

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-74175972
Project	- New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Transmission Project, which includes development of: - new overhead transmission lines including: - dual 500 kV lines between Bayswater Power Station substation and the New England REZ; 500 kV and 330 kV lines within the REZ to connect to proposed energy hubs and existing transmission lines; - five energy hubs within the REZ; and - ancillary infrastructure such as access tracks and roads, existing electricity infrastructure upgrades/augmentation, communications infrastructure and facilities, laydown and staging areas, earthwork material sites with crushing and screening plants, concrete batching plants, helicopter landing pads, site offices and workforce accommodation camps.
Location	Between the Bayswater Power Station and Boorolong for a length of approximately 305 km, within Muswellbrook Shire, Upper Hunter Shire, Tamworth Regional, Walcha Shire, Uralla Shire, Armidale Regional and Singleton Local Government Areas.
Proponent	Energy Corporation of NSW
Date of Issue	07 April 2026
General Requirements	The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must meet the minimum form and content requirements as prescribed by Part 8 of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021</i> (the Regulation) and must have regard to the Department's: <i>State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines</i>; and - Renewable Energy Planning Framework, including the <i>Transmission Guideline</i> and its supporting <i>Technical Supplement for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment</i> (most recent version as updated from time to time). 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 within the project area; - 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 Project Area (as per Table 1 of the <i>SSI guidelines - preparing an environmental impact statement</i>) and Development Footprint (disturbance area including but not limited to areas for infrastructure, road works, access tracks); - consistency in information presented in the EIS and all technical reports, including distances, development footprint, project design and infrastructure proposed, construction timeframes and receiver numbers; • 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 <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>; - 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; • a risk assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the development, identifying the key issues for further assessment; • 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), and any other significant issues identified in the risk assessment, focusing on the specific issues identified 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 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); - 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 <i>Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner Guidelines</i>.
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, including impacts associated with transport route road upgrades, in accordance with the <i>NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>, 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, including the wildlife refuge at Glenbawn Dam;
- assess the impacts associated with all ancillary infrastructure, including the transport route road upgrades;
- include an assessment for serious and irreversible impacts (SAIL) in accordance with Section 9.1 of the BAM;
- be finalised by an accredited assessor as BAM-compliant within 14 days of submission;
- an assessment of the likely direct and indirect impacts 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;
- a cumulative impact assessment of biodiversity values in the region from nearby developments; 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 adequate 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;
- an assessment of 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 and (where relevant) drinking water resources, including the Glenbawn Dam, Dungowan Dam, Hunter River, Pages River, Macdonald River, Namoi River, and Gwydir River and other watercourses present or adjacent to the proposed corridor, having regard to NSW Water Quality Objectives;
- details of water requirements, supply arrangements and wastewater disposal arrangements for construction and operation (including consultation with suppliers);
- 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;
- identify potential biosecurity risks and appropriate strategies to prevent, eliminate or minimise those risks;
- an assessment of impact of the project on agricultural land, land reserved under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, 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;
 - 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 peak and average traffic generation, including light vehicles, shuttle buses, heavy vehicles and 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 of the project, particularly in relation to the capacity and condition of public roads (including site access(es)), road safety, intersection performance and impacts to rail infrastructure (with consideration of rail safety);
- a concept level route analysis for heavy vehicles requiring escort and high-risk heavy vehicles requiring escort;
- a cumulative impact assessment of traffic from nearby developments (including mining operations); and
- provide details of measures to mitigate and/or manage potential impacts (developed in consultation with the relevant road/rail authorities), including:
 - a schedule of all required haulage route road upgrades (including resulting from heavy vehicle and heavy vehicles requiring escort and high-risk heavy vehicles requiring escort);
 - strategic concept designs of proposed road upgrades (including the site access point(s)) prepared in accordance with *TfNSW's Strategic-Design-requirements-for-DA-Factsheet.pdf* (where relevant);
 - road maintenance contributions, and any other traffic control measures;
- details of the ongoing maintenance works required to service assets, outlining the measures to maintain the road.

Landscape and Visual:

- a detailed assessment of the visual impacts of all components of the project in accordance with the *Transmission Guideline* and supporting *Technical Supplement for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment*.

Noise:

- an assessment of the construction noise impacts of the project in accordance with the *Interim Construction Noise Guideline* (ICNG), blasting impacts, cumulative impacts (considering other developments in the area), and

	operational noise impacts in accordance with the <i>NSW Noise Policy for Industry</i> (2017), including corona noise; and - provide details of measures to mitigate and/or manage potential impacts. Air Quality: - an assessment of the air quality impacts of the project, including from dust; and - an assessment of the likely greenhouse gas impacts of the project including a breakdown of scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions as defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and measures to minimise emissions and consideration of climate change adaptation related to 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); <i>Battery Energy Storage System</i> (if proposed) – a Preliminary Hazard Analysis (PHA) prepared in accordance with <i>Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No. 6 – Guidelines for Hazard Analysis</i> (DoP, 2011). The PHA must assess the risk and demonstrate compliance with the Department's <i>Hazardous Industry Advisory Paper No. 4, 'Risk Criteria for Land Use Safety Planning</i> (DoP, 2011) for all proposed energy storage technologies, 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, the handling and use of any dangerous goods 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 <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection Guideline</i> (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 certified aerodromes within 30 km of the transmission line and uncertified aerodromes and landing areas within 10km of the transmission line, and consider the impact to nearby aerodromes, aircraft landing areas; - address impacts on obstacle limitation surfaces; and - identify aviation marking requirements, if any. 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 waste facilities, including Councils). Social Impact: - an assessment of the social impacts in accordance with <i>Social Impact Assessment Guideline</i> (DPIE) and consideration of the need for construction workforce accommodation. Economic: - an assessment of the economic 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 consideration of construction workforce accommodation;
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	- 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 EP&A 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/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-planning-framework • 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, infrastructure and service providers, community groups, affected landowners, Native Title holders, exploration licence holders, quarry operators and mineral title holders. The EIS must: • detail how engagement undertaken was consistent with the Undertaking Engagement Guide: Guidance for State Significant Projects (DPIE, November 2021); and • 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.
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.

Enclosed: Attachment 1: Bilateral Assessment Requirements

Bilateral Assessment Requirements

Application Number	SSI-74275972
EPBC Number	2025/10405
Project	New England Renewable Energy Zone Transmission Project
Location	The southern-most end of proposed action begins at the Bayswater Power Station in Muswellbrook, within the Hunter Central Coast REZ and generally runs in a north-easterly direction ending in the north-east section of the New England REZ, approximately 22 km north of Armidale, NSW
Proponent	Energy Corporation of New South Wales ABN: 13 495 767 706
Desired Performance Outcome	Requirement
1. Environmental Impact Assessment Process	- On 16 March 2026, a delegate of the Minister for the Environment, determined that the New England Renewable Energy Zone Transmission Project (the proposed action) is a controlled action under section 75 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act). The EPBC Act controlling provisions for the proposed action are: - Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 and 18A) - The delegate confirmed that the proposed action will be assessed under the accredited bilateral agreement with New South Wales (<i>Amending Agreement No. 1</i>), and as such, is required to be assessed in the manner specified in Schedule 1 to that Agreement, including, addressing the matters outlined in Schedule 4 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000</i> (EPBC Regulations). - The designated proponent must undertake an assessment of all protected matters that may be impacted by the proposed action under the controlling provisions identified in paragraph 1. The Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (AG DCCEEW) considers that the proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on the protected matters listed in Appendix A. - The Applicant must consider each of the protected matters under the triggered controlling provisions that may be impacted by the action. Note that this may not be a complete list and it is the responsibility of the proponent to undertake an analysis of the relevant impacts and ensure all protected matters that are likely to be impacted are assessed for the Commonwealth Minister's consideration.
2. References	Guidelines for Biodiversity matters of National Environmental Significance

APPENDIX A - Significant impact on EBPC Act protected matters

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water considers that the proposed action is likely to have a significant impact on the protected matters listed in **Table 1**.

