Planning Application Report

Murchs Corner BESS

2977 Hamilton Highway, Darlington 3271, VIC

For EBARE Pty Ltd

19 December 2025

cogency

Planning | Engagement | Strategy

Document Details

Murchs Corner BESS

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We celebrate the physical and spiritual connections between Indigenous people and place expressed through the Birrarung Wilam (Common Ground) art project on the banks of Melbourne's Yarra River.

Acknowledgement of Country

Cogency acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we meet, work and write, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation, and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and emerging.

Cogency also extends that respect and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Darlington, the Eastern Maar Peoples. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and waterways. We also recognise the resilience, strength, and pride of the Eastern Maar and First Nations communities and acknowledge that Sovereignty was never ceded.

Executive Summary

EBARE Pty Ltd (the Proponent) has engaged Cogency Australia Pty Ltd (Cogency), a planning and engagement firm, to prepare the enclosed planning permit application package to be lodged with the Minister for Planning (the Responsible Authority) for permit approval.

This planning report supports an application for use and development of land for Utility installation (land used to transmit, distribute or store power), known as the Murchs Corner battery energy storage system (BESS) (the Proposal), located in Darlington, Victoria. The Murchs Corner BESS has a conceptual capacity up to 500MW / 2,000MWh.

The Proposal is located at the 'Stony Point' property, addressed as 2977 Hamilton Highway, Darlington, within Moyne Shire. However, the Site is a smaller area within the larger farming property and accessed via Darlington-Terang Road. The Site comprises two land parcels along the western edge of the farming property, with a total area of 391ha. The Proposal will require the development of approximately 28 ha. Figure 1 presents an overview of the Site. To connect to the National Energy Market (NEM), the Proposal will 'cut in' to the existing 500kV Moorabool to Mortlake transmission line that runs east-west through the centre of the Site.

The purpose of this planning permit application package is to provide the Responsible Authority and referral authorities with comprehensive detail of the Proposal. This includes detail on the Proponent and project team, design features, potential impacts and mitigations, and compliance with relevant Acts, regulations, plans, land use controls and guidelines, contained primarily within the Moyne Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme).

The Proposal is considered a 'Utility Installation' and is classed as a Section 2 (permit required) use within the Farming Zone. The Proposal and planning permit triggers are summarised in Table 1.

The Proposal requires ancillary infrastructure (cut-in terminal station, substation and associated electrical infrastructure) and ancillary works, such as new access point and internal tracks, native vegetation removal within a mapped wetland, security fencing, drainage, earthworks and landscaping.

This Site is ideally suited to a BESS and associated infrastructure development, due to the existing transmission line through the Site, relatively flat topography, minimal existing vegetation and significant distance to nearby dwellings.

Table 1 – Site and application summary

Application Summary	
Site	
Address	2977 Hamilton Highway, Darlington 3271, VIC (note, the Proposal relies on access to Darlington-Terang Road)
Title Description	2~10\PP2492 1~20\PP2492
Area	391ha
Municipality	Moyne Shire Council
Restrictions on title	N/A
Planning	
Planning Scheme	Moyne Planning Scheme
Responsible Authority	Minister for Planning (Clause 72.01-1)
Zones	35.07 Farming Zone
Overlays	None

Relevant Particular Provisions	52.05 – Signs 52.06 Car Parking 52.17 Native Vegetation 53.22 Significant Economic Development
Permit triggers	35.07-1 Section 2 Use of land for a Utility Installation. 35.07-4 To construct a building or carry out works associated with a Section 2 Use. 52.05-14 – To develop land for a business identification sign 52.06-6 To provide car parking spaces to the satisfaction of the responsible authority. 52.17-1 Native vegetation removal
Notice and Review	53.22-4 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.
Referral requirements	66.02-4 – Electricity transmission authority 66.02-7 – Victorian WorkCover Authority

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AHD	Australian Height Datum
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CEC	Clean Energy Council
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
HV	High voltage
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
LGA	Local Government Area
kV	kilovolt
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt-hour
NEM	National Energy Market (NEM)
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone

1. Introduction

Cogency Australia Pty Ltd (Cogency), on behalf of EBARE Pty Ltd (the Proponent), has prepared this report to accompany a planning permit application for a utility-scale battery energy storage system (BESS) and ancillary infrastructure in Darlington, Victoria hereby referred to as the Murchs Corner BESS (the Proposal).

The Proposal has been informed by a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement program that to date has involved meetings with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), Moyne Shire Council, and relevant State agencies. Engagement activities have included near neighbours mailout, a community drop-in session (CDIS), direct meetings and newspaper advertisements. Additional community and stakeholder engagement will coincide with the planning application process and beyond.

The Proposal is considered to have a strong alignment with the purpose of the relevant zones and overlays, as well as key state, regional and local policy within the Moyne Planning Scheme. Furthermore, it directly supports Federal and Victorian policy objectives in relation to energy storage and emissions reduction.

This report outlines the Proposal, details the site and locality, and provides a detailed planning assessment of the Proposal against the Moyne Planning Scheme and relevant policy.

1.1 Proposal summary

Site and Project Area

As an early concept, the Murchs Corner BESS has potential capacity up to 500MW / 2,000MWh. The Proposal will develop approximately 28 hectares of land and include a 'cut in' terminal station, onsite substation and associated infrastructure. Once operational, the Murchs Corner BESS will provide additional stability for the NEM and with its energy storage capacity on the grid can support existing and proposed renewable energy generation within Victoria's South-West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ).

The Proposal is located at 2977 Hamilton Highway, Darlington, at the Stony Point property within the Moyne Shire local government area (LGA). Stony Point is a 1,870ha farming landholding approximately 4km south-west of Darlington. The Proposal comprises two land parcels along the western edge of the property defined as the Site, with a total area of 391ha. Two unnamed creeks and corresponding wetlands intersect the Site, the eastern one known locally as Mt Fyans Drain. Stony Point farm is primarily broadacre grazing and cropping, with limited centre pivot irrigation, various farm buildings and an historic residence close to Mt Emu Creek. As shown in Figure 1, a smaller Project Area has been defined more tightly to the proposed development that avoids key farming infrastructure and creeks, but also extends to the western edge of the Darlington-Terang Road surface, to account for any associated access roadworks.

The BESS will connect into the NEM by cutting into the existing 500kV overhead transmission line that crosses east-west through the centre of the Project Area. The transmission line does not have a mapped, associated easement on Title, although other legislation would provide for a designated easement. Access to the Project Area is via an existing farm access track off Darlington-Terang Road. The proposed Darlington Wind Farm is opposite to the Site, on the western side of Darlington-Terang Road (Figure 2).

Upgrades may be required where existing tracks and electrical infrastructure cross through the DEECA mapped wetland (Mt Fyans Drain) resulting in native vegetation removal. The extent of upgrade works is unknown at this stage and will be undertaken by AusNet to augment their existing assets.The strategic advantages of the location and Site include:

- Existing transmission through the Site, and nearby proposed renewable energy generation projects
- The Site is generally level as well as above potential flood levels, reducing bulk earthworks
- Farming Zone and open paddocks with low ecological value
- Located away from Darlington township.

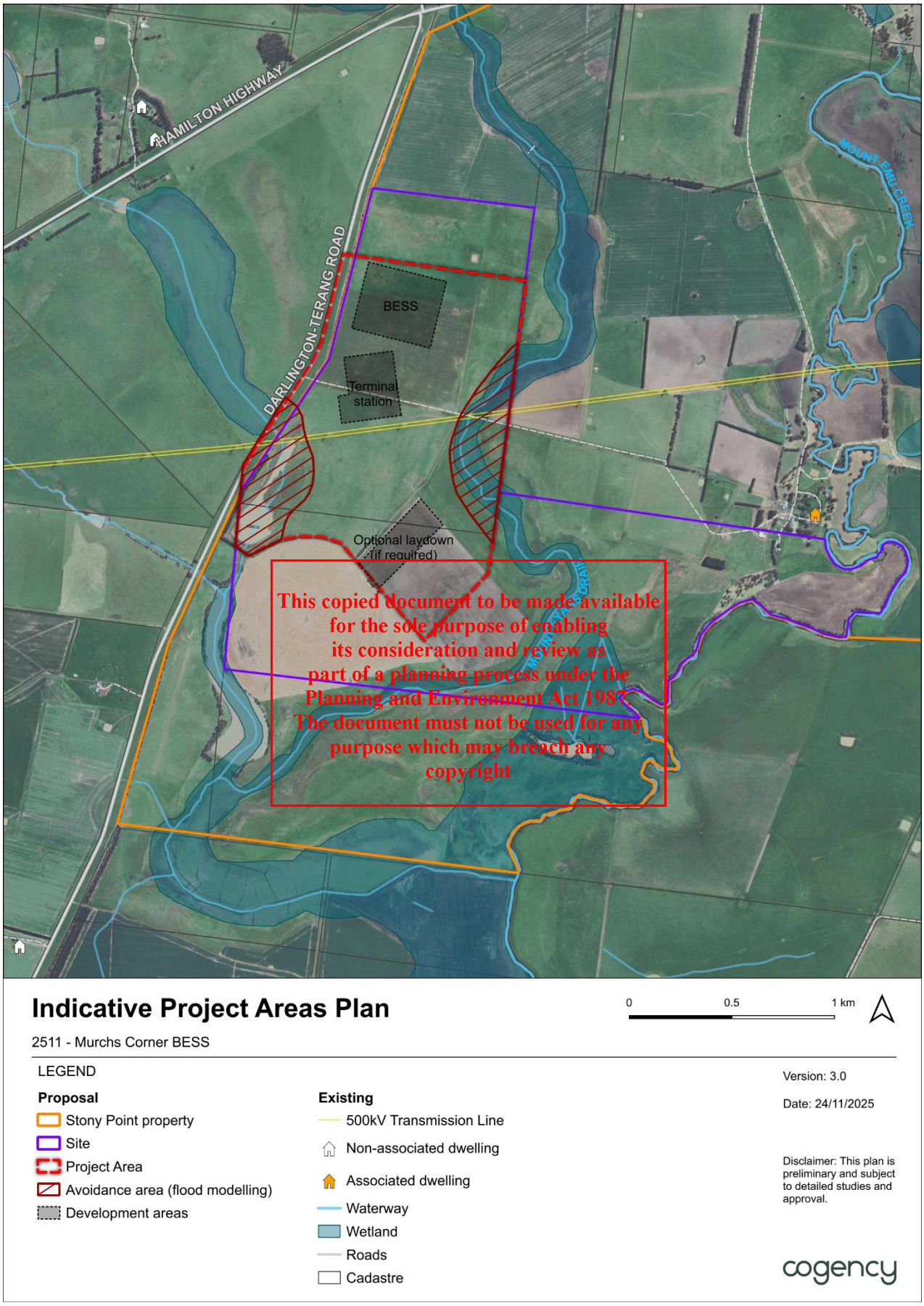


Figure 1 - Project Areas Plan

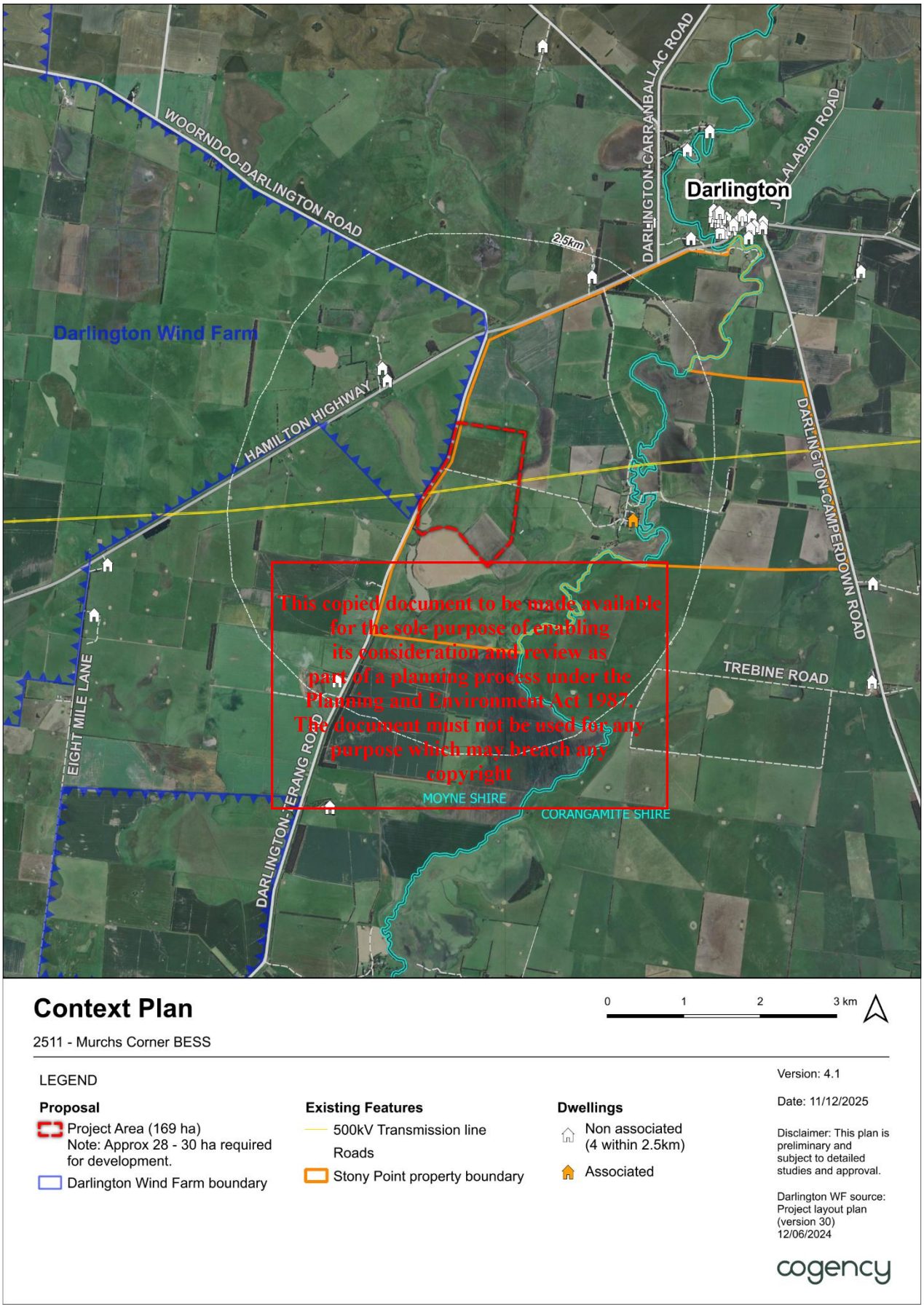


Figure 2 - Context Plan

Planning triggers

The Project Area is zoned Farming Zone (FZ) in the Moyne Planning Scheme. Planning permit triggers are:

- Clause 35.07-1 – Use of land for a utility installation (BESS)
- Clause 35.07-4 – Buildings and works associated with a Section 2 Use (BESS)
- Clause 52.05-14 – To develop land for a business identification sign
- Clause 52.06-6 – Car Parking
- Clause 52.170-1 – Native vegetation removal.

1.2 Traditional Owners

Prior to European Settlement, the Darlington area was stewarded by the Eastern Maar peoples. Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) representing the Eastern Maar.

The Eastern Maar are the Traditional Owners of a large area of south-western Victoria, that extends from Ararat, through to the Warrnambool, Port Fairly and Great Ocean Road areas. Eastern Maar is the name adopted by people who identify as Maar, Eastern Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung, Peek Whurrong, Kirrae Whurrung, Kuurn Kopan Noot and/or Yarro waetch (Tooram Tribe) amongst others.

1.3 The Proponent and Project Team

The Proponent

The Proponent is EBARE Pty Ltd, a company associated with the Jamieson Family, who are a 6th generation farming family who have lived and managed Stony Point since the late 19th century. The Jamiesons have partnered with Alternate Path to develop the project.

Representing EBARE is Robert Luxmoore, a project management consultancy who is overseeing the development of the Proposal.

Project team

A team of suitably qualified specialist consultants has been engaged to assess and provide input into the Proposal. Table 2 lists the specialist environmental and technical consultants that have contributed to the Proposal. A range of impact assessments have been prepared to accompany this application (included as appendices) and should be read in conjunction with this Planning Report.

Table 2 – List of consultants

Consultant	Technical expertise
Cogency	Planning and Engagement
Biosis	Ecology
SLR Consulting	Acoustic
SWM Consulting	Hydrology
Meridian Agriculture	Agriculture
Peter Haack Consulting	Landscape and Visual Impact
Traffix	Traffic
Niche	Cultural Heritage
NJM Design	Fire
WSP	Engineering

Based on technical impact assessments, the Proposal is not expected to generate any unreasonable or significant environmental or community impacts.

2. Site & context analysis

2.1 Site context

The Site is located on agricultural land within the Stony Point property in Darlington, within the Moyne Shire LGA. Darlington is a small town, primarily on the eastern bank of Mt Emu Creek (the creek is the boundary between the Moyne and Corangamite Shire areas), approximately 170km southwest from Melbourne. Darlington has a population of 84 (ABS 2021) with no residents that identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The Site is approximately 4km southwest of Darlington and 20km northeast of Mortlake. The Stony Point property is approximately 1,870ha in size, of which a 169ha Project Area is being considered to locate the Proposal. The footprint of the Proposal is expected to only be approximately 28 ha. The Site is predominantly used for livestock grazing with some cropping.

The Site is accessed from Darlington-Terang Road, a road that boarders the Stony Point property and provides direct access to the Hamilton Highway. The surrounding area comprises relatively few rural dwellings, large agricultural properties and a number of waterways and wetlands. The 500kV Moorabool to Mortlake transmission line runs east-west through the centre of the Site.

