Appendix P

Accommodation and Employment Strategy (Tetra Tech Coffey, 2025)

Yanco Delta Wind Farm

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Origin Energy Power Limited

Reference: 754-MELEN364917_R02

5 December 2025

YANCO DELTA WIND FARM

Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Report reference number: 754-MELEN364917_R02
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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
BESS	Battery energy storage system
BnB	Bed and breakfast
DPE	New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment (now Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure)
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ERP	Estimated resident population
GW	Gigawatt
km	Kilometres
LGAs	Local government areas
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt hour
NSW	New South Wales
Project EIS	Yanco Delta Wind Farm Environmental Impact Statement, 6 November 2022
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
SALs	Suburbs and localities
SEIA	Socio-economic Impact Assessment
SSD	State Significant Development
VNI West	Victoria to NSW Interconnector West
WTGs	Wind turbine generators

1. INTRODUCTION

The Yanco Delta Wind Farm (the Project) is a 1.5 GW wind farm, comprising up to 208 wind turbine generators (WTGs), an optional 800 MWh battery energy storage system (BESS), and ancillary infrastructure and facilities. The Project is located within the Murrumbidgee Council and Edward River Council local government areas (LGAs) and the South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) in New South Wales (NSW).

The Yanco Delta Wind Farm Environmental Impact Statement (Project EIS) (Jacobs, 2022a) was prepared for the Project under Part 4 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (SSD-41743746). The Project EIS was subject to a public exhibition process in late 2022. On 21 December 2023, the Project was granted consent subject to conditions by the Director, Energy Assessments, under delegation from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

The Yanco Delta Wind Farm was acquired by Origin Energy Power Limited (Origin) from Virya Energy Pty Ltd in early 2024. Origin is currently progressing through the post-EIS approval processes.

Tetra Tech Coffey has been engaged by Origin to prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy (the Strategy) to meet Condition B50 of the Development Consent (see Section 1.1).

1.1 BACKGROUND

A Socio-economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) (Jacobs, 2022b) was prepared for the Project EIS, which assessed potential impacts of the Project's construction and operation on local and regional communities. This included an assessment of potential impacts on local housing and accommodation due to demand for accommodation by the construction workforce.

The Project EIS did not propose a worker accommodation camp for the Project, with the construction workforce proposed to use existing rental housing and short-term visitor accommodation within towns located within commuting distance from the Project area (i.e., approximately one hour) (Jacobs, 2022b).

The SEIA found that increased demand for worker accommodation has potential to impact on the availability of rental accommodation for existing residents, leading to a reduction in the supply of affordable rental housing, and subsequent impact on housing affordability and increased housing stress for low- and fixed-income households. Further, the SEIA noted that while use of short-term accommodation would help to reduce impact on rental housing, and that while vacancy rates suggested capacity in the short-term accommodation, demand for short-term, visitor accommodation by the construction workforce has potential to reduce availability for some accommodation types for travellers and holiday makers during peak tourist periods (Jacobs, 2022b).

The SEIA also assessed potential impacts and opportunities for local and regional employment from the Project's construction and operation. Specifically, the SEIA noted that the creation of employment and training opportunities during construction would have positive impacts for groups such as young people, unemployed people, women and Aboriginal people. At the same time, demand for construction workers has potential to increase competition for local workers resulting in potential impacts on existing business and industry if workers move away from their jobs in existing businesses and industries (Jacobs, 2022b).

In response to the above, the SEIA recommended the preparation of a Workforce Accommodation Strategy and Local Workforce Strategy to manage demand by workers on housing and accommodation, and maximise local employment and training opportunities during construction (Jacobs, 2022b). Subsequently, a condition of the development consent for the Approved Project (Condition B50) includes the requirement to prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy (see below).

ACCOMMODATION AND EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

B50. Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the development in consultation with Murrumbidgee Council and Edward River Council and to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary. This strategy must:

(a) propose measures to ensure there is sufficient accommodation for the workforce associated with the development;

(b) consider the cumulative impacts associated with other State significant development projects in the area;

(c) include strategies to minimise impacts on short-term accommodation during periods of high demand for season agricultural workers and peak tourism;

(d) include a contingency plan for periods of limited accommodation availability;

(e) investigate options for prioritising the employment of local workers for the construction and operation of the development, where feasible; and

(f) include a program to monitor and review the effectiveness of the strategy over the life of the development, including regular monitoring and review during construction.

Following the Planning Secretary's approval, the Applicant must implement the Accommodation and Employment Strategy (DPE, 2023).

Origin is currently preparing a modification to the project for an onsite temporary worker accommodation facility; changes to infrastructure, site access and transport routes; and increases in the disturbance footprint and construction workforce. The modification will be supported by an updated SEIA. This Accommodation and Employment Strategy is an interim strategy to satisfy Condition B50 of the Approved Project and will be updated to satisfy the modified project once determined.

1.2 PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Strategy is to address the requirements of Condition B50 of the Development Consent by outlining an approach to manage potential impacts relating to workforce accommodation and for prioritising employment of local workers for construction and operation of the Project. This document includes:

- Introduction to the strategy, including background, approach to developing the Strategy and a summary of stakeholder engagement undertaken (this section).
- Project overview, including accommodation and workforce requirements of the Project's construction and operation phases (Section 2).
- Summary of the existing socio-economic profile (Section 3).
- Overview of other State significant development projects currently planned, proposed, or under construction that have potential to result in cumulative impacts (Section 4).
- Worker accommodation strategy, outlining measures to ensure sufficient accommodation for the workforce while minimising local impacts (Section 5).
- Employment strategy, describing measures to prioritise employment for local workers (Section 6).
- Program to monitor and review the effectiveness of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy (Section 7).
- References used in the preparation of this Strategy (Section 8).

1.3 APPROACH

Preparation of this Strategy has involved desktop research and collection of primary data through stakeholder engagement. Key steps included:

- Review and analysis of available background information on existing socio-economic conditions of local and regional communities, including data and information on housing and accommodation, and workforce. Key data sources included:
  - Socio-economic profile prepared for the Project EIS (Jacobs, 2022a).
  - Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs and the towns of Jerilderie and Coleambally.
  - Information on short-term, visitor accommodation.
  - Rental bond data from NSW Fair Trade, which provides information on the rental stock in local and regional communities based on new rental bonds lodged at the commencement of tenancies, rental bonds held, and bond refunds at the end of tenancies.
- Review of workforce and accommodation information provided by Origin.
- Engagement with staff from Murrumbidgee and Edward River Councils.
- Survey of accommodation providers and real estate agents in Jerilderie, Coleambally, Darlington Point, Finley, and Berrigan, to understand existing context relating to visitor accommodation and rental housing.
- Identification of strategies to ensure sufficient worker accommodation and minimise impacts on short-term accommodation, and to prioritise employment of local workers, and ongoing monitoring and review.

1.4 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engagement for this Strategy has been undertaken through:

- On-line meetings with staff from Murrumbidgee and Edward River Councils, including:
  - Department Head, Planning, Community, Development & Infrastructure, Murrumbidgee Council.
  - Coordinator, Economic Development, Edward River Council.
- Telephone interviews with accommodation providers located within local and regional towns, to gather information on existing visitor accommodation, including accommodation supply, occupancy, peak visitor periods, and previous experience with accommodating workers. Interviews were completed with:
  - Jerilderie Colony Inn Hotel Motel.
  - Coleambally Motel and Accommodation.
  - Darlington Point Motel.
  - Jerilderie Motel and Caravan Park.
  - Finley Country Club Hotel Motel.
- Telephone interviews with real estate agents servicing local and regional communities, to gather information on the existing rental housing market, including rental housing stock, rental vacancies, rental costs, and previous experience with accommodation for construction project workers. Interviews were conducted with:
  - Rob Crow & Co Real Estate, Tocumwal.
  - McGrath Riverina Real Estate, Temora.
  - Glen Preston Real Estate, Leeton.

Calls were made to several other accommodation providers and real estate agents, although contact was not able to be made, or people declined to participate. Outcomes of the stakeholder engagement are presented in relevant sections of this Strategy.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The following assumptions and limitations apply to this Strategy.

