



Social Impact Scoping Report

Deepwater Hybrid Solar Farm, NSW

18 December 2024

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Document Status

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1.1	Angela Peace	18 December 2024	Emma Bathgate	19/12/2024

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

AAP Consulting has been engaged to identify the likely social impacts of the proposed Deepwater Hybrid Solar Farm (the Project), located approximately 4 kilometres north of Deepwater, NSW.

The Project is in the Tenterfield and Glen Innes Severn Council areas.

The capital value of the Project is valued at over \$30 million. It is therefore considered State Significant Development (SSD) under Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021 (Planning Systems SEPP). The value of the Project will be refined over the assessment and design process.

This Social Impact Scoping Report (this report) has been prepared to provide preliminary insights into the likely social impacts relating to the Project. The process undertaken to scope the impacts considered the New South Wales Department of Planning, Housing and Industry (NSW DPHI) new Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Guideline (NSW DPHI, 2023) and Social Impact Scoping Tool and demonstrates an understanding of:

- the Project's social locality
- high-level characteristics of the communities within the social locality (social baseline)
- potential or likely social impacts for different groups in the social locality and the level to which these impacts need to be addressed
- any Project refinements or approaches to date in response to likely social impacts.

1.2 The Project

ib vogt Development Australia is proposing to develop a 120MW (AC) Hybrid Solar Farm across an approximately 1,000-acre site located about 4 kilometres north of Deepwater, NSW.

The proposed Deepwater Hybrid Solar Farm would occupy rural land and is forecast to produce 322 GWh per annum, enough to power approximately 60,000 NSW households.

The project would include the following key components:

- Solar Panels: Approximately 240,000 solar panels with a single-axis tracking system to optimize their angle to the sun throughout the day.
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS): A 120MW, 4-hour storage system to provide reliable energy output.
- Substation: A substation to connect to the existing 132kV transmission line that runs through the property.
- Infrastructure Upgrades: New access points and some road widening to improve visibility for safe access and egress onto the New England Highway.

The Project Site was chosen for several reasons, including its proximity to the existing transmission line, eliminating the need for additional transmission infrastructure, large existing sections of level land, and modified and cleared pastures suitable for solar farm development.

The same family has owned the proposed site for over 100 years and is predominantly used for sheep grazing. Property ownership will not change, and the property owners will receive annual rental payments for the solar farm's operation.

An indicative Project layout is provided in the Scoping Report (ELA, November 2024).

1.3 Structure of this report

The structure of this report is influenced by the SIA Guideline requirements (NSW DPHI, 2023) and is outlined below.

Table 1.1 Structure of this report

Chapter	Description
Chapter 1	Introduces the Project and structure of this report and describes the methodology during the scoping phase
Chapter 2	Describes the social locality and establishes the social baseline
Chapter 3	Identification of the likely social impacts for different groups in the social locality
Chapter 4	Framework for approach to SIA in the assessment phase
Chapter 5	Concludes the scoping report

1.4 Preliminary assessment method

The methods used to inform this scoping phase are outlined in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Preliminary assessment method

Stage	Approach
Understanding of Project context	Regional planning policies and strategies were reviewed to contextualise the Project. Outcomes of community engagement completed by ib vogt Development Australia relating to the Project, as well as a review of various comparative studies of nearby projects, have also informed this context.
Identifying the preliminary social locality and description of the existing environment	The approach used to identify the preliminary social locality considered who is most likely to experience direct and indirect impacts because of the Project and where those groups of people are located. The social locality will be further refined and updated according to Project changes and further investigation of impacts during the assessment phase. The description of the existing environment provides a summary of the social locality, including a high-level overview of regional demographic characteristics, socio-economic backgrounds, land use, key industries, and social infrastructure and an overview of directly impacted state suburbs and localities.
Scoping of likely social impacts	The scoping of likely social impacts resulting from the Project has been guided by the SIA Guideline and regarding the social impact categories presented in Table 1.3. The scoping of likely social impacts included:

Stage	Approach
	- gaining an understanding of the Project's social locality - considering the characteristics of the communities within the social locality (the social baseline) - identifying likely social impacts for different groups in the social locality. The initial scoping of likely social impacts was informed by: - understanding the Project context and activities - reviewing the existing environment and outcomes of preliminary assessments completed as part of the Scoping Report for the Project - considering community opinions and sentiments towards the Project activities through: - desktop research and review of other comparative projects - social commentary of comparative Projects and issues in the social locality - outcome of engagement undertaken by ib vogt Development Australia - review of submissions and research from comparative projects
Determining the complexity of Phase 2 SIA report	The approach used to determine the level of assessment required for an identified social impact has been completed in accordance with the SIA Guidelines following the completion of the SIA Scoping Tool. A key objective of the SIA scoping phase is to identify the level of assessment required for each impact in the assessment phase. The level of assessment determines the extent of effort and data required to assess the impact. The levels of assessment and the indicative data requirements are shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1.3 Social impact categories (NSW DPPI, 2023)

Categories	Definition
Way of life	How people live, how they get around, how they work, how they play, and how they interact each day.
Community	Community composition, cohesion, character, how the community functions, and people's sense of place.
Accessibility	How people access and use infrastructure, services and facilities, whether provided by a public, private or not-for-profit organisation.
Culture	Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including shared beliefs, customs, values and stories, and connections to Country, land, waterways, places and buildings.
Health and wellbeing	Physical and mental health especially for people vulnerable to social exclusion or substantial change, psychological stress resulting from financial or other pressures, access to open space and effects on public health.
Surroundings	Ecosystem services such as shade, pollution control, erosion control, public safety and security, access to and use of the natural and built environment, and aesthetic value and amenity.
Livelihoods	People's capacity to sustain themselves through employment or business.
Decision-making systems	Including the extent to which people can have a say in decisions that affect their lives, and have access to complaint, remedy and grievance mechanisms.

