Social Impact Assessment

Panorama BESS – SSD 50587460

Panorama BESS Subco Pty Ltd

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SLR Project No.: 660.30234.00000

19 March 2024

Revision: 02

Revision Record

Revision	Date	Prepared By	Checked By	Authorised By
01	30 June 2023	Drew Williams	Rob Dwyer	Rob Dwyer
02	19 March 2024	Drew Williams	Rob Dwyer	Rob Dwyer

Basis of Report

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Australia (SLR) with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the timescale and resources allocated to it by agreement with Panorama BESS Subco Pty Ltd (the Client). Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected, which has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is for the exclusive use of the Client. No warranties or guarantees are expressed or should be inferred by any third parties. This report may not be relied upon by other parties without written consent from SLR.

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Executive Summary

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has been prepared on behalf of Panorama BESS Subco Pty Ltd for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at Evans Plains near Bathurst, NSW.

The project is a State Significant Development Application (SSDA) which requires the preparation of an environmental impact Statement (EIS) and the preparation of this document is guided by the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the project. The SEARs identify the need for a SIA prepared in accordance with the Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects.

This SIA has been developed with consideration of the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2021a) (the SIA Guideline). The assessment considers potential impacts to people's way of life, community, accessibility, culture, health and wellbeing, livelihoods and the extent to which people have had a say in the decision-making process for the project. For the purposes of this assessment, 'people' refers to individuals, households, groups, communities, or organisations. A standard level of assessment as per the SIA Guideline has been adopted for the level of assessment for each social impact.

The report describes the existing social baseline conditions of potentially affected communities and groups in the project's social locality and assesses the potential social impacts and benefits of constructing and operating the project, and recommends measures to enhance, mitigate and manage the social impacts identified.

Based on the assessment in this report, the key social impacts of the proposed development are:

- The need for the preparation of a Community Consultation Strategy prior to construction commencing. This Strategy will assist with the exchange of information and identify the project specific mitigation and management strategies that will be in place to minimise the potential for negative impacts on the community in and around the construction site.
- During construction there is potential for adverse temporary impacts to the surroundings, health and wellbeing associated traffic impacts, dust, noise and/or vibration. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will assist in mitigation of these impacts.
- The most significant social benefits of the proposal relate to:
- The provision of new renewable energy infrastructure allowing for greater access to renewable energy for consumers and the associated environmental benefits of renewable energy.
- The proposed development would support the continued and targeted growth of the national renewable energy generation capacity.
- Positive impacts to livelihoods associated with increased employment opportunities. The project will generate approximately 20FTE construction jobs and approximately 1 FTE operational jobs.

The overall long-term benefit of the proposed development is considered to be positive, and potential negative impacts can be mitigated through implementation of various technical reports prepared for the SSDA. Overall, the proposal is consistent with the strategic growth-focused aims and objectives and will support the development of the project and creation of employment generating land uses.

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1.0 Introduction

SLR has been commissioned by Panorama BESS SubCo Pty Ltd (Panorama BESS SubCo) to complete a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the Panorama Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project (the Project). The purpose of this SIA is to inform the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project to be submitted under Part 4 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

This report has been prepared to meet the Department Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), previously the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the Project.

1.1 Project Overview

Panorama BESS proposes to construct, operate, and decommission a BESS with a capacity of 100 Megawatts (MW) 200 Megawatt Hours (MWH) and associated ancillary infrastructure adjacent to an existing 132 Kilovolt (kV) substation operated by TransGrid in Evans Plains, NSW (henceforth referred to as 'the Project').

The BESS will consist of SolBank BESS containers (or enclosures) in 'back-to-back' formation in two north-south aligned rows. The SolBank is a lithium iron phosphate (LiFePO4) chemistry-based battery enclosure with up to 2,800 kWh of usable energy capacity, specifically engineered to be one of the safest and most reliable systems for utility-scale applications. Each SolBank container has dimensions of 6058 millimetres (mm) by 2438mm by 2896mm with an approximate weight of 30,000 kilograms (kg). The BESS will be supported by inverters which will convert the electricity from the BESS and connect to the existing TransGrid substation via approximately 100 metres (m) of 132 kV underground cable.

Construction of the Project is anticipated to take approximately 14 to 15 months and it is expected that the operational life of the Project would be approximately 20 years, after which the BESS would be decommissioned and the infrastructure removed, returning the site to its original use.

The proposed development is further discussed in **Section 4.0**

1.2 Assessment Scope and SEARs

The DP&E issued SEARs to the applicant on 9 December 2022 for the preparation of an EIS for the proposed development (SSD- 50587460). The SEARS outlines the following requirements, refer to Table 1 below.

Table 1: SEARs Requirements of SSD 50587460 for SIA

SEARs Requirement	Report Cross Reference
Social Impact	
Key Issues The EIS must address the following specific matters: **Social Impact –** including an assessment of the social impacts in accordance with Social Impact Assessment Guideline (DPIE, 2021);	**Section 9.0** provides an assessment of social impacts

1.2.1 Scope and Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to analyse the potential social impacts that may arise from the development, having regard to social trends and issues affecting the local and broader surrounding areas.

This report addresses the requirement for a SIA specified in the SEARs for the project. It follows the principles set out in the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* (NSW DPE 2021) "the DPE Guideline" and aligns with requirements set out in the Technical Supplement for Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Developments (NSW DPE 2021).

This report includes the following components:

- Project summary and site context.
- Baseline analysis of the designated area of social influence of the development, including current and forecast population profile, and existing social infrastructure networks.
- Strategic policy context, including relevant state and local government drivers.
- Social issues and trends relevant to the proposed development.
- Community and stakeholder perspectives of relevance to the proposed development.
- Predicted social impacts of the proposed development at this location, along with recommended mitigation and enhancement measures.

1.3 Background

Several sites were considered during the site selection process for the Project, having regard for the following:

- Appropriate zoning of land to facilitate development consent for a BESS;
- Availability of existing access to the site via an established road network;
- Proximity to the existing TransGrid substation, to minimise impacts of easements;
- Selection of a construction location that would avoid and/or minimise impacts to high quality native vegetation and protected fauna;
- An area that would not result in, or be subject to, potential flood impacts; and
- Minimising impacts to surrounding privately or publicly owned land and residential dwellings due to noise and visual amenity concerns.

2.0 Objectives and Scope of this Assessment

2.1 Assessment Framework and Methodology

SIA involves the analysis of social changes and impacts on communities that are likely to occur as a result of a particular development, planning scheme, or government policy decision. The purpose of SIA is to assess the impacts of the development, both positive and negative, for all stages of the project lifecycle for key stakeholders and the broader affected community.

2.2 Social Impact Assessment

The assessment of social impacts in this SIA has been based on the DPE Guideline which is applicable to all State Significant Development (SSD) projects and developments. As the proposed development classified as SSD, the DPE Guideline has been followed as the primary basis for assessment, for the purposes of this SIA.

As outlined in the DPE Guideline social impacts vary in their nature and can be positive or negative, tangible or intangible, physically observable, or psychological (fears and aspirations). Social impacts can be quantifiable, partly quantifiable or qualitative. They can also be experienced or perceived differently by different people and groups within a community, or over time.

The SIA involves a number of steps, including a baseline analysis of the existing socio-economic environment of a defined study area or areas; identifying list of stakeholders and considering their views; scoping of relevant issues; identification and assessment of potential impacts against the specified suite of factors set out in the DPE Guideline; determination of the significance of the impacts, and identification of measures to manage or mitigate the project's potential negative impacts and enhance potential benefits.

The methodology employed in preparing this SIA is designed to ensure that the social environment of communities potentially impacted by the project is properly accounted for and recorded, and anticipated impacts are adequately considered and assessed.

2.3 Social Factors for Assessment

The DPE Guideline details eight categories of social impacts to be assessed for SSD. The DPE Guideline defines social impacts as "the consequences that people experience when a new project brings change". Social impacts can involve both positive and negatives changes that can occur as a result of a project, which refers to potential changes to people's lives. The eight categories of social impacts are provided in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Social Impact Categories – *Social Impact Assessment Guideline (NSW DPE 2021)*

Way of life	Community	Accessibility	Culture
Including how people live, how they get around, how they play, and how they interact each day.	Including composition, cohesion, character, how the community functions, resilience, and people's sense of place.	Including how people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities, whether provided by a public, private, or not-for-profit organisation.	Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including shared beliefs, customs, practices, obligations, values and stories, and connections to Country, land, waterways, places and buildings.

Health & wellbeing	Surroundings	Livelihoods	Decision-making
Including physical and mental health especially for people vulnerable to social exclusion or substantial change, psychological stress resulting from financial or other pressures, access to open space and effects on public health.	Including ecosystem services such as shade, pollution control, erosion control, public safety and security, access to and use of the natural and built environment, and aesthetic value and amenity.	Including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business.	Including the extent to which people can have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and have access to complaint, remedy and grievance mechanisms.

2.4 Assessment Methodology

Stages in the preparation of this SIA are as follows:

- Baseline analysis of the existing socio-economic environment, involving:
  - Study area definition, including primary and secondary geographic areas likely to be impacted (see **Section 6.2**).
  - Demographic analysis, including socio-economic characteristics of current communities and population forecast (see **Section 6.3**).
  - Review of relevant background information, along with relevant local and state policy frameworks (see **Section 5.0** and **Section 6.0**).
- Stakeholder and community engagement. Engagement and consultation associated with the Project has been conducted with Aboriginal stakeholders, the wider community and agency stakeholders. All stakeholders were notified of the Project via a series of letters and emails. A project specific website was established to further engage with community. Phone interviews were held with respondents along with ongoing follow up emails. A number of onsite and respondent property meetings were held. Ongoing discussions with Bathurst Regional Council and Transport for NSW have been occurring. Community consultation drop-in sessions were held in December 2023.
- Findings of stakeholder and community consultation undertaken have been reviewed to identify community and stakeholder aspirations and values. Consultation that has been undertaken with various project stakeholders including Bathurst Regional Council, affected landholders, Transport for NSW and the general public. The outcomes of the consultation process have been considered in the design of the project (see **Section 8.0**).
- Scoping of issues: Analysis of potential impacts during and post-construction, with each of the directly affected communities and other stakeholders identified in relation to the way they may be affected. Both positive and negative potential issues are identified. An SIA Scoping Checklist has been prepared at the outset of this assessment, in line with the specifications of the DPE Guideline, this is attached at Appendix B. This scoping process has underpinned the social impact assessment in **Section 9.0**.
- Identification of impacts as per the DPE Guideline parameters. The SIA ultimately appraises the significance of each identified impact based on its duration, extent and sensitivity of impact "receivers." This results in a social risk rating for impacts, as per the social impact significance matrix shown in **Section 9.0**.
- Identification of mitigation strategies to manage impacts and enhance benefits of the development.

2.5 Information Sources and Assumptions

The data sources and policy documents utilised within this SIA are listed in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Data Sources

Source	Data/Plans/Documents
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)	• 2021 Census Data ○ 2016 and 2021 Census QuickStats

Source	Data/Plans/Documents
	○ Australia QuickStats • 2016 Census Data ○ Australia QuickStats • Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)
Bathurst Regional Council	• Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041 (Released December 2022) • Bathurst Community Strategic Plan 2022 • Bathurst Region Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 (2020) • Bathurst Region Economic Development Strategy | 2018-2022 • Bathurst Local Environmental Plan 2014.
NSW DPE (now DPHI)	• Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects 2021 • SIA Guidelines Technical Supplement 2021
Mapping Services	• SIX Maps • Near Maps

2.6 Authorship and SIA Declarations

The DPE Guideline requires authors to hold appropriate qualifications. The subject SIA author'(s) expertise and qualifications are set out in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Author(s) Qualifications and Declaration

This SIA has been prepared by:		
Name	Rob Dwyer	Drew Williams
Role	SIA Lead Author / Reviewer	Co Author / Reviewer
Qualifications	• Bachelor of Science, Human and Physical Geography (University of Newcastle) • Graduate Diploma of Urban and Regional Planning (University of New England)	• Bachelor of Environmental Science and Management (University of Newcastle) • Diploma of Architecture (Hunter TAFE)
Memberships	• Registered Planner and Fellow, Planning Institute of Australia (PIA). • Accredited under the NSW Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner (REAP) Scheme – REAP Number 7608. • Member, Hunter Chapter Property Council of Australia (PCA).	
Recent experience	• The New Public School Mulgoa Rise School SIA. • Hawkesbury Centre of Excellence SIA. • Light Horse Interchange Warehouse Facility (Lots 1 and 5) SIA. • Green Square Integrated School SIA.	• Gunning Solar Farm EIS. • Gunning Solar Farm SIA • Merimbula Lake Holiday Park SIA. • Blue Mountains Walking Track REF.

