



Attachment A

Planning Report

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Planning Report

Proposed Utility Installation (Battery Energy Storage System)

89 Cobden-Scotts Creek Road, Cobden VIC 3266
(Lot 2 of TP863659)

FOR: Cobden BESS Pty Ltd

SLR PROJECT No: 620.041534.000001

Revision: 3.0

24 July 2026

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Revision Record

Revision	Date	Prepared By	Checked By	Authorised By
3.0	24 July 2026	Olivia Sharp	Mitchell Kennedy	Katie Yang
2.0	11 June 2026	Olivia Sharp	Mitchell Kennedy	Katie Yang
1.0	29 January 2026	Olivia Sharp	Mitchell Kennedy	Katie Yang

Basis of Report

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR) with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the timescale and resources allocated to it by agreement with Cobden BESS Pty Ltd (the Client). Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected, which has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

This report is for the exclusive use of the Client. No warranties or guarantees are expressed or should be inferred by any third parties. This report may not be relied upon by other parties without written consent from SLR.

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Executive Summary

Cobden BESS Pty Ltd seeks to establish a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 75 Megawatt (MW) / approximately 300 Megawatt hours (MWh) at 89 Cobden-Scotts Creek Road, Cobden VIC 3266, formally known as Lot 1 and Lot 2 of TP863659 (the Project). It is noted that the proposed building and works are wholly contained within Lot 2 of TP863659.

The Project will be connected into the 66 kilovolt (kV) sub-transmission line which runs from Cobden Zone Substation to Camperdown Zone Substation in a line-in-line-out configuration. Network provider Powercor will facilitate the effective integration into the existing power grid.

The proposed BESS will store excess energy during times of low demand and discharge the electricity into the grid at periods of high demand. Unlike many other forms of energy storage and generation, batteries are particularly valuable due to the flexibility they provide. The Project supports Victoria's energy security by enhancing grid stability through energy storage. It aligns with key energy policies and will contribute to achieving the National Electricity Market's projected future energy storage requirements.

This Planning Report provides an overview of the Project and an assessment of the proposed development against the relevant State and Local planning provisions and other relevant matters. This report is supported by a suite of technical assessments, including:

- Flood Assessment Gap Analysis
- Preliminary Site Investigation – Contamination
- Geotechnical Desktop Study
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Bushfire Risk Assessment
- Hazards and Risk Assessment
- Traffic Impact Assessment;
- Native Vegetation Assessment; and
- Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment.

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These reports collectively inform the planning and environmental considerations of the Project.

The assessment concludes that the proposed development complies, or can be conditioned to comply, with the relevant assessment benchmarks and on balance, the development application should be approved subject to reasonable and relevant conditions.

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Table of Contents

Basis of Report	ii
Executive Summary	iii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	viii
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Site & Application Details	1
1.2 The Proponent	2
1.3 Project Objectives	3
1.4 Terminology	3
1.5 Pre-lodgement Engagement.....	4
1.5.1 Department of Transport and Planning Engagement.....	4
1.5.2 Clause 53.22: Significant Economic Development.....	6
1.6 Regulatory Engagement.....	6
1.6.1 Head, Transport for Victoria	6
1.6.2 Country Fire Authority	7
1.7 Report Structure	7
2.0 Existing Land Conditions.....	10
2.1 Regional Context.....	10
2.2 Site Location and Details.....	10
2.3 Surrounding Development.....	10
2.4 Existing Vegetation.....	10
2.5 Topography and Drainage.....	11
3.0 Project Description	16
3.1 Project Overview	19
3.1.1 BESS Components	19
3.1.2 Grid Connection	20
3.1.3 Construction and Decommissioning	20
3.1.4 Operation	27
3.1.5 Decommissioning and Rehabilitation.....	28
4.0 State Legislation, Guidelines and Policy.....	29
4.1 Planning and Environment Act 1987.....	29
4.2 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988	29
4.2.1 Ecological Vegetation Classes	29
4.3 Corangamite Planning Scheme	30
4.3.1 Land Use Zoning.....	30



4.3.2 Clause 35.07-1 – Land Use	32
4.3.3 Clause 35.07-4 Buildings and Works	32
4.3.4 Schedule 1 to Clause 37.05 Farming Zone	35
4.4 Overlays	37
4.4.1 Designated Bushfire Prone Area	37
4.5 Municipal Planning Strategy (LPP) and Planning Policy Frameworks	39
4.5.1 Clause 02.03-1 Cobden	39
4.5.2 Clause 02.03-2 Environmental and landscape values	39
4.5.3 Clause 02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity	39
4.5.4 Clause 02.03-4 Natural resource management	39
4.5.5 Clause 02.03-9 Infrastructure	40
4.5.6 Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Great South Coast	40
4.5.7 Clause 12.01-1S Protection of biodiversity	40
4.5.8 Clause 12.01-2S Native vegetation management	40
4.5.9 Clause 12.03-1S River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs	41
4.5.10 Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire Planning	41
4.5.11 Clause 13.05-1S Noise management	41
4.5.12 Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility	41
4.5.13 Clause 14.01-1S Protection of Agricultural Land	42
4.5.14 Clause 15.01-6S Design for rural areas	42
4.5.15 Clause 17.01-1S Diversified Economy	42
4.5.16 Clause 19.01-1S Energy Supply	42
4.5.17 Clause 19.01-2S Renewable Energy	43
4.6 Particular Provisions	43
4.6.1 Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation	43
4.6.2 Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network	44
4.6.3 Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development	45
5.0 General Provisions	48
5.1 Clause 65.01 Approval of an application or Plan	48
5.1.1 Decision Guidelines	48
5.2 Clause 66 Referral and Notice Provisions	48
5.2.1 Clause 66.02-7 Use and Development Referrals	49
5.2.2 Clause 66.03 Referral of Permit Applications Under Other State Standard Provisions	49
5.2.3 Other Referrals	50
6.0 Other Relevant Legislation and Policies	51



6.1	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conversation Act 1999.....	51
6.1.1	Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)	51
6.2	Renewable Energy Action Plan	52
6.3	Victoria's Regional Economic Growth Statement 2024	52
6.4	Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan 2014	52
6.5	Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy.....	53
6.6	Corangamite Shire Council Plan 2025-2029.....	53
7.0	Assessment of Planning and Environmental Issues	54
7.1	Contamination	54
7.2	Geotechnical	54
7.3	Bushfire Risk	54
7.3.1	CFA Guidelines for Renewable Energy Installations.....	55
7.4	Hazards and Risk	56
7.5	Flooding	57
7.6	Flora and Fauna.....	57
7.7	Traffic.....	57
7.8	Acoustics.....	58
7.9	Stormwater.....	59
7.10	Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment.....	59
7.11	Agricultural Impact Assessment	60
8.0	Conclusion.....	61

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Tables

Table 1	Application Details	1
Table 2	Proponent Details	3
Table 3	DTP Comments	4
Table 4	Report Structure	8
Table 5	BESS Specifications	19
Table 6	Details of BESS Construction & Commissioning	21
Table 7	Construction Material and Equipment	23
Table 8	Clause 35.07-6 Decision guidelines	32
Table 9	Subdivision and other requirements at Clause 35.07 Schedule 1	35
Table 10	Permit Requirements for Earthworks at Clause 35.07 Schedule 1	36
Table 11	Policy Guidelines	42
Table 12	Clause 52.29-6 Decision Guidelines	44



Table 13	Clause 53.22-1 Significant Economic Development Categories.....	45
Table 14	Table 2 of Clause 53.22-1.....	46
Table 15	Application Requirements	47
Table 16	Clause 53.22 Decision Guidelines	47
Table 17	Summary of MNES	52

Figures

Figure 1	Project Area.....	9
Figure 2	Regional Context.....	12
Figure 3	Aerial and Site Cadastre.....	13
Figure 4	Plan of Survey (Source: Land Dimensions)	14
Figure 5	Topography	15
Figure 6	Example of a Battery Enclosure.....	20
Figure 7	Land Zoning.....	31
Figure 8	Bushfire Prone Area	38

Appendices

Appendix A	Development Plans
Appendix B	Certificate of Title
Appendix C	Flood Assessment Gap Analysis
Appendix D	Preliminary Site Investigation – Contamination
Appendix E	Geotechnical Desktop Study
Appendix F	Noise Impact Assessment
Appendix G	Stormwater Management Plan
Appendix H	Bushfire Risk Assessment
Appendix I	Hazards & Risks Assessment
Appendix J	Traffic Impact Assessment
Appendix K	Native Vegetation Assessment
Appendix L	Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AC	Alternating Current
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AHD	Australian Height Datum
APZ	Asset Protection Zone
ARES	Australian Renewable Energy Services Pty Ltd
ASS	Acid Sulphate Soils
BAL	Bushfire Attack Level
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BMP	Bushfire Management Plan
CaLP Act	Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CFA	Country Fire Authority
COD	Commercial Operations Date
Council Plan	Corangamite Shire Council Plan 2025-2029
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DC	Direct Current
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DFP	Development Facilitation Program
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EMP	Emergency Management Plan
EOL	End of life
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EPBC Act	Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Classes
FCAS	Frequency Control and Ancillary Services
FFG Act	Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988
ft	Feet/Foot
FTE	Full time equivalent
FZ	Farming Zone
Growth Plan	Great South Regional Growth Plan 2014
ha	Hectares
HRA	Hazards and Risk Assessment
HV	High voltage
kg	Kilogram



KL	Kilolitre
km	Kilometre
kV	Kilovolt
kVA	Kilovolt-ampere
LEM	Local Electricity Network
LGA	Local Government Area
LPT	Large Power Transformer
LV	Low voltage
LVIA	Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment
m	Metre
mm	Millimetre
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
m/s	Metres per second
MW	Megavolt
MVA	Mega Volt-Amperes
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt-hour
NBN	National Broadband Network
NEM	National Electricity Market
OGVA	Office of the Victorian Government Architect
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
O&M	Operation & Maintenance Building
OSOM	Over Size Over Mass
P&E Act	Planning and Environmental Act 1987
PADs	Potential Archaeological Deposits
PCS	Power Conversion System
PPF	Planning Policy Framework
Planning Scheme	Corangamite Planning Scheme
PSI	Preliminary Site Investigation
RCS	Regional Catchment Strategy
SLR	SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd
VPP	Victoria Planning Provisions
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design

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1.0 Introduction

SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (SLR) has been engaged by Cobden BESS Pty Ltd to prepare this Planning Report in support of a planning permit application for the proposed development of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) located at 89 Cobden-Scotts Creek Road, Cobden VIC 3266, formally known as Lot 1 and Lot 2 of TP863659 (the Project). It is noted that the proposed buildings and works are wholly contained within Lot 2 of TP863659.

The Project involves:

- A BESS with capacity of 75MW / approximately 300MWh at the point of connection, comprising battery units, inverters, transformers, substation and ancillary infrastructure.
- The BESS will be connected into the 66 kilovolt (kV) sub-transmission line which runs from Cobden Zone Substation to Camperdown Zone Substation in a line-in-line-out configuration. The scope of works associated with this planning permit application includes the grid connection infrastructure from the Project substation to the nominated point of connection. Works beyond the point of connection fall within the scope and jurisdiction of Powercor and do not form part of this planning permit application. Powercor, as the network provider, will facilitate effective integration into the existing power grid.
- New driveway and crossing over access from Cobden Port Campbell Road.
- Associated ancillary infrastructure including operations & maintenance building/storage warehouse, security fencing, CCTV security system, landscaping, access and internal roads, water tanks, temporary parking.
- Decommissioning of the BESS facilities at end of life (EOL).

The development is both an important project for the region and an important piece of storage infrastructure to support renewable energy in Victoria.

The application is submitted under the Development Facilitation Program (DFP) pursuant to Clause 53.22: Significant Economic Development of the Corangamite Planning Scheme. The proposal meets the eligibility requirements for assessment as a Category 1 application.

The report describes the Subject Site, its environment, the proposed development and provides an assessment of the proposal in terms of the matters for consideration under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. It should be read in conjunction with the supporting information, together with the Development Plans included at Appendix A.

1.1 Site & Application Details

Table 1 below provides a summary of the key site and application details.

Table 1 Application Details

Site & Application Details	
Site Address	89 Cobden-Scotts Creek Road, Cobden VIC 3266
Legal Property Description	Lot 1 of TP863659 Lot 2 of TP863659 <i>*Note: the proposed buildings and works are wholly contained within Lot 2 of TP863659</i>



Site & Application Details	
Site Area	49.3 hectares (ha)
Local Government Area	Shire of Corangamite
Planning Scheme	Corangamite Planning Scheme
Zone	Farming Zone (FZ) – Schedule 1
Overlays	No applicable overlays
Other Matters	Designated Bushfire Prone Area
Proposed Development	Construction and use of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated works, and to create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone 2
Proposed Land Use	Utility installation
Permit Triggers	- Clause 35.07-1 Use of Land (Farming Zone) - Clause 35.07-4 Buildings and works (Farming Zone) - Clause 52.29-2 Create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone 2 (Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network)
External Referrals	Head, Transport for Victoria
Estimated Development Cost	Between \$120 million – \$140 million
Applicant	Cobden BESS Pty Ltd
Applicant's Representative	Mitchell Kennedy, Associate Consultant – Planning SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd Level 11, 176 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne VIC 3002 E: mkennedy@slrconsulting.com M: 0455 588 014

1.2 The Proponent

The proponent Cobden BESS Pty Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Australian Renewable Energy Services Pty Ltd (ARES). ARES is an Australian owned and operated company focused on delivering innovative, reliable and commercially viable renewable energy solutions. ARES is committed to supporting Australia's transition to a low-carbon future by developing, designing and delivering high-quality renewable energy and storage projects. The company's expertise spans project development, engineering, procurement and construction, as well as long-term asset management. With strong industry capability and a growing portfolio of clean energy initiatives, ARES is playing an important role in strengthening Australia's energy resilience through the deployment of grid-scale renewable generation and battery energy storage systems.

The proponent details are provided at Table 2.

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Table 2 Proponent Details

Proponent Details	
Applicant	Cobden BESS Pty Ltd
ABN	98 678 086 041
Applicant Address	Level 11, 88 Tribune Street South Brisbane QLD 4101
Contact	Mitch Williams
Contact Details	dionysus@areservices.com.au

1.3 Project Objectives

The Project aims to support Victoria's, and more broadly Australia's transition to renewable energy while improving overall grid stability and resilience. This is achieved by storing excess energy from the network during low demand periods (e.g. midday hours due to high rooftop solar energy penetration) and distributing this back to the grid at peak demand times, in addition to providing ancillary network support services such as frequency regulation.

By participating in the National Electricity Market (NEM) wide Frequency Control and Ancillary Services (FCAS) markets, the Project will assist to stabilise the frequency of the grid at critical times in response to loss of load or loss of generation. The resulting improvement to the stability of grid frequency reduces the risk of system failure and blackouts. It also helps to ensure that the NEM can accommodate an increasing proportion of variable load and generation forecast in years to come. Once constructed, the utility-scale development will store and discharge excess power to the electricity grid, generating an array of economic, environmental, social and network benefits.

By addressing minimum demand and variable generation challenges, the proposed development additionally provides economic, environmental, and social benefits to the immediate and wider community.

1.4 Terminology

The areas of investigation and assessment discussed within this report for the Project include:

- *Subject Site* – consisting of Lot 1 of TP863659 and Lot 2 of TP863659;
- *Project Area* – the area marked in Figure 1 associated with the Project within the Subject Site, consisting of all compounds, buildings and equipment within the Project boundary fence including:
 - *BESS Compound* – the area of the BESS battery containers;
 - *Substation Compound* – the area of the Project substation;
 - *Switch Room / Control Room*
 - *O&M Buildings*
 - *Proposed Sub-Transmission Line* – preferred disturbance footprint for the construction of the overhead transmission line route internal to the Subject Site;
 - *Proposed Access Route* – proposed access from Cobden-Port Campbell Road to the Project Area.



1.5 Pre-lodgement Engagement

1.5.1 Department of Transport and Planning Engagement

A pre-application meeting was held on 1 July 2024, with attendees from SLR, ARES and Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to seek confirmation of the planning pathway options for the Project. At the time, the definition of the Project being a 'Minor Utility Installation' was discussed throughout the meeting, alongside exemptions for these uses and its associated buildings and works under Clause 62.01 of the Corangamite Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme).

The Project was to be connected to a section of the electricity distribution network operating with a nominal voltage not exceeding 66,000 volts. As such, the Project was defined as a 'Minor Utility Installation' in accordance with the Planning Scheme. Under Clause 62.01 and 62.02-1, the Project was therefore exempt from the requirements for a Planning Permit Application.

On 21 August 2025, Amendment VC279 was gazetted, introducing changes to the land-use definition of 'Minor Utility Installation' within the Victoria Planning Provisions and all planning schemes (Clause 73.03). The 'Minor Utility Installation' land use applies only to "*a battery with a storage capacity of no more than 5 megawatts.*" As a result, the previous exemption could not be relied upon for the Project, and a planning permit is now required.

Following this legislative change, a follow-up meeting was held on 12 September 2025 with DTP to confirm the appropriate approval pathway for the Project. DTP confirmed that the Project would require a planning permit through the DTP. DTP also provided a preliminary review of the previously prepared technical reports and offered initial feedback. A table of the feedback is provided below, with a response to each item.