- Tetra Tech Coffey has relied on information from a range of secondary sources, including information presented in the SEIA prepared for the Project EIS. Except where stated, Tetra Tech Coffey has not attempted to verify the accuracy or completeness of this information.
- Details of other State Significant Development (SSD) projects included in this Strategy is based on the review of the Project EIS, EISs recently prepared for other projects, and the NSW Major Projects Portal. These details are subject to change and readers of this Strategy are advised to verify the status of these projects independently.
- Estimated Project workforce numbers are based on information provided by Origin, and informed by Early Contractor Involvement engagement between Origin and contractors familiar with large scale infrastructure projects.
- The Project workforce consists of existing Origin employees, and employees of suppliers, construction contractors, and sub-contractors engaged to undertake specific tasks, as well as new personnel engaged for the Project.
- Estimates for accommodation demand assume that:
  - 10% of the total peak Project workforce would be accommodated locally (i.e., ’non-camp workforce’) and includes groups such as locally sourced workers currently residing in towns within about a 1.5 hour commute from the Project, drive-in/ drive-out (DIDO) or fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) workers that choose to live locally, and sub-contractors not accommodated in the camp.
  - 40% of the ‘non-camp workforce’ would comprise locally sourced workers or sub-contractors who currently own or rent housing in local and regional communities and would therefore not require accommodation.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Project is located approximately 10 to 40 km northwest of Jerilderie, and 45 km southwest of Coleambally, within the South West REZ in NSW (Jacobs, 2022a).

2.1 KEY PROJECT FEATURES

The following provides a summary of key Project features, based on the Project description outlined in the Project EIS. Key features include (Jacobs, 2022b):

- Up to 208 WTGs with a generating capacity of approximately 1,500 MW.
- An optional 800 MWh BESS.
- Permanent ancillary infrastructure, including an operation and maintenance facility, internal roads, hardstand areas, below ground cabling and above ground lines, central primary substation and up to eight collector substations.
- Temporary facilities to support construction (e.g., site compounds, laydown areas, concrete batch plants, stockpiles and gravel borrow pit(s)).

The Project would mainly be located on private property comprising rural land used for agricultural land uses, including grazing, cropping and irrigated cropping. Surrounding land uses are mainly agricultural, with areas of residential farm infrastructure, road reserves and managed resource production (Jacobs, 2022a).

Approximately 20 residential buildings are located within 8 km of the WTGs and two residential buildings are located within 5 km of proposed transmission line infrastructure (Jacobs, 2022a).

2.2 PROJECT SCHEDULE

The construction of the Project is anticipated to commence in early 2027 and would occur over a period of about four years. Key construction stages would include:

- Enabling works, including site establishment, construction of external roads, the expansion of Dinawan substation and establishment of the temporary worker accommodation camp.
- Main construction works, including excavation and foundation construction, electrical installation, turbine construction and commissioning, transmission line construction, commissioning of operational infrastructure and construction of the operational and maintenance facility.
- Site demobilisation, including removal of temporary construction facilities.

2.3 PROJECT WORKFORCE

This section provides an overview of the workforce estimates for the construction and operations phases of the Project. The construction workforce estimates have been informed by Early Contractor Involvement engagements between Origin and contractors familiar with the delivery of large-scale infrastructure projects in regional locations.

Construction

Construction of the Project is anticipated to require an average workforce of about 430 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers over the construction phase. A histogram of the estimated construction workforce is shown in Figure 2.1. As shown, the construction workforce is anticipated to:

- Ramp up rapidly, with up to about 200 FTE workers by month six and a peak of about 895 FTE workers in month 22.
- Plateau at around 800 or more workers over a period of about eleven months (i.e., from about month 18 to month 28), before steadily reducing at the completion of the main construction works.

The construction workforce would comprise a range of skilled and general labourer positions, including:

- Professional and management positions in areas such as engineering, project management, environmental management, community relations, contract and procurement, health, safety and quality, human resources, etc.
- Electrical, civil and building tradespeople, e.g., concreters, steel fixers, electricians, linesmen, plant and machinery operators, mechanical trades, trades assistants and labourers, etc.
- Project support, e.g., accommodation camp staff (catering, security and maintenance), transport management, administration, etc.

Operation

Once operational, the Project is anticipated to require a workforce of about 30 workers to oversee the operation of the Project and carry out routine inspections and maintenance (Jacobs, 2022a).

2.4 WORKER ACCOMMODATION

Construction

As noted in Section 1.1, the Project EIS did not propose a worker accommodation camp for the Project's construction phase, with construction workers anticipated to use existing rental housing and short-term visitor accommodation in towns located within commuting distance from the Project area (i.e., approximately one hour) (Jacobs, 2022b). Subsequent to the approval of the Project EIS, a worker accommodation camp is proposed to be established on land within the Project area.

During construction, the workforce is proposed to be accommodated through a combination of:

- Accommodation camp, which would cater for up to about 850 people.
- Short-term, visitor accommodation and rental housing, including:
    - Prior to the commencement of camp operations (about month six).
    - During periods when the demand for accommodation exceeds the capacity of the camp.
    - Following decommissioning of the camp post the main construction works.

The capacity of the camp in comparison to the Project workforce is shown in Figure 2.1. The camp would be developed in stages to ensure sufficient accommodation is available to meet the forecast demand, with the commencement of operation and subsequent decommissioning of the camp expected once the construction workforce reaches about 200 people.

During the main construction phase, it is anticipated that up to approximately 90 workers would reside in non-camp accommodation, including existing residents. A breakdown of the estimated accommodation requirements for the estimated peak construction workforce is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Estimated accommodation requirements – peak construction workforce

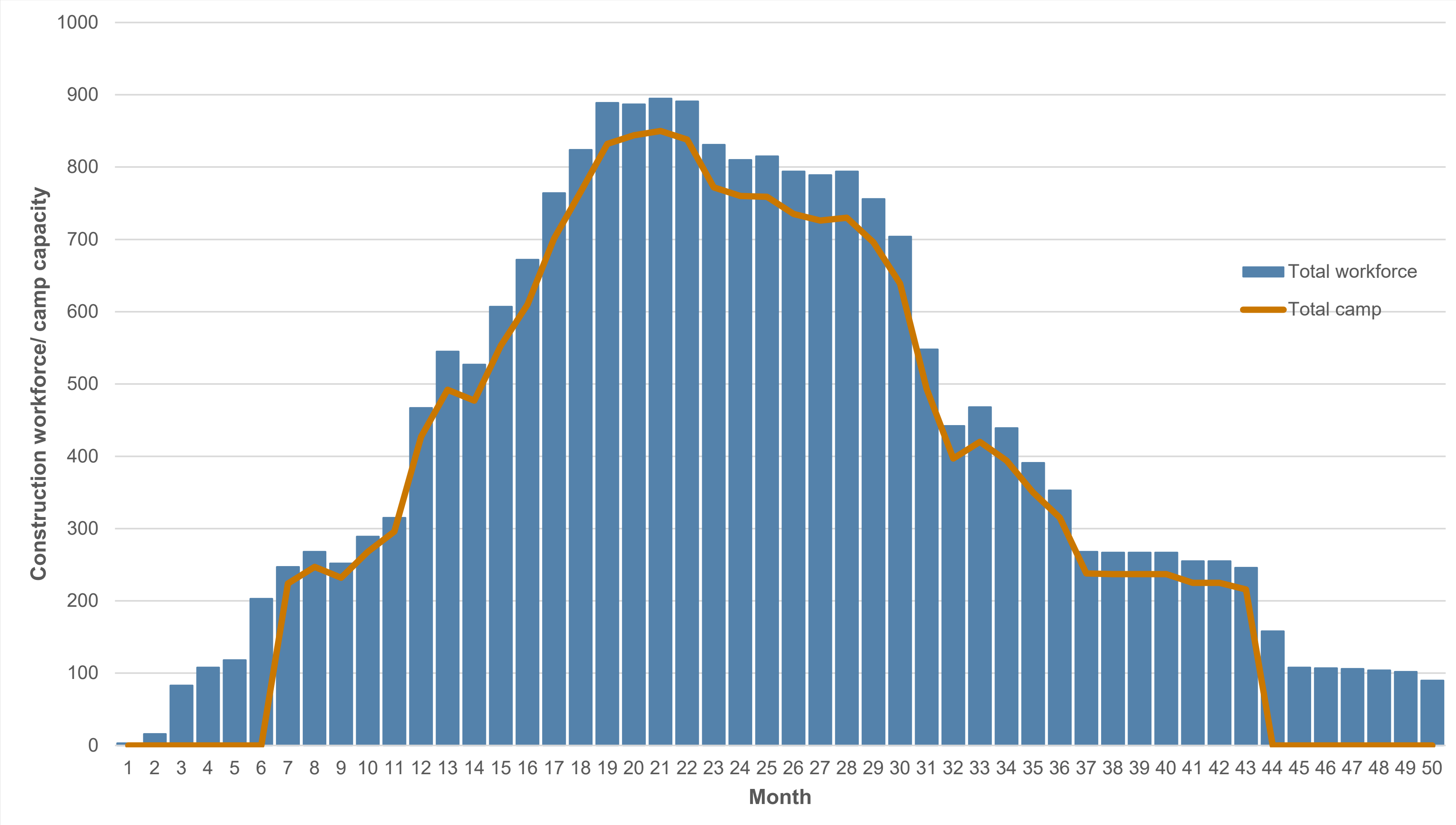
	Approximate number of workers	Comment
Peak construction workforce	895	
Workers in accommodation camp (approximately 90% of total workforce)	850	DIDO/ FIFO workers
Total non-camp workforce (approximately 10% of total workforce)	90	E.g., existing residents, DIDO/FIFO workers that choose to live locally, sub-contractors not accommodated in the camp.
People that currently live ‘locally’ (approximately 40% of ‘non-camp’ workforce)	36	Locally sourced workers and sub-contractors that currently own or rent a house within about 1.5 hours of the Project and do not need accommodation.
People requiring new accommodation (e.g., rental housing, visitor accommodation, caravan park, etc)	54	People that move temporarily into the area for the Project (e.g., workers for suppliers or sub-contractors requiring accommodation for short-periods, workers that choose to relocate for the duration of construction, etc)

Outside of the main construction phase, it is estimated that the Project would generate demand for local accommodation for up to about 195 people:

- For the six months prior to the operation of the accommodation camp, including three months in which demand for accommodation would be for more than 100 people.
- Following the decommissioning of the camp, of which local accommodation would be required for about 100 people for five months.

