Molong Battery Energy Storage System

Application Number: **02927** Commencement Date: **21/05/2025** Status: **Locked**

1. About the project

1.1 Project details

1.1.1 Project title *

Molong Battery Energy Storage System

1.1.2 Project industry type *

Energy Generation and Supply (renewable)

1.1.3 Project industry sub-type

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1.1.4 Estimated start date *

01/09/2026

1.1.4 Estimated end date *

01/01/2056

1.2 Proposed Action details

1.2.1 Provide an overview of the proposed action, including all proposed activities. *

The proposed action will involve the development, construction, operation, and eventual decommissioning of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 150 megawatts (MW) / 730 megawatt hours (MWh) connecting via overhead transmission line (TL) directly to the existing Molong 132/66 kilovolts (kV) substation operated by TransGrid. The proposed action will be located on a portion of Lot 99 on Deposited Plan (DP) 102024, accessible via 1 Deight Street, Molong, New South Wales (NSW). The TL will traverse through Lot 1 on DP 542283, connecting to the TransGrid substation within the same lot and accessible via 19 Back Saleyards Road, Molong, NSW. The proposed location is within the Cabonne Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA), and includes land zoned as Primary Production (RU1). The project area, inclusive of two lots, is approximately 426 hectares (ha). The project area is approximately 413 ha with the disturbance footprint being approximately 9.6 ha.

The BESS will comprise battery units, inverters, transformers, a substation and ancillary infrastructure. The battery units will be within individual containers (or enclosures), with each container measuring approximately 6 metres (m) or 20 feet (ft) in length with an approximate weight of 43,000 kilograms (kg). The battery units will generally be in a linear arrangement with some minor changes anticipated as detailed design progresses. The inverters will convert the electricity stored in the battery units from Direct Current (DC) to Alternating Current (AC), and vice versa, that will be directed through a reticulation network of underground 33 kV cables within the BESS site and the proposed 33/132kV main transformer and 132kV overhead lines (approximately 900m in length) to the existing TransGrid Molong Substation.

Construction of the proposed action will require heavy vehicles, plant, and equipment for the transportation of components and installation of the components on the site. The proposed action is likely to require earth-moving equipment for civil and road works, cable trenching equipment, forklifts, and cranes subject to detailed design to install the BESS and complete ancillary works. It is anticipated that the construction phase will occur over a period of 14 months, followed by commissioning for a period of approximately eight months. Over that time, the main construction activities will include (Att 1, Section 1.1.3, pp 1-2 [This attachment is not publicly available and has been redacted due to the inclusion of sensitive data] See publicly available version Att 1A, Section 1.1.3, p1-2):

- Transportation of construction personnel, associated heavy and light vehicles, and materials to and from the site on a day-to-day basis, dependent on construction schedule;
- Site establishment works including vegetation clearing within the Development Footprint, bulk earthworks, and a temporary construction compound;
- Road works to formalise internal site access road to accommodate heavy vehicles, including a new driveway crossover;
- Construction of hardstand, gravel all weather access road and sealed BESS internal roads and curbing;
- Construction of proposed substations including installation of earthing grid, benching works, transformer bunding, installation of 33kV/132kV main transformer outdoor switchgear, high voltage busbar and support structure, overhead gantry structures, auxiliary transformer, harmonic filters, and reactive plant;
- Construction of overhead 132 kV transmission line to facilitate connection to the existing TransGrid Molong 132/66kV transmission substation;
- Installation of underground 33kV reticulation cabling, auxiliary transformers, battery enclosures, and inverter & transformer stations;
- Construction of ancillary works including parking areas, water tank, storage structures, stormwater management infrastructure, closed water retaining solution (likely above ground) to detain any potentially contaminated water, security cameras, security lighting and fencing;
- Acoustic attenuation measures, to be determined as part of detailed assessment;
- Cold and hot commissioning of BESS and substation equipment;
- Hold point testing and Final Acceptance;
- Removal of temporary construction facilities, and rehabilitation of disturbed areas following completion of construction of the proposed action.

The following materials will be transported to the site to facilitate construction of the Project and ancillary facilities and infrastructure:

- 264 battery enclosures, within modular containers;
- 50 Power Conversion Stations including inverters, transformers and switchgear;
- Hardstand works materials and equipment;
- Bulk earthworks materials and equipment;
- Retention pond materials and equipment;
- Concrete foundations;
- Piling;
- Building structures (operations and maintenance building and storage warehouse, and including temporary structures for construction crew and management);
- Control and 33kV switchrooms, approximately 6 m in height, and 132 kV Switchgear;
- 500 kilovolt-ampere backup diesel generator
- Substation and battery auxiliary transformers;
- Harmonic Filters and reactive power plant;
- Busbar and conductor support structures;
- Up to eight lightning protection masts up to 20 m high
- Fence, gates, security cameras and lighting;
- Fire Safety System;
- 150 kilolitre (kL) water storage tank for emergency response purposes;
- Sewerage tank
- One 20 kL potable water tank;
- 132 kV concrete or steel poles;
- Overhead bare wire conductors;
- Integrated earthing systems for the substation and battery areas;
- 33 kV, low and high voltage DC AC cabling;
- 33/132 kV Main Transformer up to 4m in height to top of main tank;
- Transformer bunding and environmental controls for insulation oil.

The operation of the proposed action would involve, but not be limited, to the following general activities:

- Maintenance and management of equipment, site buildings, and landscaping.
- General administrative activities.
- Receipt of equipment or goods.
- Waste removal from maintenance.

Minimal plant and equipment will be required for operation of the facility, primarily for staff access and maintenance vehicles. The proposed action is expected to self-operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week with minimal onsite oversite by authorised staff. The facility is otherwise restricted to the public. Emergency responses and maintenance activities may be required to be undertaken out of hours. During operation, it is anticipated that up to two full-time equivalent onsite jobs will be required to undertake planned and unplanned maintenance activities.

Following the operational phase, the proposed action will be decommissioned and the infrastructure removed following the End of Life (EOL) of the BESS, with works required to return the site as close as possible to its original state and use. All decommissioning and restoration activities would be in accordance with permits, approvals and regulatory requirements at the time. The operational life of the Project will be determined by the evolving nature of the technology, however is anticipated that the lifespan will be approximately 30 years from the commercial operations date (COD). The standard construction hours and heavy vehicles, plant, and equipment required for the construction of the proposed action would also apply to the decommissioning phase, albeit on a reduced scale.

Primarily, the purpose of the Project is to support Australia's energy shift and to improve overall grid stability and resilience through storing excess energy from the network during low demand periods (e.g. midday hours due to high rooftop solar energy penetration) and distributing back at peak demand times, in addition to providing ancillary network support services such as frequency regulation. The project will assist to stabilise the frequency of the grid at critical times in response to loss of load or loss of generation. The resulting improvement to the stability of grid frequency reduces the risk of system failure and blackouts. It also helps to ensure that the National Electricity Market (NEM) can accommodate an increasing proportion of variable load and generation forecast in years to come. The utility-scale development will store and discharge excess power to the electricity grid.

1.2.2 Is the project action part of a staged development or related to other actions or proposals in the region?

No

1.2.6 What Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents are relevant to the proposed action, and how are they relevant? *

The following legislation, planning frameworks and policies are considered relevant to the proposed action including:

1. ***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*** **(EPBC Act)** - The EPBC Act provides a legal framework to protect and manage unique plants, animals, habitats and places – called 'Protected Matters'. Ecological surveys undertaken within the project area have confirmed the presence of two Protected Matters including Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) and Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*). A third Protected Matter, Pink-tailed Legless Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) has also been considered as present (i.e. assumed), although not confirmed, due to low detectability. No other Protected Matters are considered relevant to the proposed action.
2. ***Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*** **(BC Act)** - The BC Act establishes a framework for assessing and offsetting biodiversity impacts from proposed development in NSW. Section 7.9 of the BC Act requires that a State Significant Development (SSD) application be accompanied by a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) unless the Project is not likely to have any significant impact of biodiversity values. As proposed action will impact native vegetation and associated habitats, a BDAR has been prepared.
3. ***Native Title Act 1993*** - The Native Title Act 1993 is commonwealth legislation that recognises the interests and rights Aboriginal people have to land and aims to provide recognition and protection of common law native title rights. A search of the Register of Native Title Claims on 20 October 2024 showed no claim at the site.
4. ***Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*** **(EP&A Act) and** ***Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*** **(EP&A Regulation)** - The EP&A Act and the EP&A Regulation form the statutory framework for planning approvals and environmental assessment in NSW. Implementation of the EP&A Act is the responsibility of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, State government agencies, and local government authorities. The requirement for development consent and various development controls are set out in environmental planning instruments (EPIs), including State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) and local environmental plans (LEPs). The EP&A Act and the EP&A Regulation outline the legislative framework for State Significant Development (SSD) including the requirement to follow the various Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) preparation guidelines, and the requirement for a Registered Environmental Assessment Planner (REAP) to endorse the EIS.
5. ***Local Land Services Act 2013*** **(LLS Act)** - The LLS Act regulates the clearing of native vegetation on rural land in NSW but only when the activity is permitted without Council consent. There are two broad categories of land under the LLS Act; Category 1 (Exempt) land and Category 2 (Regulated, Vulnerable or Sensitive) land. The draft map shows the project area categorised as a mixture of Category 1 and Category 2 land. No application for Category 1 (Exempt) land has been submitted for the proposed action.
6. ***National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*** **(NPW Act)** - The NPW Act provides for the protection of Aboriginal objects (sites, objects and cultural material) and Aboriginal places in NSW. Under the Act (Part 6), an Aboriginal object is defined as: *"any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft for sale) relating to indigenous and non-European habitation of the area that comprises NSW, being habitation both prior to and concurrent with the occupation of that area by persons of European extraction, and includes Aboriginal remains".* An Aboriginal place is defined under the NPW Act as an area which has been declared by the Minister administering the Act as a place of special significance for Aboriginal culture. It may or may not contain physical Aboriginal objects. An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) (Att 2 Section 1-8, pp 1-38) has been drafted as part of the SSD application and is being prepared in accordance with feedback obtained through consultation with the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council (OLALC) and additional aboriginal groups.
7. ***Water Management Act 2000*** **(WM Act)** - The WM Act aims to provide for the sustainable and integrated management of the water sources of the State for the benefit of both present and future generations. There is a first order water course southeast of the development footprint is considered

waterfront land as defined under the Act. Consideration of impacts to this water course will be included in the EIS, however it is noted that a water use approval under section 89, a water management work approval under section 90 or an activity approval (other than an aquifer interference approval) under section 91 of this Act is not required for SSD. Notwithstanding, the SSD process provides other requirements for assessments for water courses, and any works in close proximity to a watercourse (typically 40m) are prohibited.

8. **State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021** - The SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure) aims to facilitate the effective delivery of infrastructure across the State by providing for the development of electricity generating works on any land in a prescribed rural, industrial or special use zone for which there is consent. The project falls under the definition of *electricity generating works*, which includes "*a building or place used for the purpose of electricity storage*".
9. **State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience & Hazards) 2021** - Chapters 3 and 4 the SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) are required to be considered for the proposed action. A detailed Risks and Hazards Assessment is being prepared for the EIS, and will consider matters such as fire, bushfire, and electromagnetic fields.
10. **State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity Conservation) 2021** - Chapters 3 & 4 of SEPP (Biodiversity & Conservation) aim to protect koala habitat. According to Section 3.3 and Schedule 2, this SEPP applies to rural zoned land within Cabonne Local Government Area (LGA). Surveys undertaken to date have not identified any koala or core koala habitat that will be removed as part of this project.

1.2.7 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken regarding the project area, including with Indigenous stakeholders. Attach any completed consultation documentations, if relevant. *

Public Consultation

Storenergy 3 Pty Ltd have delivered a targeted community and stakeholder engagement program to support the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Molong Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Molong, New South Wales. The engagement program aimed to inform key stakeholders about the project, gather feedback to inform the EIS, and build early awareness and trust within the Molong community. A range of tailored communication tools were used to reach diverse audiences, including newspaper advertisements, targeted mailouts to near neighbours, and direct engagement with local government representatives and community organisations. These materials provided accessible information about the project and encouraged participation via community engagement sessions and online surveys.

Recognising a largely neutral sentiment toward the BESS within the Molong community, Stor-Energy established clear performance indicators to guide the engagement approach. These included:

- Engaging with community members and stakeholders willing to participate, to understand their perceptions and concerns about the project.
- Gathering insights into what the Molong community values and identifying local nuances that may influence project delivery.

Key engagement activities included:

- A community pop-up event held at the Molong Street Stall on Friday 21 March 2025, introducing the project and the proponent to the community and providing high-level project information.
- Two community drop-in sessions held on Monday 23 June 2025 at the Cabonne Community Centre, providing opportunities for stakeholders to engage directly with the project team, ask questions, and access detailed technical information.
- Door knocking with near neighbours along Deight Street and Back Saleyards Road, offering personalised engagement and project collateral.
- Stakeholder meetings with local organisations including the Cabonne Shire Council, the Rural Fire Service (RFS), and the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) allowing for more detailed discussion of project-specific interests and issues.

While participation was modest, consistent with the regional setting and early stage of the project, feedback from those who did engage was generally neutral to positive. Stakeholders expressed a willingness to learn more about the project and provided valuable feedback on a range of topics, including (Att 3, Section 4, pp7-12):

- Concerns around battery fires and potential radiation, particularly from near neighbours.
- Interest in the project proponent’s structure, responsibilities, and the long-term management of the facility.
- Questions surrounding battery lifespan, recycling, and disposal processes.
- Interest in how local community members, including Aboriginal groups, would benefit from the project.
- Suggestions for local procurement, employment opportunities, and involvement in environmental initiatives.
- Recognition of the battery’s potential to enhance energy reliability and support broader energy goals in the region.

The consultation process successfully established a foundation for future engagement. It provided the project team with insight into community attitudes, raised awareness of local values and priorities, and identified areas where further communication and collaboration would be beneficial. Moving forward, it is recommended that Stor-Energy maintain open communication channels and continue providing regular updates to stakeholders. A proactive, transparent engagement approach will be key to building trust and

ensuring community members have ongoing opportunities to participate in shaping project outcomes. Recommendations for further public consultation are included in detail in the Engagement Summary Report (Att 3, Section 6, pp13-15).

Indigenous Consultation

Engagement with First Nations stakeholders has commenced through initial meetings with the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC), the relevant LALC under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*. This early consultation sought to introduce the proposed action, establish appropriate communication protocols, and invite input on any cultural or heritage matters of significance within the project area (Att 2, Section 3, pp20-24 - Please note this document will not be made publicly available due to sensitivity). Ongoing communication with Orange LALC is planned to continue throughout the proposed action's assessment phase, particularly during the cultural heritage investigations and EIS consultation period. Five Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP's) signed up for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) and have been involved in the consultation process including engagement in fieldwork and review of reports (Att 2, section 3, pp 20-27 - Please note this document will not be made publicly available due to cultural sensitivity [see ‘Disclaimer and Cultural Restrictions’ p3]). Further targeted engagement will be conducted in line with any requirements under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and relevant NSW Aboriginal cultural heritage guidelines, to ensure that the interests and values of First Nations stakeholders are appropriately recognised and addressed.

1.3.1 Identity: Referring party

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By completing and submitting this form, you consent to the collection of all personal information contained in this form. If you are providing the personal information of other individuals in this form, please ensure you have their consent before doing so.

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1.3.1.1 Is Referring party an organisation or business? *

Yes

Referring party organisation details

ABN/ACN	29001584612
Organisation name	SLR CONSULTING AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
Organisation address	2060 NSW

Referring party details

Name	Jordan Peppin
Job title	Project Consultant - Ecology and Biodiversity
Phone	(02) 4037 3200
Email	jordan.peppin@slrconsulting.com
Address	10 Kings Road, Newcastle NSW 2292

1.3.2 Identity: Person proposing to take the action

1.3.2.1 Are the Person proposing to take the action details the same as the Referring party details? *

No

1.3.2.2 Is Person proposing to take the action an organisation or business? *

Yes

Person proposing to take the action organisation details

ABN/ACN	21667756630
Organisation name	STORENERGY 3 PTY LTD
Organisation address	2000 NSW

Person proposing to take the action details

Name	Oliver Coleman
Job title	Head of Development
Phone	0434260802
Email	oliver.coleman@stor-energy.com
Address	Level 7, 1 Macquarie Place, Sydney NSW 2000

1.3.2.14 Are you proposing the action as part of a Joint Venture? *

No

1.3.2.15 Are you proposing the action as part of a Trust? *

No

1.3.2.17 Describe the Person proposing the action's history of responsible environmental management including details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against the Person proposing to take the action. *

There are no past or current proceedings against StorEnergy 3 Pty Ltd under Commonwealth, State or Territory law.

Separate entity StorEnergy 1 Pty Ltd have recently lodged an EPBC Act Referral (Referral Number 02977) with Oliver Coleman listed as the 'person proposing to take action'.

1.3.2.18 If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework

StorEnergy 3 Pty Ltd is a newly formed entity, and as such have adopted the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) policies of partnered company, HMC Capital Limited. Details of the Sustainability Report 2024 (Att4, Section1-9 ,pp1-43) and Sustainability Commitments (Att 5, Section 1, pp 1-4) are attached.

Sustainability commitments outlined by HMC Capital include:

Climate Action – To actively minimise carbon emissions by:

- Transition the real assets we manage and control towards net zero carbon by 2028
- Consider environmental factors in the acquisition, development, and maintenance of our assets
- Seek to responsibly adopt renewable energy sources and technologies.

Green Future – To champion the preservation and restoration of the natural environment by:

- Reduce waste and ensure efficient use and reuse of water across our operations
- Deploy environmentally friendly building materials where available and appropriate
- Restore and enhance the natural environment within, and in the surrounds of our assets.

1.3.3 Identity: Proposed designated proponent

1.3.3.1 Are the Proposed designated proponent details the same as the Person proposing to take the action? *

Yes

Proposed designated proponent organisation details

ABN/ACN	21667756630
Organisation name	STORENERGY 3 PTY LTD
Organisation address	2000 NSW

Proposed designated proponent details

Name	Oliver Coleman
Job title	Head of Development
Phone	0434260802
Email	oliver.coleman@stor-energy.com
Address	Level 7, 1 Macquarie Place, Sydney NSW 2000

1.3.4 Identity: Summary of allocation

Confirmed Referring party's identity

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	29001584612
Organisation name	SLR CONSULTING AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
Organisation address	2060 NSW
Representative's name	Jordan Peppin
Representative's job title	Project Consultant - Ecology and Biodiversity
Phone	(02) 4037 3200
Email	jordan.peppin@slrconsulting.com
Address	10 Kings Road, Newcastle NSW 2292

Confirmed Person proposing to take the action's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	21667756630
Organisation name	STORENERGY 3 PTY LTD
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Oliver Coleman
Representative's job title	Head of Development
Phone	0434260802
Email	oliver.coleman@stor-energy.com
Address	Level 7, 1 Macquarie Place, Sydney NSW 2000

Confirmed Proposed designated proponent's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

1.4 Payment details: Payment exemption and fee waiver

1.4.1 Do you qualify for an exemption from fees under EPBC Regulation 5.23 (1) (a)? *

No

1.4.3 Have you applied for or been granted a waiver for full or partial fees under Regulation 5.21A? *

No

1.4.5 Are you going to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under EPBC Regulation 5.21A?

No

1.4.7 Has the department issued you with a credit note? *

No

1.4.9 Would you like to add a purchase order number to your invoice? *

No

1.4 Payment details: Payment allocation

1.4.11 Who would you like to allocate as the entity responsible for payment? *

Person proposing to take the action

2. Location

2.1 Project footprint

Project Area: 413.24 Ha **Disturbance Footprint:** 9.57 Ha

2.2 Footprint details

2.2.1 What is the address of the proposed action? *

1 Deight Street and 19 Back Saleyards Road, Molong NSW 2866

2.2.2 Where is the primary jurisdiction of the proposed action? *

New South Wales

2.2.3 Is there a secondary jurisdiction for this proposed action? *

No

2.2.5 What is the tenure of the action area relevant to the project area? *

All lots within project area are freehold land. Land tenure will consist of option to lease for Battery on Lot 99 on Deposited Plan (DP) 102024 and Easement request for transmission line on Lot 1 on DP 542283.

3. Existing environment

3.1 Physical description

3.1.1 Describe the current condition of the project area's environment.

The project area is located approximately 3 kilometers (km) northwest of Molong, and 25 km northwest of Orange, in the Central West region of New South Wales (NSW). The project area is within the Cabonne Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA) and includes land zoned as Primary Production (RU1). The development footprint is approximately 9.6ha.

