

14 August 2024

Energy, Resources and Industry Assessments
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Sir/Madam

**SSD-50587460 – Panorama Battery Energy Storage System
749 and 800 Mid Western Highway, Evans Plains**

I refer to the above proposal currently on public exhibition.

Council provides the following by way of comment on the application as lodged.

Strategic Context

The site is located in an area that is zoned rural. Land to the north is zoned R5 Large Lot Residential. A significant part of the land zoned R5 Large Lot Residential whilst zoned is yet to be developed. Residential development, in the form of rural residential housing, has the potential to extend closer to the proposal than currently exists. This should be acknowledged and considered in the assessment process.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

The site is located within broader Mount Panorama/Wahluu precinct. Mount Panorama/Wahluu has been the subject of number of investigations into both tangible and intangible aboriginal cultural heritage. The site of the development is located within an area identified as the “Outline of the fallen Warrior Wahluu” identified by AHIMS Site ID 44-3-0280.

The current ACHAR does not reference broader Bathurst Regional Local Government Area Aboriginal Heritage Study 2017 as a foundation document or the broader cultural importance of Mount Panorama/Wahluu.

Council notes the ACHAR has identified a number of items of ACH which will be impacted during the construction process. The intention being to relocate these items nearby in consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders and provided ongoing protection

Traffic and Access

Council notes that access will be provided from the Mid Western Highway. The Mid Western Highway is a classified road.

The proposal relies upon Council roads, notably Evans Plains Creek Road, for the purposes of providing heavy vehicle access to the site. Evans Plains Creek Road is currently a low volume rural road. It is partly sealed. Approximately 2.8km of Evans Plains Creek Road remains unsealed.

For the purposes of the assessment the proposal should be considered a “traffic generating development” under Council’s adopted Section 7.11 Contributions Plan. During the construction phase, it will generate heavy vehicle traffic movements over and above what would reasonably be considered as being for traditional agricultural or residential purposes.

Council notes that it is collecting Section 7.11 Contributions under its adopted Bathurst Regional Rural Roadworks Section 7.11 Plan towards the upgrading (sealing) of the unsealed sections of Evans Plains Creek Road. The contributions would be used for the sealing of Evans Plains Creek Road as contemplated under this Plan.

Landscape and Visual Assessment

The Landscape and Visual Assessment concludes that for certain residential receivers the visual impact is “moderate”. The Assessment also concludes that the visual impacts is to be mitigated by ensuring that “all visible infrastructure elements to blend with its surrounding context by colour matching with natural elements”. The Assessment also recommends that “the proposed development consider the options of mitigation measures to meet the local and planning objectives in protecting and enhancing the rural scenic views and vistas. These characterise Bathurst regional by visually integrating it so that it blends in with its surrounding context”.

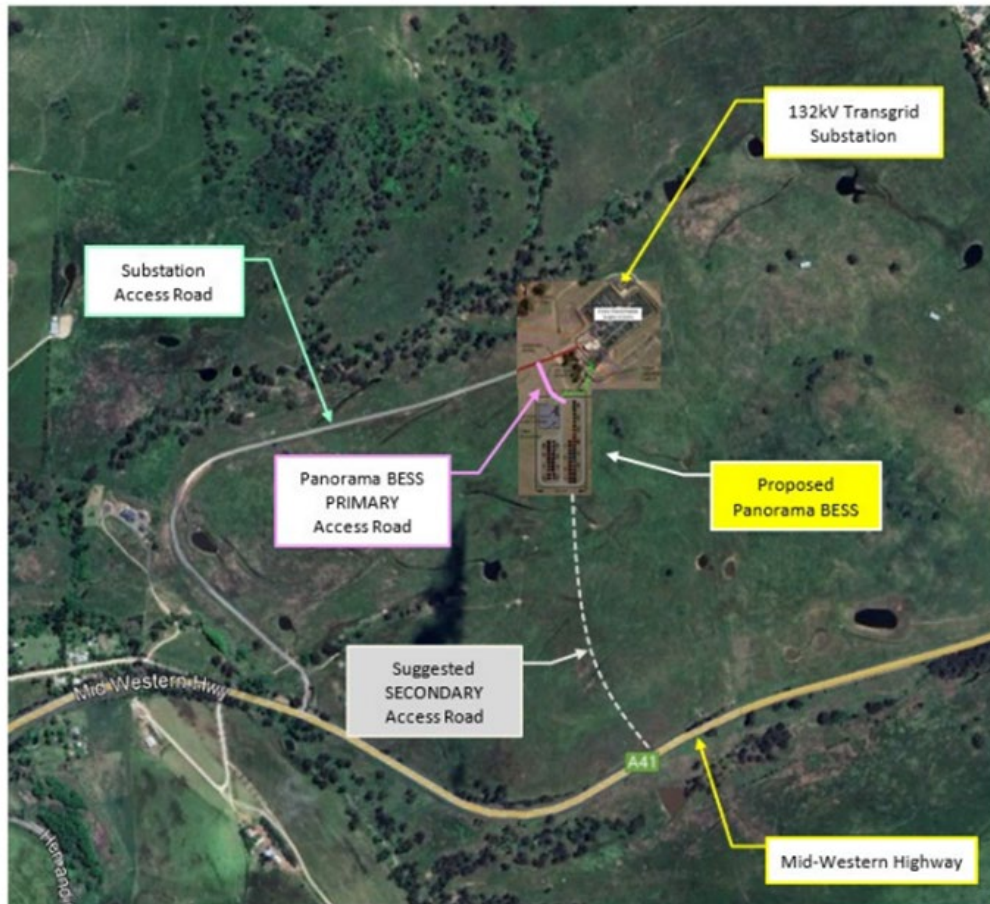
The summary of mitigation measures recommends that a “visual management plan (VMP) is proposed to be prepared prior to works which will document a range of mitigation measures. If possible, the intention is to colour all visible infrastructure elements to blend with its surrounding context by colour matching with natural elements. If required, further consideration of landscaping and screening will be applied”.

It remains unclear as to the extent to which any of the infrastructure can by colour matched to natural elements whatever that may mean. The inclusion of “if possible” and “if required” does not provide any particular certainty as to the final treatments being implemented and therefore the extent to which this moderate impact may be mitigated remains unresolved.

Hazard and Risk

The Hazard and Risk Assessment suggests the installation of a secondary access road from the BESS connecting to the Mid Western Highway.

Figure 11: Panorama BESS Facility - Access



The impact of the construction of a secondary route is not considered elsewhere in the submitted documentation eg, potential for additional access to Mid Western Highway.

If you have any questions please contact Council's Manager Development Assessment, Mr Richard Denyer, on 6333 6211.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Southorn', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Neil Southorn
DIRECTOR
ENVIRONMENTAL, PLANNING & BUILDING SERVICES