

Macedon BESS

Macedon BESS – Planning Report

Macedon BESS Development Pty Ltd

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Executive Summary

This report has been prepared for South Energy Pty Ltd on behalf of Macedon BESS Development Pty Ltd to support a planning permit application for the Macedon Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the Project). The proposed BESS will be located on Black Forest Drive (also referred to as Macedon-Woodend Road), Macedon. The application proposes the use and development of land for a proposed Utility Installation (BESS), car parking, vegetation removal, the display of business identification signage, and creation of access to a road in the Transport Zone 2 under the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.

The application will be pursued under the pathway provided by Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development) of the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme.

The Project is defined as a Utility Installation pursuant to Clause 73.03 (Land Use Terms) and will require a planning permit for the following activities:

- Clause 35.06 (Rural Conservation Zone) – For use of land, and buildings and works for the purpose of a ‘Utility Installation’. Planning approval is triggered for buildings and works under Clause 35.06-5 for the following:
 - to construct a building within 100m of a Transport Zone 2
 - to construct a building within 100m of a dwelling
 - to construct a building within 100m of a waterway
 - for earthworks which change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary, or which increase the discharge of saline groundwater (Schedule 1).
 - Changes to rate of flow subject to detailed design and to be confirmed prior to endorsement of plans. A stormwater detention basin is expected to manage this requirement.
- Clause 36.04 (Transport Zone) – For buildings and works (emergency access) associated with a ‘Utility Installation’
- Clause 42.02 (Vegetation Protection Overlay), Schedule 2 – Lop, destroy or remove any vegetation
- Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation); Schedule 9 to Clause 42.02 (Vegetation Protection Overlay) – Lop, destroy or remove native vegetation
- Clause 52.05 (Signs) – Display of business identification signage in a Category 4 – sensitive areas
- Clause 52.06 (Car Parking) – To provide car parking spaces to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority
- Clause 52.29 (Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network) - Create access to a road in the Transport Zone 2 (Black Forest Drive)

The Project is considered to meet the requirements and policy directions of the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme. The Project will comply with all statutory requirements and design standards associated with a BESS facility. The proposed BESS has been strategically located adjacent to the Gisborne Zone Substation to reduce the need for extensive transmission lines, thereby minimising the Project's footprint. Construction for the Project is expected to span approximately 12-15 months, and the Project will be in operation for 20 years, with an option to extend a further 20 years with repowering.

The Project will directly support State and local policy initiatives aimed at enhancing the stability of power supply. The Project is designed to store excess electricity during periods of low demand and discharge it back to the grid as required, thereby enhancing the overall stability of the power supply network and reducing risks to sensitive locations during outages. It also reduces power cost by minimising energy curtailment, making energy more affordable to consumers.

In this context, the Project aligns with the Draft 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP) (Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO]), which promotes the development of energy infrastructure that ensures secure, reliable, and affordable electricity during the transition to net zero by 2050. Additionally, it supports the Victorian government's energy storage targets outlined in the *Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017* and aligns with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council's vision for a low-carbon future.

Glossary/Abbreviations

Term	Definition
The Applicant	Macedon BESS Development Pty Ltd
Aurecon	Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd.
ACH Act	<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CBD	Central Business District
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CHS	Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, (now known as Department of Transport and Planning and Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action)
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)
FFG Act	<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i>
FTE	full-time equivalent
GW	gigawatt
Guidelines	Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (DELWP, 2017)
Heritage Act	<i>Heritage Act 2017</i>
ISP	Integrated System Plan
ha	hectares
kL	kilolitre
km	kilometres
kV	Kilovolt
LGA	Local Government Area
m	metre
m ²	square metres
mm	millimetres
MNES	Matter of National Environmental Significance
MWh	Megawatt hours
NEM	National Electricity Market
P&E Act	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>
PMST	Protected Matters Search Tool
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
Regulations	<i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i>
Subject Site	The defined area of the (unnamed) property located at Black Forest Drive, Macedon (see Figure 3-2).
The Project	The proposed use and development of the Macedon Battery Energy Storage System
(the) Proponent	South Energy, the organisation responsible for developing and implementing the Macedon BESS Project.
WWCHAC	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

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1 Introduction

Aurecon Australasia Pty Ltd (Aurecon) has been engaged by South Energy Pty Ltd on behalf of Macedon BESS Development Pty Ltd to facilitate the environmental and planning assessments and approvals for the Macedon Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). This report has been prepared to support a planning permit application for the use and development of the Macedon BESS (the Project) in central Victoria. The Project is located within the Macedon Ranges Local Government Area (LGA) and is subject to the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme).

The Project seeks to develop a 188.6 megawatts (MW) / 501MWh BESS to enhance grid stability and reliability by providing bi-directional power function. The Project will connect to the adjacent Gisborne Zone Substation (operated by Powercor), providing access to the National Electricity Market (NEM).

Further details of the Project are provided at Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of planning approval requirements for the Project

Requirement	Details
Applicant	Macedon BESS Development Pty Ltd
Responsible Authority	Minister for Planning
Property Address	Unnamed property, Black Forest Drive, Macedon 3440 (also known as Macedon-Woodend Road)
Formal Property Description	Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 444155
Total Site Area	Subject Site: 7.28 hectares (ha)

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Proposal	The Project features the following permanent core and ancillary infrastructure: ■ A 188.6MW/501MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), comprising – 123 BESS containers – 41 Power Conversion Units (PCS) + Medium Voltage Stations (Medium Voltage Transformers) – 1 High Voltage Transformer ■ On-site 66/33 kilovolt (kV) collector substation including associated infrastructure: – harmonic filter – switchgear and control room – connection cabling to the existing 66/22kV Gisborne Zone Substation ■ Internal access roads including a (new) access point on Allison Lane and a (new) secondary emergency access point on Black Forest Drive ■ One (1) Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Building ■ Three (3) permanent parking spaces ■ 4m noise wall ■ One (1) pump house and one (1) septic tank ■ Effluent dispersal area ■ Lighting equipment including: – Nineteen (19) mounted lights on fence up to 10.6 m in height – Seven (7) light poles ■ Construction of two (2) lightning masts up to 21.4m in height adjacent to the collector substation ■ Fire risk mitigation infrastructure including: – Two (2) 335 kilolitre (kL) round water tanks with a 12m diameter – One (1) firewater holding pond / stormwater detention basin ■ Fencing around the perimeter of the BESS and collector substation ■ One (1) business identification sign located at site access point on Allison Lane
Zones	■ Rural Conservation Zone, Schedule 1 - (RCZ1) ■ Transport Zone 2 - Principal road network (TRZ2)
Overlays	■ Vegetation Projection Overlay Schedule 2 - Roadside Vegetation (VPO2) ■ Vegetation Projection Overlay Schedule 9 - Living Forest (VPO9) ■ Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 5 - Other Water Supply Catchments (ESO5)

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Planning Permit Triggers	■ Clause 35.06 (Rural Conservation Zone)- For use of land and buildings and works for the purpose of a 'Utility Installation'. (35.06-1 & 35.06-5) – To construct a building within the following setbacks (35.06-5): – 100m of a Transport Zone 2 – 100m of a dwelling – 100m of a waterway – For earthworks which change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary, or which increase the discharge of saline groundwater (Schedule 1). ■ Changes to rate of flow subject to detailed design and to be confirmed prior to endorsement of plans. A stormwater detention basin is expected to manage this requirement. ■ Clause 36.04 (Transport Zone) – For buildings and works associated with a 'Utility Installation' ■ Schedule 2 to Clause 42.02 (Vegetation Protection Overlay) – Lop, destroy or remove any vegetation ■ Schedule 9 to Clause 42.02 (Vegetation Protection Overlay) & Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation) – Lop, destroy or remove native vegetation ■ Remove, destroy or lop native vegetation under subclause 1 (Permit requirement) to Clause 52.17 (Native vegetation) ■ Clause 52.05 (Signs) – Display of business identification signage in a Category 4 – sensitive areas under Subclause 14 (Sensitive areas) to Clause 52.05 (Signs) ■ Clause 52.06 (Car Parking) – To provide car parking spaces to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority. ■ Clause 52.29 (Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network) – Create access to Black Forest Drive, a road in the Transport Zone 2TRZ2 under subclause 2 (Permit requirement) to Clause 52.29 (Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network)
Areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity (CHS)	No
Bushfire Prone Area	Yes

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the Proposal to support an application for a Planning Permit to the Minister for Planning:

The scope of this Planning Report is to:

- Provide an overview of the Subject Site and surrounding area;
- Outline the specific details of the Project; and
- Provide an analysis of the Project against the relevant planning requirements.

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1.2 Supporting Documents

This Report is accompanied by the following documentation:

Table 2 Supporting Documents

Document Name	Appendix Reference
Certificate of Title	Appendix A
Site Layout Plan	Appendix B
Ecological impact assessment (Aurecon, 2026)	Included separately
Noise Assessment (SLR Consulting, 2025)	Included separately
Traffic Impact Assessment (Aurecon, 2026)	Included separately
Hydrology Assessment (Aurecon, 2026)	Included separately
Social and Economic Impact Assessment (Aurecon, 2026)	Included separately
Risk Management Plan (including Bushfire assessment) (Aurecon, 2026)	Included separately
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Aurecon, 2026)	Included separately
Arboricultural Assessment (Active Green Services, 2026)	Included separately
Consultation Summary Report (Aurecon, 2026)	Included separately
Land Capability Assessment (Edwards Environmental, 2025)	Included separately
Letter of Cultural Heritage Advice (JEM Archaeology, 2026)	Included separately

2 Project Background

2.1 The Applicant

The Proponent, South Energy, is an Australian renewable energy developer and specialist in delivering utility scale renewable energy projects. South Energy's mission is to deliver clean energy solutions to support Australia's transition towards a sustainable future. South Energy are committed to developing, building and operating advanced large-scale, grid-connected projects that help mitigate carbon emissions and create long-term business and employment opportunities for local communities.

South Energy is a member of the Growland Group, a Melbourne-based property developer dedicated to responsible and sustainable land development.

South Energy's development approach encourages proactive participation, community engagement, and multi-purpose land use. South Energy has extensive experience undertaking solar farm projects; the Macedon BESS is one of the first BESS Projects pursued by South Energy in Victoria.

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2.2 Project Benefits

Large-scale energy storage infrastructure (e.g. BESS) will play an important role in securing the Victorian electricity grid, supporting the State's renewable energy transition. By providing an increased capacity for detection and response to disturbances in power supply, BESS infrastructure helps to facilitate the stable operation of Victoria's electricity network.

The Macedon BESS will support the reliable delivery of electricity across Victoria by helping to stabilise the grid and create a more flexible and resilient power network. For the electricity grid to operate securely and reliably, supply and demand must be balanced in real time through sophisticated monitoring and control systems. During operation, the Macedon BESS will store excess electricity from the network during periods of high generation and release it back into the grid when supply is constrained or demand is high (including during outages). Through this process, the BESS reduces the need to curtail energy generation, improves overall grid efficiency, and contributes to lower electricity costs for consumers.

The Project will also drive local and regional investment and create employment opportunities for the local area. As detailed in the accompanying 'Social and Economic Impact Assessment', the Project will create approximately 137 (direct and indirect) full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs across Victoria over the construction phase, and 140 FTE jobs across the (20-year) operational phase. The total economic impact is also projected to generate an increase of \$88 million in output for the Victorian economy and enhance local business activity.

South Energy proposes to voluntarily develop an ongoing Benefit Sharing Program (BSP) in collaboration with local stakeholders to support initiatives which contribute to the delivery of renewable energy projects.

From the Proposal's Commercial Operation Date, South Energy intends to establish a community benefit fund, with the annual contribution amount to be confirmed each year. The fund will be managed locally where possible.

Overall, the Proposal will contribute to the local economy, increase employment opportunities, and improve community wellbeing through more stable and affordable energy supply.

2.3 Site Selection

The site selection and design process has been rigorous to ensure the Project is optimally sited and designed. This approach has ensured the efficient use of land while minimising environmental impacts wherever possible and reducing the potential impacts on neighbouring properties and road users.

BESS Projects are often co-located with or situated near network connection points, such as terminal stations, to ensure a secure and reliable connection with the grid. In this context, the Subject Site has been selected due to its proximity to, and access to, the existing Gisborne Zone Substation and associated transmission infrastructure. The substation's existing capacity and established network connectivity enable streamlined grid integration of the proposed Macedon BESS, in addition to reducing the need for additional network upgrades (including additional transmission lines), minimising construction complexity, approval risks and long-term operational constraints.

Additionally, the Subject Site is located adjacent to major roads and existing transport connections including the Calder Highway to the west. As such, the Subject Site is highly accessible and provides sufficient capacity for construction and operations traffic. Furthermore, the existing vegetation on the Subject Site boundaries provide screening for various portions of the facility, as detailed in the *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (Aurecon, 2026). Coupled with the Subject Site's proximity to similar infrastructure (Gisborne Zone Substation), these unique attributes help minimise potential impacts on local amenity.

2.4 Consultation

Between April 2024 and October 2025, South Energy implemented a structured engagement program for the Macedon BESS ahead of submission to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). The engagement

program has been informed by and detailed within the Social and Economic Impact Assessment submitted with this application.