This SIA has been prepared by:		
Declaration	I declare that this SIA contains all available information that is relevant to the social impact assessment of the development to which this SIA relates, and it is true in all material particulars and does not, by its presentation or omission of information, materially mislead.	I declare that this SIA contains all available information that is relevant to the social impact assessment of the development to which this SIA relates, and it is true in all material particulars and does not, by its presentation or omission of information, materially mislead.
Signature		D E Williams
Name	Rob Dwyer	Drew Williams
Date	19-03-24	19-03-24

3.0 Site Analysis

3.1 Site Location and Context

The Project site is located on Lot 2 DP 864272 at 800 Mid-Western Highway and Lot 521 DP 603541 at 749 Mid-Western Highway, Evans Plains, NSW. The site is located approximately 2.5 kilometres (km) to the west of the suburb of Robin Hill and approximately 5.8km south-west of the township of Bathurst, within the within the Bathurst Regional Local Government Area (LGA).

The broader lot (Lot 2 DP 864272) is irregular in shape and currently zoned RU1 – Primary Production under the *Bathurst Regional Local Environmental Plan 2014* (BLEP 2014). The lot currently contains one residential dwelling within the central western portion of the lot that is not permanently inhabited. The Project development site is located within the eastern extent of the site and to the immediate south-west of the existing 132 kV substation operated by TransGrid located on adjacent Lot 521 DP 603541 at 749 Mid-Western Highway. The Project development site has generally low grades, will not encroach into the existing easement containing 132 kV overhead lines, and is largely cleared of vegetation making it ideal for the proposed use.

The site and surrounding context are illustrated in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3.**

3.2 Existing Development

Access to the site will be predominantly from an existing access track that services the existing substation site, located adjacent to the project site. A smaller access track will be constructed southward off the existing track to service the proposed project site for construction, operation and decommissioning purposes (life of the project).

The surroundings of the site have been largely cleared for grazing and other current and historical agricultural purposes.

Some of the site contains easements to permit linear electrical infrastructure and restrict the use of the lot for other purposes, this electrical easement is essential to the site's function as a source of power storage.

3.3 Surrounding Development

The Project is located within a predominantly rural setting, with surrounding land parcels to the west and south mapped as RU1 – Primary Production and land parcels to the north and east mapped as R5 – Large Lot Residential under the BLEP 2014.

Potential sensitive receivers are located in the nearby suburb of Robin Hill approximately 1 km to the east and 1.4 km to the north to the nearest residential dwellings; and the suburb of Evans Plains approximately 800 m to the west. An existing shed exists on the subject site. A dwelling is under construction near the shed. The shed and dwelling are classified as a sensitive receiver for the purposes of assessing the impacts of the Project. It is understood that the intention of the landowner is for the dwelling to be permanent residence once completed, with the residence to potentially be rented out by the current landowner who has an agreement for the Project with the Applicant.

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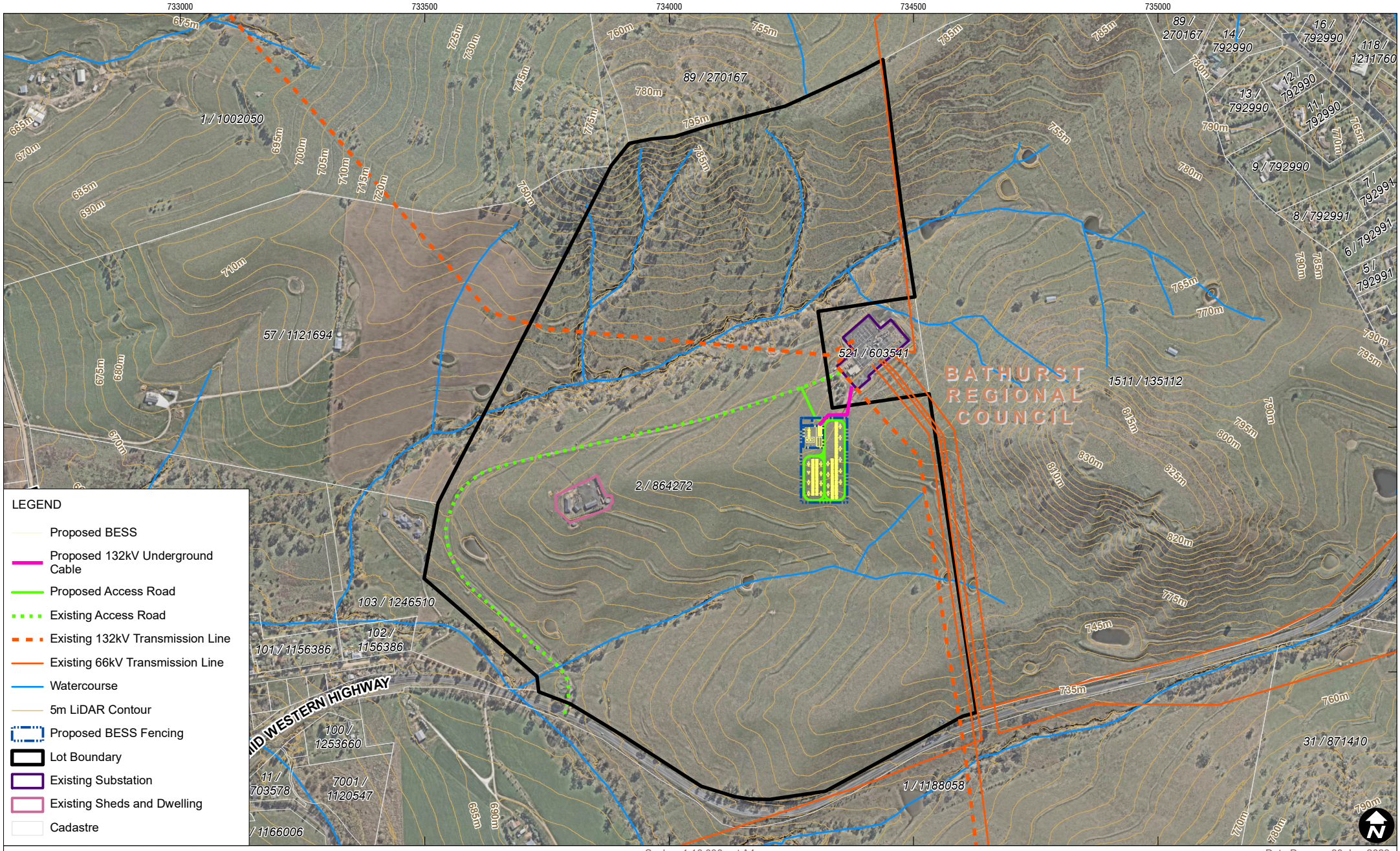
REGIONAL CONTEXT OF THE SITE

FIGURE 2



Scale: 1:10,000 at A4
Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Date Drawn: 30-Jun-2023
Project Number: 660.30234.00000

Data Source: Basedata NSW SS, December 2021
Aerial imagery supplied by Nearmap (May, 2023)
Elevation data supplied by DCS Spatial Services (July, 2019)

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SITE PLAN

FIGURE 3

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4.0 Proposed Development

4.1 Description of Proposed Development

The Project will involve the development, construction, operation, and eventual decommissioning of a BESS with a capacity of 100 MW, 200 MWH adjacent to the existing 132 kV substation operated by TransGrid. The BESS will consist of SolBank BESS containers (or enclosures) in 'back-to-back' formation in two north-south aligned rows. Each SolBank container has dimensions of 6058 mm by 2438mm by 2896mm with an approximate weight of 30,000 kg. The BESS will be supported by inverters which will convert the electricity from the BESS and connect to the existing TransGrid substation via approximately 100m of 132kV underground cable.

The key elements of the Project involve construction, operation and decommissioning phases. These stages include the following:

- Installation and operation of a SolBank BESS including battery enclosures, inverters, and transformers.
- Associated ancillary infrastructure including:
  - A 132kV underground cable connecting a 33kV switch building to the existing substation.
  - Formalisation of existing access from Mid-Western Highway and existing access road within Lot 2 DP 864272 to accommodate heavy vehicles.
  - Proposed access road from the BESS to connect to the existing access road within Lot 2 DP 864272.
  - Operations and maintenance (O&M) building.
  - Stormwater management infrastructure, lighting, and security fencing.
  - Construction laydown areas.
  - Decommissioning of the SolBank BESS at the end of life (EOL) include disassembly and removal of associated infrastructure from the site, to be returned as close as possible to its existing condition.

The proposed development design is provided in **Figure 3.**

4.2 Construction Staging

The construction phase of the Project is anticipated to take approximately 14 to 15 months and it is expected that the operational life of the Project would be approximately 20 years, after which the BESS would be decommissioned and the infrastructure removed, returning the site to its original use.

The main staged construction activities will include:

- Transport of construction personnel and associated heavy and light vehicles, and materials to and from site on a day-to-day basis, dependent on construction schedule.
- Site establishment works including vegetation clearing, bulk earthworks, and temporary construction compound.
- Road works to formalise internal site access road to accommodate heavy vehicles, construction of new access road from the BESS to connect to the existing access

road within Lot 2 DP 864272, and construction of upgrade to the Mid-Western Highway site entry to provide a Basic Left Turn (BAL) treatment at the access driveway crossover.

- Construction of concrete pad and installation of O&M building, battery enclosures, and inverter stations.
- Construction of underground 132 kV transmission cable and switch building to facilitate connection to the existing Transgrid 132 kV substation in the north-eastern portion of the site.
- Construction of ancillary works including stormwater management infrastructure, emergency night lighting, and security fencing.
- Water use for dust suppression, brought to site in water tankers.
- Removal of temporary construction facilities, and rehabilitation of disturbed areas following completion of construction of the Project.

5.0 Strategic Policy and Planning Context

The Project aims to have the following benefits for the region:

- Increase local employment and investment opportunities during construction.
- Add significant benefits to the NSW electricity grid because it allows for the dispatch of energy in accordance with market demand to assist in load leveling and grid support to balance the natural fluctuations in electricity demand throughout the day and reduce congestion on the local grid.
- Play an important role in providing stability to the NSW energy network by charging up during the day when renewable energy generation is high and then providing that power back to the grid at night to support high demand.
- The BESS is located along a major transmission route which is in line with the Federal Government's direction to improve the affordability and security of the national energy market while also delivering on international climate commitments.

Applicable plans and policies of relevance to the social context of the Project are discussed below.

5.1 Policy Setting

The NSW Government's current energy security policy and approach to a clean energy transition is being delivered through the strategic development of the renewable energy sector, as outlined through the NSW Government's *Renewable Energy Action Plan (2013), Electricity Strategy (2019)* and the *Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (2020)*. This policy context is relevant to inform the public positioning and key messaging for the planning and development of the Projects.

5.2 Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041

In December 2022, the Central West Regional Plan 2041 was officially finalised and released, replacing the Central West Regional Plan 2036. The latest version builds upon its predecessor through rigorous review, consultation and reflection to set forward the plan to leverage the Region's endowments for community, environmental, social and economic growth spanning the 20 year period.

This plan outlines 23 objectives for achieving the regional strategies and plans. Some of the relevant objectives to the project include:

- Objective 2: Support the State's transition to Net Zero by 2050 and deliver the Central–West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.
- Objective 7: Plan for resilient places and communities.
- Objective 11: Strengthen Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange as innovative and progressive regional cities.

The Project would be directly consistent with the Regional Plan as it would provide an operational BESS facility to support the increase in renewable energy project development within the region.

5.2.1 Bathurst Community Strategic Plan 2022

The overarching vision set out in this plan is as follows "Bathurst vision: "*A vibrant and innovative region that values our heritage, environment, culture, diversity and strong economy."*

The plan sets out key priorities of the residents in the value statement, which highlights themes of: sense of place and identity, smart and vibrant economy, strengthening of environmental stewardship, support sustainable and balanced growth, foster a community of health and safety and community leadership and collaboration.

