

New England Solar - Accommodation & Employment Strategy



Stage 1b – 400MWac – Operations

Stage 2a – 320MWac - Construction

Stage 3a – 200MW/2hr - Construction

14 December 2023

Document Control

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3	15 September 2022	Independent environmental audit and various project updates	Onward Consulting	GLC	ACEN Australia
4	14 December 2023	Update to incorporate Stage 2 and Stage 3 of NES	T Verkerk	P Millar	S Donnan



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
ACEN Australia	ACEN Australia Pty Ltd (previously UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd)
AES	Accommodation and Employment Strategy
BESS	battery energy storage system
CoC	Conditions of consent of SSD 9255
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
Council	Uralla Shire Council
DA	development application
DPE	NSW Department of Planning and Environment (Formerly known as NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment)
Decommissioning	The removal of solar panels and ancillary infrastructure and/or rehabilitation of the Site
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement for NES
ha	hectare
LGA	local government area
km	kilometre
kV	kilovolt
MW	megawatt
NES	New England Solar
NSW	New South Wales
PV	photovoltaic
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
RTS	Response to Submissions (report)
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
SRD SEPP	<i>State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011</i>
SSD	State significant development
UNE	University of New England

1 Introduction

1.1 Approved Project

New England Solar Project (NES) was granted Development Consent from the Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE) (now the Department of Planning and Environment [DPE]) on 9 March 2020 (SSD 9255). The Development Consent was most recently modified on 26 May 2023 (Modification 2), after receiving approval for Modification 1 on 9 Feb 2021.

1.1.1 General project description

ACEN Australia Pty Ltd (ACEN Australia) (formerly named UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd) has approval to develop the New England Solar and Battery Project; a significant grid-connected solar and battery energy storage system (BESS) project along with associated infrastructure (the Project), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla, which lies approximately 19 km south of Armidale, in the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA) (hereafter referred to as NES). NES is within the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). NES was approved, subject to conditions, by the New South Wales (NSW) Independent Planning Commission (IPC) on 9 March 2020 (SSD 9255).

NES will be constructed in the following stages:

- Stage 1a: Construction of a 400 megawatt (MW) solar farm within the Northern Array, which commenced on 7 February 2022 and is expected to be completed by Q4 2023
- Stage 1b: Operations of 400MW solar
- Stage 2a: Construction of a 320 megawatt (MW) solar farm within the Central Array, which is expected to commence by Q1 2024
- Stage 2b: Operations of 320MW solar
- Stage 3a: Construction of 200MW/2hr BESS within the approved Substation/BESS area, which is expected to commence by Q1 2024
- Stage 3b: Operations of 200MW/2hr BESS
- Stage 4a: Construction of 1200MW/2hr BESS within the approved Substation/BESS area
- Stage 4b: Operations of 1200MW/2hr BESS
- Stage 5: Decommissioning

Key components of NES development are summarised in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Key components of NES

Aspect	Description
--------	-------------

NES project summary	<p>The NES project includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generating capacity of approximately 720 (MWac), including about 400 MWac generated by the northern arrays (Stage 1) and 320 MWac from the central arrays (Stage 2). • Approximately 1.4 million single-axis tracking solar panels (up to 4.3 metres (m) high) and 150 power conversion units (PCU) (up to 2.7 m high). • A grid substation in the northern array area and connection to TransGrid's 330 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. • A lithium-ion battery storage facility (1,400 MW/2,800 MWh) located adjacent to the substation and within a number of small enclosures (up to 2.9 m high) or larger battery buildings (up to 5.5 m high) (Stage 3 & 4). • Internal access tracks, staff amenities, maintenance buildings (up to 8 m high), offices, laydown areas, car parking and security fencing. • Subdivision of land within the site for the TransGrid switchyard.
Project area	<p>Site: 3,655 hectares (ha).</p> <p>Total NES footprint: 2,159 ha</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1b footprint: 1,159 ha • Stage 2a footprint: 985 ha • Stage 3a footprint: 15 ha
Access route	<p>All vehicles will access the site via the New England Highway, Barleyfields Road (North) and Big Ridge Road).</p>
Site entry and road upgrades	<p>Two new site entry points are constructed on Big Ridge Road with a rural property access type.</p> <p>Upgrades to the intersection of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New England Highway and Barleyfields Road (North), including a Channelised Right Turn (CHR) treatment. • Barleyfields Road (North) and Big Ridge Road, including a Basic Left Turn (BAL) treatment. <p>Upgrades have been made to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barleyfields Road (North) between the New England Highway and Big Ridge Road, including sealing to a width of 7.2 m and 1 m gravel shoulders. • Big Ridge Road including sealing sections to a width of 7.2 m and 1 m gravel shoulders, and upgrading a section with a gravel surface to a width of 8.7 m.

