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Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

Hazelwood East BESS

19-May-2026
Hazelwood East BESS

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Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

Hazelwood East BESS

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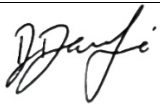
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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Abbreviations and glossary of terms	1
1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Project Description	3
2.1 Project overview	3
2.2 Site context	3
2.3 Project construction	5
2.3.1 Key construction activities	5
2.4 Operation	6
2.5 Decommissioning	6
3.0 Assessment Methodology	7
3.1 Contextual analysis	7
3.1.1 Desktop analysis	7
3.1.2 Site inspection	7
3.1.3 Study area	8
3.1.4 Landscape character zones	8
3.2 Impact assessment	8
3.2.1 Landscape character impact assessment	8
3.2.2 Visual impact assessment	9
3.2.3 Photographs and photomontages	10
3.3 Mitigation and management measures	10
3.4 Limitations, uncertainties and assumptions	11
4.0 Existing Environment	12
4.1 Legislation, policies, guidelines and standards	12
4.2 Regional context	13
4.3 Local context	15
4.4 Topography and hydrology	16
4.5 Land use zoning	17
4.6 Vegetation	19
4.7 Heritage	20
4.7.1 Aboriginal cultural heritage	20
4.7.2 Non-Aboriginal heritage	20
4.8 Landscape character zones	22
4.8.1 LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture	23
4.8.2 LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure	24
4.8.3 LCZ 3: Environmental Living	24
4.8.4 LCZ 4: Residential	25
5.0 Landscape Impact Assessment	27
5.1 Assessment of operational impacts	27
5.1.1 LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture	27
5.1.2 LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure	28
5.1.3 LCZ 3: Environmental Living	29
5.1.4 LCZ 4: Residential	29
6.0 Visual Impact Assessment	31
6.1 Visibility of the Project	31
6.2 Representative viewpoints	31
6.3 Visual impact assessment at operation	33
6.3.1 Viewpoint 01: Church Road west	33
6.3.2 Viewpoint 02: Hazelwood North community facilities	34
6.3.3 Viewpoint 03: Central Hazelwood Road	37
6.3.4 Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road	40
6.3.5 Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek	42
6.3.6 Viewpoint 06: Tramway Road	44
6.4 Visual impact assessment during construction	46
6.5 Decommissioning phase	47

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7.0	Assessment of Cumulative Impacts	49
8.0	Recommended Mitigation Measures	51
9.0	Conclusion	52
10.0	References	54

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Executive Summary

Overview

Voyager Renewables Pty Ltd is proposing to develop, construct and operate a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of approximately 500 MW/ 2,000 MWh capacity, at 545 Tramway Road, Hazelwood North. The Hazelwood East BESS (the Project) would connect to Hazelwood Terminal Station on the adjacent site and would comprise a containerised BESS, underground cable connection to the Hazelwood Terminal Station, and key auxiliary infrastructure to support operations and maintenance.

The purpose of this Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LCVIA) report is to assess the potential landscape character and visual impacts associated with the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project to inform the preparation of the planning permit required for the Project.

Existing environment

The Hazelwood East BESS is located within the Latrobe Valley, a landscape shaped by long-term agricultural clearing and use and energy generation infrastructure. The site and surrounding landscape comprise open grazing land with limited remnant vegetation, intersected by drainage corridors and high-voltage transmission infrastructure associated with the Hazelwood Terminal Station and surrounding energy precinct. Gently undulating topography and sparse vegetation cover result in generally open views, although intermittent bands of trees along roads, waterways and property boundaries provide some visual screening. The surrounding landscape character reflects a combination of rural agricultural land uses and electrical infrastructure, establishing a modified landscape in which large-scale infrastructure is already evident.

Landscape character impact assessment key findings

Four Landscape Character Zones (LCZs) were identified within the study area from which to assess the Project's impact on landscape character, comprising LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture; LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure; LCZ 3: Environmental Living; and LCZ 4: Residential. The Hazelwood East BESS is located predominantly within LCZ 1, with the connection to the Hazelwood Terminal Station situated within the adjoining LCZ 2.

LCZ 1 would experience the greatest degree of change, with an increase in electrical infrastructure within the rural agricultural landscape. However, due to the highly modified and functional nature of this LCZ and existing high-voltage transmission lines through the LCZ, the landscape character impact rating has been assigned as moderate (adverse). LCZ 2 is considered to have a low impact with the proposed change, being the removal of a small portion of vegetation to allow for the underground connection. Environmental Living (LCZ 3) and Residential (LCZ 4) areas would remain unaffected, with no interface with the Project site boundary. Overall, the Project is considered to have a **low (adverse)** effect on landscape character within the study area.

Visual impact assessment key findings

While potential visibility from the surrounding landscape would theoretically be high due to the large open lots and expansive tracts of cleared land with limited vegetation cover, the gently undulating topography, together with intermittent bands and stands of vegetation provide a degree of visual buffering. This would screen views from many surrounding residences and road corridors, with separation distances from homesteads further reducing visual impact.

Overall, a relatively low number of visual receptors would experience views of the Project at any given time from surrounding residences or along local road corridors. The highest concentration of potential visual receptors would be associated with users of Tramway Road, which includes sections of roadway with limited vegetation buffering in proximity to the Project.

Beyond the immediate road corridor and more distant properties, the Project is not expected to be visually prominent within the broader landscape.

Six viewpoints were selected to assess the visual impact of the Project, located at publicly accessible locations surrounding the site. The Project would introduce additional electrical infrastructure into existing views, resulting in an increase in visually prominent, utilitarian elements within the open agricultural landscape. However, most sensitive receptors would experience views from distances

greater than approximately 1.1 km, within a landscape already characterised by the adjacent Hazelwood Terminal Station and high-voltage transmission lines that traverse and define the wider visual context. Overall, the visual impact due to the Project is considered to be **moderate (adverse)** prior to mitigation.

It is noted that while the Project would have a moderate impact on views from the local surrounding area, no long distance views to the Project were identified, nor any views from particularly sensitive locations such as places associated with tourism, heightened cultural values or recreational importance (such as the Strzelecki Ranges or other identified regionally important locations).

The visual impact of the Project during construction is assessed as **high to moderate (adverse)** due to the introduction of large-scale construction equipment and activities into a predominantly rural, open pasture landscape, resulting in visual clutter visible from surrounding properties. The Project would be most visually prominent during the construction period, given that all the visible elements seen at operation would be present but seen in conjunction with the visual clutter of construction activity. However, it is noted that the construction period is temporary and the impact would reduce at operation.

Mitigation of impact

While no mitigation measures to particularly reduce operational visual impacts from any one location have been identified as no viewpoints have resulted in a significant impact rating (being high or high to moderate), a series of mitigation measures has been recommended, including recommendations on selection of materials and colour of infrastructure, lighting controls and the preparation of a landscape plan.

The implementation of measures recommended to mitigate Project impacts on landscape character and visual amenity would further reduce the impact of the Project over time, particularly if planting was implemented to reduce the visual prominence of Project infrastructure.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the overall Project impact on landscape character and visual amenity are expected to be acceptable and manageable and consistent with the evolving energy infrastructure character of the Latrobe Valley.

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Abbreviations and glossary of terms

Table 1-1 Abbreviations and Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
AECOM	AECOM Australia Pty Ltd
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
D	Depth (meters)
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EVC	Ecological Vegetation Class
H	Height (meters)
HV	High Voltage
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
km	Kilometre / kilometre
kV	Kilovolt
L	Length (meters)
LCZ	Landscape Character Zone
LCVIA	Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment
m	Metre / metres
MV	Medium Voltage
MVA	Megavolt-Ampere
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt-hour
NEM	National Electricity Market
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OEMP	Operation Environmental Management Plan
PCS	Power Conversion System
POC	Point of Connection
T	Tonnes
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
Voyager	Voyager Renewables Pty Ltd

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1.0 Introduction

Voyager Renewables Pty Ltd (Voyager) is proposing to develop, construct and operate the Hazelwood East Battery Energy Storage System (BESS, hereafter 'the Project') in response to significant changes in Australia's energy market and policy settings, including the rapid growth of variable renewable energy generation and the progressive retirement of coal-fired power stations. Large-scale battery storage presents an opportunity to enhance grid flexibility and reliability by enabling renewable energy to be stored and dispatched when it is most needed, supporting the ongoing transition of Victoria's energy system.

Hazelwood East is strategically located within the Latrobe Valley, a region with established electricity infrastructure and a long history of energy generation. The proposed Project would leverage existing transmission capacity associated with the former Hazelwood Power Station, reducing the need for new transmission lines. This development approach minimises potential environmental impacts and supports the continued evolution of the Latrobe Valley as a key energy precinct.

Voyager's objective for the Project is to provide large-scale energy storage that supports grid stability during periods of peak demand. The facility would store excess electricity generated from renewable sources, such as wind and solar, and dispatch this energy when demand exceeds supply or when generation is constrained. In doing so, the Project would contribute to the reliability of Victoria's energy grid and support local economic outcomes through construction employment and supplier engagement, while continuing the area's legacy as a critical contributor to Victoria's electricity supply.

The purpose of this Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LCVIA) report is to assess the potential landscape character and visual amenity impacts associated with the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project to inform the preparation of the planning permit required for the Project.

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2.0 Project Description

2.1 Project overview

Voyager Renewables Pty Ltd (Voyager) is proposing to develop, construct and operate a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of approximately 500 MW/ 2,000 MWh capacity, at 545 Tramway Road, Hazelwood North. The Hazelwood East BESS (the Project) would connect to Hazelwood Terminal Station on the adjacent site and would comprise a BESS to store excess energy from the grid during periods of low demand, releasing it back to the grid during high demand periods.

The project includes the construction, operation, and maintenance of a BESS with a 500 MW maximum power output capacity with 4-hour duration (i.e. 2,000 MWh) and associated infrastructure.

The BESS will consist of:

- Approximately 432 containerised battery units and approximately 144 inverters and two main power transformers to step up from 33 kV to 500kV
- 33kV underground cable connection from the battery units to the project collector substation
- A project collector substation comprising 33 kV switchgear, main power transformers, protection and control systems, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear (including switchyard) and associated harmonic filtering equipment
- 500 kV underground cable connection from the electrical substation to the Hazelwood Terminal Station (Point of Connection), including underground cables crossing Tramway Road.
- Operations and maintenance (O&M) compound including O&M building, amenities, car parking sufficient for employees and contractors during operation
- Stormwater management infrastructure, firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants and internal access tracks.
- Upgrades to existing, and construction of new access track and crossover from Tramway Road.
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping.

2.2 Site context

The site is approximately 4.2 kilometres south of Morwell and 1.5 kilometres north of Churchill, within the City of Latrobe local government area (LGA). The site is approximately 140.23 hectares and is primarily used for grazing within the Farming Zone (FZ). The Hazelwood Terminal Station is located in the western part of the site boundary. Surrounding areas include Jeeralang Power Station and Wooreen BESS to the west and farmland with rural properties to the north, east and south.

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Figure 2-1 Site boundary and indicative site layout

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2.3 Project construction

The Project will move through various phases during construction. Figure 2-2 highlights what these different phases will be and the key activities within each phase.

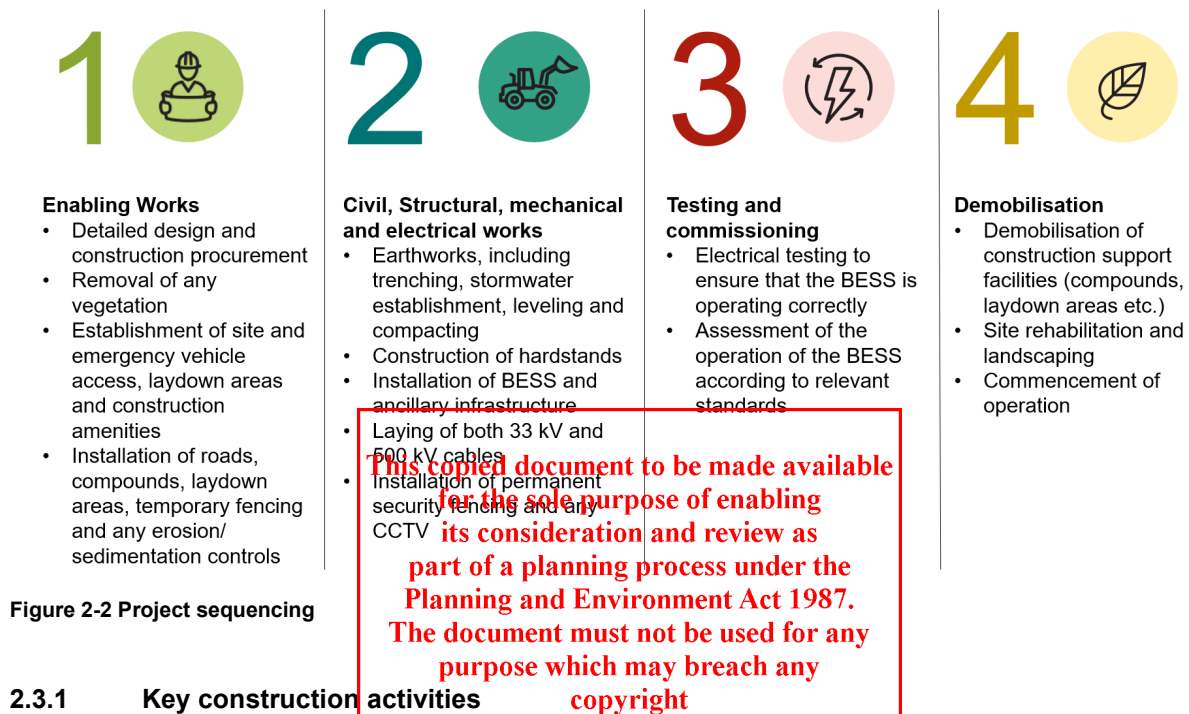


Figure 2-2 Project sequencing

2.3.1 Key construction activities

The key construction activities proposed for the Project, together with indicative descriptions and timeframes, are summarised in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1 Key construction activities

Component	Indicative description and timeframes
Enabling works	• Site establishment works including land clearance, upgrade or installation of access tracks and construction of hardstand areas. • Create a laydown and construction compound approximately 120m x 410m to the north of the project site. • Earth grid typically not below 1m in depth around the entire equipment area. • A combination of trenching and Horizontal Directional Drilling for the underground cable will be to a depth of 1.5m • Construction of site facilities for staff (temporary and permanent).
Civil, structural, mechanical and electrical works	• Civil works: benching within the Project site boundary, drainage, excavation of trenches and placement of ducting for internal reticulation cabling, pouring concrete pads for equipment. • Construction of onsite substation, underground reticulation cabling, underground transmission cable to POC, upgrade works at POC to existing electricity grid. • Installation of battery units, PCS, transformers and associated equipment. • Construction of ancillary infrastructure such as O&M facility and car parking.

Component	Indicative description and timeframes
Testing and commissioning	Commissioning works including electrical testing to ensure that the BESS is operating correctly.
Demobilisation	- Removal of all temporary construction equipment and facilities. - Rehabilitation of unoccupied disturbed land in accordance with the existing nature of the site, including any prescribed landscaping mitigations.

2.4 Operation

The operational life of the BESS is indicatively estimated at 40 years, contingent on component replacement and ongoing asset management. The Project would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week as an unmanned facility. The BESS would be managed remotely and staffed by up to two (2) full time equivalent staff as well as ad hoc contractors, as required during both planned and unplanned maintenance periods. It would be anticipated no more than 10 people would be on site anytime.