The Bathurst Community Strategic Plan 2022 identifies the local values of the community and outlines the desires and plans to achieve a smart and vibrant economy, a diverse environment interconnected by environmental stewardship, healthy and connected communities, and environmentally sustainable economic choices.

The Bathurst Regional LGA population is predicted to grow from 42,398 to 53,361 by 2036, which is approximately a 26% increase in population. This population increase will require variety of housing options, increased facilities and increased energy demands.

5.2.2 Bathurst Region Economic Development Strategy 2018 - 2022

The Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 provides a guiding framework for Bathurst Regional Council and the community, to drive economic growth. The purpose of the Strategy is to drive vigorous and sustainable economic development and recognises the need for collaborative effort across all levels of government, the community, and not-for-profit groups to achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

The Strategy recognises a need for the ongoing development and renewal of infrastructure to support new investment (such as the Panorama BESS), reduce production costs, improve quality of life and enable the long term sustainability of the Bathurst Region.

5.2.3 Bathurst Regional Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040

The Bathurst Region Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 (2020) outlines the Bathurst Shires economic, social and environmental land use needs over the course of 20 years (2020-2040). The strategy builds on other plans and strategies and articulates how growth and change will be managed into the future.

The project aligns with key parts of the land use vision within the strategy which includes:

- *“The alignment of development, growth and infrastructure provision.*
- *Valuing the natural environment, planning for a changing climate and improving resistance to natural hazards and extreme weather events.*
- *Becoming a smart community which embraces education, knowledge and technological change.”*

The project is in alignment with these key aspects of the land use vision in the strategy by creating strategic renewable energy supporting infrastructure for the region that will provide climate resistance energy solutions and associate economic benefit.

5.2.4 Bathurst Local Environmental Plan 2014 (BLEP 2014)

The site is subject to the BLEP 2014 and is located on land zoned ‘RU1 – Primary in accordance with this plan. The Project is considered to meet the definition of ‘electricity generating works’ which is permitted with consent under the BLEP 2014 by virtue of being “any other development not specified in item 2 or 4”.

The Project is considered to be consistent with the objectives of the BLEP 2014 by providing social and economic benefits by supporting the establishment of renewable energy generation within the Bathurst region and by extension, contribute to climate change action through emission reductions.

6.0 Local Social Context

6.1 Introduction

The DPE Guideline states:

> *"There is no prescribed meaning or fixed, predefined geographic boundary (e.g. the local suburb, or 'within 500m') to a social locality; rather, the social locality should be construed for each project, depending on its nature and its impacts. The term 'social locality' is similar to 'area of social influence' that is commonly used in SIA practice."*

Furthermore, the DPE Guideline identifies the social baseline study as describing *"the social context without the project."*

The social locality and baseline study for the proposed Project has been determined utilising a desktop assessment of the following data sources:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Data.
- Material from similar projects in the general locality.
- Relevant local, State and Commonwealth strategic plans and policies.

6.2 Social Locality

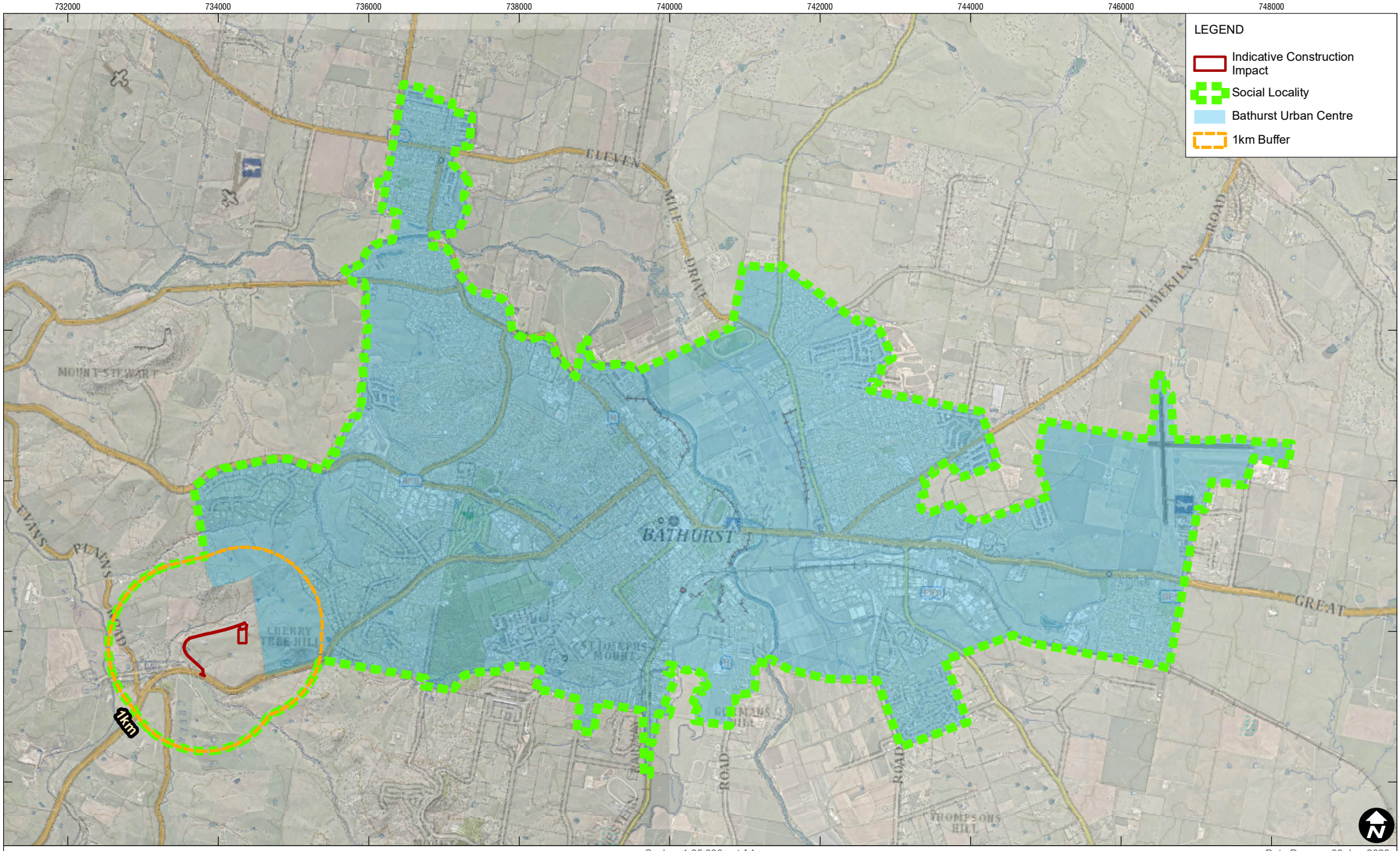
The Project is located in the far east extent of the suburb of Evans Plains, with a small population of only 168 people according to the 2021 ABS Census. Immediately to the east of the project location is Robin Hill, with a small population of 925 people according to the 2021 ABS Census. Due to these suburbs being low density and sparsely populated, a larger study area (by population) is required to be representative of the Social Locality to gain sufficient depth of understanding of the local population and various social and demographic aspects.

Bathurst (urban centre and surrounding suburbs), located within the Bathurst Regional LGA has an area code of UCL112002 and a population of 36,230 people (Census 2021). This area consists of Bathurst City centre and surrounding suburbs. The "Social Locality' for the Project includes the urban centre and surrounding suburbs as well as land to the west within the visual catchment of the Project site.

The "Social Locality is shown in **Figure 4.**

The Social Locality and broader study areas for this SIA consist of:

- Land surrounding the Project;
- Bathurst – Social Locality (Census area code: UCL112002); and
- Bathurst Regional Local Government Area (Census area code: LGA10470).



Scale: 1:65,000 at A4
Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Date Drawn: 30-Jun-2023
Project Number: 660.30234.00000

Data Source: Basedata overlay © Department of Customer Service 2020
Aerial imagery supplied by Nearmap (May, 2023)
Elevation data supplied by DCS Spatial Services (July, 2019)

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SOCIAL LOCALITY

FIGURE 4

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6.3 Community Profile

6.3.1 Demographics

2021 Census data from the ABS has been utilised to prepare a brief community profile analysis of the Urban Centres and Localities (UCL) 'Social Locality (UCL112002), with comparisons drawn between the broader Bathurst Regional LGA and the State of New South Wales (NSW). Key information on demographics and employment (by industry of employment) status is provided in **Table 4.**

Table 4: General Demographics in Study Areas

Characteristic	Social Locality	Bathurst Regional LGA	NSW
Median Age	37	38	39
Unemployment	4.4%	4.0%	4.9%
Industry of Employment (Top Responses)	Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) – 4.4% State Government Administration – 3.4% Other Social Assistance Services – 4.4%	Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) – 4.2% Other Social Assistance Workers – 4.0% State Government Administration – 3.3%	Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals) – 4.2% Supermarkets and Grocery Stores – 2.5% Other Social Assistance Workers – 2.4%
Median weekly household income	$1,547.00	$1,585.00	$1,829

(ABS, 2021)

Within the Social Locality, 84.5% of people were born in Australia, with 7.9% of the area identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ABS, 2021).

6.3.2 Population

According to the 2021 Census, NSW has a population of 8,072,163 people, the Bathurst Regional LGA has a population of 43,567and the Social Locality has a population of 36,230 people (ABS, 2021).

The Bathurst Regional LGA population grew from 41,300 to 43,567 (5.4% growth since 2016 census).

The Bathurst Regional LGA population is predicted to grown from 42,398 to 53,361 by 2036, which is approximately a 26% increase in population. This population increase will require variety of housing options, increased facilities and increased energy demands.

6.3.3 Employment

As of the 2021 census, employment in the Social Locality consisted of 58.4% fulltime workers, 31.5% part time workers 5.7% away from work and 4.4% unemployed. Similarly, Bathurst Regional LGA residents' employment status consisted of 58.4% full time workers, 31.7% part time workers, 5.9% away from work and 4% unemployed. These two areas were relatively consistent with the NSW employment data which consists of 55.2% full time workers, 31.7% part time workers, 10.2% away from work and 4.9% unemployed.

Based on the Bathurst Region Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 (Bathurst Regional Council, 2022), historically, the key economic activities within the region have been education, healthcare, manufacturing and retail trade.

The Strategy aims to leverage the Region's endowments: it's topography, water, natural resources, proximity to Sydney and Canberra, lifestyle benefits, natural resources, Aboriginal heritage and historic heritage, hospitals, labour resources and local institutions.

Occupations

The top occupations within the Social Locality area as compared to Bathurst Regional LGA and NSW is outlined in **Table 5.**

Table 5: Occupation Percentages in Study Areas

Occupation	Social Locality (%)	Bathurst Regional LGA (%)	NSW (%)
Professionals	19.3	19.1	24.0
Community and Personal Service Workers	16.2	15.0	10.6
Technical and Trades Worker	13.9	14.2	12.9
Clerical and Admin Workers	10.6	11.9	12.7

(Source: ABS 2021)

All three localities share the same top occupation of 'Professionals'.

6.3.4 Housing

Within the Social Locality 11% of renting households were paying $450 or more per week in rent in 2021. Rental payments in the Social Locality are indicative of its residential role and function and are related to the value of residential property. Regional indicators suggest that challenges exist for obtaining short-term accommodation and for obtaining affordable housing for people who are seeking accommodation but are not connected with employment in the renewables sector.

6.3.5 Places of Birth

In the 2021 census, 84.7% of the Bathurst Regional LGA population was born in Australia, with the other top 5 birthplaces being England (1.9%), New Zealand (1.0%), India (0.8%), Philippines (0.6%) and Nepal (0.4%). This diverts from the trend in the Social Locality, where Australia (84.5%), England (1.8%) and New Zealand (1.0%) remain as top 3 countries of birth. Across the state of NSW, the trends are much more diverse, with just 66.9% of Australians being born in Australia, and England (3.6%), India (2.6%), China (2.2%), New Zealand (2.1%) and Philippines (1.2%) topping the other than Australia category.

6.3.6 Languages

Mono-lingual (i.e., English only) households are overwhelmingly present within the Bathurst Regional LGA (87.6%), with this percentage relatively steady in mono-lingual households as compared to the Social Locality ((87.1%). A more diverse range of languages is used in the wider NSW with only 67.6% mono-lingual. Comparatively, Australia wide, this number is 72%.

