

Planning Report

Hazelwood East BESS

28-Aug-2026
Hazelwood East BESS

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Planning Report

Hazelwood East BESS

Client: CI Hazelwood East ProjectCo Pty Ltd as trustee of the CI Hazelwood East Project Trust
ABN 21 872 745 506

Prepared by

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Quality Information

Document Planning Report
Ref 60771810
https://aecomaus.sharepoint.com/sites/voyager-hazelwoodeastbess/shared documents/approval team/hazelwood east bess - planning report_revdrfi.docx
Date 28-Aug-2026
Originator Patrick Tse
Checker/s Daniel Banfai
Verifier/s Daniel Haysom

Revision History

Rev	Revision Date	Details	Approved	
			Name/Position	Signature
D	03 September 2026	Final	Daniel Haysom	

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Abbreviations and glossary of terms

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
AACHS	Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
AH Act	<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i>
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DFP	Development Facilitation Process
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
EE Act	<i>Environment Effects Act 1978</i>
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EP Act	<i>Environment Protection Act 2017</i>
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
FFG Act	<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i>
GLaWAC	Gunai Kurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
HV	Heritage Victoria
ha	hectare
km	kilometres
LCZ	Landscape Character Zone
m	metres
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
MPS	Municipal Planning Strategy
MW	Megawatt
OSOM	Oversize Overmass (vehicle or load)
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyls
PCS	Power Conversion System
PPF	Planning Policy Framework
the 'Project'	Hazelwood East Battery Energy Storage System
P&E Act	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
VHI	Victorian Heritage Inventory
VPP	Victorian Planning Provisions

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
VTP	2025 Victorian Transmission Plan
Planning Scheme Zones	
FZ	Farming Zone
FZ1	Farming Zone – Schedule 1
SUZ	Special Use Zone
SUZ1	Special Use Zone – Schedule 1 (Brown Coal)
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
TRZ	Transport Zone
TRZ2	Transport Zone 2
Planning Scheme Overlays	
SRO1	State Resource Overlay 1

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project overview

AECOM Australia (**AECOM**) has prepared this Planning Report on behalf of CI Hazelwood East ProjectCo Pty Ltd as trustee for CI Hazelwood East Project Trust (ABN 21 872 745 506) (**Hazelwood East**) who is the Proponent for the planning permit application for the Battery Energy Storage System (**BESS**) at Hazelwood East (the **Project**). Hazelwood East is a wholly owned subsidiary of Voyager Renewables Pty Ltd (ABN 79 670 848 692) (**Voyager**), a local Australian energy company established by Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners. The application is for the use and development of a Utility Installation (BESS), altering access to TRZ and removal of native vegetation.

Voyager is proposing to develop, construct and operate the Project in response to 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.

The Project 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.

The Project is also located within the Gippsland Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). REZ are areas formally designated by the Victorian Government as being best suited for developing large-scale wind, solar, and battery projects. The Victorian Transmission Plan (**VTP**) sets out locations where renewable energy technologies and transmission should be built in Victoria in addition to when and in what capacity in order to meet Victoria's future energy needs over the next 15 years. The Gippsland REZ is incorporated into the VTP, having been identified as an area with significant transmission network capacity and the potential for coordinated connections into the 500 kV transmission network around Loy Yang.

The proposed BESS 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 report is to assess the planning implications associated with the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project to inform the preparation of the planning permit required for the Project. An overview of the site is illustrated in Figure 1. The report draws on the findings of various technical studies conducted to support the permit application.

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Figure 1 Site overview (AECOM, 2026)

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1.2 Application summary

1.2.1 Application details

The proposal and planning triggers are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Application Details

Requirement	Details
Project area	
Municipality	Latrobe City Council
Property address and formal property description	545 Tramway Road, Hazelwood North (Lot 1 TP547597) 530 Tramway Road, Hazelwood North (Lot 2G-A PP2749) 3840 Boldings Road, Hazelwood North (Lot 1 TP219245)
Total Project area	Site area: 140.24 hectares (ha) Indicative Project works area / Project boundary: Approx. 26ha
Proposal	Use and development of a utility installation (Battery Energy Storage System) and associated buildings and works.
Planning	
Planning scheme	Latrobe Planning Scheme
Responsible authority	Minister for Planning (Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) under delegation)
Planning permit triggers	Clause 35.07 (FZ1): Use of land for a 'utility installation'. Clause 35.07 (FZ1): Buildings and works associated with 'utility installation' Clause 36.04 (TRZ2): Use of land for a 'utility installation'. Clause 36.04 (TRZ2): Buildings and works associated with 'utility installation' Clause 52.29 (Land adjacent to the Principal Road Network): Alteration of access to a road in Transport Zone 2. Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation Removal): Removal of native vegetation. Clause 52.05 (Signs): To display a business identification sign.
Zones	- Farming Zone – Schedule 1 (FZ1) - Special Use Zone – Schedule 1 (SUZ1) - Transport Zone – Principal road network (TRZ2)
Overlays	State Resource Overlay – Schedule 1 (SRO1)
Particular provisions	Clause 52.06 (Car parking) Clause 52.17 (Native vegetation) Clause 52.22 (Significant Economic Development) Clause 52.29 (Land adjacent to the Principal Road Network)
Notice and review	Pursuant to Clause 53.22-4 (Exemption from review), the application is exempt from the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> .
Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity	The site includes Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity (AACHS)
Heritage Inventory	The site contains a Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) Listing: H8121-0061 Otterburn Farm Complex

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1.2.2 Approval process

This application is lodged through the Development Facilitation Process (**DFP**) process. The Project meets the sector and threshold criteria as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 Project eligibility for DFP assessment pathway – Clause 53.22

Use	Condition	Project component	Threshold met?
Utility installation	A utility installation used to: • Transmit or distribute electricity; or • <u>Store electricity if the installed capacity is 1 megawatt (MW) or greater</u>; or • Transmit or distribute gas. must be proposed.	500MW Battery Energy Storage System	Yes

1.3 Report structure and supporting documents

This planning report provides an assessment of the Project as follows:

- Section 1.0 provides an overview of the Project.
- Section 2.0 outlines the proposal, describing the existing site and detailing the Project's key components including details of construction, operation, and decommissioning.
- Section 3.0 provides an overview of the existing conditions of the environment.
- Section 4.0 describes the consultation and stakeholder engagement undertaken for the Project.
- Section 5.0 outlines the legislation and policy relevant to the Project.
- Section 6.0 presents the relevant provisions of the Planning Scheme and provides an assessment of the Project against them.
- Section 7.0 provides a summary of the specialist technical assessments and any potential impacts relevant to the Project.
- Section 8.0 concludes the report.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents which have been prepared specifically for this application:

- Agricultural Assessment prepared by RMCG (Appendix 1)
- Ecological Assessment prepared by AECOM (Appendix 2)
- Fire Risk Management Plan prepared by Fire Risk Consultants (Appendix 3)
- Historical Heritage Assessment prepared by Andrew Long and Associates Pty Ltd (Appendix 4)
- Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by AECOM (Appendix 5)
- Environmental Noise Assessment prepared by Resonate (Appendix 6)
- Surface Water Impact Assessment prepared by AECOM (Appendix 7)
- Traffic Impact Assessment prepared by AECOM (Appendix 8)

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2.0 Project description

2.1 Overview

Voyager is proposing to develop, construct and operate the Project comprising a Battery Energy Storage System (**BESS**) of approximately 500 MW/ 2,000 MWh capacity, at 545 Tramway Road, Hazelwood North, that connects to Hazelwood Terminal Station on the adjacent site at 530 Tramway Road. The purpose of the Project is to store excess energy from the grid during periods of low demand, releasing it back to the grid during high demand periods. The total footprint of the Project boundary (as shown on Figure 2) is approximately 26.56 hectares.

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 final specifications and layout would be subject to detailed design considerations.

The BESS (shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3) would consist of:

- Approximately 394 containerised battery units and approximately 142 inverters¹ 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 retention basin and firewater management devices including water tanks and hydrants, 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

Further detail on these components is provided below.

2.2 Project description

2.2.1 Battery Energy Storage System and transmission to Hazelwood Terminal Station

The current preliminary design is based on lithium ion chemistry energy storage system specifications.

The transmission infrastructure to connect the BESS to the Hazelwood Terminal Station consists of a 500kV trenched cable system. The easement is generally aligned with an existing overhead easement and is proposed to cross Bennetts Creek and Tramway Road once. These crossings have been identified as potential candidates for under-boring using horizontal directional drilling, subject to further investigation.

Table 3 BEES / electrical components

Component	Description
Battery Storage Yard	Power capacity: approximately 500MW Duration: 4-hour duration (2,000 MWh energy capacity)

¹ Note some technical reports for the planning permit application have used a higher number of battery blocks and inverters in their assessments. This provides a conservative approach to the assessment of impacts. The number of battery blocks and inverters has subsequently been reduced through the design and assessment process. The final specifications and layout would be subject to detailed design considerations.

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Component	Description
	Approximately 394 battery blocks* Approximately 142 inverters* Thermal Management: Thermal bay which includes fans, radiators, pumps, compressors and thermal power electrons; and coolant manifolds.
Underground electrical cabling	Connecting from Point of Connection / MV transformer skids to Project collector substation Voltage: 33kV Siting within the indicative BESS footprint
High voltage (HV) electrical cabling	Underground cable, connecting Project collector substation to PCS at Hazelwood Terminal Station Voltage: 500 kV Length: approximately 1400 metres (m) with cable route aligned with existing overhead easement. Easement width of approximately 15m Construction footprint: approximately 30m wide construction corridor
Electrical substation	Two main power transformers to step up from 33kV to 500kV, each sized at 250-300MVA. Substation also comprises 33 kV switchgear, protection and control systems, control rooms and switchrooms, 500 kV high-voltage switchgear (including switchyard) and associated harmonic filtering equipment. Lightning protection system including lightning masts.

*Note some technical reports for the planning permit application have used a higher number of battery blocks and inverters in their assessments. This provides a conservative approach to the assessment of impacts. The number of battery blocks and inverters has subsequently been reduced through the design and assessment process. The final specifications and layout would be subject to detailed design considerations.

2.2.2 Ancillary infrastructure

Table 4 Supporting components

Component	Description
Operation and maintenance	Operations and maintenance (O&M) compound including O&M building, amenities, car parking sufficient for employees and contractors during operation, including: - Office (with amenities) - Warehouse - Workshop - Control room - Switchroom building - Security fencing - Pump house Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) security system may be installed.
Access	Primary site access: from Tramway Road via new entrance. Internal access roads including to substation and office areas.
Car parking	During construction, a large carparking area is to be provided in the laydown area to accommodate all construction vehicles on site.

Component	Description
	During operation, 16 carparks would be provided to accommodate staff and maintenance contractors.
Water storage	Water tanks with a total volume of approximately 600 kL. Firewater retention system (FWRS) (retention pond) with a capacity of approximately 600 kL Stormwater retention pond with a capacity of approximately 4,000 m ³ plus approximately 0.3 m freeboard.
Safety	A safety controller is located within the thermal bay.
Signage	Business identification and safety signage at primary entrance.
Potable water	These services would be required and would likely be sought through existing infrastructure that connects to site. A communications tower may be required. Connections to these services would be finalised in the detailed design stage.
Sewerage	
Electricity	
Telecommunications	
Fire services	The primary access for emergency services is from Tramway Road, to the substation area and traverses west, south of the substation area. A secondary access has been provided from the primary access point, across the north of the substation area to connect to the BESS. Water for firefighting is provided via on-site water storage tanks. A fire water retention pond is located to the northeast of the BESS area.
Security	A 3m high security fence would be constructed around the perimeter of the BESS facility. CCTV may also be installed.
BESS equipment protection	If required, permanent protection of battery units, inverters and other equipment can be installed. This may consist of reinforced concrete bollards at regular intervals surrounding the equipment.

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Spatial Reference: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55
Imagery Source: ESRI Satellite
11/06/2026

Hazelwood East BESS
BESS Layout

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Figure 2 Site boundary and indicative site layout (Voyager, 2026)



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Spatial Reference: GDA2020 MGA Zone 55
Imagery Source: ESRI Satellite
11/06/2026

Hazelwood East BESS
BESS Layout

Revision: 01 Created by: SW Reviewed by: AMBR Notes: 1. For information only. 2. Not to survey. 3. This document is confidential.

Figure 3 Indicative site layout of BESS area (Voyager, 2026)

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2.3 Project construction

2.3.1 Project sequencing

The Project would move through various phases during construction. These different phases and the key activities within each phase are highlighted below:



Enabling Works

- Detailed design and construction procurement
- Removal of any vegetation
- Establishment of site and emergency vehicle access, laydown areas and construction amenities
- Installation of roads, compounds, laydown areas, temporary fencing and any erosion/ sedimentation controls



Civil, Structural, mechanical and electrical works

- Earthworks, including trenching, stormwater establishment, leveling and compacting
- Construction of hardstands
- Installation of BESS and ancillary infrastructure
- Laying of both 33 kV and 500 kV cables
- Installation of permanent security fencing and any CCTV



Testing and commissioning

- Electrical testing to ensure that the BESS is operating correctly
- Assessment of the operation of the BESS according to relevant standards



Demobilisation

- Demobilisation of construction support facilities (compounds, laydown areas etc.)
- Site rehabilitation and landscaping
- Commencement of operation

2.3.2 Key construction activities

The key construction activities proposed for the Project, together with indicative descriptions, are summarised in Table 5.

Table 5 Key construction activities

Component	Indicative description
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 would 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 of Project area, 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.
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.

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Component	Indicative description
	Rehabilitation of unoccupied disturbed land in accordance with the existing nature of the site, including any prescribed landscaping mitigations.

2.3.3 Construction workforce and traffic

Up to 150 full-time construction workers could be expected during the construction of the facility. It's assumed that at peak, all 150 workers would be on site. It is estimated that peak vehicle movements would occur during the Stage 2 civil, structural, mechanical and electrical works stage, over a 9-12 month period, commencing early 2028. During this time, construction traffic is anticipated to be as follows:

- estimated construction heavy vehicle traffic and oversized (**OSOM**) vehicles volumes: 600 OSOM loads, over a 6-10 month duration
- estimated construction light vehicle traffic volumes: up to 600 light vehicle movements per day at peak

This is subject to further discussions and coordination on construction methodology with the contractor.

2.3.4 Construction program

The proposed construction timeframe is approximately 18 months, aiming to commence in the first quarter of 2028. An indicative schedule for construction is provided in Table 6.

Table 6 Indicative construction schedule

Task/stage	Start date/duration
Enabling works	Q1 2028: 1-3 months
Civil, structural, mechanical and electrical works	Early 2028: 9-12 months
Commissioning	Mid 2028: 6 months
Demobilisation	Late 2028 to early 2029 1-3 months

2.4 Operation

2.4.1 Operational activities

During operation, key activities would include:

- 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.

2.4.2 Operational plant and equipment

In addition to the equipment described in Section 2.2, Table 7 provides an indicative list of operational plant and equipment.

Table 7 Indicative plant and equipment for operation

Equipment to be used during operation	
Light vehicles	Elevated work platforms
Hand held power tools	Tractors

Equipment to be used during operation	
Mobile cranes	Generators
Delivery trucks	

2.4.3 Operational workforce and hours

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 at any anytime. Adequate parking would be provided onsite for the operation of the Project with 16 spaces to be provided to accommodate operational staffing requirements.

2.4.4 Operational life expectancy

The operational life of the BESS is indicatively estimated at 40 years, contingent on component replacement and ongoing asset management.

2.5 Decommissioning

The operational life of the BESS is indicatively estimated at 40 years, after which time the Project would commence decommissioning. This 40 year estimate would require periodic component replacements and includes repowering of batteries.

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. While the operational life of the Project is estimated at 40 years, repowering with new technology after 40 years may also be feasible (subject to future statutory approvals).