Table 1.4 Level of assessment (NSW DPHI, 2023)

Level of Assessment	Secondary Data	Primary Data Consultation	Primary Data - Research
Detailed: the Project may result in significant social impacts, including cumulative impacts.	Required	Broad consultation	Targeted research
Standard: the Project is unlikely to result in significant social impacts, including cumulative impacts.	Required	Targeted consultation	Potentially targeted research
Minor: the Project may result in minor social impacts.	Required	Limited – if required (e.g. local council)	Not required
Not relevant: the Project will have no social impact, or the social impacts of the Project will be negligible	n/a		

2 Preliminary social locality and baseline

2.1 Social locality

This report considers social impacts in the ‘social locality’. There is no prescribed meaning or fixed, predefined geographic boundary to a Project’s social locality; rather, the social locality should be construed depending on the Project’s nature and impact.

Defining the social locality begins with understanding the nature of the Project, the characteristics of affected communities and how positive and negative impacts may be reasonably perceived or experienced by different people. The following features of the Project’s social context have been considered in understanding the Project’s social locality:

‘Host landowner’ is applied to those landowners that ‘host’ the solar panels and associated infrastructure and are receiving payments for leasing parts of their land for use by the Project. This is identified as a geographic area in which communities are most likely to experience both construction and operational impacts from the Project or a level of direct impact. There are three host landowners associated with the Project (noting that this is one family), covering 3 Host Landowners.

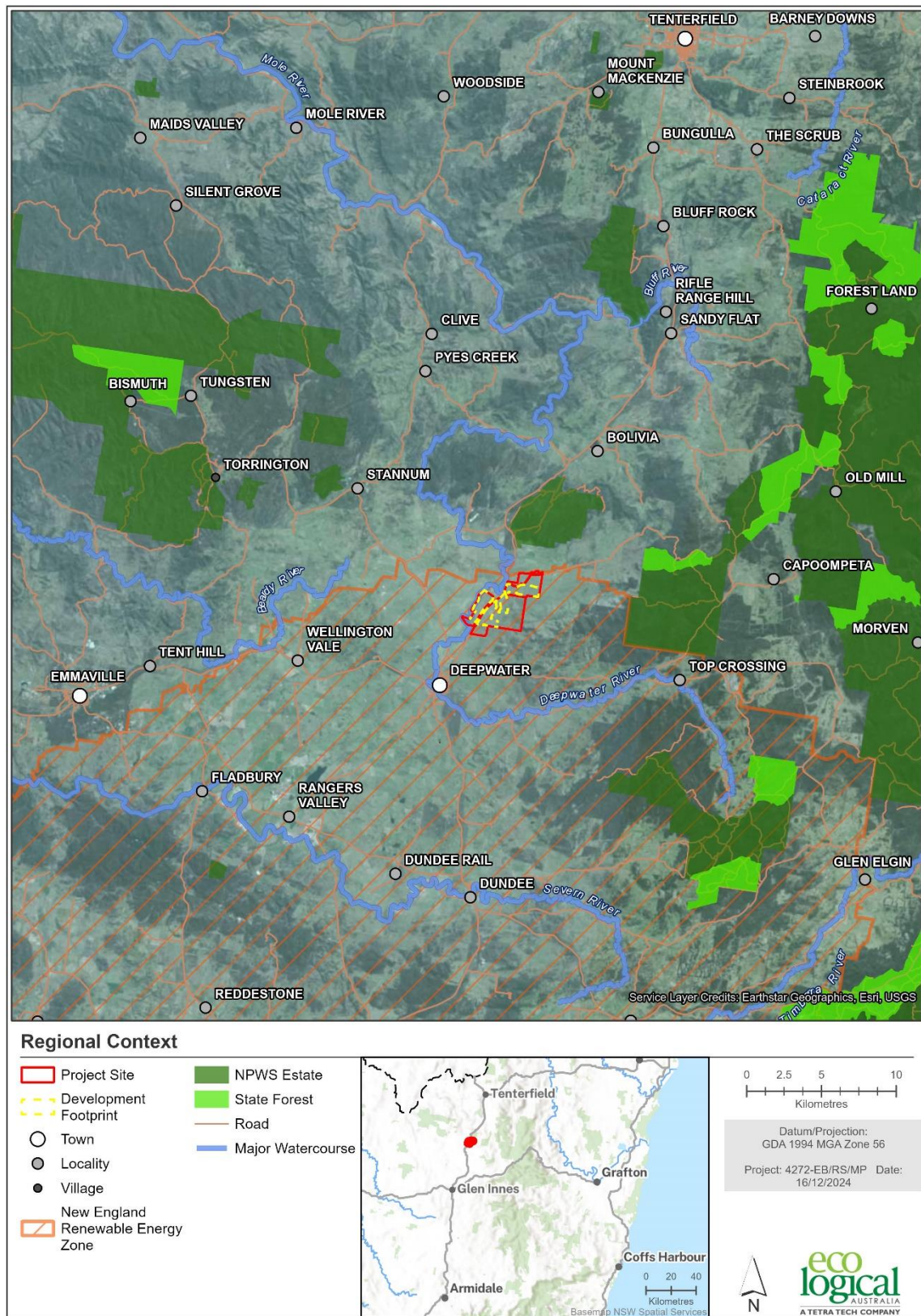
‘Neighbouring landholders’ is applied to those landowners and residents close to the Project. This is identified as the geographic area in which communities are most likely to experience construction and operational impacts from the Project or a level of direct impact – but do not host Project infrastructure. There are 16 households within 4 km of the Project Site.

‘Region’ is applied where the spatial extent of social impacts on communities is generally broader than the nearby neighbour and reflects potential social impacts on a broader community. For example, the haulage route associated with the construction and operations of the Project or potential visual impacts. In this case, the indirect areas of influence or ‘region’ include (but are not limited to) the Tenterfield and Glen Innes Severn LGAs.

