



APPENDIX T

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Garoo Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System

Social Impact Assessment

PREPARED FOR

The Trustee for GreenPulse Solar
Farm and BESS Unit Trust

DATE

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Garoo Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System

Social Impact Assessment

0751705



Loucky Spit
Social Consultant



Paula Saad
Principal Consultant



Sophie Butcher
Principal Consultant / Project Manager



Lucy Baker
Partner

Environmental Resources Management
Australia Pty Ltd
Level 14, 207 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

T +61 2 8584 8888

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
Applicant	The Trustee for GreenPulse Solar Farm and BESS Unit Trust ('GreenPulse')
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACHAR	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report
AHIMS	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BDAR	Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CBP	Community Benefit Program
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CSEP	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
CSES	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
CNVMP	Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan
DA	Development Application
DCCEEW	NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DPHI	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
DRP	Decommissioning Rehabilitation Plan
EMS	Environmental Management Strategy
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
ERM	Environmental Resource Management
FIFO	Fly-in Fly-out
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GGA	Glint and Glare Assessment
GW	Gigawatt
ha	Hectares
HHA	Historical Heritage Assessment
ICNG	Interim Construction Noise Guideline
IRSAD	Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage
km	Kilometre
Km ²	Square Kilometre
kV	Kilovolt
LEP	Local Environmental Plan

Acronym	Description
LGA	Local Government Area
LVIA	Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
m	Metres
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt hour
NIA	Noise Impact Assessment
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NPI	Noise Policy for Industry
NSW	New South Wales
OTL	Overhead transmission line
OEMP	Operational Environmental Management Plan
OSOM	Oversize and Overmass
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
Project	Garoo Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
PNTL	Project Noise Trigger Level
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Index for Areas
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SEPP	State Environment Planning Policy
SES	State Emergency Service
SA1	Statistical Area Level 1
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SIMP	Social Impact Management Plan
SSC	State Suburbs
SSD	State Significant Development
SUA	Significant Urban Area
TIA	Traffic Impact Assessment
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
UCL	Urban Centres and Localities
WAMP	Workforce Accommodation Management Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

This Social Impact Assessment (SIA) has been prepared for the Trustee for GreenPulse Solar Farm and BESS Unit Trust ('GreenPulse' or the 'Applicant') to assess the social impacts relating to the development of the Garoo Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the Project). The Applicant proposes to construct, operate, maintain and (where relevant) decommission the Garoo Solar Farm and BESS renewable energy development. The Project is proposed to be located at 291 Garoo Road, situated in the rural locality of Garoo, New South Wales (NSW), within the Tamworth Regional Local Government Area (LGA).

The Project has a total Project Area of approximately 369 hectares (ha) and a Development Footprint, representing the expected impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Project, of approximately 319.5 ha. The proposed solar farm is anticipated to have an installed capacity of up to 133.76 Megawatt (MW) Alternating Current (AC), and a BESS facility with 360 MW / 1,440 Megawatt hour (MWh) storage capacity.

The Project is declared State Significant Development (SSD) under Clause 2.6(1) of the *State Environmental Planning Policy* (Planning Systems) 2021 (Planning Systems SEPP). The Applicant is seeking development consent for the Project under Part 4, Division 4.7 of the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

1.1 THE APPLICANT

The Trustee for the GreenPulse Solar Farm and BESS Unit Trust is a joint venture between Jinko Power Australia Pty Ltd (Jinko Power) and Bright Path Renewables Pty Ltd (Bright Path). Jinko Power is a leading global renewable energy company specialising in the investment, development and operation of solar power plants and Bright Path is an Australian-owned renewable energy developer committed to promoting the widespread adoption of renewable energy and fostering a green, low-carbon future. These organisations have widespread experience in large-scale renewable projects in Australia and internationally across Europe, Asia and Africa.

Operating as an Australian developer of utility-scale solar and battery storage systems, GreenPulse brings expert management in project planning, network connections, renewable generation and financing. Aligned with the NSW Government's ambitious targets to halve emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050, the organisation aims to contribute to the transition to a carbon-neutral economy, helping establish a reliable, affordable and clean energy system.

The Applicants name, Australian Business Number (ABN) and address (trading as The Trustee for GreenPulse Solar Farm and BESS Unit Trust) are listed below:

- **Applicant name:** The Trustee for GreenPulse Solar Farm and BESS Unit Trust;
- **ABN:** 93 705 623 303; and
- **Address:** Suite 906, 821 Pacific Highway, Chatswood, NSW 2067.

1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Project is situated in the rural locality of Garoo, approximately 40 kilometres (km) (by road) south of Tamworth and 370 km northwest of Sydney. Located entirely within the Tamworth Regional LGA, the Project Area extends across approximately 369 ha, comprising 17 freehold land parcels and one Crown Land lot.

The land is currently used for agricultural activities, predominantly livestock grazing and irrigated cropping. **Figure 1-1** presents the Project in a regional setting.

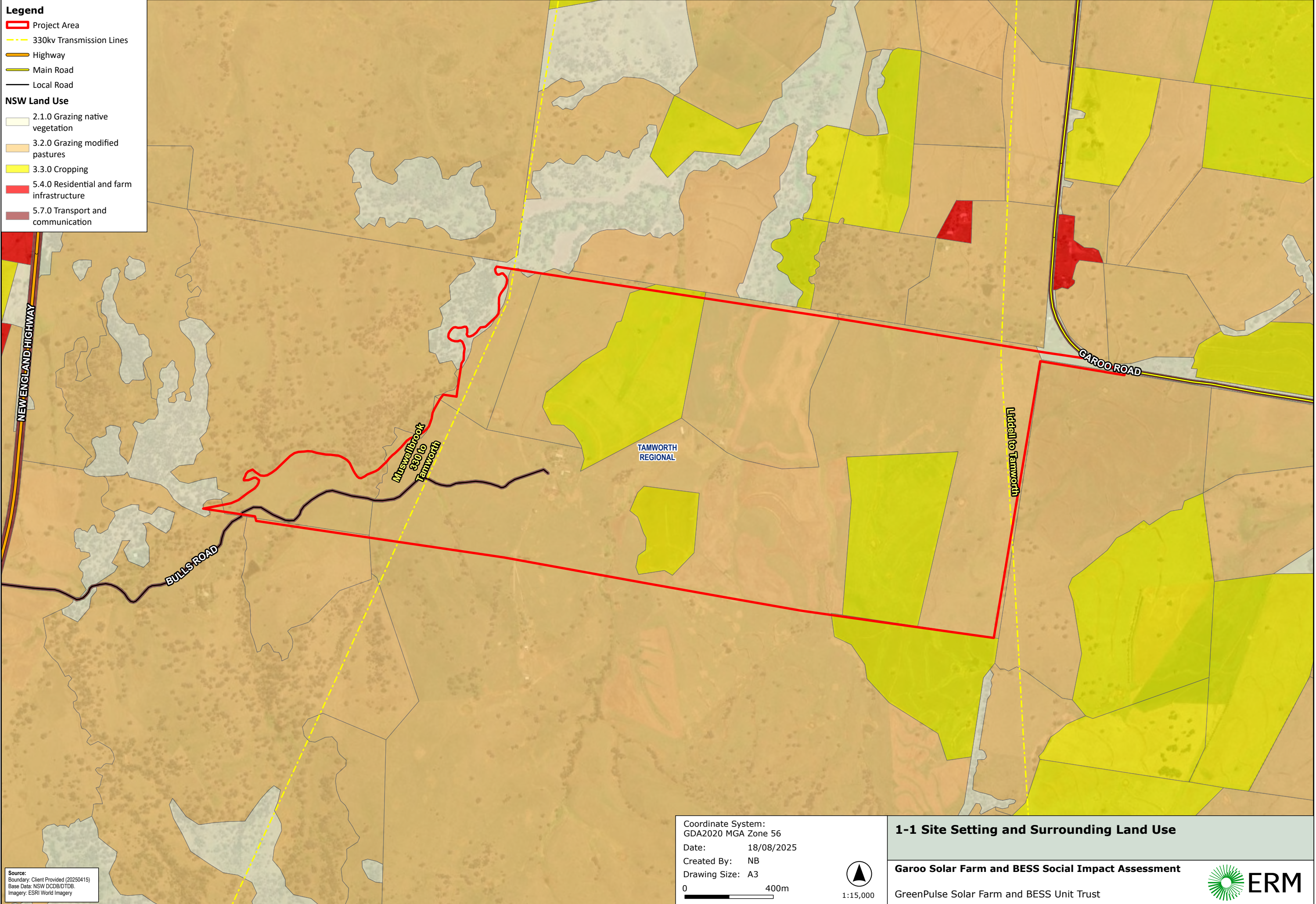
The Project will involve the construction, operation, maintenance and, where relevant, decommissioning of an AC solar farm, BESS and associated supporting ancillary infrastructure. **Table 1-1** summarises the key indicative Project components and specifications.

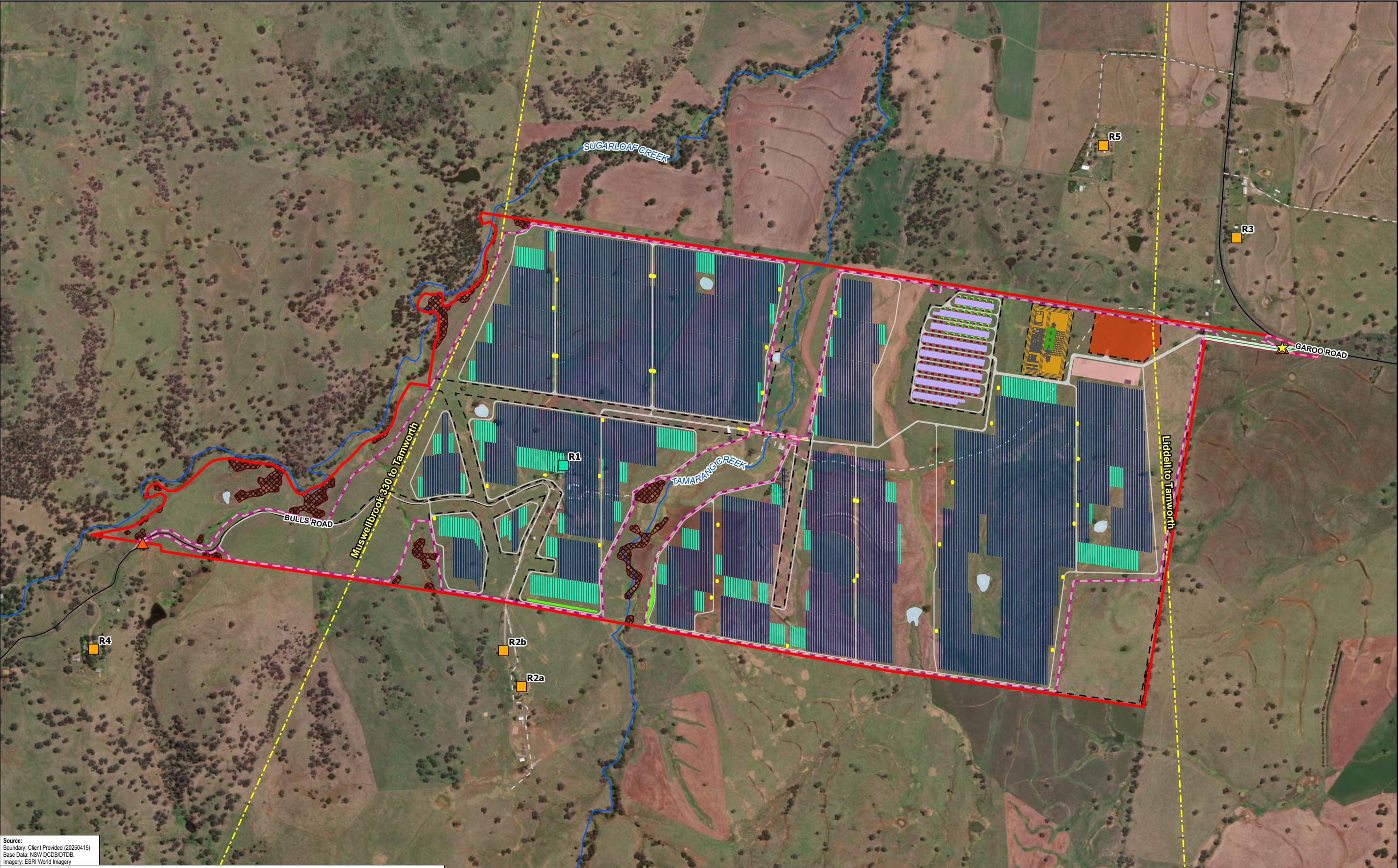
TABLE 1-1 INDICATIVE PROJECT DESIGN – COMPONENTS AND SPECIFICATION

Component	Feature	Specification
Energy generation	Solar Arrays	133.76 MW AC solar farm. The maximum height of the solar panels above natural ground is 1.5 metres (m) at 0 degrees of rotation and 2.9 m at 60-degree rotation. The solar panels will typically return to face east after sunset.
Electrical Reticulation Network	On-site substation	New customer and TransGrid high voltage interconnection facilities will be developed in the northeast section of the Project Area, linking into the existing 330 kilovolt (kV) Liddell-Tamworth transmission line.
	Internal electrical reticulation network (Medium Voltage)	- Electrical reticulation will generally follow rows of panels and internal access routes to reach the step-up substation (33 / 330 kV) for the Project. - The Project will connect into the substation (33 / 330 kV) on-site directly via underground cables (33 kV, internal reticulation voltage). - The Project will be connected to the Grid by Switching Station (330 kV) located on-site boundary.
	Switchyard / BESS	BESS with a capacity of 360 MW / 1,440 MWh storage capacity. Switch and other electrical equipment providing connection to the existing 330 kV transmission network.
Access Roads	Access to site	Access to the Project Area will be via the existing Garoo Road, located on Crown land and road reserve. Approximately 330 m of a currently unsealed road, that runs from Garoo road into the northeast section of the Project Area, will be required to be upgraded. This will be subject to assessment in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase.
Infrastructure	On-site temporary infrastructure	- Temporary Workers Accommodation Camp (TWAC) for workers, with a capacity of up to 250FTE. - Construction of the camp is anticipated to commence in late Q4 2026, and would be ready for occupation prior to main construction activities commencing. The camp would be operational for approximately 15 months and decommissioned at the final stages of construction (Q1 2028), allowing the final solar arrays to be installed. Construction workforce will be housed offsite for the final stages of Project construction. - Temporary construction compounds including site offices, car parking and staff amenities. - Supporting infrastructure such as borrow pits, laydown and storage areas, perimeter fencing and site access. - Essential utilities including water supply and power.

The Project proposes to connect to the national grid via the existing 330 kV Liddell-Tamworth overhead transmission line, which traverses the Project Area in a general north-south alignment. Once operational, the solar component will provide enough electricity to power approximately 70,000 homes, and the BESS will store up to four hours of electricity, released during peak demand to assist reliable power supply and grid stability.

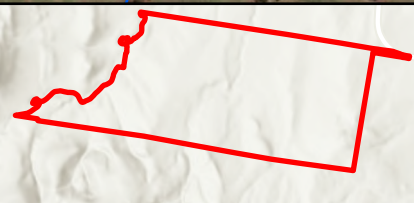
The Project in a regional setting is presented in **Figure 1-1** and Project layout is presented in **Figure 1-2**. This shows the positioning of the solar panels, BESS, substations, and associated infrastructure within the Development Footprint.





Sources:
Boundary: Client Provided (20250415)
Base Data: NSW DCDB/DTDB
Imagery: ESRI World Imagery

Legend				
Project Area	Transmission Lines (existing)	PV (Mounting Structure - Half Table)	Customer Substation Area	BESS Container
Development Footprint	Maintained Existing Water Dams	PV (Mounting Structure - Full Table)	Transgrid Substation Upgrade	Strategic Road Upgrade
Preferred access point	Avoidance Area	Internal Road	Inverters	Fence
Emergency Access point	Associated Dwelling	Parking and Laydown Area	Bridge	O&M Building
	Non-Associated Dwelling		PCS Station	Bridge Piers
			OHL Interconnection	Noise Walls - PCS Stations
				Noise Wall - High Voltage Transformer
				Mitigation Planting Areas
				Local Road
				Local Track-Vehicular



Coordinate System:
GDA2020 MGA Zone 56
Date: 05/11/2025
Created By: NB
Drawing Size: A3
0 400m
1:12,000

F1-2 Project Layout

Garoo Solar Farm and BESS Social Impact Assessment

GreenPulse Solar Farm and BESS Unit Trust

1.3 PURPOSE AND OUTLINE

The purpose of this SIA is to provide the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) with an understanding of the Project's potential social impacts, and how these social impacts are identified, assessed, managed, and monitored, consistent with the legislative and regulatory context outlined above.

The SIA is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides an overview of the SIA methodology;
- **Section 3** describes the scoping for the Project's Social Locality, stakeholder identification and stakeholder engagement;
- **Section 4** provides a legislative and regulatory framework for the Project, which has been considered in the assessment of socio-economic impacts;
- **Section 5** describes the existing baseline conditions in the Project's Social Locality;
- **Section 6** assesses the social impacts that may result from the Project, provides an overview of enhancement and mitigation measures, and a rating of residual impacts; and
- **Section 7** outlines an approach that will be followed in monitoring and managing social impacts into the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project.

1.4 AUTHORSHIP

The SIA report was drafted by Niobe Fitzgerald who holds a Bachelor of Criminology and Indigenous Heritage, History and Knowledge, and a Graduate Certificate in Forensic Anthropology from the University of Western Australia and Loucky Spit, who holds a BSc of Political Science and a MSc in International Relations at the University of Amsterdam. The report was reviewed from a technical perspective by Paula Saad, who has over 15 years' experience in the field of social performance (including SIA) and holds a Bachelor of Urban Planning from Mackenzie University. Paula and Loucky are members of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA).

2. SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This SIA has been prepared in accordance with the NSW Guideline and Technical Supplement (DPE 2023a, 2023b), which aims to enhance the rigour applied to SIAs, with a view to minimising impacts and enhancing benefits in line with good international industry practice. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with these Guidelines and the Project Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) (outlined in **Section 4.2**). We acknowledge that the NSW SIA Guidelines were updated in July 2025. However, this project received its SEARs prior to that update, under the 2023 guidelines. Accordingly, this assessment has been prepared in line with the 2023 NSW Guideline and Technical Supplement, which were applicable at the time of SEARs issuance, while the updated guidelines have nonetheless informed our awareness of current best practice. **Figure 2-1** outlines the steps taken to complete the SIA, which are described in the following sections.



FIGURE 2-1 SIA PROCESS

2.1 PHASE 1: SCOPING

Following good international industry practice (Vanclay et al 2015) and the NSW Guideline and Technical Supplement (DPE 2023a, 2023b), the scoping undertaken for this SIA aimed to:

- Capture and characterise the likely social impacts to inform Project planning before social impacts start occurring;
- Enable a consistent but scalable approach to SIA where the level of assessment is proportionate to the scale and nature of the likely social impacts;
- Consider the information to be assessed during the SIA scoping and initial assessment and the approach to community engagement;
- Identify potential Project refinements and possible mitigation and enhancement measures; and
- Identify the impacts that may require further assessment in the EIS and the possible level of assessment for each impact.

The SIA also made use of DPPI's SIA Worksheet (scoping worksheet) (DPPI 2024b), which helped to identify potential social impacts through the following steps:

- Identification of Project activities that may cause impacts;
- Categorisation of impacts according to their effects on way of life, community, accessibility, culture, health and wellbeing, surroundings, livelihoods, decision-making system; and whether the impacts are positive or negative, tangible or intangible;
- Determination as to which prior investigations are relevant to the Project;
- Identification of cumulative and combined impacts, including spatial, temporal, and linked impacts;

- Definition of material impact, including the extent of people affected, duration of impacts, intensity / scale of impacts, sensitivity of the people affected, and their level of concern or interest; and
- Assignment of assessment levels, such as detailed, standard, minor, or not relevant, for each identified impact.

2.2 PHASE 2: SOCIAL BASELINE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The social baseline describes the social context without the Project. It documents the existing social environment, conditions and trends relevant to the impacts identified. The social baseline is the benchmark against which direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are predicted and analysed.

The scope and content of the social baseline has been tailored to the Project context and the level of assessment of social impacts using meaningful indicators and information, including stakeholder engagement activities relevant to the SIA (**Section 3.3**). Where scoping identified that primary data was required for the assessment, stakeholder engagement activities for the EIS were adapted to provide this information (**Section 3**).

The data collected and presented in this SIA is based on a review of available data from a range of primary and secondary sources. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) – Census (Community Profile), Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), etc;
- NSW Government Department data (e.g. NSW Health, Transport for NSW, and NSW Police Force);
- Local Government data;
- Stakeholder engagement outcomes – community insights, including issues and concerns, gathered through the stakeholder consultation process (**Section 3.3**);
- Local and State government planning, policy, and strategy documentation; and
- Plans, policies and other documents provided by Greenpulse.

Combined, this data seeks to portray community values, and how people and the things they value may be impacted by the Project. This includes consideration of:

- The features of the community, the social locality, and / or the landscape that people value which ranges from urban areas and the sense of community or the accessibility of services that the community experiences, to natural and diverse environments or quiet / vibrant neighbourhoods;
- How these features influence local people's way of life, health or wellbeing;
- How the Project might affect these features, and for which groups;
- How the Project could be modified to enhance these features and how they affect people's wellbeing; and
- How the Project may be designed to avoid and minimise any short-term adverse impacts.

In considering the above, the social baseline identifies and describes: the different social groups who may be affected by the Project; all the built and natural features that local people value and why they value them; the historical, current and expected social trends, including as a result of this Project and other projects in the area; the various social elements of value, and interpretations of them, while demonstrating appropriate social-science research methods and data limitations.

The key limitations of the data collection and analysis undertaken for the SIA are provided in **Table 2-1**.

TABLE 2-1 LIMITATIONS OF THE SIA DATA COLLECTION

Limitations	Description	Adopted Methods to Address
Subjectivity	Qualitative data can be influenced by community perceptions, biases and values. Whilst these aspects have sought to be validated through the data analysis conducted, there always remains the possibility of these influences remaining.	The SIA employed the method of data triangulation to reduce the potential for subjectivity and enhance the reliability of conclusions and strengthen the overall validity of the results obtained in the assessment process. Triangulation entails cross-referencing findings from multiple data sources (qualitative and quantitative), research methodologies (i.e. various methods employed by each technical assessment) and community perspectives (supportive, neutral and oppositional). Accordingly, the SIA draws on a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data sets, including Project specifications, baseline data, multiple sources of stakeholder engagement and technical studies conducted for the EIS.
Data Collection	Time and resource constraints and concern about consultation fatigue in communities make best practice social science data collection difficult to achieve.	In addition to stakeholder engagement data, the SIA has utilised the multiple sources of stakeholder engagement across the various technical studies undertaken for the EIS. Accordingly, the extent of data presented within the SIA is appropriate for the nature and scale of the Project.
Cumulative impacts	Cumulative impact assessments are carried out in accordance with Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for SSD. These assessments are typically based on the limited amount of publicly available information of surrounding projects applying for Development Approval. The limited extent of information, and associated knowledge gaps, results in a fragmented approach to forecasting cumulative social impacts. For example, there is limited data surrounding the various factors affecting the future supply and demand for housing, which could have an impact on the availability of accommodation for the non-local workforce.	Stakeholder engagement included asking direct questions about the perception of cumulative impacts to key stakeholders. Additionally, the SIA provides an overview of proximate SSDs with potential for cumulative impacts. The SIA has also considered the social implications of the cumulative impact assessments conducted by all relevant technical appendices of the EIS.

Limitations	Description	Adopted Methods to Address
Predictivity	SIAs are conducted before a project is implemented and subsequently prior to the community experiencing both Project benefits and impacts.	Some of the social impacts identified in this report are those which have the potential to occur in the future. In identifying and assessing potential impacts, the SIA has drawn on academic literature (with a focus on studies that have evaluated impacts of similar types of projects) and insights from experienced practitioners. In addition, consideration is given to existing and emerging community trends to help identify potential impacts that may occur, and their likely significance.

2.3 PHASE 3: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The primary and secondary data collected and compiled for the social baseline, including community voices, is then assessed with the rigorous impact significance methodology, as described in the Technical Supplement (2023b).

In this approach, impact significance is understood as the likelihood of an impact occurring combined with the magnitude of impacts, both positive and negative, and prior to the application of any mitigation or management measures. The likelihood level refers to the probability of a social impact occurring as a result of the Project, while the magnitude is considered as a combination of the following characteristics rated from very low to very high:

- **Extent:** Who specifically is expected to be affected (directly, indirectly, and / or cumulatively), including any potential vulnerable people? Which location(s) and people are affected? (e.g., near neighbours, local, regional);
- **Duration:** When is the social impact expected to occur? Will it be time-limited (e.g., over particular Project phases) or permanent?;
- **Severity:** What is the likely scale or degree of change? (e.g., mild, moderate, severe);
- **Sensitivity:** 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; and
- **Level of Concern / Interest:** How concerned / interested are people? Sometimes, concerns may be disproportionate to findings from technical assessments of likelihood, duration and / or severity. Concern itself can lead to negative impacts, while interest can lead to expectations of positive impacts.

Qualitative and quantitative indicators described in the social baseline are used to inform an understanding of the social impacts identified in the scoping phase across each of these five characteristics.

The **magnitude** for each impact from the following five levels can then be defined on the following scale:

- **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 highly, either lasting for 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; and
- **Minimal:** Little noticeable change experienced by people in the locality.

The likelihood of an impact occurring along with its magnitude of impact as assessed above combine to yield a rating of social impact significance, as described in **Table 2-2**.

TABLE 2-2 ADAPTED DPHI SOCIAL IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE MATRIX (2023B)

		Magnitude level				
		1 Minimal	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Transformational
Likelihood level	A Almost certain	Medium	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

*Where impacts are positive the following colour scale is used:

	Positive		Low	Medium	High	Very High
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2.4 PHASE 4: ENHANCEMENT, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS

Following the assessment of impacts, measures to avoid and / or minimise negative impacts are considered, including those implemented in earlier stages of Project planning and development. Where avoidance or minimisation is not possible, management strategies are identified. Where an impact is predicted to be positive, measures to enhance positive impacts are identified to ensure the maximum benefit to the community across all impact significance ratings.

The following factors (DPE 2023b, p. 15) were considered in the development of mitigation measures:

- Ensuring a clear connection between the mitigation measure and the negative social impact being mitigated;
- Whether there is an applicable standard that defines what is acceptable;
- Whether the Project is the sole or primary cause of the negative social impact, and the scale of its relative contribution to the overall or cumulative impact;
- Whether the mitigation measure requires action by another party separate to the proponent;
- Whether the mitigation measure itself is likely to cause secondary social impacts;
- Whether the mitigation measure is reasonable or practicable;
- Whether, and in what ways, the mitigation measure is acceptable to affected people;

- Whether the mitigation measure will address all reasonably foreseeable scenarios; and
- Whether the mitigation approach is prescribed in a government policy, or if alternative formalised arrangements are required.

Social impact significance, as outlined in **Table 2-2**, is used to determine the level of management required with a proportional focus on impacts with a higher impact significance (i.e., medium, high and very high). The impact assessment and impact significance ratings derived in the assessment are revised after the application of management and mitigation strategies have been applied to provide a residual impact significance rating for each impact.

These management and mitigation strategies are arranged according to Project phase (e.g., Construction and Operation) and into the following categories: stakeholder and community; employment and procurement; local disruptions during construction; accommodation and worker influx; land use and landscape, and cumulative impacts. The management and mitigation strategies summarised in **Section 7** provide a preliminary Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP). The preliminary SIMP focuses on effective, adaptive, and actionable measures and includes consideration of the likelihood of their implementation and sustainability from the community's perspective.

2.5 PHASE 5: MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The accuracy of the impact assessment, progress towards implementation of the SIMP, and the effectiveness of measures it contains is accompanied by a monitoring and management framework. The framework (and subsequent plan) includes a program for monitoring the predicted social impacts against actual impacts and describes:

- The desired outcomes in social terms, including measures and strategies detailed in the SIMP;
- The indicator(s) that will be used to monitor change;
- The targets against which performance will be assessed;
- The methods that will be used to monitor the social impact;
- The frequency of monitoring;
- The roles and responsibilities involved in the monitoring framework (and subsequent plan); and
- The process for responding to monitoring results, including the process, and roles and responsibilities for identifying and implementing adaptive management strategies as required.

The framework also outlines any relevant social incident notification and reporting process, a program for ongoing analysis of social impacts (positive and negative), identification of any data gaps and how they might be addressed, and processes for reviewing and reporting on the results of monitoring. Monitoring and evaluation plans are conditions typically applied during the Project's State assessment and approvals process. The framework outlined in **Section 7** provides the basis for developing a more detailed plan that will be required to meet this likely condition of approval, and will be consistent with any additional SIMP development that may also be required as conditions of approval.

3. SCOPING: SOCIAL LOCALITY AND STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

This chapter outlines the scoping process for the SIA, which focuses on defining the Social Locality and identifying key stakeholders. It provides detail to the physical and operational attributes of the Project to determine the impacted communities and routes, using demographic and geographic data to support the analysis. It also provides an overview and categorisation of stakeholders identified, including landowners, local councils, and Aboriginal communities, which is essential for undertaking targeted engagement, analysis of engagement data and impact mitigation strategies.

3.1 APPROACH TO DETERMINING THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

For the purposes of the SIA, these people include individuals, households, groups, communities, businesses, and other types of organisations. Key terms that categorise different members of the local population are provided below:

- *Receptors* are defined as those individuals or entities that are directly affected by the project. Various technical studies for the EIS refer to receptors who are directly impacted by changes to noise, air quality and traffic;
- *Stakeholders*, on the other hand, can refer to groups or organisations that represent several people with an interest in a SSD. Stakeholders can be more actively involved in the project, having a stake in its process and outcomes;
- *Sensitive receptors* typically refer to specific locations or populations that are particularly vulnerable to changes and impacts from a project. Examples include schools, hospitals, and communities with heightened environmental or social vulnerabilities;
- *Vulnerable groups* are subsets of the population that might experience disproportionate impacts due to their socioeconomic status, health, age, or cultural significance; and
- *Sensitive Receivers* is a term used in the visual impact assessment guidelines (Transport for NSW, 2023).

In determining the Project's Social Locality, the following Project aspects (refer to **Table 1-1**) were taken into consideration:

- The number of solar panels and their locations across the Project Area, and the layout of the access tracks, the substations, BESS and transmission line;
- The location of these components within the overall Project Area relative to sensitive land uses. This included proximity to environmental values and topographical features; and
- Construction, operation and decommissioning phase activities, such as:
 - Land clearing and ongoing access for maintenance;
 - Workforce requirements, including skills required and accommodation arrangements;
 - Goods and services required by the Project; and
 - Haulage routes to and from the Project Area.

When considering these aspects, it was determined that the Project's Social Locality should include the Project Area, the area surrounding the Project Area wherein noise, visual and other amenity impacts may occur, the haulage routes where similar amenity impacts may be experienced, and the communities in larger centres that may provide workers or goods and services to the Project.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

As stated in **Section 1.2**, the Project is situated in the rural locality of Garoo, within the Tamworth Regional LGA, approximately 40 km (by road) south of Tamworth and 370 km northwest of Sydney.