The project area is characterised by gentle slopes and flat topography, with areas of woodland vegetation (remnant and regrowth native vegetation) and land that has been cleared or partially cleared for agricultural grazing and other industrial purposes. A large portion of the project area is in low condition due to the lack of native species and disturbance from historical and current land use practices. The TransGrid Molong Substation is located in the north of the project area. No other buildings exist within the project area. Further detail on the condition of the project area's environment is provided in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) (Att 1, Section 3-4, pp10-23 [This attachment is not publicly available and has been redacted due to the inclusion of sensitive data] See publicly available version Att 1A, Section 3-4, pp10-23)

Within the development footprint native vegetation has been classified as the following communities:

- Approximately 3.16 ha of Plant Community Type (PCT) 277 'Blakely's Red Gum - Yellow Box grassy tall woodland of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion' in low condition; and
- Approximately 2.73 ha of PCT 277 'Blakely's Red Gum - Yellow Box grassy tall woodland of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion' in regrowth condition (Att 1, Section 2.1.6, pp 14).

The disturbance footprint includes patches of PCT 277 two broad condition state of "low" and "regrowth". The low condition class typically incorporates areas with a mature canopy and degraded ground layers. The low condition class includes areas of regrowth vegetation with degraded ground layers. In addition, the disturbance footprint includes 3.67 ha of non-native vegetation (PCT 0). The non-native vegetation includes mown areas and areas currently grazed (Att 1A, Section 4.2.1, pp 14).

3.1.2 Describe any existing or proposed uses for the project area.

The Cabonne Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA) have a primary industry focus with agriculture, viticulture, horticulture and mining forming the basis of the local economy (Link 1, Section 1.1.2, Page 2). Tourism is a significant and growing component of the regional economy, focused around food and wine from an emerging viticulture industry, historic sites and the natural beauty of the area. Key drivers of employment growth in the region are mining, agriculture, the local wine industry, construction, manufacturing, commerce/retail services, health and education.

The southern section of the project area is currently used for agricultural grazing. The northern section of the project area is currently leased by TransGrid, with the existing substation in operation.

The proposed action will involve the development, construction, operation, and eventual decommissioning of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with an overhead transmission line connecting to the existing TransGrid substation. The aim the BESS is to stabilise local networks and market pricing.

3.1.3 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values that applies to the project area.

South West Woodland Nature Reserve is located approximately 15 kilometers (km) west of the project area. South West Woodland Nature Reserve includes 13,840 hectares and is managed by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The South West Woodland Nature Reserve provides habitat several known threatened species, and protects areas constituting Threatened Ecological Communities (Link 2, Section 1, pp1-6).

Molong Creek is located approximately 1.5 km south of the project area. Molong Creek is considered 'Biodiverse Riparian Land' and is mapped on the 'Biodiversity Values Map' under Part 7 of the Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (Att 1A, Section 3.2.5, p11).

The Yuranighs Aboriginal Grave Historic Site is located approximately 3.5 km south west of the project area. The grave site includes a cemetery and culturally significant burial trees, and is managed by NPWS (Link 3, Section 1, p1).

The BESS project is not expected to have any impacts on these nearby natural and unique features. No other outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values apply to the project area.

3.1.4 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the project area.

A review of topographical mapping indicates that the elevation within the project area ranges from approximately 565 to 604 meters above sea level.

3.2 Flora and fauna

3.2.1 Describe the flora and fauna within the affected area and attach any investigations of surveys if applicable.

Based on the findings of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report, completed by SLR Consulting (Att 1A, Section 4-5, pp 13-49) the following flora and fauna attributes were identified within the disturbance footprint.

Flora:

A total of 87 plant species were recorded, comprising of 23 native species and 64 exotic species. No threatened plants listed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) or the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) were detected.

The vegetation across the disturbance footprint was categorised as the following Plant Community Types (PCT):

- Approximately 5.89 hectares (ha) of PCT 277 'Blakely's Red Gum - Yellow Box grassy tall woodland of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion' in low and regrowth condition.
- Approximately 3.67 ha of PCT 0 ‘Non-native vegetation’.

Two Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) are associated with PCT 277 Blakely's Red Gum - Yellow Box grassy tall woodland of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion including White Box Yellow Box Blakely’s Red Gum Woodland (Box-Gum Woodland) listed as Critically Endangered (CE) under the BC Act and White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland (Box Gum Grassy Woodland) listed as CE under the EPBC Act. Detailed botanical surveys confirmed approximately 5.89 ha of Box-Gum Woodland (BC Act listed TEC) within the disturbance footprint. No areas of vegetation were classified as Box Gum Grassy Woodland (EPBC Act listed TEC).

Fauna:

A total of 51 fauna species were detected within the disturbance footprint, comprising of 44 native species and four exotic species (Att 1A, Appendix E, pE1-E3). The fauna list included one amphibian, 29 birds, 19 mammals, and two reptiles. Two threatened species were detected including:

- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*), which is listed as vulnerable (V) under the BC Act and EPBC Act was recorded flying over and foraging within the development footprint.
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), which is listed as V under the BC Act and EPBC Act was recorded foraging within the development footprint.

In addition, Pink-tailed Legless Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) which is listed as V under the BC Act and EPBC Act has been assumed present due to low detectability of survey. The disturbance footprint includes partially buried rocks in open woodland, which is considered potential suitable habitat for this species. No records of this species exist within the project area.

No additional threatened species have been recorded on site or were detected during extensive surveys.

3.2.2 Describe the vegetation (including the status of native vegetation and soil) within the project area.

Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) Region and Subregion Summary:

The project area lies within the NSW South Western Slopes IBRA Region on the lower inland slopes of the Great Dividing Range. This region occupies 10 percent of NSW and extends from north of Cowra through southern NSW into western Victoria. The region is dominated by sub-humid climate characterised by hot summers with no dry season.

The project area lies wholly within the Upper Slopes (Inland Slopes) IBRA Subregion. This subregion is characterised by Ordovician to Devonian folded and faulted sedimentary sequences with inter-bedded volcanic rocks and large areas of intrusive granites. Soils are shallow stony soils on steep slopes, texture contrast soils grading from red subsoils on upper slopes to yellow subsoils on lower slopes. Alluvial sands, loams and clays, with extensive red-brown earths on undulating plains and more extensive grey clays on alluvium.

Vegetation Characteristics:

The disturbance footprint includes areas of grassy woodland, regrowth woodland and non-native vegetation on gentle slopes and flats. Areas of grassy woodland include mature canopy species dominated by Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*) and Apple Box (*E. bridgesiana*), with lower strata mostly absent and dominated by introduced species. Evidence of regrowth woodland vegetation was observed in some areas with juvenile growth of woodland canopy species Yellow Box, Apple Box and Blakely's Red Gum (*E. blakelyi*), native shrub layer including Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata),* with the native groundcover mostly absent. Non-native vegetation consists of exotic pasture with introduced forbs and grasses including High Threat Weed (HTW) Great Brome (*Bromus diandrus),* and non-HTWs Patersons Curse (*Echium plantagineum*), Meadow Salsify (*Tragopogon pratensis)* and Clovers (*Trifolium* spp.).