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3.0 Existing conditions

3.1 Regional context

The Project area is located within the Latrobe Valley in the Gippsland region to the south-east of Melbourne. Gippsland has been central to Victoria's energy generation, with the Latrobe Valley's extensive brown coal deposits driving the State's coal-fired power industry for decades. The region is now undergoing significant transformation as Victoria shifts toward renewable and low emissions energy. The large brown coal mines and power stations that once defined the Valley's land use are progressively closing and being rehabilitated, marking a transition to a cleaner energy landscape and more diversified regional economy.

Located approximately 4.2 kilometres (km) to the north of the Project area is Morwell, which is one of the primary population centres in Latrobe, along with Traralgon and nearby townships of Churchill and Moe-Newborough. Morwell's origins are tied to coal mining and power generation following the discovery of brown coal in the nineteenth century. With a population of approximately 14,539, the town serves as a regional hub transitioning toward a more diverse economic base including advanced manufacturing, government services, transport, and emerging renewable energy industries.

To the north-east of the Project area is the Loy Yang Mine and Loy Yang Power Station. The Loy Yang mining licence (MIN 5189) covers approximately 4,580 hectares with the associated Loy Yang A and B Power Stations. Loy Yang A is scheduled to close by 2035, with Loy Yang B remaining operational until 2047. To the west of the Project area is the decommissioned Hazelwood Coal Mine which ceased operation in March 2017 and is currently under rehabilitation to remediate it to a safe, stable and sustainable landform.

3.2 Site context

The Project site is approximately 4.2 km south of Morwell and 1.5 km north of Churchill, within the municipality of the Latrobe City Council. The site is approximately 140.24 hectares and is primarily used for grazing within the Farming Zone – Schedule 1 (**FZ1**). The Hazelwood Terminal Station is located in the western part of the site boundary within the Special Use Zone – Schedule 1 (Brown Coal) (**SUZ1**). Bennetts Creek is an ephemeral waterway that runs through the south-west corner of the site. An existing house sits near the southern boundary of the site, which may be retained for use as a Project site office. All other structures on the site including sheds, cattle yards and a disused dairy would be removed in preparation for the Project.

3.3 Site surrounds

3.3.1 Land Use

The surrounding land is predominantly used for farming with the site and immediate surrounding properties to the east and south all being used for farming. The site is currently used for beef production. Previously it was used as a dairy farm, however, it has not been used for dairy production for the past five years.

A number of BESS developments are proposed or under construction within the surrounding area, shown in Figure 4. Immediately to the north of the site is farmland, however, this is proposed to be developed by European Energy into the Gippsland BESS. Located approximately 900m to the south-west is the Tramway Road BESS. To the north-west is Bennetts Creek BESS and Latrobe Valley BESS, located approximately 2 km and 2.5 km away respectively. Hazelwood BESS is located approximately 3.4 km to the west of the Project.

Immediately adjoining the site on the western side of Tramway Road is the Hazelwood Terminal Station which includes Jeeralang A and B Power Station, and Wooreen BESS. Located approximately 1.5 km to the west of the Project site is the former Hazelwood Coal Mine which ceased operation in March 2017 and is currently under rehabilitation.

Residential properties in the Churchill township are located approximately 1.5 km to the south of the site, which includes a mix of typologies ranging from rural lifestyle dwellings to standard residential dwellings. There are rural properties scattered along Church Road, Hazelwood Road and Boldings

Road, surrounding the site. Hazelwood North Primary School and recreation reserve are also located directly north on Church Road.

A number of industrial buildings are located approximately 1 km to the north which include green waste services, agriculture specialists and logistic services. Approximately 1.7 km to the north-east is the Latrobe Valley BESS which connects to the adjoining Morwell Terminal Station.

3.3.2 Sensitive receptors

One dwelling is located approximately 1km from the proposed BESS facility. There are no other sensitive receptors within 1km of the proposed BESS facility. The nearest dwellings to the proposed BESS facility, shown in Figure 5 are:

- One dwelling located approximately 1000m to the south-west, at 600 Tramway Road.
- Three dwellings located between approximately 1.2km-1.5kmm to the south, at 15, 40,45 and 130 Boldings Road.
- The Churchill township located approximately 1.5 km to the south.
- Multiple dwellings located approximately 1.2km-1.5km to the north, at 30, 65, 79, 90 and 92 Church Road.
- Hazelwood North Primary School and 130 Church Road, located approximately 1.5 km to the north.
- A dwelling located 1.8 km to the east, at 1100 Hazelwood Road.
- Multiple dwellings located between approximately 1.2kmm to 1.8 km to the south-east, at 1200 and Hazelwood Road, and 125 and 185 Boldings Road.
- Multiple dwellings are located approximately 1.7 km to the south-east, on the outskirts of Hazelwood South.

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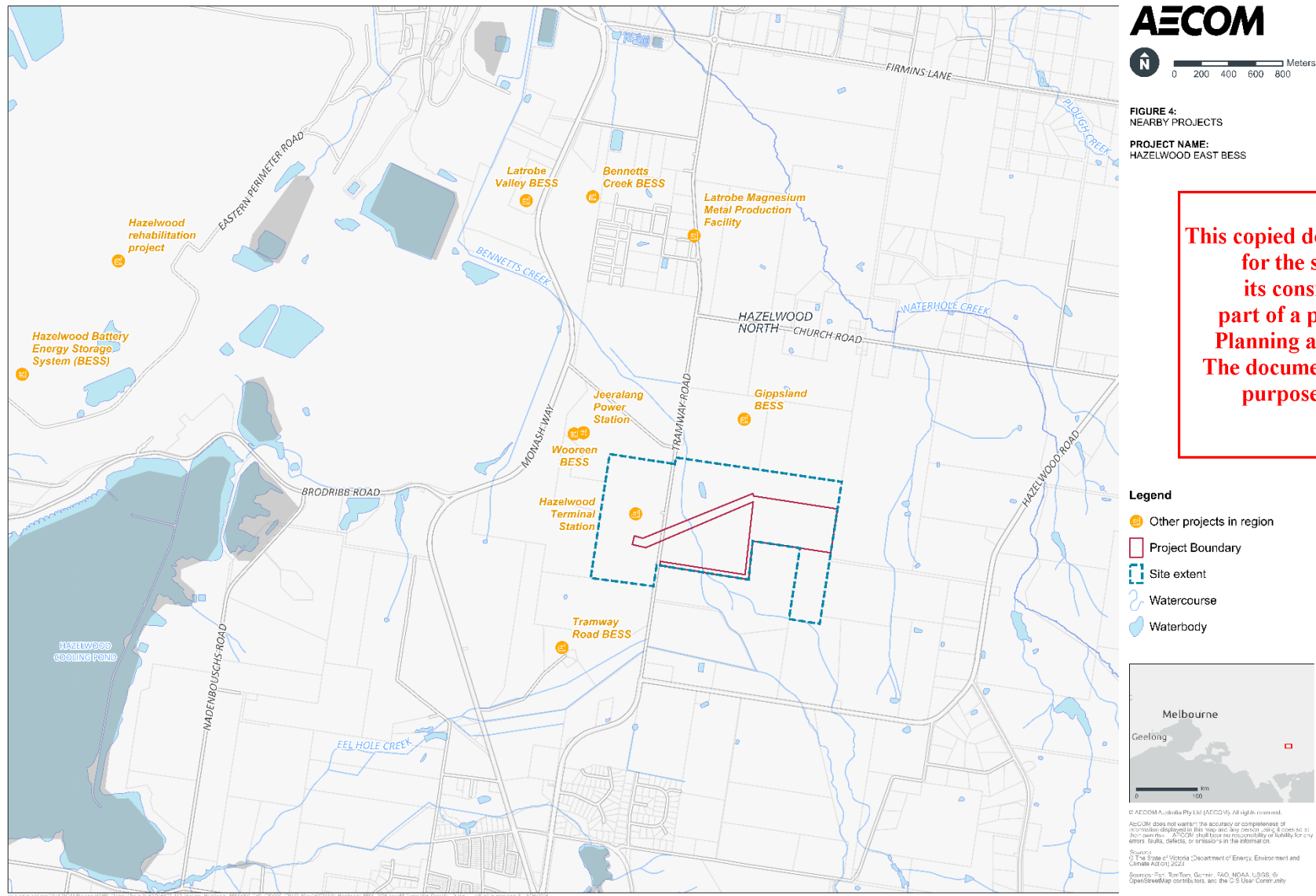


Figure 4 Surrounding BESS Projects (AECOM, 2026)

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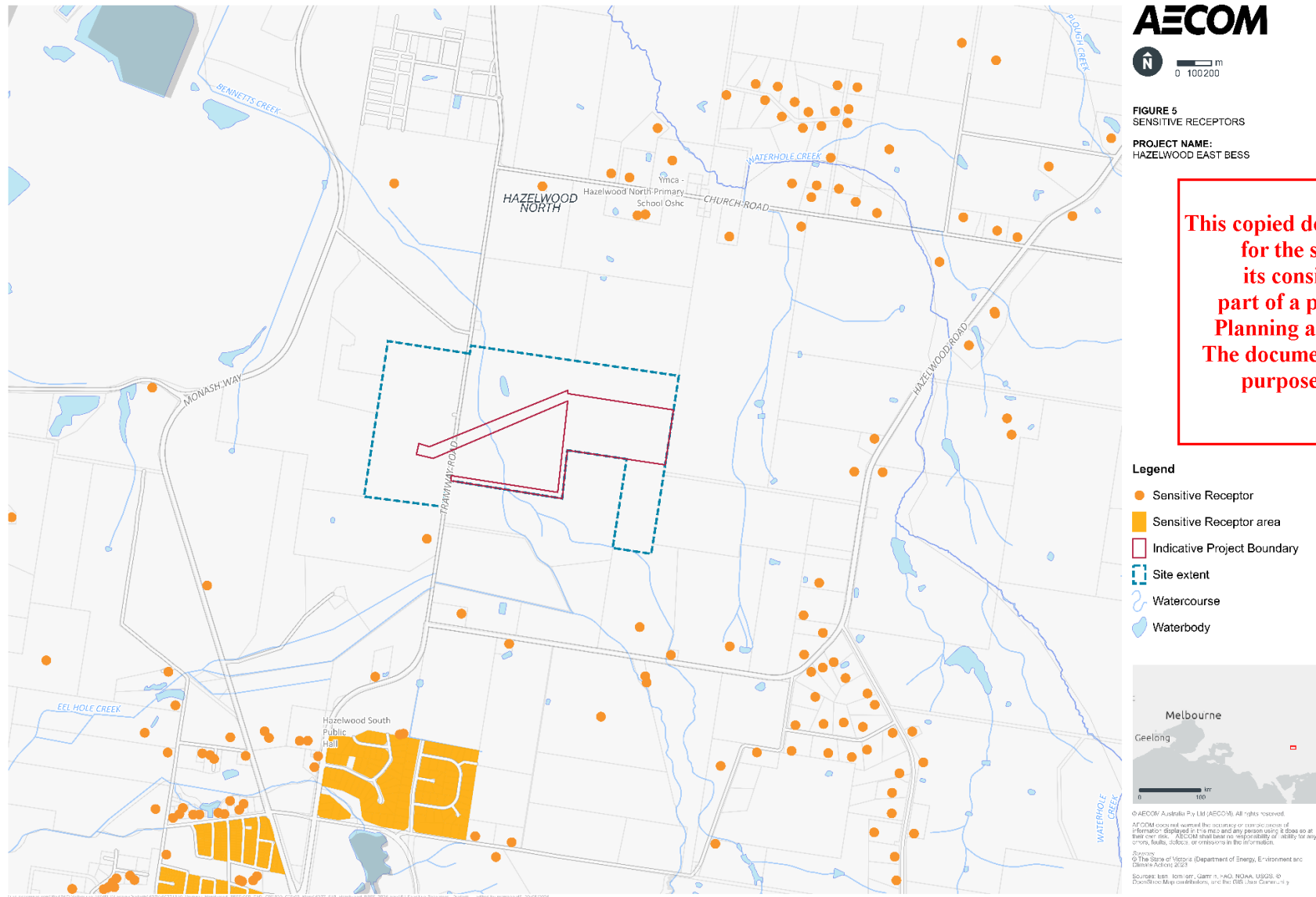


Figure 5 Sensitive receptors (AECOM, 2026)

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3.3.3 Transport infrastructure

The key roads relevant to the Project include Princes Freeway, Tramway Road, Princes Drive, Monash Way and Firmins Lane. A summary of these roads is provided in Table 8 and shown in Figure 6.

Table 8 Summary of key roads

Road	Description
Princes Freeway	A state highway located to the north-west and extends towards north-east of the Project site. Aligned east-west to east direction, providing a connection between Melbourne to the west and the Project access on Tramway Road in Morwell. The posted speed limit of Princes Freeway at the Project location is 110 kph.
Tramway Road	An arterial road which traverses through the western portion of the Project site. Aligned in north-south direction and provides a connection between Morwell to the north and Churchill to the south. Tramway Road connects to Firmins Lane and Princes Freeway further north and connects to Monash Way in Churchill. The posted speed limit of Tramway at the Project location is 100 kph.
Monash Way	An arterial road located to the north-west of the Project site. Aligned north to south and provides a connection between Morwell to the north and Churchill to the south. The posted speed limit of Monash Way at the Project location is 80 kph.
Firmins Lane	An arterial road located to the north of the Project site. Aligned west to east and provides a connection between Monash Way and Tramway Road. The posted speed limit of Firmins Lane at the Project location is 80 kph.
Princes Drive	An arterial road located to the north of the Project site. Aligned west to east and provides a connection between Princes Freeway to the east and Tramway Road. The posted speed limit of Princes Drive at the Project location is 80 kph.



Figure 6 Surrounding transport infrastructure

4.0 Consultation and stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder and community engagement for the Project has been undertaken in accordance with the Project's Communications and Engagement Strategy (the Strategy), which establishes the framework for engagement throughout Project planning, construction, operation and decommissioning.

Voyager recognises that successful delivery of renewable energy infrastructure depends on building and maintaining trusted relationships with communities, Traditional Owners, landholders, government agencies and other stakeholders. Consistent with the principles outlined in the Strategy and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework, engagement has been guided by the principles of transparency, accessibility, inclusiveness, responsiveness and continuous improvement.

The Project has adopted a 'no surprises' approach to engagement, ensuring stakeholders are informed early, provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in Project planning and kept informed of key Project milestones and decisions. Engagement has been undertaken not only to inform stakeholders about the Project, but also to understand local values, identify issues and opportunities, and ensure stakeholder feedback helps shape Project outcomes wherever practicable.

Recognising the importance of local knowledge and trusted relationships, Voyager the r engaged a Gippsland-based Community Manager to design, coordinate and deliver stakeholder and community engagement activities for the Project. The Community Manager brings extensive knowledge of the Latrobe Valley and broader Gippsland region, including established networks and an understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with the region's ongoing energy transition. This local presence has enabled early relationship building, timely communication and responsive management of stakeholder enquiries and concerns.

To support transparent and accountable engagement practices, Voyager has established a stakeholder relationship management system to record and manage stakeholder interactions throughout the Project lifecycle. The system captures engagement activities, stakeholder feedback, enquiries and commitments, enabling the Project team to monitor engagement performance, identify emerging issues, track community sentiment and ensure timely responses to stakeholder concerns. The system also provides an auditable record of engagement activities and supports ongoing reporting, evaluation and continuous improvement of the engagement program.

Voyager has adopted an evidence-based approach to understanding community priorities and aspirations. Specialist social research has been undertaken by Forward Thinking to better understand local social context, community cohesion, regional opportunities and community priorities. This work complements stakeholder feedback received through engagement activities and would inform the design and governance of the proposed Community Benefit Fund.