Table 3 DTP Comments

Comment	Response
Please finalise the below mentioned planning reports for lodgement of the applications ADVERTISED PLAN	Application documents have been updated and finalised in response to DTP's preliminary comments. The following documents are enclosed as part of this submission: • Appendix A – Development Plans • Appendix B – Certificate of Title • Appendix C – Flood Assessment Gap Analysis • Appendix D – Preliminary Site Investigation – Contamination • Appendix E – Geotechnical Desktop Study • Appendix F – Noise Impact Assessment • Appendix G – Stormwater Management Plan • Appendix H – Bushfire Risk Assessment • Appendix I – Hazards and Risk Assessment • Appendix J – Traffic Impact Assessment • Appendix K – Native Veg Assessment



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Comment	Response
	Appendix L – Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment.
A desktop visual impact assessment should be included in the planning reports	The Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is provided at Appendix L. A summary of the LVIA is provided at Section 7.10.
The development plans will need to specify how the battery facilities will have access to and from the site to the adjoining road network;	The Development Plans provided in Appendix A, detail how the battery facilities will have access to and from the site to the adjoining road network. A new access driveway and crossover is proposed from Cobden-Port Campbell Road to provide access to the Project.
The Cobden BESS project development plans will need to show the location of the proposed 4 metre noise wall to ensure compliance with the Noise Protocol.	A 4m noise wall is proposed around the substation area. This is shown on the enclosed Development Plans (Appendix A). A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) is provided at Appendix F. However, it is noted through detailed design and optimisation of transformer selection, including consideration of a quieter transformer, the Project may seek to eliminate the requirement for noise wall around the transformer, provided the predicted noise levels at each receiver remain consistent with the outcomes presented in the NIA.
The applications will both need to be referred to WorkSafe upon lodgement	This is noted. However, as outlined in Section 5.2, because the proposal does not trigger mandatory referral to WorkSafe Victoria under Clause 66.02-7. This is supported by the Hazard and Risk Assessment (refer to Appendix I) which confirms that while the proposal involves materials classified under the Australian Dangerous Goods Code, the relevant regulatory thresholds (including fire protection quantities and licensing triggers) are not exceeded.
The Cobden BESS project will need to be referred to Head, Transport for Victoria upon lodgement as access from Cobden-Port Campbell Road (Transport Zone 2) (TRZ2) is proposed to be created.	Head, Transport for Victoria was engaged following submission of the application documentation to DTP in January 2026. Refer to Section 1.6.1.
DTP will seek advice via notice from the CFA after lodgement of the applications;	The CFA was engaged following submission of the application documentation to DTP in January 2026. Refer to Section 1.6.2.
The Cobden project shows some inconsistencies regarding the location of the BESS within the land parcels shown in the submitted application documents, in particular the development plans, noise assessment and Traffic Impact Assessment. Please ensure that the location of the BESS infrastructure within the project site is the same across all application documents.	All application documentation has been updated, where relevant, to ensure the BESS infrastructure within the Subject Site is consistent with all documentation.

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Comment	Response
Clarification is sought as to which part of the electricity grid each project is connecting into, to understand the referral requirements from DTP's end;	The Project will be connected into the 66kV sub-transmission line which runs from Cobden Zone Substation to Camperdown Zone Substation in a line-in-line-out configuration. The scope of works associated with this planning permit application includes the grid connection infrastructure from the Project substation to the nominated point of connection. Works beyond the point of connection fall within the scope and jurisdiction of Powercor and do not form part of this planning permit application. Powercor, as the network provider, will facilitate effective integration into the existing power grid.
Regarding the Cobden BESS project, please note that if there are works occurring within the Cobden-Port Campbell Road, road reserve for the powerline connection, consent from the relevant road authority (Head, Transport for Victoria) will be required for the application being made and for the proposed use or development.	This is noted. A Planning Permit is triggered under Clause 52.29-2 (Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network) to Create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone 2. This is detailed in this report, specifically in Section 4.6.3.

1.5.2 Clause 53.22: Significant Economic Development

The Development Facilitation Program (DFP) established by the Victorian Minister for Planning, provides an accelerated assessment pathway for priority projects that deliver significant economic value and public benefit to Victoria, including through job creation.

Eligibility

The eligibility requirements are outlined within the provisions themselves. These requirements are based on the sector and threshold criteria below.

- Significant economic development (Clause 53.22)
- Significant residential development incorporating affordable housing (Clause 53.23)
- Great Design Fast Track (Clause 53.25)

This proposal is submitted under Clause 53.22: Significant Economic Development of the Corangamite Planning Scheme. Clause 53.22 includes "Utility Installation" as an allowable use where the installed capacity is 1 MW or greater, which applies to the Project. On this basis, the proposal satisfies the requirements for assessment as a Category 1 application. All applications lodged through the DFP are determined by the Minister for Planning or by the DTP under delegated authority.

A detailed assessment of Clause 53.22 is provided in Section 4.6.3 of this report.

1.6 Regulatory Engagement

The application submission to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) was lodged in January 2026. Following this submission, further consultation was undertaken with the Head, Transport for Victoria (HTfV), and the Country Fire Authority (CFA), as outlined below.

1.6.1 Head, Transport for Victoria

A planning permit is triggered under Clause 52.29 (Land Adjacent to Transport Zone 2), requiring referral of the application to the HTfV. A meeting was held on 17 March 2026



between SLR, ARES and representatives from HTfV, Laura Hooper and Dave Fary, to discuss the Project in detail.

The meeting sought to obtain in-principle support for the Project and to discuss key transport matters, including:

- Access from Cobden-Port Campbell Road, including access location, sight distance requirements and design considerations
- Intersection treatments, including the temporary removal and reinstatement of concrete medians at the Cobden-Warrnambool Road / Cobden-Port Campbell Road intersection to facilitate OSOM vehicle movements
- Potential road upgrades
- Construction vehicle access arrangements
- Planning permit requirements

HTfV indicated support for the proposal and subsequently issued a Clearance Letter dated 20 March 2026, outlining general conditions to be addressed and incorporated into the Planning Permit.

1.6.2 Country Fire Authority

The Subject Site is located within a Designated Bushfire Prone area, and engagement with the CFA has been undertaken to support consideration of bushfire risk and emergency management requirements. Following the application submission in January 2026, a meeting was held on 23 March 2026 between SLR, ARES and representatives from the CFA, including Matthew Allen, Peter Lockwood and Ben Taylor, to discuss the Project in detail.

The purpose of this meeting was to seek in-principle support for the Project and to obtain CFA input on key bushfire and emergency management considerations, including:

- The overall risk of the development, including CFA's general perception of risks associated with BESS facilities and approaches to managing internal container fire events
- Availability of local CFA resources, including appliance capabilities and typical hose diameters likely to be utilised at the Subject Site
- Insights from recent Victorian bushfire events, including lessons learned relevant to emergency planning for the facility
- Advice regarding the proposed BAL-12.5 outcome and associated Asset Protection Zones (APZ)
- Any specific CFA requirements to be incorporated into the project design, having regard to the CFA's Renewable Energy Facility Guidelines

At that meeting, the CFA indicated they would be willing to review the Bushfire Risk Assessment prior to lodgement. The Bushfire Risk Assessment was subsequently provided to the CFA on 1 May 2026; however, no formal feedback had been received at the time of lodgement.

1.7 Report Structure

This Planning Report has been structured and supported by the Appendices as identified below:



Table 4 Report Structure

Section / Appendix	Inclusion
Planning Report	
1.0 Introduction	This section provides the context for the detailed assessment of the Project.
2.0 Existing Land Conditions	This section provides background to the characteristics relevant to the Subject Site.
3.0 Project Description	This section provides a consolidated description of the Project that the proponent is seeking approval for.
4.0 State Legislation, Guidelines and Policy	This section outlines key State legislation, policies and guidelines that inform the assessment of the Project, and details how these apply to the proposal.
5.0 General Provisions	This section assesses the general planning provisions of the Corangamite Planning Scheme relevant to the Project, including referral triggers, decision guidelines and overarching requirements.
6.0 Other Relevant Legislation and Policies	This section summarises the additional legislation, policies, federal documents and regulatory frameworks that will inform the assessment of the Project.
7.0 Assessment of Planning and Environmental Impacts	This section provides a detailed assessment of the key environmental issues and recommended mitigation measures proposed to address any potential impacts of the Project.
8.0 Conclusion	This section summarises the Project and key considerations.
Appendices	
Appendix A	Development Plans
Appendix B	Certificate of Title
Appendix C	Flood Assessment Gap Analysis
Appendix D	Preliminary Site Investigation
Appendix E	Geotechnical Desktop Study
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Appendix K	Native Vegetation Assessment
Appendix L	Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

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FIGURE 1

LEGEND

- Point of Connection
- VIC Road
- Fence
- Noise Wall
- - - Proposed Access Route
- ▨ Battery Area
- ▭ Fire Hydrant
- ▭ MV Switchroom
- ▭ O+M Building
- ▭ Road
- ▨ Screening 5m from fence, no planting within 1m of fence
- ▭ Stormwater Management
- ▭ Substation Area
- Tank
- ▭ Cadastre

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Coordinate System:	GDA2020 MGA Zone 54
Scale:	1:2,000 at A4
Project Number:	620.041534
Date Drawn:	7/24/2026
Drawn by:	RB



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OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS
User Community, Esri, USGS
Site Layout provided by client 20260507

2.0 Existing Land Conditions

2.1 Regional Context

The Subject Site is located within the township of Cobden, situated in the Corangamite Local Government Area (LGA) in south-west Victoria. Cobden is known for its farming and agricultural base, situated approximately 200 kilometres south-west of Melbourne. The Cobden town centre is approximately 2.5 kilometres northeast of the Subject Site.

Refer to Figure 2 for a Regional Context Plan.

2.2 Site Location and Details

The Subject Site is made up of two adjacent lots, is commonly referred to as 89 Cobden-Scotts Creek Road, Cobden VIC 3266 and is legally identified as Lot 1 on TP863659 (eastern lot) and Lot 2 on TP863659 (western lot). A government road traverses the Subject Site in a north-south direction, separating the two lots. Whilst formally known as Lot 1 and 2 on TP863659, it is noted that the proposed buildings and works are wholly contained within Lot 2 on TP863659. Refer to Figure 3 for the site aerial imagery and cadastral plan.

The Subject Site has an overall area of approximately 49.3ha, with a frontage of approximately 500 metres to Cobden-Port Campbell Road along its western boundary, which is within the Transport Zone 2 (T22).

The Subject Site is largely undeveloped, with the exception of a single dwelling and associated property fencing located on Lot 2 adjacent to Cobden-Port Campbell Road. Access to the existing dwelling is provided via a crossover and driveway from Cobden-Port Campbell Road. A 15m electricity easement (E-1) is located on the western boundary of Lot 2.

Refer to the Plan of Survey produced by Land Dimensions extracted in Figure 4.

2.3 Surrounding Development

The surrounding area is characterised by large rural allotments, some of which contain rural residential dwellings. Key surrounding land uses include an electrical substation located approximately 950m to the northwest, and two animal feed industrial facilities situated approximately 1 to 1.2km to the north. The Cobden Lime Quarry is located approximately 3km to the southeast, while the Cobden town centre lies around 2.5km to the northeast.

2.4 Existing Vegetation

The Subject Site is predominantly utilised for cropping, with existing vegetation largely comprising modified pastures and a mixture of agricultural weeds and fodder species.

Planted vegetation is primarily concentrated around the homestead, access driveway and cattle yards, consisting of introduced *Pinus radiata* and non-endemic *Eucalyptus globulus*. This vegetation is considered to be planted for amenity and agricultural purposes and is not native vegetation as defined under Clause 52.17 of the Planning Scheme.

Three patches of native vegetation comprising Herb-rich Foothill Forest (EVC 23) were identified within the broader Subject Site. These patches are located away from the Project Area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Refer to Native Vegetation Assessment at Appendix K.



2.5 Topography and Drainage

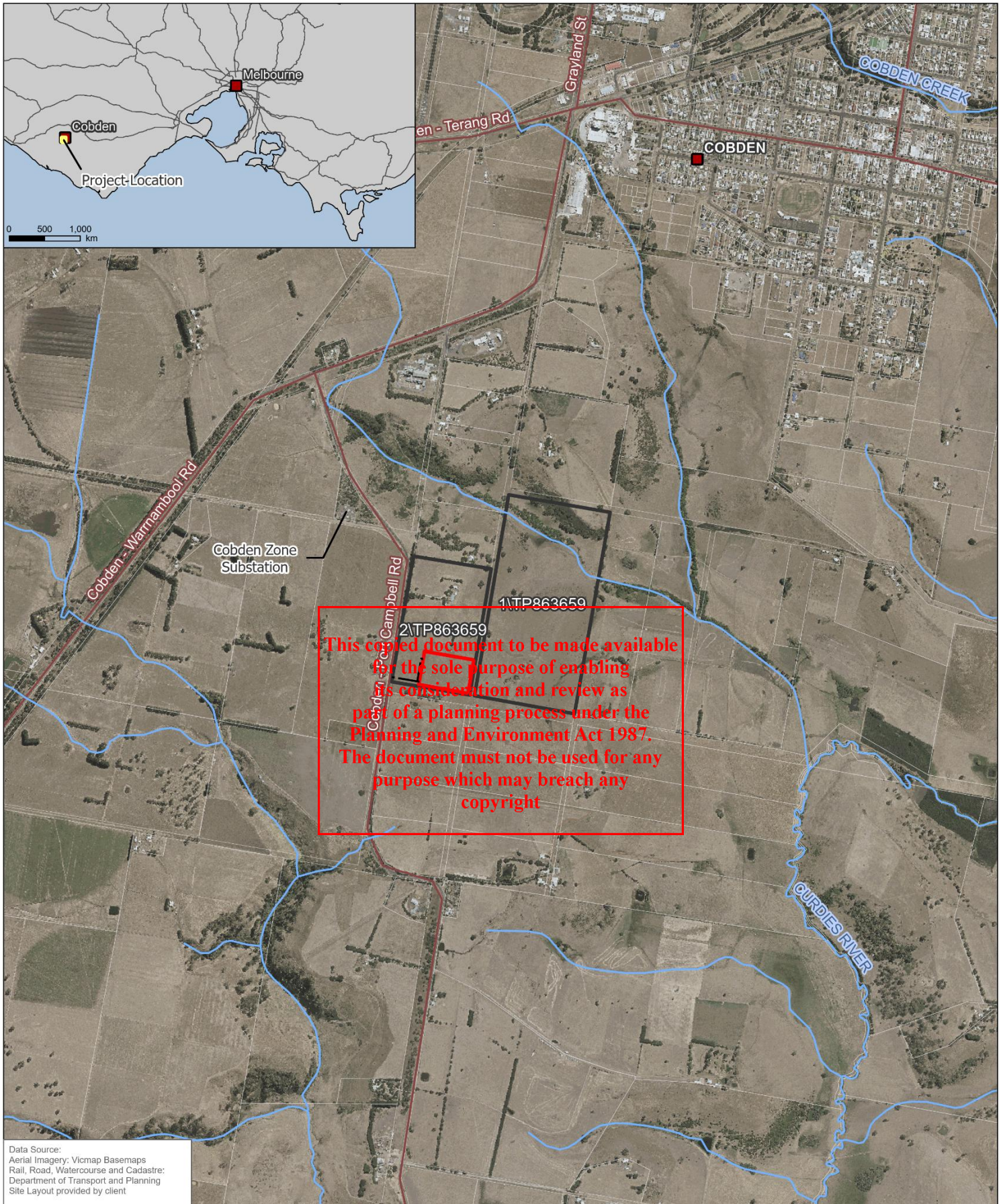
Ground levels across the Subject Site range from approximately 134.2m AHD at the lower eastern extent to around 136.8m AHD towards the western boundary. The landform falls steeply to the east, with the Curdies River bed located at approximately 36m AHD and the nearest tributary at around 56m AHD. The slope between the Subject Site and the tributary averages around 10%.

Higher elevation terrain is situated to the northwest, rising to approximately 146m AHD. The surrounding landscape remains relatively flat up to about 135m AHD before descending more sharply towards the Curdies River corridor. While some sheet flow is expected from the local catchment, overland flows naturally drain downslope towards the Curdies River and are unlikely to significantly affect the Subject Site. Figure 5 provides an illustration of the topography of the Subject Site.