Rail transport	Construction materials may be transported to the site via a combination of road and rail (average of 2 trains per week). A train unloading area and materials storage area may be constructed adjacent to the Main Northern Railway. Materials will be stored in shipping containers (up to 2.9 m high) until required on-site.
Construction	Construction materials may be transported to the site via a combination of road and rail (average of 2 trains per week). Construction hours limited to Monday to Friday 7 am to 6 pm, and Saturday 8 am to 1 pm.
Operation	The expected operational life of NES is approximately 30 years. However, this may involve infrastructure upgrades that could extend the operational life.
Decommissioning and rehabilitation	The NES project also includes decommissioning at the end of the NES project life, which will involve removing all infrastructure.
Hours of operation	Daily operations and maintenance will be undertaken Monday to Friday 7 am to 6 pm, and Saturday 8 am to 1 pm. NES will be operational 24/7.
Subdivision	Subdivision of the lots on which the approved TransGrid Switchyard is located has been completed.
Employment	Approximately 700 construction jobs and up to 15 full-time operational jobs.
Capital investment value	\$1.268 billion.

1.2 Working Hours

1.2.1 Construction

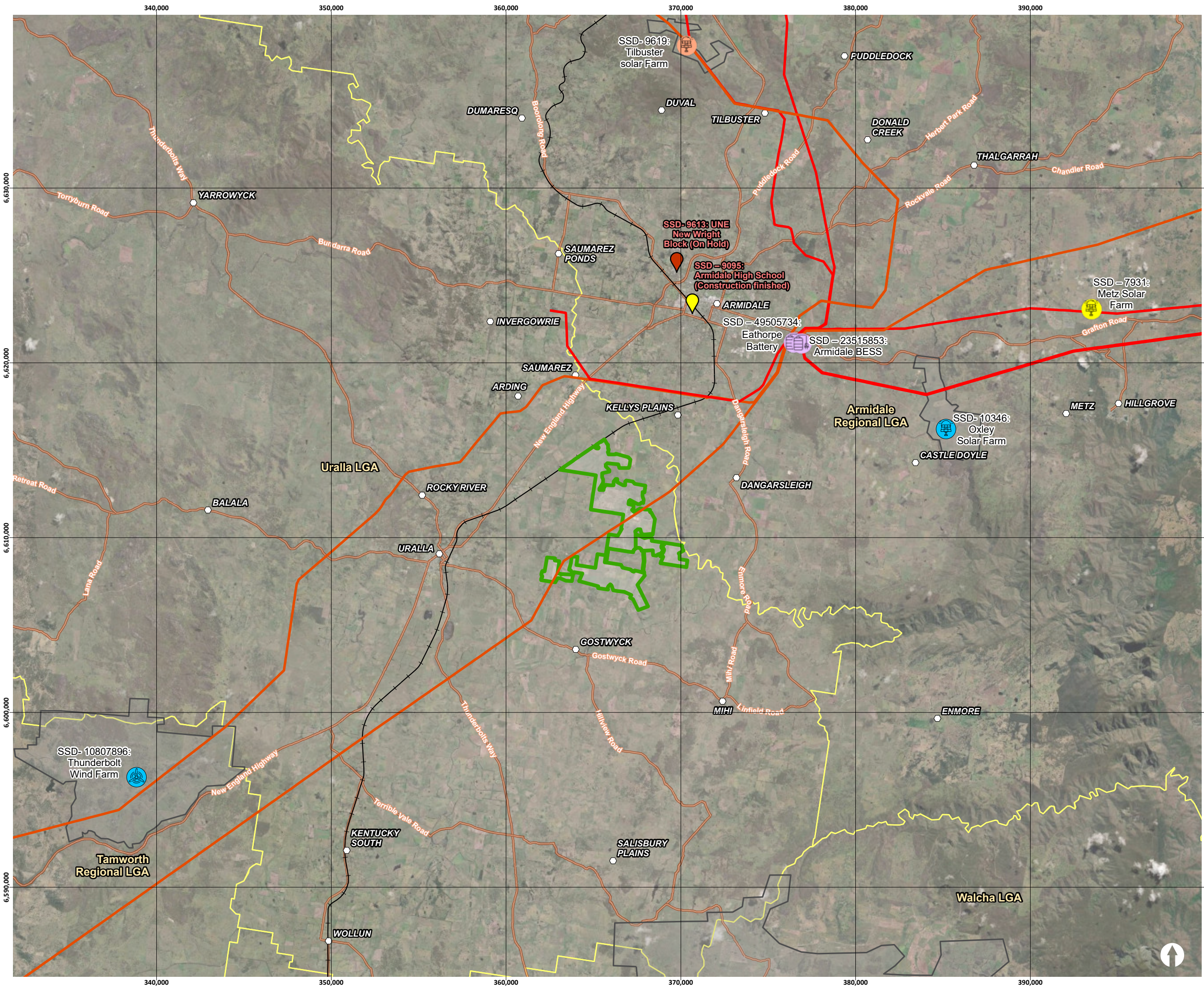
Unless approval has been obtained from the Secretary, construction, upgrading and decommissioning activities on site can only be undertaken between the following hours:

- 7 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday;
- 8 am to 1 pm Saturdays; and
- at no time on Sundays and NSW public holidays.

1.2.2 Operations

Once commissioned, NES will operate 24 hours a day. The facility will be staffed during daylight hours, generally from:

7 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday (staff on-call during weekends and public holidays).



Legend

New England Solar Site

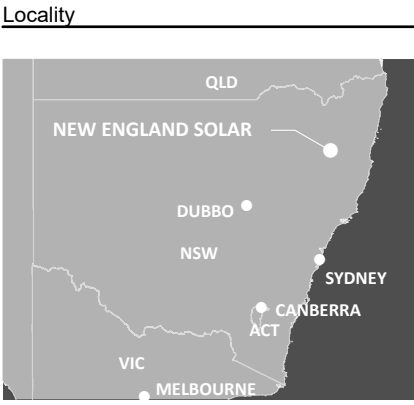
- New England Solar Site
- LGA Boundaries
- Arterial Road
- Railway
- Existing 132 kV Transmission Line
- Existing 330 kV Transmission Line

Projects Under Development

- BESS (Prepare EIS)
- Solar (Determination)
- Solar (Construction Finished)
- Solar (Assessment)
- Wind (Assessment)

Notes

1. Project features shown are preliminary and subject to change.



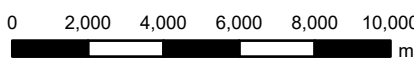
Project

New England Solar
Renewable Energy from ACEN

Title

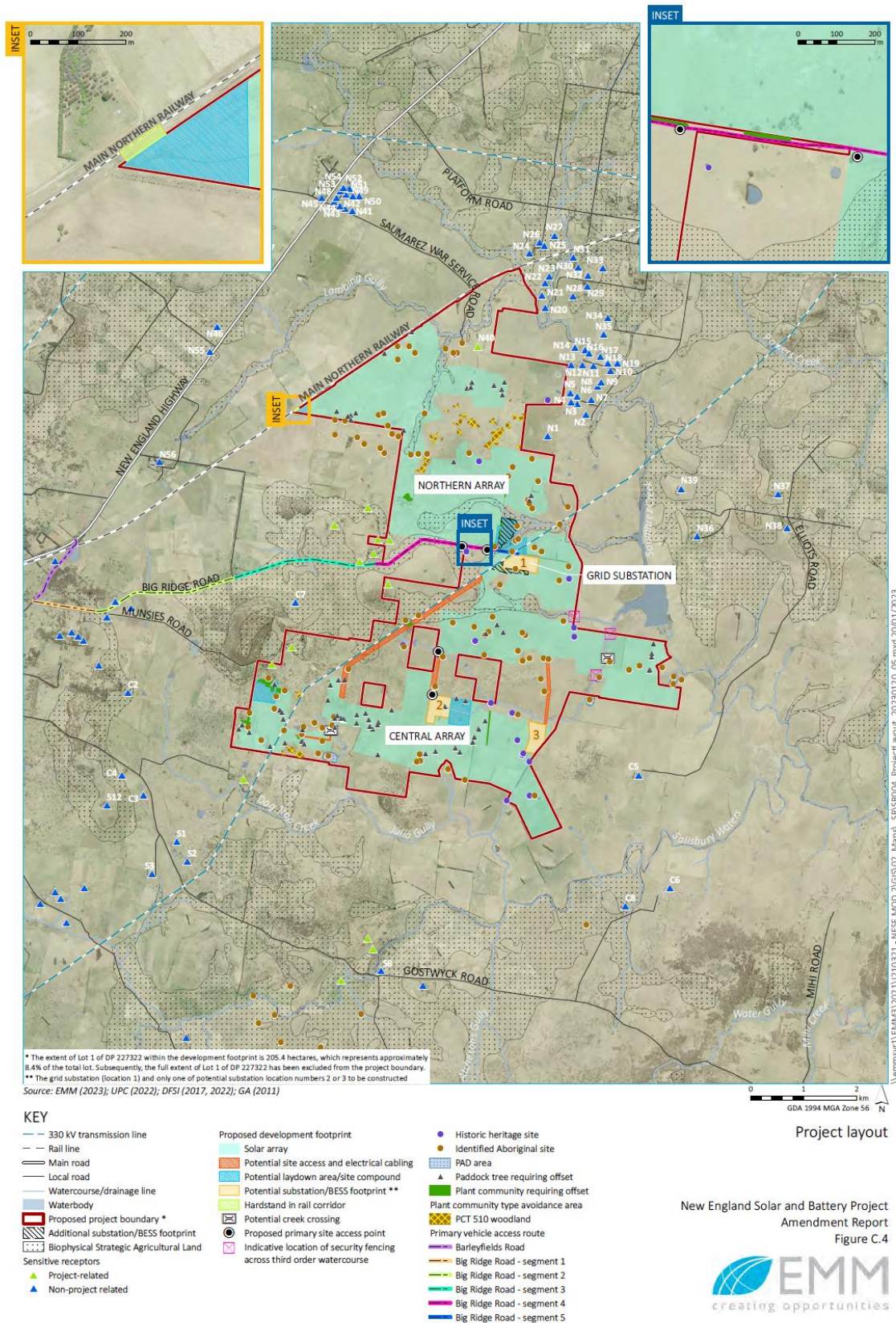
Figure 1-1 Regional Context

Drawing no. NESF-P018 **Date** 5/10/2023



1:200,000 GDA2020 MGA Zone 56

Figure 1.2 - NES layout



1.3 Development consent

1.3.1 Approval pathway

NES is identified as a State significant development (SSD) under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) (EP&A Act) and the *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011* (SRD SEPP).

NES was subject to the SSD assessment and approval provisions of the EP&A Act and a development application (DA) and environmental impact statement (EIS) were submitted for assessment. The DA and EIS for the Project were publicly exhibited from 20 February to 20 March 2019.

