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RES Australia Pty Ltd

DATE
12 June 2026

REFERENCE
0776507

Planning Report

Bunyip North Battery Energy Storage
System

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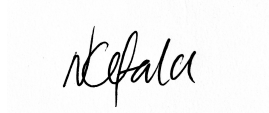
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Bunyip North Battery Energy Storage System

0776507



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability
AH Act	<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> (Vic)
BPA	Bushfire Prone Area
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BLCAC	Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
BMO	Bushfire Management Overlay
BNTS	Bunyip North Terminal Station
CaLP Act	<i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> (Vic)
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CHS	Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
DC	Direct Current
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Cth)
DFP	Development Facilitation Program
DSN	Declared Shared Network
DTSO	Declared Transmission System Operator
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EE Act	<i>Environment Effects Act 1978</i> (Vic)
EP Act	<i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> (Vic)
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth)
ERM	Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd
ESO1	Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 1
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
FFG Act	<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> (Vic)

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Acronym	Description
GED	General Environmental Duty
GWZ1	Green Wedge Zone – Schedule 1
ha	Hectare
HV	High Voltage
kV	Kilovolt
LGA	Local Government Area
LSIO	Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
LV	Low Voltage
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MWh	Megawatt hour
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
MV	Medium Voltage
MW	Megawatt
NHVR	National Heavy Vehicle Regulator
NIA	Noise Impact Assessment
NSA	Noise Sensitive Area
NSR	Noise Sensitive Receptor
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OSOM	Oversize/Overmass
P&E Act	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)</i>
PCS	Power Conversion System
PCRZ	Public Conservation and Resource Zone
PPF	Planning Policy Framework
PRN	Principal Road Network
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
RES	RES Australia Pty Ltd
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
TIA	Traffic Impact Assessment
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
TPZ	Tree Protection Zone
TRZ2	Transport Zone 2 – Principal Road Network
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
VTP	Victorian Transmission Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Bunyip North BESS (the Project) is proposed to deliver a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) for large-scale electricity storage and dispatch capability, supporting Victoria's transition toward a more renewable and reliable energy network. The BESS is anticipated to have a storage capacity of up to 400 megawatts (MW) / 2,400 megawatts-hours (MWh), with a connection to the existing 220 kilovolt (kV) transmission network via a new transmission terminal station, the Bunyip North Terminal Station (BNTS).

The Project is wholly located within the Cardinia Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 80 kilometres (km) southeast of central Melbourne in Victoria's Gippsland region and approximately 2.5 km north of the Bunyip town centre.

1.1 PURPOSE

Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM) acts on behalf of Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd in its capacity as trustee for the Bunyip North Project Trust (the Proponent), wholly owned by RES Australia Pty Ltd, to prepare a planning permit application for the use and development of the Project at 30 Tonimbuk Road, Bunyip North, in southeast Victoria. This planning report, together with the attached documentation, forms the planning permit application to the Minister for Planning (the Responsible Authority) pursuant to Clause 72.01-1 of the Cardinia Planning Scheme and the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) (P&E Act).

This report should be read in conjunction with the Certificates of Title (Appendix A), the set of Development Plans (Appendix B) and the following supporting technical assessments:

- Traffic Impact Assessment (Amber Organisation, 2026) (Appendix C)
- Risk Management Plan and Fire Safety Study (Fire Risk Consultants, 2026) (Appendix D)
- Ecological Assessment (ERM, 2026) (Appendix E)
- Noise Impact Assessment (ERM, 2026) (Appendix F)
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landform Architects, 2026) (Appendix G)
- Flood Modelling Assessment (Water Technology, 2026) (Appendix H)
- Agricultural Assessment Report (Pinion Advisory, 2026) (Appendix I)
- Consultation Summary Report (RES, 2026) (Appendix J)

1.2 PROJECT RATIONALE

Victoria has legislated renewable electricity generation targets of 65 % by 2030 and 95 % by 2035, along with energy storage capacity targets of at least 2.6 GW by 2030 and 6.3 GW by 2035 (*Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017* (Vic), as amended 2024).

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The Project aims to support these targets by delivering large-scale battery storage capacity to assist in integrating renewable generation, enhancing network reliability, and strengthening energy security for Victorian communities and businesses, particularly in the east of Victoria along the Yallourn Power Station to Rowville transmission line.

It is also expected to provide local and regional economic benefits, supporting employment opportunities and investment for local businesses during construction and operation.

1.3 THE PROPONENT

RES Group (RES) is the world's largest independent renewable energy company. Established in 1981, RES has over 40 years of renewable development experience and an actively expanding project portfolio of currently in excess of 27 gigawatts (GW). RES is active in 24 countries working across onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage and transmission and distribution. RES has internal expertise in development, engineering and technical assessment, construction, project finance, project operations, and construction and asset management.

RES has been developing renewable energy projects in Australia since 2004. With an experienced and specialist workforce of over 200 Australian employees, RES has a development pipeline of over nine GW and currently has a portfolio of 2.5 GW of operational renewable assets in Australia. The company has offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and multiple regional locations, and is engaged in all technologies: wind, solar, and storage, offering development, construction, and asset management services across Australia.

RES has developed several projects in Victoria including the Ararat Wind Farm, Murra Warra I Wind Farm, Murra Warra II Wind Farm, Murra Warra Solar Farm and BESS (approved), and Baringhup Solar Farm (approved). RES has an additional 1 GW of projects in development in Victoria including the Watta Wella Wind Farm. The portfolio also includes projects in other states, such as Taralga Wind Farm in NSW, the Dulacca Wind Farm, and Emerald Solar Park in Queensland.

Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd in its capacity as trustee for the Bunyip North Project Trust is the Proponent for this Project, which is wholly owned by RES Australia Pty Ltd, and was established specifically for the purpose of owning and developing the Project.

1.4 PROJECT TEAM

The Proponent has engaged a team of specialist consultants to assess and provide input into the Project. Table 1-1 lists the specialist consultants that have contributed to the development of the proposal, including the accompanying assessments that should be read in conjunction with this planning report.

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TABLE 1-1 PROJECT TEAM

Technical Specialty	Consultant
Planning	ERM
Transport	Amber
Ecology	ERM
Acoustics	ERM
Cultural Heritage	ERM
Landscape and Visual Impact	Landform Architects
Hydrology	Water Technology
Bushfire Risk	Fire Risk Consultants
Agriculture	Pinion Advisory

1.5 APPLICATION SUMMARY

A summary of the planning permit application details is provided in Table 1-2 below.

TABLE 1-2 APPLICATION DETAILS

Item	Application Details
Proposal	Bunyip North BESS
Subject Site	30 Tonimbuk Road, Bunyip North 3815
Certificate of Title	2\PS315155, 2\TP871515
Zones	- Green Wedge Zone – Schedule 1 (GWZ1) - Transport Zone 2 – Principal Road Network (TRZ2)
Overlays	- Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 1 (ESO1) - Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)
Other Overlays	Designated Bushfire Prone Area (BPA)
Permit Triggers	- Clause 35.04-1: Use of land as a utility installation (Section 2 Use). - Clause 35.04-5: Undertake building and works associated with a utility installation (Section 2 Use). - Clause 42.01-2: A permit is required to construct or carry out works or remove vegetation - Clause 52.05: To erect a sign that provides business identification information about a business or industry on the land where it is displayed, which must not exceed 3sqm. - Clause 52.06-3: To provide some or all car parking spaces required under Clause 52.06-5. - Clause 52.29-2: Create or alter access to the Princes Freeway, a road in a Transport Zone 2 (TRZ2).

Item	Application Details
Relevant Particular Provisions	• Clause 51.02 Metropolitan Green Wedge Land: Core Planning Provisions • Clause 52.06 Car Parking • Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation • Clause 52.29 Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network • Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development
Municipality	Cardinia Shire Council
Responsible Authority	The Minister for Planning (as per Clause 72.01-1)
Application Pathway	Development Facilitation Program (DFP)

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2. SITE CONTEXT

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The Project Area, being the land within which the Project is proposed to be developed, comprises approximately 27.6 hectares (ha) of private freehold land (the Site) and 3.2 ha of public land to accommodate a proposed new vehicular access from the Princes Freeway. The Project Area is shown in Figure 2-2.

The Project Area sits within the Green Wedge Zone Schedule 1 (GWZ1), Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) and Bushfire Prone Area (BPA).

The Site is located on Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 315155, at 30 Tonimbuk Road, Bunyip North, and comprises rural land currently used for agricultural purposes, being primarily cattle grazing (dairy) and seasonal cultivation of hay and silage. There is an existing 220 kV transmission line that traverses the southern part of the Site.

The accessway via the Princes Freeway to the south of the Site, located on Lot 2 of TP871515, is within the Transport Zone (TRZ2 – Principal Road Network) and has an area overlapping the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).

2.2 EASEMENTS AND ENCUMBRANCES

As shown in the Certificates of Title (Appendix A), there is an existing transmission easement that runs across the southern portion of the Project Area, where a 220 kV Yallourn Power Station to Rowville Terminal transmission line runs parallel to the Princes Freeway, as shown in Figure 2-1). The easement (E-1, owned by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria) is 122.63 m in width, and runs east-west across the Project Area and adjacent lots. Existing 220 kV transmission towers along the Princes Freeway are typically in the order of 35–45 m in height, consistent with standard Victorian transmission infrastructure, and are located approximately 180-250 m away from the Princes Freeway.

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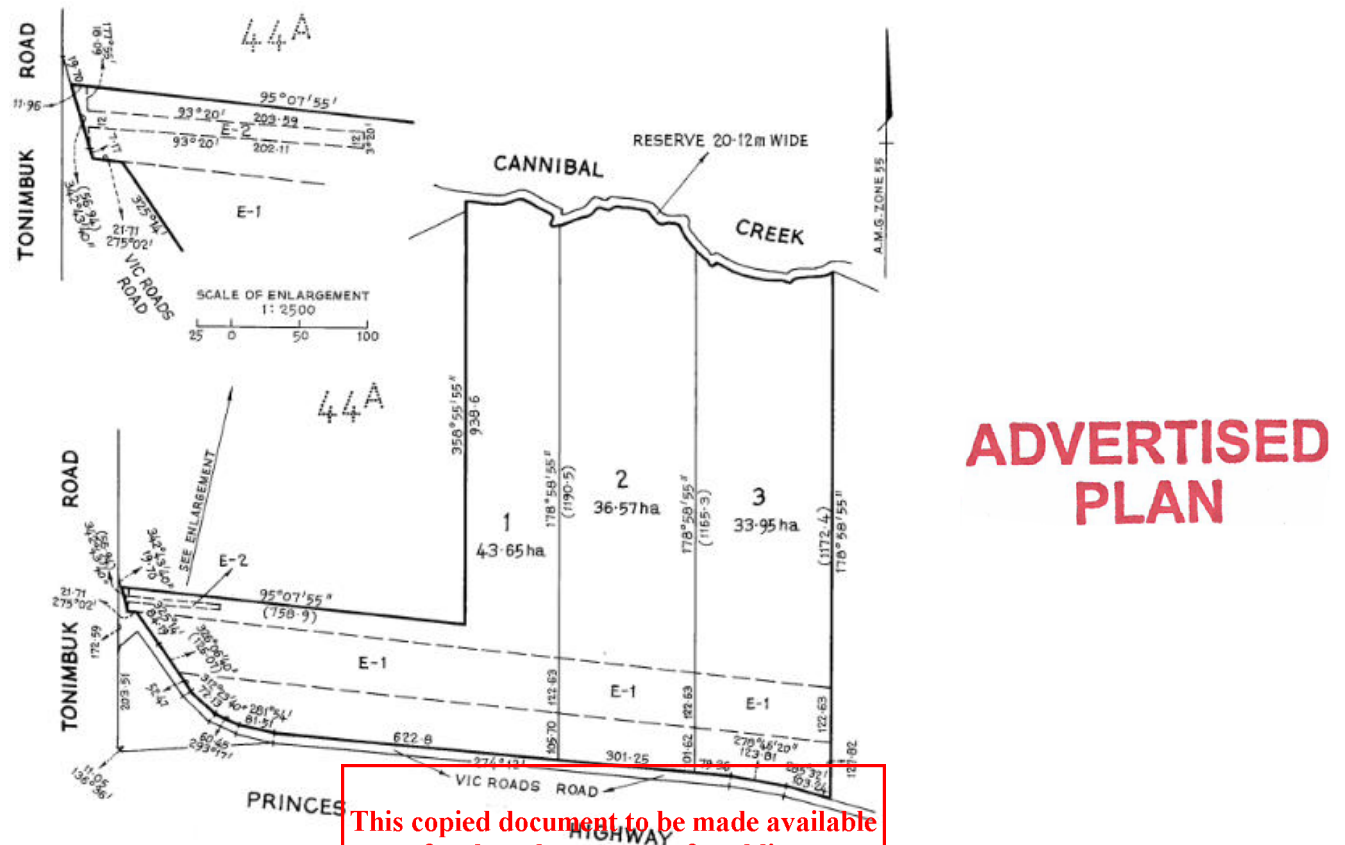