Following the vegetation assessment, the following Plant Community Type (PCT) was identified, Blakely's Red Gum - Yellow Box grassy tall woodland of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion (PCT 277). The BioNet Vegetation Information (BioNet VIS) description for PCT 277 is listed below; "*Tall woodland to about 20 metres high dominated by Blakelys Red Gum (Eucalyptus blakelyi) and Yellow Box (Eucalyptus melliodora). Blakelys Red Gum or Yellow Box vary in their dominance and either can be absent in some places grading into areas with more Apple Box (Eucalyptus bridgesiana), Long-leaved Box (Eucalyptus goniocalyx) and rarely Eucalyptus microcarpa. Shrubs are sparse or absent and may include Acacia dealbata. The ground cover may be dense to sparse depending on rainfall and is dominated by grass species including Poa sieberiana, Bothriochloa macra, Aristida ramosa, Themeda australis, Austrodanthonia spp and Austrostipa species. Forbs include Vittadinia cuneata, Chrysocephalum apiculatum and Sida corrugata. A very widespread community on fertile deep, loam or clay soils derived from a range of substrates including fine-grained sedimentary and metamorphic rocks but also volcanics and fine-grained granite. Occurs on flats, footslopes and hillslopes mainly in the upper slopes sub-region of the NSW South-western Slopes Bioregion mainly east of Wagga Wagga. Grades into White Box (Eucalyptus albens) grassy woodland (PCT266) on hillslopes and into either PCT76 (Western Grey Box woodland) or PCT276 (Yellow Box woodland) on parna or alluvial flats. Mainly cleared and subjected to nutrification from fertilizers and associated weed invasion*" (Link 4)**.**

In areas of PCT 277, two vegetation zones were delineated based on broad condition states including 'PCT 277 Low', 3.16 hectares (ha) containing a mature canopy with a degraded understorey and 'PCT 277 Regrowth', 2.73 ha exhibiting canopy species regrowth, with a degraded understorey. All areas of PCT 277 within the disturbance footprint meet the Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) description of Box-Gum Woodland (BC Act listed Critically Endangered Ecological Community [CEEC]). Further details relating to alignment of TECs is included in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) (Att 1A, Section 4.2-4.3, p14-22).

In total, the proposed action will require the removal of approximately 5.89 ha of native vegetation (PCT 277) which aligns with a BC Act listed CEEC, Box-Gum Woodland.

3.3 Heritage

3.3.1 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas or other places recognised as having heritage values that apply to the project area.

There are no Commonwealth heritage places overseas or other places recognised as having heritage values that apply to the project area.

3.3.2 Describe any Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area.

An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment was prepared by Virtus Heritage in 2025 to investigate and assess the impact of proposed activities on known and potential Aboriginal objects, Aboriginal places and cultural heritage values within the project area as well as to provide appropriate management and mitigation strategies. (Att 2, Section 1-8, p13-36 - Please note this document will not be made publicly available due to cultural sensitivity [see 'Disclaimer and Cultural Restrictions' p3])

The project area is within the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri people, a large language group of inter-related tribes that cover a large portion of central New South Wales, stretching from the Murray River in the south, to Lithgow and Dubbo in the north. Within the Wiradjuri language, there are many smaller familial groups that exist (NSW Heritage Office 2003). A search of the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management Register (AHIMS) register and State Heritage Inventory (SHI) was conducted by Virtus on 6 November 2024 for any Aboriginal heritage sites recorded within and adjacent to the project area. The AHIMS search reported 44 sites, none of which are located within the project area. The SHI search located no Aboriginal Places declared by the minister for the environment under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPWS Act) within a 10km radius of the project area.

The results of a site survey undertaken on 18 December 2024, 16-17 April 2025 and 1 May 2025 identified four sites containing Aboriginal artifacts, two within the project area, one within the project disturbance footprint and one outside of the project area and disturbance area. An additional three sites containing evidence of Aboriginal modification were recorded within the project area during the site surveys. No Aboriginal modification sites identified will be directly impacted (i.e. removed) as a result of the proposed action (Att 6, Section 6.3 pp 54-72 - Please note this document will not be made publicly available due to sensitivity) (Att 2, Section 7, pp 34-35 - Please note this document will not be made publicly available due to cultural sensitivity [see 'Disclaimer and Cultural Restrictions' p3]).

3.4 Hydrology

3.4.1 Describe the hydrology characteristics that apply to the project area and attach any hydrological investigations or surveys if applicable. *

An unnamed first order ephemeral creek is located within the project area, with a portion of the creek intercepting with the proposed access track footprint in the southwestern corner. The creek is a tributary to Molong Creek, which is located approximately 1.4 km south of the project area. During surveys in 2024 and 2025, the creek has been dry.

Several potential groundwater-dependent ecosystems (GDEs) and several registered groundwater bores were identified within the vicinity of the Project Area. These represent key non-extractive environmental values associated with the local groundwater system.

The following relevant GDEs were identified:

- A moderate potential aquatic GDE associated with Molong Creek is located approximately 1.2 km southeast of the Project Area boundary. This creek segment may exhibit some groundwater interaction, particularly during dry periods, although the site itself is not directly adjacent to the GDE.
- Low potential terrestrial GDEs occur within and across the Project Area, consistent with the mapped extent of White Box grassy woodland within the Upper Slopes sub-region of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion. These areas are scattered and represent vegetation communities that may partially rely on shallow subsurface moisture.

Based on topographic and regional groundwater flow patterns, only down-gradient or laterally adjacent GDEs are considered potentially susceptible to change from project activities. No water level impact is anticipated on the existing groundwater users from the development as the project does not require a groundwater licence, nor is it planning groundwater extraction for the operation of the BESS facility. A risk assessment determined all risk factors associated with the potential for the project to impact upon groundwater systems to be insignificant or low.

No other hydrological factors are of relevance to the proposed project.

4. Impacts and mitigation

4.1 Impact details

Potential Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) relevant to your proposed action area.

EPBC Act section	Controlling provision	Impacted	Reviewed
S12	World Heritage	No	Yes
S15B	National Heritage	No	Yes
S16	Ramsar Wetland	No	Yes
S18	Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	Yes	Yes
S20	Migratory Species	No	Yes
S21	Nuclear	No	Yes
S23	Commonwealth Marine Area	No	Yes
S24B	Great Barrier Reef	No	Yes
S24D	Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas	No	Yes
S26	Commonwealth Land	No	Yes
S27B	Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas	No	Yes
S28	Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency	No	Yes

4.1.1 World Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.1.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.1.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

No world heritage sites are within proximity to the site.

4.1.2 National Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.2.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

No national heritage sites are within proximity to the site.

4.1.3 Ramsar Wetland

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ramsar wetland
No	No	Banrock Station Wetland Complex
No	No	Riverland
No	No	The Coorong, and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland
No	No	The Macquarie Marshes

4.1.3.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.3.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

There are no Ramsar Wetlands within close proximity to the site. The closest Ramsar site ‘Hunter Estuary Wetlands’ is located over 250 km north-east of the project area.