A number of submissions from the public, government agencies and other organisations were received by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) following the public exhibition of the DA and EIS. A Response to Submissions report (RTS) was submitted to DPE in June 2019, addressing the matters raised in the submissions provided during the EIS exhibition period.

As a result of further discussions with the local community, landholders and other stakeholders, ACEN Australia made a number of amendments and refinements to the proposal that was the subject of the DA and EIS, including the removal of a southern array and the Construction Accommodation Village (CAV). An Amendment Report, prepared and submitted to the DPE in June 2019 in conjunction with the RTS, summarised the changes made since the EIS exhibition and the impacts associated with the amended Project.

The DPE undertook a comprehensive assessment of the merits of NES and considered all potential issues in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act. Under Section 4.5 (a) of the EP&A Act and clause 8A of the SRD SEPP, DPE referred the Project to the IPC on 19 December 2019. Development consent SSD 9255 for NES was granted on 9 March 2020.

The Development consent was most recently modified on 16 February 2021 (Modification 1 – road upgrade disturbance area increase). Modification 2 was approved on 26 May 2023.

1.3.2 Consent conditions

The Project has been approved to be developed subject to a number of conditions of consent for SSD 9255 (CoC) as issued by the IPC. These conditions are required to:

- prevent, minimise and /or offset adverse environmental conditions;
- set standards and performance measure for acceptable environmental performance;
- require regular monitoring and reporting; and
- provide for the ongoing environmental management of the Project.