The area of social influence may extend beyond these boundaries at subsequent stages of Project planning and assessment to include locations from which construction contractor workforces may be sourced and where materials may be supplied for the Project. It should also be noted that the indirect area of influence extends far beyond the LGA in terms of the use of power generated from Solar Farms.

A graphical representation of the regional context is shown in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1 Regional context



2.2 Understanding the strategic context

A review of local and regional community plans has been undertaken to identify community values and aspirations in the social locality and to understand the consistency of the Project with applicable strategic planning policies. This builds upon the detailed overview of strategic plans and policies of the relevant national, state, regional and local planning and policy context outlined in the Scoping Report.

Table 2.1 Community plans and strategic planning policy

Planning Framework	Comments
The New England North West Regional Plan 2041	- The New England North West Regional Plan 2041 (NSW DPHI, 2022) outlines a 20-year strategic vision for the vast regional area, with a core focus on development, innovation, economic growth and environmental protection. The Plan covers 12 local government areas, including: Moree Plains, Narrabri, Gwydir, Inverell, Gunnedah, Tamworth Region, Uralla, Liverpool Plains, Walcha, Armidale Region, Glen Innes Severn and Tenterfield. The Regional Plan aims to build the capacity of the localities and coordinate effective rural land use, with a focus on renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. - The document highlights the NSW Government's recently developed Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, of which coordinates a framework for sustainable and renewable energy systems in NSW (pg. 43). Identifying Glen Innes LGA, and the southern portion of Tenterfield LGA, as a prime rural location for a compatible renewable energy zone (pg. 44, 92, 106). The Plan has a keen focus on leading the state in renewable energy technology and investment; and meeting the Net Zero Plan goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050 (pg. 40). - The region seeks to continue implementing green infrastructure, by prioritising wind and solar energy, while simultaneously expanding the local economy and attracting young and vibrant families (pg. 43, 106).
Glen Innes Severn Council Community Strategic Plan 2022 - 2032	- Glen Innes Severn Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2022 - 2032, provides a 10-year plan for the localised region (Glen Innes Severn Council, 2022). Drawing on the regional plan (NSW DPHI, 2022), the CSP identifies key challenges that the community will face over the next decade, being: a population that is predicted to contract and age; changing environmental conditions; and job creation and industry diversification (pg. 18). The Council seeks to counteract such challenges with adaptive solutions and opportunities. Through community consultation, it has been identified that core issues of importance to residents are: public housing; home support services; renewable energy; and health and education (pg. 5). - The LGA is reliant on the agricultural and visitor economies (pg. 17). With the prospective decline in working-age residents, the Council proposes to diversify its economy and employment opportunities (pg. 17). Engaging with not-for-profit organisations, levels of government, and the private sector, will ensure the area can diversify its capacity (pg. 13, 14). There is a community-identified priority to build and utilise renewable energy resources, "with a focus on wind and solar energy and battery storage." (pg. 17).
Tenterfield Community Strategic Plan 2032	The Tenterfield CPS 2032 provides a 10-year strategic plan for the local communities (Tenterfield Shire Council Community Strategic Plan, 2022). The local community have identified, through consultation processes, targeted priorities including accessibility to facilities; better maintenance of existing infrastructure; better communications infrastructure; council operations run transparently, efficiently and sustainably;

Planning Framework	Comments
	economic development across the region; better health care; better stormwater and drainage infrastructure; strong leadership; improved waste management; and more youth and recreational facilities (pg. 5). The Council has developed a vision for the community, with a focus on diversifying employment opportunities and growing the economy (pg. 6). Alongside a strategic goal of protecting, enhancing and promoting the environment, and utilising sustainable and environmentally friendly infrastructure and services (pg. 11).

2.3 Nearby projects

The renewable energy project situated within both Glen Innes Severn and Tenterfield LGA will be considered as part of the SIA.

2.4 Preliminary social baseline data collection

A social baseline profile gathers knowledge from both primary and secondary data sources to increase understanding of the existing social environment in which a Project is proposed. It provides a point of comparison; it can be used as a reference against which to measure the impacts of the Project as it develops and/or to determine the adequacy or otherwise of existing facilities (Vanclay, 2015).

A key component in developing the social baseline was collating and interpreting relevant demographic data. To provide statistical analysis, the primary areas of interest for this assessment are shown in Table 2.2 as defined by the ABS (2021) and include:

- The host LGA Tenterfield Shire Council and Glen Innes Severn Council, including the major centres that will likely service the construction and operation of the Project.
- The Suburb and Locality (SAL) of Deepwater and Bolivia.

Table 2.2 Primary areas of interest for the purpose of statistical data collection

ABS Geography Type	ABS code	Name/Localities Included	Description
Suburb and Locality	11233	Deepwater	The area in which the Project is located.
Suburb and Locality	10446	Bolivia	The area directly adjacent to the Project, likely to also experience several direct impacts.
Local Area Government	17400	Tenterfield LGA	The regional area in which the Project is located
Local Area Government	13010	Glen Innes Severn LGA	The regional area in which the Project is located.
State/Territory	1RNSW	The Rest of New South Wales	State/Territory

2.5 Social baseline summary

The statistics indicate that local areas like Deepwater, Bolivia, and its surrounds have comparable economic and demographic characteristics to the LGAs while somewhat distinct from the Rest of NSW averages.

Localised areas show lower labour force participation rates, higher unemployment, and unique occupational structures centred on agriculture and tourism. Health indicators suggest relatively good health among residents, with an increased rate of arthritis possibly reflecting the older demographic of locals. Housing conditions highlight affordability in Deepwater and surrounding LGAs, while Bolivia has higher mortgage repayments, comparable to the NSW median.

