

Your ref: SSD-62423490 and SSD-62423494
Our ref: 12618763

22 September 2025

Patrick Copas
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
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SSD-62423490 and SSD-62423494 Port of Newcastle Clean Energy Precinct SEARS expiry date extension

Dear Patrick

1. Introduction and background

Port of Newcastle Operations Pty Ltd (PON) propose to construct and operate the Clean Energy Precinct (CEP or 'the project') a facility for clean energy production in Newcastle, NSW. The project would provide renewable energy that would contribute towards meeting NSW and Commonwealth renewable energy targets.

The project obtained two sets of Secretary Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the:

- Overarching Concept Plan approval for the CEP as presented in the original *Scoping Report Clean Energy Precinct Concept Plan* (WSP, 2023) (CEP Scoping Report)
- Stage 1 Enabling Works approval for the CEP as presented in the original *Scoping Report Clean Energy Precinct Stage 1* (WSP, 2023) (Stage 1 Scoping Report)

As described in the CEP Scoping Reports it included the provision of facilities for the production of hydrogen and ammonia, and the provision of ancillary facilities to support this production including electrical and water infrastructure. A broad description of the project was included in the CEP Scoping Report prepared for the project and submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) (now Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)) in October 2023.

The project involves production of hydrogen and subsequently up to 980 kilotons per annual (ktpa) of ammonia, storage of up to 120,000 tonnes of ammonia onsite and a pipeline connection to a berth in the Port of Newcastle (PON) to allow connection to export markets. Proposed site services include a new switchyard and connection to the high voltage Transgrid power lines to the west of the site and a water treatment plant at the eastern extent of site to produce water of a quality required to supply the hydrogen and ammonia production facilities.

2. Purpose of this letter

This letter has been prepared to provide:

- A summary of the CEP project refinements since the submission of the Scoping Reports, as a result of the Front-End Engineering Design (FEED) phase that has since occurred.
- Confirm that PON is seeking to consolidate the existing two SEARs into a single combined application as it is noted that the two sets of SEARs are largely identical.
- A request to extend the SEARs for 12 months beyond the expiry dates of the current SEARs. This will allow for the Port of Newcastle to complete lodgement of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Request that DPHI reissue a single consolidated set of SEARs in lieu of the current two SEARs (Concept Plan and Stage 1) as part of this extension, such that a single EIS and development application can be submitted for the CEP.

3. Project definition refinement

Since the issuing of SEARs for both the Concept Plan and Stage 1, PON entered into a FEED phase including EIS related studies which has seen the design take the project beyond a conceptual stage, and has confirmed the technical viability of the CEP. Importantly through this FEED process key elements of the projects design which influence hazards and risk have been refined to reduce risk to acceptable levels and a detailed stormwater management strategy has been developed to support the protection of biodiversity values at the site. PON has consulted with DPHI regularly regarding the project, including with the DPHI Industry Assessments and DPHI Hazard Assessments team.

Table 1 provides a summary of the key project elements as detailed in the original scoping reports and shows how the project has now been refined through design, or streamlined as a result of the FEED process and EIS related studies.

The requested consolidated SEARs are to address a combined single SSD application seeking Concept approval for the precinct and approval to construct enabling infrastructure as will be described in detail in the EIS.

4. Specialist assessments to support the SSD applications

PON has prepared the full set of specialist assessments as required by the SEARs. As detailed above, due to the nature of the project particular focus on the hazards and risk modelling has been undertaken as the project has progressed to ensure that DPHI requirements and relevant standards and criteria can be met be the project.

The amended project area has also required the slight expansion of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) to cover the relatively small area to the west of the disturbance boundary presented in the CEP Scoping Report, required to facilitate the construction of the Transgrid electrical infrastructure network connection.

PON, and their EIS and REAP consultant GHD, also undertook a review of the specialist assessments identified in the SEARs to identify potential gaps in the impact assessment that may occur as a result of applying the original SEARs to the refined project. Table 2 provides a summary of the key environmental issues identified in the SEARs or both the Concept Plan and Stage 1 compared with the assessments required for the revised project. Given the comprehensive nature of the original SEARs, it is not considered that there are any gaps that would necessitate additional technical studies or updated SEARs.

5. Timing

With the requisite level of design work required to inform the EIS nearing completion, the EIS has a forecast for completion late 2025 or early 2026. In the lead up to EIS completion, PON will engage with DPHI regularly to provide updates on the assessment outcomes and planning for lodgement.

6. SEARs extension request

As stated in Section 2, this letter has been prepared to request that:

- DPHI extend the SEARs for 12 months beyond the expiry dates of the current SEARs. This will allow for the Port of Newcastle to complete lodgement of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- DPHI reissue a single consolidated set of SEARs in lieu of the current two SEARs (Concept Plan and Stage 1) as part of this extension, such that a single EIS and development application can be submitted for the CEP.