Operation

As noted in Section 2.3, the Project would have an operational workforce of 30 people. It is proposed that the operations workforce would primarily use existing housing, either owner occupied or rental housing, in local and regional communities up to about one hour commute from the Project.



Source: Based on data supplied by Origin Energy

Figure 2.1 Construction workforce and accommodation camp capacity

3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

This section describes existing socio-economic conditions within local and regional communities relevant to this Strategy, including:

- Jerilderie and Coleambally, as the closest towns to the Project.
- Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs, within which the Project is located.

This section presents data for these areas based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defined suburb and localities (SALs) of Jerilderie and Coleambally and LGAs of Murrumbidgee and Edward River. SALs are approximations of the officially recognised boundaries of suburbs and localities as defined by each Australian state and territory (ABS, 2021a).

Social and economic data and information presented in this section has mainly been sourced from the SEIA prepared in 2022 (Jacobs, 2022b) supplemented with more recent information on housing, accommodation, and workforce, where available.

3.1 OVERVIEW

The Project is situated within the Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs, the Riverina Murray Region, and South West REZ of NSW. The Riverina Murray Region is located approximately 300 km north of Melbourne and covers 20 LGAs extending from the Snowy Valleys in the east, Albury in the south, Wentworth in the west and Temora in the north (Invest Regional NSW, 2024). It includes the regional centres of Wagga Wagga, Albury, and Griffith, of which Griffith is the closest regional centre to the Project. The closest towns to the Project are (Jacobs, 2022b):

- Jerilderie – located approximately 10 to 40 km southeast of the Project in the Murrumbidgee LGA.
- Coleambally – located approximately 45 km northeast of the Project, also in the Murrumbidgee LGA.

Jerilderie is a rural service centre for surrounding rural communities, providing access to health and social services, retail and recreational facilities for residents within the town and surrounding rural properties. Coleambally was established in 1968 to service the Coleambally Irrigation Area. Today, the town supports local populations through a range of community services and facilities (Jacobs, 2022b).

The township of Conargo also provides a focus for local communities closest to the Project (Jacobs, 2022b). At a regional level, other key townships include Deniliquin in the Edward River LGA, Darlington Point in Murrumbidgee LGA, Finley and Berrigan in the Berrigan Shire LGA, and Carrathool in Carrathool Shire LGA.

Agriculture is a major economic driver within the Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs. Stakeholder consultation for this Strategy identified irrigated cropping, including rice and cotton, broad scale dryland cropping, and beef and sheep grazing as the major agricultural sectors in the region. The Murrumbidgee River delivers water to major food producing areas, including the Coleambally Irrigation Area and Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Combined, these irrigation areas account for more than a quarter of fruit and vegetable production in NSW (Regional Development Australia, 2024).

Engagement for this Strategy also noted health care services, education, and tourism as important regional industries. Renewable energy generation is a key growth area for the Riverina Murray Region, supporting diversification of existing industries and attracting new industries (NSW DPE, 2023).

3.2 POPULATION

Murrumbidgee LGA had an estimated resident population (ERP) of 3,607 people at 30 June 2023. At the same time, Edward River LGA had an ERP of 8,430 people (refer to Table 3.1). Contrary to NSW as a whole, both LGAs experienced a decline in population over the 10 years and five years to 2023. Edward River LGA also experienced a decline in population between 2022 and 2023, however the population of Murrumbidgee LGA grew by 1.1% over the same period. This is compared to a growth rate of 2.1% for NSW as a whole (ABS, 2024). Population information for Jerilderie and Coleambally within the Murrumbidgee LGA is available from the 2021 Census. These towns recorded total populations of 922 and 1,152 people, respectively in 2021 (Jacobs, 2022b).

Table 3.1 provides an overview of selected population characteristics of local and regional communities near the Project. Observations from this data indicate that communities near the Project, are generally characterised by:

- More females in Edward River LGA, which is consistent with NSW, while Murrumbidgee LGA and the towns of Jerilderie and Coleambally, had more males (i.e., between 91.4 and 94.9 females to every 100 males).
- Older populations, with median ages from 43 to 51 years, which was well above the median age for NSW (at 39 years); and higher proportions of people aged 65 years or over, particularly in Jerilderie.
- Proportions of children aged 14 years or under, similar to, or marginally lower than, the proportion of this group in NSW, with lower populations of this group consistent with an older population.
- Considerably lower proportions of working aged people (i.e., aged between 15 years and 64 years) compared to NSW, which is likely to reflect the trend of youth and young adults moving away from regional areas to larger urban centres for education and employment opportunities. Jerilderie in particular had very low proportions of working aged people, with this group representing 53.3% of the town's total population.
- Proportions of people that are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander above NSW as a whole, with Murrumbidgee LGA having particularly high proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Compared to NSW, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Murrumbidgee LGA also reported higher median ages, while Edward River LGA had lower proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of working age.

Table 3.1 Population characteristics

Indicator	Jerilderie SAL	Coleambally SAL	Murrumbidgee LGA	Edward River LGA	NSW
Population					
Estimated resident population (2023) (1)	-	-	3,607	8,430	8,342,285
Change in ERP (2022-23) (1)	-	-	1.1%	-0.3%	2.1%
Annual average change in ERP (2013-23) (1)	-	-	-0.8%	-0.6%	1.2%
Annual average in ERP (2018-23) (1)	-	-	-1.1%	-0.7%	1.0%
Population (2021) (2) (3)	922	1,152	3,353	8,456	8,072,163
Sex ratio (M:F) (2021) (4)	100:94.9	100:92.6	100:91.4	100:102.8	100:102.6

Indicator	Jerilderie SAL	Coleambally SAL	Murrumbidgee LGA	Edward River LGA	NSW
Age profile (2021)					
Median age (years) [(2) (3)]	51 years	43 years	45 years	46 years	39 years
14 years or under [(2) (3)]	17.1%	18.1%	16.9%	17.4%	18.2%
15-64 years [(2) (3)]	53.3%	62.3%	56.5%	57.6%	64.1%
65 years and over [(2) (3)]	29.2%	20.2%	21.7%	24.9%	17.6%
First Nations peoples (2021)					
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people [(2) (3)]	5.3%	4.3%	8.6%	4.8%	3.4%
Sex ratio (M:F)	100:126.1	100:60.6	100:98.6	100:115.8	100:101.2
Median age [(5)]	24 years	37 years	32 years	23 years	23 years
Working aged population (15-64 years) [(5)]	49.0%	61.2%	64.5%	58.5%	60.2%

Source: [(1)]ABS, 2024; [(2)]Data for Jerilderie SAL, Coleambally SAL and NSW from Jacobs, 2022b; [(3)] Murrumbidgee LGA, and Edward River LGA based on data from ABS, 2021b; [(4)] Based on data from ABS, 2021c; [(5)] Based on data from ABS, 2021d.