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Data Source:
Aerial Imagery: Vicmap Basemaps
Rail, Road, Watercourse and Cadastre:
Department of Transport and Planning
Site Layout provided by client

0 250 500 m
Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 54
Scale: 1:20,000 at A4
Project Number: 620.041534
Date Drawn: 7/24/2026
Drawn by: RB

LEGEND

- Town
- Road
- Watercourse
- Cadastre
- ▭ Cadastre (Subject Site)
- Access Road
- ▭ Development Area

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COBDEN BESS

REGIONAL CONTEXT



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FIGURE 2



Data Source:
Aerial Imagery: Viomap Basemaps, 2019
Rail, Road, Watercourse and Cadastre:
Department of Transport and Planning

 0 50 100 m
Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 54
Scale: 1:5,000 at A4
Project Number: 620.041534
Date Drawn: 29-Jan-2026
Drawn by: RB

LEGEND
— Road
— Watercourse
▬ Cadastre (Subject Site)
▬ Cadastre

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COBDEN BESS

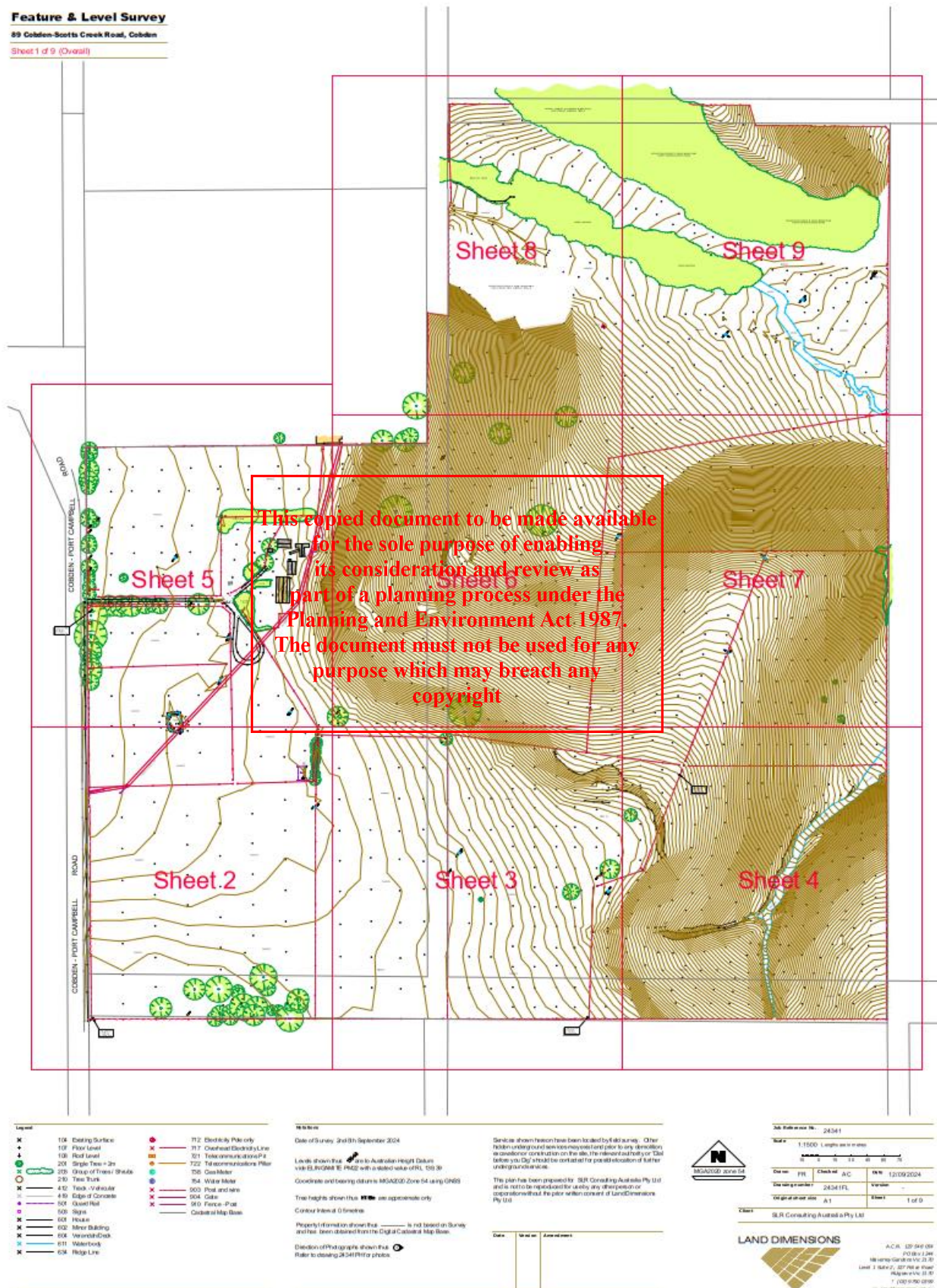
AERIAL AND SITE CADASTRE



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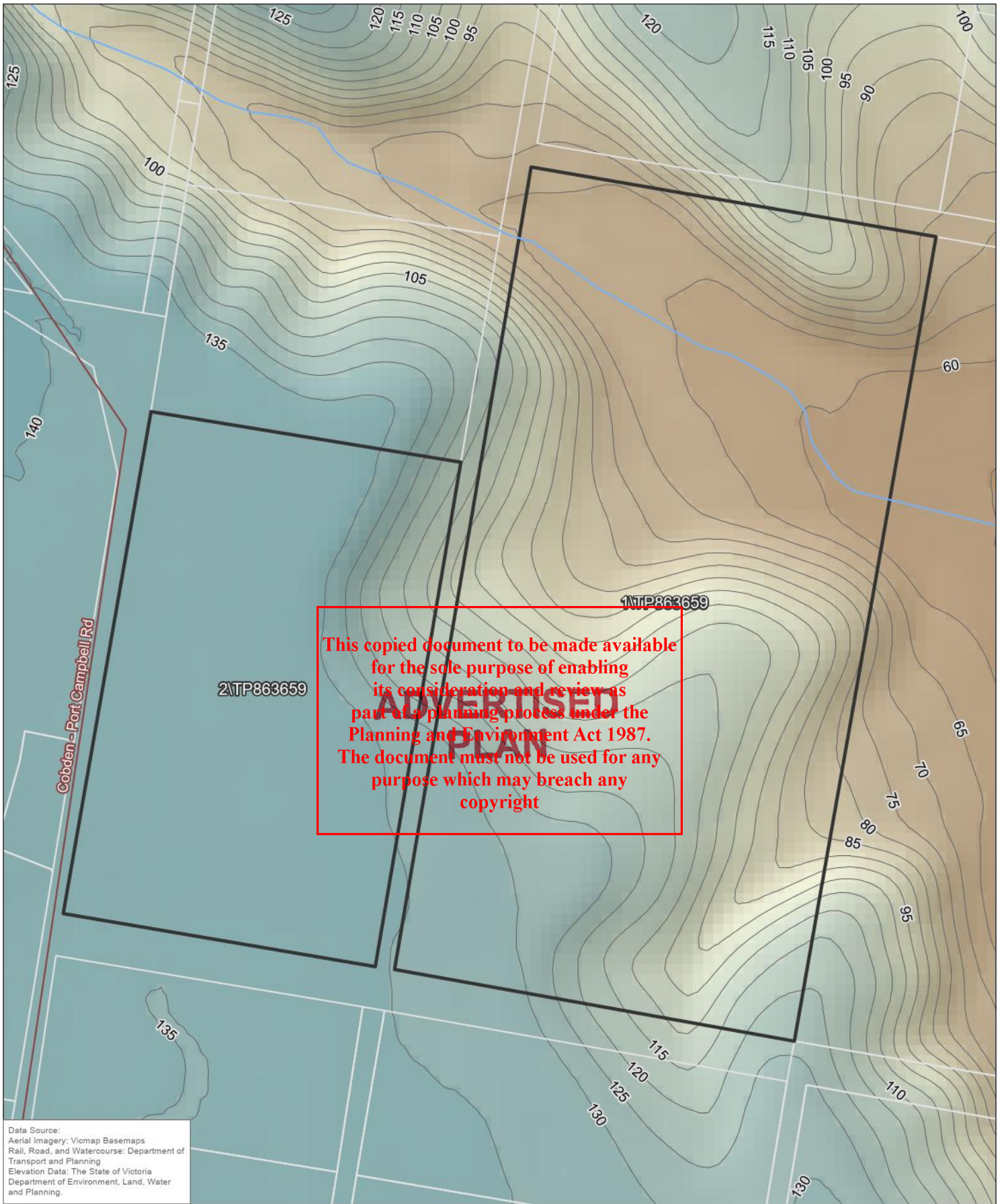
FIGURE 3

Figure 4 Plan of Survey (Source: Land Dimensions)



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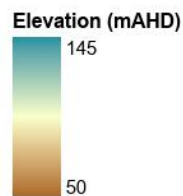


Data Source:
Aerial Imagery: Vicmap Basemaps
Rail, Road, and Watercourse: Department of Transport and Planning
Elevation Data: The State of Victoria
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 54
Scale: 1:5,000 at A4
Project Number: 620.041534
Date Drawn: 29-Jan-2026
Drawn by: RB

LEGEND

- Road
- Watercourse
- Topographic Contour (5m AHD)
- Cadastre (Subject Site)
- Cadastre



COBDEN BESS

TOPOGRAPHY



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FIGURE 5

3.0 Project Description

The Project will involve the development, construction, operation, and eventual decommissioning of a BESS, with a capacity of 75MW and approximately 300MWh at the point of connection.

The Project will be connected into the 66kV sub-transmission line which runs from Cobden Zone Substation to Camperdown Zone Substation in a line-in-line-out configuration. The scope of works associated with this planning permit application includes the grid connection infrastructure from the Project substation to the nominated point of connection. Works beyond the point of connection fall within the scope and jurisdiction of Powercor and do not form part of this planning permit application. Network provider Powercor will facilitate effective integration into the existing power grid.

The BESS is to be located on the southern portion of the Subject Site, with a Project Area of approximately 2.6ha. Vehicle access to the BESS will be provided via a new access driveway and crossover from Cobden-Port Campbell Road to the west. An access road will also be constructed within the Subject Site around the Project Area, connecting it to Cobden-Port Campbell Road, along with a new access gate and crossover at the road interface.

The BESS will comprise battery containers, power conversion systems (inverters and transformers), operation & maintenance (O&M) building, landscape screening, firefighting water tanks, switchroom, ancillary infrastructure and a separate substation all within the indicative Project Area.

The BESS will charge up from the grid when electricity supply is abundant and cheap, and then discharge to the grid when supply is lower and prices more expensive. It will also provide grid stability and control services. The inverters will convert the electricity from the grid from alternating current (AC) to direct current (DC) to be stored in the battery units (charging process), and then vice versa from DC to AC for discharging, that will be directed through a reticulated network of underground 33kV cables within the BESS Compound. This electrical output will be directed to the proposed onsite 66/33kV substation, where the voltage will be stepped up to 66kV for export to the grid.

The power conversion system (PCS, NOTE 1¹) will be installed on 20-foot skids. The Project Area is irregular in shape and will incorporate vegetation screening along the Project's perimeter fence. Access will be provided via internal roads, with a laydown area included to support safe and efficient vehicle access

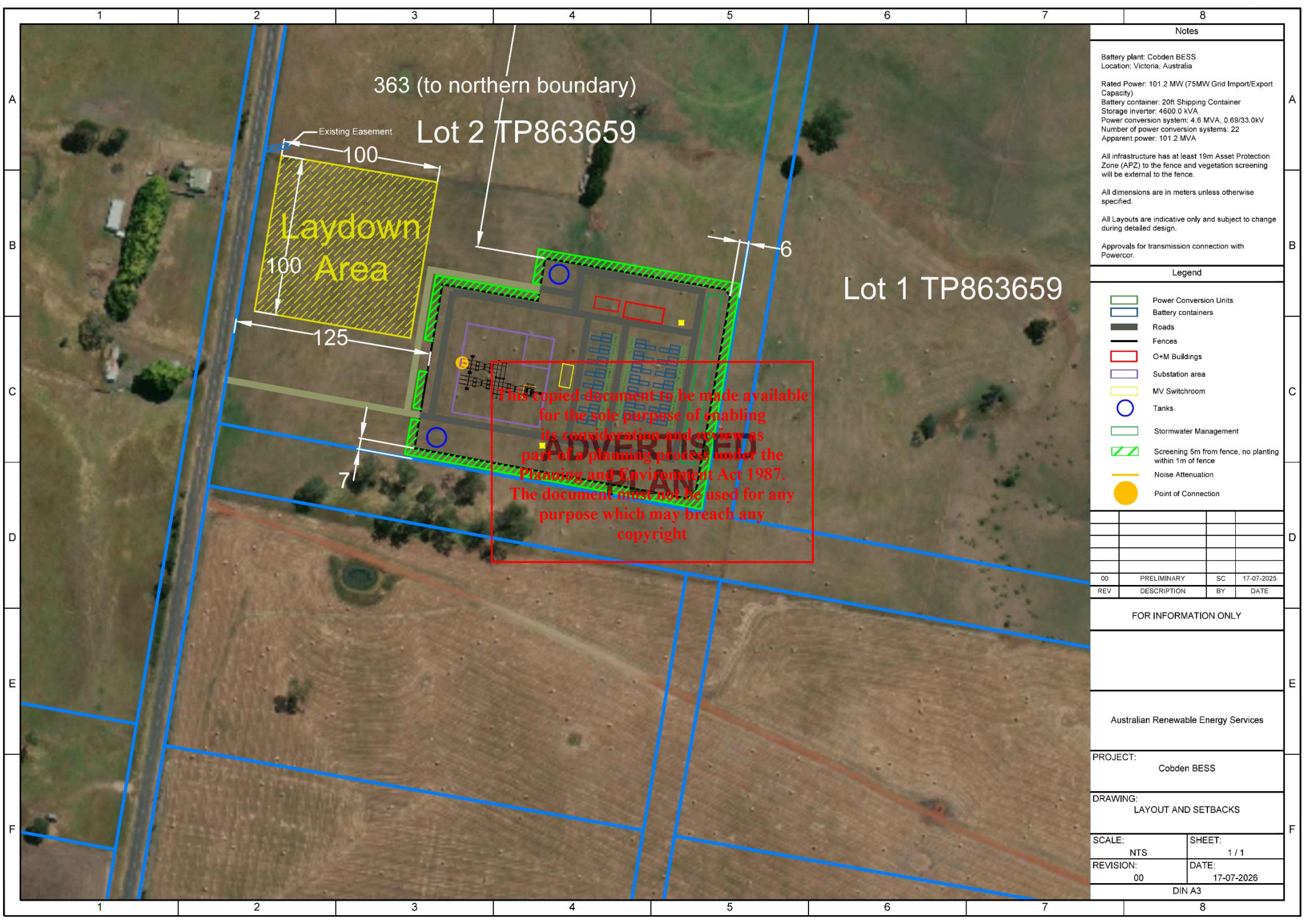
The key aspects of the Project are outlined in Table 5 and described in detail in the sections that follow. An indicative layout of the Project is provided in the Development Plans in Appendix A. This layout is conceptual and subject to refinement during the detailed design phase.

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¹ A PCS contains the inverter to convert BESS DC power to grid AC power, and the step up transformer to the 33kV internal system voltage.





Notes

Battery plant: Cobden BESS
Location: Victoria, Australia

Rated Power: 101.2 MW (75MW Grid Import/Export Capacity)
Battery container: 20ft Shipping Container
Storage inverter: 4600.0 kVA
Power conversion system: 4.6 MVA, 0.69/33.0kV
Number of power conversion systems: 22
Apparent power: 101.2 MVA

All infrastructure has at least 19m Asset Protection Zone (APZ) to the fence and vegetation screening will be external to the fence.

All dimensions are in meters unless otherwise specified.

All Layouts are indicative only and subject to change during detailed design.

Approvals for transmission connection with Powercor.

Legend

Power Conversion Units

Battery containers

Roads

Fences

O+M Buildings

Substation area

MV Switchroom

Tanks

Stormwater Management

Screening 5m from fence, no planting within 1m of fence

Noise Attenuation

Point of Connection

00	PRELIMINARY	SC	17-07-2025
REV	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Australian Renewable Energy Services

PROJECT:
Cobden BESS

DRAWING:
LAYOUT AND SETBACKS

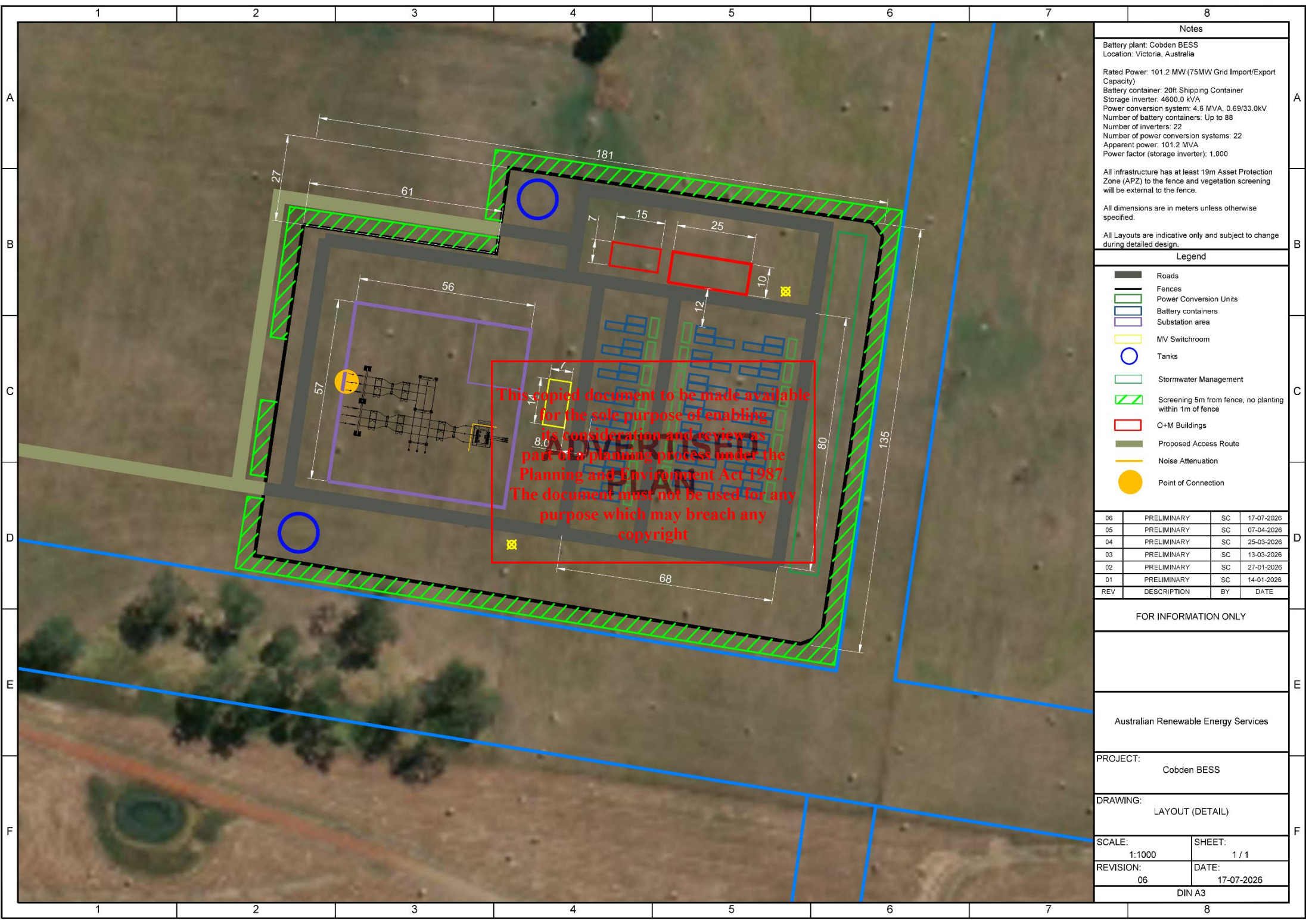
SCALE:
NTS

SHEET:
1 / 1

REVISION:
00

DATE:
17-07-2026

DIN A3



Notes
Battery plant: Cobden BESS
Location: Victoria, Australia

Rated Power: 101.2 MW (75MW Grid Import/Export Capacity)
Battery container: 20ft Shipping Container
Storage inverter: 4600.0 kVA
Power conversion system: 4.6 MVA, 0.69/33.0kV
Number of battery containers: Up to 88
Number of inverters: 22
Number of power conversion systems: 22
Apparent power: 101.2 MVA
Power factor (storage inverter): 1.000

All infrastructure has at least 19m Asset Protection Zone (APZ) to the fence and vegetation screening will be external to the fence.