FIGURE 2-1 PLAN OF SUBDIVISION PS315155P

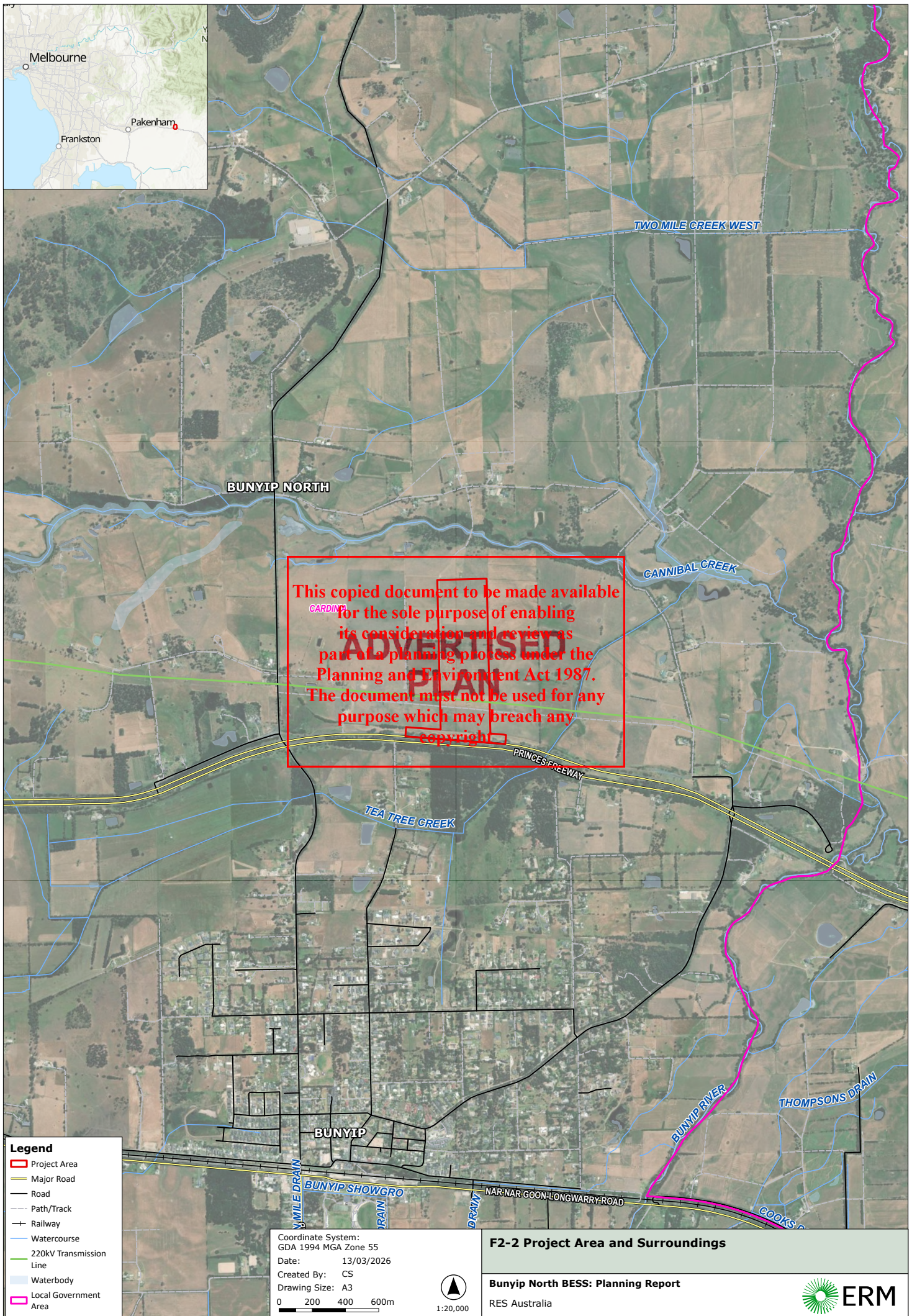
2.3 SITE SURROUNDINGS

Cannibal Creek is located north of the Project Area, with Tea Tree Creek located to the east. To the east and west of the Project Area is agricultural land. South of the Project Area is bounded by the Princes Freeway, with the Bunyip Native Sanctuary located on the opposite side of the Freeway. Refer to Figure 2-2 for the Project Area and surroundings.

Cannibal Creek is located within an area of identified Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity and is zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) and is also within the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO).

A recently approved planning permit is located adjacent to the Project (in Lot 3 of PS315155, to the east). Planning Permit T240063 was issued by Cardinia Shire Council to 'create or alter access to a road in a TZ2'. The permit authorises the establishment of a temporary, new access arrangement to the Princes Freeway. The application was approved in March 2025, following approval from Cardinia Shire Council and the Head, Transport for Victoria.

A planning permit application for a separate BESS project (Wimpole Battery, proposed by AMPYR) has also been lodged (31 January 2026) on Lot 3, adjacent to and east of the Project Area. This proposal is currently at application stage and does not form part of the existing land use context but is noted for contextual awareness.



3. PROJECT PROPOSAL

3.1 OVERVIEW

The Proponent is seeking to install a 400 MW / 2,400 MWh BESS and associated infrastructure, and creation of an accessway to the Princes Freeway, as depicted by the Concept Layout Plan (Figure 3-1 and Appendix B).

The Indicative Development Footprint (Figure 3-2) is approximately 17.5 ha within the Project Area, and will include:

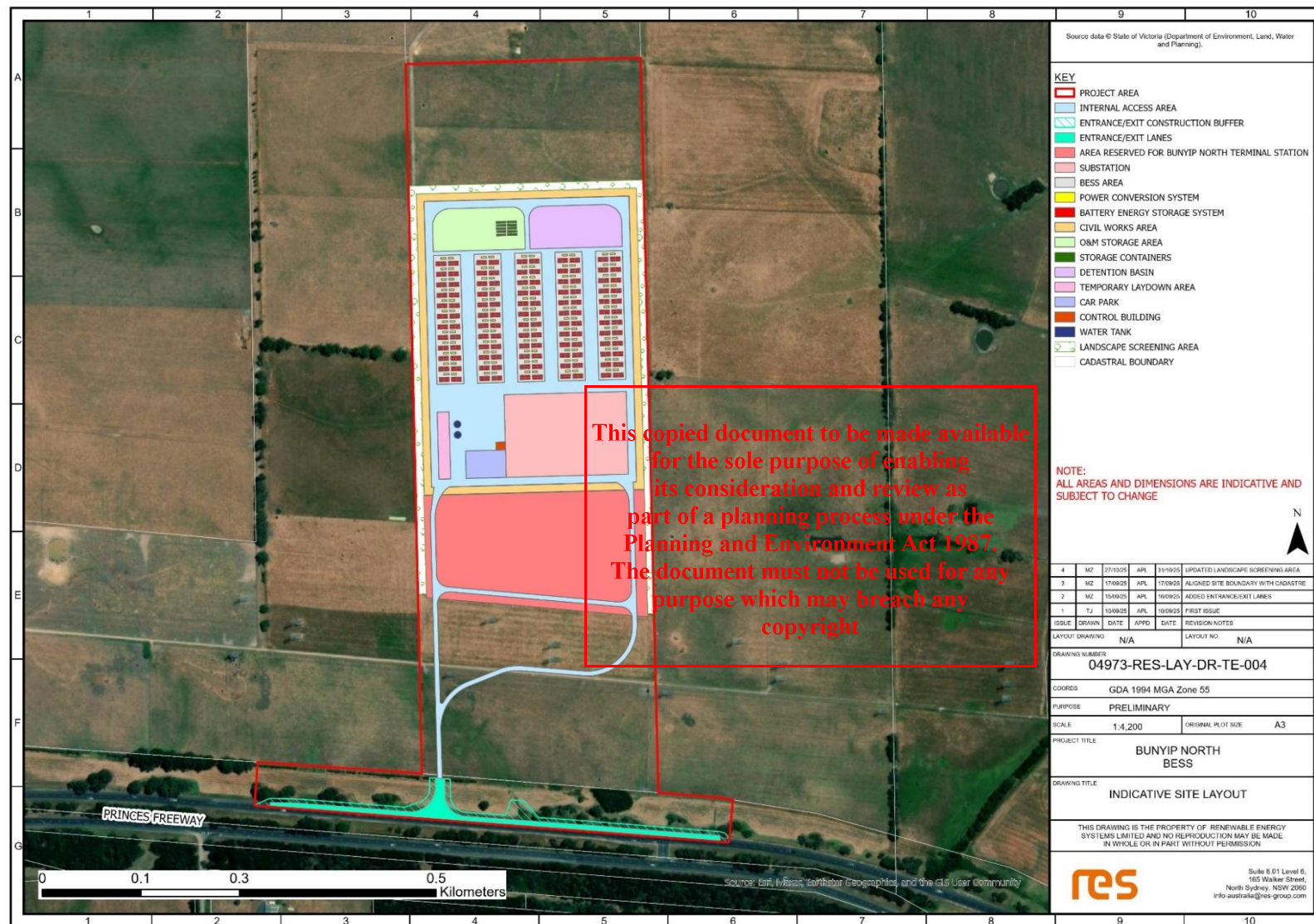
- A series of battery units, inverters, cooling systems, MV transformers, protection devices, ring main units and connecting infrastructure (nominal 400 MW / 2,400 MWh storage capacity).
- Control room, switch room and maintenance buildings.
- Utility connections.
- Aboveground infrastructure and underground alternating current cables.
- Sealed main site access at the entrance to the Site.
- Unsealed internal access tracks for access to and move around the Site.
- Fire protection equipment including water tanks, booster pumps, hydrants.
- Installation of perimeter security fencing.
- Temporary construction laydown and vehicle turning area for the purpose of the construction.

The proposed Project, as shown in Figures 3-1 and 3-2, shows the current indicative layout based on known information at this stage, however will require further design refinement, subject to planning approval and permit conditions.

The construction phase is expected to last up to 27 months.

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FIGURE 3-1 CONCEPT LAYOUT PLAN (RES - 04973-RES-LAY-DR-TE-004)

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Legend

- Project Area
- Indicative Development Footprint
- Path/Track
- Watercourse
- Cadastre
- Waterbody

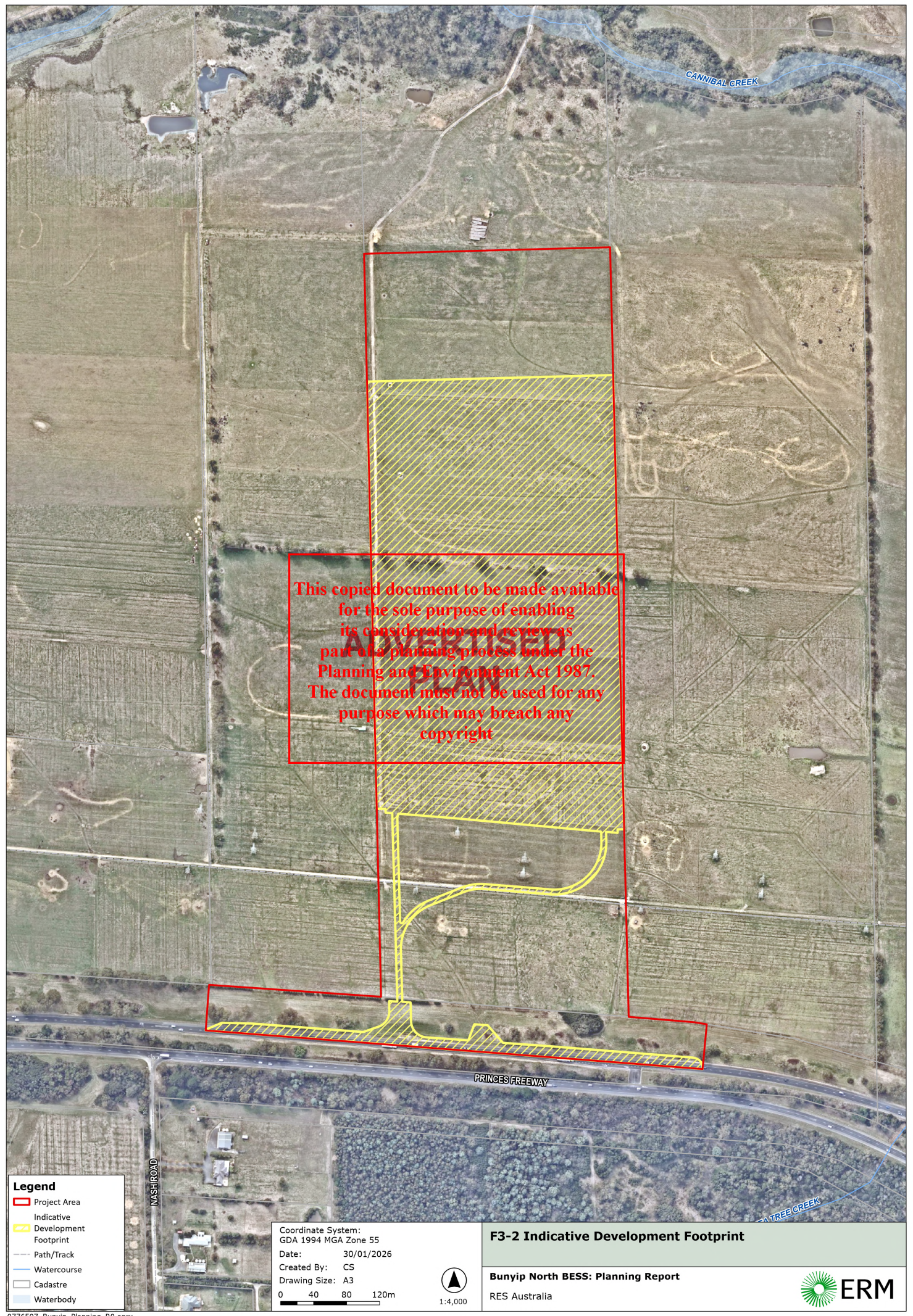
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GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55
Date: 30/01/2026
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0 40 80 120m



F3-2 Indicative Development Footprint

Bunyip North BESS: Planning Report

RES Australia



3.2 LAND USE

The proposal is defined as a 'Utility Installation' under the land use definitions outlined in Clause 73.03 of the Cardinia Planning Scheme.

3.3 PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Project is proposed to consist of the key electrical, civil, and supporting infrastructure outlined below. These components collectively enable the safe and reliable operation of the Project.

Indicative dimensions for the Project infrastructure can be viewed in the Development Plans (Appendix B). All design details are indicative and subject to refinement through detailed design and further consultation with relevant authorities.

3.3.1 ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- BESS units – modular containerised units comprising battery banks and associated management systems, providing a total installed capacity of approximately 400 MW / 2,400 MWh.
- Power Conversion System (PCS) – bi-directional inverter(s) and transformer skids to convert DC output from the batteries to AC (and vice versa) for transformer voltage step-up and grid connection.
- On-site Substation – including 33/220kV step-up transformer(s), switchgear, busbars, earthing, protection and metering equipment, reactive power plant and connection points to the terminal station.
- Underground LV/MV cabling – to connect battery enclosures, inverters (PCS units), and auxiliary systems.
- High-voltage (HV) connection infrastructure – to connect the on-site substation to the terminal station via either overhead or underground connection, to be confirmed through detailed design and in consultation with the network operator.

Connection of the Project to the established Victorian Declared Shared Network (DSN), via a new 220kV terminal station, BNTS. This new terminal station will connect to the existing 220kV transmission line between Yallourn and Rowville via a direct cut-in arrangement. Further information on the grid connection is detailed in Section 3.4.

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3.3.2 SITE PREPARATION AND CIVIL WORKS

- Benches – engineered hardstand areas will provide a stable, level foundation for the PCS and BESS enclosures, electrical infrastructure, balance of plant equipment, and internal access roads. The final cut and fill requirements will be finalised during the detailed design phase.
- Batters – formed around the bench to provide a gradual transition to surrounding natural terrain. The batter will also assist with drainage and perimeter firebreak (subject to CFA requirements).
- Foundations - concrete slab or pier foundations with mounting bolts for the battery containers, transformers, switch room and inverter components.

3.3.3 ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Control Room – a combined facility housing medium-voltage switchgear, protection and control systems, and communications equipment for operation of the BESS.
- Operations and Maintenance (O&M) storage area – for maintenance equipment.

3.4 TERMINAL STATION AND GRID CONNECTION

The BESS connection to the grid will be via the proposed BNTS. The BNTS is proposed to be constructed and operated by a Declared Transmission System Operator (DTSO), with discussions currently underway with AusNet. The layout includes space for both the cut-in arrangement design and the BNTS. Figure 3-3 shows the indicative grid connection arrangement, illustrating the connection from the Project substation, to the BNTS, and onward to the transmission network through a cut-in to the existing 220 kV Yallourn Power Station to Rowville Terminal Station transmission line that traverses the Project Area.

Construction of additional and/or relocation of existing transmission towers may be required to facilitate the deviation necessary for the cut-in. At this stage, the proposed cut-in includes installation of two new monopoles between existing Tower No. 182 and Tower No. 180. These monopoles are expected to be lower than the existing transmission lines (approximately 32 metres in height), with an indicative height in the order of 26–29 metres, subject to confirmation through detailed design. Figures 3-4, 3-5 and 3-6 show the indicative design for the Project cut-in to the existing transmission lines.

Connection to the grid network is confirmed through the connection application process managed by VicGrid. This process has commenced, with a connection application for the Project submitted to VicGrid in April 2026, which will continue to progress in consultation with AusNet and VicGrid. Detailed design will be confirmed through this process and addressed through conditions of the planning permit. A permit for the subdivision of the terminal station will be sought by AusNet at the time it is required.

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FIGURE 3-3 INDICATIVE PROJECT GRID CONNECTION

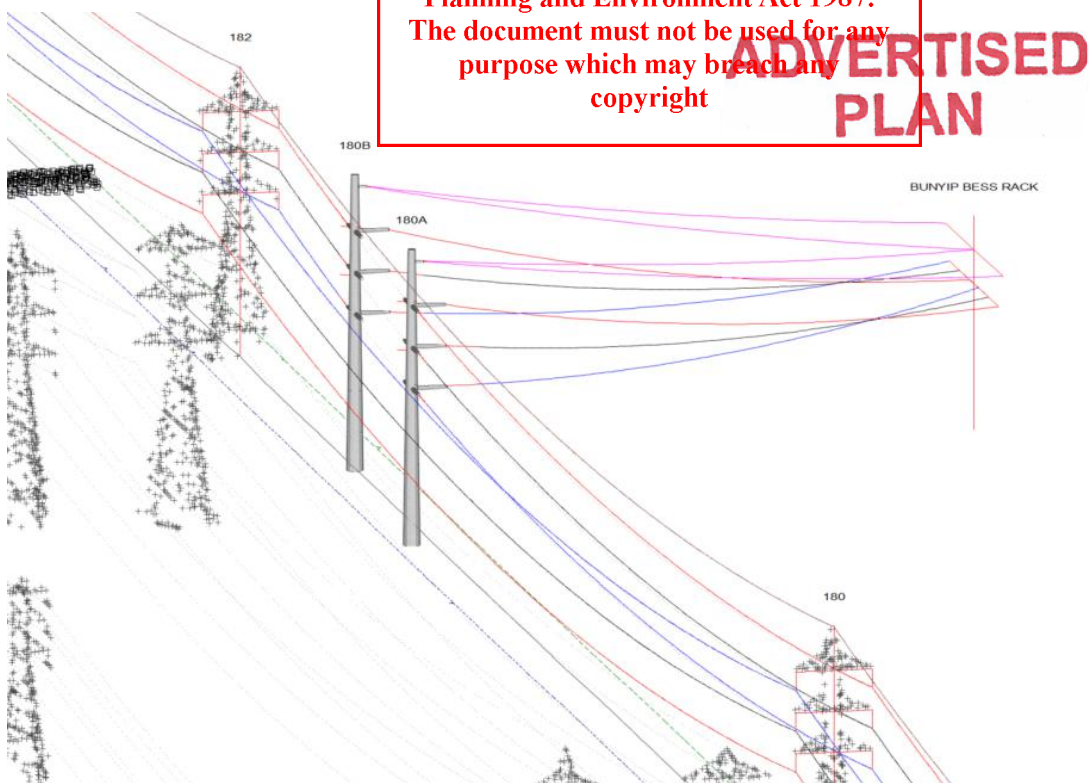


FIGURE 3-4 BUNYIP NORTH BESS INDICATIVE CUT-IN CONCEPT DIAGRAM



FIGURE 3-5 BUNYIP NORTH BESS INDICATIVE CUT-IN CONCEPT PLAN VIEW



FIGURE 3-6 BUNYIP NORTH BESS INDICATIVE CUT-IN ELEVATION

3.5 ACCESS AND PARKING

A new accessway is proposed along the southern boundary of the Project Area from the Princes Freeway, to support construction and operational vehicle movements. This access has provision for an acceleration and deceleration lane to allow for safe traffic movements into and out of the Project Site. It is noted that the Traffic Impact Assessment (Appendix C) determined an acceleration lane was not necessary for the Project from a safety perspective, however this has been included following engagement with DTP's Transport Team. As this accessway is to a road that is within the TRZ2, it is subject to written approval by the Head, Transport for Victoria.

Internal access roads (gravel or sealed) will provide internal access for construction, operations and emergency vehicles. The internal access road will be a minimum of 4 m in trafficable width.

Car parking will be confirmed during the detailed design phase of the Project and will comply with the dimensions required under Clause 52.06-9 of the Cardinia Planning Scheme. As the

Planning Scheme does not specify a car parking rate for the utility installation land use, the number of spaces will be determined based on the expected peak construction workforce and to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority.

Please see Section 6.1 for further information regarding the traffic impact assessment.

3.6 DESIGN EVOLUTION

The Project has undergone iterative design development, informed by pre-application engagement with relevant authorities and stakeholders, to ensure the siting and layout respond appropriately to site constraints and environmental sensitivities. Specialist inputs have guided refinements to the Project Area and design outcomes, with an emphasis on avoidance of environmental sensitivities as the primary mitigation measure.

As part of this process, the Project Area has been reduced and refined to avoid environmentally and culturally sensitive land. In particular, the development is sited to avoid areas associated with Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), and the Project Area avoids all mapped Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity (CHS) and land affected by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). This refinement has resulted in the Indicative Development Footprint and ensures that works are confined to areas with lower environmental and cultural risk.

Project layout and access design have also been developed to minimise impacts on ecological values. The design maintains development buffers of at least 200 m around key waterbodies and avoids all known areas of high-value habitat identified by the ecological assessment (Appendix E).

Access arrangements have been carefully aligned within the existing road reserve where practicable, including the avoidance of native vegetation. The accessway design has been refined to retain native trees, with Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) established and maintained in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the ecological assessment (Appendix E). This approach ensures that retained trees are protected during construction and operation.

In parallel with the technical assessments, there has been ongoing stakeholder engagement to also feed into the design evolution. This includes both regulatory stakeholders and the local community, as detailed in Section 5. The Proponent is also progressing a voluntary CHMP in consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the region, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), as detailed in Section 6.7.

Overall, the evolution of the Project design demonstrates a clear commitment to avoiding and minimising environmental impacts.

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4. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

4.1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

4.1.1 PLAN FOR VICTORIA

Plan for Victoria is the State's overarching strategic policy that sets out the guiding principles for development in the State.

The plan is structured around five key pillars. These include:

- Pillar 1 - Housing for all Victorians
- Pillar 2 - Accessible jobs and services
- Pillar 3 - Greater Places, suburbs and towns
- Pillar 4 - Sustainable environments
- Pillar 5 - Self-determination and caring for Country

The Sustainable Environments pillar sets out the State's vision for transitioning to renewable energy as part of Victoria's pathway to net zero emissions, including a reduction in reliance on fossil fuels. The Plan recognises that regional Victorian communities are well placed to host and benefit from renewable energy infrastructure investment, including battery energy storage projects, and seeks to enable the delivery of affordable, reliable and clean energy in appropriate locations to support businesses and communities.

4.1.2 VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION PLAN

In August 2025, VicGrid released the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP), a strategic plan for renewable energy infrastructure in the State, to deliver better outcomes for Victorian consumers and communities.

The VTP outlines the proposed Renewable Energy Zones (REZ), as well as investment in new transmission infrastructure. The proposed REZ are identified as the most suitable areas to host new onshore (and offshore) renewable energy generation, and energy storage to support the planned transmission network. In relation to the proposed Project, the VTP specifically seeks to deliver an additional 4.8 to 7.7 GW of additional battery energy storage to build storage capacity and resilience across Victoria's future and existing renewables network.

The Project is strategically sited along the existing Yallourn Power Station to Rowville Terminal Transmission Line, which connects Gippsland to Metropolitan Melbourne. The Project's location on this existing transmission line allows the BESS to make productive use of established transmission infrastructure that will otherwise carry reduced generation following Yallourn's scheduled retirement, supporting an efficient transition of the network from coal to renewables. The Project would therefore support future network services to enhance grid stability in the region from renewable energy sources in the nearby proposed Gippsland REZ.

4.1.3 PLAN MELBOURNE

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 is a State-level planning document released in 2017 that outlines the strategic framework for the Melbourne Metropolitan region up to 2050. The document encourages the redevelopment of underutilised land, particularly urban renewal areas, with

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close proximity to employment, various services and public transport infrastructure. Furthermore:

- It seeks to respond to the challenges of population growth, driving economic prosperity and liveability.
- It defines what kind of city Melbourne will be and identifies the infrastructure, services and major projects which need to be put in place to underpin the city's growth.
- It is the State Government's blueprint for Melbourne's future prosperity, liveability and sustainability.
- The Strategy addresses Melbourne's infrastructure, housing, employment and environmental challenges with an integrated approach to planning, based broadly on principles of transit-oriented development that includes land use, transport and social and community infrastructure.

It is noted that Plan Melbourne is relevant to this Project, as Bunyip township is listed as an urban area, and the Project is in the surrounding Green Wedge area within the Metropolitan Melbourne region¹.

Outcome 4, 'Melbourne is a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity', seeks to provide policies that can address challenges of planning for Melbourne while protecting the best aspects of natural and built environment. Direction 4.5 sets out the plan for Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban areas, including that planning for these areas is required to "support renewable energy sources such as wind and solar as a viable

Outcome 6, 'Melbourne is a sustainable and resilient city' details desired outcomes to ensure Melbourne both protects its natural assets and planning processes under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach any copyright.

Direction 6.1 sets out the policies for a transition to a low-carbon city and Victoria achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The proposed Project is supported by Policy 6.1.2, which states "planning policy and controls will be strengthened to remove barriers and increase the uptake of renewable energy... investigating opportunities for renewable energy initiatives in Melbourne's green wedges and periurban areas"². The proposed Project is consistent with Plan Melbourne, as the Project which sits within a Green Wedge Zone, is a strategically important Project which supports the State's energy transition objectives (thus supporting the outcomes outlined in Outcome 6 of Plan Melbourne), but also protects biodiversity, landscape, water, environmental and cultural heritage resources, by designing to avoid these sensitivities associated with Cannibal Creek. This outcome also identifies the desired 'Planning outcomes for Green Wedges and Peri-urban Areas', which identifies State-significant infrastructure, including to "provide opportunities for renewable energy generation" (Plan Melbourne, page 91).

4.1.4 VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT GREEN WEDGES GUIDANCE

The Green Wedge Zone seeks to recognise, protect and conserve non-urban land for its agricultural, environmental, landscape and recreational values. According to the Victorian Government's Green Wedge guidance³, green wedge areas contain a mix of agricultural uses alongside low-density activities and major infrastructure, including facilities such as airports

¹ Plan Melbourne (2017), Department of Transport and Planning, Map 1 – page 4)

² Plan Melbourne (2017), Department of Transport and Planning, page 111

³ Green Wedges, Department of Transport and Planning, webpage (last updated 15 August 2025)

and water treatment plants. These areas are intended to support a range of compatible rural and non-urban land uses that do not compromise long-term agricultural productivity or landscape character.

The proposed Project utilises low-density, small footprint infrastructure, and does not remove land that is of the highest agricultural quality or strategically significant, and remains compatible with surrounding agricultural operations. Pending detailed design, land not used for the Project would continue to be used for cattle and dairy production (as per the current land use). Given its limited ground disturbance and co-location with existing utility infrastructure, the Project will not impact the ongoing use of agricultural land or surrounding rural activities.

4.1.5 CARDINIA SHIRE GREEN WEDGES MANAGEMENT PLANS

The Project lies across two different sections of the Green Wedge in the eastern metropolitan area of Melbourne, Western Port Green Wedge and Southern Ranges Green Wedge (Figure 4-1). At the time of this planning assessment, the Southern Ranges Green Wedge Management Plan is yet to be prepared, however the Cardinia Western Port Green Wedge Management Plan (CWPGWMP) was adopted in May 2017, and has been considered below despite only part of the Project being included within the boundary (Figure 4-2).



FIGURE 4-1 GREEN WEDGE LAND (PLAN MELBOURNE 2017)

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Legend

- Project Area
- Major Road
- Road
- Path/Track
- Southern Ranges Green Wedge Area
- Westernport Green Wedge Area

Coordinate System:
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55
Date: 13/03/2026
Created By: CS
Drawing Size: A3
0 150 300 450m



F4-2 Project Area in Green Wedge Areas

Bunyip North BESS: Planning Report

RES Australia

The CWPGWMP establishes a strategic framework to protect the agricultural, environmental, landscape and cultural heritage values of the Green Wedge while accommodating essential infrastructure that delivers a net community benefit.

The Project is a low intensity, non-urban infrastructure use that is carefully sited on previously modified agricultural land and avoids areas of high environmental, biodiversity and cultural heritage significance. Its location adjacent to existing transmission infrastructure reflects the Management Plan's objective that major infrastructure should be accommodated in the Green Wedge where it supports broader State and regional objectives, such as renewable energy and energy transition.

The Project does not rely on agricultural water supplies and does not introduce incompatible uses or urban development pressures into the Green Wedge.

Environmental and landscape values are protected through careful siting, setbacks from waterways, avoidance of mapped biodiversity corridors, and minimisation of vegetation removal. This approach is consistent with the Management Plan's emphasis on protecting biodiversity, landscape character and ecological connectivity, particularly within areas associated with the Western Port catchment.

The Project also aligns with the Management Plan's recognition of climate change and the need for resilient infrastructure that supports Victoria's transition to a low carbon energy system. By providing large scale electricity storage capacity, the Project supports broader energy reliability and climate adaptation objectives while remaining compatible with the long term vision for the Green Wedge as a permanent non-urban area.

Overall, the Project gives effect to the planning principles and strategic directions of the CWPGWMP by accommodating essential energy infrastructure in a manner that protects agricultural, environmental, landscape and cultural heritage values, and delivers a clear net community benefit.

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4.2 PLANNING POLICY

4.2.1 RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

The responsible authority for the administration and enforcement of the Planning Scheme or provision of the Planning Scheme is specified in Clause 72.01-1.

Pursuant to Clause 72.01-1 of the Planning Scheme, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for any matters under Divisions 1, 1A, 2 and 3 of Part 4 of the P&E Act and the endorsement of, approval of or satisfaction with matters required by a permit or the scheme to be endorsed or approved or completed to the satisfaction of the responsible authority, with regard to the use and development and land for:

- Utility installation used to transmit or distribute electricity.
- Use or development to which Clause 53.22 (Significant Economic Development) applies.

4.2.2 DEVELOPMENT FACILITATION PROGRAM

As the Project seeks to develop land that includes a utility installation used to "transmit or distribute electricity; or store electricity if the installed capacity is 1 megawatt or greater", pursuant to Clause 53.22-1, the application is eligible to be assessed under the Development

Facilitation Pathway (DFP) in accordance with Clause 53.22 Significant Economic Development of the Cardinia Planning Scheme.

4.2.3 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) seeks to ensure that the objectives of planning in Victoria (as set out in Section 4 of the P&E Act) are fostered through appropriate land use and development policies and practices. The PPF informs the preparation and implementation of local planning policy objectives and the introduction of zone and overlay controls, and seeks to integrate relevant environmental, cultural, social and economic factors in the interest of net community benefit and sustainable development. Those clauses most relevant to the current proposal include:

TABLE 4-1 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES ASSESSMENT

Clause	Objective	Assessment
12.01-1S Protection of biodiversity Clause 12.01-1L Biodiversity	To protect and enhance Victoria's biodiversity. Seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity by recognising the importance of native vegetation as habitat for flora and fauna, maintaining wildlife corridors and managing erosion risks associated with vegetation removal.	An Ecological Assessment (Appendix E) confirms that the Project avoids areas of significant native vegetation and fauna habitat. Biodiversity values and wildlife corridors associated with Cannibal Creek are retained through appropriate setbacks and design avoidance, and the Project Area is largely confined to previously modified agricultural land. Refer to Section 6.3 for further details.
Clause 12.05-2S Landscapes	Protect and enhance significant natural landscapes so development does not undermine their natural qualities. Strengthen landscape quality, open-space connections and environmental performance in key areas (such as green wedges, conservation areas and non-urban land), recognising the landscape as both an aesthetic asset and a functioning natural system.	The Project is located within a low-lying, modified agricultural landscape that does not exhibit the characteristics of a ridgeline, high scenic value area, or visually prominent landform. The Site is generally flat, screened by existing vegetation and infrastructure, and is already influenced by the presence of the Princes Freeway and an existing 220 kV transmission corridor. As confirmed by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Appendix G), the Project will result in Low to Negligible visual impacts from all assessed public viewpoints, including key local roads and the Princes Freeway. No impacts to identified scenic landscapes or tourism assets are expected.
Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire Planning Clause 13.02-1L Bushfire Planning	To strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life.	While the Project Area is located within a BPA and BMO, the BESS and associated infrastructure do not lie within the BMO, which only overlaps with the proposed access via the Princes Freeway. The Project

Clause	Objective	Assessment
		has been designed to minimise bushfire risk through appropriate siting, access, and infrastructure design. A fire risk management plan prepared by Fire Risk Consultants (Appendix D) concludes that the Project can comply with the Country Fire Authority's Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (v4, 2023) and manage bushfire risk to an acceptable level through appropriate design, access, firefighting water supply and ongoing management measures, without increasing risk to surrounding land or communities. Refer to Section 6.2 for further details.
Clause 13.03-1S Floodplain Management	To assist the protection of: - Life, property and community infrastructure from flood hazard - The natural flood carrying capacity of rivers, streams and floodways - The flood storage function of floodplains and waterways - Floodplain areas of environmental significance or importance to river, wetland or coastal health	A flood modelling assessment undertaken by Water Technology (Appendix H) confirms that the Site is largely flood-free. No riverine flooding is expected, and the proposal will not alter flood behaviour or increase flood risk. Refer to Section 6.6 for further information.
13.05-1S Noise Management	To assist the management of noise effects on sensitive land uses.	A noise impact assessment was undertaken by ERM (Appendix F) to identify likely noise levels and attenuation requirements for the Project. The assessment confirmed that the predicted noise levels at nearby noise sensitive receivers comply with the relevant noise limits. Refer to Section 6.4 for further detail.
Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility	To protect community amenity, human health and safety while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial, infrastructure or other uses with potential adverse off-site impacts.	The proposed Project has been designed to be compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses, which are predominantly agricultural in nature. The operation of the BESS, together with appropriate siting, setbacks and design measures, ensures that adverse off-site impacts such as noise,

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Clause	Objective	Assessment
		traffic or visual effects are avoided or minimised. The Project will not compromise the safe and effective operation of surrounding employment generating uses.
Clause 14.01-1S Protection of Agricultural Land Clause 14.01-1R Protection of agricultural land Clause 14.01-1L Protection of agricultural land	Support a productive and resilient agricultural sector by promoting sustainable, innovative and climate-adaptive farming and rural land use practices. Enable ongoing investment, diversification and appropriate infrastructure for both traditional and intensive animal industries, while ensuring new development is well-located and protects the environment and surrounding amenity.	The Project has been sited and designed to minimise the loss and fragmentation of productive rural land and to support the continued operation of surrounding agricultural uses. The Indicative Development Footprint is confined to agricultural land categorised as "Fair" in the Land Capability for Agriculture (Clause 14.01-1L), and is not considered land with 'high' or 'good' agricultural land capability. The Project enables surrounding agricultural uses to continue. The proposed location of the BESS will not fragment agricultural land and will not restrict access to water or rural infrastructure. The BESS installation is largely reversible and will have no permanent impact on the productive capacity of the soils beyond the life of the Project. Refer to Section 6.8 for further detail.
Clause 14.02-1S Catchment Planning and Management	To assist the protection and restoration of catchments, waterways, estuaries, bays, water bodies, groundwater, and the marine environment.	The results of the flood modelling assessment (Appendix H) confirms that the proposal will not alter local hydrology or impact downstream catchments. Flood behaviour and flow paths will be maintained under the proposed development. Refer to Section 6.6 for further detail.
Clause 17.01-2S Innovation and Research Clause 17.03-2S Sustainable Industry	To create opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education.	The Project contributes towards the Victorian State Governments renewable energy goals. The Project will also result in a number of community benefits including the creation of jobs for up to 75 personnel on-site during the construction phase.
19.01-1S Energy supply	To facilitate appropriate development of energy supply infrastructure.	The development of a BESS contributes towards the Victorian State Governments renewable energy goals. The Project will improve grid reliability and in turn provide a

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Clause	Objective	Assessment
19.01-2S Renewable energy	To support the provision and use of renewable energy in a manner that ensures appropriate siting and design considerations are met.	secure, reliable and cost-effective energy sources to Victoria, particularly due to the Project having a strategic location between Gippsland and Melbourne along the existing Yallourn Power Station to Rowville Terminal Transmission Line.
19.03-2S Infrastructure design and provision	To provide timely, efficient and cost-effective development infrastructure that meets the needs of the community.	

4.2.4 ZONE

The entirety of the Site is within GWZ1. The accessway via the Princes Freeway is within the Transport Zone (TRZ2 – Principal Road Network). Refer to Figure 4-3.

The proposal to develop a BESS is broadly consistent with the purpose of the GWZ1 and TRZ2.

The purposes and permit trigger assessment are outlined in Table 4-2 and an evaluation of the proposal against the decision guidelines of Clause 35.05-6 of the GWZ1 and TRZ2 are provided in Table 4-3.



