

# Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

Section 5.16 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

Part 8 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*

<b>Application Number</b>	SSI-48323210
<b>Project</b>	<p>Central-West Orana REZ Transmission project, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of two new double circuit 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines between the existing network at Wollar and the proposed substations at Merotherie and Elong Elong (primary infrastructure);</li> <li>• development of a new double circuit 330 kV transmission line connecting the new 500 kV transmission line and renewable energy generation and storage projects within the REZ (secondary infrastructure);</li> <li>• construction of a new switching station at Wollar (adjacent to Transgrid's existing substation);</li> <li>• construction of a new substation at both Merotherie and Elong Elong; and</li> <li>• ancillary infrastructure such as site offices, workforce accommodation camps, internal roads and grid connection to the transmission network.</li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>	Within the Central-West Orana REZ, from Wollar to Elong Elong via Merotherie for a length of approximately 89km for primary infrastructure, and 160 km for secondary infrastructure
<b>Proponent</b>	Energy Corporation of New South Wales
<b>Date of Issue</b>	7/10/2022
<b>General Requirements</b>	<p>The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must meet the minimum form and content requirements as prescribed by Part 8, Division 5 of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021</i> (EP&amp;A Regulation) and must have regard to the <i>State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines</i>.</p> <p>In particular, the EIS must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a stand-alone executive summary;</li> <li>• a summary of the background to the project, including alternatives that were considered to the project;</li> <li>• a full description of the project, accompanied by suitable maps and plans, including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- disturbance area;</li> <li>- physical layout of the project over time, including sections of key components;</li> <li>- key uses and activities to be carried out on site;</li> <li>- likely timing of the project including any stages, the key phases within each stage (site preparation, construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning and rehabilitation) and the sequencing of these stages and phases;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• the relevant strategic context for the project, having regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State legislation, policies and guidelines including current initiatives to improve energy security and reliability in the National Electricity Market;</li> <li>- any other existing, approved or proposed projects that could result in cumulative impacts with the project;</li> <li>- the need for the project and why the proposed project is preferred over other alternatives, including detailed consideration of alternative options and routes (including other existing easements and connections to other transmission lines and opportunities for shared infrastructure with proposed developments in the region) and justification for the preferred routes;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• the relevant statutory context for the project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the assessment pathway for the project under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>;</li> <li>- the approvals required before the project may be carried out;</li> <li>- any relevant matters for consideration;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• a description of the engagement that was carried out during the preparation of the EIS, the key issues raised during this engagement and the proposed engagement strategy for the project if it is approved;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an assessment of the likely economic, social and environmental impacts of the project having regard to the requirements in any relevant Government legislation, policies and guidelines (see below), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the state of the existing environment;</li> <li>- community views;</li> <li>- the measures that would be implemented to avoid or minimise impacts, including a consolidated summary of the proposed mitigation measures for the project;</li> <li>- the predicted impacts of the project, including any cumulative impacts of the site and existing or proposed developments in the region taking into consideration any relevant legislation, environmental planning instruments, guidelines, policies, plans and industry codes of practice including <i>Cumulative Impact Assessment Guideline</i> (DPIE, November 2021);</li> <li>- actions proposed to deal with any uncertainties associated with the assessment; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• a detailed evaluation of the merits of the project as a whole.</li> </ul> <p>The EIS must also be accompanied by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a report from a AIQS Certified Quantity Surveyor or RICS Chartered Quantity Surveyor providing a detailed calculation of the capital investment value (CIV) (as defined in Schedule 7 of the EP&amp;A Regulation) of the proposal, including details of all assumptions and components from which the CIV calculation is derived. The report shall be prepared on company letterhead and indicate applicable GST component of the CIV and include certification that the information provided is accurate at the time of application; and</li> <li>• an estimate of the jobs that will be created during the construction and operational phases of the proposed project.