Consent Condition 28 of Schedule 3 states that *prior to commencing construction, ACEN Australia must prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the Project in consultation with Council, and to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This AES must:*

- (a) propose a strategy to ensure there is sufficient accommodation for the workforce associated with the Project;*
- (b) consider the cumulative impacts associated with other State Significant Development projects in the area;*

- (c) investigate options for prioritising the employment of local workers for the construction and operation of the development, where feasible; and*
- (d) include a program to monitor and review effectiveness of the strategy over the life of the Project, including regular monitoring and review during construction.*

Further, following the Secretary's approval, ACEN Australia must implement the approved AES. Schedule 4 of the SSD 9255 specifies a number of environmental management and reporting conditions that are relevant to the AES. These relate to the revision of strategies, plans and programs; incident notification; and non-compliance notification. These conditions are further addressed in Section 6.4.

Consent condition 2(a) of Schedule 2 states that ACEN Australia must carry out the development generally in accordance with the EIS. Within the EIS, a number of commitments were made with regard to a Construction Workforce Management Plan, which this AES addresses, specifically:

- Consultation mechanisms with Uralla Shire Council, Armidale Regional Council and Tamworth Regional Council to avert pressure on local resources and ensure a reasonable approach to planning transient worker housing;
- Consultation frameworks with local accommodation providers to ensure fairness, open communications and forward planning, and grievance mechanisms;
- Plans for medical and other needs to ensure appropriate spread of workforce needs across all local resources and to avoid heavy pressure on a small number of local GPs; and
- A Code of Conduct for the project's workers (particularly to avoid anti-social behaviour at peak construction times).

1.4 Document structure

This Accommodation and Employment Strategy (hereafter referred to as the AES) has been prepared to address the various requirements of Condition 28 and is structured as follows:

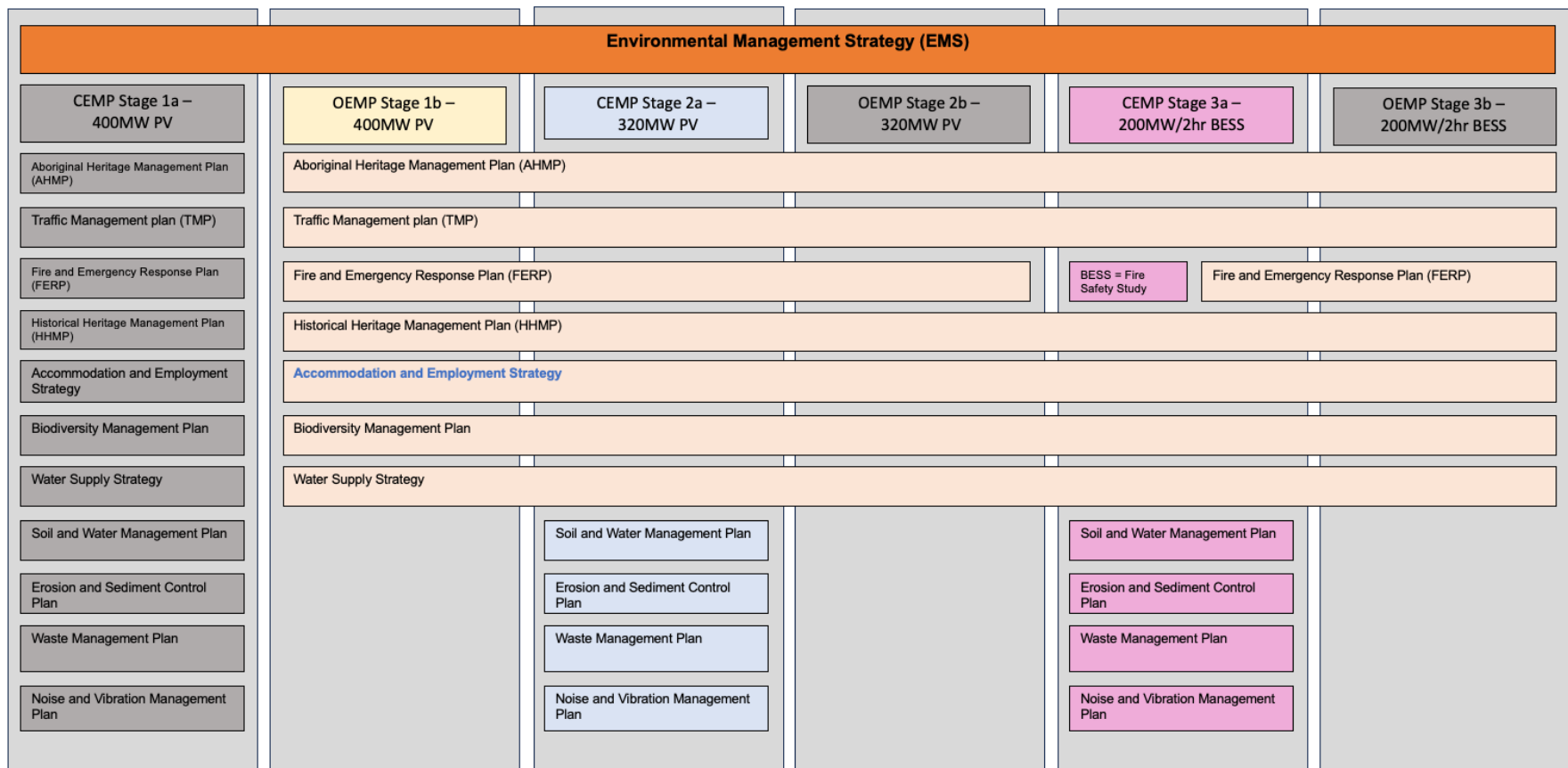
- Section 1 provides an overview of the Project and the approval pathway; a brief description of the consent conditions directly relevant to this AES; and a description of the purpose of this AES;
- Section 2 provides a brief overview of the local and regional social and economic structure;
- Section 3 describes the workforce required during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project. It also addresses the cumulative impacts and interaction with other local projects;
- Section 4 describes the employment strategy, including a description of the local employment opportunities; the recruitment strategy; and the mechanisms to prioritise local employment;
- Section 5 describes the accommodation strategy, including an overview of short-term and rental accommodation; and a hierarchy of accommodation options; and