3.3 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

A summary of key education, income and employment characteristics for local and regional communities near the Project at the 2021 Census are presented in Table 3.2. The main observations from this data include:

- People aged 15 years or over reported lower levels of education compared to the NSW average, with lower proportions of people with university qualifications (i.e., advanced diploma or above), and who have completed Year 12. At the same time, the proportion of people in local and regional communities with certificate level qualifications and secondary school education of Year 9 or below was above these groups in NSW.
- Median weekly personal and household incomes in local and regional communities were less than in NSW. Median personal incomes ranged from $694 to $782 per week, compared to $813 in NSW, while median household incomes ranged from $1,166 in Jerilderie to $1,555 per week in Coleambally, compared to $1,829 in NSW.
- Labour force participation in Jerilderie and the Edward River LGA were below that reported for NSW, which is likely to reflect the older populations of these areas. At the same time, Coleambally and Murrumbidgee LGA had levels of labour force participation above NSW.
- Unemployment rates in local and regional communities were below that recorded for NSW (4.9%). Coleambally had the lowest unemployment rate (at 2.0%), while the unemployment rate for both Jerilderie and Edward River LGA was 3.6%.
- Women generally recorded lower levels of labour force participation compared to the population as a whole, although amongst women aged 15 years or over, Murrumbidgee LGA and Coleambally, both had higher levels of labour force participation than NSW. Unemployment rates for women in local and regional communities were typically well below NSW.
- Youth aged 15 to 24 years, generally reported levels of labour force participation similar to, or above NSW. Youth unemployment at the 2021 Census for Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs was similar to NSW as a whole.
- Levels of workforce participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years or above is similar to, or above NSW. The unemployment rate at the 2021 Census in Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people is below that for NSW.

Table 3.2 Education, income and employment, 2021

Indicator	Jerilderie SAL	Coleambally SAL	Murrumbidgee LGA	Edward River LGA	NSW
Education					
Advanced diploma or above	19.0%	20.5%	17.6%	20.0%	37.2%
Certificate level qualifications	19.9%	21.8%	21.1%	22.5%	18.1%
Year 12	33.9%	38.4%	34.8%	36.1%	58.9%
Year 9 or below	15.1%	12.0%	14.2%	15.5%	8.4%
Income					
Median weekly personal income	$694	$841	$782	$701	$813
Median weekly household income	$1,166	$1,555	$1,401	$1,240	$1,829
Employment					
Total labour force	391	639	1,698	3,918	3,874,012
Labour force participation	51.5%	67.8%	61.0%	56.2%	58.7%
Unemployed	3.6%	2.0%	2.9%	3.6%	4.9%
Women, youth, and First Nations people					
Women – labour force participation	48.1%	63.9%	57.4%	54.0%	55.5%
Women – unemployed	3.4%	1.7%	2.5%	3.3%	4.5%
Youth – labour force participation (1)	-	-	64.0%	64.2%	59.3%
Youth – unemployed (1)	-	-	9.7%	8.7%	9.8%
First Nations – labour force participation (1)	-	-	67.3%	54.3%	56.5%
First Nations – unemployed (1)	-	-	7.6%	9.3%	9.8%

Note: (1) Information for Jerilderie and Coleambally has been excluded due to low numbers.

Source: ABS, 2021b

Working population

Working population data from the ABS provides information based on where a person goes to work, rather than their place of residence. At the 2021 Census, there were 1,647 people who worked within the Murrumbidgee LGA and 3,673 people who worked in the Edward River LGA[1] (ABS, 2021c).

Agriculture was the main industry of employment for people working in the Murrumbidgee LGA in 2021, employing about 610 people or 37.0% of workers. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing support services also employed a further 73 people (4.4%). Other key industries of employment included food product manufacturing (7.2%), and pre-school and school education (5.8%) (ABS, 2021c). Agriculture was also a key industry of employment for workers in the Edward River LGA, employing 528 people or 14.4% of the working population. Other key industries included health care and social assistance, including hospitals, medical and

[1] Working population data from the ABS is not available for suburbs and localities (SALs).

other health care services, and residential care services (17.0%), retail, particularly food retailing and other store-based retailing (9.4%), and preschool and school education (7.5%) (ABS, 2021c).

Accommodation and foods service industries are also key employers in the LGAs, employing 232 people (6.3%) in Edward River LGA and 69 people in Murrumbidgee LGA (4.2%). Most workers in this industry are employed in food and beverage services (a total of 233 people), with 63 people working in accommodation (ABS, 2021c). There were 316 workers employed in construction related industries in the Edward River and Murrumbidgee LGAs at the 2021 Census representing 6.2% and 5.5% of the working population respectively. This included people employed in building construction, heavy and civil engineering construction, and construction services. This was below the proportion of people employed in these industries in NSW (8.6%). Approximately 21 people in the Edward River and Murrumbidgee LGAs were employed in electricity supply industry, which represented 0.4% and 0.3% of working population respectively. The proportion of workers in this industry in each LGA was similar to NSW (0.4%) (ABS, 2021c).

3.4 BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Agriculture

Agriculture is a key employer and economic driver for local and regional communities. Murrumbidgee is one Australia's most vital agriculture regions, with 75% of the Murrumbidgee Valley's land use being dryland grazing and cereal-based cropping. Commercial forestry takes up 3% of the catchment, while cotton production, chicken production, grape and rice growing, and aquaculture are also key land uses within this region (Murray-Darling Basin Authority, 2023). Seasonal agriculture depends on surrounding weather conditions that vary throughout the year, primarily residual humidity and rainfall levels. Demand for workers is generally higher during peak agricultural seasons (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2024).

Consultation for this Strategy identified peak seasons for various agricultural products were rice (February to March), cotton (May to July), wheat (end of year), and sheep (across the year). It was noted that most workers stay on farming properties or at the caravan park.

The largest proportion of businesses in each of the LGAs comprise of agriculture, forestry and fishing related businesses, with agriculture and sheep grazing being the predominant land use within and surrounding the Project area. More specifically, this involves grain growing, grain-sheep or grain-beef cattle farming and sheep farming businesses (Jacobs, 2022b).

Tourism

The study area falls into the Riverina and The Murray Tourism Regions. Peak tourism periods include long-weekends, holidays and regional community and cultural events that attract visitors from outside the area, including Jerilderie Races (September); Coleambally Food and Farm Festival (Taste Coly) (October); Deni Ute Muster (October), and Griffith Shaheedi Tournament – Sikh Games (June). Feedback from engagement noted that key attractions for the region include the weather, environment (water-based activities), and community arts and cultural events.

In 2023, there were 2.85 million domestic daytrip and 2.72 million domestic overnight visitors to the Riverina and Murray regions respectively (Destination NSW, 2023). A total of $1.04 billion was spent by visitors in the Riverina region in 2023, with $1.02 billion being spent in the Murray region. The main reason for visiting these regions was visiting friends and relatives for domestic travellers. International tourists were more likely to visit the region for holidays, pleasure and sightseeing (Destination NSW, 2023).

3.5 HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

As noted in Section 2.4, the construction and operational workforces are likely to generate demand for private houses and short-term, visitor accommodation. This section provides information on housing and accommodation within local and regional communities, including housing availability and affordability, supply and demand for short-term visitor accommodation, and other accommodation.

3.5.1 Housing

Table 3.3 provides a summary of key housing characteristics within local and regional communities near the Project, with further discussion provided in the following sections.

Table 3.3 Housing characteristics, 2021

Characteristic	Jerilderie SAL	Coleambally SAL	Murrumbidgee LGA	Edward River LGA	NSW
Dwellings					
Total private dwellings	424	495	1,489	3,856	3,199,988
Unoccupied private dwellings	65	52	191	523	299,524
Dwelling occupancy	85.6%	88.7%	86.7%	86.4%	90.6%
Separate houses	78.8%	81.4%	81.3%	77.7%	59.5%
Average number of bedrooms per dwelling	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.1
Three- and four- bedroom separate houses	80.5%	81.9%	78.8%	79.3%	76.4%
Dwelling occupancy					
Average household size	2.2	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.6
Average persons per bedroom	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.9
Dwelling tenure					
Owned outright	47.1%	41.2%	40.0%	40.6%	31.5%
Owned with a mortgage	25.6%	23.7%	24.6%	29.4%	32.5%
Rental houses	19.3%	24.6%	22.9%	24.8%	32.6%
Rented from a real estate agent (% of rental houses)	28.6%	11.1%	19.3%	58.5%	69.1%
Rented from person not in same household (1)	37.1%	53.7%	45.3%	20.9%	14.6%
Other landlord type (2)	8.6%	22.2%	21.6%	7.3%	2.9%
Housing costs					
Median mortgage repayments (monthly)	$842	$867	$869	$1,803	$2,167
Median rent (weekly)	$175	$180	$190	$220	$420
Households paying more than 30% of household income on mortgage repayments	9.7%	5.8%	9.1%	8.2%	17.3%

Characteristic	Jerilderie SAL	Coleambally SAL	Murrumbidgee LGA	Edward River LGA	NSW
Households paying more than 30% of income on rent	8.6%	6.5%	13.9%	30.0%	35.5%

Note: (1) includes dwellings rented from parent/other relative or other person; (2) Includes dwellings rented through an owner/ manager of a residential park (e.g., caravan park, manufactured home estates), or government or non-government employer.