The two LGAs provide highly comparable statistics, indicating that the two localities share similar demographics and employment opportunities. The median age in Deepwater and Bolivia is higher than in the Rest of NSW, depicting an ageing demographic. The local area of Deepwater has a particular prevalence of people in the 65-79 year age group, with fewer younger children and people in their thirties. Such detailed data is not available for the small population in Bolivia; however, the median age is 61 years. Both local areas show some variation from the LGAs, although they are relatively similar.

The rural setting ensures that agricultural occupations are prevalent, with a large percentage in the beef cattle farming industry. Full-time and part-time work in the LGAs is proportional to the figures for the rest of NSW. The median personal and household incomes in the LGAs and local areas reflect the rural nature of the areas, and the typically lower wages offered by the predominant industries.

In terms of housing, Deepwater has a significantly higher percentage of couple families without children, compared to state averages. At the same time, one-parent household statistics are relatively like the LGAs and the Rest of NSW. Due to the low population in Bolivia, such statistics are not available. Comparatively, Bolivia locals enjoy slightly higher incomes than the locals in Deepwater. However, both local incomes are lower than state averages, once again reflecting the rural nature of the area, and the opportunity for further development.

Median rent in the local areas is relatively low, suggesting a stable rental market. However, there are very few vacancies. As of October 2024, there were 11 vacancies (1.3% vacancy rate) in Glen Innes and surrounds (postcode 2370), no vacancies in Deepwater and surrounds (2371) and only three vacancies (0.8% vacancy rate) in Tenterfield and surrounds (postcode 2372)¹.

Appendix 2 provides statistics relating to the key characteristics of those people living within the social locality.

2.6 Vulnerabilities and opportunities within the social locality

Analysing demographic profiles is essential for identifying groups that may be disproportionately affected by vulnerabilities and opportunities within a community. This understanding can inform targeted strategies that address challenges while leveraging community strengths. Based on the data

¹ Accessed 19 November 2024 via https://sqmresearch.com.au/graph_vacancy.php?postcode=2370&t=1

collected to inform the social baseline, the following vulnerabilities and opportunities have been identified in Deepwater, Bolivia, and the surrounding regions.

Vulnerabilities

- **Aging Population:** The higher median age in Deepwater (56 years) and Bolivia (61 years) indicates a significant proportion of older residents. This demographic shift may lead to increased demand for healthcare services and specialised support, potentially straining local healthcare resources.
- **Employment Challenges:** The unemployment rate in Deepwater (8.9%) is almost double the Rest of NSW average. The overall LGA engagement in the labour force is lower compared to the state averages, while remaining comparable within its own region. This suggests barriers to employment may exist, particularly in the Deepwater locality, where participation is significantly lower.
- **Educational Attainment:** Lower levels of tertiary education (10.5% in Deepwater) suggest potential skill gaps within the workforce, limiting employment opportunities and economic mobility for residents.
- **Housing Affordability:** Although rental stress is minimal, the low number of available housing options may mask underlying issues of housing stability, particularly for lower-income households in surrounding areas.
- **Health Conditions:** Notable rates of chronic health conditions, such as arthritis and asthma, indicate a need for targeted health services and programs to support affected populations.

Opportunities

- **Indigenous Engagement:** The presence of Indigenous populations, being slightly higher in the LGAs than the state average, provides an opportunity to develop culturally sensitive programs that address specific community needs and enhance inclusivity.
- **Community Volunteering:** High rates of voluntary work (20.0% in Deepwater) reflect strong community engagement, which can be harnessed to create programs that support local initiatives and improve social cohesion.
- **Economic Development Potential:** The slightly lower labour force participation in Deepwater suggests opportunity to engage with the pre-existing skilled labourers, while also focusing on attracting a younger demographic to grow job creation and skill development.
- **Social Networks:** The close-knit nature of smaller communities can foster collaboration and resilience, providing a foundation for support systems that enhance overall community well-being.
- **Housing Initiatives:** The prevalence of unoccupied dwellings (18.4% in Deepwater) and lower rent levels create opportunities for developing affordable housing programs that could improve living conditions and promote community stability.

3 Scoping of social impacts

3.1 Stakeholder identification

Social impact assessment involves the participation and collaboration of people who have an interest in or those who are affected by a project. As Burdge (2004) outlines, stakeholders may be affected groups or individuals that:

- Live, work, or recreate near the project
- Have an interest in the proposed action or change
- Use or value a resource associated with the project
- Are affected by the project e.g., may be required to relocate because of the project.

A stakeholder identification process has been undertaken to identify those people, including any potentially vulnerable or marginalised groups that the project may impact. The key stakeholder groups identified are shown below, with a more comprehensive list provided in Appendix 3.

Figure 3-1 Stakeholder group identification



3.2 Stakeholder engagement

ib vogt Development Australia began consulting with immediate neighbours in 2024, to discuss optional planning agreements with the nearest neighbours to the Project.

ib vogt Development Australia has also begun working with members of the Deepwater Progress Association on identifying some potential projects that can be supported by the Project that would benefit the community.

Meetings to introduce the project have been held with Glen Innes Council on 23rd October 2024 and Tenterfield Council on 11th October 2024.

3.3 Scoping of likely social impacts

The scoping of likely social impacts resulting from the proposed facility has been guided by the SIA Guideline and with reference to the social impact categories presented in Table 1.3. The scoped likely social impacts are presented in Table 3. 1.

To assess the potential impacts, a preliminary social risk significance assessment was carried out to determine the overall significance rating of the potential social impact without mitigation. The impacts have been evaluated according to the SIA Guideline. As part of this risk assessment, consideration was given to the following:

- The likely population to be affected, separately for each component of the Project
- The timing of the potential social impact
- The potential impact characteristics that were assessed during the scoping phase (extent, duration, scale, sensitivity)
- The potential level of significance of the potential social impact, considering the likelihood and magnitude of the potential social impact

The tables used to evaluate the likelihood of both positive and negative social impacts and inform the magnitude of each impact before and after mitigation or enhancement are adapted from the SIA Guideline and provided for reference in Figure 3-2.