- Section 6 provides details on the actual implementation of the AES, including monitoring and reporting; the associated record keeping; and the process of evaluation and review.

This AES forms part of the supporting documentation to the Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) which provides the strategic framework and 'roadmap' for the overall environmental management for the Project (refer to Figure 1.3).

New England Solar

Renewable Energy from ACEN



Blue text = This plan. Yellow Boxes = Site wide plans. Grey boxes = not active plans

Figure 1.3 – Environmental management documents structure

1.5 Consultation

Since approval of Version 3 of the AES, consultation has continued to occur, including:

- Industry briefings and open days during the procurement process.
- Ongoing consultation with accommodation providers to verify availability of beds and effects of other major projects in the region.
- Consultation with medical practices to confirm the level of service provided.
- Consultation with local councils to understand future events occurring in the area that have potential to affect accommodation availability.

Extensive consultation was undertaken during the preparation of the EIS and leading up to Project approval in March 2020 and as part of previously approved revisions of this document.

ACEN Australia conducted consultation with Uralla Shire Council regarding Version 4 of the AES which reflects the inclusion of Stage 2a and 3a works. This included meeting with the Interim General Manager, Acting Executive Director Infrastructure & Development, executive Manager Civil Infrastructure, Manager Civil Infrastructure and Manager Development & Planning on 23 August 2023, as well as a meeting with Acting Executive Director Infrastructure & Development, Manager Development & Planning, Councilors and the Mayor on 20 September 2023. Council did not raise any concerns during this meeting and a copy of Version 4 of the AES has been submitted for review and comment which will be noted in Appendix A.

1.6 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities relevant to the AES are provided in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 – Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
ACEN Australia Project Manager	Ensure the AES is developed, implemented and maintained in accordance with the relevant requirements of the development consent.
Contractors Project Manager	Ensure the AES is implemented and maintained in accordance with the relevant requirements of the development consent.
Contractor Community Liaison Officer	Responsible for consultation with stakeholders and monitoring as required by this AES and reporting to ACEN Australia Community Liaison Officer.
ACEN Australia Community Liaison Officer	Ensure the AES is developed, implemented and maintained in accordance with the relevant requirements of the development consent and actioning any reporting completed by the Contractor's Community Liaison Officer.