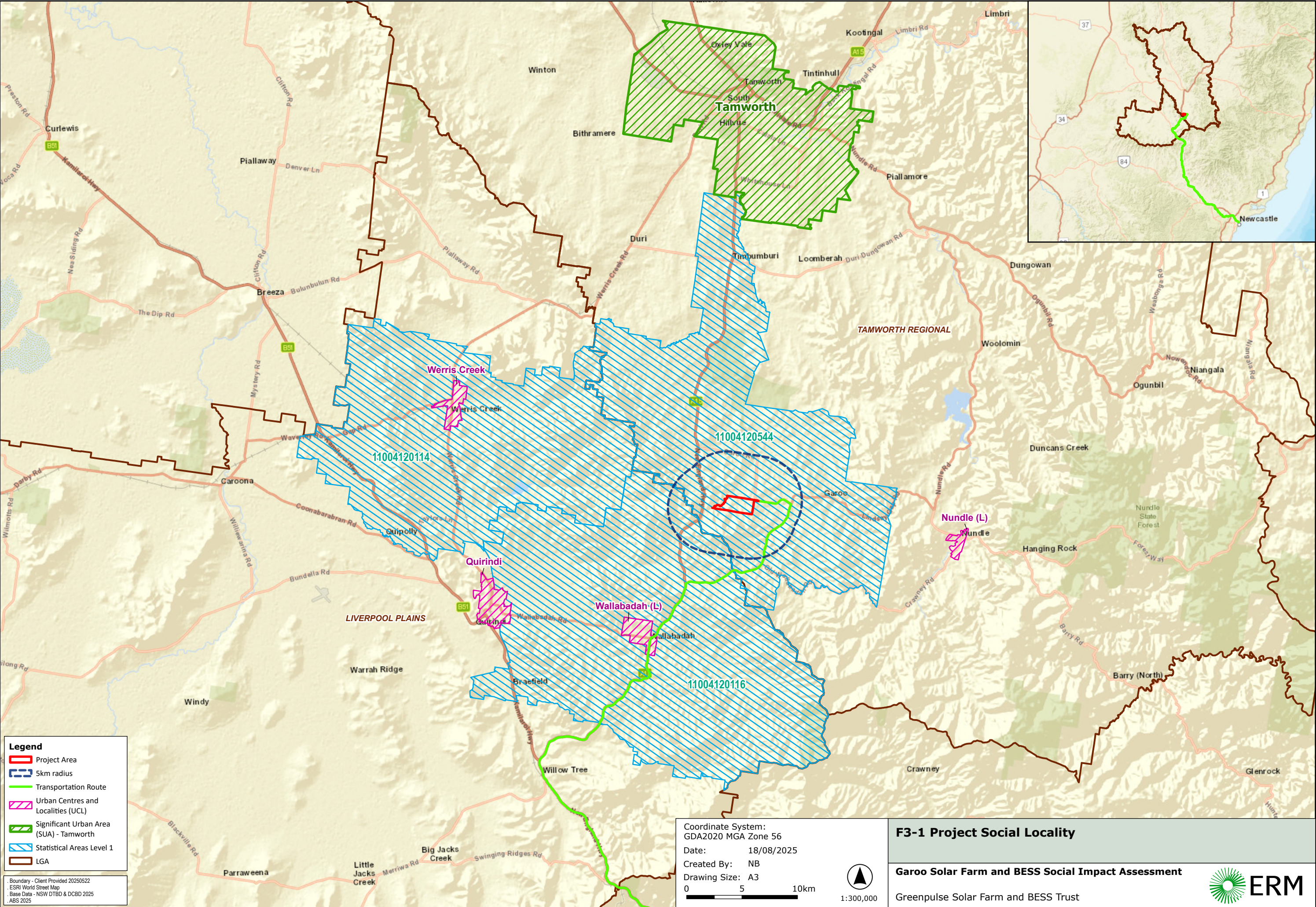
The Project Social Locality, as defined for the purposes of the SIA, is comprised of the following three components:

- The **Project Area and immediate surrounding areas** refers to the ABS Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) Nos. 11004120544 (containing the Project), SA1 11004120116 (adjacent to Project Area to the South), and SA1 11004120114 (adjacent to Project Area to the West). SA1 data has been used to identify key baseline indicators for the areas of the Social Locality immediately surrounding the Project Area, which encompasses sensitive receptors;
- The proposed **transportation and haulage routes** to the Project Area. The Port of Newcastle has been identified as the port where the solar farm and BESS plant will be imported. The route will follow the New England Highway, connecting the highway to the Project Area via Lindsays Gap Road and Garoo Road. Access is proposed via a new connection with Garoo Road at the northeast corner of the Project Area; and
- The **surrounding towns and regional centres** that may provide goods and services to support the Construction Phase of the Project include the following statistical areas: Tamworth Significant Urban Area (SUA), Werris Creek Urban Centres and Localities (UCL), Wallabadah UCL, Nundle UCL, and Quirindi UCL.

The data sets chosen for the Social Locality and identified in **Section 5**, will enable the following types of comparative statistical analysis:

- **Rural-urban analysis:** SUAs and UCLs establish baseline data for urban areas whilst SA1s surrounding UCLs represent low-density rural areas, which allows for a rural-urban analysis;
- **Hierarchical spatial analysis:** LGA and State data is included to allow for a hierarchical spatial analysis comparing local areas (SA1s and UCLs) to regional and State baselines. Besides Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310), Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920) is also considered as the Project Area is relatively closely located to the LGA border; and
- **Time-series analysis:** Including ABS data from the two most recent census years (currently 2016 and 2021) will allow for a time-series analysis to identify positive and negative socio-economic trends.

The Project Area and immediate surrounding areas, transportation and haulage routes, and surrounding towns and regional centres form the Social Locality, as depicted in **Figure 3-1**.



3.2.1 ABS DATASETS

The data presented in the baseline provides an understanding of the communities within the Social Locality, including the Project Area and immediate surrounding areas, local transportation and haulage routes and nearby towns and regional centres. It is noted that not all data sets (e.g., health, crime, transport) are readily available at a SA1 level. Where this is the case, the most appropriate data is presented, which may be at a LGA or regional level.

Table 3-1 outlines the primary ABS datasets used to provide key demographic data across the Project's Social Locality. Where available, 2016 and 2021 Census data is used for the purposes of comparative trend analysis. Prior to conducting a comparative trend analysis, it is crucial to ensure that land areas remain unchanged. There have been no changes to the land area and boundaries of the ABS Statistical Areas that comprise the Social Locality between 2016 and 2021. Although numerous changes were made to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard between 2016 and 2021 census (ABS, 2021b), changes to statistical area names and code numbers between 2016 and 2021 did not correspond to boundary or land area changes (as shown in **Table 3-1**).

TABLE 3-1 SUMMARY OF RELEVANT ABS DATASETS

Location	2016		2021	
	Approx. Area (km ²)	ABS Data Reference	Approx. Area (km ²)	ABS Data Reference
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	9,884.4	LGA17310	9,884.4	LGA17310
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	5,082.2	LGA14920	5,082.2	LGA14920
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	*	1120544	*	11004120544
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the South)	*	1120116	*	11004120116
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the West)	*	1120114	*	11004120114
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	240.7	1031	240.7	1032
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	5.5	UCL115152	5.5	UCL115157
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	6.5	UCL122157	6.5	UCL122148

Location	2016		2021	
	Approx. Area (km ²)	ABS Data Reference	Approx. Area (km ²)	ABS Data Reference
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	2.5	UCL122111	2.5	UCL122102
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	9.8	UCL115115	9.8	UCL115122
NSW Code 1 (STE)	800,810.8	Area Code 1	800,797.7	Area Code 1

3.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES FOR THE SIA

The Applicant has developed communication materials and implemented an engagement program to ensure transparent and meaningful engagement with the community and stakeholders. This approach has built an understanding of potential concerns, opportunities and mitigation strategies throughout the scoping and EIS phases. The engagement conducted has also collated information that will support communication during future stages of the Project, including construction and delivery.

Table 3-2 summarises the engagement undertaken in accordance with *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPHI, 2024a).

TABLE 3-2 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity	Description
Established communications channels and tools	- Created a Project website, email address and factsheet to promote community awareness, provide Project updates and respond to Project enquiries. - Implemented a stakeholder and feedback database to record engagements and Project sentiment.
Letters to introduce the Project	28 letters sent to individual residents and businesses, 25 located within 5km of the Project area (immediate neighbours).
Meetings	9 face-to-face meetings held - Meeting with NSW Member for Tamworth, The Hon. Kevin Anderson, Tamworth Regional Council Mayor, Cr Russell Webb, 6 immediate neighbours, and 2 surrounding community members held at immediate neighbours property on 22 July 2025. 3 meetings with immediate neighbours held at neighbours properties on 5 and 6 April 2025. 5 meetings held with government agencies 1 online meeting with immediate neighbour on 28 July 2025
Phone calls	32 phone calls to and from immediate neighbours and surrounding community members (30 neutral and 1 negative) >10 phone calls to and from government agencies
Emails	48 emails to and from immediate neighbours and surrounding community members (46 neutral and 2 negative) >20 emails to and from government agencies
Community engagement sessions	- Community sessions held on 4 April 2025 and 5 April 2025 at Gowrie Community Hall 10 attendees visited the session and were either immediate neighbours or surrounding community members.

Activity	Description
	Attendance by Federal Member for New England, The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP.

3.3.1 IDENTIFICATION OF KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Table 3-2 lists the stakeholder groups who have been or will be engaged throughout the Project lifecycle. Stakeholders have been grouped based on organisation type, individual interest or interaction with the Project.

This list will be updated in response to stakeholder feedback as the Project progresses.

TABLE 3-3 IDENTIFIED STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Potential interests/concerns
State and Federal elected Members	- The Hon. Kevin Anderson MP, State Member for Tamworth - The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP, Federal Member for New England	- Community consultation - Opposition to renewable energy projects - Community wellbeing, including visual amenity, audible impacts - Impact on local residents and businesses - Economic benefits - Impacts on local roads and infrastructure - Local job opportunities - Local skill requirements - Local accommodation requirements - Decommissioning
State and Federal representatives and agencies	- The Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) - NSW DPHI - NSW Biodiversity, Conservation and Science (BCS) directorate - NSW DCCEEW - Heritage NSW - Transport for NSW (TfNSW) - EnergyCo NSW - NSW Local Land Services - NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) - Regional Development Australia (RDA) Northern Inland Region - Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner - NSW Rural Fire Service - WaterNSW	- Community consultation - Community wellbeing - Project approval - Regulatory compliance - Environmental impact - Transport of materials to site - Local job opportunities - Local skill requirements - Decommissioning - Meeting renewable energy and emissions targets

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Potential interests/concerns
Local government – elected officials and executive staff	- Tamworth Regional Council - Cr Russel Webb, Mayor and elected councillors - Paul Bennett, General Manager - Peter Resch, Director Regional Services - Gina Vereker, Director Liveable Communities	- Community consultation - Community wellbeing - Impact on local residents and businesses - Economic benefits - Impacts on local roads and infrastructure - Impacts on accommodation - Impacts on tourism - Decommissioning, including materials to landfill
Aboriginal communities	- The Traditional Owners, the Kamilaroi / Gamilaroi / Gomeroi people of the Kamilaroi Nation - Nungaroo Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC)¹ - Tamworth LALC - The Tamworth Coalition of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations - Aboriginal Affairs NSW - Supply Nation - National Indigenous Australians Agency - AbSec - NTS Corp - Office of the Registrar of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act	- Community consultation - Impact on Aboriginal social, historical, scientific and aesthetic objects or values - Economic benefits including aboriginal participation through jobs and procurement - Impacts of construction traffic, health and safety
Host landowners/landholders	Individual landowner of the proposed site	- Individual consultation, access to private leased land - Noise - Visual amenity - Property values - Health and safety, including fire management - Construction disruption - Potential operation agreements / remuneration
Immediate neighbours	Neighbouring dwellings within 5 km of the proposed site	- Individual consultation, access to private leased land - Audible impacts - Visual amenity - Property values, health and safety - Construction disruption
Local community organisations and businesses	- Tamworth Business Chamber - Business NSW New England / North West - NSW Farmers' Tamworth District Branch - Local contractors and suppliers	- Community consultation - Community wellbeing - Business and workforce opportunities (during construction with influx of workers and ongoing operations) - Social and economic impacts

¹ Boundaries of Local Aboriginal Land Councils NSW, 2009, [Boundaries of Local Aboriginal Land Councils NSW](#) | Aboriginal Housing Office

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders	Potential interests/concerns
	- Service industries likely to benefit during construction – food and beverage, supermarkets - Nearby businesses such as Goonoo Goonoo Station - Local tourism organisations, including Tamworth Region and Tamworth Visitor Information Centre - Estate agents - Regional Aviation Association of Australia	- Health and safety, including fire management - Noise - Environmental impacts - Aboriginal heritage objects and values - Impact to flight paths
Utilities	- Transgrid - Ausgrid	- Supply of services - Fire management
Surrounding communities	Community members who live outside of the 5 km radius of the site	- Community consultation - Community wellbeing - Economic benefits/impacts - Impacts of construction traffic - Health and safety, including fire management
Local schools, religious organisations, clubs	- Wallabadah Public School - Lions and Rotary Clubs - Local churches	- Community consultation - Community wellbeing - Project milestones - Project budget - Local employment - Project updates - Community involvement and events
Local media	- Newspapers - Northern Daily Leader - The Tamworth Times - Radio stations 88.9FM Tamworth - ABC New England - Rhema FM 89.7 Tamworth 92.9FM Tamworth Radio - Facebook groups - Community Notice Board - Tamworth and District - Tamworth; who, what, when, where, how - Tamworth True	- Community consultation - Community wellbeing - Project milestones - Project budget - Local employment - Project updates - Community involvement and events
National/State media	National and state newspapers, radio and television	- Renewable energy targets - Carbon emission reductions - Community discontent/protests - Safety concerns - Environment or heritage impacts - Budget and timelines

3.3.2 ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Consultation with local Aboriginal communities has taken place in preparation of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR).

The aboriginal heritage survey was undertaken by ERM on 26 -28 February 2025, with representatives of the Representative Aboriginal Party's (RAPs) present.

The Aboriginal community consultation for the Project included four main stages:

- Stage 1: Notification of project proposal and registration of interest;
- Stage 2: Presentation of information about the proposed Project and assessment methodology to RAPs;
- Stage 3: Gather information about Cultural Significance; and
- Stage 4: Draft ACHAR issued to RAPs for review.

A total of 17 RAPs were identified. All RAPs were invited to provide feedback on cultural heritage significance, with a total of 12 RAPs attending the heritage survey. The draft ACHAR was submitted to RAPs on 23 May 2025.

The Applicant has sought and received feedback from the community throughout the EIS phase. Aboriginal community consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Consultation Requirements (NSW DECCW, 2010a). All correspondence was recorded in the Aboriginal Heritage Consultation Log.

3.3.3 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

This section provides insight in what was discussed during past and current engagements that is relevant to the SIA. In line with participatory research methods, SIA focused engagement by ERM recognises all stakeholders as key knowledge holders who can provide valuable information about the local community, economy, infrastructure and environment (Vanclay, 2003).

Table 3-4 provides a summary of the community views on the Project and where the topics have been addressed in relevant sections of the EIS and technical reports.

TABLE 3-4 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER VIEWS SUMMARY

Theme/Topic	Comment/Concern
Environmental impact	• Fire and fire risk - how fires would be managed • Land use - livestock grazing options and livestock setback requirements • Flora and fauna • Biosecurity - impact to stock and risk to Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) rating if grazing near or on the Project site. Biosecurity measures to prevent weed contamination. • Waste and water management - how the waste being produced on the site would be managed and potential heavy metal leaks from the solar panels internal systems into the soil or water.
Property value and insurance	• Potential decrease in property value • Perceived impact to insurance policies
Visual impact	• Loss of visual amenity at property and options for screen planting • Visual changes to the existing landscape
Compensation	• Compensation for impacted neighbours and for loss of value of capital improvements on farms • Fencing along neighbouring property boundaries upgraded or replaced
Transport and traffic	• Local road maintenance - roads already in poor condition and Council resources tend to be directed to more densely populated areas • Traffic movements and site/vehicle access for construction workers

Theme/Topic	Comment/Concern
Approval process	• The approval process for the Project
Accommodation	• Worker accommodation and cumulative impacts with other projects

4. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This section describes the legislative and regulatory context relevant to the SIA. The broader strategic context of the Project is provided in the EIS. As noted in Section 2, we acknowledge the update to the NSW SIA Guidelines released in July 2025. This project received its SEARs prior to that update, under the 2023 guidelines. Accordingly, the assessment has been prepared in line with the 2023 NSW Guideline and Technical Supplement.

4.1 NSW LEGISLATION

The SEARs requirements relevant to the SIA are presented in **Table 4-1**. Agency specific advice provided by the Tamworth Regional Council is presented in **Table 4-2**.

TABLE 4-1 SEARS REQUIREMENTS RELEVANT TO THE SIA

Issue	SEARs Requirement	Relevance to the SIA
Social impact	Social – including an assessment of the social impacts or benefits of the project for the region and the State as a whole in accordance with the SIA Guideline (DPE, 2023), including consideration of any increase in demand for community infrastructure services, and consideration of construction workforce accommodation.	This standalone SIA addresses this SEARs requirement.
Economic	Economic – including an assessment of the economic impacts or benefits of the project for the region and the State as a whole and provide details of any proposed voluntary benefit sharing, having regard for the Benefit-Sharing Guideline 2024 and Private Agreement Guideline 2024.	The Economic Assessment (Appendix S of the EIS) informs the impact assessment in Section 6 .
Consultation	During the preparation of the EIS, you should consult with the relevant local, State or Commonwealth Government authorities, infrastructure and service providers, community groups, affected landowners and any exploration licence and / or mineral title holders. In particular, you must undertake detailed consultation with affected landowners surrounding the development, the owners of all exploration licences across the proposed development site, the operator of any pipelines on or adjacent to the site, and all relevant government agencies, including the relevant local Council. The EIS must: • detail how engagement undertaken was consistent with the Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects (DPHI, 2024); • describe the consultation process and the issues raised and identify where the design of the development has been amended in response to these issues. Where amendments have not been made to address an issue, an explanation should be provided.	Outlines the broader consultation requirements for the EIS. Section 3.3 summarises consultation relevant to the SIA.

Issue	SEARs Requirement	Relevance to the SIA
Additional Consultation Requirements	Heritage – including: • An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) prepared in accordance with the Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW (OEH, 2011) and the Code of Practice for the Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW (DECCW, 2010), identifying, describing, and assessing any impacts to any Aboriginal cultural heritage sites or values associated with the site (including impacts from any proposed earth works, construction works and road upgrades), including results of archaeological test excavations (where required), undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards and requirements; • evidence of adequate consultation with Aboriginal communities in determining and assessing impacts, identifying and selecting options for avoidance of Aboriginal cultural heritage and identifying appropriate mitigation measures (including the final proposed measures), having regard to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents (DECCW, 2010), including the consultation process outlined within; and • assess the impact to historic heritage having regard to the Guidelines for Preparing a Statement of Heritage Impact, in consultation with Council. Landscape and Visual – including: • a landscape and visual impact assessment, prepared in accordance with the Solar Guideline and the Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; • a detailed assessment of the likely visual impacts of all components of the project on surrounding residences (including approved developments, lodged development applications and dwelling entitlements), and key locations, scenic of significant vistas and road corridors in the public domain; and • details of measures to mitigate and / or manage potential impacts (including a draft landscaping plan for on-site perimeter planting, with evidence it has been developed in consultation with affected landowners). Transport – including: • an assessment of the peak and average traffic generation, including light vehicles (including shuttle buses), heavy vehicles, heavy vehicles requiring escort, high risk heavy vehicles requiring escort (noting Table 1 in TfNSW Fact Sheet - Transport Management Plans for Over Size and / or Overmass Movements in NSW) and construction worker transportation; • an assessment of the likely transport impacts to the site access route(s), including the above listed vehicles, site access point(s), any Crown land, particularly in relation to the capacity and condition of the roads, road safety and intersection performance; • a concept Level Route Analysis required for high-risk heavy vehicles requiring escort; • a cumulative impact assessment of traffic from nearby developments (including mining operations and the Hexham Straight Project); and • provide details of measures to mitigate and / or manage potential impacts (developed in consultation with the relevant road authorities) including:	Additional consultation requirement for other technical studies have been referenced in Section 3.3.2 and have informed the assessment of social impacts in Section 6.

Issue	SEARs Requirement	Relevance to the SIA
	- a schedule of all required road upgrades (including resulting from heavy vehicle and over mass / over dimensional traffic haulage routes), - clear figures of proposed road upgrades (including the site access point); and - road maintenance contributions, and any other traffic control measures.	
Legislation, Policies & Guidelines	The assessment of the key issues listed above must take into account relevant guidelines, policies, and plans as identified. A list of some of the legislation, policies and guidelines that may be relevant to the assessment of the project can be found at: https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/planning-reforms/rapid-assessment-framework/improving-assessment-guidance https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/policies-and-guidelines; http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications#assessments	The NSW SIA Guidelines (DPE 2023a, 2023b) are discussed below (Section 4).

Additional elements of the SEARs relating to Landscape and Visual, Noise, Heritage, Land Use, Transport and Hazards are relevant to the SIA and are discussed in **Section 6**. The agency advice on SEARs have also been considered in this assessment.

TABLE 4-2 TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL AGENCY ADVICE FOR SEARS

Requirement	Agency Advice	Relevance to the SIA
Public consultation	• Publish newspaper notice in the Northern Daily Leader; • Display the EIS at 474 Peel Street, Tamworth (Council administration office); • Provide all documents electronically; • Conduct SIA prior to lodgement and include the outcomes and engagement in the EIS; and • Ensure consistency across the EIS and all other technical reports.	Stakeholder engagement relevant to the SIA is addressed in Section 3.3 of this report and Appendix D of the EIS.
Visual impact	• LCVIA detailing species, planning schedule, maintenance, and drought contingency; • Include a draft Landscaping Plan in the EIS and consult affected landowners; • Demonstrate existing views, visual impacts and screening effectiveness; • Use industry standard methods to assess impact on traffic and surrounding residents; and • Assess the visual impact on residents within 5km.	Visual impact is assessed in Section 6.5.2 of this report and the LCVIA is referenced as Appendix L in the EIS.
Residential receptors	• Given the 2 residents within 500 m and 14 residents within 4 km, the EIS must adequately consider all potential impacts on residential receptors, including but not limited to: ◦ Electro-magnetic energy and proximity of the electrical substation; ◦ Noise, traffic and visual impacts;	Residential receptors are discussed in Section 6.3.2 , Section 6.3.3 and Section 6.5.2 of this report.

Requirement	Agency Advice	Relevance to the SIA
	◦ Dust from construction activities; and ◦ Glint and flare of solar panels.	Noise impact is assessed in Appendix K, traffic impact is assessed in Appendix P and visual impact is assessed in Appendix L of the EIS.
Social impact	• Include mitigation measures in the EIS; • Assess housing and demographics across all projects; • Recommended CBF for Garoo and surrounds, • Address short-term and legacy housing options; • Include Garoo, Nundle and surrounds into an Engagement Strategy to respond to identified impacts.	Housing, demographics and housing options are addressed in Section 5. Mitigation measures/enhancement measures for each identified social impact and the CBF are addressed in Section 6.
Heritage	• Prepare and ACHAR per OEH (2011) and DECCW (2010) guidelines.	Heritage is addressed in Section 6.5.3 of this report and Appendix I of the EIS.
Traffic and access	• Include TIA in EIS to cover all phases of the Project; • Assess 24/7 traffic volumes; • Identify and assess per TfNSW, AUSTRROADS, Council standards; • Conduct dilapidation surveys and develop specific plans for dust management; • Upgrade Garoo Rd, Bulls Rd and Lindsays gap Rd; • Confirm Crown Title and meet relevant design standards; • Address lot consolidation and redundant roads; and • Conduct Level 3 bridge inspections.	Traffic and access is addressed in Section 6.3.2 of this report and Appendix P of the EIS.
Development contributions / planning agreement	• Discuss Planning Agreement with Council to consider road networks and communities; • Consider Section 7.12 under <i>EP&A Act 1979</i>; and • Encourage transparency and include in EIS as part of economic benefits.	Legislative and regulatory framework is outlined in Section 4 of this report and Appendix A of the EIS.
Biophysical impacts	• Identify impacts on aquifers and groundwaters table in EIS; and • Include analysis and mitigation across the Project lifecycle.	Analysis and mitigation measures are addressed in Section 6 of this report and Appendix H and O of the EIS.
Water	• Assess bore water impact on neighbouring supplies and develop waters use plan with TRC and landholders.	The environment and biodiversity is assessed in Section 6.3.4 and Appendix H and O of the EIS.

Requirement	Agency Advice	Relevance to the SIA
Agricultural impact	- Prepare Agricultural Impact assessment and explore agrisolar opportunities; and - Assess long-term loss of agricultural land from renewable developments.	Disruption to farming practices is assessed in Section 6.3.5 of this report and Appendix M of the EIS.
Decomissioning and waste	- Include Decommissioning Plan in EIS and consult TRC; - Define standards for land restoration; propose decommissioning bond; and - Develop pre-construction; include reuse/circular solutions, disposable logistics, and cumulative landfill impact.	Decommissioning is assessed in Section 3.7 of the EIS.
Biodiversity	- Require transparency on distance assessed and mitigation measures; and - Include options for local biodiversity offsets and consider inclusion in planning agreement.	Environment and biodiversity is assessed in Section 6.3.4 of this report and Appendix G of the EIS.
Stormwater and flooding	Assess minor/major stream events and prepare management and mitigation plans.	Stormwater and flooding is addressed in Section 6.10.1.3, Appendix N and Appendix O of the EIS.

4.2 NSW SIA GUIDELINES

DPE's *Social Impact Assessment Guideline: For State Significant Projects* ('the Guideline') (DPE, 2023a), *Technical Supplement: Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* ('Technical Supplement') (DPE, 2023b) and Social Impact Assessment Worksheet (scoping worksheet) (DPE, 2023c), together referred to as 'the Guidelines', provide the most up to date guidance on undertaking SIAs in NSW. Together they update the 2021 draft versions of the same documents and supersede the 2020 Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Mining, Petroleum, and Extractive Industry Development (DPIE, 2017) which had become the de facto guideline for all SSDs. The Guideline intends to provide a rigorous framework that aims to:

- identify, evaluate, and respond to social impacts;
- guide meaningful stakeholder and community consultation on social impacts throughout project phases;
- obtain reliable, relevant information, insights and analysis for decision-makers; and
- provide advice on how the SIA can inform ongoing project refinement, monitoring, and adaptive management.

The Technical Supplement provides additional specific advice including on how the SIA should be presented, how to define likelihood and magnitude levels of social impacts, and how to determine impact significance (DPE, 2023b). The Scoping Worksheet is a decision support tool that assists in identifying and considering the likely social impacts of the Project. It is a tool that can be used to demonstrate how scoping has informed the level of assessment undertaken. This SIA has been prepared in line with DPHI's preferred approach drawing on the Guideline, Technical Supplement and Scoping Worksheet.

4.3 STATE, REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

4.3.1 NSW ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE ROADMAP

The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (the Roadmap) outlines the NSW Government's plan to attain an energy sector that is affordable, clean and reliable. The Roadmap builds on the objectives of the Electricity Strategy and the Transmission Infrastructure Strategy.

The Roadmap sets out the plan to replace NSW's coal-fired power stations with renewable energies including wind and solar farms and battery storage. The Roadmap seeks to support the delivery of up to 12 Gigawatts (GW) of renewable electricity generation and up to 2 GW of long duration storage. This is enabled through the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020.

4.3.2 LARGE-SCALE SOLAR ENERGY GUIDELINE

The Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline (DPHI, 2022) provides comprehensive guidance for the planning, assessment and regulation of large-scale solar energy projects classified as SSD. The guideline aims to support communities, industry stakeholders, applicants, and regulators by clarifying the planning framework and outlining key considerations for solar development. Additionally, it covers the context of solar energy in NSW's transition to energy, identifies suitable areas for development and outlines the assessment process.

4.3.3 LAND USE PLANNING

The local environmental planning context relevant to the Project's land planning is summarised in **Table 4-3**. The EIS provides a broader overview of regional and local plans, policies and planning and how compliance and alignment with these plans is structured.

TABLE 4-3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS RELEVANT TO THE PROJECT

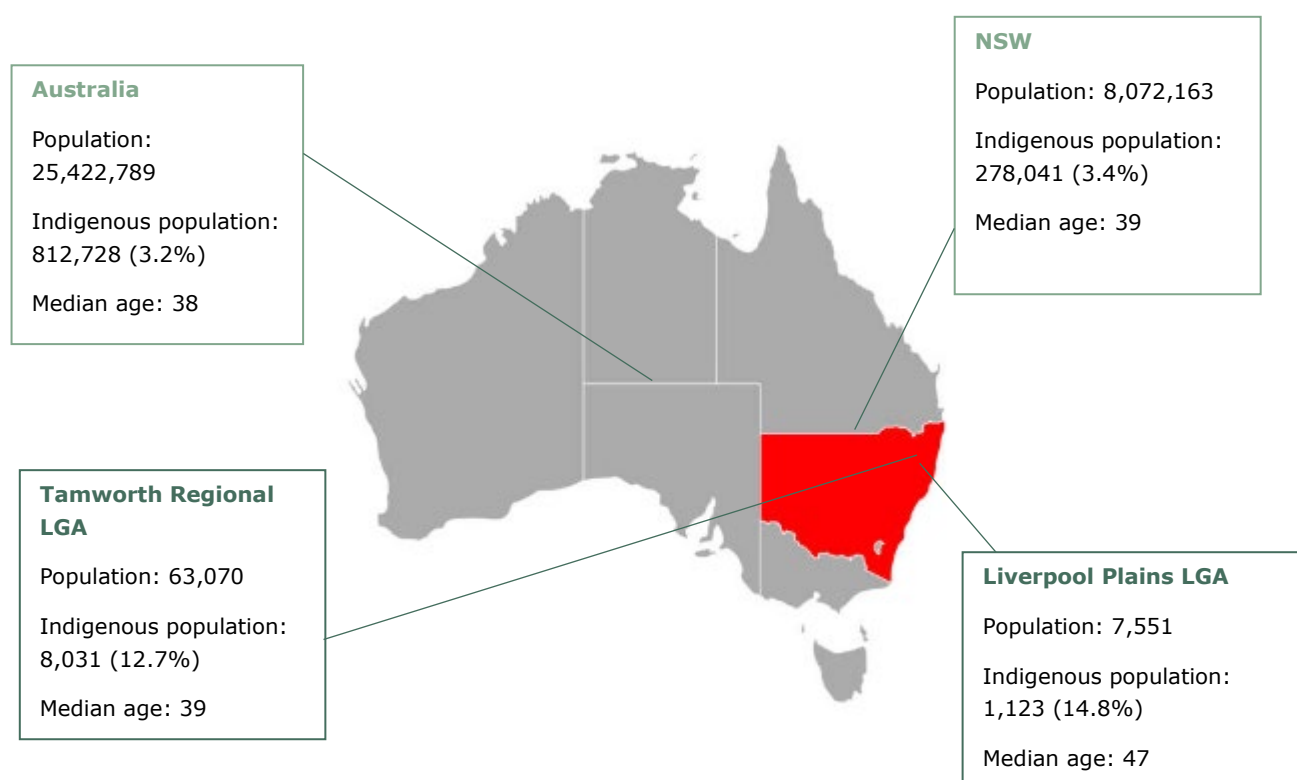
Policy/Plan	Description and Relevance
Tamworth Regional Local Environmental Plan (TRLEP) 2010	The TRLEP 2010, along with the Tamworth Regional Development Control Plan 2010 (TRDCP 2010), are undergoing a major review process. Both of these guidelines set standards for development within the Tamworth Regional LGA. The TRLEP 2010 outlines the development controls for land in the LGA; these being: • The zoning of land, whether residential, rural, commercial, industrial etc.; • If a development is permissible or prohibited and what can be undertaken in each zone; • Minimum lot sizes for subdivision, particularly important for residential and rural properties; • Entitlement requirements for rural properties (e.g. minimum area); • Areas and items of heritage significance and areas that are considered under conservation; and • Standards for development (e.g. maximum building height). The TRDCP 2010 sits below the TRLEP 2010 and gives detailed guidelines on how to undertake development on the land. The TRLEP 2010 has undertaken a phased review and as a result, the Council has adopted the Tamworth Regional Blueprint 100 Part Two: Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020 (LSPS 2020). The LSPS 2020 details future land use planning, development control amendments and the comprehensive review of the TRLEP 2010. A community Expression of Interest (EOI) process was undertaken in 2022 where local property owners were invited to identify possible amendments to the TRLEP 2020. As a result of both the staged comprehensive review and EOI, several potential amendments to the TRLEP 2010 have been identified. As of 27

Policy/Plan	Description and Relevance
	February 2024, the Council have prepared a planning proposal for Phase 1 of the TRLEP 2010 review and referred it to DPHI with a request for a Gateway Determination.
Liverpool Plains Local Environmental Plan (LPLEP) 2011)	The LPLEP 2011 sets standards and permissions that apply to land use and development within the Liverpool Plains LGA. The guideline operates under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and sets out the legal parameters for what landowners can conduct on the land, these being; • The zoning of land, whether residential, rural, commercial, industrial etc.; • If a development is permissible or prohibited and what can be undertaken in each zone; • Minimum lot sizes for subdivision, particularly important for residential and rural properties; • Entitlement requirements for rural properties (e.g. minimum area); • Areas and items of heritage significance and areas that are considered under conservation; and • Environmental protection, including biodiversity corridors and overlays for flood prone land. The LPLEP 2011 is supported by various maps, overlays that define zoning, heritage and environmental constraints. As of 21 June 2024, the LPLEP 2011 remains in use and continues to be updated regularly to reflect strategic planning priorities and community needs. Any proposed amendments must go through the formal planning process, including public consultation and approval by DPHI.

5. SOCIAL BASELINE

The baseline section aims to establish a thorough understanding of the current social, economic, and environmental contexts before the start of the Project. It provides a clear overview of existing conditions, serving as a reference point for assessing and measuring the Project's impacts. This analysis includes a detailed look at demographic profiles, economic activities, housing conditions, and community well-being within the Social Locality. By mapping these baseline conditions, potential vulnerabilities and opportunities are identified, ensuring that Project decisions and interventions are well-targeted and that mitigation strategies are tailored to the community's specific needs. This foundational knowledge is essential for predicting the Project's potential impacts and for planning sustainable development that aligns with the local community's socio-economic fabric. The findings in the baseline highlight the need for robust measures to mitigate noise, ensure safety, and control dust emissions, especially to protect the well-being of youth and the elderly, who may be more susceptible to environmental hazards.

A demographic snapshot contextualizing the location of the Project is outlined in **Figure 5-1**.



Source: ABS 2021a, ABS 2021b.