Prioritising impacts in this integrated manner allows for appropriate assessment and mitigation strategies to be developed. These strategies address the impacts requiring more technical management and those stakeholders perceive as high risk, important, and/or of concern. These perceived concerns are just as important to manage as they have the potential to result in elevated levels of community concerns, complaints, and grievances if not addressed appropriately.

Figure 3-2 NSW SIA Guideline Social Impact Significance Matrix (DPHI, 2023)

		Magnitude level				
		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood level		Minimal	Minor	Moderate	Major	Transformational
A	Almost certain	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Very High
B	Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
C	Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
D	Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
E	Very unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Table 3. 1 Scoped social impacts

Id	Impact to people	Social impact categories	Timing	Significance type	Stakeholder group	Social impact ranking (without mitigation ²)			Potential vulnerabilities or opportunities	Level of assessment SIA
						L	M	S		
S01	Changes to the visual landscape and how people experience their rural surroundings, something people value	Surroundings Way of life	Operations	Negative	Neighbouring landholders	C	2	Medium	Vulnerability: Aging populations and those living in an area for a long period of time may be more affected by visual changes as they impact their familiar environment and sense of rural identity.	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and research
S02	Increased dust and noise due to construction activity, causing a decline in social amenity, health or way of life for host landholders and nearby neighbours	Health and wellbeing	Construction	Negative	Host and neighbouring landholders	C	2	Medium	Vulnerability: Older residents and those with chronic health conditions may be more susceptible to increased noise and dust during construction.	Standard, requiring targeted engagement with those directly impacted.
S03	Economic uplift and employment opportunities, due to job creation during construction and opportunities for local service providers and community	Livelihoods	Construction	Positive	Surrounding communities, industry and local business First Nation people and groups	B	2	Medium	Opportunity: Leverage economic development potential to create jobs and training programs, addressing skills gaps for residents. Develop culturally sensitive programs to enhance Indigenous engagement and create pathways for economic participation Vulnerability: Limited employment sustainability after construction due to	Standard, requiring targeted engagement with those directly impacted.

² L = Likelihood (A: Almost Certain, B: Likely, C: Possible, D: Unlikely, E: Very Unlikely); M = Magnitude (1: Minimal, 2: Minor, 3: Moderate, 4: Major, 5: Transformational); S = Significance rating (L: Low, M: Medium, H: High, VH: Very High).

Id	Impact to people	Social impact categories	Timing	Significance type	Stakeholder group	Social impact ranking (without mitigation ²)			Potential vulnerabilities or opportunities	Level assessment SIA	of in
						L	M	S			
									limited ongoing jobs for maintenance and operation. Resource strain from local businesses during construction.		
S04	Distributive equity of economic benefits between the region and nearby neighbours	Community	Construction/operations	Negative	Host and neighbouring landholders surrounding community, Local Councils	C	3	Medium	Vulnerability: Concerns about inequitable distribution of benefits may lead to community dissatisfaction, especially among lower-income households.	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.	
S05	Funding support may enhance community projects, fostering pride and engagement across the LGA's.	Community	Construction/operations	Positive	Community interest and service groups, surrounding communities	C	3	Medium	Opportunity: High rates of volunteering can be harnessed to support community initiatives, promoting social cohesion and engagement among vulnerable groups.	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.	
S06	Fear of community division due to the planning for and operation of renewable energy and desire for alternative energy sources, leading to decreased social interactions and weakening of community bonds	Community decision-making systems	Construction/operations	Negative	Host and neighbouring landholders	B	3	High	Vulnerability: Individuals reliant on close-knit community support may experience increased stress and social isolation due to differing opinions on energy sources.	Detailed, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.	
S07	Disconnection from cultural heritage due to changes to land use potentially	Culture	Construction	Negative	First Nation people and groups	C	3	Medium	Vulnerability: Changes to land use may threaten the cultural practices and identity	Standard, requiring targeted	

Id	Impact to people	Social impact categories	Timing	Significance type	Stakeholder group	Social impact ranking (without mitigation ²)			Potential vulnerabilities or opportunities	Level of assessment in SIA
						L	M	S		
	impacting the identity and the erosion of cultural practices								of First Nations communities, requiring targeted support and engagement.	consultation and secondary data analysis.
S08	Changes to how people access roads and other services due to increased vehicle movements during construction and traffic management	Accessibility	Construction	Negative	Host and neighbouring landholders, emergency services.	c	3	Medium	Vulnerability: Increased traffic may pose challenges for older residents or those with disabilities who rely on safe access to services.	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.
S09	Perceived environmental risks from improper waste disposal, including damaged panels, end-of-life components, and potential contamination of soil and water.	Surroundings Health and wellbeing	Construction and operations	Negative	surrounding communities, Local councils	C	3	Medium	Vulnerability: Limited waste management infrastructure, economic constraints, and the health sensitivities of an older population could exacerbate the risks of contamination, particularly for those reliant on local natural resources for their livelihoods. Opportunity: Strong community cohesion and environmental stewardship present opportunities for collaborative waste management solutions and enhanced local infrastructure, benefiting both the solar farm project and the broader community	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.
S10	Changes to land use impacting agricultural resources and production	Livelihoods	Construction/ operations	Negative	Industry, surrounding	C	2	Medium	Vulnerability: The potential impact on agricultural resources could threaten local livelihoods, particularly for farmers and	Standard, requiring targeted

