Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the engagement activities undertaken to support the North Yarragon BESS project, to detail topics raised in discussions with stakeholders, and to outline the changes that have been made in response.

2 Engagement Summary

Table 1 provides a summary of the engagement activities conducted to date for the North Yarragon BESS project.

Table 1: Summary of engagement

Stakeholder	Date	Engagement Summary
Landowner	Ongoing	The Proponent maintains regular engagement with the Landowner, providing Proposal updates and coordinating site access, when required.
Baw Baw Shire Council	10/3/2024	Initial Proposal introduction meeting.
	Aug/Sep 2025	The three East Ward councillors from Baw Baw Shire Council were contacted for an introduction to the Proposal, and an invitation was extended for ZEN Energy to facilitate a site walk over with councillors in September 2025.
	3/12/2025	A further in-person briefing on the Proposal was provided to council representatives in Warragul.
Department of Transport and Planning	2/5/2024	Initial Proposal introduction meeting.
	4/4/2025	Follow-up meeting outlining progress and an overview of impact assessments being conducted.
	19/1/2026	Pre-lodgement meeting outlining the prepared application material and seeking feedback prior to DA submission.
Country Fire Authority	20/5/2024	An online Proposal introduction meeting was conducted to discuss the CFA's Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) and implications for the Proposal site.
	17/4/2025	A pre-application meeting was held to introduce the Proposal ahead of future lodgement with DTP.
VicGrid (formerly AEMO Vic)	24/7/2024	Connection enquiry response received.
	25/6/2025	The Project was enrolled in Pre-Application stage with AEMO Vic.
	Ongoing	The Proponent communicates regularly with the VicGrid connection management team regarding the grid connection application process.
	20/9/2024	Introduction meeting was held in Morwell at the GLaWAC office. The meeting introduced the Proposal, the chosen

Stakeholder	Date	Engagement Summary
Registered Aboriginal Party (Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC))		CHMP pathway (complex assessment to be undertaken) and opportunities for partnership between GLaWAC and ZEN Energy.
	17-19/6/2025	Standard and Complex Assessment conducted on site with GLaWAC representatives and Aurecon cultural heritage specialists.
	12/1/2026	CHMP prepared and submitted to GLaWAC for approval.
Direct Neighbours	Jun/Jul 2025	The Proponent first made direct contact with neighbours adjacent to the Proposal Boundary in June and July 2025. Project information has been sent via post to nearby neighbours within 2km of the Project site on 07 July 2025.
	5/8/2025	The Proponent met in-person with interested direct neighbours to discuss the Proposal and provide an opportunity to raise concerns.
	16/9/2025	The Proponent met in-person with all direct neighbours and discussed questions and concerns relating to the Proposal.
	Ongoing	The Proponent continues to discuss the Proposal and responds to questions from neighbours.
Nearby Residents	7/7/2025	A project information brochure has been sent via post to nearby neighbours within 2km of the Project site.
	5/8/2025	The Proponent met with community members that requested in response to the project information brochure.
	17/11/2025	A further brochure containing FAQs was mailed out to residents within 10km of the site, to include the town of Yarragon. This brochure also notified the residents of the upcoming Community Information Day.
Baw Baw Sustainability Network (BBSN)	Sep/Oct 2025	The Proponent engaged with BBSN regarding their planned information sessions on BESS projects. The Proponent provided project information brochures for distribution to BESS session participants.
	Nov 2025	The Proponent provided BBSN with details of the Community Information Day and project FAQ brochure to notify interested members of the event.
Community	23/11/2025	An interview regarding the Proposal was conducted with the Proponent on 3BBR West Gippsland Community Radio.
	1/12/2025	The Proponent held a Community Information Day for the general public at Yarragon Public Hall. Display boards presented the preliminary project layout design and photomontages from various viewpoints. The FAQ brochure was also distributed at the Community Information Day. The Community Information Day was advertised in the Warragul Gazette newspaper, Yarragon Community Newsletter, brochure mail-out to residents within 10km radius, and on social media (Yarragon Community Facebook page and Warragul Community Noticeboard Facebook page).

Stakeholder	Date	Engagement Summary
		Approximately 70 people attended the Community Information Day. There was a protest group consisting of around 25-30 people which attended the event at around 6:00pm. The Proponent representatives spoke with members of the protest group and listened to their concerns.
West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	Mar 2025	Aurecon communicated with WGCMA to confirm that the West Gippsland CMA would not require a pre-application meeting prior to planning documentation being lodged with DTP.

3 Commentary on engagement

Key stakeholders of the North Yarragon BESS (the Proposal) were engaged early, following completion of a preliminary feasibility study on the site and prior to public announcement. These early engaged stakeholders include:

- Baw Baw Shire Council
- Department of Transport and Planning
- Country Fire Authority
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
- West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

These stakeholders provided feedback on the initial project concept which was taken into account in the development of the preliminary layout design and the impact assessments conducted as part of the preparation of the planning application.

Direct neighbours of the Proposal were contacted in June and July of 2025 to notify them of the Proposal and establish a direct line of communication with ZEBRE representatives. Introductions were made over the phone, with a formal letter of introduction and project information brochure sent via email soon after. An initial project brochure was also distributed via AusPost to residents within a 2km of the Proposal on 7 July 2025.