FIGURE 5-1 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT (2021 CENSUS)

5.1 LANDSCAPE, TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE CONTEXT

The Project site is located approximately 380 km north-west of Sydney and 40 km south of Tamworth Regional LGA near the southern boundary of Tamworth Regional and Liverpool Plains LGAs. The Project Area is spread over rural properties zoned 'RU1: Primary Production' for agricultural use. The land proposed to host the Project is currently used for agricultural activities, predominantly livestock grazing and irrigated cropping.

Natural features surrounding the Project include the Nundle State Forest, located approximately 65 km south-east of Tamworth. Natural landmarks in proximity to the Project include Wallabadah Nature Reserve and Melville Range nature Reserve.

The locality can be defined by four distinct landscape character areas that largely follow the cardinal directions (north, east, south, and west):

- **South of the Project:** To the south of the Project Area is the Crawney Pass National Park, which has a denser level of forest and is known for its vast visual charm. The township of Wallabadah is also located south-west of the proposed Project location and is accessible via the New England Highway or Wallabadah Road;
- **West of the Project:** To the south-west of the Project location is the Quirindi township and directly to the west is the Werris Creek township. These areas are typically less dense in forestry and defined by a more open agricultural landscape with rolling ridgelines. Werris Creek is accessible via Werris Creek Road and Gap Road, and Quirindi is accessible via Kamilaroi Highway and Hawker Street;
- **North of the Project:** Tamworth is located to the north of the Project and will provide primary goods and services. The main roads that run into Tamworth are Goonoo Goonoo Road, Duri Road, Oxley Highway, Manilla Road, Wallamore Road, Daruka Road and New England Highway. The landscape between the Project and Tamworth is characterised by open grass grazing land for agricultural use with minimal vegetation; and
- **East of the Project:** To the east of the Project Area is the Nundle State Forest and other landscapes that are characterised by dense forest and small mountain ranges. There is minimal accessibility through this area other than small and unmarked roads. This area is typically known as a tourist hotspot due to the visual amenity.

The Applicant has entered into Agreements with one landowner / entities hosting the Project. One parcel of Crown Land is located within the Project Area, for which the Applicant has obtained consent.

There is one associated dwelling located within the Project Area and zero associated dwellings outside of the Project Area but, within the associated land titles. There are 14 non-associated dwellings within 4 km of the Project Area.

5.2 POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 5-1 draws on the ABS datasets listed in **Table 3-1** to provide a demographic overview of the Social Locality. As outlined in **Section 3.2**, the Project Area is located within ABS SA1 11004120544.

Tamworth Regional LGA and Liverpool Plains LGA displayed contrasting population trends between 2016 and 2021, with an increase of 5.7% and a decrease of 1.8%, respectively. Whilst Tamworth SUA's population increased with 6.9%, smaller regional towns also displayed contrasting population trends between 2016 and 2021, with Wallabadah UCL experiencing a slight population increase of 1.9%, while Werris Creek, Nundle and Quirindi faced a population decline of 6.4%, 1.3% and 2.9%, respectively.

Population stagnation or slight decline in regional centres can intensify socio-economic challenges, such as labour shortages and infrastructure degradation, as these regions often have fewer alternative sources of economic activity to buffer against such impacts.

Even more contrast was visible in the Project's immediate surroundings, with the SA1 containing the Project's population declining 9.6% and the SA1 adjacent to the South with 7.7%, whilst the population in the SA1 adjacent to the West faced an increase of 9.8%.

The median age across these areas remains consistently higher than the NSW average (39), indicating an older demographic prevalent in all locations of the Social Locality², with the exception of Tamworth SUA (37).

ABS data relating to language, age, Indigenous populations and social disadvantage is assessed in **Sections 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4** respectively.

² Stable or stagnant increase or decrease generally refers to <1% annual change. When referring to slight, moderate, or high increases or decreases the report takes into consideration the rate of variability for the specific socio-economic indicator, the rate of change for NSW and the percentage of change.

TABLE 5-1 KEY POPULATION INDICATORS ACROSS THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Year	Population	Population Change (%)	Median Age	Median Weekly Household Income (\$)	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Pop. (%)	Pop. Over 65 Years of Age (%)	Pop. Under 14 Years of Age (%)	Households where a non-English language is used (%)
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)								
2021	63,070	5.7 (3,407)	39	1,416	12.7 (8,031)	19.8 (12,525)	20.2 (12,704)	6.8 (1,602)
2016	59,663		40	1,180	10.1 (6,040)	18.8 (11,162)	20.2 (12,113)	4.6 (1,077)
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)								
2021	7,551	-1.8 (136)	47	1,165	14.8 (1,123)	24.6 (1,858)	17.7 (1,333)	3.5 (101)
2016	7,687		45	1,032	12.4 (959)	22.3 (1,719)	18.8 (1,448)	2.1 (68)
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)								
2021	359	-9.6 (38)	45	2,015	4.2 (9)	19.2 (71)	19.3 (71)	0.0 (0)
2016	397		42	1,763	1.8 (7)	15.0 (59)	23.1 (92)	2.1 (3)
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the South)								
2021	489	-7.7 (41)	47	1,625	5.3 (18)	22.4 (112)	19.2 (96)	0.0 (0)
2016	530		45	1,213	5.6 (29)	18.3 (97)	21.1 (112)	1.5 (3)
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the West)								
2021	345	9.8 (31)	43	1,899	4.9 (14)	22.0 (74)	21.3 (72)	0.0 (0)
2016	314		44	1,386	5.8 (15)	14.8 (45)	20.4 (62)	2.4 (3)

Year	Population	Population Change (%)	Median Age	Median Weekly Household Income (\$)	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Pop. (%)	Pop. Over 65 Years of Age (%)	Pop. Under 14 Years of Age (%)	Households where a non-English language is used (%)
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)								
2021	43,874	6.9 (2,868)	37	1,411	14.1 (6,197)	18.9 (8,336)	20.6 (9,045)	8.4 (1,389)
2016	41,006		37	1,184	11.3 (4,637)	17.8 (7,287)	20.5 (8,417)	5.5 (895)
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)								
2021	1,349	-6.4 (93)	50	917	23.5 (316)	30.3 (412)	16.6 (224)	3.5 (20)
2016	1,442		50	763	20.5 (297)	28.4 (413)	16.5 (238)	1.1 (7)
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)								
2021	216	1.9 (4)	58	919	13.4 (22)	32.0 (67)	10.0 (21)	0.0 (0)
2016	212		56	774	8.1 (14)	28.2 (63)	11.2 (25)	0.0 (0)
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)								
2021	314	-1.3 (4)	56	712	7.0 (23)	31.5 (96)	15.3 (47)	0.0 (0)
2016	310		53	671	9.8 (27)	34.8 (109)	15.9 (56)	2.5 (4)
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)								
2021	2,602	-2.9 (78)	47	1,084	18.2 (474)	27.2 (707)	17.9 (467)	4.3 (43)
2016	2,680		44	951	15.3 (411)	24.9 (667)	18.0 (483)	3.2 (36)
NSW Code 1 (STE)								
2021	8,072,163	7.9 (591,935)	39	1,829	3.4 (278,041)	17.7 (1,424,141)	17.9 (1,470,001)	29.5 (856,911)
2016	7,480,228		38	1,486	2.9 (216,177)	16.2 (1,217,646)	18.5 (1,386,328)	26.5 (735,563)

**Changes were made to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) between 2016 and 2021 census (ABS, 2021b), including statistical area names and code numbers. This report references the 2021 ASGS names and codes for all statistical areas.*

5.3 ECONOMIC PROFILE

This section includes data on various economic aspects of the Social Locality. This includes an overview of the Social Locality's workforce, including information on top occupations of employment, main industries and characteristics of local businesses.

5.3.1 MAIN OCCUPATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Table 5-2 presents the top occupations of employment within the Social Locality to provide insight on the Social Locality's economic profile.

The LGAs that include the Social Locality contains an approximate workforce of 33,216 with 11,222 workers with relevant occupations and skill sets. This translates to 41.1% of the labour force with relevant occupations: Labourers (39.7%), Technicians and Trades Workers (38.7%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (21.5%).

More specifically:

- The grouped SA1s³ present a total labour force of 662 workers, of which almost a third (186 / 28.1%) are employed in relevant occupations. Labourers contribute to 34.9% of this workforce (9.8% in total workforce across the grouped UCLs*), where Machinery Operators and Drivers contribute to 30.1% (8.5%*) and Technicians and Trades Workers contribute to 34.9% (9.8%*);
- The grouped UCLs⁴ present a total labour force of 1,655 workers, of which almost half (672 / 40.6%) are employed in relevant occupations. Labourers contribute to 34.8% of this workforce (14.1% in total workforce across the grouped UCLs*), where Machinery Operators and Drivers contribute to 34.8% (15.2%*) and Technicians and Trades Workers contribute to 27.8% (11.3%*); and
- The Tamworth SUA presents a total labour force of 20,564 workers, of which a third (6,980 / 33.9%) are employed in relevant occupations. Labourers contribute to 43% of this workforce (26.8% in total workforce across the SUA*), where Machinery Operators and Drivers contribute to 18.6% (11.5%*) and Technicians and Trades Workers contribute to 38.4% (23.9%*).

TABLE 5-2 CATEGORISATION TOP OCCUPATIONS WITHIN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Location	Census Year	Labour Force (#)	Technicians and Trades Workers (%)	Machinery Operators and Drivers (%)	Labourers (%)
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	2021	29,980	14.0 (4,000)	7.0 (2,009)	14.0 (4,024)
	2016	27,597	14.4 (3,740)	6.9 (1,786)	14.1 (3,678)
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	2021	3,236	11.4 (347)	13.4 (407)	14.3 (435)
	2016	3,256	11.4 (342)	12.4 (373)	15.2 (459)
	2021	213	6.1 (13)	5.2 (11)	6.6 (14)

³ SA1 11004120544, SA1 11004120116, and SA1 11004120114.

⁴ Werris Creek UCL, Wallabadah UCL, Nundle UCL, and Quirindi UCL.

Location	Census Year	Labour Force (#)	Technicians and Trades Workers (%)	Machinery Operators and Drivers (%)	Labourers (%)
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	2016	220	10.6 (24)	1.8 (4)	6.6 (15)
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the South)	2021	267	14.0 (37)	10.6 (28)	12.1 (32)
	2016	268	10.2 (25)	12.2 (30)	9.4 (23)
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the West)	2021	182	8.7 (15)	9.8 (17)	11.0 (19)
	2016	164	12.7 (20)	12.0 (19)	10.1 (16)
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	2021	20,564	13.7 (2,682)	6.6 (1,296)	15.4 (3,002)
	2016	18,914	14.3 (2,533)	6.5 (1,149)	14.8 (2,618)
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	2021	461	14.0 (58)	21.4 (89)	15.7 (65)
	2016	449	13.4 (51)	17.8 (68)	17.0 (65)
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	2021	79	6.2 (4)	18.8 (12)	12.5 (8)
	2016	96	14.3 (12)	6.0 (5)	16.7 (14)
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	2021	91	4.8 (4)	6.0 (5)	24.1 (20)
	2016	98	9.3 (9)	8.2 (8)	22.7 (22)
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	2021	1,024	12.8 (121)	15.4 (145)	14.9 (141)
	2016	1,084	13.7 (134)	138 (14.1)	149 (15.2)
NSW Code 1 (STE)	2021	3,874,012	11.9 (436,589)	6.0 (222,186)	8.2 (300,966)
	2016	3,605,872	12.7 (429,239)	6.1 (206,839)	8.8 (297,887)

5.3.2 MAIN INDUSTRIES WITHIN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Table 5-3 provides a categorisation of the top eight industries per statistical area based on five categories:

- Agriculture and Primary Production⁵;
- Public and Social Services⁶;
- Commercial and Retail Services⁷;
- Industrial and Manufacturing Services⁸; and

⁵ Agriculture and Primary Production comprises the following ABS categories: 'Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing'.

⁶ Public and Social Services comprises the following ABS categories: 'Public Administration and Safety', 'Education and Training' and 'Healthcare and Social Assistance'.

⁷ Commercial and Retail Services comprises the following ABS categories: 'Wholesale trade', 'Retail Trade' and 'Accommodation and Food Services'.

⁸ Industrial and Manufacturing Services comprises the following ABS categories: 'Mining' and 'Manufacturing'.

- Construction and Infrastructure⁹.

The Social Locality displays a mixed economic composition with strong employment in Public and Social Services and negligible industrial and construction activities. This suggests economic vulnerability and a need for economic diversification in the Social Locality and that the Project may be perceived as introducing changes to the cultural landscape.

The data presents:

- The highest percentage of workers from the grouped UCLs were found to be occupied in the Public and Social Services Industry (26.9%). The next largest industry was Commercial and Retail Services (18.4%). There was no trending change from 2016 for those occupied across the industries;
- In the Tamworth SUA, the largest industry was Commercial and Retail Services (19.3%) with the next largest being Public and Social Services (17.5%). These industries experienced a growth between 2016 and 2021 of 116.7% and 111.2%, respectively. While the Industrial and Manufacturing Services is not the largest industry it did experienced a growth of 72.0% during the same period; and
- In comparison, the grouped LGAs have the largest amount of the workforce employed in the Public and Social Services Industry (47.3%) and Industrial and Manufacturing Services (20.2%). There has been a decline across the LGAs between the 2016 and 2021 Census period in the Agricultural and Primary Production (-35.3%), Commercial and Retail Services (-53.5%) and Construction and Infrastructure (-21.6%) industries. This may suggest that there is a need to focus on employment in these industries or potential sourcing of external goods and services to support the Project without impacting the region.

TABLE 5-3 CATEGORISATION OF TOP INDUSTRIES IN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Location	Census Year	Agriculture and Primary Production (%)	Public and Social Services (%)	Commercial and Retail Services (%)	Industrial and Manufacturing Services (%)	Construction and Infrastructure (%)
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	2021	4.9 (906)	42.3 (7,883)	12.3 (2,287)	23.9 (4,468)	9.4 (1,744)
	2016	12.9 (1,731)	58.2 (7,814)	40.1 (5,387)	16.6 (2,233)	17.0 (2,288)
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	2021	22.7 (692)	23.1 (734)	14.1 (429)	7.9 (243)	7.0 (214)
	2016	24.5 (737)	24.1 (726)	15.1 (454)	7.1 (215)	6.9 (208)
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	2021	2.2 (437)	18.4 (3,591)	20.3 (3,970)	10.9 (2,140)	8.6 (1,679)
	2016	1.9 (350)	9.6 (1,700)	10.3 (1,832)	7.0 (1,244)	7.6 (1,337)
Werris Creek UCL	2021	2.7 (11)	23.1 (96)	20.7 (86)	9.4 (39)	9.4 (39)
	2016	2.5 (10)	23.5 (93)	19.9 (79)	5.8 (23)	7.6 (30)

⁹ Construction and Infrastructure comprises the following ABS categories: 'Construction' and 'Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services'.

Location	Census Year	Agriculture and Primary Production (%)	Public and Social Services (%)	Commercial and Retail Services (%)	Industrial and Manufacturing Services (%)	Construction and Infrastructure (%)
(UCL115157)						
Wallabada h UCL (UCL122148)	2021	12.5 (8)	21.9 (14)	17.2 (11)	9.4 (6)	0.0 (0)
	2016	8.1 (7)	23.3 (20)	11.6 (10)	0.0 (0)	13.9 (12)
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	2021	8.4 (7)	37.3 (31)	28.9 (24)	6.0 (5)	3.6 (3)
	2016	11.6 (11)	29.5 (28)	23.2 (22)	3.2 (3)	7.4 (7)
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	2021	5.3 (54)	29.8 (305)	17.9 (183)	8.6 (88)	6.9 (71)
	2016	6.2 (67)	28.3 (307)	18.1 (196)	8.8 (95)	7.3 (79)
NSW Code 1 (STE)	2021	2.0 (74,728)	29.2 (1,074,321)	17.9 (662,418)	6.4 (237,060)	9.5 (351,104)
	2016	2.1 (72,625)	26.9 (908,936)	19.8 (669,340)	6.8 (229,067)	9.3 (314,372)

*This data was not available for SA1s in 2016 and 2021.

5.3.3 LOCAL BUSINESSES IN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Data relating to the 'Counts of Australian Businesses' (ABS, 2025c) was used to provide insight in the characteristics of local businesses within the Social Locality. This data is available at LGA level.

As presented in **Table 5-4**, the two LGAs host a total of 7,203 businesses, of which most (2,095) are in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, followed by 1,218 businesses in the Construction industry. This may include relevant businesses for the Construction Phase of the Project. It is noticeable that almost all businesses in the Social Locality employ less than 19 people and many are non-employing at all. It should also be noted that counts are heavily influenced by entry and exits within Australia's small business sector, and the scope of business counts is limited to businesses actively remitting in a Goods and Services Tax (GST) role only.

TABLE 5-4 NATURE OF LOCAL BUSINESSES IN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Location	Total Businesses	Of which with <19 employees	Industry 1	Total / non-employing	Industry 2	Total / non-employing	Industry 3	Total / non-employing
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA1731)	6,138	97.6 (5,994)	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	24.9 (1,528) / 1,251	Construction	18.3 (1,121) / 556	Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	7.9 (484) / 408
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA1492)	1,065	99.5 (1,060)	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	53.2 (567) / 429	Construction	9.1 (97) / 61	Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	8.1 (86) / 80

5.4 VULNERABLE GROUPS

Vulnerability refers to an individual or groups capacity to adapt to, or cope with changes in their environment and is influenced by a range of different socio-economic factors. Some individuals or groups may be more vulnerable than others due to certain existing socio-economic characteristics including (but not limited to) age, livelihood, language proficiency and health status.

Regional towns throughout NSW are often prone to social, cultural, environmental and economic changes over time. This section considers four groups across the Social Locality with potential social vulnerabilities associated with socio-economically disadvantage, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD), age, and Indigenous peoples.

5.4.1 CULTURAL AND LINGUISTICAL DIVERSITY

CALD is a broad term used to describe communities with diverse languages, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, traditions, societal structures and religions (Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, 2012). CALD groups are often considered vulnerable people. As per the SIA Guidelines (DPE 2023a, 2023b) special attention is required to ensure culturally appropriate and inclusive engagement.

Demographic data of the Social Locality shows that:

- The percentage of households where a non-English language is used in 2021 in the Tamworth Regional LGA is 6.8% and in the Liverpool Plains LGA is 3.5%; and
- Overall, the Social Locality shows significantly lower percentages than those in the State and in Australia, with the NSW percentage at 29.5% and the national average at 24.8%.

The Australian Governments Department of Home Affairs provides a free interpreting service, which is accessible to any non-English speaking household living in Australia (Department of Home Affairs, 2024).

5.4.2 YOUTH AND ELDERLY

Youth and elderly populations are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of large development projects due to their specific mobility, health, safety, and social needs. During the construction, operation and decommissioning phases, the Project impacts that have potential to exacerbate the needs of youth and elderly groups are concentrated to the immediate surroundings of the Project Area.

Demographic data of the Social Locality (refer to **Table 5-1**) shows that:

- 20.4% (14,383 individuals) of the population of the two LGAs is over 65 years of age. This number increased by 11.7% (1,502 individuals) since 2016;
- In the three SA1s, the percentage of the population above 65 years ranged from 19.2% up to 22.4% in 2021. Across the grouped SA1s there was a total of 257 individuals, making up 21.5% of the population. This population group has increased, on average by 5.1% across the grouped SA1s since 2016;
- In the grouped UCLs, there were 1,282 individuals (28.6%) over the age of 65. This increased by 1.7% between 2016 and 2021, where the population was slightly declining during the same period;

- Compared to the State (17.7% / 1,424,141 individuals), the Social Locality displays a greater portion of the population being over the age of 65;
- When it comes to youth, 19.8% (14,037 individuals) of the population of the grouped LGAs is under 14 years of age. This number decreased by 3.5% (476 individuals) since 2016;
- In the three SA1s, the percentage of the population under 14 years ranged from 19.2% up to 21.3% in 2021. Across the grouped SA1s there was a total of 239 individuals, making up 20.0% of the population. This population group has decreased, on average by 1.6%, across the grouped SA1s since 2016;
- In the grouped UCLs, there were 759 individuals (16.9%) under the age of 14. This decreased by 0.4% between 2016 and 2021, where the population was slightly declining during the same period; and
- Compared to the State (17.9% / 1,470,001 individuals), the Social Locality generally displays a greater portion of the population being under the age of 14.

5.4.3 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

Aboriginal population communities are culturally vulnerable to the Project impacts that may affect tangible and intangible heritage, particularly given past practices and government policies that may have created detachment from traditional lands.

Demographic data of the Social Locality (refer to **Table 5-1**) shows that:

- The grouped SA1s have a very small proportion of First Nations people, and this number has slightly increased over time (from an average of 4.4% of the overall population in 2016 to 4.8% in 2021);
- An increase of the proportion of First Nations peoples within the populations from 2016 to 2021 was visible in grouped UCLs of the Social Locality, where the population decreased from 26.9% to 18.6%, respectively. In 2021, Werris Creek hosted 316, Wallabadah 22 and Nundle 23 and Quirindi 474 First Nations people;
- This increase was also noticeable in LGAs in the Social Locality, increasing from 10.1% to 12.7% in the Tamworth Regional LGA and 12.4% to 14.8% in the Liverpool Plains LGA; and
- The Social Locality's proportion of First Nations people is generally higher than that of NSW (2.9% in 2016, and 3.4% in 2021).

Table 5-5 provides the weekly median household income, median age and employment data of First Nations across the Social Locality. This data is not available as SA1 level.

Demographic data of the Social Locality shows that:

- Median weekly household incomes of First Nations people are higher than that of the general population in some UCLs (with a difference of \$706 in Wallabadah, \$121 in Nundle and \$106 in Werris Creek and \$110 in Quirindi), whilst the Tamworth SUA is lower (with a difference of \$19);
- Across the grouped SA1s, First Nations median household incomes are significantly overrepresented showing a significantly higher income, in comparison to the general population (with an average difference of \$334 more);

- In comparison, in the LGAs the weekly median household income of First Nations people is significantly lower than that of the overall population in the Liverpool Plains LGA (with a difference of \$352) and higher in the Tamworth Regional LGA (with a difference of 3);
- The median age of First Nations people in the Social Locality ranges from 21 (Tamworth SUA) to 42 (Wallabadah UCL). In comparison, that of the general population in the Social locality ranges from 37 (Tamworth SUA) to 58 (Wallabadah UCL);

While the data is representative of the population, it should be noted that it may not be considered a completely accurate assumption as the median household income significantly overrepresents the First Nations people.

While acknowledging this data is presented by the ABS, it should be expected that traditionally underrepresented groups within rural communities will tend to be more negatively impacted as a result.

TABLE 5-5 INDIGENOUS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Location	Census Year	Median Weekly Household Income (\$)	Unemployment (%)	Median Age (#)
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	2021	1,419	11.2 (339)	21
	2016	1,106	16.0 (329)	21
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	2021	1,128	17.0 (66)	27
	2016	986	18.8 (61)	27
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	2021	1,392	-	21
	2016	1,048	-	20
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	2021	2,125	-	31
	2016	0	-	16
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to the Project area to the South)	2021	2,250	-	19
	2016	1,874	-	22
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to the Project area to the West)	2021	2,166	-	18
	2016	1,625	-	21
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	2021	1,023	-	29
	2016	1,010	-	28
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	2021	1,625	-	42
	2016	1,124	-	26
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	2021	833	-	27
	2016	1,083	-	44
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	2021	1,194	-	26
	2016	978	-	27

Location	Census Year	Median Weekly Household Income (\$)	Unemployment (%)	Median Age (#)
NSW Code 1 (STE)	2021	1,558	9.8 (10,322)	23
	2016	1,214	15.3 (11,827)	22

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unemployment (%) data is not available at a SUA, SA1 or UCL level in 2016 and 2021 data sets.

5.4.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

SEIFA is a product developed by the ABS¹⁰ that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census, with SEIFA 2021 based on Census 2021 data. The SEIFA is commonly used to determine areas that require funding and services, identify new business opportunities, and assist research into the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and various social outcomes. A relative measure of socio-economic disadvantage was first produced by the ABS following the 1971 Census while the SEIFA in its present form was first produced from the 1986 Census data (ABS 2018b).

The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) used in the SEIFA 2021 is the same as that used for the previous three censuses (2016, 2011 and 2006). IRSAD is a general measure of advantage and disadvantage, summarising the economic and social conditions of people and households. It ranks areas from most disadvantaged to most advantaged. The SEIFA scores are a percentile score, which divides a distribution into 100 equal groups. The lowest scoring 1% of areas are given a percentile number of 1 and the highest 1% of areas are given a percentile number of 100. A score of 50 suggests an area is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged. The ABS broadly defines relative socio-economic advantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society. This is broadly defined in recognition of the many concepts that have emerged in the literature to describe advantage and disadvantage.

The dimensions included in SEIFA are guided by international research, given the constraints of Census data. The Census does collect information on the key dimensions of income, education, employment, occupation, housing, and some other miscellaneous indicators of advantage and disadvantage; these are the candidate variables used to construct the SEIFA (ABS 2018b).

The latest available SEIFA indicators across the Project's Social Locality are reported in **Table 5-6**. Stability in the Liverpool Plains LGA suggests consistent socio-economic conditions on average, while declines in the Tamworth Regional LGA and the SA1 areas imply an increasing rate of lesser advantage in the population on average.

¹⁰ Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census, available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-technical-paper/2021#what-is-seifa->.

Data presents:

- In 2021, SEIFA scores of the SA1s ranged from 979 to 1,055 with the highest percentile ranking found in SA1 11004120544, area containing the Project, (percentile 70 in Australia and percentile 63 in NSW), and the lowest percentile ranking found in SA1 11004120114, area adjacent to Project Area to the West, (percentile 40 in Australia and percentile 38 in NSW);
- In comparison, the SEIFA scores of the LGAs in 2021 were 937 (Tamworth Regional LGA) and 905 (Liverpool Plains LGA), which is lower in score than the SA1s; and
- Overall, the Social Locality presents declining percentiles from 2016 to 2021, which indicate declining socio-economic conditions and increased disadvantages over the course of time.

TABLE 5-6 SEIFA INDICATORS ACROSS THE PROJECT'S SOCIAL LOCALITY

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Score	Rank in Australia	Percentile in Australia	Rank in NSW	Percentile in NSW
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	2021	937	202	37	39	31
	2016	947	224	42	53	41
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	2021	905	98	18	12	10
	2016	906	90	17	15	12
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	2021	1,055	40,977	70	11,795	63
	2016	1,086	43,772	80	13,018	74
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the South)	2021	1,020	32,903	56	9,617	51
	2016	1,011	28,188	52	8,684	50
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the West)	2021	979	23,311	40	7,038	38
	2016	999	25,517	47	7,945	46

*SEIFA is not provided for AUS, UCLs and SUAs Statistical Areas, and is not relevant to the State.

5.5 HOUSING AND ACCOMODATION

This section provides an overview of key income data, housing affordability / availability and household census data statistics. Further baseline data for short-term housing capacity and pressures are provided in **Appendix B**. A key aim of collecting baseline data for long and short-term housing is to inform the assessment of accommodation generated from worker influx during the Construction Phase (refer to **Section 6.4.1**).

Key income and housing indicators across the Project's Social Locality are reported in **Table 5-7**. Housing costs data is presented in combination with household incomes, and participation of the labour force (including unemployment figures). Trends across short-term and long-term housing options are included further in this section to gain further insight into housing availability. The purpose of this section is to inform the assessment of employment and procurement options, as well as accommodation pressures generated from worker influx, particularly during the Construction Phase.

Housing and income data from **Table 5-7** shows:

- Household income in the Social Locality has increased from 2016 to 2021 at all locations but in 2021 is consistently below the State average (\$1,829), except for SA1 11004120114 and SA1 11004120116;
- The percentage of rent / mortgage monthly repayments exceeding 30% of household income—a key indicator of housing stress—has significantly increased over time at all locations within the Social Locality, except for the SA1s (all three SA1 experienced a decrease in mortgage repayments as a percentage of the household income);
- Unemployment rates in the Social Locality are higher than that of the State (4.9%), with the exception of the SA1s and Nundle (3.3%);
- The percentage of houses owned outright are significantly higher than the State (31.5%) at all locations of the Social Locality, except for Tamworth SUA; and
- Additionally, whilst the SA1s show household compositions with more families than the State (71%), nearby towns show a more diverse household compositions with a lower percentage of families and more singles and / or groups.

5.5.1 INCOME AND HOUSING

TABLE 5-7 KEY INCOME AND HOUSING INDICATORS IN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Location	Census Year	Median weekly household income (\$)	Median weekly household income (\$) – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Percentage change in weekly household income (%) – Whole Population / Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population	Unemployment (%)	Rent / mortgage monthly repayments > 30% household income* (%)	Owned outright / Owned with mortgage / rented (%)	Household composition (families / single / group) (%)
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	2021	1,416	1,419	20.0 (236) / 28.3 (313)	4.5 (1,341)	32.8 (2,403) / 10.7 (791)	33.6 (7,934) / 31.3 (7,382) / 31.1 (7,336)	68.5 (16,167) / 28.5 (6,726) / 3.1 (722)
	2016	1,180	1,106		5.8 (1,609)	11.1 (N/A) / 5.3 (N/A)	33.9 (7,372) / 31.1 (6,763) / 30.9 (6,729)	69.4 (15,096) / 27.5 (5,972) / 3.1 (678)
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	2021	1,819	1,467	76.3 (787) / 48.7 (481)	6.6 (6,361)	41.2 (10,041) / 23.0 (6,170)	23.0 (15,937) / 38.7 (26,804) / 35.2 (24,377)	80.9 (56,085) / 17.2 (11,919) / 1.9 (1,314)
	2016	1,032	986		7.4 (241)	7.0 (N/A) / 4.8 (N/A)	41.3 (1,203) / 25.1 (730) / 29.4 (855)	67.3 (1,954) / 30.1 (875) / 2.6 (76)

Location	Census Year	Median weekly household income (\$)	Median weekly household income (\$) – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Percentage change in weekly household income (%) – Whole Population / Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population	Unemployment (%)	Rent / mortgage monthly repayments > 30% household income* (%)	Owned outright / Owned with mortgage / rented (%)	Household composition (families / single / group) (%)
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	2021	2,015	2,125	14.3 (252) / N/A (N/A)	0.0 (0)	20.0 (3) / 8.3 (3)	43.2 (54) / 28.8 (36) / 12.0 (15)	88.0 (103) / 12.0 (14) / 0.0 (0)
	2016	1,763	N/A (0)		0.0 (0)	4.9 (N/A) / 9.4 (N/A)	41.5 (56) / 29.6 (40) / 20.7 (28)	85.8 (109) / 14.2 (18) / 0.0 (0)
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the South)	2021	1,625	2,250	33.9 (412) / 20.1 (376)	1.1 (3)	0.0 (0) / 6.9 (4)	51.5 (88) / 33.9 (58) / 8.8 (15)	79.4 (131) / 20.6 (34) / 0.0 (0)
	2016	1,213	1,874		7.8 (21)	0.0 (0) / 8.4 (N/A)	47.1 (89) / 30.7 (58) / 19.0 (36)	69.4 (134) / 29.0 (56) / 1.6 (3)
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the West)	2021	1,899	2,166	1.3 (24) / 33.3 (541)	3.8 (7)	33.3 (6) / 0.0 (0)	43.1 (50) / 23.3 (27) / 15.5 (18)	81.5 (97) / 18.5 (22) / 0.0 (0)
	2016	1,875	1,625		1.8 (3)	0.0 (N/A) / 10.7 (N/A)	43.3 (45) / 30.8 (32) / 23.1 (24)	82.7 (910) / 17.3 (19) / 0.0 (0)
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	2021	1,411	1,392	19.2 (227) / 32.8 (344)	5.1 (1,046)	33.2 (2,062) / 10.0 (477)	30.0 (4,959) / 28.9 (4,784) / 37.5 (6,211)	66.5 (11,005) / 30.1 (4,983) / 3.4 (570)
	2016	1,184	1,048		6.4 (1,210)	13.7 (N/A) / 4.7 (N/A)	30.4 (4,561) / 29.2	67.7 (10,165) / 28.8

Location	Census Year	Median weekly household income (\$)	Median weekly household income (\$) – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Percentage change in weekly household income (%) – Whole Population / Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population	Unemployment (%)	Rent / mortgage monthly repayments > 30% household income* (%)	Owned outright / Owned with mortgage / rented (%)	Household composition (families / single / group) (%)
							(4,381) / 36.5 (5,479)	(4,323) / 3.6 (535)
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	2021	917	1,023	20.2 (154) / 1.3 (13)	10.0 (46)	32.4 (44) / 8.9 (12)	48.3 (278) / 23.5 (135) / 23.7 (136)	60.8 (348) / 36.5 (209) / 2.6 (15)
	2016	763	1,010		12.9 (58)	10.3 (N/A) / 3.1 (N/A)	46.1 (268) / 21.0 (122) / 28.6 (166)	59.1 (345) / 37.7 (220) / 3.3 (19)
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	2021	919	1,625	18.7 (145) / 44.6 (501)	10.1 (8)	21.4 (3) / 23.1 (3)	68.1 (62) / 14.3 (13) / 15.4 (14)	60.0 (54) / 40.0 (36) / 0.0 (0)
	2016	774	1,124		7.3 (7)	3.4 (N/A) / 8.4 (N/A)	57.3 (55) / 27.1 (26) / 15.6 (15)	63.9 (62) / 32.0 (31) / 4.1 (4)
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	2021	712	833	6.1 (41) / -23.1 (250)	3.3 (3)	26.3 (5) / 24.0 (6)	50.8 (65) / 19.5 (25) / 14.8 (19)	50.4 (65) / 42.6 (55) / 7.0 (9)
	2016	671	1,083		10.2 (10)	9.0 (N/A) / 4.1 (N/A)	59.2 (74) / 21.6 (27) / 16.8 (21)	59.2 (74) / 38.4 (48) / 2.4 (93)
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	2021	1,084	1,194	13.9 (133) / 22.1 (216)	7.4 (76)	32.2 (104) / 9.9 (25)	39.4 (397) / 25.1 (253) / 32.1 (323)	61.9 (621) / 35.3 (354) / 2.9 (29)

Location	Census Year	Median weekly household income (\$)	Median weekly household income (\$) – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Percentage change in weekly household income (%) – Whole Population / Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Population	Unemployment (%)	Rent / mortgage monthly repayments > 30% household income* (%)	Owned outright / Owned with mortgage / rented (%)	Household composition (families / single / group) (%)
	2016	951	978		8.8 (95)	10.9 (N/A) / 3.9 (N/A)	38.8 (414) / 23.7 (253) / 33.9 (361)	63.8 (676) / 33.5 (355) / 2.7 (29)
NSW Code 1 (STE)	2021	1,829	1,558	23.1 (343) / 28.3 (344)	4.9 (189,852)	35.5 (335,404) / 17.3 (163,060)	31.5 (914,537) / 32.5 (942,804) / 32.6 (944,585)	71.2 (2,065,107) / 25.0 (723,716) / 3.8 (111,646)
	2016	1,486	1,214		6.3 (225,546)	12.9 (N/A) / 7.4 (N/A)	32.2 (839,665) / 32.3 (840,004) / 31.8 (826,922)	72.0 (1,874,524) / 23.8 (620,778) / 4.2 (109,004)

5.5.2 PRIVATELY OWNED HOUSING

The housing market is complex and changes in property values are due to many factors. The establishment of the Project has potential to influence local property values, potentially elevating them due to improvements in local infrastructure and economic benefits or decreasing them if the development is viewed unfavourably.