Id	Impact to people	Social impact categories	Timing	Significance type	Stakeholder group	Social impact ranking (without mitigation ²)			Potential vulnerabilities or opportunities	Level of assessment in SIA
						L	M	S		
					communities, Local councils				those dependent on agricultural production.	consultation and secondary data analysis.
S11	Perceived health risks to the community, due to the presence of solar farm infrastructure.	Health and wellbeing	Operations	Negative	Host and neighbouring landholders, emergency services.	C	2	Medium	Vulnerability: The older population and existence of pre-existing medical conditions or reduced mobility, could, limit their ability to respond quickly to potential issues. Opportunity; The project to serve as an educational platform for the community, raising awareness about renewable energy, sustainability, and new career opportunities in the green economy.	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.
Cumulative impacts										
S12	The construction of multiple large projects over the same timeframe, creating a cumulative shortage of both short and long term accommodation, due to the Presence of the construction workforce	Accessibility Way of life	Construction	Negative	Local businesses, Local Councils, surrounding communities	B	4	High	Vulnerability: Limited affordable housing options may exacerbate housing stability issues for lower-income households, leading to increased demand for local resources.	Detailed, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.
S13	Increased construction vehicle movements from multiple large projects over the same time frame or	Accessibility	Construction	Negative	Surrounding communities	C	3	Medium	Vulnerability: The existing population may experience increased traffic congestion and disruptions to daily travel, leading to longer commute times and reduced access	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and

Id	Impact to people	Social impact categories	Timing	Significance type	Stakeholder group	Social impact ranking (without mitigation ²)			Potential vulnerabilities or opportunities	Level of assessment in SIA
						L	M	S		
	consecutive timeframes, producing cumulative traffic delays and changes to the way people move in and around the localities.								to essential services due to cumulative traffic delays from multiple large construction projects	secondary data analysis.
S14	The temporary influx of construction workers may strain social infrastructure and services, increasing demand for healthcare services, GPs, emergency services, and recreational facilities, potentially exacerbating existing service constraints	Accessibility	Construction	Negative	Surrounding communities	C	3	Medium	Vulnerabilities: Further reduced access to already limited healthcare, emergency services, and recreational facilities due to the increased demand created by the temporary influx of construction workers, exacerbating existing service constraints Opportunities: Potential for the project to contribute to enhanced facilities and expanded service capacity	Standard, requiring targeted consultation and secondary data analysis.

4 SIA research methodologies and engagement

4.1 Research and approach to SIA during the EIS phase

The scoping phase has identified several likely social impacts of the project, which will primarily require a 'standard' or 'detailed' level of assessment during the EIS. Technical specialists will carry out several detailed studies and investigations, including (but not limited to) water, biodiversity, noise and traffic. The SIA consultant will work closely with the specialists assessing the project's impacts to determine the likely indirect impacts.

In addition, the SIA will use specific research methods to gather qualitative and quantitative information. This will further assist with refining issues, responses to social impacts and proposed management measures. The SIA research methods are further defined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Research methods for SIA

Research methods	Description
Interviews and surveys	The work of Bradshaw and Stratford (2005) on qualitative research design and rigour is beneficial in designing the semi-structured interview methodology and the online survey. The authors guide participant selection and sampling. Their work explains that in qualitative research, the number of people we interview, communities we observe, or texts we read is less important than the quality of who or what we involve in our research and how we conduct that research. Their work emphasises that 'purposive' sampling is typical in this type of research and that the sample is not intended to be representative, given that the emphasis is usually on analysing meanings.
Exploratory research	Exploratory research involves familiarising a researcher with a topic to satisfy curiosity and improve understanding. Exploratory research is often conducted in areas of inquiry, where the goals of the research are "to scope out the magnitude or extent of a particular phenomenon, problem, or behaviour, to generate some initial ideas (or "hunches") about that phenomenon, or to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study regarding that phenomenon" (Bhattacharjee, 2012). For instance, if a community is generally dissatisfied with a business or government's operations, exploratory research may measure the extent of dissatisfaction, or the frequency of complaints and their presumed cause. For this assessment, research will include a comparative analysis of similar operations, including reviews of submission reports, social commentary and engagement outcomes and qualitative media analysis.
Desktop analysis based on specialist studies	The term 'desktop analysis' refers to a study carried out primarily through the integration of technical assessments into the SIA rather than physical investigations; that is, it can be done sitting at a desk. For this assessment, several social impacts, including aesthetics, amenity and cumulative impacts, will be mostly assessed in other technical studies in the EIS.

4.2 Participatory engagement approach

A participatory and impartial engagement approach will be undertaken to inform the SIA and build upon the engagement carried out by the proponent as part of the development of the EIS. The engagement will be respectful, inclusive, and meaningful, and will complement other SIA research activities. The

proposed tool that will be used to achieve the desired SIA consultation outcomes is shown in Table 4.2. The engagement approach will be integrated into the broader EIS program to improve engagement efficiencies and minimise the risk of consultation fatigue (refer to Appendix C of the Scoping Report).

Table 4.2 Research methods for SIA

Engagement technique	Level of participation	Description	Targeted stakeholders	Engagement lead
Semi-structured interviews	Consulting to collect information and insights	Interviews will be used to explore the project's social impacts and collect data, evidence, and insights from stakeholders nearest to the project area. The semi-structured interview format provides a flexible structure that allows the interviewer to create and ask questions about situations as they emerge and the interviewee to digress and express views freely.	Nearby neighbours, First Nations groups, community interest and service groups, including accommodation and long-term stay providers, industry, local business, and local council.	SIA Consultant
Drop in days and contact points (e.g. phone, email)	Sharing information	Helping people to understand the role of the social impact assessment and identify affected and interested people, groups, organisations and communities. Provide people with a forum to identify social impacts concerning the project.	Wider community	ELA/ib vogt Development Australia
Fact sheets/newsletters	Sharing information	Provide input into project information prepared by the proponent to help people understand the social impact assessment and ways to get involved.	Wider community	ELA/ib vogt Development Australia

5 EIS Phase (next steps)

This SIA scoping report documents the process and outcomes of the scoping phase of the social impact assessment undertaken by AAP Consulting Pty Ltd for the project. Specifically, it has:

- Demonstrated an understanding of the project's social locality
- Considered the characteristics of the communities within the social locality (the social baseline)
- Identified likely social impacts for different groups in the social locality and the level of assessment required for the EIS assessment phase.