6.4 Local Social Infrastructure Context

Within the Social Locality at the time of the 2021 census, 67.5% of residents lived in a family household, 28.9% lived alone and 3.6% lived in group households. Homeowners (owned outright) represent 31.3%, while 31.9% are homeowners with a mortgage. Of homeowners with mortgages, 78.4% have to make repayments less than or equal to 30% of household income, and 10.6% of households with mortgages have repayments greater than 30% of household income.

Based on the 2021 ABS census, the median weekly rent for a house in the Bathurst regional LGA is $320, and the median monthly mortgage repayment is $1,733.

6.4.1 Community Facilities and Services

Relevant community facilities located in proximity to Bathurst Regional LGA are listed in **Table 6**.

Table 6: Community Facilities and Services Nearby

Facility	Description
Cultural and Entertainment	Bathurst Regional Art Gallery Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre Bathurst Rail Museum Chiefly Home Hillend Art National Motor Racing Museum Licensed Clubs & Hotels
Sporting and recreational	Bathurst Swimming pool Bathurst Skate Park Bathurst Golf Club Recreational Sporting Shooters Clubs Cycle Ways and Footpaths Sports Stadium John Mathews Sporting Complex Sporting Ovals, Grounds and Parks.
Education	Charles Sturt University TAFE NSW Bathurst Over 15 public and private schools and colleges (primary and secondary), colleges Day care and pre-schools.
Emergency services	Bathurst Police Station SES Bathurst Unit NSW Fire Service (Fire and Rescue and Rural Fire Service), Bathurst
Health services	Bathurst Hospital Bathurst Private Bathurst Health Services Ochre Medical Centre Bathurst General Practice Doctors and Specialists Bathurst Central Animal Hospital
Events	Bathurst 1000 Car Racing Event (Mt Panorama) Other Bathurst Car Racing Events (Mt Panorama)

Facility	Description
	The Royal Bathurst Show Sustainable Living Expo
Religion	Bathurst Uniting Church Bathurst Presbyterian Church Catholic Diocese of Bathurst Cathedral of St Michael and St John

Note: This table is not an exhaustive list and other valuable facilities are available within the area.

6.5 Transport and Accessibility

As at the 2021 census, the most common methods of travel to work on the day of the census in the Social Locality, Bathurst Regional LGA, NSW and Australia are as per **Table 7**.

Table 7: Transport Data 2021 Census

Methods of Travel				
Method	**Social Locality (%)**	**Bathurst Regional LGA (%)**	**NSW (%)**	**Australia (%)**
Car (as driver)	66.4	65.5	43.1	52.7
Walked	3.3	3.2	2.5	2.5
Car (as passenger)	5.8	5.4	3.2	3.9
Public transport	0.5	0.4	4.0	4.6
Did not work	10.9	10.7	13.2	11.8
Worked at home	10.5	11.7	31.0	21.0

(Source: ABS 2021)

The dominance of Car (as driver) as most prevalent means of transport to work on the day of the 2021 Census is a common characteristic of rural county areas with minimal available local public transport infrastructure.

7.0 Local Social Issues and Trends

Section 5 outlined the strategic policy and planning context for the area and wider region. A key and common theme throughout these and for the Bathurst Regional LGA specifically is the prioritising local opportunities and community resilience through development of innovating and progressive projects.

Three of the objectives of the **Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041** that capture key values of the project are as follows.

- Objective 2: Support the State's transition to Net Zero by 2050 and deliver the Central–West Orana Renewable Energy Zone.
- Objective 7: Plan for resilient places and communities; and
- Objective 11: Strengthen Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange as innovative and progressive regional cities.

The Project is poised to play an important role in providing stability to the NSW energy network by charging up during the day when renewable energy generation is high and then providing that power back to the grid at night to support high demand. This directly relates to the above objectives as supporting the renewable energy and net zero targets, improving the resilience of the community and pushing Bathurst Regional LGA towards innovation and progression as a city.

- The vision statement in the **Bathurst Community Strategic Plan 2022** is "A vibrant and innovative region that values our heritage, environment, culture, diversity and strong economy".

This demonstrates that the Bathurst Region and surrounds holds innovation an economy as key characteristics of the community. The project is innovative in nature and is poised to support innovative renewable energy projects into the future.

One challenge facing the Bathurst Region is the increasing number of transient workforces, due to the development of multiple major projects (including renewables) either proposed, or in construction. This situation presents some flow-on challenges for the region in maintaining an existing strong sense of community and decreasing anti-social behaviour. It also presents challenges for the provision of short-term accommodation for workers within the renewables sector, and challenges to housing affordability for people who are seeking such accommodation but are not connected with employment in this sector.

7.1 Community Views on Project in the Locality

Three existing SSD projects were reviewed as part of the desktop study. The projects were located within the Bathurst Regional LGA and were considered large enough to present potential cumulative social impacts to the Project A review of assessments that have been completed for the project regarding social impacts was undertaken, with **Table 8** outlining social impacts identified.

Table 8: Surrounding Development SIA Review

Project Description and Consultation Undertaken	Impacts Identified
Bathurst Second Circuit (SSD-9681)	
The SSD application proposes a FIA Grade 2/FIM Grade A National Circuit (4km), Club Circuit (2km) and associated pit building and paddock, spectator zone, vehicular and pedestrian accesses and carparks, track safety structures.	Key concerns raised during preliminary consultation related to residential amenity due to access and noise generation. A SIA has not yet been prepared for the SSD.

Project Description and Consultation Undertaken	Impacts Identified
The site is approximately 300ha across several lots centred around Mount Panorama, 5km southwest of the Regional City of Bathurst.	
Glanmire Solar Farm (SSD-21208499)	
The SSD Application proposed the development of a 60 MW solar farm, associated infrastructure and potential battery storage at 4823 Great Western Highway Glanmire.	Key concerns raided during preliminary consultation included impact on land values, traffic impacts, loss of visual amenity, loss of prime agricultural land, glare impacts and impacts the heritage listed Woodside Inn. A SIA has not yet been prepared for the SSD.
Bathurst Integrated Medical Centre (SSD-30394840)	
The SSD Application proposed the construction and use of an integrated medical facility providing hospital, medical centre and education uses and ancillary multilevel carpark to service the medical facility and other surrounding uses within the Bathurst Town Centre at 250 Howick Street and George Street, Bathurst. Community consultation for the SSDA has not yet commenced. Community consultation is underway for the Planning Proposal to amend the Local Environmental Plan to permit a greater height and floor space ratio across the development site.	Key concerns raised in public submissions during consultation for the Planning Proposal related to impacts to traffic and access, heritage, visual amenity and socio-economic (Keylan 2021). A SIA has not yet been prepared for the SSD.

Consultation undertaken for projects in the surrounding area identified traffic, visual amenity and noise and vibration, heritage and socio-economic impacts as key concerns. The potential for cumulative impacts are addressed through the implementation of management and mitigation measures provided in specialist investigations including Noise and Vibration Impact Assessments (NVIA), Traffic Impact Assessments (TIA) and Visual Impact Assessments (VIA), among others.

7.2 Community Feedback on the Project

The feedback from the engagement conducted thus far with the community in relation to this proposed development showed a general support for renewable energy and has identified a small number of concerns around the potential impacts on local residents such as:

- Noise.
- Traffic access.
- Land value impacts.
- Fire risk.
- Visual impacts (including lighting).
- Erodibility of soils.

Further details on feedback, including concerns raised, and consultation undertaken is outlined in **Section 8.0** of this document and **Section 5.0** of the EIS.

8.0 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

This chapter summarises the findings from the community engagement activities undertaken in relation to the project:

- As part of the EIS engagement; and
- As part of the data collection for the SIA.

Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken by the proponent and SLR. Outcomes from the engagement are presented in the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report prepared by SLR and contained in **Appendix R** of the EIS.

8.1 Traditional Owner Engagement

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) was prepared for the project and traditional owner / stakeholder consultation for this process commenced in August 2022. The consultation process initially identified 15 Aboriginal stakeholder organisations with potential interest in the project. Following a notification process, five organisations responded to be registered for subsequent consultation through the project. Four representatives participated in the field investigation of a study area (which incorporated the development footprint for the project) and discussions around tangible and intangible values as part of the Aboriginal heritage stakeholder consultation process for the ACHA.

8.2 Engagement Commitments

8.2.1 Stakeholder Identification

A stakeholder identification process was undertaken for the Project to support the planning and delivery of community and stakeholder consultation and to inform the SIA. This process involved identifying stakeholders with an interest, or those directly and indirectly affected by the Project, including identifying any potentially vulnerable or marginalised groups.

8.2.2 Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Consultation

A detailed engagement plan was developed in consultation with the proponent and in line with the NSW's DPE's Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects. It committed to the delivery of a considered, open and evidence-based approach to the engagement.

As outlined in the community consultation and feedback report engagement with community, groups and other key stakeholders began in late 2022.

An initial letter requesting engagement on the Project was issued on 10 October 2022, with a subsequent letter containing a Project update and FAQ section was issued on 21 March 2023.

In response to the invitation to engage, four emails were received and four phone interviews were held to discuss the Project and address any issues or queries around the development. SLR Consulting also met with a number of surrounding property owners / occupiers.

Community drop-in sessions were held on 4 and 5 December 2023 at the Bathurst City Bowling Club, with Recurrrent Energy representatives present. A total of 1,403 directly addressed letters were sent to residents within 3km of the project and along the transport route, inviting members of the public to attend the information sessions to:

- Introduce the project planning and development team;

- Update the community on the Panorama BESS development process, with the EIS nearing lodgement at the time of the sessions;
- Discuss the outcomes of the environmental assessment and concerns around project impacts;
- Gain community feedback on the proposed benefits sharing of the project; and
- Demonstrate commitment to open and ongoing consultation with the host community.

Pull-up banners with project information were displayed during the sessions and printed maps and copies of the Executive Summary of the EIS were available to facilitate discussions. Four people attended the sessions.

A summary of matters addressed is included in **Table 9** below.

Table 9: Summary of Community Consultation

Method of Communication	Community Stakeholder (and nature of interaction)	Summary of Consultation
Resident mail out 10 October 2022	Mail out	An initial letter requesting engagement on the Project was sent to residents/owners/occupiers.
Email 19 October 2022	Owner/occupier Unknown address	Primary concerns raised around fire risk. Request for clarification on decommissioning phase.
Phone 20 October 2022	Owner/occupier McLennan Close	Primary concerns raised around noise and saleability of residence in the future.
Phone 21 October 2022 Email 29 March 2023	Owner/occupier Stewart Street, Evans Plains	Primary concerns raised around fire risk, visual amenity, light pollution, and erosion and sediment control during earthworks. Resident noted involvement in local community climate change group and noted approval for Project objective.
Email 23 October 2022	Owner/occupier Mid-Western Highway, Evans Plains	Request for Project updates during SSDA process.
Phone 24 October 2022	Owner/occupier McClennan Close, Robin Hill	Primary concerns raised around noise and saleability of residence in the future.
Onsite discussion 27 October 2022	Owner / occupier Mid-Western Highway, Evans Plains	Discussed the site, its history and site alterations that had occurred in recent years. Potential of any surrounding residents having any objections about any proposals on the subject site.
Onsite meeting 27 October 2022	Owner / occupier Stewart Street, Evans Plains	Site visited and noted that the elevation of it was similar to that of the development site.
Phone 31 October 2022	Owner/occupier Robin Hill	Request for clarification on whether associated solar farm would also be proposed in the future.
Email 2 November 2022 Follow up on 9 November 2022	Owner/occupier Robin Hill	Primary concerns raised around noise and visual amenity. Request for clarification on decommissioning phase, and source of energy production to be stored by BESS.
21 March 2023	Mail out	A letter was sent to residents providing a project update and FAQ section on the Project.

Method of Communication	Community Stakeholder (and nature of interaction)	Summary of Consultation
Letter 15 November 2023	Mail out	Letters were sent to residents within 3km of the project and along the transport route, inviting members of the public to attend the information sessions.
Community consultation drop-in sessions 4 and 5 December 2023	4 local residents attended workshops	One neighbour was particularly supportive of the project (and renewable power in general). Informal engagement with members of the public who were in the bowling club during the sessions was also undertaken, some of whom lived locally to the project. There was a general sentiment that the project was not a cause of concern among the community.
Letter 29 January 2024	Owner/occupier Stewart Street	Project update, including consultation about construction noise exceedances and proposed mitigation.
Phone call 2 February 2024	Owner/occupier Stewart Street	Primary concerns related to dust (existing dust and potential for dust during construction).
Email 23 February 2024	Owner/occupier Stewart Street	An email detailing the proposed dust mitigation measures proposed during construction, and the potential for some vegetation screening on the property boundary was proposed.