Table 5-8 provides an overview of the median house and unit prices and annual change in sale prices for the towns across the Social Locality.

Data shows that median house prices in the Social Locality range from \$307,500 to \$525,000 and that sales price changes range between 5.6% to 36.4%.

In comparison, the median house and unit prices in NSW are significantly higher at approximately \$1,193,228, and the median unit price is around \$686,947 (ABS 2025d). The annual median sale price change for houses in regional NSW was 3.5%, and for units it is around 3.9% (NAB, 2024).

TABLE 5-8 MEDIAN HOUSE AND UNIT PRICES

Location	Median House Price (\$)	Annual Median Sale Price Change (%)	Median Unit Price (\$)	Annual Median Sale Price Change (%)
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	525,000	5.6	356,000	-13.2
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	307,500	7.9	364,000	12.5
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	412,500	36.4	-	-
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	-	-	-	-
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	395,000	18.4	-	-

Source: <https://www.propertyvalue.com.au/explore/new-south-wales>, <https://www.realestate.com.au/>, <https://www.yourinvestmentpropertymag.com.au/>

Table 5-9 provides an overview of the available housing stock in the towns of the Social Locality. It should be noted that this information is a snapshot and can differentiate quite significantly over time. Data shows that at the time of writing this report, an approximate 343 properties were for sale, containing an approximate total of 1,271 rooms.

TABLE 5-9 PRIVATE HOUSING STOCK IN THE SOCIAL LOCALITY

Location	House and Unit Size				Properties (Approx.)	Rooms
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed		
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	2	14	46	237	299	1,116
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	0	2	7	16	25	89
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	0	2	0	0	2	4
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	0	0	2	4	6	22
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	0	0	4	7	11	40
Total	2	18	59	264	343	1,271

Source: Domain.com.au

Rental housing availability is used as an indicator of the demand for housing, supply of rental properties, and overall health of the housing market (SQM Research, 2024).

Private rentals are generally used for long-term accommodation. Long-term housing or accommodation refers to privately owned and rented housing, for a long-term period, typically three months or longer.

A snapshot of long-term housing availability as of February 2025 is indicated in **Table 5-10** too, it should be noted that this information is a snapshot and can differentiate quite significantly over time. Data shows that at the time of writing this report, an approximate 154 properties were for rent, containing an approximate total of 470 rooms.

TABLE 5-10 RENTAL HOUSING AVAILABILITY

Location	House and Unit Size				Rental Properties (Approx.)	Rooms
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed		
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	8	23	53	27	111	321
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	0	2	8	8	18	60
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	0	2	0	0	2	4
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	0	0	2	4	6	22

Location	House and Unit Size				Rental Properties (Approx.)	Rooms
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed		
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	0	0	5	12	17	63
Total	8	27	68	51	154	470

Source: Domain.com.au

Consideration of housing vacancy rates provide a window into the prospective long-term accommodation options available in the Social Locality. SQM Research housing vacancy rate data draws on a combination of ABS data and online data from monitoring major property listing sites to provide a time-series analysis on a monthly and postcode scale (SQM Research, 2024). SQM Research has tracked residential vacancy rates from 2005 through to 2025, on a postcode basis.

A review of housing vacancy data (SQM Research, 2024) shows that:

- Tamworth and Nundle, postcode 2340, experienced its highest vacancy rate since 2015 in June 2020 at approximately 3.5% with approximately 210 vacancies. In comparison, latest data from April 2025 shows a vacancy rate of 1.4%;
- Werris Creek, postcode 2341, experienced the highest vacancy rate in February 2015, at approximately 7.1% with 16 vacancies. In comparison, latest data from April 2025 shows a vacancy rate of 1.7%; and
- Wallabadah and Quirindi, postcode 2343, experienced the highest vacancy rate in February 2015, at approximately 4.3% with 34 vacancies. In comparison, latest data from April 2025 shows a vacancy rate of 0.3%;

Rental affordability is a key portion of the housing market that is likely to respond to worker influx prompted by large projects and is a key component for sustaining the economic vitality of communities and the wellbeing of individuals (Lawrie, Tonts, & Plummer, 2011). Generally, rental stress can occur when rent exceeds 30% of a low-income household gross income. As presented in **Table 5-7**, the percentage of households experiencing rental / mortgage stress in the Social Locality has significantly increased over time at all locations within the Social Locality, except for the SA1s.

SGS Economics and Planning in partnership with National Shelter, Beyond Bank, and Brotherhood of St Laurence have published the Rental Affordability Index (RAI) since 2015 (SGS, 2024).

The RAI index is calculated using the following equation:

$$RAI = (Income \div qualifying\ income) \times 100$$

The results from the equation are broken down into affordability categories shown in **Figure 5-2**.

Index score	Share of income spent on rent	Relative unaffordability
<50	60% or more	Extremely unaffordable rents
51-80	38-60%	Severely unaffordable rents
81-100	30-38%	Unaffordable rents
101-120	25-30%	Moderately unaffordable rents
121-150	20-25%	Acceptable rents
151-200	15% or less	Affordable rents
>200		Very Affordable rents

FIGURE 5-2 SGS RENTAL AFFORDABILITY INDEX

The findings identify that in Quarter 2, 2024 the postcodes containing the following areas within the Social Locality were scored as follows:

- Tamworth and Nundle, postcode 2340, Acceptable – RAI Score = 121;
- Werris Creek, postcode 2341, information unavailable; and
- Wallabadah and Quirindi, postcode 2343, Acceptable – RAI Score = 137.

These are relatively good scorings and provide further nuance to the rental stress numbers as presented in **Section 5.5.1**.

5.5.3 SHORT TERM HOUSING AVAILABILITY

Short-Term Accommodation (STA) refers to tourist accommodation such as hotels, motels, cabins and caravan parks etcetera to be resided for a temporary or short-term period, typically within a maximum of three months. STA is important for communities to provide accommodation for visitors and tourists and to support the local economy through tourist activities.

Table 5-11 provides an overview of STA options within the Social Locality. Occupation rates of these options are not considered in this analysis. A full overview is provided in **Appendix B**.

Data presents:

- There are at least 36 short-term accommodation options in the Social Locality, of which four are portable options, totalling 754 rooms; and
- Tamworth offers most STA options, providing 88% of the rooms.

TABLE 5-11 CAPACITY IN SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION

Location	STA	Rooms
Portable options	4	n/a
Tamworth	19	664
Werris Creek	2	10
Wallabadah	2	12
Nundle	5	37
Quirindi	4	31
Total	36	754

5.6 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

This section provides an overview of the social infrastructure present in the Social Locality, which contributes to the wellbeing of the local community. The regional centre that is likely to provide social infrastructure for the Project is Tamworth due to its size, proximity, and connectivity to the Project via the New England Highway.

Three key aspects of social infrastructure are discussed: (1) community and recreation services, (2) health facilities and performance indicators, and (3) education services and outcomes.

5.6.1 COMMUNITY AND RECREATION

Table 5-12 outlines the community and recreation services in the Social Locality, which covers sports, religious, hospitality, and essential services such as emergency response, cultural organizations, and general amenities like parks, cafes, and community halls. These services play a crucial role in supporting the well-being of residents and accommodating workforce needs during the Construction and Operation phases of the Project.

TABLE 5-12 COMMUNITY AND RECREATION SERVICES IN THE STUDY AREA

Service	Tamworth	Werris Creek	Wallabadah	Nundle	Quirindi
Parks	19	7	3	4	5
Sporting Facilities	21	1	0	1	0
Swimming Pools	3	1	0	1	0
Fitness Centres	18	1	0	0	2
Golf Courses	6	1	0	2	1
Shopping Centres	8	0	0	0	0
Post Offices	10	1	1	1	1
Libraries	6	1	0	1	1
Community Halls	3	0	0	1	1

Service	Tamworth	Werris Creek	Wallabadah	Nundle	Quirindi
Cafes	48	3	1	2	3
Pubs/Restaurants	22	4	1	2	8
Catholic Church	8	1	0	1	1
Anglican Church	3	1	1	1	1
Uniting Church	2	1	0	1	1
Presbyterian Church	2	0	0	0	0
Mosque	2	0	0	0	0
Rotary Club	2	0	0	0	1
Lions Club	1	0	0	0	0
Chamber of Commerce	1	0	0	0	0
Cultural Groups	1	0	0	0	0
State Fire Emergency	2	1	0	0	1
Police	2	1	0	1	1
Ambulance	2	0	0	0	1
Voluntary Emergency Services	1	0	0	0	0

Werris creek, Wallabadah, Nundle and Quirindi have fewer services, offering only basic services like parks, a swimming pool, and a community hall, while lacking fitness centres and libraries. Tamworth (and Quirindi to an extent) provide a wider range of services, including multiple parks, cafes, and cultural centres. All towns have a range of Christian churches, but only Tamworth has a Mosque. Emergency services (fire, police, ambulance, flood) are available in all towns but Wallabadah.

5.6.2 HEALTH

This section explores two components of community health: (1) community health indicators, and (2) the existing community health facilities likely to service the construction and operational workforce.

Public health services in surrounding towns and regional centres, which may support the Construction Phase of the Project are identified in **Table 5-13**. Importantly, the Social Locality provides a wide range of health services with only Tamworth and Quirindi providing 24-hour emergency services and mental health services. The availability of 24-hour emergency and mental health services is crucial for supporting the physical and mental well-being of a large construction workforce.

TABLE 5-13 PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

Service Type	Tamworth	Werris Creek	Wallabadah	Nundle	Quirindi
24-hour emergency	2	0	0	0	1
Mental health services	25	0	0	0	1
Maternity services	5	1	0	0	1
Surgical services	11	0	0	0	1
Renal dialysis	2	0	0	0	1
Oncology services	5	0	0	0	0
Community health services	3	1	0	0	1
Palliative care	4	0	0	0	0
Rehabilitation services	12	1	0	0	1
Aged care services	20	0	0	1	1
Dental services	15	0	0	0	1
Pathology services	8	0	0	0	1

Key indicators of hospital performance within the Social Locality are presented in **Table Table 5-14**, which shows that Tamworth Hospital (within a one-hour commute) operates for a larger number of patients and that Quirindi Hospital is generally performing better than that of Tamworth.

TABLE 5-14 HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicator		Tamworth Hospital (2023-2024)	Quirindi Hospital (2023-2024)
Percentage of patients who commenced treatment within the recommended time, emergency department waiting times (%)	Emergency	69	88
	Urgent	61	84
	Semi-urgent	45	84
	Non-urgent	68	96
Percentage of patients who depart the emergency department within four hours of arrival (%)	Emergency	34	74
	Urgent	37	80
	Semi-urgent	55	90
	Non-urgent	71	98

Performance Indicator		Tamworth Hospital (2023-2024)	Quirindi Hospital (2023-2024)
Number of patients presenting to the emergency department (#)	Emergency	5,894	336
	Urgent	11,826	955
	Semi-urgent	18,913	1,694
	Non-urgent	6,878	1,180

Source: www.aihw.gov.au/hospitals/my-local-area

Existing health conditions across the Social Locality are reported in **Table 5-15**. In the SA1s representing the immediate surroundings, neurocognitive and respiratory conditions are generally below or comparable to the New South Wales average. However, at the LGA and UCL and SUA level the rates of neurocognitive and respiratory conditions are generally above the NSW average, suggesting poorer health outcomes for people living in regional centres.

TABLE 5-15 EXISTING HEALTH CONDITIONS IN 2021

ABS Statistical Area	Neurocognitive (%) ¹¹	Respiratory Conditions (%) ¹²
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	↑ 11.6 (7,330)	↑ 11.5 (8,452)
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	↑ 9.1 (689)	↑ 12.4 (935)
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	↓ 5.8 (21)	↓ 7.5 (27)
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the South)	↓ 4.5 (22)	↓ 9.2 (45)
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the West)	↓ 4.9 (17)	↑ 11.3 (39)
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	↑ 12.0 (5,289)	↑ 13.5 (5,931)
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	↑ 13.4 (181)	↑ 16.3 (219)
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	↑ 10.2 (22)	↑ 16.2 (35)
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	↓ 8.0 (25)	↑ 14.6 (46)
Quirindi UCL	↑ 10.2 (267)	↑ 13.3 (345)

¹¹ Neurocognitive combines the following ABS categories: 'Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)' and 'Dementia (including Alzheimer's)'.

¹² Respiratory combines the following ABS categories: 'Lung Conditions (including COPD or emphysema)' and 'Asthma'.

ABS Statistical Area	Neurocognitive (%) ¹¹	Respiratory Conditions (%) ¹²
(UCL115122)		
NSW Code 1 (STE)	8.8 (709,118)	9.5 (761,744)

Legend:

↑ Above state average

↓ Below state average

5.6.3 EDUCATION

This section explores two components of community education:

- Education facilities, as these may experience impacts from the Project; and
- Education attainment. If educational profiles are strong enough, this may suggest opportunities for the Project to source workers locally and lay a foundation for the technical needs of the Project.

Education facilities are outlined in **Appendix C**. Data presents that the Social Locality is relatively well serviced with educational facilities, with Tamworth offering high school and higher education options. However, there are limited educational facilities available surrounding the Project (that are not in the Tamworth regional centre).

Additionally, when looking at childcare options in the Social Locality, most areas surrounding the Project Area are indicated as 'childcare deserts', meaning that children compete for childcare placement as childcare access is scarce (Victoria University, 2024)¹³. This can put pressure on families and sometimes indirectly impact workforce demographics (i.e. workers, often female workers, staying home).

The educational profiles in the Social Locality outlined in **Table 5-16** may suggest opportunities to source workers locally with a high portion of vocational education. However, attention may need to be directed towards the decline in university and year 12 education rates across the Social Locality.

¹³ Tamworth: 0.38-0.55 childcare places per child; Werris Creek, Wallabadah and Quirindi: 0.21 childcare places per child; and Nundle: 0.16 childcare places per child.

TABLE 5-16 EDUCATION ATTAINMENT ACROSS THE PROJECT'S SOCIAL LOCALITY

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Educational Attainment Year 12 (%)	Educational Attainment Vocational (%)	Educational Attainment University (%)
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	2021	↓ 11.6 (5,838)	↑ 21.2 (10,719)	↓ 22.9 (11,510)
	2016	↓ 11.1 (5,257)	↑ 20.0 (9,512)	↓ 20.3 (9,649)
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	2021	↓ 10.7 (668)	↑ 19.6 (1,214)	↓ 15.3 (948)
	2016	↓ 10.9 (683)	↑ 17.3 (1,085)	↓ 14.2 (882)
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	2021	↓ 10.2 (30)	↑ 19.8 (58)	↓ 30.7 (90)
	2016	↓ 10.8 (34)	↑ 20.7 (65)	↓ 29.3 (92)
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the South)	2021	↓ 9.9 (40)	↑ 23.9 (97)	↓ 22.2 (90)
	2016	↓ 12.2 (51)	↑ 21.5 (90)	↓ 22.3 (93)
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to Project Area to the West)	2021	↓ 10.1 (28)	↑ 23.1 (64)	↓ 18.0 (50)
	2016	↓ 10.3 (25)	↑ 21.0 (51)	↓ 15.3 (37)
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	2021	↓ 12.1 (4,199)	↑ 20.5 (7,144)	↓ 23.2 (8,081)
	2016	↓ 11.7 (3,809)	↑ 19.4 (6,341)	↓ 20.7 (6,742)
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	2021	↓ 8.9 (101)	↑ 19.2 (216)	↓ 8.4 (95)
	2016	↓ 8.6 (101)	↓ 14.4 (170)	↓ 7.9 (93)
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	2021	↓ 9.4 (18)	↑ 19.8 (38)	↓ 8.8 (17)
	2016	↓ 12.0 (22)	↑ 20.1 (37)	↓ 10.4 (19)
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	2021	↓ 6.0 (16)	↓ 15.0 (40)	↓ 18.7 (50)
	2016	↓ 8.0 (20)	↓ 13.2 (33)	↓ 18.8 (47)
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	2021	↓ 9.5 (203)	↑ 20.5 (439)	↓ 14.4 (307)
	2016	↓ 10.3 (224)	↑ 18.3 (401)	↓ 12.6 (275)
NSW Code 1 (STE)	2021	14.5 (954,987)	15.1 (993,244)	37.1 (2,454,824)
	2016	15.3 (930,654)	14.9 (903,919)	32.3 (1,967,858)

Source: ABS 2021

Legend:

↑ Above state average

↓ Below state average

5.7 ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

This section outlines the existing transport infrastructure within the Social Locality, including road networks and public transport services, and how these are currently utilised.

The Project Area is situated approximately 40 km south of Tamworth, on the eastern side of the New England Highway. Access to the site will be provided via a newly proposed entry point from Garoo Road, located at the north-eastern corner of the site. Light vehicles approaching from the north will access the site via the New England Highway / Garoo Road intersection. All other vehicles, including Oversized and Overmass (OSOM) vehicles, will be required to use the New England Highway / Lindsays Gap Road intersection, approaching from the east.

The Garoo Road access point has been designed to accommodate Project-related traffic and provides adequate sight distances to ensure safe entry. While heavy vehicles are restricted from accessing the site from the north via Garoo Road, light vehicles may still use this route (Amber, 2024).

There are currently no public transport services operating around the Project Area. However, two privately operated school bus services, S202 and S218, run in the area. These services are managed by Hannaford Coaches and Macphersons Tamworth. The S202 service travels along Garoo Road from the New England Highway to the proposed site access, while the S218 service stops at the Garoo Road / New England Highway intersection.

5.8 CULTURAL HERITAGE

5.8.1 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

This section provides context of the cultural landscape associated with the Project. The region is rich in cultural and historical significance, with numerous heritage-listed sites and landmarks. Tamworth is one of the earliest inland settlements in NSW. European exploration began in the early 19th century, notably with John Oxley's 1818 expedition. Similarly, Liverpool Plains became known for its rich soil and ability to support wheat and livestock farming. Settlement patterns were shaped by the availability of water and arable land, with communities forming along the Peel and Namoi Rivers.

Prior to colonial settlement, the lands were inhabited by the Kamilaroi people. The Kamilaroi people extended across vast areas of north-western NSW and southern Queensland, encompassing river systems, plains and ranges that supported their lifestyle. Additionally, the Kamilaroi people maintained strong trade and ceremonial links with neighbouring groups.

Both LGAs lie within the boundaries of the Tamworth LALC and hosts numerous heritage listed sites of cultural significance. These included scarred trees, ceremonial grounds and rock art sites that offer insight into the enduring legacy of the Kamilaroi people.

5.8.1.1 HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Several sites in the Social Locality are of State and local significance which reflect the region's rich agricultural, transport and mining history. There are a number of heritage listed properties and features that contribute to the cultural identity of the area:

In the Liverpool Plains LGA, state-listed heritage sites include the Quirindi Railway and the Windy Station Woolshed. The Wallabadah Cemetery is of significance, commemorating the arrival of the First Fleet at the First Fleet Memorial Garden. The Quirindi Rural Heritage Village showcases the mechanical transport history of the region through its extensive museum and machinery displays. This is home to the Vintage Machinery and Miniature Railway Rally and Swap Meet, a popular local event that aims to educate and showcase the region.

The Tamworth LGA, along with other Councils in the Social Locality, maintains heritage inventories that feature properties of local cultural significance, including homesteads, churches, and other notable developments; none of which are located near the Project site. Nundle is recognised for its heritage tied to the mid 1800s gold rush, with landmarks such as the Nundle Woollen Mill and the Peel Inn. Meanwhile, Werris Creek is home to the Werris Creek Railway Station and Museum, a site listed on the State Heritage Register and a popular tourist attraction that highlights the region's rail history.

5.9 COMMUNITY VALUES

The Tamworth and Liverpool Plains LGAs are known for their strong community values, which are reflected in their vibrant social and cultural events. In Tamworth, the community places a high value on strong ties and cultural heritage, particularly the traditions of the Gamilaroi / Kamilaroi Nation. This is evident in events like the annual Tamworth Country Music Festival, one of the largest music festivals in Australia, which brings together thousands of visitors to celebrate both local and international country music artists. The festival not only showcases musical talent but also reinforces the region's commitment to cultural heritage and community connection.

In the Liverpool Plains region, the agricultural focus of the workforce is celebrated through events like the Quirindi Show, an annual agricultural show featuring livestock competitions, equestrian events, and local produce displays. This event highlights the region's dedication to agriculture and the importance of diversity and inclusion within the workforce. Additionally, the annual Sunflowers on the Plains event, where sunflowers bloom across the region, attracts visitors for photography and local tours, emphasising community appreciation for natural beauty and rural lifestyle.

Both LGAs prioritise access to quality services and amenities, ensuring residents have what they need for a good quality of life. This is reflected in events like the annual Taste Tamworth Festival, which celebrates local food and wine with markets, cooking demonstrations, and gourmet dinners. The festival underscores the community's value of quality of life and connection to local produce.

Overall, the Tamworth and Liverpool Plains LGAs offer a range of social, workforce, amenity, and lifestyle values, that are highlighted throughout various annual events.

These events not only provide entertainment and cultural enrichment but also strengthen cohesion within the community and highlight the unique characteristics of each region.

Table 5-12 outlines the community and recreation services in the Social Locality, which covers sports, religious, hospitality, and essential services such as emergency response, cultural organizations, and general amenities like parks, cafes, and community halls. These services play a crucial role in supporting the well-being of residents and accommodating workforce needs during the Construction and Operation phases of the Project.

5.10 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Some of the key events and festivals across the Social Locality include motorcycle and car rallies, agricultural events, and family focused celebrations which reflect the community values across the different towns.

In the Social Locality, the largest annual events to note are:

- **Tamworth Country Music Festival** (January) – one of Australia’s largest annual music festivals, celebrating local and international country music artists. Vistors numbers for this event are estimated at ~300,000 (VisitNSW.com);
- **Taste Tamworth Festival** (April) – annual food event in the region, featuring markets, cooking demonstrations, and gourmet dinners in efforts to celebrate local food and wine;
- **Quirindi Show** (September) – annual agricultural show featuring livestock competitions, equestrian events and local produce displays to celebrate the region’s agricultural heritage;
- **Sunflowers on the Plains** (December to March) – annual event showcasing blooming flowers and attracting visitors from far and wide to emphasise the community’s appreciation for natural beauty and rural lifestyle;
- **Yuga-Li Gathering Festival** (May) – annual weekend long featuring music, creativity and community;
- **Vintage Machinery and Miniature Railway Rally and Swap Meet** (May) – annual event showcasing vintage machinery, a miniature railway, a swap meet, and other attractions;
- **The Way It Was Festival** (May)– annual festival showcasing life in the past with demonstrations like blacksmithing and heavy horse work; and
- **Fiesta La Peel** (April) – annual festival celebrating cultural diversity with music, art, food, music and dance.

Additionally, the Social Locality hosts a few informal and once-off events throughout the year. These typically involve events like the Tamworth Regional Council Events including local markets, workshops and cultural activities organised by the council. Additionally, there is the Miniature Railway Open Day held at the Quirindi Rural Heritage village on the fourth Sunday of each month, the Yuga-Li gathering Festival celebrating artisan stalls, live music and traditional activities like didgeridoo making and boomerang throwing.

These events provide additional opportunities for community engagement and cultural enrichment in both regions.

The dates that festivals and annual events occur is of importance when considering the STA options identified in **Section 5.5.3**.

5.11 BASELINE SUMMARY

This section provides an overview of the key implications and insights from the baseline as outlined in **Section 5.1** to **Section 5.10** and the challenges and opportunities identified through the baseline analysis. **Table 5-17** provides an overview of these key findings which feed into the assessment presented in **Section 6**.

TABLE 5-17 BASELINE SUMMARY AND IDENTIFICATION OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Theme		Identification of challenges or opportunities
Stakeholder engagement		- Established communication tools (website, email, factsheet), sent 28 introductory letters, held 10 meetings (including with government officials and neighbours), conducted over 100 phone and email interactions, and hosted two community sessions attended by local residents and politicians. - Raised issues included fire risk, livestock grazing, flora/fauna protection, biosecurity, and waste/water management. There were particular concerns about contamination from solar panels. - Community members expressed concerns about property value, insurance impacts, visual amenity loss, and requested compensation and fencing upgrades. - Feedback included worries about road maintenance, traffic during construction, worker accommodation, and clarity around the project approval process.
Landscape, topography and land use context		- The land proposed to host the Project is currently used for agricultural activities, predominantly livestock grazing and irrigated cropping. This may lead to disruption of farming activities. - The Project is surrounded by a diverse landscape including Nundle State Forest on the east, and nature reserves, townships, as well as open grass grazing land for agricultural use in other directions. The arrival of the Project as well as other renewable energy developments may pose cumulative pressure on potential landscape changes.
Population demographics		- Whilst the State has shown a stagnant population growth of 7.9% between 2016 to 2021, the locations within the Social Locality present contrasting trends ranging from -9.6% to 9.8%. This may be a challenge for the Project's workforce sourcing. - Additionally, the Social Locality's median age is consistently higher than the NSW average (except for Tamworth SUA), which provides further challenges to reskilling people into renewable energy workforce participation.
Economic profile	Main occupations	- Similar to contrasting population growth, the labour force in the locations of the Social Locality fluctuate. This indicate that some locations may provide better opportunities to draw the workforce from than others. 41.1% of the LGAs' workforce is included in the labour force as technicians and trades workers, machinery and operators and labourers, with this percentage ranging from 28.1% at the Project's immediate surroundings, whilst the UCLs and SUA show 40.6% and 33.9%, respectively. This data points towards potential for the sourcing of local construction workers in surrounding towns during the Project's Construction Phase. - Overlapping construction periods of other developments may increase challenges for the Project as they may compete for workers.

Theme		Identification of challenges or opportunities
	Main industries	- The Social Locality displays a mixed economic composition with strong employment in Public and Social Services, with negligible industrial and construction activities. This provides opportunities for the Project's workforce sourcing and reskilling people into renewable energy workforce participation. - Overlapping construction periods of other developments may increase challenges for the Project as they may compete for procurement and suppliers.
	Local businesses	- Construction can result in short term workforce shortages for local businesses. - Out of an approximate 7,203 businesses, 1,218 (16.9%) are active in the construction industry, which offers opportunities for local procurement and suppliers. - At the same time, of 1,218, 556 (45.6%) are sole traders. This may cause challenges for the Project, e.g. with its bidding process and the administration of several small parties.
Vulnerable groups	Cultural and linguistic diversity	The Social Locality shows low linguistic vulnerability which should ease communication and engagement as the likelihood of CALD groups being excluded from engagement activities due to language barriers is deemed to be low.
	Youth and elderly	- Compared to the State, the Social Locality displays a greater portion of its population being over the age of 65, and the percentage has increased between 2016 and 2021. - These findings suggest an increasing aging population which reflect vulnerability due to age. This may indicate potential challenges to source local workers. It also highlights the need for robust measures to mitigate noise, ensure safety, and control dust emissions, especially to protect the wellbeing of the elderly, who may be more susceptible to environmental hazards. - At the same time, compared to the State, the Social Locality generally displays a greater portion of the population being under the age of 14. This trend suggests potential future opportunities to source local workers whilst it also offers opportunities for the Project to support community needs such as training opportunities or youth hubs.
	Indigenous people	- Data shows that the Social Locality's proportion of First Nations people is generally higher than that of NSW, and that the percentage of Indigenous population as part of the overall population has increased between 2016 and 2021 in all locations of the Social Locality, except in SA111004120116, SA111004120114, and Nundle UCL. - These trends may lead to calls for equity, particularly in areas such as employment opportunities and access to healthcare and education services. This could create opportunities for the Project to promote cultural diversity, enhance the visibility of Indigenous culture, and potentially support economic development for Indigenous communities within the Social Locality—for example, through initiatives like the CBP.

Theme	Identification of challenges or opportunities	
		- The high Indigenous population also highlights the need to ensure that the Project does not exacerbate existing health, education, and economic disparities faced by Indigenous communities (NIAA, 2023). This is particularly important as the Indigenous population's median age is significantly lower compared to that of the overall population (ranging from 37 to 58 for the overall population, compared to a range of only 21 to 42 for the First Nations population). - No significant economic disadvantages were found as the median weekly household incomes of Indigenous people are higher in some towns, and lower in others.
	Socio-economic disadvantage	- Overall, the Social Locality presents declining percentiles from 2016 to 2021, which indicate declining socio-economic conditions and increased disadvantages over the course of time. This may present itself in a higher vulnerability to change amongst its population. - At the same time, compared to the LGAs, the Project's immediate surroundings (the SA1s) present a more socially and economically advantaged population, even though the area west of the Project falls below the state's average.
Housing and accommodation	Income and housing	- The rise in mortgage / rental stress in the Social Locality suggests that economic conditions might be declining, even though household incomes have increased over time. Increases in mortgage stress can be caused by decreases in income, unaffordable housing prices leading to over-leveraged new mortgages or interest rate increases for variable rate mortgages and can cause stress and anxiety amongst the population. - Household incomes in 2021 were consistently below the State average whilst unemployment rates in the towns of the Social Locality (except in Nundle UCL) were all higher than that of the State. This further indicates vulnerability to change due to stress and anxiety. - At the same time, the percentage of houses owned outright are significantly higher than the State (31.5%) at all locations of the Social Locality, except for Tamworth SUA, which indicates that at least a part of the population has some financial security and could experience a sense of resilience, although this may not be felt evenly amongst the population.
	Privately owned housing	- Median house and unit prices in the Social Locality are lower than the NSW averages. Although annual median sale price changes fluctuate beyond the State's averages, this data indicates vulnerabilities in relation to privately owned housing. - Rental availability in the Social Locality is limited to an approximate 154 rental properties and the low vacancy rates suggest strong demand and tight supply. It is important for the Project to take this context into consideration when looking for accommodation options for its influx workers. - The Social Locality's challenges with housing affordability means that the accommodation of worker influx can play a taxing role on community cohesion if not managed well.

Theme		Identification of challenges or opportunities
	Short-term accommodation	An estimated 754 STA rooms spread over 36 STA are located within a one-hour commute of the Project. Although these may provide potential accommodation options for the Project, overlapping construction periods of other developments may increase challenges for the Project as they may compete for accommodation options.
Social Infrastructure and Community Wellbeing	Community and recreational services	Tamworth provides the greatest range of community and recreational services to support the Project workforce, whilst other towns have less offerings and may be more prone to pressure on these services in case the Project will use them for its workforce.
	Health	- A wide variety of health services are available in the Project's surroundings, including 24-hour emergency services in Tamworth and Quirindi, which can support a safe working place for the construction workforce. Those two towns also have hospitals. - At the same time, the local community's health conditions in the nearby towns are below the State's average. This may indicate a larger demand for health services and suggests that the Project should be cautious to not putting additional pressure on existing health services.
	Education	- Tamworth provides most educational facilities, including tertiary facilities, which may provide options for the Project to provide skills training and funding opportunities, as well as support the needs of the Construction workforce and their families. - The Social Locality presents educational attainment in vocational training that is higher than the State, indicating opportunities for the Project to source workers locally with a strong base of vocational training.
	Access and Connectivity	- The Project may want to offer shuttle busses for workers as no public transportation options are available. Two private school bus routes run in the area, S202 and S218. - The Project will be accessed via Garoo Road for light vehicles and Lindsays Gap Road for heavy and oversized vehicles, with safe entry points and adequate sight distances. - Up to 292 vehicle movements per day are expected during peak construction, including 156 heavy vehicle trips, which the existing road network can accommodate. - A traffic Management Plan will be implemented to ensure safety and minimise disruption during construction.
Community Values	Cultural heritage	- The region holds deep cultural and historical significance, many of which are heritage-listed and early European settlements. This suggests potential opportunities for the Project to promote local culture. - The traditional custodians of the land, Kamilaroi people, have a strong cultural legacy with sites that are present and protected. This suggests that the Project should work closely with Kamilaroi representatives and RAPs such as the representatives of Tamworth LALC, to identify and avoid damage, disturbance or interference of cultural heritage.

