

Notice of decision

Section 2.22 and clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

Application type	State Significant Development
Application number and project name	SSD-47065463 Silver City Energy Storage System
Applicant	A-CAES NSW Pty Ltd
Consent Authority	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Decision

On 21 February 2025, the Director, Energy Assessments, granted consent to the development application for the Silver City Energy Storage System subject to conditions, under delegation from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and section 4.38 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act).

A copy of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's (the Department) Assessment Report and Development Consent is available [here](#).

Date of decision

21 February 2025

Reasons for decision

The following matters were taken into consideration in making this decision:

- the relevant matters listed in section 4.15 of the Act and the additional matters listed in the statutory context section of the Department's assessment report;
- the prescribed matters under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*;
- the objects of the Act;
- the considerations under s 7.14(2) and 7.16(3) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW);
- all information submitted to the Department during the assessment of the development application and any additional information considered in the Department's Assessment Report;
- the findings and recommendations in the Department's Assessment Report; and
- the views of the community about the project (see **Attachment 1**).

The findings and recommendations set out in the Department's Assessment Report were accepted and adopted as the reasons for making this decision.

The key reasons for granting consent to the development application are as follows:

- the project would provide a range of benefits for the region and the State as a whole, including:
 - enabling renewable energy to be stored and dispatched during peak demand, supporting grid stability;
 - contributing to a more diverse local economy;
 - creating up to approximately 400 construction jobs and 26 operational jobs;
 - contributions to Broken Hill City Council of \$3.1 million through a Voluntary Planning Agreement;
 - a capital investment of approximately \$638 million;
 - storage of energy for dispatch to the National Electricity Market; and
 - assisting in transitioning the electricity sector from coal and gas fired power stations to renewable energy.
- the project is permissible with consent, and is consistent with NSW Government policies including the *NSW Electricity Strategy (2019)*, *NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap*, *NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030* and associated *Implementation Update* and the *Far West Regional Plan 2036*;
- the impacts on the community and the environment can be appropriately minimised, managed or offset to an acceptable level, in accordance with applicable NSW Government policies and standards;
- none of the government agencies nor Council object to the project;
- the issues raised by the community during consultation and in submissions have been considered and adequately addressed through changes to the project and the conditions of consent. Engagement on the project is considered to be in line with *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects*, including the community participation objectives outlined in these guidelines; and
- weighing all relevant considerations, the project is in the public interest, subject to the strict conditions of the consent.

Attachment 1 – Consideration of Community Views

The Department exhibited the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project from 16 November 2023 until 13 December 2023 (28 days) and received 5 community submissions, 4 objecting to the project and 1 submission supporting the project.

The Applicant engaged with the community during the preparation of the EIS and detailed the findings of the engagement, including how it influenced the scope and design of the project, in the EIS. The Department consulted with government agencies and Broken Hill City Council throughout the assessment process.

The key issues raised by the community (including in submissions) and considered in the Department's Assessment Report and by the decision maker included noise, visual – lighting, air quality – dust, and socio-economic impacts. Other issues are addressed in detail in the Department's Assessment Report.

Issue	Consideration
<p>Noise</p>	<p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant has undertaken a <i>Noise Impact Assessment</i>. Under the worst case scenario, construction activities may exceed the noise management levels (NMLs) under the <i>Interim Construction Noise Guideline</i> (ICNG) for approximately 2,200 residential lots. No residences are predicted to be highly noise affected. The maximum continuous duration for works above the NML at any one receiver would not exceed 3 weeks. The Applicant has committed to implementing construction noise mitigation measures in accordance with the ICNG, including noise monitoring and development and implementation of a Trigger Action Response Plan. Predicted operational noise levels at all receivers are predicted to be compliant with mitigation measures. To protect the amenity of the area, the Department has set operational noise limits for the project at all residences, with noise assessment locations at R2 and R9 identified for compliance monitoring. No vibration impacts are predicted at any sensitive receivers. An assessment of corona discharge noise emissions for a 500 KV line identified exceedances at receiver R17. As the Applicant would operate the transmission line at 220 kV, exceedances would likely be avoided, however, the Department has included conditions relating to the investigation and validation of corona noise. The Applicant has committed to noise monitoring 3 months post commencement of operation of the project at full capacity and nine months post commencement of operation at full capacity to confirm compliance. <p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction work permitted between 7am and 6 pm Monday to Saturday for the SCES facility and between 7 am and 6 pm Monday to Friday and between 8 am and 1 pm Saturday for the transmission line, with the following exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject to the Applicant providing further justification, undertaking consultation and further noise impact assessment, construction hours may be varied on a case-by-case or activity specific basis; and construction works that are no more than 5 dB above RBL at any residence in accordance with the ICNG and no more than the Noise Management Levels specified in Table 3 of the ICNG at other sensitive land uses. Comply with the airblast overpressure and vibration criteria prescribed. Comply with the operational noise limits as derived from the NPfl at all residences, including under Very Noise Enhancing Conditions. Describe best practice measures to mitigate corona noise to acceptable levels; identify residences predicted to experience corona discharge noise levels above RBL, and predict how often corona noise is expected to be above this level per year; undertake a study, including monitoring of existing transmission lines under meteorological conditions likely to exacerbate corona noise, determine sound power levels of conductor bundles and validate predictions; and identify all feasible and reasonable measures to reduce corona noise below RBLs. Prepare a Noise Monitoring Report within 12 months of commencing operation.
<p>Visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting impacts 	<p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant has undertaken a <i>Lighting Impact Assessment</i> (LIA) and has prepared a detailed lighting design to understand the potential lighting impacts on the astronomy business conducted at nearby receiver R2. The LIA concluded that although the sky brightness would increase, with implementation of mitigation measures, the Bortle Class classification at receiver R2 would not change from Class 4 – rural/suburban transition. The Applicant has committed to restricting the number of active security lights at the SCES facility, utilising smart sensors, and reducing colour temperature of the lighting. <p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design lighting for the operational phase of the development in accordance with the commitments and recommendations included in the <i>Lighting Impact Assessment</i> (July 2024) and in consultation with the business at receiver R2.
<p>Air Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dust impacts during construction 	<p>Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispersion modelling for particulate matter (PM) emissions during construction concluded that concentrations of PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀ and Total Suspended Particles (TSP) would be below the Impact Assessment Criteria established under the <i>Approved Methods for the Modelling and Assessment of Air Pollutants in New South Wales</i> (Approved Methods) at all sensitive receivers. The Applicant has committed mitigation measures to manage any potential air quality impacts during construction, including dust suppression and controls. <p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with air quality criteria at any residences on privately owned land. Prepare an Air Quality Management Plan, in consultation with the EPA, including management and monitoring of lead dust.
<p>Socio-economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation 	<p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant has identified a number of accommodation options within Broken Hill that could be used to accommodate construction workers for the project. Accommodation options include a combination of long-term leases and the use of two caravan parks that have existing development approvals in place that may be developed for workforce accommodation. The Applicant has committed to preparing an Accommodation, Employment and Procurement Strategy to address impacts on accommodation within Broken Hill relating to the construction workforce. <p>Conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and implement an Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the development, in consultation with Council, and informed by local accommodation and employment service providers, including a program to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy.