

ARTS Synchronous Condenser – Ararat Terminal Station

Permit No: PA2302154 &
PA2302155



Officer Assessment Report
Development Approvals & Design



Department
of Transport
and Planning

OFFICIAL

Executive Summary



Key Information	Details		
Application No:	PA2302154 (Ararat Rural City) & PA2302155 (Pyrenees Shire)		
Received:	31 March 2023		
Statutory Days:	23		
Applicant:	[REDACTED]		
Planning Scheme:	Ararat Rural City (PA2302154) & Pyrenees Shire (PA2302155)		
Land Address:	<p>PA2302154:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crown Allotment 19B Parish of Eversley - Lot 12 on Title Plan 849291N - Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 525779B - Pyrenees Highway - Landsborough-Elmhurst Road <p>PA2302155:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 702370C - Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 702370C - Lot 36 on Plan of Subdivision 004975 - Lot 37 on Plan of Subdivision 004975 - Lot 39 on Plan of Subdivision 004975 - Crown Allotment 2014 Parish of Eversley 		
Proposal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of land (works) and removal of native vegetation (PA2302154). • Use and development of land for a utility installation (synchronous condenser) with associated work and the removal of native vegetation (PA2302155). 		
Why is the Minister responsible?	Under Clause 72.01-1, the Minister for Planning is the responsible authority for planning permits for the use and development of land for a utility installation used to store electricity if the installed capacity is 1MW or greater.		
Why is a permit required?	Clause	Control	Trigger
Zone:	Clause 35.07	Farming Zone (FZ) (Pyrenees Shire)	Buildings and works associated with a section 2 use (including earthworks)
	Clause 35.06	Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) (Ararat Rural City)	Use of land for a utility installation (synchronous condenser) Buildings and works associated with a section 2 use (including earthworks).
Overlays:	Clause 42.01	Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 2 (ESO2) (Pyrenees Shire)	To carry out works and to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, including dead vegetation.
	Clause 42.01	Environmental Significance Overlay – Schedule 2 (ESO2) (Ararat Rural City)	To carry out works and to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, including dead vegetation.
	Clause 43.02	Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 1 (DDO1) (Pyrenees Shire)	Buildings and works within the Design and Development Overlay.
Particular Provisions:	Clause 52.17	Native Vegetation	To remove, destroy, or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation
Cultural Heritage:	An approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan was provided 8 April 2024, referenced 19193.		
Referral Authorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary to DELWP (s55 Recommending) (PA2302154 & PA2302155) • Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water Authority (s55 Determining) (PA2302154 & PA2302155) 		

- AusNet Transmission Group (s55 Determining) (**PA2302155**)

Public Notice:**PA2302154:**

Notice of the application was undertaken by the Department of Transport and Planning in the following manner:

- Notice of the application under section 52(1)(a) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) was not given to owners and occupiers of all land adjoining the site.
- Notice of the application was given to Ararat Rural City Council under section 52(1)(b) of the Act.
- Notice of the application was given to the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (now DEECA) under section 52(1)(c) of the Act.
- Notice of the application was given to the following organisations under section 52(1)(d) of the Act:
 - Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation.

One submission and no objections have been received as of **24 April 2024**.

PA2302155:

Notice of the application was undertaken by the applicant at the direction of the Minister for Planning in the following manner:

- Notice of the application under section 52(1)(a) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) was given to owners and occupiers of all land adjoining the site.
- Notice of the application was given to Pyrenees Shire Council under section 52(1)(b) of the Act.
- Notice of the application was given to the Secretary to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (now DEECA), Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, and Wimmera Catchment Management Authority under section 52(1)(c) of the Act.
- Notice of the application was given to the following organisations under section 52(1)(d) of the Act:
 - EnergySafe Victoria
 - Country Fire Authority (CFA)

three submissions and no objections have been received as of **24 April 2024**.

Delegates List:

Approval to determine under delegation received on **10 April 2024 (Project Discussion Meeting)**.



Application Process

1. The key milestones in the application process were as follows:

Application lodgement (PA2302154 & PA2302155)	31 March 2023
Further information requested	28 April 2023
Further information satisfied	1 August 2023
Decision Plans	<p>Synchronous Condenser Elmhurst – Native Vegetation Assessment dated May 2023</p> <p>ARTS SynCon – Planning Approvals, Site Context Map, prepared by NGH.</p> <p>ARTS SynCon – Planning Approvals, Key Components Map.</p> <p>Study area and native vegetation, prepared by Nature Advisory.</p> <p>General Layout – Synchronous Condenser Station, prepared by Andritz, drawing number: AU-ARA-P22-010 sheets 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.</p>
Other Assessment Documents	ARTS Synchronous Condenser Elmhurst – Planning report dated June 2023.

2. The subject of this report is the decision plans (as described above) and below:
 - Planning report – ARTS Synchronous Condenser, Elmhurst, Victoria, June 2023
 - Ararat Terminal Station – Synchronous Condenser – Environmental Noise Assessment, March 2022
 - Bush Fire Hazard Assessment – ARTS Synchronous Condenser – March 2023
 - Ararat Synchronous Condenser – Traffic Impact Assessment – March 2023
 - Synchronous Condenser Elmhurst – Native Vegetation Assessment – May 2023
 - ARTS SynCon – Planning Approvals – Prepared by NGH generally known as advertised plans.

Proposal Summary

3. Planning application PA2302154 seeks the development of land (works) and the removal of native vegetation to allow for the construction of the proposed Synchronous Condenser Utility Installation (PA2302154) at the existing Ararat Terminal Station.
4. The extent of native vegetation to be removed within Ararat Rural City is:
 - 0.124 hectares
5. Planning application PA2302155 seeks the use and development of land for a utility installation with associated work and the removal of native vegetation. The application was lodged on 31 March 2023 (concurrently with PA2302154) and is located within Pyrenees Shire.
6. PA2302155 includes an utility installation (synchronous condenser) and associated items, including: control room, coolers, and security fencing.
7. The extent of native vegetation to be removed within Pyrenees Shire is:
 - 0.448 hectares



Figure 1. PA2302154 and PA2302155 works area. Nature Advisory, May 2023.

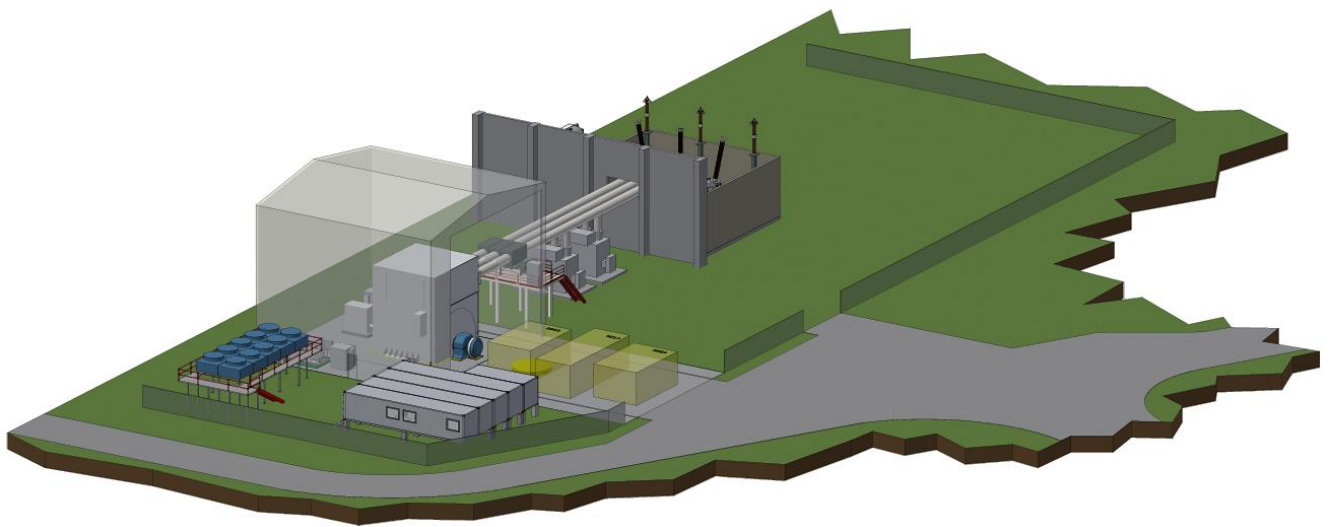


Figure 2. Proposed Synchronous Condenser Render. NGH, May 2023.



Site Description

8. The proposed development (works) and removal of native vegetation (**PA2302154**) are sited on the following lots:
 - Crown Allotment 19B Parish of Eversley
 - Lot 12 on Title Plan 849291N
 - Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 525779B
 - Pyrenees Highway
 - Landsborough-Elmhurst Road
9. The proposed use and development of land for a utility installation with associated work and the removal of native vegetation (**PA2302155**) on the following lots:
 - Lot 1 on Plan of Subdivision 702370C
 - Lot 2 on Plan of Subdivision 702370C
 - Lot 36 on Plan of Subdivision 004975
 - Lot 37 on Plan of Subdivision 004975
 - Lot 39 on Plan of Subdivision 004975
 - Crown Allotment 2014 Parish of Eversley
10. The immediately surrounding land is within the Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) or Farming Zone (FZ) and is generally used for low activities (cropping and grazing) or conserved as a natural environment.
11. The town of Elmhurst is approximately 1.5 kilometres to the south of the subject site. Ararat is located approximately 30 kilometres to the west of the subject site.
12. The Pyrenees Highway which is a Transport Zone 2 (TPZ2) is located to the south,



Figure 3. Affected lots associated with PA2302154 and PA2302155.

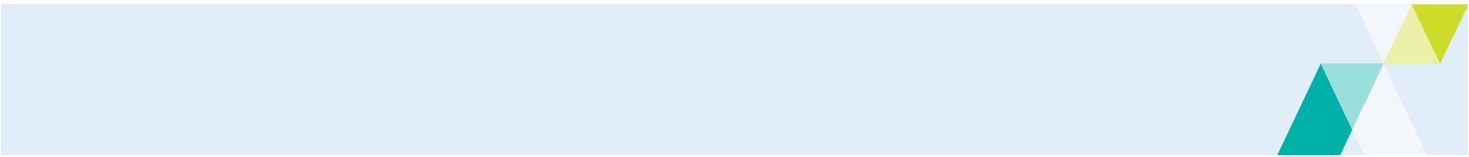


Figure 4. Existing Ararat Terminal Station. DTP Planning Officer, 2023.



Figure 5. Existing Ararat Terminal Station. DTP Planning Officer, 2023.



Municipal Planning Strategy

13. The following objectives and strategies of the Municipal Strategic Statement of the Ararat Rural City and Pyrenees Shire planning schemes are relevant to the proposal:

Clause	Description
02.01	Context
02.02	Vision
02.03	Strategic Directions
02.04	Strategic Framework Plan

Planning Policy Framework

14. The following objectives and strategies of the Planning Policy Framework of the Ararat Rural City and Pyrenees Shire planning schemes are relevant to the proposal:

Clause 12	Environmental and Landscape Values
12.01	Biodiversity
12.03	Water Bodies and Wetlands
12.05	Significant Environments and Landscapes
Clause 13	Environmental Risks and Amenity
13.02	Bushfire
13.04	Soil Degradation
13.05	Noise
13.07	Amenity, Human Health and Safety
Clause 14	Natural Resource Management
14.01	Agriculture
14.02	Water
Clause 15	Built Environment and Heritage
15.01	Built Environment
15.03	Heritage
Clause 18	Transport
18.01	Land Use and Transport
Clause 19	Infrastructure
19.01	Energy

15. The assessment section of this report provides a detailed assessment of the relevant planning policies.



Zoning and Overlays

Clause 35.07 – Farming Zone (FZ) (Ararat Rural City)

16. Pursuant to Clause 35.07 the purpose of the Farming Zone is to:

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

17. It is considered that the proposed works are suitable for the site, noting that it adjacent to the existing terminal station and makes use of existing infrastructure, including the existing access track and road network.

18. It is acknowledged that that the proposal will not enhance agricultural production, it will have near no impacts on the operation and expansion of nearby agricultural uses.

19. The proposal includes the removal of native vegetation. The application has been accompanied by a native vegetation assessment, which includes an avoid, minimise and offset statement. This is expanded on further below.

20. It is considered that the proposal is appropriate in the Farming Zone.

Clause 35.06 – Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ) (Pyrenees Shire)

21. Pursuant to Clause 35.06 the purpose of the Rural Conservation Zone is to:

- *Conserve the values specified in a schedule to this zone.*
- *Protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.*
- *Protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.*
- *Encourage development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality.*
- *Provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area.*
- *Conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non urban landscapes.*

22. The following sections include a discussion of how the proposal responds to these requirements.

23. It is considered that the use and development of land is suitable within the RCZ, as the site is directly adjacent to the existing Ararat Terminal Station, and the proposal will not have any unreasonable impact with adjoining land uses, which are generally low intensity agricultural activities.

24. The proposal includes the removal of native vegetation. The application has been accompanied by a native vegetation assessment, which includes an avoid, minimise and offset statement. This is expanded on further below.

25. The proposal is considered to have limited and acceptable visual amenity and landscape impacts, noting that it is sited immediately adjacent to the existing Ararat Terminal Station in a location without landscape significance.

26. It is considered that the proposal is appropriate in the Rural Conservation Zone.



Clause 42.01 – Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2) (Ararat Rural City)

27. Schedule 2 of the Environmental Significance Overlay relates to Watercourses, Waterbody and Wetland Protection Areas.
28. The following environmental objectives are sought to be achieved:
- *Maintain and enhance the environment – economic and scenic values – and to maintain the integrity of the ecosystems.*
 - *Prevent pollution and increased turbidity of water in natural watercourses.*
 - *Maintain the biological physical and chemical quality and quantity of water within the watercourse, water-body or wetland.*
 - *Maintain the ability of streams and watercourses to carry natural flows.*
 - *Prevent erosion of banks, streambeds and adjoining land and the siltation of watercourses, drains and other features.*
 - *Protect and encourage the long term future of fauna and flora habitats along watercourses.*
 - *Ensure development does not occur on land liable to flooding.*
 - *Prevent waste discharge, nutrients and other pollutants from entering watercourses and water-bodies.*
 - *Prevent increased surface runoff or concentration of surface water runoff leading to erosion or siltation of watercourses.*
 - *Conserve existing wildlife habitats close to natural watercourses and encourage regeneration of riparian and fringing vegetation.*
 - *Minimise the potential damage caused to human life, buildings and property by flood waters.*
 - *Restrict the intensity of use and development of land and to activities which are environmentally sensitive and which are compatible with potential drainage of flood hazards.*
 - *Promote the use and environmental solutions in siting and design in preference to modification of natural systems through technical and engineering measures.*
 - *Minimise the environmental impact on estuarine environments by controls over water releases and sand bar management in line with the established protocols of Wimmera Mallee Water and Southern Rural Water.*
 - *Maintain the natural role of wetlands in filtering nutrients and absorbing soluble pollutants in water. Further loss of wetlands through drainage will be discouraged.*
 - *Protect and ensure the long term future of fauna and flora habitats in wetlands and estuarine areas.*
29. The proposal includes works to include upgrading the existing access track and bridge over the Wimmera River to accommodate oversize vehicles during the construction stage, the values of the watercourse will be protected.
30. The proposal does not seek to alter the watercourse or its bank topography or to change the drainage function of the Wimmera River. It is acknowledged that the removal of native vegetation will occur in the location, there are expected to be limited, if any impacts on water quality or habitat values.
31. Noting that the proposal has been designed to make best use of existing infrastructure/resources and to minimise the extent of works and impacts, the proposal is considered appropriate.

Clause 43.02 – Design and Development Overlay (DDO1) (Pyrenees Shire)

32. Schedule 2 of the Design and Development Overlay relates to potentially flood-prone areas.
33. The following design objectives are sought to be achieved:
- *Define areas of urban and rural land which are known or reasonably suspected to be affected by flooding or drainage problems.*
 - *Provide a discretionary control mechanism for preventing inappropriate development from occurring on land affected by flooding or drainage problems.*
 - *Set design and development parameters which will regulate development and help safeguard life and property, pending the determination of appropriate flood plain management strategies.*

- *Ensure that development maintains the free passage of any likely flood waters and is compatible with local drainage conditions.*

34. Works which occur within the Design and Development Overlay (DDO1) are related to the upgrading of existing sections of access track, with the removal of native vegetation.

35. The works are not expected to have any impacts from, or cause any impacts to, potentially flood-prone areas. The works are minor in nature and only to facilitate the construction of the proposal.

36. It is considered that the proposal is appropriate to the purpose of the DDO1.

Clause 42.01 – Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO2) (Pyrenees Shire)

37. Schedule 2 of the Environmental Significance Overlay relates to watercourse protection.

38. The following environmental objectives are sought to be achieved:

- *Maintain the quality and quantity of water within the watercourse.*
- *Maintain the ability of streams and watercourses to carry natural flows.*
- *Prevent erosion of banks, stream beds and adjoining land and siltation of watercourses, drains and other features.*
- *Protect and encourage the long term future of fauna and flora habitats along watercourses.*
- *Prevent pollution and increased turbidity or water in natural watercourses.*
- *Prevent increased surface run-off or concentration of surface water run-off leading to erosion or siltation of watercourses.*
- *Conserve existing wildlife habitats close to natural watercourses and where appropriate to allow for generation and regeneration of habitats.*
- *Protect the watercourse and its environs as significant natural landscapes.*

39. A planning permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works and to remove, destroy or lop any vegetation, including dead vegetation.

40. The proposal includes works to include upgrading the existing access track and bridge over the Wimmera Rive to accommodate oversize vehicles during the construction stage, the values of the watercourse will be protected.

41. The proposal does not seek to alter the watercourse or its bank topography or to change the drainage function of the Wimmera River. It is acknowledged that the removal of native vegetation will occur in the location, there are expected to be limited, if any impacts on water quality or habitat values.

42. Noting that the proposal has been designed to make best use of existing infrastructure/resources and to minimise the extent of works and impacts, the proposal is considered appropriate.

Particular Provisions

Clause 52.17 Native Vegetation

43. Pursuant to Clause 52.17-1, a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead vegetation. The proposal seeks to remove 0.124ha in Ararat Rural City Council and 0.447ha in Pyrenees Shire Council. Noting that the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action (DEECA) are a recommending referral for applications which fall under the detailed pathway. Given the extent of native vegetation across the two applications the application was referred pursuant to Clause 66.02-2. This is discussed further below.



Referrals

44. The application was referred to the following groups:

Provision / Clause	Organisation	Response and date received
Section 55 Referral – Recommending (PA2302154 & PA2302155)	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (now DEECA).	A response was received 12 May 2023 and provided no objection subject to recommended conditions.
Section 55 Referral – Determining (PA2302154 & PA2302155)	Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water	A response was received 3 May 2023 and provided no objection and no recommended conditions.
Section 55 Referral – Determining (PA2302155)	AusNet Transmission Group	No response has been received as of 23 April 2024.

Notice

45. **PA2302154:** The application is not subject to the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b), (c) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) pursuant to the following provisions:

- It was considered the development of land (works) and removal of native vegetation would not result in any unreasonable detriment to adjoining landowners or occupiers. As such, the application was not notified under section 52(1)(a) of the Act.
- Ararat Rural City Council were provided notice of the application pursuant to section 52(1)(b) of the Act. No response has been received to date.
- The Secretary of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (now DEECA) was provided notice of the application pursuant to section 52(1)(c) of the Act.
- Notice to the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Cooperation was provided pursuant to section 52(1)(d) of the Act.

46. One submission from DEECA dated 18 October 2023 was received and stated no objection to the granting of a planning permit. No further submissions or objections have been received as of 23 April 2024.

47. **PA2302155:** The application is subject to the notice requirements of section 52(1)(a), (b), (c) and (d), the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (the Act) pursuant to the following provisions:

- Adjoining landowners and occupiers were notified of the application under section 52(1)(a) of the Act.
- Pyrenees Shire were provided notice of the application pursuant to section 52(1)(b) of the Act.
- The Secretary of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (now DEECA) were provided notice of the application pursuant to section 52(1)(c) of the Act.
- Notice to EnergySafe, and Country Fire Authority were provided pursuant to section 52(1)(d) of the Act.

48. One submission was received from DEECA Grampians dated 18 October 2023 and stated that they do not object to the granting of a planning permit.



49. One submission was received from Pyrenees Shire dated 16 October 2023. The submission is not considered to be an objection, however, raises noise, wastewater, and general environmental duty as key considerations of the proposal.
50. One submission was received from CFA dated 28 September 2023. The submissions stated no objection to the granting of a planning permit, however provided several recommended conditions.
51. No further submissions or objections have been received as of 29 April 2024.



Key Considerations

53. The following are deemed the key considerations in assessing the acceptability of the proposal:

- General policy context and planning controls
- Potential offsite amenity impacts
- Visual impact and landscaping
- Natural environment and natural systems
- Vehicle access and traffic
- Potential hazards

State and Local Planning Policy Framework

54. **Clause 12.01-1S** and **Clause 12.01-2S** promote the protection and conservation of Victoria's biodiversity to ensure there is no net loss of biodiversity from the removal of native vegetation. The applicant has demonstrated appropriate efforts to avoid and minimise impacts on native vegetation. The proposal appropriately considers **Clause 13.02** (Bushfire) with fire management work undertaken to ensure appropriate outcomes can be achieved and that any risks are avoided or mitigate to protect human life and the environment. A submitted noise report shows that any impacts will be limited and acceptable in accordance with **Clause 13.05**.
55. The proposal is located within rural zones; however the land does not have any productive significance. There will be limited, if any, impacts on the State's agricultural base and surrounding land use will remain compatible for agricultural purposes **Clause 14.01**. The proposal will ensure the protection and conservations of places of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance. The proposal is accompanied by an approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan **Clause 15.03**.
56. The proposal is considered to have limited traffic impacts and utilises the existing road network **Clause 18.01**. The proposal is supported by **Clause 19.01** and its objective to facilitate the appropriate development of energy supply infrastructure.

Buildings and Works

57. The zoning and overlay provisions have been considered above in assessing the application.
58. Works are proposed across several land parcels and road reserves, primarily to upgrade sections of existing access track and to create partial sections of new track to allow oversized movements. This is to facilitate the construction of the synchronous condenser. There are expected to be limited, if any, impacts on water quality or habitat values. The proposal has been designed to make best use of existing infrastructure/resources and to minimise the extent of works and impacts.
59. Noting the existing access track and the extent of works this is considered appropriate.

Noise Impacts

60. The planning application was accompanied by an Environmental Noise Assessment prepared by Marshall Day Acoustics. The findings of the reports found that the existing noise environment is dominated by the existing transformer at the Ararat Terminal Station and that noise from the subject site is typically inaudible at 2123 Lansborough-Elmhurts Road (closest sensitive receptor).
61. The Environmental Noise Assessment outlines the General Environmental Duty (GED) that is applicable to design and operation of the proposal. In accordance with the GED, the risk of harm from noise should be minimised as far as practicable, which means that all practicable measures to reduce noise emissions should be implemented.
62. The predicted noise levels were assessed against the night-time noise limit, as this is the most stringent. Three scenarios were modelled, with the key difference in each relating to the enclosure for the synchronous condenser:



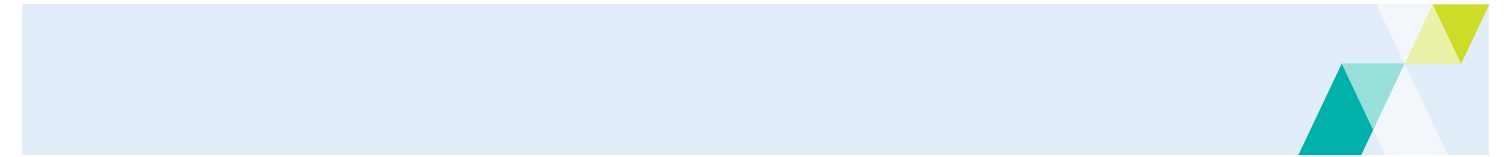
63. Scenario one was modelled with the enclosure doors open. Compliance would not be achieved with the night-time noise limit for both nearby sensitive receptors. This indicated that the synchronous condenser is required to be fully enclosed with the doors closed at night-time, but that the doors could be opened during the day and evening periods.
64. Scenario two was modelled with the enclosure doors closed and with an estimated construction of 0.5mm profiled steel. Compliance was achieved with the night-time noise limit for both nearby sensitive receptors, although compliance for once receiver was marginal, the assessment found that the lack of margin presents a risk of non-compliance if other noises sources are considered or if a +5 dB adjustment for tonality is found to be applicable.
65. Scenario three was modelled with the enclosure doors closed and with an estimated construction of 0.5mm profiled steel and 6mm fibre cement. Compliance was achieved with the night-time noise limit for both nearby sensitive receptors, and the assessment found that compliance would remain if other noise sources are considered or if a +5dB adjustment for tonality is found to be applicable.
66. It is considered that the proposal appropriately demonstrates that it will be able to comply with the relevant noise limits. In all three scenarios the enclosure doors are closed, and there is no scenario where the synchronous condenser would operate with its enclosure doors open during the night-time period.
67. DTP officers support the environmental noise assessment and recommend that a condition requiring the utility installation to comply with the relevant EPA noise publication at all times.

Landscape and Visual Impacts

68. The subject site is sited adjacent to the existing Ararat Terminal Station, as shown in figures 3 and 4. The area is heavily modified by existing energy infrastructure, including high voltage power line which traverse the site. Existing electrical infrastructure within the site has a maximum height of 21 metres.
69. The site and surrounds do not have any landscape value of significance and is located within undulating terrain. Additionally, the closest non-participating dwelling is approximately 1.2 kilometres from the subject site.
70. It is acknowledged that the synchronous condenser is modelled off of a worst-case scenario, which includes a 14-metre-high acoustic shed, to mitigate any unreasonable noise impacts. Noting the existing electrical infrastructure has a maximum height of 21-metres, the proposed acoustic shed will not unreasonably dominate the existing area.
71. The acoustic shed and other buildings will be clad with either galvanised steel or colourbond and finished in a non-reflective, neutral colour, to make the appearance more recessive.
72. Noting the existing and highly modified landscape, DTP officers support the location of the proposed synchronous condenser.

Bushfire Risk Assessment

73. Planning application PA2302155 was accompanied by a Bush Fire Hazard Assessment prepared by Coolburn Fire and Ecology.
74. The assessment identifies that the location of the proposed synchronous condenser facility (and associated infrastructure) requires a bushfire hazard assessment due to the site and surrounding area being mapped as a bushfire prone area.
75. The report found that the site is suitable for development in the context of bushfire risk, the design can achieve bushfire protection measures, and the project would facilitate appropriate ongoing management planning that has the capacity to offer a higher level of protection to the asset and the community.
76. On 28 September 2023, the Country Fire Authority provided a submission following notification of the application pursuant to s52(1)(d) of the Act. The submission provided no objection to the proposal and included several recommended conditions relating to a risk management plan, emergency management plan, and fire management plan.



77. DTP officers support the recommended conditions provided by the CFA and recommend the inclusion of these conditions.

Traffic Considerations

78. The application was accompanied by a Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by Impact dated 23 March 2023.
79. The Traffic Impact Assessment considers the existing access to the site, proposed access and overall movements. Construction of the proposal is anticipated to occur over a period of 12 months.
80. The recommendation of the Traffic Impact Assessment concludes that a detailed Traffic Management Plan is expected to be prepared prior to the commencement of the project to confirm any mitigation measures and management works required. This includes but is not limited to:
- Confirmation of the construction timeframe and work stages.
 - Confirmation of the expected traffic volumes generated by the project for all work stages.
 - Identification of all HV and OD vehicle haulage routes for all work stages.
 - A mechanism to review identified haulage route road conditions prior to the commencement of works.
 - Mechanisms/agreements (if deemed necessary) to maintain haulage route roads and road infrastructure, including local public roads used by site traffic, during construction works and to reinstate roads to at least pre-construction conditions.
 - Qualify any requirement for specific work stage construction traffic management plans.
 - Qualify and identify any relevant mechanisms for OD vehicle permits and traffic management requirements.
81. It is recommended that should a permit be granted a condition requiring a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) to be prepared prior to construction on site.

Native Vegetation Removal

82. Clause 52.17-4 of the Planning Scheme sets out that before deciding an application, the responsible authority must consider the decision guidelines specified in the DELWP document *Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation* ('the Guidelines') as appropriate.
83. The guideline sets out three assessment pathways for applications to remove native vegetation. The relevant pathway will reflect the potential impacts an application may have on biodiversity and is determined from the location and extent of the native vegetation to be removed. The application specific to Ararat Rural City seeks less than 0.5ha of native vegetation, however, the application is associated with PA2302155 which seeks additional vegetation which would exceed over 0.5ha for the two projects. As such, the application was referred to DEECA as a recommending referral authority pursuant to Clause 66.02-2.
84. DEECA provided a referral response dated 12 May 2023 providing no objection to the granting of a permit subject to conditions. DTP Officers support the proposed conditions which relate to offset requirements.
85. The application demonstrates a commitment to avoid and minimise vegetation clearance, where possible. In response to the decision guidelines of Clause 52.17, the Native Vegetation Assessment (prepared by Nature Advisory, dated May 2023) includes an 'Avoid and Minimise Statement' which demonstrated the measures in place to minimise the development footprint.
86. It is not expected that the proposed native vegetation removal will impact significantly or discernibly on water quality (including groundwater quality) waterway and riparian ecosystems or will cause land degradation.
87. The proposed native vegetation removal will have limited impact on existing landscape values and acceptable values will be retained.
88. The proposed vegetation removal is located within an identified area of cultural sensitivity. An approved CHMP includes recommendations for ongoing cultural heritage management of the site.



89. The location of native vegetation removal does not include removal within sensitive wetlands or coastal areas.
90. As per the guidelines pursuant to clause 52.17-4, it is considered that the proposed native vegetation removal is appropriate. It is recommended that the conditions provided by DEECA are included requiring a general offset of 0.032 general habitat units located within the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority boundary or the Ararat municipal area, with a minimum strategic biodiversity of at least 0.362 (**PA2302154**) and a general offset of 0.097 general habitat units located within the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority boundary or the Pyrenees municipal area, with a minimum strategic biodiversity of at least 0.247 (**PA2302155**).



PA2302154:

91. The proposal is generally consistent with the relevant planning policies of the **Ararat Rural City** Planning Scheme and will contribute to the provision of **energy supply** within the **Grampians region**.
92. The proposal is generally supported by the various referral agencies.
93. It is **recommended** that Planning Permit No. **PA2302154** for the **Development of land (works) and removal of native vegetation** be issued subject to conditions.
94. It is **recommended** that the applicant, council, and referral authorities be notified of the above in writing.

PA2302155:

95. The proposal is generally consistent with the relevant planning policies of the **Pyrenees Shire Council** Planning Scheme and will contribute to the provision of **energy supply** within the **Grampians Region**.
96. The proposal is generally supported by the various referral agencies.
97. It is recommended that Planning Permit No. **PA2302155** for the **Use and development of land for a utility installation (synchronous condenser) and removal of native vegetation** be issued subject to conditions.
98. It is **recommended** that the applicant, council, and referral authorities be notified of the above in writing.



Prepared by: [Redacted]

I have considered whether there is a conflict of interest in assessing this application and I have determined that I have:

- No Conflict**
- Conflict and have therefore undertaken the following actions:
 - Completed the **Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form.**
 - Attached the Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form on to the hardcopy file.
 - Attached the Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form into the relevant electronic workspace.

Name: [Redacted]

Title: [Redacted]

Signed: [Redacted]

Phone: [Redacted]

Dated: 29 April 2024

Approved by: [Redacted]

I have considered whether there is a conflict of interest in assessing this application and I have determined that I have:

- No Conflict**
- Conflict and have therefore undertaken the following actions:
 - Completed the **Statutory Planning Services declaration of Conflict/Interest form.**
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Name: [Redacted]

Title: [Redacted]

Signed: [Redacted]

Phone: [Redacted]

Dated: 29 / 4 / 2024