

APPENDIX A – EIA FOR CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL



Renew Estate Pty Ltd
Bomen solar farm EIS
Environmental impact assessment for changes to the
Proposal

June 2018

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Renew Estate proposes to develop a 120 megawatt (MWdc) solar farm at Bomen, about seven kilometres north-east of the Wagga Wagga central business district (CBD) on the eastern side of Byrnes Road (referred to as the 'proposal').

The proposal requires development consent from the Minister for Planning under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). GHD Pty Limited prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to support the development application for the proposal. The EIS addresses the requirements of Schedule 2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* (EP&A Regulation) and Section 79C of the EP&A Act. It also addresses the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) which were provided on 21 November 2017 by the Department of Planning and Environment.

The Department of Planning and Environment exhibited the environmental impact statement (EIS) from 21 April 2018 – 21 May 2018.

The proposal has been subject to minor revisions since the EIS was finalised for exhibition. These revisions are summarised below and in Figure 1:

1.1.1 Revised transmission line

A section of the transmission line corridor has been moved to the east, from Lot 3 DP 594679 to the adjacent Lot 2 DP 594679 (refer to Figure 1).

The transmission corridor represents a wide corridor within which a narrower disturbance footprint will be sited for the construction of the transmission line and easement. The revised transmission corridor is up to 150 metres wide in some locations, however the easement will likely be 30 to 45 metres wide for overhead sections, or 7 to 11 metres wide for underground sections. The additional width included in the corridor is to allow for flexibility during detailed design, and ensures that all potentially disturbed land is assessed in the Development Application.

At the time of preparing the EIS, it had not been determined whether the proposed transmission line from the on-site substation to the Wagga North substation would be an overhead or underground line. As such, the EIS considered the impacts of both scenarios to ensure the worst case impacts were assessed for each environmental aspect.

Renew Estate has since committed to an underground line between the southern boundary of the southern development area and the Wagga North Substation (Figure 1). The method for the section of transmission line from the on-site substation to the southern boundary of the southern development is still yet to be determined and may be either overhead or underground. This will be determined during detailed design.

1.1.2 Alternative control building location option

The EIS proposed an indicative location of the control building north of Trahairs Road (refer Figure 1). An alternative option for the control building location is now proposed adjacent to the project substation (referred to as Option 2, refer Figure 1). The alternative location would simplify the SCADA communication system link between the substation and control building.

The final option will be selected during detailed design. Should Option 2 be selected, solar panels would likely be constructed at the location where the control building was proposed in

the EIS (Option 1) north of Trahairs Road. Should this occur, the tree located adjacent to this Option 1 site would be removed (refer to Figure 4). The tree would be retained if Option 1 was selected, to provide shade and amenity for operational staff, consistent with the EIS.

1.1.3 Revised proposal site adjacent to protected woodland patch

In addition to the area subject to the revised transmission line corridor alignment, the proposal site has been revised adjacent to a patch of protected woodland in the north west portion of the site. The patch of woodland is protected under the Wagga Wagga Development Control Plan (DCP) as described in the EIS. Whilst this woodland patch was not part of the disturbance area and would be retained, the proposal site boundary as presented in the EIS traversed the centre of the woodland patch. The proposal site boundary at this location represented the boundary of the proposed subdivision of Lot 11 DP1130519 and therefore the boundary of the land to be acquired and managed by the project.

The subdivision boundary and corresponding proposal site has been revised exclude the entire woodland patch from the land to be acquired by the project in response to the request made by Wagga Wagga City Council (WWCC) for the woodland patch to be managed by one landowner.

The subdivision boundary and corresponding proposal site has also been extended further south immediately west of the woodland patch to compensate for this loss of area, resulting in the total proposal site size remaining the same.

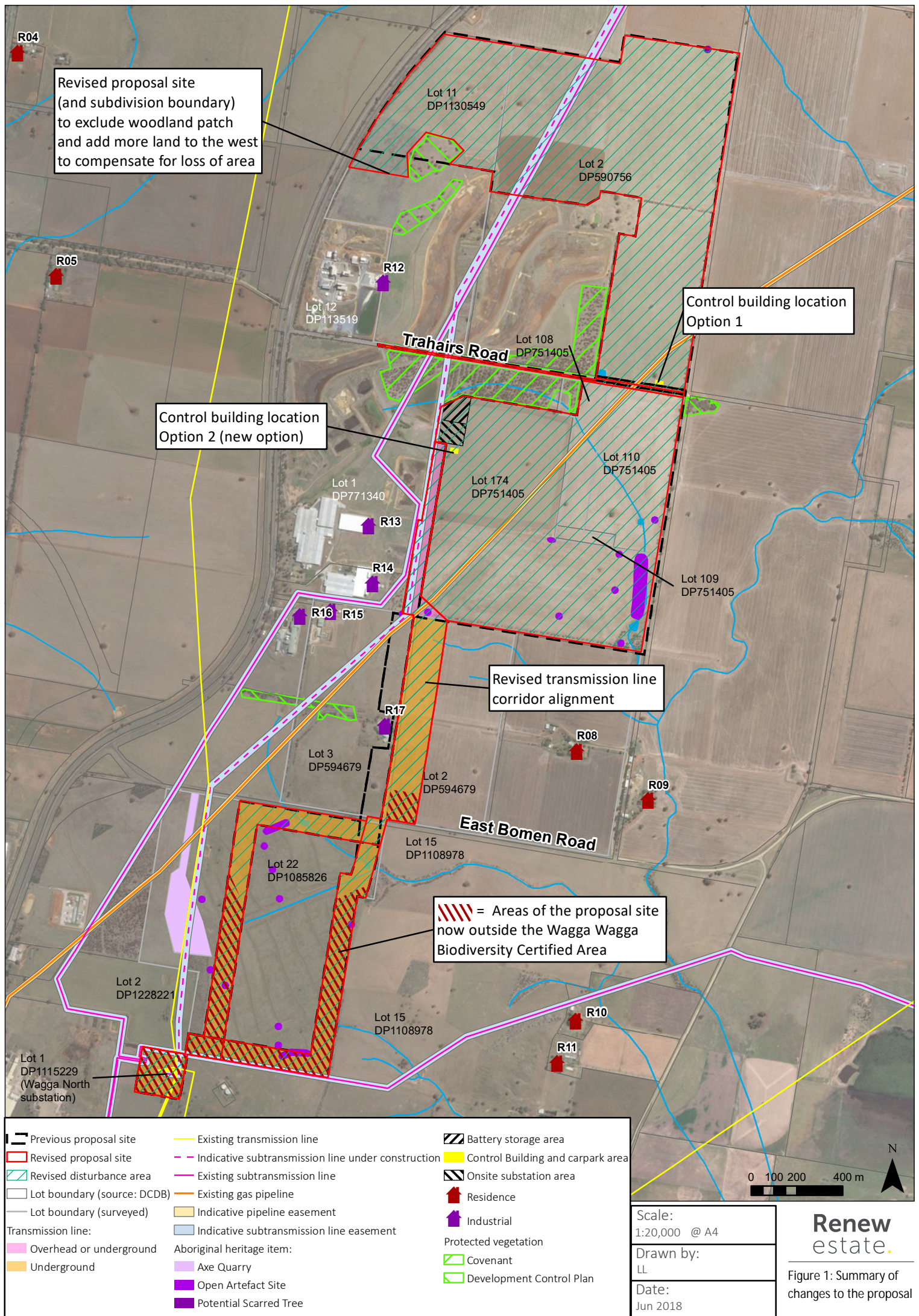
1.1.4 Revised land subject to the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certified Area

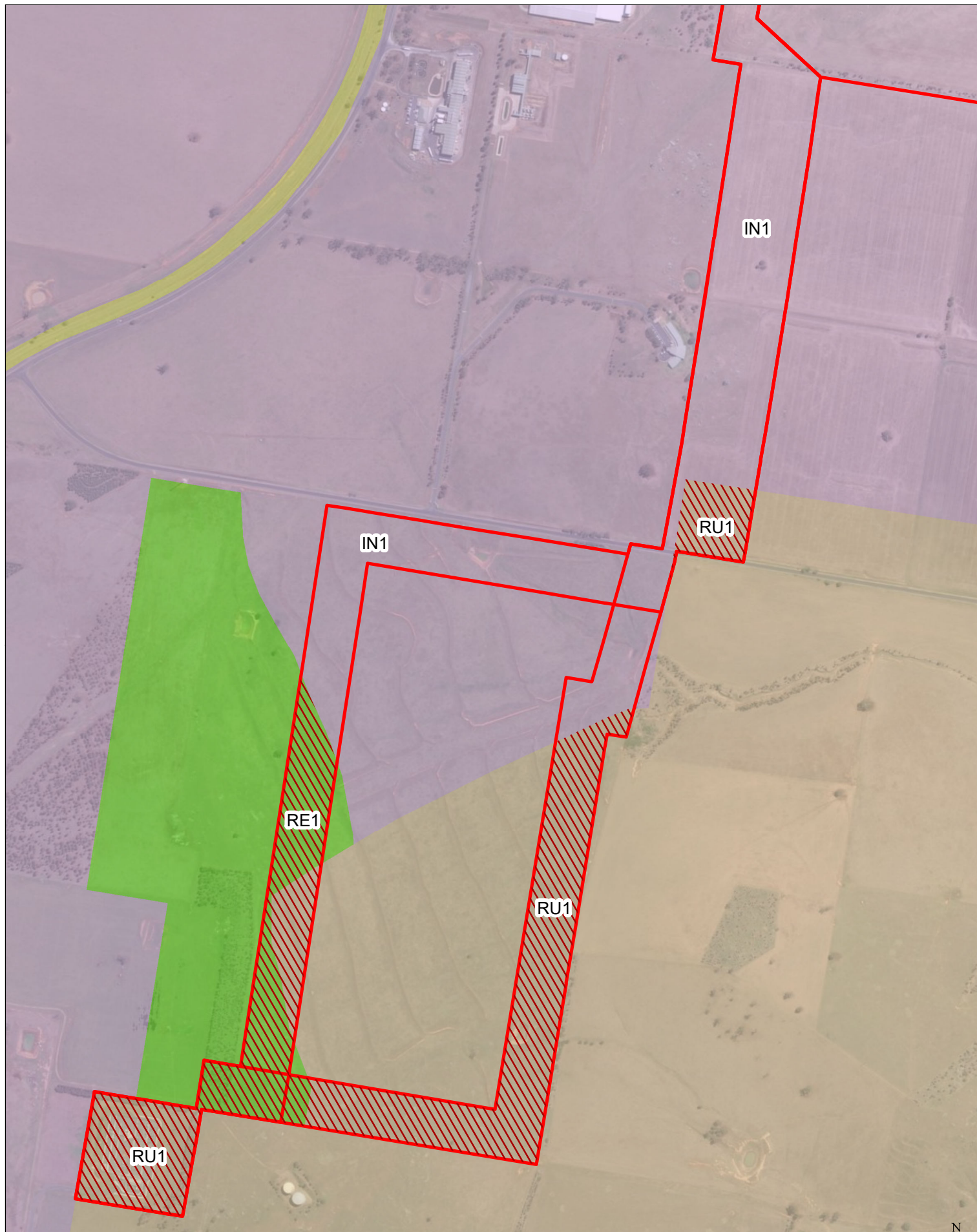
The EIS stated that the proposal site was located on land inside the Biodiversity Certification Area of the Wagga Wagga LEP and that a biodiversity assessment under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) was therefore not required.


On 28 May 2018 WWCC made Renew Estate aware of the Biodiversity Certification of Environmental Planning Instruments Order 2017 which commenced on 24 November 2017. The effect of clause 4 of the Order was the revision of the land subject to the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certified Area such that only land zoned Business (B1-B8), Industrial (IN1-IN4), Residential (R1-R5) or Special Infrastructure (SP1-SP3) immediately before the commencement of the BC Act 2016 remains part of the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certified Area.

In light of the Order, parts of the proposed transmission line corridor are now outside of the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certified Area where the land is zoned Public Recreation (RE1) and Primary Production (RU1) (refer to Figure 2). For these areas, the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) applies, as established under the BC Act.

For areas where the BAM applies, a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) is required when vegetation proposed to be removed is classified as native vegetation. The removal of native vegetation is required to be offset according to the BAM. For the areas of the proposal site outside of the Biodiversity Certified Area, where the BAM would apply, Renew Estate has committed to retaining all native vegetation. Therefore, a BDAR is not required to be prepared for the proposal.








 Areas of the proposal site outside of the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certification Area


 Proposal site

Wagga Wagga LEP land use zone

 IN1 General Industrial

 RE1 Public Recreation (outside certified area)

 RU1 Primary Production (outside certified area)

 SP2 Infrastructure

Scale:
 1:9,000 @ A4

Drawn by:
 LL

Date:
 June 2018

Renew
 estate.

Figure 2: Areas of the proposal site outside of the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certified Area

1.2 Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to assess the potential environmental impacts of the changes to the proposal described above. The environmental impact assessment in section 6 of the EIS was reviewed and this concluded that additional assessment was required for the following environmental aspects as there was the potential for there to be changes to the impacts assessed in the EIS:

- Aboriginal heritage
- Biodiversity
- Noise and vibration
- Landscape and visual.

Section 2 of this report describes the potential impact on these environmental aspects and compares it to the assessment in section 6 of the EIS.

Additional assessment has not been undertaken for environmental aspects other than those listed above because the proposed changes are unlikely to change the impacts assessed in the EIS or require additional management measures.

2. Environmental impact assessment

2.1 Aboriginal heritage

The Aboriginal Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (AACHIA) (AECOM, 2018) submitted as part of the EIS was a draft report as it was pending receipt of comments from Registered Aboriginal Parties. The AACHIA has since been finalised and the final revision incorporated the changes to the proposal site as described in section 1.1.

In May 2018 an additional archaeological survey was undertaken for the area subject to the revised transmission line corridor. No additional Aboriginal sites were identified during the survey. As such, there are no changes to the impacts to Aboriginal heritage sites in the final AACHIA, to those reported in the EIS and draft AACHIA.

2.2 Biodiversity

This section discusses the potential impacts on biodiversity as a result of the changes to the proposal described in Section 1.1.

2.2.1 Assessment approach

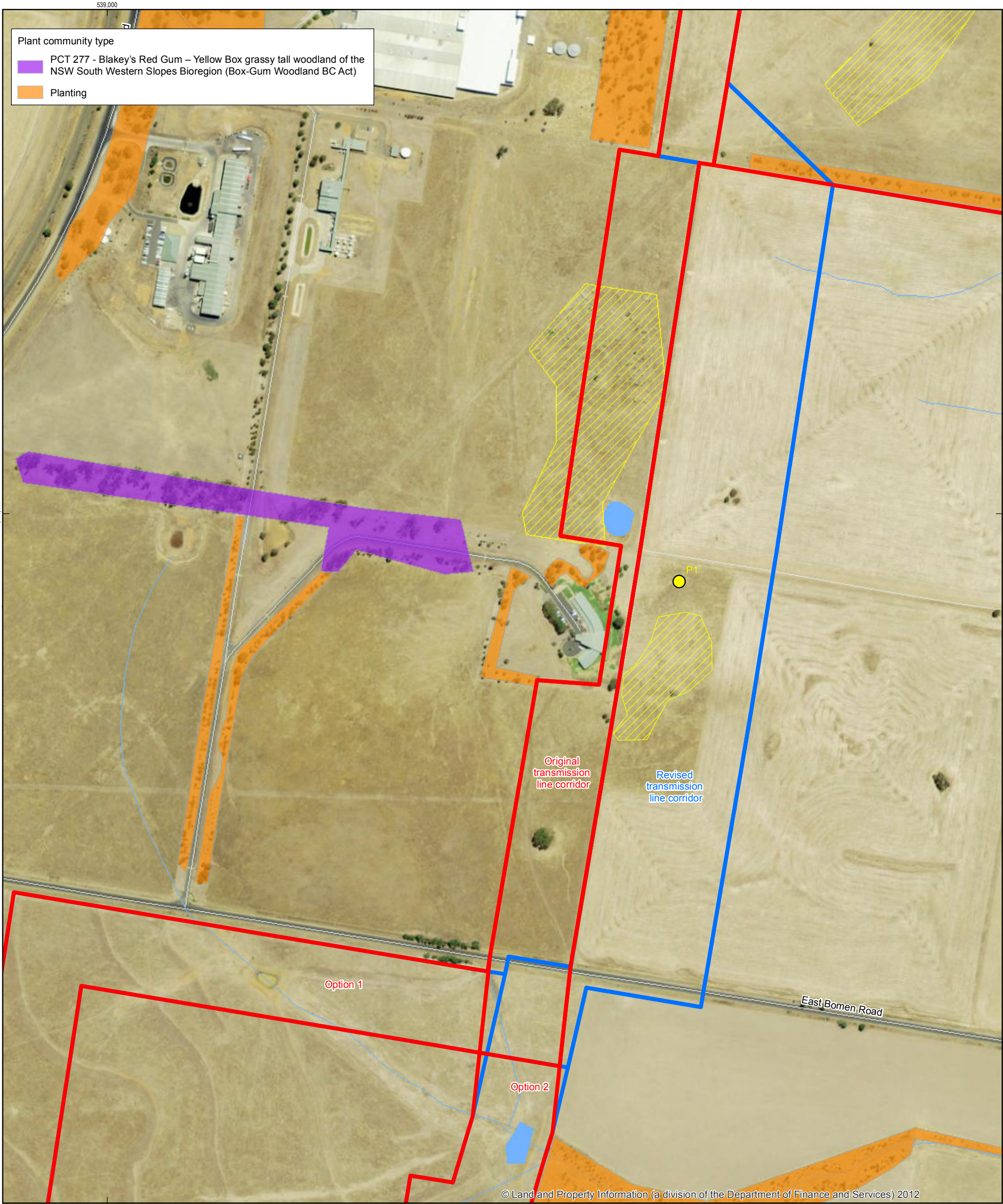
2.2.1.1 Revised transmission line corridor alignment

Database review

As the revised transmission line corridor alignment is located directly adjacent to the alignment assessed in the EIS, database searches conducted for the EIS are considered sufficient. The area of the new corridor is included in the searches undertaken for the EIS.

Field survey

A field survey was conducted by an ecologist on 18 May 2018 to assess the revised transmission line corridor alignment. The primary objectives of the field survey were to assess the revised corridor area in terms of its ecological values, consistent with those areas previously surveyed for the EIS. The survey effort included one flora plot survey and recording of incidental groundcover species throughout the revised corridor area (see Figure 3).



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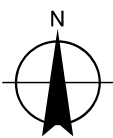
- Flora survey plot
- Drainage line/stream
- Road
- Original transmission line corridor
- Revised transmission line corridor
- Rocky outcrop
- Dam

Paper Size A3

0 50 100 200

Metres

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55



Renew Estate
Bomen 120 MW solar farm biodiversity assessment addendum

Job Number 23-16243
Revision 0
Date 15 Jun 2018

Revised transmission line corridor
and flora plot survey location

Figure 3

2.2.1.2 Alternative control building location option

The areas subject to both proposed control building locations (Option 1 and Option 2) were assessed for biodiversity values in the EIS. No further database reviews or field surveys are required.

2.2.1.3 Revised proposal site adjacent to the protected woodland patch

The area subject to the change in proposal site adjacent to the protected woodland patch was assessed for biodiversity values as part of the investigations undertaken for the EIS. This includes the additional land added to the proposal site immediately west of the woodland patch. Whilst this land was not included in the proposal site as shown in the EIS, it was part of an earlier revision of the proposal site and captured in the field surveys. No further database reviews or field surveys are required.

2.2.1.4 Revised land subject to the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certification

As discussed in section 1.1.4, since the commencement of the Biodiversity Certification of Environmental Planning Instruments Order 2017 on 24 November 2017, parts of the proposed transmission line corridor are outside of the Wagga Wagga Biodiversity Certified Area where the land is zoned Public Recreation (RE1) and Primary Production (RU1) (Figure 2). This was not identified in the EIS.

For the areas outside of the Biodiversity Certified Area, where the BAM would apply, Renew Estate has committed to retaining all native vegetation. Therefore, a BDAR is not required to be prepared for the proposal.

2.2.2 Existing environment

2.2.2.1 Revised transmission line corridor alignment

Flora

A total of 27 flora species were recorded within the area of the revised corridor area, comprised of eight native species and 19 introduced species.

The revised corridor area has been previously disturbed by cropping and grazing by livestock, and therefore contains a high proportion of introduced groundcover species and to a lesser extent, native species that are commonly found in disturbed environments. The most common native species present are Red-leg Grass (*Bothriochloa macra*) and Hairy Panic (*Panicum effusum*), which occur in the central section of the revised corridor area that has not recently been ploughed. Native species also occur along the edges of the ploughed paddocks in the northern and southern sections of the revised corridor area (see Photo 1).

Commonly occurring introduced groundcover species include Stink Grass (*Eragrostis cilianensis*) and Wild Oats (*Avena fatua*). The road reserve of East Bomen Road is dominated by Paspalum (*Paspalum dilatatum*)

There is no remnant vegetation within the revised corridor area. The only canopy present includes three small planted eucalypts in the northern ploughed paddock and two acacias within a rocky outcrop in the central section of the alignment. No hollow-bearing trees were recorded.

No priority weeds for the Riverina region were recorded during surveys.

Fauna

Field surveys identified evidence of grazing by livestock and native and introduced mammal species. Scats from the native Eastern Grey Kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*) and the introduced European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) were recorded. Superb Fairy-wrens (*Malurus cyaneus*) were recorded perching on the fenceline and in the garden of the laboratory adjacent to the site.

Due to the disturbed nature of the area, the grassland habitat within the revised corridor area is likely to provide only marginal habitat for native fauna species considered likely to occur in the study area (see Appendix B of biodiversity assessment).

Rocky outcrops are located in the central section of the revised corridor area (see Figure 3). These rocky outcrops are mostly large embedded rocks and therefore provide limited value as fauna habitat including roosting sites for birds and potential basking/sheltering sites for reptiles. In addition, the rocky outcrops are located in highly disturbed grassland, which provides marginal fauna habitat.



Photo 1: Looking south from the central section of the alignment, along the western boundary of Lot 2 DP 594679

Threatened species and populations

No threatened species or populations were observed in the study area during field surveys.

The habitat in the revised corridor area site is typical of a highly disturbed agricultural environments and contains only marginal habitat for threatened species. Due to the lack of canopy species in the site, and largely ploughed groundcover, habitat outside of this site in the wider study area would likely provide preferred and/or better quality habitat. Section 3.5 of the biodiversity assessment in the EIS contains a summary of listed species and populations that may occur in the study area.

2.2.2.2 Revised proposal site adjacent to the protected woodland patch in the northwest

The additional land added to the proposal site immediately west of the woodland patch is dominated by introduced groundcover species consistent with grazing and cropping land use. Commonly occurring species include Common Wheat (*Triticum aestivum*), Witchgrass (*Panicum capillare*) and Wild Oats. The priority weed Silverleaf Nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*) is also common throughout this section of the study area.

There are no canopy species present in this area.

2.2.3 Potential impacts

2.2.3.1 Direct impacts

Revised transmission line alignment

The impacts of the revised alignment are not expected to differ from those described in section 4.1 of the biodiversity assessment for the EIS for the following reasons:

- The corridors are of the same length, therefore the disturbance footprint would be similar.
- Both corridors are located in disturbed grassland dominated by introduced species
- Both corridors contain areas of rocky outcrops that have low potential fauna habitat value
- No tree canopy removal would be required for either alignment.

Alternative control building location option

The tree that would potentially be removed adjacent to the control building Option 1 location if Option 2 is selected, is a large hollow-bearing Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), with a diameter at breast height of 200 centimetres (see Figure 1 for location). The tree contains a total of eight hollows including the following:

- Four hollows less than five centimetres diameter
- Three hollows between five and 10 centimetres diameter
- One hollow between ten and twenty centimetres diameter.

Hollow-bearing trees are an important habitat component for many fauna species in the study area and locality. They provide potential roosting and nesting habitat for microchiropteran bats, arboreal mammals and woodland birds. The removal of this hollow-bearing paddock tree is unlikely to substantially affect fauna in the study area due to the presence of additional hollow-bearing trees in the study area and locality within patches of woodland that provide better quality habitat, including along Trahairs Road about 300 metres to the west of the location.

Revised proposal site adjacent to the protected woodland patch

Introduced groundcover vegetation would be impacted during construction work in the revised area west of the protected woodland patch. Impacts are not expected to differ from those described in section 4 of the biodiversity assessment for the EIS, as the groundcover to be removed is of a similar condition to the assessed area for the EIS. The woodland patch would be retained as previously identified.

Impacts on threatened biota

Potential impacts of the proposed changes to the proposal on threatened biota are not expected to differ from those described in section 6 of the biodiversity assessment for the EIS.

A significance assessment for the Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*), listed as vulnerable under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, was prepared (see Appendix C of the biodiversity assessment).

The possible removal of an additional hollow-bearing tree has the potential to impact on the Superb Parrot by removing an additional four hollows potentially suitable for use as habitat by the species.

This tree removal would not alter the outcomes of the significance assessment for the Superb Parrot for the following reasons:

- The area of additional habitat removal (only four hollows) is small in relation to habitat available in the locality
- Additional tree removal would be limited to an isolated paddock tree, with additional hollow-bearing trees located along Trahairs Road about 300 metres to the west of the location
- Presence of higher quality habitat value in patches outside the study area.

2.2.3.2 Indirect impacts

Indirect impacts are not expected to differ from those described in section 4.2 of the biodiversity assessment for the EIS.



Figure 4 Location of hollow-bearing tree to be removed (indicated by arrow north of Trahairs Road)

2.2.4 Avoid, minimise and mitigate impacts

Mitigation measures to be implemented for the proposal would be in line with those detailed in section 5.2 of the biodiversity assessment for the EIS. No new additional mitigation measures are required as a result of the revised transmission line corridor alignment.

2.3 Noise and vibration

This section assesses the potential noise impacts associated with the revised transmission line. The area added to the proposal site adjacent to the protected woodland patch was already captured as part of the site area assessed in the EIS (refer to figures within Noise Impact

Assessment in Appendix F of EIS). As such, the noise model does not need amending in this area.

2.3.1 Noise modelling and predicted noise results

This section assesses the potential construction noise impacts with reference to:

- Bomen Solar Farm EIS – Noise Impact Assessment Rev0, (February 2018)
- Interim Construction Noise Guideline (ICNG) (DECC 2009)

The transmission line from the on-site substation to the southern boundary of the southern development area is proposed to be either overground or underground. The transmission line from the southern boundary of the southern development area to the Wagga North substation is proposed to be underground. This assessment is based on the construction of an underground transmission line from the on-site substation to the Wagga North substation as this is a worst-case scenario (activity sound power level of the underground transmission line is 117 dBA compared to 112 dBA for the overhead transmission line). Operational noise impacts have not been assessed because the change in alignment would not alter the operational noise impacts assessed in the EIS.

Construction Scenario 5 (CS5) (Table 4-2 of the February 2018 assessment) relates to the construction of underground transmission lines. Construction Scenario 5 in the EIS was originally modelled within the main proposal site (northern and southern development area) and not within the transmission line corridor. As such, there are discrepancies in the predicted noise levels presented in the EIS and the predicted noise levels associated with construction of the revised transmission line.

Noise modelling was undertaken using SoundPLAN 7.4 to predict the noise levels at the nearest sensitive receivers during the construction of the transmission line within the revised corridor in Lot 2 DP594679. The noise model parameters are consistent with the Section 4.2.2 of the February 2018 noise assessment.

The predicted noise results associated with the construction of the transmission line in Lot 2 DP594679 are presented in Table 1, along with the relevant ICNG noise management levels (NML) and identification of any exceedances. The activity sound power level used for modelling CS5 was 117 dBA.

Table 1 Predicted construction noise levels at sensitive receivers – CS5

Construction scenario	Construction Hours	Receiver ID	Receiver Type	NML	Predicted noise level $L_{Aeq(15min)}$ * EIS	Predicted noise level $L_{Aeq(15min)}$ – Revised transmission line	Exceedances of NML (Revised transmission line)
CS5 –below ground line (Option 1)	Standard (Monday to Friday 7 am to 6 pm, Saturday 8 am to 1 pm)	R1	Residential	45	22 to 31 ¹	17 to 21	No
		R2	Residential	45	23 to 32 ¹	19 to 23	No
		R3	Residential	45	27 to 35 ¹	24 to 28	No
		R4	Residential	45	24 to 32 ¹	23 to 24	No
		R5	Residential	45	26 to 34 ¹	23 to 28	No
		R6	Residential	45	23 to 29 ¹	21 to 25	No
		R7	Residential	45	21 to 27 ¹	19 to 23	No
		R8	Residential	45	34 to 51 ¹	36 to 47	2 dB
		R9	Residential	45	31 to 45 ¹	33 to 41	No
		R10	Residential	45	23 to 32 ¹	31 to 37	No
		R11	Residential	45	24 to 32 ¹	25 to 32	No
		R12	Industrial	75	50 ¹	43	No
		R13	Industrial	75	59 ¹	57	No
		R14	Industrial	75	61 ¹	57	No
		R15	Industrial	75	52 ¹	48	No
		R16	Industrial	75	47 ¹	44	No
		R17	Commercial	70	48 ¹	71	1 dB
		R18	Residential	45	21 to 29 ¹	19 to 24	No
		R19	Residential	45	23 to 29 ¹	21 to 25	No
		R20	Residential	45	24 to 33 ¹	24 to 28	No
		R1	Residential	45	22 to 31 ¹	18 to 22	No

Construction scenario	Construction Hours	Receiver ID	Receiver Type	NML	Predicted noise level $L_{Aeq(15min)}$ * EIS	Predicted noise level $L_{Aeq(15min)}$ – Revised transmission line	Exceedances of NML (Revised transmission line)
CS5 – below ground line (Option 2)	Standard (Monday to Friday 7 am to 6 pm, Saturday 8 am to 1 pm)	R2	Residential	45	23 to 32 ¹	18 to 23	No
		R3	Residential	45	27 to 35 ¹	24 to 28	No
		R4	Residential	45	24 to 32 ¹	22 to 24	No
		R5	Residential	45	26 to 34 ¹	23 to 28	No
		R6	Residential	45	23 to 29 ¹	21 to 25	No
		R7	Residential	45	21 to 27 ¹	19 to 23	No
		R8	Residential	45	34 to 51 ¹	36 to 47	2 dB
		R9	Residential	45	31 to 45 ¹	34 to 41	No
		R10	Residential	45	23 to 32 ¹	31 to 37	No
		R11	Residential	45	24 to 32 ¹	26 to 33	No
		R12	Industrial	75	50 ¹	43	No
		R13	Industrial	75	59 ¹	57	No
		R14	Industrial	75	61 ¹	57	No
		R15	Industrial	75	52 ¹	48	No
		R16	Industrial	75	47 ¹	43	No
		R17	Commercial	70	48 ¹	71	1 dB
		R18	Residential	45	21 to 29 ¹	19 to 24	No
		R19	Residential	45	23 to 29 ¹	21 to 25	No
		R20	Residential	45	24 to 33 ¹	24 to 28	No

Note – 1 – Predicted noise level is based on based on construction work within the northern and southern development area and the transmission line corridor.

2.3.2 Discussion of construction noise impacts

The construction noise results in Table 1 indicate the following:

- Construction of an underground transmission line is predicted to result in marginal exceedances of the relevant noise management levels at R8 and R17 (2 dBA and 1 dBA, respectively). These exceedances are expected to be short term in duration and would reduce as the plant and equipment moved progressively along the alignment and further away from the sensitive receiver.
- Construction noise impacts will be managed as per the noise mitigation measures outlined within Section 6 of the February 2018 noise assessment.

2.3.3 Discussion of construction vibration impacts

Construction of the transmission line has the potential to cause adverse vibration impacts during pile boring works. Vibration impacts can occur if pile boring is within four metres of any sensitive receivers. Pile boring will not be within four metres of any sensitive receiver during the construction of the transmission line. As such, no adverse vibration impacts to sensitive receivers are anticipated.

2.3.4 Conclusion

The noise model results indicate that construction of an underground transmission line may result in marginal exceedances at R8 and R17. Construction noise impacts are to be managed as per the noise mitigation measures outlined within Section 6 of the February 2018 noise assessment.

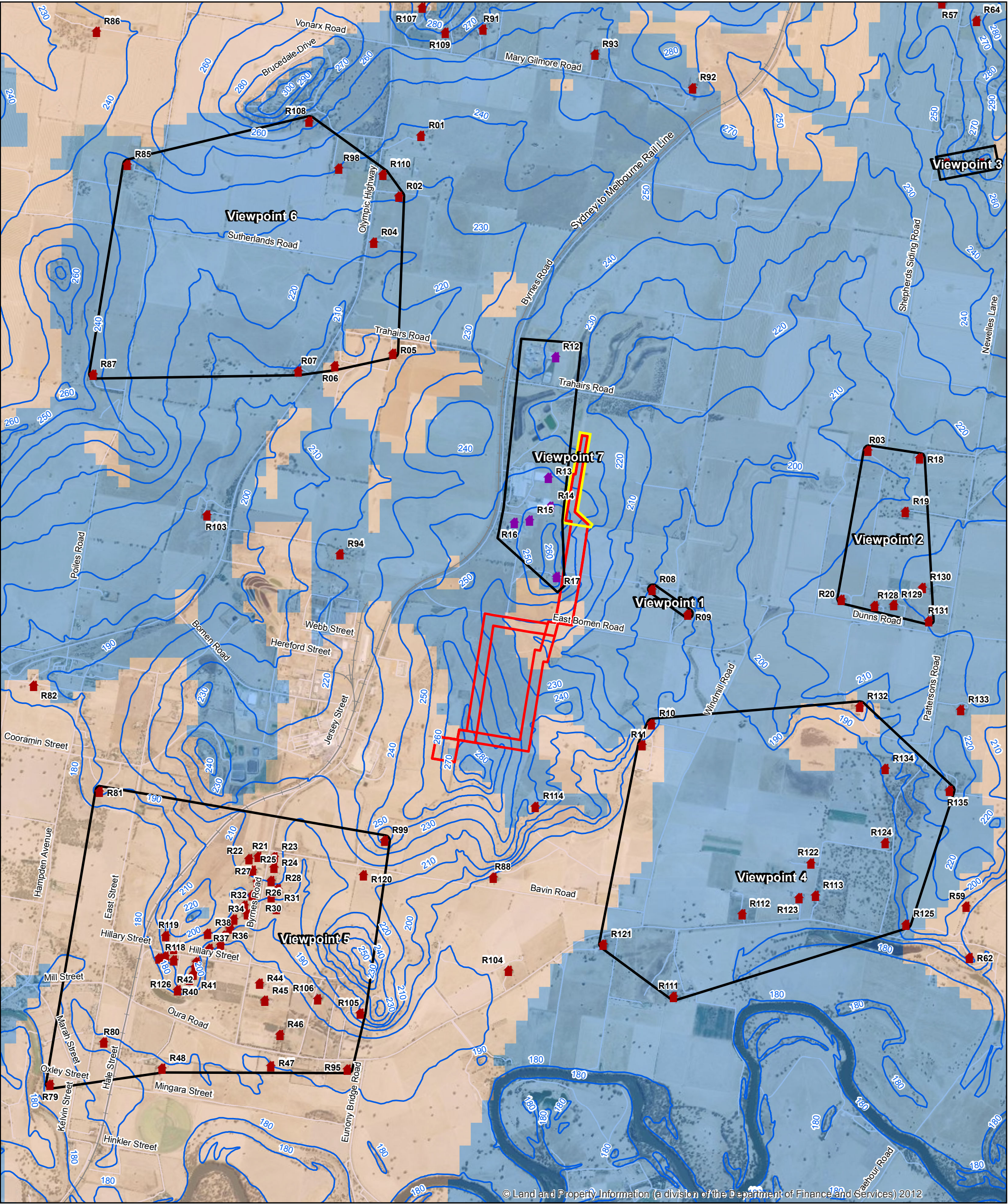
2.4 Landscape and visual

This section assesses the potential landscape and visual impacts of the revised transmission line. The change to visual impacts as a result of the area added to the proposal site adjacent to the protected woodland patch are considered negligible given the screening effect that the woodland would provide for receivers to the east.

Figure 5 shows the viewshed analysis for the updated potential overhead transmission corridor section, which now only extends from the on-site substation to the southern boundary of the southern development area. The section of the transmission line from the southern boundary of the southern development area to the Wagga North substation will be underground and therefore will not have a visual impact.

A comparison of Figure 5 with Figure 6.10 of the EIS, indicates that a reduced overhead section reduces the visual impacts of the overall proposal compared to the assessment detailed in Section 6.4.3 of the EIS.

The proposed changes to the transmission line do not require any changes to the management measures detailed in the EIS.



LEGEND

Revised transmission line corridor

Above ground transmission line assessed for viewshed

Residence

Industrial

Elevation contour (10m)

Road

Viewpoint location

Views not available of proposal

Views available of proposal

3. Conclusion

3.1 Summary

Renew Estate proposes to refine the proposal that was assessed in the EIS and this involves:

- moving a section of the transmission line moving to the east, from Lot 3 DP 594679 to the adjacent Lot 2 DP 594679.
- committing to an underground line for the section of transmission line between the southern boundary of the southern development area and the Wagga North Substation. The method for the section of transmission line from the on-site substation to the southern boundary of the southern development is still yet to be determined and may be either overhead or underground.
- including an additional location option for the control building. The additional location is adjacent to the project's substation.
- Revising the proposal site boundary to exclude a patch of protected woodland in the north west portion of the site assessed in the EIS. The subdivision boundary and corresponding proposal site has also been extended further south immediately west of the woodland patch to compensate for this loss of area, resulting in the total proposal site size remaining the same.

This report assesses the potential environmental impacts of the changes to the proposal and concludes that there is negligible change to the environmental impacts described in section 6 of the EIS. The changes to the proposal do not require any changes to the management measures described in the EIS.

3.2 Scope and limitations

This report: has been prepared by GHD for Renew Estate Pty Ltd and may only be used and relied on by Renew Estate Pty Ltd for the purpose agreed between GHD and the Renew Estate Pty Ltd as set out in this report.

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26443/<https://projects.ghd.com/oc/Canberra/bomensolarfarmeisspe/Delivery/Documents/Revised EIA for changes to the proposal.docx>

Document Status

Revision	Author	Reviewer		Approved for Issue		
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0	B James	P Carson		P Carson		15 June 2018

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