Source: Based on ABS, 2021b, 2021d

Housing supply

Jerilderie and Coleambally had a combined total of 919 dwellings at the 2021 Census, of which 117 were unoccupied on Census night. At a regional level, there were 1,489 dwellings in the Murrumbidgee LGA (191 of which were unoccupied), and 3,856 dwellings in the Coleambally LGA (of which 523 were unoccupied). Dwellings in local and regional communities near the Project were generally characterised by:

- Relative low dwelling occupancy, with dwelling occupancy ranging from about 85.6% in Jerilderie to 88.7% in Coleambally, compared to 90.6% across NSW.
- High proportions of separate houses, with this dwelling type comprising approximately 80% of dwellings in each area, well above this dwelling type in NSW at approximately 60%.
- Dwellings that were generally larger than those across NSW, with the average number of bedrooms per dwelling ranging from about 3.2 to 3.4 bedrooms, compared to 3.1 in NSW. Further, approximately 80% of separate houses in Jerilderie and Coleambally comprised three- or four-bedroom dwellings, with was consistent with the Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs, but above the proportion of these dwellings in NSW.
- Smaller average household sizes compared to NSW, ranging from 2.2 people per household in Jerilderie and Edward River LGA to 2.4 people in Coleambally. Bedroom occupancy was also below NSW, with an average of 0.7 people per bedroom across each area, compared to 0.9 people in NSW.

Murrumbidgee Council is currently undertaking planning for new residential land subdivisions to support housing development. These include Bluebonnet Crescent Development at Coleambally, and Wunnamurra Stage 3 development in Jerilderie, both of which are anticipated to start construction around 2029 (Murrumbidgee Council, 2024a). A new residential subdivision comprising 55 lots at Darlington Point is also due to be completed in December 2024 (Murrumbidgee Council, 2024b).

Housing tenure

Approximately 65% or more of occupied dwellings in local and regional communities were owner occupied (i.e., owned outright or with a mortgage), with this as high as 72.7% in Jerilderie and 70% in Edward River LGA. While this is similar to or above NSW as a whole (64%), the proportions of dwellings that were owned outright was well above NSW (refer to Table 3.3).

There were 296 houses that were being rented in the Murrumbidgee LGA, of which 178 houses were in Jerilderie and Coleambally. Edward River LGA had a further 827 houses that were being rented. Of the rental houses in local and regional communities near the Project:

- Relatively low proportions were rented from a real estate agent. With the exception of Edward River LGA, less than 30% of rental houses in each location were being rented formally through an agent.
- Murrumbidgee LGA, including Jerilderie and Coleambally, had high proportions of dwellings that were being rented from a family member or other person compared to NSW. More than half of rental houses in Coleambally were rented through a person not in the same household, compared to about 14.6% in NSW.

- Approximately 22% of rental houses in Murrumbidgee LGA and Coleambally were being rented through an ‘other landlord type’, such as a residential park, or employer.

Further discussion about rental housing stock in communities near the Project is in following sections.

Housing affordability

Housing in local and regional communities was generally more affordable compared to NSW. As shown in Table 3.3, median mortgage repayments in local and regional communities near the Project at the 2021 Census, were significantly lower than the NSW median ($2,167 per month). Further, the proportion of households experiencing mortgage stress were below NSW. In 2021, of the households in the Murrumbidgee LGA and Edward River LGA that were paying a mortgage, 9.1% and 8.2% respectively paid more than 30% of their household income on mortgage repayments. This is compared to 17.3% in NSW. Households in Jerilderie experienced slightly higher levels of mortgage stress, with 9.7% paying more than 30% of household income towards a mortgage.

At the 2021 Census, median weekly rental payments for households in Jerilderie, Coleambally, Murrumbidgee LGA and Edward River LGA were well below the NSW average ($420).

The proportion of houses owned with a mortgage for Jerilderie, Coleambally, Murrumbidgee LGA and Edward River LGA are all lower than NSW’s proportion at 32.5%. A higher proportion of the population within these SALs and LGAs own their houses outright compared to the NSW proportion of 31.5%. There are also a lower proportion of houses rented compared to broader NSW, suggesting that houses are more affordable in these areas.

Rental housing

Recent information on rental housing is available at a postcode level from NSW Fair Trading. The data includes (NSW Fair Trading, 2024):

- New rental bonds lodged annually, which provides an indication on the availability of rental housing annually, and includes information on rent values, dwelling type, and number of bedrooms.
- Bonds held, which provides an indication of the rental housing stock.
- Bond refunds, which provides an indication on how long tenancies are held.

While it is noted that this is not necessarily an accurate reflection of rental properties, given some properties may be vacant or bonds are not held for some rental properties (e.g., properties rented through family member), the number of bonds held by NSW Fair Trading provides an indication of the rental stock available.

Table 3.4 presents information on rental bonds for 2021 to 2023 for postcodes covering local and regional towns near the Project. This data indicates:

- In 2023, there was a total of 706 rental bonds held for residential properties in local and regional towns, of which 169 properties were in Coleambally and Jerilderie. The number of bonds held declined by about 3.7% from the previous two years, a reduction of about 27 residential properties.
- The turnover of rental properties has declined over recent years, with 203 new rental bonds lodged in 2023, of which 48 were for residential rental properties in postcodes covering Coleambally and Jerilderie. Jerilderie reported an increase in the number of new rental bonds lodged from 2022, although this followed a decrease between 2021 and 2022.
- The average number of days that residential tenancies were held in 2023 was 828 days (approximately 2.4 years), with the duration of tenancies increasing from 2021. This is compared to the average of 872 days (2.4 years) for NSW. Rental properties in Coleambally were generally held for a shorter period (i.e., 430 days or 1.2 years), while those in Jerilderie were held for about 975 days (2.7 years).

Table 3.4 Rental bonds held by NSW Fair Trading, 2021-2023

Location (postcode)	Bonds held [1]			Rental bonds lodged [2]			Average days held [3]		
	Dec-21	Jan-23	Dec-23	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Coleambally (2707)	65	79	76	23	35	27	437	427	430
Jerilderie (2716)	63	57	54	25	16	21	778	878	975
Darington Point (2706)	98	94	93	19	10	16	1,409	1,489	1,266
Berrigan (2712)	98	99	88	39	37	21	652	765	807
Finley (2713)	222	230	213	80	79	66	793	685	850
Tocumwal (2714)	184	174	182	54	58	52	789	945	830
Total	730	733	706	240	235	203	775	818	828

Sources: [1]NSW Fair Trading, 2021a, 2023, 2024; [2]NSW Fair Trading, 2021b, 2022a, 2023b; [3]NSW Fair Trading, 2021c, 2022b, 2023c

Table 3.5 presents information on the type and size of residential rental properties for which new bonds were lodged annually. Houses were the main residential properties available for rent, accounting for about two-thirds of new rentals between 2021 and 2023, while flats/ units contributed about 30% of new rentals annually. The number of new rental bonds for flats/ units and houses have declined from 2021, by about 19 properties and 10 properties respectively.

In 2023-, two- or three- bedroom dwellings accounted for 33.5% and 41.9% of new rentals. The number of these size dwellings available for rent declined from 2021. At the same time, there was increase in the number of one-bedroom dwellings available, while larger five-bedroom dwellings remained relatively consistent.

Table 3.5 Type and size of dwellings, 2021-2023

	2021	2022	2023
Dwelling type			
Flat/ unit	76	70	57
House	150	155	140
Terrace, townhouse, semi-detached	5	6	4
Other	3	2	0
Unknown	6	2	2
Number of bedrooms			
1 bedroom	10	8	14
2 bedrooms	91	90	68
3 bedrooms	90	106	85
4 bedrooms	35	21	35
5 bedrooms	3	5	0
Unknown	11	5	1
Total number of bedrooms	617	615	545

Source: NSW Fair Trading, 2021b; 2022a; 2023b

The median rent for new rentals registered in 2023 was $300 per week. Weekly rents for houses ranged from $60 per week for a one-bedroom house in Finley to $1,600 for a three-bedroom house in Jerilderie, with the median weekly for new rental houses being $335.

Stakeholder feedback on rental housing

Stakeholder consultation for this strategy identified housing availability and affordability as a key issue for local and regional communities. In particular, it was noted that:

- The rental housing market across the wider region is very competitive with people moving to the region struggling to find rental accommodation. The region has consistently experienced a tight housing market and high demand for rental housing, in part due to generational changes in farming areas, with people on farms downsizing and moving to local towns.
- High level of underutilisation of housing (i.e., underutilised bedrooms in houses), for example couples living in a four-bedroom house.
- Housing is constraining the ability to secure essential workers such as medical and health care staff, with examples reported of nursing staff having to decline a job offer due to not being able to secure housing (and also child care), or new health care staff having to stay in short-term, visitor accommodation until housing is available.
- New housing developments are being established in both Edward River and Murrumbidgee LGAs. Murrumbidgee Council is planning Stage 3 of a residential development.
- Murrumbidgee Council is currently delivering housing in conjunction with the State government, for critical workers such as paramedics, teachers, nursing, police (e.g., four, two-bedroom units).