Theme		Identification of challenges or opportunities
	Community values	• If events and festival timeframes overlap with construction periods, the demand for accommodation may impact upon the readily available options for tourists and visitors to rely upon. This is particularly relevant for the Tamworth Country Music Festival, which is said to attract ~300,000 visitors over a period of 10 days. • There is an opportunity to provide support for key festivals and events throughout the construction and operations phases of the Project.

6. SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As outlined in **Section 2.3**, the impact assessment methodology follows that outlined in DPFI's Technical Supplement (DPE, 2023b). Overall, the key drivers of social change that may affect communities in the Social Locality resulting from the Project relate to:

- Procurement opportunities for Local / Regional Businesses and employment opportunities for the local workforce;
- Disruptions due to construction related activities (noise, dust, transportation of materials and workers, etc.);
- Accommodation arrangements for construction workforce; and
- Amenity (noise, visual) and other land use and landscape changes due to altered landscapes.

In assessing the potential impacts, ERM has considered the:

- Characteristics of the Project, including the timing, duration and intensity of activities (where known);
- Issues raised by stakeholders during the engagement process; and
- Outcomes from technical studies undertaken by the Project (noise, visual, cultural heritage etc.).

The impacts have been assessed based on the likelihood of the impact occurring, the magnitude of the impact (degree of change caused by the impact) if it occurs, and the vulnerability of the impacted receptors (refer to **Section 2.3**).

Decommissioning: The Project elements will operate for a minimum of 30 years. At the end of the asset's life, one of the following options will be undertaken:

- Repower as a solar farm using the existing or "best practice" at the time technology; or
- Replacement of solar panels and other infrastructure where generally within the predictions and criteria in this EIS; or
- Decommission the Project and remove the solar panels and associated infrastructure in accordance with a 'Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan'.

If replacement infrastructure is installed, these will remain within the Project Description and predicted impacts for which any development consent is granted (unless a modification is sought and granted).

The Applicant will fund and execute the decommissioning of the Project. When decommissioning occurs, the following steps will be taken:

- Key stakeholders including landowner and relevant regulators will be consulted;
- In general, all above ground structures will be removed and the land rehabilitated;
- Some infrastructure may be retained in situ (e.g., internal access roads) where beneficial and as agreed with the landowner; and
- Some below ground infrastructure may be left in situ to avoid further disturbance and minimise clearing of revegetated areas, unless otherwise agreed with the landowner and / or specified in the conditions of development consent.

The Applicant aims to recycle all dismantled and decommissioned infrastructure and equipment removed from the Project Area, where possible. Materials that cannot be recycled will be disposed of at a licensed waste management facility.

Given the timeframe involved, the Decommissioning Phase has been considered at a higher level in the impact assessment than the other phases of the Project. It should be noted however, that the potential social impacts associated with the Decommissioning Phase of the Project will also be considered in greater detail as part of a future Decommissioning Rehabilitation Program (DRP) (or similar), which will be prepared closer to the decommissioning date (in accordance with any Project approval requirements) in order to ensure that the most up to date best practice measures are incorporated. It is anticipated that the decommissioning and rehabilitation phase would take no less than 5 months to complete, with the Project Area being returned, as far as practicable, to its condition prior to the commencement of construction.

Cumulative impacts: Based on the SSD projects outlined in **Table 6-1** there is the potential for cumulative impacts to be experienced by stakeholders within the Social Locality.

The Project is also located within proximity of the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), which was proposed to facilitate the coordinated development of renewable energy generation projects, energy storage and transmission. This means that the region is planned to have a significant number of renewable energy developments, as well as other SSD projects.

Cumulative social impacts arising from the accumulation of projects in the wider New England REZ, including the Social Locality, are a possibility as the NSW Government pursues a large-scale transition to renewable energy sources (NSW Government, 2019; 2020).

There are a number of major projects in the region, including other larger scale renewable projects, that are preparing planning applications or have obtained planning approval. **Table 6-1** identifies the projects within 50 km of the Project.

Projects highlighted in grey indicate projects:

- With a (partly) overlapping timing for their construction; and
- Within a 50 km radius.

Based on this, at least the following six projects are identified as potentially having relevant cumulative impacts: Middlebrook Solar Farm and BESS, Lambruk Solar Farm, Hills of Gold Wind Farm, Kingswood BESS, Calala BESS, and Tamworth BESS.

Together, these projects would require at least 881 construction workers during their construction periods. It should be noted that this number may increase, depending on other project's timelines and because not all workforce data was available online.

Cumulative impacts of these projects are considered in the assessment outlined in this section.

TABLE 6-1 NEARBY MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Project	Application Number	Developer	Scale	Proximity	Status	Potential overlap with the Project? ¹⁴	Expected workforce	Source
<i>Solar Energy Developments</i>								
Middlebrook Solar Farm and BESS	SSD-10455	Total Eren Australia Pty Ltd	320 MW of solar capacity with a 300 MW / 600 MWh BESS	25 km	Recommendation with Independent Planning commission (IPC)	Yes – construction planned for 2025-2027	400 construction workers 15 operational staff	Middlebrook Solar Farm approved subject to conditions NSW Independent Planning Commission
Lambruk Solar Farm	SSD-67436209	Venn Energy Pty Ltd	500 (DC) / 300 (AC) MW of solar capacity with a 300 MW / 1200 MWh BESS	37.5 km	Prepare EIS	Yes - construction planned for 2026-2028	N/A	https://lambruk.solarproject.com.au/the-project/
<i>Wind Energy Developments</i>								
Hills of Gold Wind Farm	SSD-9679	Wind Energy Partners	420 MW	49 km	Approved	Yes - construction planned for 2025-2033	211 construction workers 28 operational staff	Hills of Gold Wind Farm approved with strict conditions NSW Independent

¹⁴ The Project's Construction Phase is anticipated to start in Q4, 2026 and the duration of construction from commencement to commissioning of the Project is expected to occur over an 18-month period with peak construction occurring for 10 months. Operational works are therefore expected in 2028.

Project	Application Number	Developer	Scale	Proximity	Status	Potential overlap with the Project? ¹⁴	Expected workforce	Source
								<u>Planning Commission</u>
<i>Energy Storage and Supply</i>								
Wallabadah BESS	SSD-78391212	North Harbour Clean Energy	400 MW / 800 MWh	11 km	Prepare EIS	N/A	N/A	
Kingswood BESS	SSD-63207219	Iberdrola Australia Development Pty Ltd	500MW / 1000 MWh	41 km	Response to Submissions	Yes - construction planned for 2025-2027	100 construction workers	https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=PAE-73484957%2120240815T231208.373%20GMT
Calala BESS	SSD-52786213	Equis Energy Pty Ltd	300 MW / 600 MWh	46 km	Approved	Yes - construction planned for 2025-2027	170 construction workers 7 operational staff	<u>Calala BESS - Mecone</u>
Tamworth BESS	SSD-23830229	Maoneng Pty Ltd	200 MW	43 km	Response to Submissions	Yes - construction planned for 2026-2027	N/A	<u>Tamworth BESS 200MW/400MWh utility-scale battery energy storage system project.</u>

Project	Application Number	Developer	Scale	Proximity	Status	Potential overlap with the Project? ¹⁴	Expected workforce	Source
Infrastructure								
Werris Creek Coal Mine Expansion	MP10_0059	Werris Creek Coal Pty Ltd	Extension of operations north of limit	25 km	Approved	N/A	140 operational staff	https://majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/prweb/PRRestService/mp/01/getContent?AttachRef=MP10_0059-MOD-2%2120190731T043817.379%20GMT
Chaffey Dam Upgrade	SSI-5039	State Water Corporation	Increase level of dam wall and spillway	43 km	Approved	N/A	N/A	Chaffey-information-sheet.pdf
Extractive Industry								
Willow Tree Gravel Extension	SSD-48590227	Regional Group Australia	Increase production to 750,000 T per annum	45 km	Prepare EIS	N/A	N/A	Willow Tree Gravel Extension Planning Portal - Department of Planning and Environment
Currabubula Quarry Expansion Project	SSD-79020958	Boral Resources Pty Ltd	Increase production to 750,000 T per annum	47 km	Prepare EIS	No, completed	N/A	Currabubula Quarry Expansion Project Planning Portal

Project	Application Number	Developer	Scale	Proximity	Status	Potential overlap with the Project? ¹⁴	Expected workforce	Source
								- <u>Department of Planning and Environment</u>
<i>Other</i>								
Tamworth Hospital Redevelopment	SSD-5204	NSW Health Infrastructure	Hospital redevelopment	47 km	Approved	N/A	N/A	<u>Tamworth Hospital Redevelopment - Stage 2 - Health Infrastructure NSW</u>

6.1 STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITY

Stakeholder and community impacts have been raised during stakeholder engagement conducted for the EIS and SIA.

6.1.1 EFFECTIVENESS OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Impact Overview

Meaningful stakeholder engagement is key to managing social impacts. Insufficient or ineffective engagement, however, may occur due to poor communication, lack of stakeholder identification, minimal stakeholder involvement, misaligned expectations, inadequate conflict management, or a lack of trust and transparency, limited accountability and follow up, or cultural and contextual insensitivity, amongst other reasons.

NSW SIA Categories

Health and Wellbeing; Decision-making Systems; Way of Life; Community.

Affected Stakeholders

Local community organisations and businesses; Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Communities; Immediate Neighbours.

Findings

Engagement findings: Stakeholder engagement efforts have ensured accessibility and inclusivity by providing clear, concise information in formats and channels that met the community's needs (refer to **Section 3.3**).

During the community drop-in session, it was shared that the local community is aging, and that the drop-in advertisement may not have reached the older population through the media channels selected. Elderly people commonly face difficulties in adopting information communications technology and are at risk of digital exclusion. The ability of older adults to engage with digital technology is associated with weaker social connections, poorer health outcomes, and general vulnerability. It is critical that engagement and communications materials are made available in accessible formats to ensure the inclusion of older residents and elderly in decisions relating to the Project. Without alternative methods of engagement, such as in-person and paper-based, the older population across the Social Locality may become excluded from stakeholder engagement efforts, and in doing so, reduce their ability to influence Project management and mitigation options of importance to their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Stakeholder have also raised that, although there is no objection to the site, they would like to seek clarity on the exact parcel of land for the development.

Community benefits: A benefit-sharing model was developed in line with the NSW Benefit-Sharing Guideline (2024), in collaboration with Tamworth Regional Council, agencies, community groups, and local residents, focusing on neighbourhood and local community benefits.

The proposed scheme offers \$58,696 per year during construction and \$93,696 per year during operation, both within the allowed maximum of \$133,696 annually, though the construction phase amount is below the typical range and residents think it could be increased.

Intergeneration inequity: Intergeneration inequity may occur if current stakeholders receive the benefits of the Project, whilst future generations inherit the waste and environmental issues generated by an improperly decommissioned Project.

The DRP for the Project will prioritise site restoration (along with workforce transition, refer to **Section 6.2.1**) and will establish relevant sustainability requirements and parameters for decommissioning. To ensure appropriate waste management, the Applicant will recycle the dismantled and decommissioned infrastructure and equipment and remove it from the Project Area, where possible. Opportunities to reuse material by local groups and / or organisations will be considered. Materials that cannot be recycled will be disposed of at a licensed waste management facility.

Following decommissioning, the Project Area will be rehabilitated to its current condition and made suitable for agricultural use.

Summarizing, Stakeholder engagement has been inclusive and accessible, with clear information shared through various channels. However, feedback from the community drop-in session highlighted that older residents may have missed out due to limited access to digital media, with the need for more in-person and paper-based communication. While there is general support for the project, stakeholders have asked for clarity on the exact land parcel and suggested increasing the proposed benefit-sharing amount to better reflect community expectations.

To address long-term concerns, the project includes plans for responsible decommissioning and site restoration, aiming to prevent environmental issues for future generations. Recycling and reuse of materials will be prioritised, and the land will be returned to agricultural use after the project ends.

Management and Mitigation

To manage potential insufficient or ineffective community engagement, or for the local community to become more divided over the Project and address the mental health and wellbeing of stakeholders involved, it will be important to ensure that there is ongoing stakeholder engagement conducted with surrounding communities, including those stakeholders that have voiced concern in relation to the Project.

Specifically, the following management measures are proposed to be adopted by the Project:

- The implementation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) post approval and preconstruction tailored to Construction and Operational Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. The SEP will include the requirement to provide regular Project updates (e.g., electronic and hard-copy communication materials) and seek input from stakeholders in relation to their concerns and / or impacts that are being experienced. Engaging in open dialogue, providing transparent information about operational activities, and actively involving the community local initiatives derived from the fund, will be vital for fostering understanding and unity during the Operation Phase. The SEP will:
 - Ensure that diverse and inclusive engagement methods are used to minimise redundancy and stakeholder fatigue;
 - Ensure the continued opportunity for stakeholders to engage with the Applicant on decisions in relation to Project design and management where reasonable;
 - Provide opt-in engagement options allowing stakeholders to participate at their convenience; and
 - If deemed necessary during stakeholder engagement, the Project will consider alternative engagement options to reduce stakeholder fatigue but ensure it remains meaningful;
- A grievance mechanism will also be developed and implemented throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during day-to-day construction and operational activities;
- The Project will promote awareness of mental health through their website and ongoing engagement activities;
- The Applicant is offering to enter a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with Tamworth Regional Council which will fund community benefits and local infrastructure (refer to **Section 7.1.1**); and
- To address the intergenerational equity and waste management impacts associated with the Project: Development and Implementation of a DRP, which will outline how waste streams derived from decommissioning activities will be appropriately managed, including ensuring adherence to a waste hierarchy that considers recycling before general waste disposal.
 - Engagement with community groups and / or organisations within the Social Locality regarding the potential donation of materials salvaged through decommissioning works for reuse on community projects;
 - Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council to understand the potential options to dispose of materials through licenced Council refuse facilities; and
 - Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase to manage concerns that may arise during decommissioning activities.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics associated with the potential impact on insufficient or ineffective stakeholder engagement is provided in **Table 6-2**.

TABLE 6-2 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS INSUFFICIENT OR INEFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	Insufficient or ineffective stakeholder engagement has the potential to impact all stakeholders within the Social Locality. However given the location of the Project, those stakeholders located in the Denman and Muswellbrook townships are likely to be the most impacted.
Duration	It will be important to meaningfully manage stakeholder engagement throughout the course of the Project's lifespan, especially during the periods of pre-construction and construction. The duration of construction from commencement to commissioning of the Project is expected to occur over an 18-month period with 6 months of peak construction.
Severity	The community across the Social Locality are relatively interdependent with strong community connections and values.
Sensitivity	Stakeholder engagement will continue to use a variety of engagement methods to ensure that vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly persons) can access Project information and provide feedback.
Level of Interest	Although stakeholders have not shown major levels of concern, stakeholder engagement efforts have been minimal, and not all views and feedback may have been revealed at this stage in time.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-3**.

TABLE 6-3 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE INSUFFICIENT OR INEFFECTIVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Major	Possible	High	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Operation	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low

6.2 EMPLOYMENT AND PROCUREMENT

Typically, key stakeholders are interested in the increased direct and indirect employment opportunities (refer to **Section 6.2.1**), increased local procurement opportunities (refer to **Section 6.2.2**), and potential to create skills shortages (refer to **Section 6.2.3**). Benefits through employment and procurement opportunities were discussed during stakeholder engagement activities.

6.2.1 INCREASED DIRECT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Impact Overview

Increased demand for labour creates direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local community.

Higher employment levels can lead to improved social outcomes such as reduced socio-economic disadvantage and enhanced community wellbeing, as individuals and families gain stable incomes, increasing their access to better healthcare, education, and recreational facilities.

NSW SIA Categories

Livelihoods.

Affected Stakeholders

Local community organisations and businesses.

Findings

Construction workforce: Construction is expected to commence in Q4, 2026. The Project is anticipated to have a peak construction workforce of approximately 250 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and would directly employ approximately 180 workers.

The duration of construction from commencement to commissioning of the Project is expected to occur over an 18-month period with 6 months of peak construction.

Operational workforce: Approximately 10 direct jobs, with all employees expected to reside in the region (refer to Appendix S of the EIS).

Decommissioning workforce: It is anticipated that the decommissioning and rehabilitation phase would take no less than five months to complete.

Economic assessment: During construction, on a regional level, most direct impacts generated by the Project are within the construction industry. In total, the direct output from the Project is estimated at \$156 million per annum (p.a).

The annual value added by the Project to the regional economy is estimated at \$182 million, of which \$54 million comes from direct impacts. The average direct impact on household income is estimated \$21 million annually.

At a state level, most of the direct output generated by the Project is in the construction industry. In total, direct output from the Project is estimated at \$178 million. The total impact on household income is \$33 million p.a on the NSW economy during the construction phase.

During operations, the annual direct output to the region from the Project will be \$61 million. Value added to the region is estimated at \$35 million p.a over the operation phase. The average direct impact on household income is estimated at \$2 million annually.

At a state level, the annual direct output from the Project is estimated at \$61 million. The estimated value added by the Project to the NSW economy is \$21 million for direct impacts p.a.

Economic profile: The baseline data provides key findings and assumptions related to employment opportunities:

- **Available appropriate workforce:** Although there is a fluctuating labour force in the locations of the Social Locality, there is potential for the sourcing of local construction workers in surrounding towns during the Project's Construction Phase. A total of 41.1% of the workforce across the LGAs is employed in roles such as technicians and trades workers, machinery operators, and labourers. This proportion varies by location, with 28.1% in the Project's immediate surroundings, 40.6% in the UCLs, and 33.9% in the SUAs; and
- **Relevant industries:** The Social Locality displays a mixed economic composition with strong employment in Public and Social Services and negligible industrial and construction activities. This provides opportunities for the Project's workforce sourcing and reskilling people into renewable energy workforce participation;

Aging population: Compared to the State, the Social Locality displays a greater portion of its population being over the age of 65, and the percentage has increased between 2016 and 2021. These findings suggest an increasing aging population, which may indicate potential challenges to sourcing local workers.

Educational attainment: At the same time, the educational profiles of the Social Locality indicate a capability to support the families of the workforce and / or suggest opportunities to source workers locally with a strong base of vocational training.

Local employment target¹⁵: The local employment target for the construction phase of the Project is 20-30%, with project contractor(s) to be requested to do their best efforts to optimise local talent hiring subject to availability and market competitiveness.

Cumulative impacts: The cumulative impact assessment approach involves considering the impacts of the Project together with the impacts of other relevant future projects on economic activity. **Table 6-1** presents other nearby projects with potential to overlap with the Construction Phase of the Project, which include: Middlebrook Solar Farm and BESS, Lambruk Solar Farm, Hills of Gold Wind Farm, Kingswood BESS, Calala BESS, Tamworth BESS.

These Projects are likely to be sourcing workers locally and drawing from a similar local workforce to the Project.

The total expected construction workforce of these projects is ~881¹⁶. If these projects have a similar local employment target as that of the Project (20-30%), they will require at least 176-264 local and 617-705 influx workers.

In summary, the findings suggest that the Project will provide 36-54 (20-30% of 180) direct employment opportunities for the local community during its Construction Phase (and 50-75 during its peak) and 10 direct jobs during operations, whilst there fluctuating availability of appropriate workforce within the region.

¹⁵ The establishment of a local employment target is informed by the NSW SIA guidelines and is both an aspirational and forecasted target based on limited available data at the time of writing the report. This target does not constitute a binding commitment, and actual employment outcomes will be subject to market conditions, workforce availability, and project requirements.

¹⁶ Calculated as follows: Middlebrook Solar Farm and BESS 400 + Hills of Gold Wind Farm 211 + Kingswood BESS 100 + Calala BESS 170.

Opportunities to train and reskill people are identified due to, amongst other factors, a highly vocationally trained population. Cumulative impacts and the community's aging population may be challenging for further enhancement of this positive impact.

Management and Enhancement

To maximise employment benefits associated with the Project, the following enhancement measures will be adopted:

- Develop and implement a Accommodation and Employment Strategy (AES) for the Project, including measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contractor and the Operational and Decommissioning Phase of the Project;
- Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Social Locality;
- Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction and Decommissioning Phase to achieve maximum local employment targets set, and report on local content used;
- Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council to discuss opportunities to support workers in finding new jobs that match their acquired skillsets; and
- Maintenance of the grievance mechanism throughout the Decommissioning Phase to manage concerns that may arise, including issues associated with workforce transition.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for increased direct and indirect employment opportunities is provided in **Table 6-4**.

TABLE 6-4 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	Assuming a 20-30% employment target is met, the Project will provide opportunities for direct employment across the Social Locality and for a range of industries. In the scenario where the 20-30% target is not met, the Project will have reduced economic benefits across the Social Locality. The Economic Assessment (Appendix S of the EIS) indicates that the extent of direct employment opportunities is 180 direct jobs, with 250 jobs at peak construction. The extent of employment during decommissioning will likely be limited to the surrounding areas, depending on the availability of workers at the time.
Duration	The impact will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with six months of peak construction, and to a lesser extent during operations, which is

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
	anticipated to be a minimum of 30 years. The consideration of transitioning of the Operational workforce to other local employment opportunities will be planned in the final period of operation, in accordance with any Project approval requirements. The duration of employment opportunities during the Decommissioning Phase is no less than five months.
Severity	It is expected that most impact will be felt during the Construction Phase, with a construction workforce of approximately 180 FTE, with peak construction workforce of 250 workers. The impact during operation is limited and the decommissioning period for the Project will require the employment of a limited number of local workers and result in a short-term increase in economic growth for the Social Locality.
Sensitivity	The Social Locality's workforce is mainly active within the public and social services. The Project will provide an opportunity for diversification of skills and job opportunities, which is important in the context of the transition to renewable energy.
Level of Interest	There is support for the economic benefits the Project will bring to the Social Locality, which includes local employment.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-enhancement and post-enhancement impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-5**.

TABLE 6-5 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Likely	Medium	Major	Almost Certain	High
Operation	Minor	Possible	Low	Moderate	Likely	Medium

6.2.2 INCREASED LOCAL PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Impact Overview

Increased demand for goods and services helps to stimulate the local economies. Businesses within the Social Locality benefit from increased economic activity associated with the construction workforce and Project material requirements.

NSW SIA categories

Livelihoods.

Affected Stakeholders

Local community organisations and construction businesses.

Findings

In addition to providing employment opportunities, the Project has the potential to provide opportunities for the local procurement of goods and services during the Construction Phase, which will benefit local and regional businesses.

A strategic focus on local procurement, both direct and indirect, is paramount for fostering economic growth and community development. Direct local procurement involves sourcing goods and services directly from Local / Regional Businesses, thereby stimulating the regional economy and providing opportunities for local suppliers.

Accordingly, in addition to providing employment opportunities, the Project has the potential to provide direct opportunities for the local procurement of goods and services, which will benefit local and regional businesses. Indirectly, the Project will also contribute to the local economy by providing opportunities to support businesses that, in turn, benefit from increased economic activity - such as equipment manufacturers, maintenance managers, other service providers. Where possible, these demands are sought to be met through Local / Regional Businesses and organisations within the Social Locality.

Engagement findings: There was support for the economic benefits the Project will bring to Social Locality, which includes local procurement. The overall perception is that the Project would bring a 'good balance' of business and investment to the area.

Economic profile: The baseline data provides key findings and assumptions related to employment opportunities:

- **Available appropriate workforce:** Although there is a fluctuating labour force in the locations of the Social Locality, there is potential for the sourcing of local construction workers in surrounding towns during the Project's Construction Phase. 41.1% of the LGAs' workforce included in the labour force as technicians and trades workers, machinery and operators and labourers, with this percentage ranging from 28.1% at the Project's immediate surroundings, whilst the UCLs and SUA show 40.6% and 33.9%, respectively;
- **Relevant industries:** The Social Locality displays a mixed economic composition with strong employment in Public and Social Services and negligible industrial and construction activities. This provides opportunities for the Project's workforce sourcing and reskilling people into renewable energy workforce participation;
- **Local businesses:** Out of an approximate 7,203 businesses, 1,218 (16.9%) are active in the construction industry, which offers opportunities for local procurement and suppliers. At the same time, of 1,218, 556 (45.6%) are sole traders. This may cause challenges for the Project, e.g. with its bidding process and the administration of several small parties;
- **Opportunity for training:** The top industries in the Social Locality are skewed toward favouring public and social services. This provides an opportunity for the Project to provide training to expand and bring variety to workforce skillsets in the Social Locality; and

- **Aging population:** Compared to the State, the Social Locality displays a greater portion of its population being over the age of 65, and the percentage has increased between 2016 and 2021. These findings suggest an increasing aging population, which may indicate potential challenges to sourcing local workers.

Economic assessment: During construction, at a regional level, the annual total impact of the indirect output from the Project on the regional economy is estimated at \$405 million. The Input-Output (IO) analysis indicates that the industries with the highest indirect output from the Project (based on a one-digit ANZSIC classification) include Construction, Manufacturing, Transport, Administration and Support Services, Wholesale Trade, and Professional and Scientific Services. The annual value added by the Project to the regional economy is estimated at \$128 million from indirect impacts annually and the indirect impact on household income is expected to be \$8 million p.a. Additionally, direct employment impacts will flow through the economy and create an estimated additional 67 jobs leading to an overall expected increase of 247 jobs.

At state level, the indirect impacts total \$462 million for NSW. The main industries that benefit from indirect Project impacts are Construction, Manufacturing, Professional and Scientific Services, Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services, Financial and Insurance Services, and Transport, Postal and Warehousing. Value added by the Project to the state economy is estimated at \$156 million from indirect impacts. The total impact on household income is \$12 million p.a on the NSW economy and direct employment impacts will flow through the economy and create an estimated additional 99 jobs leading to an overall expected increase of 279 jobs.

During operations, at regional level, annual indirect outputs total \$102 million for the region. The main industries that receive indirect impacts from the Project are Electricity, Gas and Water Supply, Financial and Insurance Services, Construction, Professional and Scientific Services, and Manufacturing. Value added to the region is estimated at \$14 million from indirect impacts and the indirect impact of household income is expected to be \$1 million p.a. The Project's employment impacts will flow through the economy and create an estimated additional four jobs leading to an overall expected increase of 14 jobs.

At state level, the indirect output totals for the state are estimated at \$124 million p.a. The main industries that receive indirect impacts from the Project are Electricity, Gas and Water Supply, Financial and Insurance Services, Professional and Scientific Services, Construction, Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services and Manufacturing.

The estimated value added by the Project to the NSW economy is \$21 million p.a for indirect impacts and the indirect impact of household income is expected to be \$1 million. The employment impacts will flow through the economy and create an additional six jobs leading to an overall expected increase of 16 jobs.

Cumulative impacts: The cumulative projects outlined in **Section 6.2.1** will also contribute to cumulative local procurement opportunities for local businesses, and the consistent stream of renewable energy and battery storage developments is likely to provide opportunities for local manufacturing and construction businesses to adapt to the increased demand for project components.

Additionally, as stated in the economic assessment, because of an increase in the labour force in the region, the resident population will grow. Given the current population dynamics in the region, this increase in the resident population is likely to be higher than the current underlying rate (+0.5%).

An increase in the resident population will lead to economic growth through increased economic activity driven by expenditure on goods, services, accommodation and entertainment. These flow-on effects will boost the regional economy, so long as there is excess capacity to meet demand. In the event of scarcity, there could be an erosion in the quality of services and an increase in the cost of living for existing residents.

Summarising, the findings suggest that the Project will provide direct and indirect business and procurement opportunities in the Social Locality and wider region, particularly during its Construction Phase. The Social Locality offers a fluctuating available appropriate workforce and relevant industries. Challenges to further enhance this positive impact may occur due to the small size of construction businesses, cumulative impacts, and an aging population.

Management and Enhancement

To maximise local procurement opportunities and with following enhancement measures will be adopted:

- Develop and implement local content initiatives which includes measures to encourage local procurement for the EPC Contractor and include local employment goals for the Operation Phase. These initiatives are to be aimed at livelihoods, including people's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business;
- Create awareness amongst the community, in partnership with the Tamworth Regional Council and other partner organisations to foster a better understanding of the ways Local / Regional Businesses may be able to take part in the Project. This awareness is to be generated using a Project specific website and existing communication channels within the Tamworth Regional LGA;
- Work with the EPC Contractor during the Construction Phase to track and report on the local content used for the Project in order to demonstrate the extent to which local content is being accessed¹⁷;
- To enhance procurement opportunities, the Project will investigate options for developing long-term contracts with local suppliers to source goods based on demand (i.e. spot purchasing); and
- Assist respective Local / Regional Businesses in becoming 'job ready' by:
 - ensuring lead contractors are encouraged to hire regional residents where they have the required skills and experience and are able to demonstrate a cultural fit with the organisation;

¹⁷ The Proponent has confirmed that records of "contact us" forms where local companies can introduce themselves and apply for subcontracting/direct jobs will be kept.

- participation in business group meetings, events or programs in the regional community in order to increase transparency in relation to upcoming opportunities; and
- encouraging lead contractors to purchase local non-labour inputs to production, where local producers can be cost and quality competitive, to support local industries.

The Project will also implement measures to encourage local content where importance is placed on procurement of local non-labour inputs to production where local producers can be cost and quality competitive. This can be done in several ways, but measures will at least include a process which:

- Allows businesses with an ABN to register their business and submit EOIs;
- Provides additional information about the available work packages and the process of bidding for subcontracting or supply opportunities with the main subcontractor(s); and
- Engaged suppliers and subcontractors directly according to their procurement processes.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for local direct and indirect procurement opportunities is provided in **Table 6-6**.

TABLE 6-6 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS LOCAL PROCUREMENT

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	Opportunities for local procurement extend throughout the Social Locality.
Duration	The impact will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with six months of peak construction, and to a lesser extent during operations, which is anticipated to be a minimum of 30 years.
Severity	41.1% of the Social Locality have relevant occupations and industries to those required for construction.
Sensitivity	The Project will provide an opportunity for the diversification of skills and job opportunities, which is important in the context of the transition to renewable energy.
Level of Interest	There was support for the economic benefits the Project will bring to the Social Locality, which includes local procurement.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-enhancement and post-enhancement impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-7**.

TABLE 6-7 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE LOCAL PROCUREMENT

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Major	Likely	High
Operation	Minor	Possible	Low	Moderate	Likely	Medium

6.2.3 POTENTIAL TO CREATE SKILLS AND LABOUR SHORTAGES

Impact Overview

The increased demand for labour driven by the Project may contribute to skills shortages. The need for specialised skills may outstrip the available regional workforce, creating gaps in relevant industries. Skills and labour shortages can be mitigated by providing on-the-job training, preferring to hire contractors, partnering with educational institutions, and creating a target for apprenticeships.

NWS SIA categories

Livelihoods; Accessibility.

Affected Stakeholders

Local community organisations and businesses.

Findings

Economic benefits notwithstanding, the Project also has the potential to negatively impact the availability of skilled workers within the Social Locality and wider region. This impact is typically recognised when a considerable proportion of skilled workers available in a region are employed on a single large Project, meaning that other businesses and / or operations are unable to draw from the same pool of skilled workers to fulfil their job requirements.

Economic profile: The baseline data provides the following key findings and assumptions related to employment opportunities:

- **Population stagnation:** Population stagnation or slight decline in regional centres can intensify socio-economic challenges, such as labour shortages and infrastructure degradation, as these regions often have fewer alternative sources of economic activity to buffer against such impacts;
- **Relevant occupations:** A portion of the Social Locality's workforce have relevant occupations and skills required for the Construction Phase of the Project (i.e. work as technicians and trades workers, machine operators and drivers, or labourers). This crossover of relevant skillsets increases the possibility that workers may decide to leave their current employer and accept an opportunity with the Project for the duration of the Construction Phase. Where this occurs, Local / Regional Businesses may be negatively impacted as they are unable to hire and / or retain suitable staff,

and in-turn their economic output is diminished as they cannot fulfil contracts and business commitments; and

- **Workforce diversity:** The Project will supply employment in construction and infrastructure, which is currently a minor industry in the Social Locality.

Economic assessment: The labour force in the region is expected to be insufficient to meet the demand from the projects in the region. As a result, it is likely that some labour will shift industries, individuals outside of the labour force may rejoin, and there may be inward movement of labour from other regions. Given the demand for labour, wage increases may occur depending on whether the shortage can be met at the current wage rate.