Engagement to date with agency stakeholders has been undertaken by SLR Consulting and/or Recurrent Energy, as part of preparation of the overarching EIS for the Project. Agencies consulted, as well as summarised responses, are provided in **Table 10**.

Table 10: Summary of Agency Consultation

Agency of Authority	Summary of Consultation
Bathurst Regional Council	Request for preliminary engagement issued via email on 15 November 2022. Following this initial consultation with Council, a request consideration of construction access and the need to consider alternate routes was made. On 2 November 2023 RE contacted Council to provide a project update and to schedule a meeting. A meeting was held with Council on 4 December 2023 to explain the project in detail and discuss the project approval timeframe. Council indicated general support of the project. Council did note that the community have previously raised concerns in relation to solar projects. The use of Evans Plains Road, including the unsealed section, was discussed with Council, including the low traffic volumes and speed, safe sight distances and the details of the TIA. TfNSW's comments were also discussed, as were other assessment issues including visual impact, noise, battery fire risk and heritage.
Transport for NSW	Following initial consultation, TfNSW rrequested preparation of a TIA, which considered aspects including traffic volumes, characteristics and capacities, heavy vehicles routes, cumulative impacts, road safety and any required road network upgrades. A project and transport update was provided to TfNSW (Development West) on 22 November 2023 via email, including providing a copy of the TIA. Specifically, comments were requested from TfNSW on the proposed site access location and BAL treatment, as well as the light vehicle right-turn site entry, prior to finalisation of the EIS:

Agency of Authority	Summary of Consultation
	• The Project site access location (left in turn from eastbound direction on Mid Western Highway) at the existing access driveway crossover is proposed to be designed with a BAL treatment as per Austroads Guidelines prior to the commencement of construction and movement of heavy and light vehicles associated with the Project; and • All light vehicles are proposed to travel on the Mid-Western Highway in the westbound direction and turn right into the site via the existing access driveway crossover, which will require light vehicles to cross the carriageway in close proximity to the beginning of an overtaking lane. The arrangement has been assessed as appropriate and safe given negligible delays due to low vehicular volumes (21 inbound light vehicles per day); safe intersection sight distances (SISD) are satisfactory; and turn warrant assessments indicate that no dedicated turn lanes are necessary. An initial response was received from TfNSW on 6 December 2023 seeking additional information, including turn warrants assessment and SISD check. SLR responded to note that these had been included in the TIA, providing section references for Transport's convenience. TfNSW responded on 20 December 2023 to advise that: • The SISD and methodology used are both acceptable. • The swept path is based on the largest vehicle identified in the TIA and this will be a condition of any consent . • Turn warrants appear to be applied incorrectly. A detailed response was provided to TfNSW on 21 December 2023 to resolve the concern regarding turn warrants, explaining that they are consistent and that the short construction duration of 14 months explains why the diagrams look different. Recurrent Energy and SLR offered to meet with TfNSW to discuss or provide more information if needed. A follow up email was sent to TfNSW on 18 January 2024 and 13 February 2024 to follow up any further comments. No further response has been received from TfNSW at this time.
NSW Rural Fire Service	Requested the preparation of a Fire Safety Study in accordance with the DPIE Hazardous Industry Planning and Assessment Papers (HIPAPs).
NSW Fire and Rescue	Requested further consideration of fire safety and emergency response management.
DPE - Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate (now part of Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water)	Requested consideration of Biodiversity, Water and Soils, and Flooding.
Department of Primary Industries (DPI) – Agriculture	Requested consideration of post use rehabilitation, biosecurity (pests, weeds and diseases).
Transgrid	Noted procedural requirements for connection to Transgrid's network. Subsequently a connection enquiry under the National Electricity Rules was submitted on 23 August 2022. On 4th October 2022 Transgrid confirmed that it was the correct Network Service Provider for the connection to the network. Panorama BESS is now commencing design of connection services to complete the connect application.

Agency of Authority	Summary of Consultation
DPE – Heritage NSW (now part of Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water)	Noted the need to prepare an ACHAR as part of the future application.
DPE – Industrial Assessments (now part of DPHI)	Requested a Preliminary Hazard Analysis (PHA) prepared in accordance with the Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No. 6, 'Hazard Analysis' and Multi-level Risk Assessment.
DPE – Water (now part of Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water)	Requested consideration of impacts to groundwater, surface water, water sharing plans, ground water dependent ecosystems and waterfront land.
DPE – Crown Lands (now part of DPHI)	No additional comments made.
DPI - Fisheries	No additional comments made.
Department of Regional NSW – Mining, Exploration & Geoscience (MEG) - Geological Survey of NSW (GSNSW)	No additional comments made.

8.3 Engagement Outcomes to Date

All engagement with community stakeholders to date has generally been positive and supportive of the development. Issues or items for consideration following consultation are expressed within **Table 11**, along with how the proposed development has or will respond to these matters.

Table 11: Issues or Considerations of Potential Impact

Issue or Consideration	Project Response
Noise and Vibration Noise and vibration associated with construction and operation has the potential to impact upon the health and wellbeing of nearby land occupiers.	A Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (NVIA) has been prepared by SLR Consulting (2024) to inform the SSDA pursuant to the SEARs. The NVIA assessed construction noise and vibration on surrounding noise sensitive receivers and determined that while the development would result in high level of noise impact to the surrounding noise environment during construction due to the proximity to adjacent receivers, mitigation measures recommended to manage and lessen the impact on the surrounding receivers such as acoustic barriers should appropriately manage impacts. A preliminary assessment of operational noise indicated primary impacts would be associated with traffic generation and vehicle noise and should be subject to a more detailed assessment.
Traffic and access Noise and vibration associated with construction traffic has the potential to impact upon the health and wellbeing of nearby land occupiers. Additional traffic during construction, including heavy vehicles, has the potential to increase perceptions about road safety.	A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) has been prepared by SLR Consulting (2024) to inform the SSDA pursuant to the SEARs. The TIA recommends the preparation of a comprehensive Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) prior to substantial commencement of construction activities. The CTMP would detail construction impact mitigation strategies including a driver's code of conduct.
Land value impacts (saleability)	A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by SLR (2024). A Visual Management Plan will be prepared documenting actions to ensure infrastructure elements are colour-matched with natural elements and vegetative screening established and maintained.

Issue or Consideration	Project Response
The change represented by a large-scale solar farm in proximity to existing rural residences can be a cause of concern for the residences particularly with respect to property values of their land.	
Fire risk The site has the potential to be affected by bushfire. Matters raised during consultation include BESS-related and non-BESS (electrical) related fire hazards.	A Preliminary Hazard and Risk Assessment has been prepared by SLR (2024). In relation to bushfire risk the Assessment concludes that bushfire risk issues can be adequately mitigated, and accordingly, the BESS facility will be adequately protected from the threat of a bushfire event. The Project Road (carrying capacity, turning circles, etc) will be designed for fully loaded firefighting vehicles of up to 23 tonnes and where practical and feasible, a 'back-up' secondary access road to a facility is recommended for consideration. An Engineering Operation and Maintenance Management Plan should be prepared for the facility to include all measures aimed at managing hazards and risks, including specific targeted measures detailed in a Project Emergency Response Plan.
Visual Amenity and lighting The visual impact of construction equipment and earthworks required to construct the facility, and presence of the facility once operational has the potential to impact upon the character of the area.	A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) has been prepared by SLR Consulting (2024) to inform the SSDA pursuant to the SEARs. The VIA concluded that at five key public vantage points likely to be impacted by the Project the effect was identified to be moderate to minor. Nearby private receptors maybe affected with moderate to minor-negligible impacts.
Dust, Erosion and Sediment Control and erodible soils The impact of construction equipment and earthworks required to construct the facility has the potential to impact nearby waterways.	A Surface and Groundwater Assessment has been prepared by SLR Consulting (2024) to inform the SSDA pursuant to the SEARs. Ground disturbance due to site earthworks represents the greatest risk to surface water quality during construction, increasing erosion and mobilising sediments into receiving watercourses, which has the potential to increase turbidity and nutrient loads in downstream watercourses. A site wide Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) will be prepared as part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the Project.

Matters raised through agency consultation and requests made through the requirements of the issued SEARs have been addressed within the EIS for the Project and accompanying impact assessment reports. The community stakeholder request for clarification on the decommissioning phase, and source of energy production to be stored by the BESS can be addressed in post-approval community consultation strategies.

8.4 Ongoing and Future Engagement

Ongoing consultation and engagement shall be undertaken through all future stages of the Project.

Ongoing consultation and engagement will be undertaken throughout the remainder of the planning approval process, primarily through written communication and website updates.

Formal notification of the Project will be undertaken by DPHI during the assessment period for the SSD, with the Applicant committed to responding to all relevant issues and queries arising during this period through DPHI's formal response to submissions process.

During construction, consultation and engagement shall be undertaken with relevant parties and will include notification of the commencement of works and consultation on works with the potential for impact on nearby receivers. The Applicant and their contractors will continue to engage and work with all relevant agencies and authorities to meet all regulatory requirements and ensure compliance with conditions of consent.

As the Project progresses, refinement of this document and the tools located within the engagement strategy may be required to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of engagement measures proposed.

9.0 Social Impact Assessment

9.1 Overview of the SIA

Having analysed the current social baseline for the proposed development, this SIA sets out an assessment of social impacts arising from the Project and recommended responses, including measures to enhance social benefits and mitigate potentially negative impacts.

The SIA assesses impacts across the suite of factors set out within the DPE Guideline. The assessment has been based on the information available to date, and primarily represents a desktop study, informed by a site visit and a review and analysis of publicly available documents relevant to the precinct, as well as information provided by Council.

The assessment considers the potential impact on the community and social environment should the social impacts envisaged occur, compared to the baseline scenario of the existing use of the Project Site and social context.

This assessment also includes recommended responses to identified impacts, including both mitigation measures for potentially negative impacts and actions to enhance benefits.

9.2 Assessment Framework and Approach

This assessment considers the potential impact on the community and social environment should the social impacts envisaged occur, compared to the baseline scenario of the existing use of the site and social context.

The purpose of this social impact analysis is to:

- Identify, analyse and assess any likely social impacts, whether positive or negative, that people may experience at any stage of the project lifecycle, as a result of the project.
- Investigate whether any group in the community may disproportionately benefit or experience negative impacts and proposes commensurate responses consistent with socially equitable outcomes.
- Develop social impact mitigation and enhancement options for any identified significant social impacts.

Ultimately, there can be two main types of social impacts that may arise because of the proposed development. First, direct impacts can be caused by the project which may cause changes to the existing community, as measured using social indicators, such as population, health, and employment. Secondly, indirect impacts that are generally less tangible and more commonly related to matters such as community values, identity, and sense of place. Both physically observable as well as psychological impacts need to be considered.

This study identifies the following key social factors relevant to the assessment of social impacts of the project.

- **Way of Life** - including how people live, how they get around, how they work, how they play, and how they interact each day.
- **Community** - including composition, cohesion, character, how the community functions, resilience, and people's sense of place.
- **Accessibility** - including how people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities, whether provided by a public, private, or not for-profit organisation.

- **Culture** - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including shared beliefs, customs, practices, obligations, values and stories, and connections to Country, land, waterways, places and buildings.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - including physical and mental health especially for people vulnerable to social exclusion or substantial change, psychological stress resulting from financial or other pressures, access to open space and effects on public health.
- **Surroundings** - including ecosystem services such as shade, pollution control, erosion control, public safety and security, access to and use of the natural and built environment, and aesthetic value and amenity.
- **Livelihoods** - including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business.
- **Decision Making Systems** - Impacts on decision-making systems were identified as negligible as part of the SIA Scoping Stage and have therefore not been assessed in detail in this report.

9.3 Key Affected Communities

This assessment covers the social locality which is expected to experience social impacts associated with the temporary construction activities and some of the future operational impacts as well as the resulting benefits from the operational phase of the project. The social locality is shown in Chapter 6.0.

Key communities to experience social impacts and/ or benefits of the project can be grouped as follows:

- Neighbouring residents.
- Neighbouring businesses and services.
- Local area workers.
- Visitors to the locality.
- Visitors from the broader Secondary Study Area.
- Indigenous people.
- Temporary construction workers in the area.