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FIGURE 4-3 ZONING CONTROLS

TABLE 4-2 ZONING ASSESSMENT

Clause	Relevant purposes	Assessment
35.05 Green Wedge Zone – Schedule 1 (GWZ1)	- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework. - To provide for the use of land for agriculture. - To protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity, natural resources, scenic landscapes and heritage values of the area. - To ensure that use and development promotes sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision. - To protect, conserve and enhance the cultural heritage significance and the character of rural and scenic non-urban landscapes. - To recognise and protect the amenity of existing rural living areas.	Pursuant to Clause 35.05-1, a permit is required for use and development of a utility installation on GWZ1 land. This copied document to be made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach any copyright
36.04 Transport Zone 2 (TRZ2)	- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework. - To provide for an integrated and sustainable transport system. - To identify transport land use and land required for transport services and facilities. - To provide for the use and development of land that complements, or is consistent with, the transport system or public land reservation. - To ensure the efficient and safe use of transport infrastructure and land comprising the transport system.	Pursuant to Clause 36.04-1, a permit is required for the creation or alteration of access to the Princes Freeway which is zoned as TRZ2. Written consent from the Head, Transport for Victoria is required under Clause 36.04-3. A Traffic Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of this planning application, and the required consent is expected to be obtained through the formal referral process undertaken by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

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TABLE 4-3 DECISION GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATIONS WITHIN THE GWZ1 AND TRZ2

Decision Making Criteria	Evaluation of Proposal
<i>Green Wedge Zone</i>	
<u>Rural Issues</u> - The maintenance of agricultural production and the impact on the local rural economy. - The environmental capacity of the site to sustain the rural enterprise. - The need to prepare an integrated land management plan. - The impact on the existing and proposed rural infrastructure. - The potential for the future expansion of the use or development and the impact of this on adjoining and nearby agricultural and other land uses. - The protection and retention of land for future sustainable agricultural activities.	The proposed use and development of land for a utility installation is considered compatible with surrounding land uses which comprises of agricultural activity. The Project will largely be remotely operated. There are also no effects resulting from the proposal which would limit the operation or expansion of adjoining or nearby agricultural uses. Therefore, an integrated land management plan is not required. At the end of its operational life, the Project may be upgraded or repowered, subject to the relevant land agreements and planning approval requirements. If the Project is not upgraded or repowered, it would be decommissioned in accordance with applicable approvals and regulatory requirements. Decommissioning would generally include the removal all above-ground equipment and restoring the land to its original use and consistent with surrounding land uses unless otherwise agreed with the landowner.
<u>Environmental Issues</u> - 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 fauna habitat and the revegetation of land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridge lines, property boundaries and saline recharge and discharge areas. - How the use or development relates to sustainable land management and the need to prepare a sustainable land management plan. - The location of on-site effluent disposal areas to minimise impact of nutrient loads on waterways and native vegetation.	The Project will not directly impact native vegetation and avoids higher value fauna habitats. With standard construction controls in place, no significant impacts to flora or fauna are expected. Whilst some vegetation affected by the proposed development are native species, these are planted trees for amenity (in the Princes Highway road reserve and within the Indicative Development Footprint). Accordingly, there is no native vegetation that requires a permit for removal as part of the proposal. If landscape screening is required, a Landscape Plan would adopt the use of species that are indigenous to the region. Development of a sustainable land management plan and effluent disposal are not applicable to this proposal.

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Decision Making Criteria	Evaluation of Proposal
<u>Design and Siting Issues</u> - The need to minimise adverse impacts of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used on major roads, landscape features and vistas. - The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure services which minimises the visual impact on the landscape. - The need to minimise adverse impacts on the character and appearance of the area or features of archaeological, historic or scientific significance or of natural scenic beauty or importance. - The need to locate and design buildings used for accommodation to avoid or reduce the impact from vehicular traffic, noise, blasting, dust and vibration from an existing or proposed extractive industry operation if it is located within 500 m from the nearest title boundary of land on which a work authority has been applied for or granted under the <i>Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990</i>.	The Project Area has been selected due to its proximity to the existing 220 kV transmission line, which traverses the Site. The BESS facility will be able to connect directly to these lines which minimises the need for further site disturbances including visual impact on the landscape. There are no archaeological, historic or other heritage features within the Project Area. The nearest mapped Aboriginal CHS relates to Cannibal Creek, located outside the Project Area. As the Project does not intersect any Aboriginal CHS, no impacts to heritage values are expected. A voluntary CHMP is being prepared with BLCAC to support best-practice management during construction. The proposal does not require on-site accommodation. This copied document to be made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach any copyright
<u>Primary School or Secondary School Issues</u> - Access being provided via an all-weather road with dimensions adequate to accommodate emergency vehicles and not rely on local residential streets for access. - Access by public transport, or if public transport is not available or adequate, transport may be provided by the school. Where transport is provided by the school the parking of buses should be accommodated on site. - Connection to a reticulated sewerage system if available or if not available, the wastewater must be treated and retained on-site in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection Regulations under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i> for an on-site waste water management system.	Not applicable. ADVERTISED PLAN

Decision Making Criteria	Evaluation of Proposal
- In the absence of reticulated sewerage, a Land Capability Assessment on the risks to human health and the environment of an on-site wastewater management system constructed, installed or altered on the lot in accordance with the requirements of the Environment Protection Regulations under the <i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i>. - Connection to a reticulated potable water supply or an alternative potable water supply with adequate storage for school use as well as for fire fighting purposes. - Connection to a reticulated electricity supply or an alternative energy source.	ADVERTISED PLAN
<i>Transport Zone 2</i>	
Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate: - The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework. - The effect of the proposal on the development, operation and safety of the transport system. - Whether the development is appropriately located and designed, including in accordance with any relevant use, design or siting guidelines.	The Project will not adversely affect the development, operation or safety of the transport system. The Project has direct access via Princes Freeway, providing a safe and efficient connection for construction vehicles. Traffic during operation will be minimal, limited to periodic maintenance. A Traffic Management Plan will be implemented to manage vehicle movements during the construction phase. The layout of the Project has been designed to ensure safe access and movement within the Project Area, and complies with relevant design and siting considerations for TRZ2.

Sections 4.2.4.1 and 4.2.4.2 provide further consideration how the proposed use of the utility installation (BESS) is appropriate within the context of the Green Wedge Zone.

4.2.4.1 LAND QUALITY ASSESSMENT

A desktop Land Quality Assessment has been undertaken to support the proposed development of the Project.

The Project is located on land identified as Class 3 agricultural land (Figure 4-4), which is characterised by moderate agricultural capability with limitations that restrict its use to a narrower range of crops and grazing activities compared to higher quality Classes 1 and 2 land. Class 3 land remains suitable for agricultural use; however, it is not considered strategically significant agricultural land in a municipal or regional context.

In the absence of the Southern Ranges Green Wedge Management Plan, which is still under development, the CWPGWMP has been used to address suitability of the development in the

Green Wedge. The proposed development of a utility installation (BESS) on Class 3 agricultural land is consistent with the intent of the Cardinia Planning Scheme and the CWPGWMP, which recognises that essential infrastructure may be appropriately located within the Green Wedge where it delivers a net community benefit and does not compromise high value agricultural resources. The Project has been designed as a low intensity, non-urban use with a confined development footprint and does not preclude the continued use of adjoining land for farming purposes. The development does not rely on soil based agricultural productivity, does not require access to agricultural water supplies, and does not introduce land use conflicts or urban encroachment pressures that would undermine agricultural operations.

Importantly, planning policy places a stronger emphasis on protecting high quality and strategically significant agricultural land, while allowing flexibility for infrastructure uses on land of lower agricultural capability where impacts can be avoided or minimised. In this context, the establishment of a utility installation on Class 3 agricultural land is considered appropriate.

Accordingly, the proposed BESS is compatible with the land's agricultural capability and aligns with both State and local planning objectives by accommodating essential energy infrastructure while remaining compliant the broader Green Wedge objectives. Further analysis of the land quality of the Project Area can be found in the Agricultural Assessment Report (Appendix I).

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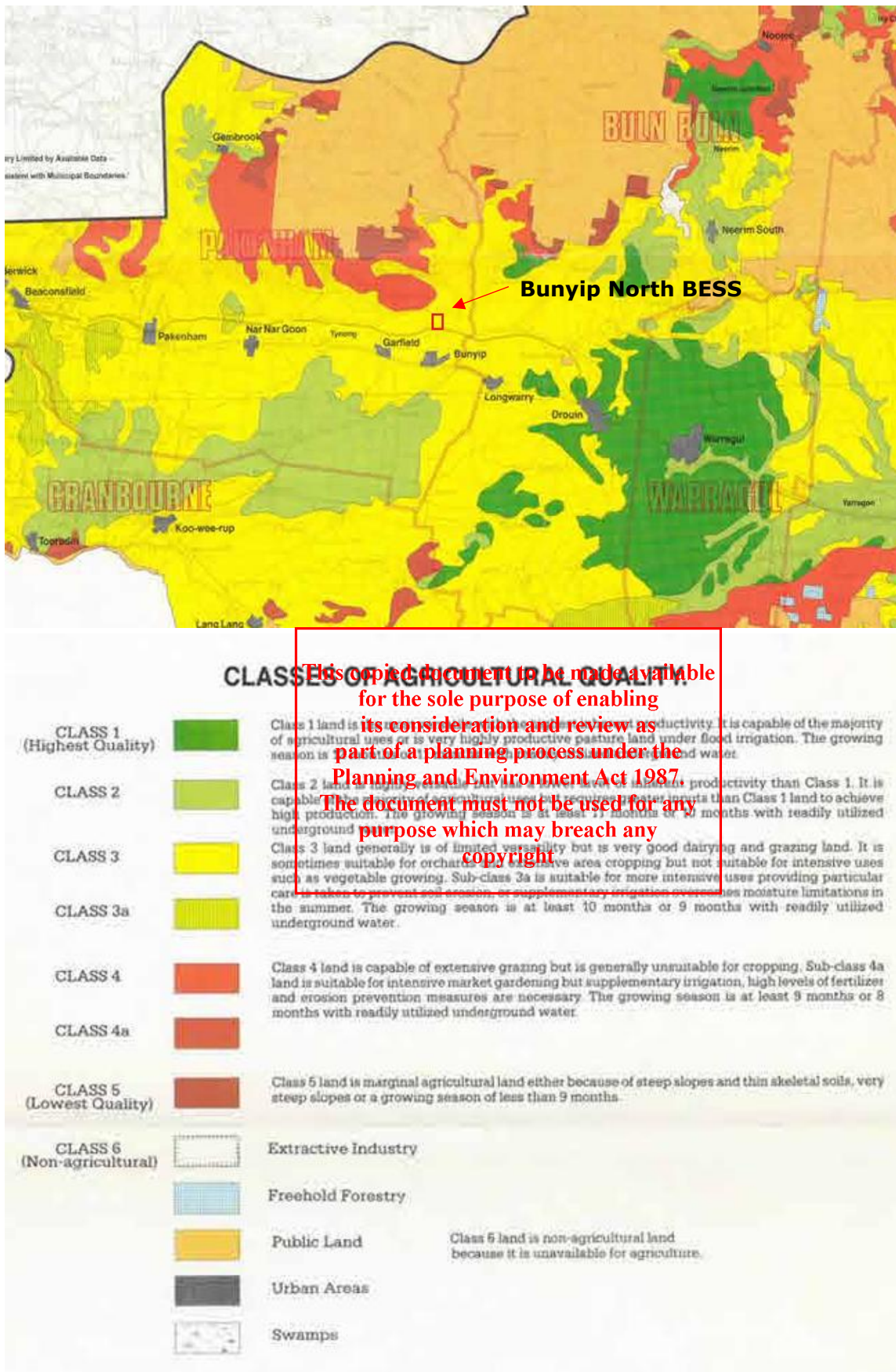


FIGURE 4-4 AGRICULTURAL LAND QUALITY (SOURCE: ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL QUALITY OF LAND IN GIPPSLAND - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, VICTORIA)

4.2.4.2 VCAT CASE STUDY

Melton CC v Minister for Planning [2022] VCAT 179 (25 February 2022)

In *Melton City Council v Minister for Planning*, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) considered a challenge to the Minister's decision to grant approval for a renewable energy facility (solar farm) on land within the GWZ. The case examined whether the development was appropriately sited having regard to Green Wedge policy, landscape values, rural character, agricultural land impacts and amenity considerations.

VCAT upheld the Minister's decision, finding that renewable energy infrastructure can be an appropriate use within the Green Wedge where it delivers a clear net community benefit, is strategically justified, and where impacts on landscape character, amenity and agricultural land are avoided or acceptably mitigated. The Tribunal confirmed that Green Wedge policy does not prohibit utility scale renewable infrastructure, and that planning decision makers must balance local impacts against State policy objectives for renewable energy and climate change mitigation, rather than treating agricultural or landscape considerations as determinative in isolation.

Consistent with VCAT's findings on agricultural land, the Project is also located on Class 3 agricultural land, which is not identified as high quality or strategically significant. The development footprint is confined and does not preclude the ongoing agricultural use of adjoining land, aligning with VCAT's approach that agricultural classification alone is not determinative. In relation to landscape and amenity, the Project has been designed to minimise visual prominence, avoid ridgelines and sensitive landscapes, and respond to an already modified rural context.