Local businesses: There is a risk that the Project will contribute to skills shortages within the Social Locality. The impact on local businesses is lessened by the existing mobility of prospective employees. Nationally, 'Technicians and Trades Workers', 'Labourers', and 'Machinery Operators and Drivers' have the largest proportion of independent contractors (15%, 10% and 10%, respectively). The tendency for workers within these industries of employment to operate as independent contractors is an indicator for existing employee mobility within the workforce, with the potential for these independent contractors to align themselves with an EPC Contractor rather than be already employed long-term by Local / Regional Businesses (ABS, 2024).

Cumulative impacts: The Project also has the potential to generate competition for local goods and service providers within the Social Locality, particularly those of direct relevance to the resourcing requirements specified to construction. This competition may reduce the ability of Local / Regional Businesses to work on smaller-scale projects within the Social Locality, and by consequence neglect local community members.

Competition may be increased by the cumulative SSD projects in the Social Locality as a result of its proximity to the REZ. Lessened accessibility to goods and services within the local community may result in these goods and services becoming more expensive, and out of reach of vulnerable members of the local community, such as the elderly or those of limited financial means.

In summary, it was found that the increased demand for labour driven by the Project may contribute to skills shortages in a region with population stagnation and with relevant workforce available who may decide to leave current employers to accept an opportunity with the Project. It is also likely that some labour will shift industries, and individuals outside of the labour force may rejoin. Competition may also be increased due to the presence of other SSD projects in the Social Locality. At the same time, existing employee mobility was identified amongst the relevant workforce, meaning that it is likely that many construction workers are independent contractors, rather than employed on a long-term basis by Local / Regional Businesses.

Management and Enhancement

To address the potential creation of skills shortages within the Social Locality, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement the AES for the Project, including the proposed mitigation and management measures contained therein;
- Monitor for skills shortages within the region and take this into consideration with EPC Contractor recruitment objectives;
- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement to maintain ongoing communication with Tamworth Regional Council and local business groups;
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders, including in relation to skills shortages and local business impacts, are identified and acted upon;
- Ensure that on-the-job training programs are provided to upskill local workers with transferable skills;
- Preference hiring contractors to meet short-term labour demands with specialised skills;
- Partner with educational institutions to create apprenticeship programs and internships, ensuring a steady supply of semi-skilled workers; and
- Create and implement a target for apprenticeships to foster local employment and build a skilled workforce for the future.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for the potential creation of skills shortages is provided in **Table 6-8**.

TABLE 6-8 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS SKILLS SHORTAGES

Impact Characteristics	Key Findings
Extent	Skill shortages have potential to generate impacts throughout the social locality across a range of industries.
Duration	The impact will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with six months of peak construction. Impact is expected to be negligible during operations.
Severity	The Project demands on the Social Locality are in moderate relation to the workforce population. The Social Locality contains a high portion of occupations relevant to the skill requirements of the Project.
Sensitivity	Apart from Tamworth, most towns in the Social Locality may not be large enough to easily adapt to shifting labour dynamics.
Level of Interest	This was not raised as a concern during stakeholder engagement; however, it is a known concern for other renewable developments in regional areas.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-9**.

TABLE 6-9 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE SKILLS SHORTAGES

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low
Operation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6.3 LOCAL DISRUPTIONS

Concerns regarding local disruptions during the Construction Phase typically include impacts related to social amenity resulting primarily from noise and vibration, dust, and visual impact.

6.3.1 CHANGES IN SOCIAL AMENITY

Impact Overview

Construction impacts including noise, vibration, dust, visual amenity, which influence social amenity and potentially cause an impact on community health and wellbeing. Social amenity impacts that have potential to exacerbate the needs of youth and elderly groups. In the immediate surrounding areas of the Project, the youth and elderly population remained consistently above the NSW average. These findings highlight the need for robust measures to mitigate noise, ensure safety, and control dust emissions, especially to protect the well-being of youth and the elderly, who may be more susceptible to environmental hazards.

NSW SIA Categories

Health and Wellbeing; Surroundings; Livelihood.

Affected Stakeholders

Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Communities.

Findings

Land use: The following baseline findings relate to social amenity impacts:

Land use in the Tamworth LGA is centred around agriculture, with mining, parkland, forestry, national parks and urban areas also present. Primary agriculture accounts for approximately 88% of land use, which primarily comprises grazing and irrigated cropping (idCommunity, 2025). Livestock grazing is the most extensive agricultural commodity, with cattle, sheep, and poultry farming common. Crops cultivated in the region are predominantly cereal and hay crops, such as wheat, oats and barley, with horticulture activities also present on a smaller scale (idCommunity, 2021).

The Project Area and its surrounds are characterised by grazed native and modified grasslands, resulting from extensive livestock grazing and some small-scale crop production, with evidence of historic vegetation clearance.

There is one existing dwelling within the Project Area, which is accessed from Garoo Road via the New England Highway.

The following findings relating to social amenity were identified in technical studies within the EIS:

Noise and vibration assessment: A noise and vibration impact assessment was undertaken to provide an assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Project (Refer to Appendix K of the EIS). The study states that:

- **During construction of the Project,** worst-case and unmitigated noise levels are likely to be exceeded at times at up to five identified sensitive receivers within 2 km of the Project boundary. However, there are no predicted noise impacts that will exceed the Interim Construction Noise Guideline (ICNG) 'highly affected' management level at any of the sensitive receivers for all construction scenarios. The primary noise contributors are the drum roller, padfoot roller, cranes and small pile driving rigs, all being defined in worst-case construction noise scenarios. The measures entail a combination of informing the community on operating duration of high noise emitting construction machinery, and complaints' handling process. These will be outlined in the Construction Noise and Vibration Management plan (CNVMP) for the Project;
- **During operation of the Project,** compliance with the Noise Policy for Industry (NPI) Project Noise Trigger Levels (PNTLs) is expected to be achieved through the implementation of noise mitigation measures. As a result, all identified sensitive receivers located within 2 km of the Project boundary are predicted to meet the NPI PNTLs. Compliance with the day-time PNTLs are predicted to be achieved at all noise sensitive receivers. The Project has investigated the application of all source and pathway feasible and reasonable noise mitigation measures to reduce noise impacts. The noise mitigation measures include at-source measures, such as the installation of noise reduction kits and silencer kits, and at-path measures in the form of noise walls for the 'PCS Station' and 'High Voltage Transformer'. The Applicant will implement recommended mitigation measures;
- **Cumulative noise impacts:** The project amenity noise level is specifically used for addressing cumulative noise impacts and has already been considered in the development of the PNTLs for this Project. The predicted noise levels for the Project indicate compliance with the PNTLs and therefore, also demonstrates that cumulative impacts are unlikely. Middlebrook Solar Farm and BESS, and Lambruk Solar Farm are located more than 20 km away from this Project and their contribution to cumulative noise are assumed to be insignificant at the closest noise sensitive receivers to this Project. These Projects are expected to also achieve the NPI project amenity noise levels to address cumulative noise impacts. The assessment is recommended to be reviewed when the predicted operational noise levels for the nearest developments are available; and

- **Traffic noise:** Construction and operational traffic noise impacts arising from additional traffic associated with the Project have also been assessed. Construction and operational road traffic impacts are not expected at all sensitive receivers in accordance with the assessment methodology and criteria outlined in the Road Noise Policy (RNP).

Bushfire assessment: A bushfire risk assessment was undertaken to provide an assessment of bushfire risks associated with the construction and operation of the Project (Refer to Appendix R of the EIS). The study concludes that the Project Area does not have a history of bushfires and has a moderate bushfire danger rating. It further states that mitigation will be a combination of complementary strategies, all of which are required to provide the best possible protection outcome for the project and the community. In terms of design principles to minimise risk, the BESS layout will be designed to:

- Provide a defensible space around infrastructure; and
- Ensure that appropriate access, egress and manoeuvrability is provided for first responders.

Despite any mitigation measures applied, bushfire risk will always remain, and it is therefore important that a Bushfire Emergency Management and Operations Plan (BEMOP) is prepared in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, including NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), NSW Fire and Rescue, landowners and adjoining property owners.

In the event that a fire does breach any containment lines and threatens the assets, it is possible that the infrastructure will sustain direct flame contact. The detailed mitigation measures outlined in the bushfire risk assessment have been developed to meet the relevant provisions outlined in Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019 (NSW RFS, 2019) and to ensure that the BESS development does not present any increased risk of widespread fire across the landscape.

In summary, the Project will bring a change in land use to the Social Locality, which is currently mainly centred around agriculture, particularly livestock grazing. Furthermore, noise levels are expected to be relatively low to moderate, and the bushfire risk is moderate.

Management and Mitigation

To address the potential negative changes in social amenity, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Immediate Neighbours and the Surrounding Communities;
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon; and
- Develop and implement a CEMP that will include specific mitigations for construction phase impacts, including:
 - Dust management;

- Construction hours align with statutory requirements / approvals;
- Conduct Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) awareness training where appropriate;
- Noise and vibration management, including development and implementation of a CNVMP as per the management measures stated in the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment;
- Bushfire risk management, including development and implementation of a BEMOP as per the management measures stated in the bushfire risk assessment; and
- Biosecurity risk management, refer to **Section 6.3.4**.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for increased changes in social amenity is provided in **Table 6-10**.

TABLE 6-10 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS SOCIAL AMENITY

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	Impacts are mostly at the local level with direct impacts to Immediate Neighbours, and indirect impacts experienced by the Surrounding Communities.
Duration	The impact will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with six months of peak construction.
Severity	The social amenity disruptions expected during construction are not likely to be experienced by other stakeholders in the Social Locality.
Sensitivity	Most of the impacts are likely to be experienced by Immediate Neighbours. There were five sensitive receptors identified during the construction phase, however, there are no predicted noise impacts that will exceed the ICNG 'highly affected' management level at any of the sensitive receivers for all construction scenarios.
Level of Interest	During engagement, no known concerns about impacts to social amenity were raised.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-11**.

TABLE 6-11 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE SOCIAL AMENITY

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Likely	High	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Operation	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low

6.3.2 TRAFFIC CONGESTION, COMMUNITY SAFETY CONCERNS, AND DETERIORATION OF ROAD SURFACE CONDITIONS

Impact Overview

Transportation of materials and equipment to the Project Area has the potential to cause wear and tear on roads, road traffic congestion and community safety impacts for road users along the haulage routes and on local roads. Risk of traffic injury, or in the worst case a fatality, resulting from increased vehicle movements during the transportation of goods and workers to and from the Project Area.

NSW SIA Categories

Way of Life; Accessibility; Health and Wellbeing; Surroundings.

Affected Stakeholders

Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Communities, Visitors to the Region.

Findings

Working hours: The Project's construction activities are proposed to be restricted to standard daytime construction working hours, these times will have an impact on the local road network as traffic on roads will be increased by workers going to and leaving the Project Area around these times:

- 7:00 am to 6:00 pm (Monday to Friday);
- 7:00 am to 1:00 pm (Saturday); and
- No construction will occur on Sundays or Public Holidays.

Local road network: Garoo Road and Lindsays Gap Road are the relevant local roads. Both are sealed and have a speed limit of 100km/hr. Garoo Road and Lindsays Gap Road connect with New England Highway at T-intersections. Both intersections have channelised right turn and channelised left turn treatments. Garoo Road is a B-Double approved route.

Traffic generating potential: The peak traffic-generating potential is during the construction phase, which involves trips associated with the workforce accessing the Project Area and the delivery of raw materials and plant. However, due to the proposed workforce accommodation camp within the Development Footprint, with capacity to house approximately 250 workers, traffic associated with workers accessing the Project Area is expected to be minimal. During operation the Project is expected to generate up to 20 vehicle trips per day associated with between 5 to 10 maintenance personnel accessing the Project Area. Decommissioning is anticipated to generate a similar level of traffic to the construction stage.

It is anticipated that during peak construction the Project could generate up to 108 light and 156 heavy vehicles per day. Construction of the solar farm and BESS is expected to generate approximately 82 vehicles per hour in the morning and evening peak hours during the peak construction period, which would reduce to 35 vehicles per hour during the average construction periods.

Light vehicles approaching the Project Area from the north only can use the New England Highway / Garoo Road intersection, reaching the Project Area access gate from the north. All other vehicles, including OSOM, will be required to use the New England Highway / Lindsays Gap Road intersection, approaching the site access gate from the east.

Overall, the construction traffic is expected to have a minimal impact on the operation of the road network. Accordingly, it is concluded that the road network is able to accommodate the traffic generated by the development during the construction period.

Traffic Congestion: Congestion may arise from an increased volume of traffic between the towns of the Social Locality and the Project Area as ongoing construction activities will necessitate the movement of materials to / from the Project Area. Traffic congestion caused by increased vehicle movements, and the potential establishment of detours or other road blockages, may cause disruptions to daily commutes and local business operations which may impact on stakeholder way of life, or increase stress and anxiety, impacting on their health and wellbeing. Impacts will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, but decommissioning activities will also require the frequent movement of workers and materials to / from the Project Area.

All equipment required for the Project will be delivered from the Port of Newcastle, with construction materials and supplies sourced locally where possible. The existing road network has capacity to accommodate these traffic volumes during construction, operation, and decommissioning phases.

Heavy vehicle access will be restricted to roads approved for B-Double use, as identified in the Transport for NSW Restricted Access Vehicle Map. A Route Assessment confirmed a preferred access route for OSOM vehicles from the Port of Newcastle. This route can accommodate such vehicles with appropriate traffic management measures and does not require road upgrades.

Existing turning treatments from the state road network to the site are deemed adequate to manage the anticipated increase in traffic. The proposed site access location also provides sufficient sight distance to ensure safe vehicle entry.

Community Safety: An increased volume of daily traffic may result in compromised emergency response times, a higher potential for unsafe driving (i.e. speeding, distracted driving etc.) to occur, resulting in an accident, and a heightened exposure to air pollution from vehicle dust and exhaust emissions, all of which can impact upon community health and wellbeing. The S202 privately operated school bus service uses Garoo Road from New England Highway to the proposed site access. The bus travels on Garoo Road between the hours of 7:00am to 7:40am and 4:25pm to 4:50pm on school days. The S218 service uses the Garoo Road bus stop at the intersection of New England Highway. The service travels north from this intersection only. The bus is scheduled for this stop at 8:10am and 3:50pm on school days. Both buses travel by the site which stops in close proximity which increases the risk for accidents with local community members. This should be acknowledged by the Applicant to aid in scheduling Project traffic around school start and end times.

Road Surface Conditions: The use of larger vehicles (i.e. B-Doubles) and the higher volume of traffic has the potential to cause a deterioration of road pavement conditions, which in turn, increases the risk of a traffic accident occurring. The New England Highway, Garoo Road and Lindsays Gap Road are sealed roads. Garoo Road and Lindsays Gap Road join with New England Highway at T-intersections. Both intersections have channelised right turn and left turn treatments. It was found that vehicles can access the site with suitable traffic management measures. High risk OSOM vehicles will access the site during the construction phase and travel under escort outside of peak periods. During operation the increase in traffic of between 5 and 10 vehicle movements per day would result in a negligible change to the traffic environment. The road network can readily accommodate the traffic generated by the Project during all Project phases (refer to the Traffic Impacts Assessment (TIA) included at Appendix P of the EIS for further details on this).

Cumulative impact: Other pre-existing and proposed projects are expected to generate additional vehicle traffic due to the Project being in proximity of the New England REZ. The vehicles would be distributed on the surrounding road network and are expected to have a minimal cumulative impact on the operation of the road network (Also refer to Appendix P of the EIS).

Decommissioning: During the Decommissioning Phase, internal roads, if not required for ongoing farming purposes or fire access, would be removed and the Project Area reinstated as close as possible to its original state. Traffic generation during this stage will be similar to that of the construction phase. A comprehensive Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be developed prior to decommissioning in collaboration with relevant road authorities to ensure adequate road safety and road network operations are maintained.

In Summary, the Project's peak traffic generating potential is during construction, with up to 108 light and 156 heavy vehicles per day during the Project's peak construction phase. Light vehicles approaching the Project Area from the north can use the New England Highway / Garoo Road intersection whilst other vehicles, including OSOM, will approach the Project Area from the access gate on the east. School bus services were identified on the local road network and should be taken into consideration. However, the construction traffic is expected to have a minimal impact on the operation of the road network and the existing road network has capacity to accommodate traffic volumes. During operation the increase in traffic of between 5 and 10 vehicle movements per day would result in a negligible change to the traffic environment.

Management and Mitigation

To address traffic and transport related disruptions to stakeholders, the Project will adopt the following management measures:

- Develop and implement a TMP, which draws on the Project TIA. The TMP should include the following measures to manage the social dimension of the impact:
 - Heavy vehicles should avoid travelling at peak bus operating times to limit the interaction of larger vehicles and vulnerable road users;

- OSOM vehicle trips be timed so they do not coincide with other OSOM vehicles within the surrounding area to limit the impact to the road network;
- On-site speed restrictions;
- Appropriate dust suppression measures;
- Maintenance program for on-site access tracks to ensure safe access;
- Loading and unloading is proposed to occur within the work area. No street or roads to be used for material storage at any time; and
- Sufficient car parking on-site to ensure that vehicles are not parked on the surrounding road network; and all car parking and loading areas to be designed in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard (2890 series) and Council requirements.
- Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the requirement to provide frequent updates around local impacts arising from construction related activities to Immediate Neighbours and the surrounding community. Neighbours are to be consulted and notified regarding the timing of major deliveries which may require additional traffic control and disrupt access. The SEP includes:
 - Continued engagement with Immediate Neighbours to ensure that matters raised in relation to traffic concerns, including school bus routes, are appropriately considered and incorporated into construction management processes and procedures;
- Repair damaged Council roads and / or upgrade roads as required in accordance with Council Engineering Standards;
- Take timing of school bus services into consideration to limit potential for accidents;
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders during construction are identified and acted upon; and
- Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding of any particular periods of intense road use by transport vehicles and / or oversized or over dimensioned vehicles. This information can then be disseminated to Project stakeholders as considered relevant. It is recommended that any OSOM vehicle trips are timed so they do not coincide with other OSOM vehicles within the surrounding area to limit the impact to the road network, which can be undertaken as part of the permit application.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics related to traffic congestion, community safety concerns and deterioration of road surface conditions is provided in **Table 6-12**.

TABLE 6-12 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE TRAFFIC AND ROADS

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	It is anticipated that traffic disruptions will be experienced in the Social Locality. The geographical extent of the cumulative impact is across the Social Locality but will be primarily experienced between the towns of the Social Locality and the Project Area.
Duration	The impact will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over a 15-month period with 6 months of peak construction, and to a lesser extent during operations, which is anticipated to be a minimum of 30 years. The decommissioning period is expected to take no less than five months.
Severity	The TIA considered surrounding SSD projects and identified that the current road network has adequate capacity to handle the additional construction traffic. Construction traffic does have the potential to impact upon stakeholders through delays due to congestion, the potential for traffic accidents and increased road surface deterioration. For traffic during decommissioning, there is currently limited visibility as to the capacity of the road network in approximately 30 years' time. There is the potential for additional road upgrades to have occurred, but also for other projects to occur within the Social Locality that may influence the degree of change experienced.
Sensitivity	There is a possibility that vulnerable groups who direct and / or indirectly use the roads (i.e. elderly, emergency services, youth, etc.) may be affected.
Level of Interest	Stakeholders were concerned about how the Project may impact the condition of surrounding roads and queried site/vehicle access for the workers.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-13**.

TABLE 6-13 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE TRAFFIC AND ROADS

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Major	Possible	High	Minor	Possible	Medium
Operation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6.3.3 (PERCEIVED) HEALTH IMPACTS

Impact Overview

Concerns about adverse health impacts associated with solar farms and BESS operations are common in Projects of this nature, including noise and visual impact, bushfire, safety concerns linked to the thermal runaway, fires, and the release of toxic chemicals in the case of accidents, and the polluting of agricultural land and water supply linked to potential mismanagement of disposal of BESS equipment.

NSW SIA Categories

Health and Wellbeing; Community; Way of Life.

Affected Stakeholders

Immediate Neighbours; Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Communities.

Findings

Engagement findings: Based on practitioner experience from similar solar farm and BESS projects across NSW, common stakeholder engagement concerns include perceived risks associated with fire and explosion risks, toxic chemical exposure, air quality impact, water contamination, noise, and electromagnetic fields. Stakeholders frequently raise concerns about the effects on agricultural land, with nearby landowners seeking greater clarity on how the Project may influence soil quality and water supply, both of which are essential to their livelihoods. Additionally, bushfire risk is a recurring issue, alongside broader concerns about community health and wellbeing. However, in stakeholder engagement data received there were no known concerns about health impacts associated with the construction or operation of the Project.

Community health: Although there is a range of health facilities available within the Social Locality, baseline data on the Social Locality's population's health indicates that the local community's neurocognitive and respiratory health conditions are above the State's average. This may suggest a larger demand for health services which means that the Project should be cautious to not putting additional pressure on existing health services (refer to **Section 5.6.2**).

Indigenous people's health: Additionally, it was found that there is a high Indigenous population in the Social Locality, in comparison to the State average. This highlights the need to ensure that the Project does not exacerbate existing health, education, and economic disparities faced by Indigenous communities (NIAA, 2023). This is particularly important as the Indigenous population's median age is significantly lower compared to that of the overall population (ranging from 37 to 58 for the overall population, compared to a range of only 18 to 42 for the Indigenous population).

Noise and vibration assessment: A noise and vibration impact assessment was undertaken to provide an assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Project (Refer to Appendix K of the EIS). Outcomes of this study are discussed in **Section 6.3.1** and suggest that noise and vibration impacts during construction are predicted to be below the ICNG 'highly noise affected' management level is likely to be exceeded at times at up to 5 sensitive receivers within 2 km of the Project boundary, and during operations, the operational noise assessment concluded that with the incorporation of noise mitigation measures, all the identified sensitive receivers within 2 km of the Project boundary are predicted to achieve compliance with the NPI PNTLs. The predicted noise levels for the Project indicate compliance with the PNTLs and therefore, also demonstrates that cumulative impacts are unlikely. The two nearest noise-generating projects (Middlebrook Solar Farm and BESS, and Lambruk Solar Farm) are expected to also achieve the NPI project amenity noise levels to address cumulative noise impacts.

Construction and operational road traffic impacts are not expected at all sensitive receivers in accordance with the assessment methodology and criteria outlined in the RNP. It should be noted however that there can still be effects on the community's health. This could be in the form of annoyance, stress, frustration, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

Bushfire assessment: A bushfire risk assessment was undertaken to provide an assessment of bushfire risks associated with the construction and operation of the Project (Refer to Appendix R of the EIS). Outcomes of this study are also discussed in **Section 6.3.1** and suggest that the Project Area has a moderate bushfire danger rating. The study suggests mitigation measures through a combination of complementary strategies.

Here too, it should be noted that, even if Project Area's bushfire danger rating is moderate, the community may experience this differently and face similar mental health issues.

Inclusion of vulnerable people: baseline data presents:

- **Cultural and linguistical diversity:** There is little vulnerability in relation to cultural and linguistical diversity in the Social Locality, with the percentage of households using a non-English language was low with 6.8% in the Tamworth Regional LGA and 2.5% in the Liverpool Plains LGA. This shows significantly lower percentages than those in the State and in Australia, at 29.5% and 24.8%, respectively. This indicates low linguistical vulnerability, which should ease communication and engagement as the likelihood of CALD groups being excluded from engagement activities due to language barriers is deemed to be low and suggests that there are opportunities for direct communication and engagement around (potential) perceived health impacts;
- **Aging population:** The Social Locality's median age ranges from 37 to 58 which is slightly higher than the State median age of 39. Additionally, there was a general increase in the population aged 65 and over, across the entirety of the Social Locality (except Nundle UCL), whilst the population under 14 years is experiencing a slight decline (remaining stable in the Tamworth LGA, Tamworth SUA and Werris Creek UCL). These findings reflect vulnerability due to age, which may indicate potential challenges to source local workers and highlight the need for robust measures to mitigate noise, ensure safety, and control dust emissions, especially to protect the wellbeing of the elderly, who may be more susceptible to environmental hazards. This information suggests that this demographic group within the local community may be particularly prone to experiencing health impacts;
- **Indigenous people:** The Social Locality's Indigenous population is growing. The Tamworth Regional LGA experienced an increase in the Indigenous population from 10.1% in 2016 to 12.7% in 2021, and the Liverpool Plains LGA experienced an increase from 12.4% in 2016 to 14.8% in 2021. The proportion of the population who identify as Indigenous is higher than that of NSW (3.4%). The unemployment rate of the Indigenous population (9.8%) is lower than the unemployment rate found across the Tamworth regional and Liverpool Plains LGAs, at 11.2% and 17.0%,

respectively. Moreover, median weekly household incomes vary with some townships where the Indigenous population has a higher median income and others where it is lower. The Indigenous median age is significantly lower across the board (ranging from 37 to 58 for the general population, compared to a range of 18 to 44 for the Indigenous population), indicating high vulnerability. Particularly this last finding shows the sensitivity of Indigenous people in relation to (perceived) health impacts and implies that this group may require specific attention when actual health impacts occur; and

- **Socio-economic disadvantages:** The Social Locality is relatively less advantaged as the Tamworth Regional LGA has a SEIFA percentile of 31 and the Liverpool Plains LGA has a SEIFA percentile of 10. At the same time, SA1 of the Project Area and the SA1s adjacent to the Project Area have increased socio-economic conditions from 2016 to 2021, which indicates that there may be a higher community need for social wellbeing projects in the Social Locality's UCLs. This information suggests that there may be opportunities for the Project to support community needs to mitigate (perceived) health impacts.

Summarising, although there is a range of health facilities available within the Social Locality, demand for health services may be high due to the community's health conditions. Especially First Nations people and elderly may be sensitive to this impact and may require special attention. (Perceived) health impacts and reasons for anxiety or stress are mainly related to annoyance, stress, frustration, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, based on input from stakeholders.

Management and Mitigation

To address the perceived health impacts associated with the Project, the following management measures will be adopted:

- Implementation of a SEP tailored to the Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement;
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities;
- Develop and implement a CEMP, as outlined in **Section 6.3.1**;
- Develop and implement an Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP), which will include specific mitigations for the Project, and may include:
 - System and operational monitoring;
 - Site management and maintenance responsibilities;
 - Implement erosion control measures to prevent soil erosion and runoff;
 - Biosecurity management (including pest control and weed management);
 - Emergency Response Plan;
 - Waste Management Plan; and

- To align all communication with the Community's culture and values and aligning the Project's construction, operation and engagement activities with the Social Locality's events and festivals calendar.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for perceived health impacts is provided in **Table 6-14**.

TABLE 6-14 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS PERCEIVED HEALTH IMPACTS

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	The extent of this impact is limited to the immediately surrounding areas of the Project. However, the perception of the impact may extend to members of the surrounding community.
Duration	Impacts may remain for the entire duration of the Project, which is anticipated to be minimum 30 years.
Severity	Based on the technical studies, it is expected that the intensity of health impacts is low to moderate. However, if electrical faults, fire or increased erosion results in bushfire or land contamination the degree of change would change to high.
Sensitivity	The Indigenous population's low median age indicates that this group has a high vulnerability to potential health impacts.
Level of Interest	No stakeholder concerns in relation to (perceived) health impacts were identified during engagements to date.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-15**.

TABLE 6-15 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE PERCEIVED HEALTH IMPACTS

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low
Operation	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low

6.3.4 IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

Impact overview

The Project has potential to disturb biodiversity and the environment of its surroundings, which may cause implications for the population of the Social Locality, e.g. through a feeling of loss, effects on health and wellbeing, access to resources and ecosystem services, or cultural disruptions.

NSW SIA Categories

Surroundings.

Affected Stakeholders

Surrounding communities; Immediate neighbours.

Findings

Land and land use context: The Project Area is currently being used for agricultural activities such as livestock grazing and irrigated cropping and in turn is zoned 'RU1 – Primary Production'. Land use across the LGAs predominantly includes commercial / urban developments and agricultural purposes, including sheep and cattle grazing, lucerne and wheat growing, and poultry farming.

MNES Report: A Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) Report was prepared to support the Applicant with the preparation and submission of a referral under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Three field investigations were undertaken in 2024-2025 involving terrestrial and aquatic habitat surveys, vegetation assessments and targeted surveys for listed threatened species. The Project design has been refined several times to account for impacts on land comprising high biodiversity value.

- **Species under the EPBC Act:** Based on desktop research, field surveys and vegetation ground-truthing, several species listed under the EPBC Act were concluded as known, likely or may occur in the Project Area. These include two bat species, *Corben's Long-eared Bat* and *Yellow-bellied Sheathtail-bat*, as well as four species associated with the local plant community: *Eastern Cave Bat*, *Bluegrass*, *Euphrasia arguta*, and *Finger Panic Grass*. Additionally, the *White Box–Yellow Box–Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland*, a Critically Endangered Ecological Community, is present on-site and considered a Serious and Irreversible Impact (SAII) entity, although it has been excluded from the Development Footprint.
- **BDAR:** A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR, Appendix G of the EIS) was prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 (BAM) and the Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS) and has assessed the potential impacts of the Project on threatened species. The Project is anticipated to have prescribed impacts as outlined below:
 - The removal of human-made structures;
 - Impacts to non-native vegetation; and
 - Impacts to habitat connectivity.

Stakeholder concerns: Stakeholders expressed concerns about how fire risks would be managed on-site, and how land use would affect livestock grazing and setback requirements. They also raised issues around protecting local flora and fauna, maintaining biosecurity standards to avoid risks to livestock and LPA ratings, and preventing weed contamination. Waste and water management were key concerns, particularly the potential for heavy metal leaks from solar panels into soil or water.

Management and Mitigation

To address the impacts on the environment and biodiversity associated with the Project, the following management measures will be adopted:

- Implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement;
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities; and
- Develop and implement a CEMP and an OEMP which will include specific mitigations for the Project, and may include:
 - System and operational monitoring;
 - Site management and maintenance responsibilities;
 - Implement erosion control measures to prevent soil erosion and runoff;
 - Biosecurity management (including pest control and weed management);
 - Emergency Response Plan; and
 - Waste Management Plan.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for impacts on the environment and biodiversity is provided in **Table 6-16**.

TABLE 6-16 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	Impacts are mostly at the local level with direct impacts to Immediate Neighbours, with indirect impacts experienced by the Surrounding Communities.
Duration	The impact will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with 6 months of peak construction.
Severity	Impacts will be most acutely experienced by Immediate Neighbours.
Sensitivity	Most of the impacts likely to be experienced by Immediate Neighbours.
Level of Interest	Stakeholders raised concerns about fire safety, livestock management, environmental protection, biosecurity risks, and potential soil or water contamination from solar panel waste.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-17**.

TABLE 6-17 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Likely	High	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Operation	Minor	Possible	Medium	Minimal	Possible	Low

6.3.5 DISRUPTION TO FARMING PRACTICES

Impact overview

The Project has potential to disrupt farming practices because of the Project construction.

NSW SIA Categories

Livelihoods.

Affected Stakeholders

Host landowner.

Findings

Engagement findings: Project compatibility with local land use was discussed with the local community. As the Applicant will be purchasing the land, there is no expectation for livestock practices to continue throughout the Project's lifespan and livestock will be removed from the Project Area during the Construction and Operational Phases of the Project. No further issues were raised during the consultation.

Land use: The Project Area's land use has evidence of extensive agricultural activities such as livestock grazing and irrigated cropping. The Project Area and surrounding areas are zoned RU1 - Primary Production and are primarily occupied by agricultural or vegetated land.

Economic assessment: The Construction phase of the Project is expected to be 18 months. During this time, it is likely that there will be disruption to grazing and disruption to access for neighbouring properties. The footprint of the Project is 368 ha on cleared agricultural land used for grazing with minimal vegetation. The loss of agricultural production from the Project area is expected to be \$175,000 p.a based on average agricultural production per ha of agricultural holding in the Tamworth Regional LGA (ABS, 1990-2023). The economic impact of this loss of production is estimated to be \$325,000 annually for the region and \$382,000 annually for the state.

It is expected that the Project once operational will accommodate sheep grazing minimising the impact to landowners and farmers (Jinko Power & Bright Path Renewables, n.d.).

Solar grazing will require suitable management practices to ensure success of both the solar farm and sheep grazing. On balance, the current plan to continue grazing is likely to lead to minimal agricultural losses during the operation phase.

Cumulative impacts: According to the Economic Impact Assessment, disruption of farming activities is likely to be comparable across most renewable energy projects (Refer to Appendix S of the EIS).

Agricultural impact assessment: The Land and Agricultural Impact Assessment (LAIA) for the Project (Refer to Appendix M of the EIS), states that 268.81 ha of the Project Area is currently used for grazing modified pasture and 100.19 ha is used for dryland cropping.

This equates to 0.12% and 0.09% of the land used for livestock production and cropping within the Tamworth Regional LGA respectively. Based on this, the LAIA states that the loss of productivity is considered to be negligible compared to the overall agricultural activity of the New England and North West region. Due to the scale of operation currently occurring on the Project Area, it is considered unlikely that the loss of agricultural productivity would have a material impact to local providers in the wider region also because the Applicant is committed to using as much of the Project Area as possible for agricultural purposes for the duration of the operational phase of the Project, with only a minimal area (BESS, switchyard, substation) lost during operation. Therefore, the land will still be able to provide agricultural productivity.