9.4 Impact Assessment Factors and Responses

The following section sets out the assessment of social impacts arising from the proposed development and recommended responses, including measures to enhance social benefits and mitigate potentially negative impacts, across the suite of factors set out in the DPE Guideline. The assessment has been based on the information available to date, and is primarily a desktop study, informed by a review and analysis of publicly available documents relevant to the project.

9.5 Evaluation Principles

The evaluation includes a risk assessment of the degree of significance of risk, including the envisaged magnitude (duration, extent, and potential to mitigate/enhance), and likelihood, and potential to mitigate/enhance each identified impact. The social impact significance matrix provided within the DPE Guideline – Technical Supplement has been adapted for the purposes of undertaking this social impact assessment.

Each impact has been assessed and assigned an overall risk that considers both the likelihood of the impact occurring and the consequences should the impact occur. The assessment also sets out recommended mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for each identified matter.

Magnitude of impact generally considers the dimensions outlined in **Table 12**.

Table 12: Components of Magnitude

	Dimensions Details Needed to Enable Assessment	
Magnitude	**Extent**	Who specifically is expected to be affected (directly, indirectly, and/or cumulatively), including any vulnerable people? Which locations(s) and people are affected? (e.g. near neighbours, local, regional, future generations).
	Duration	When is the social impact expected to occur? Will it be time-limited (e.g. over particular project phases) or permanent?
	Severity or scale	What is the likely scale or degree of change? (e.g. mild, moderate, severe).
	Intensity or importance	How sensitive/vulnerable (or how adaptable/resilient) are affected people to the impact, or (for positive impacts) how important is it to them? This might depend on the value they attach to the matter; whether it is rare/unique or replaceable; the extent to which it is tied to their identity; and their capacity to cope with or adapt to change.
	Level of concern/interest	How concerned/interested are people? Sometimes, concerns may be disproportionate to findings from technical assessments of likelihood, duration and/or intensity.

Severity and /or sensitivity levels of social impacts are defined in **Table 13** .

Table 13: Defining Severity / Sensitivity Levels for Social Impacts

Severity	Meaning
Transformational	Substantial change experienced in community wellbeing, livelihood, infrastructure, services, health, and/or heritage values; permanent displacement or addition of at least 20% of a community.
Major	Substantial deterioration/improvement to something that people value an indefinite time or affecting many people in a widespread area.
Moderate	Noticeable deterioration/ improvement to something that people value highly, either lasting for an extensive time, or affecting a group of people.
Minor	Mild deterioration/ improvement, for a reasonably short time, for a small number of people who are generally adaptable and not vulnerable.
Minimal	Little noticeable change experienced by people in the locality.

Likelihood levels for the social impact are provided in **Table 14**.

Table 14: Likelihood Level Definitions

Likelihood level	Description
Almost certain	Definite or almost definitely expected (for example, has happened on similar projects)
Likely	High probability
Possible	Medium probability
Unlikely	Low probability
Very Unlikely	Improbable or remote probability

Potential impacts identified in the scoping process are analysed based on the nature of the impact and its predicted severity, and based on this, are assigned a level of significance in line with **Table 15**.

Table 15: Social Impact Significance Matrix

Level of Magnitude					
Likelihood Level	**Minimal**	**Minor**	**Moderate**	**Major**	**Transformational**
A Almost Certain	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
B Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
C Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
D Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
E Very Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

9.6 Discussion of Social Factors

Table 16 through to **Table 22** present discussions on the potential social impacts of the project.

9.6.1 Way of Life

Table 16: Potential Social Impacts – Way of Life

Potential Impacts
During Construction
Potential way of life impacts during construction may include: • Changes to regular work or life environment and routines experienced by local residents or local business operators. • Temporary changes to peace, quite enjoyment and existing private use of land and property because of the development, caused by amenity impacts (such as noise, dust and vibration and increased traffic congestion). • Temporary increased in workforce numbers would increase the demand for services on local businesses including availability of short to medium term accommodation potentially placing further pressure on the availability of affordable rentals for existing residents. • Changes in peace and quiet. Early arrival of plant, materials and workforce can impact upon privacy, peace and quiet of surrounding residents. • Cumulative impacts of construction in the area. • Some localised traffic impacts caused by increased road users during construction phase. • Employment of regional residents. • Local producers will have the ability to provide non-labour inputs to the Project. • Increased amount of construction workers requiring accommodation which may prevent tourists from acquiring accommodation. • Representatives from Panorama BESS Subco will participate, as appropriate, in business group meetings, events or programs in the regional community. • Increased pressure on regional communities to accommodate renewable industries.
During Operation
Potential way of life impacts during operation may include: • Increased infrastructure would increase employment within the local area.

Potential Impacts	
• Increased focus on renewable energy focused infrastructure. • Greater access to renewable energy for consumers and the associated environmental benefits of renewable energy. • Panorama BESS Subco in partnership with the Bathurst Regional Council and the local community will help maximise the provision of community grants through various initiatives and programs within the local community, including the education, arts, sporting, and culture sectors.	
Responses / Mitigation Measures	
During Construction	
• A Community Consultation Strategy (CCS) be prepared prior to construction commencing to enable information exchange with the community and identify with them the project specific mitigation and management strategies that will be in place to minimise the potential for negative impacts on the community in and around the construction site. The CCS will also detail processes and communication strategies to ensure that key stakeholders are advised and consulted about major changes and disruptions, and the process for providing feedback and further consultation during the project. • Minimise impacts as far as practicable through the implementation of the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the site. The CEMP should also provide protocols that will keep noise from construction vehicles and workers to a minimum while arriving and leaving work, especially outside of agreed construction times; encourage carpooling and public transport usage where possible; and ensure construction workers are aware and respectful of neighbouring properties and ensure Evans Plains Road is used by heavy vehicles. • Minimise dust impacts as far as practicable through implementation of dust management controls.	
During Operation	
• Implementation of the CCS. • Implementation of Operational management Plans (Traffic, Environmental and Noise)	
Summary	
Overall impact	On balance, the project would result in increased access to renewable energy and employment for the local community and have a positive benefit for the way of life for workers, business and the local community. It is noted that negative impacts may be experienced by workers, residents, road users and local businesses during construction. Implementation of mitigation measures would ensure these temporary impacts are minimised as far as practicable.
	• Construction: High (likely moderate) – Negative • Operation: High (likely moderate) – Positive
Likelihood	The short-term impacts have a high probability. The long-term positive impacts are almost certain.
Duration	Impacts would be short term. Positive outcomes would occur long term.
Consequence	The consequence of change as a result of construction to way of life would be low – negative. As a result of operation, the consequence is moderate (positive).
Severity / sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity to impacts.
Extent	Construction impacts would likely impact workers, residents and visitors to Robin Hill and Bathurst. Provision of improved renewables and potential employment would impact residents of and workers living across the Bathurst Regional LGA and beyond.
Potential to mitigate / enhance	Construction impacts would need to be proactively mitigated due to the communities directly affected.

9.6.2 Community

Table 17: Potential Social Impacts - Community

Potential Impacts	
During Construction	
• The construction period may disrupt the existing local community surrounding the site, including impacts to composition. • The construction period is forecast to generate approximately 20 FTE jobs. Changes to the composition of the local community may be experienced during construction, with an increased number of construction workers in the local area. • Prolonged increased number of construction workers in the area, prolonged disruptions to regular staff and neighbouring community networks. • An increase in the demand for services on local businesses including availability of short to medium term accommodation potentially placing further pressure on the availability of affordable rentals for existing residents.	
During Operation	
• Potential benefits to community cohesion and functioning for the employees, local residents and visitors associated with the delivery of renewable energy. • The new development may bring impacts to existing residents and visitors to the area as a result of the construction of the project in terms of sense of place and loss of connection to place for some residents. These perceptions may be positive, or negative, depending on the stakeholder.	
Responses / Mitigation Measures	
During Construction	
• A CCS be prepared prior to construction commencing to enable information exchange with the community and identify with them the project specific mitigation and management strategies that will be in place to minimise the potential for negative impacts on the community in and around the construction site. The CCS will also detail processes and communication strategies to ensure that key stakeholders are advised and consulted about major changes and disruptions, and the process for providing feedback and further consultation during the project. • Mitigation measures set out in the CEMP will be implemented to reduce the impacts associated with disruption to the site and surrounding residents during the construction period. • Positive social impacts and community acceptance of the project can be amplified by employing local residents. • Undertake works as per Staging described in the Preliminary Construction Plan to mitigate impacts during construction.	
During Operation	
• Implementation of Operational Management Plans (Traffic, Environmental and Noise).	
Summary	
Overall impact	Overall, the additional renewable energy infrastructure to the region will have a positive benefit to community. The works, if impacts associated with construction are well mitigated, will ensure positive outcomes for the broader community. Any negative social impacts on the community composition and cohesion are medium during construction, but low during operation.
	• Construction: High (likely moderate) – Negative • Operation: High (likely moderate) – Positive
Likelihood	Short term construction impacts with longer term positive impacts associated with renewable energy infrastructure and employment.
Duration	Operational benefits are long term.

Potential Impacts	
Consequence	The consequence of change as a result of construction to community would be low – negative. As a result of operation, the consequence is moderate (positive).
Severity / sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity to impacts.
Extent	Construction impacts would likely impact worker profile in the local area.
Potential to mitigate / enhance	Construction impacts would need to be proactively mitigated due to the communities directly affected. During operation, there is a high ability for workers, local residents and visitors to adapt to new traffic arrangements around the site, due to their proposed quality and design.

9.6.3 Accessibility

Table 18: Potential Social Impacts - Accessibility

Potential Impacts	
During Construction	
Key considerations include: • Truck and worker vehicle movements associated with the construction activity may impact accessibility around the site. • Potential reduced accessibility and inconvenience associated with construction-related traffic flows, increased traffic, reduced on-street parking, truck movements on the streets surrounding the site. • Cumulative construction impacts because of other redevelopment in the vicinity may lead to construction fatigue, disruption, spatial and temporal cumulative impacts.	
During Operation	
• Impacts to accessibility associated with the delivery of new facilities with increased capacity.	
Responses / Mitigation Measures	
During Construction	
• Consistent with Austroads Guidelines, Evans Plains Road will be used by heavy vehicles for access to and from the site. • Implement mitigation measures as per the Construction Traffic Management Plan. • A CCS be prepared prior to construction commencing to enable information exchange with the community and identify with them the project specific mitigation and management strategies that will be in place to minimise the potential for negative impacts on the community in and around the construction site. The CCS will also detail processes and communication strategies to ensure that key stakeholders are advised and consulted about major changes and disruptions, and the process for providing feedback and further consultation during the project.	
During Operation	
• During operation, road changes will incorporate pedestrian and accessibility features where required. Due to the location of the project, low pedestrian access is predicted.	
Summary	
Overall impact	Overall improved access and street scape, however temporary traffic impacts during construction may arise.
	• Construction: Medium (possible minor) – Negative • Operation: High (likely major) – Positive
Likelihood	Positive impacts of the proposed development are highly likely.
Duration	Operational benefits are long term.

Potential Impacts	
Consequence	The consequence of impacts during the construction phase are considered moderate. Upon completion the consequence of the development is considered minimal.
Severity / sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity to impacts.
Extent	Construction impacts would likely primarily impact workers, visitors and local residents.
Potential to mitigate / enhance	Construction impacts would need to be proactively mitigated.