All dimensions are in meters unless otherwise specified.

All Layouts are indicative only and subject to change during detailed design.

Legend
Roads
Fences
Power Conversion Units
Battery containers
Substation area
MV Switchroom
Tanks
Stormwater Management
Screening 5m from fence, no planting within 1m of fence
O+M Buildings
Proposed Access Route
Noise Attenuation
Point of Connection

06	PRELIMINARY	SC	17-07-2026
05	PRELIMINARY	SC	07-04-2026
04	PRELIMINARY	SC	25-03-2026
03	PRELIMINARY	SC	13-03-2026
02	PRELIMINARY	SC	27-01-2026
01	PRELIMINARY	SC	14-01-2026
REV	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Australian Renewable Energy Services

PROJECT: Cobden BESS

DRAWING: LAYOUT (DETAIL)

SCALE: 1:1000	SHEET: 1 / 1
REVISION: 06	DATE: 17-07-2026

DIN A3

3.1 Project Overview

3.1.1 BESS Components

The specifications for the proposed BESS are outlined in Table 5.

The BESS would be capable of discharging up to 75MW of dispatchable power. By storing energy at times when there is excess supply and discharging at times of high demand, the BESS would contribute to the reliability of the National Electricity Market (NEM), providing on demand power when it is most needed. The BESS is also capable of providing Frequency Control Ancillary Services (FCAS), helping the grid to remain in balance during contingency events such as coal fired generator trip, or transmission line outages.

The battery containers are comprised of lithium-iron-phosphate batteries which are specifically selected for their fire safety characteristics. Each enclosure will have temperature and humidity control systems that maintain the equipment within operational temperature limits. Each enclosure will also contain a fire warning system, with temperature and gas sensors as well as a fire suppression system, containing an aerosol suppressant.

Up to 66 BESS container units is to be installed supported by 22 inverters located externally to the modular enclosures. The batteries and inverters would be connected to each other with DC cables and are fixed to an appropriate foundation system, to be determined during detailed design.

Table 5 BESS Specifications²

Specification	Details
No. of Battery Containers	Up to 66
No. of Battery Racks per Enclosure	3
Battery Container	20ft Battery Energy Storage System
Storage Inverter	4600.0 kVA
Power Conversion system	4.6 MVA, 0.69/33.0kV
Dimensions	L: 6058mm x W: 2438mm x H: 2896mm (20 foot high cube shipping container)
Weight	<18t
Battery Chemistry	Lithium-iron-phosphate
Inverters	22
MV Transformers	22
Substation	1 x 66/33kV Transformer, 2 x 66kV lines out

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² Final BESS specifications will be subject to detailed design



Figure 6 Example of a Battery Enclosure



3.1.2 Grid Connection

The BESS will be connected into the 66kV sub-transmission line which runs from Cobden Zone Substation to Camperdown Zone Substation in a line-in-line-out configuration. Electricity stored within the BESS will be converted from DC to AC by onsite inverters and transferred through underground 33 kV cables to the proposed onsite 66/33kV substation, where it will be increased to 66 kV for discharge into the electricity network.

The proposed overhead power line will extend from the Project substation westward to the point of connection within the Substation Area, then further extending to the existing overhead network along Cobden-Scotts Creek Road. Integration of the Project into the existing electricity network will be undertaken by Powercor.

The scope of works associated with this planning permit application includes the grid connection infrastructure from the Project substation to the nominated point of connection. Works beyond the point of connection, including new overhead lines and modifications to the existing 66kV sub-transmission line required to facilitate the line-in-line-out connection, fall within the scope and jurisdiction of Powercor and do not form part of this planning permit application.

3.1.3 Construction and Decommissioning

The construction of the Project will require heavy vehicles, plant and equipment for transportation of components and installation of the components within the Project Area. Construction laydown areas and temporary buildings may also be established on the Subject Site outside the Project Area. Earth-moving machinery, cable-trenching equipment, forklifts, and cranes will be required, subject to detailed design, to install the BESS and undertake associated civil and ancillary works.

The BESS is expected to operate for approximately 15-30 years providing short, medium and long-term local employment opportunities. The proponent is committed to decommissioning and rehabilitating the Subject Site at the end of its operational life (EOL).

Decommissioning of the BESS at EOL would include disassembly and removal of associated infrastructure from the Subject Site, returning the land to its original condition.

The following Table 6 is a summary of the anticipated construction and commissioning details.

Table 6 Details of BESS Construction & Commissioning

Detail	Estimated Time Duration
Total Duration (months)	24 months
Pre-construction Duration (months)	6 months
Construction Duration (months)	12 months
Commissioning and Energisation Duration (months)	6 months

3.1.3.1 Construction Activities

It is anticipated that the construction to the end of commissioning will last approximately 18 months. During this period, the main construction activities will occur in the following sequence:

- Site establishment works including vegetation clearing within the BESS fencing boundary, bulk earthworks, and temporary construction compound;
- Construction of hardstanding, gravelled access road and BESS internal roads and drainage;
- Installation of a substation including installation of earthing grid, benching works, transformer bunding, installation of 66/33kV main transformers, outdoor switchgear, high voltage (HV) busbar and support structure, overhead gantry structures, harmonic filters, and reactive plant;
- Construction of an overhead power line from the substation, connecting west to the road reserve and then up towards the north, to cut into existing overhead lines located along Cobden-Port Campbell Road. These works will be undertaken by Powercor;
- Installation of underground 33kV reticulated cabling, auxiliary transformers, battery containers, and the PCS;
- Construction of ancillary works including parking areas, water tank, storage structures, stormwater management infrastructure, water containment infrastructure, and security lighting and fencing, including indicative noise wall and landscape screening;
- Construction of Operations & Maintenance building, and delivery and installation of control room and switchroom;
- Transport of construction personnel, associated heavy and light vehicles, and materials to and from the Subject Site on a day-to-day basis, dependent on construction schedule;
- Cold and hot commissioning of BESS and substation equipment;
- Hold point testing and Final Acceptance; and

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- Removal of temporary construction facilities, and rehabilitation of disturbed areas following completion of construction of the Project.

3.1.3.2 Construction Materials and Equipment

A range of construction materials and equipment will be transported to the Subject Site to facilitate the delivery of the Project. This will include lithium iron phosphate battery containers (up to 66 units), PCS units (up to 22) and hardstand and bulk earthworks materials.

Electrical and substation components to be delivered comprise 66 kV switchgear (up to 8 m high), 66/33kV main transformer (up to 6m high), busbar and conductor support structures, harmonic filters (TBC), 33kV switchroom and control room, backup diesel generator (for auxiliary systems only), and lightning protection masts up to 20 m high.

Additional materials will include fencing, gates, landscape screening, indicative noise wall, security cameras and lighting, the fire safety system, two firefighting water tanks, integrated earthing systems for the substation and battery areas, internal road and parking materials, low and high voltage DC and AC cabling, transformer bunding, and associated environmental controls for insulation oil.

3.1.3.3 Construction Hours and Personnel

It is anticipated that a maximum of 91 persons, consisting of 76 workers and up to 15 supervisors, will travel to the Subject Site via Toyota Coaster type shuttle buses and light vehicles at the peak of construction activities. This represents the highest volume of personnel potentially on-site at a given time. On a typical day, there will likely be fewer workers.

Once operational, the BESS will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Project is anticipated to result two full time equivalent (FTE) staff, with potential for up to five FTE ad-hoc contractors. The workforce would be sourced from the local area where possible, and the wider region where worker deficits arise.

The following standard construction hours are proposed for the Project:

- Monday to Friday – 7 am to 6 pm.
- Saturday – 8 am to 1 pm.
- Sunday and Public Holidays – No works to be undertaken.

No works are proposed to be undertaken outside of the standard construction hours. In the event this is required, Out of Hours (OOH) approval would be sought, and all works would be undertaken in accordance with the appropriate OOH protocols and approval processes.

3.1.3.4 Construction Traffic and Equipment

Construction traffic will access the Subject Site directly from Cobden-Port Campbell Road, via Cobden-Warrnambool Road and the broader arterial network, including Princes Highway.

Construction material and equipment may be sourced from a number of local and metropolitan suppliers and regional quarries. At this stage, it is anticipated that concrete, aggregates and potable and non-potable water will be sourced locally where possible. Sewerage and waste material generated on site will be removed to appropriately licensed facilities within the local region.

A summary of the necessary construction material and equipment to the Subject Site, including their place of origin, are set out in the below Table 7.



Table 7 Construction Material and Equipment

Construction Material/ Equipment	Vehicle Type ^[1]	Origin/ Destination ^[1]	No. Trucks ^[1]	Trip Movements
Imported Materials <i>[Sand, aggregates and cement utilised for concrete batching and compacted road base. Site access road, Footings and foundations, Internal roads, Hardstand/ Laydown areas]</i>	26m B-Double or 20m Articulated Vehicle or Heavy Rigid Vehicle	Melbourne and/ or Local Quarry/ Supplier	1,100 ^[4]	2,200 ^[4]
Battery Units	25m Class 1 Low Loader (OSOM) ^[2]	via Port of Melbourne	68	136
O & M Building		Melbourne	4	8
Substation Building/ Switch room		via Port of Melbourne	1	2
Ancillary Equipment 1 <i>[Site mobilisation and establishment, Plant mobilisation, Substation electrical equipment, Construction demobilisation]</i>	25m Low Loader	Melbourne or Regional Supplier	52	104
Ancillary Equipment 2 <i>[Fencing, Inverter delivery and installation, BoS Material Delivery]</i>	20m Articulated Vehicle	Melbourne or Regional Supplier	66	132
Water <i>[Potable water and non-potable water for dust suppression/ landscaping]</i>	Heavy Rigid Vehicle (19,000 litre water truck ^[3])	Local Supplier	100	200
Fuel	20m Articulated Vehicle	Melbourne	50	100
Large Power Transformer <i>[up to 160 tonnes]</i>	Class 1 Over Size Over Mass (OSOM) ^[2]	via Port of Melbourne	1	2
TOTAL			1,442	2,884

^[1] Source: SLR, 2025

^[2] Source: ARES, 2025

^[3] Maximum expected tank size

^[4] Trips calculated represent 'worst case' based on the smallest design vehicle proposed (i.e. HRV). Reduction in trips will occur through the use of the larger design vehicles.

Based on the Traffic Impact Assessment (Appendix J), construction activities are expected to generate approximately 30 inbound and 30 outbound vehicle trips per day during the peak construction period (assumed 12 months), with the majority of movements comprising heavy vehicles.

The majority of construction material and equipment will be brought to the site by Class 2 Heavy Vehicles. The exception to this relates to the one (1) main transformer for the proposed substation. The main transformer is a large indivisible item weighing up to 160



tonnes. As such, a Class 1 OSOM vehicle will be required to bring the main transformer to the Subject Site and will comprise a prime mover and platform trailer.

The proposed heavy vehicle route to the Subject Site mostly comprises Princes Highway, Cobden-Stonyford Road, Cobden-Warrnambool Road and Cobden-Port Campbell Road. Access for B-Double vehicles along Cobden-Port Campbell Road will require approval from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) due to existing route restrictions.

In addition, OSOM vehicle movements (including delivery of battery units, buildings and the transformer) will require specific approvals from the NHVR and relevant road authorities for sections of the route not currently gazetted, including the final segment to the site. A detailed OSOM Route Study will be undertaken to confirm the final transport route and any required mitigation measures.

To facilitate the delivery of the transformer and other oversize components, temporary modification (including removal) of concrete medians at the Cobden-Warrnambool Road / Cobden-Port Campbell Road intersection may be required, with reinstatement following completion of major deliveries.

All construction vehicles and equipment will be accommodated within designated areas on site. Opportunities to minimise the extent and duration of temporary impacts will be implemented as part of construction management planning. Any temporary parking and laydown areas will be reinstated following completion of the construction phase.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be prepared prior to the commencement of construction to manage traffic movements, including heavy vehicle routing, OSOM transport, workforce access, and potential impacts on the surrounding road network.

3.1.3.5 Disturbance Footprint

The Project Area is located within agricultural land comprised predominantly of modified pasture species and agricultural weeds. While native vegetation is present within the broader Subject Site, it is located outside the Project Area and will not be impacted by the proposed development.

As part of the civil works, limited clearing of introduced pasture species and agricultural weeds will occur within the Project Area prior to bulk earthworks. Overall, the Project does not involve the removal of native vegetation and will result only in the disturbance of highly modified land with low ecological value.

The potential impacts on ecological values can be appropriately managed through the implementation of standard environmental management measures during construction. These measures include minimising vegetation removal through detailed design, clearly delineating approved disturbance areas, implementing dust suppression practices, undertaking pre-clearance fauna inspections by a suitably qualified ecologist, and relocating any fauna encountered in accordance with relevant wildlife permit requirements.

Erosion and sediment controls should be implemented to protect nearby watercourses, including minimising soil disturbance during wet conditions, stabilising exposed soils, and appropriately storing fuels, chemicals and spill response equipment. In addition, a site-specific Weed and Pest Management Plan should be implemented to prevent the introduction and spread of weeds and pests through the cleaning of vehicles and machinery, and by minimising the movement of soil, mulch and other materials capable of transporting weed propagules. Collectively, these measures will avoid, minimise and mitigate potential impacts to native vegetation, fauna habitat and surrounding environmental values.

Refer to the Native Vegetation Assessment provided at Appendix K.



3.1.3.6 Ancillary Infrastructure

The following ancillary infrastructure will be undertaken in conjunction with the BESS:

- Stormwater management works
- Temporary construction facilities
- Permanent operating facilities (O&M building, storage warehouse, parking lot, CCTV security system)
- Landscaping
- Stormwater retention pond and separate onsite contaminated water retention solution
- Power supply and telecommunications
- Waste storage/management

Earthworks

Earthworks are proposed within the Project Area. The earthworks will be predominantly restricted to the BESS and Substation Compound to create a stable platform, as well as internal roads and stormwater infrastructure. The design and extent of the earthworks is subject to detailed design and stormwater modelling.

The detailed design includes internal access roads, hydrant locations and infrastructure to support operational efficiency, emergency access and fire protection requirements.

Stormwater Management Infrastructure

Stormwater will be managed on-site via a Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) treatment train comprising an Ocean Protection Pollutant Trap, bio-retention basin and swale, discharging to the legal point of discharge.

The system has been designed to achieve best practice stormwater quality outcomes and limit post-development peak flows to at or below existing conditions. It will also accommodate the capture and containment of firewater runoff.

Refer to the Stormwater Management Plan at Appendix G.

Temporary Construction Facilities

Temporary facilities (e.g., port-a-com buildings) will be established within the Subject Site, outside the Project Area, during the construction period to accommodate storage, temporary car parking, and office and break-room facilities for site staff.

All facilities will be removed upon the completion of construction works with all permanent administrative and staff activities to occur within the permanent operating facilities.

Permanent Operating Facilities (O&M building/permanent operating facilities and parking lot)

A permanent O&M building is proposed within the Project Area that will be used for ongoing site operations. A small parking lot is also proposed that will be utilised by site staff.

Fencing, Lighting and Security

The Project Area will be secured by chainmesh security fencing and access gates which would remain during operation. The chain mesh fencing will be approximately 2.4m high. Above the chain mesh there will be anti-climb features, bringing the boundary fence height to



a total of 2.4m – 2.7m. The fencing will be installed around the perimeter of the Project Area, ensuring all critical electrical infrastructure is contained within a single controlled access

An indicative 4m high noise attenuation wall may be installed around the BESS substation transformer to meet applicable acoustic requirements. However, through detailed design and optimisation of transformer selection, including consideration of a quieter transformer, the project may seek to eliminate the requirement for noise wall around the transformer, provided the predicted noise levels at each receiver remain consistent with the outcomes presented in the Noise Impact Assessment.

Lighting for the Project will be installed for security purposes as well as critical and emergency works purposes. The lighting will be designed to minimise glare and spill into adjacent areas. CCTV security will be installed for operations, however, this will not be functional during construction stages.

Landscaping will be provided around the perimeter of the Project Area to provide visual screening and integration with the surrounding rural context.

Water Use and Firefighting

Water will be required during the construction phase for dust suppression, general construction, and maintenance activities. This water will be brought to the Subject Site in water tankers.

Temporary water storage tanks will be installed early in the construction phase to support these activities. Wastewater generated during construction will be captured and appropriately removed from the site in accordance with relevant Council and water authority requirements. Potable water will be provided for construction personnel, and temporary toilet facilities will be installed and serviced off site.

The Project will incorporate permanent firefighting water infrastructure comprising water tanks with a total capacity of 288KL (2 x 144KL), servicing both the BESS and Substation Compounds. These tanks will be reserved for firefighting purposes only and will be available throughout the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project. An internal reticulated firefighting water system will be designed in consultation with the CFA to ensure appropriate coverage and accessibility across the Project Area.

Additional water infrastructure will include rainwater harvesting from the O&M building and warehouse roofs for general operational use, as well as a permanent on-site septic system to service the O&M building during operation of the Project.

Power Supply

During construction, temporary power supply will be provided by a standard metered connection to the local distribution network. Where this is not practical, a mobile off-grid hybrid power supply system incorporating solar, battery and/or diesel generator systems may be used.

Power supplies required for operations shall be provided by the Project substation and associated transformers and low voltage (LV) systems.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications will be provided via a combination of local 5G mobile network, point to point wireless communication systems, satellite-based communications and local NBN connection.