On 5 August 2025 ZEBRE representatives met with interested nearby residents who requested a meeting in response to the initial mailout. ZEBRE representatives also met with all direct neighbours on the Proposal boundary on 16 September 2025.

Following this initial public announcement, a subset of the community in opposition to the Proposal emerged, with an initial petition against the Proposal emerging. The organiser of this petition was contacted directly by the Proponent and invited to meet and discuss the project further however they did not engage.

The Baw Baw Sustainability Network (BBSN) actively engaged with community concerns regarding proposed BESS developments in the Baw Baw Shire Council area. BBSN held community information evenings in late 2025 to discuss proposed BESS developments in the area. The Proponent provided project information brochures for distribution to BESS session participants. The BBSN released their position statement regarding BESS proposals in Baw Baw Shire in October 2025.

The three East Ward councillors from Baw Baw Shire Council were contacted for an introduction to the Proposal, and an invitation was extended for the Proponent to facilitate a site walk over with councillors in September 2025. One of the councillors accepted the offer, however, was unable to attend at the last minute. The Baw Baw Shire Council formally opposed the Proposal during their council meeting on 22 October 2025.

Introduction calls were made to Wayne Farnham's office (State MP for Narracan) to discuss the Proposal in early 2025. There has been no direct response to date. A subsequent petition against BESS development in Baw Baw is being led by Wayne Farnham.

The Proponent held a Community Information Day for the general public at Yarragon Public Hall on Monday 1 December, 2025. A second project information brochure was distributed via post during this week and distributed at the Community Information Day.

ZEBRE received a letter from Cr Kate Wilson (Mayor, Baw Baw Shire Council) on 16 December 2025 expressing Baw Baw Shire Council's position and requesting that ZEBRE representatives meet with their planning department consider alternate project locations. The Proponent accepted the offer with a meeting to be scheduled at the time of writing.

4 Key Topics Raised

Table 2 provides an overview of the matters raised and where the issues are addressed in the planning application or within this summary document. Section 5 provides further detail on specific topics.

Table 2: Overview of matters raised

Category	Community Views	Where addressed
Access road	Concern regarding the access road crossing a watercourse and potential swampy soil making construction of a culvert bridge difficult.	Section 5.7 of this document.
Access road	There may be endangered flora and fauna in the vegetation where the access road watercourse crossing is proposed.	Ecological Impact Assessment
Visual impact	Concerns were raised regarding the visual impact of the facility from neighbouring properties and along the public road.	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Section 5.4 of this document.
Visual impact	Request to keep any excess soil from earthworks on site.	This will be considered in the detailed earthworks design and discussed with the site landowner.
Noise impact	Concern regarding the noise impact on nearby residences due to the operation of the BESS facility.	Operational Noise Impact Assessment
Noise impact	Question on the impact of BESS noise on cattle.	Section 5.5 of this document.
Noise impact	Why is a sound-proof wall not used around the battery site?	Operational Noise Impact Assessment
Fire	Need huge amount of water for firefighting, much more than can be stored onsite.	Bushfire, Hazard and Risk Impact Assessment. Section 5.2 of this document.
Fire	In the event of an extreme fire such as a Black Saturday type event, concerns were raised that BESS units could catch fire due to ember attack or a fire front crossing vegetation adjacent to the Facility.	Section 5.2 of this document.
Fire	If a fire occurs with westerly wind the two access routes from the east may become obscured by smoke and	Section 5.2 of this document.

Category	Community Views	Where addressed
	prevent emergency fire services from reaching the site.	
Fire	Concern that a BESS fire will spread to neighbouring properties and beyond.	Section 5.2 of this document.
Fire	Concern that the project layout does not include an allocated staging area for CFA to use in the event of a BESS fire.	Section 5.2 of this document.
Contamination	Concern that the fire water run-off cannot be contained and prevented from contaminating soil, groundwater or the nearby watercourse.	Section 5.3 of this document.
Contamination	Concern that smoke and particulates could impact on neighbouring dairy farms in the event of a fire within the Facility.	Section 5.3 of this document.
Land use compatibility	Some community members have questioned the siting of a BESS facility on agricultural land with productive soils.	Planning Report Section 5.1 of this document.
Siting	Why is the BESS project proposed for this area and not located in the La Trobe Valley?	Section 5.1 of this document.
Lighting	Direct neighbours have raised concerns regarding 24/7 lighting at the facility.	Section 5.6 of this document.
Property Prices	There have been some claims made that renewable energy projects harm nearby property values.	The Proponent addressed this topic in the Project Brochure with FAQs (see Attachment 1) mailed out in late November 2025 to residents within a 10km radius of the project.
Insurance	A question was raised of whether insurance companies would hike prices or refuse to insure nearby properties.	Project Brochure with FAQs (see Attachment 1).

5 Responses and actions implemented

This section provides further detail on how specific concerns and questions are being addressed by the Proponent.

5.1 Site selection

The Site of the Proposal is along the Hazelwood-Rowville 220kV transmission easement. This easement and the nearby Yallourn-Rowville 220kV easement form part of a common 220kV system connecting the Latrobe Valley to metropolitan Melbourne. Following the retirement of the 1450MW Yallourn W Power Station in 2028, this 220kV system will be under-utilised at a time when there will be a significant need for dispatchable energy to meet peak demand periods. Accordingly, proximity to the Hazelwood-Rowville 220kV easement was one key factor in site selection.

The proposed battery has been deliberately positioned in the rear corner of a private property to minimise visual and noise impacts on neighbouring properties and passing traffic.

A number of community members have asked why the project is not located in the La Trobe Valley where there is existing large energy generation infrastructure. The main reason is the lack of available land area that is suitable for a BESS. Key sites in proximity to existing brown coal power stations are largely held by the remaining generators, are covered by mining lease, state forest or other reserves, are too close to population centres, or require a very large project size to be able to connect to the 500kV system.

The specific site identified to host the Proposal was chosen based on several factors including:

- Proximity to the Hazelwood-Rowville 220kV easement which avoids the need for new overhead easements and generally minimises the requirement for new electrical infrastructure.
- Compared to other sites along this 220kV transmission easement, it provides for relatively larger setback distances to sensitive receivers than most other site options.
- It comprises cleared grazing land predominantly free from native vegetation.

- The proposed development footprint can be accommodated outside of any Bushfire Management Overlay.
- It consists of practical (i.e. relatively flat or gently sloping) terrain suited to construction of a BESS yard, and free from inundation risk.
- Soil quality of the Site has been previously classified by the Victorian Department of Agriculture as moderate (Class 3).
- The risk of significant cultural heritage sites on the development footprint was also assessed as low.
- The remainder of the property will continue to support farming activities, and at the end of the project's life, the land can be returned to agricultural use if desired.

5.2 Fire

5.2.1 Design to minimise fire risk

Throughout the development of the BESS facility layout design, the CFA's Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (which includes BESS facilities) were followed. Key design features that have been implemented in the design include:

- water tanks meeting the specified on-site fire water volume requirement
- dry hydrant system distributed throughout the site
- a conservative Asset Protection Zone width of 20m between battery containers and the vegetation buffer
- 40m setback of from the edge of the Bushfire Management Overlay to the nearest battery container
- access roads to the required CFA specification

The Proponent has engaged with representatives from the CFA headquarters regarding the BESS facility design and implemented changes in the design based on feedback from the CFA representatives. The design changes include:

- Moving the BESS site boundary fence to completely avoid the Bushfire Management Overlay.

- Maintaining compliance with CFA guidelines whilst adding boundary vegetation screening and additional BESS setback distance.

5.2.2 Catastrophic fire events

The North Yarragon BESS site is located in predominantly cleared grazing land, but is approximately 9km south of the heavily forested conservation reserves. During the notorious "Black Saturday" bushfires in 2009 when a lot of the alpine areas of Victoria burnt, the proposed BESS site was subject to ember attack. Through discussions with local residents, it is clear that the event was traumatic for the community. There is a fear of embers from bushfire causing a more catastrophic fire within the BESS facility.

The main components in the BESS facility and their resistance to ember attack has been considered. The external surface of structures and buildings within the BESS facility are steel or metal cladding and have good resistance to ember attack. Exposed ground surfaces within the facility will either be single size aggregate, concrete, bitumen, or crushed gravel, all of which are non-combustible. The battery containers warrant further consideration due to the flammability of the lithium battery chemistry.

The BESS units used in the BESS facility will have an Ingress Protection rating of IP55. This means that the device is not completely dust tight but dust must not enter in sufficient quantity to interfere with normal, safe operation of the unit. The battery cooling system is closed loop and the external fans are used only for the heat exchange and do not allow outside air ingress inside the battery unit. The risk of ember ingress to the BESS unit is considered negligible.

All modern BESS units have thermal insulation (commonly glass fiber insulation) to resist external heat. Some manufacturers have tested to ASTM-E119 (Building Fire Test Method) and achieved an external temperature withstand rating of up to 1050 degrees celsius over 2 hours. Some BESS suppliers use inherently self-extingusing materials (e.g. RTM material with UL94-VO) for battery pack covers.

During the BESS procurement phase for the project, resistance to external fire and ember attack would be stated performance criteria and suppliers would be required to provide technical information and test reports to prove their products are robust enough to be shortlisted or selected.

5.2.3 Site access

Both the main access road and the emergency access road are to the east of the site (off Yarragon-Shady Creek Road). In the event of a fire at the BESS facility, and with a westerly wind, these access paths may become obscured by smoke and prevent emergency fire services from reaching the site.

The Proponent has discussed the site access with representatives from CFA headquarters. CFA has indicated that in the event of a BESS fire where both site access points are unsafe to use, they will seek an alternate emergency access point, for example via the existing AusNet transmission easement access track which continues through to proximity to Darnum Shady Creek Rd.

5.2.4 Staging area

While the project layout does not have a specific staging area, there are various locations around the site that could be suitable for CFA to establish a staging area, depending on the wind direction. For example, the south of the proposed subdivision for any southerly, westerly, or easterly winds, or the adjacent parcel (to the direct east of the proposed subdivision) in the case of northerly winds.

5.3 Contamination

5.3.1 Groundwater and waterways

Questions were raised by nearby residents regarding whether groundwater would be used for the BESS facility, particularly for firefighting. The BESS facility will not use groundwater. Water for firefighting will be brought in via truck and a volume of at least 600kL will be stored on site in tanks.

A conservatively sized detention basin will be constructed to capture surface run off. Fire water run-off would be collected in the detention basin and the contents of this basin can then be tested and disposed of appropriately via carting trucks if need be.

Questions were also raised in relation to the permeability of the BESS facility surfaces and potential for fire water runoff to infiltrate to groundwater.

We have consulted with our engineering and construction partners CPP who has advised that the engineered bench applied to BESS facilities is built to the following:

“

1. *Compaction of the in-situ foundation soils means they are denser that the existing native materials (prior to constructing of the Bench)*

2. *The Bench fill material is also structural graded material that compacts, again to a far denser material than the native soils on the virgin land. Typically, ~ 100% of the Maximuim Dry Density of the quarried Materials.*

3. *The Capping or Pavement layer of 200mm also then provides an even denser layer over the Engineered Bench Fill*

All of the above treatment are in fact designed to produce a durable, and highly impermeable barrier to both water and any potential contaminants on the surface. The surface is also graded to allow for free draining and capture of any surface runoff into a control and contained drainage and retention system.

This is a HIGH priority on any CPP design and is also explained in our Basis of Design Document for Environmental Controls.”

In summary, engineered BESS benches are inherently very low permeability, and with active drainage features to manage all surface water using conservatively sized drainage systems – e.g. see Figure 1 showing installation of conservatively sized drainage systems at ZEBRE’s Templers BESS in South Australia.

We also note that in real incidents such as the Victorian Big Battery Fire, water samples collected under the supervision of CFA were extracted from the catchment and laboratory results from those samples indicated (according to public reports on the incident) that the likelihood of the fire having a material impact on the water was minimal. However, as a precaution, the water was removed from the catchment, via suction trucks.

Figure 1: Drainage system under construction at Templers BESS in South Australia

5.3.2 Smoke, ash and particulate matter

The BESS site is surrounded by active dairies, and some of the neighbours expressed concern about potential for toxic smoke, ash and particulate matter to negatively impact dairy cattle and milk production. A local milk collection company (Burra Foods) have prepared a discussion paper on what they would consider in the event of "catastrophic failure". While “catastrophic failure” is not further defined, it can be inferred from Burra’s paper that such failure refers to confirmed off-site contamination resulting from an incident at the BESS facility. The paper considers the worst-case scenario of a catastrophic failure as a starting point. In the extreme scenario, there is a fear that the farmer’s livelihoods could be impacted.

Specifically, Burra Foods noted that “Burra would not collect milk from surrounding dairy farms if there was a catastrophic failure of a battery farm. Burra would be guided by both the relevant authorities and our own internal evaluation of milk to determine whether acceptable safety, quality and reputational standards are met prior to recommencing collections.” The

paper from Burra Foods also notes several other potential operational impacts of such an event on their dairy collection activities.

In response, ZEBRE notes the likelihood of such catastrophic failure is extremely low, almost to the point of being counterfactual. BESS failure statistics are continually improving as the industry becomes mature. Figure 2 below is from the US Electric Power Research Institute and shows that the chances of a fire globally has dropped to be around 3% in grid scale battery of a size proposed for North Yarragon, and continues to improve – this is a 3% chance of any incident which as per discussion of real case studies below is likely to be a single BESS container or at worst a pair of BESS containers; the chance of a "catastrophic incident" would be significantly lower again.