Table 1 | Protected matters likely to be significantly impacted

MNES	Threatened category
Threatened ecological community	
New England Peppermint (<i>Eucalyptus nova-anglica</i>) Grassy Woodlands	Critically Endangered
White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland ecological community	Critically Endangered
Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia ecological community	Critically Endangered
Natural grasslands on basalt and fine-textured alluvial plains of northern New South Wales and southern Queensland ecological community	Critically Endangered
Central Hunter Valley eucalypt forest and woodland ecological community	Critically Endangered
Semi-evergreen vine thickets of the Brigalow Belt (North and South) and Nandewar Bioregions ecological community	Endangered
Coastal Swamp Oak (<i>Casuarina glauca</i>) Forest of New South Wales South East Queensland ecological community	Endangered
Mammalia	
Koala (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT) (<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>)	Endangered
Greater Glider (southern and central) (<i>Petauroides volans</i>)	Endangered
Spotted-tailed Quoll (<i>Dasyurus maculatus maculatus</i> (SE mainland population))	Endangered
Large-eared Pied Bat (<i>Chalinolobus dwyeri</i>)	Endangered
Aves	
Regent Honeyeater (<i>Anthochaera Phrygia</i>)	Critically Endangered
Southern Whiteface (<i>Aphelocephala leucopsis</i>)	Vulnerable
Reptilia	
Long Sunskink (<i>Lampropholis elongata</i>)	Critically Endangered
Western Sawshelled Turtle (<i>Myuchelys belli</i>)	Endangered
Hunter Valley Delma (<i>Delma vescolineata</i>)	Endangered
Amphibia	
Yellow-spotted Tree Frog (<i>Litoria castanea</i>)	Critically Endangered

MNES	Threatened category
Booroolong Frog (<i>Litoria booroolongensis</i>)	Endangered
Flora	
a leek-orchid (<i>Prasophyllum</i> sp. <i>Wybong</i>)	Critically Endangered
Dungowan Starbush (<i>Asterolasia beckersii</i>)	Critically Endangered
<i>Euphrasia arguta</i>	Critically Endangered
Small Snake Orchid (<i>Diuris pedunculata</i>)	Endangered

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water considers that the protected matters listed in **Table 2** are at risk of being impacted by the proposed action.

Table 2 | Protected matters at risk of impact

MNES	Threatened category
Mammalia	
Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby (<i>Petrogale penicillata</i>)	Vulnerable
Reptilia	
Purvis' Turtle (<i>Myuchelys purvisi</i>)	Endangered
Alpine Water Skink (<i>Eulamprus kosciuskoi</i>)	Vulnerable
Border Thick-tailed Gecko, Granite Belt Thick-tailed Gecko (<i>Uvidicolus sphyrurus</i>)	Vulnerable
Aves	
South-eastern Hooded Robin (<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>)	Endangered
Gang-gang Cockatoo (<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>)	Endangered
Painted Honeyeater (<i>Grantiella picta</i>)	Vulnerable
Amphibia	
Stuttering Frog (<i>Mixophyes balbus</i>)	Vulnerable
Davies' Tree Frog (<i>Litoria daviesae</i>)	Vulnerable
Fish	
Hunter Galaxias (<i>Galaxias</i> sp. nov. 'Hunter')	Critically Endangered
Crustacea	
Gamilaroi Crayfish (<i>Euastacus gamilaroi</i>)	Endangered
Terrestrial Crayfish (<i>Euastacus maccai</i>)	Endangered
Flora	

MNES	Threatened category
Velvet Wattle (<i>Acacia pubifolia</i>)	Endangered
<i>Bertya</i> sp. Clouds Creek	Endangered
McKie's Stringybark (<i>Eucalyptus mckieana</i>)	Vulnerable
Tall Velvet Sea-berry (<i>Haloragis exalata</i> subsp. <i>velutina</i>)	Vulnerable
<i>Ozothamnus tessellatus</i>	Vulnerable
Hairy-joint Grass (<i>Arthraxon hispidus</i>)	Vulnerable
<i>Callistemon pungens</i>	Vulnerable
Slaty Red Gum (<i>Eucalyptus glaucina</i>)	Vulnerable
Austral Toadflax, Toadflax (<i>Thesium australe</i>)	Vulnerable
Rufous Pomaderris, Brown Pomaderris (<i>Pomaderris brunnea</i>)	Vulnerable
<i>Androcalva procumbens</i>	Vulnerable
Spiny Peppercress (<i>Lepidium aschersonii</i>)	Vulnerable
Bluegrass (<i>Dichanthium setosum</i>)	Vulnerable