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3.1.4 Operation

3.1.4.1 Operation Activities and Equipment

The operation of the Project would involve, but not be limited, to the following general activities:

- Maintenance and management of equipment, site buildings, and landscaping.
- General administrative activities.
- Receipt of equipment or goods.
- Waste removal from maintenance and administration activities.

Operation of the facility will require only minimal plant and equipment, primarily associated with staff access and routine maintenance activities.

3.1.4.2 Operational Hours and Personnel

The BESS will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, up to two FTE staff on site and up to two FTE staff off site. with potential for up to three FTE ad-hoc contractors. The facility is otherwise restricted to the public.

Maintenance inspections will be undertaken daily or on an as needs basis and are remotely monitored 24 hours a day. Emergency responses may also need to be undertaken out of hours.

3.1.4.3 Capacity Replenishment and Augmentation

The facility may be subject to capacity replenishment and/or augmentation events throughout its operational life to maintain or extend storage duration (i.e. year 8, 15, etc). Development approval is being sought for a targeted lifetime 4-hour storage duration, noting that the initial oversizing as outlined in Table 5. At commencement of operations, only three of the four BESS container positions per inverter are expected to be installed, meaning the initial delivered capacity may be lower (for example, around 2-4 hours depending on the final investment decision). The fourth container position is reserved for future installation, which would increase the storage duration to roughly 5.5 hours. This additional container could be added as a one-off augmentation or as part of broader repowering works to replace or replenish degraded battery enclosures. Capacity replenishment or augmentation activities are expected to require heavy vehicles, including OSOM deliveries for battery enclosures, along with smaller utility vehicles and cranes.

3.1.4.4 Operational Waste Management

Waste generated during the operational phase of the Project will come from on-site staff and maintenance activities and comprise a mixture of recyclable and non-recyclable materials.

All batteries, associated modules, and containers are expected to last the full project design life and be recycled, in bulk, as part of the decommissioning phase. Should a lithium-ion battery become defective, the module will be removed from site and repaired or recycled by the battery supplier as part of the ongoing maintenance agreement.

For the most part, minor quantities of waste are expected to be generated during the operation of the Project. However, for BESS capacity augmentation projects or other major maintenance activities, any substantial packaging or other waste will be removed and recycled by accredited contractors. As general, day-to-day, waste will be taken by staff when they leave the Project Area, no dedicated waste storage area is required or proposed.



3.1.4.5 Environmental Management

A wash down bay is proposed near the new vehicle crossover on Cobden-Port Campbell Road. The wash down bay will be used during construction and operation to prevent the tracking of weeds and pathogens to and from the Project.

3.1.5 Decommissioning and Rehabilitation

The Project is proposed to be decommissioned at the end of the BESS's operational life, with all associated infrastructure removed and the Subject Site restored as close as to its original condition. Decommissioning and restoration works will be undertaken in accordance with the permits, approvals and regulatory requirements in place at that time, and in consultation with the landowner, Council and other relevant stakeholders.

All infrastructure and equipment are expected to be removed unless adaptive reuse is considered beneficial (for example, if the access road is deemed useful for agricultural, firefighting or other ongoing purposes). The site would then be regraded where necessary, covered with topsoil and revegetated with stabilising grasses.

The operational life of the Project will depend on technological developments; however, it is currently anticipated to be approximately 15-30 years from the commercial operations date (COD).

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4.0 State Legislation, Guidelines and Policy

Compliance with all legislative requirements have been considered within the following chapters of this report.

4.1 Planning and Environment Act 1987

The proposal, as with all planning permits, is subject to the provisions of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (P&E Act), as it establishes a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria.

Under the Planning Scheme and Victoria Planning Provision (VPP) Clause 72.01-1, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for utility installations that:

- *Transmit or distribute electricity*
- *Store electricity with an installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater*

This proposal meets these criteria and is therefore subject to the Minister's jurisdiction under Clause 72.01-1.

4.2 Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

The Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) is the primary State legislation for the protection of native plants, animals and ecological communities on public land and water in Victoria.

No flora or fauna species listed under the FFG Act were recorded during the field survey. Database searches identified records of potentially suitable habitat for 34 FFG-listed species within the broader search region. However, the Project Area has been highly modified through agricultural use and comprises predominantly improved pasture and agricultural weeds. As a result, the Project Area does not provide suitable habitat for FFG-listed species.

The Project is confined to this highly modified land and will not result in impacts to native vegetation or habitat features capable of supporting listed species

The FFG Act applies to land owned or managed by a public authority. As the Subject Site is privately owned, an FFG Act permit to take listed or protected flora is not required for the Project.

Refer to Native Vegetation Assessment at Appendix K.

4.2.1 Ecological Vegetation Classes

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) are the standard unit for classifying vegetation types in Victoria. EVCs are described through a combination of floristics, lifeforms and ecological characteristics, and through an inferred fidelity to environmental attributes.

Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's) are protected by the following Victorian legislation:

- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) (2019 amendment act has been integrated into 1988 Act)
- *Wildlife Act 1975*
- *Marine and Coastal Act 2018*.

EVCs for Lot 1 and 2 of TP863659 and the paper road between these lots (area referred to as 'Study Area' in the context of the Native Vegetation Assessment) were determined using DEECA's pre-European native vegetation modelling (DEECA 2023a, 2024b). This modelling



indicates that the Subject Site and its surrounds would historically have supported Herb-rich Foothill Forest (EVC 23), based on factors such as rainfall, aspect, soil type and remnants of native vegetation.

Field evidence, including floristic composition, soil characteristics, and the presence of mature Eucalyptus ovata, confirmed that Herb-rich Foothill Forest (EVC 23) once occurred within the Study Area. Remnant native vegetation was limited to three small, isolated patches located along the northern, eastern and western boundaries. The species composition of these patches aligned with the floristic characteristics of Herb-rich Foothill Forest (EVC 23).

Three habitat zones of this EVC were mapped within the Study Area, comprising a total of 1.545 hectares of remnant native vegetation.

Refer to Native Vegetation Assessment at Appendix K.

4.3 Corangamite Planning Scheme

The Subject Site is subject to the provisions of the Corangamite Planning Scheme (the Planning Scheme). The relevant provisions are assessed in the following sections of this Report. The proposal triggers the need for a planning permit under the following clauses of the Planning Scheme:

- Clause 35.07-1 Use of Land (Farming Zone)
- Clause 35.07-4 Buildings and works (Farming Zone)
- Clause 52.29-2 Create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone 2 (Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network)

4.3.1 Land Use Zoning

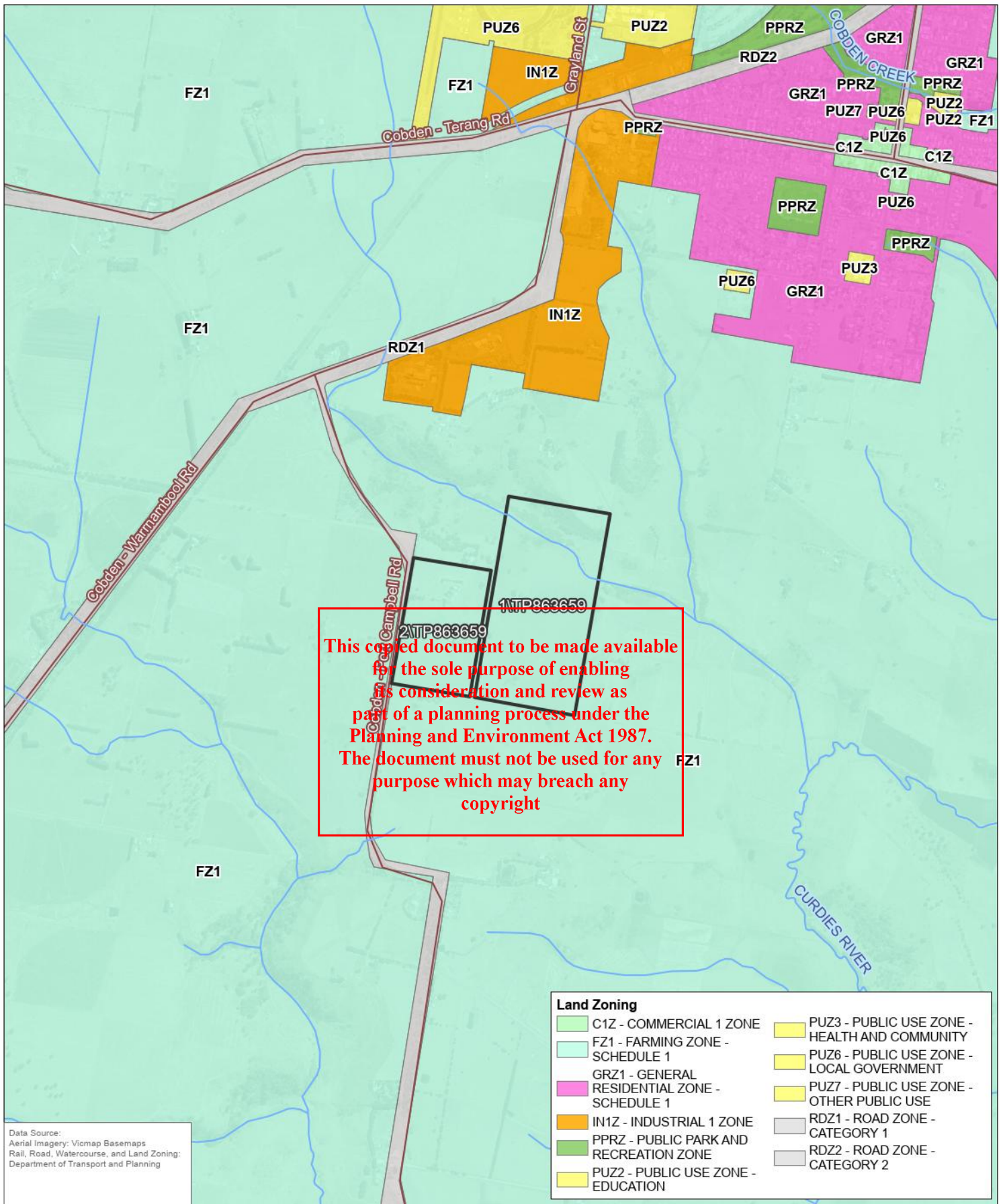
The Subject Site is located within the Farming Zone (FZ), specifically within Schedule 1 (FZ1) (refer to Figure 7).

Clause 35.07 of the Planning Scheme states the purpose of the FZ is:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for the use of land for agriculture.*
- *To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.*
- *To ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.*
- *To encourage the retention of employment and population to support rural communities.*
- *To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.*
- *To provide for the use and development of land for the specific purposes identified in a schedule to this zone.*

The proposed development of a BESS, defined as 'Utility Installation' within the Planning Scheme is considered appropriate for the location and meets the relevant objectives of the zone. The proposal does not remove productive agricultural land from ongoing use, nor does it introduce a sensitive land use that could constrain surrounding agricultural operations. The development supports broader strategic planning objectives by providing economic benefits





Data Source:
Aerial Imagery: Viomaps Basemaps
Rail, Road, Watercourse, and Land Zoning:
Department of Transport and Planning

0 250 500 m
Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 54
Scale: 1:20,000 at A4
Project Number: 620.041534
Date Drawn: 29-Jan-2026
Drawn by: RB

LEGEND
— Road
— Watercourse
□ Cadastre (Subject Site)

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COBDEN BESS

LAND ZONING



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FIGURE 7

4.3.2 Clause 35.07-1 – Land Use

Pursuant to Clause 73.03 of the Planning Scheme, the Project is defined as a 'Utility Installation', defined as follows

Utility Installation

Land used:

- a) for telecommunications;*
 - b) to transmit or distribute gas or oil;*
 - c) to transmit, distribute or store power;***
 - d) to collect, treat, transmit, store, or distribute water; or*
 - e) to collect, treat, or dispose of storm or flood water, sewage, or sullage.*
- It includes any associated flow measurement device or a structure to gauge waterway flow.*

Under the Table of Uses within Clause 35.07-1, 'Utility Installation' use is identified as a Section 2 use, meaning a permit is required. Accordingly, the proposed use is permitted with consent. This application therefore seeks consent for the partial use of the land for 'Utility Installation'.

4.3.3 Clause 35.07-4 Buildings and Works

Pursuant to Clause 35.07-4, a permit is required to construct a building or carry out works associated with a use in Section 2 of Clause 35.07-1.

In accordance with Clause 35.07-6 Decision Guidelines, an application to use or to construct a building or construct or carry out works must be accompanied by the following information (as appropriate) and considered against certain decision guidelines. Refer to Table 12 for an assessment against the decision guidelines.

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Table 8 Clause 35.07-6 Decision guidelines

Decision Guidelines	Comment
General Issues	
<i>The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.</i> <i>Any Regional Catchment Strategy and associated plan applying to the land.</i> <i>The capability of the land to accommodate the proposed use or development, including the disposal of effluent.</i> <i>How the use or development relates to sustainable land management.</i> <i>Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.</i>	This planning report is considered to give due regard to the Municipal Planning Strategy and Planning Policy Frameworks. Given the nature of the proposed use, the development is not reliant on the supply of water and sewer for operational purposes. Developments containing BESS typically require large areas of flat land within close proximity to transmission lines, substations, and minimal surrounding sensitive receptors. These characteristics are generally consistent with rural land. Developments of these types have demonstrated compatibility with rural settings in various other Council areas.

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Decision Guidelines	Comment
How the use and development makes use of existing infrastructure and services.	
Agricultural Issues and the Impacts from Non-Agricultural Uses	
- Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production. - Whether the use or development will adversely affect soil quality or permanently remove land from agricultural production. - The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses. - The capacity of the site to sustain the agricultural use. - The agricultural qualities of the land, such as soil quality, access to water and access to rural infrastructure. - Any integrated land management plan prepared for the site. - Whether Rural worker accommodation is necessary having regard to: - The nature and scale of the agricultural use. - The accessibility to residential areas and existing accommodation, and the remoteness of the location. - The duration of the use of the land for Rural worker accommodation.	Although the FZ nature of the Subject Site anticipates uses that are of a rural nature, opportunities for non-rural uses can be located within these areas where they do not compromise the long-term use of the land for rural purposes. Whilst BESS are not considered a conventional rural use, it is considered a productive use of the Subject Site which will enhance the Subject Site's economic viability and will be a positive diversification of land use in the area. The Project is not considered to be detrimental to existing land uses, and will not restrict future agricultural uses on site. The Project involves minimal land disturbance, minimising the potential impact to the long-term viability of land for rural purposes. When the BESS is decommissioned, the Subject Site can be returned to a traditional rural/agricultural function. Rural worker accommodation is not proposed.
Environmental Issues	
- The impact of the proposal on the natural physical features and resources of the area, in particular on soil and water quality. - The impact of the use or development on the flora and fauna on the site and its surrounds. - The need to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area, including the retention of vegetation and faunal habitat and the need to revegetate land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridgelines, property boundaries and saline discharge and recharge area.	Given the nature of the proposed use, the Project is not reliant on the supply of water and sewer for operational purposes. Water requirements for the purposes of drinking and fire-fighting will be stored on at the Project Area within storage tanks to meet the site's needs. Determination of the relevant water supply will be investigated during detailed design of the Project. The proposed works will not affect any flora species listed under the EPBC Act or FFG Act



Decision Guidelines	Comment
The location of on-site effluent disposal areas to minimise the impact of nutrient loads on waterways and native vegetation.	Although three small, isolated patches of native vegetation were identified within the broader Subject Site, these are located outside the Project Area and will not be impacted by the Project. The Project Area is highly modified and comprises predominantly improved pasture and agricultural weeds, and does not support native vegetation. Accordingly, the Project will not result in the removal of native vegetation and will not impact flora, fauna or habitat values. Refer to Native Vegetation Assessment provided at Appendix K.
Design and Siting Issues	
- The need to locate buildings in one area to avoid any adverse impacts on surrounding agricultural uses and to minimise the loss of productive agricultural land. - The impact of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used on the natural environment, major roads, vistas and water features and the measures to be undertaken to minimise any adverse impacts. - The impact on the character or appearance of the area on features of architectural, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance. - The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure including roads, gas, water, drainage, telecommunications and sewerage facilities. - Whether the use and development will require traffic management measures. - The need to locate and design buildings used for accommodation to avoid or reduce noise and shadow flicker impacts from the operation of a wind energy facility if it is located within one kilometre from the nearest title boundary of land subject to: - A permit for a wind energy facility; or - An application for a permit for a wind energy facility; or	Whilst BESS are not considered a conventional rural use, it is considered an appropriately located and productive use of the Subject Site which will enhance the Subject Site's economic viability and will be a positive diversification of land use in the area. The Project is not considered to be detrimental to existing land uses, and will not restrict future agricultural uses on site. The Project involves minimal land disturbance, minimising the potential impact to the long-term viability of land for rural purposes. When the BESS is decommissioned, the Subject Site can be returned to a traditional rural/agricultural function. The siting of the BESS and associated infrastructure has been guided by an iterative design process, ensuring it is located to minimise environmental, and amenity impacts as far as practicable. ADVERTISED PLAN



Decision Guidelines	Comment
○ An incorporated document approving a wind energy facility; or ○ A proposed wind energy facility for which an action has been taken under section 8(1), 8(2), 8(3) or 8(4) of the Environment Effects Act 1978. • The need to locate and design buildings used for accommodation to avoid or reduce the impact from vehicular traffic, noise, blasting, dust and vibration from an existing or proposed extractive industry operation if it is located within 500 metres from the nearest title boundary of land on which a work authority has been applied for or granted under the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990.	ADVERTISED PLAN

4.3.4 Schedule 1 to Clause 37.05 Farming Zone

The Subject Site is located within Schedule 1 of the FZ. In addition to the decision guidelines of Clause 37.05-6, the FZ1 Schedules are summarised in Table 9 and Table 10 below.