2 Social and Economic Profile

2.1 Local profile

Uralla is a medium-sized rural town on the New England Highway approximately halfway between Sydney and Brisbane. It is located approximately 215 km (3 hours) west of Coffs Harbour by road and approximately 22 km south of Armidale, the nearest major regional centre. The population of the Uralla Shire LGA was 5,971 in 2021, with 23 % aged 65 and over, 17.6 % aged under 14 and a median age of 47. Approximately 9.5% of Uralla Shire LGA's population identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

In 2021, within Uralla Shire LGA, 29.2 % of the population were attending an educational institution, with 4.9 % in a tertiary or technical institution (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Most businesses within the Uralla Shire LGA are associated with agriculture, forestry and fishing, which contribute to almost \$140 million, or 26.5 % of the Uralla Shire LGA's gross regional product. The importance of agriculture to the Uralla Shire LGA's economy is further reflected by the area's employment statistics, which indicate that approximately 250 employees or 25 % of employment within the Uralla Shire LGA is supported by agriculture, forestry and fishing (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Tourism is a key industry in Uralla Shire LGA, bringing in approximately \$8 million per year. ABS statistics indicate that the number of businesses within the Uralla Shire LGA have been generally stable, or marginally increasing (from 639 to 655), over the period 2018-2022. The increase was attributable to an increase in the number of small businesses employing 1-4 people. Non-employing businesses represent 60% of registered businesses in the Uralla Shire LGA. The number of people in the labour force has slightly increased from 2016 to 2021 and the unemployment rate has decreased from 5.3% to 4.1% (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

The development footprint for NES intersects a mix of large-scale and small-scale farms within the Uralla Shire LGA. The agricultural properties that make up the development footprint are currently primarily used for sheep grazing for production of wool and lambs, with some cattle grazing for beef production.

A general search for health and medical facilities identified some general practice centres within Uralla, however over 50 facilities are located within 128km of Uralla (including in Armidale and Tamworth).

2.2 Regional profile

While NES is located in the Uralla Shire LGA, the broader regional economy comprising Uralla Shire, Armidale Regional, Walcha Shire and Tamworth Regional LGAs has the potential to contribute to NES and derive economic benefits from both the construction and operation phases. Major industries of employment across the LGAs include beef-cattle farming (specialised), sheep farming (specialised), sheep-beef-cattle farming, hospitals, teaching, administration and mining. Agriculture accounts for up to 41 % of economic activity in some parts of Uralla Shire LGA, although Tamworth and Armidale LGAs have more diverse economies.

In 2021, the regional economy had a population of 101,181 and a labour force of 47,687, with Tamworth Regional LGA being the largest (Australian Bureau of Statistics, n.d.). In 2021, there were 2,214 people unemployed with the majority of these located in Tamworth Region LGA although the unemployment rate was highest in Armidale Regional LGA (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

The main occupations of usual residents were professionals followed by managers (which includes farm managers). The percentage of usual residents employed as professionals was greatest in Armidale Regional LGA and Tamworth Regional LGA, while the percentage of usual residents employed as managers was greatest in Uralla Shire LGA. Beef cattle and higher education are significant industry sectors for residents of Uralla Shire LGA, while hospitals and higher education are significant sectors of employment for residents of Tamworth Regional LGA and Armidale Regional LGA, respectively.

3 Workforce Generation

3.1 Workforce estimates

3.1.1 Construction

The EIS originally predicted the direct employment opportunities generated by NES to be up to 700 full-time equivalents (FTEs) at the peak of construction including all stages.

Since February 2022 when construction began for Stage 1a, the workforce has been building gradually towards the predicted peak of up to 450 people. With the construction Stage 1a expected to complete the transition to the operations Stage 1b by Q4 2023, there will be a subsequent reduction in workforce to 10 -15 FTE staff.

It is expected that Stage 2a will largely reflect Stage 1a, and it is estimated that the workforce will be very similar due to the similarities in size and time frames. Stage 3a, the construction of the BESS will have minimal workforce as the nature of BESS construction involves the installation of specialized BESS containers and are delivered on flatback trucks.

It is expected that a limited overlap will occur between the commencement of Stage 1b and the commencement of construction of Stage 2a and Stage 3a.