We are planning to complete the relevant assessments and lodge the EIS in the first half of 2026. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned if you require any further clarification.

Regards



Simon Murphy
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Air & Noise

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Table 1 Comparison of applications

Project >	2023 SEARs request project		2025 Revised project	Proposed refinements
	Concept Plan	Stage 1	Concept Plan (inc Stage 1)	
Project footprint	Located at former KIWEF site on Kooragang Island	Located at former KIWEF site on Kooragang Island.	Generally consistent with the original SEARs application with small boundary extension to cover the Transgrid/Lumea electrical infrastructure network connection. Refer to comparison of Figure 1 and Figure 2.	Single integrated precinct approach for the entire KIWEF site will reduce complexity of multiple approvals and there subsequent compliance management.
Power supply	Electrical infrastructure including grid connection, transmission infrastructure, substation and switchyard	Electrical infrastructure including grid connection, transmission infrastructure, substation and switchyard.	Generally consistent with the original SEARs application small extension of the project footprint to include high voltage infrastructure network connection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Connection to Transgrid HV 330 KV transmission network. – Power supply switch yard and substation for voltage step down and distribution.
Water supply	Water infrastructure including pipeline connection and water infrastructure corridors	Water infrastructure including pipeline connection and water infrastructure corridors.	Generally consistent with the original SEARs application. Process water will now be sent directly to a centralised water treatment plant rather than a number of smaller tenant operated plants. See water treatment below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New water pipeline connection to site water treatment plant. – Potable water connection from Hunter Water. – Domestic sewage treatment via Hunter Water network.
Water treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Water treatment facilities co-located within hydrogen production areas 	Not in scope.	Standalone water treatment plant area inside the NCIG rail loop to treat and distribute process water to all site users. Refer Figure 1.	More efficient use of the project site by centralising water treatment with plant to be operated by coNEXA.
Hydrogen Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Up to 750 MW electrolysis capacity – Production of 103 ktpa hydrogen – 21 ktpa for distribution – 83 ktpa for ammonia synthesis 	Not in scope.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Up to 1200 MW electrolysis capacity. – Quantities for distribution and ammonia synthesis subject to tenant requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Up to 1200 MW electrolysis capacity. – Electrolysers arranged subject to tenant requirements.

Project >	2023 SEARs request project		2025 Revised project	Proposed refinements
Project element	Concept Plan	Stage 1	Concept Plan (inc Stage 1)	
Hydrogen Storage, Compression and Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low and high pressure buffer storage tanks located within hydrogen and ammonia production areas respectively. – Hydrogen distribution pipelines from production, to storage to ammonia production and to tube trailers. – Storage for 50 x 670 kg tube trailers. 	Not in scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Low and high pressure buffer storage tanks located within hydrogen and ammonia production areas respectively. – Hydrogen distribution pipelines from production, to storage to ammonia production and to tube trailers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Gas compressors for high pressure storage vessels up to 48 tonnes/hour capacity. – Production of up to 178 ktpa (Kilotonnes per annum) of hydrogen. – Storage for hydrogen tube trailers.
Ammonia production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 425 ktpa ammonia production via Haber-Bosch process 	Not in scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Up to 980 ktpa ammonia production via Haber-Bosch process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Air separation unit for nitrogen recovery. – Pipe network for movement from production to storage.
Ammonia Storage and Distribution	Three 30,000 tonne ammonia storage tanks (plus one from infrastructure DA) and associated pipeline infrastructure.	One 30,000 tonne double-walled ammonia storage tank with associated pipeline infrastructure to enable export of ammonia from tank.	Four 30,000 tonne double-walled ammonia storage tank with associated pipeline infrastructure to enable export of ammonia from tank.	Total 120,000 tonnes storage and associated refrigeration units and export pipeline connection to port facilities consolidated.
Roads and Paved Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Internal roads – Car parking facilities – Heavy and light vehicle parking areas – Laydown area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Administration buildings – Control room – Warehouse facilities – Workshop with gantry crane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Internal roads – Car parking facilities – Heavy and light vehicle parking areas – Laydown area – Gate house & administration buildings – Control room – Workshops with gantry crane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Primary access from Cormorant Road via Delta Road. – Internal road system relying on upgrades of existing roads where possible. – Light and heavy vehicle parking. – Storage yards and laydown areas.
Innovation Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Area of the CEP for collaborative working, meeting, training, operations and maintenance spaces for industry collaboration. 	Not in scope	Not in scope	Innovation hub removed, due to land use safety complexities. Resulting reduction in individuals/employees onsite reduces risk exposure to a Major Hazard Facility (MHF).