Table 9 Subdivision and other requirements at Clause 35.07 Schedule 1

Requirements	Land	Area/Dimensions/Distance	Comment
Minimum subdivision area (hectare)	Land in Timboon described as Lot 9 LP64910, Lot 1 TP711332, Lot 2 PS444640	Minimum area necessary to create a balance lot in the Farming Zone.	Not Applicable – No subdivision is proposed as part of this application.
	All other land	40 hectares	
Minimum area for which no permit is required to use land for a dwelling (hectares)	All land	40 hectares	Not Applicable – Dwelling use is not proposed as part of this application.
Maximum area for which no permit is required to use land for timber production (hectares)	None specified	None specified	Not Applicable – Timber product use is not proposed as part of this application.
Maximum floor area for which no permit is required to alter or extend an existing dwelling (square metres)	None specified	None specified	Not Applicable – Alteration or extension of an existing dwelling is not proposed as part of this application.



Requirements	Land	Area/Dimensions/Distance	Comment
Maximum floor area for which no permit is required to construct an out-building associated with a dwelling (square metres)	None specified	None specified	Not Applicable – Construction of an out-building associated with a dwelling is not proposed as part of this application.
Maximum floor area for which no permit is required to alter or extend an existing building used for agriculture (square metres)	None specified	None specified	Not applicable – Alteration or extension of an existing building used for agriculture is not proposed as part of this application.
Minimum setback from a road (metres)	Transport Zone 3 Other road	40 metres 20 metres	Complies – Refer to Appendix A which details an appropriate setback from the adjoining roads.
Minimum setback from a boundary (metres)	All land	100 metres	Complies – Refer to Appendix A which details an appropriate setback from the relevant boundaries.
Minimum setback from a dwelling not in the same ownership (metres)	All land	100 metres	Complies – The proximity from the Project Area to the nearest dwelling at 69 Cobden-Port Campbell Road, Cobden is approximately 480m.

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Table 10 Permit Requirements for Earthworks at Clause 35.07 Schedule 1

Requirement	Land	Comment
Earthworks which change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary	None specified	Not Applicable – The earthworks have been designed such that they do not result in an increase in the rate of flow or alter the discharge point of stormwater across the property boundary. The Stormwater Management Plan (Appendix G) demonstrates that the site peak discharge for the 1% AEP and 20% AEP post-development conditions have been calculated as not exceeding the pre-development peak discharge for the modelled design storm events.
Earthworks which increase the discharge of saline groundwater	None specified	Not Applicable – The Geotechnical Desktop Study (Appendix E) confirms that saline soils are not present on the site. Accordingly, the proposed earthworks are not expected to increase the discharge of saline groundwater.



4.4 Overlays

The Subject Site is not affected by any overlays.

4.4.1 Designated Bushfire Prone Area

The Subject Site in its entirety is mapped as a Designated Bushfire Prone area, refer to Figure 8. Special bushfire construction requirements apply to the Subject Site. Bushfire risk on Subject Site will be adequately mitigated if correct procedures are implemented, ensuring the proposal can be adequately protected from the threat of a bushfire event.

A Bushfire Risk Assessment has been prepared by SLR and addresses the following:

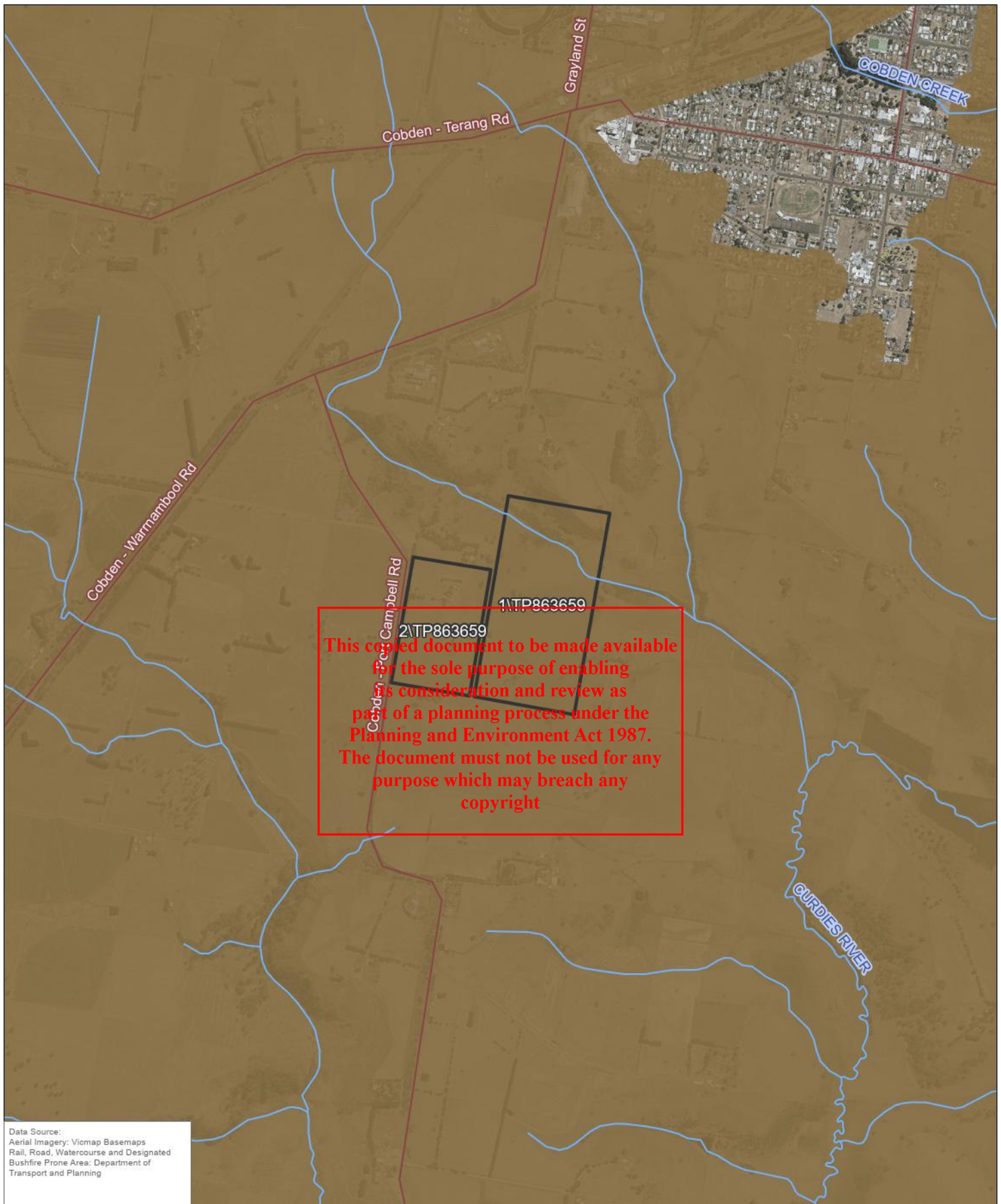
- Asset Protection Zones (APZs): Identification and design of APZs to reduce radiant heat exposure and prevent flame contact with BESS infrastructure.
- Construction and Design Standards: Assessment of building and infrastructure design measures that minimise vulnerability to flames, radiant heat and ember attack.
- Access and Egress: Review of safe access routes for emergency services and evacuation pathways for site personnel.
- Firefighting Water Supply: Confirmation of adequate onsite water availability to support fire suppression operations.
- Landscape/Vegetation Management specific to Bushfire Risk.
- Emergency Response Planning: Evaluation of emergency preparedness measures, including response procedures specific to bushfire risk.

Refer to the Bushfire Risk Assessment provided at Appendix H. A detailed summary of the findings of the Bushfire Risk Assessment is provided in Section 7.3.

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Data Source:
Aerial Imagery: Viomaps Basemaps
Rail, Road, Watercourse and Designated
Bushfire Prone Area: Department of
Transport and Planning

 0 250 500 m
Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 54
Scale: 1:20,000 at A4
Project Number: 620.041534
Date Drawn: 29-Jan-2026
Drawn by: RB

LEGEND
— Road
— Watercourse
▭ Cadastre (Subject Site)
■ Designated Bushfire Prone Area

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COBDEN BESS

BUSHFIRE PRONE AREA



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FIGURE 8

4.5 Municipal Planning Strategy (LPP) and Planning Policy Frameworks

The following Municipal Planning Strategy (Local Planning Policy) and Planning Policy Frameworks (PPFs) apply to the Project:

4.5.1 Clause 02.03-1 Cobden

Clause 02.03-1 provides long-term objectives to each town within the municipality. Specific to Cobden, Council seeks to:

- *Support population and economic growth in Cobden that:*
 - *Protects and encourages employment and builds on Cobden's role as a service town.*
 - *Attracts more people to live, work and spend time in Cobden, including visitors and key workers.*
 - *Delivers new homes that meets a variety of needs, including those of an ageing population.*
 - *Promotes the economic, social and physical resilience of Cobden.*
- *Protect and enhance the heritage features of the built and natural landscape.*
- *Facilitate recreational and tourist amenities and facilities.*

Response: The BESS will provide a stable electricity supply for the town, which is support local employment, and attract new residents to the area. The Project is located outside the township and therefore does not affect heritage features, neighbourhood character or the natural landscape. It also does not conflict with recreational or tourism objectives and instead provides essential infrastructure that supports the ongoing functioning and growth of these sectors.

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4.5.2 Clause 02.03-2 Environmental and landscape values

The purpose of this Clause seeks to support land use and development that protects and enhances biological diversity.

Response: The Project Area has been positioned to avoid the removal of native vegetation. The three patches of native vegetation identified on the Subject Site are located outside the Project Area and will not be affected by the proposal.

4.5.3 Clause 02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity

The purpose of this clause is for Council to identify the risks that development may pose, specifically relating to bushfire and flood risk.

Response: The proposed development will implement measures that effectively mitigate bushfire and flood risk on the Subject Site and in the locality. The proposal will not inherently contribute to increased bushfire and flood risk in the locality. A Flood Assessment Gap Analysis is provided at Appendix C. A Bushfire Risk Assessment is provided at Appendix H.

4.5.4 Clause 02.03-4 Natural resource management

The objective of this clause is to ensure that agriculture remains the Shire's largest and most important industry. The protection and enhancement of the agricultural industry is linked to the Shire's environmental and economic wellbeing. Given the importance of agriculture to the local economy, the preservation of agricultural land is necessary for the sustainable



development of primary production within the Shire. Unplanned urban growth into productive agricultural land may compromise the viability of the industry and must be avoided.

Response: The Project Area has been carefully positioned to avoid impact of agricultural land, where the Project Area occupies a small portion of a large rural property. The Project does not disrupt agricultural activities which can continue across the land. The Project facilitates a stable and reliable electricity network, which will indirectly contribute to the economic resilience of the agricultural sector within the municipality.

4.5.5 Clause 02.03-9 Infrastructure

An objective of this clause is to ensure the facilitation of the establishment and expansion of renewable energy facilities while managing the impacts on amenity, roads and environment.

Response: The Project intends to provide a storage facility for renewable energy which directly corresponds to this objective. The Project does not detract from amenity for neighbouring land uses and effectively manages impacts on surrounding infrastructure, roads, environment and risks such as flooding and bushfire as supported by the technical reports submitted with this application. Refer to the Visual Impact Assessment at Appendix L.

4.5.6 Clause 11.01-1R Settlement – Great South Coast

The objective is to focus on regional investment and growth in regional cities, including facilitating the district town of Camperdown and support development and investment in small towns that are facing economic and population challenges.

Response: The Project will deliver an essential energy infrastructure, providing stability of the local electricity network. The Project has been carefully designed to respond to the needs of both the existing and future communities in the region, providing employment and infrastructure. The project enhances economic growth through employment opportunities and contributes to regional Victoria's sustainable development. As such, the Project supports the needs of both the existing and future communities in the region while promoting environmental sustainability and facilitates a zero-emissions future.

4.5.7 Clause 12.01-1S Protection of biodiversity

The objective of this clause is to protect and enhance Victoria's biodiversity.

Response: No flora and fauna species or ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act are comprised within the Subject Site or Project Area. Protected native vegetation is not impacted by the Project. While three small patches of native vegetation are present within the broader Subject Site, these are located outside the Project Area and will not be impacted by the proposed development. A Native Vegetation Assessment is provided at Appendix K.

4.5.8 Clause 12.01-2S Native vegetation management

The objective of this clause is to ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

Response: The Project avoids all native vegetation. Native vegetation present within the broader Subject Site is located outside the Project Area and will be retained and protected. As no native vegetation removal is proposed, the development achieves the objective of no net loss to biodiversity and does not require offsets. A Native Vegetation Assessment is provided at Appendix K.

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4.5.9 Clause 12.03-1S River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs

The objective of this clause is to protect and enhance waterway systems including river and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs.

Response: The existing ground levels across the site range from approximately 134.2m AHD to 136.8m AHD. In comparison, the Curdies River bed to the east lies at around 36m AHD, and the nearest tributary is approximately 56m AHD. The land between the Subject Site and the tributary is relatively steep, with a gradient of about 10%. Given this elevation difference and topography, there is no anticipated flood impact within the Project Area and it is highly unlikely that any river flooding from the Curdies River or its tributaries would reach the Project Area. Refer to the Flood Assessment Gap Analysis contained within Appendix C for additional detail pertaining to flood impact.

4.5.10 Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire Planning

The objective of this policy is to strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life.

Response: The Subject Site is designated as a Bushfire Prone Area. Bushfire risk on site can be adequately mitigated if correct procedures are implemented, and that the proposal can be adequately protected from the threat of a bushfire event. A detailed assessment against the CFA Guidelines for Renewable Energy Installations is provided in Section 7.3.1. Refer to Appendix H for the Bushfire Risk Assessment.

4.5.11 Clause 13.05-1S Noise management

The objective of this clause is to assist the management of noise effects on sensitive land uses.

Response: The Project will manage noise appropriately. The Project can comply with all relevant EPA noise criteria at surrounding sensitive receptors, including the nearest dwelling approximately 280m west of the site. Predicted noise levels are well below applicable limits for all time periods. Mitigation measures, including a potential noise wall to the substation transformer, ensure compliance, with further optimisation possible at detailed design stage. Refer to Appendix F for the Noise Impact Assessment.

4.5.12 Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility

The objective of this clause is to protect community amenity, human health and safety while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial, infrastructure or other uses with potential adverse off-site impacts.

Response: A BESS is considered to be an appropriate development within a Farming Zone because it is a low-impact form of essential infrastructure that has negligible environmental, and amenity impact making it compatible with surrounding agricultural uses. Its compact footprint and contained design ensure that nearby farming activities can continue without constraint, while setbacks, fire-management measures and landscaping further minimise any potential off-site effects in line with policy requirements to avoid incompatible uses and manage adverse impacts through siting and design. As a result, the Project avoids introducing land-use conflict, does not encroach on rural productivity, and supports the broader objective of accommodating necessary infrastructure in locations where it can function safely and effectively without compromising community amenity or adjoining land uses.

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4.5.13 Clause 14.01-1S Protection of Agricultural Land

The objective of this clause is to protect the state's agricultural base by preserving productive farmland.

Response: The Project aligns with the objectives of Clause 14.01-1S. The Project's design and land use plan demonstrate a commitment to coexisting with any future agricultural activities on the surrounding land. The Project is not considered to be detrimental to existing land uses and will not restrict future agricultural uses on site.

4.5.14 Clause 15.01-6S Design for rural areas

The objective of this clause is to ensure development respects valued areas of rural character.

Response: The Project has considered the valued areas of rural character in the region and ensures development that is respectful of its surroundings. The Project's commitment to supporting renewable energy and regional Victoria's economic growth exemplifies its positive contribution to the local community.

4.5.15 Clause 17.01-1S Diversified Economy

The objective of this clause is to strengthen and diversify the economy.

Response: The Project will generate job opportunities during construction and operational phases. Further, the Project will improve access to reliable energy close to where people live and work, supporting the broader economic development.

4.5.16 Clause 19.01-1S Energy Supply

The objective of this clause is to facilitate appropriate development of energy supply infrastructure.

Response: The Project directly provides energy storage infrastructure, required to transition to a low-carbon economy. The Project is designed to be resilient to climate impacts, offering rapid-response support during extreme weather events. The Project Area is appropriately located on a site in which will minimise land-use conflict and take advantage of existing transmission infrastructure.

Policy Guidelines

Clause 19.01-1S outlines policy guidelines relating to the *Climate Action Act 2017*. These are extracted below in Table 11 and a response is provided to each guideline.

Table 11 Policy Guidelines

Guideline	Target	Response
The long-term emissions reduction target specified in section 6 of Part 2 of the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> .	Victoria aims for net-zero emissions by 2045, a target that guides all climate action.	The Project supports this target by enabling greater use of renewable energy and reducing reliance on fossil-fuel generation. By storing excess renewable energy and dispatching it when needed, the BESS directly contributes to lowering overall emissions from the electricity network.



Guideline	Target	Response
Interim emissions reduction targets determined under Division 2 of Part 2 of the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> .	2025: 28–33% reduction below 2005 levels. 2030: 45–50% reduction below 2005 levels. 2035: 75–80% reduction below 2005 levels.	The Project assists in meeting interim emissions targets by improving the efficiency and reliability of renewable energy generation in the short and medium term.
Adaptation action plans prepared under Division 2 of Part 5 of the <i>Climate Action Act 2017</i> .	Mandatory five-yearly strategic documents developed for seven key systems (built environment, natural Environment, water cycle, human services, education and training, health and primary production) to guide government and community adaptation to climate change impacts	The Project aligns with climate adaptation objectives by providing resilient energy infrastructure capable of supporting the grid during extreme weather events.

4.5.17 Clause 19.01-2S Renewable Energy

The objective of this Clause is to support the provision and use of renewable energy in a manner that ensures appropriate siting and design considerations are met.

Response: The Project delivers renewable energy storage infrastructure within an appropriate rural setting where land use conflicts are minimal. The Subject Site is geographically well positioned for connection to the existing electrical network, specifically the sub-transmission line running between the Cobden Zone Substation to Camperdown Zone Substation. This makes the Subject Site a suitable and practical location for the Project.

4.6 Particular Provisions

4.6.1 Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation

To ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. This is achieved by applying the following three step approach in accordance with the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017) (the Guidelines):

- *Avoid the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.*
- *Minimise impacts from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation that cannot be avoided.*
- *Provide an offset to compensate for the biodiversity impact if a permit is granted to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation.*

To manage the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation to minimise land and water degradation.

Response: The Project has been designed to avoid all native vegetation. The Project Area is located entirely within highly modified agricultural land comprising improved pasture and agricultural weeds. While native vegetation is present within the broader Subject Site, it is located outside the Project Area and will not be impacted by the Project.

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The Project Area itself does not support native vegetation and will not result in the removal, destruction or lopping of any native vegetation. Vegetation located around the existing dwelling comprises planted species and therefore is not considered native vegetation under Clause 52.17, where it is exempt. Noting the above,

- A planning permit is not required under Clause 52.17;
- The avoid and minimise requirements do not apply; and
- No biodiversity offsets are required.

The proposal is therefore fully consistent with the objective of achieving no net loss to biodiversity. Refer to Appendix K for the Native Vegetation Assessment.

4.6.2 Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network

Cobden-Port Campbell Road forms the western boundary of the Subject Site and is zoned Transport Zone 2 (TZ2). The Project includes a new vehicle access point from Cobden-Port Campbell Road, with a temporary 20-metre construction access required during the construction phase. Clause 52.29 applies to land adjacent to a road in TRZ2. Under Clause 52.29-2, a permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone 2.

The purpose of this Clause is:

- To ensure appropriate access to the Principal Road Network or land planned to form part of the Principal Road Network
- To ensure appropriate subdivision of land adjacent to Principal Road Network or land planned to form part of the Principal Road Network

Response: Suitable access will be provided from Cobden-Port Campbell Road to the Subject Site, to facilitate both the construction and ongoing operation of the Project. The proposed vehicle access, as well as the temporary 20m construction access is essential for the delivery of infrastructure, construction materials and operational requirements. The access will be designed and located to ensure efficient vehicle movements and safety of Cobden-Port Campbell Road.

Refer to Traffic Impact Assessment provided at Appendix J. This assessment confirms that the proposed access arrangements are appropriate and consistent with the objectives of Clause 52.29.

4.6.2.1 Clause 52.29 Decision Guidelines

Before determining an application under Clause 52.29, the responsible authority must consider the decision guidelines in Clause 52.29-6, in addition to the broader decision guidelines in Clause 65. An assessment against these decision guidelines is provided in Table 12.

Table 12 Clause 52.29-6 Decision Guidelines

Decision Guidelines	Comment
<i>The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.</i>	As outlined in Section 4.5 of this Report, the proposal appropriately responds to the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
<i>The views of the relevant road authority.</i>	As outlined in Section 1.6.1 of this Report, Head, Transport for Victoria (HTfV) have been engaged to discuss the application. HTfV indicated

Decision Guidelines	Comment
	support for the Project and subsequently issued a Clearance Letter dated 20 March 2026, outlining general conditions to be addressed and incorporated into the Planning Permit. Any further referrals and/or correspondences from HTfV will be considered and responded to, as appropriate.
<i>The effect of the proposal on the operation of the road and on public safety.</i>	The Project is not expected to affect the operation of Cobden-Port Campbell Road or compromise public safety. The new access will be designed and located to ensure safe vehicle movements. Refer to Traffic Impact Assessment at Appendix J.
<i>Any policy made by the relevant road authority pursuant to schedule 2, clause 3 of the Road Management Act 2004 regarding access between a controlled access road and adjacent land.</i>	Not applicable – Cobden-Port Campbell Road is within the TRZ2 and is not a controlled access road.

4.6.3 Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development

The purpose of this clause is as follows:

- To prioritise and facilitate the planning, assessment and delivery of projects that will make a significant contribution to Victoria's economy and provide substantial public benefit, including jobs for Victorians.
- To provide for the efficient and effective use of land and facilitate use and development with high quality urban design, architecture and landscape architecture.

Response: The Project will deliver essential energy infrastructure that supports Victoria's transition to a more resilient and renewable energy system. By improving grid stability, the project contributes to broader economic outcomes and strengthens the reliability of energy supply. The Project represents an efficient and effective use of land in a suitable location and has been designed to minimise off-site impacts. Through careful siting, layout, design and screening, the development achieves a high-quality and functional built form that responds appropriately to its site context.

Clause 53.22-1 Application

In accordance with Clause 53.22-1, an application under this clause must fall within the one of the categories detailed in Table 13.

Table 13 Clause 53.22-1 Significant Economic Development Categories

Category	Condition
Category 1	The application must include a use specified in Table 2 and the conditions corresponding to that use must be met. If the application includes more than one use in Table 2, only one use must meet the corresponding conditions, except where the application includes an energy generation facility or transport terminal, in which case all conditions corresponding to those uses must be met.



Category	Condition
	The application must not include a use that requires a permit if that use is not specified in Table 2. Information demonstrating the likely feasibility of the proposed development is provided to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. This must include written advice from the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, Invest Victoria. This does not apply to an application for the use or development of land for an energy generation facility, renewable energy facility, transport terminal, utility installation or warehouse (fuel depot).
Category 2	The application must include a use specified in Table 2. The conditions corresponding to that use do not need to be met. The application may also include a use that is not specified in Table 2. The proposed use or development must be: - carried out by or on behalf of, or jointly or in partnership with, the State of Victoria or a public authority; or - funded, or partly funded, by the State of Victoria, the Commonwealth or a public authority; or - carried out on Crown land.
Category 3	The application must include a use specified in Table 2. The conditions corresponding to that use do not need to be met. The application may also include a use that is not specified in Table 2. The Minister for Planning has advised in writing that they are satisfied the proposed use or development of land is of significance having regard to the: - Purpose of clause 53.22. - Estimated cost of development. - Extent to which the development supports or implements planning policy. Information demonstrating the likely feasibility of the proposed development is provided to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. This must include written advice from the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, Invest Victoria.

The application falls within Category 1 above, as the proposed use (Utility Installation) is found within Table 2 of Clause 53.22, and the conditions (as summarised in Table 14) are met. It is noted that written advice from the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, Invest Victoria is not required for this application, as this requirement does not apply to applications for the use and development of land for a Utility Installation.

Table 14 Table 2 of Clause 53.22-1

Use	Condition
<i>Utility installation (other than data centre)</i>	A utility installation used to: - Transmit or distribute electricity; or - Store electricity if the installed capacity is 1 megawatt or greater; or - Transmit or distribute gas.



Use	Condition
	<i>must be proposed.</i>

Clause 53.22-3 Application Requirements

In addition to the application requirements elsewhere in the planning scheme, an application submitted under Clause 53.22 must be accompanied by the following information, refer to Table 15.

Table 15 Application Requirements

Application Requirement	Response
<i>A report or other documents demonstrating the likely feasibility of the development.</i>	Table 1 of Clause 53.22 confirms that applications for the use and development of land for a utility installation are not required to obtain written advice from the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate, of Invest Victoria
<i>A report prepared by a suitably qualified quantity surveyor which specifies the estimated cost of the development.</i>	The estimated cost of development is between \$120 million and \$140 million. A Quantity Surveyor's Report has not been provided, as it is not required for this application. Clause 53.22-1 confirms that the requirement to demonstrate feasibility does not apply to applications for the use or development of land for a utility installation.
<i>For extractive industry, a report prepared by a suitably qualified person specifying the estimated value of the resource to be extracted.</i>	Not applicable – the proposal is not for an extractive industry use.

Clause 53.22-5 Decision Guidelines

Before determining an application under Clause 53.22, the responsible authority must consider the decision guidelines in Clause 53.22-5, in addition to the broader decision guidelines in Clause 65. An assessment against these decision guidelines is provided in Table 16.

Table 16 Clause 53.22 Decision Guidelines

Decision Guidelines	Comment
<i>The purpose of the clause.</i>	As outlined in Section 4.6.4 of this report, the proposal appropriately responds to the purpose of this clause.
<i>The views of the Office of the Victorian Government Architect.</i>	No comments have been received from the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA). The proposal achieves an appropriate standard of design and can respond to any OVGA advice if required.

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5.0 General Provisions

5.1 Clause 65.01 Approval of an application or Plan

5.1.1 Decision Guidelines

Before deciding on an application or approval of a plan, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:

- *The matters set out in section 60 of the Act.*
- *Any significant effects the environment, including the contamination of land, may have on the use or development.*
- *The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *The purpose of the zone, overlay or other provision.*
- *Any matter required to be considered in the zone, overlay or other provision.*
- *The orderly planning of the area.*
- *The effect on the environment, human health and amenity of the area.*
- *The proximity of the land to any public land.*
- *Factors likely to cause or contribute to land degradation, salinity or reduce water quality.*
- *Whether the proposed development is designed to maintain or improve the quality of stormwater within and exiting the Environment Act 1987.*
- *The extent and character of native vegetation and the likelihood of its destruction.*
- *Whether native vegetation is to be or can be protected, planted or allowed to regenerate.*
- *The degree of flood, erosion or fire hazard associated with the location of the land and the use, development or management of the land so as to minimise any such hazard.*
- *The adequacy of loading and unloading facilities and any associated amenity, traffic flow and road safety impacts.*
- *The impact the use or development will have on the current and future development and operation of the transport system.*

Response: This planning report provides a comprehensive assessment of the considerations outlined under Clause 65. The report provides an assessment of the relevant planning issues applying to the proposed development. In accordance with this assessment, the proposed works are considered acceptable and compliant with Clause 65 of the Planning Scheme.

5.2 Clause 66 Referral and Notice Provisions

Clause 66 of the Planning Scheme sets out the kinds of applications which must be referred under section 55 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (P&E Act) or for which notice must be given under section 52(1)(c) of the P&E Act.

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5.2.1 Clause 66.02-7 Use and Development Referrals

Clause 66.02-7 outlines the circumstances in which an application relating to a 'Utility Installation' must be referred to the Victorian WorkCover Authority as a determining referral authority. Referral is required where the use or development of land for an industry, utility installation or warehouse meets one or more of the following triggers:

- *The use is for a purpose listed in the table to Clause 53.10 where no threshold distance is specified, or where the threshold distance will not be met.*
- *The use involves any of the following regulatory requirements:*
 - *Exceeding a fire protection quantity under the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2022.*
 - *A requirement to notify under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017.*
 - *A licence required under the Dangerous Goods (Explosives) Regulations 2011.*
 - *A licence required under the Dangerous Goods (HCDG) Regulations 2016, where the use is not associated with agriculture.*
- *Buildings and works associated with an existing industry, utility installation or warehouse will increase the total building or works area by more than 25 per cent, and any of the above regulatory triggers apply.*

The Hazards and Risk Assessment (Appendix I) identifies the proposal involves the storage and handling of materials classified under the Australian Dangerous Goods Code and assesses potential hazard scenarios associated with the proposed BESS and associated infrastructure. The assessment concludes these thresholds are not exceeded.

Accordingly, the proposal does not trigger mandatory referral to Victorian WorkCover Authority under Clause 66.02-7.

It is noted, however, that preliminary advice from DTP indicates an intention to refer the application to the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

5.2.2 Clause 66.03 Referral of Permit Applications Under Other State Standard Provisions

Clause 66.03 requires referral of applications triggered by other provisions of the Planning Scheme. Clause 52.29-4 requires referral to the Head, Transport for Victoria as a determining referral authority where an application:

- *Creates or alters access to a road declared as a freeway or arterial road under the Road Management Act 2004;*
- *Subdivides land adjacent to such a road;*
- *Affects land owned by the Head, Transport for Victoria for road purposes; or*
- *Affects land within a Public Acquisition Overlay where the Head, Transport for Victoria is the acquiring authority for a road.*

The proposal includes the creation of a new access point to Cobden-Port Campbell Road, which is located within the Transport 2 Zone (T2Z) and forms part of the arterial road network.

As such, referral to the Head, Transport for Victoria is required under Clause 66.03.



5.2.3 Other Referrals

DTP have advised that the application will be circulated to the CFA for comment. It is noted that CFA is not a determining or recommending referral authority under Clause 66.

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6.0 Other Relevant Legislation and Policies

6.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the Commonwealth Government's primary environmental legislation. It establishes the legal framework for assessing and protecting nationally and internationally significant biodiversity and heritage values, collectively known as Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). Any action that is likely to have a *significant impact* on MNES must be referred to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment for assessment.

A desktop assessment and site investigations have been undertaken to determine whether the Project may affect MNES and whether referral under the EPBC Act is required. The EPBC Protected Matters Search Tool (DCCEEW 2024) identified two ecological communities with potential to occur in the broader search region: *Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain* and *Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain*. Neither ecological community occurs within the Project Area.

The Project Area has been highly modified through long-term agricultural use and comprises predominantly improved pasture and agricultural weeds. It does not contain native vegetation or an environment capable of supporting EPBC Act-listed threatened species or ecological communities.

Based on the findings of the assessment, the Project is unlikely to result in a significant impact on any EPBC Act-listed species, communities, or other MNES, and therefore referral to the Commonwealth Minister is not required.

6.1.1 Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES)

The nine MNES to which the EPBC Act applies are:

- World heritage properties
- National heritage places
- Wetlands of international importance (often called 'Ramsar' wetlands after the international treaty under which such wetlands are listed)
- Nationally threatened species and ecological communities
- Migratory species
- Commonwealth marine areas
- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- Nuclear actions (including uranium mining)
- A water resource, in relation to coal seam gas development and large coal mining development

The findings of a desktop assessment have been summarised in Table 17 below:

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Table 17 Summary of MNES

Matters of National Environment Significance	Findings
World Heritage Properties	None
National Heritage Places	None
Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar)	None
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park	None
Commonwealth Marine Area	None
Listed Threatened Ecological Communities	2
Listed Threatened Species	48
Listed Migratory Species	18

Based on the limited constraints identified on the Subject Site, referral under the EPBC Act is not required. Refer to the Native Vegetation Assessment provided at Appendix K.

6.2 Renewable Energy Action Plan

The Victorian Renewable Energy Action Plan was produced to support investment into the Victorian energy sector. The plan outlines the transition to a renewable energy future. The plan identifies the path for renewables and affordable and reliable energy systems, through goal setting including the investment into energy storage. This plan sets out Victorian renewable energy targets of 40 per cent by 2025. Through the proposed development of the Project, it is considered that it will support the Victorian Government's planning and the Victorian Government's planning process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Supporting clean, efficient energy in the region.

6.3 Victoria's Regional Economic Growth Statement 2024

The Regional Economic Growth Statement 2024 titled "Open for Business" outlines the State Government's plan to enhance economic potential across regional Victoria.

The document recognises energy infrastructure as a key driver of regional economic growth. The proposed development will deliver energy infrastructure that supports the transition to renewable energy. Additionally, the project will create short-term construction employment and generate long-term operational roles, contributing to sustained local job opportunities.

6.4 Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan 2014

The Great South Regional Growth Plan 2014 (Growth Plan) was prepared by the Victorian Government and provides a regional approach to land use planning in the Great South Coast region. It covers the municipalities of Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians and Warrnambool.

The Project aligns with the strategic directions of the Growth Plan, as it emphasises the need for expanded energy infrastructure to support regional growth. The Project will contribute to a resilient energy distribution system, facilitating the delivery of alternate energy. The proposal facilitates sustainable economic and industrial development in Camperdown and the broader Corangamite Shire.

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6.5 Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy

The Corangamite Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) provides a strategic framework for integrated natural resource management across the region, including the Corangamite Shire. The proposal aligns with the vision of the RCS through minimising environmental impacts and facilitating a sustainable land use.

The Subject Site is located within a rural landscape system as per the RCS. Vegetation removal has been avoided, and the Project does not compromise the land's ongoing use for agricultural purposes.

6.6 Corangamite Shire Council Plan 2025-2029

The Corangamite Shire Council Plan for 2025-2029 (Council Plan) is a strategic document that outlines the vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities of Council for the next four years.

The Project appropriately responds to the vision, objectives and values of the Council Plan as it will contribute to long-term sustainability of the municipality through supporting the transition to a low-carbon future. The energy infrastructure will be improved, enhancing economic growth and climate resilience. Further, the Project supports local and regional opportunities by providing energy infrastructure.

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7.0 Assessment of Planning and Environmental Issues

7.1 Contamination

A Preliminary Site Investigation (PSI) has been undertaken by SLR to assess potential contamination at the Subject Site (refer to Appendix D). The technical report was prepared with reference to the previous site layout. The update to the site layout does not affect the findings or conclusions presented within the report.

The PSI indicates that the proposed unmanned BESS facility presents a low likelihood of contamination affecting construction or operation. While the Subject Site's agricultural history means underlying soils may contain residues from fertilisers, pesticides, recycled wastewater irrigation, or naturally elevated compounds, these factors primarily relate to potential waste-classification requirements should any excavated soil need to be disposed of off-site.

It is noted that where soils are unsuitable or surplus, sampling and classification by a suitably qualified environmental professional will be required in accordance with EPA Publications 702.2 and 1828.3. This testing may be undertaken either prior to excavation or on stockpiled material. Before excavation begins, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should also be prepared to outline OHS and environmental controls for managing soil interactions, handling excavated materials, and addressing any unexpected finds during works.

Refer to the PSI contained within Appendix D for further details.

7.2 Geotechnical

A Geotechnical Desktop Study has been undertaken by SLR is provided at Appendix E. The technical report was prepared with reference to the previous site layout. The update to the site layout does not affect the findings or conclusions presented within the report.

The report reviews relevant geotechnical information that is available and assess conditions at the site which may pose a geotechnical risk and/or place constraints on the Project within the Project Area. This relates to the topography, geology, hydrology and hydrogeology, historical land use, mining, quarrying, acid sulphate soil (ASS), services and utilities, salinity and erosion.