9.6.4 Culture

Table 19: Potential Social Impacts - Culture

Potential Impacts	
During Construction	
• Potential changes to the community's connection to place associated with the construction period, which would result in changes to the appearance and functionality of the site and may disrupt place narratives. • Potential negative impacts to sense of place associated with Aboriginal cultural heritage. An ACHAR has been prepared by Austral Archaeology (2023), noting that no Aboriginal sites were identified in the project site boundary but were identified near the project site boundary within the study area. A survey and test excavation program was conducted in consultation with Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council (BLALC) which identified a number of artefacts. Two artefacts were determined to be subject to direct impacts from the proposed construction works. Findings and recommendations of the ACHAR were supported by those Registered Aboriginal Parties who participated in the consultation process. For further information on Aboriginal Heritage assessment and mitigation measures, refer to Section 6.4 of the EIS.	
During Operation	
• Increased activation of the site due to the high-quality design, which will result in new place narratives and improved connection to place for visitors, workers, and local residents.	
Responses / Mitigation Measures	
During Construction	
• Ensure recommendations from the ACHAR including the implementation of an unexpected finds policy in the event of any unexpected finds of Aboriginal sites, objects, or archaeological deposits being identified during construction.	
During Operation	
• Nil.	
Summary	
Overall impact	Provision of high-quality renewable energy infrastructure at this location would likely have a positive benefit to culture and environmental values, subject to addressing recommendations in the ACHAR and other cultural needs.
	• Construction: Low (unlikely minor) – Negative • Operation: Medium (likely minor) – Positive
Likelihood	Positive impacts of the proposed development are likely, and negative impacts are minor during construction.
Duration	Operational benefits are long term, construction impacts are temporary.
Consequence	The consequence of impacts during the construction phase are considered moderate. Upon completion the consequence of the development is considered minimal.
Severity / sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity to impacts

Potential Impacts	
Extent	Construction impacts would likely impact stakeholders within the area. Operational benefits have the potential to enhance connection to culture for visitors and local residents.
Potential to mitigate / enhance	Construction impacts would need to be proactively mitigated.

9.6.5 Health and Wellbeing

Table 20: Potential Social Impacts – Health and Wellbeing

Potential Impacts	
During Construction	
• Potential wellbeing impacts for residents, workers, and visitors in the area, associated with construction dust, increased construction traffic, noise and vibration. • To improve traffic safety to the access location a Basic Left Turn (BAL) treatment as per Austroads Guidelines will be implemented a and right-turn into the site from the Mid-Western Highway will be banned for construction vehicles. • Highly noise intensive works will only be undertaken during standard construction hours.	
During Operation	
• Greater regional renewables presence. • Cumulative improved wellbeing benefits associated with the proposed development's contribution to the renewable energy industry.	
Responses / Mitigation Measures	
During Construction	
• Mitigation measures set out in technical documents, including the CEMP, NVIA and VIA should be implemented to reduce the impacts associated with noise, vibration and dust management during the construction phase. • Develop a communications and consultation plan ensuring that all stakeholders are made aware of the timing and likely impact of the construction period. Opportunities for feedback and to ask questions should also be provided.	
During Operation	
• Implement recommendations in the NVIA to minimise noise impacts from the proposed building plants and services. • Consider opportunities to enhance accessible pedestrian connections to neighbouring green and recreational spaces that are within walking distance to support health and wellbeing.	
Summary	
Overall impact	Provision of high-quality renewable energy infrastructure at this location would likely have a positive benefit to the overall environment with reduced emissions from other forms of energy generation. Temporary health and wellbeing impacts during construction (noise, dust, traffic etc) can be mitigated appropriately.
	• Construction: Medium (possible moderate) – Negative. • Operation: High (likely major) – Positive.
Likelihood	Impacts of the proposed development on health and wellbeing during construction are likely. Positive impacts of the proposed development are highly likely during operation, both locally and to a district/regional extent.
Duration	Operational benefits are long term.
Consequence	The consequences of negative impacts during construction will be moderate. The operational benefits will be significant.

Potential Impacts	
Severity / sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity to impacts.
Extent	Construction impacts would likely impact residents and workers in the area.
Potential to mitigate / enhance	Construction impacts would need to be proactively mitigated during construction.

9.6.6 Surrounds

Table 21: Potential Social Impacts - Surrounds

Potential Impacts	
During Construction	
• Changes to the appearance of the site associated with construction activity. • Presence of construction vehicles and worker presence in surrounding towns for accommodation. • The construction of the Project will result in a reduction in approximately 2 ha of land available for agricultural activity – beef grazing and cropping. These impacts were assessed and identified within the EIS as negligible.	
During Operation	
• Permanent impacts to surroundings as a result of changes to the appearance of the site. The infrastructure will be visible from the public realm to some extent. Reducing the presence of infrastructure can be achieved through vegetative and perimeter screening. • Visibility can also be reduced colour-matching the infrastructure with natural elements. • Potential impacts to surroundings associated with the increased capacity of the site, including increased noise and traffic movements. A TIA has been prepared by which notes that travel demand will increase as a result of the development, however the overall impact is minor, with the surrounding road network having sufficient capacity to service additional travel demand.	
Responses / Mitigation Measures	
During Construction	
• Mitigation measures set out in the CEMP will be implemented to reduce the impacts associated with noise and vibration and visual amenity during the construction phase. • Develop and implement a CCS ensuring that all stakeholders (incl. surrounding residents, workers, visitors, and other stakeholders) are made aware of the timing and likely impact of the construction period. • Opportunities for feedback and to ask questions should also be provided.	
During Operation	
Maintenance /upgrades to tracks will have a long-term positive affect for the surrounds.	
Summary	
Overall impact	Provision of high-quality renewable energy infrastructure at this location would likely have a positive benefit to the overall environment with reduced emissions from other forms of energy generation. Changes to the streetscape and appearance of the site during construction, including hoarding etc may reduce the enjoyment of the surroundings, but only temporarily.
	• Construction: Medium (likely minor) – Negative • Operation: High (likely moderate) – Positive or Negative, dependant on the receiver
Likelihood	Positive impacts of the proposed development are highly likely as a result of the design and negative impacts will be mitigated during construction (e.g. staging plan to minimise disruption).

Potential Impacts	
Duration	Operational benefits are long term, construction impacts are temporary.
Consequence	The consequences of negative impacts during construction will be moderate. The operational benefits will be significant.
Severity / sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity to impacts.
Extent	Construction impacts would likely impact workers of surrounding businesses, residents and visitors in the area, improved surroundings and amenity would affect users of the site and workers and visitors from the broader area to the site.
Potential to mitigate / enhance	Construction impacts would need to be proactively mitigated.

9.6.7 Livelihoods

Table 22: Potential Social Impacts - Livelihoods

Potential Impacts
During Construction
• Positive impacts associated with increased access to employment opportunities within the construction sector during the construction phase. It is anticipated that approximately 20FTE jobs will be generated during construction. These jobs will be temporary, project-based work that is typical to the sector. • Positive impacts as a result of potential improved viability of businesses in the area associated with trade from construction workers (for example, accommodation, shops and cafes). • The construction of the Project will create demand for regional labour resources. This has the potential in the short run in the attraction of workers from other relevant sub-sectors and sectors of the economy leading to labour shortages in these other areas of the economy. For this Project where direct construction demand is for 20 workers no observable price effects are anticipated.
During Operation
• Potential improved viability of other businesses in the area associated with concentration of employment (regional renewable projects included). • Loss of land that has potential for agricultural use such as cropping and grazing.
Responses / Mitigation Measures
During Construction
• Positive social impacts and community acceptance of the project can be amplified and have flow-on benefits in other aspects of contractor life, by using social employment and procurement practices and hiring locally. Explore opportunities to engage, train and employ local residents, and utilise the skills and services of local businesses during construction. • A CCS be prepared prior to construction commencing to enable information exchange with the community and identify with them the project specific mitigation and management strategies that will be in place to minimise the potential for negative impacts on the community in and around the construction site. The CCS will also detail processes and communication strategies to ensure that key stakeholders are advised and consulted about major changes and disruptions, and the process for providing feedback and further consultation during the project.
During Operation
Explore opportunities for socially sustainable procurement methods which prioritise employment of local residents in the area.
Summary

Potential Impacts	
Overall impact	Provision of high quality renewable energy infrastructure at this location would likely have a positive benefit to the overall environment with reduced emissions from other forms of energy generation. The development of the site, if impacts associated with construction are well mitigated, will ensure positive social outcomes in terms of increased employment opportunities and improved viability of local businesses. Negative social impacts associated with livelihoods are low, both during construction and operation. Positive social impacts associated with livelihoods are likely
	• Construction: Medium (likely minor) – Positive or negative. • Operation: Medium (likely minor) – Positive.
Likelihood	Positive impacts of the proposed development on livelihoods are highly likely.
Duration	Operational benefits are long term, construction impacts are temporary.
Consequence	Moderate consequence during construction.
Severity / sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity to impacts.
Extent	Construction impacts would likely mostly impact the construction sector and provide jobs within the area.
Potential to mitigate / enhance	Benefits to livelihoods can be amplified by exploring opportunities to employ local residents during the construction and operational phases.

9.6.8 Decision-Making Systems

As identified in **Section 9.2** Impacts on decision-making systems were identified as negligible as part of the SIA Scoping Stage and have therefore not been assessed in detail in this report.

10.0 Monitoring and Management Framework

To monitor and measure the ongoing impact of the proposed development on relevant stakeholders and the surrounding community, the following social impact mitigation measures are recommended.

Prior to Construction

A CCS be prepared prior to construction commencing to enable information exchange with the community and identify with them the project specific mitigation and management strategies that will be in place to minimise the potential for negative impacts on the community in and around the construction site. The CCS will also detail processes and communication strategies to ensure that key stakeholders are advised and consulted about major changes and disruptions, and the process for providing feedback and further consultation during the project.

During Construction

- Development of a CEMP that includes complaints handling procedure for identifying and responding to community issues related to construction impacts.
- Development of a CEMP that incorporates all relevant mitigation measures contained within the following technical studies:
- Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (SLR Consulting, 2024).
- Traffic and Transport Assessment (SLR Consulting, 2024).
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Austral Archaeology, 2023).
- Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (SLR Consulting, 2024).
- Economic Impact Assessment (Gillespie Economics, 2024).
- The CEMP should also provide protocols that will:
    - Ensure Evans Plains Road is used by heavy vehicles for access to and from the site.
    - Keep noise from construction vehicles and workers to a minimum while arriving and leaving work, especially outside of agreed construction times.
    - Encourage carpooling where possible.

During Operation

- Continued consultation with relevant stakeholders consistent with the Community Consultation Strategy for the project.
- A Visual Management Plan should be prepared documenting actions to ensure infrastructure elements are colour-matched with natural elements and vegetative screening is maintained.
- An Engineering Operation and Maintenance Management Plan should be prepared for the facility to include all measures aimed at managing hazards and risks, including specific targeted measures detailed in a Project Emergency Response Plan.

11.0 Conclusion

11.1 Overview

The SIA has been informed through a tailored consultation process and through a thorough examination of qualitative and quantitative data. The area of social influence of the project consists of the people impacted or likely to be affected by the project. In this regard the SIA has focused on the local area which includes the Bathurst urban centre / locality and the adjacent area of Evans Plains.

The construction phase of the project would last for approximately two years utilising a workforce of up to 20 people. The operational phase would last for about 30 years utilising a workforce of one employee.

The project is in the locality of Evans Plains, near Bathurst, NSW.

11.2 Evaluation of the Project

Each category of impact is appraised with a significance of the impact based on the likelihood, consequence, and social risk rating. Overall, the level of impacts from the development ranges from low to high, with no major significant negative impacts identified that cannot be effectively mitigated.

Key issues relate to:

- The need for the preparation of a Community Consultation Strategy prior to construction commencing. The Strategy will assist with the exchange of information and identify the project specific mitigation and management strategies that will be in place to minimise the potential for negative impacts on the community in and around the construction site.
- During construction there is potential for adverse temporary impacts to the surroundings, health and wellbeing associated traffic impacts, dust, noise and/or vibration. A Construction Environmental Management Plan will assist in mitigation of these impacts.

The most significant social benefits of the proposal relate to:

- The provision of new and therefore renewable energy infrastructure.
- The proposed development would support the continued and targeted growth of the national renewable energy generation capacity.
- Positive impacts to livelihoods associated with increased employment opportunities. The project will generate approximately 20 FTE construction jobs and approximately 1 FTE operational job.

The overall long-term benefit of the proposed development is considered to be positive, and potential negative impacts can be mitigated through implementation of various technical reports prepared for the SSDA. Overall, the proposal is consistent with the strategic growth-focused aims and objectives and will support the development of the project and creation of employment generating land uses.

12.0 References

2021 Census Data

- Australia QuickStats.

2016 Census Data

- Australia QuickStats.