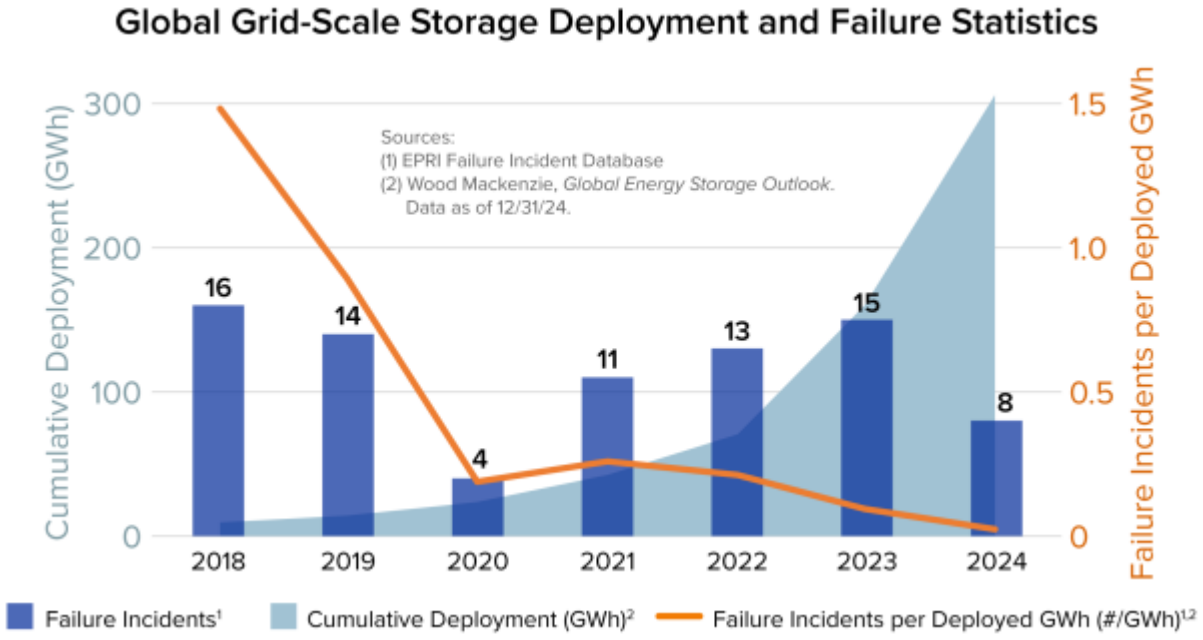


Figure 2: Grid-scale battery storage deployment and failure statistics

At the time of publishing in Yarragon Community Newsletter last November, 36 BESS (>30MW) were in operation in Australia with a further 70 under construction. There have been 2 fire incidents - Tesla's VBB and Bouldercombe BESS projects. VBB used more volatile BESS cell chemistry (Nickel-Manganese-Cobalt) than the more stable Lithium Iron Phosphate as proposed for North Yarragon BESS. Both events were limited to 1-2 battery containers. ZEBRE is not aware of any evidence of off-site contamination, or any impacts on neighbours. Cropping continues adjacent VBB and grazing continues adjacent Bouldercombe BESS. We acknowledge that statistics and case studies alone cannot

alleviate all concern. Community would be much more comfortable with an outright “guarantee”, which cannot be offered. In the extremely unlikely event that an incident did lead to actual contamination or risk of contamination of adjacent pasture, in this unfortunate circumstance ZEBRE notes that major projects such as this are required to hold comprehensive insurance policies. Public Liability cover of minimum AUD $50m is typical.

ZEBRE has sought further advice from our insurance broker on:

1. Latest available BESS failure statistics, including any data on a "catastrophic failure" that would lead to a real risk of contamination or damage of adjacent properties, grazing land, or livestock.

2. How a Project's public liability insurance would actually be managed in the event of potential contamination – to understand the scope of third party costs it would cover (for example whether it would extend to bespoke laboratory testing of milk, soil, vegetation for contamination and any additional compliance obligations imposed on nearby dairies or collectors as a result of an incident)

3. Any case studies of public liability insurance responding to compensate neighbours for impacts/losses following a "catastrophic failure" of a BESS facility, or analogous response of project insurance of other facility types where there result has been contamination of or damage to adjacent properties.

We will report back to neighbours and Burra Foods with further information on these topics as they become available.

5.4 Visual Impact

The project has been strategically positioned in the north-western corner of the property to maximize setback and minimize visibility from surrounding residences and Yarragon–Shady Creek Road.

Visual screening measures, including a vegetation buffer zone, have been provisioned for around the perimeter of the project. Any vegetation planted will comply with CFA guidelines.

Photomontages have been produced for display at Community Information Day and are included in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted as part of the Planning Application.

Implementation of earth berms within the landscape buffer is currently under consideration by the Proponent to further improve visual screening. This would also have the benefit of supporting the retention of topsoil on site.

5.5 Noise

The project has been strategically positioned in the north-western corner of the property to maximize setback and minimise impacts of operational noise for nearby residences. An Operational Noise Impact Assessment has been conducted, including detailed noise modelling of the BESS equipment and on-site background noise measurements. This has demonstrated that the noise emissions from the project are within the statutory limits.

ZEBRE enquired with our noise consultant as to the availability of any method used by acoustics professionals to reliably assess impacts of noise on animals. They noted that there are not extensive studies on animal response to noise, but that it is well reported that livestock generally become conditioned to common/recurring background noises.

ZEBRE has identified several academic and professional papers consistent with this – for example Agile Engineering Consultants of New Zealand (2024) completed a broad scan of all available studies and scientific literature on the topic of impact of noise on dairy and sheep as part of assessment of impact of a new industrial area adjacent to grazing land, with some of their key reported points being that “for noise to result in adverse impacts on livestock, it generally needs to be very loud (>80dB) or very sudden but also relatively unfamiliar. Not all researchers commented on adaptability of livestock to noise, but those that did made it clear that the animals in question could adjust to a continuous loud noise source seemingly in a matter of days even where the noise was nearly 4 times louder (60dBA vs 80 dBA).”

ZEBRE note that predicted noise levels at the site boundary in any operating condition do not exceed 60dB(A).

We note the presence of grazing across Australia (and within Baw Baw shire) adjacent to louder and more varied noise sources, including major highways, other utility scale batteries, thermal power stations, mines, minerals processing plants, and sawmills. A sawmill operates in business hours approximately 1km west of the North Yarragon BESS host site.

5.6 Lighting

Neighbours have asked if the BESS facility will have lighting which illuminates the site throughout the night.

There is no requirement for the site to be illuminated at all times during the night. As such, the only lighting at the BESS facility would be essential safety lighting, which includes motion-activated and entry/exit lights. The site will otherwise remain dark unless scheduled maintenance is taking place, or in the case of an emergency.

5.7 Access Road

A concern has been raised regarding the access road crossing a watercourse and potential swampy soil making construction of a culvert bridge difficult, along with concerns for fauna in the crossing alignment.

This crossing location is proposed as it provides the most logical subdivision arrangement for the project. Furthermore, the subject crossing location has been historically cleared on multiple occasions for fenceline installation and maintenance. This has required heavy machinery (bulldozer) to cross through this terrain for initial crossing construction purposes. Figure 3 below shows the cleared section of fenceline at year 2010.