An intrusive geotechnical investigation, including detailed geotechnical laboratory testing and the preparation of an interpretive design report, will be undertaken during the detailed design phase and completed prior to construction. This work is necessary to inform detailed design of the Project given the preliminary desk study findings, which indicates that the Subject Site may be geotechnically complex, and while the broader geological and groundwater context is understood, conditions within the Subject Site, particularly across the Project Area remain undefined. Completing the intrusive investigation will allow these risks to be properly assessed and inform the development of suitable structural design parameters for the BESS infrastructure.

Refer to the Geotechnical Desktop Study contained within Appendix E for further details.

7.3 Bushfire Risk

A Bushfire Risk Assessment has been prepared by SLR to assess the bushfire risk associated with the Project.

The Subject Site is located within a Designated Bushfire Prone Area. It is noted that the Subject Site is not affected by the Bushfire Management Overlay. The assessment identifies



that the Subject Site is highly modified and predominantly utilised for agricultural purposes, with surrounding vegetation characterised as managed grassland. The Subject Site and surrounding land are generally flat, and there is a low to moderate bushfire risk, with some historical bushfire activity recorded in the surrounding area.

A conservative BAL assessment was undertaken, which adopts a BAL-12.5 for all buildings and critical infrastructure. This is achieved via a minimum 19m APZ around all infrastructure within the Project Area. The APZ will be maintained as managed grassland, ensuring reduced fuel loads and improved defensible space of the Subject Site. The assessment demonstrates that bushfire risk can be appropriately managed through the following measures:

- Provision and ongoing maintenance of APZ
- Design and construction measures consistent with BAL-12.5 requirements
- Suitable access arrangements for emergency services
- Provision of a water supply for firefighting purposes (2 x144kL tanks)

As well, a detailed Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) will be prepared during the detailed design phase of the Project.

Refer to the Bushfire Risk Assessment contained within Appendix K for further details.

7.3.1 CFA Guidelines for Renewable Energy Installations

CFA's 'Guidelines for Renewable Energy Installations' (the guidelines) provide best practice guidance for the design, construction and operation of renewable energy facilities, including BESS infrastructure to manage bushfire risk and emergency response. The guidelines have been considered in the design of the Project to ensure bushfire is appropriately managed and the Project can be safely accessed and operated in the event of an emergency.

Key considerations under the guidelines and how they have been addressed are summarised below:

- **Associated Risk and Management:** The proposed BESS and the associated bushfire risk have been considered, including the management of potential internal container fire events. Design measures and operational procedures will be implemented to minimise ignition risk and support safe incident response.
- **Defendable Space (APZ) and BAL:** The Project has been designed to achieve a Bushfire Attack Level of BAL-12.5, with a minimum 19m APZ provided around infrastructure. This outcome is consistent with CFA's guidance for renewable energy facilities located within rural grassland environments and enables safe conditions for emergency response.
- **Access for Emergency Services:** Access arrangements have been designed to accommodate emergency vehicles, including:
 - The off-site approach paths and access to the Subject Site provide for:
 - access enabled from the north along Cobden-Port Campbell Road from Cobden.
 - access enabled from the southwest along Cobden-Warrnabool Road and then Joe Blakes Road from the south along Cobden-Port Campbell Road.
 - All-weather access from Cobden-Port Campbell Road



- Internal access roads meeting CFA requirements for width, gradient and load capacity
- Adequate turning areas and perimeter access within the site
- External access via the surrounding road network has also been assessed as appropriate for emergency service response.
- **Water Supply and Firefighting Resources:** A dedicated firefighting water supply of 288 kL (2 x144 kL tanks) is proposed, consistent with CFA guidance.
- **Emergency Management and Response:** Emergency response considerations, including site layout, access, evacuation and operational procedures, have been incorporated into the Project design. A detailed Bushfire Management Plan (BMP) will be prepared during detailed design, outlining site-specific emergency response procedures and coordination with local emergency services.
- **Consultation with CFA:** A meeting with CFA was held on 23 March 2026. The purpose of this meeting was to seek feedback on the Project's risk profile, emergency response considerations and design approach.

Based on the above, the Project is considered to be consistent with the intent of the CFA's 'Guidelines for Renewable Energy Installations', with no unacceptable bushfire risk identified.

7.4 Hazards and Risk

A Hazards and Risk Assessment (HRA) has been prepared by SLR to assess the potential risks associated with the Project. These risks have been assessed in accordance with ISO 31000 risk management principles, CFA guidelines, and relevant Australian and international standards, and includes a Preliminary Risk Screening and Preliminary Hazard Analysis. The HRA considers hazards associated with construction, operation and decommissioning phases, including hazardous materials management, electrical infrastructure and also BESS-specific risks.

Fire is identified as the primary hazard associated with lithium-ion battery systems, particularly in relation to thermal runaway events. The HRA demonstrates that these risks can be effectively managed through standard industry design and operational measures, including battery management systems, fire detection and suppression systems, appropriate separation distances, asset protection zones, and provision of on-site water supply and emergency response procedures. Other risks, such as transformer fire, bushfire exposure and electromagnetic field impacts, have also been assessed and are considered manageable with appropriate controls.

The HRA confirms that all identified risks can be reduced to low or as low as reasonably practicable levels. As well, the development is not expected to introduce additional risk to surrounding land uses or increase the extent or severity of bushfire or other hazard events. Overall, the assessment concludes that the risks associated with the Project can be appropriately managed through standard engineering, operational and management measures, and that the facility can be safely developed and operated in accordance with relevant requirements.

Refer to the Hazards and Risk Assessment contained within Appendix I for further detail.

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7.5 Flooding

A Flood Assessment Gap Analysis was undertaken by SLR (refer to Appendix C). The technical report was prepared with reference to the previous site layout. The update to the site layout does not affect the findings or conclusions presented within the report.

This report assesses the Subject Site for any potential flood constraints. Ground levels on the site range from 134.2m AHD to 136.8m AHD. In comparison, the riverbed to the east is much lower at 36m AHD, and the nearest tributary is around 56m AHD. The land between the site and the Curdies River tributary is identified as steep (about 10%), where river flooding from the Curdies River or its tributaries is very unlikely to reach the site.

Further, to the northwest, the land rises to about 146m AHD. The ground is mostly flat down until approximately 135m AHD and then steepens toward the Curdies River.

Noting the above, the Subject Site sits at a higher elevation than the surrounding landscape, and the assessment concludes that flood risk is low. Therefore, further modelling and detailed Flood Impact Assessment are not required.

Refer to the Flood Assessment Gap Analysis contained within Appendix C for further details.

7.6 Flora and Fauna

A Native Vegetation Assessment has been prepared to assess the existing flora and fauna within the Subject Site.

The Subject Site is predominantly utilised for cropping, with existing vegetation largely comprising modified pastures and a mixture of agricultural weeds and fodder species.

No threatened flora or fauna species listed under the EPBC Act or the FFG Act were recorded in the Subject Site. The Subject Site has been highly modified and does not provide suitable habitat for listed species. Three small patches of native vegetation of Herb-Rich Foothill Forest (EVC 23) were identified within the Subject Site; however these patches are located outside the Project Area and will not be affected by the Project.

The Project Area is located entirely within modified pasture and does not support native vegetation removal. Accordingly, the proposed development will not result in the removal of native vegetation (0 hectares) and does not trigger a planning permit under Clause 52.17 of the Planning Scheme or the requirement for biodiversity offsets.

Noting the above, the Project is not expected to result in any significant impact on native flora, fauna or ecological values.

Refer to the Native Vegetation Assessment contained within Appendix K for further details.

7.7 Traffic

A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) has been prepared by SLR to assess the transport impacts associated with the Project.

The Subject Site has frontage to Cobden-Port Campbell Road, which is identified as a Transport Road Zone Category 2 (TRZ2). The requirements of Clause 52.29 (Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network) are triggered, as a planning permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a TRZ2. Access to the Project is proposed via Cobden-Port Campbell Road via a new single driveway crossover, located 590m south of Joe Blakes Road, with connection to the broader road network via Cobden-Warrnambool Road. The TIA demonstrates that the proposed access arrangement is appropriately located and designed to safely accommodate the anticipated traffic movements associated with the development, in line with Clause 52.29.



The construction phase will generate approximately 30 inbound and 30 outbound vehicle movements per day. This represents an increase in traffic movements, however, modelling demonstrates that the surrounding road network and the Cobden-Warrnambool Road / Cobden-Port Campbell Road intersection will continue to operate within acceptable performance thresholds, with no upgrades required to accommodate this increase. Temporary works are required to facilitate construction traffic, including the removal and reinstatement of concrete medians at the Cobden-Warrnambool Road / Cobden-Port Campbell Road intersection to accommodate OSOM vehicle movements. Sight distances at both the intersection and proposed site access comply with relevant Austroads and Australian Standards, and no crash patterns or safety risks have been identified that would preclude the development.

Traffic volumes associated with the operational phase are expected to be minimal and will not result in any material impact on the surrounding road network. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and detailed OSOM route assessment will be prepared during detailed design to manage construction activities and confirm transport routes.

The TIA concludes that, subject to the recommended management measures, the proposal will not impact the safe and efficient operation of the arterial road network. The development satisfies the intent of Clause 52.29 and is therefore considered appropriate from a traffic perspective.

Refer to the Traffic Impact Assessment contained within Appendix J for further detail.

7.8 Acoustics

A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) has been prepared by SLR to assess the noise impacts associated with the Project. The NIA has been undertaken in accordance with the *Environment Protection Act 2017*, the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021*, and EPA Publication 1826.4 *Noise Protocol*, with consideration of cumulative noise and low frequency noise criteria.

The NIA uses a conservative modelling approach based on representative sound power levels for the proposed infrastructure, including battery units, inverters and a high voltage transformer, and has assumed operation of the Project is 24 hours. Sensitive receivers in the surrounding rural area were identified, where the closest is located approximately 280m west from the Subject Site. The applicable noise limits for utilities in a Farming Zone have been adopted, with adjustments made where required to account for nearby industry and cumulative noise impacts.

The NIA concludes that the Project can achieve compliance with the applicable noise limits at all identified sensitive receivers during day, evening and night periods. Predicted operational noise levels are well below the relevant criteria across all receivers. Cumulative noise impacts, including nearby industrial operations and the existing substation, have also been considered and comply with EPA requirements. In order to achieve compliance, the NIA identifies a 4m high noise wall surrounding the substation transformer. However, it is noted that, through detailed design and optimisation of transformer selection, including consideration of quieter equipment, the Project may seek to remove or modify the requirement for this noise wall. Any such refinement would be subject to demonstrating that predicted noise emissions remain consistent with, or improved from, the outcomes presented in the NIA.

Furthermore, the NIA notes that low frequency noise is unlikely to be problematic, where the relevant guideline thresholds predicted are not exceeded. However, further review will be undertaken at the detailed design stage once final equipment selections are confirmed, including consideration of any tonal characteristics in accordance with EPA requirements.



Overall, the NIA concludes that the Project can be designed and operated to meet all relevant noise criteria, subject to standard design refinement and equipment selection at the detailed design stage. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to achieve an acceptable acoustic outcome.

Refer to the Noise Impact Assessment contained within Appendix F for further detail.

7.9 Stormwater

A Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) has been prepared by SLR to assess stormwater quality and quantity impacts associated with the BESS.

The SMP has been developed in accordance with the Urban Stormwater Best Practice Environmental Management Guidelines (CSIRO, 1999), EPA Urban Stormwater Management Guidelines (Publication 1739.1, 2021), and the Corangamite Shire Planning Scheme. The assessment included MUSIC modelling of stormwater quality and DRAINS hydrologic modelling for pre and post-development conditions. Although the development introduces a high proportion of impervious surfaces, a Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) treatment train comprising a JellyFish pollutant trap, bioretention basin and swale has been demonstrated to meet or exceed best practice pollutant reduction targets.

In addition, stormwater quantity modelling confirms that the proposed detention basin limits post-development peak flows to at or below pre-development levels for both minor and major storm events. Accordingly, the development is not expected to result in adverse downstream flooding or drainage impacts, and the SMP concludes that the proposed measures achieve compliance with relevant statutory and best practice requirements.

Refer to the Stormwater Management Plan contained within Appendix G for further details.

7.10 Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

A Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to evaluate the potential visual effects of the Project, on surrounding landscape and sensitive receptors. The LVIA identifies that the Subject Site is located within a highly modified rural pastoral landscape characterised by open agricultural land, scattered vegetation, rural road corridors and dispersed infrastructure.

The Project is located within a modified pastoral landscape influenced by agricultural land use, transport infrastructure and utility corridors associated with the broader volcanic plains. While the Project introduces additional utility installation, the Project remains generally consistent with the functional character of the surrounding environment and does not fundamentally alter the defining characteristics of the wider landscape.

The LVIA notes the Subject Site can accommodate the Project, with visual impacts primarily associated with the introduction of infrastructure elements such as battery units, inverters and associated structures. However, these impacts are reduced through siting, setbacks and the generally low profile of the infrastructure which is consistent with the surrounding rural environment.

Visibility is generally localised to sections of Cobden-Port Campbell Road and limited nearby receptors, with most views being transient in nature. The Project would be perceived within an existing landscape that already contains agricultural and utility infrastructure and would not become a dominant or defining visual feature. The landscape screening surrounding the perimeter of the Project Area will assist in integrating the Project into the surrounding landscape and minimise visibility from nearby roads and viewpoints. Over time, the establishment of vegetation is expected to soften the visual presence of the development.



Overall, the LVIA concludes the visual impacts of the Project will be low to moderate and can be effectively mitigated, and that the development is consistent with the existing landscape character and relevant planning policy. The Landscape Concept Plan, which forms part of Appendix C within the LVIA, provides details of proposed planting, perimeter screening and the associated plant schedule.

Refer to Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment contained within Appendix L for further details.

7.11 Agricultural Impact Assessment

The Project does not warrant the preparation of a standalone Agricultural Impact Assessment, as the proposed BESS will not result in any significant or irreversible loss of agricultural land, reduction in agricultural productivity, or compromise the ongoing farming zone use potential of the Subject Site. The Subject Site is currently utilised predominantly for cropping activities and is characterised by highly modified agricultural land comprising improved pastures, agricultural weeds and fodder species.

Whilst the land is located within the Farming Zone (FZ), the purpose of the zone is not solely to facilitate traditional agricultural activities. The FZ also provides for the use and development of land where such uses are compatible with and do not prejudice the long-term productive capacity of agricultural land. In this regard, the proposed BESS represents an appropriate complementary land use that can coexist within a rural setting without undermining the broader agricultural function of the locality.

The Project is not a conventional agricultural use; however, it represents a productive and economically beneficial use of the land that contributes to the diversification of rural land uses and supports broader energy infrastructure objectives. The development will provide an alternative revenue stream for the landowner while maintaining the site's long-term suitability for agricultural purposes.

Importantly, the Project will not result in the permanent loss of agricultural land. The development footprint is relatively limited and involves minimal ground disturbance, excavation, or alteration to landform. The proposal does not require the removal of high-value agricultural infrastructure, does not fragment agricultural landholdings, and will not adversely affect the operation of surrounding agricultural activities. The Project will therefore not compromise the agricultural productivity of adjacent land or create land use conflicts with existing farming operations.

The BESS is inherently reversible in nature. Upon decommissioning, all above-ground infrastructure can be removed and the land rehabilitated, allowing the site to readily return to traditional agricultural or other rural uses. As such, the Project does not sterilise the land from future agricultural production and does not diminish the long-term agricultural capability of the site.

Having regard to the limited physical footprint of the development, the absence of impacts on surrounding agricultural operations, the retention of the land's long term productive capacity, and the reversible nature of the proposed use, it is considered that the Project will not give rise to any material agricultural impacts. Accordingly, a separate Agricultural Impact Assessment is not considered necessary to inform the determination of the application.

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8.0 Conclusion

SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd has prepared this Planning Report on behalf of Cobden BESS Pty Ltd to support a planning permit application for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at 89 Cobden-Scotts Creek Road, Cobden VIC 3266, formally known as Lot 1 and Lot 2 of TP863659. It is noted that the proposed buildings and works are wholly contained within Lot 2 of TP863659.

The Project involves:

- A BESS with capacity of 75 MW / approximately 300 MWh at the point of connection, comprising battery units, inverters, transformers, substation and ancillary infrastructure.
- The BESS will be connected into the 66kV sub-transmission line which runs from Cobden Zone Substation to Camperdown Zone Substation in a line-in-line-out configuration. The scope of works associated with this planning permit application includes the grid connection infrastructure from the Project substation to the nominated point of connection. Works beyond the point of connection fall within the scope and jurisdiction of Powercor and do not form part of this planning permit application. Powercor, as the network provider, will facilitate effective integration into the existing power grid.
- New driveway and crossover access from Cobden-Port Campbell Road.
- Associated ancillary infrastructure including operations & maintenance building/storage warehouse, security fencing, CCTV security system, landscaping, access and internal roads, water tanks, temporary parking.
- Decommissioning of the BESS facilities at end of life (EOL).

The proposal is eligible for assessment under Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development and complies with all relevant legislative requirements, including the Corangamite Planning Scheme and associated policies. The use and development are permissible within the Farming Zone and align with its objectives, as well as the broader strategies and policies of the VPP. The proposal is wholly compliant with the applicable particular provisions.

The Project will provide energy storage to contribute to improving regional electricity reliability and respond the Victorian Governments Renewable Action Plan initiatives. The Project will not increase demand for public services or facilities and will have minimal impact on native vegetation and flora and fauna or on agricultural land, waterways and wetlands.

The design of the development incorporates appropriate stormwater management design, it respects the natural environment, and minimises potential amenity impacts on neighbouring properties. The perceived potential impacts arising from the proposal on surrounding properties included traffic, access and parking, noise, visual amenity, ecological, and waste and water management. Where necessary, mitigation measures are proposed to minimise these potential impacts and reduce potential risk associated with the development.

Given the merit of the design and the absence of any significant adverse environmental impacts or planning issues, the proposed development is considered to be in the public's interest and worthy of support from both the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and the Minister for Planning.

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