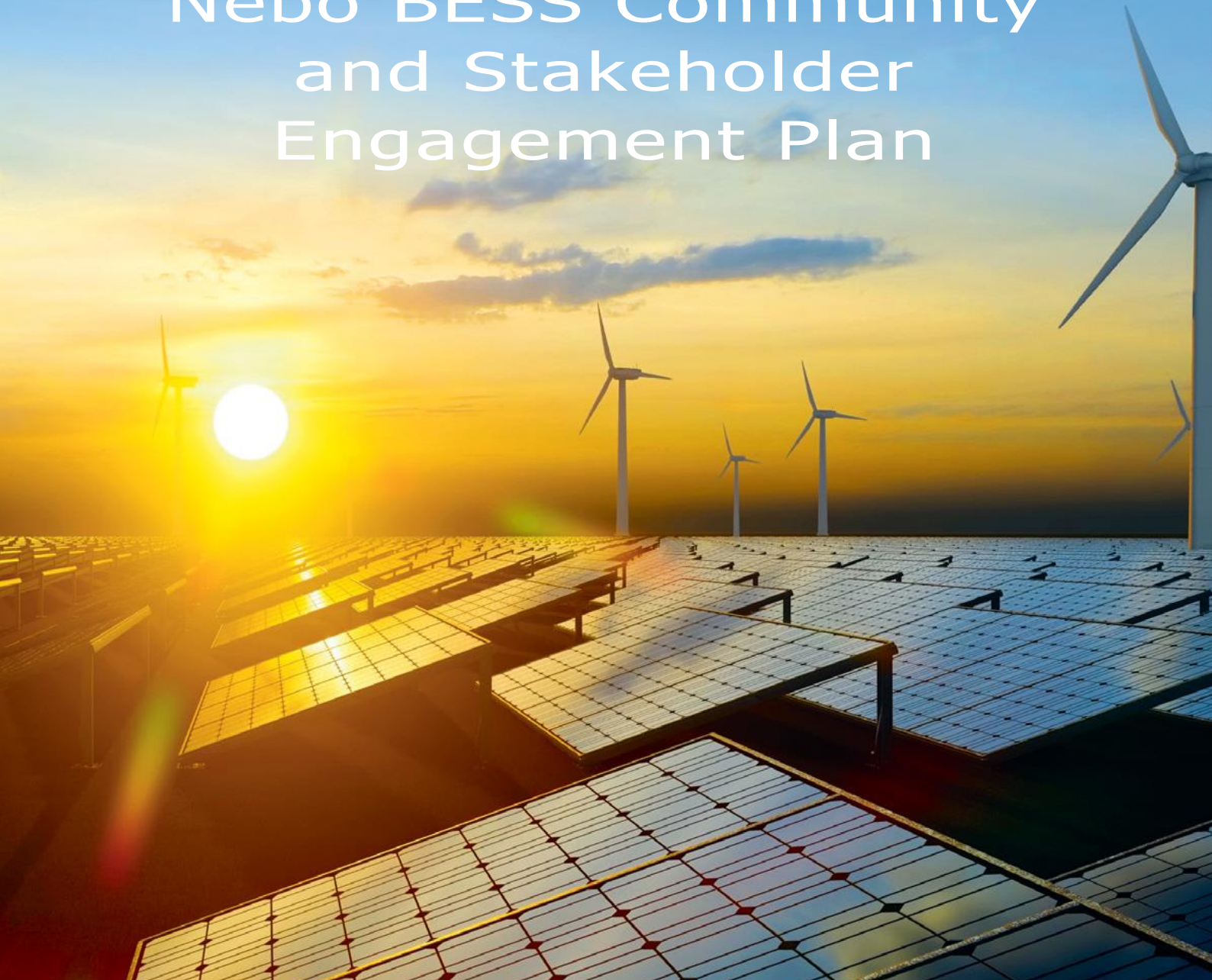




Australian Clean Energy

# Nebo BESS Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan



## Document control

### Document Details

<b>Document Name</b>	Nebo BESS Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
<b>Title</b>	Nebo BESS Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan
<b>Issue Date</b>	2/09/2024

### Version Control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>
Draft 1	20/12/2024
	Click or tap to enter a date.

### Document Review

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
<b>Prepared by</b>		Click or tap to enter a date.	
<b>Reviewed by</b>		Click or tap to enter a date.	
<b>Approved by</b>		Click or tap to enter a date.	

### Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners

ACE Power acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of all the lands and waters upon which we work, live, and play. We particularly acknowledge the Widi people who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands proposed for the Nebo BESS. We recognise that for many thousands of years, the Traditional Custodians of this Country cared for and lived harmoniously with this place, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

ACE Power is committed to a just, equitable, and reconciled Australia and recognises that we all have a role to play in achieving this vision.

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## Purpose

This Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP) details how ACE Power will engage with stakeholder and the local community about the proposed Nebo BESS (the Project).

The document outlines the communication and engagement approach to support constructive relationships with stakeholders and the community, mitigate project risks, build ACE Power's reputation, and foster an aligned approach to genuine engagement.

ACE Power understands that the success of the Nebo BESS is dependent on the open communication with all stakeholders and members of the local community.

This live document will be updated in response to stakeholder and local community feedback, project requirements, and the completion of key milestones. Following consultation ACE Power may issue an updated CSEP reporting on the consultation for the Nebo BESS.

It is the intention of ACE Power that this CSEP will remain with the project throughout the project lifetime. It should also be shared with any EPC or O&M contractors as appropriate.

## Responsibility

As the Nebo BESS project moves through its lifecycle, the contractors involved, as well as the overall responsibility for the project may change. This will mean that the responsibility for the management of this CSEP and its requirements will change with it. Table 1 outlines the responsibilities for this document throughout the project life cycle.

Table 1 CSEP responsibilities

Development Stage	Responsibility for CSEP	Responsible person
Site selection	ACE Power	Shane Humphreys Senior Development Manager
Feasibility	ACE Power	Shane Humphreys Senior Development Manager
Planning and approvals	ACE Power	Shane Humphreys Senior Development Manager
Post DA lodgment	ACE Power	Shane Humphreys Senior Development Manager
Handover	ACE Power	Shane Humphreys Senior Development Manager
Construction	Asset Owner, Nominated EPC Contractor	
Operation	Asset Owner, Nominated O&M, Asset Manager	
Decommissioning	Asset Owner	



## 1 About the Project

### 1.1 Project Overview

The Nebo BESS is a 900MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project that is currently being developed by ACE Power. ACE acquired the rights to the land in Q1 2023 and is currently progressing the development of the project; this includes the grid connection process, design works, the planning approval process, cultural heritage processes as well as community and stakeholder engagement.

The project is summarised in the following bullets:

- The Nebo BESS is comprised of battery cabinets, and inverter cabinets shown as the blue and pink rectangles (batteries) and orange rectangles (inverter stations).
- The Nebo BESS project substation is located directly south of the Project, incorporating four 33/275kV transformers.
- A 275kV cable route has been selected, to the Point of Connection, this is shown as a green line in the centre of a 60m wide easement.
- Figure 1 presents an overview of the Project, showing the 4-hour batteries and the inverter stations, which contain the associated 0.48/33kV transformers.

Initial discussions with Powerlink have informed the project that a direct connection into the Nebo substation at 275kV is achievable. Once commissioned, the Project will contribute to overall system strength in the network and will be capable of providing the services which Powerlink is seeking to procure to fulfil its obligations from 2025. To this end, the Nebo BESS has been submitted to Powerlink's RIT-T process which is seeking to procure system strength services from market participants; assessment of the submission is ongoing through Q1 2025.



Figure 1 Overview of Project

## 2 Community Engagement Approach

### 2.1 Approach Overview

The approach detailed in this CSEP describes a process that aims to enable consistent, targeted, and meaningful community engagement on all ACE Power projects. The approach will focus on the following guiding principles:

- Engage early to establish and build relationships with all interested stakeholders, including local government authorities, neighbouring landowners and the wider local community.
- Facilitate genuine, two-way engagement by sharing information about the Project, to identify and address any concerns, risks or opportunities for the Project. Consultation should be collaborative, and ACE Power will always seek to work with the local community throughout the project lifecycle.
- Provide opportunities for consultation with all stakeholder groups based on their individual requirements. Engagement should be relevant to the level of impact and interest in the Project.
- Engage with Traditional Owners of the land on which our projects are located.
- Work with local communities to share the benefits of the project with the communities that host infrastructure.

Project stakeholder and community engagement is led by ACE Power's dedicated project managers. This allows a single point of contact for each project to facilitate clear and open communication channels and the fostering of genuine relationships with stakeholders and the community.

Key aspects of this CSEP include:

- Detailed stakeholder mapping incorporating stakeholders and communities affected and/or interested in the Project.
- A community stakeholder analysis that underpins engagement, planning, and risk mitigation.

The project timelines are outlined in table 2.

Table 2 - Project timelines (indicative).

Milestone	Date
Site selection	2023/2024
Feasibility	2024
Planning and approvals	2024-2025
Construction to commence	2026
Operations to commence	2028

## 2.2 Objectives

The objectives that will guide the engagement activities include:

- Effectively engaging with stakeholders based on policy, the Project, and the planning process.
- Integrating feedback and engagement outcomes into Project decision-making.
- Building constructive relationships to position ACE Power as a leader in stakeholder engagement.
- Clearly communicate decisions that will affect stakeholders as early as possible, clearly, and through accessible channels.
- Incorporate stakeholder feedback wherever possible and follow through where a commitment has been made.
- Build confidence with regulators, governments, decision-makers, and other stakeholder representatives by demonstrating our engagement approach.

## 2.3 Industry best practice

### 2.3.1 International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Quality Assurance Standard

The Quality Assurance Standard was endorsed by the IAP2 Federation in May 2015 and is recognised as the International Standard for Public Participation practice.

Designed to respond to market requirements for evidence that effective community and stakeholder engagement has been delivered, the standard supports the delivery of the IAP2 spectrum of public participation which aims to move engagement from one of inform, consult, or involve to more actively collaborating and empowering stakeholders and local communities.

The standard provides:

- A set of principles to ensure consistency in the quality of consultation and engagement.
- An outline of the essential elements of any engagement process and what each stage of a community and stakeholder engagement process should incorporate.
- A quality process by which engagement projects can be assessed.
- Certainty for both practitioners and clients that the community and stakeholder engagement practice has been delivered to these standards.

### 2.3.2 Clean Energy Council Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Development

The Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Developments (Energy Charter) is a voluntary set of commitments for Clean Energy Council (CEC) members designed to communicate the standards that the signatories will uphold in developing renewable energy projects.

ACE Power has committed to the charter and will use the guidelines as guiding principles, ensuring they engage respectfully with the communities in which they plan and operate projects, are sensitive to environmental and cultural values, and make a positive contribution to the regions in which they operate. The CEC charter is included in Appendix 1.



## 2.4 Engagement tools and techniques

The table below summarises potential engagement and communications tools to enable stakeholders and community members to participate. ACE Power will use the most appropriate tools available throughout the consultation process.

Table 3 - Engagement tools and techniques

Tools	Purpose
Stakeholder and feedback database	ACE Power maintains a stakeholder and feedback database. This system captures stakeholder information and specific engagement details, ensuring that stakeholder feedback, concerns, and enquiries are recorded and addressed. The system will be used to record all queries including those raised at community meetings and assign actions to relevant staff to ensure these are followed up promptly.
Project webpage	A Project/ACE Power-branded webpage has been established and will be used as a key interface with stakeholders and the wider community. It includes general project information and factsheets and contact information, including an online feedback form. It will be updated regularly to reflect the latest project information.
Community enquiry number	ACE Power will promote a toll-free community feedback phone number in all communications.
Email address	A Project email address has been established and remains available to stakeholders and the community during the life of the Project.
FAQs	Regular Frequently Asked Questions sheets will be developed to enable consistent responses to common questions across the Project phases.
Emails/letters	Tailored letters will be used for formal engagement with directly affected stakeholders. Letters will include relevant updates on the Project and key details such as project and construction milestones.
Media releases	Media releases will be issued to communicate key messages, milestones, and announcements. Copies will be provided to relevant media outlets, as required, and will be hosted on the Project website. Major Project milestones may be formally announced through media events.
In-person meetings	Face-to-face meetings are ACE Power's preferred engagement method and can take a variety of forms including scheduled meetings and site visits. Meetings are designed to offer information about the Project, encourage and maintain open lines of communication, and establish a relationship should there be any future concerns or queries related to the Project. Meetings are to have an agenda, with minutes recording key decisions and all meeting participants. Community members will be notified of upcoming meetings via direct emails and follow-up phone calls where they are direct invitees, and via media advertising when the meetings are open to the wider community.
Surveys and questionnaires	Should stakeholder feedback on the proposal and engagement activities be required, online surveys and physical handout questionnaires will be used.
Virtual consultation tools	If necessary, remote consultation activities will be implemented, including video conferencing to conduct stakeholder briefings or as an alternative to in-person meetings.

Fact sheets	Relevant fact sheets prepared for distribution at community engagement activities to provide project information on various topics and project phases. Fact sheets will also be published on the Project website.
Advertisements	Community focused consultation information will be included in local media advertising to promote awareness, provide updates, and advise on key community meetings and consultation events.
Facilitated meetings	Facilitated meetings between key stakeholders and the Project team to provide transparency, access to technical experts and ultimately build a constructive relationship between ACE Power and the community.
Information events	Where required, local information sessions to support understanding of the Project by broader community members and stakeholders. These may be hosted by ACE Power or may include attendance at local regional events.
Social media	Social media has been used to share details on community feedback sessions.

## 2.5 First Nations Engagement

ACE Power is committed to respectfully and effectively engaging with First Nations people and communities. ACE Power will use the Federal Government guidelines to ensure the promotion of cultural safety, the building and maintenance of trust, and engagement early and often. The AIATSIS Guidance on Engaging with Traditional Owners outlines key engagement principles.

A Cultural Heritage Agreement is currently being negotiated with the Widi people, this agreement will facilitate a cultural heritage assessment of the site, expected to be completed in Q1 2025. The outcome of the assessment will guide next steps.

## 2.6 Hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups

The Project team will work with local government and other service providers to identify relevant individuals, groups, and those who support them in engaging with the project. These groups may include:

- Residents in areas with limited communications connectivity
- A time-poor population working in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Young people and the aged
- People with physical and cognitive impairments that hinder consultation
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- Seasonally transient communities

The best approach will be determined on a case-by-case basis. ACE Power commits to delivering an engagement program that combines digital, written, and in-person methods and tools to all potentially interested parties regardless of accessibility issues.

### 3 Community context

#### 3.1 Local Community in Nebo

Nebo is a rural township located in the Isaac Regional Council. Approximately 72 km south-east of Mackay.

At the 2021 ABS Census, the entire Isaac Regional Council area had a population of 22,046, with Nebo home to 3.9 percent, having a population of 857 people (53.8 percent male and 46.2 percent female) with a median age of 37.

The number of people Isaac Regional Council who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is 3.2 percent of the population, with Nebo's being congruent.

The Isaac Regional Council area's primary industry is Coal Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction and Specialised Beef Cattle farming. Other dominant industries include labour supply services (3.5 percent) and Local Government Administration (3.2 percent).

Notable landmarks include Historic Nebo Museum, Civeo Camp and Mount Britton.

#### 3.2 Traditional Owner context

The Widi People are the original custodians of the lands throughout the Nebo region and as such have been invited to take part in a Cultural Heritage Agreement that is currently being negotiated. ACE Power understands that providing accurate and timely information to the Widi people is an important responsibility of the project and look forwards to continuing to work with them through the various stages of the project.

#### 3.3 Political context

Hon Michelle Landry MP is the Federal MP for the electorate of Capricornia. She represents the Liberal National Party of Queensland. The party's stance on renewable energy projects emphasises caution. The party was initially in line with the 75 percent renewable target for 2035 but now has other priorities, however they are committed to the net zero by 2050 targets.

#### 3.4 Engagement to date

Engagement to date has been with various stakeholders including but not limited to neighbours, the community centred around Nebo, Isaac Regional Council, Indigenous Groups, local businesses and infrastructure organisations including Powerlink. A community engagement event was held in Nebo on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2024 to provide the opportunity for the community to provide feedback.

Feedback from the community event is maintained separately outside of this document, within the feedback register.

## 4 Community Engagement Strategy

The engagement strategy on ACE Power project is tailored to the specific project location, regional context. Early identification of stakeholders and other potentially interested community groups is the first stage of effective engagement.

### 4.1 Stakeholders

ACE Power aims to consult with all interested parties based on their specific needs and concerns about the project. Stakeholders and the proposed engagement activities are tailored to meet the differing needs to stakeholder groups.

Ace Power has undertaken an analysis of likely interested parties, as well as involved parties with the project – this list of stakeholders is maintained separately outside this document, in a stakeholder register.

### 4.2 Facilitating engagement

Community engagement allows ACE Power to get to know the local community, as well as undertake a baseline social assessment for the project, which to date has assisted with identifying the positive and negative social impacts that the project may create.

#### 4.2.1 Project Website

The Nebo BESS project website is set up to provide information about the project to the local community and anyone else that may be interested in the project. The webpage will be regularly updated with the latest project information.

[www.acepower.com.au/nebo](http://www.acepower.com.au/nebo)

The website also provides contact information for the project and provides an online webpage for comment.

#### 4.2.2 Project Contact Details

The project email address is [nebo@acepower.com.au](mailto:nebo@acepower.com.au) and the email remains with the project throughout the development lifecycle.

The project phone number is 1800 577 455.

#### 4.2.3 Community information sessions

A community information session for the project was held at Nebo Memorial Hall on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of October. The purpose of this is to provide the local community the opportunity to learn about the project, meet the project team and ask questions.

Community information sessions are to be advertised on the council website and using local community groups on social media where possible.

The community information sessions for ACE Power projects are advertised in local newspapers where possible. This provides visibility to those in society that prefer this method of communication.

#### 4.2.4 Local business information session

ACE Power intends to hold a local business information session in Q2 2025. This will allow local business to gain more information about the project and identify potential opportunities for local businesses to partner with the project. The project will seek to procure local services including: clearing, fencing, civil, mechanical and electrical engineering services, catering, cleaning, equipment hire, security and waste removal.

Opportunities for training and bringing in additional staff will be discussed during this session, and we expect to continue discussions with relevant businesses thereafter.

## 5 Community benefit fund

### 5.1 Community Benefit Sharing

ACE Power is committed to ensuring that the long-term benefits of the project are shared with the community. The Project will establish the Nebo BESS community benefit fund. This is designed to

It should be noted that the community benefit fund does not include:

- Host landowner payments.
- The value of newly created local jobs and investment.
- Any necessary council rates or fire levies.
- Any other activities that may be conditions of the Development Approval.

The Nebo BESS community fund is still being developed and refined as the project achieves the various approvals required prior to the commencement and construction of the project.

### 5.2 Applications for community initiatives

The Nebo BESS community fund will be open to applications to local community groups and initiatives in Nebo and surrounding areas. Interested parties should contact the project via the project website.



## 6 Reporting and Evaluation

### 6.1 Reporting

The purpose of the CSEP is to describe the approach to community consultation for ACE Powers proposed Nebo BESS project in Queensland during the early stages of project development. As a result of following this approach it will be possible to obtain constructive feedback on the project from the local community.

The CSEP will be updated regularly, including with detail on the outcomes of the community consultation to identify how feedback can be used to improve the project.

The CSEP should include:

- A summary of the engagement tools used on the Nebo BESS project.
- A quantitative summary of the engagement with the project. This may include: number of interactions with the project website, attendance at community day, details of any other consultation meetings.
- Data from any surveys issued by the project to interested parties.

The CSEP should provide a summary of the outcomes of the consultation process. This may be presented in the form of a consultation log. The nature of feedback, ACE Powers response feedback and timelines for implementation (where appropriate) are the primary reporting method for community consultation.

### 6.2 Evaluation

ACE Power is committed to identifying ways in which it can improve the approach to community consultation on renewable energy projects.

Engagement and communication processes will be monitored and reviewed on all projects to:

- Ensure the techniques being used are effective
- Identify new stakeholders throughout the process
- Respond to any new issues that arise through consultation.

ACE Power will ensure all staff/subcontractors are complying with any established community protocols. This will be achieved by:

- Reviewing enquiries and complaints data to identify unresolved or recurring issues and emerging trends
- Inform discussions with stakeholders and the community
- Inform discussions with members of the Project team
- Media monitoring.

## Appendix A      Clean Energy Councils Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Developments

1. We will engage respectfully with the local community, including Traditional Owners of the land, to seek their views and input before finalising the design of the Project and submitting a development application.
2. We will provide timely information and be accessible and responsive in addressing the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the lifetime of the development.
3. We will be sensitive to areas of high biodiversity, cultural and landscape value in the design and operation of projects.
4. We will minimise the impacts on highly productive agricultural land where feasible and explore opportunities to integrate continued agricultural production into the project.
5. We will consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the development, and on the mitigation options where relevant.
6. We will support the local economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities wherever possible.
7. We will offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the development and consult them on the options available, including the relevant governance arrangements.
8. We commit to using the development to support educational and tourism opportunities where appropriate.
9. We will demonstrate responsible land stewardship over the life of the development and welcome opportunities to enhance the ecological and cultural value of the land.
10. At the end of the Project's design or permitted life we will engage with the community on plans for the responsible decommissioning, or refurbishment/repowering of the site.

## Appendix B Complaints and Enquiries Procedure and Policy

### Nebo BESS Complaints Management Procedure

ACE Power is committed to managing complaints with transparency and has developed this complaint management policy with these values in mind. The following procedure outlines our process for receiving, investigating and resolving complaints and dealing with community incidents.

### Definitions

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of an action taken, decision made, or service provided by us or our contractors.

### Scope

This policy applies to Nebo BESS project staff and contractors carrying out services on behalf of ACE Power.

### Guiding principles

Our complaint management procedure is underpinned by the following principles:

- Enabling complaints – stakeholders can make a complaint via multiple channels.
- Responding to concerns – ACE Power will take necessary steps to resolve complaints.
- Learning and improving – ACE Power will review complaints to understand issues and improve where applicable.

### How to make a complaint

A person can make a complaint regarding the Nebo BESS by:

- Phone – By calling the Project's toll-free number 1800 931 994. This number is published on our website and is also promoted via Project flyers, brochures and newsletters.
- Email – send an email to [nebo@acepower.com.au](mailto:nebo@acepower.com.au)
- In person – to a representative of our Project team
- Mail – in writing, addressed to Nebo BESS: Suite 402, 39 East Esplanade, Manly NSW 2095

All complaints will be registered and responded to within 48 hours or the next business day where possible, acknowledging the complaint has been received.

### Responding to complaints

- On receipt of a complaint, ACE Power will assess the nature of the complaint and form a view as to which staff person is best placed to respond and investigate.
- ACE Power may contact the person making the complaint to collect more information to be able to fully assess the complaint. This information may include:
  - Name, contact details of the person making the complaint
  - Details of the issue, including if relevant, the time, location and nature of the issue being raised
  - Any further characteristics of the issue being raised that are relevant to the investigation
- At this time, ACE Power will also advise the person making the complaint as to when a response can be expected.

- ACE Power will maintain the privacy of persons making a complaint and operates in alignment with relevant privacy laws and legislation.

#### Investigating complaints

- ACE Power will endeavour to handle all complaints in a manner intended to lead to their effective resolution as quickly as possible. As such, the following assessment and investigation process will be carried out:
- a suitably knowledgeable and qualified member of the team will conduct an initial investigation of the complaint and seek further advice from the person making the complaint if required.
- a time frame will be communicated to the person making the complaint as to when we expect the issue to be resolved. Usually, we aim to conclude complaint investigations within 14 business days.
- details of the complaint will be checked against internal company records, plans, stakeholder registers, relevant Standards and/or project conditions to determine if the complaint has merit.
- a decision will be reached as to whether corrective action, if any, is needed to rectify issues raised.
- The person making the complaint will be provided with an outcome and corresponding factual information to inform them of the outcome of the investigation and ACE Power's position on the issue raised.
- It is also noted that some complaints may not require an investigation and may be considered an opinion, general enquiry or a request for further information. If this is the case, ACE Power will endeavour to respond to the person making the complaint within 48 hours to advise that their complaint will not progress as such and the matter will be closed.
- Anyone making a complaint to ACE Power can request feedback on the progress of their complaint by contacting the relevant staff member investigating the issue.
- Should a person who has made a complaint not be satisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation, they can ask for their complaint to be escalated to the Project Director for further consideration.
- People making complaints can also opt to take their complaints to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner for further investigation.
- Once all investigations are completed and communicated to the person making the complaint, the complaint will be closed.

#### Roles and responsibilities

ACE Power Project and Community Engagement team: receive and acknowledge receipt of the complaint, providing the person making the complaint with a timeframe for investigation and response. This staff member may then investigate the complaint in collaboration with other relevant team members when applicable.

Project Director: available to review complaints if the issue is highly complex and or the person making the complaint is unsatisfied with the initial response provided.

#### Accessibility

We understand that some people may require assistance to make a complaint.

The National Relay Service can be contacted using the information below:

- Website: [relayservice.gov.au](http://relayservice.gov.au)
- Phone: Relay Service Helpdesk 1800 555 660
- TTY users: 1800 555 630 and ask for 1800 340 340
- Email: [helpdesk@relayservice.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@relayservice.com.au)

### Remedies

In the event that we have made an error, we will take steps to redress the situation. Possible remedies include but are not limited to:

- An explanation of why the issue occurred and the steps taken to prevent it happening again
- A reversal of a decision if possible, taking circumstances into account.
- Providing the means of redress requested by the complainant.
- An apology to the person making the complaint.

### Multiple complaints by a complainant

Multiple complaints from a single complainant within a short period of time or relating to the same topics will be treated as one complaint.

### Unreasonable complaint conduct

Most complainants who lodge a complaint act reasonably and responsibly in their interactions even when experiencing distress, frustration and anger about their complaint. However, in a very small number of cases some complainants may behave in ways that are inappropriate and unacceptable towards our staff. When complainants behave in these ways, we consider their conduct to be 'unreasonable'.

Unreasonable conduct is any behaviour by a complainant which, because of its nature or frequency raises health, safety, resource or equity issues for the project, our staff, or other stakeholders.

We will generally manage unreasonable conduct and/or complaints by limiting or adapting the ways that we interact with complainants by restricting who they can conduct and what issues can be raised with us. Complainants in this situation will be notified in writing that we consider their complaint conduct unreasonable and how we will manage their complaint going forward. If behaviour is significantly unreasonable, we will terminate all communications.

### Reporting on performance

To measure our complaints performance, we measure the following key performance indicators:

- Number of complaints received
- Top issues recorded against complaint data
- Performance of responses provided against set response timeframes.
- Number of changes made to processes and procedures as a result of complaints.