The Site is located on the edge of the South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), an area identified by the Victorian Government as an area with the significant potential for renewable energy, specifically for the coastal region's strong average wind speeds. The South West REZ is primary located within Moyne Shire, which has experienced significant growth in renewable energy development, with the area being a key location for existing and proposed wind farms, as shown in Figure 3. As of July 2025, there were ten operating, one approved, and four proposed wind farms in the Shire including one opposite the Site.

The proposed Darlington Wind Farm is opposite the Site, to the west of Darlington-Terang Road. It has a proposed generation capacity of 325MW with up to 45 wind turbines. The project first began planning in 2006 and was subsequently paused in 2014. Planning re-commenced in 2021 and is currently in the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) stage. It is proposed to connect to the same 500kV transmission line as the Proposal. Moyne Shire Council has expressed concern over the amount of wind development in the area and are advocating for clearer land use planning and greater community benefits.

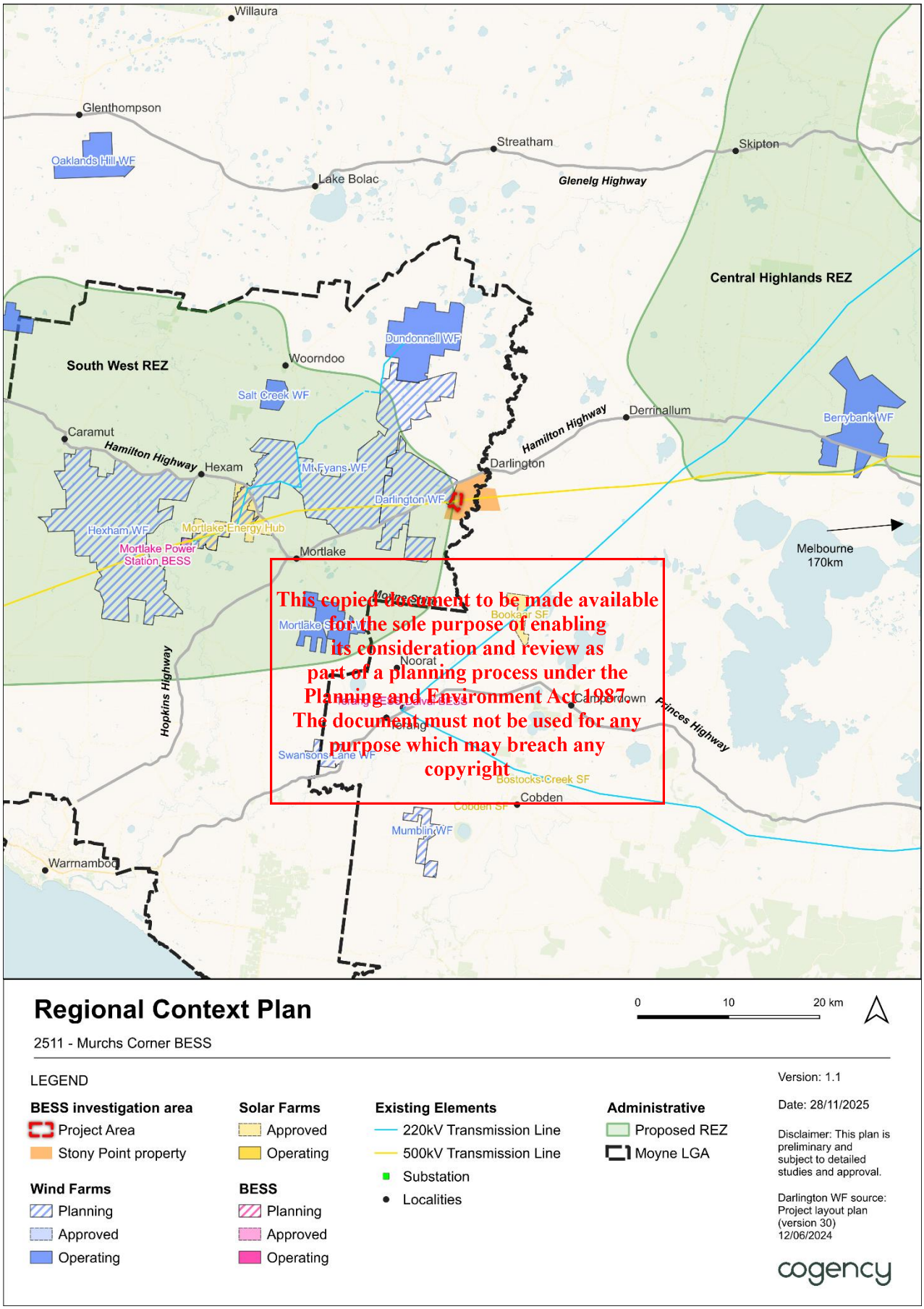


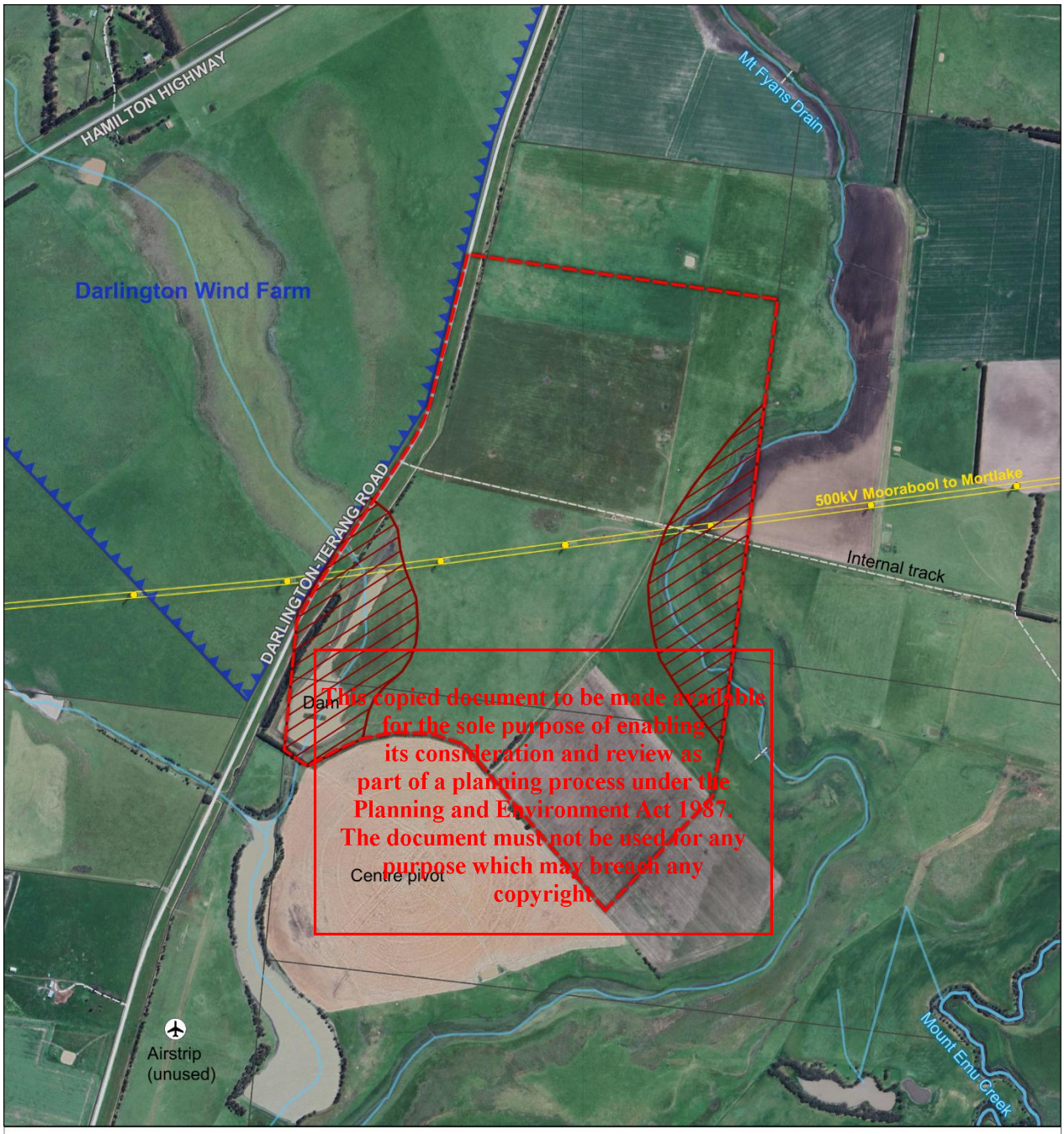
Figure 3 - Regional Context Plan

2.2 Site analysis

Due to the large size of the Stony Point property, the Site has been defined as comprising the two parcels of land where the BESS and ancillary infrastructure will be located. Due to the large size of the Site (391 ha), a Project Area (169 ha) has been defined more tightly around the actual development footprint, including road reserve frontage. Avoidance Areas (Figure 4) have been established within the Project Area based on preliminary investigations (particularly ecology and hydrology) that informed siting and the potential Development Area.

The Project Area is broadly cleared of native vegetation, with the only native vegetation present (some native grasses) occurring along Mt Fyans Drain and some native trees and shrubs within the planted shelter belts just inside the boundary(Figure 5). The Darlington-Terang road reserve is dominated by non-native species. Table 3 shows a range of site photos. The Project Area is currently used for agricultural grazing and cropping. The Moorabool to Mortlake 500kV transmission line crosses east-west through the centre of the Project Area. The Project Area is bordered by Darlington-Terang Road to the west and Mt Fyans Drain to the east. The existing dwelling on the Stony Point property will remain in use during the Proposal's construction and operation. An unused airstrip is located south of the Project Area.

The Avoidance Areas exclude areas along the western unnamed creek and Mt Fyans Drain to ensure development does not encroach on flood prone and ecologically sensitive land.



Site Plan

0 250 500 m

2511 - Murchs Corner BESS

LEGEND

Proposal
- Project Area
- Avoidance area

Darlington Wind Farm
- Wind farm boundary

Existing Features
- 500kV Transmission line
- Transmission poles
- Airstrip (unused)
- Roads
- Waterway
- Cadastre

Version: 4.1

Date: 11/12/2025

Disclaimer: This plan is preliminary and subject to detailed studies and approval.

Darlington WF source: Project layout plan (version 30) 12/06/2024

cogency

Figure 4 - Site Plan

Table 3 – Site photographs

2.2.1 Site access

Access to the Site is via Darlington-Terang Road, a Council-owned road. Darlington-Terang Road is a sealed two-lane road that runs between Hamilton Highway to the north and Terang-Mortlake Road to the south. A default rural speed limit of 100km/h applies to Darlington-Terang Road (Appendix F).

The Hamilton Highway is a State-managed arterial highway that connects Geelong and Hamilton via Mortlake. Hamilton Highway is generally aligned in a northeast-southwest direction with a typical speed limit of 100 km/h near the Site.

2.2.2 Planning zones and overlays

The Site is located within the Farming Zone (FZ). No overlays apply to the Site or the Project Area. The entire Site is mapped as Bushfire Prone Areas and includes areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity, however no areas of a cultural heritage sensitivity are mapped within the Project Area.

2.2.3 Vegetation

The Site is predominately used for livestock grazing with some cropping. The Project Area is generally cleared of native vegetation with some native grasses occurring along Mt Fyans Drain and some native trees and shrubs within the planted shelter belts on the boundaries of the Project Area (Figure 5). The roadside reserve within the Project Area is highly disturbed and dominated by non-native species with no native vegetation recorded (Appendix C).

Native vegetation impacts will not occur as a result of the BESS placement, the terminal stations, the two accessways and the proposed crossover.

Native vegetation within and directly adjacent to Mt Fyans Drain are included within the Avoidance Areas where no development is proposed, except where existing tracks and electrical infrastructure cross through Mt Fyans Drain and may need upgrading Impacts to Mt Fyans Drain *may* occur for the augmentation of the existing internal track and the 'cut-in' easternmost transmission tower. However, the extent of upgrade works is unknown at this stage and will be undertaken by AusNet to augment their existing assets. A Native Vegetation Removal Report (NVR) has been attached to the Flora & Fauna Assessment (Appendix C) to demonstrate potential impacts. Upgrades within the DEECA mapped wetland will be limited to upgrading existing infrastructure, in order to minimise impacts to native vegetation.

The soils in within the Project Area are moderate in fertility and have a tendency to become waterlogged.

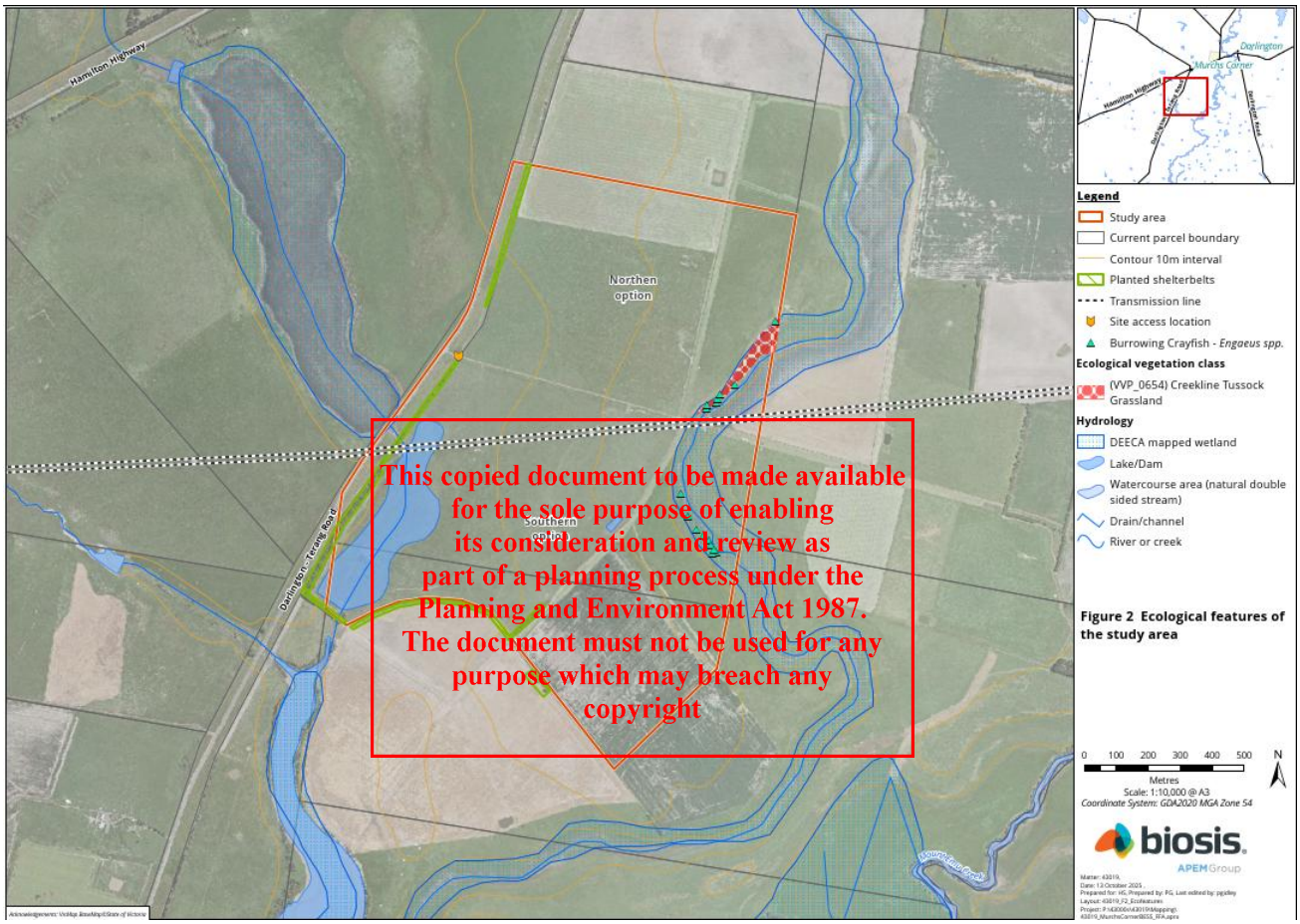


Figure 5 - Ecological features of the Project Area

2.2.4 Topography and hydrology

A Flood Assessment (Appendix H) has been undertaken by SWM Consulting with a 10m resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and a 1m resolution LiDAR-derived DEM. The Project Area is generally flat in the centre, sloping down along Mt Fyans Drain and the dam. While known locally as Mt Fyans Drain, it is an ephemeral water line and officially un-named. The Project Area elevation ranges between 138 – 150 AHD as shown in Figure 6.

The Project Area is partially impacted by flooding during the estimated 1% AEP (Annual Exceedance Probability) flood event in areas along the two creeks and along the northern boundary where water escapes the confines of Mt Fyans Drain. The estimated 1% AEP flood extents reflect the underlying topography. Flows are found to mainly be contained within the confines of the waterways and water storages.

The Avoidance Areas include all areas within the estimated 1% AEP flood extents, therefore no development is proposed on flood prone areas, except where existing tracks and electrical infrastructure cross through Mt Fyans Drain and may need upgrading.