Feedback from interviews with real estate agents identified that the rental market was tight, with few rental properties available. The following provides a summary of the key findings from the interviews with real estate agents.

- The number of properties managed by real estate agents interviewed range from 50 and 250 rental properties. Most of rental properties are three- or four- bedroom dwellings, but some also manage one-bedroom dwellings.
- Most rental properties had minimum rental periods of at least three months and were generally long-term rentals, with all reporting that there were currently very few rental houses available to rent.
- The housing market has been impacted by the recent COVID-19 pandemic and changes to interest rates – *'it has heated up after COVID and remained hot'*, '*COVID and interest rates have made people sell investment properties'* although it was noted that the high demand and low vacancy rate has 'been like this for a while'.
- High demand and low vacancy rates consistently occur across the year, with agents generally having waiting lists of people looking for rental properties.
- Rental prices vary from about $250 to $370 per week for a one- to two- bedroom house, $350 to $600 for a larger three- to four- bedroom house, and $200 to $300 for an apartment.
- Real estate agents have all previously rented to workers of construction projects. No preference was noted for the type of housing workers sought, although one agent noted that houses with at least three-bedrooms were popular with construction projects due to the number of staff able to be accommodated in the one house.
- It was noted that more houses are needed for accommodation.

3.5.2 Short-term visitor accommodation

This section provides an overview of short-term visitor accommodation in local and regional communities. Data on visitor accommodation is available from the Australian Accommodation Monitor for tourism regions across NSW. The Australian Accommodation Monitor presents information on visitor accommodation such as hotels, motels, serviced apartments, and holiday parks with 10 or more rooms. Between July 2022 and June 2023, there was a total of 193 accommodation providers with 10 or more rooms within the Murray and Riverina Tourism regions, offering a combined total of 6,292 rooms. The average room occupancy rates were 73.7% in the Riverina region and 64.7% in the Murray region. This is compared to an average room occupancy rate of 70.3% in NSW (STR, 2023).

Internet searches for visitor accommodation in Jerilderie, Coleambally, Darlington Point, Berrigan, and Finley identified 16 accommodation providers offering a total of approximately 217 rooms, including motel rooms, cabin accommodation, units, apartments and houses. Table 3.6 includes a list of accommodation providers, with those that were interviewed for this Strategy highlighted in blue.

Table 3.6 Local and regional visitor accommodation

Location	Accommodation provider	Number and type of accommodation
Jerilderie	Jerilderie Motel and Caravan Park	8 motel rooms, seven cabins
	Jerilderie Motor Inn	14 rooms
	Royal Mail Hotel	10 rooms
	Colony Inn Hotel Motel	12 motel rooms, five-bedroom house
	The Old Surgery BnB	1 room
	Jerilderie BNB	2-bedroom house
Coleambally	Coleambally Motel and Accommodation	6 motel units, three short-stay units (on-site), including: 4-bedroom unit; 3-bedroom unit; 2-bedroom apartment.
	Brolga Hotel	12 rooms
Darlington Point	Darlington Point Motel	10 accommodation units/ rooms, one main house, 2 x 3-bedroom houses
Berigan	Berigan Motel	20 rooms
	Federal Hotel and Motel	6 rooms
Finley	Finley Motel	22 rooms
	Palm Motor Inn	20 rooms
	Century Motor Inn	18 rooms
	Albion Hotel Motel	11 rooms
	Country Club Hotel Motel	11 motel rooms, seven ‘upstairs’ rooms (shared accommodation)
Total rooms		217

Note, blue highlighting indicates accommodation providers interviewed for this Strategy.

In addition to accommodation providers listed above, a search of Airbnb identified a small number of additional holiday houses in local towns near the Project, including (www.airbnb.com.au):

- Two in Darlington Point, including a one bedroom, and a three-bedroom properties.
- One property in Coleambally, that has one bedroom.

Feedback from engagement with stakeholders, including accommodation providers, noted that local and regional communities, including Jerilderie, Coleambally and Deniliquin experience temporary fluctuations in population from seasonal tourism around holiday periods (e.g., Christmas, long-weekends, Easter, school holidays), and during major events such as the Deni Ute Muster, Jerilderie Races, agricultural sales (e.g., ram sales in February), and Griffith Shaheedi Tournament – Sikh Games (June).

As noted in Section 3.4, seasonal workers also contribute to population fluctuations and demand for some accommodation, often experienced in the agriculture sector during peak harvest seasons.

Stakeholder feedback on visitor accommodation

Stakeholder consultation for this Strategy noted the following comments in relation to the availability of short-term visitor accommodation:

- Several caravan parks are located within local and regional towns, including privately run parks in Jerilderie, Darlington Point and Deniliquin, with Council operated parks in Coleambally and Darlington Point. Many visitors of caravan parks include return visitors who visit annually at certain times of the year.
- A lot of caravaners travel through towns such as Deniliquin and Jerilderie, particularly when travelling north in April and May for the winter months, and south around September and October. Many caravaners stay in free camping areas, caravan parks, or small motels.
- Most privately operated accommodation in Edward River LGA is focused on Deniliquin. At certain times of the year, accommodation in Deniliquin is fully booked out, with stakeholder feedback suggesting that many visitors are coming from Victoria.

The following provides a summary of the key findings from the interviews with accommodation providers.

- Occupancy rates vary and in some months, although most noted that recent months have been higher, e.g., can be one or two nights for some months, but for the last little while occupancy of three or four nights a week is more common; has been 90 to 100% full in last two or three months. It was noted that midweek tends to be busier with one provider noting occupancy of about 85% during the week and 30% on weekends.
- Feedback on the busiest times of the year varied between accommodation providers, with some suggesting that holiday periods such as Christmas and Easter were busy, while others suggested that people camping meant that these periods were a little quieter. Local community and cultural events were identified as periods that most accommodation providers were busy (e.g., Jerilderie races, ram sales, working dog auction, Sikh Games, annual glider and model plane events).
- Passing travellers were a key source of guests for accommodation providers (e.g., transit travellers, people that stayed a single night). More recently, most noted that workers are an important source of business, including workers supporting agricultural industries (e.g., irrigation and agronomists), the energy sector (electricians, ecologists, drillers, etc) and tradespeople from Wagga Wagga or Albury who visit to provide trade services to local communities.
- The location of the area on major transport routes mean that many guests include travellers passing through from NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. The length of stay was noted as being one night, or three or four days for travellers, and for several weeks for construction workers.
- A concern was noted that with more workers in the area, this would make it harder for tourists to come through, with one noting that the previous night the 'whole town was full up and no tourists could get rooms'. Some providers noted plans for expansion to provide more accommodation.

3.6 SUMMARY OF HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION AVAILABILITY

The review of housing and accommodation in local and regional communities indicates:

- Local and regional communities had occupancy levels below NSW, with about 10 to 15% of dwellings unoccupied on Census night in 2021. This represented 117 dwellings in Jerilderie and Coleambally unoccupied on Census night in 2021, and 714 dwellings in the Murrumbidgee. While much of this is likely to be due to people being away at the time of the Census, it is possible that some of these include holiday homes or second dwellings on properties that may be available to the Project.
- New residential subdivisions currently planned or under construction may provide some opportunity for construction of new housing, although the timing of this is most likely to be suited to the operations phase of the Project.
- At the 2021 Census, there were 157 houses in Jerilderie and Coleambally that were being rented, excluding those rented through a State or territory housing authority or from a community housing provider. At the same time, this was 989 rental houses in Edward River and Murrumbidgee LGAs. The study area had relatively high proportions of rental houses that were rented privately from a family member or friend, rather than through a real estate agent.
- There were 203 rental properties in local and regional towns that were newly rented in 2023 (about 30% of total rental stock), providing a total of 545 bedrooms (an average of 2.7 bedrooms per dwelling). Within Jerilderie and Coleambally specifically, 48 residential properties were newly rented in 2023 (about 37% of rental stock), offering a total of 122 bedrooms. The turnover of rental properties has declined over the past few years, which is consistent with an increase in the average duration that tenancies are held and also with feedback from real estate agents regarding a very tight rental market and low vacancy rates.
- Based on rental bond data, the total rental housing stock of local and regional communities was 706 properties in 2023, which is similar in number to rental houses in Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs that were being rented through a real estate agent, other landlord type, or for which the landlord type was not stated at the 2021 Census. Assuming an average of 2.7 bedrooms per dwelling, this provides a total of about 1,895 bedrooms.
- A total of 217 short-term accommodation rooms were identified in local and regional communities. Based on average occupancy rates for the Riverina and Murray Tourism regions, this would suggest a surplus of between 57 and 77 rooms. Although, based on recent occupancy rates noted by some accommodation providers, this would suggest a surplus of about 43 rooms.