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key issues</b></p>	<p>The level of assessment of key matters must be proportionate to the likely significance of the impacts on the matter.</p> <p>In particular, the EIS must address the following specific matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Biodiversity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an assessment of the biodiversity impacts of the project, including impacts associated with transport route road upgrades, in accordance with the <i>NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> and the <i>Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) 2020</i>, and documented in a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR);</li> <li>- the BDAR must document the application of the avoid, minimise and offset framework including assessing all direct, indirect and prescribed impacts in accordance with the BAM;</li> <li>- an assessment of the impacts of the project on listed aquatic threatened species, populations or ecological communities, scheduled under the <i>Fisheries Management Act 1994</i>, and a description of the measures to minimise and rehabilitate impacts; and</li> <li>- if an offset is required, details of the measures proposed to address the offset obligations;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Heritage:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an assessment of the impact to Aboriginal cultural heritage items (cultural and archaeological) including impacts associated with transport route road upgrades, in accordance with the <i>Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in NSW</i> (OEH, 2011) and the <i>Code of Practice for the Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW</i> (DECCW, 2010) including results of archaeological test excavations (if required);</li> <li>- evidence of consultation with Aboriginal communities in determining and assessing impacts, developing options and selecting options and mitigation measures (including the final proposed measures), having regard to the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents</i> (DECCW, 2010); and</li> <li>- assess the impact to historic heritage having regard to the NSW Heritage Manual;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Water and Soils:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an assessment of the impacts of the project on the quantity and quality of the region’s surface water resources, including the Talbragar River, Coolaburragundy River, and the Castlereagh, Macquarie-Bogan and Hunter catchment areas, having regard to <i>NSW Water Quality Objectives</i>;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- details of water requirements, supply arrangements and wastewater disposal arrangements for construction and operation;
- an assessment of the impacts of the project on groundwater aquifers and groundwater dependent ecosystems having regard to the *NSW Aquifer Interference Policy* and relevant *Water Sharing Plans*;
- an assessment of the potential flooding impacts and risks of the project;
- where the project involves works within 40 metres of the high bank of any river, lake or wetlands (collectively waterfront land), identify likely impacts to the waterfront land, and how the activities are to be designed and implemented in accordance with the *DPI Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land* (2018) and (if necessary) *Why Do Fish Need to Cross the Road? Fish Passage Requirements for Waterway Crossings* (DPI 2003); and *Policy & Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation & Management* (DPI, 2013); and
- a description of the erosion and sediment control measures that would be implemented to mitigate any impacts in accordance with the *Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils & Construction* series, including Volumes 1, 2A and 2C (Landcom);
- **Land:**
  - an assessment of impacts of the project on soils and land capability of the site and surrounds;
  - an assessment of the risk of soil contamination and disturbance of land (including associated with naturally occurring asbestos, acid sulfate soils and salinity in the vicinity of the site); and
  - assessment of impact of the project on agricultural land, biosecurity, land reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, Crown lands including State Forests and travelling stock reserves, mineral resources and exploration licenses, rail reserves and pipeline corridors;
- **Traffic and Transport:**
  - an assessment of the potential transport impacts for all stages of the project on the capacity, condition, safety and efficiency of the local and State road network and the rail network;
  - a cumulative impact assessment of traffic from nearby developments;
  - details of the ongoing maintenance works required to service assets, outlining the measures to maintain the road; and
  - provide details of measures to mitigate and/or manage potential impacts including a schedule of all required road upgrades and any other traffic control measures, developed in consultation with the relevant road and/or rail authority;
- **Amenity:**
  - an assessment of the likely visual impacts of the project on surrounding residences, scenic or significant vistas, night lighting, air traffic and road corridors in the public domain, and the Siding Spring Observatory in accordance with the *Dark Sky Planning Guideline* (2016); and
  - an assessment of the construction, operational and road noise, vibration and blasting impacts of the project, including any corona discharge noise;
- **Air:**
  - an assessment of the air quality impacts of the project, including from dust.