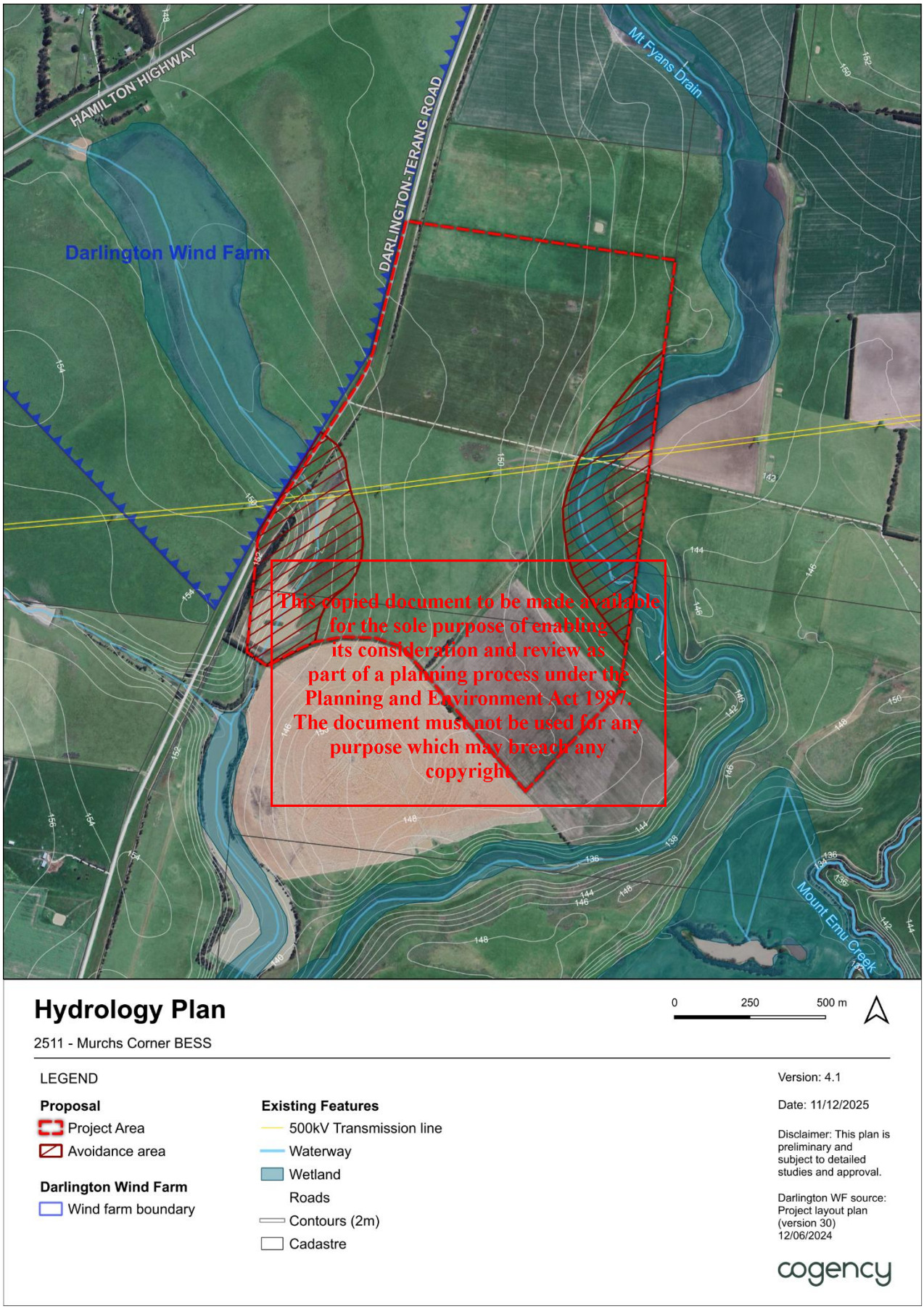


Figure 6 - Hydrology Plan

2.2.5 Existing infrastructure

The Project Area contains a high voltage transmission line and farm access tracks, identified in Figure 4. The 500kV Moorabool to Mortlake transmission line carries two 500kV lines that connect Mortlake Terminal Station (MOPS) to Cressy Terminal station (CRTS). The Haunted Gully Terminal Station (HGTS) is cut into one line and facilitates the connection of Stockyard Hill Wind Farm. The transmission line is owned and operated by AusNet. There is no formal easement for the transmission line mapped on the Title Plan, however, other legislation is understood to create a 'designated easement'.

2.2.6 Surrounding land uses

Broadly the Project Area sits within a rural landscape surrounded by agricultural land, waterways and wetlands, and only a small number of dwellings at least 1 km distant (Figure 7). The Site's surrounds include:

- Agricultural land mainly consisting of paddocks.
- Darlington-Terang Road, a wetland, unnamed creek and the proposed Darlington Wind Farm to the west.
- Farming centre pivot to the south.
- Mt Fyans Drain, Stony Point dwelling and Mount Emu Creek to the east.
- Mt Fyans Drain and Hamilton Highway to the north.

Nearby dwellings

There are two dwellings within 2km of the Project Area, excluding the associated Stony Point dwelling.

1. 3282 Hamilton Highway, approximately 1km north-west.
2. 3276 Hamilton Highway, approximately 1.2km north-west.

Two other non-associated dwellings are just within 2.5 km of the Project Area, 490 Darlington-Terang Rd and 2998 Hamilton Hwy.

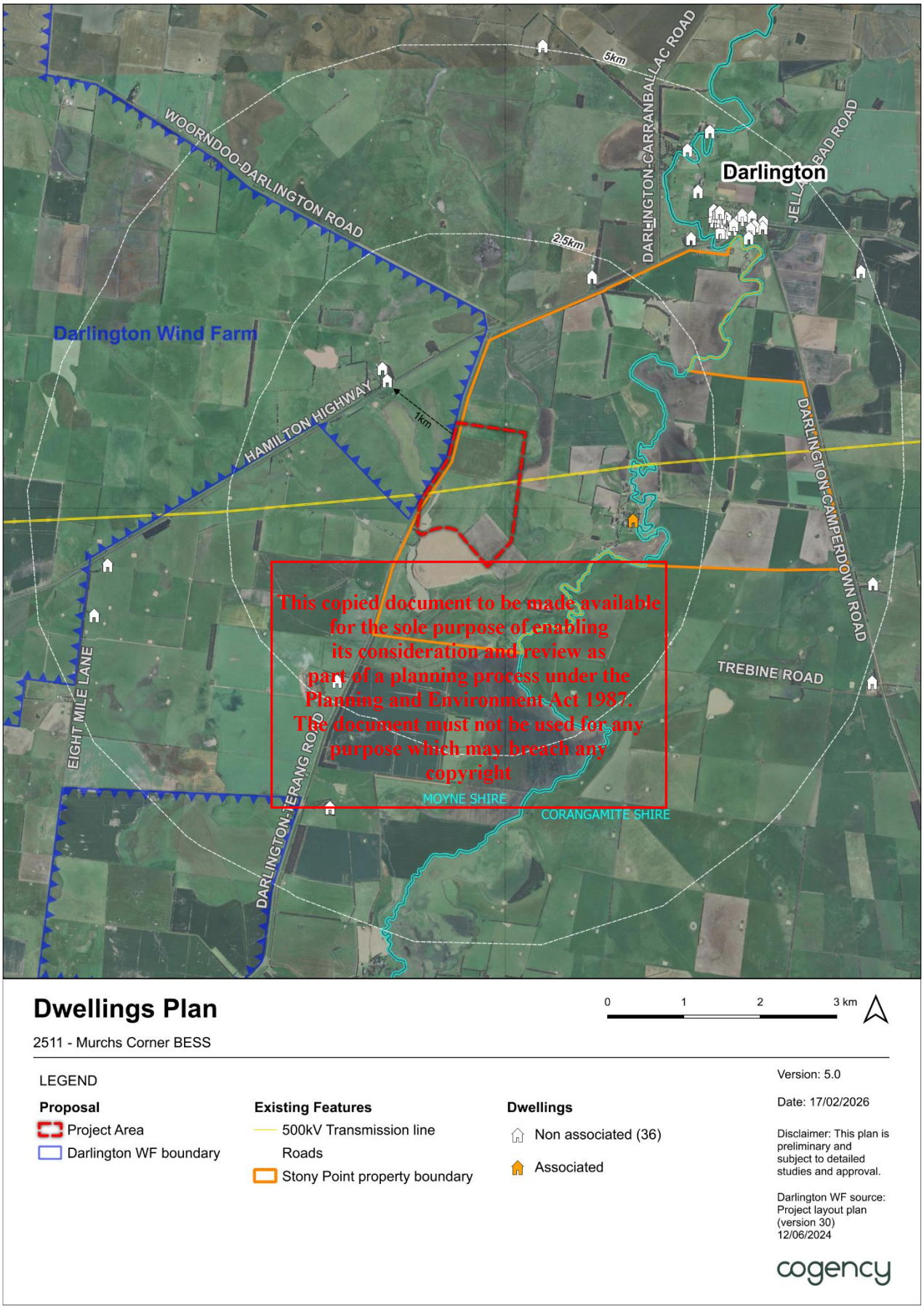


Figure 7 - Dwellings plan

3. The Proposal

This section outlines the details of the proposed BESS as well as the Proposal's justification and benefits.

3.1 Overview

The Murchs Corner BESS Proposal includes the following key components:

- BESS Area:
  - Battery modules
  - Power conversion systems (PCS) (consisting of inverters, transformers, switchgear and control equipment),
  - On-site substation and associated electrical infrastructure
  - Internal transmission cabling
  - Operation & maintenance building
  - Water storage systems and fire-fighting infrastructure
  - Water attenuation basins
  - Asset protection zone (10m within hardstand, plus 20m managed bare earth outside perimeter)
  - Security fencing and monitoring systems
- Cut-in terminal station
- Construction laydown area (temporary) and permanent hardstand for infrastructure
- Access points and internal access tracks
- Earthworks (that do not change the rate of flow or the discharge point of water across a property boundary, or increase the discharge of saline groundwater)
- Landscaping / screening
- Business identification sign (maximum 3sqm).

Refer to Figure 8 and Figure 9 for the concept layout of the Proposal. Design plans are also provided at Appendix B.

To minimise fire risk, the Proposal includes a minimum 10m asset protection zone (APZ) around the BESS Area, substation and associated infrastructure.

Upgrades may be required where the internal access track and the transmission 'cut-in' easternmost pylon cross through the DEECA mapped wetland (Mt Fyans Drain), potentially resulting in native vegetation removal. The extent of upgrade works is unknown at this stage and will be undertaken by AusNet to augment their existing assets.

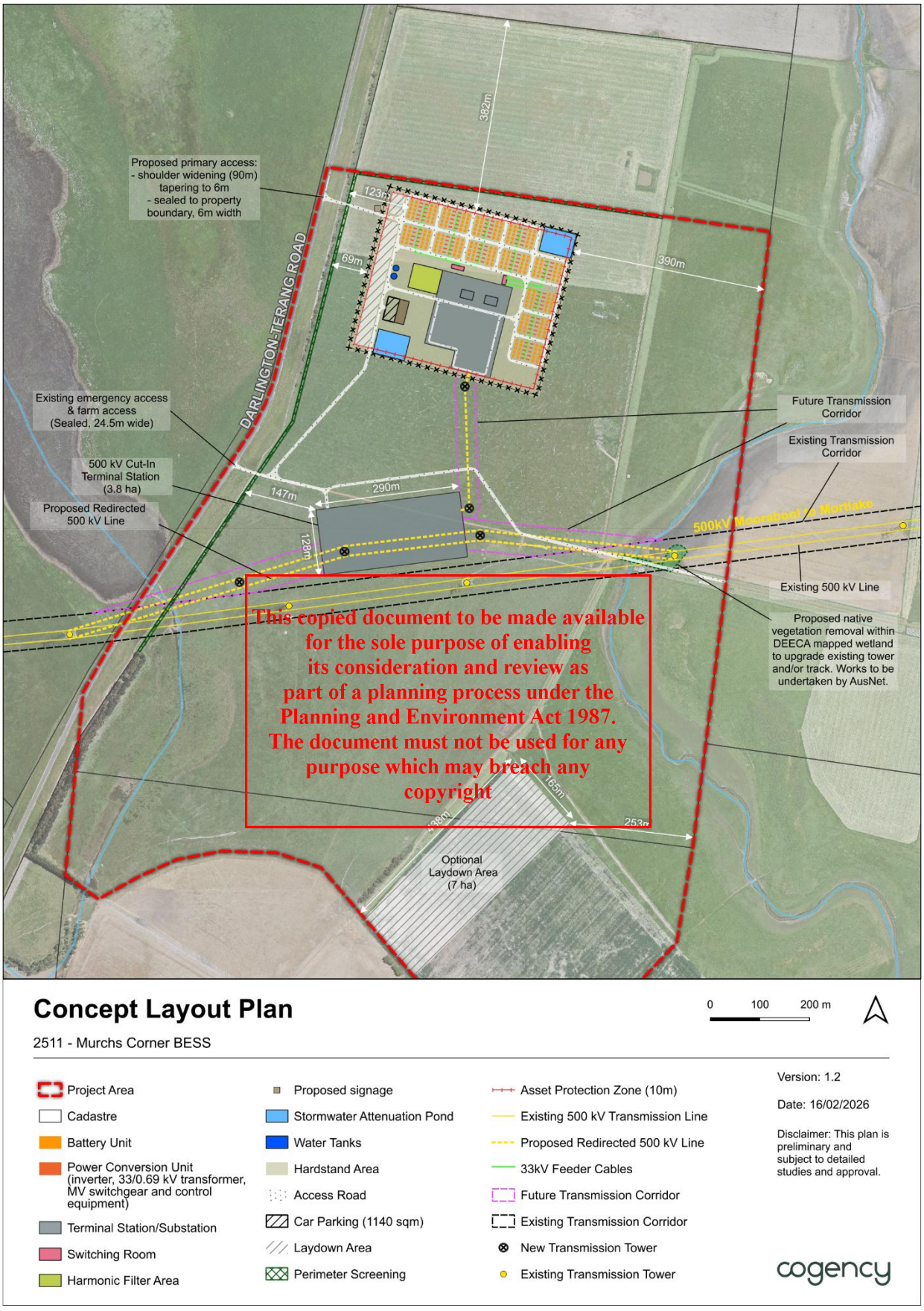


Figure 8 - Concept Layout Plan

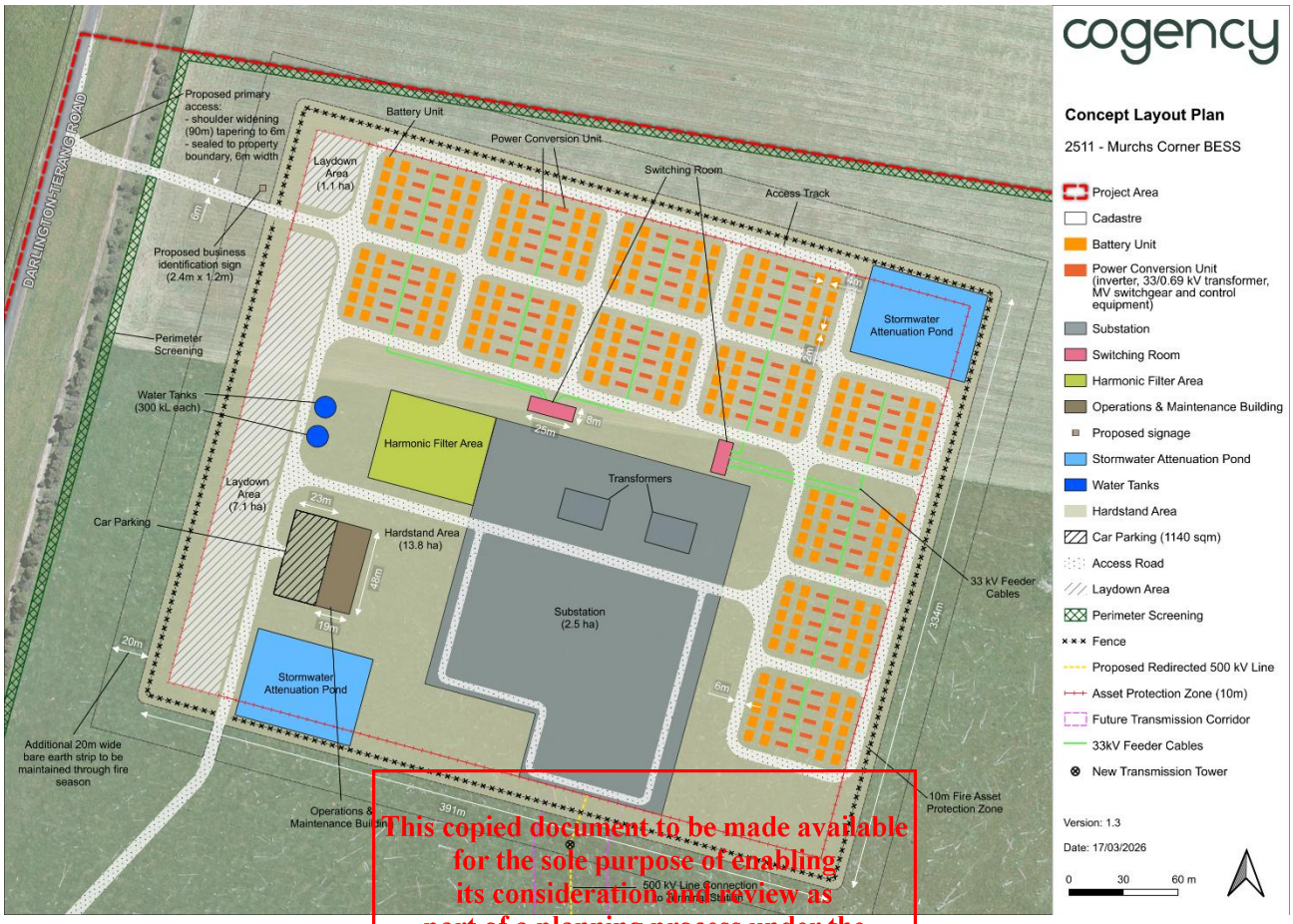


Figure 9 - Concept Layout Plan (BESS Area)

3.2 Battery storage

While exact technology providers have not been selected yet, the Proposal will most likely use Lithium Ferro(iron) Phosphate (LFP) cells. LFP battery cells are durable and have an extensive lifespan, a broader thermal operating range, and release less energy during thermal runaway than other battery technologies. This means they have a lower risk of overheating or catching fire due to their unique safety features. Figure 10 presents diagrams of the LFP cell, Battery Module and Rack.