Figure 3: Satellite image from 2010 showing cleared section of watercourse along the fenceline

The present condition of the regrowth vegetation at the crossing location is relatively degraded, with understory of exotic invasives such as scotch thistle, blackberry – refer to the Ecological Impact Assessment for further details.

The design adopted for a road crossing of the intermittent watercourse at this location would be so as to not impede flow compared to present conditions – a multiple box culvert design would achieve this objective (e.g. as per Figure 4 below). Piles may be required as part of this solution – requirements would be confirmed at detailed design stage.

Construction at this location is considered no more onerous than at many other constructed crossing locations along this tributary of Shady Creek or Shady Creek proper.

Figure 4: Multiple box culvert design

6 Further actions

The Proponent is committed to continuing engagement with the community and stakeholders throughout the development of the project. Further actions that will be taken as part of this ongoing engagement include:

- Regular engagement with neighbours and Baw Baw Shire Council
- At suitable intervals, distribute project update brochures
- Provision of more technical information on BESS product to neighbours and related stakeholders (e.g. Burra Foods) so they are better informed about the robustness of BESS product and implausibility of the “catastrophic” scenarios that are of greatest concern to them.
- Seek more detailed feedback from insurers on incident statistics, management of public liability claims and extent of cover following a hypothetical catastrophic event.
- Consider to explore suitability of earthen berms to further reduce visibility of the Facility
- During the BESS procurement phase for the project, ensure that resistance to external fire and ember attack would be stated performance criteria and suppliers would be required to provide technical information and test reports to prove their products are robust enough to be shortlisted or selected.

Attachment 1 - Project Information & FAQ Brochure (November 2025)

What happens if there was a fire?

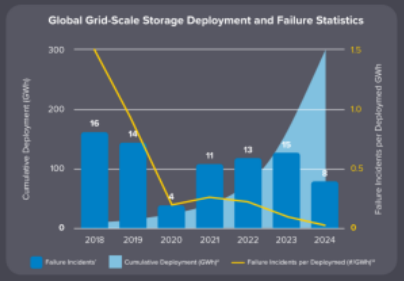
Fires in modern grid scale batteries are rare. There are currently 36 operating grid scale (over 30 Megawatts) batteries in Australia and a further 70 under construction. Two have had fires to date – the Victorian Big Battery at Moorabool, Victoria and the Bouldercombe BESS in central Queensland. Both fires were contained on site and the safety and design measures in place ensured no contamination or spread of fire occurred.

Across the world, the cases and rate of failure of grid scale batteries have reduced dramatically as lessons were learnt from the early, less mature phase of the industry. Materials and technology involved are more advanced and incorporate improved fire detection and protection measures.

The figure below is from the US Electric Power Research Institute and shows that the chances of a fire globally has dropped to be around 3% in grid scale batteries and continues to improve.

Importantly, fires that have happened have been in 1-2 battery containers, not across an entire project. This was the case for the two fires in Australia.

What occurred at the Victorian Big Battery at Moorabool in 2021 has been published by Tesla (the battery manufacturer), by Neoen (project developer and owner), and by the Country Fire Authority (CFA). Links to these reports are provided at the end of this paper.



Some key facts from the Victorian Big Battery fire:

- Fire started in one battery container and spread to a second, adjacent battery container. The CFA applied cooling water around, not on, the fire and it self-extinguished after approx. 6 hours. The CFA then monitored for a further 2-3 days.
- Cooling of the surrounding area and infrastructure remains the strategy of the CFA with any future battery fire in regional Victoria.
- The Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) deployed two mobile air quality monitors within 2km of the fire site. Data collected two hours after the fire found the surrounding air quality was "good" and no long-lasting air quality concerns arose.
- During the fire, the CFA and project staff-controlled water run-off from fire hoses into a detention basin. Lab testing of water samples collected under CFA supervision found minimal impact of the fire on water quality.
- As an additional precaution, water collected was removed and treated at a specialist facility.

Why use lithium-ion batteries?

Globally, lithium-ion batteries have become the cornerstone of energy storage in consumer goods, household appliances, electric vehicles and stationary energy battery storage. This is due to the combination of safety, performance and cost effectiveness.

Grid-scale batteries use a lithium-ion cell type known as Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) because it offers superior safety and reduced fire risk compared to other cell chemistries. By comparison, LFP makes up less than half the EV battery market where performance is rated as more important relative to safety.

Our proposed project will use this very stable option of LFP, unless a better option becomes commercially available. Another key feature of LFP is that it doesn't release oxygen or "offgas' which can accelerate a fire.

The Moorabool fire occurred in different, more volatile "NMC" lithium-ion chemistry batteries.

Will the project negatively impact the landscape?

If approved, this project will be located 7.5km out of Yarragon and on a back paddock, set back away from Shady Creek Rd and surrounding residences. We are preparing designs with screening options to reduce visibility of the project.

A battery would be a new type of development in the area, but to keep this in perspective: there are farming sheds, other buildings and commercial operations nearby that are larger than the equipment involved in this project.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was undertaken to identify any potential adverse impacts and found there would be a very low impact to the surrounding landscape.