The engagement aimed to raise early awareness, gather local feedback, and identify potential development considerations. Key engagement activities included notifying neighbouring residents via letters, phone calls, meetings, and emails with key regulatory bodies, council representatives, MPs, local sustainability and community groups, and technical experts. Engagement with stakeholders is to continue as appropriate, to address matters associated with the development through to the date of approval submission.

A summary of consultation undertaken to date is provided in the sections below.

2.4.1 Community Consultation

A public information session was held on 9 October 2025 to introduce the Macedon BESS Project. The drop-in session was organized to engage with residents and stakeholders, providing a platform to share Project details with the local community. In addition to the drop-in session, the South Energy team visited neighbours to the site who were unable to attend on the day of the session. FAQ sheets and project information letters were provided to those who were not at their homes during the visit. This consultation provided an opportunity to inform potential refinements of the proposed design of the Macedon BESS. Further detail on how community feedback has shaped the Project is provided in the *Consultation Summary Report* (Aurecon, 2026).

2.4.2 Pre-application meeting with Department of Transport and Planning

A formal pre-application meeting occurred on 11 October 2024, to introduce the Project to DTP. Additional meetings were held with DTP on 11 December 2024, and more recently on 25 August 2025 to discuss progress of the Project. The August 2025 meeting included discussion of recommended community engagement activities, referral authorities, utilisation of the Development Facilitation Pathway for this project, and anticipated timelines for DTP assessment.

2.4.3 Macedon Ranges Shire Council

A meeting with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council (the Council) was undertaken on 28 April 2025, where an overview of the Project was presented to the Council. Council officers were supportive of the Project with no concerns raised at the meeting.

A secondary pre-application meeting was held with Council's planning department on 28 April 2025 to discuss progress of the Project, siting and design, the approval pathway and environmental assessment considerations. Through this meeting, Council recommended the preparation of a Land Capability Assessment (LCA) to detail the Project's connection to sewer and waste management systems. This LCA has been subsequently prepared and submitted with this application.

2.4.4 Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)

Pre-application advice with DEECA regarding native vegetation removal was provided via email in October 2024 and June 2025. More recently, a meeting was held with a Senior Planning Officer from DEECA Energy on 16 February 2026 to provide an update on the application and latest Ecological Impact Assessment, with a follow-up phone call on 23 March 2026 specifically relating to opportunities for further avoidance of large and/or hollow bearing trees in the footprint of the Allison Lane access point. This discussion prompted further interrogation of the Ecological Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which has led to the retention of an additional four large trees (including one hollow-bearing tree) adjacent to the Allison Lane access point. This has resulted in a revised total of 10 large trees to be removed, rather than 14 as previously proposed.

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3 Subject Site and Surrounds

3.1 Subject Site

The proposed Subject Site is located on Black Forest Drive, Macedon and is formally known as Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 444155 (refer to Figure 3-2). The Subject Site has an area of approximately 7.28 ha and is located in the Macedon Ranges Shire. The Subject Site is bordered by Allison Lane to the north, Black Forest Drive to the east, the Gisborne Zone Substation to the south and the Calder Highway to the west. Vehicle access to the Subject Site is proposed via a new accessway branching off Allison Lane with a new secondary emergency accessway connecting to Black Forest Drive.

There are no restrictive covenants, agreements between Council and landowner under Section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* or other encumbrances on title that restrict the Project's development.

The Subject Site is undeveloped, privately owned land and contains no built structures. Mature vegetation is present along the Subject Site's boundaries. The central portion of the Subject Site comprises flat topography, with small patches of mature canopy trees and understorey vegetation. Based on DTP mapping, there is an unnamed waterway located within the western portion of the Subject Site (see Figure 3-2).

Wombat State Forest is located approximately 4km west of the Project.

The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) associated with the Subject Site is Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC). The Subject Site is not located within an Area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity, as defined under the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*. South Energy has engaged JEM Archaeology to conduct a site inspection and provide a letter of advice confirming that no mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required for this project. South Energy has concurrently applied for Certification of a Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Test (PAHT) for the purposes of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

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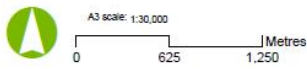
Legend

Project Area

Source: Esri, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, GeoEye, Getmapping, Aergrid, IGN, IGP, GIS User Community, and Melbourne Airport
Vantor, Earthstar Geographics, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FMO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS

Date: 17/03/2026

Version: 1



Job No: PS27802
Coordinate System: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55

Macedon BESS
Project Context

Figure 3-1 Site Context

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Figure 3-2 Subject Site

3.2 Site Surrounds

The Project is located in central Victoria, approximately 2.3 km northwest of New Gisborne, 3.5 km south of Macedon township, and approximately 60 km north-west from Melbourne's CBD.

The Subject Site's surrounds are largely characterised by cleared, vacant land on the south-western side of the Calder Freeway and agricultural land to the north of Black Forest Drive. The Subject Site is situated in a rural setting and away from established neighbourhoods. Low density rural residences are visible within the broader landscape to the north, with the nearest dwelling being across Black Forest Drive, approximately 65 m to the east of the Subject Site.

3.2.1 Special Water Supply Catchment Area

Several Designated Water Supply Catchment Areas are located around the Subject Site. The Subject Site is predominantly located outside the Rosslynne Reservoir (Jacksons Creek) Designated Water Supply Catchment Area; however, the eastern boundary of this water supply catchment area intersects the northwestern portion of the site.

Additionally, the Rosslynne Reservoir (Riddles Creek) Designated Water Supply Catchment Area is located approximately 3 km to the northwest. While not immediately close to the Subject Site, there are unnamed waterways that flow from the site to this catchment.

As detailed in the submitted Hydrology Report, the potential impacts to surface water and groundwater associated with the Project are generally considered to be low. No works associated with the BESS are proposed in this area. Key impact mitigation measures can be incorporated into a CEMP to manage drainage on site. A Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) will also be required to adequately address drainage on site post-construction.

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Figure 3-3 Proposed Site Layout Plan

4 Project Description

The application proposes the use and development of the Subject Site for a Utility installation (BESS) and ancillary infrastructure. The application proposes to provide three (3) permanent car parking spaces, the removal of native vegetation, earthworks, and the display of business identification signage to identify the proposed use of the land for a BESS.

Details on the infrastructure proposed are shown in the Concept Design prepared by EHV Consulting and Design on 27 October 2025 (Appendix B). A site layout plan is provided at Figure 3-3.

4.1 Project infrastructure and associated works

The Project includes the following permanent and ancillary infrastructure:

- A 188.6MW/501MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) including:
 - 123 BESS containers
 - 41 Power Conversion Systems (PCS) + Medium Voltage Stations (Medium Voltage Transformers)
 - 1 High Voltage Transformer
 - 8 Auxiliary Transformers (AUX TRFR)
- On-site (66/33kV) collector substation including associated infrastructure:
 - harmonic filter
 - switchgear and control room
 - connection cabling to the existing (66/22kV) Gisborne Zone Substation
- Internal access roads including two (2) new accessways
- One (1) Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Building
- Three (3) permanent parking spaces
- Effluent dispersal area
- 4m high noise wall
- One (1) pump house and one (1) septic tank
- Lighting equipment including:
 - Nineteen (19) mounted lights on fence up to 10.6 m in height
 - Seven (7) light poles
- Construction of two (2) lightning masts up to 21.4m in height adjacent to the collector substation
- Fire risk mitigation infrastructure including:
 - Two (2) 335 kilolitre (kL) round water tanks with a 12m diameter
 - One (1) fire holding pond/stormwater detention basin
- Fencing around the perimeter of the BESS and substation facility
- Installation of one (1) business identification sign located at site access point on Allison Lane

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The BESS equipment will have a maximum height in the order of 3m. A noise wall at a height of 4m will be installed on the eastern boundary of BESS equipment. Light poles will have a maximum height of approximately 10.6m.

The proposed collector substation will be located in the southern section of the Subject Site, directly adjacent to the existing Gisborne Zone Substation. The collector substation will have a maximum height of approximately 7m and be adjacent to two lightning masts measuring up to 21.4m in height.

The connection cabling between the Project's collector substation and the adjacent Gisborne substation will be installed entirely underground using standard open-cut trenching, as the direct route avoids third-party private land. The construction methodology begins with site surveying and utility mapping, followed by the mechanical excavation of a trench to a safe depth of 0.9-1.2 meters. High-voltage cables are then installed within heavy-duty conduits, layered with thermal bedding sand, mechanical protection slabs, and highly visible electrical warning tape. To complete the works, the trench is backfilled, compacted, and the surface reinstated to its original condition, allowing for final cable jointing, terminations at both substations, and pre-energisation testing.

Additionally, the construction phase of the Project will involve temporary civil works and the installation of a temporary laydown area adjacent to the O&M building (see Figure 3-3).

4.2 Access

The Project features two new accessways: a primary accessway for construction and operations to the north of the Subject Site off Allison Lane; and a secondary emergency only accessway towards the southern end of the Subject Site off Black Forest Drive. Both access points will be five meters in width.

The proposed new primary accessway connecting to Allison Lane is in the vicinity of an existing driveway to the private property to the north. The Project will have no direct impacts on this existing accessway.

The design includes widening of the existing Allison Lane / Black Forest Drive intersection to facilitate construction vehicles.

Internally, access roads with a standardised width of five metres will be constructed to provide access throughout the fenced facility.

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4.3 Fencing

The proposed BESS and collector substation will be enclosed by a chain link security fence at a height of 3.2m. A set of sliding gates for vehicles will be included at each entry point across the internal access roads to facilitate vehicular access to the BESS and substation. This includes an access gate located at the primary access point from Allison Lane, an access gate at the emergency access point off Black Forest Drive, and an access gate along the internal roadway to provide access to the substation area at the southern end of the Subject Site.

4.4 Signage

One business identification sign will be installed at the primary site access point on Allison Lane.

The dimensions of the business identification sign will be 2m (width) by approximately 1.5m (height), totalling 3sqm, and will sit 1.7m above the ground. The sign will be non-reflective and not be illuminated, electric or animated.

The signage dimensions and business details to be displayed are specified in detail within the signage plan submitted as part of this application.

4.5 Construction

The construction phase is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2027 and last approximately 12-15 months. There will be four stages, including procurement, site preparation, equipment delivery and installation, and commissioning and testing.

Further information is to be provided in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be prepared prior to commencement of construction.

4.6 Operations

The Project is expected to be in operation for approximately 20 years. The BESS facilities are designed to operate automatically without the need for dedicated staff to be stationed on-site at all times. It is anticipated that approximately seven full-time personnel will be employed annually across Victoria for incidental works to support the ongoing operation of the facility. Staff will access the site periodically to undertake inspections and maintenance, with no more than three employees expected to be present on-site at any given time.

Vehicles which access the site during the operations phase are expected to be mostly light vehicles with occasional heavy vehicles required for instances of major maintenance.

An onsite Operations and Maintenance (O&M) facility has been proposed for staff, serving as the central hub for operation, monitoring and maintenance of the facility.

The Project is expected to be decommissioned following the 20-year operational phase, at which time the land will be returned to its previous state. This will involve the removal of all above ground non-operational equipment and rehabilitation of disturbed areas, in consultation with the landholder.

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5 Legislative and policy context

The follow section details the legislation and policies applicable to this report (refer to Table 3).

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Table 3 Government strategies, policies and plans

Legislation, strategies, policies and guidelines	Description	Relevance to Project
Federal		
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) (Cth.)	The EPBC Act defines Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) and sets out requirements for natural resource and environmental management in Australia, including for the protection of threatened species, and threatened ecological communities. Under the EPBC Act, an action (i.e. a proposed project) will require approval from the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment if the action “has, will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on a MNES”.	An Ecological Impact Assessment was undertaken by Aurecon to inform this application and confirm obligations under the EPBC Act. The assessment did not identify any MNES during the field survey in October 2024. According to the Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) search undertaken for the Subject Site in November 2024, one protected fauna under the EPBC Act, namely Gang Gang Cockatoo, was modelled to occur within the Subject Site. A significant impact assessment ¹ under the EPBC Act was undertaken to determine the likelihood and extent of impacts of the Project on the species. The assessment concluded that the Project is unlikely to result in a significant impact on Gang Gang Cockatoo.
Draft 2026 Integrated System Plan (ISP) (Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO))	The Draft 2026 ISP presents the roadmap for the National Electricity Market (NEM's) transition towards a more reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy future by 2050. The ISP sets out an ‘optimal development path’ (ODP) for generation, storage and network investments for at least the next 20 years	The Draft ISP ‘step change scenario’ forecasts a requirement for 5.9GW of utility scale storage capacity in Victoria by 2028-29. At present, the operational, under construction or otherwise committed BESS total provides approximately half of the forecast requirement. The Project, proposed to operate at an installed capacity of up to 188.6MW/501MWh, provides a key contribution to the targeted delivery of utility scale storage.
Electricity Statement of Opportunities 2025 (AEMO)	Each year, AEMO publishes the Electricity Statement of Opportunities (ESOO) to provide technical and market data for a 10-year outlook. In the 2025 ESOO, on-time and in-full delivery of committed, anticipated and federal and state government supported generation projects, as well as anticipated and actionable transmission developments and the coordination of embedded consumer resources, would reduce reliability risks.	The Project will contribute to meeting electricity reliability standards through providing reliable storage.