Project >	2023 SEARs request project		2025 Revised project	Proposed refinements
Project element	Concept Plan	Stage 1	Concept Plan (inc Stage 1)	
Ancillary Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Administration buildings – Control room – Warehouse facilities – Workshop with gantry crane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Administration buildings – Control room – Warehouse facilities – Workshop with gantry crane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Administration buildings – Control room – Workshop with gantry crane – Fencing, lighting, landscaping – Business identification signage – Utility connections 	Ancillary facility generally consistent. Warehousing elements removed and extensive landscaping has been developed in order to align with Green and Golden Bell Frog requirements.

Table 2 Specialist assessment SEARs review table

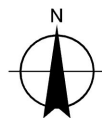
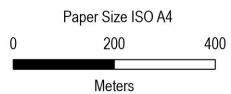
SEARs Key issue	Required by Concept SEARs	Required by Stage 1 SEARs	Note	Required for revised project
Statutory and strategic context	✓	✓	No change to scope of required.	✓
Suitability of the site	✓	✓	No change to scope of required.	✓
Community and stakeholder engagement	✓	✓	No change to scope of required. NB all consultation to-date has been all encompassing for all project elements.	✓
Hazards and risk	✓	✓	No change to scope of required. All hazard and risk assessment (modelling) to-date has been all encompassing for all project elements. Multiple engagements with DPHI Hazards team have been undertaken.	✓
Dangerous goods movements	✓	✓	Proposed DG movements, notable hydrogen, on public road network are reduced in the revised project but consideration still required.	✓
Dangerous goods	✓	✓	Addressed as part of hazard and risk assessment.	✓
Contamination	✓	✓	Similar footprint requires similar contamination issues to be addressed.	✓
Geotechnical	✓	✓	Similar footprint requires similar geotechnical issues to be addressed.	✓
Biodiversity	✓	✓	Similar footprint requires similar biodiversity issues to be addressed. Revised footprint to include assessment of Transgrid HV network connection.	✓
Water	✓	✓	Similar footprint requires similar water issues to be addressed.	✓
Flooding	✓	✓	Similar footprint requires similar flooding issues to be addressed.	✓
Traffic and transport	✓	✓	Revised project will result in a large reduction in traffic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Construction workers: Originally 5261 compared to 400 for revised project. – Operational workers: Originally 539 compared to 180 for revised project. Assessment still required.	✓
Air quality and odour	✓	✓	Primary emissions sources of hydrogen and ammonia production facilities and flares consistent between original and revised project. Assessment required.	✓
Human health risk	✓	✓	Primary emissions sources of hydrogen and ammonia production facilities and flares consistent between original and revised project. Assessment required.	✓
Noise and vibration	✓	✓	Primary noise sources of hydrogen and ammonia production facilities consistent between original and revised project. Assessment required.	✓

SEARs Key issue	Required by Concept SEARs	Required by Stage 1 SEARs	Note	Required for revised project
Infrastructure requirements	✓	✓	Assessment of the projects utility connections and infrastructure requirements needed.	✓
Visual	✓	✓	Most visible site infrastructure (production facilities and Air Separation Units (ASUs) consistent between original and revised project. Assessment required.	✓
Waste	✓	✓	Similar waste streams between original and revised project. Revised project staff production will result in reduction of putrescible waste generation but other waste streams consistent. Assessment required.	✓
Bushfire	✓	✓	The same level of bushfire attack potential relates to the site. Assessment required.	✓
Aboriginal heritage	✓	✓	Similar footprints require Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment report to be prepared as per SSD requirements.	✓
Non-Aboriginal heritage	✓	✓	Similar footprints require Non-Aboriginal heritage assessment to be prepared.	✓
Social	✓	✓	Similar amenity and community impact potential between original and revised project. SIA required.	✓
Economic	✓	✓	Economic impacts (benefits) required to be assessed for both original and proposed projects.	✓
Climate change	✓	✓	Climate change impact consideration required for all projects.	✓
ESD and energy efficiency	✓	✓	ESD and energy change impact consideration required for all projects.	✓
Planning agreement	✓	✓	Planning agreement consideration required for all projects.	✓



Legend

	CEP approximate site		Hydrogen Production
	Existing Site Roads		Multipurpose Hardstand Area
	Ammonia Production		Proposed Water Treatment
	Ammonia Storage		Site Access
	Clean Energy Storage		Railway
	Electrical Infrastructure		Roads
			Cadastre
			Watercourse



**Port of Newcastle
CLEAN ENERGY PRECINCT (EIS)**

Project No. **12618763**
Revision No. **G**
Date **17/09/2025**

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA2020
Grid: GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Project overview

FIGURE 1



Figure 2 Concept Plan layout from original SEARs request (WSP, 2023)