- **Hazards and Risks:**
  - *Health*: an assessment of potential hazards and risks associated with electric and magnetic fields (EMF) having regard to the latest advice of the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA);
  - a preliminary risk screening completed in accordance with the Department's *Applying SEPP 33*. If the screening indicates that the development is 'potentially hazardous', a Preliminary Hazard Analysis (PHA) must be prepared in accordance with the Department's *Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No. 6, 'Hazard Analysis'* and *Multi-Level Risk Assessment*. The EIS and PHA must also verify that the development can comply with all relevant standards and codes of practice, including *Australian Standards AS1940: The storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids*;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Telecommunications</i>: identify possible effects on telecommunications systems, including all licenced government microwave links, and assess impacts and mitigation measures including undertaking a detailed assessment to examine the potential impacts as well as analysis and agreement on the implementation of suitable options to avoid potential disruptions to radio communication services, such as transmission tower exclusion zones;</li> <li>- <i>Bushfire and Emergency</i> – an assessment of the risks to public safety, paying particular attention to bushfire risks, emergency egress and evacuation, and demonstrate compliance with <i>Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2019</i>;</li> <li>- <i>Pipeline</i> – where the proposal is adjacent to or on land in a high pressure gas pipeline corridor, report on consultation outcomes with the operator of the pipeline; and</li> <li>- <i>Aviation Safety</i> - assess potential impacts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o defined air traffic routes, aircraft operating heights, approach / departure procedures, radar interference, communication systems, navigation aids, use of emergency helicopter access, aerial baiting and culling in the National Parks, safe and efficient aerial application of agricultural fertilisers and pesticide;</li> <li>o identify aerodromes within 30 km of the transmission line and consider the impact to nearby aerodromes and aircraft landing areas; and</li> <li>o address impacts on obstacle limitation surfaces;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Waste:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identify, quantify and classify the likely waste streams to be generated throughout all stages of the project, and describe the measures to be implemented to reduce waste generation, manage, reuse, recycle and safely dispose of this waste;</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Social:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an assessment of the social impacts in accordance with <i>Social Impact Assessment Guideline</i> (DPIE, July 2021) and consideration of construction workforce accommodation; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Economic:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an assessment of the benefits of the project for the region and the State as a whole, including consideration of any increase in demand for community infrastructure and services, and details of how the construction workforce will be managed to minimise local impacts, including a consideration of the construction workforce accommodation and an assessment of the impacts to State Forests.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Plans and Documents</b>	<p>The EIS must include all relevant plans, architectural drawings, diagrams and relevant documentation required under Part 8 of the EP&amp;A Regulation. Provide these as part of the EIS rather than as separate documents.</p> <p>In addition, the EIS must include high quality files of maps and figures of the subject site and proposal.</p>
<b>Legislation, Policies &amp; Guidelines</b>	<p>The assessment of the key issues listed above must take into account relevant guidelines, policies, and plans as identified.</p> <p>A list of some of the legislation, policies and guidelines that may be relevant to the assessment of the project can be found at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Planning-reforms/Rapid-Assessment-Framework/Improving-assessment-guidance">https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Planning-reforms/Rapid-Assessment-Framework/Improving-assessment-guidance</a></li> <li>● <a href="https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/policies-and-guidelines">https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/policies-and-guidelines</a>; and</li> <li>● <a href="http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications#assessments">http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications#assessments</a></li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<p>During the preparation of the EIS, you must consult with the relevant local, State or Commonwealth Government authorities, service providers, community groups, affected landowners, Native Title holders, exploration licence holders, quarry operators and mineral title holders.</p>
<b>Expiry Date</b>	<p>If you do not lodge an EIS for the infrastructure within 2 years of the issue date of these SEARs, your SEARs will expire. If an extension to these SEARs will be required, please consult with the Planning Secretary 3 months prior to the expiry date.</p>

