

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Aquila Wind

VERSION 5

February 2023



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Prepared by
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on behalf of
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Acknowledgement of Country

Umwelt would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the country on which we work and pay respect to their cultural heritage, beliefs, and continuing relationship with the land. We pay our respect to the Elders – past, present, and future.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AGL	Above Ground Level
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CSEP	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
CWO REZ	Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone
DPE	Department of Planning and Environment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
km	Kilometre
kV	Kilovolt
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	Local Government Area
MW	Megawatt
NSW	New South Wales
SA	Statistical Area
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SSC	State Suburbs
SSD	State Significant Development

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1.0 Introduction

ACEN Australia (ACEN) proposes to develop Aquila Wind (the Project) to provide reliable and affordable renewable electricity to the National Electricity Market (NEM) and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the generation of electricity from the burning of fossil fuels.

The Project is located approximately 2.5 kilometres (km) southeast of Stuart Town and 2 km northeast of Euchareena, in the Central West region of NSW, within the Dubbo Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA) and on the lands of the Wiradjuri Nation. Dubbo is situated approximately 70 km northwest of the Project Boundary¹ (the northern most extent). The other regional centres of Mudgee, Wellington and Orange are situated approximately 40 km to the northeast, 30 km to the northwest and 35 km to the south respectively. Lake Burrendong is located approximately 8 km north of the Project Boundary. The Project Area² is traversed by the Main Western Railway and is located approximately 14 km east of the Mitchell Highway.

The Project design incorporates up to 50 Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) (each with a blade-tip height of up to 250 m) comprising an installed capacity of up to 300 MW, a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), ancillary civil and electrical engineering infrastructure, temporary construction facilities, and permanent worker facilities. It is estimated that the Project will generate approximately 300 jobs during the construction phase and 15 jobs during the operational phase.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

This Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) outlines the approach and implementation program to inform the Scoping phase of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and broader Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project's State Significant Development (SSD) application, to be lodged with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE).

The purpose of the CSEP is to outline the approach to be undertaken in relation to community and stakeholder engagement across the Project's planning and assessment phase, to inform the preparation of relevant scoping reports (as part of the Request for SEARs) and completion of the Project's SIA technical study (as part of the EIS).

As noted in the NSW DPE SIA Guideline (2022), respectful, inclusive, and meaningful engagement is a fundamental part of project planning and development and the development of a SIA. Engagement with affected communities and stakeholders provides first-hand insight into what people value and how they expect a project to affect them. Projects may affect people in different ways, both positively and negatively, and consequently identifying and understanding social impacts helps to inform responses that aim to avoid, mitigate or reduce negative impacts and enhance positive impacts.

¹ The Project Boundary is the maximum spatial extent of potential land access defined by the boundaries of the Host landholder properties (i.e. all agreed lots owned by Host landholders). The Project Boundary is outlined in red in the supporting figures throughout this PHCA.

² The Project Area encompasses all land within and including the Project Boundary.

Community and stakeholder engagement is a key component of the SIA and EIS process, with the DPE SIA Guideline (2022) outlining the following objectives to guide engagement:

- To ensure those potentially affected by a project understand the project and how it will affect them.
- To collect relevant data, evidence, and insights for scoping the SIA to ensure representativeness of views.
- To understand the interests that people have and how impacts may be experienced (from their perspective).
- To consider the views of people in a meaningful way and use these insights to inform project planning and design.
- To provide opportunities for people to collaborate on project design matters and input to preferred solutions to address impacts.
- To confirm data, assumptions, findings, and recommendations.
- To ensure people know how their input has been considered, and what strategies will be put in place to address their concerns.
- To help understand how other specialist studies prepared for the EIS assist in addressing social impacts.
- To respect people's privacy, allowing them to communicate their views anonymously if requested.

Therefore, the specific objectives of this CSEP are to:

- **Support the building of relationships with local stakeholders to establish a socially sustainable project.**
- **Guide and support a strategic and coordinated approach to engagement, including specific mechanisms, timeframes and responsibilities during the planning and assessment phase of the Project.**
- **Facilitate transparent and meaningful information exchange on the Project.**
- **Identify key stakeholders and communities relevant to the development of the Project.**
- **Support the Project's understanding of its local context, identification of stakeholders, including vulnerable community groups, stakeholder expectations and project alignment with local aspirations.**
- **Facilitate the genuine involvement of stakeholders in the planning and approvals process as well as in developing responses to impacts.**
- **Ensure that community and stakeholder inputs are effectively integrated into the technical assessments within the EIS and inform refinements to project design and plans.**
- **Meet regulatory requirements for public, stakeholder and community consultation.**
- **Collaborate with local stakeholders on local benefit sharing strategies to ensure they are co-designed, targeted, and appropriate to the Project's operating context.**
- **Align with ACEN's values and principles around timely, open, inclusive, and meaningful engagement.**

1.2 Approach and Process

The NSW Government's SIA Guideline (2022) requires SIA to be undertaken for all SSDs in NSW. SIA is informed by, and relies on, the outcomes of early, and ongoing community and stakeholder engagement through the assessment phase to identify social issues/impacts and develop appropriate strategies to mitigate and/or enhance project impacts.

The approach to stakeholder engagement adopted for the Project is informed by the NSW Government's SIA Guideline (2022), the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's '*Undertaking Engagement – Guidance for State Significant Projects*' (2022), and the Wind Energy Guideline (NSW DPE, 2016), and consideration has been given to the general and CWO REZ specific First Nations Guidelines (Office of Energy and Climate Change, 2022).

Best practice engagement design and delivery is also guided by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. The IAP2 Spectrum outlines differing levels of engagement depending upon consultation objectives, that range from 'inform' and 'consult' through to greater degrees of participation - 'involve', 'collaborate' and 'empower'.

Different approaches to engagement outlined on the spectrum may be used, perhaps simultaneously, depending on the needs of each community group or each stage of the project lifecycle. The level of community interest will evolve over the duration of the Project and engagement should be adaptive to change and emerging issues or opportunities.

2.0 Project Overview

2.1 Project Background

The Project Area is located near Mount Aquila, approximately 2.5 km southeast of Stuart Town and approximately 2 km northeast of Euchareena. Beyond these smaller townships, isolated rural residential properties surround the site.

The Project Area is zoned RU1 Primary Production pursuant to *Dubbo Regional Local Environmental Plan 2022* (Dubbo Regional LEP 2022). Land surrounding the Project Boundary is zoned part C3 Environmental Management and part RU1 Primary Production. Other land use zones further afield in and around Stuart Town include R5 Large Lot Residential, RE1 Public Recreation, RE2 Private Recreation RU1 Primary Production, RU5 Village, SP2 Infrastructure and W1 Natural Waterways.

The ‘Main Western Railway’ extends north to south and passes through the westernmost portion of the Project Area for approximately 500 metres (m), between Store Creek and Farnham.

The Project Boundary comprises an area of approximately 6,087 hectares (ha). ACEN has identified an indicative Development Corridor of approximately 1,473 ha within which all Project infrastructure will be placed. Within this indicative Development Corridor, it is estimated that the actual land disturbance area (based on the current Project layout) would be in the order of 388 ha, or approximately 5–6% of the total Project Area.

The Project Area (all land within and including the Project Boundary) is situated at an elevation of approximately 600 to 800 m above sea level (ASL) and comprises a complex terrain, with steep arid hills to the eastern Project Boundary and rolling ridge lines to the west that are dominated by improved pasture used for grazing.

The Project design incorporates up to 50 WTGs (each with a blade-tip height of up to 250 m) comprising an installed capacity of up to 300 MW, a BESS, ancillary civil and electrical engineering infrastructure, temporary construction facilities, and permanent worker facilities. It is estimated that the Project will generate approximately 300 jobs during the construction phase and 15 jobs during the operational phase. The Project will connect to the National Electricity Market (NEM) via the existing 330 kV transmission line (Line 72) located within the Project Boundary.

The Project Area is located within the Central West-Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWO REZ) identified in the NSW Government’s Electricity Strategy (refer to Section 3.1.1 of the Social Impact Scoping Report). The CWO REZ is expected to play a vital role in the delivery of affordable energy to the community across NSW. The Central West-Orana region has been identified as having high wind energy resource potential, with preliminary wind studies undertaken by ACEN Australia guiding the development of the preliminary turbine layout for the Project.

Within the Project boundary ACEN has identified 20 private landholdings – 18 hosting turbines and two containing other infrastructure within the Project boundary. Existing 132 kV and 330 kV transmission lines traverse the Project Area (in a north to south direction), with the grid connection occurring at a position within the Project boundary and near the 330 kV line.

Land use within the Project Area and the surrounding locality is largely characterised by cropping and grazing. Key sensitive receivers currently identified in relation to the Project include:

- Ten host dwellings located within the Project Area.
- 65 non-associated dwellings located within 3.35 km of proposed WTGs (i.e. the ‘black line’ as defined by the NSW DPE’s *Wind Energy: Visual Assessment Bulletin* (the Visual Bulletin), dated December 2016).
- 171 non-associated dwellings located between 3.35 km and 4.95 km of proposed WTGs (i.e. between the ‘black line’ and ‘blue line’ as defined by the Visual Bulletin).

2.2 Governance

The Project is located within the Dubbo Regional LGA (refer to Figure 1.1 of the Social Impact Scoping Report), which is administered by Dubbo Regional Council.

The Project Area is located within the traditional lands of the Wiradjuri nation. Wiradjuri means ‘*the people of the three rivers*’, and the nation’s traditional and modern-day connections to Country extend over a large area of NSW encompassing the Macquarie, Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers, bounded by the Murray River in the south (Three Rivers Regional Assembly, 2020). The Project Area is located in the modern-day NSW Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) of Dubbo. There are no registered native title claims in or surrounding the Project Area.

2.2.1 Policy Setting

The NSW Government’s current energy security policy and approach to a clean energy transition is being delivered through the strategic development of the renewable energy sector, as outlined through the NSW Government’s Renewable Energy Action Plan (2013), Electricity Strategy (2019) and the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap (2020). This policy context is relevant to inform the public positioning and key messaging for the planning and development of the Project.

The proposed Project is located within the Central West-Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWO REZ) which is the State’s first pilot REZ, and one of five REZs being implemented by the NSW government. REZs co-locate renewable energy generation, energy storage and transmission lines with the aim of providing affordable, reliable and low-emissions electricity to the grid. REZs aim to install the transmission infrastructure required to attract private investment and to enable the transition to an electricity network powered by renewable energy sources.

The CWO REZ is anticipated to unlock up to 3 gigawatts of new network capacity by the mid-2020s, enough to power 1.4 million homes. New transmission infrastructure will enable generators (such as solar and wind projects) participating in the REZ to export electricity to the rest of the network. It is expected to bring up to \$5.2 billion in private investment to the Central West Orana region by 2030. At its peak, the CWO REZ is expected to support around 3,900 construction jobs within the region (Energy NSW, 2020).



Figure 2.1 Geographic Area of the Central-West Orana REZ

Source: EnergyCo, 2022.

2.2.2 Regional Development Context

The Project is located within the Central West Orana Region in NSW, a diverse and productive region with good connectivity to Sydney, Canberra, and Newcastle. Key regional cities include Bathurst, Orange, and Dubbo, and the townships of Lithgow, Mudgee, and Cowra.

The population of the region is expected to reach 300,000 people by 2036, and as such, there has been a strong focus from the NSW Government to develop the region into *‘the most diverse regional economy in NSW with a vibrant network of centres leveraging the opportunities of being at the heart of NSW’* (NSW Government, 2016).

The NSW Government’s Central West and Orana Regional Plan (2017) notes in their vision for the region *‘landmark solar, wind and bioenergy projects that distinguish the region as a leader in renewable energy development.’* The Plan outlines the role renewable energy will play in creating a sustainable future for the region, particularly by promoting local jobs and development opportunities for associated industries. Specifically, Direction 9 of the Plan is aimed at increasing renewable energy generation across the region.

2.3 Community Profile and Considerations

The study area is located proximal to several suburbs which recorded very low populations (<100 people) at the time of the 2016 Census. To the north, the township of Stuart Town (pop. 235) is situated approximately 3.3 km west of the Project boundary whilst to the south the township of Euchareena (pop. 197) is situated adjacent to the Project boundary. For comparative reporting purposes, the Project is located within the ABS defined Wellington Statistical Area 2 (SA2) (pop. 8,831), which forms part of the Dubbo Regional LGA (pop. 50,077).

Data has been reviewed from publicly available secondary datasets, including the most recent Australian Census (2016 & 2021), for the study areas noted, to develop an understanding of the social and economic context of the potentially affected communities. Key characteristics of the study communities include:

- An older population than the NSW average, particularly in areas proximal to the Project.
- A higher Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population than the NSW average.
- A higher unemployment rate compared with the broader LGA and NSW average.
- Lower levels of internet access compared with the NSW average.
- A low number of residents born outside Australia; therefore, the community is not expected to be culturally and linguistically diverse.
- A lower level of property occupation in proximal areas, however a much higher proportion of dwellings that are owned outright or with a mortgage compared with NSW.
- High motor vehicle usage, particularly in the suburb of Stuart Town, which indicates a high level of road use or dependence on private vehicles for transportation.
- Sheep farming is the top industry of employment in nearby Stuart Town, and in the broader Wellington SA2 region. In comparison, the leading industry of employment in the Dubbo Regional LGA is Hospitals (excluding psychiatric hospitals).

2.3.1 Identified Issues and Social Risks to the Project

This section provides an overview of identified local concerns, issues, and interests as relevant to the Project for further consideration in the Project's environmental and social impact assessment process.

In recent years, proposed renewable energy projects in the CWO REZ have had diverse responses from local communities in relation to their perceived impacts. Social impacts are often inter-related and may be perceived both positively and negatively by different stakeholder groups.

Following an initial review of Project information and plans, as well as analysis of submissions received on comparable or nearby projects, local media, other publicly available documentation and Umwelt's relevant project experience in the CWO REZ, we have understood the following issues to be of relevance for consideration in planning and developing for the current Project.

- Matters relating to information sharing and community participation in project development:
 - Lack of community representation in project planning and development.
 - Lack of knowledge or experience of renewables, resulting in mistrust or scepticism.
 - Community division / polarisation.
 - Recent experiences with other projects, resulting in misinformation.
 - Consultation fatigue due to multiple concurrent projects occurring at the same time.
- Matters relating to broader community effects:
 - Strain on local infrastructure, facilities, and services.
 - Cumulative effect on community cohesion across local townships.
 - Lack of local long-term economic benefit.
 - Climate change adaptation and intergenerational equity.
 - Unequal distribution of project benefits.
- Matters relating to the Project footprint:
 - Social amenity factors such as levels of noise, visual impact and other amenity impacts.
 - Changes to local road conditions, increased traffic and concern for public safety associated with movement of the construction workforce.
 - Land use conflict with other industry sectors e.g. agriculture and disruption to farming operations and livelihoods.
 - Perceived property devaluation.
 - Health and wellbeing of workers.

The cumulative nature of renewable energy projects must also be considered given the NSW Government's NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and other development projects proposed, or in development, within the CWO REZ. These may include impacts associated with the influx of construction workforces in the region on housing and local service use, access issues associated with increased road traffic, cumulative visual impacts associated with multiple project developments etc. Such impacts will be assessed as part of the social and environmental impact assessments.

3.0 Engagement Strategy

Consistent with the SIA Guideline, community engagement undertaken as part of the Project will be respectful, inclusive, and meaningful. Engagement will be used to identify community values and aspirations in relation to the Project, and to focus the SIA and the broader EIS on key issues of concern for relevant stakeholders and local communities, including opportunities to further refine project design to address and/or enhance project impacts.

The principles underpinning community engagement adopted by ACEN align with the '*Community Engagement Guidelines for the Australian Wind Industry*' developed by the Clean Energy Council (Clean Energy Council, 2018). In adopting the principles of the Guideline, ACEN commits to the following with respect to the development of the Project:

- **Openness:** Relevant information will be shared with the community in a format that is clear, accurate, timely and honest.
- **Inclusiveness:** ACEN will work with project stakeholders to ensure their perspectives are appropriately considered.
- **Responsiveness:** All community concerns will be listened and responded to.
- **Accountability:** The Project will continue to monitor, evaluate, and disclose information about project activities and identified positive and negative impacts of the Project.

3.1 Stakeholder Identification

Social impact assessment involves the participation and collaboration of people that may have an interest in, or those that are affected by, a project. As Burdge (2004) outlines, stakeholders may be affected groups or individuals that:

- Live, work, or recreate near the Project.
- Have an interest in the proposed action or change.
- Use or value a resource associated with the Project.
- Are affected by the Project e.g., may be required to relocate because of the Project.

A stakeholder identification process was undertaken for the Project to support the planning and delivery of community and stakeholder consultation to inform the SIA and broader EIS. This process involved identifying stakeholders with an interest in the Project, and those that may be directly or indirectly affected by the Project, including any potentially vulnerable or marginalised groups.

A summary of identified key stakeholder groups relevant to the Project are included within **Figure 3.1**.

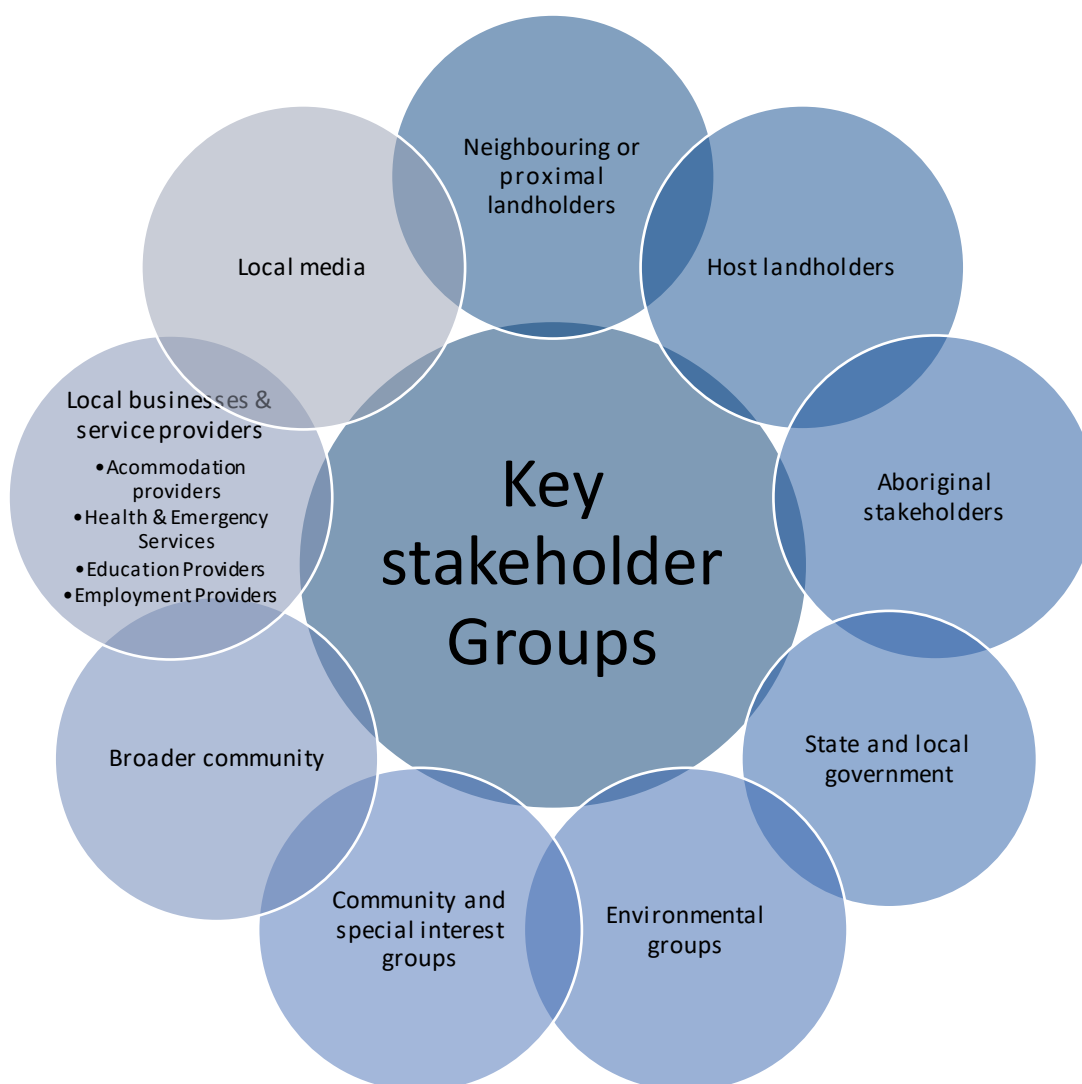


Figure 3.1 Key Stakeholder Groups

Source: Umwelt, 2022.

The purpose of the Scoping SIA report is to determine the size and scale of likely social impacts of the Project and, in turn, the scope of the SIA (DPE, 2022). This is an important process as it will define and shape the way in which key stakeholder groups are engaged and involved in project decision-making. This CSEP is therefore cognisant of the following key objective of SIA practice, as noted by the Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles (1994):

“Social impact assessment is predicted on the notion that decision-makers should understand the consequences of their decisions before they act, and that the people affected will not only be appraised of the effects, but have the opportunity to participate in designing their future.”

For the purposes of the SIA scoping report, key stakeholders relevant to this CSEP and SIA have been identified and are presented within **Table 3.1**.

Consistent with the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum, identified stakeholders have been assigned a preliminary grouping according to their relevance and priority to the Project:

- High priority: stakeholders who require proactive and **collaborative** engagement.
- Moderate priority: stakeholders who will require information provision and/or may wish to be **involved** in the Project.
- Low priority: stakeholders who will be given the opportunity to be **informed** or **consulted** but may not necessarily be engaged directly.

Table 3.1 Stakeholder Identification

Affected Stakeholder Group	Potential Stakeholders	Prioritisation	IAP2 Engagement Spectrum Approach	Scoping SIA Phase 1	SIA Phase 2 Consultation
Host Landholders	Nine host dwellings	High	Collaborate	✓	✓
Proximal Landholders	Approximately 72 non-associated dwellings (i.e. those located within the 'black line' as defined by the Visual Bulletin)	High	Involve	✓	✓
Aboriginal Stakeholders	Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council	High	Involve	✓	✓
Local Government	Dubbo Regional Council - representatives from the Planning & Environment, and Corporate & community Services teams, Mayor Cabonne Shire Council - representatives from the Planning & Environment, and Corporate & community Services teams, Mayor	High	Involve	✓	✓
Environmental Groups	Mid Macquarie Landcare	High	Consult	✓	✓

Affected Stakeholder Group	Potential Stakeholders	Prioritisation	IAP2 Engagement Spectrum Approach	Scoping SIA Phase 1	SIA Phase 2 Consultation
Community, Development, and Special Interest Groups	Mumbil District Progress Association Mumbil Action Group Stuart Town Advancement Association Regional Development Australia – Orana Branch	High	Consult	✓	✓
Broader Community	Stuart Town Facebook group	Medium	Inform	✓	✓
Community Service Providers	Emergency services (Police, Fire and Rescue, Ambulance services) Education services Health services Accommodation providers Training and employment services	Medium	Consult		✓

3.2 Engagement Mechanisms

The engagement of stakeholders and community groups will include a combination of information provision (inform) and engagement (consult, involve) mechanisms to:

- Improve knowledge and awareness of the company, its activities, the Project, and key issues/impacts as they arise.
- Facilitate stakeholder involvement in the identification of issues/impacts, areas of interest/concern and strategies to address the issues raised.

Various methods will be used to engage with different stakeholder groups based on the objective of engagement, the type of information being conveyed, level of feedback required, understanding of stakeholder needs and identified engagement preferences.

Table 3.2 outlines the mechanisms that are planned to be utilised to engage with each stakeholder group in the SIA Scoping Phase of the Project.

Table 3.2 Mechanisms by Stakeholder Group for Scoping SIA Phase, and Proposed SIA Phase Consultation

Mechanism	Targeted Stakeholder	Description	First Round of Consultation	Second Round of Consultation
Website	Traditional Owners Host landholders Community groups Broader community Local businesses and service providers Local media	A website dedicated to the Project including a description and overview of the Project, development application process, company information, responses to key concerns, risk management plans, maps, media releases and contact information.	A website and email established in August 2022.	The website and email address will be monitored and updated when required across subsequent phases.
Media release	Local Government Traditional Owners Host landholders Neighbouring/proximal landholders Community groups Wider community Local businesses and service providers Local media	To introduce the project to the broader community through local and regional media channels.	Advertising in local newspapers and radio stations in August 2022 to advise of upcoming consultation opportunities and provide Project updates.	Subsequent media releases will be developed when required in the EIS phase.
Community Newsletters	Broader community	Project information sheets to distribute information about the Project to the broader community and targeted stakeholders.	No. 1 – Project overview and invitation to drop-in session was distributed in August 2022.	No. 2 – To provide a Project update and share notes and feedback received from community received during the scoping phase. No. 3 – To provide a Project update and present the draft findings of EIS & SIA and inform the community of the exhibition process.

Mechanism	Targeted Stakeholder	Description	First Round of Consultation	Second Round of Consultation
Drop-in session	Broader community Community groups Local businesses and service providers	Multi-hour time periods when stakeholders can drop in to speak to the Project team and experts, view documents and plans and ask questions.	One session held at Stuart Town Hall of Arts on Tuesday 30 September between 2 pm and 6 pm.	A session to summarise the draft results of the technical studies and gain feedback for the SIA will be held in the EIS phase.
Online Survey	Broader community	Online or offline surveys to obtain input and feedback on Project decision-making, as well as specific information about the needs, desires and impacts on stakeholders related to the Project.	Established on 2 September 2022, with all feedback received prior to 19 September included within the SIA scoping report.	The survey will be updated and distributed in the second phase to provide opportunity for the community to provide feedback and validate impacts from the scoping phase. Also used to understand potential mitigation and enhancement measures.
Personal Meetings or Interviews	Local Government Community groups Traditional Owners	Introductions to the Project, semi-structured interview discussions to listen to individual concerns, interests, and issues to gather preliminary feedback, including sensitivities, understanding of information needs and future engagement preferences.	One on one meetings held throughout the month of August and September 2022.	Follow up interviews and meetings will occur during the preparation of the SIA and EIS. Interviews with local businesses and services providers will occur during the preparation of the SIA and EIS.
Project briefings	State Government Local Government Traditional Owners Community groups	Formal briefings to key stakeholders and government agencies, with Project Information Sheets and/or slide decks to formally introduce the Projects.	Initial Project briefings undertaken in August and September 2022.	Further Project briefings will be undertaken across subsequent phases of the Project as required.

Table 3.3 outlines the stakeholders that have participated in the scoping phase of the Project’s planning and assessment process to date, as well as those who have informed the development of this Report.

Table 3.3 Stakeholders Consulted During Scoping Phase

Stakeholder Group	Mechanism Used	Number Contacted	Number Engaged
Host Landholders	Consultation with ACEN	10	85
Neighbouring Landholders	Consultation with ACEN	26	46
Broader Community	Media Release	4	4
	Project Website	-	-
	Project email/hotline	12	12
	Community Newsletter	~2,905 households and businesses	-
	Drop in Community Information Session	-	38
	Broader Community Survey	-	13
Local Government	Project briefing and interview	2	2
Traditional Owners	Project briefing and interview	3	-
Local Community, Environmental and Special Interest Groups	Project briefing and interview	12	1
Total			201

3.3 Engagement Materials

Umwelt will draft and prepare relevant engagement materials and tools to support engagement in accordance with the CSEP. These will be prepared following ACEN’s confirmation of the Implementation Plan (refer **Section 4.0**). Such materials will include:

- **Run sheets and/or agendas** – for formal project briefings for ACEN to hold with government agencies, and for key stakeholder meetings that the Umwelt team may facilitate in the local or regional area.
- **Interview discussion guides** – a suite of discussion guides including a standard discussion template/survey question set, as well as targeted guides for specific stakeholder or community groups and including talking points and questions for community information sessions. Each guide will likely include up to 5 open ended questions.
- **Project information sheets** – to communicate key information visually and concisely on the Project to the wider community, to be distributed via multiple means such as a resident mail drop, online format, and in hard-copy at community information/drop-in sessions.

- **Record-keeping templates** – including interview note taking templates and meeting minute templates.
- **Stakeholder engagement database** – to record contact details and outcomes of engagement, in an Excel spreadsheet or a nominated stakeholder database.

3.3.1 Scoping Phase Engagement

The SIA Guideline (2022) outlines that the scoping phase will include community engagement activities to understand likely stakeholder issues and concerns to inform the SIA.

To satisfy the SIA requirements, proposed engagement activities to be undertaken in this phase need to be targeted at identifying perceived issues of concern and/or positive impacts in relation to the proposed project, to be further considered in the subsequent EIS/SIA phase. In this regard, the SIA process calls for likely social impacts to be appropriately scoped and identified through consultation with potentially affected people and mitigation and enhancement options preliminarily explored.

Engagement in Phase 1 provides an opportunity to gauge and understand stakeholder issues/ concerns/ interests in relation to the Project; to identify possible strategies or solutions to address topics raised; and for this information to proactively inform project design and planning.

Questions to include in the interview discussion guides appropriate to this phase will include topics relating to:

- Awareness and attitudes towards solar and wind energy project developments (and other industry development in the local or regional area).
- Awareness and public perceptions of ACEN.
- Potential issues, concerns or interests related to the proposed Project.
- Community values, identity, local needs, and aspirations.
- Areas of value and use within and near the Project.
- Sense of community in the area.
- Potential sensitive receivers and/or vulnerable community groups.
- Preferred engagement mechanisms, frequency, and content.

The information gathered in the scoping phase will be used to inform the SIA and EIS preparation, by focusing the assessment on key social and environmental issues or impacts of importance to key stakeholder groups; and by identifying project design refinements that may seek to avoid or minimise negative impacts and/or enhance positive impacts. This is an important process in project development and records of changes/revisions in project design will be recorded and discussed in the EIS.

Further engagement activities in the subsequent assessment phase, will seek to address and respond to key community issues/concerns and will also include engagement activities required to further assess the social impacts relating to the Project.

4.0 Engagement Implementation Planning

4.1 Scoping Phase

An overview of planned engagement activities and associated staging across the Scoping phase for the Project is outlined in **Table 4.1**. Engagement implementation planning for the second phase activities to support the SIA will be determined after submission of the scoping report to the NSW DPE.

Table 4.1 Engagement Implementation Plan (Scoping Phase)

Target Stakeholder Group	Mechanism	Objectives	Tasks	Responsibility	Timing
Host and Proximal Landholders	Review of existing engagement outcomes, inclusion of SIA specific questions in ACEN personal meetings	Understand concerns and expectations, community needs and values, to inform the SIA and future engagement activities	Provide landholder contact details and engagement outcomes to Umwelt	ACEN Australia	August 2022
			Undertake calls/ meetings with identified key stakeholders and include SIA questions	Umwelt	August 2022
			Analyse / report on outcomes in scoping report	Umwelt	September 2022
Aboriginal Stakeholders (e.g. LALCs)	Personal meetings / Interviews	Provide project overview, understand perspectives, community needs and values	Send Project introduction/ invitation email	ACEN Australia	August 2022
			Organise meetings	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022
			Undertake meetings	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022 to September 2022
			Analyse / report on outcomes in scoping report	Umwelt	September 2022
Local Government	Project briefing	Provide project overview and update, understand interests and concerns	Send Project introduction/ invitation email	ACEN Australia	August 2022
			Organise meetings	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022
			Develop briefing presentation	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022

Target Stakeholder Group	Mechanism	Objectives	Tasks	Responsibility	Timing
			Attend briefings (online or in-person)	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022 to September 2022
			Analyse / report on outcomes in scoping report	Umwelt	September 2022
Environmental and Community Groups	Initial letters sent via email, offer of project briefing	Provide project overview, understand perspectives, community needs and values	Send Project introduction/ invitation email	ACEN Australia	August 2022
			Organise meetings	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022
			Undertake meetings	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022 to September 2022
			Analyse / report on outcomes in scoping report	Umwelt	September 2022
Broader Community	Letter / project information sheet	Disseminate key project information and increase awareness of the Project In the community Provide a mechanism for input and ongoing community engagement	Draft project information sheet content	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022
			Design project information sheet	ACEN Australia	August 2022
			Organise printing and distribution of Project information sheet	Umwelt	August 2022
	Community Information Session	To provide an introductory overview of the Project including the assessment and approvals process in key townships or community locations nearby the Project	Organise venue and key materials	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	August 2022
			Host information session	ACEN Australia / Umwelt	September 2022
			Analyse / report on outcomes in scoping report	Umwelt	September 2022

5.0 Reporting and Evaluation

5.1 Record Keeping and Stakeholder database

A dedicated stakeholder database will be established to record stakeholder interactions and related information throughout the Project's planning and assessment phase. This will include an engagement register, based on ACEN's Stakeholder Register Template, whereby team members will record the contact details of stakeholders, summaries of each consultation or contact undertaken, and any actions that arise from these meetings. This database will be established by Umwelt on an interactive and accessible platform for live sharing with the project team (e.g., SharePoint).

Outcomes and records of each engagement activity will be documented by the team member(s) in attendance. ACEN's Interactions Register Template will be maintained throughout the delivery of the Implementation Plan to ensure consistent tracking and recording of all community or stakeholder engagement activities and outcomes.

Information to be recorded will include:

- Stakeholder contact details.
- Activity details (including stakeholder engaged, attendees, time, place, mechanism used).
- Discussion points.
- Summary of key outcomes, including any actions arising.
- Preferences for future engagement.

Following completion of engagement for each phase, outcomes and data obtained will be collated and analysed to identify key impact themes and impact prioritisation. Identified issues or impacts may also be mapped to identify any spatial/geographic patterns in the data to demonstrate the representativeness and comprehensiveness of the engagement program.

Outcomes of the engagement will then be analysed and presented in the scoping report and subsequent SIA. Outcomes of the engagement will also be provided to inform relevant EIS technical studies and for further consideration in project design and planning.

5.2 Evaluation

The implementation of the CSEP will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure effectiveness in achieving the objectives outlined in **Section 1.0**. In this regard, it will be important to ensure that:

- All key stakeholders and communities relevant to the Project have been identified, in particular, vulnerable and at-risk groups.
- All identified relevant stakeholders are offered the opportunity to participate in the engagement program.

- Relevant Project information has been provided to all relevant stakeholders and all questions and queries received are followed up in a timely manner by Umwelt or ACEN.
- Regular Project team meetings will be held between Umwelt and ACEN to provide required updates and ensure a collaborative and consistent approach to engagement across the Project.
- Engagement outcomes and community feedback is meaningfully and adequately considered for the purposes of the development of a scoping report to inform future engagement and planning.
- Engagement outcomes, where possible, is used to inform Project design and refinements, including the development of enhancement or mitigation measures to address specific impacts.
- All regulatory requirements relating to community engagement are met.
- Engagement is timely, open/transparent, inclusive, and meaningful.

6.0 References

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