In summary, there are extensive agricultural activities such as livestock grazing and irrigated cropping taking place within the Project Area. It is likely that there will be disruption to grazing during the construction period. The loss of agricultural production from the Project area is expected to be \$175,000 p.a. The economic impact of this loss of production is estimated to be \$325,000 annually for the region and \$382,000 annually for the state. Although the loss of productivity is negligible compared to the overall agricultural activity of the New England and North West region, there are impacts to farming practices to the host landowner. This impact will be minimised during operations as the Project will accommodate sheep grazing.

Management and Enhancement

The Project will adopt the following management measures:

- The implementation of a SEP that includes engaging surrounding landowners. Through the SEP, the Applicant will provide regular updates about upcoming construction activities that might impact landowners' annual livestock management. Where relevant, the Applicant will aim to understand surrounding landowners' periods for cropping and livestock movements;
- Development and implementation of the grievance mechanism to manage concerns that may arise during day-to-day construction and operational activities;
- Development and implementation of the CEMP as outlined in **Section 6.3.1**; and
- Implementation of the mitigation measures related to the disruption of farming practices (direct impact of 0.01% on the regional economy) as outlined in the Economic Impact Assessment (EIA), including working in partnership with the local Councils and community to help maximise the projected economic regional benefits.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for the disruption of farming practices is provided in **Table 6-18**.

TABLE 6-18 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS DISRUPTION OF FARMING PRACTICES

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	The EIA (Refer to Appendix S of the EIS) indicates that the extent of direct and indirect impact of foregone agriculture during the Project construction is estimated at up to around 0.01% of direct agricultural economic activity in the region.
Duration	The impact will mainly be felt during the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with 6 months of peak construction.
Severity	The impact is limited to up to around 0.03% of direct agricultural economic activity in the region. The EIA states that economic activity associated with the construction and operation of the Project would outweigh the loss of economic activity from the impact on agricultural production (Refer to Appendix S of the EIS).
Sensitivity	The impact is expected to be felt by the host landowner only. For the wider region, the impact is considered negligible.
Level of Interest	Project compatibility with local land use was discussed with the local community during stakeholder engagement sessions.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-19**.

TABLE 6-19 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE DISRUPTION FARMING PRACTICES

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Likely	High	Minor	Likely	Medium
Operation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6.3.6 POTENTIAL FOR REDUCED COMMUNITY COHESION

Impact Overview

Local disruptions arising from the Project's construction can increase the risk of reduced community cohesion and increased negative sentiment within the community. Increased social tensions due to divergent opinions related to the desirability of the Project and population influx may reduce community cohesion and result in negative mental health and wellbeing impacts to the local community. This difference of opinion between community members over the Project may lead to increased tension within the community.

NSW SIA Categories

Health and Wellbeing; Decision-making Systems; Way of Life; Community.

Affected Stakeholders

Immediate Neighbours; Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Communities.

Findings

Potential for reduced community cohesion was identified based on the following:

Engagement findings: Although no specific concerns have been raised during engagement activities, this does not necessarily imply the absence of such issues. It was noted that stakeholder engagement efforts to date have shown limited feedback on the topic (refer to **Section 6.1**), which may indicate that issues related to community cohesion have not been fully explored.

Disruptions and changes: Research indicates that disruptions to one's environment, such as the construction of projects and developments, can lead to a loss of place attachment and identity (Manzo, 2023), (Jozwik, 2024). The changes brought about by the Project, particularly during its construction phase, can significantly alter the sense of place for individuals within the affected area. Each person may experience these disruptions differently, depending on their personal attachment to the locality and their resilience to change. The influx of workers into the Social Locality due to the Project's construction can have profound effects on community cohesion as the introduction of a large non-local workforce often brings diverse cultural backgrounds, which can strain existing social norms and interactions (Owen, 2018), (World Bank, 2016). These cultural differences may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, disrupting the established social fabric. As these tensions rise, the community may experience a fragmentation of its bonds. Long-standing relationships and social networks can be weakened as residents struggle to adapt to the new social dynamics. This fragmentation can erode the sense of identity and belonging that the local population previously enjoyed, leading to feelings of alienation and disconnection.

Summarizing, Although no specific concerns about community cohesion were raised during engagement, the limited feedback suggests this topic may not have been fully explored. It's possible that some issues remain unspoken or are yet to emerge.

Major changes, like construction projects, can affect people's sense of place and identity. The arrival of a large, non-local workforce may also impact social dynamics, potentially leading to tension, misunderstandings, and a weakening of community bonds.

Management and Mitigation

To address the potential for reduced community cohesion, the Project will adopt a suite of management measures comprising:

- The implementation of the SEP tailored to Construction and Operational Phase of the Project will be important for the mitigation of potentially reduced community cohesion. Specifically, the Project will hold regular community meetings to keep residents informed about project progress and address concerns. It will also be transparent about decision making processes and provide regular updates on Project developments to build trust with the community. Recognising the impacts of temporary disruptions caused by construction activities, a concerted effort is needed to address lingering concerns and strengthen or rebuild community cohesion;

- A grievance mechanism will also be developed and implemented throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during day-to-day construction and operational activities and to provide clear channels for community feedback and ensuring timely responses to concerns and suggestions; and
- Apply a Worker Code of Conduct as per **Section 6.3.6**. The Worker Code of Conduct should establish clear behaviour standards for non-local workers to help maintain community cohesion and sense of belonging within the local community. All Project workers will be provided with information on cultural sensitivity to promote understanding and respect for local customs and norms and to foster mutual understanding between the local community and incoming workers.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics related to the potential reduced community cohesion is provided in **Table 6-20**.

TABLE 6-20 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS POTENTIALLY REDUCED COMMUNITY COHESION

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	Potential loss of community cohesion has the potential to impact all stakeholders within the Social Locality. However given the location of the Project, those stakeholders located in the Quirindi, Nundle, Wallabadah and Werris Creek townships are likely to be the most impacted.
Duration	It is anticipated that the loss of community cohesion will be most acutely experienced during the period of construction. The duration of this impact is also expected in the early stage of the Operational Phase but not persist for the lifespan of the Project.
Severity	The community across the Social Locality are relatively interdependent with strong community connections and values.
Sensitivity	The Social Locality comprises small and interconnected communities. Accordingly, the loss of community cohesion may elicit a higher degree of change for impacted stakeholders.
Level of Interest	Although stakeholders have not shown major levels of concern, stakeholder engagement efforts have been limited, and not all views and feedback may have been revealed at this stage in time.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-21**.

TABLE 6-21 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE POTENTIAL FOR REDUCED COMMUNITY COHESION

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Major	Possible	High	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Operation	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low

6.4 ACCOMMODATION AND WORKER INFLUX

The social impacts associated with the influx of workers during the Construction Phase include the potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation (refer to **Section 6.4.1**) and the potential increase in demand for services and recreational facilities (refer to **Section 6.4.2**).

6.4.1 INCREASED DEMAND FOR SHORT- AND LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION

Impact Overview

The influx of workers during the Construction Phase has the potential to increase the demand for both short-term and long-term accommodation within the Social Locality. Pressure on long-term accommodation has the potential to contribute to tight rental markets if substantive construction workforces are brought into an area without an appropriate means to manage the worker influx. A sudden increase in the population can exacerbate existing accommodation shortages and cost of living pressures through increased rents in areas with low vacancy rates. Increased pressure on the long-term rental and homeownership markets and changing demographic in the community may result in out-migration.

In addition, the loss of short- and long-term accommodation options has the potential to more likely impact vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, those facing financial hardship, or those with lesser disposable incomes, within the Social Locality. If there is a lack of available short-term housing, this may also impact the ability for family and friends to stay close by to elderly familial relations during extended periods of visitation, which may result in reduced visitation and contribute to social isolation. Similarly, if there is a lack of affordable accommodation options to support short-term rentals this may reduce the accessibility for those more transient lifestyles from residing within the local area.

The reduction in STA has the potential to impact upon tourism operations within the Social Locality as the number of accommodation options available to support these ventures will be reduced. A reduction in tourist accommodation availabilities can lead to a loss of revenue for Local / Regional Businesses that heavily depend on the tourism sector. This loss of revenue may also result in those businesses struggling to cover operational costs, subsequently reducing their contribution to the local economy. Tourist ventures typically rely on a steady stream of visitors, and a decrease in accommodation options for travellers may threaten the viability and long-term sustainability of these businesses, and in doing so, negatively affect the social fabric of the community.

Cumulative impacts may increase the demand for short and long-term accommodation caused by the influx of workers associated with other SSD projects in the Social Locality and the increasing number of projects within the New England REZ.

Accommodating large construction workforces in regional areas is a multifaceted challenge that simultaneously requires mitigating socio-economic impacts and enhancing socio-economic benefits to various stakeholders.

Achieving a socially equitable outcome for all stakeholder groups requires careful planning and communication between local governments, STA providers and occupants and owners of the existing housing stock.

NSW SIA Categories

Livelihood; Community; Way of Life; Accessibility.

Affected Stakeholders

Local / Regional Businesses; Visitors to the Region; Surrounding Communities.

Findings

The Project is located approximately 40 km from Tamworth and within safe driving distance of Werris Creek, Wallabadah, Nundle and Quirindi. Most towns in the Social Locality (except Tamworth SUA) have a higher median age than the State average and show mixed population trends, with some areas growing and others declining.

Baseline findings: Towns with older populations and declining growth may present challenges for sourcing local workers. Household incomes are consistently below the State average, and unemployment rates (except in Nundle UCL) are higher than the State average, increasing vulnerability and sensitivity to change. Mortgage and rental stress is rising across the Social Locality, driven by lower incomes, unaffordable housing and interest rate increases, adding to community anxiety around housing (refer to **Section 5.5**).

Median house and unit prices are lower than NSW averages, with annual price changes fluctuating more than the State average, indicating housing market vulnerability. Rental availability is limited, with only 154 rental properties and very low vacancy rates (0.3%–1.7%), meaning long-term rental capacity is unlikely to meet peak construction workforce needs. While rental affordability is rated as 'Acceptable' under the RAI (SGD, 2024), STA options are also constrained. The region offers about 754 STA rooms, with Tamworth SUA accounting for 88%, but overlapping construction periods for other major projects may create competition for accommodation.

Events such as the Tamworth Country Music Festival, which attracts over 300,000 visitors in January, further reduce STA availability and could negatively impact tourism and local businesses if peak construction coincides with major events. Based on current data, as outlined in **Section 5.5** there are an estimated 391 rooms in rental and STA markets and 1,271 rooms in properties listed for sale, but after factoring in cumulative pressure from other projects, only about 86 rental / STA rooms and 282 private property rooms remain available. Using private housing stock could increase stress and anxiety in the community.

Cumulative Impacts: Multiple SSD projects within or near the New England REZ are expected to overlap with the Project's construction period, creating significant cumulative demand for short- and long-term accommodation. This influx of workers - estimated at around 881 across projects - could increase housing prices, rents, and reduce availability of short-term accommodation typically used for tourism.

Workforce Requirements: The Project aims to achieve a 20–30% local employment target, corresponding to approximately 36–54 FTE workers (50–75 at peak). The remaining non-local workforce, estimated at 126–144 workers (175–200 at peak), will require accommodation. To manage this, the Project will establish an on-site TWAC within the Development Footprint, with capacity for up to 250 workers, covering the entire peak workforce if necessary. This approach will significantly reduce pressure on surrounding towns and local accommodation providers, helping to minimise housing impacts.

Although the TWAC will be implemented on-site and operational for approximately 15 months, the construction phase is expected to last 18 months, meaning some workforce will need off-site accommodation during the final stages of construction, which may place short-term pressure on local accommodation depending on the number of workers requiring housing.

Given the small number of employees during the Operational phase of the Project, there is unlikely to be any crowd out of housing or adverse impacts on the rental market attributable to this Project.

In summary, the Project faces accommodation challenges due to low rental availability, housing stress, and competing SSD projects, compounded by major local events. To mitigate impacts, the Project will target 20–30% local employment and provide an on-site TWAC with capacity for up to 250 workers - enough to house the entire peak workforce if required - significantly reducing pressure on surrounding towns. Long-term housing impacts are not anticipated given the small operational workforce.

Management and Mitigation

To address the potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation because of worker influx during the Construction Phase, the Project will adopt a suite of management measures comprising:

- Construction of the proposed on-site TWAC to accommodate up to 250 workers;
- Prepare an AES that includes a Workforce Accommodation Management Plan (WAMP) aimed at minimising social impacts by ensuring safe, equitable, and community-sensitive living arrangements for construction personnel. The Strategy should include, but not limited to, the following components:
 - Confirmation of local employment target and actions to maximise local workforce participation;
 - Measures to encourage and set targets for local employment for the EPC Contractor;
 - Accommodation plan detailing use of the on-site TWAC, its capacity, and contingency measures;
 - Construction timeframes, including the construction of the TWAC;
 - Social impacts (including impacts on medical services in regional areas with increased population) and proposed mitigations;

- Servicing requirements and supply arrangements for the TWAC – waste, water, sewage, electricity, air quality;
- Consideration of traffic movements;
- Consideration / assessment of any TWAC facilities;
- Security and night lighting for the TWAC; Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council to understand pressures experienced in relation to worker influx and accommodation;
- Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on short and long-term housing and accommodation within the wider region;
- Stipulate ongoing consultation with local property owners and accommodation providers to manage occupancy and maximise use of local accommodation, without preventing its use for major event and holiday purposes; and
- Develop and implement a Worker Code of Conduct to mitigate the potential for increased anti-social behaviour or crime that may potential arise from an increased number of FIFO / DIDO workers. The Worker Code of Conduct should include, at a minimum:
 - Principles of behaviour: Guideline for appropriate behaviour that apply to interactions with all workers whether at work or out of work;
 - Anti-harassment, bullying and discrimination: Sets out the provisions for appropriate conduct, and outlines potential consequences of breach to these provisions;
 - Work health and safety: Requires that all workers understand their obligations to comply with the relevant work health and safety procedures and legislative requirements;
 - Develop and implement a SEP, inclusive of the various stakeholders relevant to the WAMP; and
 - Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics related to the potential increase in demand for short and long-term accommodation is provided in **Table 6-23**.

TABLE 6-22 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	The affected stakeholders are likely to be Local / Regional Businesses, Visitors to the Region, and Surrounding Communities. Cumulative impacts extend to short- and long-term accommodation markets across the Social Locality and New England REZ.
Duration	The period of influx and pressure on short and long-term accommodation would be time limited to the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with six months of peak construction. Given the pipeline on renewable energy projects, the timeframe for cumulative impact is anticipated to be far longer.
Severity	The severity of housing impacts is anticipated to be minimal, as the Project proposes an on-site TWAC capable of housing up to 250 workers. Despite the TWAC cumulative worker influx would likely outstrip supply and result in a higher degree of change in these locations. TWAC will operate for 15 months of an 18-month construction period, some workers will require off-site accommodation, creating potential short-term pressure on local housing.
Sensitivity	Stakeholder sensitivities are expected to be minimal with the provision of an on-site TWAC accommodating up to 250 workers.
Level of Interest	Accommodation pressure is a known concern within the Social Locality and the New England REZ regarding the need to balance large-scale projects with tourist events and transit tourists.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-24**.

TABLE 6-23 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Likely	Major	High	Minor	Possible	Medium
Operation ¹⁸	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6.4.2 INCREASED DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Impact Overview

Worker influx may create pressure on recreational facilities as the increased demand for leisure activities can strain resources and restrict access for the existing community. This demand may lead to overcrowding, extended wait times, and impact on recreational experiences, which may lead to a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction among the community, impacting the health and well-being of residents.

¹⁸ With approximately 10 direct jobs during operations, with all employees expected to reside in the region (Refer to Appendix S of the EIS), this impact is deemed negligible during the Project's Operation Phase.

The influx of workers from various SSD projects in the Social Locality and New England REZ places additional demand for services and recreational facilities.

NSW SIA Categories

Accessibility; Way of Life; Health and Wellbeing.

Affected Stakeholders

Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Communities; Immediate Neighbours.

Findings

Social infrastructure: The following baseline findings relate to impacts linked to an increased demand for services and recreational facilities:

- **Community and recreational services:** The Social Locality is well provided with services. Tamworth provides the greatest range of community and recreational services to support the Project workforce, whilst other towns have less offerings and may be more prone to pressure on these services in case the Project will use them for its workforce;
- **Health facilities:** The Social Locality provides a wide range of health services, including 24-hour emergency services, and mental health services in Tamworth and Quirindi. However, due to the fact that the population is aging, an increasing number of people is expected to make use of these facilities. **Section 5.6.2** outlines public and private health services within the Social Locality. It is anticipated that these medical services will be used by workers during the Construction Phase, when required, to treat illnesses or accidents. If the Social Locality experiences increased pressure on major medical facilities there is potential to generate more impacts to vulnerable groups reliant on health services (refer to **Section 5.4**), including elderly, youth, and Indigenous peoples;
- When considering usage of health facilities, baseline data on the Social Locality's population's health should be taken into account, particularly because the local community's health conditions are below the State's average. This may indicate a larger demand for health services and suggests that the Project should be cautious to not putting additional pressure on existing health services. Additionally, it was found that there is a high Indigenous population in the Social Locality, which highlights the need to ensure that the Project does not exacerbate existing health, education and economic disparities faced by Indigenous communities (NIAA, 2023). This is particularly important as the Indigenous population's median age is significantly lower compared to that of the overall population (ranging from 37 to 58 for the overall population, compared to a range of only 21 to 42 for the Indigenous population);

- **Educational facilities:** The Social Locality is relatively well serviced with educational facilities, although 'childcare deserts' were identified around the Project Area. Tamworth provides most educational facilities, including tertiary facilities, which may provide options for the Project to provide skills training and funding opportunities, as well as support the needs of the Construction workforce and their families; and
- **Community events:** If the peak construction workforce overlaps with a key event (refer to **Section 5.10**), the level of demand and resultant pressure on these services and recreational facilities will be further increased, especially when coinciding with key events such as the Tamworth Country Music Festival in January.

Cumulative impact: The public and private health services within the Social Locality will be used by Project workers during the Construction Phase, when required. There is a possibility that another six projects will place additional strain on these health services through potential overlap of construction periods. In doing so, reduced accessibility for community members (including vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, youth and Indigenous peoples) within the Social Locality is a potential impact.

The cumulative extent of worker influx may also increase demand on recreational facilities within the Social Locality, and in doing so, negatively impact recreational experiences due to overcrowding and limitations of accessibility. These negative experiences will ultimately impact on the health and well-being of local residents.

Additionally, the economic assessment states that an increase in the resident population and reduction in unemployment, coupled with housing pressure can lead to an increase in prices as demand for goods and services increases. The interconnectedness of the broader region will mitigate this to an extent, allowing for price pressures to ease across a wider geographic footprint. Further, the increase in new residents is foreseeable and will likely lead to increases in the supply of goods and services to meet demand. Prices in these situations tend to adjust quickly and any price increases are likely to be temporary (Refer to Appendix S of the EIS).

Although a TWAC is proposed and its associated social infrastructure requirements will be assessed in the Accommodation and Employment Strategy, it is expected that workers housed in the TWAC will continue to use social infrastructure facilities and services within the Social Locality.

Summarising, the Social Locality is well provided with services, including emergency health services, but these may increasingly be needed due to an aging population and a community with below average health conditions. Educational facilities are also available for skills training. The cumulative extent of worker influx may also increase demand on recreational facilities within the Social Locality as well as an increase in prices as demand for goods and services increases.

Management and Mitigation

In order to address the increased demand for services and recreation facilities as a result of worker influx during the Construction Phase, the Project will adopt a suite of management measures comprising:

- Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council to understanding pressures experienced by the townships in relation to worker influx;
- Develop and implement the AES;
- Continue to engage with relevant health (e.g. hospitals, medical clinics, etc.) and emergency services (e.g. ambulance, police, fire brigade, State Emergency Service (SES), etc.) to understand strains and design measures to mitigate strain on local services;
- Engage with the proponents of the relevant solar, wind and BESS projects in the immediate surrounds to ascertain an understanding as to their construction periods and potential options to manage population influx and pressures on social infrastructure, services and recreational facilities within the wider region;
- Develop and implement a SEP; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism to ensure that concerns / complaints raised by stakeholders are identified and acted upon.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics related to the increase in demand for services and recreational facilities is provided in **Table 6-25**.

TABLE 6-24 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	Stakeholders in the Social Locality may be impacted by increased pressure on social and emergency services resulting from the 108 (250 at peak construction) expected non-local workers. Cumulative impacts would extend to townships and regional centres across the Social Locality and New England REZ.
Duration	The period of influx and pressure on services and facilities will be time limited to the Construction Phase, which is expected to occur over an 18-month period with six months of peak construction. Given the pipeline on renewable energy projects, the timeframe for cumulative impact is anticipated to be far longer.
Severity	Existing social and emergency infrastructure appears to have capacity to service the workforce required for the Construction Phase.
Sensitivity	Vulnerable groups will be most impacted, including those requiring access to medical services, social infrastructure, and recreational opportunities.
Level of Interest	Pressure on services due to the influx of construction workers is a known concern within the Social Locality and New England REZ more broadly (Community Power Agency, 2025).

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-26**.

TABLE 6-25 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE DEMAND FOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Major	Possible	High	Moderate	Possible	Medium
Operation ¹⁹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6.5 LAND USE AND LANDSCAPE

The social impacts associated with land, the landscape, and the use of land include (perceived) impacts in relation to the value of land (refer to **Section 6.5.1**), alterations to the landscape and visual amenity (refer to **Section 6.5.2**), and potential impacts on tangible and intangible cultural heritage (refer to **Section 6.5.3**).

6.5.1 PERCEIVED IMPACTS TO LAND VALUES

6.5.1 Impact Overview

Perceived potential impacts to neighbouring land values resulting from altered rural character because of the Project.

NSW SIA Categories

Livelihoods; Health and Wellbeing; Decision Making Systems

Affected Stakeholders

Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Communities; Aboriginal Communities

Findings

Engagement findings: Key concerns regarding visual impacts affecting property values were noted from neighbouring landowners and community members whilst negative impacts to property values have been discussed. Stakeholder engagement also included conversations on the Project's compatibility with local land use.

Existing literature: Current literature analysing the effect of renewable energy developments on property values provides three key findings (Brinkley and Leach, 2019; Abashidze and Taylor, 2022):

- **Mixed outcomes:** The effect of renewable energy developments on property values suggests mixed outcomes for properties based on their underlying land use;
- **Landscape change:** There is ongoing debate regarding whether the landscape changes outweigh the positive effects of increased economic activity and benefit sharing; and

¹⁹ With approximately 10 direct jobs during operations, with all employees expected to reside in the region (Refer to Appendix S of the EIS), this impact is deemed negligible during the Project's Operation Phase.

- **Agricultural Productivity:** Land values for agricultural properties are closely linked to productivity, with higher productivity enhancing land valuation due to increased economic returns.

Economic Assessment: In connection to the existing literature on agricultural productivity, the construction phase of the Project will result in a reduction of up to 369 ha of land available for agricultural activity (Refer to Appendix S of the EIS). However, the EIA states that the economic activity impacts associated with this were assessed and identified as negligible relative to the economic activity impacts of the Project construction. They are therefore not expected to have an impact on the value of the land.

Land Visual Impact Assessment: A Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LCVIA) was prepared to provide an assessment of potential landscape character and visual amenity impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Project (Refer to Appendix L of the EIS), which can indirectly be linked to land values. Refer to **Section 6.5.2** for further details.

In summary, stakeholder engagement revealed concerns about visual impacts and potential effects on property values, as well as compatibility with local land use. Although the Project will temporarily reduce land available for farming, the economic impact is expected to be minimal. A LVIA was also completed to and found that there are not expected to be any impact to the value of the land.

Management and Mitigation

To minimise perceived land devaluation impacts associated with the operation of the Project, the following management and mitigation measures will be adopted:

- Implement visual impact mitigations for sensitive receptors as identified in the LCVIA (Refer to Appendix L of the EIS);
- Where possible, the Applicant will aim to ensure that local initiatives with the potential to increase the value of lifestyle property are prioritised, such as communal green spaces, recreational facilities, and road infrastructure; and
- Develop and implement a grievance mechanism, so that community concerns can be identified and actively managed.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics linked to impacts to land values is provided in **Table 6-27**.

TABLE 6-26 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS LAND VALUES

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	The perceived impact is limited to individuals and the broader community (Refer to Appendix L of the EIS).
Duration	The duration of the Project is anticipated to be minimum 30 years. However, the perception of this impact is not likely to persist for the life of the Project.
Severity	A literature review suggests mixed outcomes on property devaluation of Immediate Neighbours that are visually impacted or Surrounding Communities.
Sensitivity	There is limited proximity to property types likely to be affected and the flat landscape helps to minimize visual impacts.
Level of Interest	There was concern about property values by stakeholders who perceived the change in rural character to negatively property values.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-28**.

TABLE 6-27 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE LAND VALUES

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low
Operation	Minor	Possible	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low

6.5.2 ALTERED RURAL CHARACTER (VISUAL AMENITY)

Impact Overview

Altered rural character and concerns about the Project's aesthetics has the potential to cause stress and anxiety amongst the local community.

NSW SIA Categories

Surroundings; Health and Wellbeing.

Affected Stakeholders

Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Communities; Aboriginal Communities.

Findings

Engagement findings: Visual impact is a common concern among communities regarding the development of renewable energy projects, particularly in rural areas, with stakeholders raising similar concerns in comparable projects and locations, especially in REZs, where the concentration of developments tends to be high.

According to the LCVIA (refer to Appendix L of the EIS), visual concerns included general concerns of the potential impact to the visual amenity in the area and decrease property values. Additionally, visitors stated their frustration regarding the potential visual changes the solar farm would have to the landscape and the potential impacts this will cause to their property values.

It was also raised during stakeholder engagement sessions that screen planting was discussed for dwellings in line with or overlooking the proposed BESS. There is potential to mitigate the project's visual impact by altering the design or positioning of the BESS, however this is subject to investigation and confirmation.

Scenic quality and landscape character: It was found that overall, the existing landscape within the Study Area²⁰ has the ability to absorb the Project with a low degree of visual impact. Due to the undulating topography of the farmland that is primarily utilised as pastures, with some cropping. Vegetation is predominately cleared to support livestock grazing. The landscape is highly modified through human intervention to support agricultural production. In addition, transport corridors and transmission easements are present throughout (Refer to Appendix L of the EIS).

Visual impact: The preliminary visual impact assessment identified 15 non-associated dwellings within a radius of 4 km from the Project. Six public viewpoints along roads within 2.5 km of the Project were assessed. The Technical Supplement states that the visual study areas should be 2.5 km from the Project for all road and rail receptors, and 4.0 km from the Project for all private receptors and public viewpoints.

The impact is primarily limited to 15 non-associated dwellings, of which five required further Intermediate Assessment, while the remaining 10 did not require any assessment. Additionally, two public viewpoints were identified as needing further Intermediate Assessment. The Intermediate Assessment concluded that two non-associated dwellings had a moderate visual impact rating and required further evaluation, whereas three dwellings were rated as low or very low impact and did not require additional assessment. A subsequent Detailed Assessment determined that two non-associated dwellings, specifically R2 and R20, had a moderate visual impact rating and would require mitigation measures.

Visibility of the TWAC from Garoo Road and the New England Highway is limited due to the surrounding topography. While some private receivers may have partial views of the camp, these are expected to be minimal and temporary. Given that visibility is restricted and the camp will only be in place for 15-months during the construction period, the overall visual impact has been assessed as low.

Glint and glare: A Glint and Glare Assessment (GGA), (refer to Appendix L of the EIS) was undertaken by Moir Studio in accordance with the assessment process outlined within the NSW DPPI's Large Scale Solar Energy Guideline (2024).

²⁰ The geographical region or area under consideration in the preparation of an LCVIA. Refer to figure 4 of the LCVIA.

An assessment for Scenario 1²¹ identified eight residential receptors within 3 km of the PV array area, with three (R2A, R2 and R4) experiencing high to moderate glare impacts requiring mitigation. Two nearby roads, Garoo Road and Bulls Road, may also experience significant yellow glare, particularly Bulls Road with over 300 hours annually. While green glare was noted, its impact is minimal due to short exposure times. To address these issues, an alternative tracking pattern from Scenario 3 is recommended, which mitigates glare for all but Bulls Road, which still faces moderate glare. Further consultation is required to finalise this approach. No aviation receptors were found within 5 km.

Cumulative impact: The Project is located within proximity of the New England REZ, which was designated following a detailed state-wide geospatial mapping exercise undertaken by the NSW Government in 2018. The occurrence of large-scale renewable energy projects within a region has the potential to alter the perception of the overall landscape character irrespective of being viewed in a single viewshed, as these projects could become part of the existing landscape.

The LCVIA indicates that there are no cumulative impacts have been assessed for public and private viewpoints. (Refer to Appendix L of the EIS).

Summarizing, based on the GGA, glare impacts are high to moderate for eight residential receptors within 3 km of the PV array area and two nearby roads may experience significant yellow glare.

Management and Mitigation

In order to minimise the real or perceived visual impacts associated with the Project, and the resultant impact on stakeholders, the following mitigation measures will be adopted:

- The implementation of a SEP will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement. Especially ongoing consultation with Immediate Neighbours to provide screen planning to manage the visual impact from neighbouring properties is key to managing this impact. This work may include completion of a localised visual impact assessment where merited;
- Implementation of the recommendations of the LCVIA; and
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project in order to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics for altered rural character (visual amenity) impacts is provided in **Table 6-29**.

²¹ Three scenarios were modelled as part of the GGA. Scenario 1 did not include operational mitigations. Scenario 2 and 3 included modelled operational mitigations.

TABLE 6-28 IMPACT CHARACTERISTICS VISUAL AMENITY

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	The visual impact was primarily confined to 15 non-associated dwellings, with five requiring further assessment and two ultimately needing mitigation. Additionally, two public viewpoints and two dwellings were rated as having moderate visual impact, while others were found to have low or negligible impact.
Duration	The duration of the Project is anticipated to be minimum 30 years.
Severity	The landscape within the Study Area has the ability to absorb the Project with a low degree of visual impact.
Sensitivity	The impact is of concern for several projects within proximity of the New England REZ.
Level of Interest	Stakeholders were concerned about visual changes to the landscape and the loss of visual amenity at nearby properties, with interest in screen planting as a possible solution.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-30**.

TABLE 6-29 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE VISUAL AMENITY

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Minor	Possible	Medium
Operation	Minor	Possible	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low

6.5.3 POTENTIAL IMPACT ON TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Impact Overview

Altered landscapes can significantly impact both tangible and intangible Aboriginal heritage. Physical changes can impact sacred and archaeological sites, while disrupting traditional practices and cultural connections.

NSW SIA Categories

Culture; Health and Wellbeing; Decision Making Systems

Affected Stakeholders

Aboriginal Communities.

Findings

The baseline data provides the following finding related to Aboriginal cultural heritage:

Engagement findings: During stakeholder engagement endeavours, it was commented that the potential presence of Aboriginal artefacts might render the site unsuitable; however, no further information was provided regarding the source or basis of this concern.

Local Aboriginal Land Council: the Tamworth regional and Liverpool Plains LGA are located within the Tamworth LALC boundary, with numerous sites of cultural significance to the Kamilaroi people. This suggests that the Project should work closely with Kamilaroi representatives and RAPs such as the representatives of Tamworth LALC, to identify and avoid damage, disturbance or interference of cultural heritage.

Inclusion of Indigenous people: baseline data presents:

- **Indigenous population:** The Social Locality's Indigenous population is growing and the proportion of the population who identify as Indigenous is higher than that of NSW (3.4%). The unemployment rate of the Indigenous population was 11.2% and 17.0% in 2021 for Tamworth Regional LGA and Liverpool Plains LGA, respectively. However, median weekly household incomes vary with some townships where the Indigenous population has a higher median income and others where it is lower. The Indigenous median age is significantly lower across the board (ranging from 37 to 58 for the general population, compared to a range of 18 to 42 for the Indigenous population), indicating high vulnerability.

HHA: The Historical Heritage Assessment (HHA, Appendix J of the EIS) determined that there are no known built heritage items or significant view lines within or adjacent to the Project. Additionally, the archaeological potential and archaeological heritage significance of the Project has been determined as low. There are no historically built features within the Project area that pose archaeological constraints, so work can proceed without requiring further heritage assessments.

ACHAR: An ACHAR, (Appendix I of the EIS) was undertaken to identify, assess, and recommend management strategies for Aboriginal cultural heritage within the Project Area. RAPs were engaged throughout the process and were provided with the assessment methodology and invited to review and comment on the outcomes. The ACHAR confirmed that there are no previously registered Aboriginal sites located within the Project Area. However, during the assessment, a total of 13 new Aboriginal sites were identified. These include Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs), isolated artefacts, artefact scatters, and a potential hearth. All newly identified sites were recorded in accordance with Sections 6–8 of the Code of Practice and the Guide to Completing the AHIMS Site Recording Form (OEH 2012). Based on the current Development Footprint, no identified sites (including their extents and any applicable buffers) are expected to be harmed by the Project. Each site has been mapped, assessed, and appropriate management measures have been proposed to ensure their ongoing protection.