In summary, the above suggests:

- There is likely to be some unused capacity within the existing housing stock.
- Rental housing may provide a level of accommodation, although annual turnover of this stock is relatively limited.
- While there is a reasonable amount of hotel accommodation in local and regional communities (up to about one hour commute), availability of rooms somewhat more limited.

4. STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Potential cumulative impacts of the Project due to interaction or overlap with impacts of other projects located near the Project and with concurrent or consecutive construction timeframes were assessed in the Project EIS (Jacobs, 2022a). Table 4.1 provides a list of SSD projects proposed, planned or occurring within the Edward River LGA, Murrumbidgee LGA, and surrounding LGAs. This is based on review of the Project EIS, EISs recently prepared for other projects (e.g., Dinawan Solar Farm and Dinawan Wind Farm), and review of the NSW Major Projects Portal in November 2025.

Access Schemes declared under the *Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020* (EII Act) are a key part of the NSW Government's plan to coordinate renewable energy and storage investment in REZs and meet the objectives of the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (Roadmap). The South West REZ Access Scheme was formally declared on 12 April 2024. Only holders of an Access Right may apply to connect to the Access Rights Network and send generation into the network up to its allocated maximum capacity (EnergyCo, 2024). In addition to Yanco Delta Wind Farm, energy renewable and storage projects that were granted Access Rights in the South West REZ include Bullawah Wind Farm, Pottinger Energy Park, and Dinawan Energy Hub (EnergyCo, 2025).

Proposed workforce and accommodation details for each of these projects are included in Table 4.1, along with details of other relevant projects. Origin is committed to working with the successful project proponents, Energy Co and local governments, to ensure that cumulative impacts, including on housing, accommodation, and local workforce are identified, managed and mitigated.

Table 4.1 State Significant Development Projects

Location	Status	Indicative timing	Construction workforce	Operations workforce	Accommodation approach
Murrumbidgee LGA					
Dinawan Solar Farm	More information required	Construction expected to commence in 2025 and take 18 to 36 months.	400 workers	Up to 10 workers	Temporary accommodation facility
Dinawan Wind Farm	More information required	Construction expected to commence in 2025 and take 60 months.	600 workers (peak)	Up to 50 workers	On-site temporary accommodation facilities
Argoon Wind Farm	Prepare EIS	Construction expected to take 24 to 36 months. Timing not specified.	340 workers	6-12 workers	To be determined. May include use of temporary accommodation camp
Edward River LGA					
Baldon Wind Farm	Response to submissions	Construction expected to commence in Q4 2025 and take 36 months.	350 to 400 workers	35 workers	Temporary accommodation camp will be required
Victoria to NSW Interconnector West (VNI West)	Prepare EIS	Construction anticipated to commence in 2026 and take two years.	600 workers (up to 1,200 workers during peak periods)	Not specified.	Workforce accommodation facilities

Location	Status	Indicative timing	Construction workforce	Operations workforce	Accommodation approach
Pottinger Wind Farm	Approved	Construction is expected to commence in 2026 and occur over approximately 55 months.	900 workers (peak)	50 workers	Temporary accommodation facilities
Surrounding LGAs					
Bullawah Wind Farm	More information required	Construction expected to take 3.5 years. Stage 1 commencement date (Q4 2025) likely to be revised after determination	350 workers (peak)	40 workers	Temporary accommodation camp
Pottinger Solar Farm	Prepare EIS	Construction expected to commence in 2026, likely to be revised.	220 workers	4 workers	Temporary worker accommodation (to be confirmed).
Keri Keri Wind Farm	Response to submissions	Construction expected to commence in late 2027 and take 24 months.	Up to 650 workers	12 workers	Temporary worker accommodation camp

Source: Various scoping reports and EIS' from the NSW Major Projects portal (refer to Section 8 for list of document sources)

5. WORKER ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES

This section outlines proposed strategies and actions to provide for sufficient accommodation of the Project's construction and operations workforces, and to minimise impacts on short-term accommodation during peak demand periods of other industries.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Strategy in relation to worker accommodation include:

- Maximise the use of the worker accommodation camp to accommodate the construction workforce.
- Prioritise the use of short-term visitor accommodation within Jerilderie and Coleambally as the towns closest to the Project, and in towns up to about one-hour commute from the Project (e.g., Berrigan, Darlington Point, and Deniliquin).
- Minimise worker demand for short-term visitor accommodation in towns closest to the Project during peak tourist events.
- Minimise pressure from the Project on rental housing availability and affordability, including for essential workers, and fixed- and low- income households.

5.2 STAKEHOLDERS

Table 5.1 outlines key stakeholders relevant to the implementation of the accommodation strategy for the Project, including their role and likely interest.

Table 5.1 Key stakeholders

Stakeholder	Interest
Origin	• Responsibility for delivery of the development in accordance with the Development Conditions. • Compliance of the contractor in implementing the worker accommodation strategy. • Management of community issues and grievances relating to worker accommodation.
Contractor	• Responsible for the establishment and management of the worker accommodation camp. • Securing sufficient workforce for the construction workforce, including management of bookings for short-term and rental accommodation. • Engagement with stakeholders about peak accommodation demand periods.
Local Councils, principally Edward River and Murrumbidgee Councils, but also surrounding councils	• Management of impacts on housing and accommodation for essential workers (e.g., health care workers, teachers, etc). • Opportunities to provide for long-term housing.
Accommodation providers	• Provision of short-term, visitor accommodation for construction workforce.
Real estate agents	• Provision of short-term and long-term rental accommodation.
Local communities/ property owners	• Potential interest in offering dwellings for short-stay or long-term rent.
Industry representatives (e.g., tourism and agriculture bodies)	• Management of impacts on housing and accommodation needs of seasonal workers and tourists. • Peak worker accommodation demand periods.

5.3 CONSTRUCTION PHASE ACCOMMODATION

The construction phase would require a peak workforce of up to 895 people, with an average workforce requirement of 430 workers. The construction workforce is anticipated to plateau at approximately 800 workers or more over a period of approximately 11 months (i.e., from month 18 to month 28).

The following worker accommodation options are proposed for accommodating the construction workforce:

- **Temporary worker accommodation camp**, proposed to be established on land within the Project area to provide accommodation for up to about 850 people during the main construction period (approximately 37 months).
- **Short-term accommodation**, including hotels, motels, short-stay rentals (e.g., Airbnb), caravan parks, within Jerilderie and Coleambally and in towns up to about one-hour commute from the Project (e.g., Berrigan, Darlington Point, and Deniliquin).
- **Long-term housing**, including rental housing (e.g., rented through a real estate agent or accommodation rented privately through agreement with property owners).

Based on workforce estimates provided for this Strategy (refer to Section 2.3), it is estimated that short-term, visitor accommodation and long-term housing would be required for up to approximately 54 people during the main construction phase. Outside of the main construction phase, it is estimated that short-term accommodation would be required for up to about 195 people:

- For the six months prior to the commencement of the accommodation camp, with accommodation for more than 100 people potentially required for a period of three months.
- Following the decommissioning of the accommodation camp, of which accommodation would potentially be required for more than 100 people for about five months.

A histogram of the Project workforce and the accommodation camp capacity is in Figure 2.1.

The numbers above assume that about 40% of the 'non-camp workforce' would include locally sourced workers (either employed directly by the contractor or through sub-contractors) who currently own or rent housing in local and regional communities, and for which accommodation would not be required. As noted in Section 2.4, this is estimated to be approximately 36 workers at the peak construction phase. However, this number would be dependent on availability of relevantly skilled local workers, and subject to the outcomes of strategies outlined in Section 6, for the purposes of this Strategy this has been conservatively assumed that additional accommodation would be required for all workers not accommodated in the camp.

As noted in Section 3.6:

- There is likely to be some unused capacity within the existing housing stock, based on the dwelling occupancy rate at the 2021 Census that showed about 117 dwellings in Jerilderie and Coleambally, and 714 dwellings in the Murrumbidgee and Edward River LGAs.
- Rental housing may provide a level of accommodation, with a total rental stock of 706 properties (offering 1,900 rooms) in local and regional communities in 2023, with 203 new rentals (providing 545 rooms) in 2023.
- While there is a reasonable amount of hotel accommodation in local and regional communities (up to about one hour commute) (approximately 217 rooms), availability of rooms is somewhat more limited based on feedback on occupancy rates in local towns compared to recent occupancy rates for the Riverina and Murray Tourism regions (i.e., 43 rooms compared to between 57 to 77 rooms).