¹ A significant impact is defined under the EPBC Act as an impact which is ‘important, notable, or of consequence, having regard to its context or intensity’

Legislation, strategies, policies and guidelines	Description	Relevance to Project
State		
<i>Climate Change Act 2017</i> and subsequent plan and strategies: - Renewable Energy Action Plan (DELWP [now Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action], 2017) - Victoria's Climate Change Strategy (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, 2026-2030)	The <i>Climate Change Act 2017</i> and <i>Victoria's Climate Change Strategy (2026-2030)</i> establish the long-term target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The Act sets five-yearly interim targets for achieving net-zero emissions. Updates to the Act in 2024 have included setting in law the state's emissions reduction targets of: 28–33% below 2005 levels by 2025 45–50% below 2005 levels by 2030 75–80% below 2005 levels by 2035. - Net zero emissions by 2045 – five years earlier than Victoria's previous commitment The Renewable Energy Action Plan (2017) outlines the Government's vision for a strong, sustainable and locally based renewable energy industry in Victoria.	The Project supports the policy objectives of the <i>Climate Change Act 2017</i> as it facilitates the development of renewable energy supply infrastructure. It will support the transition to a low-carbon economy by providing energy storage capacity that enables renewable energy generation and contributes to greenhouse emission reductions.
Plan for Victoria (2025)	The Plan for Victoria provides a long-term strategic framework which sets out the state-wide vision for Victoria from 2025 through to 2050. - Plan for Victoria provides a set of short and long-term actions to track progress towards the state's vision, including for renewable energy infrastructure and regional economic development. - Action 22 seeks to support regional Victoria's leading role in the state's energy transition in line with the Victorian Transmission Plan (2025).	The Project aligns with the Plan for Victoria by supporting the state's transition to renewable energy. The Project is consistent with actions and strategies provided by the Plan for Victoria which support regional economic development opportunities.
Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VicGrid 2023) and subsequent plans including: - Victorian Transmission Plan (VicGrid, 2025) - Victorian Government's Renewable Energy Zones (Proposed)	The Victorian Government has proposed new Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) through the Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP). REZs were selected through a strategic land use assessment which considered a number of factors including abundance of wind and sun, and appropriateness of development from a land use and environmental perspective.	Although not located within a REZ, the Project supports the objectives of the VTP by facilitating the operation of infrastructure supporting the renewable energy transition. The Project promotes the long-term interests of electricity consumers, particularly in relation to reliability and security of the national electricity system.

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Legislation, strategies, policies and guidelines	Description	Relevance to Project
Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (Country Fire Authority, 2025) (CFA Guidelines)	The CFA Guidelines establish the risk assessment methodology and key emergency and safety mitigation for renewable energy installations, including BESS.	■ The Project has been assessed against the CFA Guidelines (refer to accompanying Risk Management Plan) and makes several recommendations for technical and management safeguards to aid in compliance with the Guidelines, to reduce the residual risk such that no identified hazard poses a significant risk to the community, the Project or the surrounding area. ■ Further study and planning will be undertaken per the Guidelines in the detailed design phase.
National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005	The National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005 provides a legislative framework for the management and regulation of the electricity supply industry in Victoria. Its primary purpose is to promote the efficient generation, distribution, and supply of electricity, while ensuring reliability and sustainability for consumers and the environment. Specifically, the Act facilitates critical network upgrades and infrastructure connections needed to ensure power reliability in Victoria.	The Project seeks to support these outcomes by providing increased network stability and overall lower electricity prices for Victorians.
Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017 (Vic.)	The <i>Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017</i> supports the development of projects and initiatives to encourage investment, employment and technology development in Victoria in relation to renewable electricity generation, energy storage and electricity generation in the offshore area of Victoria. Importantly, it provides the following energy storage targets: ■ at least 2.6 gigawatt (GW) of energy storage capacity by 2030 ■ at least 6.3 GW by 2035. These energy storage targets include short and medium duration energy storage systems, allowing energy to be moved around during the day to meet demand and to be supplied through longer duration imbalances.	The short and medium duration energy storage targets which this Act seeks to support specifically include grid-scale batteries of the type proposed by the Project.

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Legislation, strategies, policies and guidelines	Description	Relevance to Project
Local		
Macedon Ranges Shire Council Counting Down to Zero Net Emissions for Council Operations Plan 2022-2030 (Macedon Ranges Shire Council, 2022)	The Counting Down to Zero Plan outlines a series of tangible initiatives across Council-managed facilities and operations to reduce the Macedon Ranges Shire Council carbon footprint. It targets zero net emissions by 30 June 2030, outlining more than 30 recommended actions for Council to reduce, avoid or offset its existing emissions while also influencing key stakeholders to do the same. The plan focuses on several key actions, including increasing generation and supply of power through installing solar panels and battery power storage at Council-owned buildings, and potentially through larger renewable energy generation projects.	While not directly tied to the carbon footprint of Council facilities or operations, the Project would be broadly consistent with the focus areas and key actions of the plan in seeking to support battery power storage and larger scale renewable energy projects within the Macedon Ranges area.
Shaping the Ranges 2025-2035	The Shaping the Ranges Plan (The Plan) provides Macedon Ranges Shire Council's long-term plan to guide Council actions over the next 10 years. The Plan identifies Council's priorities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the context of the declared climate emergency.	The Project provides critical energy-storage infrastructure to support the transition to renewable energy and subsequent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.
Climate Emergency Plan 2023-2030	This Climate Emergency Plan (the Plan) aims to accelerate action in the Macedon Ranges Shire to address climate change. The Plan guides future council activities to address climate change and sets out opportunity for community members to take action. The Plan includes a total of 56 actions, across the six themes of Nurturing Nature, Climate Ready Communities, Post Fossil Fuels, Health and Wellbeing, Waste and the Circular Economy, and Response and Recovery.	The Project plays an enabling role in the broader integration of renewable generation to the grid, through its function to improve grid reliability, and reducing reliance on fossil-fuels.
Biodiversity Strategy 2018	The Biodiversity Strategy establishes Macedon Ranges Shire Council's vision for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity values across the Shire. The Strategy emphasises the unique and highly significant qualities of the region's biodiversity and natural environment.	The Project is located in an area considered to be occasionally utilised by the EPBC Act listed Gang-gang Cockatoo for foraging. However, no significant impact on the species is determined to occur as a result of the Project. Impact on the existing habitat corridor for Gang-gang Cockatoo has been minimised through avoiding treed vegetation where practical, and through careful design and siting of Project infrastructure.

6 Planning Context and Controls

The Project is subject to the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme. The following sections identify the planning permit requirements and conditions applicable to the Project and provide a summarised response against the decision guidelines under each of the relevant planning controls. A detailed response to each decision guideline applicable to the Project is provided at Appendix C.

6.1 Land Use Definitions

The proposed BESS is a 'Utility installation' for "*Land used to transmit, distribute or store power*" under Clause 73.03 (Land Use Terms) of the Planning Scheme.

6.2 Municipal Planning Strategy

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is a key component of the Planning Scheme for each LGA. The MPS sets out the long-term vision, objectives and strategies for future development, and includes policy direction that reflects the diverse land uses and development intensity in the municipality. These policy directions are general in nature and rely on the application of the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) to achieve the broad strategic direction of the MPS.

The Macedon Ranges MPS outlines the strategic directions for settlement, environmental and landscape values, environmental risks and amenity, natural resource management, built environment and heritage, housing, economic development, transport, infrastructure and gaming for the Macedon Ranges Shire.

The strategic directions listed below are relevant to the Project:

- Clause 02.03-2 (Environmental and landscape values)
- Clause 02.03-3 (Environmental risks and amenity)
- Clause 02.03-5 (Built environment and heritage)
- Clause 02.03-7 (Economic development)

An assessment against the MPS is provided at Table 4.

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Table 4 Assessment of the Project against the Municipal Planning Strategy

MPS Strategic Direction	Relevance to Project
Clause 02.03-2 (Environmental and landscape values) Strategic directions for biodiversity are to: ■ Conserve the biodiversity values of the shire by protecting, enhancing, managing and restoring indigenous vegetation and fauna habitat. ■ Enhance the significant and sensitive environmental assets including Mount Macedon, forested areas around Woodend, the Cobaw Ranges and Special Water Supply Catchments shown on the Rural Framework Plan at Clause 02.04 as Living Forests. ■ Establish the Cobaw Biolink to connect areas of significant vegetation between the Macedon and Cobaw Ranges.	The Project would have limited impacts on native vegetation and landscape values. Design of the Project has sought to avoid and minimise impacts to native vegetation wherever possible. A detailed ecological assessment has been undertaken to identify any threatened or rare indigenous vegetation and significant fauna habitat. No protected flora or fauna species were identified to be present during the assessment or anticipated to heavily rely on the impacted area. The design has sought to conserve the biodiversity values of the area by avoiding large trees where practical when locating the design components for the BESS, taking into consideration functional requirements and other relevant policies and design standards including the CFA guidelines.
Clause 02.03-3 (Environmental risks and amenity) Strategic directions for environmental risks are to: ■ Avoid increasing bushfire risk and minimise exposure of people to bushfire risk. ■ Ensure the use and development of land prone to flooding minimises the consequences of inundation. ■ Discourage further use and development of land that is prone to flooding. ■ Reduce the impact of use or development on soil erosion and salinity in the shire and the region. ■ Maintain the amenity of the areas interfacing with industrial and commercial uses and the quality of the rural environment.	Bushfire risks and mitigation measures (including the requirement and specification of firebreaks) have been considered in the design and siting for the Project to comply with the CFA Guidelines. The Project does not face any specific flooding risk, nor is it considered likely to impact soil erosion or salinity (refer to the Hydrology Assessment (Aurecon, 2026) included as part of this application).
Clause 02.03-5 (Built environment and heritage) Strategic directions for urban design, built form and neighbourhood character are to: ■ Protect and enhance the distinctive character and form of the shire's towns and rural settlements. ■ Facilitate industrial and commercial development that is attractive and has a positive impact on the amenity of the area. ■ Promote development that respects the rural character and high landscape values of the municipality. ■ Encourage subdivision in residential zones that responds positively to site features, integrates well with the neighbourhood, provides a functional environment and achieves energy efficient and environmentally sensitive layouts. ■ Protect and enhance the rural character of the township entrances and gateways.	The Project would not detract from the character of Macedon or the amenity of the immediate area, given that it would not be located adjacent to any township or area of high landscape value. The Project would similarly not affect any township entrances or gateways.

Clause 02.03-7 (Economic development)

The majority of Macedon Ranges residents are employed within the shire, or in the Melbourne and Hume LGAs. Local industrial areas are an important source of employment. There is a need to create further local employment opportunities within townships and reduce the reliance on commuting.

Strategic directions for economic development are to:

- Encourage economic development provided it does not compromise environmental values, particularly in Special Water Supply Catchment areas.
- Increase local commercial and industrial employment opportunities.
- Encourage retail development within activity centres consistent with their role in the settlement hierarchy with the majority of retail directed to the core of regional centres and district towns as identified in the shire's Strategic Framework Plan at Clause 02.04.
- Encourage development that meets the needs of residents and visitors, and reduces the leakage of economic activity to nearby areas, particularly in terms of basic grocery supply, medical provision and education.
- Avoid out of centre retail development.

The Project would encourage local employment opportunities throughout construction and operation.

It is estimated that 277 positions will be created across all stages of the Project. This includes 137 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs during the construction phase and approximately 140 FTEs during the operational phase.

It is estimated that the Project will generate a total output increase of \$88 million for the Victorian economy during construction (or \$22 million for the broader Loddon Campaspe Region), and a rolling contribution of \$10 million per annum for the Victorian economy during operation (or approximately \$2.5 million per annum for the Loddon Campaspe Region).

Refer to the Social and Economic Impact Assessment (Aurecon, 2026) included as part of this application for further details.

6.3 Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) sets out the strategic policies that guide land use and development decisions at the State, regional and local levels.

The Project is consistent with the PPF. Relevant topics include Biodiversity (Clause 12.01); Amenity, Human Health and Safety (Clause 13.07); Economic Development (Clause 17); Energy Infrastructure (Clause 19.01); Climate Change and Environmental Risks (Clause 13.01; Clause 13.02; Clause 13.04; Clause 13.05; Clause 13.06); and Water Catchment Planning and Management (Clause 14.02-1S). A consolidated response to the PPF is provided below:

- The submitted design for the Project has been developed based on a comprehensive assessment of the existing environment at the Subject Site and its surroundings, ensuring that impacts are minimised. Notably, the ecological survey that informed the Ecological Impact Assessment accompanying this report identified no protected flora or fauna species at the Subject Site that would be affected by the Project.
- The Project has been carefully sited away from existing townships and locations of significant environmental, landscape and amenity values. The Subject Site between two major transport corridors and the existing Gisborne Zone Substation (similar utility use) will allow the proposed BESS to visually integrate into its surrounding environment, while ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses (roads and utility). The proposed design has minimised impacts on treed vegetation to the greatest extent possible by utilising areas dominated by understorey weeds, thereby further reducing Project impacts on local amenity.
- The Subject Site allows the Project to maximise use of established infrastructure for connection with the grid without the need for extensive transmission lines. Additionally, the new access points connecting to Allison Lane and Black Forest Drive have been respectively designed to minimise disruptions to the existing traffic flow and ensure the safe operation of the road.
- The Project represents direct investment into the municipality's energy market which would contribute to diversifying the region's economy, creating local employment opportunities, and upskilling the local workforce.
- The Project will form an integral part of the local energy supply network, delivering enhanced stability and resilience in power supply while lowering energy costs. By storing excess energy during periods of low

demand and releasing when needed, the proposed BESS will help mitigate the necessity for additional power generation capacity to meet the ever-increasing peak demand levels, thereby contributing to the transition to a low-carbon economy.