Overall, the Project is consistent with the outcome in *Melton CC v Minister for Planning* in that it demonstrates utility-scale renewable infrastructure can be acceptable within the Green Wedge where it is well sited and well designed, with regard to the following aspects of the Project's design:

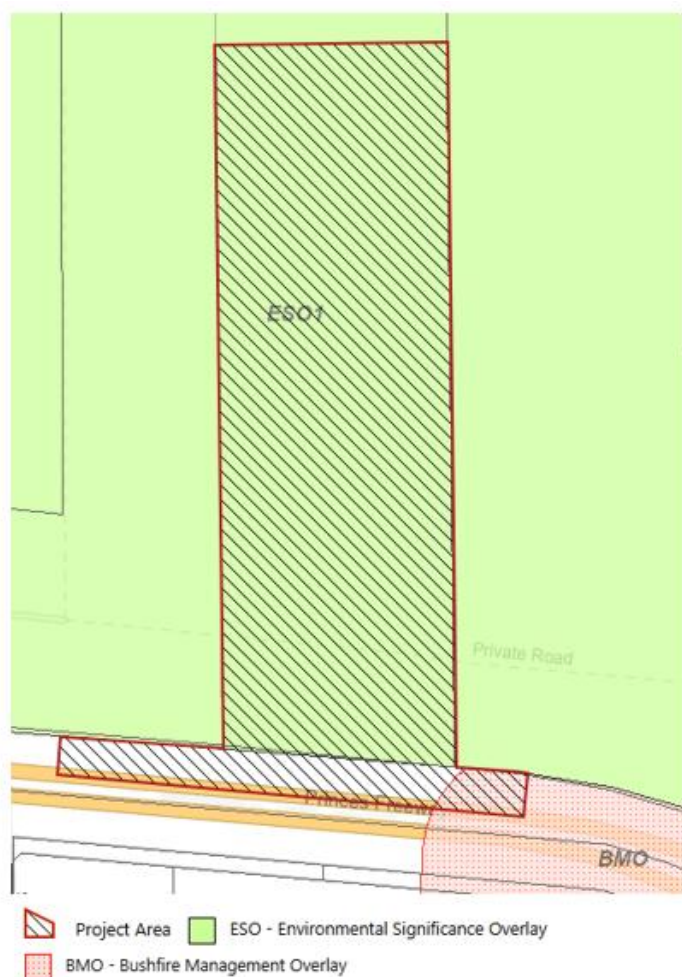
- Appropriately balancing local land use considerations with broader State policy objectives by strategically siting the Project adjacent to existing 220 kV transmission lines, thereby minimising the need for additional infrastructure.
- Delivering a clear net community benefit by supporting renewable energy generation and improving grid stability within the region.
- Siting the Project on land that is not identified as the most valuable agricultural land, consistent with the Cardinia Planning Scheme (Clause 14.01-1L - Land Capability for Agriculture), and the Victorian Government's Green Wedge guidance.
- Applying siting and setbacks to avoid hydrological and biodiversity constraints and to respond to the valued landscape characteristics of the region.

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4.2.5 OVERLAYS

The entirety of the Site is affected by the ESO1, and an area of the road reserve is within the BMO, as shown in Figure 4-5. Table 4-4 identifies whether a planning permit is triggered by these overlay controls.



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FIGURE 4-5 OVERLAY CONTROLS

TABLE 4-4 OVERLAY ASSESSMENT

Clause	Relevant purposes	Assessment
42.01 Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 1 (ESO1)	- To identify areas where the development of land may be affected by environmental constraints. - To ensure that development is compatible with identified environmental values.	The entirety of the Site is affected by the ESO1. A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works within an ESO1. A planning permit is required under Clause 42.01 to remove any vegetation, including dead vegetation and non-native species, that includes pasture and trees within the BESS area, as shown by the Indicative Development Footprint (Figure 3-2).

Clause	Relevant purposes	Assessment
	ADVERTISED PLAN	Impacts to this vegetation removal does not require assessment against the Guidelines and does not trigger offset obligations. To minimise impacts on the environmental values of the Site, the development footprint has been carefully sited to avoid the removal of native vegetation, where practicable. A 10 m vegetation management zones has been established around the facility to satisfy bushfire protection requirements while limiting the extent of vegetation clearance. This approach ensures that the objectives of the ESO are upheld by avoiding and minimising impacts on significant environmental features.
Clause 44.06 Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)	- To ensure that the development of land provides protection of human life and strengthens community resilience to bushfire. - To identify areas where the bushfire hazard warrants bushfire protection measures to be implemented - To ensure development is only permitted where the risk to life and property from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level.	The Project is only affected by the BMO in State-owned land, in the south east corner of the Project Area in the Princes Freeway road reserve where the proposed acceleration lane is located. The BMO does not overlap where the BESS and associated infrastructure is proposed to be located. Pursuant to Clause 44.06-2 (Permit requirement), a permit is not required to construct a building or construct or carry out works associated with a 'utility installation'. A Risk Management Plan, including a Fire Safety Study (Appendix D), has been prepared which concludes that bushfire risk can be managed to an acceptable level through appropriate siting, design, infrastructure and operational controls, including provision of safe access for vehicles (including emergency vehicles), in consultation with the Country Fire Authority (CFA). This is summarised in Section 6.2. On this basis, the Project is not expected to increase bushfire risk to surrounding land or communities and is consistent

Clause	Relevant purposes	Assessment
		with the objectives of Clause 44.06 and Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire Planning).

4.2.6 PARTICULAR PROVISIONS

The particular provisions are specific prerequisites or planning provisions for a range of particular uses and developments and apply consistently across the state. Unless specified otherwise, the particular provisions apply in addition to the requirements of a zone or overlay.

TABLE 4-5 PARTICULAR PROVISIONS

Clause	Purpose	Assessment
51.02 Metropolitan Green Wedge Land: Core Planning Provisions	- To protect metropolitan green wedge land from uses and development that would diminish its agricultural, environmental, cultural heritage, conservation, landscape natural resource or recreation values. - To protect productive agricultural land from incompatible uses and development. - To ensure that the scale of use is compatible with the non-urban character of metropolitan green wedge land.	Clause 51.02-2 specifies the list of uses of land that are prohibited for land outside the Urban Growth Boundary. The Project is considered to comply with this clause, as a Utility Installation is not listed as a prohibited use. The Project aligns with the purpose of the clause, as it is a use that is compatible with productive agricultural land and the non-urban character of metropolitan green wedge land.
52.05 Signs	- To regulate the development of land for signs and associated structures. - To ensure signs are compatible with the amenity and visual appearance of an area, including the existing or desired future character. - To ensure signs do not contribute to excessive visual clutter or visual disorder. - To ensure that signs do not cause loss of amenity or adversely affect the natural or built environment or the safety, appearance or efficiency of a road.	A permit is required for the display of business identification sign. The sign may include information about a business or industry on the land, the street number of the business premises, the nature of the business, a business logo or other business identification information. The total display area to each premises will not exceed 3 sqm. ADVERTISED PLAN
52.06 Car Parking	To ensure the provision of an appropriate number of car parking spaces having regard to the demand likely to be generated, the activities	While Clause 52.06 does not independently trigger a planning permit for the Project, a planning permit is required under other provisions of the Cardinia Planning Scheme, and Clause 52.06 therefore applies to the assessment

Clause	Purpose	Assessment
	on the land and the nature of the locality. - To support sustainable transport alternatives to the motor car. - To promote the efficient use of car parking spaces through the consolidation of car parking facilities. - To ensure that car parking does not adversely affect the amenity of the locality. - To ensure that the design and location of car parking is of a high standard, creates a safe environment for users and enables easy and efficient use.	of the application. Car parking requirements will be confirmed during the detailed design phase of the Project and will comply with the dimensions required under Clause 52.06-9 of the Cardinia Planning Scheme. As the Planning Scheme does not specify a car parking rate for the utility installation land use, the number of spaces will be determined based on the expected peak construction workforce and to the satisfaction of the Responsible Authority, in accordance with Clause 52.06.
52.17 Native Vegetation Removal	To ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. This is achieved by applying the following three step approach in accordance with the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, 2025) (the Guidelines).	A permit is not required for the removal of native vegetation. The proposal will only result in the removal of planted native vegetation (including in the roadside), which is exempt from the requirement for a permit under Clause 52.17. All other vegetation potentially impacted by the proposal is not classified as native vegetation under the Guidelines. Refer to Section 6.3 for further details.
52.29 Land Adjacent to the Principal Road Network	To ensure appropriate subdivision of land adjacent to Principal Road Network or land planned to form part of the Principal Road Network.	A permit is required for the creation or alteration of access to the Princes Freeway, which forms part of the Principal Road Network. Written consent from the Head, Transport for Victoria is required under Clause 36.04-3. A Traffic Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of this planning application, and the required consent is expected to be obtained through the formal referral process undertaken by DTP.
53.22 Significant Economic Development	To prioritise and facilitate the planning, assessment and delivery of projects that will make a significant contribution to Victoria's economy and provide substantial public benefit, including jobs for Victorians.	This Project is classified as a Category 1 application under Clause 53.22 of the Cardinia Planning Scheme. The Category 1 conditions outlined in Table 1 (Clause 53.22-1) state the application must be for a use specified in Table 2.

Clause	Purpose	Assessment
	To provide for the efficient and effective use of land and facilitate use and development with high quality urban design, architecture and landscape architecture.	The Category 1 condition to provide information demonstrating the feasibility of the proposed development to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning is not required for an application for the use or development of land for a utility installation. The Project is for the use and development of a 'utility installation (other than a data centre)', and meets the specified conditions for Table 2, whereby the Project will: Store electricity if the installed capacity of 1 megawatt or greater. Additionally, this application is made under Clause 53.22, exempting the application from the decision requirements of sections 64(1), (2) and (3), and the review rights of section 82(1) of the P&E Act.

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4.2.7 OTHER RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Other relevant legislation and any implications for the proposal is summarised in Table 4-6.

TABLE 4-6 OTHER LEGISLATION

Legislation	Purpose	Relevance and Implications
<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (AH Act) / Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 (Vic)</i>	Aboriginal cultural heritage is primarily protected by the AH Act and the <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</i>. Under this legislation, Aboriginal cultural heritage is protected by requiring planning permit applicants to prepare a CHMP if and when their proposed actions pose a risk to Aboriginal cultural heritage. Under the AH Act actions are considered to pose a risk to Aboriginal cultural heritage, and therefore require the preparation of a mandatory CHMP, when they are both a "high impact activity" and occur in an "area of cultural heritage sensitivity".	Given that the proposed design as part of this application occur outside of areas mapped within an area of CHS, the Project does not trigger a requirement for a mandatory CHMP requirement. Notwithstanding the above, a voluntary CHMP is being prepared and no construction works will commence until the CHMP is approved.

Legislation	Purpose	Relevance and Implications
<i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> (CaLP Act) (Vic)	Under the CaLP Act, control of declared noxious weeds and pest animals will require ongoing management prior, during and post construction.	Three pest animals were identified within the Project Area including: - European Rabbit (<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>) - Red Fox (<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>) - Fallow Deer (<i>Dama dama</i>) The management of declared noxious weeds and pest animals listed under the CaLP Act, will be undertaken in accordance with industry best practice and addressed through the Project's environmental management plans.
<i>Dangerous Goods Act 1985 / Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012</i> (Vic)	Regulates the safe storage, handling, transport and use of dangerous goods to protect people, property, and the environment from harm.	The Project will involve the storage and management of lithium-ion batteries, which are classified as dangerous goods. All requirements of the dangerous goods legislation would be followed.
<i>Environment Effects Act 1978</i> (EE Act) (Vic)	The EE Act provides for the assessment of proposed works that have the potential to significantly impact the environment in Victoria. The EE Act enables the Victorian Minister for Planning to determine whether an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required before project approvals can proceed.	The ecological assessment undertaken by ERM (Appendix E) found that the Project is unlikely to impact on any species or communities listed under the EE Act. No other referral criteria under the EE Act are triggered by the proposed works. Accordingly, a referral under the EE Act is not required.
<i>Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act) (Cth)	The EPBC Act provides protection of the environment from actions proposed to have the potential to significantly impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) or the environment of Commonwealth land. Approval is required by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment for actions that may have a significant impact on MNES.	While no MNES were recorded within the Project Area, the ecological assessment (Appendix E) identified several EPBC Act listed species as having potential to occur within the riparian vegetation and aquatic habitat along Cannibal Creek, located approximately 250 m north of the Project Area. To confirm that no significant impacts will arise, the Project was referred under the EPBC Act on 17 April 2026.

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Legislation	Purpose	Relevance and Implications
<i>Environment Protection Act 2017 (EP Act) / Environment Protection Regulations 2021</i>	The EP Act focuses on the general environmental duty (GED) which requires all Victorians to take reasonable and practical steps to reduce the human and environmental health risks of their activities. The <i>Environment Protection Regulations 2021</i> supports the EP Act by setting out specific duties, permissions, and controls for managing waste, noise, air and water pollution and other environmental risks.	A development licence, operating licence, permit or registration is not required under the EP Act. However, the Project will comply with the GED by implementing measures to minimise environmental risks during construction and operation. Waste including soil and any hazardous substances, will be managed in accordance with industry best practice and disposed of via appropriately licenced waste contractors. Waste minimisation, reuse and recycling will be prioritised where practicable. A Noise Impact Assessment (Appendix F) was completed in accordance with the Noise Protocol. The Project is predicted to comply with all relevant operational noise limits, consistent with the GED requirements under the EP Act.
<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act) (Vic)</i>	Under the FFG Act, a permit is required to take (kill, injure, disturb, or collect) threatened or protected flora species from public land.	No flora, fauna or ecological communities listed as threatened under the FFG Act will be impacted by the Project. A protected flora permit will not be required.
<i>Heritage Act 2017 (Vic)</i>	The <i>Heritage Act 2017</i> sets out procedures to identify places of state heritage significance, and of historical archaeological value	The Project Area does not contain any items listed on the Victorian Heritage Register; therefore, no approval is required under <i>Heritage Act 2017</i> .
<i>Water Act 1989 (Vic)</i>	Provides the legal framework for managing Victoria's water resources. The main purpose of the <i>Water Act 1989</i> is to: promote the equitable and efficient use of water resources; make sure water resources are conserved and properly managed and increase community involvement in conserving and managing water resources.	The Project Area is not within a waterway and therefore, a Works on Waterways approval will not be required.

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5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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5.1 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Ongoing consultation with relevant government authorities, service providers, and stakeholders has been undertaken to inform the Project design and approvals pathway. Key stakeholders engaged with before the planning application was submitted are outlined below.

TABLE 5-1 SUMMARY OF PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder	Summary
Energy Assessment Team, DTP	Engagement with the Energy Assessment Team has been ongoing, including two pre-application meetings held on 19 June 2025 and 2 March 2026 to discuss the Project.
Transport for Victoria, DTP	A meeting with was held with Transport for Victoria's Statutory Planning Team on 30 September 2025 to discuss the Project.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	A meeting was held with DCCEEW on 3 September 2025 to discuss the Project.
Cardinia Shire Council	Ongoing engagement with Cardinia Shire Council has been undertaken since May 2025.
Country Fire Authority	A meeting was held with the CFA on 28 May 2025 to discuss the Project.
Melbourne Water	There has been ongoing engagement with Melbourne Water, including a meeting on 21 October 2025, as detailed in the flood modelling assessment (Appendix H).
Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC)	Engagement is ongoing with BLCAC, with the CHMP being developed in consultation with BLCAC, including meetings on 30 July 2025, 6 November 2025, and 26 February 2026.
AusNet	Ongoing engagement with AusNet has been undertaken since 2025.
Adjoining landowners	There has been ongoing engagement with adjoining landowners throughout 2025.
Wider community	The Project launched to the local community in August 2025. Engagement with the community has since been ongoing, and is detailed further in Section 5.2.
Network operators (VicGrid, AEMO)	Ongoing engagement regarding grid connection and associated infrastructure since May 2025.

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5.2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation has been undertaken by the Proponent between August 2025 and March 2026, in support of the planning application, and to both inform the community and receive feedback on the Project.

Consultation was initiated at the commencement of pre-lodgement technical work in August 2025 and has continued through to lodgement, providing complementary channels for information provision, dialogue, and written feedback. Engagement methods included:

- Direct written engagement with neighbouring landowners through two letters (August 2025 and March 2026)
- Community newsletter to approximately 1,275 Bunyip households and advertisements in the Bunyip & District Community News (September 2025 and March 2026), and media releases resulting in coverage in the Pakenham Officer Star News (August 2025 and October 2025)
- A dedicated Project website (bunyipnorth-energystorage.com)
- A direct point of contact with the Project team, reachable via a mobile number and Project email published on the website
- Face-to-face engagement at three established local events - Bunyip Community Markets in October 2025 and January 2026, and Bunyip Show in March 2026
- A structured online feedback form launched in March 2026
- Ongoing meetings and conversations with local community organisations throughout the consultation period.

Engagement with the Bunyip North Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC), representing Traditional Owners, has been undertaken and is ongoing.

Key feedback received included the following:

- Supportive feedback related to renewable energy infrastructure, grid reliability and local employment opportunities.
- Most engagement was to find out more information relating to the Project, focusing on fire safety, energy/grid benefits, noise, visual amenity, land use and project timing.
- Some concerns were raised, most frequently about fire safety and emergency management, ecology/environmental values, visual amenity, land use and noise.

Consultation feedback directly informed refinements to the Project, including:

- Reduction of the Project Area in November 2025 to establish a buffer to Cannibal Creek, avoiding mapped high-value native vegetation, aquatic habitat and areas identified as culturally sensitive.
- Expansion of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment scope to include the Mount Cannibal viewpoint, and the addition of provisions for landscape screening within site layout.
- Commissioning of an independent agricultural assessment to inform the planning application.

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- Adaptation of engagement approaches in line with community-group advice, including attendance at established local events and the publication of plain-language assessment summaries, project layout and informational FAQs ahead of lodgement.

RES will continue to engage with landowners, the wider community, community organisations, Traditional Owners and agencies through the assessment, construction and operation of the Project. For further details on the engagement undertaken and feedback received, refer to Appendix J.

5.3 COMMUNITY BENEFITS FUND

The Project is being developed within the context of Victoria's evolving framework for renewable energy and storage infrastructure, including the Victorian Access Regime and the associated Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines administered by VicGrid.

Consistent with these frameworks, the Proponent is undertaking a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to identify, assess and respond to the potential social impacts, both positive and adverse, associated with the construction and operation of the Project. The SIA is being prepared in accordance with contemporary best practice and will inform engagement activities, project design considerations and the approach to benefit sharing.

The Victorian Access Regime establishes clear expectations that renewable energy and storage projects demonstrate how they will engage with communities and deliver meaningful social value and economic benefits as part of gaining access to the shared transmission network.

In alignment with these expectations, the Proponent acknowledges that:

- Community engagement and benefit sharing are integral components of responsible project development
- The nature and scale of benefits should be proportionate to the project's impacts and context
- Benefit-sharing approaches should be informed by community needs and priorities rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all model.

Informed by the SIA outcomes, the Proponent will develop a Benefit Sharing Program for the Project that aligns with:

- The objectives of the Victorian Access Regime
- The principles set out in the Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines
- Relevant Victorian Government policy relating to renewable energy and storage infrastructure

The Benefit Sharing Program will be designed to deliver meaningful, locally relevant benefits and may include a combination of financial and non-financial measures, where appropriate.

The final form of the program will be informed by:

- The scale and nature of project impacts identified through the SIA
- Feedback received through ongoing stakeholder engagement
- Opportunities to support local priorities and long-term outcomes

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Consistent with VicGrid guidance, benefit sharing will focus on delivering value to the host community in a way that is transparent, proportionate and responsive to local circumstances, rather than being limited to a fixed or prescriptive funding model.

Community engagement for the Project will continue throughout the development process and into subsequent project phases. The Proponent recognises that both the SIA and the Benefit Sharing Program are iterative and will be refined as additional information emerges and engagement continues.

This approach ensures that community benefit considerations remain integrated into project decision-making and that outcomes continue to align with the intent of the Victorian Access Regime and associated guidelines over time.

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6. TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS

In support of this permit application, the following potential impacts were assessed to confirm that the proposal is consistent with the Cardinia Planning Scheme:

- Traffic
- Fire hazard and risk
- Ecology
- Noise
- Visual and Landscape
- Hydrology and Flooding
- Historic and Cultural Heritage
- Agricultural

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A summary of the key findings of the technical assessments prepared in support of this application are provided below.

6.1 TRAFFIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Transport Impact Assessment (TIA) was undertaken by Amber Organisation (see Appendix C).

A new access road is proposed along the southern boundary of the Project Area from the Princes Freeway to support construction and operational vehicle movements. This will only result in removal of native vegetation that has been planted and is therefore exempt from the requirement of a permit under Clause 52.17 of the Cardinia Planning Scheme.

The proposed construction traffic access route from the Port of Melbourne to the Project is designated for B-Double vehicles. As such, the access route is able to accommodate the loads and types of vehicle movements to be generated during construction of the Project.

A very small number of Oversize/Overmass (OSOM) vehicle movements would be required during construction, to deliver larger plant and equipment to the Site such as the substation transformer and earthmoving equipment. Suitability of the route from the Port of Melbourne to the Site will be undertaken as part of a future National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) permit application once loads and potential vehicle combinations are confirmed.

To mitigate the impacts during the construction phase, a TMP would be prepared prior to construction commencing which would include measures to ensure safe routes to and from the Site are followed.

Based on the TIA, it is concluded that the proposed access arrangements are suitable to accommodate the expected vehicle types and traffic volumes during the construction and operational phases of the Project.

Notwithstanding the above, it is noted that Cardinia Shire Council issued Planning Permit T240063 on 7 March 2025 for a separate access arrangement on the adjoining lot to the west (Lot 3 PS315155), related to the infrequent transport of livestock to and from the site. While the permit conditions relate specifically to the proposal on Lot 3 PS315155, some elements of the approved access requirements interface with the Project's access arrangements on Lot 2 PS315155. At the time of writing, the interpretation and implementation of these conditions

are the subject of ongoing discussions with Council, DTP and Head, Transport for Victoria. The Proponent seeks ongoing engagement to ensure that any administrative or design coordination matters can be appropriately resolved prior to construction.

6.2 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND FIRE SAFETY STUDY

A Risk Management Plan (including Fire Safety Study) was undertaken by Fire Risk Consultants (Appendix D) to assess bushfire and operational fire risk associated with the Project. The Project Area is located within a Bushfire Prone Area (BPA) and partially in the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO).

The assessment concluded that the Project can meet the requirements of the CFA's *Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities* (v4, 2023) and that fire risk can be managed to an acceptable level through a combination of design, infrastructure and operational controls. Key measures include the provision of:

- Perimeter firebreaks, internal and perimeter access roads suitable for emergency vehicles.
- Adequate firefighting water supply and hydrant coverage, separation distances between infrastructure and vegetation.
- Integrated fire detection and suppression systems within battery units.
- Preparation and implementation of a Fire Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan.

Accordingly, the Project is not expected to increase bushfire risk to surrounding land or communities and is consistent with the objectives of Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire Planning).

6.3 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

An ecological assessment was undertaken by ERM (Appendix E), including a site survey conducted in April 2025. For the purposes of the assessment, an Ecology Assessment Area was defined to capture the Project Area and its immediate surrounds, allowing consideration of the context of on-site values with respect to those supported elsewhere on the property and potential indirect impacts to nearby ecological features. The Ecology Assessment Area covers approximately 65 ha and includes the entirety of Lot 2\PS315155, the eastern portion of Lot 1\PS315155, and a farm dam located to the west of the Project Area (refer to Figure 4-1 of Appendix E).

Several patches of native vegetation and scattered native trees were recorded within the Ecology Assessment Area. However, most of this vegetation is outside the Project Area which mainly comprises introduced pasture species and amenity plantings-

A total of 8.377 ha of native vegetation was recorded from the Ecology Assessment Area, comprising the habitat zones summarised in Table 6-1.

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TABLE 6-1 NATIVE VEGETATION WITHIN THE ECOLOGY ASSESSMENT AREA

Habitat Zone	Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC)	Bioregional Conservation Status	Area (ha)	No. of Large Trees
A	EVC 83 Swampy Riparian Woodland	Vulnerable	5.192	2
B	EVC 83 Swampy Riparian Woodland	Vulnerable	1.479	1
C	EVC 83 Swampy Riparian Woodland	Vulnerable	1.504	6
D	EVC 793 Damp Heathy Woodland	Depleted	0.202	0
Total			8.377	9

Scattered Trees recorded within the Ecology Assessment Area comprised:

- 3 Large Scattered Trees
- 5 Small Scattered Trees

Species recorded included Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) and Silver-leaf Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*).

Clause 52.17

The only native vegetation potentially impacted by the proposal comprises planted trees within a windrow that crosses the Project Area, and planted Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) within the Princes Freeway road reserve. As this vegetation is planted, **it is exempt** from the requirement for a permit under Clause 52.17 of the Cardinia Planning Scheme.

All other vegetation potentially impacted by the proposal is not classified as native vegetation under the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction, or lopping of native vegetation* (the Guidelines) (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017a) or the Cardinia Planning Scheme.

Clause 42.01

All other vegetation within the Project Area, including dead vegetation and non-native species, is covered by an ESO, except for that within the Princes Freeway road reserve. As such, a planning permit **is required** under Clause 42.01 to remove any of this vegetation (that sits within the private freehold land). Impacts from this vegetation removal does not require assessment against the Guidelines and does not trigger offset obligations.

6.4 NOISE ASSESSMENT

A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) was undertaken by ERM (Appendix F), including background noise monitoring in accordance with the Noise Protocol (EPA Victoria, September 2025) to establish project-specific operational noise limits at 134 Noise Sensitive Areas (NSA) located near the Site.

The NIA has considered the lodged Wimpole Battery application that is immediately adjacent to the east of the Project. As a NIA for Wimpole Battery was not available at the time of this assessment to determine its cumulative noise contribution to the NSAs, this assessment has adopted *Publication 1997 Technical guidance: Measuring and analysing industry noise and*

music noise (EPA Victoria, 2021), applying the alternative assessment criteria for multiple industrial premises, specifically those for proposed new industry or extension of existing premises in rural areas.

Two operational scenarios (day and evening/night) were modelled using SoundPLAN v9.1, covering battery units, inverters and transformers. The NIA predicts that operational noise from the Project will comply with all applicable Noise Protocol limits across all periods (day and evening/night), and no specific noise mitigation measures are required.

Compliance with the Noise Protocol noise limits is predicted for the identified NSAs during the day, evening and night periods. In addition, no cumulative noise impacts with the proposed and adjacent BESS (Wimpole Battery) are predicted based on the Project's compliance with Publication 1997 noise limits. As such, no specific noise mitigation measures are required to be implemented.

This assessment has considered GED with respect to the selection of quieter equipment. As a result, margins of compliance of 8 dB and 5 dB are achieved at the worst-affected Noise Sensitive Receptor (NSR) against the Noise Protocol and Publication 1997 noise limits respectively. This approach aligns with the GED under the EP Act, which requires risks to human health and the environment to be minimised so far as reasonably practicable.

6.5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was prepared by Landform Architects (see Appendix G) to assess the potential for visual impacts of the Project.

The LVIA also considered the availability of potential public viewing locations within and around the Project Area. Within the 2.5 km assessment area, the assessment confirms that there are no elevated lookouts, public reserves or formal public vantage points in proximity to the Project Area or north of the Princes Freeway from which the Project would be readily visible. There are likewise no nearby or neighbouring dwellings that would experience direct visual impacts. The closest dwelling, located approximately 650 m to the west, is associated with the Project Area. No visual mitigation measures, such as landscape screening are considered necessary to reduce off-site residential or public views, however an area of landscape screening has been built into the Indicative Development Footprint, to allow for screening if deemed required. All other dwellings in the surrounding area are separated from the Project Area by public roads, vegetation along creek corridors, or are located at distances where existing vegetation provides partial screening or filtered views.

The LVIA included a site assessment from publicly accessible viewpoints identified as having potential visibility of the Project:

1. Cannibal Hill Reserve Southern Lookout
2. Princes Freeway
3. Tonimbuk Road
4. Wimpole Road
5. McConnell Lane

These viewpoints are also shown in Figure 6-1.

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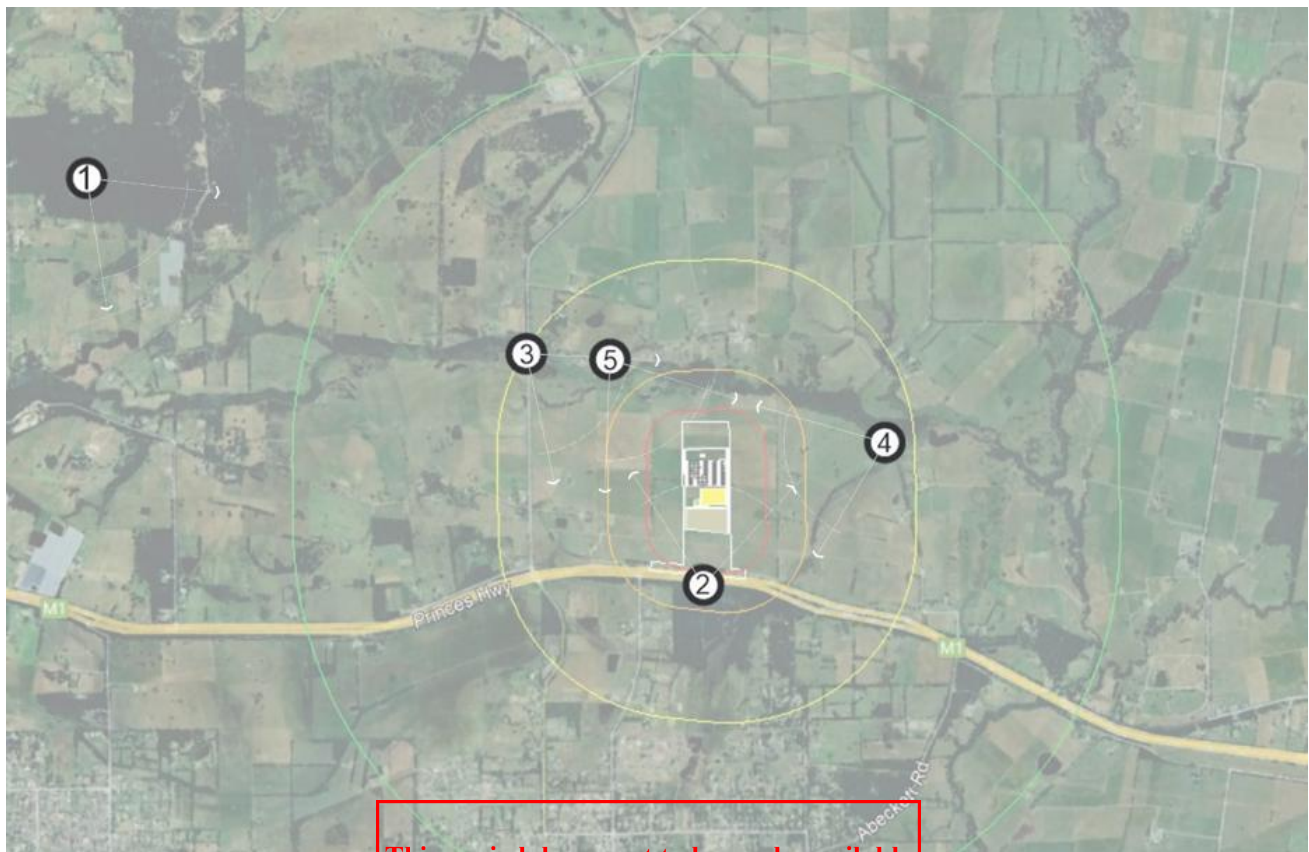


FIGURE 6-1 VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS (LANDFORM ARCHITECTS, 2026)

Across all viewpoints, the overall visual impact ranges from Low to Negligible, with no locations exhibiting a Moderate or High level of impact rating. The Project Area is a low-lying, cleared agricultural landscape already influenced by the presence of the existing 220 kV transmission corridor. As such, the LVIA supports that the ~~copy right~~ project does not display the high-sensitivity landscape characteristics or environmental attributes that the GWZ1 and ESO1 seek to protect.

The results of the visual impact ranges for each viewpoint are provided in Table 6-2.

TABLE 6-2 VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS AND ASSESSED VISUAL IMPACT

Viewpoint ID	Name	Landscape sensitivity	Overall visual impact
1	Cannibal Hill Reserve Southern Lookout	Low / Modified Farmland	Negligible
2	Princes Freeway	Low / Modified Farmland	Low - Negligible
3	Tonimbuk Road	Low / Modified Farmland	Low - Negligible
4	Wimpole Road	Low / Modified Farmland	Low - Negligible
5	McConnell Lane	Low / Modified Farmland	Negligible

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6.6 FLOOD MODELLING ASSESSMENT

A Flood Modelling Assessment for the Project was undertaken by Water Technology (see Appendix H). The assessment indicates that much of the BESS footprint is either flood-free or subject only to shallow sheet flow during flood events.

Within the BESS footprint, predicted flooding is minor, with depths generally less than 0.15 m and flow velocities typically below 0.7 m/s under the 1% AEP event. This represents a low flood hazard environment, with slow-moving overland flow that poses minimal risk to the Project's structures or operations. No riverine flooding is predicted to encroach on the BESS footprint.

The flood modelling completed for the Project has undergone independent review by Melbourne Water as part of early engagement undertaken to confirm that the baseline conditions were appropriate for the Project Area. Although Melbourne Water is not a referral authority for this application (as the Project Area lies outside the LSIO), they reviewed the hydraulic and hydrology modelling and indicated that the baseline flood conditions are satisfactory at this stage of the Project. Their feedback supports the conclusion that the Project is located outside the 1% AEP flood extent of Cannibal Creek and that the predicted shallow, slow-moving overland flow within the BESS footprint presents a low flood hazard environment.

Notwithstanding the low flood risk, in accordance with Clause 14.02-1S (Catchment Planning and Management), the Project is committed to mitigating potential surface water impacts through detailed design informed by a post-development flood impact assessment to be completed prior to construction. This approach will ensure that all identified runoff is appropriately managed, existing overland flow paths are maintained and post-development flood behaviour remains consistent with baseline conditions.

6.7 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

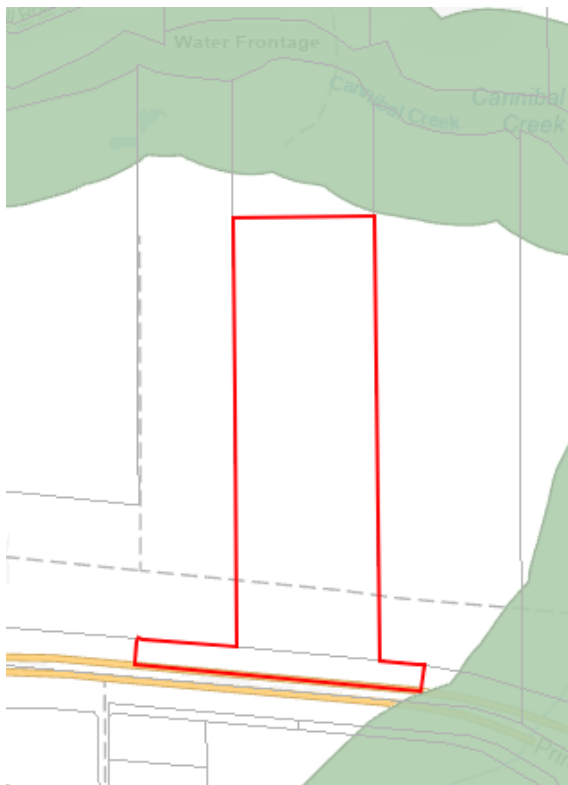
There are no World, National, or local heritage places in the Project Area.

The Project Area is located on land for which the BLCAC is the RAP. The Project Area does not intersect any mapped Aboriginal CHS (Figure 6-2). The nearest mapped area of Aboriginal CHS is associated with the Cannibal Creek, located approximately 10 m from the Project Area and 188 m from the proposed development footprint at its closest point.

Under the AH Act, a CHMP is required where a proposed activity is a high impact activity and is located wholly or partly within an Aboriginal CHS. While the Project constitutes a high impact activity, it does not intersect any Aboriginal CHS. Accordingly, a mandatory CHMP **is not required**.

Noting the above, there is no heritage assessment supporting the application, however a voluntary CHMP (CHMP No. 20711) is currently being prepared in consultation with BLCAC to support best practice heritage risk management. No cultural heritage findings have been identified through the voluntary CHMP's standard and complex assessment processes. Construction and any ground-disturbing works will not commence until the voluntary CHMP is approved.

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FIGURE 6-2 AREAS OF ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SENSITIVITY IN GREEN (VICPLAN)

6.8 AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

An Agricultural Assessment Report has been provided to support the planning application, undertaken by Pinion Advisory (Appendix I). This desktop assessment examines the existing agricultural characteristics of the site and surrounding farming enterprise, including land capability, soils, climate, and hydrogeology, and assesses the potential impacts of introducing a BESS within a Green Wedge Zone context. It considers both on-farm effects (productivity, access to infrastructure, and farm viability) and off-farm impacts (land use conflict risks relating to amenity, environment, and infrastructure), having regard to established principles of agricultural land use planning in Victoria.

The assessment finds that the Project, occupying approximately 17.5 ha of grazing land, will have negligible impact on the ongoing viability and productivity of the farming enterprise. While there is a theoretical reduction in carrying capacity and agricultural income, these impacts can be mitigated through farm management adjustments and are expected to be offset by lease income generated by the Project. Reinvestment of lease income on pasture renovation and infrastructure improvements may lift the productive capacity on the balance of the contiguous and non-contiguous landholdings beyond pre-project levels, such that the net effect of the project on agricultural production at the property scale may be positive rather than neutral. The development will not fragment agricultural land, restrict access to infrastructure, or result in long-term loss of soil productivity, as it is largely reversible beyond the life of the Project. Broader land use conflicts and environmental risks are assessed as acceptable with standard mitigation measures, including to ground water, although further investigation of shallow groundwater conditions is recommended at the detailed design stage.

7. CONCLUSION

The Project represents an appropriate development that is consistent with the objectives of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, the Cardinia Planning Scheme and broader State planning policy.

The Project is a strategically significant utility installation that supports Victoria's transition to a reliable, resilient and low carbon energy system. It directly responds to State policy objectives to facilitate renewable energy infrastructure and electricity storage, improve energy security, and support climate change mitigation and adaptation outcomes. The location of the Project adjacent to the existing 200 kV transmission line reflects appropriate strategic planning, and minimises the need for additional infrastructure.

The Project aligns with policy for developments in the Green Wedge, by accommodating essential infrastructure in a manner that protects agricultural productivity, environmental values, landscape character and cultural heritage, while delivering a clear net community benefit. The Project appropriately balances local land use considerations with broader State policy objectives for renewable energy and climate resilience. The Project has been designed as a low intensity, non-urban use with a confined development footprint, does not introduce urban development pressures, and remains compatible with surrounding rural and farming activities and uses. The use of Class 3 agricultural land is consistent with planning policy, which prioritises the protection of high quality and strategically significant agricultural land, while allowing flexibility for infrastructure uses where impacts are avoided or minimised for Classes of less significance.

Comprehensive technical assessments confirm that potential impacts relating to traffic, bushfire risk, ecology, noise, landscape and visual amenity, flooding, cultural heritage and agriculture have been appropriately assessed and can be managed to acceptable levels through further design refinement and permit conditions. The Project avoids areas of environmental and cultural sensitivity, maintains appropriate setbacks from waterways, and has been designed to minimise visual prominence within a landscape of rural context.

Overall, the Project is considered to be an appropriate development that has carefully considered surrounding sensitivities and values, and will assist in the transition to renewables and net zero to ensure that Victoria meets its renewable energy targets. The Project is therefore considered in alignment with the relevant planning controls and policies as assessed in this planning report.

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