4.1.4 Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Threatened species

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Anthochaera phrygia	Regent Honeyeater
No	No	Aphelocephala leucopsis	Southern Whiteface
Yes	Yes	Aprasia parapulchella	Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Pink-tailed Legless Lizard
No	No	Botaurus poiciloptilus	Australasian Bittern
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Callocephalon fimbriatum	Gang-gang Cockatoo
No	No	Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami	South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo
No	No	Chalinolobus dwyeri	Large-eared Pied Bat, Large Pied Bat
No	No	Climacteris picumnus victoriae	Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern)
No	No	Dasyurus maculatus maculatus (SE mainland population)	Spot-tailed Quoll, Spotted-tail Quoll, Tiger Quoll (southeastern mainland population)
No	No	Euphrasia arguta	
No	No	Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Grantiella picta	Painted Honeyeater
No	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
No	No	Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot
No	No	Leipoa ocellata	Malleefowl
No	No	Lophochroa leadbeateri leadbeateri	Major Mitchell's Cockatoo (eastern), Eastern Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Pink Cockatoo (eastern)
Yes		Maccullochella macquariensis	Trout Cod

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
Yes		Maccullochella peelii	Murray Cod
No	No	Macquaria australasica	Macquarie Perch
No	No	Melanodryas cucullata cucullata	South-eastern Hooded Robin, Hooded Robin (south-eastern)
No	No	Neophema chrysostoma	Blue-winged Parrot
No	No	Nyctophilus corbeni	Corben's Long-eared Bat, South-eastern Long-eared Bat
No	No	Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT)	Koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)
Yes	Yes	Polytelis swainsonii	Superb Parrot
No	No	Prasophyllum petilum	Tarengo Leek Orchid
No	No	Prasophyllum sp. Wybong (C.Phelps ORG 5269)	a leek-orchid
Yes	Yes	Pteropus poliocephalus	Grey-headed Flying-fox
No	No	Rostratula australis	Australian Painted Snipe
No	No	Stagonopleura guttata	Diamond Firetail
Yes		Swainsona recta	Small Purple-pea, Mountain Swainson-pea, Small Purple Pea
No	No	Thesium australe	Austral Toadflax, Toadflax

Ecological communities

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ecological community
No	No	Grey Box (Eucalyptus microcarpa) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia
No	No	Natural Temperate Grassland of the South Eastern Highlands
No	No	White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland

4.1.4.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

Yes

4.1.4.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

Threatened Species

The following protected matters may be subject to direct and indirect impacts as a result of the proposed action:

- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) relating to the loss of approximately 5.89 hectares ha of habitat, and;
- Pink-tailed Legless Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) relating to the loss of approximately 1.11 ha of potential habitat and;
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), relating to the loss of approximately 5.89 ha of foraging habitat.

Superb Parrot

The Superb Parrot is a medium sized long-tailed green parrot that occurs west of the Great Dividing Range in New South Wales (NSW) from Canberra, Goulburn and as far west as Nyngan and Swan Hill. The two main populations in New South Wales include a Riverina Population and a South West Slopes and Southern Tablelands Population. The Superb Parrot nests in permanent and successive colonies in large, living or dead trees with many hollow branches, typically near a watercourse.

Diurnal bird surveys undertaken in Spring 2024, and Summer 2025 confirmed Superb Parrots to be utilising the habitat within the project area for foraging and dispersal. The mature vegetation within the development footprint (3.16ha) contains three hollow bearing trees and is considered potential breeding habitat for Superb Parrot. Surveys were conducted during breeding season with reference to the 'Survey Guidelines for Australia's Threatened Birds' (DEWHA 2010) to confirm current use of potential breeding habitat (i.e. hollow-bearing trees) within the development footprint. Currently there is no evidence indicating the use of hollows for breeding within the development footprint.

Based on the definition of an 'important population' in the Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 the Superb Parrots that utilise the subject land do not constitute an important population.

In summary, approximately 5.89 ha of Superb Parrot foraging habitat will be permanently cleared as a result of the proposed action which represents approximately 0.0019%. Within the known area of occupancy for Superb Parrot, the removal of habitat as a result of the proposed action is approximately 0.07%. Surveys did not detect breeding activity within the hollows to be removed. Alternative foraging habitat is present directly adjacent to the proposed action in 50ha of protected Box- Gum Woodland (Link 5, Section1, pp 1,)**.**

As Superb Parrots have been recorded on within the development footprint, an Assessment of Significance has been prepared based on the criteria for 'Vulnerable' species in the *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1* (DoE 2013) (Att 7, Section 2.1.1, pp 3-9 [This attachment is not publicly available and has been redacted due to the inclusion of sensitive data] See publicly available version Att 7A, Section 2.1.1, pp 3-9). The Superb Parrot is a highly mobile species that has seasonal movements (i.e. migration and dispersal) and is not impacted by movement barriers. Overall, based on the consideration of the significance criteria, the proposed action is not likely to have a significant impact on the Superb Parrot.

Pink-tailed Legless Lizard

The Pink-tailed Legless Lizard (also known as the Pink-tailed Worm-lizard) is worm-like, with a dark-brown head and nape, gradually merging with the pale grey or grey-brown body (DCCEEW 2024). The Pink-tailed Legless Lizard is primarily known from the Central and Southern Tablelands and the South Western Slopes (DCCEEW 2024). The project area includes partially buried rocky areas in an open woodland, with scattered boulders and logs, which constitutes potential Pink-tailed Legless Lizard habitat. Based on the assessment of native vegetation within the development footprint undertaken for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) , the suitable habitat is considered marginal and low condition potential habitat for the species due to the following:

- The potential habitat within the development footprint is located on flats and lower slopes. Based on the Conservation Advice (Threatened Species Scientific Committee [TSSC] 2015), Pink-tailed Legless-lizard habitat is often well-drained, and located on mid-slopes or ridge tops.
- The potential rocky habitat is within an area of disturbed woodland with a predominately exotic groundcover (62 percent exotic average cover), and a low native species richness. Based on the Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015), the presence of ground-layer species, especially native grasses, are the principal determinants of occurrence of the Pink-tailed Legless-lizard.
- The potential habitat does not contain a predominant cover of native grasses, including Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*). Based on the Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015), Kangaroo Grass is characteristic of most known Pink-tailed Legless-lizard sites.
- The area of potential habitat is currently used for livestock grazing. Based on the Conservation Advice (TSSC 2015), livestock grazing can detrimentally affect the Pink-tailed Legless-lizard due to trampling, pasture improvement, and slashing.

Construction of the proposed action will require the removal of 1.11 ha of low condition habitat for the Pink-tailed Legless-lizard. However, it is unlikely that the subject land supports a resident population of the species, for the reasons outlined above.

As Pink-tailed Legless Lizard is assumed present, a Assessment of Significance has been prepared based on the criteria for 'Vulnerable' species in the *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1* (DoE 2013) (Att 7A, Section 2.1.3, pp 12- 15). In sum, approximately 1.11 ha of Pink-tailed Legless Lizard potential habitat will be cleared as a result of the proposed action, and is not likely to result in a significant impact.