- The Project will manage natural hazards associated with climate change and bushfire risks to ensure that the proposed BESS enhances climate resilience while safeguarding public safety. The proposed infrastructure will comply with all applicable design conditions concerning bushfire, including the CFA Guidelines, as outlined in the accompanying Hazard and Risk Assessment Report.
- Several Designated Water Supply Catchment Areas are located around the Subject Site, with the eastern boundary of the Rosslynne Reservoir (Jacksons Creek) Designated Water Supply Catchment Area intersecting the northwestern portion of the site. No works associated with the BESS are proposed in this area. As detailed in the submitted Hydrology Report, the potential impacts to surface water and groundwater associated with the Project are generally considered to be low. Key impact mitigation measures can be incorporated into a CEMP to manage drainage on site. A Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) will also be required to adequately address drainage on site post-construction.

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6.4 Zones

6.4.1 Clause 35.06 - Rural Conservation Zone

The Subject Site is within the Rural Conservation Zone Schedule 1 (RCZ1) (refer to Figure 6-1).

Pursuant to Clause 35.06 of the Planning Scheme, the purpose of the RCZ is as follows (selected as relevant):

- *To conserve the values specified in a schedule to this zone.*
- *To protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.*
- *To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.*
- *To encourage development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality.*

The RCZ1 identifies the following conservation values (selected as relevant):

- *To ensure that the existing forest mosaic is protected and that any development does not compromise native vegetation, but provides for its enhancement.*
- *To protect the unique flora, fauna and landscapes that are fundamental to the character and biodiversity of the area from inappropriate land use and development.*
- *To protect the conservation and landscape values of adjoining public land.*
- *To ensure that the character and landscape values of the area are protected.*

Under the RCZ1, the Project requires a planning permit to:

- Use land for a Utility installation (Section 2 use) pursuant to Clause 35.06-1 (Table of uses).
- Construct a building or carry out works for a Utility installation (Section 2 use) under Clause 35.06-5 (Buildings and Works)
- Construct a building within the following setbacks:
 - 100m from a Transport Zone 2
 - 100m of a dwelling
 - 100m of waterway
- Undertake earthworks that change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary, or which increase the discharge of saline groundwater, as stipulated at Clause 35.06-5 (Buildings and works).

The Project will undertake earthworks during construction of hardstand areas. Any changes to rate of flow or discharge point of saline groundwater as a result of these works are subject to detailed design and are to be confirmed following submission of this application. Notwithstanding this, an assessment of proposed earthworks is provided below.

The proposed earthworks are consistent with the objectives and decision guidelines under the RCZ1, on the basis that the earthworks will be contained within the Project footprint which occupies the southwestern portion of the Subject Site, where an infestation with Gorse (declared noxious weed) was identified. This location avoids the higher-value canopy vegetation towards the northern portion of the Subject Site, allowing the Project to minimise impacts to trees and native vegetation, thereby preserving the existing forest mosaic within the RCZ1, while minimising impacts on the existing landscape.

The Subject Site does not intersect any value or listing of historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat or cultural values. The proposed earthworks are for the construction of a hardstand area on a pre-existing flat topography, and it is not anticipated that the works would impact on the stability of land. The proposed earthworks have been carefully designed to avoid existing underground infrastructure.

An assessment against the relevant decision guidelines of the RCZ1 is provided in Appendix C.

Clause 35.06-7 specifies that signage requirements are at Clause 52.05 and that the RCZ is subject to Signage Category 4- sensitive areas.

Exemption from notice and review

This application pursues planning approval under Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development). Decision requirements under Sections 64(1), (2) and (3), and the review rights of section 82(1) of the P&E Act therefore do not apply (refer to Section 6.6.5). While there is no exemption for notice and review under the RCZ, Clause 53.22 supersedes review requirements articulated under the Zone.

With respect to the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a) and (d) of the Act, Aurecon submits that the giving of notice is not warranted on the basis that:

- The proposed buildings and works would not cause material detriment having regard to key matters under the Decision Guidelines below.
 - The proposed buildings and works support the intent of the Rural Conservation Zone to protect the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.
 - The Proposal has been well integrated into the surrounding landscape and sited in a location which is effectively screened from major roads and residences, as detailed in the associated Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
 - Noise to sensitive receptors is managed through the construction of noise walls around key infrastructure.

Furthermore, it is noted that community engagement has been conducted by the Proponent, including door knocks and letters issued to residents in close proximity to the Project inviting them to a local drop-in session (refer to the Consultation Summary Report (Aurecon, 2026) included as part of this application for further detail).

6.4.2 Clause 36.04 - Transport Zone

The Project features an emergency accessway connecting to Black Forest Drive in the Transport Zone 2 Principal road network (TRZ2). The purpose of the Transport Zone is as follows:

- *To provide for an integrated and sustainable transport system.*
- *To identify transport land use and land required for transport services and facilities.*
- *To provide for the use and development of land that complements, or is consistent with, the transport system or public land reservation.*
- *To ensure the efficient and safe use of transport infrastructure and land comprising the transport system.*

Under the TRZ2, the Project requires a planning permit to:

- Use land for a Utility installation (Section 2 use) under Clause 36.04-1 (Table of uses) to the TRZ
- Construct or carry out works for a Utility installation (Section 2 use)

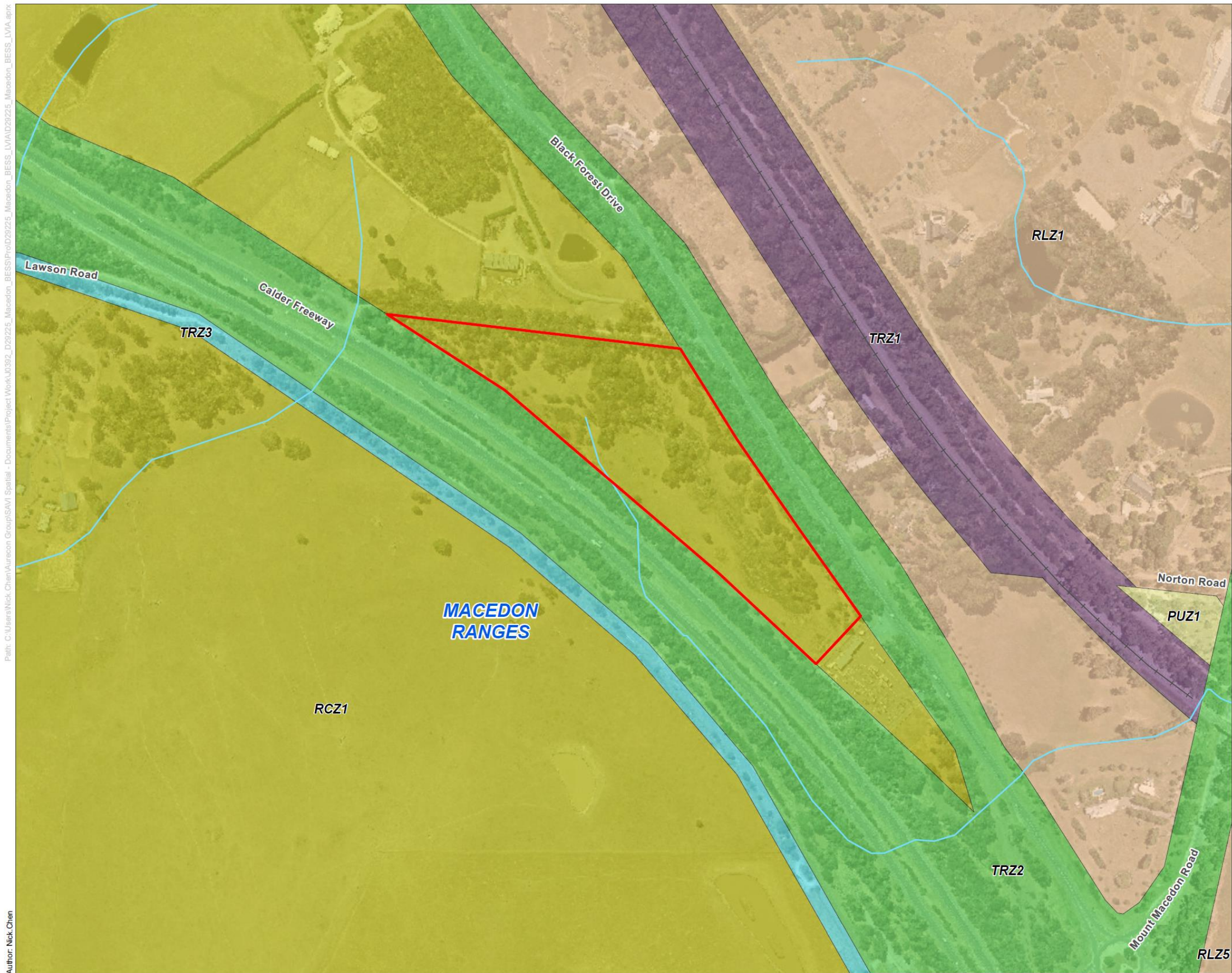
A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) has been prepared for the Project and accompanies this application. A summary of the findings within this report is provided at Section 7.4.

The Project has been designed to integrate with the existing road network. The proposed new accessway from Black Forest Drive will serve as secondary access to the Subject Site during an emergency only. The TIA notes that it is a requirement of the CFA Guidelines for two accesses to be provided at a BESS facility, to ensure the efficient ingress and egress of emergency vehicles when required. The TIA concludes that the Project will not adversely affect the safe operation of adjacent roads.

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Author: Nick Chen



aurecon



Legend

- Railways
- Watercourse
- Local Government Area
- Subject Site

Planning zones

- PUZ1 - Public Use Zone (Service and Utility)
- RCZ - Rural Conservation Zone
- RLZ - Rural Living Zone
- TRZ1 - Transport Zone 1
- TRZ2 - Transport Zone 2
- TRZ3 - Transport Zone 3

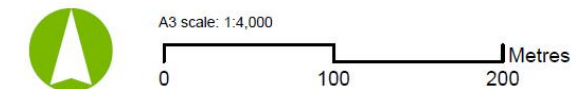
Basemap: Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Data source: Aurecon (2025), DELWP (2025)

Date: 12/06/2025

Version: 1

Macedon BESS
Planning Zones



Job No: P527802
Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Figure 6-1 Zoning map

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6.5 Overlays

The following overlays affect the Subject Site, as shown in Figure 6-2.

6.5.1 Clause 42.02 - Vegetation Protection Overlay

The Project intersects the Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 2 - Roadside Vegetation (VPO2) and Vegetation Protection Overlay Schedule 9 - Living Forest (VPO9). The purpose of the VPO is as follows:

- *To protect areas of significant vegetation.*
- *To ensure that development minimises loss of vegetation.*
- *To preserve existing trees and other vegetation.*
- *To recognise vegetation protection areas as locations of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance.*
- *To maintain and enhance habitat and habitat corridors for indigenous fauna.*
- *To encourage the regeneration of native vegetation.*

The Project requires a planning permit to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation not exempt under Clause 42.02-3 (Table of exemptions) within the VPO2; and any native vegetation within the VPO9. A detailed assessment against the decision guidelines of VPO2 and VPO9 is presented at Appendix C. A summary assessment is provided below.

Assessment summary

The proposed vegetation removal is consistent with the purpose and decision guidelines of the VPO, on the basis that no protected native vegetation or flora species are anticipated to be impacted by the Project, and impacts to native vegetation have been minimised as far as practicable. Specifically, the Project is located within a portion of the Subject Site comprising primarily land infested by Gorse (weed), and where the least native vegetation was identified. Access routes into the Subject Site have been carefully designed to minimise impacts to native vegetation and large trees where possible. Removal of unavoidable vegetation including in the road reserve along Black Forest Drive and Allison Lane, as well as within the proposed hardstand area, will still be required to enable construction. The extent of removal is resultant from extensive design refinements to ensure maximum retention.

A total of 2.406 ha of native vegetation has been proposed for removal for the Project, including ten (10) large trees in patches and one (1) small scattered tree. Removal of native vegetation will be undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DEECA, 2025) (the Guidelines) including any offset requirements.

The ecological survey conducted between 28 May to 11 June 2025 recorded no protected flora or fauna species within the Subject Site and surrounds. Treed habitat along Black Forest Drive was assessed to provide habitat corridor for the EPBC Act listed Gang Gang Cockatoo, for which presence was last recorded 1 km to the north of the Subject Site in 2018. A significant impact assessment on Gang Gang Cockatoo under the EPBC Act was undertaken for the Project and concluded that no significant impact on the species is anticipated. Impact on the existing habitat corridor has been minimised through avoidance and mitigation measures during early stages of the design.