- Environmental monitoring in accordance with the conditions of approvals and management plans.
- Service and repair of any onsite infrastructure.
- Maintenance of internal access tracks, drainage and culverts, fencing/gate and other civil works.
- Maintenance of BESS, electrical reticulation system, substation and control systems.

2.5 Decommissioning

The operational life of the BESS is indicatively estimated at 40 years, after which time the project would commence decommissioning. During decommissioning above ground components would be removed and recycled where possible, and land rehabilitated. The battery units would either be disposed of, repurposed or recycled at a licensed disposal facility. The decommissioning timeframe is expected to be approximately 12 months post operation phase.

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3.0 Assessment Methodology

LCVIA is a tool used to identify and assess the impact of a project on landscape character, views and visual amenity.

This LCVIA has been prepared in accordance *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition* (2013), developed by the Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management, UK (GLVIA3). This guideline is widely recognised as constituting 'best practice' in this field. In addition, this report has been prepared with reference to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), the *Latrobe Planning Scheme*, including Clause 12.05-2S (Landscapes), relevant local strategic planning policy, and the *Solar Energy Facilities Design and Development Guideline* (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2022).

In accordance with the above guidelines, key steps in the assessment of landscape character and visual impact include:

1. **Contextual analysis** - analysis of the regional and local context in which the Project is located. This includes a desktop assessment to inform a site visit and a description of the existing environment, including the identification of landscape character zones (LCZs) and viewpoints
2. **Landscape character impact assessment** - evaluation of the impact of the Project on the LCZs within the study area
3. **Visual impact assessment** - evaluation of the existing views and visual amenity surrounding the impact area to assess possible impacts placed on the community by the Project
4. **Mitigation of impacts** – development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts that the Project may impose on landscape character and views within and around the study area.

3.1 Contextual analysis

A contextual analysis has been undertaken, describing the existing environment within the study area. The contextual analysis is used for identification of elements and features relevant to assessment of the Project, including site setting, topography, land use, landscape and heritage values, extent of views, and visual amenity. This section was compiled using the following methodology.

3.1.1 Desktop analysis

Existing data was gathered and reviewed, including:

- Legislation and policy information
- Available information on sensitive visual receptors and elements which would influence landscape character and visibility of the Project. These included topography, heritage and cultural values, hydrology, land use, vegetation, tourism etc.
- GIS mapping, including visual envelope mapping, zoning and land use, topography and heritage information
- Project design information
- Google Earth and Google Street View imagery.

Using this data, a preliminary assessment of the existing landscape and visual environment was undertaken and used to inform the site inspection.

3.1.2 Site inspection

A site inspection was undertaken by AECOM on 5 March 2026. The purpose of the inspection was to:

- Identify views from sensitive visual receptors within publicly accessible locations
- Assess landscape character
- Undertake photography to record key views and landscape character.

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3.1.3 Study area

The study area for the LCVIA was determined based on several factors, including:

- Topography of the surrounding landscape
- The number and complexity of LCZs surrounding the Project
- The visual containment of the Project due to its scale in comparison to surrounding built form, landform and vegetation.

For this assessment, a study area was delineated as a 2-kilometre radius around the Project, centred around the eastern portion of the site which would contain the more visually prominent built forms of the Project, including the substation and BESS (refer to Figure 2-1 and Figure 4-1). This was considered conservative given the flat to gently sloping topography, the scale of the existing infrastructure and rural character of the surrounding area and the visual screening provided by existing surrounding vegetation.

3.1.4 Landscape character zones

A landscape character assessment identifies what makes a place distinctive, without necessarily assigning a value to it, and considers the way different components of the environment - both natural (the influences of topography, geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna), and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) - interact together and are perceived to form a distinct pattern, which gives its particular sense of place.

To provide a framework for more clearly describing the area and assessing how the Project would affect the elements that make up the landscape (including the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape and its distinctive character), distinct parts of the overall landscape have been separately defined and mapped as landscape character zones (LCZs).

3.2 Impact assessment

3.2.1 Landscape character impact assessment

Landscape character impact assessment considers the effect of change and development on landscape as a resource in its own right. The consideration of the potential impact of the Project on landscape character has been determined based on the existing landscape's sensitivity to change, and the magnitude of change that is likely to occur.

The sensitivity and magnitude of landscape effects address the following specific criteria:

- Sensitivity of landscape to proposed change, based on:
 - Susceptibility to change - this describes the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular LCZ, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the Project without undue consequences for the maintenance of the existing situation, and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies
 - Value of landscape – this describes the qualities of a place which would make it valued, such as natural or ecological characteristics, the presence of heritage items or cultural values, spatial characteristics, recreational elements or scenic qualities.
- Magnitude of landscape effect, based on:
 - Type/nature of change
 - Geographical extent
 - Duration and reversibility of effects.

Using these criteria, the sensitivity and magnitude have been assessed and graded as being high, moderate, low or negligible. The Landscape Character and Visual Impact Grading Matrix has been used to combine the ratings for sensitivity and magnitude (refer to Table 3-1) to determine an overall landscape character impact rating. Findings can be high, high to moderate, moderate, moderate to low, low or negligible in relation to the existing environment. Ratings of high and high to moderate are considered to be significant, requiring mitigation.

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Table 3-1 Landscape Character and Visual Impact Grading Matrix*

		Magnitude			
		High	Moderate	Low	Negligible
Sensitivity	High	High	High to Moderate	Moderate	Negligible
	Moderate	High to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Low	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

*Source: GLVIA3

A qualitative assessment further assigns a rating to the change in the landscape character. This is a professional judgement as to whether the effects of the Project are deemed 'adverse', 'neutral' or 'beneficial' and considers if the changes due to the Project would affect the quality of character within each LCZ. Importantly, the qualitative assessment rating is secondary to the overall impact rating, thereby a low change in landscape character within an LCZ with an adverse rating, for example, still remains a minor change but with a slightly adverse outcome.

An assessment of the impact of the Project on landscape character has been undertaken at operation, but not during the construction period. According to GLVIA3, impact on landscape character is considered to arise from changes to the physical fabric and patterns of the landscape. However, the construction activities for the Project are temporary and predominantly reversible (with the exception of vegetation removal) and would not change settlement patterns or spatial organisation within the landscape. Assessment of the Project during operation is considered to adequately capture the long-term effects on landscape character, given the above.

3.2.2 Visual impact assessment

3.2.2.1 Visibility of the Project

Research into the likely visibility of the Project, once operational, from the surrounding area has been undertaken to define locations where the Project may be seen, taking into account topography, built form and vegetation. Potential visual receptors were also identified to help inform the study area and compile a series of potential viewpoints within it.

3.2.2.2 Representative viewpoints

The potential viewpoints identified above were then refined based on the site investigation to a series of representative viewpoints from which to assess the visual effects due to the Project. Factors such as proximity to the changes, and the number and type of visual receptors at each potential viewpoint, were taken into account to select the representative viewpoints. Representative viewpoints were chosen to assess the changes from publicly accessible locations, although some viewpoints were used to approximate the changes seen from private locations such as residences or community facilities.

3.2.2.3 Assessment of changes to views

The assessment of visual impact addresses the effects of change on the views available to people and their visual amenity. It assesses how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes, in the context and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or the introduction of new elements.

Visual effects of the Project have been assessed at operation using the method described below.

The evaluation of potential effects on visual amenity has been based on the sensitivity to change of the viewpoint (and the visual receptors it represents), and the magnitude of change that is likely to occur.

The sensitivity of each viewpoint is mainly a function of:

- the occupation or activity of the people experiencing the view
- the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the view and the visual amenity they experience, for example:

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- people who are engaged in outdoor recreation, where their attention or interest is likely to be focused on views and the visual amenity they experience, are likely to be more sensitive to a proposed change in that view, rather than land use zoning
- indicators of value attached to views, e.g. through appearing on tourist maps, or provision of facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards and interpretative material).

The magnitude of change to views and visual amenity takes into account:

- type/nature of change in the view with regard to the:
 - loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition
 - degree of contrast or integration of any new features with the existing landscape in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture
 - nature of the view of the Project in terms of amount of time it would be experienced, and whether the views would be full, partial or glimpses
- geographical extent of the visual effect with different viewpoints including the:
 - angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor
 - distance of the viewpoint from the Project
 - extent of area over which the changes would be visible
 - duration and reversibility of visual effects, for example the duration in terms of short term (0-5 years), medium term (6-15 years) or long term (16-30+ years).

Using the criteria listed above, the extent of sensitivity and magnitude for visual effects are measured, with each assessed and graded as being high, moderate, low or negligible. The Landscape and Visual Impact Grading Matrix was then used to combine the ratings for sensitivity and magnitude (refer to Table 3-1) to determine an overall visual impact rating. Overall impact ratings of high and high to moderate have been considered to be significant, requiring mitigation.

A qualitative assessment rating as assigned which considers the quality of the change in views (deemed 'adverse', 'neutral' or 'beneficial') from each viewpoint. It is based on professional judgement and considers whether the changes would affect the quality of the visual experience of visual receptors, given the nature of the existing views. Importantly, the qualitative assessment rating is secondary to the overall impact rating, thereby a low change in views from a viewpoint with an adverse rating, for example, still remains a minor change but with a slightly adverse outcome.

A high-level commentary has been provided on the impact of the Project on views and visual amenity during construction.

3.2.3 Photographs and photomontages

Photographs of the view from each viewpoint were used to assist in providing a baseline from which to assess changes arising from the Project. Either single photographs or a series of photographs stitched to form a panorama were used to illustrate views. All photographs were taken using a full frame camera.

Photographs for use in stitched panoramas were captured with the camera mounted in portrait orientation on a tripod with a panoramic head, with the final panorama stitched to depict a view of 124 degrees.

Photomontages were produced to illustrate the proposed changes from key viewpoints from which the greatest visual changes would potentially be seen, or to illustrate typical changes due to the Project. These were prepared by overlaying a 3D model of the Project over a panorama showing the existing view, removing any structures or vegetation to be removed as part of the Project using graphic software.

3.3 Mitigation and management measures

Following on from the assessment of impact on landscape character and views, mitigation measures have been proposed to avoid or reduce adverse impacts deemed to be moderate or higher.

3.4 Limitations, uncertainties and assumptions

The following limitations, uncertainties and assumptions apply to this assessment:

- The Project was assessed from publicly accessible land only. No detailed assessment from private property was undertaken.
- Desktop investigations and a site visit were undertaken to inform this assessment.
- No community consultation was undertaken as part of this assessment.

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4.0 Existing Environment

4.1 Legislation, policies, guidelines and standards

The Victorian planning framework comprises an integrated suite of legislation, policies, guidelines and standards that guides the assessment of development proposals. Not all of this framework is highly relevant to assessment of the LVIA aspects of BESS.

The most relevant parts are:

- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- Latrobe Planning Scheme
- Solar Energy Facilities Design and Development Guideline (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2022).

These are summarised in the table below.

Table 4-1 Legislation, policy, guidelines and standards relevant to the assessment

Document title	Summary	Relevance to the Project
<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>	Principal statutory framework for assessing development in Victoria, including utility-scale energy infrastructure. Planning schemes prepared under the provisions of the Act apply to each municipal area in Victoria.	For an LCVIA, the relevant considerations are the environmental effects of development, orderly planning, protection of landscape values, and balancing visual amenity with infrastructure needs.
Latrobe Planning Scheme	The Latrobe Planning Scheme is a statutory document that sets out the way land may be used or developed, an includes planning policy framework, zones, overlays, particular provisions and other elements.	In general, the planning scheme supports renewable energy infrastructure in appropriate locations and minimise 'minimise or reduce visual amenity impacts through appropriate siting and design' (eg, clause 19.01-2S 'Renewable energy').
Solar Energy Facilities Design and Development Guideline (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2022)	This guideline provides an overview of the policy, legislative and statutory planning arrangements for solar energy facility projects in Victoria. It provides advice on siting of infrastructure to maximise efficiency while minimising the impact on the environmental and community values.	The guidelines are relevant as they references associated infrastructure, including a BESS and provide relevant guiding principles for visual assessment. With regard to LCVIA, infrastructure should not lead to the loss of cultural heritage or landscape values of significance. The guideline identifies siting requirements and assessment criteria to minimise impacts on landscape values.

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4.2 Regional context

The site is located within the Latrobe Valley in eastern Victoria, within the Latrobe City Council LGA, approximately 10 kilometres south of the regional centre of Morwell (Figure 4-1).

The surrounding landscape reflects the long-established energy production role of the Latrobe Valley and includes a mix of industrial land, rehabilitated land associated with former mining activities, and rural landholdings used predominantly for grazing.

The Hazelwood Power Station and open-cut mine to the west of the study area have been defining elements of the local landscape from the 1960s. The power station ceased operation in 2017 with the open cut remaining with plans for remediation primarily including the creation of a pit lake. Loy Yang Power Station and open cut mine, located to the northeast of the study area, is Australia's largest brown coal surface mine, with the site scheduled for closure by 2035. Yallourn Power Station and open cut mine is located to the northwest of the study area and is scheduled for closure in 2028.

The site is located within proximity of existing electricity infrastructure associated with the Latrobe Valley generation network, including Hazelwood Terminal Station, Wooreen Energy Storage System (to be operational prior to 2027), Jeeralang Power Station (peaking plant) and high-voltage transmission lines that traverse the surrounding landscape. These structures are visually prominent features within the local environment and contribute to the established industrial character of the area.

Beyond the immediate energy production precinct, the surrounding area comprises a mixture of rural land uses, rural residential properties and areas of remnant vegetation associated with drainage corridors and roads. Nearby centres include Morwell to the north, Traralgon to the northeast and Churchill to the south-west. These areas reflect the broader landscape pattern of the Latrobe Valley, where energy infrastructure, agricultural land uses and regional townships co-exist within a modified valley landscape.

While the area is not subject to a formally designated state significant landscape classification, it contains several valued landscape resources, including the forested foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges, Morwell National Park, locally valued bushland reserves, and the recognised Strzelecki Scenic Drive touring route. These landscapes contribute scenic, recreational and setting values, while the broader Latrobe Valley also exhibits a distinctive industrial landscape character associated with energy generation infrastructure and expansive valley views.

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Figure 4-1 Regional context

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4.3 Local context

The site and its immediate surrounds are characterised by a mosaic of grazing land, hobby farms and rural-residential properties set on large allotments, with scattered dwellings, farm sheds, shelterbelts and remnant vegetation contributing to a spacious, rural character (refer to Figure 4-2). Gently undulating topography and expansive views toward the Strzelecki Ranges provide a strong sense of openness, while roadside vegetation and patches of woodland introduce a semi-vegetated rural backdrop. Although predominantly agricultural in character, the area is influenced by its proximity to Morwell and the broader Latrobe Valley energy and industrial landscape, where infrastructure associated with power generation, transmission and extractive industries forms part of the wider setting.

The site is accessed via the local road network that connects to the Princes Freeway, which provides the primary east-west transport route through the Latrobe Valley.