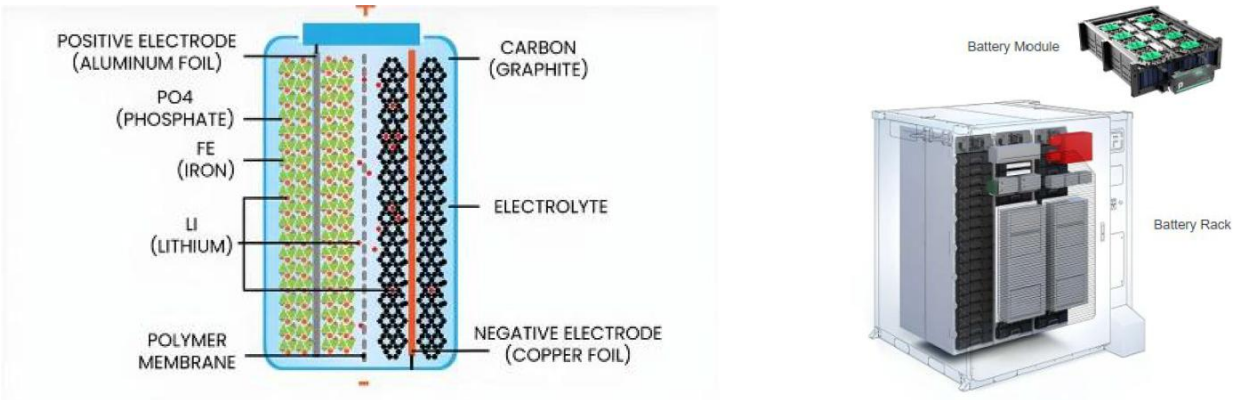


Figure 10 - LFP cells, Battery Module and rack diagram

The Proposal includes rows of battery units (approximately 480 units) arranged with PCS (approximately 120 units) located in between the battery rows. The battery enclosures house multiple racks of modules and contain monitoring and communications equipment, a cooling system, and a fire detection and suppression system. The modularity of the batteries allows for ease of construction and maintenance.

3.3 Associated infrastructure

The Proposal includes electrical cabling, and infrastructure connects the BESS units and inverters with the on-site substation The transmission connection will run via an underground cable from the BESS Area to the onsite 500/33kV substation, in the BESS Area to the 500kV cut-in terminal station. The substation will include two power transformers connecting to the cut-in terminal station. The underground cable will ensure that it does not interfere with the connection of future developments into the cut-in terminal station. Figure 11 provides a graphic illustration of the primary components and connections.

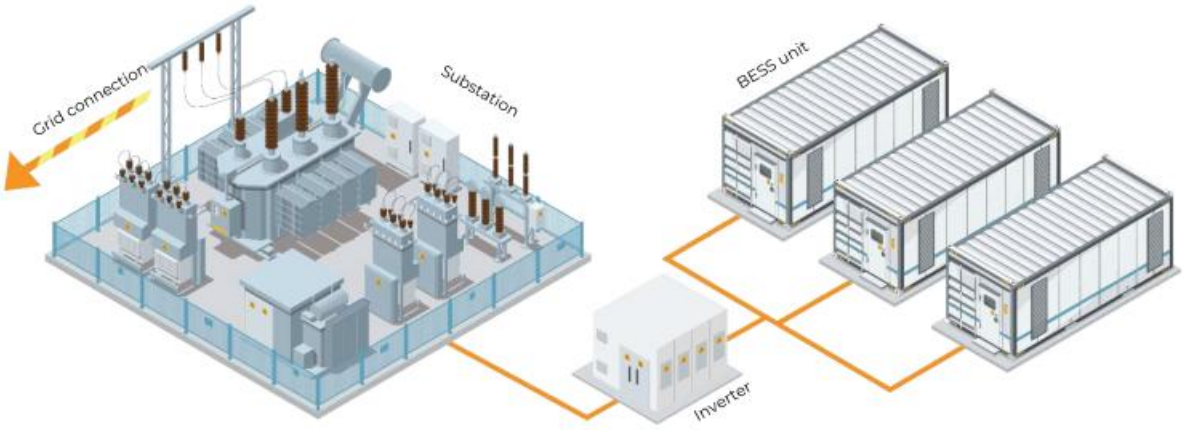


Figure 11 - Stylised representation of BESS units, inverter and substation

3.4 Grid connection

The Proposal will cut-in at the existing 500kV transmission line to connect into the NEM. A transmission cut-in involves the construction of a new 500kV terminal station to facilitate the connection into the 500kV transmission line (it has not yet been determined whether a single or dual circuit cut-in). Two connection configurations are being considered:

- Single circuit connection – The single circuit connection involves connecting the Proposal into the single MOPS-CRTS 500kV transmission line.
- Dual circuit connection – The dual circuit connection involves connecting the Proposal into both the MOPS–CRTS and MOPS–HGTS 500 kV transmission lines simultaneously.

The transmission cut-in may require upgrade works to the existing internal track and the eastern transmission pylon within Mt Fyans Drain, resulting in native vegetation removal. Approximately 0.245 ha of native vegetation removal is to predicted to be required for the upgrade works, however the extent of upgrade works is unknown at this stage. While these works will be undertaken by AusNet, an indicative Native Vegetation Removal Report (Appendix C) has been prepared for completeness of the planning application. Depending on the extent and requirement for upgrade works, a protected flora permit (FFG Act) may be required. However, given the low quality of the vegetation within the Site and the ability for construction to be managed in dry seasons, the impacts are considered low. An EPBC Act referral is expected to result in a 'Not a Controlled Action' determination.

The Proposal creates potential asset sharing opportunities with the proposed Mt Fyans Wind Farm and Darlington Wind Farm to support the increased generation of renewable energy in the South West REZ.

It is noted that a duplication of the 500kV transmission line is planned as part of the South West expansion program in the Victorian Transmission Plan 2025, however it is unknown at this stage whether it will run parallel to the north or south, or what the project timeframe is (current proposed delivery date is between 2032-3038).

3.5 Access and parking

A Traffic Engineering Assessment by Traffix presents existing road and traffic conditions, as well as modelling increases in vehicle movements by the Proposal (Section 7.4 and Appendix F).

Primary access during the construction and operation phases will be via a new access point on Darlington-Terang Road at the northeast corner of the Project Area. The new access point will be located in a gap between existing roadside vegetation to minimise vegetation removal, ensuring no native vegetation removal in this location. This new access point is being created to minimise the length of travel for construction vehicles along Darlington-Terang Road (approximately 1.2 km, instead of 1.8 km to the existing more southern access point).

Primary access during the BESS operational phase will continue to utilise the new access point from Darlington-Terang. Nonetheless, the existing (southern) access will be upgraded from a gravel to a sealed track (to the property boundary) and widened as necessary, to accommodate AusNet and farm operation access. Sealing both accesses will mitigate any gravel spill onto Darlington-Terang Road.

The road section between Hamilton Highway and the Project Area is a sealed road approximately 6.5m wide. No additional works to Darlington-Terang Road are required.

Within the Development Area the access tracks will run from the entrance point to the BESS Area, terminal station and laydown area, with a loop surrounding the BESS Area and on-site substation. Additional internal tracks between the BESS modules will provide ample circulation. These tracks will be designed to accommodate both construction and operational traffic, and loading and offload activities, including access for fire trucks in accordance with CFA guidelines (Section 4.2 of the Design Guidelines and Model Requirements: Renewable Energy Facilities, Country Fire Authority (CFA), August 2023).

Car parking for construction staff will be provided within a parking area on-site. It is expected that up to six employees may be on-site at any one-time during operation. Accordingly, 10 car parking spaces will be provided to accommodate potential visitors. Given the large area of the overall Development Area and the position of the BESS units in the northern portion, all car parking demands are expected to be comfortably accommodated on-site.

3.6 Earthworks and drainage

The BESS and inverter units as well as substation and infrastructure will require engineered hardstands, necessitating earthworks (site preparation and some cut/fill). The concept design seeks to ensure that earthworks are balanced and stormwater runoff will be effectively managed to ensure there are minimal changes to existing flow regimes. The hardstands will be graded with the natural fall of the land from the northwestern corner to southwestern and northeastern corners to direct overland flows into the attenuation basins. An engineering review was undertaken by WSP to ensure that any water runoff can be managed and allowed to discharge at the predevelopment flow rates. An indicative benching investigation suggests that the amount of fill above natural ground level along the western edge, closest to public view, will only require between 300-700mm, providing very low visual change due to cut/fill.

Clean water diversion channel or table drains will be provided around the outside of the hardstand in the BESS and substation areas to prevent contamination and ensure upstream flows are directed to pre-development locations. The BESS and substation areas will also be provided with gully pits and pipe drainage as needed to ensure no ponding of water across the pad.

3.7 Firefighting infrastructure

In accordance with the CFA Guidelines, the following infrastructure will be provided as outlined in Appendix J:

- Fire hydrant system (compliant with AS2419.1-2021, Open Yard Protection)
- Firefighting water storage (at least 288kL)

- Attenuation basins to contain contaminated firefighting water
- Multiple access points and internal track circulation

3.8 Additional works

Vegetation planting

Perimeter vegetation screening will be provided to filter views at neighbouring residences to reduce the visual impact of the Proposal. The design and location of the screening will be informed by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix G), with a detailed Landscape Plan to be requested as a condition of permit.

Security fencing

A 2-3 metre high mesh security fence will be installed around the BESS Area and terminal station to deter theft or vandalism and prevent unauthorised access to equipment.

Business identification signage

To assist with identification of the BESS facility, a business identification sign is proposed within the Site. The sign will be a maximum of 3 sqm, adhering to the provisions of Clause 52.05 Signs. See Figure 12 and the design pack for more detail, as well as Table 10 for a full assessment against the particular provision. The exact sign design and detail will be finalised during detailed design.

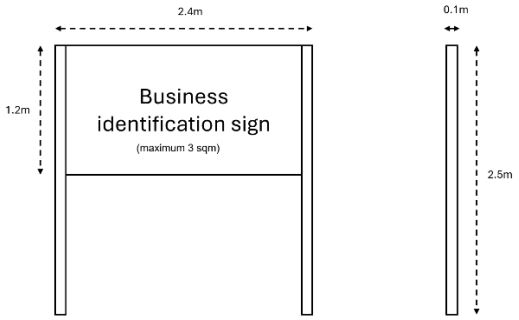


Figure 12 – Proposed business identification sign

3.9 Employment

The development of the Murchs Corner BESS, a potentially $1 billion project, is expected to create up to approximately 200 jobs during the construction stage. These will comprise jobs in the fields of manufacturing, electrical, civil engineering, roadworks, cabling, construction, fencing, and general construction.

Beyond construction, there are expected to be around six full time equivalent (FTE) jobs intermittently at the Site for the lifetime of the Proposal[1]. These jobs will be responsible for the operations and maintenance of the facility, including reporting, safety, monitoring, and upkeep of the facility. The Proponent is committed to procuring locally to the extent possible, drawing from the skills in the Moyne Shire and surrounding region.

The Proposal will play an important role in growing the renewable energy generation and storage industry in Victoria. As the State's energy supply transitions to renewable energy, more demand for storage will be created.

[1] Construction and ongoing employment numbers have been calculated from similar projects across Australia. Exact employment numbers will be confirmed closer to construction.

3.10 Construction, operation and decommissioning

Construction

Construction will be a key period of the Proposal's development and is expected to include the following elements:

- Delivery, assembly and installation of BESS components and ancillary infrastructure
- Installation of fencing, lighting and site signage, including safety signage
- Earthworks to achieve project bench and hardstand areas
- Establishment of temporary construction compound, car parking spaces and internal roads
- Installation of underground cabling from onsite substation to the terminal station

The majority of vehicles expected to service the Site during construction include a vehicle size up to and including 26m B-Double trucks and truck and quad dog combination trunks.

A detailed Construction and Environmental Management Plan will be prepared in accordance with any conditions of a planning permit.

Operation

The operation of the Proposal will involve charging and discharging of the housed battery units, monitoring and maintenance of the batteries, inverters, substation, internal cabling as well as general site maintenance and general security monitoring. Ongoing maintenance activities will include the testing and replacement of components, power connection and security, access tracks and security, and undertaking electrical maintenance. The Proposal is expected to have an operational lifespan of at least 20 to 25 years.

Decommissioning

At the end of the Proposal's anticipated operational lifespan, and assuming the facility is not repowered (with new units and a new lease), aboveground components would be removed and re-purposed where possible. The aim of the decommissioning phase will be to return the land to its original condition and commence site rehabilitation consistent with the surrounding landscape.

Upon commencement of decommissioning, all infrastructure would be removed, with key elements including:

- Removal of all aboveground BESS and substation site infrastructure, including permitter fencing, site offices and maintenance buildings
- All laydown, bench, access tracks, and infrastructure to be decommissioned and removed.
- Project area to be returned to the condition and consistency of surrounding landscape.

Other elements, such as vegetation planting and flood retention basin will be maintained on site at the discretion of the landowner. A decommissioning plan will be required as a condition of permit.

3.11 Proposal justification

3.11.1 Site suitability

The Site is well suited for a BESS and benefits from its proximity to the South West REZ and the existing 500kV transmission line. The Site is considered suitable for the use and development for a BESS for the following reasons:

- Direct access to the 500kV transmission line for connection to the NEM
- The Project Area is generally level, reducing bulk earthworks

- Zoning that allows for the use
- Historic agricultural activities on the primary parcel meaning it contains low biodiversity values
- Large land parcel (primary parcel), allowing the Proposal to be set back from surrounding waterways and wetlands
- Located away from dwellings.

3.11.2 Design iteration

The proposal has iteratively evolved based upon initial due diligence, preliminary investigations, community engagement and detailed technical investigations.

A broader investigation area was initially defined, with due diligence and preliminary investigations focused upon ecology and noise, with options north and south of the existing transmission line considered. The northern vs southern options did not identify any threshold constraints, however the northern option was selected due to marginally preferred assessments for: access (and hence fire response), grid (potential future duplication of the 500kV line likely to be south side), existing vegetation screening, avoidance of irrigated land on south, and greater separation from permanent waterways.

During neighbour and community engagement pre-application, discussions with some neighbours and Moyne Shire Council identified two preferences that have been updated in the concept design: creation of a new crossover for primary construction access at the northern end of the BESS area, reducing the length of travel along Darlington-Terang Road from Hamilton Highway, and increased separation distance on the western property boundary (from minimal setback to approximately 100m from the road edge).

3.11.3 Why battery energy storage?

Battery energy storage is essential to ensuring Australia's electricity grid is prepared for the phase out of traditional coal fired power stations in the coming decades. The variability of renewable energy sources means that there is a need for storage within the grid to supply power during periods of low generation.

Further, the continued popularity of domestic rooftop solar is leading to an oversupply of generation in the middle of the day during sunny periods, offering the opportunity to store power during this time, and release it in the evening. Battery storage technology has advanced to a point where the delivery of numerous grid-supporting batteries is cheaper and more efficient compared to other energy storage solutions such as pumped hydro. They will contribute to form a crucial part of ensuring an adequately firmed renewable energy capacity, as directed in AEMO's Integrated System Plan, which highlights a need for 46GW/640GWh of dispatchable storage by 2050.

The Murchs Corner BESS will strengthen grid stability for communities in the region through the ability to rapidly increase or decrease output, by providing 'ancillary services' such as frequency and voltage support.

In supporting the introduction of more renewable energy generation, the Proposal will assist with Victoria's renewable energy transition and support the legislated Victorian Renewable Energy Target for 50% of electricity to be sourced from renewables by 2030, which will increase to 65% by 2030 and 95% by 2035. Importantly, the Proposal will be crucial to achieving the legislated Victorian energy storage targets of at least 2.6 GW by 2030 and 6.3 GW by 2035.

4. Community and stakeholder engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement is fundamental to delivering positive and effective outcomes for both energy projects and the local community. Proactive, meaningful, inclusive and robust engagement can be seen as a direct investment in both strong communities and the success of the renewable energy transition.

The engagement approach for the Murchs Corner BESS has been guided by the Engagement Institute (formerly IAP2) Core Values and the Public Participation Spectrum. The spectrum is founded on the premise that different stakeholders will have varied levels of involvement in decision-making.

4.1 Engagement objectives, principles and commitments

The Proponent is committed to an open and transparent community and stakeholder engagement process. This includes ensuring proactive and early engagement, developing a benefit sharing model tailored to the local community and site context, and seeking to create a positive long-term legacy in the region. Furthermore, the Proponent commits to treat members of the local community and other stakeholders fairly, courteously and in a consistent and ethical manner.

4.1.1 Commitment to engagement

For the purposes of this Proposal, the Proponent commits to 'inform', 'consult' and 'involve' the appropriate stakeholders through an effective engagement process based on the objectives and promises outlined in the spectrum in Figure 13.