5.4 OPERATIONS PHASE ACCOMMODATION

As noted in Section 2.3, the operations phase of the Project is anticipated to require a workforce of up to 30 workers.

The following worker accommodation options are proposed for accommodating the construction workforce:

- **Short-term accommodation**, including hotels, motels, short-stay rentals (e.g., Airbnb), caravan parks, within Jerilderie and Coleambally and in towns up to about one-hour commute from the Project (e.g., Berrigan, Darlington Point, and Deniliquin).
- **Long-term housing**, including rental housing (e.g., rented through a real estate agent or accommodation rented privately through agreement with property owners).

5.5 ACTIONS

Table 5.2 describes actions to be implemented to ensure sufficient accommodation for the workforce is available, and that impacts on housing and accommodation are appropriately managed.

Table 5.2 Worker accommodation actions

Action	Timing	Responsibility
Identify opportunities for the early opening of some sections of the worker accommodation camp to accommodate part of the construction workforce prior to the main construction period (i.e., in month six).	Pre-construction, construction	Origin, Contractor
Stage the decommissioning of the worker accommodation camp to maximise the availability of the worker accommodation camp to accommodate the construction workforce beyond the main construction period.	Pre-construction, construction	Origin, Contractor
Review the workforce profile, including ramp-up and ramp-down periods, to allow refinement of the workforces' housing and accommodation needs.	Pre-construction	Origin, Contractor
Where possible, maximise the use of local sub-contractors that have employees currently living within towns up to a 1.5-hour commute of the Project.	Construction/ operation	Contractor
Implement strategies outlined in the Employment Strategy to maximise the number of locally sourced workers, where possible.	Construction/ operation	Contractor
Secure short-term accommodation bookings in advance in accordance with Project requirements.	Ongoing during construction	Contractor
Secure long-term rental contracts in advance to cover the peak construction and workforce accommodation periods.	Ongoing during construction	Contractor
Establish and maintain an accommodation register that provides the opportunity for property owners within a one-hour commute to register their interest in offering dwellings for rent (either short-stay or long-term rent).	Construction/ operation	Origin, Contractor
Conduct early and regular engagement with accommodation providers in Jerilderie, Coleambally, Berrigan, Darlington Point, and Deniliquin to manage periods of peak accommodation demand.	Construction	Contractor
Where possible, minimise use of visitor accommodation in local towns during major tourism events, for example: • Use visitor accommodation in towns further from the Project. • Maximise use of worker accommodation camp. • Minimise the number of non-essential workers/ activities to reduce accommodation demand.	Construction	Contractor

Action	Timing	Responsibility
Maximise utilisation of short-stay and long-term rental accommodation by encouraging workers to share accommodation, where possible.	Construction	Contractor
Consider opportunities to purchase existing housing and/or build new housing that can be used both during and post-construction to accommodate the operational workforce.	Construction/ operation	Origin
Engage with contractors of other Projects that have existing worker accommodation camps about potential to temporarily utilise surplus accommodation within their camps, where this is permitted under the existing camp approval.	Construction	Origin
Undertake regular engagement with Murrumbidgee and Edward River Councils and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., industry bodies) to provide information on the timing of construction periods that are likely to generate high demand for worker accommodation, and to inform the management of worker accommodation during peak agricultural and tourism periods. This should also include early notification about housing and accommodation requirements for the operational workforce.	Construction/ operation	Contractor
Engage with other project developers and contractors about timing of peak construction activities accommodation needs.	Pre-construction, Construction	Origin
Review and confirm housing and accommodation needs of the operational workforce prior to the operation phase.	Prior to operation	Origin, contractor

6. LOCAL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES

This section outlines proposed strategies and actions to maximise employment opportunities and subsequent social and economic benefits for local and regional communities through prioritisation of employment of local workers for the construction and operation of the Project.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Strategy in relation to local employment is to:

- Maximise economic development and growth opportunities of the Project for local and regional communities.
- Maximise employment and procurement opportunities for local people and businesses during the construction and operation of the Project.
- Optimise Project opportunities for underrepresented groups, including First Nations people, women, and youth.
- Minimise impacts on housing and accommodation due to demand by Project workers.

6.2 STAKEHOLDERS

Table 6.1 outlines key stakeholders relevant to the implementation of the employment strategy for the Project, including their role and likely interest.

Table 6.1 Key stakeholders for the employment strategy

Stakeholder	Likely interest in employment strategy
Origin	• Responsibility for delivery of the development in accordance with the Development Conditions. • Implementing and ensuring compliance with actions detailed in the employment strategy.
Local councils, principally Edward River and Murrumbidgee councils, but also surrounding councils	• Opportunities for economic growth and development. • Employment and procurement opportunities for local workers and businesses.
Local communities	• Potential interest in employment opportunities, including as employees and sub-contractors.
Education and training providers	• Provision of training and skills to support employment and procurement opportunities.

6.3 CONSTRUCTION PHASE EMPLOYMENT

Construction of the project will require a workforce of up to 895 people, with an average workforce requirement of about 430 workers. Workforce requirements will comprise a range of skilled and general labourer positions including:

- Professional and management positions in areas such as engineering, project management, environmental management, community relations, contract and procurement, health, safety and quality, human resources, etc.
- Electrical, civil and building tradespeople, e.g., concreters, steel fixers, electricians, linesmen, plant and machinery operators, mechanical trades, trades assistants and labourers, etc.

- Project support, e.g., accommodation camp staff (catering, security and maintenance), transport management, administration, etc.

The construction workforce for the Project is anticipated to comprise:

- Existing personnel of contractors and sub-contractors.
- New personnel employed by contractors and sub-contractors, including workers sourced from local and regional communities, and FIFO and DIDO workers from outside of these areas.

6.4 OPERATIONS PHASE EMPLOYMENT

Operation of the Project is anticipated to require a workforce of about 30 workers. The operational workforce would comprise existing and new personnel employed by contractors and sub-contractors.

6.5 ACTIONS

Table 6.2 describes actions to be implemented prior to and during construction and operations to prioritise local employment and procurement.

Table 6.2 Local employment actions

Action	Timing	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an online employment register where local workers can register their interest in available employment opportunities on the Project.	Prior to construction and ongoing	Origin, Contractor
Implement early and ongoing communication and engagement strategies with local communities about available employment opportunities and timing, including through existing local information networks, community engagement activities (e.g., information sessions, forums), and Project websites.	Pre-construction and ongoing	Origin, Contractor
Investigate opportunities to prioritise employment for First Nations people, women and other underrepresented groups.	Prior to construction and ongoing	Contractor
Engage with local education and training providers about local skills and training requirements for employment opportunities.	Construction / operation	Contractor
Work with local secondary schools to investigate options for school-based education (i.e., traineeships, apprenticeships) opportunities and to promote benefits and pathways into the construction and energy industries.	Construction, operation	Origin, Contractor
Engage with Murrumbidgee and Edward River councils and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., industry bodies) to identify access pathways to local workers.	Construction, operation	Origin, Contractor
Where possible, maximise the use of local sub-contractors that have employees currently living within towns up to one hour commute of the Project.	Construction, operation	Contractor
Identify opportunities for involvement of local businesses and suppliers, and First Nations- and female- led businesses.	Construction, operation	Origin, Contactor
Establish and maintain an online register of suppliers where local businesses and suppliers can register their interest in procurement opportunities on the Project.	Pre-construction, construction, operation	Contractor
Implement early and ongoing communication and engagement strategies with local suppliers and sub-contractors about potential Project procurement opportunities, pre-qualification requirements, etc., including through engagement with local business and industry networks (e.g., Murray Riverina Industry Capability Network, Chambers of Commerce, business associations, Riverina Regional Development Australia, etc).	Pre-construction, construction, operation	Origin, Contractor

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Ongoing monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy would be undertaken in accordance with Condition B50. This would include:

- Monthly monitoring of the progress and effectiveness of the actions undertaken to minimise potential impacts on local housing and accommodation, and to maximise opportunities for local employment.
- Maintaining records of:
  - Use of local accommodation facilities and their accommodation availability for the Project.
  - Employment of local workers for the Project.
  - Participation levels of local businesses and suppliers in Project procurement, and develop additional actions if participation of local businesses and suppliers is not being achieved.
- Monitoring of the Project feedback and complaints process to identify any issues relating to housing and accommodation, and employment, and respond to complaints and issues in a timely manner.
- Review the suitability of the Strategy and update as required, in response to:
  - Any significant changes to the construction program and workforce requirements, that have potential to affect demand for local housing and accommodation.
  - Feedback from ongoing engagement with external stakeholders such as local Councils, accommodation providers, local business and industry, and community.
  - Recurring issues and complaints about potential impacts on local housing and accommodation, and employment, raised through stakeholder feedback, and the Project feedback and complaints process.

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