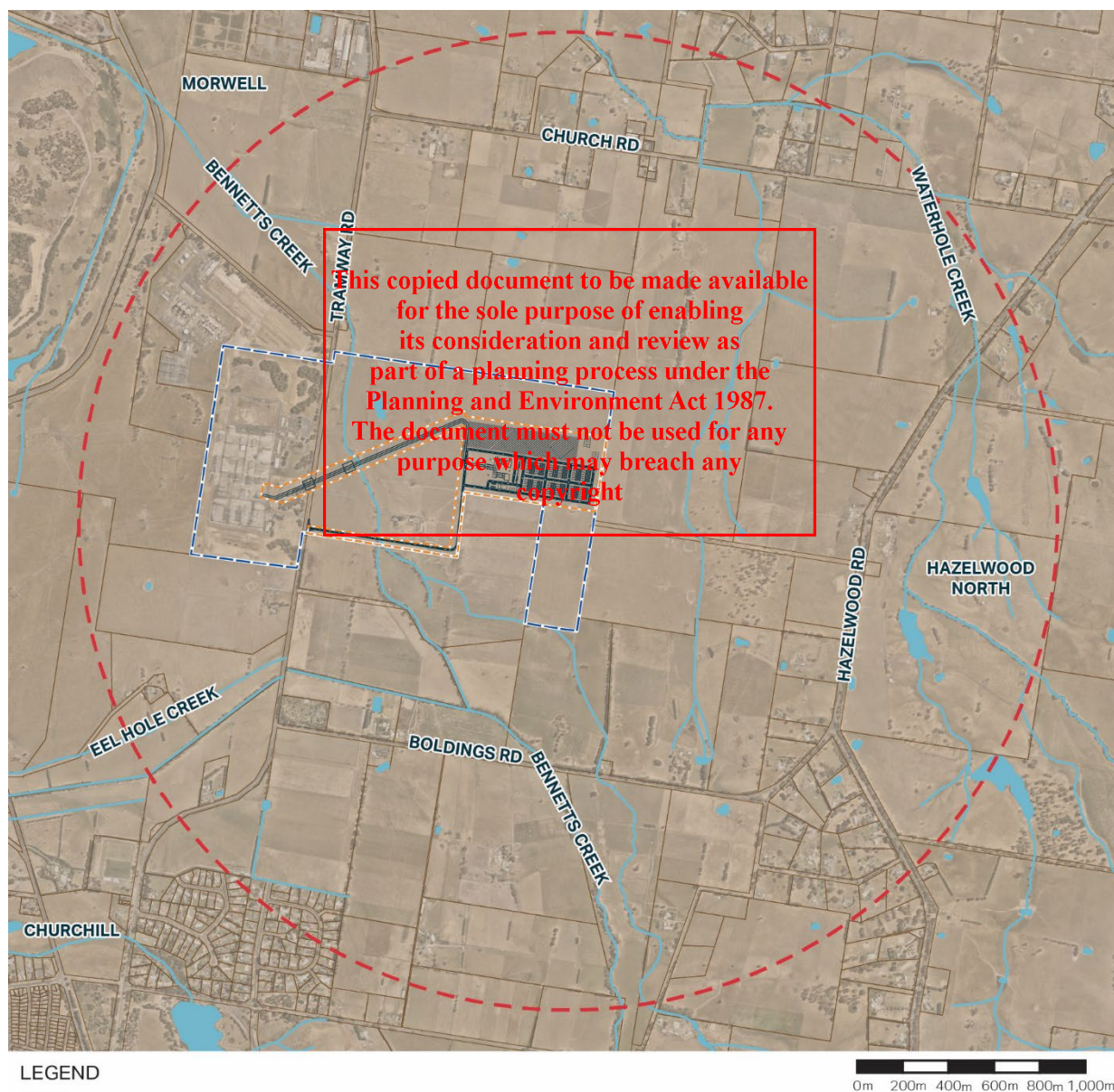


Figure 4-2 Local context

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4.4 Topography and hydrology

As shown in Figure 4-3, the landscape within the study area and surrounds primarily comprises gently undulating topography, extending from 0 to 265 metres. The Project site itself is situated on relatively flat land within broad pastoral plains. Drainage corridors associated with Bennetts Creek, Waterhole Creek and Eel Hole Creek traverse the surrounding landscape, influencing local landform and vegetation patterns. Drainage lines are primarily low water to dry in parts. Notably Bennetts Creek directly intersects the Project site boundary.

More pronounced changes in elevation occur to the south-east of the study area, particularly around Hazelwood North, where the landscape rises to low ridgelines, although overall the landscape remains open and expansive with long-distance views across the valley floor. The Strzelecki Ranges to the southeast and the southern portion of the Great Dividing Range to the north are large topographical elements, standing out as a backdrop to the open gently undulating landscape of the immediate surrounds.

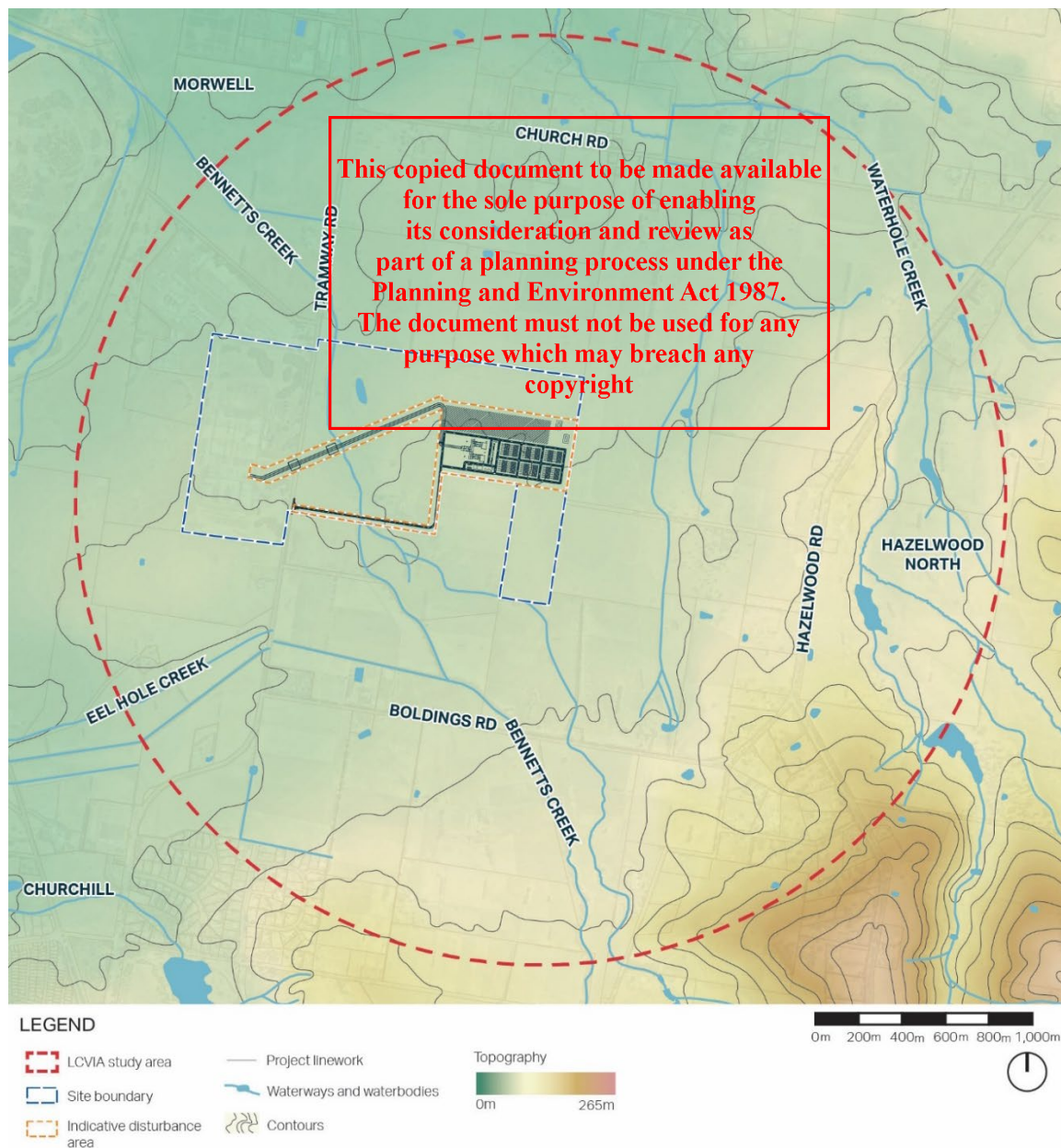


Figure 4-3 Topography and hydrology

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4.5 Land use zoning

Within the study area, the site boundary is located predominantly within land affected by the State Resource Overlay (SRO1), reflecting the broader Latrobe Valley resource and energy precinct. The southwestern portion of the site boundary intersects overlays including the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) and the Specific Controls Overlay (SCO3). These overlays within and adjacent to the site boundary reflect an established context of energy infrastructure, with only the SRO1 controls applying directly to the indicative disturbance area.

The predominant land use zones surrounding the site are grazing modified pastures, with areas of cropping, rural residential with agriculture, electricity substations and transmission, fuel powered electricity generation, rural residential without agriculture and hardwood plantation forestry surrounding the site (refer Figure 4-5). These primary land uses surrounding the site reflect a diverse mix of agricultural, residential, and recreational activities within the surrounding landscape. This variety contributes to the visual and functional character of the area, which is typical of peri-urban and rural landscapes on the outskirts of Melbourne.

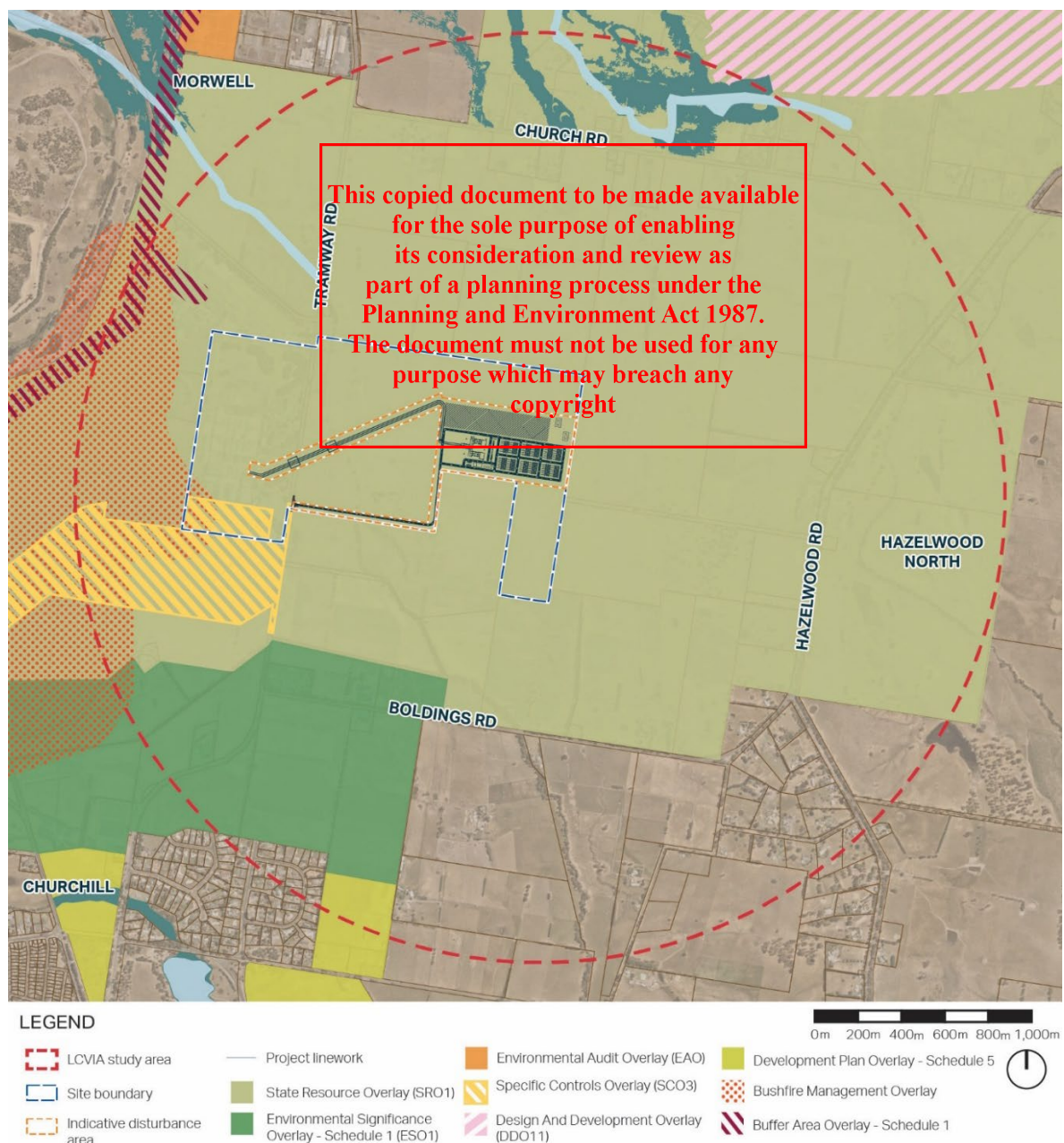


Figure 4-4 Planning overlays

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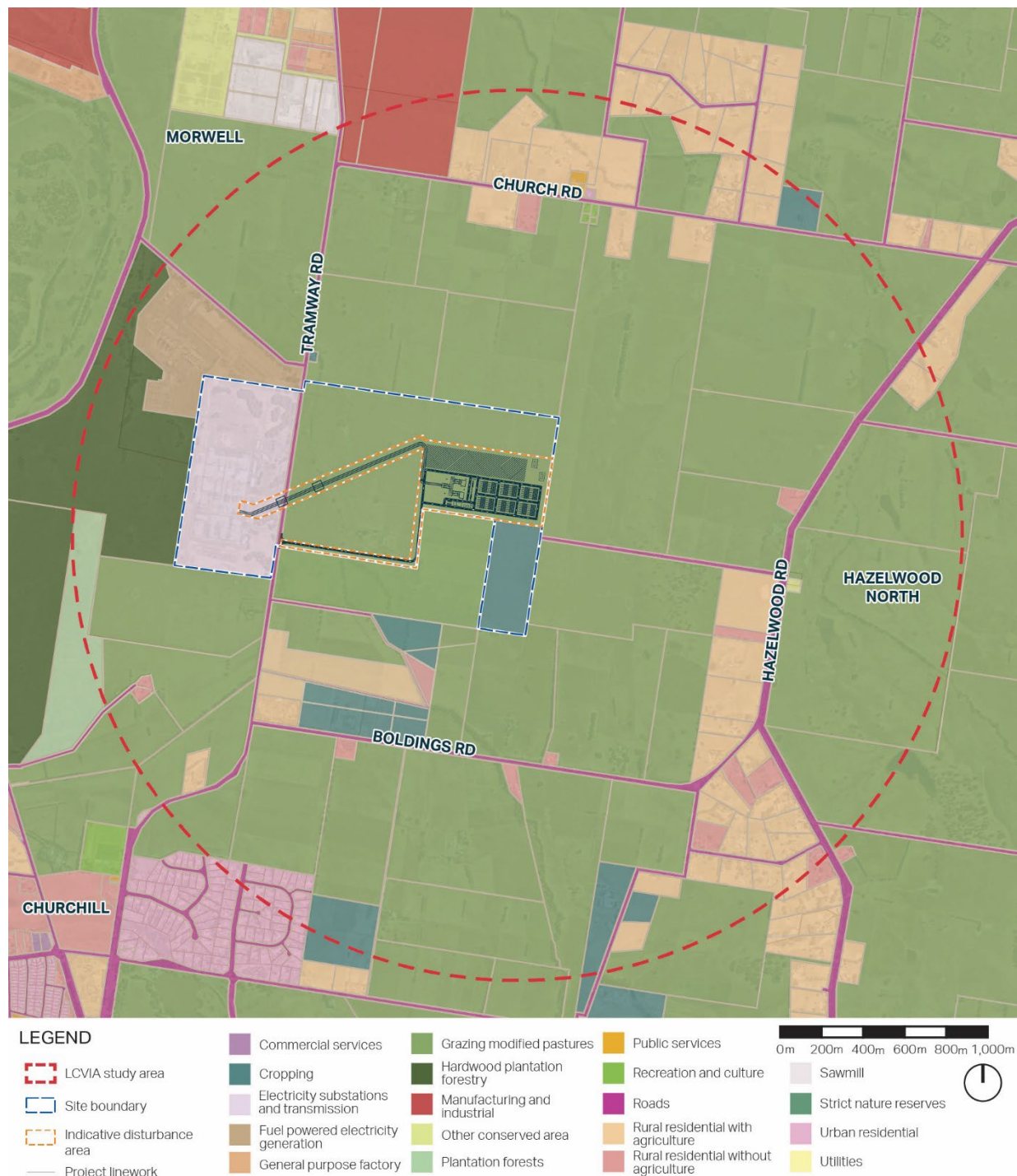


Figure 4-5 Land use zoning

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4.6 Vegetation

The site and its immediate surrounds are located within the Gippsland Basin Bioregion, with fertile alluvial soils and a long history of ecological modification. Widespread clearing has resulted in 57% of the land area in the region cleared of natural vegetation, predominantly for agricultural purposes, with Eucalyptus open forest and woodlands comprising 43% of uncleared land in the bioregion (Australian Government, 2015).

Within the study area defined by this report the land has undergone significant clearing with fragmented patches of remnant and planted vegetation scattered across the landscape and more linear bands of vegetation occurring along creek lines and road corridors (refer to Figure 4-6).

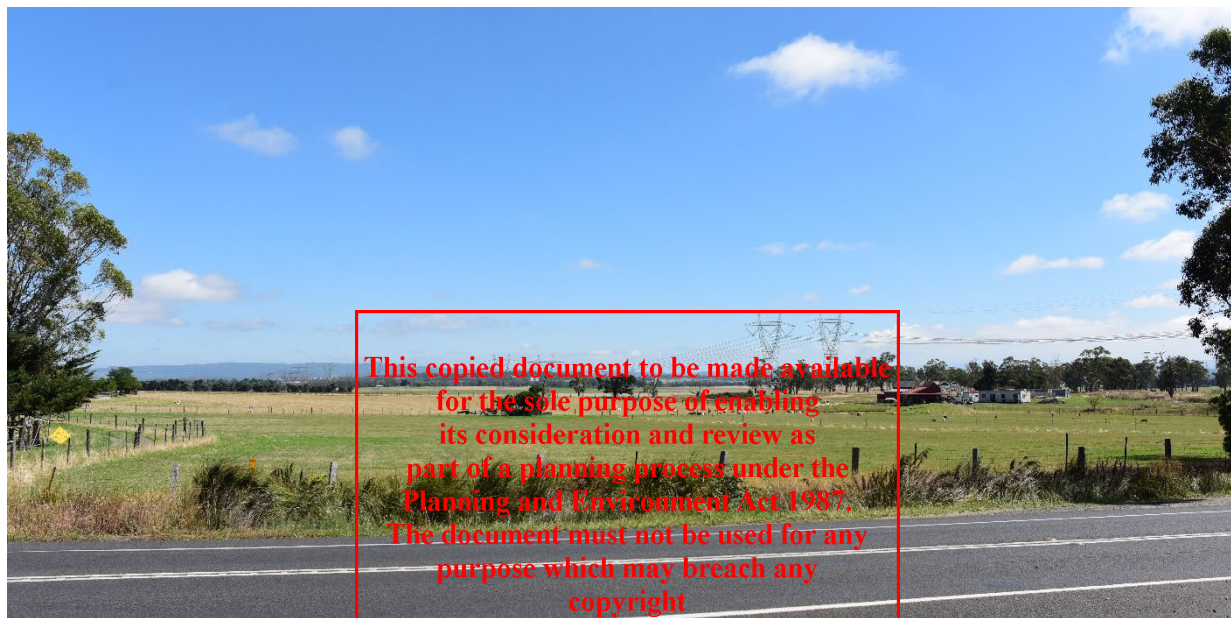


Figure 4-6 Typical vegetation within the study area, comprising large areas of cleared grazing land with exotic grasses and patches and bands of taller vegetation

The *Ecological Assessment Report* (AECOM, 2026) notes that pre-1750 modelling indicates that the land within the Project site boundary was historically dominated by Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55), Plains Grassy Forest (EVC 151), and areas of Swamp Scrub (EVC 53) associated with Bennetts Creek. However, current vegetation bears little resemblance to these original communities, with the predominant grazing land use on the site comprising a mix of introduced grasses with some small patches of native grasses. Scattered trees within the grazing land typically comprise planted native species.

Existing native vegetation is limited to small, fragmented and heavily disturbed patches and linear corridors along waterways and roads. Field surveys identified low habitat quality within assessed habitat zones, bearing little resemblance to their original EVCs. These areas lack intact canopy structure, mature trees, recruitment and structural diversity, and occur within a cleared landscape that further diminishes their ecological value. The EVCs within the study area include the following:

- EVC 16: Primarily clustered around Hazelwood Road, to the east of the site
- EVC 53: Fragmented patches distributed across the landscape
- EVC 55: Fragmented cluster located adjacent to entry to site, west of Tramway Road with additional patches occurring on the outer extents of the study area
- EVC 151: Fragmented patches distributed across the landscape west of Hazelwood Road.

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4.7 Heritage

4.7.1 Aboriginal cultural heritage

The site is located within the traditional lands of the Braiakaulung people, who occupied the Latrobe River Valley, and the valleys of the Thompson, Avon, and Macalister Rivers. A report outlining the background research in support of a cultural heritage management plan has been established as part of this planning permit. The key findings from the Hazelwood East BESS, 545 Tramway Road, Hazelwood North: background research in support of CHMP 21027 (Andrew Long + Associates, 2026) include:

- A total of 287 registered Aboriginal cultural heritage places are located within the geographic region. The majority of previously registered Aboriginal places within the geographic region are stone artefact sites. The remaining Aboriginal places comprise scarred trees, earth features, and quarries.
- Previous assessments have identified that elevated landforms near waterways have the potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage to be present.
- There are two previously registered Aboriginal places within the Project site boundary. Both places are located on rises east of Bennetts Creek. Three additional places are registered within 450m of the Project site boundary within the study area.
- Large scale disturbance has occurred in the western section of the Project site boundary west of Tramway Road from the construction of the Hazelwood Terminal Station.
- Little disturbance other than vegetation clearing, the construction of transmission towers, and historic and modern agropastoral activities have been documented in the remainder of the Project site boundary at 545 Tramway Road, Hazelwood North.

Further investigations and reporting are required to determine the extent of impact due to the Project. Refer to Figure 4-7 for distribution of documented Aboriginal cultural heritage areas.

4.7.2 Non-Aboriginal heritage

Several non-Aboriginal heritage items lie within the study area (refer Figure 4-7). The Otterburn Farm Complex is partially located within the Project site boundary. This heritage place comprises a historic farm complex associated with early settlement in the Hazelwood district and represents the agricultural history of the region.

Two other non-Aboriginal local heritage items lie within 2km of the site area:

- The Tramway Road Former Residence is located to the south of the Project site boundary along Tramway Road. While outside the project site boundary, the item is situated in proximity to the southwestern extent of the study area.
- The Church Road Farm Complex is located approximately 1.25km to the north-east of the Project. The place reflects the rural farming history of the locality and contributes to the historic landscape character of the surrounding agricultural land.

Collectively, these heritage places reflect the historical agricultural development and rural settlement of the Hazelwood area. Their settings are generally characterised by open farmland, rural dwellings, and agricultural infrastructure that contribute to the broader cultural landscape of the Gippsland region.

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Figure 4-7 Documented heritage items

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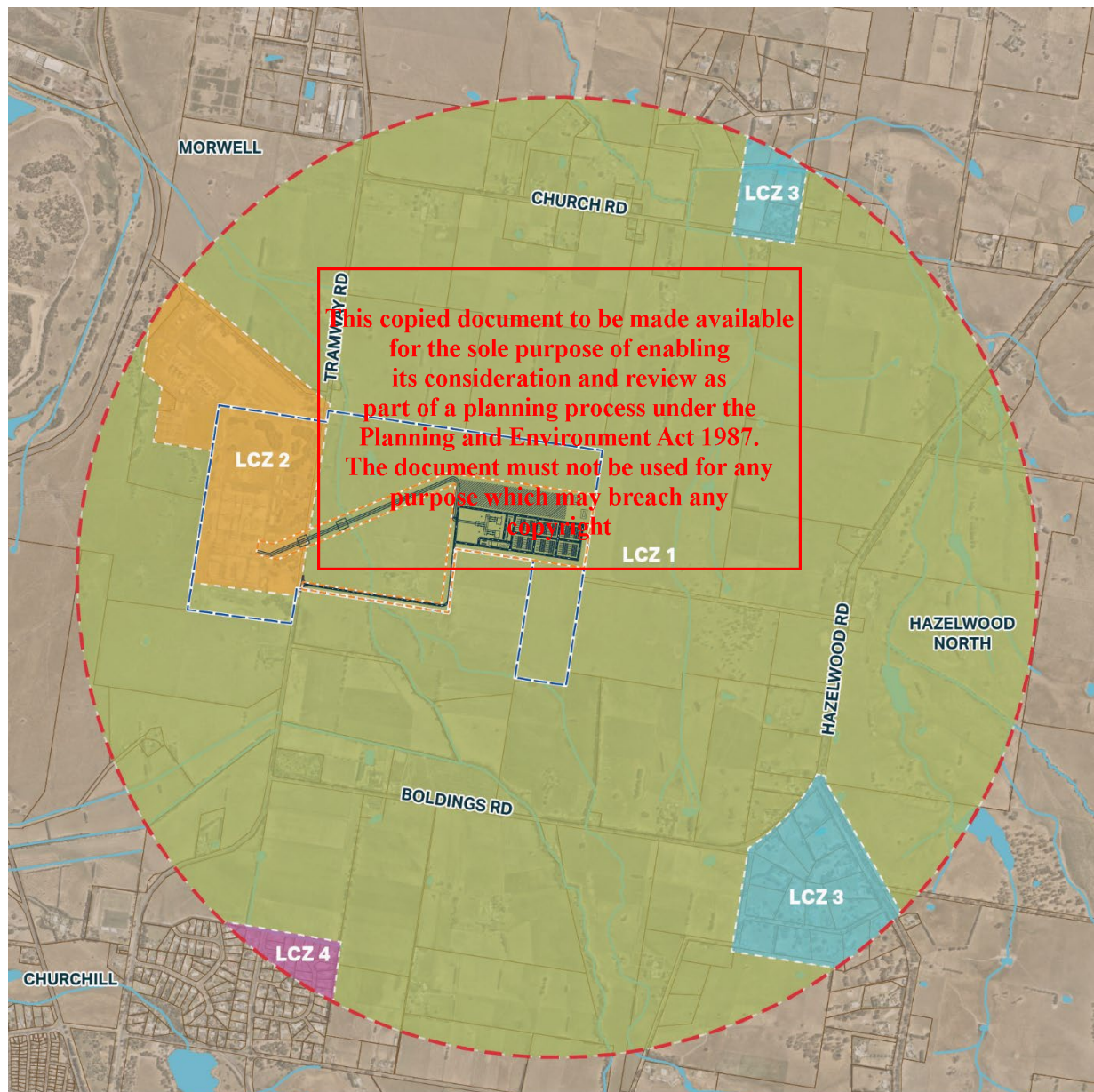
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4.8 Landscape character zones

Four LCZs have been identified within the study area (refer to Figure 4-8):

- LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture
- LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure
- LCZ 3: Environmental Living
- LCZ 4: Residential.

The Project predominantly lies within LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture and LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure.



LEGEND

 LCVIA study area	 Project linework	 LCZ 3: Environmental Living
 Project boundary	 LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture	 LCZ 4: Residential
 Site boundary	 LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure	

0m 200m 400m 600m 800m 1,000m



Figure 4-8 Landscape character zones within the study area

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4.8.1 LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture

This LCZ is the most prominent LCZ surrounding the Project, with the majority of the Project situated within this zone. The topography of this LCZ is generally flat to gently undulating.

The LCZ is characterised by large open lots and expansive tracts of cleared land with limited vegetation cover. Occasional rural homesteads are situated primarily near roads and typically comprise a cluster of buildings, including a house, sheds and garages. High-voltage transmission lines run through the LCZ, traversing the landscape from the Hazelwood Terminal Station. Two transmission lines run from the terminal station to the east, one to the north and two to the west, passing through the Project site boundary. These are substantial vertical elements in a relatively flat, open agricultural landscape.

Road infrastructure within this LCZ is limited and generally consists of moderate-speed rural roads that connect nearby residential areas. These roads are typically bordered by vacant rural lots and lined by occasional bands of trees.

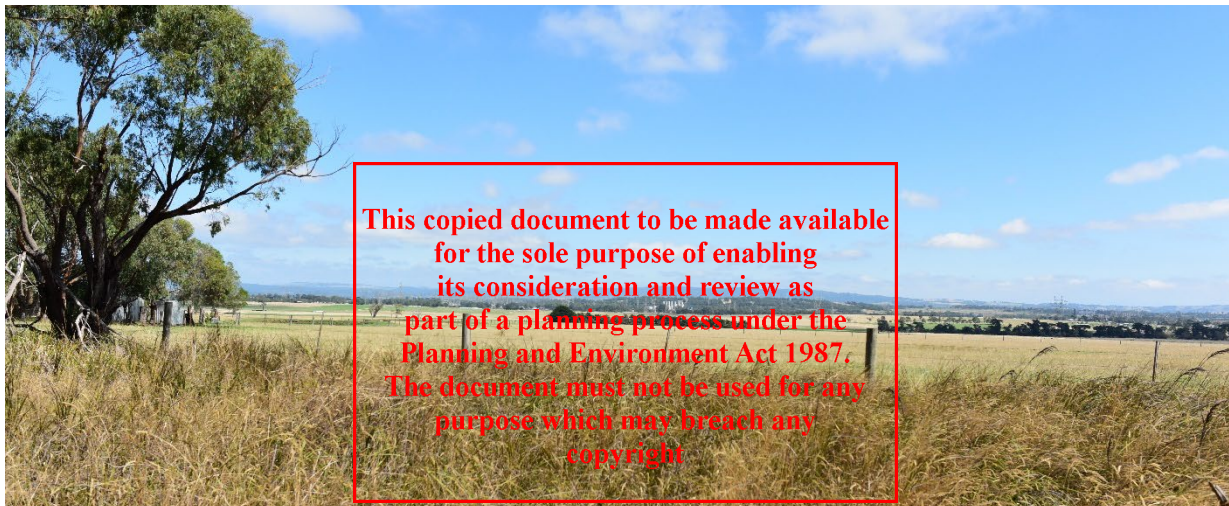


Figure 4-9 Pastoral landscape characteristic of LCZ 1



Figure 4-10 Typical road corridor within LCZ 1 (Tramway Road)

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4.8.2 LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure

A smaller portion of the works sit within this LCZ, which contains existing energy generation and BESS infrastructure including the Hazelwood Terminal Station, Wooreen Energy Storage System (to be operational prior to 2027) and Jeeralang Power Station (peaking plant). The Hazelwood Terminal Station will be incorporated into the proposed development.