The analysis has identified several social impacts for further examination during the EIS phase, with the SIA focusing on:

- **Community:** The SIA will explore the potential for social division within the community due to differing views on renewable energy. Strategies will be developed to foster dialogue and support community initiatives that encourage inclusivity and pride.
- **Way of Life:** Changes to the visual landscape and amenity, including noise and dust impacts, will be assessed. The SIA will engage directly with vulnerable groups, such as elderly residents, to understand how these changes may affect their daily routines and overall quality of life.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** The increased dust and noise during construction and operations pose potential health risks, particularly for those with pre-existing conditions. The SIA will conduct targeted consultations to identify health vulnerabilities and develop mitigation strategies to minimise these risks.
- **Livelihoods:** The SIA will examine the economic uplift and employment opportunities created during construction, while addressing concerns related to the distribution of benefits and the pressure on local accommodation. Efforts will be made to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities and support for local businesses.
- **Cultural Heritage:** The potential disconnection from cultural heritage for First Nations communities will be carefully considered. Culturally sensitive consultations will be prioritised, with the aim of developing programs that promote Indigenous economic participation and respect for cultural practices.
- **Accessibility:** The SIA will assess both the positive and negative impacts of construction on local infrastructure, particularly road access. The analysis will explore how increased traffic may impact vulnerable residents' ability to access essential services safely.
- **Surroundings:** Environmental impacts will be examined, including disruption to local ecosystems and agricultural resources. The SIA will explore how these changes may disproportionately affect communities that rely on natural resources for their livelihoods and cultural practices.

As the project progresses into the EIS phase, the SIA will update the social baseline, validate the social influence area, and integrate community feedback through targeted consultations and participatory methods. By addressing both the vulnerabilities and opportunities identified in this scoping phase, the

SIA will develop strategies that mitigate negative impacts and enhance positive outcomes for the local community.

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2 Community baseline data

Category	Indicator	Deepwater SAL	Bolivia SAL	Tenterfield LGA	Glen Innes Severn LGA	Rest of NSW	Comparative discussion
People							
	Total Population	456	74	6,810	8,931	2,829,637	The low population density of the local areas suggest rural living arrangements and the opportunity for growth.
	Gender Distribution	51.2% Male 48.8% Female	50.0% Male 50.0% Female	48.9% Male 51.1% Female	49.4% Male 50.6% Female	49.2% Male 50.8% Female	Gender distribution is relatively balanced across all areas, reflecting typical demographic trends. The distribution in the LGAs aligns closely with that of the rest of NSW.
	Median Age	56	61	55	50	43	The higher median age in Deepwater and surrounds may indicate an older population, potentially influencing the demand for specific community services and infrastructure.
	Indigenous Population	7.5%	0%	7.5%	7.6%	6.6%	Indigenous populations are slightly higher in the local areas compared to the rest of NSW, indicating a potential need for specific community services.
	Marital Status	49.3%	58.1%	47.1%	44.2%	45.6%	Higher percentages of registered marriages in local areas compared to the rest of NSW.
Households and families							
	Total Households	118	23	1,800	2,271	755,789	The smaller household figures in the local areas of Deepwater are relative to the low density population.
	Average Number of Children (with children)	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	Family sizes are comparable across all areas.
	Couple Families Without Children	61.9%	N/A	57.2%	51.9%	43.5%	A significant portion of couple families without children in local areas contrasts with regional averages, which may reflect differing family planning trends or economic conditions.
	One Parent Families	17.8%	N/A	15.7%	17.7%	17.1%	Generally, the percentage of one-parent families is comparable to the Glen Innes Severn LGA and the rest of NSW.

Category	Indicator	Deepwater SAL	Bolivia SAL	Tenterfield LGA	Glen Innes Severn LGA	Rest of NSW	Comparative discussion
Employment and income							
	Labour Force Participation	40.8%	N/A	44.6%	47.1%	56.4% in the labour force	Lower participation in the labour force in local areas and surrounding government areas may be indicative of the higher median age of the region; or may reflect barriers to employment such as job availability.
	Median Weekly Household Income	\$763	\$866	\$885	\$934	\$1,434	The rural nature of these areas contributes to lower incomes by limiting access to diverse industries and high-paying jobs typically found in urban centres. Many residents rely on agriculture or local services, which tend to offer lower wages. Additionally, lower labour force participation and the area's affordability may also contribute to reduced income levels.
	Median Personal Income	\$456	\$575	\$490	\$528	\$722	
	Worked Full-Time Worked Part-Time	44.6% 36.9%	N/A N/A	50.6% 35.8%	53.1% 34.1%	54.5% 33.7%	Deepwater local area has a slightly lower percentage of full-time employment, compared to the LGAs and the rest of NSW. The stable level of part-time employment may reflect job flexibility or economic variations in employment types.
	Unemployment Rate	8.9%	N/A	7.0%	6.4%	4.6%	The localised area of Deepwater in particular has the highest rate of unemployment across the LGAs and the rest of the State.
	Provided unpaid assistance to someone with a disability %	13.6%	N/A	14.5%	13.0%	13.1%	Although comparable to greater NSW statistics, Deepwater and the Tenterfield LGA show a considerable engagement with unpaid assistance. Reflecting the values of the community and the possible need for targeted community services.
	Did voluntary work last 12 months %	20.0%	N/A	22.2%	19.3%	15.5%	The local areas show significantly higher levels of voluntary work when compared to the Rest of NSW.
Housing and mobility							
	Median Rent	\$200	\$140	\$240	\$220	\$330	Rent is relatively lower in local areas surrounding Deepwater, compared to the rest of NSW.
	Renter Households Paying >30% Income	29.0%	N/A	36.5%	37.8%	36.0%	The absence of rent stress in Deepwater local areas is a positive indicator of economic stability for renters, contrasting with broader trends in the region.