Grey Headed Flying-fox

The Grey-headed Flying-fox is a large ('megachiropteran') bat species with a distribution ranging from Ingham in Queensland, to Adelaide in South Australia. They are usually found on the coastal lowlands and slopes of eastern Australia below altitudes of 200 m (Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment [DAWE] 2021). The bats can be found within a broad range of habitats, including subtropical and temperate rainforests, tall sclerophyll forests and woodlands, mangroves, heaths and swamps, as well as urban gardens. Their primary food source is nectar and pollen of Eucalyptus, Melaleuca and Banksia species.

Roosting camps are found within gullies, close to water and in vegetation with dense canopy and are generally located within 20 km of a food source. However, individuals can travel up to 40 km from their home camp to forage. Individual camps may have a population of tens of thousands of animals and are used for mating, birth and rearing young. Annual mating commences in January and conception occurs in April or May; a single young is born in October or November (Office of Environment and Heritage 2020).

Grey-headed Flying-fox was sighted on two occasions during the nocturnal surveys in January 2025. No flying-fox camps have been recorded within or adjacent to the development footprint and based on data from the National Flying-fox Monitoring Viewer (DCCEEW 2012) the closest known and occupied flying-fox camp is located approximately 27km southeast of the project area, on Ploughmans Lane, Orange NSW. It is likely that the project area occupies the mid to outer foraging range from camps based in Orange.

The proposed action will require the removal of foraging habitat for the Grey-headed Fly-fox, comprising 5.89ha of Plant Community Type (PCT) 277, which contains known foraging species, Yellow Box. Within the foraging range, approximately 156,920 ha of alternative foraging habitat (woody native vegetation communities) currently exists. The proposed action will result in approximately 0.004 percent reduction in foraging habitat within the range of the closest Flying-fox camp. Therefore, the habitat to be removed represents a negligible proportion of the total area of available habitat for this species in the locality.

As the Grey-headed Fly-fox was recorded on site, a Assessment of Significance has been prepared based on the criteria for 'Vulnerable' species in the *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1* (DoE 2013) (Att 7A, Section 2.1.2, pp 9-12). Due to the absence of breeding camps, and the minor impacts to the mid-outer range of foraging habitat, the proposed action was determined unlikely to have a significant impact on Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Threatened Ecological Communities

The proposed action will result in direct impacts (clearing) to PCT 277, which is associated with the following protected matter TEC:

• White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland ('Box Gum Grassy Woodland'), listed as Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act.

An assessment of key diagnostic characteristics for Box Gum Grassy Woodland and threshold criteria has been prepared. Evidence to justify the ineligibility of native vegetation within the development footprint constituting Box Gum Grassy Woodland is detailed in (Att 7A, Section 2.2.1, pp14-17). Based on detailed vegetation survey data, the assessment concluded that due to the lack of native species cover and abundance in the ground layer, the vegetation within the subject land doesn't contain a predominantly native understorey and therefore doesn't meet the criteria for the Box Gum Grassy Woodland TEC, as defined under the EPBC Act. Therefore, no impacts to this protected matter are expected as a result of the proposed action and no Assessment of Significance addressing the *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1* is required.

4.1.4.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

No

4.1.4.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

No Protected Matters are likely to be significantly impacted by the proposed action. Assessments of Significance have been prepared according to the criteria listed in the *Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1* for the following Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) listed under the EPBC Act of relevance to the proposed action:

- Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) relating to the loss of approximately 5.89 hectares (ha) of habitat (Att 7A, Section 2.1.1, pp 3-9).
- Pink-tailed Legless Lizard (*Aprasia parapulchella*) relating to the loss of approximately 1.11 ha of potential habitat (Att 7A, Section 2.1.3, pp 12-15).
- Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*), relating to the loss of approximately 5.89 ha of foraging habitat (Att 7A, Section 2.1.2, pp 9-12).

A complete assessment of the impacts of the proposed action are detailed in the relevant sections listed above for each Protected Matter.

4.1.4.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.4.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

Based on the Assessment of Significance for EPBC Act listed Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), it was determined unlikely that the proposal would not have a significant impact on listed entities (Att 7A, Sections 2-3, pp 3-18). Direct and indirect impacts are considered to be negligible and/or reduced by the proposed avoidance measures and mitigation actions included in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (Att 1A, Section 7, pp 52-53). For the aforementioned reasons, the proposal is not considered a controlled action.

4.1.4.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

The proposed action is to be constructed on land which is suitably located beside an existing substation and nearby solar farm development. No other locations are available for consideration as part of the proposed development. Approximately 38 percent of the project location (i.e. the disturbance) includes non-native vegetation. The project location exhibits limited areas of disturbed native vegetation including areas that have been previously cleared with evidence of recent regrowth (approximately 2.73 hectares [ha] of Plant Community Type [PCT] 277 Regrowth Condition) and areas of low condition remnant woodland with evidence of ongoing disturbance (approximately 3.16 ha of PCT 277 Low Condition).

Based on calculations from the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), the overall vegetation integrity scores are considered low scores indicating that the composition, structure and function of the vegetation within the subject land is below the benchmark condition (i.e. ‘best on offer condition’) for PCT 277 (Att 1A, Section 4.5, p25). Therefore, the selected location maximises the development of non-native vegetation, and in a lesser degree, impacts native vegetation that has historically been degraded and is currently in low condition.

In addition, the proposed action has been designed through an iterative process to avoid and minimise impacts to native vegetation and threatened species habitat, which is depicted in the BDAR (Att 1A, Section 7, pp 52-53). The proposed design and location of the access road and the transmission line was chosen to avoid impacts to mature vegetation and maximise the clearing of non-native vegetation. In general, minimising the overall area of clearing has been a significant consideration in the design of the proposed width of the proposed access road and transmission line. The proposed access road easement has been reduced from a width of 40m to 30m, and the proposed transmission line easement of 45m has been realigned to avoid an area of PCT 277 Low that contains an additional five hollow-bearing trees which will now be retained.

4.1.4.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

The following Protected Matters will be offset under the New South Wales Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS). The credit requirement calculated through the preparation of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) are as follows:

- Superb Parrot - 20 species credits; and
- Pink-tailed Legless Lizard - 10 species credits; and
- Plant Community Type 277 Low condition - 34 Ecosystem credits (inclusive of Grey-headed Flying-fox (predicted species) foraging habitat offsets).
- Plant Community Type 277 Regrowth condition - 49 Ecosystem credits (inclusive of Grey-headed Flying-fox (predicted species) foraging habitat offsets).

The complete credit requirement for this proposal under the BOS is included in BDAR (Att 1A, Section 10, pp 73-74).

4.1.5 Migratory Species

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper
No	No	Apus pacificus	Fork-tailed Swift
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris melanotos	Pectoral Sandpiper
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
No	No	Motacilla flava	Yellow Wagtail

4.1.5.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.5.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

No migratory species have been recorded within a 10km buffer of the project area, or were detected during surveys. As these protected matters are considered absent from the project area, the proposed action is unlikely to result in a direct or indirect impact.

4.1.6 Nuclear

4.1.6.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.6.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The nature of the proposed action is non-nuclear. There are no nuclear sites in proximity to the project area.

4.1.7 Commonwealth Marine Area

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.7.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.7.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

No Commonwealth Marine Areas are located in proximity to the project area.