The character of this LCZ is industrial and utilitarian, defined by large, robust structures and expansive areas of concrete, asphalt, and other hardstand surfaces. The LCZ is closely tied to the infrastructure of the nearby Hazelwood Power Station and open-cut mine. The land has been heavily modified to accommodate industrial operations, resulting in predominantly flat or artificially levelled topography. The infrastructure of the LCZ includes elements such as tall transmission lines, storage buildings, equipment bases, and utility structures reinforcing the zone's functional and industrial character.

Vegetation within the LCZ is sparse and generally limited to small patches, outside operational areas and surrounded by turf, emphasising the predominance of engineered surfaces and tall utilitarian elements. Overall, the LCZ presents a landscape shaped by industrial activity where human intervention has strongly defined the form, function, and character of the LCZ.



Figure 4-11 Hazelwood Terminal Station

4.8.3 LCZ 3: Environmental Living

LCZ 3 is characterised by a semi-rural residential landscape that retains a strong sense of openness and a connection to the surrounding natural and agricultural landscape. Large residential lots are organised along a series of streets informed by the gently undulating topography. Mature trees and dense plantings are prominent throughout the zone, defining property boundaries, reinforcing the green character of the area, and providing a clear contrast to the largely cleared, flat farmland of the neighbouring LCZ 1.

The pattern of dwellings and the arrangement of open spaces within the lots create a distinctive landscape that is recognisably different from the more expansive rural agricultural lands nearby. The combination of built form and vegetation contributes to a landscape that is both open and structured, with an emphasis on natural elements and low-intensity residential use.

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Figure 4-12 Dwelling characteristic of LCZ 3



Figure 4-13 Private yard of property characteristic of LCZ 3

4.8.4 LCZ 4: Residential

LCZ 4 is characterised by a moderately dense residential landscape that retains a recognisable structure and form. Lots are smaller and more closely spaced than in surrounding areas, and dwellings are arranged in a consistent pattern that contributes to the overall character of the zone. Established vegetation, including gardens and occasional mature trees, are prominent features throughout the area, softening the built environment and reinforcing a green and landscaped character.

The combination of relatively compact lot layouts and abundant vegetation gives the LCZ a distinct residential character within the local context. The zone is surrounded by the open, cleared farmland of LCZ 1, which highlights the contrast between the semi-urban residential pattern and the expansive rural landscape nearby.

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Figure 4-14 Residential dwellings and streetscape characteristic of LCZ 4



Figure 4-15 Residential dwellings characteristic of LCZ 4

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5.0 Landscape Impact Assessment

5.1 Assessment of operational impacts

5.1.1 LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture

The potential effects of change on LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture are described in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture - landscape character impact assessment

LCZ 1 – Rural Agriculture

Anticipated change

The majority of the proposed works would sit within LCZ 1 with the more visually prominent infrastructure concentrated in the eastern portion of the Project site boundary.

The works within this LCZ would include the construction and operation of a BESS with a 500 MW maximum power output capacity and associated infrastructure. Based on the indicative Project design, the surface elements would include:

- Approximately 432 containerised battery units, approximately 144 inverters and two main power transformers
- A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear (including switchyard)
- O&M compound including O&M building, amenities, car parking (16 spaces)
- Stormwater management infrastructure, firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants and internal access tracks
- Upgrades to existing, and construction of new 7m trafficable width access track and crossover from Tramway Road
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping.

Sensitivity to change: moderate

LCZ 1 is considered to have **moderate sensitivity** for the following reasons:

- The LCZ is spatially open and picturesque, however, is somewhat visually compartmentalised by tall vegetation
- The landscape within this LCZ has been substantially disturbed over time due to development practices including clearing of bushland, establishment of grazing pastures and the establishment of vegetation breaks for elements such as a road corridors and fencelines
- Similar infrastructure exists adjacent to the LCZ and is characteristic of the area, with other energy generation infrastructure within the surrounding landscape
- Areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage are located throughout and traverse the LCZ
- Three non-Aboriginal heritage elements are present within this LCZ.

Magnitude of change: moderate

- The Project would comprise a small portion of the overall LCZ within the study area
- While transmission lines and associated infrastructure are existing elements within the LCZ, the Project would introduce additional electrical infrastructure, including a substation, BESS and lightning protection structures up to 30 m tall, increasing the occurrence of electrical infrastructure within the LCZ
- While the changes are characteristically similar to the existing energy infrastructure within LCZ and the adjacent LCZ 2, they do not align with the primary character within the LCZ
- Some minimal clearing of existing vegetation within the Project site boundary would be required
- The change to the landscape would be long-term.

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LCZ 1 – Rural Agriculture

Landscape character impact rating: moderate (adverse)

Overall, the change in landscape character within the LCZ due to the Project is considered to be moderate (adverse). Although the changes would affect only a small portion of the LCZ, the Project would introduce built form of a substantial scale within the rural agricultural setting. However, this would be tempered by the spatial compartmentalisation within the LCZ due to vegetation.

While the changes are characteristically similar to the existing energy infrastructure (transmission lines) within the LCZ and associated infrastructure in the adjoining LCZ 2, the adverse qualitative rating reflects the increase in large scaled electrical infrastructure within a rural agricultural landscape.

5.1.2 LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure

The potential effects of change on LCZ 2: Industrial are described in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2 LCZ 2: Energy infrastructure - landscape character impact assessment

LCZ 2 - Energy Infrastructure

Anticipated change

The majority of the proposed works would be located within LCZ 1, with the connection to the Hazelwood Terminal Station situated within LCZ 2. This connection comprises a 500 kV underground (trenched) cable system. The works would be visible during the construction phase; however, during operation the primary residual change would be limited to minor vegetation removal.

Sensitivity to change: low

- The LCZ contains existing energy related infrastructure which is aligned with the proposed works
- The landscape of this LCZ has been significantly modified over time due to development practices, including clearing of bushland areas, levelling and implementation of hardstand areas
- The LCZ is considered to have limited landscape or aesthetic value, functioning primarily to support industrial (electrical) operations rather than providing landscape amenity
- An area of Aboriginal cultural heritage, following Bennetts Creek runs through the northeastern portion of LCZ 2. No non-Aboriginal heritage elements are present within this LCZ.

Magnitude of change: low

- The Project would impact a very small portion of the LCZ
- The Project would comprise infrastructure characteristic of the existing LCZ
- While some existing vegetation within the LCZ would be cleared to allow for the proposed underground cabling, no new surface level elements would be introduced within the LCZ.

Landscape character impact rating: low (adverse)

Overall, the change in landscape character within the LCZ due to the Project is considered to be low (adverse). The substantial elements of the Project would be located outside the LCZ, with the primary perceivable operational change relating to vegetation removal. Vegetation is not considered a defining characteristic of this LCZ, and its removal would result in limited impact to the overall landscape character. While the changes would be long term, the impact is expected to reduce over time with the maturation of any replacement tree planting.

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5.1.3 LCZ 3: Environmental Living

The potential effects of change on LCZ 3: Environmental Living are described in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 LCZ 3: Environmental Living - landscape Character Impact Assessment

LCZ 3 - Environmental Living

Anticipated change

There would be no changes due to the Project within this LCZ.

Sensitivity of change: moderate

LCZ 3 (Environmental Living) is considered to have **moderate sensitivity** for the following reasons:

- This LCZ comprises smaller, dispersed portions of the overall study area
- The landscape has value due to its ecological characteristics
- The landscape of this LCZ has been disturbed over time due to development practices, including thinning of bushland areas and the establishment of vegetation breaks for elements such as a road corridors and fencelines
- Established vegetation along roads and fencelines provides visual buffering to the surrounding environment, providing a sense of enclosure
- An area of Aboriginal cultural heritage, following Waterhole Creek runs through the northern portion of LCZ 3. No non-Aboriginal heritage elements are present within this LCZ
- The Project involves work that would be visually prominent in the surrounding landscape, but is not located within this LCZ and would be buffered from view within this LCZ by vegetation and distance
- The Project is aligned with the broader character of the area

Magnitude of change: negligible

There are no proposed changes that would impact this LCZ. The magnitude of change is negligible.

Landscape character impact rating: negligible (neutral)

While the spatially open nature and residential context of this LCZ increases its sensitivity to change, the lack of change within the LCZ results in a negligible impact rating.

5.1.4 LCZ 4: Residential

The potential effects of change on LCZ 4: Residential are described in Table 5-3.

Table 5-4 LCZ 4: Residential - landscape Character Impact Assessment

LCZ 4 - Residential

Anticipated change

There would be no changes due to the Project within this LCZ.

Sensitivity of change: moderate

LCZ 4 (Residential) is considered to have **moderate sensitivity** for the following reasons:

- This LCZ comprises a small portion of the overall study area
- The proposed changes would be located approximately 1.6km from this LCZ with bands of vegetation providing buffering between the Project and the LCZ
- No new elements would be introduced into the landscape and no scenic or perceptual aspects of the landscape would be altered by the proposed changes
- The landscape of this LCZ has been disturbed over time due to development practices, including clearing of bushland areas and the establishment of vegetation breaks for elements such as a road corridors and fencelines
- An area of Aboriginal cultural heritage, following Waterhole Creek runs through the northern portion of LCZ 3. No non-Aboriginal heritage elements are present within this LCZ

LCZ 4 - Residential

- The Project is aligned with the broader character of the area
- The change to the landscape would be long-term

Magnitude of change: negligible

There are no proposed changes that will impact this LCZ. The magnitude of change is negligible.

Landscape character impact rating: negligible (neutral)

While the spatially open nature and residential context of this LCZ increases its sensitivity to change, the lack of change within the LCZ results in a negligible impact rating.

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6.0 Visual Impact Assessment

6.1 Visibility of the Project

The most visually prominent elements of the Project based on the current indicative design include:

- Approximately 432 containerised battery units, approximately 144 inverters sitting at 3.2m in height
- A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear (including switchyard)
- O&M compound including O&M building, amenities, car parking (16 spaces)
- Lightning protection poles (up to 30m in height)
- Stormwater management infrastructure, firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants and internal access tracks
- Upgrades to existing, and construction of new 7m trafficable width access track and crossover from Tramway Road
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping.

The visual prominence of the infrastructure described above would vary depending on the scale, form and finish of each element. Taller infrastructure, such as substation components and lightning protection poles, would likely be visible over longer distances due to their height, although their open framework and typically recessive colouring would help to reduce their visual dominance. In contrast, lower-profile elements such as the BESS units, water tanks and O&M buildings would generally have more limited visibility at greater distances due to their lower height, but their larger solid form and block-like appearance may result in greater visual prominence at close range, particularly where lighter or reflective colours are used.

Two visual receptor groups have been defined that would be sensitive to change in the character of the current views:

- Private domain – views from private residences, Hazelwood North Primary School and surrounding businesses
- Public domain – motorists / cyclists using public roads and those using North Hazelwood Public Hall and tennis courts at Hazelwood North Reserve (public park with hall and tennis courts).

While potential visibility from the surrounding landscape would theoretically be high due to the large open lots and expansive tracts of cleared land with limited vegetation cover, the gently undulating topography, together with intermittent bands and stands of vegetation, would provide a degree of visual buffering. This would screen views from many surrounding residences and road corridors, with separation distances from homesteads further reducing visual impact.

Overall, a relatively low number of visual receptors would experience views of the Project at any given time from surrounding residences or along local road corridors. The highest concentration of potential visual receptors would be associated with users of Tramway Road, which includes sections of roadway with limited vegetation buffering in proximity to the Project.

Beyond the immediate road corridor and more distant properties, the Project is not expected to be visually prominent within the broader landscape.

6.2 Representative viewpoints

Six representative viewpoints have been chosen to assess potential impacts on existing views seen by the visual receptors shown in Figure 6-1. These viewpoints are positioned at key locations to represent views that are sensitive to changes (i.e. residences and community facilities), locations that would experience a large degree of change or that are typical of changes that will be experienced by motorists along adjacent road corridors. These viewpoints assess the view seen by local residents, road users and other receptors near each location, such as workers and visitors to neighbouring properties.

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The viewpoint locations are:

- Viewpoint 01: Church Road west
- Viewpoint 02: Hazelwood North community facilities
- Viewpoint 03: Central Hazelwood Road
- Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road
- Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek
- Viewpoint 06: Tramway Road.



Figure 6-1 Representative viewpoints

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6.3 Visual impact assessment at operation

6.3.1 Viewpoint 01: Church Road west

This viewpoint is located on Church Road, adjacent to the entry to the properties at 65, 75 and 79 Church Road, approximately 1.4km north of the project boundary (refer to Figure 6-2). The impact to visual amenity from this location is assessed in Table 6-1.



Figure 6-2 Existing view from Viewpoint 01: Church Road west

Table 6-1 Viewpoint 01 - Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint 01: Church Road west	
Receptors	
- Receptors at this viewpoint include residents of and visitors to adjacent properties who would have a vested interest in the quality of the view from their property - Any workers to the property would have a lesser interest in the view, and would primarily be focused on the task at hand - Local motorists would have a passing interest in the view and would be travelling at up to 80 kilometres per hour or slowing to enter driveways	

Existing view

The existing view from this location (refer to Figure 6-2) comprises a gently rolling, open pastoral landscape, with paddocks extending from the foreground of the view to a ridgeline in the middle ground and a vegetated range in the background.

The foreground includes the two-way carriageway of Church Road and a grassed verge with local distribution lines running adjacent to the road. Post and wire fenced paddocks extend across the middle ground of the view with bands and stands of paddock trees and a combination of local distribution lines and larger transmission lines standing as vertical elements along the ridgeline. Densely vegetated hillsides are visible in the left background, on the horizon.

Anticipated change to view

The following elements are theoretically visible from this viewpoint (subject to further discussion within the magnitude of change section below):

- Containerised battery units, inverters and main power transformers sitting at 3.2m in height
- A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear
- O&M compound including O&M building and amenities
- Lightning protection poles (up to 30m in height)
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping.

Sensitivity: low

The sensitivity of this viewpoint is considered to be **low**, based on the following:

- Residents of and visitors to adjacent properties would have a vested interest in the visual amenity of the view, however, views from residences are partially or wholly screened from views to the south due to tree and shrub planting
- A moderate to low number of motorists travelling along Church Road at speeds of up to 80 km/h would predominantly comprise local residents travelling between work and home, and are likely to have a passing interest in the surrounding landscape
- Those on the surrounding properties would be spending prolonged stretches of time at the property, however, would be predominantly focussed on the task at hand.

Magnitude of change: moderate

From this viewpoint, the factors contributing to the magnitude of change include:

- The Project would introduce infrastructure in the background of the view
- The scale of the infrastructure would include solid structures up to 3.2 metres in height and lightning protection posts up to 30m in height with a mature tree centrally in the view providing minor visual buffering
- The solid structural elements would represent a new and visually distinct elements within the view, with the likely white colouring of the battery units contrasting with the muted tones of the existing landscape palette
- The lightning protection posts are tall, narrow elements compared to the surrounding high voltage transmission towers throughout the agricultural landscape in the middle and background
- The Project would be viewed from a distance of approximately 1.4km
- The changes would be seen across a small proportion of the view from this viewpoint
- The Project would not obstruct views to the vegetated ridge line and vegetated hills in the background
- Changes due to the Project would be long term, with the proposed elements remaining visible over the long term unless new vegetation is introduced to partially screen views.

Overall, the magnitude of change at this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate**.

Visual impact rating: moderate to low (adverse)

The visual impact of the Project from this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate to low (adverse)**. This reflects:

- The low sensitivity of the viewpoint, which represents views from nearby residences with a proprietary interest in the view, however views would be screened by vegetation. The typical view seen by motorists as they travel along the road would remain largely unchanged
- The moderate magnitude of change, which is due to the addition of infrastructure within the view. While the view includes existing electrical infrastructure (transmission lines and poles), the proposed elements would include solid white structures (3.2m in height) which are visually different to elements in the existing view, and would remain in the view for the long-term.