Given the nature of the works, the limited extent of earthworks required, and the predominantly flat topography of the Subject Site (with a ground slope of less than 20 per cent), it is not anticipated that the proposed removal would have any adverse impact on land stability, soil erosion, slippage or salinisation. Further, the Subject Site has not been identified to have scientific, nature conservation or cultural significance, and any amenity impacts have been minimised through design.

Bushfire risk and mitigation measures (including the requirement and specification of firebreaks) will comply with the CFA Guidelines. This is detailed in the accompanying Risk Management Plan.

In addition to the above, the VPO requires consideration of the following decision guidelines relating to a schedule to the overlay. Specifically:

- *The statement of the nature and significance of the vegetation to be protected and the vegetation protection objective contained in a schedule to this overlay.*
- *Any other matters specified in a schedule to this overlay.*

An assessment against the above listed matters under each schedule to the VPO applicable to the Project is provided below.

Vegetation Projection Overlay Schedule 2 – Roadside Vegetation

The VPO2 provides the following Vegetation protection objective:

- *To protect areas of significant remnant vegetation located along roadsides throughout the municipality.*

The VPO2 provides the following Statement of nature and significance of vegetation to be protected:

- *Roadside vegetation plays an important role as a wildlife habitat. Roadside areas are important locations of rare, threatened and endangered flora and fauna species. It is important to maintain and enhance habitat and corridor requirements for indigenous fauna.*

Roadside vegetation also determines the quality of travel experience and contributes to the visual quality of the area.

Tracts of remnant vegetation are fragmented in the area and roadside areas represent one of the largest reserves of native vegetation species.

Areas mapped are considered significant because one or more of the following apply:

- *The vegetation comprises important biodiversity links and corridors.*
- *The areas consolidate remnant corridors.*
- *Occurrence of rare or threatened species or communities.*

Summary Assessment Against Decision Guidelines (VPO2)

During construction, the proposed alignments for the accessways will be cleared. The vegetation proposed for removal is the minimum extent required to achieve site access requirements and relevant bushfire protection standards, as stipulated under the CFA Guidelines (refer to accompanying Risk Management Plan).

Construction works for the Project will be in accordance with a CEMP which specifies mitigation measures, including the need for temporary fencing, to protect roadside vegetation in the immediate surroundings of the construction site.

Vegetation Projection Overlay Schedule 9 – Living Forest

The VPO9 provides the following Vegetation protection objective:

- *To protect and enhance all remnant native vegetation for its role in biodiversity, natural resource management, and landscape and character.*

The VPO9 provides the following Statement of nature and significance of vegetation to be protected:

- *Council's vision for the areas around Woodend, Macedon and the Cobaw Ranges is protecting and enhancing the existing forest mosaic. This native vegetation is considered valuable for its environmental role, including its contribution to biodiversity, and for the part it plays in the character and amenity of the Shire.*

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Assessment Summary Against Decision Guidelines (VPO9)

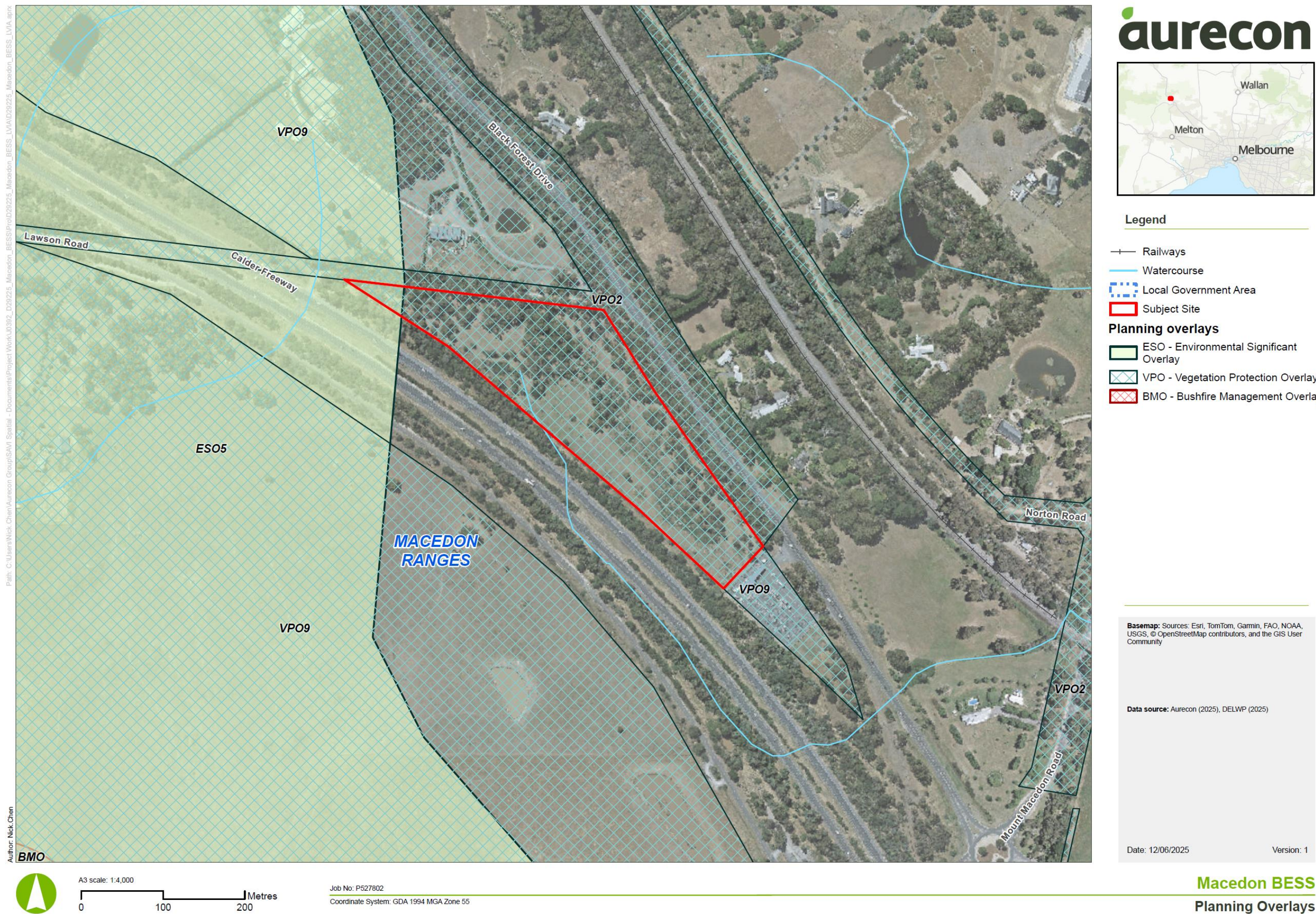
The Project has sought to preserve the 'Living Forest' vision of Council by strategically locating buildings and works in areas of the Subject Site where the least native vegetation and high value trees were identified. Specifically, the Project is positioned primarily in an area heavily infested with weeds, and away from the lush continuous canopy in the north of the subject site. The accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment has concluded that the vegetation proposed for removal does not represent significant value at a regional level.

6.5.2 Clause 42.01 - Environmental Significance Overlay - Schedule 5 (ESO5)

The Subject Site intersects the ESO5 towards the northeastern corner. No activity has been proposed in this area, and therefore no further consideration is warranted under the ESO5.

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6.6 Particular Provisions

The following provisions of the Planning Scheme apply to the Subject Site.

6.6.1 Clause 52.05 – Signs

Clause 52.05 seeks to oversee the development of land for signs and related structures. It ensures that signs are consistent with the area's visual environment, considering both current and future characteristics, while avoiding visual clutter and disorder.

Sign requirements in the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ1) are classified as Category 4 – Sensitive areas. Category 4 signage areas operate to provide for unobtrusive signs in areas requiring strong amenity control.

Pursuant to Clause 52.05-14, a permit is required for a business identification sign, subject to the condition that the total display area to each premises must not exceed 3 sqm, otherwise the sign is prohibited.

The Planning Scheme does not provide additional conditions or exemptions under a Schedule to Clause 52.05. Therefore, the Project is assessed against decision guidelines under the parent control (Clause 52.05).

Exemption from notice and review.

An application for a sign is exempt from the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the P&E Act.

Assessment Summary

The Project seeks the display of a business identification sign at the site entrance on Allison Lane. The sign will be self-supporting, used solely to identify the facility, the owner and the operator. The sign will feature a business logo, contact number and other key Project information.

The dimensions of the business identification sign will be 2m (width) by approximately 1.5m (height), totalling 3sqm, and will sit 1.7m above the ground. The sign will be non-reflective and not illuminated, electric or animated.

A detailed assessment against the Decision Guidelines under Clause 52.05-8 is provided in Appendix C.

6.6.2 Clause 52.06 – Car Parking

Clause 52.06 addresses the safety and efficiency of land use and development by requiring the provision of sufficient car parking spaces to land users based on anticipated demand and local conditions. The Clause also considers the design, location and amenity of parking spaces.

Pursuant to Clause 52.06, the provision for car parking is required prior to the commencement of a new use, including the Project. Whilst the number of car parking spaces required for a Utility installation is not defined, under Clause 52.06-6 (Number of car parking spaces required for other uses), sufficient car parking must be provided to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority prior to the commencement of a new use.

The proposed BESS and its associated infrastructure are designed to operate automatically, meaning dedicated staff do not need to be stationed on-site at all times. Therefore, on-site parking will only be necessary to accommodate incidental repairs, routine inspections and maintenance visits by authorised personnel. Staff will access the site periodically for inspections and maintenance activities with up to three full-time staff on-site during business hours.

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Summary Assessment

The accompanying TIA concludes that the Project will require limited workers on site once operational. Vehicles accessing the site will be mostly light vehicles (e.g. passenger cars, utility vans) with some heavy vehicles required for major maintenance.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposed three parking spaces is sufficient. The accompanying TIA is discussed in further detail at Section 0.

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6.6.3 Clause 52.17 – Native Vegetation

The Subject Site contains native vegetation characterised as EVC 128 Grassy Forest. The proposed works have been strategically positioned where minimal trees and native vegetation is present. Following consideration of relevant bushfire policy and design standards, however (including requirements for a firebreak and access track specifications under the CFA guidelines), the Project will still necessitate the removal of 2.406 ha of native vegetation. This amount comprises 2.377 ha of native vegetation in patches (including 10 large trees in patches), and 0.028 ha of scattered trees (i.e. one small scattered tree).

Clause 52.17 seeks 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 Guidelines, which provides that any native vegetation removed under Clause 52.17 must be offset by the same general habitat unit. In the context of the Project, an offset of 1.4330 general habitat units would be required. A desktop search of the Native Vegetation Credit Register (NVCR) has shown that the required offset is currently available for purchase (DEECA 2024). Details on the offset arrangements are provided in the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted alongside this application.

The Guidelines also provide for consideration of potential impacts on vegetation of cultural heritage importance, riparian habitat, waterbodies and groundwater quality. Given that the Project is not within a designated area of cultural heritage significance (CHS), impacts on vegetation of cultural heritage importance will not occur. The Subject Site also does not intersect any known riparian ecosystem. Groundwater quality impact by the Project will be negligible due to works not requiring deep excavation.

6.6.4 Clause 52.29 – Land adjacent to the principal road network

Clause 52.29 aims to ensure appropriate access to the Principal road network or planned future roads within the Principal road network.

The Project requires a planning permit to authorise the new emergency accessway connecting to Black Forest Drive in the TRZ2 (Principal road network).

As detailed in the accompanying TIA, the Project will not significantly interfere with the existing flow of traffic on Black Forest Drive, nor affect the operation or safety of the existing road.

The Project is consistent with the objectives and decision guidelines under Clause 52.29.

6.6.5 Clause 53.22 – Significant Economic Development

The Project seeks planning approval from the Minister for Planning via the Development Facilitation Program under Clause 53.22.

The purpose of Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development is:

- *To prioritise and facilitate the planning, assessment and delivery of Proposals 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.*

Clause 53.22 applies to this application as the following tests are met:

- This application is classified as a Category 1 application under Table 1 of Clause 53.22-1.
 - Aurecon notes that under Category 1 applications, written advice from the Chief Executive Officer or delegate of Invest Victoria is not required for a proposed utility installation.
- The conditions outlined in Table 2 are met as the application is for a utility installation used to store electricity if the installed capacity is 1 megawatt or greater.

Exemption from notice and review

An application under any provision of this planning scheme is exempt from the decision requirements of sections 64(1), (2) and (3), and the review rights of sections 82(1) of the Act.

Summary Assessment

The Project is eligible under Clause 53.22 as a Utility installation that stores electricity and with an installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater.

All application requirements under Clause 53.22-3 have been met.

Before deciding on an application, the Responsible Authority must consider the Decision Guidelines outlined in Table 5, below.

Table 5 Assessment of the Proposal against Significant Economic Development Decision Guidelines

Decision Guidelines	Proposal Response
The purpose of the Clause	The Project supports the implementation of battery energy storage infrastructure that will help facilitate the transition to more sustainable electricity sources in Victoria. The Project supports the statewide transition to a low-carbon economy, providing public benefit to Victorians.
The views of the office of the Victorian Government Architect	The Project comprises a utility installation situated away from any built-up area and adjacent to existing energy infrastructure. As such, the Project does not warrant input from the office of the Victorian Government Architect.

6.7 Referral and Notice Requirements

Under Clause 53.10-1 of the Planning Scheme, an application for a Utility installation must be referred to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as there is no specific land use threshold distance provided in the Planning Scheme. This referral is required under Section 55 of the Act to ensure that the EPA reviews the potential environmental impacts of the proposed use and provides recommendations or conditions for mitigating any adverse effects.

Under Clause 66.02 (Use and Development Referrals) and Clause 66.03 (Referral of Permit Applications Under Other State Standard Provisions), the following referral requirements apply to the Project:

Clause	Applicable referral requirements	Referral Authority	Type of referral authority
Clause 66.02-2 (Native vegetation)	To remove, destroy or lop native vegetation under Clause 52.17 in the Detailed Assessment Pathway as defined in the Guidelines.	DEECA	Recommending referral authority
Clause 66.02-4 (Major electricity line or easement)	To construct a building or construct or carry out works on land within 60 metres of a major electricity transmission line (220 Kilovolts or more) or an electricity transmission easement.	AusNet	Determining referral authority
Clause 66.02-5 (Special water supply catchment area)	To use, and to construct a building or construct or carry out works, that are within a declared Special Area classified as a Special Water Supply Catchment Area under the Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 and which provides water to a domestic supply.	Southern Rural Water	Determining referral authority

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Clause 66.02-7 (Industry, utility installation or warehouse)	To use land and for buildings and works where the area for buildings and works will increase by more than 25% for a Utility Installation where the fire protection quantity is exceeded under the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2022. The Proposal exceeds UN Class 9 for the use of Lithium Ion. The application is therefore to be referred to WorkSafe Victoria as the Victorian WorkCover Authority.	WorkSafe Victoria	Determining referral authority
Clause 66.03	An application under Clause 52.29-4 to create or alter access to Black Forest Drive (declared arterial road) under the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i> .	Head, Transport for Victoria	Determining referral authority
Schedule to Clause 66.04	Any application to remove, destroy or lop vegetation within the VPO9.	Secretary to DEECA	Determining referral authority

Notice requirements are discussed in Section 6.4.1.

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7 Summary of Impact Assessments

7.1 Ecology

An Ecological Impact Assessment of the Project has been prepared, which accompanies this planning application. This assessment details that the Study Area comprises mostly native vegetation, in the form of Grassy Forest (EVC 128). The only part of the Study Area that does not support native vegetation is a dense infestation of noxious weeds, primarily Gorse in the south-east part of the Study Area.

The current design of the Macedon BESS Project would result in the removal of a total extent of 2.406 ha of native vegetation including:

- 2.377 ha of removal of native vegetation in patches (including 10 large trees in patches); and
- 0.028 ha of removal of scattered trees (ie. One small scattered tree).

The Ecological Impact Assessment identified the closest record of the EPBC Act listed Gang-gang Cockatoo being 1km north of the Study Area. Habitat in this location is connected to treed habitat in the Study Area via habitat corridors that exist along Black Forest Drive and the Vline rail line. As such, it is considered that Gang-gang Cockatoo are likely to occasionally utilise the Study Area and adjoining region for foraging.

The Project seeks the removal of 1.39 ha of potential foraging habitat for Gang-gang Cockatoo. However, the assessment concludes the proposed action is unlikely to result in a significant impact to Gang-gang Cockatoo. This conclusion was determined in consideration of the fact that the quantum of impacts to potential foraging habitat is minor/negligible compared to the abundance of less disturbed tree habitat in the region.

No FFG Act listed threatened species were recorded in the Study Area, and no FFG Act protected flora species were recorded within public land. As such, a Protected Flora Permit is unlikely to be required for the Project.

Appropriate offsets will be secured for the removal of native vegetation.

7.2 Arboricultural

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been prepared to provide an assessment 1483 trees associated with the impact area.

The AIA operates in accordance with *AS 4970 – 2009 Protection of trees on development sites*. As such, any intrusion into a Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) of 10% or less is categorised as minor and is likely to be

tolerable. An intrusion of greater than 10% into a TPZ is categorised as major and it must be demonstrated that a tree would remain viable if the tree is to be retained.

The assessment concludes that of the 1483 trees associated with the concept design:

- One (1) is of very high retention value. Tree 184 *Eucalyptus radiata* (Narrow Leaf Peppermint).
- Eleven (11) trees are of high retention value. All of which consist of either *Eucalyptus viminalis* or *Eucalyptus radiata*.
- Eighty-six (86) trees (represented by 85 tree data records) are of moderate retention value.
- One-hundred and seventy-eight (178) trees (represented by 145 tree data records) are of low or very low retention value.
- The remaining four (4) trees are recommended for removal due to health and or structure defects that deem them immediately hazardous to any adjacent work site or future infrastructure. Their health is considered poor-dead and their arboricultural value is very low.
- 1203 trees (represented by 977 tree data records) are recommended for retention within the current design. This is provided that the recommended tree protection measures are followed.

The AIA provides an analysis of the retention value and impact under the relevant standards of each tree assessed.

7.3 Noise

The Noise Impact Assessment indicates that with implementation of mitigation measures including the installation of a 4m noise wall at the boundary of the BESS, compliance can be demonstrated with the Noise Protocol. The noise assessment also accounted for the combined cumulative noise from the Project and the adjacent Gisborne Zone Substation.

Noise impacts during the construction phase are controlled by limiting works to day periods and a combination of training/equipment maintenance and community engagement. Construction vibration impacts are unlikely to result in cosmetic damage and human discomfort at the nearest receivers.

Low frequency noise was evaluated following the Low Frequency Guidelines, indicating a low likelihood of problematic low frequency noise at the nearest receivers. Accordingly, the Project complies with the relevant Regulations and is not expected to cause unreasonable acoustic impacts on the surrounding environment and landscape.

7.4 Traffic and Transport

Two access points are proposed for the site, with one primary access point from Allison Lane on the northern site boundary and the other, emergency-only access point on Black Forest Drive on the eastern boundary. The Allison Lane accessway will facilitate access in both construction and operational phases. Swept path analysis of the construction access shows it can accommodate two-way simultaneous movements of 19m semi-trailers. The TIA notes the site plans include widening of the existing Allison Lane / Black Forest Drive intersection to facilitate access by construction vehicles.

During the peak construction period, the project is estimated to generate 50 'in' light vehicle movements in the AM peak, 50 'out' light vehicle movements in the PM peak and 30 'in' and 30 'out' heavy vehicle trips per day across construction hours, outside the AM and PM road network peak hours. The increase in traffic volumes on the key access roads due to the construction phase vehicle movements is not expected to notably impact the operation of these roads. No construction worker vehicles will be parked on surrounding roads.

Traffic arrangements during construction can be addressed via a Construction Traffic Management Plan as part of the Construction Environment Management Plan.

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When the BESS is operational, regular traffic movements will be limited to a small team of staff visiting the site for periodic maintenance and inspection activities. This application proposes a total of three car parking spaces to provide sufficient servicing during the operational phase.

7.5 Surface Water and Groundwater

The Project is located in the upper Jacksons Creek catchment, with tributaries running to the west and east of the Project Area. There are two Declared Water Supply Catchments to the west and north east – Rosslynne Reservoir (Jacksons Creek) and Rosslynne Reservoir (Riddles Creek). The Assessment identified two unnamed waterways which flow from the north-western corner of the site towards Salty Creek and from the western boundary of the site towards Riddles Creek. As these waterways have the potential to carry sediment and contaminants to the surrounding creeks, a stormwater management plan to mitigate impacts from runoff is recommended.

The geology beneath the Project Area is comprised of bedrock, and Quaternary alluvial sediments are present in valleys. The depth to groundwater is relatively deep, with the watertable 15-20 m bgl so the risk of intersecting the watertable during construction is low, however groundwater could be shallower near the unnamed waterways. Groundwater salinity is also slightly brackish and consequently groundwater use is limited.

Potential impacts to surface and groundwater are generally considered to be low and key impact mitigation measures can be incorporated into a CEMP to manage drainage on site. A Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) will also be required to adequately address drainage on site post-construction.

The unnamed waterway which intersects the western section of the Subject Site is a designated waterway under the Water Act 1989 (despite its limited hydrological significance and the absence of any obvious waterway during site inspections) and therefore a permit is required from the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA to undertake works within 30m of the waterway. Ongoing consultation with Melbourne Water is being undertaken regarding the mitigation of impacts to the water course (refer to the Hydrology Assessment (Aurecon, 2026) included as part of this application for further detail).

7.6 Landscape and Visual Amenity

The LVIA Study Area has been defined within a radius of 1000m from the location of the proposed site.

The baseline assessment identified two Landscape Character Zones (LCZ); 'Rural Conservation' (LCZ1) and 'Rural Living' (LCZ2) within the Study Area. The BESS and ancillary structures introduce built form which is larger in extent than farm infrastructure but of a scale that does not influence outside of the Site. It presents a very low magnitude of change to the LCZ1, due to the retention of vegetation around the site, site clearance and built form. Given that this LCZ is widely dispersed, the proposed works will have a very low impact to the landscape character. Also, the Project is outside LCZ2 and screened via vegetation and will have a negligible impact on LCZ2.

An assessment of seven representative public viewpoints concluded that visual impact ratings during the construction phase would be negligible within most viewpoints while there would be low to very low impacts on adjacent rural residences. Furthermore, the visual impact ratings during the operational phase would be low to very low for rural residences and motorists on Black Forest Drive and negligible from other viewpoints assessed.

7.7 Risk

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The dangerous goods screening assessment concluded the following:

- Under Clause 53.10-1 of the Planning Scheme, an application for a utility installation must be referred to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) as there is no specific land use threshold distance provided in the Planning Scheme. This referral is required under Section 55 of Planning and Environment Act 1987 to ensure that the EPA reviews the potential environmental impacts of the proposed use and provides recommendations or conditions for mitigating any adverse effects.

- As the placard quantity thresholds for C1 combustible liquids (56kL of diesel) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) stored on site exceed the placard quantity thresholds as set out by Schedule 2 of the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2022, placards are required during construction. They should be located at every entrance to the buildings and rooms that store the batteries.

Bushfire Assessment

The Project is subject to the Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (CFA Guidelines), which stipulates specific design conditions and requirements for a renewable energy facility, including a BESS. The CFA Guidelines will be strictly adhered to across all stages of the Project, including the final design which will be submitted following this application.

Recommended safeguards in compliance with the CFA Guidelines are proposed to reduce residual risk such that no identified hazards will pose a significant risk. The Bushfire Assessment recommends that a safety management system is implemented prior to the commencement of commissioning or operation of the Project.

The Project is subject to several fire hazards, which include:

- During construction and operation: Risks of fire ignition at the Subject Site from project-related sources may include construction equipment such as bulldozers and excavators, activities involving hot works (such as grinding, welding, and cutting), electrical faults, motor vehicle exhaust systems, chemicals and flammable materials. Once a fire is started, it can be spread through the vegetated areas within and surrounding the Subject Site. It is noted that the Subject Site is not likely to generate a large fire run due to its physical footprint and vegetation arrangement.
- Risks in the broader landscape: Fire risk in the broader Macedon locality is assessed to be significant due to nearby forested areas and remnant vegetation, hilly terrain and limited road access. The hilly terrain facilitates air movement and can direct a fire to spread via existing understory vegetation, particularly highly flammable species such as Gorse. This fire could then be intensified due to dense canopy cover providing elevated fuel loads.
- Risks at the Subject Site: The Subject Site displays characteristics similar to its broader landscape, comprising a mix of unmanaged grassland, forest patches dominated by several eucalypt species, and shrubland comprising a dense Gorse infestation. The eastern boundary adjoins a substation with a hardstand firebreak, and access is via Black Forest Drive and Allison Lane. The highest risk areas on the site are known bushfire-prone forested areas to the north-west, where historical fires were recorded, as well as potential roadside ignitions along the Calder Highway or Black Forest Drive. The Project is situated in the lowest-risk portion of the Subject Site, being the area covered by grassland, where surrounding forest patches are located upslope of the site. Key fire risks at the Subject Site include the central areas of Gorse and unmanaged grassland, which are currently assessed to be in a low-fuel condition due to kangaroo grazing.

A 10m wide firebreak around the perimeter of the site, with access track, will be incorporated into the site layout. Additionally, the assessment recommends situating the facility in the lowest-risk grassland zone; designing infrastructure to resist ember attack; maintaining grass under 100 mm during fire danger periods; controlling invasive weeds; providing multiple emergency vehicle access routes; and equipping personnel with fire safety training. During construction and operation, risks from machinery, hot works, electrical faults, vehicle exhaust, accidental ignitions, and dangerous materials storage must be managed through permits, equipment checks, firefighting readiness, and adherence to CFA safety modules.

This Risk Management Plan concludes that the proposed BESS development would be provided with the required mitigations and controls to meet the model requirements of the CFA Guidelines. An Emergency Plan and Fire Management Plan will be prepared prior to construction, pursuant to the requirements of the CFA Guidelines.

7.8 Land Capability Assessment

The Land Capability Assessment concludes that sustainable on-site wastewater management is achievable through management options including (but not limited to) treatment of effluent to a secondary standard and

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discharge via sub-surface irrigation, maintaining compliance with effluent quality and set-back distances required by authorities, adaptive water use monitoring, and sustainable wastewater treatment and disposal.