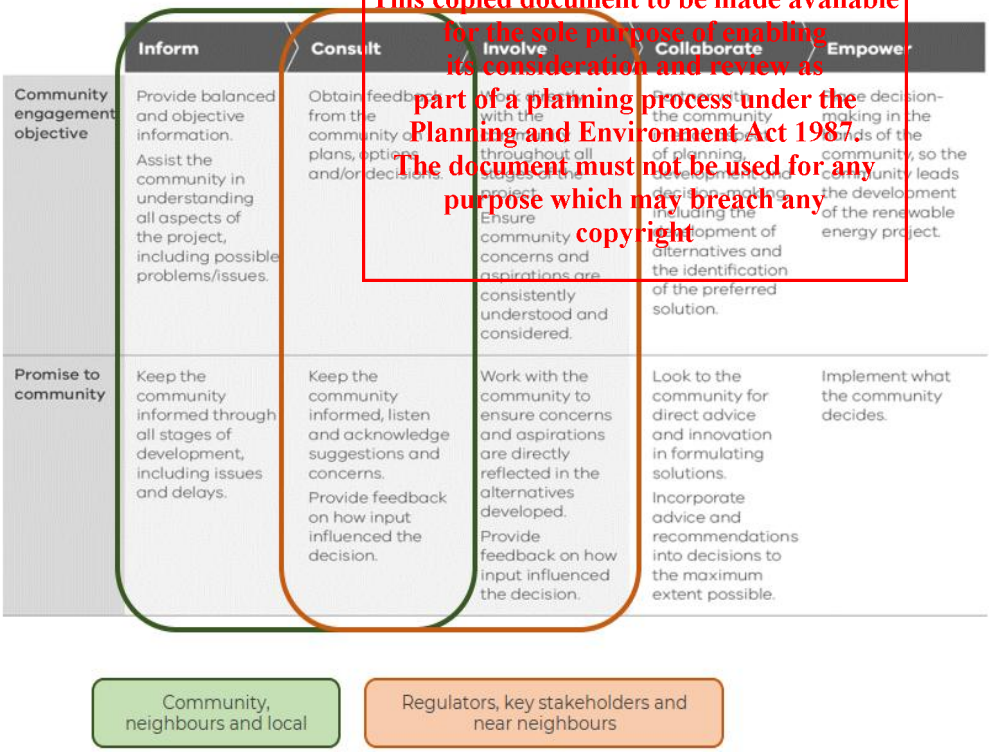


Figure 13 - Engagement commitment in relation to the IAP2 spectrum

4.2 Engagement to date

This section details the engagement the Project team has undertaken during the feasibility and design phases of the Proposal to inform the design and planning application.

The engagement program to date is presented in summary groups for near-neighbours, the local community and other stakeholders. A detailed summary of key stakeholder and community engagement is attached to this report (Appendix K).

The Proposal was publicly announced at the end of October / start of November, supported by targeted stakeholder and community engagement, and the team has sought to monitor and respond to interest in the Proposal from local stakeholders.

A variety of different communication materials have been created and distributed throughout the engagement process. These included posters, a newspaper advertisement, project specific email and a webpage: https://www.murchscornerbess.com.au/. Copies of these communication materials are provided in an appendix of the Engagement Summary (Appendix K).

4.2.1 Near-neighbour engagement

To date, the Proponent has spoken directly with landowners within 2.5km of the Project Area (four residences, six landowners). Communication activities began in October 2025 and have including letters, phone calls, and in-person meetings.

On 28 October 2025, a letter of introduction was sent to seven landowners within 2.5km of the Project Area introducing them to the project team and informing them of the Proposal. The correspondence included an invitation to attend the forthcoming Community Drop In Session (CDIS).

During the drop-in session and from further calls and meetings, a range of views were heard. These varied between support for the proposal, desire to see the community benefit fund shaped to support neighbours and the Darlington community, and questions and concerns on fire risk, traffic impacts, siting and relationship to other projects. In response, the BESS was moved approximately 70m east from the lot boundary, increasing overall setbacks and further minimising visual impacts. A construction primary access point at the northwest end of the BESS Area was introduced to reduce the travel distance of construction traffic and to minimise their impacts on Darlington-Terang Road and the dwelling south of the Project Area. Follow-up meetings and phone calls have been held with neighbours in November and December 2025 to address technical questions and to discuss neighbour benefits. The Project team is continuing to engage with near-neighbours who hold concerns as well as those supportive of the Proposal.

4.2.2 Stakeholder engagement

As part of the early design and engagement phase of the Proposal, the team undertook several engagement activities prior to the planning submission, in accordance with the engagement strategy. Summaries of these engagement meetings are included in the Engagement Summary (Appendix K). Meetings and communication have included:

- DTP
- Moyne Shire Council
- CFA, Corangamite Shire Council, local elected politicians (State and Federal), and Glenelg Hopkins CMA.

DTP acknowledged that the site is strategically located considering other existing and planning renewable projectsin the area and at face value appears to be a good site based on preliminary technical findings. DTP advised that the agricultural implications were an important consideration.

Moyne Shire Council's renewable energy and engineering team was primarily concerned with the school bus stop near the Hamilton Highway/Darlington-Terang Road intersection and expressed a desire for heavy vehicles to fully avoid the school bus route during its operating periods. Council recommended the consideration of planned road upgrades near the Site and the effect of harvest time on traffic movements. Council acknowledged the benefit of the landowner having local knowledge of the area.

4.2.3 Community engagement

To ensure the broader community had opportunities to be involved in the Proposal, the project team hosted a Community Drop In Session (CDIS) on 12 November 2025. The purpose of the CDIS was to provide information about the Proposal to the community, provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions and voice their opinions, encourage engagement in the planning process, as well as establish a point of contact for the Proposal.

Table 4 summaries the key details of the CDIS.

Table 4 - Summary of CDIS

Engagement Objective	Relevant Objectives & Actions
Date & time	▪ 12 November 2025, 3pm – 6pm
Location	▪ Darlington Mechanics Institute Hall, 2 Ware St, Darlington
Team members	▪ Billy Greenham, Cogency ▪ Clive Jamieson, Proponent ▪ Bobby Jamieson, Proponent ▪ Will Reed, Robert Luxmoore ▪ Simon Reed, Robert Luxmoore ▪ Andrew Clark, Alternate Path ▪ Leah Smythe, Alternate Path
Event promotion	▪ 2 x Mortlake Dispatch ▪ Letters to neighbours
Set up	▪ A1 boards arranged around the room, table set up with A3 plans and benefit sharing brainstorm poster.
No. of attendees	▪ 16
Overall sentiment	▪ Positive sentiment from broader community, negative sentiment and concerns raised by three neighbouring farming families.
Key themes	▪ Support for the proposal, ▪ Desire to see the community benefit fund shaped to support neighbours and the Darlington community, and ▪ Questions and concerns on fire risk, traffic impacts, siting and relationship to other projects.

5. Legislation, policy and guidelines context

The Proposal is strategically supported by a number of renewable energy and climate change related policies at the Commonwealth, State, Regional and Local levels. When viewed holistically, the Proposal supports the relevant objectives and actions of these policies, with particular regard to efforts for greater energy storage to decarbonise Australia's energy generation, in turn minimising greenhouse gas emissions and supporting renewable energy generation infrastructure.

5.1 Policy and strategic summary and alignment

Table 5 outlines the policies, legislation and plans that are relevant to the Proposal and provides a brief assessment of the Proposal's alignment with the relevant objectives and actions of each policy and/or strategy.

Table 5 – Policy and Strategy Alignment

Legislation / Policy	Relevant Objectives & Actions	Proposal Alignment
Commonwealth		
Paris Climate Agreement 2016	▪ Strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. ▪ Maintain global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C. ▪ Achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and inscribe low emissions technology stretch goals.	▪ The Proposal will contribute to Australia's commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement by supporting the efficacy of nearby wind farms in the Mortlake area and allowing more renewable energy projects to connect to the NEM. This is in line with recent Federal announcements regarding a long-term emissions reduction strategy.
Climate Change Act 2022	▪ Advance Australia's response to climate change. ▪ Promote accountability in governance and policy making in regard to climate change. ▪ Achieve Australia's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, per section 10 of the Act, at least 43% below 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero by 2050.	▪ The Proposal supports Australia's greenhouse gas reduction targets by storing and distributing new renewable energy that can contribute to the replacement of fossil fuel-based energy. ▪ This Proposal will also help reduce reliance on fossil fuels by enhancing the reliability and stability of renewables, contributing to grid decarbonisation. ▪ The Proposal will also provide construction and maintenance jobs for the local and wider community, helping develop a new employment industry centred on green infrastructure.
Australian Renewable Energy Target Scheme	▪ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in electricity sector. ▪ Encourage generation of electricity form sustainable and renewable sources. ▪ Investment in new renewable energy projects until the target of 33,000 gigawatt-hours of renewable electricity generation is met and sustained until 2030.	▪ The Proposal supports Australia's renewable energy targets by seeking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the storage and distribution of electricity through renewable sources.
Draft AEMO Integrated System Plan 2024	▪ Provide essential support for Australia's energy transition. ▪ Triple grid-scale variable renewable energy by 2030, and increase it seven-fold by 2050. ▪ Quadruple firming capacity to support variable renewable energy.	▪ The Proposal will connect to the NEM via the construction of a new cut-in terminal station and will contribute to grid stability and management. ▪ The Proposal will help improve firming capacity for the NEM as it transitions to variable renewable energy sources.

Legislation / Policy	Relevant Objectives & Actions	Proposal Alignment
Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	▪ Environmental law that provides environmental protection in relation to Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). ▪ Ensures that development avoids or mitigates impacts on biodiversity, particularly on listed species or ecological communities. ▪ To protect threatened species and ecological communities. ▪ To promote ecologically sustainable development. ▪ To enhance Australia's capacity to address environmental challenges.	▪ The Proposal has been intentionally designed and sited to avoid and minimise impacts on flora and fauna, including MNES. ▪ Direct and indirect impacts to habitat for threatened species or communities listed under the EPBC Act are likely to be avoided. ▪ The Proposal is not considered likely to have a significant impact on MNES, see Appendix C for further details.
State		
Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006	▪ To recognise, protect and conserve Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria in ways that are based on respect for Aboriginal knowledge and cultural and traditional practices. ▪ To promote the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage as an integral part of land and natural resource management.	▪ The Proposal is located on the traditional lands of the Eastern Marr and the Eastern Marr Aboriginal Corporation (EMAC) is the RAP for the land. ▪ The Proposal has been intentionally designed and sited to avoid impacts to mapped areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity.
Climate Change Act 2017	▪ To set a long-term greenhouse gas emissions reduction target.	▪ The Proposal will directly contribute to the State's stated greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets by supporting the production and dispersion of renewable energy.
Environment Effects Act 1978	▪ If a project is expected to have significant environmental effects, an Environment Effects Statement (EES) may be required to be prepared and submitted to the Minister for assessment of the environmental effects of the works.	▪ The Proposal does not have significant environmental effects, with a self-assessment completed against EES criteria.
Environment Protection Act 2017	▪ Provides the EPA powers and tools to prevent and minimise the risks of harm to human health and the environment from pollution and waste. ▪ Provides the EPA with the ability to pursue stronger sanctions and penalties to hold environmental offenders to account.	▪ The Proposal is consistent with the purposes of the EP Act. ▪ Assessments are being undertaken to understand how the Proposal may impact the natural environment and health of the surrounding community and mitigation measures will be implemented should impacts be considered unacceptable (refer to Section 7)

Legislation / Policy	Relevant Objectives & Actions	Proposal Alignment
Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988	▪ To prevent taxa and communities of flora and fauna from becoming threatened and to recover threatened taxa and communities so their conservation status improves. ▪ To identify and mitigate the impacts of potentially threatening processes to address the important underlying causes of biodiversity decline.	▪ Approximately 0.245ha of native vegetation may be removed within the Mt Fyan Drain wetland to accommodate upgrade works to existing electrical infrastructure by AusNet. An indicative benching investigation suggests that the amount of fill above natural ground level along the western edge, closest to public view, will only require between 300-700mm, providing very low visual change due to cut/fill. Works are limited to existing infrastructure to minimise impacts to vegetation. ▪ It is recommended that AusNet do upgrade works when the wetland is not active and therefore minimise potential for permanent impacts to soil and vegetation ▪ Other than upgrade works within the wetland, the Proposal will avoid direct impacts to native vegetation and habitat for threatened species. ▪ Indirect impacts can be avoided and minimised by implementing a site-specific CEMP. ▪ The planning application is accompanied by and Flora and Fauna Assessment (refer to Appendix C) that addresses the requirements in the FFG Act.
Heritage Act 2017	▪ To protect and conserve the cultural heritage of the state. ▪ To create offences and other enforcement measures to protect and conserve cultural heritage.	▪ The Proposal is consistent with the objectives of the Act as it would not disturb any places of European heritage.
Planning and Environment Act 1987	▪ To establish a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria. ▪ Provides legal weight to instruments under the Act, including the Victorian Planning Provisions, planning schemes (such as the Moyne Shire Planning Scheme), regulations and Ministerial directions.	▪ The Proposal is in accordance with the general objectives for planning and land use within Victoria ▪ It has been selected for its strategic location, in close proximity to existing electrical infrastructure and renewable energy facilities ▪ Planning approval from the Minister for Planning is being sought as part of this application. A detailed assessment against the relevant provisions of the Moyne Planning Scheme has been provided at Section 6.
Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017 & Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET)	▪ To increase the proportion of Victoria's electricity generated by the means of large-scale facilities that utilise renewable energy sources. ▪ To contribute to achieving the renewable energy targets, and energy storage targets. ▪ To support the development of projects and initiatives to encourage investment, employment and technology development in Victoria in relation to renewable electricity generation, and energy storage. ▪ To contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Victoria and to achieve associated environmental and social benefits. ▪ To promote the transition of Victoria to a clean energy economy. ▪ To contribute to the security of electricity supply in Victoria.	▪ The proposed BESS will be key to achieving Victoria's ambitious energy storage targets of at least 2.6 GW by 2030. ▪ The battery storage capacity of the Proposal supports the Victorian Government's goals of providing reliable, affordable and clean energy. ▪ The Proposal will also contribute to Victoria's renewable energy targets by allowing more renewable energy generators to connect to the grid.

Legislation / Policy	Relevant Objectives & Actions	Proposal Alignment
Road Management Act 2004	▪ To establish a system for the management of safe and efficient public roads that best meet the needs and priorities of State and local communities.	▪ The planning application is accompanied by a Traffic Engineering Assessment (Appendix F and Section 7.4) that outlines the proposed strategies for road management. The proposal is consistent with the road management principles outlined in the *Road Management Act 2004*.
Dangerous Goods Act 1985	▪ To promote the safety of persons and property in relation to the manufacture, storage, transport, transfer, sale and use of dangerous goods. ▪ To ensure that adequate protections are taken against certain fires, explosions, leakages and spillages of dangerous goods. ▪ To ensure that information relating to dangerous goods is provided by occupiers and owners of premises to the relevant authorities. ▪ To allocate responsibilities to occupiers and owners of premises to ensure that the health and safety of workers and the general public is protected.	▪ The planning application is accompanied by a Fire Safety Study (Appendix J and Section 7.8), that assesses the hazard associated with the Proposal. ▪ Elements of the Proposal classified as Dangerous goods have been identified as per the CFA guidelines in the Fire Safety Study (Appendix J) and will be maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications and relevant Australian Standards.
Victoria's Climate Change Strategy 2026 - 2030	▪ 2045 net zero target ▪ Helping households shift to solar ▪ Affordable and sustainable transport ▪ Creating more jobs for Victorians ▪ Build large-scale energy storage to support renewables	▪ The Proposal will help support the State's energy targets by providing large-scale storage and dispersion of renewable-generated electricity. ▪ The Proposal will improve grid stability in the area to support the development of renewable generation projects. ▪ The Proposal will support the continued uptake of household solar and zero emission vehicles by allowing a greater mix of renewable energy in the electricity grid and storing energy that would otherwise be generated through fossil fuel sources. ▪ The Proposal will create new jobs in regional cities.
Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (Country Fire Authority) 2022	▪ Provides standard considerations and measures in relation to fire safety risk and emergency management to be considered when designed and operating new renewable energy facilities. ▪ Provides design guidelines for battery facilities in bushfire prone areas.	▪ The planning application is accompanied by a Fire Safety Study (refer to Section 7.8), that assesses the Proposal against the CFA Guidelines. ▪ The CFA have been and will continue to be consulted during the design, construction and operation phases.
Regional		
Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan	▪ Support the development of energy facilities in appropriate locations where they take advantage of existing infrastructure and provide benefits to the regional community. ▪ Require the protection and proper maintenance of infrastructure and assets, including local roads, during the development and construction of energy projects. ▪ Plan for and sustainably manage the cumulative impacts of alternative energy development. ▪ Support continued development of the energy industry.	▪ The Proposal is appropriately located away from residential areas in Darlington and near existing electrical infrastructure. ▪ The Proposal will follow all recommendations in the Fire Safety Study (Appendix J) and requirements to ensure all assets are adequately protected. ▪ The level of traffic generated during construction and operation phases is acceptable and will not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding road network (Appendix F and Section 7.4). ▪ The Proposal supports existing and future alternative energy development in the region and helps to develop the local energy industry.

Legislation / Policy	Relevant Objectives & Actions	Proposal Alignment
The Great South Coast Regional Strategic Plan	▪ Meet the future labour and skill demands of current and emerging industries. ▪ Invest in renewable energy development and position ourselves to become Australia's alternative energy centre. ▪ Invest in renewable energy knowledge and skills development. ▪ Reduce community and industry consumption of non-renewable resources.	▪ The Proposal will support future investment in renewable energy development by providing opportunities to upskill the local labour force and increasing demand within the local manufacturing industry for manufactured goods in the construction of the Proposal. ▪ The Proposal will help reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources by increasing the share of renewably generated electricity in the grid.
Local		
Moyne Shire Community Vision 2040	▪ Renewable Energy Use and Uptake - We are supported to live off the grid and have access to renewable energy benefits through local partnerships and an increased local uptake of sustainable practices. ▪ Climate emergency and action - We act to address our climate emergency and support our community to adapt to a changing climate. ▪ Environmental planning - We use best practice environmental and land management plans, to protect native flora and fauna, and manage our land and water for future generations.	▪ The Proposal's community benefit fund will explore the opportunities for local partnerships to ensure benefits are passed on to the community. ▪ The Proposal will help Darlington and the surround region mitigate the effects of climate change by increasing the availability of renewable energy and reducing the dependence on fossil fuel-based electricity. ▪ The Proposal has been designed to avoid and minimise impacts to nearby waterways, wetlands and ecologically sensitive areas.
Moyne Shire Council Plan 2025-2029	▪ 8.1 Advocate for improved outcomes and increased benefit for community and individuals from the renewable energy sector. ▪ 8.2 Explore innovative partnership opportunities with industry, government and the community.	▪ The project team will continue working with Council to understand and deliver upon outcomes and benefits they want to see. ▪ A community benefit fund is proposed to ensure benefits from the Proposal support the local community.

