

Notice of decision

Section 2.22 and clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

Application type	State significant development
Application number and project name	SSD 10460 Hume Battery Energy Storage System
Applicant	Meridian Energy Australia Pty Limited
Consent Authority	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Decision

On 21 January 2021, the Executive Director granted consent to the development application for the Hume Battery Energy Storage System (the project) subject to conditions, under delegation from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and section 4.38 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 **(the Act)**.

A copy of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's Assessment Report and development consent are available [here](#).

Date of decision

21 January 2021

Reasons for decision

The following matters were taken into consideration in making this decision:

- the relevant matters listed in section 4.15 of the Act and the additional matters listed in the statutory context section of the Department's Assessment Report;
- the prescribed matters under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*;
- the objects of the Act;
- the considerations under s 7.14(2) and 7.16(3) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW);
- applicable NSW Government policies and guidelines;
- all information submitted to the Department during the assessment of the development application;
- advice from relevant NSW Government agencies and Albury City Council; and
- the views of the community about the project (see Attachment 1).

The findings and recommendations set out in the Department's Assessment Report were accepted and adopted as the reasons for making this decision.

The key reasons for granting consent to the development application are as follows:

- the project would provide a range of benefits for the region and the State as a whole, including:
 - contributing to a more diverse local economy;
 - a capital investment of approximately \$32 million;
 - creating up to 40 construction jobs;
 - enabling renewable energy to be stored and dispatched during peak demand, supporting grid stability and energy security;
- the project is permissible with development consent under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007* and the *Albury Local Environmental Plan 2010*;
- the project is consistent with NSW Government policies including the *Climate Change Policy Framework*, *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030* and the *Riverina Murray Regional Plan 2036*;
- the impacts on the community and the environment can be appropriately minimised, managed or offset to an acceptable level, in accordance with applicable NSW Government policies and standards;
- none of the NSW Government agencies objected to the project and Council is supportive of the project;
- the issues raised by the community during consultation and in submissions have been considered and adequately addressed through changes to the project and the recommended conditions of consent; and
- weighing all relevant considerations, the project is in the public interest, subject to the strict conditions of consent.

Attachment 1 – Consideration of Community Views

The Department exhibited the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project from 13 August 2020 until 20 September 2020 and received four submissions from the community (two objections and two providing comment), and two from special interest groups providing comment.

The Department also received additional written feedback from two submitters following lodgement of Meridian's Response to Submissions Report.

The key issues raised by the community and considered in the Department's Assessment Report include biodiversity (including impacts on the local Squirrel Glider population), visual impacts on surrounding residences and road users, noise and hazards.

Other issues are addressed in the Department's Assessment Report.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Consideration</i>
<p><i>Biodiversity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Impacts on the Squirrel Glider (noise, barbed wire and vegetation clearing)</i> • <i>Clearing of native vegetation</i> 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project layout has been designed to minimise impacts on remnant native vegetation. • The project would impact up to 0.43 ha of low quality woodland and up to 0.02 ha of native vegetation forming part of a movement corridor for the Squirrel Glider, listed as vulnerable under the BC Act. • Impacts from the project would generate 2 ecosystem credits and 1 species credit, which would be offset in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme. • Meridian amended the project to avoid the use of barbed wire fencing, reducing the risk of injury to Squirrel Gliders and other wildlife. • The Department considers that the impact of noise on fauna from the project would not be significant. • The site is not considered to include potential Koala habitat. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retire the applicable biodiversity offset credits in accordance with the <i>NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme</i>. • Prepare and implement a Biodiversity Management Plan prior to construction and in consultation with BCD, including measures to minimise impacts to squirrel gliders on the site.
<p><i>Amenity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impacts to residences along Trout Farm Road • Visual impacts on motorists of Trout Farm Road • Noise impacts to nearby non-associated receivers 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site would not be visible from Lake Hume Village centre, approximately 300 m to the east. • The closest non-associated receiver, RR01, would not have views of the site from the residence. • Meridian has committed to implementing a vegetation buffer along the northern boundary of the site, in consultation with RR01 and WaterNSW, to further reduce visual impacts. • Whilst the project would be visible from the Hume Dam walkway and viewing platform, the presence of the Hume HPS substation and electrical infrastructure means the visual impact from these viewpoints would not be significant. • Visual impacts to vehicles travelling along Trout Farm Road would be negligible, being largely screened by existing mature roadside vegetation. The additional plantings would further reduce potential impacts on motorists. • Construction of the project would not exceed the ICNG's 'Highly Noise Affected Criterion' of 75 dB(A). • Construction of the project would, however, result in short-term exceedances of the ICNG's 'Noise Affected Criterion' of 45 dB(A) at 18 non-associated residences during the day, with the noisiest works lasting approximately 8 weeks • To manage construction noise, Meridian has committed to implementing a suite of noise control measures including temporary noise barrier and noise monitoring in accordance with the Environment Protection Authority's <i>Interim Construction Noise Guideline</i> • The project would generate negligible noise at non-associated receivers during operation, with noise levels well below the applicable EPA criteria at all receivers

	<p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that external lighting is minimised and complies with relevant Australian Standards. • Prohibit any signage or advertising on the site, unless for safety purposes. • Implement a vegetation buffer at the site in consultation with RR01 and WaterNSW. • Minimise noise generated by the construction, upgrading or decommissioning activities on site in accordance with best practice requirements outlined in the ICNG. • Restrict construction hours to Monday to Friday, 7am – 6 pm and Saturday, 8 am – 1 pm.
<p><i>Hazards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of fire or explosion • Risk associated with thermal runaway • Risks associated with the project being managed remotely 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project would incorporate an automatic fire suppression system, with battery cells designed to self-isolate in the event of a safety issue, preventing the spread of fire between battery cells. • Continuous remote monitoring of the of the facility would identify any abnormal system behaviour and alert 24-hour monitoring staff. • In the event of an emergency, there would be detection technology would trigger an automatic shutdown of the system, with alarms to notify WaterNSW staff on the site • The project site is identified as bushfire prone land, and the project would include asset protection zones and a minimum 45,000 litre water supply tank. • The project would comply with the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields. • Subject to the recommended conditions, the Department is satisfied that risks associated with the facility would be negligible. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an Emergency Plan in consultation with Rural Fire Service (RFS) and Fire and Rescue NSW. • Ensure that the development complies with the relevant asset protection zone requirements as approved by the RFS.