The Land Capability Assessment recommends the installation of a Secondary Treatment System with sub-surface irrigation and land application of treated effluent on no less than 200 square meters of sub-surface irrigation- this has been addressed by the inclusion of the effluent dispersal area within the design. In addition, the septic system design is to be completed by an irrigation specialist and constructed by a person registered or licensed with the *Victorian Building Association in Plumbing (Drainage)* works and management of the treatment and disposal system to be in accordance with relevant EPA guidelines.

7.9 Cultural Heritage

The Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) associated with the Subject Site is Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC). The Subject Site is not located within an Area of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity, as defined under the *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*. South Energy has engaged JEM Archaeology to conduct a site inspection and provide a letter of advice confirming that no mandatory Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required for this project. South Energy applied for and received a Certification of a Preliminary Aboriginal Heritage Test (PAHT number 605) on 27 March 2026 for the purposes of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, which confirmed that a mandatory CHMP is not triggered by the Project. Following this certification, South Energy have formally notified WWCHAC in writing that a voluntary CHMP will not be undertaken, and no further assessment works are scheduled. South Energy will implement strict Unexpected Finds Protocol during all construction activities to ensure the ongoing protection of cultural heritage.

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8 Conclusion

As outlined in this submission, the proposed BESS supports the Council's strategic directions in relation to environmental and landscape values, environmental risks and amenity, and economic development.

The application confirms the Project is suitable as:

- The Project will support the generation of a renewable, affordable and reliable energy supply using large-scale energy storage technology. As such, the Project directly responds to the need for energy storage identified in Federal, State and Local government strategies.
- The Project is compatible and complementary to the current land use and is strategically located adjacent to existing Gisborne Zone Substation, ensuring no extensive transmission line infrastructure would be required.
- The Project will support the sustainable growth and diversification of Macedon's rural economy in addition to the generation of employment opportunities.
- The buildings and works have been sited to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Rural Conservation Zone.
- The Project will not impact the amenity of the local area.

The Project has been designed and sited to minimise impacts to the existing environment, having regard to relevant design standards and the Macedon Ranges Shire's strategic directions.

The proposed Project location has also sought to minimise environmental impacts, including impacts to existing trees and native vegetation, to preserve the lush continuous canopy to the north of the subject site and the living forest character (as per Schedule 9 of the VPO) to the greatest extent possible, while also minimising impacts to the environmental values identified on site. This application is supported by environmental impact assessments that support the proposed site selection and concept design.

In addition to the notice and review exemptions afforded by the Planning Scheme, we request the Minister for Planning consider that the giving of notice under section 52(1)(a) and (d) of the P&E Act is not required because material detriment to adjoining land or any other person will not occur.

For the above reasons, we consider that the Project is consistent with the Macedon Ranges Planning Scheme and presents a unique opportunity for significant economic investment in the immediate and surrounding area. Accordingly, we request the Minister for Planning issue a planning permit.

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Appendix A – Certificate of Title

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Appendix B – Concept Design

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Appendix C – Assessment against decision guidelines

Decision Guideline	Project Response
Clause 35.06 - Rural Conservation Zone	
■ General Issues – Any Regional Catchment Strategy and associated plan applying to the land. – The capability of the land to accommodate the proposed use or development. – How the use or development conserves the values identified for the land in a schedule. – Whether use or development protects and enhances the environmental, agricultural and landscape qualities of the site and its surrounds. – Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and the compatibility of the proposal with adjoining land uses.	The proposed BESS footprint would only occupy a portion of the lot towards the south, conserving heavily vegetated land towards the northern portion of the Subject Site. This siting allows the Project to minimise impacts on existing flora, fauna, preserving the existing landscape value. The Project will not impact existing agricultural land or land of environmental or scenic significance, instead, it has been strategically sited on vacant land isolated from sounding land uses by two major roads, namely Calder Freeway and Black Forest Drive. Abutting land uses are limited to the existing Gisborne Zone Substation which abuts the Project to the south and is of a similar use to the Project. The Project will utilise an on-site septic tank system to manage wastewater generated during operation. The septic tank will provide primary treatment before it is discharged to a designated effluent dispersal area located in the eastern section of the site. This approach ensures wastewater is contained and suitably managed on-site in a sustainable manner. A Land Capability Assessment has been prepared and accompanies this application, detailing the suitability of the land to accommodate the proposed BESS. With respect to the change of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary, or which increase the discharge of saline groundwater, it is not anticipated that a change to the rate of flow is likely to occur. A stormwater detention basin is expected to manage this requirement. Confirmation through detailed construction drawings will be provided to the Minister for Planning prior to the endorsement of plans.
■ Rural issues – The environmental capacity of the site to sustain the rural enterprise. – The impact on the existing and proposed infrastructure. – Whether the use or development will have an adverse impact on surrounding land uses.	The Subject Site is presently vacant land and devoid of buildings or works. Due to the isolated location of the Subject Site by adjoining major roads, existing land use that neighbours the Project is limited to the existing Gisborne Zone Substation. Whilst a handful of rural residential dwellings are present on the north side of Black Forest Drive, the proposed BESS is a facility designed to store and distribute electricity and will not have offsite impacts beyond visual and noise. Mitigation measures have been proposed to mitigate these impacts according to relevant policies and guidelines to ensure any residual impact on surrounding land use is at an appropriate level. A noise wall of up to 4m will be installed along the eastern boundary of BESS equipment adjacent to Black Forest Drive. Minimisation of the extents of vegetation clearance at the interfaces with Black Forest Drive will help to ensure that any visual impacts are effectively mitigated. The design of the Project has also avoided any impact on underground utilities. A full Noise Assessment, Landscape and Visual Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment report are submitted with this application. These reports provide a detailed assessment of considerations relevant to the Project, applicable regulatory requirements, anticipated impact of the Project and provide recommended mitigation measures.

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■ Environmental issues – The protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the area, including the retention of vegetation and faunal habitats and the need to revegetate land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridgelines, property boundaries and saline discharge and recharge areas. – How the use and development relates to sustainable land management and the need to prepare an integrated land management plan which addresses the protection and enhancement of native vegetation and waterways, stabilisation of soil and pest plant and animal control. – The location of on site effluent disposal areas to minimise the impact of nutrient loads on waterways and native vegetation. – Design and siting issues – The need to minimise any adverse impacts of siting, design, height, bulk, and colours and materials to be used, on landscape features, major roads and vistas. – The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure services which minimises the visual impact on the landscape. – The need to minimise adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the area or features of archaeological, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance. – The location and design of roads and existing and proposed infrastructure services to minimise the visual impact on the landscape.	The design of the Project has sought to avoid existing flora, fauna and native vegetation to the greatest extent possible. No known riparian buffers and saline discharge and recharge areas have been identified within and around the Study Area. The proposed siting of the Project will support sustainable land management by utilising isolated land between roads to increase energy resilience of the region, thereby reserving land elsewhere for urban development. An on-site effluent disposal area is proposed in the eastern section of the site. Construction waste, including effluent disposal, will be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan to minimise impacts on the receiving environment. Any adverse impacts of siting, design, height, bulk, and colours and materials to be used, on landscape features, major roads and vistas will be minimised in accordance with relevant design standards, policies and standards. Whilst the Subject Site has not been identified as having archaeological, historic, scenic, or scientific significance, the Project has been designed to minimise amenity impacts to the receiving environment. Specifically, the maximum building height of the proposed BESS and associated buildings and works will be below the canopy cover of surrounding trees. The only exception is the two proposed lightning masts, the tips of which will extend marginally above the tree line and are expected to have negligible visibility. This allows the Project to be naturally screened from nearby residential areas, particularly from residential dwellings located across Macedon Woodend Road. Additionally, the introduction of two new access tracks connecting to Black Forest Drive and Allison Lane is not expected to adversely impact the region's character, given its location between major transport corridors where substantial traffic occurs. The BESS infrastructure is proposed to utilise metal sheeting consistent with those used in other BESS projects. The materials selected have low-reflectivity and comprise of neutral colours. Pursuant to Clause 35.06-5, a permit is required to construct a building within 100m of waterway. The unnamed waterway that intersects the western section of the site is located within 100m of proposed buildings and works. The proposed works are considered to not threaten the health or function of the waterway, as per the accompanying Surface Water and Groundwater Assessment. During construction, mitigation measures including stormwater management and sediment or erosion control measures will be implemented to protect water quality and avoid any adverse impacts. Accordingly, the proposed buildings and works are appropriate having regard to the purpose and decision guidelines of Clause 35.06. A stormwater detention basin is provided to manage stormwater runoff on-site. In the event of an emergency, stormwater detention basin design will ensure that the exit can be isolated as needed to ensure the contents of the basin can be contained and tested before controlled release.
Clause 42.02 - Vegetation Projection Overlay (VPO)	
■ The effect of the proposed use, building, works or subdivision on the nature and type of vegetation to be protected.	The Project has sought to minimise impact on vegetation at the Subject Site. Specifically, the Project has been sited within an area of land where the least ecological value was identified. The proposed siting of equipment comprises of mostly declared noxious weed with minimal native vegetation proposed to be removed for the Project (approx. 2.406 ha), which includes 10 large trees in patches and one small scattered tree. A detailed ecological assessment has been undertaken to identify any threatened flora, fauna and significant habitat. No listed threatened ecological communities or threatened flora species were recorded or considered likely to occur in the Study Area.
■ The role of native vegetation in conserving flora and fauna.	The ecological survey undertaken by Aurecon in October 2024 did not identify any protected flora or fauna at the Subject Site. It is therefore not assessed that the native vegetation proposed to be removed for the Project supports significant flora and fauna at a State or National level.
■ The need to retain native or other vegetation if it is rare, supports rare species of flora or fauna or forms part of a wildlife corridor.	■ An Ecological Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Project by Aurecon (May 2025). No rare or threatened flora or fauna was recorded at the Subject Site. ■ Treed habitat along Black Forest Drive was assessed to provide habitat corridor for the EPBC Act listed Gang Gang Cockatoo which presence was last recorded 1 km to the north of the Subject Site in 2018. A significant impact assessment on Gang Gang Cockatoo was undertaken for the Project and documented in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report. The report concluded that no signification impact would be resulted by the Project on the species. Impact on the existing habitat corridor has been minimised through avoiding treed vegetation where practical, and through design and siting as established in the main report.
■ The need to retain vegetation which prevents or limits adverse effects on ground water recharge.	The proposed vegetation removal is for the construction of a handstand area. Ground water recharge is not expected to be an issue as the top soil will be sealed by the new handstand area.

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■ The need to retain vegetation: – Where ground slopes exceed 20 percent. – Within 30 metres of a waterway or wetland. – On land where the soil or subsoil may become unstable if cleared. – On land subject to or which may contribute to soil erosion, slippage or salinisation. – In areas where the removal, destruction or lopping of vegetation could adversely affect the integrity or long term preservation of an identified site of scientific, nature conservation or cultural significance. – Which is of heritage or cultural significance.	■ The Project is located on a flat topography with a ground slope of less than 20 per cent. ■ Ground stability is not considered an issue as the cleared land will be sealed for the construction of a handstand area. Similarly, soil erosion, slippage and salinisation are not anticipated to warrant consideration under this application. ■ The proposed works will not directly impact on the unnamed waterway at the Subject Site. ■ The Subject Site was not identified to be of scientific, nature conservation or cultural significance. Specifically, no protected flora and fauna was recorded during the ecological survey conducted by Aurecon in October 2024, and the Subject Site does not intersect with a designated area of cultural heritage sensitivity under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i>. Impact on vegetation has been minimised through design and siting as established in the main report. ■ No vegetation of heritage or cultural significance was identified within the affected land.
■ The need to remove, destroy or lop vegetation to create a defensible space to reduce the risk of bushfire to life and property.	Bushfire risks will be appropriately managed to comply with relevant design standards and the CFA Guidelines. This includes the provision of defensible space.
■ Any relevant permit to remove, destroy or lop vegetation in accordance with a land management plan or works program.	No known permit to remove, destroy or lop vegetation under a land management plan or works program applies to the Project.
■ Whether the application includes a land management plan or works program.	Construction and operation of the Project will be in accordance with a Construction and Operation Management Plan and a works program.
■ Whether provision is made or is to be made to establish and maintain vegetation elsewhere on the land.	There is no known provision under the Planning Scheme to establish or maintain vegetation elsewhere on land. Native vegetation removed for the Project will be appropriately offset in accordance with Clause 52.17 and the <i>Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation</i> (DELWP 2017a).
Schedule 2 to Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO2)	
■ The need to remove any remnant vegetation including the consideration of alternative ways of carrying out any development on the land.	Vegetation within the road reserve along Black Forest Drive and Allison Lane have been mapped and assessed to inform design and siting for the proposed accessways (refer to accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment). The proposed alignments are formed where the least vegetation was identified, and where no critical habitat or protected ecological matters, including flora and fauna listed within the FFG Act and EPBC Act, were recorded.
■ The location of driveways or crossings over roadside reserves.	
■ Whether buildings, works or use could be more appropriately located on cleared land.	
■ The need for replacement vegetation of an appropriate species.	Native vegetation removed for the Project will be offset according to Clause 52.17 and the <i>Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation</i> (DELWP 2017a).
■ The need to retain remnant vegetation that is listed as a threatened taxon in the <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i>.	No threatened taxon listed under the FFG Act was identified to be impacted by the Project within the VPO2.
■ The need to facilitate the natural revegetation throughout the Woodend area.	The Project has been strategically sited where Gorse (declared noxious weed) is most prevalent to minimise impact on native vegetation.
■ Any roadside conservation or management strategies including: – <i>The Roadside Management Plan for the Shires of Newham & Woodend, Kyneton and Romsey, 1994.</i> – <i>The Gisborne Roadsides Management Plan, 1993.</i>	No roadside conservation or management strategies apply to the Project.
■ The flora and fauna conservation value of the roadside area.	The Project is not expected to impact on flora and fauna of high conservation value. No protected flora and fauna species was identified during the ecological survey conducted by Aurecon in October 2024.
■ The need to use local endemic flora species for revegetation.	No onsite revegetation requirement applies to the Project under the VPO2. Native vegetation removed for the Project will be offset according to Clause 52.17 and the <i>Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation</i> (DELWP 2017a).
■ The need to fence off roadside vegetation areas to protect its environmental values.	Construction for the Project will be in accordance with a Construction Management Plan which will include measures to contain vegetation impact to the construction footprint, including the establishment of temporary fencing.
■ The landscape, recreational and amenity values of the vegetation.	The impacted vegetation was not identified to be of significant landscape, recreational and amenity values.

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■ The role of roadsides as corridors for the movement of fauna and avifauna between areas of native vegetation.	■ Impacts on roadside vegetation has been minimised through design and siting. ■ Treed habitat along Black Forest Drive was assessed to provide habitat corridor for the EPBC Act listed Gang Gang Cockatoo which presence was last recorded 1 km to the north of the Subject Site in 2018. A significant impact assessment on Gang Gang Cockatoo was undertaken for the Project and documented in the Ecological Impact Assessment Report. The report concluded that no signification impact would be resulted by the Project on the species. Impact on the existing habitat corridor has been minimised through avoiding treed vegetation where practical, and through design and siting as established in the main report.
■ The habitat value of dead trees and logs.	Habitat value of the affected land within the VPO2 was assessed in the accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment report. No dead trees or log will be impacted by the Project within the VPO2.
■ Maintaining sight distance and clearance to fixed objects for road safety.	Impact on roadside vegetation has been kept to the minimum through design and siting as established in the main report. The proposed removal will have minimal interaction with Black Forest Drive and its existing traffic, and will not affect road safety.
■ Any relevant fire management plan.	A Fire Management Plan will be developed prior to the commissioning of the BESS in accordance with the CFA Guidelines. This Plan will be provided to CFA for their consideration and feedback.
■ The threat of soil erosion and land slip resulting from loss of vegetation.	Ground stability and soil erosion are not considered to warrant further assessment as the cleared land will be sealed to form the proposed access ways. The accompanying Landscape Capability Assessment determines that erosion and landslip risk is minor on the site.
■ The need to locate access roads across slope to minimise visual intrusion of the road on land where slope is greater than 20 per cent.	The proposed access tracks are located on a flat topography with a slope of less than 20 per cent. Visual intrusion due to differences in natural ground level is not expected to warrant further consideration.
Schedule 9 to Vegetation Projection Overlay (VPO9)	
■ The need to protect all native vegetation in this area to pursue the “Living Forest” vision.	The Project has been strategically sited towards to southwestern portion of the land where Gorse (declared noxious weed) is prevalent and where the least native vegetation would be impacted. Acknowledging the habitat value of the immediate area being heavily associated with canopy trees, the Project has sought to minimise tree impacts to nine trees in a patch and one scattered tree, thereby preserving the Council's ‘Living Forest’ vision.
■ The relative value of the vegetation in terms of the surrounding vegetation community and at a regional level.	The Project has been sited where Gorse (declared noxious weed) is prevalent to minimised impact on trees and native vegetation. No vegetation of significant ecological value will be impacted by the project, as assessed in the accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment report.
■ The threat of soil erosion and land slip resulting from loss of vegetation.	Ground stability and soil erosion are not considered to warrant further consideration as the cleared land will be sealed and topped by a hardstand area for the proposed BESS. The accompanying Landscape Capability Assessment determines that landslip risk (or landslip potential) is minor on the site.
■ The need to locate access roads across slope to minimise visual intrusion of the road on land where slope is greater than 20 per cent.	The Subject Site is situated on a flat topography with an inclination of less than 20 per cent. Visual intrusion due to differences in natural ground level is not considered to be an issue warranting further assessment.
Clause 52.05 - Signs	
The character of the area including: ■ The sensitivity of the area in terms of the natural environment, heritage values, waterways and open space, rural landscape or residential character. ■ The compatibility of the proposed sign with the existing or desired future character of the area in which it is proposed to be located. ■ The cumulative impact of signs on the character of an area or route, including the need to avoid visual disorder or clutter of signs. ■ The consistency with any identifiable outdoor advertising theme in the area.	The signage will be located at the site entrance on Allison Lane. As such, the proposed signage will coincide with proposed and existing infrastructure visible from the road and not significantly detract from the character of the area.
Impacts on views and vistas: ■ The potential to obscure or compromise important views from the public realm. ■ The potential to dominate the skyline. ■ The potential to impact on the quality of significant public views. ■ The potential to impede views to existing signs.	The signage will be located within the property boundaries at the entrance of the Project site on Allison Lane. The signs will be fit for purpose, and of an appropriate scale and design to ensure it does not impact views or compromise the public realm. No vegetation removal or landscaping will be required to facilitate the signage.

The relationship to the streetscape, setting or landscape: ■ The proportion, scale and form of the proposed sign relative to the streetscape, setting or landscape. ■ The position of the sign, including the extent to which it protrudes above existing buildings or landscape and natural elements. ■ The ability to screen unsightly built or other elements. ■ The ability to reduce the number of signs by rationalising or simplifying signs. ■ The ability to include landscaping to reduce the visual impact of parts of the sign structure.	
The relationship to the site and building: ■ The scale and form of the sign relative to the scale, proportion and any other significant characteristics of the host site and host building. ■ The extent to which the sign displays innovation relative to the host site and host building. ■ The extent to which the sign requires the removal of vegetation or includes new landscaping. ■ The impact of structures associated with the sign: ■ The extent to which associated structures integrate with the sign. ■ The potential of associated structures to impact any important or significant features of the building, site, streetscape, setting or landscape, views and vistas or area.	
The impact of any illumination: ■ The impact of glare and illumination on the safety of pedestrians and vehicles. ■ The impact of illumination on the amenity of nearby residents and the amenity of the area. ■ The potential to control illumination temporally or in terms of intensity.	The proposed signs will not be illuminated, electric or animated.
The impact of any logo box associated with the sign: ■ The extent to which the logo box forms an integral part of the sign through its position, lighting and any structures used to attach the logo box to the sign. ■ The suitability of the size of the logo box in relation to its identification purpose and the size of the sign.	The signs will identify the owner and operator of the facility. The logos will be of an appropriate scale relative to the size of the signs. The signs will display key Project information including a contact person, safety protocols for the site and security information.
The need for identification and the opportunities for adequate identification on the site or locality	
The impact on road safety. A sign is a safety hazard if the sign: ■ Obstructs a driver's line of sight at an intersection, curve or point of egress from an adjacent property. ■ Obstructs a driver's view of a traffic control device, or is likely to create a confusing or dominating background that may reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic control device. ■ Could dazzle or distract drivers due to its size, design or colouring, or it being illuminated, reflective, animated or flashing. ■ Is at a location where particular concentration is required, such as a high pedestrian volume intersection. ■ Is likely to be mistaken for a traffic control device, because it contains red, green or yellow lighting, or has red circles, octagons, crosses, triangles or arrows. ■ Requires close study from a moving or stationary vehicle in a location where the vehicle would be unprotected from passing traffic. ■ Invites drivers to turn where there is fast moving traffic or the sign is so close to the turning point that there is no time to signal and turn safely. ■ Is within 100 metres of a rural railway crossing. ■ Has insufficient clearance from vehicles on the carriageway. ■ Could mislead drivers or be mistaken as an instruction to drivers.	Proposed signage will be appropriately sited within the property boundaries to avoid driver conflict. Proposed signage will not impact the safety of drivers.

■ Efforts to avoid the removal of, and minimise the impacts on, native vegetation, taking into account the siting of the proposed development, any relevant strategic plans to preserve native vegetation.	The Proposed site layout has sought to minimise impacts on native vegetation by locating buildings and works closer to the southwestern portion of the land where noxious weed is the dominant vegetation and less native vegetation is present. Large trees are avoided where practical when locating the design components for the BESS, taking into consideration functional requirements and other relevant policies and design standards including the CFA guidelines.
■ The role of native vegetation to be removed in (1) protecting water quality and waterway and riparian ecosystems; (2) preventing land degradation, including soil erosion, salination, acidity, instability and water logging; and (3) preventing adverse effects on groundwater quality, particularly on land.	■ Native vegetation proposed for removal was not identified to be within the riparian ecosystem. ■ The proposed works will not directly impact on the unnamed waterway at the Subject Site. ■ The Proposed BESS will not emit particles that would affect ground water quality or contribute to land degradation.
■ The need to manage native vegetation to preserve identified landscape values.	The Project has been strategically sited to avoid dense canopy cover. The proposed extent of removal is the minimum extent required for the Project and is not considered to have a significant impact on landscape value.
■ Whether any part of the native vegetation to be removed, destroyed or lopped is protected under the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>.	The Project is not located within a designated area of cultural heritage sensitivity. There is no known vegetation at the Subject Site that is of Aboriginal cultural importance.
■ The need to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation to create defensible space to reduce the risk of bushfire to life and property, having regard to other available bushfire risk mitigation measures.	The proposed clearing of native vegetation has considered bushfire policies and design standards applicable to the Subject Site, including the CFA Guidelines. A full assessment of the design standards under the CFA Guidelines is provided within the Risk Management Plan at Appendix I.
■ Whether the native vegetation to be removed is in accordance with any Property Vegetation Plan that applies to the site.	No known Property Vegetation Plan applies to the proposed buildings and works.
■ Whether an offset that meets the offset requirements for the native vegetation to be removed has been identified and can be secured in accordance with the Guidelines.	Offset of 1.808 general habitat units would be required for the Project. An online search of the Native Vegetation Credit Register (NVCR) has shown that the required offset is currently available for purchase (DEECA 2024). Details about offset arrangement is provided in the Ecological Impact Assessment report at Appendix D.
■ Impacts on biodiversity based on the following values of the native vegetation to be removed: – The extent. – The condition score. – The strategic biodiversity value score. – The number and circumference of any large trees. – Whether it includes an endangered Ecological Vegetation Class. – Whether it includes sensitive wetlands or coastal areas.	The proposed native vegetation removal is categorised as Grassy Forest (EVC 128). The Project has minimised impacts on native vegetation through design and siting of design components. Particularly, the proposed design components has been located to utilise area of non-native vegetation (i.e. areas of weed infestation) where practical. Impacts to treed vegetation is limited. A full report including an assessment against considerations under this decision guideline is provided at Appendix D - Ecological Impact Assessment.
■ impacts on habitat for rare or threatened species. Where native vegetation to be removed is habitat for rare or threatened species according to the Habitat importance maps, consider the following: – The total number of species' habitats. – The species habitat(s) that require a species offset(s). – The proportional impact of the native vegetation removal on the total habitat for each species, as calculated in section 5.3.1. – The conservation status of the species (per the Advisory Lists maintained by DELWP). – Whether the habitats are highly localised habitats, dispersed habitats, or important areas of habitat within a dispersed species habitat.	An Ecological Impact Assessment has been conducted for the Project and did not identify a rare or threatened species within the Subject Site. Matters for consideration under this decision guideline, including a full list of species identified or modelled to occur at the Subject Site is provided within the Ecological Impact Assessment at Appendix D.
Clause 52.29 – Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network	

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■ The views of the relevant road authority.	■ Early engagement with DTP was undertaken regarding site access options, noting it is a CFA requirement for a minimum of two accesses to be provided to a BESS facility. Aurecon and the Proponent met with DTP on 12 June 2025 where DTP advised to avoid creating entrances along any arterial road, in this case Macedon-Woodend Road. ■ In response to DTP's advice: – the Proponent has designed the primary access to be via Allison Lane rather than Macedon-Woodend Road – the Proponent engaged with Powercor about the possibility of sharing the existing Gisborne Substation access off Macedon-Woodend Road for use by emergency vehicles access only to meet the CFA requirements for this Site. However, Powercor ultimately rejected the shared access proposal due to the impact it would have on their assets and property. ■ Therefore, the only remaining option to provide a secondary (emergency only) access to the Site to meet the CFA requirements for a BESS is to create a new access directly off Macedon-Woodend Road.
■ The effect of the proposal on the operation of the road and on public safety.	The proposed new access to Black Forest Drive will not interfere with the existing flow of traffic and will not impact on the operation and safety of the road.
■ Any policy made by the relevant road authority pursuant to schedule 2, clause 3 of the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i> regarding access between a controlled access road and adjacent land.	The Project will not affect a declared controlled access road.

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