6. Planning assessment

The Site is subject to the Moyne Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme), that outlines a range of State, Regional and Local policies, along with detailed planning provisions, that direct future use and development of the site. Table 6 presents identified planning permit triggers under the Planning Scheme.

Table 6 – Planning permit triggers

Clause	Trigger
35.07-1 **Farming Zone**	Use of land for a utility installation (BESS)
35.07-4 **Farming Zone**	To construct a building or carry out works associated with a Section 2 use
52.05-14 **Signs**	To develop land for a business identification sign
52.06-6 **Car Parking**	To provide car parking to the satisfaction of the responsible authority

6.1 Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is provided at Clause 02 of the Planning Scheme and provides the context, vision and strategic directions of Moyne Shire Council. Relevant Clauses include:

- Clause 02.01 – Context – This clause provides an overview of the relevant social, economic and environmental context of the municipality.
- Clause 02.02 – Vision – This clause sets out the vision for the municipality in line with the Council Plan.
- Clause 02.03 – Strategic Directions – This clause provides the strategic direction for the municipality in line with strategic framework plans at Clause 02.04.

Table 7 sets out the strategic direction sub-clauses and provisions relevant to the Proposal and an assessment against them.

Table 7 - Relevant strategic directions and assessment

Sub-Clause	Relevant Provisions	Assessment
Clause 02.03-2 Environmental and landscape values	▪ Protect areas of remnant native vegetation, particularly along roadsides and on freehold land, recognising the ecological and economic value. ▪ Manage land use and development to minimise impacts on coastal and river environments.	▪ The Proposal has been sited to avoid and minimise the removal of native vegetation and minimise potential indirect impacts to nearby creeks. ▪ Native vegetation impacts will not occur as a result of the BESS placement, the terminal stations, the two accessways and the proposed crossover. ▪ Potential works within the mapped wetland are limited to existing infrastructure (track and pylon) to minimise impacts to vegetation. ▪ Avoidance Areas have been established to minimise impacts to nearby creeks. ▪ Biodiversity and hydrology impact assessments have been prepared to inform the design development and assessment of the Proposal.
Clause 02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity	▪ Ensure land use and development responds to fire risk. ▪ Protect the function of existing flood ways.	▪ The Proposal has been considerate to the Design Guidelines and Model Requirements: Renewable Energy Facilities (CFA, 2023) and will incorporate the recommendations in the Fire Safety Study (Appendix J). ▪ The Proposal has been sited to avoid areas within the 1% AEP to avoid impacts to flood prone areas.

Clause 02.03-4 Natural resource management	▪ Protect the natural and physical resources upon which agricultural industries rely.	▪ The Proposal will not result in the loss of high value agricultural land. ▪ The Proposal will not result in residual detrimental impact on the productivity of the Stony Point farming property.

Assessment

The Proposal aligns with the MPS, including the vision Moyne Shire, by minimising environmental impacts to protect the natural environment and allowing the local community to access renewable energy benefits.

6.2 Planning Policy Framework (PPF)

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) sets out the objectives and strategies that guide land use and development within the municipality. Table 8sets out the relevant PPF Clause objectives and strategies and provides an assessment against them.

Table 8 – Relevant PPF objectives, strategies and assessment

Sub-Clause	Relevant Provisions	Assessment

Clause 12.01-1S Protection of biodiversity	▪ Ensure that decision making takes into account the impacts of land use and development on Victoria's biodiversity, including consideration of:
	  ▪ Cumulative impacts.
	  ▪ Fragmentation of habitat.
	  ▪ The spread of pest plants, animals and pathogens into natural ecosystems.
	▪ Avoid impacts of land use and development on important areas of biodiversity.
		▪ The Proposal has been informed by ecological assessments and avoids important areas of biodiversity around waterways and wetlands.
		▪ The majority of the Project Area is disturbed agricultural land and generally clear of native vegetation.
		▪ See Appendix C and Section 7.1 for further detail.

Clause 12.01-2S Native vegetation management	▪ Ensure decisions that involve, or will lead to, the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation, apply the three-step approach in accordance with the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017).
	  ▪ Avoid the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.
	  ▪ Minimise impacts from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation that cannot be avoided.
	  ▪ Provide an offset to compensate for the biodiversity impact from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.
		▪ Approximately 0.245ha of native vegetation removal may be required to upgrade the existing track and eastern transmission pylon, within a DEECA mapped wetland.
		▪ The extent of works is uncertain at this stage and will be undertaken by AusNet to augment their existing assets. See Appendix C for the indicative native vegetation removal report.
		▪ These works will be undertaken by AusNet to augment their existing assets. It is recommended upgrade works are done when the wetland is not active and therefore minimise potential for permanent impacts to soil and vegetation
		Outside of the potential upgrade works, the Proposal avoids native vegetation removal.

Clause 12.03-1S River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes, wetlands and billabongs	▪ Sensitively design and site development to maintain and enhance the waterway system and the surrounding landscape setting, environmental assets, and ecological and hydrological systems.	▪ The Proposal is sited away from nearby waterways and wetlands, and stormwater runoff is appropriately managed in attenuation basins. ▪ Based on flood modelling, Avoidance Areas have been established around the two nearby creeks to protect the waterway system.
Clause 13.01-1S Natural hazards and climate change	▪ Respond to the risks associated with climate change in planning and management decision making processes. ▪ Develop adaptation response strategies for existing settlements in risk areas to accommodate change over time. ▪ Site and design development to minimise risk to life, health, property, the natural environment and community infrastructure from natural hazards.	▪ The Proposal will provide a flexible and reliable energy storage solution that can readily respond to fluctuating energy demands and renewable energy generation. By storing excess energy during periods of low demand and releasing it during peak demand periods, the Proposal would help mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events of the electrical grid and enhance energy resilience. ▪ By decentralising energy storage and reducing dependence on centralised power plants, the Proposal would allow for more flexible and sustainable growth patterns, particularly in areas more vulnerable to climate-related hazards.

		▪ The Proposal is sited and designed according to rigorous standards to minimise risk to life and the environment.

Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire planning	▪ Identify bushfire hazard and undertake appropriate risk assessment by:
	  ▪ Applying the best available science to identify vegetation, topographic and climatic conditions that create a bushfire hazard.
	  ▪ Consulting with emergency management agencies and the relevant fire authority early in the process to receive their recommendations and implement appropriate bushfire protection measures.
		▪ The Proposal has been designed in accordance with the Country Fire Authority's Design Guidelines Model Requirements Renewable Energy Facilities (March 2022) and includes mandatory bushfire safety design elements such as perimeter fire breaks, access roads for emergency vehicles, adequate water access and associated fire protection and suppression systems.
		▪ A Fire Safety Study (Appendix J) has been prepared and informed the design of the Proposal and fire mitigation measures.

Clause 13.03-1S Floodplain management	▪ Identify land affected by flooding, including land inundated by the 1 in 100 year flood event (1 per cent Annual Exceedance Probability) or as determined by the floodplain management authority in planning schemes. ▪ Avoid intensifying the impact of flooding through inappropriately located use and development. ▪ Locate use and development that involve the storage or disposal of environmentally hazardous industrial and agricultural chemicals or wastes and other dangerous goods (including intensive animal industries and sewage treatment plants) outside floodplains unless site design and management is such that potential contact between such substances and floodwaters is prevented, without affecting the flood carrying and flood storage functions of the floodplain.	▪ A hydrology assessment was prepared identifying land affected by 1% AEP flooding. ▪ The Proposal will avoid land affected by flooding, classified as Avoidance Areas. ▪ The Proposal's attenuation basins are located outside of flood prone areas.
Clause 13.05-1S Noise management	▪ Ensure that development is not prejudiced and community amenity and human health is not adversely impacted by noise emissions. ▪ Minimise the impact on human health from noise exposure to occupants of sensitive land uses (residential use, child care centre, school, education centre, residential aged care centre or hospital) near the transport system and other noise emission sources through suitable building siting and design (including orientation and internal layout), urban design and land use separation techniques as appropriate to the land use functions and character of the area.	▪ The Proposal is a considered a noise emitting development and has been adequately separated from sensitive land uses. ▪ A Preliminary Noise Assessment (Appendix D) has been prepared and informed the layout of the Proposal and requirement of any noise mitigation measures. The Proposal is surrounded by few dwellings, the closest non associated dwelling is approximately 1km away.
Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility	▪ Ensure that use or development of land is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses. ▪ Avoid or otherwise minimise adverse off-site impacts from commercial, industrial and other uses through land use separation, siting, building design and operational measures.	▪ The Proposal has been located on land that currently hosts electricity infrastructure to avoid land use compatibility conflicts. ▪ The Proposal has been sited and designed to minimise adverse off-site impacts and meet relevant noise limits by ensuring appropriate separation distance and mitigation measures (see Appendix D).
Clause 14.01-1S Protection of agricultural land	▪ Avoid permanent removal of productive agricultural land from the state's agricultural base without consideration of the economic importance of the land for the agricultural production and processing sectors.	▪ The Proposal is located on agricultural land (FZ). ▪ An Agricultural Impact Assessment (Appendix J) has been prepared and confirms the site is not considered significant agricultural land. ▪ The Development Area covers approximately 28ha of the wider 391ha Site allowing the balance portion of land to continue use as cropping/grazing land.
Clause 14.02-1S Water quality	▪ Ensure that land use activities potentially discharging contaminated runoff or wastes to waterways are sited and managed to minimise such discharges and to protect the quality of surface water and	▪ The Proposal includes two attenuation basins to ensure there is no increase in rate or volume of water runoff leaving the site and impacting groundwater resources and nearby waterways and wetlands.

	groundwater resources, rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries and marine environments.	▪ In the event of contaminated water, the water can be held in the attenuation basins for proper management.
Clause 15.01-6S **Design for rural areas**	▪ Ensure that the siting, scale and appearance of development protects and enhances rural character. ▪ Site and design development to minimise visual impacts on surrounding natural scenery and landscape features including ridgelines, hill tops, waterways, lakes and wetlands.	▪ The Proposal is located adjacent to an existing 500kV transmission line to help minimise non-natural visual impacts to the surrounding landscape.
Clause 15.03-2S **Aboriginal cultural heritage**	▪ Identify, assess and document places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, in consultation with relevant Registered Aboriginal Parties, as a basis for their inclusion in the planning scheme. ▪ Ensure that permit approvals align with the recommendations of any relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plan approved under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.	▪ A Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Assessment (Appendix E)was prepared and determined there are no areas of aboriginal cultural areas within the Development Area. ▪ See Section 7.3 for further details.
Clause 17.01-1S **Diversified economy**	▪ Facilitate growth in a range of employment sectors, including health, education, retail, tourism, knowledge industries and professional and technical services based on the emerging and existing strengths of each region. ▪ Support rural economies to grow and diversify.	▪ The Proposal would help to facilitate growth in a new and innovative employment sector, thereby supporting rural economies to grow and diversify.
Clause 19.01-1S **Energy supply**	▪ Support the development of energy generation, storage, transmission, and distribution infrastructure to transition to a low-carbon economy. ▪ Develop appropriate infrastructure to meet community demand for energy services. ▪ Ensure energy generation, storage, transmission and distribution infrastructure and projects are resilient to the impacts of climate change. ▪ Facilitate the production and distribution of zero emission gases and fuels. ▪ Support energy infrastructure projects in locations that minimise land use conflicts, including in any renewable energy zones declared under section 63 of the National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005. ▪ Support energy infrastructure projects in locations that take advantage of existing and planned resources and infrastructure networks. ▪ Facilitate energy infrastructure projects that help diversify local economies and improve sustainability and social outcomes.	▪ The Proposal directly supports this clause by providing storage to assist in the transition to a low carbon economy. It would also facilitate energy infrastructure development in an appropriate location. It takes advantage of existing infrastructure, provides benefits to industry and the community, supports the transition to a low-carbon economy with renewable energy and greenhouse emission reductions, helps diversify the local economy and improve sustainability and social outcomes. ▪ The Proposal supports both existing and planned renewable energy projects in the region.
Clause 19.01-2S **Renewable Energy**	▪ Facilitate renewable energy development in appropriate locations, including in any renewable energy zones declared under section 63 of the National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005. ▪ Consider the economic, social and environmental benefits to the broader community of renewable energy generation while also considering the need to minimise the effects of a proposal on the local community and environment.	

6.3 Zones and overlays

The site is located within the Farming Zone (FZ) (Figure 14).

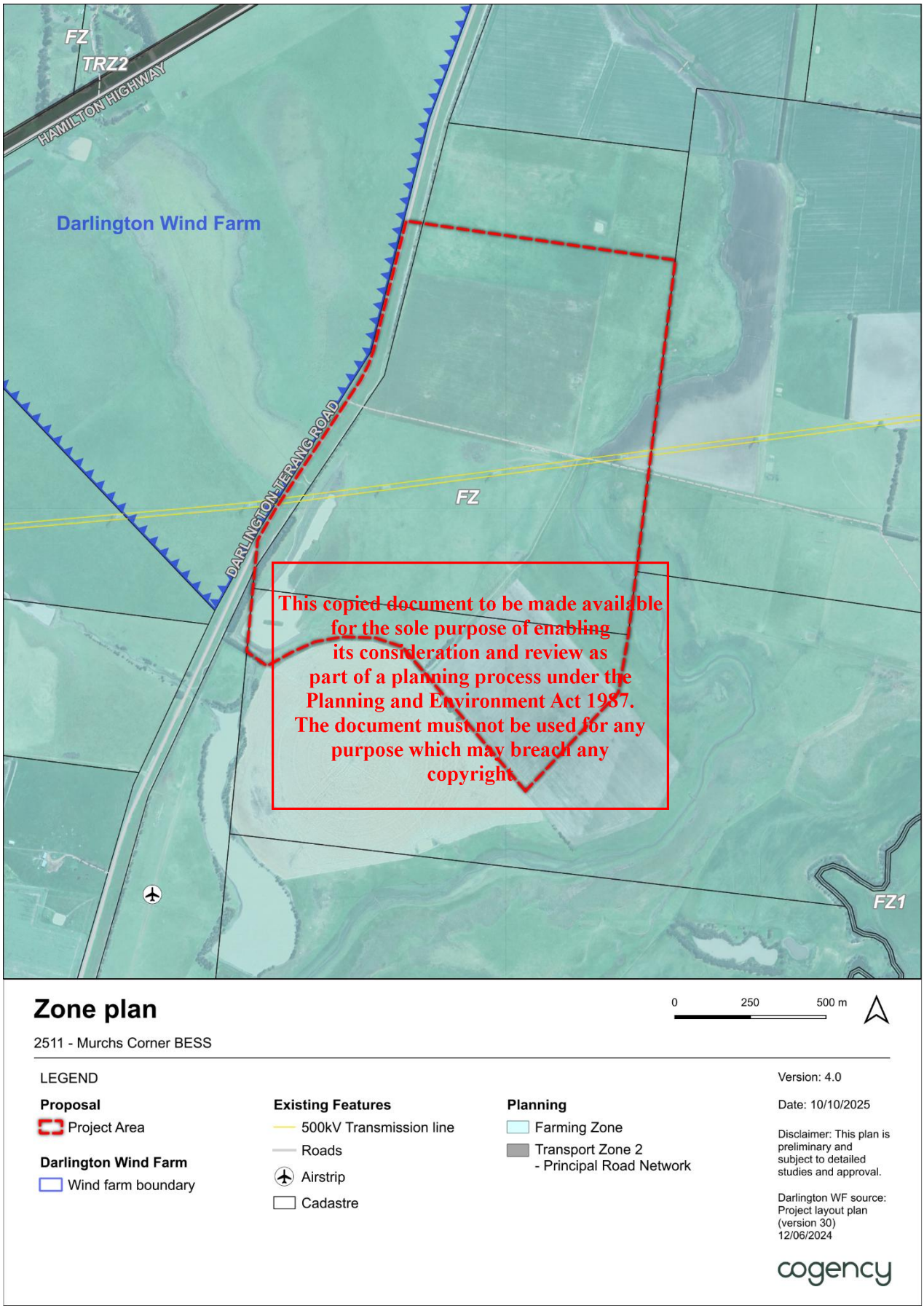


Figure 14 - Zone plan

6.3.1 Clause 35.07 Farming Zone (FZ)

The purpose of the Farming Zone is:

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

Clause 73.03 (Land Use Terms) of the Planning Scheme defines 'utility installation' as 'land used to transmit, distribute or store power'. As a result, the most appropriate definition of the Proposal is a 'utility installation'.

Permit triggers in the FZ applying to the Proposal are:

- Pursuant to Clause 35.07-1 (Table of uses), 'utility installation' is a Section 2 – Permit required use.
- Pursuant to Clause 35.07-4 (Buildings and works), a permit is required to construct or carry out buildings or works associated with a Section 2 use.
- Clause 35.07-6 (Decision guidelines) sets out the guidelines for the Responsible Authority to consider before deciding on an application, these have been set out and responded to in Table 9.
- Clause 35.07-7 (Signs) sets out that Clause 52.05 applies.

Table 9 provides an assessment against the relevant decision guidelines within the FZ.