The project will be set back 30m from neighbours' fences. This includes a 10m vegetation buffer and then a further 20m: a total of 1.12ha or 3 acres of buffer area.

An Ecological Impact Assessment has been undertaken and only 0.1 acres of vegetation needs to be removed. This vegetation has been identified as non-threatened native species and offsets will be conducted in line with regulations.

Preliminary investigations have identified that no native fauna or their habitats are threatened by the proposed project.

Will the project undermine property values?

No. There have been some claims made that renewable energy projects harm nearby property values, but there is no credible evidence to support them.

In fact, a 2022 study by Colliers, one of the largest real estate companies in Australia and worldwide, found that median property prices in six NSW and Victorian local government areas with major renewable projects increased by between 35-51% over five years.

These results show how renewable energy projects can lead to population growth, wage price growth, lower local unemployment and higher rental yields, all of which is good news for local property values.

What lighting will be used?

The only lighting involved would be essential safety lighting, which includes motion-activated and entry and exit lights. The site will otherwise remain dark unless scheduled maintenance is taking place, in which case temporary lighting may be used.

Will insurance companies hike prices or refuse to insure nearby properties?

No. The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) has stated that insurers do not have specific concerns related to neighbouring clean energy infrastructure.

At the time of writing, the ICA is not aware of any instances where its members have been unable to provide insurance or have increased premiums because of a farm (or other type of neighbouring property) hosting energy infrastructure.

Increases to premiums are unlikely to be related to clean energy projects. If you live in Australia – whether you're directly exposed to extreme weather impacts or not – insurance premiums are rising because of the escalating costs of natural disasters, increasing value of homes and vehicles, inflation pushing up building and vehicle repair costs and the increasing cost of doing business for insurers.

With climate change fuelling more frequent and severe weather events, transitioning to a low emission clean energy system is a critical part of reducing climate related risks.

Will the project use groundwater?

No – the project will not draw from groundwater. Water for fire-fighting will be brought in and stored on site.

What happens at the end of a BESS project life?

Grid scale batteries typically operate for 25 to 30 years. At the end of this period, the project may either be extended through the replacement and upgrade of key equipment, or it may be decommissioned.

Decommissioning involves the safe removal of battery units from the site, with recycling processes carried out off-site. The future use of the land is then determined, and if rehabilitation is chosen, the site can be restored to its original condition.

Reliable information sources:

Property values & insurance

1. *Clean Energy Council: Search 'consumer fact sheets' or use: https://cleanenergycouncil.org.au/for-consumers/fact-sheets/impacts-and-benefits-to-consumers-get-the-facts/public-liability-insurance-landholder-protection*
2. *Insurance Council of Australia: Search 'farm insurance' or use: https://insurancecouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Updated-ICA_Briefing_Farm-Insurance-and-Energy-Infrastructure_May-2024.pdf*
3. *Energy Fact Check: Search 'property values' or use: https://energyfactcheck.com.au/2025/07/18/do-large-scale-renewable-energy-projects-reduce-nearby-property-values-or-increase-insurance-premiums/*
4. *https://www.prd.com.au/ research-hub/article/renewable-energy-property-market-report/*

Fire safety

4. *Victorian Country Fire Authority: Search 'renewable energy fire safety' or use: https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/renewable-energy-fire-safety Also: https://news.cfa.vic.gov.au/news/responding-to-emergencies-at-renewable-energy-facilities*
5. *Moorabool battery fire: Search 'Moorabool battery fire independent report' or use: https://victorianbigbattery.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/VBB-Fire-Independent-Report-of-Technical-Findings.pdf*

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ZEBRE PROJECT
NORTH YARRAGON

ZEBRE's Templers battery project next to farmland north of Adelaide.

Renewable energy battery storage

Get accurate information

A joint venture between ZENENERGY | HDRE

ZEBRE PROJECT

NORTH YARRAGON

The North Yarragon battery project is a proposed 210-megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS), situated on a private property 7.5km north of Yarragon. If approved, the battery could supply power on-demand to approximately 66,000 homes and businesses across the region for up to 8 continuous hours.

Despite projects like this having to comply with mature regulations in Victoria, we acknowledge and respect that some people have concerns and are wary of new development. This information is the latest available, it is factual and is intended to enable you to form your own opinion.

Who is proposing this and where is it?

The project is a joint venture between ZEN Energy, Australia's first energy company to commit to science-based targets to limit climate damage, and HD Renewable Energy (HDRE), a Taiwan stock exchange-listed company.

The project site is a paddock used for grazing, at the rear of a property off Yarragon-Shady Creek Rd. The landowner agreed to the project once they were satisfied it would not negatively impact neighbouring properties or the surrounding environment. They also intend to remain living on the property.

Where is it up to?

There is a long and detailed process of planning, investigation and study, design and approvals milestones involved in a project like this.

This is important and necessary as we would not seek planning approval if there was evidence the project would cause significant damage to the environment and disruption to the community. This is both responsible and a good business decision.

We have commissioned environmental and technical studies, and the results will form a Planning Permit Application that will be submitted to the state government before the end of 2025. Baw Baw Shire Council was briefed on the project in April 2024 and we will be further briefing staff and elected officials in early December (2025). Council will assess and provide advice on the project.

Why this area and why now?

The project site is next to existing high-voltage transmission infrastructure that has available capacity for additional energy. This means no new transmission lines are needed.

The proposed battery has been deliberately positioned in the rear corner of a private property to minimise visual and noise impacts on neighbouring properties and passing traffic.

So why not further down the valley? Put simply, all available space is taken, but the demand for more energy continues to grow. Key sites in proximity to existing brown coal power stations are largely held by the remaining generators, are covered by mining lease, state forest or other reserves, are too close to population centres, or require a very large project size to be able to connect to the 500kV system.

The remainder of the property will continue to support farming activities, and at the end of the project's life, the land can be returned to agricultural use if desired.

How does the local community benefit?

We will prioritise contracts for local businesses during construction and we have made a commitment to jobs for locals as well. Approximately 80-100 construction related jobs will be available.

Workers and businesses supplying the project increases activity locally and this stimulates spending at other businesses as well.

Projects like this are consistent with Baw Baw Shire Council's Economic Strategy, which seeks to diversify local industry and support its major industries: 1. construction, 2. manufacturing, 3. agriculture.

We wish to make a long-term contribution to the community through funding a Community Benefit Scheme. Depending on what may be finally approved, we will allocate between $126,000 and $252,000 per year for the life of the project. This is based on government guidelines.

It is not for us to decide how those funds are spent. Instead, the funds are for priorities that locals decide. We will work with whatever decision-making process locals wish to put in place.

What say do locals have over the project?

If this project is to be good for the community, then it must be shaped by the community. That means taking into account feedback to design the project, decide how the construction phase should be managed, how to support local businesses, as well as determine how community funding is distributed and shape other key elements.

We started this about a year ago when we first engaged with Baw Baw Shire Council, as well as local and state agencies that will review and advise us throughout the planning process. In the past six months we began meeting neighbours of the project site and we also sent other local residents introductory information and an invitation to discuss the project further.

We are now at the stage where we have the results of initial studies and enough details of a project design to be able to submit a Planning Permit Application to the state government and seek local council's advice and feedback.

This also means we now have enough detail to be able to answer the many questions you have raised in recent weeks and months.

There remains a long way to go on a project like this. There will be ongoing consultation with neighbours, local residences and businesses, Traditional Owners, and industry groups.

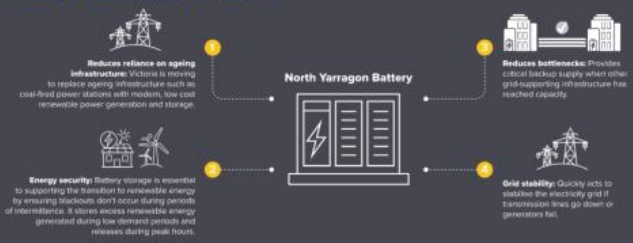
How will risks be managed?

No project or development is free of risk and that is why there is plenty of work still to do, but the first studies have established that the project:

- Is consistent with Baw Baw Shire Council's Planning Scheme.
- Meets the requirements of Victoria's planning and environmental policies.
- Complies with the Country Fire Authority (CFA) guidelines and no potential hazards were found to pose a significant risk.
- Will cause no significant damage to the natural environment, or to Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Will not cause major disruption to local traffic.
- Will not have a detrimental impact on the landscape, visually or noise levels.

Discussions with neighbours are being taken into account in the design of the project, and we will continue to take steps to provide accurate and transparent information to the community.

Securing Victorian Energy Supplies



What's a battery energy storage system (BESS)?

A BESS is a grid scale battery, carefully managed version of a household battery that you are likely already familiar with. It stores excess, or unused, energy from within the electricity system to be returned back into the electricity system on-demand to households and businesses when there's not enough power available otherwise. This often occurs in the evenings and when it's hot or cold and demand for power is high.

A BESS also has an important role to play in providing stability to the electricity system. They can provide power in a fraction of a second when there is a disruption to the electricity system (for example such as another power station being disconnected without warning, or Victoria's connection to another state being damaged as happened in 2020 when severe storms in western Victoria damaged transmission towers.

How can it be made safe?

Every development involves safety risks. Energy developments involve electricity and materials that if not carefully managed can cause harm, so that is why there are multiple regulations to meet and safety measures to include in the project design.

Before this project could be approved, we must:

1. Satisfy the Country Fire Authority (CFA) that the project is safe and complies with its guidelines. These include fire safety, risk and emergency management for designing, constructing and operating renewable energy projects.
2. Store appropriate volumes of firefighting water onsite as per the CFA guidelines. This water will be carted into site and will not draw from mains or bore water.
3. Use non-combustible site surfaces with fire protection systems that are compliant with Australian Standards This also includes fire hydrant installations.
4. Use battery storage units and designs that comply with Dangerous Goods (storage and handling) Regulations as part of Victoria's Electricity Safety Act 1998, and Energy Safe Victoria's (ESV) safety standard regulations.
5. Ensure the project site includes physical barriers to prevent the highly unlikely event of contaminated surface run off from passing into neighbouring properties and creeks.
6. Include fire-break areas between any vegetation or Bushfire Management Overlay and ensure access for fire fighting vehicles and equipment.
7. Include a detention basin designed to be an effective physical barrier as well as large enough to capture any significant site runoff — including firefighting water — to prevent contamination of neighbouring properties or creeks and allow for safe disposal.