Other

- Bathurst Regional Local Environmental Plan 2014.
- Bathurst Regional Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040.
- SIA Guidelines Technical Supplement, DPE (2021)
- Social Impact Assessment Guideline, DPE (2021)
- Google Maps
- SIX Maps
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan, (SLR Consulting, 2024)
- Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (SLR Consulting, 2024).
- Traffic and Transport Assessment (SLR Consulting, 2024).
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Austral Archaeology, 2023).
- Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (SLR Consulting, 2024).
- Economic Impact Assessment (Gillespie Economics, 2024).
- Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2041
- Bathurst Integrated Medical Centre SSD-30394840 – Scoping Report by Keylan Consulting, 2021.
- Bathurst Community Strategic Plan 2022

Appendix A Response to DPE SIA Guideline Review Questions

Social Impact Assessment

Panorama BESS – SSD 50587460

Panorama BESS Subco Pty Ltd

SLR Project No.: 660.30234.00000

19 March 2024

Item	Response to question
General	
Does the lead author of the SIA Report meet the qualification and experience requirements?	Yes
Has the lead author of the SIA Report provided a signed declaration certifying that the assessment does not contain false or misleading information?	Yes – see page 12
Would a reasonable person judge the SIA Report to be impartial, rigorous, and transparent?	Yes
Project's Social Locality Social Baseline	
Does the SIA report identify and describe all the different social groups that may be affected by the project?	Yes – see section 5
Does the SIA Report identify and describe all the built or natural features that have value or importance for people, and explain why people value those features?	Yes – see section 5
Does the SIA Report identify and describe historical, current, and expected social trends or social changes for people in the locality, including their experiences with this project and other major developments?	Yes – see section 5
Does the social baseline study include appropriate justification for each element, and provide evidence that the elements reflect both relevant literature and the full diversity of views and potential experiences?	Yes – see section 5
Does the social baseline study demonstrate social-science research methods and explain any significant methodological or data limitations?	Yes – see section 5
Identification and Description of Social Impacts	
Does the SIA Report identify and describe historical, current, and expected social trends or social trends or social changes for people in the locality, including their experiences with this project and other major development projects?	Yes – see section 5
Does the SIA Report apply precautionary principle to social impacts, and consider how they may be experienced differently by different people and groups (i.e., distributive equity)?	Yes – see section 7
Does the SIA Report describe how the preliminary analysis influenced both the project design and EIS Engagement Strategy?	Yes – see section 6
Community Engagement	
Were the extent and nature of engagement activities appropriate and sufficient to canvass all relevant views, including those of vulnerable or marginalised groups?	Yes see section 6 and separate Stakeholder Engagement Report
How have the views, concerns, and insights of affected and interested people influenced both the project design and each element of the SIA Report (e.g., the social baseline, predicting impacts, and mitigation/enhancement measures)?	Yes see section 7 and separate Stakeholder Engagement Report
Predicting and Analysing Social Impacts	
Does the SIA Report identify the matters to which the precautionary principle could or should be reasonably applied?	Yes – see section 9
Does the SIA Report impartially focus on the most material social impacts at all stages of the project life cycle, without any omissions or misrepresentations?	Yes – see section 9
Does the SIA Report analyse the distribution of both positive and negative social impacts, and the equity of this distribution?	Yes – see section 9
Does the SIA Report identify its assumptions, and include sensitivity analysis and alternative scenarios (including 'worst-case' and 'no-project' scenarios where relevant)?	Yes – see section 9
Evaluating Significance	
Do the evaluations of significance of social impacts impartially represent how people in each identified social group can expect to experience the project, including any cumulative effects?	Yes – see section 9

Item	Response to question
Are the evaluations of significance disaggregated to consider the potentially different experiences for different people or groups, especially vulnerable groups?	Yes – see section 9
Responses, Monitoring and Management	
Does the SIA Report propose responses (i.e., mitigations and enhancements) that are tangible, deliverable by the proponent, likely to be durable effective, and directly related to the respective impact(s)?	Yes – see section 9
How can people be confident that social impacts will be monitored and reported in ways that are reliable, effective, and trustworthy?	Yes – see section 9
How will the proponent adaptively manage social impacts and respond to unanticipated events, breaches, grievances, and non-compliance?	Yes – see section 9

Appendix B Social Impact Assessment Scoping Worksheet

Social Impact Assessment

Panorama BESS – SSD 50587460

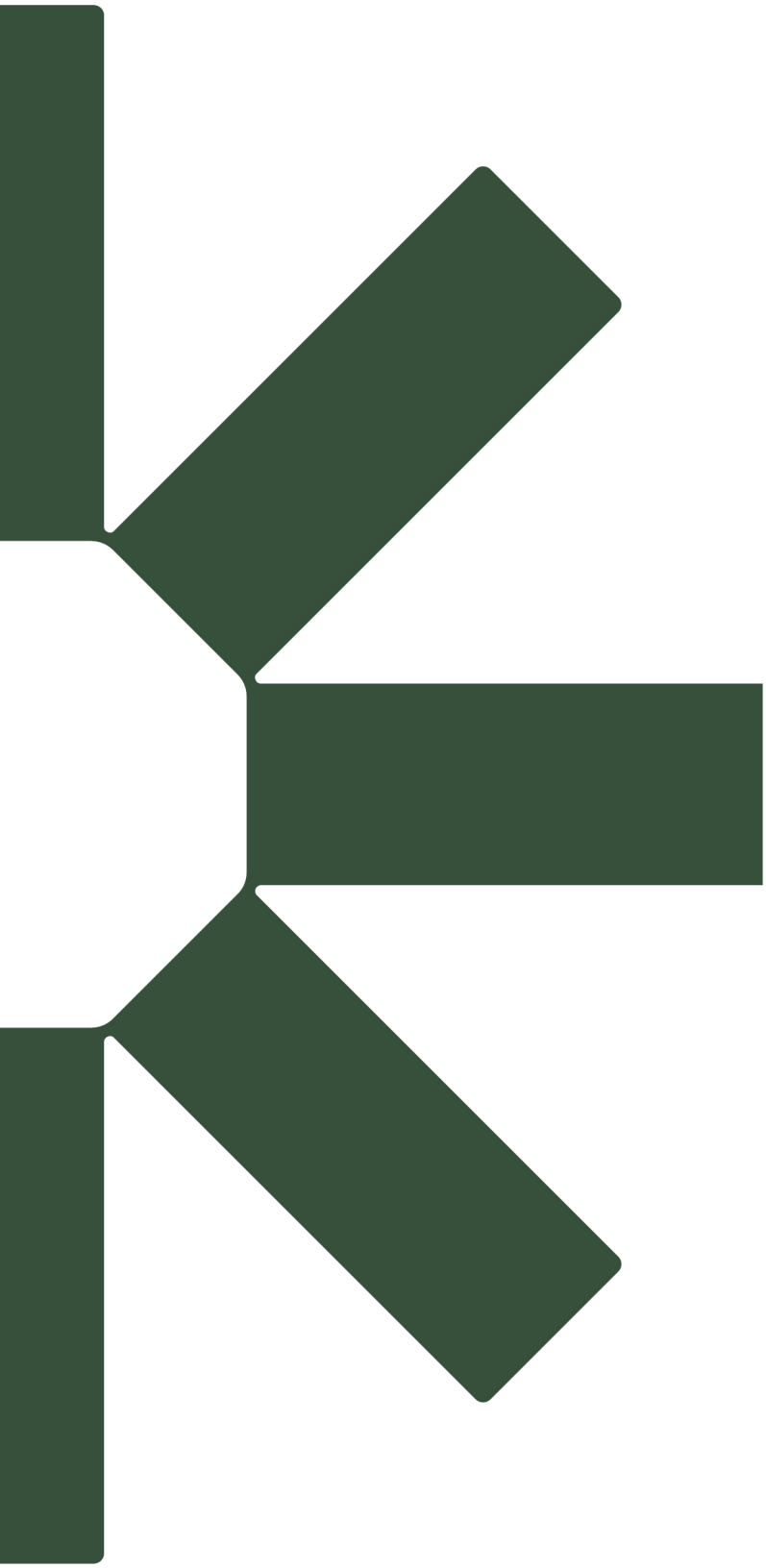
Panorama BESS Subco Pty Ltd

SLR Project No.: 660.30234.00000

19 March 2024

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Worksheet Project name: 660.30234 Panorama Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Date: September 2022

CATEGORIES OF SOCIAL IMPACTS	POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON PEOPLE		PREVIOUS INVESTIGATION OF IMPACT		CUMULATIVE IMPACTS		ELEMENTS OF IMPACTS - Based on preliminary investigation					ASSESSMENT LEVEL FOR EACH IMPACT				PROJECT REFINEMENT	MITIGATION / ENHANCEMENT MEASURES
what **social impact categories** could be affected by the project activities	What impacts are likely, and what concerns/aspirations have people expressed about the impact? Summarise how each relevant stakeholder group might experience the impact. NB. Where there are multiple stakeholder groups affected differently by an impact, or more than one impact from the activity, please add an additional row.	Is the impact expected to be **positive or negative**	Has this impact previously been investigated (on this or other project/s)?	If "yes - this project," briefly describe the previous investigation. If "yes - other project," identify the other project and investigation	Will this impact combine with others from this project (think about when and where), and/or with impacts from other projects (cumulative)?	If yes, identify which other impacts and/or projects	Will the project activity (without mitigation or enhancement) cause a material social impact in terms of its: You can also consider the various magnitudes of these characteristics					Level of assessment for each social impact	What methods and data sources will be used to investigate this impact?			Has the project been refined in response to preliminary impact evaluation or stakeholder feedback?	What **mitigation / enhancement measures** are being considered?
							extent i.e. number of people potentially affected?	**duration** of expected impacts? (i.e. **construction vs operational phase**)	**intensity** of expected impacts i.e. scale or degree of change?	**sensitivity** or vulnerability of people potentially affected?	**level of concern/interest** of people potentially affected?		Secondary data	Primary Data - Consultation	Primary Data - Research		
access	Construction and decommissioning may result in additional congestion within the surrounding traffic network or an increase in risk to the safety of other road users.	Negative	No		Yes	Other physical impacts including noise.	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required			A Traffic Impact Assessment is being prepared for the project.	'Recommendations of the assessment report will be conditioned and adhered to as part of the construction and operation of the site, mitigating this potential impact.
health and wellbeing	Noise and vibration associated with construction, operation, and decommissioning has the potential to impact upon the health and wellbeing of nearby land occupiers.	Negative	No		Yes	Other physical impacts including traffic.	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required			A Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment is being prepared for the project.	Recommendations of the assessment report will be conditioned and adhered to as part of the construction and operation of the site, mitigating this potential impact.
livelihoods	Construction, operation, and decommissioning of the facility will result in short and long term employment opportunities in the area.	Positive	No		No	Not Required	Moderate	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Minor	Required				
health and wellbeing	Air quality impacts associated with construction, operation, and decommissioning has the potential to impact upon the health and wellbeing of nearby land occupiers.	Negative	No		Yes	Other physical impacts including traffic and noise.	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required			An Air Quality Impact Assessment is being prepared for the project.	'Recommendations of the assessment report will be conditioned and adhered to as part of the construction and operation of the site, mitigating this potential impact.
community	The visual impact of construction equipment and earthworks required to construct and decommission the facility, and presence of the facility once operational has the potential to	Negative	No		No	Not Required	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required			A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is being prepared for the proejct.	'Recommendations of the assessment report will be conditioned and adhered to as part of the construction and operation of the site, mitigating this potential impact.
health and wellbeing	The production and management of waste during the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the facility has the potential to impact on nearby land occupiers.	Negative	No		No	Not Required	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required			A Construction and Operation Waste Management Plan is being prepared for the project.	Recommendations of the assessment report will be conditioned and adhered to as part of the construction and operation of the site, mitigating this potential impact.
surroundings	The construction and decommissioning of the facility will access require access to services (water, electricity, etc) which has the potential to impact on shared infrastructure.	Negative	No		No	Not Required	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required				
community	Ground distrubance associetd with construction has the potential to impact upon biodiversity.	Negative	No		No	Not Required	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required			A BDAR Waiver is being prepared for the project.	Recommendations of the assessment report will be conditioned and adhered to as part of the construction and operation of the site, mitigating this potential impact.
culture	Ground distrubance associetd with construction has the potential to impact upon unidentified cultural heritage.	Negative	No		No	Not Required	Limited	Construction, operation, and decommissioning	Limited	Unknown	Unknown	Standard	Required			An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment is being prepared for the project.	Recommendations of the assessment report will be conditioned and adhered to as part of the construction and operation of the site, mitigating this potential impact.



Making Sustainability Happen