Table 9 - Farming Zone decision guidelines and assessment

Decision Guidelines	Assessment
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, including the disposal of effluent. ▪ How the use or development relates to sustainable land management. ▪ Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses. ▪ How the use and development makes use of existing infrastructure and services.	▪ The Proposal is appropriately located on land that is capable of accommodating the proposed use of a utility installation. ▪ The Site is particularly suitable for the proposed use given the proximity to existing high voltage transmission lines and distance from sensitive receptors.
Agricultural issues and the impacts from non-agricultural uses: ▪ Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production. ▪ Whether the use or development will adversely affect soil quality or permanently remove land from agricultural production. ▪ The potential for the use or development to limit the operation and expansion of adjoining and nearby agricultural uses. ▪ The capacity of the site to sustain the agricultural use. ▪ The agricultural qualities of the land, such as soil quality, access to water and access to rural infrastructure. ▪ Any integrated land management plan prepared for the site.	▪ The Proposal would result in the net loss of approximately 28ha of agricultural land which will have an insignificant impact on the Region's and the State's agricultural production. ▪ The Site has no strategic importance and is not identified as high value agricultural land. ▪ The Proposal would not limit the operations of adjoining and nearby properties. ▪ The soils are of moderate quality, and the construction of a BESS will have no long-term detrimental impact on soil properties.

Environmental issues: ▪ The impact of the proposal on the natural physical features and resources of the area, in particular on soil and water quality. ▪ The impact of the use or development on the flora and fauna on the site and its surrounds. ▪ The need to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area, including the retention of vegetation and faunal habitat and the need to revegetate land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridgelines, property boundaries and saline discharge and recharge area. ▪ The location of on-site effluent disposal areas to minimise the impact of nutrient loads on waterways and native vegetation.	▪ The Proposal avoids all waterways and 1% AEP flood areas. ▪ The Proposal will have no long-term detrimental impact on soil properties. ▪ The Proposal avoids native vegetation removal except where existing tracks and electrical infrastructure cross through Mt Fyans Drain and may need upgrading. The extent of upgrade works is unknown at this stage and will be undertaken by AusNet to augment their existing assets. ▪ It is recommended that any upgrades works are done when the wetland is not active and therefore minimise potential for permanent impacts to soil and vegetation. ▪ Other than potential upgrade works, the Proposal will not result in direct impacts to threatened habitats or species due to the highly disturbed nature of the Project Area. More details can be found in Appendix C. The Proposal includes water attenuation basins to ensure any contaminated water can be held for proper treatment to avoid impacting groundwater and nearby waterways
Design and siting issues ▪ The need to locate buildings in one area to avoid any adverse impacts on surrounding agricultural uses and to minimise the loss of productive agricultural land. ▪ The impact of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used, on the natural environment, major roads, vistas and water features and the measures to be undertaken to minimise any adverse impacts. ▪ The impact on the character and appearance of the area or features of architectural, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance. ▪ The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure including roads, gas, water, drainage, telecommunications and sewerage facilities. ▪ Whether the use and development will require traffic management measures.	▪ The Proposal has been designed and sited to occupy the smallest footprint, minimising the loss of agricultural land and avoiding existing transmission infrastructure. ▪ By collocating the Proposal on land with an existing high voltage transmission line, the BESS and ancillary infrastructure will not present a significant change to the visual landscape. See Appendix G and Section □. ▪ The proposed vegetation screening and retain roadside trees will reduce the visual impact of the BESS to the existing landscape. ▪ Construction activities will require traffic management measures. Most details can be found in Appendix F.

6.4 Particular Provisions

Particular provisions are planning controls that apply only to certain uses and development or to particular aspects of certain uses and development. The following Particular Provisions are considered relevant to the Proposal. Their purposes, permit triggers, application requirements, referrals, and decision guidelines are considered in below.

Table 10 – Particular Provisions

Particular Provision	Planning Permit Requirements	Assessment
Clause 52.05 **Signs**	A planning permit is required for the development of land for a business identification sign within Category 4 – sensitive areas (Clause 52.05-14). The total display area to each premises must not exceed three square metres.	▪ ▪ A small business identification sign is proposed to be placed at the entrance to the site. The sign would be no more than 3 sqm and would provide for appropriate identification of the facility and direction for workers and visitors. ▪ The details of the sign will be finalised in detailed design.
	Decision guidelines ▪ 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 proposed sign is located within a rural landscape characterised by large agricultural properties with few dwellings and road signs. ▪ The future character of the area will comprise of a BESS and terminal station next to the 500kV transmission line. Located next to the BESS, the sign will be compatible with the future character of the area and not contribute to the visual clutter of signs in the surrounding rural area.

	– 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.	
	▪ 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 sign is small and recessive to the BESS and terminal station, therefore the sign will not impact on views and vistas. ▪ There are no existing signs nearby.
	▪ 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 sign will be a minor addition of the landscape, in comparison to the scale of the BESS and terminal station. ▪ Perimeter vegetation screening will likely assist with reducing the visual impact of the sign structure.
	▪ The relationship to the site and building: – The scale and form of the sign relative to the scale, proportion and proportions 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 sign will be placed near the primary access of the BESS. ▪ In comparison to the BESS, the sign is significantly smaller and is a negligible addition to visual impacts. ▪ The sign does not require the removal of vegetation.
	▪ 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 proposed sign is a simple business identification sign with two legs. The simple structure of the sign is not expected to have a significant visual impact.
	▪ 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 sign will not have any illumination.
	▪ 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 sign will not have a logo box.
	▪ 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.	▪ The sign will be setback from Darlington-Terang Road, located near the primary access. In this location, the sign will not obstruct a driver's view of traffic. ▪ The design of the sign has not been finalised yet, however the sign will designs that are distracting, similar to traffic lights, or have the potential to cause a hazard. ▪ The sign will avoid designs that could be mistaken as driving instructions.
Clause 52.06 Car Parking	Car parking must be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority (Clause 52.06-6).	▪ Car parking for operation and construction staff will be provided onsite. ▪ Given the large area of the Project Area all car parking demands are expected to be comfortably accommodated on-site.
Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation	A planning permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation (Clause 52.17-1). An application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation must comply with the application requirements specified in the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017).	▪ Upgrades maybe required where the internal access track and eastern transmission pylon cross through the DEECA mapped wetland (Mt Fyans Drain), resulting in native vegetation removal. The extent of upgrade works is uncertain at this stage and will be undertaken by AusNet to augment their existing assets. ▪ It is recommended that any upgrade works are done when the wetland is not active and therefore minimise potential for permanent impacts to soil and vegetation. ▪ Works within the mapped wetland are limited to upgrading existing infrastructure in order to minimise impacts to native vegetation.
Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development	An application is exempt from the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the P&E Act (Clause 53.22-4).	This application is made under Clause 53.22, exempting the application from the review rights of section 82(1).

6.5 General Provisions

The following General Provisions of the Planning Scheme are considered relevant to the Proposal, among other more general provisions. Broadly, General Provisions set out exemptions, decision guidelines, and referral and notice provisions.

Table 11 – Particular Provisions

General Provision	Planning Permit Requirements	Assessment
Clause 66.02-4 Major electricity line or easement	The electricity transmission authority is a determining referral authority for an application 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.	This application will be referred to the electricity transmission authority.
Clause 66.02-7 Industry, utility or warehouse	The Victorian WorkCover Authority is a determining referral authority to use land for a utility installation if the fire protection quantity is exceeded under the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulation 2012.	This application will be referred to the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

7. Technical impact assessment and mitigation measures

To inform the design and planning of this Proposal, a range of specialist technical assessments have been undertaken. These cover various topics and include contextual site assessments, describe potential impacts, and inform the design and measures required to avoid, minimise or mitigate those impacts. The site context and characteristics relevant to each technical assessment, as well as proposed impact mitigation measures, are summarised in the following sections of this chapter. The full technical reports are attached as appendices to this report.

7.1 Ecology

A Flora and Fauna Assessment was completed by Biosis Pty Ltd, provided at Appendix C. The assessment was undertaken to determine the ecological constraints of the Site and to inform the design development process. Broadly, the assessment found that most of the Project Area has been cleared (historically) to support agricultural activities such as pasture and crop production. The paddocks, roadside vegetation and farm dam are disturbed, no longer supporting native vegetation, and are dominated by introduced species. Native vegetation occurs within and directly adjacent to Mt Fyans Drain which may provide suitable habitat for six threatened flora species.

The current proposed layout of the Proposal will avoid direct impacts to native vegetation and habitat for threatened species, except where the existing internal track and eastern transmission pylon cross through Mt Fyans Drain and may need upgrading. Approximately 0.245ha of native vegetation removal is predicted to be required for those upgrade works to the track and pylon (see Figure 14) however the extent of upgrade works is uncertain at this stage. These works will be undertaken by AusNet, however an indicative Native Vegetation Removal report (Appendix C) has been prepared for completeness of this planning application. Depending on the extent and requirement for upgrade works, a protected flora permit (FFG Act) may be required. However, given the low quality of the vegetation within the Site and the ability for construction to be managed in dry seasons, the impact potential is considered low. An EPBC Act referral is expected to result in a 'Not a Controlled Action' determination.

Figure 15 - Potential native vegetation impact (removal) in DECCA mapped wetland

Potential habitats for threatened fauna species occur within Mt Fyans Drain, roadside vegetation, planted shelterbelts and the farm dam. However, the Proposal has negligible / low impacts to all fauna species because direct impacts to potential habitats are avoided and indirect impacts are minimised through 200m buffering from wetlands and waterways (defined 'avoidance areas'). The only development proposed within the 200m buffer is the construction of the western transmission tower which is unlikely to significantly impact any fauna species. The installation or relocation of transmission lines is unlikely to result in significant impacts to threatened birds.Biosis provided preliminary advice regarding potential impacts to Brolga *Antigone rubicunda* (Biosis 2025) on the basis that the current Brolga guidelines do not apply to BESS. Brolga have not been regularly recorded within 1km of the Site and are unlikely to utilise wetlands within the Project Area due to the lack of sufficiently large areas of wetland with suitable aquatic vegetation to construct nests. It was recommended that a temporally and spatially dynamic buffer be applied based on regular and continuous surveys throughout the duration of the construction period to determine the presence of breeding and foraging Brolga.

The development footprint of the BESS and related infrastructure occur within areas of low ecological constraint (Figure 16) avoiding the 200m buffer around waterways and wetlands. As a result, no targeted surveys for threatened fauna or flora species were recommended.

Mitigation

The Flora and Fauna Assessment recommends a number of avoidance and minimisation strategies including:

- Implement a site-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to avoid and minimise indirect impacts.
- Preparation of an Ecological Management Plan to provide detailed advice on the ongoing protection and long-term management of retained vegetation/habitat, creation of linkages and other habitat features such as wetlands, if proposed.
- Where possible utilise existing entrances into the property and established internal roads.
- All areas of vegetation/habitat nominated in the design plan as 'retained' are to be treated as no-go zones and are not to be encroached upon as development progresses.
- Place any water treatment and capture facilities associated with firefighting water collection away from wetlands and waterways, and construct buffering drains to ensure contaminated water does not flow into wetlands or waterways.
- Attach devices (typically flappers, balls or spirals) to electricity transmission lines to increase their visibility.
- Design or insulate poles and wires to reduce the risk of electrocution of birds or bats from contact.
- Design measures to reduce the vertical spread of lines, and Increase visibility of lines, and/or decrease the span length.
- Potential upgrade works within the DEECA mapped wetland should occur when the wetland is not active and therefore minimise potential for permanent impacts to soil and vegetation.

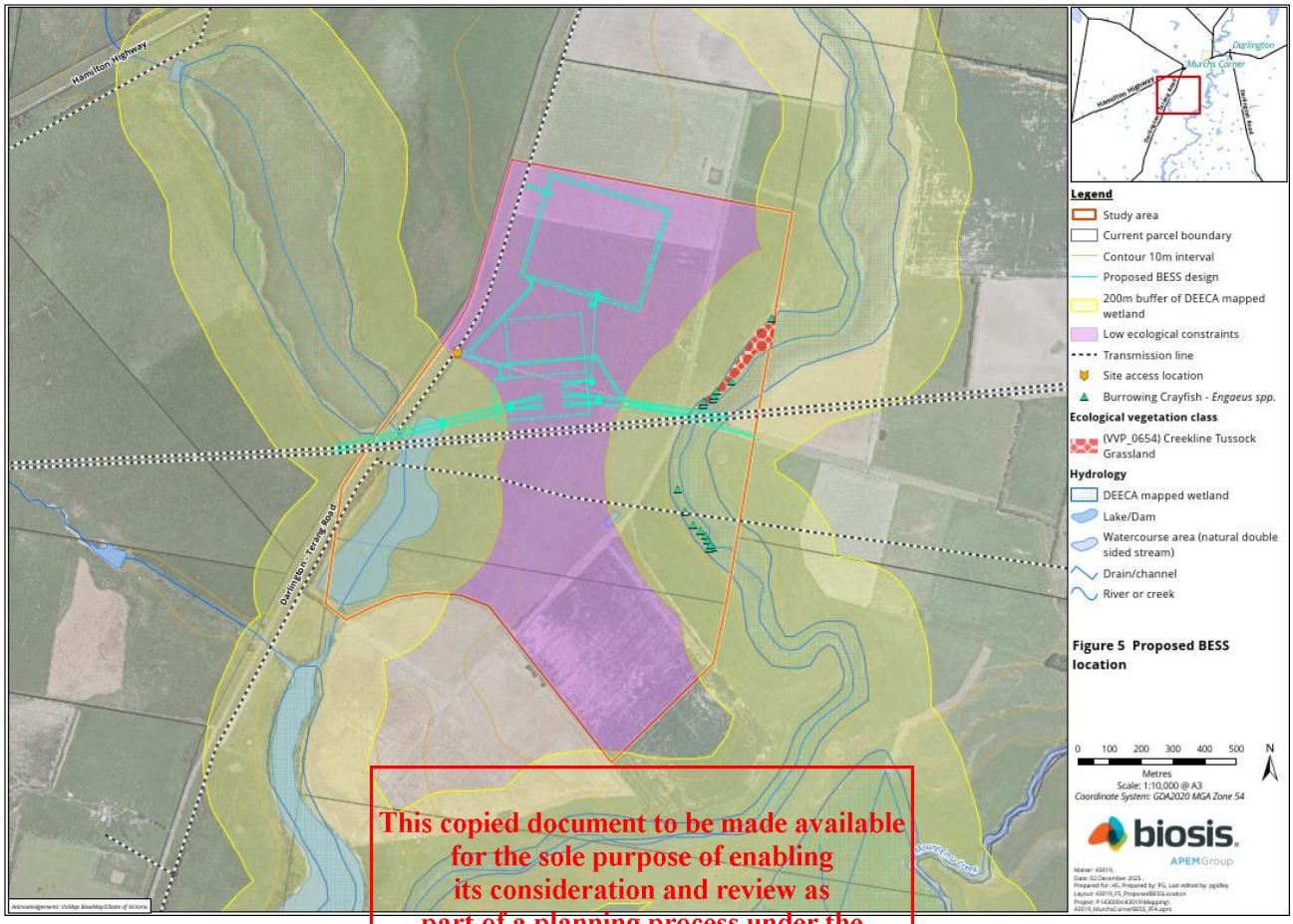


Figure 16 - Low ecological constraint locations

7.2 Noise

A Preliminary Noise Assessment has been prepared by SLR Consulting and is provided at Appendix D. Key considerations for the assessment involved:

- Determining the existing noise environment of the project area through background noise monitoring,
- Modelling the expected noise emissions from the construction and operation of the proposed BESS,
- Assessing the expected noise impacts against the various requirements of the EPA,
- Consideration of cumulative noise impacts of existing and planned industry in the surrounding project area.

The assessment identified five sensitive receptors within 3km of the BESS Area, one of which is associated with the Proposal, and concludes that:

- Construction noise maybe audible from several receivers from time to time, however noise impacts are minimised due to the distance to receivers and works being temporary and conducted during EPA normal working hours (day period) only.
- Operational noise compliance can be achieved at all times at all receivers. It is recommended that the Project source battery and inverter units with sound power levels of no more than 85 dBA and 92 dBA, respectively, which are free from tonal characteristics.

Impact Mitigation

There are a number of noise control strategies to minimise potential construction noise impacts as far a reasonably practicable including:

- Ensure construction works to occur during normal working hours.

- The lowest noise emitting plant and equipment that can economically and efficiently undertake the work should be selected where possible.
- Maintain regular maintenance of equipment to keep it in good working order and operating at the lowest feasible noise level.
- Use less intrusive broadband reversing beepers on mobile plant where possible.
- Equipment operators are to be made aware of noise impacts and techniques to minimise emissions through training/instruction, examples include:
- Avoid dropping materials from height into bins, trucks and receptacles.
- Operate mobile plant and power tools in a quiet, efficient manner where possible.
- Switch plant off when not in use.
- Machines/tools found to produce excessing noise compared with industry best practice should be removed from service until repairs or modification can be made, or the machine/tool is replaced.
- Where possible avoid tonal reversing/movement alarms on machinery and replace with broadband (non-tonal) alarms or ambient noise-sensing alarms.
- Use dampened bits on impulsive tools (e.g. ratchet drivers) to avoid 'ringing' noise.

7.3 Aboriginal cultural heritage

A Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Assessment has been prepared by Niche Environment and Heritage and is provided at Appendix E. The scope of the reporting, completed on 16 October 2025, was to identify:

- If there are any recorded Aboriginal or historic cultural heritage places within or surrounding the Project Area,
- If the Project Area is located within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity as defined in the Regulations,
- If the activity triggers the requirement for approvals under current cultural heritage legislation, and
- Determine potential risk management options that will benefit the project.

This work was completed within the framework and process provided by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* and *Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018*.

As part of the methodology, both a site visit and database search occurred to assess the likelihood and presence of any Aboriginal cultural heritage areas and/or sites. This work concluded that there were no areas of cultural heritage sensitivity recorded within the Project Area. Further, the Project Area has been previously assessed as part of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the proposed Mortlake Wind Farm (CHMPs 10152 and 11020) which similarly did not identify any Aboriginal cultural heritage across the Project Area. Considering the longstanding cleared nature of the land and high levels of modification since colonisation, the preservation of any remnant Aboriginal archaeological matter across the Project Area is considered unlikely.

The assessment concluded that a mandatory CHMP and a Cultural Heritage Permit are not required for the Proposal. No approvals are required for historic cultural heritage either, as no registered historic cultural heritage places are located within the Project Area. The Project Area also has a low potential to contain historical materials or features, and does not contain any areas of historical archaeology potential.

Impact Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed as the Proposal does not impact any aboriginal or historic cultural heritage places, materials, or features.

7.4 Transport

A Traffic Engineering Assessment has been prepared by Traffix Group and is provided at Appendix F. This report provides an investigation into the proposed vehicle access and movements during the construction and operational phases of the Proposal, considering the existing road network and condition.

The Project Area is currently accessed from Darlington-Terang Road, which then connects further north to the Hamilton Highway to Geelong and Hamilton. It is proposed that the existing crossover at Darlington-Terang Road is to be upgraded (sealed to the property boundary) and retained as the primary *operation* access for the Terminal Station only , no the BESS. It will contrinue to serve farming operations.

A new crossover at the northern end of the BESS Area is proposed as the primary *construction and operation* access to the BESS, to minimise the distance for construction vehicles travelling on Darlington-Terang Road.

During the week-long observation of both the Hamilton Highway (east of Darlington-Terang Road) and Darlington-Terang Road (adjacent to the Project Area), traffic volumes were found to be very low on Darlington-Terang Road with just over 100 cars per day on average.

The traffic impact assessment concluded:

- The 10 car parking spaces is appropriate and will suitably accommodate predicted staff parking demands and occasional visitors.
- Loading activities can be appropriately accommodated within the site via the network of internal service roadways.
- Construction vehicles can be accommodated within the temporary laydown areas to support additional parking/loading activities from heavy vehicles.
- The proposed primary access with Darlington-Terang Road is appropriate for the proposed development during the construction and ongoing operation phases, and should be provided with a rural basic left-turn treatment (BAL).
- During the construction phase and ongoing operations, the existing configuration of Darlington-Terang Road will sufficiently accommodate site generated traffic and there is no need for mitigating works.
- The existing geometry of the Hamilton Highway/Darlington-Terang Road intersection is adequate to accommodate the peak level of traffic anticipated during the construction phase of the project and suitably accommodates B-Double vehicle movements. Accordingly, it is not necessary for any upgrade works at the intersection as part of the project.
- The level of traffic generated as a result of this proposal during the construction and operation phases is acceptable and will not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding road network.

Impact Mitigation

The Traffic Engineering Assessment recommends the following measures:

- The proposed primary access should be designed to accommodate B-Double swept paths.
- The proposed access should be sealed from the carriage way of Darlington-Terang Road up to the site's property boundary (approximately 30) to mitigate gravel spill.

7.5 Landscape and visual impact

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LIVA) has been prepared by Peter Haack Consulting and is provided at Appendix G.

Key considerations of the LVIA include:

- The number and location of sensitive viewing locations

- The duration of the view – either static (generally long term - > 1 hour) and mobile (generally short term continually moving and static for no longer than 5 minutes
- The degree to which the proposed works would be visible
- The quality of the landscape setting
- The degree to which the Proposal contrasts or is compatible with the visual character of the setting – the visual modification level.

The LVIA identifies seven sensitive viewpoints within 4 km of the Project Area. The viewpoints are along Darlington-Terang Road, Hamilton Highway, and the five closest dwellings. The LVIA provides an assessment of each of the viewpoints including the viewing distance, duration and frequency of view, visual use area, visual sensitivity, visual modification and visual impact. The LVIA also recommends proposed amelioration planting, with an assessment of the resulting residual impact should the amelioration be implemented.

Generally, sensitive viewpoints beyond 2km of the Project Area were found to have very low visual sensitivity due to the relatively low-profile form of the Proposal. Of the seven viewpoints, only one viewpoint, along Darlington Terang Road, has the potential for low-medium level of impact. Following proposed amelioration of screen planting along the perimeter of the northern and western boundaries of the Site, the residual impacts are expected to be very low.

The assessment concludes that the existing agricultural landscape character of the surrounding area is of relatively low scenic quality as it currently contains high voltage transmission lines that bisect the Project Area. The mostly horizontal form of many of the components would not result in a significant visual change to the existing character. The colocation of the taller components next to the transmission line, in accordance with best practice, help to constrain the cumulative visual impact to a reasonably limited area.

Impact mitigation

A number of amelioration strategies are proposed, including:

- Proposal layout – siting components to maximise the distance to sensitive receptors and making effective use of existing vegetation and natural topography.
- Perimeter screen planting – establish mounds or bunds from surplus earthworks material or screen planting to fill gaps in existing vegetation.
- Material selection – use non-reflective finishes and natural or neutral colours, as found in the landscape setting.

It is anticipated that a condition of permit will require preparation of a Landscape Plan, detailing final amelioration design.

7.6 Hydrology

A Flood Impact Assessment was prepared by SWM Consulting and is provided at Appendix H. The assessment evaluated the existing conditions and potential flood risks to inform site and development feasibility.

Hydraulic modelling indicates the Project Area is partially impacted by flooding during the estimated 1% AEP in areas along the western, eastern and northern boundaries where water has escaped the waterways (Figure 17). As the proposed development footprint is located outside the estimated flood extent, the Proposal will not adversely impact flood behaviour on site or increase flood risk to surrounding areas. Drainage from the Project Area can be managed within the surrounding catchment network to ensure any discharge is at pre-development conditions and does not adversely impact water quality.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed as the Proposal avoids all areas subject to flooding.

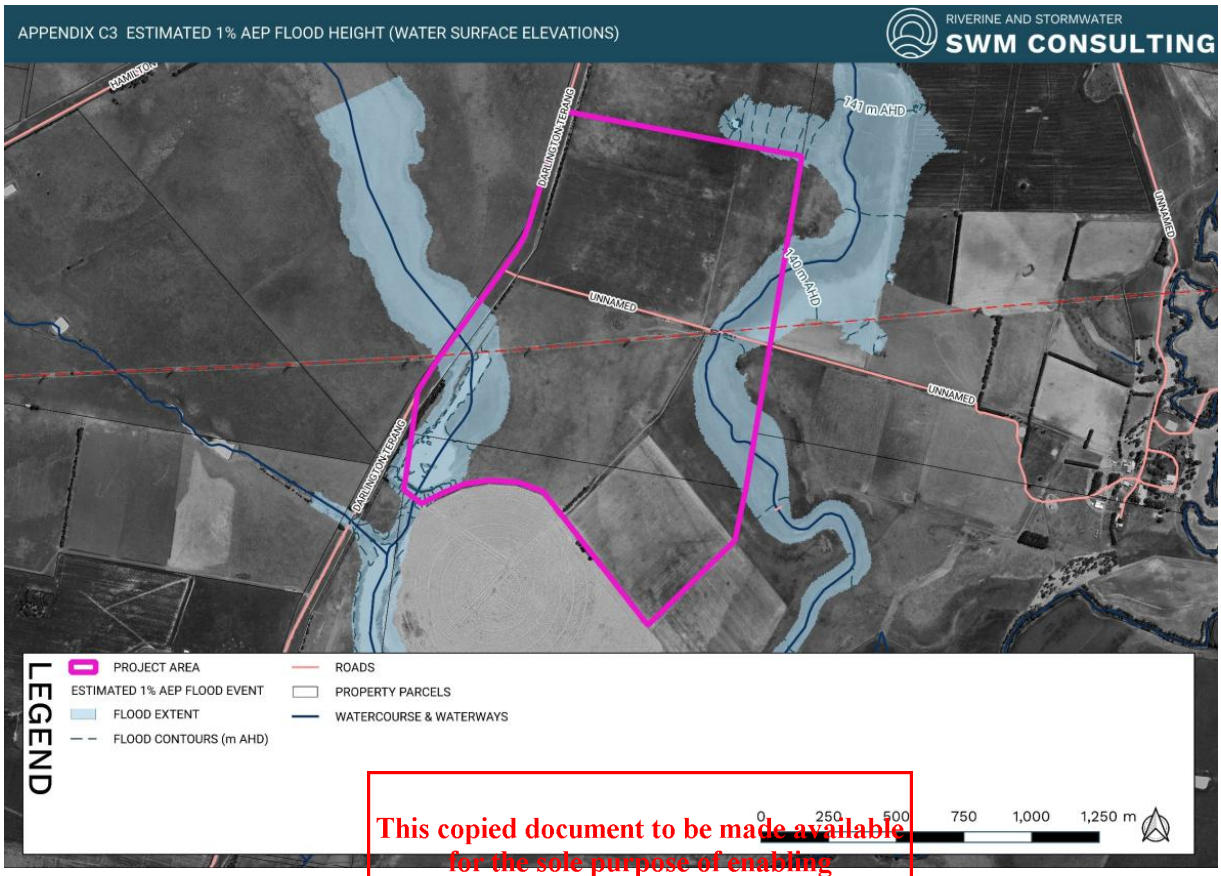


Figure 17 – Estimated 1% AEP Flood Extent

7.7 Agriculture

An Agricultural Assessment Report was prepared by Meridan Agriculture and is provided at Appendix I.

The Project Area has been used predominantly for grazing with some cropping. The soils are of reasonable quality for cropping and grazing with adequate management. However, the soils have a tendency for waterlogging which limits their ability to be highly productive.

The Proposal would have no long-term detrimental effects on the productive capacity of the soils, nor would it have a significant impact on the overall productivity of the region or State, nor impact on the ability of neighbouring businesses to operate. There will be a very small loss of retail margin to providers, however these amounts are not material, and it is likely that these losses would be spread of several suppliers.

At decommissioning, there will be no residual detrimental impact on the productivity of the site. Soil fertility will decline over time, but this decline can be corrected through the addition of suitable amendments, as required.

The Proposal provides an alternative income stream for the farming business while impacting a very small proportion of the farming property.

Mitigation

No mitigation measures are proposed there will be no long-term detrimental effects to the site and the loss of retail margin is not material.

7.8 Fire

A Fire Safety Study has been completed by NJM Design and is provided at Appendix J. The objective of the report was to identify primary fire risks associated with the implementation and function, location, proposed fire systems and fire brigade intervention of the BESS units.

In particular, the scope of work was to:

- Provide a preliminary Fire Safety Study (FSS) consistent with fire risk assessment techniques for Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper 2 (HIPAP 2) regarding the fire risk to BESS Units.
- Quantify severity of fires including heat radiation level at various distances from BESS Units.
- Put the risks into context via comparison with other accepted risks such as those from existing power infrastructure and surrounding buildings in the community.
- A review of the design to applicable standards has also been undertaken as well as a comparative risk assessment to existing power utility infrastructure and industrial facilities in the same setting.
- Recommend mitigation measures if required considering the above.

This investigation by NJM Design has found that the Proposal will be acceptable and cover all fire initiation and fire spread risks to the degree necessary, provided mitigation measures are implemented as required. Given the separation distances to the battery units and other areas of over 6m it is considered that the risk of fire spread is extremely low. There is minimal vegetation in and near the Project Area, with the entire BESS compound to be a hardstand surface free of any vegetation. During fire season, an additional 20m-wide perimeter fire break outside the BESS hardstand will be maintained as bare earth, extending the internal 10m asset protection zone to a total width of 30m.

In addition to the overall acceptable nature of the Proposal's proposed design, the Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (Country Fire Authority, 2022) with respect to location, layout bushfire protection, materials of construction, and monitoring systems have been assessed against the Proposal and have been found to be compliant, with detailed design to finalise design compliance elements such as hydrant design etc.

Impact Mitigation

Given the BESS' proximity to existing and proposed associated electrical infrastructure, the main hazards identified in NJM's Fire Safety Study are:

- Thermal runaway events to battery containers, causing spread to other equipment and facilities
- Fire from substations/transformers spreading across other equipment and facilities
- General bushfire hazard from surrounding environs
- Release of toxic gases in the event of battery combustion
- Leak of transformer oil, contaminated water runoff, and/or flammable liquids or gasses.

From these identified hazards, the following mitigation measures were proposed by NJM:

- The BESS supplier must provide the results of a large-scale test in accordance with CSA TS-800:24 and the laboratory/centre certifications.
- Ensure that the following technologies are included in the BESS units selected for installation:
  - Fire safety protection measures
  - Explosion control system

  - Remote shutdown provisions
  - Electrical fault protection devices
  - Battery management system (BMS)
  - Thermal management system (TMS)

- Fire breaks are to be at least 10m.
- All equipment must be Scada Alarmed and will allow automatic notification to the operators, who will proceed according to the Emergency plan and the protocols.
- Where transformers are oil-insulated, transformers shall use an FR3 (or similar) Ester oil where practical in lieu of the normal mineral oil.
- The MV/SUT (Medium Voltage/Step-up) transformers should be self-bunded transformers that include splash guards for AS1940 compliance.
- The 500/33kV transformers should have a bund with the capacity to hold the oil volume to account for water and overflow.
- HV and MV transformers must comply with AS2067 separation distance.
- Portable fire extinguishers must be provided as per AS 2444, and a minimum of two (2) suitable fire extinguishers must be provided within 3m-20m of each PCU (Power Conversion Unit).
- A fire hydrant system must be provided in accordance with AS 2419.1-2021: Fire hydrant installations, Section 3.9: Open Yard Protection. Their location must be determined to ensure that 2 hydrants can cover all infrastructure. (Although if the BESS is tested to meet CSA TS-800:24 hydrants may not be required)
- A containment and management plan of contaminated fire water runoff from the BESS is to be developed by the facility.
- Develop a Fire Management Plan and a containment and management plan for fire water runoff

With these provisions, in conjunction with the current Proposal design, it is expected that the risk of fire development and spread is no worse than that posed by existing utility infrastructure in the area or the adjacent buildings in the area.

8. Conclusion

As demonstrated within this Planning Report, the proposed Murchs Corner BESS application, for the use and development of land for a Utility installation, is an appropriate use and form of development for the Site.

This BESS (with a capacity of up to 500MW, 2,000MWh) is a key energy infrastructure development for Darlington and the wider Moyne Shire region and South West REZ, providing critical electricity grid services, significant regional economic benefits and a major contribution to Victoria's energy storage targets.

Approval of this planning permit application is considered appropriate for the following reasons:

- It provides significant dispatchable energy storage, supporting Victoria's energy storage targets, and local existing and future energy generation projects and energy-intensive users
- It is strategically located on land carrying the 500kV Moorabool to Mortlake transmission line, on the edge of the South West REZ, and close to other proposed and approved renewable energy generation projects
- The Proposal is located within a highly modified and open landscape character, currently used for agricultural grazing and cropping and existing electricity infrastructure, and is a sufficient distance from residential land
- Direct impacts to threatened species have been avoided. Native vegetation removal has been avoided except where an existing track and electrical infrastructure (pylon) cross through Mt Fyans Drain (a DEECA mapped wetland) and may need upgrading (to be undertaken by AusNet). The extent of native vegetation impact is minimal and low quality.
- The design has been carefully developed to be highly responsive to site opportunities and constraints. It avoids impacts to waterways, flood prone areas, aboriginal and historic heritage, and intensive agricultural production
- The Proposal has been sited on the north side of the 500kV transmission line to allow for potential future connections from nearby renewable energy projects and leaves space for the future duplication of the transmission line
- Darlington-Terang Road provides direct heavy vehicle access to the Project Area, without the need for construction traffic to pass through residential areas or necessitate road upgrades
- The Proposal will provide significant local and regional benefits, including:
  - Creation of approximately 200 jobs during peak construction and 6 intermittent operational jobs
  - Prioritisation of local employment opportunities to the extent possible for construction, operation and maintenance, as well as supporting training and development of an emerging energy industry in Victoria's South West REZ
- It is highly consistent with the key planning provisions of the Moyne Planning Scheme, including FZ
- The Proposal strongly supports relevant state and local policy in relation to energy storage, emission reductions, infrastructure provision, and environmental planning within the Moyne Shire region
- The Proposal addresses fire safety requirements within the CFA Guidelines
- The Proposal is considered appropriate to the Site's surrounds and does not unreasonably impact the amenity of nearby residences. Noise modelling demonstrates the Proposal is capable of meeting Noise Protocol obligations upon operation. The components have been sited to minimise visual appearance to neighbours and vegetation screening will further reduce visibility
- Construction impacts are manageable and will be further detailed in the environmental and construction management plans.

The application is supported by a suite of technical investigations that provide detailed assessment and justification of the Proposal. Based on these technical assessments, the Proposal is not expected to generate any unreasonable or significant environmental or community impacts. Lastly, the Proponent has undertaken a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement program, appropriately informing nearby

residents and the wider Moyne Shire communities of the Proposal. Consistent and clear information has been provided to stakeholders and community members about the details of the Proposal, any potential impacts, and how to get involved.

The project team has engaged with DTP and other key stakeholders including Moyne Shire Council and the CFA. Local community and stakeholders will continue to be engaged with during the exhibition and assessment phases of the application, and through the post-permit, construction and operation phases. The design concept has and will continue to evolve in response to technical assessments, community and stakeholder feedback.

Considering the above reasons, it is requested that Minister for Planning grant approval for this planning permit application.

Appendices

Appendix A	Certificates of Title
Appendix B	Application Plans
Appendix C	Flora and Fauna Assessment
Appendix D	Preliminary Noise Assessment
Appendix E	Cultural Heritage Due Diligence Assessment
Appendix F	Traffic Engineering Assessment
Appendix G	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Appendix H	Flood Assessment
Appendix I	Agricultural Assessment
Appendix J	Fire Safety Study
Appendix K	Engagement Summary

Appendix A Certificates of Title

Appendix B Application Plans

Appendix C Flora and Fauna Assessment

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Appendix I Agricultural Assessment

Appendix J Fire Safety Study

Appendix K Engagement Summary

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