The adverse qualitative rating is in response to the increased electrical infrastructure within the view, which would result in more visually prominent, utilitarian structures positioned in the background of the viewpoint within an open agricultural landscape, with a reduction in visual amenity within the view.

6.3.2 Viewpoint 02: Hazelwood North community facilities

This viewpoint is located on Church Road, across from Hazelwood North Primary School and adjacent to Hazelwood North Reserve, approximately 1.2km north of the project boundary (refer to Figure 6-2). The impact to visual amenity from this location is assessed in Table 6-2.

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Figure 6-3 Existing view from Viewpoint 02: Hazelwood North community facilities

Table 6-2 Viewpoint 02 - Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint 02: Hazelwood North community facilities	
Receptors	- Receptors at this viewpoint include community members visiting Hazelwood North Primary School and facilities at Hazelwood North Reserve to nearby properties who would primarily be focused on their activities - Property owners of the private church at 126 Church Road would have a vested interest in the quality of the view from their property - Local motorists would have a passing interest in the view and would be travelling at up to 80 kilometres per hour or slowing to enter driveways
Existing view	The existing view from this location (refer to Figure 6-3) comprises an expansive, open pastoral landscape, characterised by a flat to gently undulating paddock extending across the foreground and middle ground, with bands of trees and individual trees scattered throughout the paddocks. The foreground of the view includes a post-and-wire fence running parallel to Church Road, a two-way sealed road to the right of frame, bordered by a grassed verge with tall, dry grasses. The road corridor contains power poles and overhead power lines forming linear vertical elements. To the left of frame, a band of mature trees forms a strong vegetated edge adjacent to a small church. Beyond the fence, open green paddocks extend across the middle ground, largely cleared, with occasional bands of trees and clusters of vegetation around farm sheds situated centrally within the view. The background consists of densely vegetated hillsides, contributing to the open rural character of the view.
Anticipated change to view	The following elements are theoretically visible from this viewpoint (subject to further discussion within the magnitude of change section below): - Containerised battery units, inverters and main power transformers sitting at 3.2m in height - A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear - O&M compound including O&M building and amenities - Lightning protection poles (up to 30m in height) - Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping
Sensitivity: moderate	The sensitivity of this viewpoint is considered to be moderate, based on the following: Community members visiting Hazelwood North Primary School would have low visibility due to buffer planting lining the boundary of the school

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Viewpoint 02: Hazelwood North community facilities

- Community members utilising the facilities at Hazelwood North Reserve would have direct views from parts of the open space area, however boundary planting would screen views from the majority of the facilities
- Residents of and visitors to the adjacent property would have a vested interest in the visual amenity of the view, however views from property are partially or wholly screened from views to the south due to mature bands of tree planting
- A moderate to low number of motorists travelling along Church Road at speeds of up to 80 km/h would predominantly comprise local residents travelling between work and home, and are likely to have a passing interest in the surrounding landscape.

Magnitude of change: **moderate**

From this viewpoint, the factors contributing to the magnitude of change include:

- The Project would introduce infrastructure in the background of the view
- The scale of the infrastructure would include solid structures up to 3.2 metres in height and lightning protection posts up to 30m in height
- The solid structural elements would represent a new and visually distinct elements within the view, with the likely white colouring of the battery units contrasting with the muted tones of the existing landscape palette
- The lightning protection posts are tall, narrow elements compared to the surrounding high voltage transmission towers throughout the agricultural landscape in the background
- The Project would be viewed from a distance of approximately 1.2km
- The changes would be seen across a small proportion of the view from this viewpoint
- The Project would not obstruct views to the vegetated ridgeline and vegetated hills in the background due to topography
- Changes due to the Project would be long-term, with the proposed elements remaining visible over the long term unless new vegetation is introduced to partially screen views.

Overall, the magnitude of change at this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate**.

Visual impact rating: **moderate (adverse)**

The visual impact of the Project from this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate (adverse)**. This reflects:

- The moderate sensitivity of the viewpoint, which represents views from nearby community facilities and private property with a proprietary interest in the view, however the Project would be viewed from a distance of 1.2km with views wholly or partially screened by vegetation. The typical view seen by motorists as they travel along the road would remain largely unchanged
- The moderate magnitude of change, which is due to the addition of infrastructure within the view. While the view includes existing electrical infrastructure (transmission lines and poles), the proposed elements would include solid white structures (3.2m in height) which are visually different to elements in the existing view and would remain in the view for the long-term.

The adverse qualitative rating is in response to the increased electrical infrastructure within the view, which would result in more visually prominent, utilitarian structures positioned in the background of the viewpoint within an open agricultural landscape, with a reduction in visual amenity within the view

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Figure 6-4 Photomontage showing the proposal seen from Viewpoint 02

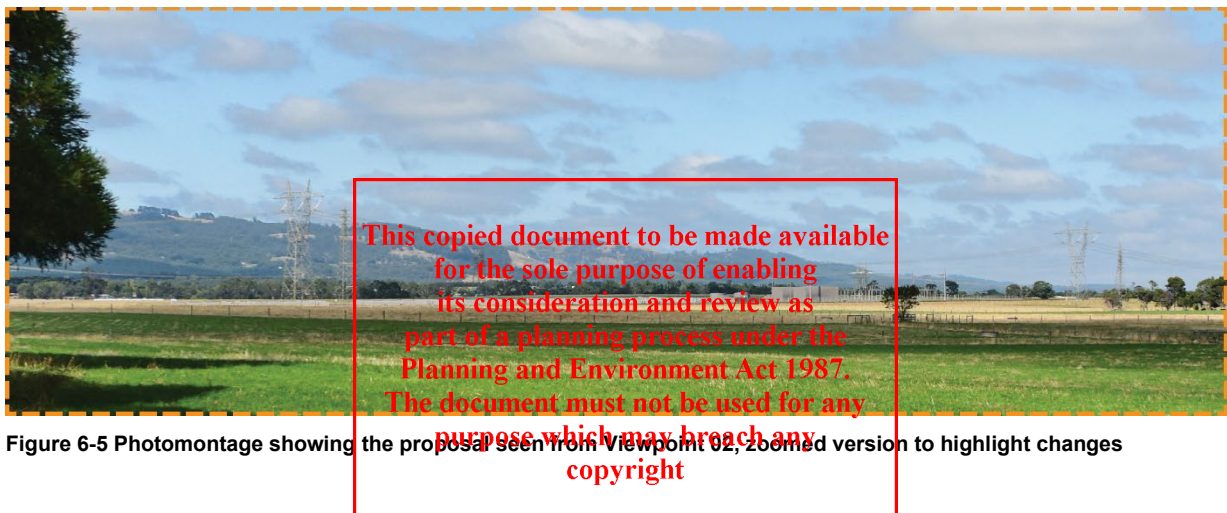


Figure 6-5 Photomontage showing the proposal seen from Viewpoint 02, zoomed version to highlight changes

6.3.3 Viewpoint 03: Central Hazelwood Road

This viewpoint is located on Hazelwood Road, approximately 1.3km east of the project boundary, adjacent to the property at 1100 Hazelwood Road, and illustrates the view that residents, workers and visitors to the property may see (refer to Figure 6-6). The impact to visual amenity from this location is assessed in

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Table 6-3.



Figure 6-6 Existing view from Viewpoint 03: Central Hazelwood Road

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Table 6-3 Viewpoint 03 - Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint 03: Central Hazelwood Road

Receptors

- Receptors at this viewpoint include residents of and visitors to nearby properties, including 1100 Hazelwood Road, who would have a vested interest in the quality of the view from their property
- Any workers to the property would have a lesser interest in the view, and would primarily be focused on the task at hand
- Local motorists would have a passing interest in the view and would be travelling at up to 100 kilometres per hour or slowing to enter driveways

Existing view

The existing view from this location (refer to Figure 6-6) comprises a broad rural outlook across open paddocks, framed by remnant native vegetation and roadside planting.

The foreground includes a grassed roadside verge dominated by tall, dry pasture grasses. Mature, native tree plantings frame the left of the view and form vegetated edge along the road corridor. Beyond the verge, post-and-wire fencing encloses open paddocks that extend across the middle ground of the view. Bands of wind-break tree plantings are sparsely distributed within the paddocks. The background comprises a distant low ridgeline and vegetated hills.

Anticipated change to view

The following elements are theoretically visible from this viewpoint (subject to further discussion within the magnitude of change section below):

- Containerised battery units, inverters and main power transformers sitting at 3.2m in height
- A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear
- O&M compound including O&M building, amenities and car parking
- Lightning protection poles (up to 30m in height)
- Firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants and internal access tracks
- New access track and crossover from Tramway Road
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping.

Sensitivity: **moderate**

The sensitivity of this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate**, based on the following:

- A moderate number of receptors are anticipated to see this view, including higher number of motorists and a low number of residents
- Visual receptors would see the view from an elevated vantage point, with clear views across the landscape
- Residents of and visitors to adjacent properties would have a vested interest in the visual amenity of the view. Some vegetation may provide visual buffering for the back (west facing side) of the property
- A moderate number of motorists travelling along Hazelwood Road at speeds of up to 100km/h would predominantly comprise local residents travelling between work and home, and are likely to have a passing interest in the surrounding landscape.

Magnitude of change: **moderate**

From this viewpoint, the factors contributing to the magnitude of change include:

- The Project would introduce infrastructure in the background of the view

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Viewpoint 03: Central Hazelwood Road

- The scale of the infrastructure would include solid structures up to 3.2 metres in height and lightning protection posts up to 30m in height
- The above elements are substantial in scale, but are smaller than the existing infrastructure in the background of the view, including the Hazelwood Terminal Station, Jeeralang Power Station and associated high voltage transmission lines throughout the agricultural landscape in the middle ground
- The Project would be viewed from a distance of approximately 1.3km
- The changes would be seen across a small proportion of the view from this viewpoint, from a slightly elevated vantage point
- The Project would not obstruct views to the vegetated ridgeline and vegetated hills in the background due to topography
- Changes due to the Project would be long-term, with the proposed elements remaining visible over the long term unless new vegetation is introduced to partially screen views.

Overall, the magnitude of change at this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate**.

Visual impact rating: **moderate (adverse)**

The visual impact of the Project from this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate (adverse)**. This reflects:

- The moderate sensitivity of the viewpoint, which represents views from nearby residences with a proprietary interest in the view, however views may be screened by vegetation. The typical view seen by motorists as they travel along the road would remain largely unchanged as the Project makes up a small portion of the overall view, viewed from a distance
- The moderate magnitude of change, which is due to the addition of infrastructure similar in character to existing electrical infrastructure behind the Project, although this would be positioned closer to the viewpoint than existing infrastructure, and would be a long-term addition to the view.

The adverse qualitative rating is in response to the increased electrical infrastructure within the view, which would result in more visually prominent, utilitarian structures positioned in the background of the viewpoint within an open agricultural landscape, with a reduction in visual amenity within the view.



Figure 6-7 Photomontage showing the proposal seen from Viewpoint 03

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Figure 6-8 Photomontage showing the proposal seen from Viewpoint 03, zoomed version to highlight changes

6.3.4 Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road

This viewpoint is located on Hazelwood Road, approximately 1.4km southeast of the project boundary, and illustrates the view that residents, workers and visitors to the nearby may see (refer to Figure 6-9). The impact to visual amenity ~~from this location is assessed in Table 6-4.~~

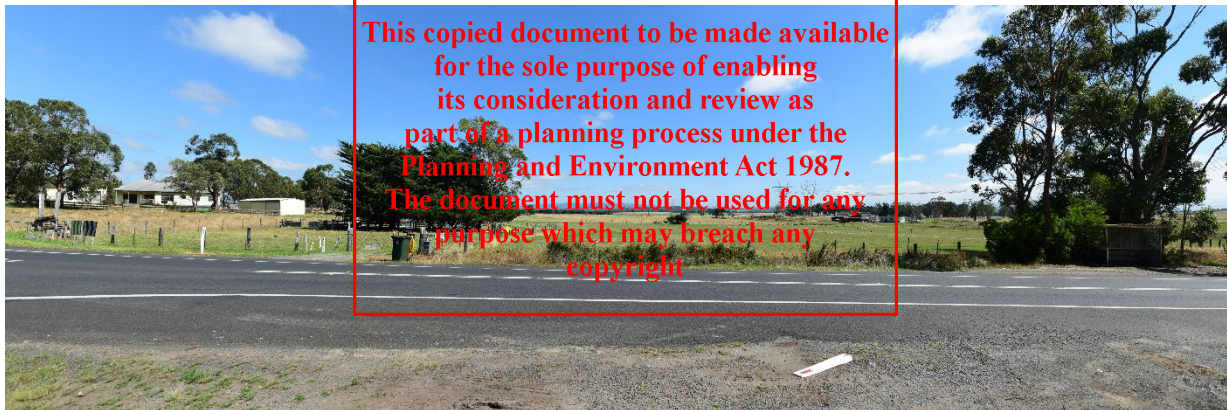


Figure 6-9 Existing view from Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road

Table 6-4 Viewpoint 04 - Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road

Receptors

- Receptors at this viewpoint include residents of and visitors to nearby properties, including 1152, 1200 and 1230 Hazelwood Road, who would have a vested interest in the quality of the view from their property
- Any workers to the property would have a lesser interest in the view, and would primarily be focused on the task at hand
- Local motorists would have a passing interest in the view and would be travelling at up to 100 kilometres per hour or slowing to enter driveways

Existing view

The existing view from this location (refer to Figure 6-9) comprises an open rural landscape viewed from the far side of Hazelwood Road, with agricultural paddocks extending across the view.

The foreground is defined by the two-way sealed lanes of Hazelwood Road with a gravel shoulder and grassed verge. Post-and-wire fencing runs parallel to the road, delineating the paddocks. To the left and right of frame, rural homesteads and sheds are visible. Open paddocks extend centrally beyond the fence into the middle ground, with scattered trees, farm infrastructure and occasional small

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Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road

structures visible. High-voltage transmission towers and lines are visible in the middle to far distance, forming prominent vertical elements within the landscape. Low rolling hills are visible in the background.

Anticipated change to view

The following elements are theoretically visible from this viewpoint (subject to further discussion within the magnitude of change section below):

- Containerised battery units, inverters and main power transformers sitting at 3.2m in height
- A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear
- O&M compound including O&M building and amenities
- Lightning protection poles (up to 30m in height)
- Firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants and internal access tracks
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping

Sensitivity: **moderate**

The sensitivity of this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate**, based on the following:

- A low number of receptors are anticipated to see this view.
- Visual receptors be viewing from a reactively flat vantage point, with views extending across the landscape
- Residents of and visitors to the nearby properties would have a vested interest in the visual amenity of the view. Mature vegetation may provide visual buffering for the property to the left of frame. The property to the right of frame is located within proximity of high voltage power lines which dominate views from the property with no vegetation buffering existing around the property
- A moderate to low number of motorists travelling along Hazelwood Road at speeds of up to 100km/h would predominantly comprise local residents travelling between work and home, and are likely to have a passing interest in the surrounding landscape.

Magnitude of change: **moderate**

From this viewpoint, the factors contributing to the magnitude of change include:

- The Project would introduce infrastructure in the background of the view
- The scale of the infrastructure would include solid structures up to 3.2 metres in height and lightning protection posts up to 30m in height
- The solid structural elements would represent new and visually distinct elements within the view, with the likely white colouring of the battery units contrasting with the muted tones of the existing landscape palette
- The lightning protection posts are tall, narrow elements compared to the surrounding high voltage transmission towers which are a defining feature of the view, traversing the landscape in the view from the right of view to the central background
- The Project would be viewed from a distance of approximately 1.4km
- The changes would be seen across a small proportion of the view from this viewpoint
- The Project would not obstruct views to the vegetated ridgeline and vegetated hills in the background
- Changes due to the Project would be long-term, with the proposed elements remaining visible over the long term unless new vegetation is introduced to partially screen views

Overall, the magnitude of change at this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate**.

Visual impact rating: **moderate (adverse)**

The visual impact of the Project from this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate (adverse)**. This reflects:

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Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road

- The moderate sensitivity of the viewpoint, which represents views from nearby residences with a proprietary interest in the view and the less invested motorists who would travel along the road at high speeds
- The moderate magnitude of change, which is due to the addition of infrastructure within the view seen from a distance of around 1.4km. While the view includes existing electrical infrastructure (transmission lines and poles), the Project would introduce a new and visually distinct elements which would include solid white structures (3.2m in height) into the existing view and would remain in the view for the long-term.

The adverse qualitative rating is in response to the increased electrical infrastructure within the view, which would result in more visually prominent, utilitarian structures positioned in the background of the viewpoint within an open agricultural landscape, with a reduction in visual amenity within the view

6.3.5 Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek

This viewpoint is located on Boldings Road, approximately 1.1km south of the project boundary, adjacent to the property at 125 Boldings Road, and illustrates the view that residents, workers and visitors to the property may see (refer to Figure 6-10). The impact to visual amenity from this location is assessed in Table 6-5.

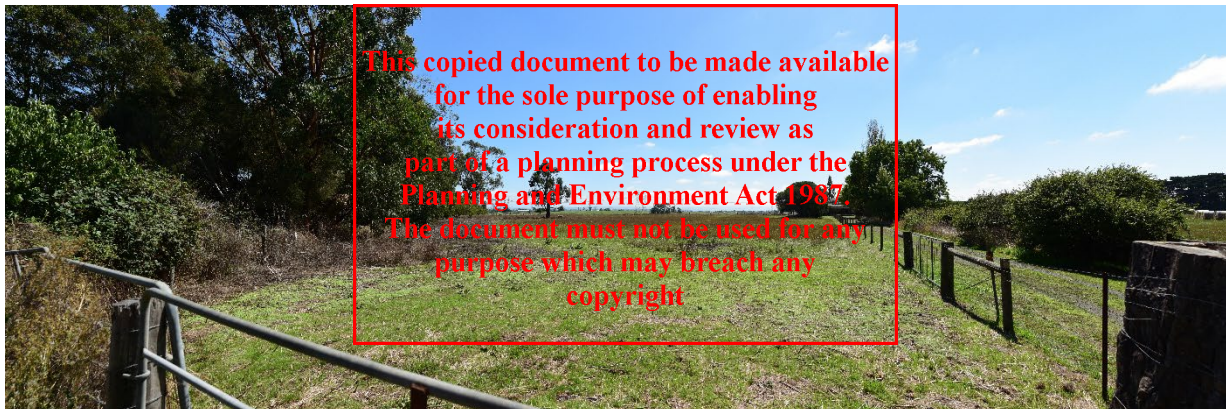


Figure 6-10 Existing view from Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek

Table 6-5 Viewpoint 05 - Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek

Receptors

- Receptors at this viewpoint include residents of and visitors to nearby properties, including 125 Boldings Road, who would have a vested interest in the quality of the view from their property
- Any workers to the property would have a lesser interest in the view, and would primarily be focused on the task at hand
- Local motorists would have only glimpse views towards the Project with bands of vegetation lining the road corridor to the sides of this viewpoint and would be travelling at up to 100 kilometres per hour or slowing to enter driveways

Existing view

The existing view from this location (refer to Figure 6-10) comprises a contained rural outlook across a cleared paddock, framed by fencing and patches of established vegetation, with distant agricultural land visible beyond.

The foreground includes a metal farm gate and fencing forming the immediate edge of the view. To the left of frame, mature trees and dense shrubs create a vegetated boundary, while fencing continues along the right side of the paddock, guiding views toward a homestead with mature vegetation in the middle ground. The paddock extends gently outward with isolated trees and vegetation scattered

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Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek

across the landscape. The background consists of flat to gently undulating farmland and distant structures.

Anticipated change to view

The following elements are theoretically visible from this viewpoint (subject to further discussion within the magnitude of change section below):

- Containerised battery units, inverters and main power transformers sitting at 3.2m in height
- A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear
- O&M compound including O&M building and amenities
- Lightning protection poles (up to 30m in height)
- Firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants and internal access tracks
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping.

Sensitivity: **moderate**

The sensitivity of this viewpoint is considered to be **moderate**, based on the following:

- A low number of receptors are anticipated to see this view
- Visual receptors would see the view from a reactively flat vantage point, with views extending across the landscape
- Residents of and visitors to the nearby property would have a vested interest in the visual amenity of the view. Mature vegetation may provide visual buffering for the back (north facing side) of the property
- A moderate to low number of motorists travelling along Boldings Road at speeds of up to 100km/h would predominantly comprise local residents travelling between work and home and are likely to have a passing interest in the surrounding landscape.

Magnitude of change: **moderate**

From this viewpoint, the factors contributing to the magnitude of change include:

- The Project would introduce infrastructure in the background of the view
- The scale of the infrastructure would include solid structures up to 3.2 metres in height and lightning protection posts up to 30m in height, however, would be partially screened by an existing cluster of planting centrally in the view
- The solid structural elements would represent a new and visually distinct elements within the view, with the likely white colouring of the battery units contrasting with the muted tones of the existing landscape palette
- The lightning protection posts are tall, narrow elements compared to the surrounding high voltage transmission towers throughout the agricultural landscape in the background
- The Project would be viewed from a distance of approximately 1.1km
- The changes would be seen across a small proportion of the view from this viewpoint
- Changes due to the Project would be long-term, with the proposed elements remaining visible over the long term unless new vegetation is introduced to partially screen views

Overall, the magnitude of change at this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate**.

Visual impact rating: **moderate (adverse)**

The visual impact of the Project from this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate (adverse)**. This reflects:

- The moderate sensitivity of the viewpoint, which represents views from a nearby residence with a proprietary interest in the view, and motorists, who would experience only glimpse views while travelling at up to 100km/h along the road lined by vegetation
- The moderate magnitude of change, which is due to the addition of infrastructure within the view but seen from around 1.1km away. While the view includes existing electrical infrastructure (transmission lines and poles), the Project would introduce a new and visually distinct elements

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Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek

which would include solid white structures (3.2m in height) into the existing view and would remain in the view for the long-term.

The adverse qualitative rating is in response to the increased electrical infrastructure within the view, which would result in more visually prominent, utilitarian structures positioned in the background of the viewpoint within an open agricultural landscape, with a reduction in visual amenity within the view.

6.3.6 Viewpoint 06: Tramway Road

This viewpoint is located on Tramway Road, adjacent to Hazelwood Terminal Station, approximately 600m west of the project boundary and illustrates the view that workers at the terminal station may see (refer to Figure 6-11). The impact to visual amenity from this location is assessed in Table 6-6.

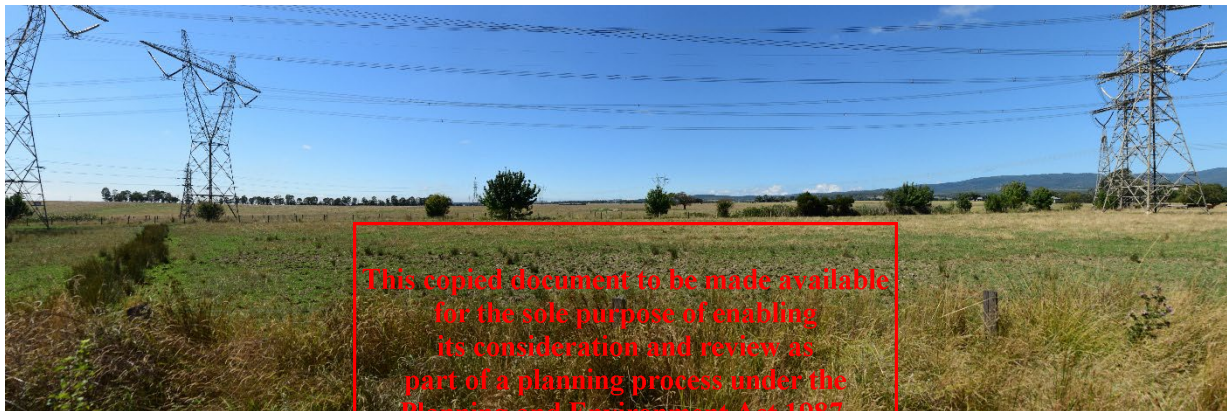


Figure 6-11 Existing view from Viewpoint 06, Tramway Road
Table 6-6 Viewpoint 06 - Visual Impact Assessment

Viewpoint 06: Tramway Road

Receptors

- Receptors at this viewpoint would primarily comprise local motorists would have a passing interest in the view and would be travelling at up to 100 kilometres per hour
- Workers in businesses such as Hazelwood Terminal Station and would have a lesser interest in the view, and would primarily be focused on the task at hand

Existing view

The existing view from this location (refer to Figure 6-11) comprises an open pastoral landscape characterised by large-scale electricity transmission infrastructure spanning broad agricultural paddocks.

The foreground includes tall dry grasses and low pasture within a fenced agricultural area. Steel transmission towers and overhead transmission lines are prominent vertical elements positioned within the middle ground, with multiple lines traversing the view horizontally. Open paddocks extend across the landscape with scattered shrubs and isolated trees. Additional transmission towers are visible receding into the distance. Low hills and a vegetated ridgeline form the background, contributing to the open and expansive rural character intersected by energy infrastructure.

Anticipated change to view

The following elements are theoretically visible from this viewpoint (subject to further discussion within the magnitude of change section below):

- Containerised battery units, inverters and main power transformers sitting at 3.2m in height
- A project collector substation, main power transformers, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear
- O&M compound including O&M building, amenities, car parking

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Viewpoint 06: Tramway Road

- Lightning protection poles (up to 30m in height)
- Firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants and internal access tracks
- New access track and crossover from Tramway Road
- Other ancillary infrastructure including boundary security fencing, lighting and landscaping

Sensitivity: **low**

The sensitivity of this viewpoint is considered to be **low**, based on the following:

- A low number of workers would see the view from this viewpoint, and a moderate number of people travelling along the road
- Motorists would have a passing interest in the view and would be travelling at up to 100 kilometres per hour, and would have their attention focussed on the act of driving
- Workers adjacent sites would primarily be focused on the task at hand.

Magnitude of change: **high**

From this viewpoint, the factors contributing to the magnitude of change include:

- The Project would introduce infrastructure in the middle ground of the view
- The scale of the infrastructure would include solid structures up to 3.2 metres in height and lightning protection posts up to 30m in height, however, the Project would be partially screened by existing shrub planting along Bennetts Creek, between the viewpoint and the Project
- The solid structural elements would represent a new and visually distinct elements within the view, with the likely white colouring of the battery units contrasting with the muted tones of the existing landscape palette
- The lightning protection posts are tall, narrow elements compared to the surrounding high voltage transmission towers in the fore, middle and background
- The Project may partially obstruct views to the distant vegetated ridgeline due to the flat topography
- The Project would be viewed from a distance of approximately 600m
- The changes would be seen across a small proportion of the view from this viewpoint
- Changes due to the Project would be long-term, with the proposed elements remaining visible over the long term unless new vegetation is introduced to partially screen views

Overall, the magnitude of change at this viewpoint is assessed as **high**.

Visual impact rating: **moderate (adverse)**

The visual impact of the Project from this viewpoint is assessed as **moderate (adverse)**. This reflects:

- The moderate sensitivity of the viewpoint, which represents views for workers at the nearby energy infrastructure sites and motorists as they travel along the road, who would be primarily focussed on the task at hand, rather than surrounding views.
- The moderate magnitude of change, which is due to the addition of infrastructure within the view. While the view includes existing electrical infrastructure (transmission lines and poles), the proposed elements would include solid white structures (3.2m in height) which are visually different to elements in the existing view and would be viewed from a distance of 600m.

The adverse qualitative rating is in response to the increased electrical infrastructure within the view, which would result in more visually prominent, utilitarian structures positioned in the middle ground of the view within an open agricultural landscape, with a reduction in visual amenity within the view.

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Figure 6-12 Photomontage showing the proposal seen from Viewpoint 06



Figure 6-13 Photomontage showing the proposal seen from Viewpoint 06, zoomed version to highlight changes

6.4 Visual impact assessment during construction

Construction works would include enabling works, civil, structural, mechanical and electrical works, testing and commissioning and demobilisation. A construction laydown area and construction compound would be established to the north of the Project site boundary. Subject to equipment lead times and availability, it is anticipated that construction of the Project would commence in early 2028 with an 18 month construction timeframe.

Visual receptors likely to see the Project during construction are outlined in Section 6.1, the most sensitive of which are likely to be residents. Residences near the Project would experience a moderate degree of visibility of the construction works, particularly heavy machinery in operation. However, views from residences would be seen from distances of over 1.1km, and would be partially screened by mature tree cover or topography from most locations.

From surrounding roads, patches of bushland, other tall vegetation and topography reduces the likelihood of clear, unobstructed views to the Project during construction. The most detailed views to the Project during construction would be seen from Tramway Road, with views from the stretch closest to the Project unobstructed by vegetation.

Overall, the visual receptors experiencing the changes during construction are considered to have a moderate sensitivity to change, given the mix of a low number of more sensitive residential receptors, and the higher number of less sensitive visual receptors passing the project on nearby roads.

The most visually prominent elements of the construction activity would include:

- Site establishment works including land clearance
- Establishment of a laydown and construction compound approximately 120m x 410m to the north of the project site

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- Trenching and Horizontal Directional Drilling activities for the underground cable
- Construction of site facilities for staff (temporary and permanent)
- Benching within the Project site boundary, drainage, excavation of trenches and placement of ducting for internal reticulation cabling, pouring concrete pads for equipment
- Construction of onsite substation, underground reticulation cabling, underground transmission cable to POC, upgrade works at POC to existing electricity grid.
- Installation of battery units, PCS, transformers and associated equipment
- Construction of ancillary infrastructure such as O&M facility and car parking

The Project would be more visually prominent during the construction period, given that all the visible elements seen at operation would be present, but seen in conjunction with the visual clutter of construction activity (including vehicle movement, plant and equipment, 'fresh' earth due to benching, and any temporary construction compounds and ancillary infrastructure required during the construction period). These changes would comprise a high magnitude of change within the existing views, with the visual clutter of construction uncharacteristic within the surrounding landscape.

Overall visual impact of construction: **High to moderate (adverse)**

The visual impact of the Project is therefore assessed as high to moderate (adverse), comprising the highest level of impact the Project would have during its lifespan. While substantial, it is noted that this stage of works is temporary, and the visual impact would reduce at operation.

The adverse qualitative rating reflects the introduction of large scale construction equipment and activity into a predominantly open rural agricultural landscape. While visual clutter associated with construction would be visible from the surrounding landscape, the construction phase is temporary. It is also noted that existing tall electrical infrastructure similar to that proposed are already present within the surrounding landscape.

6.5 Decommissioning phase

The operational life of the BESS is indicatively estimated at 40 years, after which time the project would commence decommissioning.

Decommissioning of Project components would be managed in accordance with the relevant laws and policies at the time of decommissioning. During decommissioning, above ground components would be removed and recycled where possible, and land rehabilitated. The battery units would either be disposed of, repurposed or recycled at a licensed disposal facility. Some project components such as access roads may remain subject to consultation with stakeholders. The decommissioning timeframe is expected to be approximately 12 months post operation phase.

Landscape character and visual impacts during decommissioning would be similar to those experienced during construction, however, they are expected to be of lower magnitude due to the shorter duration, reduced intensity of works and the progressive removal of infrastructure rather than its installation. A temporary increase in construction equipment and activities, including demolition equipment, cranes, heavy vehicles and site compounds, would be visible from nearby roads and surrounding properties, however proposed vegetation surrounding the site implemented during the construction phase should provide visual buffering to surrounding properties and therefore be a lesser impact than during the construction phase.

While ground disturbance associated with the removal of infrastructure may result in changes to views in the short-term due to exposed soils, these activities would be temporary and progressively reduced through staged rehabilitation. Temporary impacts to visual amenity would reduce over time as vertical and built elements are removed, resulting in an overall reduction in electrical infrastructure in the landscape. Decommissioning impacts would be short-term and of lower magnitude than construction impacts.

With appropriate management, such as staged removal of infrastructure, minimisation of lighting, retention of vegetation where practicable and the rehabilitation and revegetation of the site, decommissioning impacts on landscape character and visual amenity would be temporary, reversible

and less pronounced than construction impacts. The post-decommissioning landscape would enable a return to an open rural character consistent with the surrounding landscape.

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7.0 Assessment of Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts have the potential to occur when impacts from a project overlap or interact with those of other proposals, potentially resulting in a larger overall effect (positive or negative) on the environment or local communities. Cumulative impacts may occur when proposals are constructed or operated concurrently or consecutively.

Proposals that have the potential to have a cumulative impact with the Project and are considered relevant for this LCVIA include (refer to Figure 7-1):

- **Gippsland BESS.** A 600MW development proposed by European Energy (pending approval, no proposed construction date confirmed) located immediately north of the Project
- **Tramway Road BESS.** A 300 to 1200 MWh project (approved, with construction to commence by late 2026) developed by Eku Energy located approximately 900 m to the southwest of the Project
- **Bennetts Creek BESS.** A 100 to 200 MW BESS project (approved, under construction, and proposed to be operational in early 2028) by Flow Power, located approximately 2 km northwest of the Project
- **Wooreen BESS.** A 350 MW/1400 MWh project (approved and under construction, proposed to be operational in late 2026) by Energy Australia, located at the Jeeralang power station approximately 500m east of the Project
- **Latrobe Valley BESS.** A 100 MW BESS (operational) by Tilt Renewables, located beside the existing Morwell Terminal Station on Monash Way, 2.5 km northwest of the Project
- **Hazelwood BESS.** A 50 MW facility built by Eku Energy and ENGIE, currently operational and located approximately 3.4 km west of the Project

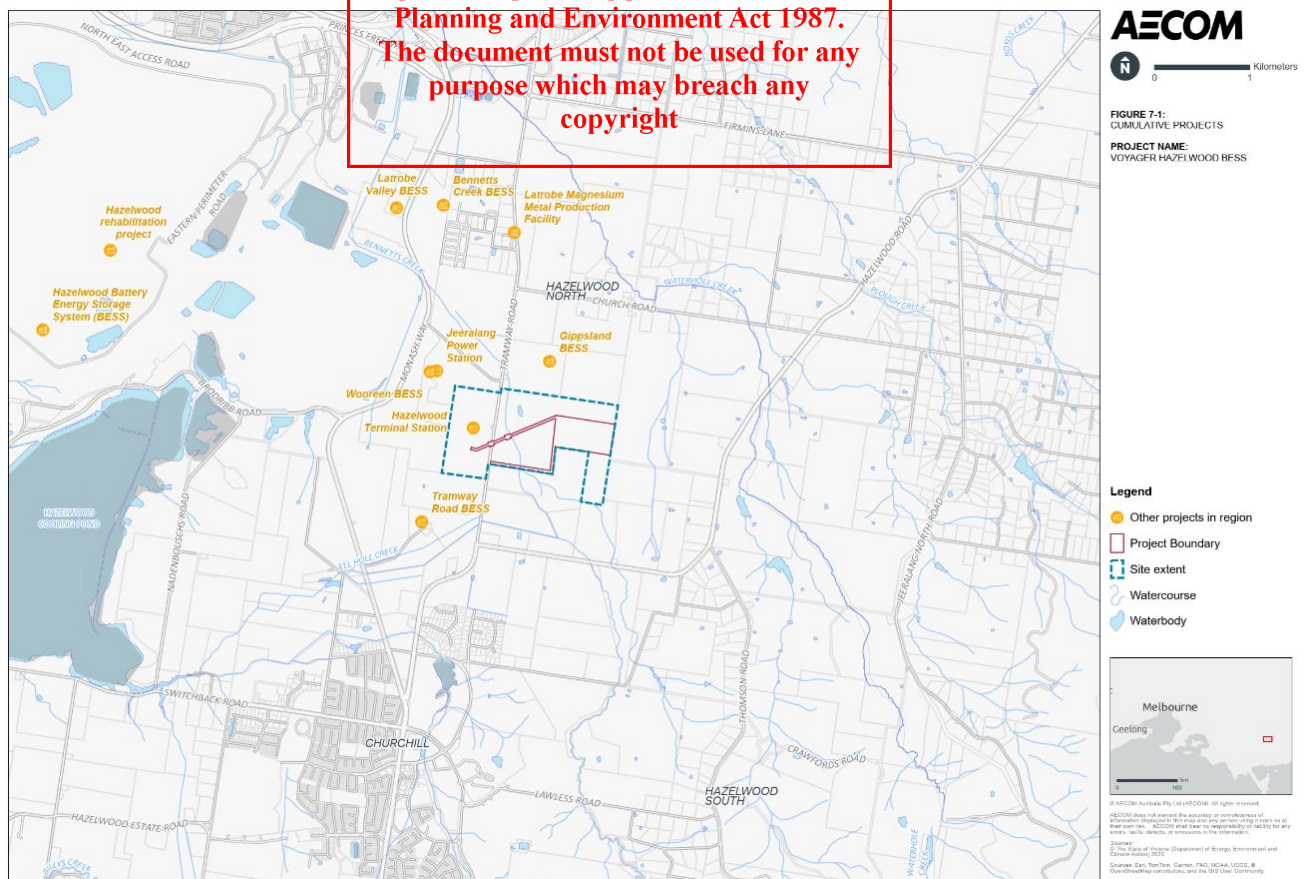


Figure 7-1 Proposed, approved and existing BESS projects in the local area

Construction of the Project is anticipated to begin in early 2028 (pending approval) with operation planned for mid-2029.

If the Project and the Gippsland BESS are both approved, it is assumed that the construction phases of these two projects would have some overlap. It is also assumed that the other five projects listed above would be completed and operational by this time (early 2028).

If the above assumptions are correct, the Latrobe Valley (and landscape within 4km of the Project) would have six BESS facilities operational by approximately mid-2029, four of which would be additional within the landscape (considering that Latrobe Valley BESS and Hazelwood BESS are already existing, operational developments within the surrounding landscape).

Overall, the increase in BESS developments within the surrounding landscape is likely to have a cumulative impact on local landscape character. Similar to what was found for the Project as an individual development, there would be an increase in electrical infrastructure within the rural agricultural landscape. This would result in an increase in the occurrence of LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure, within a landscape which is currently characteristically dominated by LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture. However, these projects are clustered around existing mining / electrical infrastructure (including the Jeeralang Power Station, Hazelwood Terminal Station and associated high voltage electrical easements and Hazelwood Mine).

Similarly, views within the local landscape would include an increase in electrical infrastructure (BESS developments). These would be most visually prominent to those travelling through the area on main roads (including Tramway Road and Monash Way), where visual receptors would have the opportunity to view these BESS developments in succession as they move through the landscape. However, due to the low density of residential homes in the rural landscape, it is unlikely that many individual residents would experience a cumulative impact of these projects within static views from their properties.

The highest potential cumulative impact would occur from Church Road and Hazelwood Road, with a low number of homes potentially receiving views to both the Project and Gippsland BESS. These locations (represented by Viewpoints 01, 02 and 03 in section 6.3 of this report) are likely to experience views to both projects, although these would be subject to existing visual compartmentalisation of the landscape by existing vegetation, which would reduce the extent of the projects seen from these locations.

While the changes to landscape character and views described above would result in cumulative impacts to both visual amenity and landscape character, it is noted that these would be somewhat anticipated given the Victorian Governments broader strategy to manage the transition away from coal-fired electricity generation, legislated energy storage targets. The Latrobe Valley has been identified by State and regional transition strategies as a key location for renewable energy generation, energy storage, transmission infrastructure and associated clean-energy industries, reflecting its historic role within Victoria's electricity system and its strategic grid connections.

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8.0 Recommended Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures recommended to reduce potential impacts of the Project on landscape character and visual amenity, to be considered during detailed design, include:

- Careful consideration of the colour and materiality of proposed structures, including the operation and maintenance buildings and water tanks. This should include the use of neutral, recessive tones (such as glaucous green or grey) and non-reflective finishes to reduce visual prominence.
- Retention and protection of existing vegetation where reasonable and feasible. In particular, efforts should be made to retain established tall vegetation within and surrounding the Project site boundary where practicable.
- Preparation of a detailed Landscape Plan to reduce impacts on landscape character and enhance visual amenity, including:
 - identification of vegetative screening locations to mitigate more substantial visual impacts where existing tree screening is absent, including consultation with nearby stakeholders (where appropriate) to assist in targeting screening outcomes for surrounding residences
 - consideration of potential cumulative impacts seen by residential receptors on Church Road and Hazelwood Road for the Project and the Gippsland BESS (if approved)
 - identification of Project infrastructure that would benefit most from ground-level screening to maximise the effectiveness of planting, recognising that screening of lower, solid structures may be more effective and practical than attempting to screen taller infrastructure where vegetation would only obscure the lower portions
 - selection of appropriate tree, shrub and grass species informed by nearby Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs), including EVC 16, EVC 53, EVC 55 and EVC 151
 - consultation with both a suitably qualified landscape architect and ecologist to maximise ecological function while minimising impacts on landscape character and visual amenity.
- Minimisation of lighting within the Project site boundary to reduce the visual prominence of the Project at night within the predominantly dark surrounding landscape, with lighting design informed by Australian Standard AS/NZS 4282:2023 – *Control of the obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting*.

Mitigation measures recommended to reduce the impact of the Project during construction and decommissioning phases include:

- Establish Tree Preservation Zones (TPZs) around trees to be retained. Tree protection would be undertaken in keeping with AS 4970-2009 *Protection of Trees on Development Sites* and would include exclusion fencing of TPZs
- Keep construction areas clean and tidy and place refuse in appropriate receptacles
- Provide well-presented and maintained site fencing with shade cloth (or similar material, where necessary) to minimise visual impacts. Temporary site fencing would be removed following construction completion.
- Measures to enhance visual amenity during construction and decommissioning to be considered within the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Decommissioning Plan for the Project.

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9.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to assess the potential landscape character and visual impacts and risks associated with the Project during construction, operation and decommissioning to inform the preparation of the planning permit required for the Project.

The Project would be situated within a landscape defined by a high degree of modification associated with agricultural land uses and energy infrastructure. The landscape typically comprises a gently undulating patchwork of paddocks with patches and bands of taller vegetation providing some spatial compartmentalisation within an open agricultural landscape. The open agricultural landscape is traversed by a series of high-voltage transmission lines connecting to the Hazelwood Terminal Station, located in the Project's site boundary. Other energy production and electrical infrastructure developments are located within the study area and surrounding landscape, including the decommissioned Hazelwood Power Station and open-cut mine, as well as the nearby Wooreen Energy Storage System (to be operational prior to 2027) and Jeeralang Power Station.

Four LCZs were identified within the study area from which to assess the Project's impact on landscape character, with the results of Project impact on each LCZ shown in Table 9-1. The assessment indicates that LCZ 1 would experience the greatest degree of change, with an increase in electrical infrastructure within the rural agricultural landscape. However, due to the highly modified and functional nature of this LCZ and existing high-voltage transmission lines through the LCZ, the landscape character impact rating has been assigned as moderate (adverse). LCZ 2 is considered to have a low impact with the proposed change, being the removal of a small portion of vegetation to allow for the underground connection. Environmental Living (LCZ 3) and Residential (LCZ 4) areas would remain unaffected, with no interface with the Project site boundary. Overall, the Project is considered to have a **low (adverse)** effect on landscape character within the study area.

Table 9-1 Landscape character impact assessment summary

	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Impact Rating	Qualitative Rating
LCZ 1: Rural Agriculture	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Adverse
LCZ 2: Energy Infrastructure	Low	Low	Low	Adverse
LCZ 3: Environmental Living	Moderate	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral
LCZ 4: Residential	Moderate	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral

Six viewpoints were selected to assess the visual impact of the Project (refer to Table 9-2). These viewpoints are located at publicly accessible locations surrounding the site and represent areas where sensitive receptors are most likely to experience views to the Project. The Project would introduce additional electrical infrastructure into existing views, resulting in an increase in visually prominent, utilitarian elements within the open agricultural landscape. However, most sensitive receptors would experience views from distances greater than approximately 1.1 km, within a landscape already characterised by the adjacent Hazelwood Terminal Station and high-voltage transmission lines that traverse and define the wider visual context. Overall, the visual impact due to the Project is considered to be **moderate (adverse)**.

It is noted that while the Project would have a moderate impact on views from the local surrounding area, no long distance views to the Project were identified, nor any views from particularly sensitive locations such as places associated with tourism, heightened cultural values or recreational importance (such as the Strzelecki Ranges or other identified regionally important locations).

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Table 9-2 Visual impact assessment summary

	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Impact Rating	Qualitative Rating
Viewpoint 01: Church Road west	Low	Moderate	Moderate to low	Adverse
Viewpoint 02: Hazelwood North community facilities	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Adverse
Viewpoint 03: Central Hazelwood Road	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Adverse
Viewpoint 04: Hazelwood Road at Thomson Road	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Adverse
Viewpoint 05: Boldings Road at Bennetts Creek	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Adverse
Viewpoint 06: Tramway Road	Low	High	Moderate	Adverse

The visual impact of the Project during construction is assessed as high to moderate (adverse) due to the introduction of large-scale construction equipment and activities into a predominantly rural, open pasture landscape, resulting in visual clutter visible from surrounding properties. The Project would be most visually prominent during the construction period, given that all the visible elements seen at operation would be present but seen in conjunction with the visual clutter of construction activity. However, it is noted that the construction period is temporary and the impact would reduce at operation.

Cumulative impacts to landscape character and views have been identified, give the four additional BESS projects currently proposed, approved or under construction in the local area.

While no mitigation measures to particularly reduce operational visual impacts from any one location have been identified as no viewpoints have resulted in a significant impact rating (being high or high to moderate), the implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in Section 8.0, including selection of materials and colour of infrastructure, lighting controls and the preparation of a landscape plan would ensure the visual prominence of the Project was minimised, and impacts would reduce over time as planting matured. It is noted, however, that potential cumulative visual impacts may be experienced by those on Church Road and Hazelwood Road, and any landscaping proposed to mitigate views from these locations should consider the proposed neighbouring Gippsland BESS.

In conclusion, the overall Project impact on landscape character and visual amenity are expected to be acceptable and manageable and consistent with the evolving energy infrastructure character of the Latrobe Valley.

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