Summarising, the traditional custodians of the land are the Kamilaroi people. No previously recorded Aboriginal sites within the Project Area were identified but a total of 13 new Aboriginal sites were identified within the Project Area during the development of the ACHAR and based on the current Development Footprint no sites will be harmed by the Project (including both site extents and their buffer, if applied).

Furthermore, the HHA determined that there are no known built heritage items or significant view lines within or adjacent to the Project.

Management and Mitigation

To manage these potential impacts, a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) will be developed and implemented to record and describe the processes and procedures required to be implemented regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage prior and during the construction and operational phases of the Project. This should be developed in partnership with the RAPs (Refer to Appendix I of the EIS).

- The CHMP will at least include (further details described in Appendix I of the EIS):
 - Cultural awareness inductions for workers;
 - Surface collection of artefact scatters;
 - Staged salvage excavation;
 - Archaeological monitoring;
 - Chance finds procedure; and
 - Repatriation of archaeological material post-construction; and Consultation with the local Aboriginal community;
- The implementation of a SEP tailored to Operation Phase of the Project will be important to facilitate stakeholder appropriate, transparent, and meaningful engagement; and
- The grievance mechanism should be maintained throughout the life of the Project to manage concerns that may arise during operational activities.

Impact Significance

A summary of the impact assessment characteristics associated with the potential impact on tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage is provided in **Table 6-31**.

TABLE 6-30 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Extent	The impact is limited to the Project Area and immediate surroundings for tangible heritage, but the extent of intangible heritage extends to the Aboriginal Country of the Kamilaroi peoples.
Duration	The Construction Phase is expected to occur over an 18-month period with six months of peak construction, and the Operational Phase of the Project is anticipated to be a minimum of 30 years.
Severity	The ACHAR suggests that the Project Area is considered to demonstrate low historic significance, low to moderate and unknown scientific value and low aesthetic value. No specific areas of social or cultural significance have been identified; however, it is understood that all Aboriginal heritage sites retain significance for the Aboriginal community and the cultural landscape of the Project Area.

Impact Characteristics	Key Finding
Sensitivity	Aboriginal Communities are culturally vulnerable to Project impacts that will affect tangible and intangible heritage as they contain important cultural knowledge.
Level of Interest	Consultation with Aboriginal people formed an essential part of the heritage assessment process to determine potential harm on Aboriginal cultural heritage from proposed activities and inform management and mitigation measures. RAPs were identified, notified and registered, provided with information about the scope of the Project and cultural heritage assessment process, and consulted. A draft ACHAR was shared with the RAPs to provide comments, which were integrated within the final version.

Based on the findings outlined in this section, the pre-mitigation and post-mitigation impact significance across all relevant project phases is outlined in **Table 6-32**.

TABLE 6-31 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Phase	Pre-mitigation			Post-mitigation		
	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance	Magnitude	Likelihood	Impact Significance
Construction	Major	Possible	High	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium
Operation	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium	Minor	Unlikely	Low

6.6 SUMMARY OF SOCIAL IMPACTS

Table 6-33 provides an overview of all social impacts identified within this section and includes pre- and post-mitigation significance scorings as well as proposed management measures.

TABLE 6-32 SUMMARY OF SOCIAL IMPACTS

Impact Group	Impact Description	Directly Affected Stakeholders	NSW SIA Categories	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation/Enhancement			Summary of Mitigation Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement
					Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		
Stakeholders and Community	Insufficient or ineffective stakeholder engagement	Local community organisations and businesses; Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Community; Immediate Neighbours	Health and Wellbeing; Decision-making Systems; Way of Life; Community	C	Major	Possible	High	- SEP - Grievance mechanism - Promotion of mental health on website - Proactive measures to ensure inclusion of vulnerable people - DRP (to be developed in accordance with Project approval)	Medium
				O	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium		Low
Employment and Procurement	Increased direct and indirect employment opportunities	Local community organisations and businesses	Livelihoods	C	Moderate	Likely	Medium	- Development and implementation of the AES - Create awareness on how prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project - Work with EPC contractor to achieve maximum local employment targets - DRP (to be developed 5 years prior to the end of the Project) - Engagement with Tamworth Regional Council - Grievance mechanism	High
				O	Minor	Possible	Low		Medium
	Increased local procurement opportunities	Local community organisations and businesses	Livelihoods	C	Moderate	Possible	Medium	- Local content initiatives - Create awareness on how local/regional businesses may be able to take part in the Project - Work with EPC contractor to track and report on local content - Investigate options for long-term contracts with local suppliers - Assist local/regional businesses in becoming 'job ready'	High
				O	Minor	Possible	Low		Medium
	Potential to create skills shortages	Local community organisations and businesses	Livelihoods, Accessibility	C	Moderate	Possible	Medium	- Development and implementation of the AES - Monitor skills shortages within the region - SEP - Grievance mechanism - Provide on-the-job training programs - Preference hiring contractors - Partner with educational institutions - Target for apprenticeships	Low
				O	Moderate	Possible	Medium		Low
Local Disruptions	Changes in social amenity	Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Community	Health and Wellbeing; Surroundings; Livelihood	C	Moderate	Likely	High	- SEP - Grievance mechanism - CEMP	Medium
				O	Moderate	Possible	Medium		Low

Impact Group	Impact Description	Directly Affected Stakeholders	NSW SIA Categories	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation/Enhancement			Summary of Mitigation Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement
					Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		
	Traffic congestion, community safety and deterioration of road surface conditions	Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Communities; Visitors to the Region	Way of Life; Accessibility; Health and Wellbeing; Surroundings	C	Major	Possible	High	- TMP - Carpooling program / shuttle bus - SEP - Repair / upgrade damaged Council roads - Grievance mechanism - Engage with other proponents on periods of intense road use and disseminate information to stakeholders	Medium
	Perceived health impacts	Immediate Neighbours; Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Communities	Health and Wellbeing; Community; Way of Life	C	Moderate	Possible	Medium	- SEP - Grievance mechanism - CEMP - OEMP	Low
				O	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium		Low
	Impacts on the environment and biodiversity	Surrounding Communities; Immediate neighbours	Surroundings	C	Moderate	Likely	High	- SEP - Grievance mechanism - CEMP - OEMP	Medium
				O	Minor	Possible	Medium		Low
	Disruption to farming practices	Host landowner	Livelihoods	C	Moderate	Likely	High	- SEP - Grievance mechanism - CEMP - Work with local councils and community to help maximise economic regional benefits	Medium
	Potential for reduced community cohesion	Immediate Neighbours; Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Communities	Health and Wellbeing; Decision-making Systems; Way of Life; Community	C	Major	Possible	High	- SEP - Grievance mechanism - Behaviour standards and information on cultural sensitivity for non-local workers	Medium
				O	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium		Low
	Increased demand for short- and long-term accommodation	Local/Regional Businesses; Visitors to the Region; Surrounding Communities	Livelihood; Community; Way of Life; Accessibility	C	Likely	Major	High	- Development and implementation of the AES - Construction of a on-site TWAC - Continue engagement with Tamworth Regional Council to understand accommodation pressures - Engage with other proponents for potential options to manage pressures - Worker Code of Conduct	Medium
Accommodation and Worker Influx	Increased demand for services and recreational facilities	Aboriginal Communities; Surrounding Communities; Immediate Neighbours	Accessibility; Way of Life; Health and Wellbeing	C	Major	Possible	High	- Continue to engage with Tamworth Regional Council to understand pressure on services - Continue to engage with relevant health and emergency services - Engage with other proponents to understand pressures of services and facilities - SEP - Grievance mechanism	Medium
	Perceived impacts on land values	Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Communities	Livelihoods; Health and Wellbeing; Decision-making Systems	C	Moderate	Possible	Medium	- Implementation LCVIA mitigations - Aim to prioritise local initiatives to increase the value of lifestyle property - Grievance mechanism - SEP	Low
Land Use and Landscape				O	Minor	Possible	Medium		Low
				C	Moderate	Possible	Medium		Medium

Impact Group	Impact Description	Directly Affected Stakeholders	NSW SIA Categories	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation/Enhancement			Summary of Mitigation Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement
					Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		
	Altered rural character (visual amenity)	Immediate Neighbours; Surrounding Communities; Aboriginal Communities	Surroundings; Health and Wellbeing	O	Minor	Possible	Medium	• Work with local/regional businesses on landscape screening • Implementation LCVIA mitigations • Grievance mechanism	Low
	Potential impact on tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage	Aboriginal Communities	Culture; Health and Wellbeing; Decision-making Systems	C	Major	Possible	High	• CHMP • SEP • Grievance mechanism	Medium
				O	Moderate	Unlikely	Medium		Low

7. MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

This section provides an overview of the recommended monitoring framework for the social impact management measures put in place during the construction and operation phases of the Project. For the post-mitigation impact significant levels to be achieved, as outlined in **Section 6**, the social impact mitigations will need to be monitored in accordance with the framework plan outlined in **Table 7-1** and integrated with the broader Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) to be developed for the Project.

The objectives of monitoring are to:

- Verify the predicted impacts and identify any other impacts that may arise;
- Verify that management measures are being implemented as planned;
- Assess the effectiveness of the management measures; and
- Provide data for any necessary regulatory reporting to the State Government or other internal compliance reporting.

Accordingly, **Table 7-1** identifies the following:

- **Management Goals:** The overarching objective is to minimise the negative social impacts associated with the Project and enhance the positive impacts. As such, specific goals corresponding to each impact have been provided. These can be used to determine whether the management measures have been effectively implemented;
- **Proposed Monitoring Activities:** The monitoring activities proposed will ensure that relevant data is collected (e.g. the performance indicators) during the various phases of the Project to ensure the effectiveness of the management measures;
- **Desired Social Outcome:** Articulate desired social outcomes to measure the social performance of the Project;
- **Performance Indicators:** The indicators provide a mechanism to determine whether the goals have been met;
- **Target:** Provides the aspirational target for performance indicators that have been estimated based on the best available data and assumptions at the approvals stage. These targets may change upon receipt of additional data post-approvals;
- **Monitoring Frequency:** Outlines the period for data collection; and
- **Responsible Person:** Assigns the relevant person and/or entity to take charge of the proposed monitoring in order achieve the management goal.

TABLE 7-1 PROPOSED MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Stakeholder and Community						
Insufficient or ineffective engagement	Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	- Foster trust and transparency by ensuring stakeholders feel heard and that their concerns are addressed promptly and effectively. - Ensure sustainable waste management practices to minimize intergenerational equity associated with long-term environmental impacts.	- Number of complaints relating to engagement - Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved - Percentage of project materials recycled by approximate weight: panels, metals, cables, inverters and batteries. - Percentage of project materials reused recorded by percentage of units.	90% of complaints resolved 100% of mounting infrastructure to be reused.	Ongoing	Applicant
Employment and Procurement						
Maximise local employment and management of retrenchment	- Record local employment - Record employee retention rate - Ensure major contractors report on local employment - Record the number of training programs undertaken	- Enhance local economic development and community well-being by increasing job opportunities, retain local skills, and building workforce capacity. - Support affected workers by providing fair retrenchment processes.	- Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project (including contractors) - Number of training programs delivered - Number of apprenticeships involved	local employment according to established target 10% of the total project workforce hours to be completed by apprentices, trainees or cadets.	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC / O&M Contractor
Maximise local procurement	Report on number of, and value of contracts with local and regional businesses	Stimulate regional economic growth by increasing procurement from local suppliers (notably Tamworth and Armidale).	- Percentage of local and regional businesses involved in the Project - Percentage of total value of relevant Project expenditure awarded to local and regional businesses	local procurement according to established target	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC / O&M Contractor
Skills shortages	Record queries and complaints received from businesses	Support local business by monitoring skill gaps, particularly those related to the Project.	- Number of local job vacancies in construction-related roles in the Social Locality - Number of applicants for construction roles in the Social Locality	No more than a 5% decrease in the number of applicants.	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC / O&M Contractor
Local Disruptions						
Minimise potential environmental and social amenity impacts (i.e. noise, vibration, dust) on community members.	- Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders - Record that working hours are maintained within the proposed schedule and community is about this schedule and any changes to it	Protect the health and well-being and way of life of the local community by proactively managing and addressing environmental and social amenity concerns	Number of complaints	90% resolved	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Minimise potential traffic inconveniences, safety concerns and contributions to road deterioration.	- Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders - Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders about cumulative traffic congestion, road safety, and wear and tear - Record that working hours are maintained within the proposed schedule and community is about this schedule and any changes to it	Ensure community safety and convenience by addressing traffic disruptions, improving road conditions, and responding to related stakeholder concerns	Number of complaints	90% resolved	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC / O&M Contractor

Management Goals	Proposed Monitoring Activities	Desired Social Outcome	Performance Indicator(s)	Target	Monitoring Frequency	Responsible Role
Manage perceived health impacts	- Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders - Record that working hours are maintained within the proposed schedule and community is about this schedule and any changes to it	Promote health and wellbeing by ensuring surrounding communities have the opportunity to raise concerns about health impacts associated with the Project.	Number of complaints	90% resolved	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC / O&M Contractor
Manage disruption to farming practices	- Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders - Record that working hours are maintained within the proposed schedule and community is about this schedule and any changes to it	Stimulate economic regional benefits	Number of complaints	90% resolved	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC / O&M Contractor
Manage community cohesion	- Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders - Record information on cultural sensitivities provided to workers	Foster trust and transparency by ensuring stakeholders feel heard and that their concerns are addressed promptly and effectively.	Number of complaints	90% resolved	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC / O&M Contractor
Accommodation and Worker Influx						
Maximise local employment and minimise potential impacts on accommodation availability, community and emergency services, and community wellbeing.	- Record local employment - Record employee retention rate - Monitor annualised occupancy rates in STA through consultation with local council	Balance local economic opportunities with accessibility and availability of both short and long-term accommodation to support both workers, businesses and residents	Percentage of people from the Region employed by the Project	20-30% local employment 100% of workforce housed within on-site TWAC if local employment target is not possible	Quarterly	Applicant / EPC Contractor
Land Use and Landscape						
Perceived impacts to land values	- Track property sales data within a 5km radius and within the Denman township - Record number of complaints	- Ensure equitable treatment of surrounding landowners by mitigating negative perceptions - Demonstrate real impacts on land values	Annualised percentage change in average property values using standardized criteria for comparable properties	90% resolved complaints	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Minimise impacts to visual amenity and rural character.	- Record number of trees planted to fulfil required screening planting mitigations - Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders about visual amenity impacts	Preserve the aesthetic and rural character of the landscape	- Percentage survival rate of trees planted - Number of complaints	100% survival rate 70% reduction in complaints	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor
Impact on Tangible and Intangible Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	- Record number of tangible cultural heritage chance finds - Number of project-related impacts to tangible cultural heritage items. - Record number of complaints received about impacts to intangible heritage	Protect Aboriginal cultural heritage by appropriately managing tangible heritage finds and addressing concerns about intangible heritage impacts	- Percentage of chance finds comply with CHMP - Number of project-related impacts to tangible cultural heritage items	100% compliance with CHMP Damage, disturbance or interference of known cultural heritage items is limited to the extent possible	Annually	Applicant / O&M Contractor

7.1.1 MANAGEMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY PLANNING AGREEMENT

Proper management of community benefits can provide positive economic impacts to the local communities. The Project has proposed a model of community benefit sharing in line with the Benefit-Sharing Guideline (NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 2024). The proposed scheme is guided by the six policy principles for benefit sharing schemes for large-scale renewable projects. These are: benefit-sharing is standard practice, cooperative, transparent, community focused, proportionate and delivers a positive outcome.

As a key component of the benefit sharing commitments, the Applicant proposes to enter into a VPA with Tamworth Regional Council. The VPA proposes an annual contribution of \$850 per MW, per annum, for the life of the Project, consistent with the Solar Guidelines to fund local infrastructure and community benefits.

The VPA will document the obligations of the Applicant to make initial and ongoing contributions to benefit sharing in the region which would include programs such as community grants, infrastructure investment, sponsorships, and educational support for existing facilities within the Social Locality. The VPA will be subject to indexation to consumer price index (CPI), for the operational life of the Project through to decommissioning.

GreenPulse and Tamworth Regional Council are still in negotiations on the governance structure of the VPA.

7.2 REPORTING AND AUDITING

In addition to ongoing monitoring, regular audits are to be undertaken by the Project. These audits are to be conducted throughout the construction and operation phases of the Project, will likely be informed by the outcomes of the EIS process and DPHI's conditions of approval and will be updated accordingly.

Audit findings will be reviewed, and where corrective actions are deemed necessary, specific actions (with designated responsibility and timing) will be developed. The focus of these actions will be on achieving the objectives set out in **Table 7-1**, as well as continuous improvement in performance.

A summary of the audit findings is to be reported externally on an annual basis. This will include an evaluation of the objectives set out in **Table 7-1** and any corrective actions that have been developed because of the audit process.

It is recommended that the predicted impacts and corresponding management measures (i.e. Project performance) be internally audited annually and externally audited once every three years. This timeframe may be extended or reduced based on the findings of ongoing audits.

7.3 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Project will be principally responsible for implementation of the management measures and the monitoring activities carried out for the Project. However, there will be instances where data will need to be obtained from a third party, or implementation will require cooperation and involvement of others (e.g. contractors and relevant local stakeholders).

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APPENDIX A

TOP OCCUPATIONS AND INDUSTRIES DATA

Location	Key Occupation and Industries
Tamworth Regional LGA (LGA17310)	- Of the 63,070 residents in this LGA, there were 29,980 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 18,018 people working full-time, 8,919 people working part-time and 1,703 away from work. - The most common occupations in the LGA included Professionals (17.6%), Labourers (14.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (14.0%), Managers (12.7%), Community and Personal Service Workers (12.6%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (11.5%), Sales Workers (9.0%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (7.0%). - Of the employed people in this LGA, 5.6% were working in Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals) and 3.3% were working in Secondary Education. Other major industries of employed included Meat Processing (3.2%), Other Social Assistance Services (3.1%) and Supermarket and Grocery Stores (2.6%).
Liverpool Plains LGA (LGA14920)	- Of the 7,551 residents in this LGA, there were 3,236 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 1,887 working full-time, 947 people working part-time and 211 away from work. - The most common occupations in the LGA included Managers (20.1%), Labourers (14.3%), Machinery Operators and Drivers (13.4%), Professionals (12.4%), Technicians and Trades Workers (11.4%), Community and Personal Service Workers (10.9%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (9.7%) and Sales Workers (6.2%). - Of the employed people in this LGA, 5.7% were working in Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised). Other major industries of employment included Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle Farming (4.6%), Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals) (3.3%), Other Grain Growing (3.2%) and Primary Education (3.1%).
SA1 11004120544 (SA1) (area containing the Project)	- Of the 359 residents in the SA1, there were 213 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 131 working full-time, 63 people working part-time and 15 away from work. - The most common occupations in the SA1 included Managers (31.6%), Professionals (16.5%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (9.4%), Sales Workers (9.4%), Community and Personal Service Workers (7.1%), Labourers (6.6%), Technicians and Trades Workers (6.1%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (5.2%). - Of the employed people in this SA1, 18.9% were working in Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised). Other major industries of employment included Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals) (4.7%), Real Estate Services (3.8%), Local Government Administration (3.3%) and Cafes and Restaurants (2.8%).
SA1 11004120116 (SA1) (adjacent to the Project Area to the South)	- Of the 489 residents in the SA1, there were 267 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 159 working full-time, 81 people working part-time and 22 away from work. - The most common occupations in the SA1 included Managers (25.3%), Professionals (15.1%), Technicians and Trades Workers (14.0%), Labourers (12.1%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (11.3%), Machinery Operators and Drivers (10.6%), Community and Personal Service Workers (9.8%) and Sales Workers (3.0%). - Of the employed people in this SA1, 11.3% were working in Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised). Other major industries of employment included Primary Education (5.3%), Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals) (4.2%), Sheep-Beef Cattle Farming (3.0%) and Cafes and Restaurants (3.0%).

Location	Key Occupation and Industries
SA1 11004120114 (SA1) (adjacent to the Project Area to the West)	• Of the 345 residents in the SA1, there were 182 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 108 working full-time, 59 people working part-time and 10 away from work. • The most common occupations in the SA1 included Managers (24.3%), Professionals (14.5%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (13.3%), Labourers (11.0%), Machinery Operators and Drivers (9.8%), Technicians and Trades Workers (8.7%), Community and Personal Service Workers (6.9%) and Sales Workers (4.0%). • Of the employed people in this SA1, 7.5% were working in Grain-Sheep or Grain-Beef Cattle Farming. Other major industries of employment included Beef Cattle Farming (Specialised) (6.9%), Other Grain Growing (6.4%), Coal Mining (6.4%) and Secondary Education (5.8%).
Tamworth SUA (SUA1032)	• Of the 43,874 residents in the SUA, there were 20,564 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 12,338 working full-time, 6,069 people working part-time and 1,109 away from work. • The most common occupations in the SUA included Professionals (18.5%), Labourers (15.4%), Technicians and Trades Workers (13.7%), Community and Personal Service Workers (13.4%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (11.4%), Managers (10.1%), Sales Workers (9.4%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (6.6%). • Of the employed people in this SUA, 6.1% were working in Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals). Other major industries of employment included Meat Processing (4.2%), Other Social Assistance Services (3.4%), Secondary Education (3.4%) and Takeaway Food Services (2.9%).
Werris Creek UCL (UCL115157)	• Of the 1,349 residents in the UCL, there were 461 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 232 working full-time, 149 people working part-time and 33 away from work. • The most common occupations in the UCL included Machinery Operators and Drivers (21.4%), Community and Personal Service Workers (16.9%), Labourers (15.7%), Technicians and Trades Workers (14.0%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (9.9%), Sales Workers (8.9%), Professionals (8.7%) and Managers (4.1%). • Of the employed people in this UCL, 5.1% were working in Rail Freight Transport. Other major industries of employment included Local Government Administration (3.9%), Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals) (3.9%), Supermarket and Grocery Stores (3.6%) and Road Freight Transport (3.4%).
Wallabadah UCL (UCL122148)	• Of the 216 residents in the UCL, there were 79 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 39 working full-time, 28 people working part-time and 4 away from work. • The most common occupations in the UCL included Machinery Operators and Drivers (18.8%), Community and Personal Service Workers (15.6%), Professionals (14.1%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (12.5%), Sales Workers (12.5%), Labourers (12.5%), Managers (7.8%) and Technicians and Trades Workers (6.2%). • Of the employed people in this UCL, 9.4% were working in Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals). Other major industries of employment included Fuel Retailing (7.8%), Road Freight Transport (7.8%), Coal Mining (6.2%) and Funeral, Crematorium and Cemetery Services (6.2%).

Location	Key Occupation and Industries
Nundle UCL (UCL122102)	• Of the 314 residents in the UCL, there were 91 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 49 working full-time, 28 people working part-time and 10 away from work. • The most common occupations in the UCL included Managers (27.7%), Labourers (24.1%), Community and Personal Service Workers (14.5%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (10.8%), Machinery Operators and Drivers (6.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (4.8%), Sales Workers (4.8%) and Professionals (3.6%). • Of the employed people in this UCL, 9.6% were working in Accommodation. Other major industries of employment included Pubs, Taverns and Bars (8.4%), Local Government Administration (8.4%), Preschool Education (7.2%) and Primary Education (7.2%).
Quirindi UCL (UCL115122)	• Of the 2,602 residents in the UCL, there were 1,024 people who were reported as being in the workforce in the 2021 Census, with 573 working full-time, 309 people working part-time and 66 away from work. • The most common occupations in the UCL included Community and Personal Service Workers (15.5%), Machinery Operators and Drivers (15.4%), Labourers (14.9%), Professionals (14.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (12.8%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (9.7%), Managers (8.7%) and Sales Workers (8.3%). • Of the employed people in this UCL, 5.1% were working in Hospitals (excluding Psychiatric Hospitals). Other major industries of employment included Local Government Administration (4.8%), Supermarket and Grocery Stores (4.6%), Aged Care Residential Services (4.3%) and Coal Mining (3.6%).
NSW Code 1 (STE)	• The most common occupations in NSW included Professionals (25.8%), Managers (14.6%), Clerical and Administrative Workers (13.0%), Technicians and Trades Workers (11.9%), Community and Personal Service Workers (10.6%), Labourers (8.2%), Sales Workers (8.0%) and Machinery Operators and Drivers (6.0%). • Of the employed people in New South Wales, 4.2% worked in Hospitals (except Psychiatric Hospitals). Other major industries of employment included Supermarket and Grocery Stores (2.5%), Other Social Assistance Services (2.4%), Computer System Design and Related Services (2.3%) and Aged Care Residential Services (2.2%).



APPENDIX B

SHORT TERM ACCOMMODATION CAPACITY DATA

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description / Approximate Capacity
Portable Accommodation	1	Company: Black Diamond Group Accommodation Type: Workforce accommodation	Capacity: Tailored Website: www.blackdiamondgroup.com.au/workforce-accommodations/ Office Location: QLD, VIC, NSW and WA
	2	Company: BBB Remote Site Services Accommodation Type: Workforce accommodation	Capacity: Tailored Website: www.bbbrss.com/mobile-mining-camps Office Location: 56-58 Stebbing Rd, Maddington, WA, 6109
	3	Company: Quick Camps Accommodation Type: Workforce accommodation	Capacity: Tailored Website: https://outbackportalbuildings.com.au Office Location: 192 Maurice Rd, Murray Bridge, SA, 5254
	4	Company: Ausco Modular Accommodation Type: Workforce accommodation	Capacity: Tailored Website: https://ausco.com.au/seasonal-workers-accommodation Office Location: QLD, VIC, NSW, WA, ACT, TAS and NT
Subtotal	4		N/A

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description / Approximate Capacity
Tamworth (approximately 30 mins drive from Project)	5	Location: Powerhouse Hotel by Rydges Accommodation Type: Hotel	Capacity: 81 rooms Website: rydges.com Address: 248 Armidale Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	6	Location: The Duck Inn Apartments Accommodation Type: Self-serviced apartments	Capacity: 9 rooms Website: theduckinn.com.au Address: 152/182 Gunnedah Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	7	Location: Roydons Motor Inn Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 16 rooms Website: theashtonmotel.com.au Address: 999 Armidale Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	8	Location: The Ashton Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 31 rooms Website: www.roydonsmotorinn.com.au Address: 110B Church Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	9	Location: Oasis Motel Tamworth Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 13 rooms Website: the-oasismotel.newsouthwaleshotels.net Address: 583 Armidale Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	10	Location: Country Capital Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 31 rooms Website: countrycapitalmotel.com.au Address: 193 Goonoo Goonoo Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description / Approximate Capacity
	11	Location: City Sider Tamworth CBD Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 38 rooms Website: www.citysidertamworth.com.au Address: 237 Marius Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	12	Location: Motel 359 Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 56 rooms Website: www.motel359.com.au Address: 359 Goonoo Goonoo Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	13	Location: BIG4 Paradise Tamworth Accommodation Type: Hotel	Capacity: Up to 200 guests (cabins, villas and camp sites) Website: www.paradisetouristpark.com.au Address: 575 Peel Street Cnr East & Peel Streets, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	14	Location: Almond Inn Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 26 rooms Website: almondinnmotel.com Address: 28-30 Ashby Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	16	Location: Tamworth Boarding House Accommodation Type: Boarding house	Capacity: 2 rooms Website: tamworthboardinghouse.com.au Address: 105 Marius Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	17	Location: Cadman Motor Inn & Apartments Accommodation Type: Motel and self-serviced apartments	Capacity: 19 rooms Website: cadmanmotorinn.com.au Address: 103-111 Ebsworth Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description / Approximate Capacity
	18	Location: Quest Tamworth Accommodation Type: Self-serviced apartments	Capacity: 40 apartments Website: questapartment.com.au Address: 337 Armidale Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	19	Location: The Retreat a Froog-Moore Park Accommodation Type: Bed and breakfast	Capacity: 5 rooms Website: froogmoorepark.com.au Address: 78 Bligh Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	20	Location: Tamworth City Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 31 rooms Website: tamworthcitymotel.com.au Address: 350 Goonoo Goonoo Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	21	Location: Tamworth Budget Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 21 rooms Website: Tamworth Budget Motel Address: 300 Goonoo Goonoo Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	22	Location: Stagecoach Inn Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 24 rooms Website: www.stagecoachmoteltamworth.com.au Address: 401 Armidale Road, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia
	23	Location: Ashby House Motor Inn Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 21 rooms Website: ashbyhouse.com.au Address: 83-85 Ebsworth Street, Tamworth, NSW, 2340, Australia

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description / Approximate Capacity
Subtotal	19		664
Werris Creek (approximately 40 mins drive from Project)	24	Location: The Old Signal Hotel Guesthouse Accommodation Type: Guesthouse	Capacity: Unknown Website: facebook.com/TheOldSignalHotel Address: 92 Single Street, Werris Creek, NSW, 2341, Australia
	25	Location: Werris Creek Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 10 rooms Website: localsearch.com.au Address: Werris Creek, NSW, 2341, Australia
Subtotal	2		10
Wallabadah (approximately 20 mins drive from Project)	26	Location: The Little House in Nursery Accommodation Type: Apartment	Capacity: 2 rooms Website: booking.com Address: Wallabadah, NSW, 2343, Australia
	27	Location: Art Shack @ Wilgabah Accommodation Type: Guesthouse	Capacity: Up to 10 guests Website: booking.com Address: Wallabadah, NSW, 2343, Australia
Subtotal	2		12

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description / Approximate Capacity
Nundle (approximately 20 mins drive from Project)	28	Location: Fossickers Tourist Park Accommodation Type: Caravan park	Capacity: 10 Website: fossickersatnundle.com.au Address: 103 Jenkins Street, Nundle, NSW, 2340, Australia
	29	Location: The Peel Inn Accommodation Type: Hotel	Capacity: 11 rooms Website: peelinn.com.au Address: 89 Jenkins Street, Nundle, NSW, 2340, Australia
	30	Location: River Glen Cottage Accommodation Type: Self-serviced cottage	Capacity: Up to 5 guests Website: nundle.com.au Address: Nundle, NSW, 2340, Australia
	31	Location: Hills of Gold Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 6 units Website: nundle.com.au Address: 97 Jenkins Street, Nundle, NSW, 2340, Australia
	32	Location: DAG Sheep Station Accommodation Type: Bed and Breakfast	Capacity: 5 cottages Website: dagsheepstation.com.au Address: 1088 Crawney Road, Nundle, NSW, 2340, Australia
Subtotal	5		37

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description / Approximate Capacity
Quirindi (approximately 30 mins drive from Project)	33	Location: Best Western Quirindi RSL Motel Accommodation Type: Motel	Capacity: 20 rooms Website: bestwestern.com Address: 10 Abbott Street, Quirindi, NSW, 2343, Australia
	34	Location: Imperial Hotel Quirindi Accommodation Type: Hotel	Capacity: 11 rooms Website: facebook.com/quirindiimperialhotel Address: 26 Station Street, Quirindi, NSW, 2343, Australia
	35	Location: Henry's Quirindi Accommodation Type: Bed and breakfast	Capacity: 32 rooms Website: visitnsw.com Address: 11 Henry Street, Quirindi, NSW, 2343, Australia
	36	Location: Quirindi Caravan Park Accommodation Type: Self-serviced apartments and caravan park	Capacity: 12 powered sites and 18 unpowered sites Website: visitnsw.com Address: 12 Abbott Street, Quirindi, NSW, 2343, Australia
Subtotal	4		31
Total	36		754



APPENDIX C EDUCATION FACILITIES

Regional Centre	Educational Centre	Type of School
Tamworth	Tamworth West Public School	K-6 Public Primary School
	Calrossy Anglican School	7-12 Private High School
	St Nicholas Primary School	K-6 Private Primary School
	St Joseph's Primary School	PK-6 Private Primary School
	McCarthy Catholic College	7-12 Private High School
	Tamworth High School	7-12 Public High School
	St Edward's Primary School	K-6 Private Primary School
	Peel High School	7-12 Public High School
	Westdale Public School	K-6 Public Primary School
	Bullimbal School	K-12 Public School (caters to students specifically with intellectual disability)
	Nemingha Public School	K-6 Public Primary School
	St Edward's Primary School	P-6 Catholic Primary School
	Tamworth TAFE NSW	Vocational Training Institution
	University of Newcastle Department of Rural Health	Higher Education Training Institution
	St Peter's Preschool Tamworth	Early Childhood Education and Care
	St Mark's Preschool and Long Day Care	Early Childhood Education and Care
	Peter Pan Preschool	Non-profit Community Preschool
	Tamworth Aero Club Flight School	Training Academy
	Tamworth Montessori Preschool	Early Childhood Education and Care
	Drivesmart Tamworth Region	Training Academy
	CRM Driver Training	Training Academy
	Airspeed Aviation Tamworth	Training Academy
	Drive 4 Life Driver Trainer	Training Academy
	Goodstart Early Learning Tamworth	Early Childhood Education and Care
	Centrepont Childcare Centre	Early Childhood Education and Care
	Central West Driver Training	Training Academy
	Imagine Childcare and Preschool	Early Childhood Education and Care
Werris Creek	Werris Creek Public School	K-6 Public Primary School
Wallabadah	Wallabadah Public School	K-6 Public Primary School
Nundle	Nundle Public School	K-6 Public Primary School
Quirindi	Quirindi Public School	K-6 Public Primary School



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Indonesia	Tanzania
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ERM's Sydney office

Level 14, 207 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

T: +61 2 8584 8888

www.erm.com