4.1.8 Great Barrier Reef

4.1.8.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.8.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project area is not in proximity to areas of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

4.1.9 Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas

4.1.9.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? *

No

4.1.9.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The proposal does not involve a water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas.

4.1.10 Commonwealth Land

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

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4.1.10.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.10.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project area is not in proximity to areas of Commonwealth Land.

4.1.11 Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

4.1.11.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? *

No

4.1.11.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact. *

The Project area is not in proximity to Commonwealth Heritage Places.

4.1.12 Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency

4.1.12.1 Is the proposed action to be taken by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth Agency? *

No

4.2 Impact summary

Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will likely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

None

Conclusion on the likelihood of unlikely significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will unlikely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

- World Heritage (S12)
- National Heritage (S15B)
- Ramsar Wetland (S16)
- Threatened Species and Ecological Communities (S18)
- Migratory Species (S20)
- Nuclear (S21)
- Commonwealth Marine Area (S23)
- Great Barrier Reef (S24B)
- Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas (S24D)
- Commonwealth Land (S26)
- Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas (S27B)
- Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency (S28)

4.3 Alternatives

4.3.1 Do you have any possible alternatives for your proposed action to be considered as part of your referral? *

No

4.3.8 Describe why alternatives for your proposed action were not possible. *

The proposed action is to be constructed on land which is suitably located beside an existing substation and nearby solar farm development. No other locations are available for consideration as part of the proposed development. Approximately 38 percent of the project location (i.e. the disturbance) includes non-native vegetation. The project location exhibits limited areas of disturbed native vegetation including areas that have been previously cleared with evidence of recent regrowth (approximately 2.73 hectares [ha] of Plant Community Type [PCT] 277 Regrowth Condition) and areas of low condition remnant woodland with evidence of ongoing disturbance (approximately 3.16 ha of PCT 277 Low Condition) (Att 1A, Section 2.1.6, pp 4).

Based on calculations from the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR), the overall vegetation integrity scores are considered low scores indicating that the composition, structure and function of the vegetation within the subject land is below the benchmark condition (i.e. 'best on offer condition') for PCT 277 (Att 1A, Section 4.5, p 25). Therefore, the selected location maximises the development of non-native vegetation, and in a lesser degree, impacts native vegetation that has historically been degraded and is currently in low condition.

In addition, the proposed action has been designed through an iterative process to avoid and minimise impacts to native vegetation and threatened species habitat, which is depicted in the BDAR (Att 1A, Section 7, pp 52-53). The proposed design and location of the access road and the transmission line was chosen to avoid impacts to mature vegetation and maximise the clearing of non-native vegetation. In general, minimising the overall area of clearing has been a significant consideration in the design of the proposed width of the proposed access road and transmission line. The proposed access road easement has been reduced from a width of 40m to 30m, and the proposed transmission line easement of 45m has been realigned to avoid an area of PCT 277 Low that contains an additional five hollow-bearing trees.

5. Lodgement

5.1 Attachments

1.2.1 Overview of the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report [Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted	21/07/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att 1-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report	21/07/2025	Yes	High

1.2.6 Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents that are relevant to the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 2-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment-2025.pdf Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment	19/06/2025	Yes	High

1.2.7 Public consultation regarding the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 2-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment-2025.pdf Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment	19/06/2025	Yes	High
#2.	Document	Att 3- Engagement Summary Report-2025.pdf Engagement Summary Report	10/07/2025	No	High

1.3.2.18 (Person proposing to take the action) If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation’s environmental policy and planning framework

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 4-Sustainability Report -2024.pdf Sustainability Commitments	28/10/2024	No	High
#2.	Document	Att5 - Sustainability Comittments - 2022.pdf Sustainability Report 2024	01/03/2022	No	High

3.1.1 Current condition of the project area's environment

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report	20/07/2025	No	High

		[Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted			
#2.	Document	Att 1-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report	20/07/2025	Yes	High

3.1.2 Existing or proposed uses for the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Link	Link 1 - Rural and Industrial Land Use Strategy-2008 https://www.cabonne.nsw.gov.au/Planning-Developm..			High

3.1.3 Natural features, important or unique values that applies to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report [Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted	20/07/2025	No	High
#2.	Link	Link 2 - Statement of Management Intent - South West Woodland Nature Reserve-2011 https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/sites/default..			High
#3.	Link	Link 3 - Yuranighs Aboriginal Grave Historic Site -2025 https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-par..			High

3.2.1 Flora and fauna within the affected area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report [Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted	20/07/2025	No	High

3.2.2 Vegetation within the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report [Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted	20/07/2025	No	High
#2.	Link	Link 4-BioNet Vegetation Information System-2025 https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research/vege..			High

3.3.2 Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 2-Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment-2025.pdf Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment	19/06/2025	Yes	High
#2.	Document	Att 6-Archaeological Assessment-2025.pdf Archaeological Assessment	10/06/2025	Yes	High

4.1.4.2 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att7A-Assessment of Significance [Redacted]- 2025.pdf Assessment of Significance - Redacted	08/07/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att7-Assessment of Significance - 2025.pdf Assessment of Significance	08/07/2025	Yes	High
#3.	Link	Link 5 - Grassy Woodland Restoration https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/wp-content/..			High

4.1.4.6 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why you do not consider the direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att7A-Assessment of Significance [Redacted]- 2025.pdf Assessment of Significance - Redacted	07/07/2025	No	High

4.1.4.9 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report [Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted	20/07/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att7A-Assessment of Significance [Redacted]- 2025.pdf Assessment of Significance - Redacted	07/07/2025	No	High

4.1.4.11 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Proposed offsets relevant to avoidance or mitigation measures

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report [Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted	20/07/2025	No	High

4.3.8 Why alternatives for your proposed action were not possible

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1A-Biodiversity Development Assessment Report [Redacted]-2025.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report - Redacted	20/07/2025	No	High

5.2 Declarations

Completed Referring party's declaration

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

ABN/ACN	29001584612
Organisation name	SLR CONSULTING AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
Organisation address	2060 NSW
Representative's name	Jordan Peppin
Representative's job title	Project Consultant - Ecology and Biodiversity
Phone	(02) 4037 3200
Email	jordan.peppin@slrconsulting.com
Address	10 Kings Road, Newcastle NSW 2292

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

☑ By checking this box, I, **Jordan Peppin of SLR CONSULTING AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to this EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. *

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

Completed Person proposing to take the action's declaration

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

ABN/ACN	21667756630
Organisation name	STORENERGY 3 PTY LTD
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Oliver Coleman

Representative's job title	Head of Development
Phone	0434260802
Email	oliver.coleman@stor-energy.com
Address	Level 7, 1 Macquarie Place, Sydney NSW 2000

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

☑ I, **Oliver Coleman of STORENERGY 3 PTY LTD**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to the EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. I declare that I am not taking the action on behalf or for the benefit of any other person or entity. *

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

✔ Completed Proposed designated proponent's declaration

The Proposed designated proponent is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

☑ Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

☑ I, **Oliver Coleman of STORENERGY 3 PTY LTD**, the Proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of myself as the Proposed designated proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral. *

☐ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *