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

Application Number	SSI-70610456
Project	Hunter Transmission Project, which includes: • two new substations at Bayswater and Olney; • a new double circuit 500 kV overhead transmission line connecting the existing 500 kV line at Bayswater to the existing 500 kV transmission line in the Olney State Forest; and • associated works including upgrades to the existing Bayswater and Eraring substations, adjustments to existing transmission lines, road upgrades, access tracks, temporary construction facilities such as laydown areas, stringing sites, construction support sites and workers accommodation.
Location	Between Bayswater and Olney State Forest for a length of approximately 100 km, within the Muswellbrook, Singleton, City of Cessnock, Central Coast and City of Lake Macquarie Local Government Areas.
Proponent	EnergyCo
Date of Issue	12 August 2024
General Requirements	The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must meet the minimum form and content requirements as prescribed by Part 8 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* (the Regulation) and must have regard to the *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines*. In particular, the EIS must include: • a stand-alone executive summary; • a summary of the background to the project, including alternatives that were considered to the project; • a full description of the project, accompanied by suitable maps and plans, including the: - disturbance area; - physical layout of the project over time, including sections of key components; - key uses and activities to be carried out on site; - 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; • the relevant strategic context for the project, having regard to: - State legislation, policies and guidelines including current initiatives to improve energy security and reliability in the National Electricity Market; - any other existing, approved or proposed projects that could result in cumulative impacts with the project;

	- an analysis of the feasible alternatives to carrying out the project, considering its objectives, including the consequences of not carrying out the infrastructure; • the relevant statutory context for the project, including: - the assessment pathway for the project under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*; - the approvals required before the project may be carried out; - any relevant matters for consideration; • 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; • 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: - the state of the existing environment; - community views; - the measures that would be implemented to avoid or minimise impacts, including a consolidated summary of the proposed mitigation measures for the project; - the predicted impacts of the project, including any cumulative impacts of the project with 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 the *Cumulative Impact Assessment Guideline* (DPIE); - actions proposed to deal with any uncertainties associated with the assessment; • a detailed evaluation of the merits of the project as a whole. **Estimated Development Cost and Employment** • Provide the estimated cost (EDC) of the project prepared in accordance with the relevant planning circular using the Standard Form of EDC Report. • Provide an estimate of the retained and new jobs that would be created during the construction and operational phases of the project, including details of the methodology to determine the figures provided. In addition the EIS must also be accompanied by a declaration from a Registered Environmental Practitioner that the EIS includes the information specified in the Department's Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner Guidelines.
Key issues	The level of assessment of key matters must be proportionate to the likely significance of the impacts on the matter. In particular, the EIS must address the following specific matters: **Biodiversity:** • an assessment of the biodiversity impacts of the project, in accordance with the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW), the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) and documented in a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). The BDAR must: - be prepared using the approved BDAR template; - document the application of the avoid, minimise and offset framework including assessing all direct, indirect and prescribed impacts in accordance with the BAM; - assess any impacts to nearby conservation areas and nature reserves; • an assessment of the likely direct and indirect impacts of the project on listed aquatic threatened species, populations or ecological communities,

	scheduled under the Fisheries Management Act 1994, and a description of the measures to minimise and rehabilitate impacts; and • if an offset is required, details of the measures proposed to address the offset obligations**.** **Heritage:** • an assessment of the impact to Aboriginal heritage (cultural and archaeological), including test excavations, 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); • evidence of consultation with Aboriginal parties in determining and assessing impacts, having regard to the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents* (DECCW, 2010); • if the test excavations do not conform with the Code of Practice, then the excavations may only be carried out with the written endorsement of Heritage NSW following consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Parties; • assess the impact to historic heritage having regard to *Guidelines for preparing a statement of heritage impact* (DPE, 2023). **Water and Soils:** • an assessment of the impacts of the project on the quantity and quality of the region's surface water resources, including the Hunter River, having regard to NSW Water Quality Objectives; • 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 *Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils & Construction* (Landcom 2004). **Land:** • an assessment of impacts of the project on soils and land capability of the site and surrounds; • assessment of impact of the project on agricultural land, land reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 including Watagans National Park and Jilliby State Conservation Area, Corrabare South and Corrabare North Flora Reserves, Crown lands including State Forests, travelling stock reserves, mineral resources and exploration licenses, rail reserves and pipeline corridors. **Contamination** • An assessment of the risk of soil contamination and disturbance of land (including associated with natural occurring asbestos, acid sulfate soils and salinity in the vicinity of the site; including:

	- characterisation of the nature and extent of any contamination on the site and surrounding area; - identification of any construction activities that could disturb or interact with any contaminated soil, groundwater or surface water, including PFAS; - details of measures to manage contaminated impacted soils, groundwater or surface water that may be encountered during construction; and - if required, a contaminated land report prepared by a certified consultant in accordance with guidelines made or approved by the EPA under s105 of the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997, the Regulation, and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021, including reference to the PFAS National Environmental Management Plan 2.0 (Heads of EPAs of Australia and New Zealand, 2020) (NEMP). **Transport:** • an assessment of the transport impacts 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 (including mining operations); and • details of measures to mitigate and / or manage potential impacts including a schedule of all required road upgrades (including resulting from high risk heavy vehicles requiring escort traffic haulage routes), and any other traffic control measures, developed in consultation with the relevant road and / or rail authority • details of the ongoing maintenance works required to service assets, outlining the measures to maintain the road. **Amenity:** • an assessment of the likely visual impacts of the project on surrounding residences, scenic or significant vistas, night lighting and road corridors in the public domain; • an assessment of the construction, operational and road noise and vibration impacts of the project, including corona noise; and • a description of the measures that would be implemented to avoid / mitigate visual and noise impacts. **Air Quality:** • an assessment of the air quality impacts of the project. **Hazards:** • a preliminary risk screening completed in accordance with Chapter 3 of Resilience and Hazard SEPP 2021 and Applying SEPP 33 (DoP, 2011); • a Preliminary Hazard Analysis (PHA) prepared in accordance with Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No. 6 – Guidelines for Hazard Analysis (DoP, 2011) and Multi-Level Risk Assessment (DoP, 2011), should the preliminary risk screening indicate that the project is “potentially hazardous”. • identify possible effects on telecommunications systems, assess impacts and mitigation measures to avoid potential disruptions to radio communication services, which may include the installation and maintenance of alternative sites; • 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);

	• an assessment of the risks to public safety, paying particular attention to bushfire risks, emergency egress and evacuation, and potential impacts to high pressure gas pipelines; • describe the bushfire protection measures for the project, including the proposed approach to vegetation management in the transmission easement, having regard to the requirements in the Planning for bush fire protection guideline (RFS 2019) • assess potential impacts on aviation safety, including: - 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, and aerial fire control; - identify aviation marking requirements; - identify certified aerodromes within 30 km of the transmission line and uncertified aerodromes and landing areas within 10 km of the transmission line, and consider the impact to nearby aerodromes and aircraft landing areas; and - address impacts on obstacle limitation surfaces. **Waste:** • 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 (in consultation with any relevant waste facilities and Councils). **Social Impact:** • an assessment of the social impacts in accordance with Social Impact Assessment Guideline (DPIE) and consideration of construction workforce accommodation. **Economic:** • 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; - an assessment of the impacts to State Forests; and - details of any proposed benefit sharing arrangements.
Plans and Documents	The EIS must include all relevant plans, architectural drawings, diagrams and relevant documentation required under Part 8 of the Regulation. Provide these as part of the EIS rather than as separate documents. In addition, the EIS must include high quality files of maps and figures of the subject site and proposal.
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; and • https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/publications#assessments
Engagement	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.
Expiry Date	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.