Category	Indicator	Deepwater SAL	Bolivia SAL	Tenterfield LGA	Glen Innes Severn LGA	Rest of NSW	Comparative discussion
	Owner with Mortgage Households Paying >30% of Income	22.9%	N/A	15.5%	13.9%	12.7%	While the LGAs enjoy less financial stress relating to mortgage repayments, a greater percentage of locals in Deepwater are faced with financial strain on their income. This may be reflective of the lower income rates of the area and proportionality of the housing market.
	Median Mortgage Repayments	\$715	\$1,400	\$1,083	\$1,083	\$1,733	Lower median mortgage repayments across the LGAs, and in particular in Deepwater, reflect affordability and opportunity for development.
Education							
	Educational Attainment (Tertiary)	10.5%	N/A	12.1%	11.9%	19.1%	Tertiary education attainment is significantly lower in local areas.
	Not Stated (Education)	45.6%	N/A	38.9%	41.4%	23.4%	A high percentage of educational attainment not stated suggests possible challenges in data collection, potentially obscuring the educational needs and resources of local communities.
	Year 12 Attainment	10.4%	33.7%	10.8%	10.8%	11.8%	Year 12 attainment rates are comparable to the rest of NSW.
Health							
	No long-term health condition(s)	45.2%	N/A	48.2%	46.8%	53.6%	Just under half of residents across all areas reported having no long-term health conditions. The local area of Deepwater and surrounding LGAs generally show higher rates of arthritis, asthma, and mental health conditions. Which may reflect the need for more community health services and infrastructure.
	Arthritis	14.9%	N/A	16.0%	13.8%	11.6%	
	Asthma	11.6%	N/A	9.3%	9.7%	9.6%	
	Mental health condition	13.4%	N/A	10.8%	11.1%	10.6%	

3 Stakeholder scan

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders
Host landholders	3 property owners (one family)
Neighbouring landholders	The project site is approximately 6 km north of Deepwater, a locality with 118 households.
Communities within the Social Locality	Local community: Deepwater Bolivia
Government – State	Fire and Rescue NSW Heritage NSW NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) including: Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate (BCSD) Energy Corporation Water Group NSW Department of Customer Services (DCS) NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) including Crown Lands NSW Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture and Fisheries (DPI) NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) NSW Energy Sector Board NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) Regional NSW – Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG) Transport for NSW (TfNSW) TransGrid Water NSW NSW State Forest NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service NSW Forestry Corporation
Government - Federal	Airservices Australia (ASA) Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
Local Council	Tenterfield Council (within the Project) Glen Innes Severn Council (adjacent)
Government - Elected Representatives	NSW Premier NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces NSW Minister for Energy Federal Member for New England – Hon Barnaby Joyce MP State Member for Lismore District (covering Tenterfield Council) - Janelle Saffin State Member for Northern Tablelands District (covering Glen Innes Council) - Brendan Moylan

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders
	Mayor and Councillors – Tenterfield Shire Council, Councillor Bronwyn Petrie (Tenterfield Mayor); and Glen Innes Severn Council, Margot Davis (Glen Innes Mayor).
Community Interest Groups and Community Services	Country Women's Association (CWA) - Tenterfield CWA - Deepwater Deepwater Library Catholic Church Deepwater St John's Anglican Church Deepwater Golf Club Deepwater Jockey Club Challenge Community Services - Tenterfield Christ Church Tenterfield Tenterfield Community Hub Deepwater School of Arts hall CODS Deepwater group Deepwater Fishing Club Deepwater Progress Association Deepwater Red Cross Deepwater Library Progress Association Newsletter - Deepwater Rotary Club of Tenterfield
Schools	Deepwater Outreach Pre School Deepwater Public School St Joseph's Primary School, Glen Innes Glen Innes Public School Glen Innes High School Glen Innes West Infants School Glen Innes Preschool Tenterfield High School Sir Henry Parkes Memorial Public School St Joseph's Primary School, Tenterfield Tenterfield Preschool Kindergarten TAFE NSW - Tenterfield
First Nations Groups	NSW Aboriginal Land Council Glen Innes Local Aboriginal Land Council Moombahlene Local Aboriginal Land Council
Industry and Local Business	Environment and Heritage (NSW) - Department of Parks and Wildlife (Tenterfield) Local businesses (e.g StarLogixs Electronics, Trethewey Industries Pursehouse Rural, Commercial Hotel (The Top Pub) – Deepwater) NSW Farmers Association TransGrid
Other Stakeholders	NSW Rural Fire Service - Tenterfield Rural Fire Service - Deepwater Unit Deepwater SES Deepwater Police Station

4 Authors certification

I, Angela Peace, certify that this SIA Scoping Report contains all information relevant to the SIA for the project, and that the information is not false or misleading. My qualifications and experiences are listed below.

Qualifications and Professional Memberships:

- Bachelor of Arts (Communications), Newcastle University (2003)
- Social Impact Assessment Certificate, University of Strathclyde and Community Insights Group (2020)
- Graduate Diploma, Social Change and Development, Newcastle University (2024 -)
- Member, International Association of Impact Assessment (membership no. 10499330)
- Member, International Association of Public Participation
- Member, Social Impact Measurement Network Australia
- Member, Environmental Institute of Australian and New Zealand Inc.

Experience:

The author is experienced in social science methodologies and has demonstrated SIA skills in government, private and education settings. She is a Social Impact and Community Engagement Specialist. She has managed SIAs for extractive industries, waste recovery, transport infrastructure, recreational facilities and energy projects in NSW and the ACT, including State Significant Projects.

Date: 25 November 2024