The social research recognises that renewable energy projects are developed within unique social, economic and cultural contexts and that community benefit initiatives should respond to place-based needs and aspirations. Together with stakeholder feedback and sentiment monitoring, the research provides an evidence base to inform community benefit planning and support positive social outcomes for the surrounding community.

Engagement activities undertaken to date have included consultation with neighbouring landholders, residents, Traditional Owners, government agencies, local government, emergency services, educational institutions, community organisations, industry stakeholders and elected representatives. Feedback received throughout the engagement process has informed environmental assessments, Project design development, mitigation measures and the proposed approach to community benefit sharing.

The engagement program would continue throughout the life of the Project and would focus on maintaining open communication channels, responding to stakeholder enquiries, providing timely updates and ensuring community benefit initiatives remain aligned with local priorities and aspirations.

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4.1 Engagement Framework

Stakeholders have been identified and prioritized based on their level of interest in, influence over, and potential impact from the Project. Engagement methods have been tailored to stakeholder needs and informed by IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation.

The Project has applied a range of engagement approaches, including informing, consulting involving and collaborating with stakeholders depending on the nature of their interest in the Project and the opportunities available to influence the outcomes.

- Key engagement objectives have been to:
- Provide timely, accurate and accessible information about the Project.
- Build trust-based relationships through early and ongoing engagement.
- Identify local knowledge, values, opportunities and concerns relevant to Project development.
- Incorporate stakeholder feedback into Project design, environmental management and mitigation measures where practicable.
- Support positive social outcomes through local employment, procurement, training and community investment opportunities.
- Ensure community benefit initiatives are informed by local priorities and aspirations.
- Establish transparent communication pathways and responsive issues resolution processes.
- Monitor stakeholder sentiment and community feedback throughout the Project development to support adaptive engagement and continuous improvement.

4.2 Community engagement

Voyager has undertaken a range of community engagement activities to inform the local community about the Project, understand community values and priorities, and provide opportunities for feedback throughout Project development.

Recognising the importance of understanding local context, the Voyager engaged an external consultant to undertake social context and community cohesion research within Hazelwood North, Morwell, Traralgon, Churchill and the broader Latrobe Valley. The research included a statistically representative survey of 200 residents and established baseline measures relating to community cohesion, local priorities, attitudes towards regional transition and perceptions of community wellbeing.

The research identified several key themes relevant to Project development, including the importance of local employment opportunities, workforce transition, cost of living pressures, housing affordability, access to services and community wellbeing. The research also identified strong support for the need to transition to new industries and employment opportunities across the Latrobe Valley, while highlighting the importance of ensuring workers can access employment opportunities that provide comparable economic outcomes to traditional industries. Findings from the research are informing ongoing engagement activities and the development of the proposed Community Benefit Fund to ensure community investment initiatives are responsive to local priorities and aspirations.

The Project team attended Farm World over three days between March 26-28, 2026, providing an opportunity to engage directly with over 300 community members and stakeholders. Discussions focused on the Project, battery energy storage technology, community benefit opportunities and the role of energy storage within Victoria's energy transition. Feedback received during the event contributed to the Project team's understanding of local issues, opportunities and community expectations.

Regular letterbox notifications have been distributed to residents and landholders surrounding the Project area to provide updates on the Project progress, upcoming engagement activities and opportunities for community participation. These notifications have supported ongoing awareness of the Project and provided information regarding how community members can contact the Project team.

Voyager maintains a dedicated Project webpage that is regularly updated with information regarding Project development, consultation activities, technical studies and opportunities for stakeholder

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participation. Project information has also been shared through regional information platforms, including Gippsland New Energy, to ensure information is accessible to a broader audience across the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland region.

A community information session was conducted on 16 June 2026, providing an opportunity for community members to learn more about the Project, environmental assessments and the planning process. The session sought feedback regarding local priorities and opportunities that could inform future Community Benefit Fund initiatives.

Community feedback received through these activities has been recorded within Voyager's stakeholder relationship management system and has informed environmental assessments, Project design refinement, mitigation measures and the ongoing development of community benefit initiatives.

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement

Targeted stakeholder engagement has been undertaken throughout Project development to inform Project design, environmental assessments, cultural heritage investigations, emergency management planning, community benefit initiatives and the planning approval process. Engagement has focused on government agencies, Traditional Owners, infrastructure providers, emergency services, local government, industry stakeholders, community organizations and neighbouring landholders.

4.3.1 Government and Regulatory Agencies

Voyage has engaged with key government agencies throughout the Project development to ensure the Project responds to planning, environmental and strategic policy considerations.

An introductory meeting with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on 16 September 2025, followed by a formal pre-application meeting involving Voyager, AECOM and DTP on 21 May 2026. Discussions focused on the proposed development, planning approval requirements, environmental assessment requirements, community development and engagement activities and Project design considerations.

Feedback received from DTP confirmed the strategic suitability of the site given its proximity to Hazelwood Terminal Station and highlighted the importance of considering cumulative impacts associated with the concentration of renewable energy and energy storage developments proposed within the Latrobe Valley. Discussions also confirmed DTP's acceptance of operational mitigation measures as an appropriate mechanism for managing potential noise impacts, subject to the findings of detailed technical assessments.

Engagement has also been undertaken with VicGrid, Latrobe City Council, State and Federal Members of Parliament and the State Electricity Commission (SEC) to provide Project updates and discuss regional energy transition opportunities, strategic planning considerations and community benefit initiatives.

4.3.2 Traditional Owners

Voyager recognizes the Gunaikurnai People as the Traditional Owners on which the Project is proposed and is committed to ensuring Traditional Owner values, knowledge and interests are considered throughout Project development.

Engagement with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) commenced in November 2025 and has continued throughout the Project planning. Early engagement focused on introducing the Project and identifying opportunities for collaboration throughout the development process.

GLaWAC representatives have undertaken site surveys as part of the preparation of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) and have provided cultural heritage advice throughout the Project's development. Cultural awareness training, facilitated by a Traditional Owner and coordinated through GLaWAC, was undertaken by the Project team and Voyagers' Chief Development Officer in February 2026 to strengthen understanding of Gunaikurnai culture, Country and values.

Beyond cultural heritage matters, engagement with GLaWAC has focused on opportunities for community benefit sharing, local procurement, training, employment and participation in the renewable energy transition.

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4.3.3 Infrastructure and Industry Stakeholders

Voyager has worked closely with AusNet throughout the Project development to investigate connection options, assess network capacity, identify land access requirements and inform Project design.

This engagement has included preliminary connection investigations, network capacity assessments, connection option studies, land access discussions and delivery planning for connection infrastructure. Outcomes from this work have informed the proposed connection approach and broader Project design.

Broader engagement has also been undertaken with regional industry and community stakeholders including Committee for Gippsland, Gippsland Climate Change Network, Voices of the Valley, Federation University, European Energy and Marinus Link. These discussions have focused on regional development opportunities, workforce transition, skills development, local procurement, managing cumulative impacts and the role of energy infrastructure in supporting the Latrobe Valley's ongoing energy transition.

4.3.4 Emergency Services

Given the nature of the proposed development, fire safety has been a key focus of stakeholder engagement.

Voyager, AECOM and the Project's Fire Risk Consultant and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) met on 6 May 2026 to discuss the Project and its approach to fire safety and emergency management. Key matters discussed include site access arrangements, emergency vehicle access, separation distances between battery units, water supply requirements and local bushfire risk considerations.

Feedback received through engagement with CFA has informed the Project's fire safety strategy, emergency response planning and the development of site layout and design measures aimed at reducing fire risk and supporting emergency response.

4.3.5 Landowners and Neighbours

Voyager has maintained ongoing engagement with the Project landowner and neighbouring landholders throughout Project development. Engagement has included face meetings, telephone conversations, email correspondence, written updates and discussions regarding Project design, environmental assessments and the planning process.

The Gippsland-based Community Manager has acted as a primary point of contact for neighbouring landholders, enabling responsive communication, timely resolution of enquiries and ongoing relationship building within the community.

Feedback received from landholders and neighbouring properties has informed Project planning and environmental assessments, particularly in relation to local conditions, land use considerations, amenity impacts and communication preferences.

Engagement with neighbouring landholders will continue throughout the planning process and, if approved, into Project delivery. Future engagement will focus on providing updates regarding public exhibition of the Planning Application, Project approvals, design of a community benefit initiative, construction planning and opportunities for neighbour agreements where appropriate.

4.3.6 Future Engagement

Voyager is committed to ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout the life of the Project. Engagement activities will continue to focus on maintaining transparent communication, responding to stakeholder enquiries, monitoring community sentiment and ensuring stakeholders have opportunities to provide feedback as the Project progresses.

In addition to stakeholders already engaged, targeted engagement is proposed with Hazelwood North Primary School, TAFE Gippsland, Energy Australia, the Mining and Energy Union, the Electrical Trades Union and local environmental groups.

Future engagement will seek to:

- Provide timely updates regarding public exhibition of the Project's Planning Application, Project approvals, construction activities and Project milestones.

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- Maintain accessible communication channels and respond to stakeholder enquiries in a timely manner.
- Continue to identify opportunities for local employment, procurement, training and participation.
- Seek ongoing feedback regarding community priorities and opportunities to inform the proposed Community Benefit Fund.
- Maintain partnerships with Traditional Owners, government agencies, community organisations and industry stakeholders throughout the Project lifecycle.

4.3.7 Key Issues Raised Through Engagement and Project Response

Engagement undertaken to date has provided valuable insights into community priorities, opportunities and concerns relating to the Project. Feedback received through community and stakeholder engagement has informed Project planning, environmental assessments, mitigation measures and the development of community benefit initiatives.

Table 9 summarises the key themes raised through engagement and how these matters have been considered during Project development.

Table 9 Engagement and feedback received

Theme	Feedback received	Project response
Fire safety	Community members and stakeholders sought information regarding battery safety, bushfire risk and emergency response arrangements.	Fire safety has been a key consideration throughout Project development. Consultation with the CFA and specialist fire risk assessments have informed site layout, emergency access arrangements, water supply requirements and emergency response planning.
Noise	Stakeholders sought assurance that operational noise impacts would be appropriately managed.	Acoustic assessments have been undertaken to inform and test the Project design. The Project would meet the EPA requirements in relation to noise.
Visual amenity	Neighbouring landholders sought information regarding potential visual impacts and opportunities to minimise views of the Project.	Landscape and visual amenity impact assessments have informed Project design and mitigation measures.
Community benefits	Community members expressed interest in ensuring the Project delivers tangible benefits for the local community.	Community feedback and specialist social research are informing the development and governance of the proposed Community Benefit Fund.
Employment and local procurement	Stakeholders expressed interest in local jobs, training opportunities and local business participation.	Ongoing engagement is being undertaken with education providers, industry stakeholders and community organisations to maximise local employment, procurement and training opportunities.
Cultural heritage and Traditional Owner participation	Stakeholders highlighted the importance of protecting cultural heritage values and ensuring Traditional Owners are involved in Project development.	Ongoing engagement with GLaWAC has informed preparation of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan and discussions regarding procurement, employment and community benefit opportunities.

Theme	Feedback received	Project response
Communication and transparency	Stakeholders requested clear, accessible and ongoing communication regarding Project development and assessment processes.	A Gippsland-based Community Manager has been engaged to provide a local point of contact. Stakeholder feedback and enquiries are recorded within Voyagers' stakeholder relationship management system to support responsive communication and issue resolution.
Regional transition and community wellbeing	Stakeholders highlighted the importance of ensuring Projects contribute positively to the Latrobe Valley's ongoing economic and energy transition.	Social context research has been undertaken to understand community priorities and opportunities and would inform community benefit initiatives and local investment opportunities.

Stakeholder and community engagement has played an important role in informing the development of the Project. Voyager will continue to engage openly and transparently with stakeholders throughout the Project lifecycle and seek to ensure the Project delivers positive outcomes for the local community and the broader Latrobe Valley region.

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5.0 Legislation, policy and guidelines

The legislation, policy, guidelines and standards relevant to this assessment are summarised below.

5.1 Commonwealth and state legislation

Table 8 outlines the relevant Commonwealth and state legislation, highlights their key objectives, and explains their relevance to the Project.

Table 10 Commonwealth and state legislation

Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
Commonwealth		
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)</i> The Commonwealth's principal environmental protection and biodiversity conservation legislation	- To protect threatened species and ecological communities - To promote ecologically sustainable development - To protect matters of national environmental significance (MNES) - Ensures development avoids and mitigates impacts on biodiversity.	- There is only one EPBC Act listed flora species within the site boundary, an individual planted Strzelecki Gum (<i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i>). This individual would be located within the Project's disturbance area, however the Project's footprint is outside of the Tree Protection Zone and would be protected by the establishment of a no-go zone in that area. - Therefore, there are no implications for the Project under the EPBC Act and a referral under the EPBC Act is not required.
<i>Native Title Act 1993</i> Establishes a national system for the recognition and protection of native title for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It sets out how native title coexists with Australia's land management system, provides processes for claims and agreements, and ensures consultation and compensation where native title rights are affected	- Provide recognition and protection of native title for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - Regulate future dealings in relation to land and waters in a way that protects native title rights and interests - Ensure native title holders have the right to be consulted and, where relevant, to negotiate on activities affecting native title land - Recognise the ongoing cultural connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their land and waters	- The location of the Project lies within the traditional territory of the Braiakaulung people. - Under the <i>Native Title Act 1993</i>, native title is "extinguished" by a "previous exclusive possession act", which is applicable to the Project as the land is privately owned.

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Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
	Establish processes for determining native title claims and resolving disputes through negotiation, mediation or determination.	
State		
<i>Environment Protection Act 2017 (EP Act)</i> Establishes the framework for protecting human health and the environment from pollution and waste	- Provides the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) with powers and tools to prevent and minimise risks to human health and the environment arising from pollution, waste and poor environmental practices - The centrepiece of the laws is the general environmental duty which requires all Victorians to take reasonable and practical steps to reduce the human and environmental health risks of their activities - A Development Licence is required: - To construct or install a plant or equipment for a prescribed development activity - To develop processes or systems for a prescribed development activity - To modify (except for general maintenance) a prescribed development activity.	The proposed BESS is not a prescribed activity listed in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Protection Regulations and therefore a development license under the EP Act is not required for the Project.
<i>Climate Change Act 2017</i> A Victorian Act that sets a long-term target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It established guiding principles for government decision-making, required climate change considerations to be integrated into policy and planning, and provided for the development of interim targets and adaptation planning	- Set a long-term target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions for Victoria by 2050 - Support Victoria's contribution to national and international climate change initiatives and agreements - Integrate climate change considerations into government policy, planning and decision-making.	The Project's proposal of a BESS supports reduced greenhouse gas emissions by enhancing grid flexibility and reliability through enabling renewable energy to be stored and dispatched.

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Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (AH Act) and Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018 Establishes processes for assessing and mitigating impacts on heritage places and objects, including requirements for Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMP) where high-impact activities are proposed in areas of cultural sensitivity	- Minimise Protect and conserve Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria - Recognise and respect Aboriginal people as the primary guardians of their cultural heritage - Provide for consultation and decision-making through Registered Aboriginal Parties and other representative bodies.	- There are AACHS located within the Project area, which includes areas within 200m of Bennetts Creek. - A CHMP is being prepared for the Project which will include further consultation with GLaWAC.
Environment Effects Act 1978 (EE Act) Provides the framework for assessing projects that may have a significant impact on the environment. It enables the Minister for Planning to require an Environment Effects Statement (EES) to evaluate potential environmental impacts of public works before decisions are made on project approvals	- Assess environmental impacts of proposed public works that may have significant effects on the environment - Provide a transparent process for evaluating environmental effects before statutory approvals are granted - Ensure decision-making considers environmental, social and economic impacts of major projects	The Project would not trigger any of the criteria warranting a referral under the EE Act.
Planning and Environment Act 1987 (P&E Act) Establishes the framework for land use planning and development in Victoria	- Provides the processes for preparing and amending planning schemes, assessing permit applications, and balancing environmental, social and economic factors to achieve sustainable land use and development - Provides legal weight to instruments under the P&E Act, including the Victorian Planning Provisions, planning schemes (such as the Latrobe Planning Scheme), regulations and Ministerial directions.	- The Project is in accordance with the general objectives for planning and land use within Victoria as the proposed development and land use would not prejudice the existing and future land uses on surrounding land. - Planning Approval from the Minister for Planning is being sought as part of this application. - The Project supports reduced greenhouse gas emissions by enabling renewable energy to be stored and dispatched.
Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act) Provides a framework for enabling and promoting conservation of Victoria's native flora and fauna	Ensure all Victorian flora and fauna (excluding the Excluded List) can persist, improve and adapt in the wild	Ecological surveys of the Project site identified FFG-listed species, however these were planted individuals.

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Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
ADVERTISED PLAN	Protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, including habitats, genetic diversity, ecological communities and processes	- No targeted surveys for FFG-listed species are required, as these species are unlikely to or have a low likelihood of occurrence within the Site Boundary. - No 'declared protected flora' were identified on public land within the Site Boundary, including the road reserves of Tramway Road. As such, a Protected Flora Licence or Permit under the FFG Act would not be triggered by the Project.
<i>Wildlife Act 1975</i> Provides for regulations in relation to rescue, removal and rehoming of animals, to ensure minimal harm to animals and environments in Victoria.	To avoid willful damage, disturbance or destruction of wildlife habitat, disturbance of protected wildlife and the taking or destruction of threatened or protected wildlife (including listed fish) without authorisation This wildlife and the taking or destruction of threatened or protected wildlife is the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach any copyright	- There is limited native vegetation within the site and the majority of the site is highly disturbed from agriculture. Although some habitat features may be occupied by native fauna. - Potential impacts on wildlife can be managed and mitigated by ensuring that a suitably qualified wildlife professional is on site for pre-clearance inspection and commencement of works. - Authorisation under the Act is therefore not required for the Project.
<i>Heritage Act 2017</i> Provides a framework to identify the most important non-Aboriginal heritage in Victoria and regulates changes to those places	- To provide for the protection and conservation of the cultural heritage of the State. - To establish a Victorian Heritage Register for the registration of places and objects. - To establish a Heritage Inventory for the recording of archaeological sites and approved sites of archaeological value	A Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) site is located within the site (H8121-0061 – Otterburn Farm Complex). A Historical Heritage Assessment (refer Section 7.5 and Appendix 4) has been prepared for the Project which has identified mitigation measures to be implemented.
<i>The Roads Management Act 2004 and Road Management (General) Regulations 2016)</i>	Define the roles and responsibilities of road authorities (VicRoads, councils and other authorities)	The proposed BESS works would be located within the road reserve of Tramway Road, requiring consent from VicRoads as the coordinating road authority.

Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
Provide a framework for managing roads and road infrastructure, and assigns ownership of, and responsibility for, roads to relevant authorities	- Ensure safe construction, operation and maintenance of roads and related infrastructure - Promote efficient coordination of works and activities on roads by utilities, developers and authorities - Support integrated transport and land use planning through consistent road management practices	- A Traffic Impact Assessment (refer to Section 7.9 and Appendix 8) has been prepared for the Project which outlines the proposed strategies for road management. - A consent letter from DTP to submit the Permit Application has been received and attached in Appendix 9.
<i>Water Act 1989</i> <i>Provides management, allocation and use of Victoria's water resources</i>	- Provide the framework for the management, allocation and use of Victoria's surface water and groundwater resources - Establish water entitlements and rights for individuals, organisations and authorities - Regulate works affecting waterways, drainage and groundwater to ensure sustainable management - Protect and enhance environmental values of rivers, streams, wetlands and aquifers - Promote integrated and sustainable water resource management balancing environmental, social and economic needs.	The proposed access road and the cable route intersect with Bennetts Creek which requires a Works on Waterways Permit from the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.

5.2 Commonwealth and state policy

Table 11 outlines the relevant Commonwealth and state policies, highlights their key objectives, and explains their relevance to the Project.

Table 11 Commonwealth and state policy assessment

Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
Commonwealth		
<i>2024 Integrated System Plan</i> (Australian Energy Market Operator, 2024)	- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in electricity sector. - Encourage generation of electricity from sustainable and renewable sources. - Investment in new renewable	The Project provides large-scale energy storage in a sustainable and renewable form, contributing to the target of 33,000 gigawatt-hours of renewable electricity generation.

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Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
Sets Australia's national roadmap for transforming the electricity grid to achieve reliable, affordable and clean energy	energy projects until the target of 33,000 gigawatt-hours of renewable electricity generation is met and sustained until 2030.	
<i>Powering Australia and Rewiring the Nation</i> (Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), 2022) Outlines the Australian Government's plan to accelerate the transition to clean, affordable and reliable energy.	- Accelerate Australia's transition to clean, reliable and affordable renewable energy - Modernise and expand the national electricity grid through strategic transmission upgrades and interconnections. - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with national climate targets. - Support investment and job creation in renewable energy generation, storage and transmission projects.	- The Project supports the national transition away from coal-fired generation and towards a renewable energy source. - The Project contributes to Latrobe Valley as a key renewable energy precinct, supporting both local and national decarbonisation goals.
<i>2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan</i> (Infrastructure Australia, 2021) Australia's roadmap for infrastructure reform, focused on reforms and policy recommendations that will deliver better infrastructure outcomes for Australian communities	- Provide a 15-year roadmap for infrastructure investment and reform across Australia - Support productivity, sustainability and resilience through well-planned infrastructure delivery - Promote decarbonisation and clean energy transition within infrastructure planning and investment decisions - Improve regional connectivity and equity, ensuring all Australians benefit from national infrastructure upgrades.	BESS developments are required for storage to support a decentralised electricity grid which Australia's energy sector is transitioning towards.
State		
<i>Victoria's Climate Change Strategy</i> (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), 2026) Sets out the state's plan to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and build resilience to the impacts of climate change.	- Achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with interim reduction targets along the way. - Accelerate the transition to renewable energy and improve energy efficiency across all sectors. - Support climate change adaptation and resilience in communities, infrastructure and natural systems.	- The Project supports the objective of the strategy by facilitating the transition to a low-emissions electricity system. - The BESS contributes to Victoria's legislated energy storage targets.
<i>Plan for Victoria</i> (DTP, 2025)	- Promote renewable energy and low-emissions industries as part of Victoria's transition to a clean energy economy - Support investment and jobs through well-planned infrastructure and industry development	- The Project would support Victoria's position as a leader in the clean energy transition. - The Project would generate local employment opportunities within the

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Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
Plan for Victoria provides a plan to addresses current and future issues and opportunities for all of Victoria.	Ensure integrated planning between state, regional and local government to deliver coordinated outcomes.	renewable energy sector through construction and supplier engagement. The Project is expected to have minimal impact on the environment and agricultural productivity, given the absence of nearby sensitive receptors and the existing rural land use.
<i>Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy 2025-2055</i> (Infrastructure Victoria, 2025) Outlines a long-term plan to guide infrastructure investment and policy decisions across the state. It focuses on supporting population growth, accelerating the clean energy transition, improving regional connectivity, and building a more sustainable, resilient and livable Victoria.	- Support the transition to clean and renewable energy, including generation, transmission and storage infrastructure - Promote sustainable and climate-resilient development that responds to environmental and social challenges - Enhance regional connectivity and equity, ensuring balanced growth between metropolitan and regional areas - Guide government investment priorities to achieve economic growth, emissions reduction and community wellbeing.	- The Project is appropriately located on rural land that does not contain significant biodiversity values, with site design focused on minimising environmental and biodiversity impacts. - The proposed BESS would strengthen Victoria's energy network by leveraging existing transmission capacity associated with the former Hazelwood Power Station.
<i>2025 Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP)</i> (VicGrid 2025) The plan for Victoria's renewable energy zones and the transmission infrastructure required to enable an orderly energy transition.	A long-term plan based on a future energy mix that responds to changing needs as coal-fired power stations close, meets growing demand from new sources such as data centres, clean fuel production and electric vehicles and meets Victoria's targets for renewable generation, storage and offshore wind. The VTP sets out six proposed Renewable Energy Zones (REZ), which are areas identified as most suitable to host new onshore renewable generation and storage.	- The Project is located within the Gippsland REZ. - The Project supports the overarching objective of the 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan by contributing to the expansion and modernisation of transmission infrastructure required to facilitate Victoria's transition to renewable energy. - The BESS supports the plan's direction to integrate additional storage capacity alongside transmission. - The Project is located within the Eastern Victoria region, where network augmentations and additional infrastructure are identified as necessary to meet

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Document and description	Key objectives	Relevance to the Project
		increasing demand in eastern metropolitan Melbourne, respond to shifts in generation from eastern to western Victoria, and ensure secure connection and supply from the proposed Gippsland REZs, including the Gippsland offshore wind area.
<i>Victoria's Regional Statement</i> (DELWP, 2015) A plan that outlines a vision and strategy for the growth and development of regional Victoria that identifies the diverse aspects of Victoria's regional economy.	- Strengthen regional communities by supporting economic development, liveability and social wellbeing across Victoria's regions. - Support infrastructure and services that improve connectivity, resilience and quality of life in regional areas - Encourage innovation and adaptation to respond to economic, environmental and social change.	- The Project is consistent with Victoria's Regional Statement as it supports a diverse regional economy. - The Project would provide a net community benefit and would support the reduction in carbon emissions. - The Project would offer targeted, regionally appropriate Community Benefits.

5.3 Regional policy

Table 12 outlines the relevant regional policies, highlights their key objectives, and explains their relevance to the Project.

Table 12 Regional policy assessment

Document & description	Key objectives	Relevance to Project
<i>Gippsland 2035: Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan</i> (Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions, 2023) Sets out a shared vision for the Gippsland community.	- Sets goals and guiding principles focusing on education and training, employment, the economy, livability, and collaboration to achieve the shared vision. - To create a thriving economy focused on identified areas of strength. - To create a healthy and attractive natural environment.	- The Project would help position Gippsland as a renewable energy leader and support the transition to sustainable energy. - The Project would support and diversify Gippsland's local economy through the creation of long-term industries recommended by the plan including renewable energy. - The Project's Community Benefit Sharing can assist is reaching Gippsland's community vision.

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Document & description	Key objectives	Relevance to Project
<i>Gippsland's Clean Energy Future</i> (Committee for Gippsland, 2022) Outlines the opportunities for Gippsland as a clean energy producer.	- To support Gippsland to become a clean energy region that delivers economic, environmental and social benefits. - To contribute to state, national and global decarbonisation goals.	The Project would be located in Gippsland and would directly support renewable energy infrastructure.
<i>Gippsland Regional Plan 2020 – 2025</i> (Committee for Gippsland, 2020) Sets the long-term strategic plan for improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental outcomes for the Gippsland region	- To become a world-leading innovator in renewable energy. - To create a strong economy built on its strengths including energy. - To prioritise renewable, clean and community energy initiatives. - To support the rehabilitation of Latrobe Valley's mines and land.	The Project directly supports the vision for Gippsland to become a leader in renewable and clean energy.
<i>Live Work Latrobe – Rural Land Use Strategy</i> (Latrobe City Council, 2019) Seeks to protect and promote economic, environmental and landscape values associated with rural land as well as respond to competing demands and legacy issues.	- To recognise and protect productive agricultural land - To support and promote intensive agriculture in Latrobe City. - To protect and enhance environmental and landscape values.	- The Project area comprises of low quality agricultural land and would have a negligible impact on regional agricultural production. - The majority of the Project area could remain as agricultural land during the BESS operation. - The Project has been designed to avoid significant environmental and landscape values within the Project area.
<i>Gippsland Regional Growth Plan</i> (State Government Victoria, 2014) Outlines future directions for land use in the Gippsland region.	- To strengthen economic resilience by growing a more diverse economy that is supported by new investment, innovation and value-adding in traditional strengths. - To deliver timely and accessible infrastructure to meet regional needs for transport, utilities and community facilities.	- Transmission and energy storage components of the Project would help Gippsland cater for growing electricity demand. - The Project represents an investment in renewable energy and supports the transition away from brown coal industries.

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5.4 Local policy

Table 13 outlines the relevant local policies, highlights their key objectives, and explains their relevance to the Project.

Table 13 Local policy assessment

Document & description	Key objectives	Relevance to Project
<i>Latrobe City Council Plan 2025-2029</i> (Latrobe City Council, 2025) Sets out Council's vision, priorities, and strategies to shape the future of the region.	- Actively pursue investment in emerging industries and industries that diversify the local economy to create jobs and increase economic growth. - Advance climate change planning and adaptation.	- The Project supports economic diversification, job creation and a sustainable transition away from coal. - The Project would contribute to Council's strategic directions on investment, climate change adaptation reinforcing Latrobe's role as a regional hub for innovation and clean energy. - The Community Benefit Sharing could support broader Council initiatives.
<i>Our Transition Plan</i> (Latrobe City Council, 2023) Guides Latrobe's economic transition as it shifts away from traditional industries towards cleaner energy sources.	- To attract investment in key industries including working towards net zero emissions generation and promoting the current skilled workforce to attract new investment and industry. - Supporting economic growth and promoting the current skilled workforce to attract new investment and industry.	- The Project would help to achieve Council's goal of net zero energy emissions. - The Project would generate economic contribution to the region through construction employment and supplier engagement. - The Community Benefit Sharing could support broader training and education initiatives.
<i>Rural Land Use Strategy</i> (Latrobe City Council, 2019) Provides a framework to guide Latrobe's long-term growth and development associated with housing, industry and employment, and rural land use.	- Promote land use and development that supports Gippsland's transition away from traditional industries. - Diversify jobs and provide long-term employment opportunities as Latrobe is experiencing a period of economic restructuring associated with the decline in traditional power production.	- The Project would support the region's aspirations to diversify from coal into a region that produces low emissions energy resources and technology. - The Project would provide opportunity for permanent employees during the operation of the BESS. - Agriculture could still be sustained on the site during the BESS's operation.

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6.0 Planning assessment

6.1 Municipal planning strategy

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) is provided at Clause 02 of the Planning Scheme and provides the context, vision and strategic directions of Latrobe City Council. Table 14 provides an assessment of the Project against the relevant clauses of the MPS.

Table 14 Municipal planning strategy assessment

Clause	Strategies and relevance to Project
Clause 02.03-3 (Environmental risks and amenity)	• <i>Support use and development that can adapt to the impacts of climate change and seeks to minimise its negative impacts.</i> • <i>Encourage energy-efficient building design including the incorporation of energy-efficient technologies.</i> • <i>Reduce bushfire risk through various bushfire protection measures</i> • <i>Reduce the damage and costs associated with flood events.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 02.03-3 (Environmental risks and amenity) as follows: • The BESS would support the transition towards renewable energy transmission, assisting in minimising impacts of climate change. • Bushfire risk has been assessed and the development is compliant with the CFA Guidelines, which is addressed in the Fire Risk Assessment (Appendix 3) and summarised in Section 7.4. • Flood risk has been assessed and found with the implementation of best practice design and management measures, the residual impacts on water quality and flood risk are expected to be minor, localised, and manageable. The Surface Water Assessment is in Appendix 7 and summarised in Section 7.8.
Clause 02.03-4 (Natural resource Management)	• <i>Enhance the viability of agricultural activity.</i> • <i>Encourage the improvement of water quality and environmental values of waterways.</i> • <i>Ensure development does not compromise coal resources.</i> • <i>Protect urban amenity, coal resource development and the productive use of land in the coal resource and buffer areas.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 02.03-4 (Natural resource Management) as follows: • The area occupied by the BESS infrastructure would represent only a small portion of the overall Project site. Once the BESS is operational, it is possible for agricultural activities to continue across approx. 60ha of land within the site boundary. • With the implementation of best-practice design and management measures, residual impacts on water quality are considered to be low. • Community Benefit Sharing offers an opportunity to support environment improvement initiatives.

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Clause	Strategies and relevance to Project
Clause 02.03-7 (Economic Development)	• <i>Enable the community to prosper from the transition to a low carbon future by supporting the diversification of employment opportunities.</i> • <i>Encourage alternative energy industries, including renewable energy and clean coal in locations with convenient access to existing energy distribution infrastructure.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 02.03-7 (Economic Development) as follows: • The Project would result in the creation of new job opportunities in the renewable energy industry. • The Project is located within the Latrobe Valley, which has established electricity infrastructure and a long history of energy generation. The proposed BESS would leverage existing transmission capacity associated with the former Hazelwood Power Station, reducing the need for new transmission lines. • The Community Benefit Sharing offers an opportunity to support education and training initiatives that could help diversify employment opportunities.

6.2 Planning policy framework

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) sets out the State, regional and local objectives and strategies that guide land use and development within the municipality. Table 15 sets out the relevant PPF Clause objectives and strategies and provides an assessment against them.

Table 15 Planning policy framework assessment

Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
Clause 12 (Environmental and Landscape Values)	
Clause 12.01-1S (Protection of Biodiversity)	• <i>Consider impacts of any change in land use or development that may affect the biodiversity value of national parks and conservation reserves or nationally and internationally significant sites</i> • <i>Assist in the identification, protection and management of important areas of biodiversity.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 12.01-1S (Protection of Biodiversity) as follows: • The Project area has been historically cleared for agricultural activities and as such the site and Bennetts Creek are considered degraded and of low biodiversity value. • The site is unlikely to contain any threatened flora or ecological communities, and no threatened fauna species are likely to occur regularly or be reliant on habitats in the Project area. • There are no proposed impacts to native vegetation, TECs, FFG Act or EPBC Act listed species. • Cabling would traverse under Bennetts Creek, minimising impacts to the waterway, however the new access road to be constructed across the creek would result in some unavoidable impact.

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
	There is potential for impact to a small farm dam (listed as wetland 478362) noting the current design avoids direct impact. For this permit it has been assumed impacted and therefore the Project may require the offsets of 0.018 general habitat units. If an impact occurs, the offset is currently available for purchase (refer to Section 7.3 and Appendix 2).
Clause 12.01-1L (Protection of Biodiversity)	<i>Protect habitats that contain indigenous flora and fauna, particularly where those species are threatened</i> <i>Retain native vegetation on roadsides, waterways and public and private land to facilitate healthy habitats to improve biodiversity</i> <i>Ensure that development does not result in a net loss of native vegetation and biodiversity.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 12.01-1L (Protection of Biodiversity) as follows: - There are no indigenous vegetation resembling woodland, forest or swamp scrub and what remains of Bennetts Creek, is severely disturbed. - The Project may require the removal of 0.09ha of native vegetation / offset of 0.018 general habitat units depending on the final design's impact to the farm dam. If disturbed, an offset would be required for the native vegetation removal in accordance with the Guidelines. An online search of the Native Vegetation Credit Register shows that the offset above is currently available for purchase from a native vegetation credit owner. - Cabling would traverse under Bennetts Creek, minimising impacts to the waterway, however the new access road to be constructed across the creek would result in some unavoidable impact. - There may be opportunities to plant native species as part of the site rehabilitation pending ongoing agricultural uses and bushfire management requirements.
Clause 12.01-2S (Native vegetation Management)	<i>Ensure decisions that involve, or will lead to, the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation, apply the three-step approach in accordance with the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017).</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 12.01-2S (Native vegetation Management) as follows: - The Project adopts the avoid, minimise, and offset approach to ensure that the removal of native vegetation is avoided and minimised where possible, and if not, an offset is provided to compensate for the biodiversity impact of the native vegetation removal.
Clause 12.03-1S (River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes wetlands and billabongs)	<i>Protect the environmental, cultural, landscape values of all waterway systems as significant economic, environmental and cultural assets.</i> <i>Sensitively design and site development to maintain and enhance the waterway system and the surrounding landscape setting, environmental assets, and ecological and hydrological systems.</i> <i>Conserve waterway systems and the landscapes and environmental values surrounding them by protecting ecological values, indigenous vegetation, terrestrial and aquatic habitats and encouraging biodiversity</i>

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
This copied document to be made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach any copyright	The Project is consistent with Clause 12.03-1S (River and riparian corridors, waterways, lakes wetlands and billabongs) as follows: • Bennetts Creek passes through the western section of the Site Boundary and this part of the creek is severely altered and degraded over a long period for grazing. • The cabling traversing Bennetts Creek would be underground, avoiding direct impacts to the creek and vegetation along the banks. However some impact to the waterway is required for the new access road. • The Project aims to protect Bennetts Creek landscape and environmental values through mitigation measures including erosion and sediment controls, and a Landscape Plan which may include revegetating the riparian areas along Bennetts Creek with locally indigenous flora species. • A CHMP for the site is being prepared which will include consideration of measures to protect cultural heritage values associated with Bennetts Creek. • An Surface Water Assessment (Section 7.8 and Appendix 7) has been prepared for the Project to inform the design of the Project and concluded that with standard management measures, impacts on the creek, such as those associated with erosion and sedimentation from the construction works, are expected to be temporary and minor.
	Clause 12.03-1L (River corridors and waterways) • <i>Enhance the health of waterway corridors by increasing vegetation along corridors.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 12.03-1L (River corridors and waterways) as follows: • The mitigation measures within the Ecological Assessment (Appendix 2) recommend the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to consider measures to revegetate the riparian areas along Bennetts Creek with locally indigenous flora species to improve habitat quality along the creek. • In order to minimise impacts to the waterway, cabling would traverse underneath Bennetts Creek, with no native vegetation removal proposed along the creekline.
Clause 13 (Environmental Risks and Amenity)	
Clause 13.01-1S (Natural hazards and climate change)	• <i>Respond to the risks associated with climate change in planning and management decision making processes.</i> • <i>Site and design development to minimise risk to life, health, property, the natural environment and community infrastructure from natural hazards.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 13.01-1S (Natural hazards and climate change) as follows: The Project has been designed to respond to the risks associated with climate change and ensures that climate change adaptation strategies are implemented. These risks include natural hazards for which the Project's siting and design has incorporated measures to minimise risks, for example in relation to flooding (Section 7.8 and Appendix 7) and fire hazard (Section 7.4 and Appendix 3)

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire planning)	- Applying the best available science to identify vegetation, topographic and climatic conditions that create a bushfire hazard. - Consulting with emergency management agencies and the relevant fire authority early in the process to receive their recommendations and implement appropriate bushfire protection measures. The Project is consistent with Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire planning) as follows: - The Project has been designed to be resilient and defensible in the case of a bushfire and does not increase bushfire risks to human life. - A Fire Risk Management Plan (Section 7.4 and Appendix 3) has been prepared that provides a clear pathway for the safe development and operation of the BESS. - Consultation with the CFA has occurred (Section 4.3.4).
Clause 13.03-1S (Floodplain Management)	- Avoid intensifying the impact of flooding through inappropriately located use and development - Plan for the cumulative impacts of use and development on flood behaviour. The Project is consistent with Clause 13.03-1S (Floodplain Management) as follows: - The Project is not located on land affected by flooding as it is not within any flood land management overlays. - A Surface Water Assessment (Section 7.8 and Appendix 7) has been prepared for the Project that considers the impact of the development on flood behaviour and residual impacts on water quality and flood risk are expected to be minor, localised and manageable. - On-site detention has been incorporated into the proposed layout to manage increased run-off to ensure existing flood conditions are not exacerbated.
Clause 13.05-1S (Noise Management)	- Ensure that development is not prejudiced and community amenity and human health is not adversely impacted by noise emissions. - Minimise the impact on human health from noise exposure to occupants of sensitive land uses (residential use, child care centre, school, education centre, residential aged care centre or hospital) near the transport system and other noise emission sources through suitable building siting and design (including orientation and internal layout), urban design and land use separation techniques as appropriate to the land use functions and character of the area. The Project is consistent with Clause 13.05-1S (Noise Management) as follows: - A Noise Impact Assessment (Section 7.7 and Appendix 6) demonstrates the Project would comply with the applicable noise limits at all nearby sensitive receptors.

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
Clause 13.06-1S (Air Quality Management)	- Ensure, wherever possible, that there is suitable separation between land uses that pose a human health risk or reduce amenity due to air pollutants, and sensitive land uses (residential use, child care centre, school, education centre, residential aged care centre or hospital). The Project is consistent with Clause 13.06-1S (Air Quality Management) as follows: - The BESS is not anticipated to release any air pollutants nor would it reduce amenity therefore the land use would not pose any risk to human health or reduce amenity due to air pollutants. - Dust management during construction would be managed through a EMP (or similar).
Clause 13.07-1S (Land use Compatibility)	- Ensure that use or development of land is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses. - Avoid locating incompatible uses in areas that may be impacted by adverse off-site impacts from commercial, industrial and other uses. - Avoid or otherwise minimise adverse off-site impacts from commercial, industrial and other uses through land use separation, siting, building design and operational measures. - Protect commercial, industrial and other employment generating uses from encroachment by use or development that would compromise the ability of those uses to function safely and effectively. The Project is consistent with Clause 13.07-1S (Land use Compatibility) as follows: - The Project is located within an established energy generation area and REZ, where there are a number of BESS developments occurring. - The Project is located adjacent to Hazelwood Terminal Station for close grid access, reducing impacts associated with transmission construction. - Project infrastructure has been sited to minimise potential impacts on surrounding land uses, particularly dwellings. - The Project represents a change in land use that aligns with the continued evolution of the Latrobe Valley as a key energy precinct. - Surrounding commercial, industrial and farming businesses should not be impacted by the development.
Clause 14 (Natural Resource Management)	
Clause 14.01-1S (Protection of agricultural land)	- Identify areas of productive agricultural land, including land for primary production and intensive agriculture. - Consider state, regional and local, issues and characteristics when assessing agricultural quality and productivity. The Project is consistent with Clause 14.01-1S (Protection of agricultural land) as follows: - The area occupied by the BESS would represent only a small portion of the overall site. Once the BESS is operational, it is possible for agricultural activities to continue across approximately 60ha of land within the site

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
	boundary. Agricultural Impact Assessments (Section 7.1 and Appendix 1) found the land does not meet the definition of high-quality, productive agricultural land and the Project is expected to have a negligible impact on regional and state level agricultural production.
Clause 14.02-1S (Catchment planning and management)	• <i>Ensure the continued availability of clean, high-quality drinking water by protecting water catchments and water supply facilities.</i> • <i>Consider the impacts of catchment management on downstream water quality and freshwater, coastal and marine environments.</i> • <i>Retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 50 metres wide along each side of a waterway to:</i> ○ <i>Maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values,</i> ○ <i>Minimise erosion of stream banks and verges, and</i> ○ <i>Reduce polluted surface runoff from adjacent land uses.</i> • <i>Undertake measures to minimise the quantity and retard the flow of stormwater from developed areas.</i> • <i>Ensure that development at or near waterways provide for the protection and enhancement of the environmental qualities of waterways and their instream uses.</i> • <i>Ensure land use and development minimises nutrient contributions to water bodies and the potential for the development of algal blooms.</i> • <i>Require appropriate measures to restrict sediment discharges from construction sites.</i> • <i>Ensure planning is coordinated with the activities of catchment management authorities.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 14.02-1S (Catchment planning and management) as follows: • The Project is not within any Special Catchment Water Area. • With the implementation of best practice design and management measures, the residual impacts on water quality are expected to be minor, localised, and manageable (Appendix 7). • The risk of significant adverse surface water effects on any of the DEECA listed wetlands on or around site is considered low given the location of these assets and the nature of the proposed activities (Appendix 7). • The Project will incorporate mitigation measures to avoid, mitigate and manage surface water impacts, during construction, operation and decommissioning of the BESS. • All construction activities to be completed in accordance with industry standard best practice guidelines including: <i>IECA Best Practice Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines</i> and <i>EPA Publication 1834; Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide</i>. • Stormwater drainage infrastructure is designed to meet Latrobe City Council and EPA requirements such as incorporating water quality treatment devices.

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
	- On-site detention has been incorporated into the design to manage increased runoff, protect downstream waterways and avoid exacerbation of existing flood conditions. - Waterway crossings would be designed in accordance with the conditions of a Works on Waterways Permit issued by WGCMA.
Clause 14.02-2S (Water quality)	<i>Ensure that land use activities potentially discharging contaminated runoff or wastes to waterways are sited and managed to minimise such discharges and to protect the quality of surface water and groundwater resources, rivers, streams, wetlands, estuaries and marine environments.</i> <i>Avoid detrimental impacts on groundwater resources and minimise risk of harm to human health and the environment from proposed land use or development</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 14.02-2S (Water quality) as follows: - The stormwater drainage network would be designed to meet the water quality objectives of CSIRO Best Practice Environmental Guidelines for stormwater management (1999), <i>EPA Publication 1739.1: Urban Stormwater Management Guidance</i>, and the Infrastructure Design Manual, prior to discharging into receiving waters. - Stormwater drainage infrastructure for the Project will be designed to meet Latrobe City Council and EPA requirements such as incorporating water quality treatment devices. - On-site detention has been incorporated into the design to manage increased runoff, protect downstream waterways and avoid exacerbation of existing flood conditions. - The storage, handling and management of fuels and chemicals would be performed in accordance with the following: <i>The Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations (2022)</i>, <i>EPA Guideline 1698: Liquid Storage and Handling Guidelines</i>, and <i>WorkSafe Victoria's Compliance Code: Hazardous Substances</i>.
Clause 14.03-1S (Resource exploration and extraction)	<i>Provide for the long-term protection of natural resources in Victoria.</i> <i>Protect the opportunity for exploration and extraction of natural resources where this is consistent with overall planning considerations and acceptable environmental practice.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 14.03-1S (Resource exploration and extraction) as follows: - The Project will not impact any nearby existing or proposed brown coal mining operations, nor will it constrain the future development of any brown coal resources in the area, ensuring the opportunity for exploration and extraction of natural resources is protected. - There is no Mining License over the Project Area.
Clause 15 (Built Environment and Heritage)	

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
Clause 15.01-6S (Design for rural areas)	• <i>Ensure that the siting, scale and appearance of development protects and enhances rural character.</i> • <i>Protect the visual amenity of valued rural landscapes and character areas along township approaches and sensitive tourist routes by ensuring new development is sympathetically located</i> • <i>Site and design development to minimise visual impacts on surrounding natural scenery and landscape features including ridgelines, hill tops, waterways, lakes and wetlands</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 15.01-6S (Design for rural areas) as follows: • The Project ensures the overall impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of the rural landscape is acceptable and manageable, as the gently undulating topography, together with intermittent bands and stands of vegetation provide a degree of visual buffering which would screen views from many surrounding residences and road corridors, with separation distances from homesteads further reducing visual impact. • A Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (Section 7.6 and Appendix 5) has been prepared for the Project that considers the visual impact of the Project. The assessment demonstrates that the Project's impact on landscape character and visual amenity are acceptable and consistent with the evolving energy infrastructure character of the Latrobe Valley.
Clause 15.03-1S (Heritage conservation)	• <i>Provide for the protection of natural heritage sites and man-made resources</i> • <i>Provide for the conservation and enhancement of those places that are of aesthetic, archaeological, architectural, cultural, scientific or social significance</i> • <i>Encourage appropriate development that respects places with identified heritage values.</i> • <i>Retain those elements that contribute to the importance of the heritage place.</i> The Project is consistent with Clause 15.03-1S (Heritage conservation) as follows: • There are no Heritage Overlays within or adjacent to the Project boundary, • The Project provides for the protection of cultural heritage through the implementation of a CHMP which is currently being prepared. • There are two VHI sites in and near the Project area. This includes H8121-0061 Otterburn Farm Complex which is located within the Project boundary and H8121-0060 Tramway Road Former Residence which is located 180m south of the Project boundary. There is no risk of damage to H8121-0060 as the registered place extent is outside the Project boundary. H8121-0061 will be partially impacted by the Project and therefore, a consent to excavate and/or a consent to damage less than 50% of a site would be obtained from HV prior to the commencement of works.
Clause 15.03-2S (Aboriginal cultural heritage)	• <i>Identify, assess and document places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, in consultation with relevant Registered Aboriginal Parties, as a basis for their inclusion in the planning scheme.</i> • <i>Provide for the protection and conservation of pre-contact and post-contact Aboriginal cultural heritage places.</i>

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
	- Ensure that permit approvals align with the recommendations of any relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plan approved under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. The Project is consistent with Clause 15.03-2S (Aboriginal cultural heritage) as follows: - AACHS have been identified within the Project area within 200m of Bennetts Creek. - A CHMP is currently being prepared for the Project that includes desktop, standard and complex assessment. - Engagement has occurred with GLaWAC as well as their presence on site during the complex assessments (Section 4.3.2).
Clause 17 (Economic Development)	
Clause 17.01-1S (Diversified Economy)	- Protect and strengthen existing and planned employment areas and plan for new employment areas. - Facilitate regional, cross-border and inter-regional relationships to harness emerging economic opportunities. - Facilitate growth in a range of employment sectors, including health, education, retail, tourism knowledge industries and professional services to build on emerging and existing strengths of each region. The Project is consistent with Clause 17.01-1S (Diversified Economy) as follows: - The Project would create new jobs in the power and renewable energy sectors, aligning with local and regional aspirations to diversify the economy during the ongoing transition of Victoria's energy system. - 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.
Clause 19 (Infrastructure)	
Clause 19.01-1S (Energy supply)	- Support the development of energy generation, storage, transmission, and distribution infrastructure to transition to a low-carbon economy - Develop appropriate infrastructure to meet community demand for energy services. - Ensure energy generation, storage, transmission and distribution infrastructure and projects are resilient to the impacts of climate change. The Project is consistent with Clause 19.01-1S (Energy supply) as follows: - The Project directly contributes to Victoria's energy transition by providing large-scale energy storage that supports grid stability during periods of peak demand. - The BESS provides clean energy transmission and storage which would reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Clause 19.01-2S (Renewable energy)	- Protect renewable energy infrastructure against competing and incompatible uses. - Set aside suitable land for future renewable energy infrastructure.

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Clause	Strategies & relevance to Project
	- Consider the economic, social and environmental benefits to the broader community of renewable energy generation while also considering the need to minimise the effects of a proposal on the local community and environment. The Project is consistent with Clause 19.01-2S (Renewable energy) as follows: - The Project is appropriately located in the Gippsland REZ and adjacent to the Hazelwood Terminal Station. - The Community Benefit Sharing offers economic, social and environmental benefits to the broader community. - Various environmental assessments demonstrate there is limited amenity, particularly noise, traffic and visual, impacts as a result of the Project.

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6.3 Land use terms

Land use terms are defined under **Clause 73.03** (Land Use Terms) of the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP). The Project comprises of a BESS and associated infrastructure are defined below.

BESS and transmission line

Figure 2). The Project is consistent with the definition of a ‘**utility installation**’.

Pursuant to **Clause 73.03** (Land Use Terms), ‘utility installation’ is defined as:

‘Land used:

- a. For telecommunications;
- b. To transmit or distribute gas or oil;
- c. **To transmit, distribute or store power, including battery storage;**
- d. To collect, treat, transmit, store, or distribute water; or
- e. To collect, treat, or dispose of storm or flood water, sewage, or sullage.

It includes any associated flow measurement device or a structure to gauge waterway flow.’

6.4 Zones

6.4.1 Farming Zone – Schedule 1

The BESS would be located within the Farming Zone – Schedule 1 (FZ1) as shown in Figure 7.

Pursuant to **Clause 35.07** (Farming Zone), the purpose of the Farming Zone (FZ) is:

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

Table 16 provides an assessment of the Project against the relevant decision guidelines of the FZ.

Table 17 outlines the permit triggers within the FZ for the proposed land use and building and works.

Table 16 FZ Decision guidelines

Decision guideline	Response
<i>Before deciding on an application to use or subdivide land, construct a building or construct or carry out works, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate: The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.</i>	• A detailed planning assessment of the Project against the MPS and PPF has been undertaken in Section 6.1 and Section 6.2 of this report. • The planning assessment demonstrates that the Project is aligned with the State, regional, and local planning policies.
<i>Whether the site is suitable for the use or development and whether the proposal is compatible with adjoining and nearby land uses.</i>	• The Project is appropriately located within the Gippsland REZ and adjacent to the Hazelwood Terminal Station, which offers a close connection option.

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Decision guideline	Response
	- The surrounding area is generally farming, energy and industrial, therefore the BESS is seen as compatible given existing BESS development in the area, and it is not a sensitive land use. - Once operational, agricultural use could remain / commence on the remainder of the site. - Environmental and amenity assessments have shown the BESS is compatible with nearby land uses, including houses.
<i>How the use and development makes use of existing infrastructure and services.</i>	The Project is located in Latrobe which is a region transitioning towards renewable energy. The Project location is positioned opposite the existing Hazelwood Terminal Station, making use of the existing infrastructure and minimising the transmission corridor required to connect to it.
<i>Whether the use or development will support and enhance agricultural production</i>	- The Project would result in some loss of farming land, however a portion of the site would still be able to be used for agriculture once the BESS becomes operational. - The Project would not impact nearby agricultural land uses. Once the Project is decommissioned, the subject site can be rehabilitated to ensure that it continues to be viable for agricultural activities.
<i>The impact of the use or development on the flora and fauna on the site and its surrounds.</i>	- Given the historic agricultural use of the site, the area and creek are degraded. - The impacts of the Project on flora and fauna on the site are considered low and there would be no impacts to TECs, FFG or EPBC Act listed species. - Potential for small impact to a farm dam with limited ecological value (listed as wetland 478362).
<i>The need to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area, including the retention of vegetation and faunal habitat and the need to revegetate land including riparian buffers along waterways, gullies, ridgelines, property boundaries and saline discharge and recharge area.</i>	- The Project has avoided impacts to identified TECs, FFG Act and EPBC Act listed species on site and minimised impacts to Bennetts Creek by cabling underground. - The Project could impact a farm dam (listed as wetland 478362), which may require offsets for the equivalent of 0.018 general habitat units. Offsets are available for purchase from a native vegetation owner. - Recommended measures also include revegetating the riparian areas along Bennetts Creek with locally indigenous flora species to improve habitat quality along the creek.
<i>The need to locate buildings in one area to avoid any adverse impacts on surrounding agricultural uses and to minimise the loss of productive agricultural land.</i>	The risk of contamination and biosecurity breaches would be mitigated with appropriate risk-based environmental and biosecurity management measures (refer to Section 7.1 and Appendix 1) throughout the life of the Project which would ensure risks of impact to agriculture remain very low.
<i>The impact of the siting, design, height, bulk, colours and materials to be used, on the natural environment, major roads, vistas and water features and the measures to be undertaken to minimise any adverse impacts.</i>	The overall impact of the Project on the natural environment and visual amenity are considered to be low and manageable with a number of mitigation measures recommended including selection of materials and colours, appropriate lighting and preparation of a landscape plan.

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Decision guideline	Response
<i>The location and design of existing and proposed infrastructure including roads, gas, water, drainage, telecommunications and sewerage facilities.</i>	- The design of the Project would result in a low residual risk to surface water, with the implementation of standard mitigation measures (refer to Section 7.9 and Appendix 7). - The Project is able to be accommodated within the existing road network without significant adverse traffic impacts (refer to Section 7.9 and Appendix 7).
<i>Whether the use and development will require traffic management measures.</i>	A Traffic Impact Assessment (refer to Section 7.9 and Appendix 8) has been prepared for the Project which outlines the proposed strategies for traffic management.

Table 17 FZ1 Permit requirements

Component	FZ1 Permit trigger
Use	In accordance with Clause 35.07-1 (Table of uses) of the FZ, a permit is required for the use of land for a 'utility installation' as it is a Section 2 (Permit required) use.
Buildings and works	In accordance with Clause 35.07-4 (Buildings and works) of the FZ, a permit is required for buildings and works associated with a Section 2 use.

6.4.2 Special Use Zone – Schedule 1

The transmission line connects to the Hazelwood Terminal Station which is located within the Special Use Zone – Schedule 1 (SUZ1) as shown in Figure 6.

Pursuant to **Clause 37.01** (SUZ) the purpose of the SUZ1 (Brown coal) is:

- 'To provide for brown coal mining and associated uses'
- To provide for electricity generation and associated uses
- To provide for interim and non-urban uses which protect brown coal resources and to discourage the use or development of land incompatible with future brown coal mining and industry.'

Table 18 provides an assessment of the Project against the relevant decision guidelines of the SUZ and SUZ1. Table 19 outlines the permit triggers within the SUZ for the proposed land use and building and works.

Table 18 SUZ1 Decision guidelines

Decision guideline	Response
<i>Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate:</i> - The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework. - Any guidelines in the schedule to this zone.	- A detailed planning assessment of the Project against the MPS and PPF has been undertaken in Section 6.1 and Section 6.2 of this report. - The planning assessment demonstrates that the Project is aligned with the State, regional, and local planning policies.
<i>The following decision guidelines apply to an application for a permit under Clause 37.01, in addition to those specified in Clause 37.01 and elsewhere in the scheme which must be considered, as appropriate, by the responsible authority:</i>	- There are identified AACHS within the Project area and a CHMP is currently being prepared for the Project. - Consultation and cultural awareness training has also occurred with GLaWAC.

Decision guideline	Response
<i>Any natural or cultural values on or near the land.</i>	
<i>Landscape treatment.</i>	- No mitigation measures to particularly reduce operational visual impacts from any one location have been identified in the Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment. - It is recommended for a landscape plan to be prepared for the Project which would reduce impacts on landscape character and enhance visual amenity.
<i>Parking and site access, loading and service areas, outdoor storage, fencing, lighting and stormwater discharge.</i>	- The Project would provide 16 permanent car parks for staff during operation along with temporary carparks for construction vehicles during construction. Site access is proposed via a new access road located to the south of the existing Hazelwood Terminal Station, off Tramway Road. - A laydown area is provided in the Project site during construction. - The Project would include boundary security fencing and lighting. - The Project would implement on-site detention to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff from the site.
<i>The impact of the building and works on nearby existing or proposed brown coal mining and the sequential development of brown coal resources in the area, having regard to any comments or directions of referral authorities.</i>	The Project would not impact nearby existing or proposed brown coal mining operations, nor would it constrain the sequential development of brown coal resources in the area.
<i>The impact of the building and works on nearby existing or proposed brown coal mining or electricity generation and any nearby agricultural uses.</i>	- The Project would not adversely affect nearby brown coal mining, electricity generation, or agricultural uses. - The adjoining land uses would continue to be able to be used for agricultural purposes during the construction and operation of the Project. - The Project would support electricity generation throughout the region.

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Table 19 SUZ1 Permit requirements

Component	SUZ1 Permit trigger
Use	In accordance with Clause 37.01 Section 1.0 (Table of uses) to the SUZ1, a permit is not required for the use of land for 'utility installation' as the proposed BESS meets the conditions set out in the Section 1 Table of uses
Buildings and works	In accordance with Clause 37.01 Section 4.0 (Buildings and works) to the SUZ1, a permit is not required for buildings and works associated with the BESS 'utility installation'

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6.4.3 Transport Zone (TRZ2 – Principal road network)

The transmission line connecting to the Hazelwood Terminal Station would run through the Transport Zone – Principal Road Network (TRZ2) as shown in Figure 7.

Pursuant to **Clause 36.01** (TRZ), the purpose of the TRZ2 (Principal road network) is:

- *To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.*
- *To provide for an integrated and sustainable transport system.*
- *To identify transport land use and land required for transport services and facilities.*
- *To provide for the use and development of land that complements, or is consistent with, the transport system or public land reservation.*
- *To ensure the efficient and safe use of transport infrastructure and land comprising the transport system.*

Table 20 provides an assessment of the Project against the relevant decision guidelines of the TRZ. Table 21 outlines the permit triggers within the SUZ for the proposed land use and building and works.

Table 20 TRZ Decision guidelines

Decision guideline	Response
Before deciding on an application, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65, the responsible authority must consider, as appropriate: • The Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework. • The effect of the proposal on the development, operation and safety of the transport system. • Whether the development is appropriately located and designed, including in accordance with any relevant use, design or siting guidelines.	• A detailed planning assessment of the Project against the MRS and PP has been undertaken in Section 6.1 and Section 6.2 of this report. • A Traffic Impact Assessment (refer to Section 7.9 and Appendix 8) has been prepared for the Project which outlines the proposed strategies for traffic management and function of the transport system. • Where the TRZ2 would be altered to provide a new access to the BESS site, available Safe Intersection Sight Distance is compliant with Austroads requirements at the planning level, and swept path analysis confirms suitable access for design vehicle. • The assessment indicates that the surrounding road network, particularly Tramway Road, has sufficient capacity to accommodate construction traffic associated with the Project without material adverse impacts on network performance, safety or public and active transport operations.

Table 21 TRZ Permit requirements

Component	TRZ2 Permit trigger
Use	In accordance with Clause 36.04-1 (Table of uses) to the TRZ, a permit is required for the use of land for 'utility installation' as the proposed BESS does not meet the conditions set out in the Section 1 Table of uses.
Buildings and works	In accordance with Clause 36.04-2 (Permit requirements) to the TRZ, a permit is required for buildings and works associated for any use in Section 1 Table of uses.

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6.5 Overlays

The Project is located within the State Resource Overlay – Schedule 1 (**SRO1**) as shown in Figure 8.

6.5.1 State Resource Overlay – Schedule 1

Table provides an assessment of the Project against the SRO1.

Table 22 SRO1 Assessment

Component	SRO1 Permit trigger
Use	In accordance with Schedule 1 to Clause 44.07 , a permit is not required for the use of land for 'utility installation'.
Building and works	In accordance with Schedule 1 to Clause 44.07 , a permit is not required for buildings and works associated with a 'utility installation'.

6.6 Other considerations

6.6.1 Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity

The Project area contains AACHS within 200m of Bennetts Creek (shown in Figure 9) and therefore a mandatory CHMP is required, which is currently being prepared. Further details are in Section 7.2 of this report.

6.6.2 Historic heritage

There is one VHI site located within the Project site which is Otterburn Farm Complex (H8121-0061) as shown in Figure 9.

This consists of a brick cistern and structural foundations which represent the only intact deposits associated with the former residences. The proposed access road would overlay with the VHI site. A Heritage Impact Assessment (Section 7.5 and Appendix 4) has been prepared for the Project. Further details are in Section 7.5 of this report.

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6.7 Particular Provisions

Particular provisions are planning controls that apply only to certain uses and development or to particular aspects of certain uses and development. Table 23 outlines the particular provisions relevant to the Project.

Table 23 Particular provisions assessment

Particular provision	Requirement	Assessment
Clause 52.05 (Signs)	Pursuant to Clause 52.05-14 (Signs), a permit is required for a business identification sign exceeding 3sqm.	Signage to identify the BESS is still to be confirmed at this stage, however it is suggested that details of the signage are to form a condition of the permit.
Clause 52.06 (Car parking)	The land use term 'utility installation' is not listed in Table 1 of Clause 52.06-5 (Number of car parking spaces required under Table 1). Pursuant to Clause 52.06-6 (Number of car parking spaces required for other uses), where a use of land is not specified in Table 1, car parking must be provided to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.	The Project would provide 16 carparks, which would be adequate for the likely maximum of 10 people on site at any given time. A Traffic Impact Assessment (refer to Section 7.9 and Appendix 8) has been prepared for the Project which outlines the proposed strategies for traffic management.

Particular provision	Requirement	Assessment
Clause 52.17 (Native vegetation)	Pursuant to Clause 52.17-2 (Permit requirement), a permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation	An Ecological Assessment (refer Section 7.1 and Appendix 2) has been prepared which has identified the Project may require impacts to the farm dam / DEECA mapped wetland 478362, which equates to 0.09 hectares of native vegetation.
Clause 52.29 (Land adjacent to principal road network)	Pursuant to Clause 52.29-2 (Permit requirement), a permit is required to create or alter access to a road in a Transport Zone 2.	Alteration to Tramway Road is required to provide an access point to the BESS site.
Clause 53.22 (Significant economic development)	Pursuant to Clause 53.22-4 (Exemption from review), an application is exempt from the decision requirements of section 64(1), (2) and (3) and the review rights of section 82(1) of the P&E Act	The Project is submitted under Category 1, therefore exempting the application from the review rights of section 82(1).

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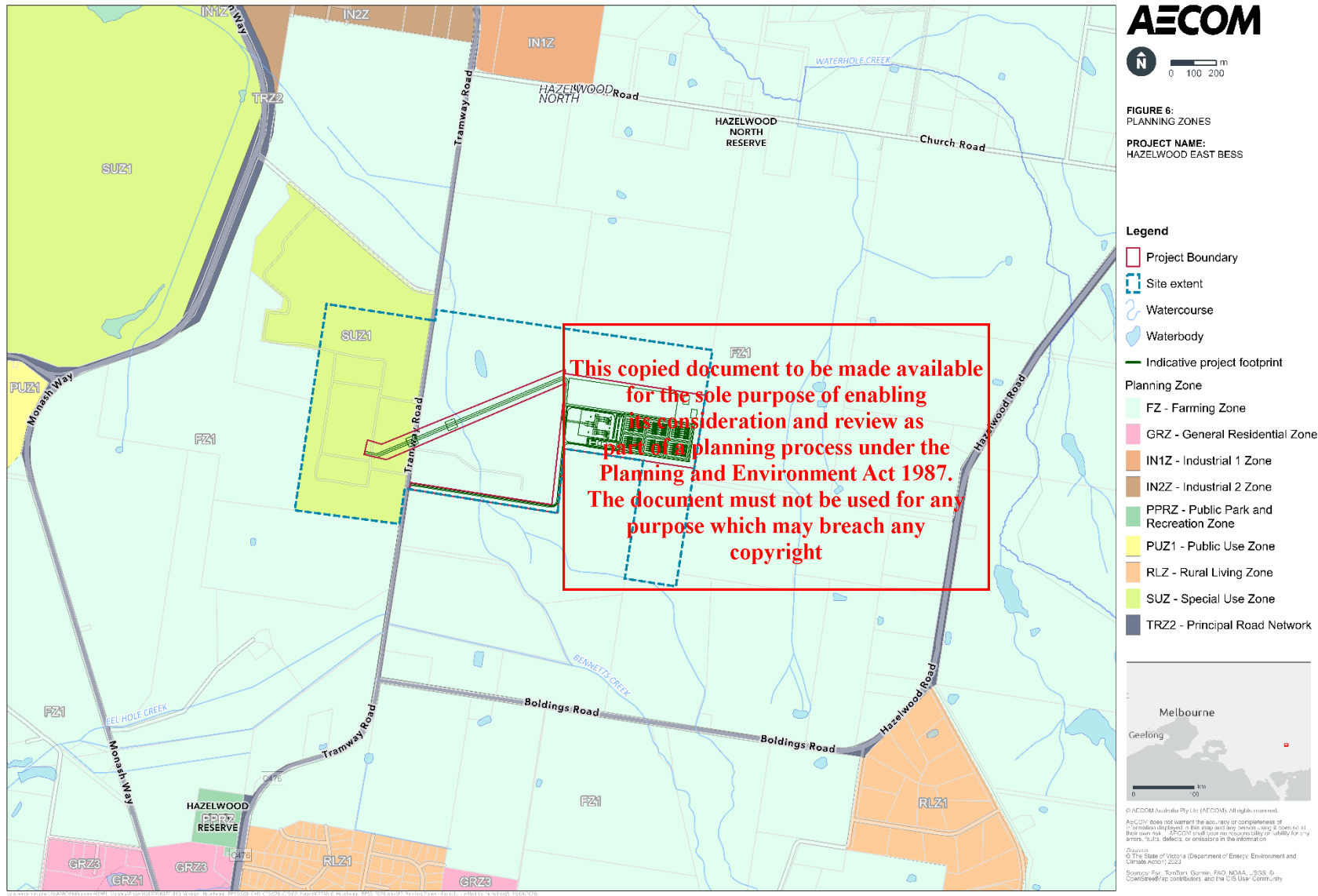


Figure 7 Planning Zones (AECOM, 2026)

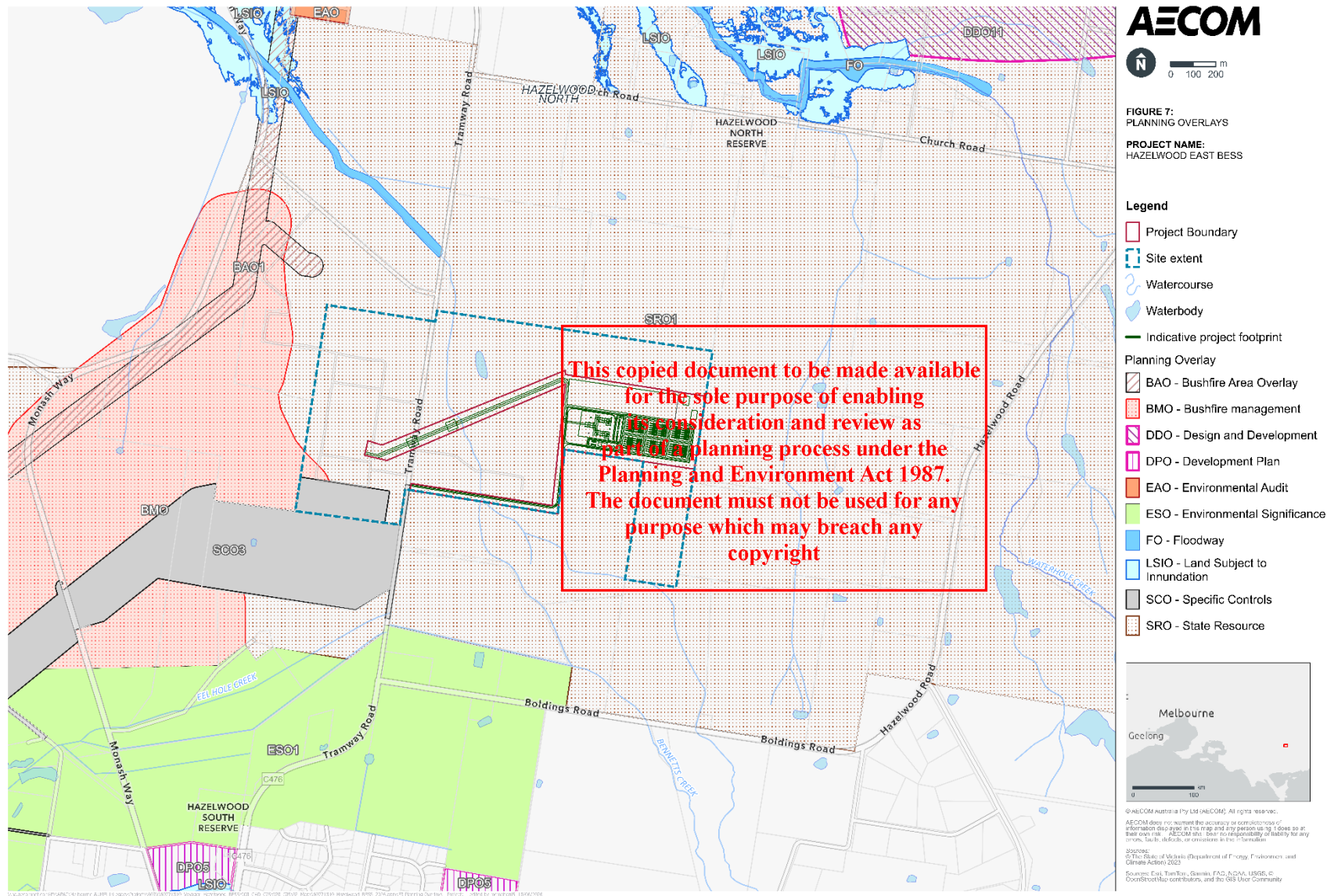


Figure 8 Planning Overlays (AECOM, 2026)

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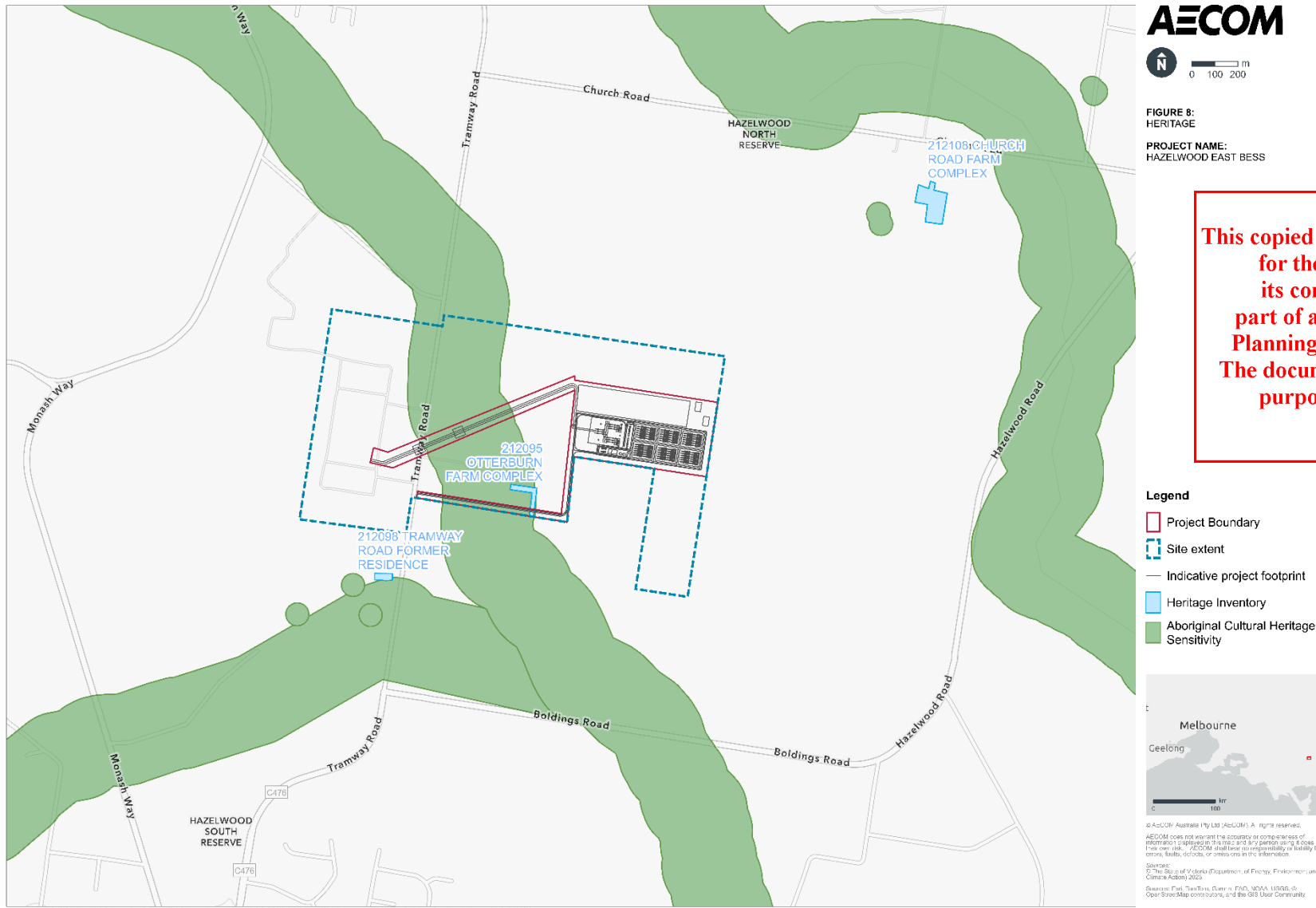


Figure 9 Heritage Considerations (AECOM, 2026)

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7.0 Impact assessment

This section provides a summary of the findings of the specialist assessments that have been undertaken in support of the Project.

7.1 Agriculture

An Agricultural Assessment (RMCG, 2026) was prepared by RMCG to assess the potential agricultural impacts and risks associated with the Project.

The Study area for the agricultural assessment includes 545 Tramway Road (zoned as FZ1), which is currently used for grazing. 530 Tramway Road, which is occupied by the Hazelwood Terminal Station has not been included in the Study area as it is not currently zoned or used for agriculture.

Key findings of the assessment were:

- The Study area does not meet the definition of high-quality productive land, however the climate and soils are of a moderate quality and are suitable to support agricultural activities such as grazing.
- The loss of agricultural production and output of the site as a result of the Project is valued at approximately \$120,000 which is considered to be insignificant at a regional (Latrobe LGA) and state level (0.2% and 0.0007% respectively). This is considered to be a negligible impact on statewide agricultural production.
- The key risks to agriculture are the potential contamination and biosecurity breaches associated with the Project. This includes the spread of disease, weeds, pests, pathogens, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) and heavy metals which could impact the study area and nearby agricultural land through the movement of vehicle, equipment, soil, animals and people. This could result in reduced meat, crop and fodder production, loss of industry accreditation, increased livestock management costs, restrictions on the movement and sale of livestock and crops, and reduced produce prices.
- Recommended mitigation measures include implementing a risk-based contamination and biosecurity management plan within the EMP which includes hygiene procedures, weed and pest monitoring and management, livestock management (where applicable), and spill and contamination management and response. Where these mitigation measures are effectively implemented, there is a very low residual risk of impact from contamination or biosecurity breaches.

Overall, the report concludes the risks to agriculture from the Project are considered very low, where mitigation measures are implemented.

A copy of the Agricultural Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

7.2 Cultural heritage

The Project area contains AACHS within 200m of Bennetts Creek, as shown in Figure 9. The results of the preliminary background research show that it is possible that ACH is present in the Project Area and therefore a mandatory CHMP is required with further investigation.

A CHMP is currently being prepared for the Project. The preparation of the CHMP will include further consultation with GLaWAC and will assist in the management of any Aboriginal cultural material which is identified within the Project Area during construction.

Once approved, the CHMP will be provided to DTP in support of this planning permit application.

7.3 Ecology

An Ecological Assessment has been prepared to identify ecological values present and assess the potential ecological impacts associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project.

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Key findings of the report were:

Ecological values of the Project area:

- The Project area comprises private agricultural land with a dwelling, a large dam in the west, a small dam in the east, and Bennetts Creek running through the western section. The Hazelwood Terminal Station features mown lawns with planted trees and shrubs for screening, while overhead transmission lines and towers traverse the grazing land.
- The Project area has been extensively cleared for agriculture and the terminal station, with no remnant woodland or forest remaining. Swamp Scrub along the creek is largely absent and severely disturbed. Native vegetation is limited to 14 small habitat zones totaling 0.307 ha (all poorly scored against EVC benchmarks due to disturbance) and one large, scattered tree. Three mapped wetlands (IDs 478358, 478362 and 478357) have also been identified within the site's farm dams, which constitute as native vegetation.
- No Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) were found to be present in the Project area.
- A total of 5 threatened flora species were identified, only as planted specimens:
 - One individual of Strzelecki Gum *Eucalyptus strzeleckii* (EPBC Act: Vulnerable, FFG Act: Critically Endangered)
 - Giant Honey-myrtle *Melaleuca armillaris subsp. armillaris* (FFG Act: Endangered)
 - Sticky Wattle *Acacia howittii* (FFG Act: Vulnerable)
 - Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata* (FFG Act: Vulnerable)
 - Southern Blue-gum *Eucalyptus globulus subsp. globulus* (FFG Act: Endangered)
- No other threatened flora or fauna species are considered to likely or potentially occur in the Project area.
- As such, there are no implications under the EPBC Act, EE Act or FFG Act in relation to ecological impacts.

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Assessment of potential ecological impacts

The current indicative layout of the Project has been designed to avoid direct impact to the DEECA mapped wetland 478362, however the wetland is located directly adjacent to the indicative Project footprint and therefore has the potential to be disturbed by construction works. If impacted, the Project would require the removal of the wetland which equates to a total of 0.09 ha of native vegetation removal. The native vegetation removal would be offset in accordance with the Guidelines (DEECA, 2025) with all offsets secured prior to the removal of native vegetation.

The offset requirements for the native vegetation removal would be:

- 0.018 general habitat units which must include the following requirements:
 - Minimum strategic biodiversity value of 0.2728
 - Occur within the West Gippsland CMA boundary or the Latrobe City Council.

The Native Vegetation Register shows that the offset is available for purchase from a native vegetation owner.

The Project would include construction of an access road crossing over Bennett Creek. Impacts associated with erosion and sedimentation from construction works are expected to be temporary and minor. No significant impacts on aquatic ecology are anticipated as Bennett Creek is ephemeral and severely altered and degraded from historical grazing activities.

Mitigation measures

Standard construction mitigation measures, including erosion and sediment control, no-go zones and tree protection zones, would help avoid or mitigate impacts arising from construction works and should be included in an EMP prepared prior to construction.

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The EMP should also consider measures to revegetate the riparian areas along Bennetts Creek with indigenous flora species to improve habitat quality along the creek, stabilize creek banks and enhance the biodiversity within the Project area.

A copy of the Ecological Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

7.4 Fire risk

A Fire Risk Management Plan has been prepared by Fire Risk Consultants to evaluate the fire risks associated with the construction, commissioning and operation phases of the Project.

The key findings of the detailed risk assessment are:

- The key driver of bushfire hazard is within 400m of the development, due to the surrounding vegetation primarily being grassland. The highly fragmented landscape will see the area within 20 km of the Project area drive bushfire behaviour.
- The site is located within 20km of fire-prone environment, where there is some likelihood of localised fire activity. However fires would likely be of a lower intensity due to the surrounding landscape and vegetation. The proposed location and parcels of land have been effectively designed to avoid areas of very high and extreme bushfire hazard, while also avoiding densely populated areas.
- The residual risk profile of the Project is considered to be low to moderate, due to the robust design considerations, incorporation of CFA Guidelines requirements and contemporary technology proposed for the Project.
- The battery unit of the development would have undergone UL 9540A testing, which would validate its resilience against thermal runaway and fire spread. The site layout, infrastructure and operational procedures would be designed to mitigate the risk of fire to onsite assets and the surrounding area.
- The Fire Risk Management Plan would provide a clear pathway for the safe development and operation of the development, which includes continued engagement with emergency service organisations, adherence to maintenance schedules, and regular review of emergency procedures.

With the implementation of the above recommended fire risk management measures and ongoing compliance, the Project would be able to operate with fire risks managed to an acceptable level, ensuring the protection of human life, property and the environment.

7.5 Historic heritage

A Historical Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Andrew Long and Associated Pty Ltd to assess the potential historical heritage impacts associated with the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project.

There are two historical sites in and near the Project area (shown in Figure 9), both of which are registered on the Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI) due to their archaeological importance:

- H8121-0061 Otterburn Farm Complex – located within the Project boundary.
- H8121-0060 Tramway Road Former Residence – located 180m south of the Project boundary.

During construction, the Project's new access track would extend over a small section of the place extent of H8121-0061 Otterburn Farm Complex. Consent is therefore required from Heritage Victoria (HV) to damage less than 50% of a registered site.

Additional mitigation measures which include further consultation with HV during the operational and decommissioning phases of the Project are recommended to ensure that maintenance and decommissioning of the access track do not further impact the registered site.

There is no risk of damage to H8121-0060 Tramway Road Former Residence as the registered place extent is outside the Project boundary.

A copy of the Historical Heritage Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 4.

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7.6 Landscape and visual impact

A Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared to assess the potential landscape character and visual impacts associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project.

Four Landscape Character Zones (**LCZ**) were identified within the Project area, with the impacts of the Project on the landscape character identified below:

- LCZ1 (Rural Agriculture): would experience the greatest degree of change, with an increase in electrical infrastructure within the rural agricultural character. Due to the highly modified and functional nature of this LCZ and existing high-voltage transmission lines through the LCZ, the landscape character rating has been assigned as moderate.
- LCZ2 (Energy Infrastructure): considered to have a low impact with the proposed change, being the removal of a small portion of (planted) vegetation to allow for the underground connection.
- LCZ3 (Environmental Living): no impact.
- LCZ4 (Residential): no impact.

Overall, the Project is considered to have a low effect on landscape character within the study area.

The Project would result in an increase in visually prominent, utilitarian elements within the open agricultural landscape. Most sensitive receptors would experience views from distances greater than approximately 1.1 km and within a landscape already characterised by the adjacent Hazelwood Terminal Station and high-voltage transmission lines that traverse and define the wider visual context. The visual impact of the Project is therefore considered to be moderate.

The visual impact of the Project during construction is assessed as high to moderate due to the introduction of large-scale construction equipment and activities into a predominantly rural, open pasture landscape which results in visual clutter visible from surrounding properties.

A number of mitigation measures have been recommended which include selection of materials and colour of infrastructure, lighting controls and the preparation of a landscape plan.

The overall Project impact on landscape character and visual amenity is therefore expected to be acceptable and manageable and consistent with the evolving energy infrastructure character of Latrobe Valley.

A copy of the Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 5.

7.7 Noise

An Environmental Noise Assessment has been prepared to assess the Project's compliance with the applicable noise limits, as well as cumulative noise limits in relation to other nearby industrial facilities. The cumulative effects of noise are discussed in Section 7.10.1.

The assessment analyses the predicted noise produced by the BESS facility and any impacts this may have on nearby sensitive receptors within a 1.8km radius of the BESS facility (shown in Figure 5). Compliance at these properties is expected to also result in compliance at more distant receivers. The noise emissions predicted are representative of conditions where the receiver is downwind of the source in a light breeze or under a moderate ground-based temperature inversion. Predicted noise levels from the BESS are expected to be the same for all time periods, since BESS operations are currently anticipated to be similar for the day, evening and night periods.

Based on this assessment, the predicted noise levels from the BESS are predicted to comply with the noise limits at all noise sensitive areas.

A copy of the Environmental Noise Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 6.

7.8 Surface water and flooding

A Surface Water Impact Assessment has been prepared to assess the potential surface water impacts associated with the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project.

The key findings of the assessment are:

- During construction, the main risks include sediment runoff from exposed soils, accidental spills of fuels or chemicals, and localised flooding due to altered drainage patterns. A key mitigation strategy during construction is the implementation of an EMP which covers surface water management, including erosion and sediment controls, chemical storage and handling, spill management and personnel responsibilities. Flood risks would be managed through site layout optimisation, adjusting work programs ahead of storm events, and compliance with relevant guidelines.
- During operational phase, the introduction of impervious surfaces and the presence of electrical and mechanical infrastructure could result in increased stormwater runoff and pollutant loads. Mitigation during this phase includes stormwater drainage infrastructure designed to meet Latrobe City Council and EPA requirements such as incorporating water quality treatment devices. On-site detention has been incorporated into the design to manage increased runoff, protect downstream waterways and avoid exacerbation of existing flood conditions.
- Decommissioning impacts are anticipated to be lower than those during construction. Decommissioning works would be carried out in accordance with the guidelines and requirements that are relevant at the end of the Project life cycle, including recycling of materials and rehabilitating land.

Mitigation measures have been proposed to appropriately manage surface water impacts. Overall, it is considered that the Project would result in a low residual risk to the environmental values of surface water, provided that the mitigation measures are implemented.

A copy of the Surface Water Impact Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 7.

7.9 Traffic

A Traffic Impact Assessment has been prepared to assess the potential traffic impacts associated with the construction of the Project.

The key findings of the assessment are:

- The surrounding road network, particularly Tramway Road, has sufficient capacity to accommodate the construction traffic associated with the Project, without adverse impacts on network performance, safety or public and active transport operations.
- During construction, traffic generation would be concentrated around workforce arrivals and departures. No adverse capacity impacts are anticipated from this as under this scenario, Tramway Road would be operating at less than 50% capacity.
- Active transport demand is minimal, with only one bus service route operating along Tramway Road, and any interactions can be effectively managed through standard construction traffic management measures.
- During operation, traffic generation would be negligible as the site is to be remotely monitored with irregular maintenance works expected to be required.

Mitigation measures include preparation and implementation of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) to manage construction related traffic and ensure the safe and efficient operation of the surrounding road network during construction.

A copy of the Traffic Impact Assessment is attached to this report as Appendix 8.

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7.10 Cumulative impact assessment

This section provides an assessment of cumulative impacts associated with other existing and proposed BESS developments in the surrounding Latrobe Valley region. For the purposes of this assessment, Projects located in proximity to the Project area have been identified and are shown in Figure 4. Table 24 describes these projects which have been considered in the cumulative impact assessment.

Table 24 Projects assessed for cumulative impacts

Project	Description	Relevance to this assessment
Bennetts Creek BESS	A proposed BESS with a planned output of 100MW / 200MWh, located on Monah Way in Hazelwood North. A new 66kV transmission line is proposed to connect to the existing Morwell Terminal Substation.	The Bennetts Creek BESS is located approximately 2 km north-west of the Project. The project was approved by the Minister for Planning in 2023. Construction is expected to commence in 2026, and the project is expected to be operational by 2028.
Gippsland BESS	A proposed BESS with a planned capacity of 600MW, located near the Hazelwood Terminal Station in Hazelwood North.	The Gippsland BESS is located on the adjoining site immediately north of the Project. The project is currently under consideration by the Minister for Planning.
Hazelwood BESS	A BESS with an output of 150MW/150MWh, located near the former site of Hazelwood Power Station.	The Hazelwood BESS is located approximately 3.4 km west of the Project. The project has been operational since 2023.
Latrobe Valley BESS	A BESS with an output of 100MW / 200MWh, located next to the existing Morwell Terminal Station on Monash Way, in Morwell.	The Latrobe Valley BESS is located approximately 2.5 km north-west of the Project. The project has been operational since 2025.
Tramway Road BESS	A proposed 300MW/1200MWh BESS and 500 kV transmission connection to the existing Hazelwood Terminal Station. Located on Tramway Road, Hazelwood North.	The Tramway Road BESS is located approximately 900m to the south-west of the Project. The project was approved by the Minister for Planning in 2025. Construction is expected to commence in 2026, and the project is expected to be operational in 2028.
Wooreen BESS	A proposed 350MW BESS, located at the Jeeralang power station in Hazelwood North.	The Wooreen BESS is located approximately 500m to the east of the Project. The project is currently under construction and is expected to be operational by the end of 2026.

The key potential cumulative impacts from the Project are expected to be related to noise and visual impacts. However, with implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in the technical reports, cumulative impacts are expected to be appropriately managed to acceptable levels. Key potential cumulative impacts are discussed in further detail below.

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7.10.1 Noise cumulative impacts

Noise emissions from the Project must be managed to ensure that the cumulative noise levels from all nearby industrial sources do not exceed the prescribed limits at nearby sensitive receptors in accordance with Environmental Protection Regulations.

The cumulative noise impact assessment conducted for the Project (see Appendix 6) includes existing and proposed BESS facilities nearby, along with other existing and future industrial noise sources. The predicted noise levels from these facilities have been added to the predicted noise level from the Project (discussed in Section 7.7), for each noise sensitive receptor to obtain the cumulative noise level.

Based on these predicted noise levels, cumulative compliance is predicted at all nearby sensitive receptors. Given the relatively low predicted noise levels from the Project, it is not expected to result in additional cumulative constraints on other projects currently proposed in the area.

7.10.2 Landscape character and visual impact cumulative impacts

Based on the Project timeframes in Table 24, the Latrobe Valley landscape (within 4km of the Project) would have six BESS facilities operational by mid-2029, four of which would be additional within the landscape, considering that the Latrobe Valley BESS and Hazelwood BESS are already existing operational developments.

The cumulative impact of the increase in BESS developments would be an increase in electrical infrastructure within the rural agricultural landscape. These projects would however be clustered around existing mining and electrical infrastructure (including Jeeralang Power Station, Hazelwood Terminal Station, Hazelwood Mine and associated high voltage electrical assets).

Views within the local landscape would also include an increase in electrical infrastructure (BESS developments), which 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 the landscape as they move through the landscape. Due to the low density of residential homes in the rural landscape, it is unlikely that many residents would experience a cumulative impact of these projects with most views from each property.

A low number of homes from Church Road and Hazelwood Road would potentially receive views to both Gippsland BESS and the Project. However, 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. Implementation of mitigation measures recommended for the Project would further reduce these impacts, which include lighting controls and the preparation of a landscape plan.

While there is a cumulative impact to the visual amenity and landscape character as described above, it is noted these impacts are anticipated to an extent, given the Victorian Government's strategy to manage the transition towards renewable energy transition, and the identification of the Latrobe Valley by State and regional strategies as a key location for renewable energy generation, energy storage, transmission infrastructure and associated clean-energy industries.

7.10.3 Transport cumulative impacts

The cumulative impacts on traffic as a result of the nearby projects are considered to be limited and manageable. Wooreen BESS is anticipated to be completed prior to the Project's construction, resulting in negligible temporal overlap. Some overlap is anticipated with Bennetts Creek BESS, however impacts are likely to be minor given the separation of construction routes due to the site being located on Monash Way. The proposal Gippsland BESS may contribute to localised cumulative effects on traffic along Tramway Road if constructed concurrently, however timing is uncertain at this stage. Overall, any residual cumulative impacts on traffic are expected to be minor and can be effectively mitigated through the preparation and implementation of an appropriate TMP.

8.0 Conclusion

The Project would 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. As the region shifts towards renewable energy, the Project is a key development which is consistent with

the changes in Australia's energy market to facilitate the rapid growth of variable renewable energy generation and the transition away from coal-fired power stations. The Project is strategically located within the Gippsland REZ and adjacent to the Hazelwood Terminal Station.

In terms of economic development, the Project would generate economic contribution to the region through construction employment and supplier engagement, while continuing the area's legacy as a critical contributor to Victoria's electricity supply. The Community Benefit Sharing Fund would also offer local and regional opportunities based on the community's needs.

The use and development of the land for a utility installation is consistent with the requirements of the Latrobe Planning Scheme, and the Project minimises potential environmental impacts while supporting the continued evolution of the Latrobe Valley as a key energy precinct.

Overall, the Project is considered to be consistent with the purpose and intent of the relevant planning controls and policies. Impacts on environmental and social aspects are generally low and manageable through standard mitigation measures proposed to be included in the Project's EMP, TMP and CHMP.

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