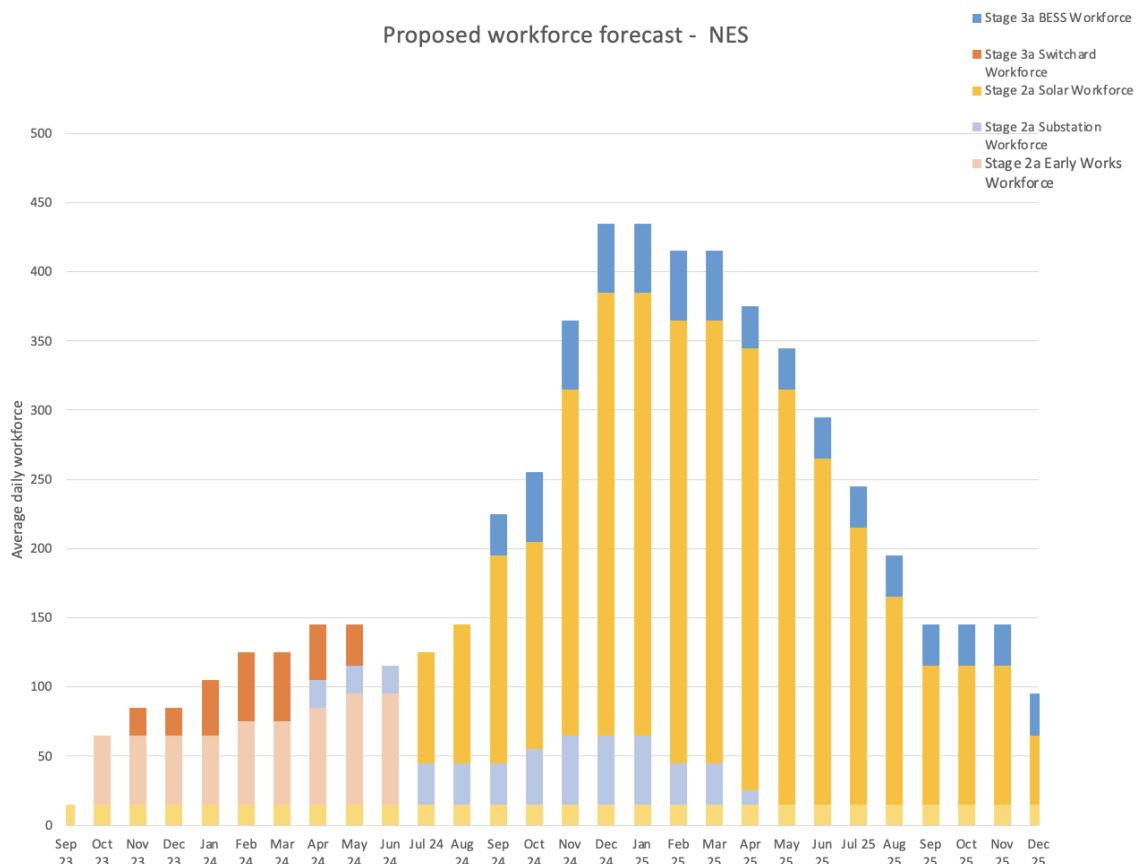


Figure 3.1 - Estimated NES workforce numbers

3.1.2 Operation

The operational lifespan of NES will be in the order of 30 years, unless the facility is re-powered at the end of the PV modules' technical life. The decision to re-power the plant will depend on the economics of solar PV technology and energy market conditions at that time. Should the PV modules be replaced during operations, the lifespan of NES may extend to up to 50 years. Throughout operations, a workforce of up to 15 FTEs will be required.

It is anticipated that the facility will require regular maintenance throughout its operational life. This will include the following ongoing tasks:

- site maintenance including:
 - vegetation maintenance;
 - weed and pest management;
 - fence and access road management;
 - upgrading drainage channels; and
 - landscaping;
- infrastructure maintenance including:
 - panel cleaning;
 - panel repair (if required); and
 - equipment, cabling, substation and communications system inspection and maintenance.

The operational workforce will also be responsible for ongoing security monitoring of the Stage 1b.

3.1.3 Decommissioning

Once NES reaches the end of its investment and operational life, NES infrastructure will be decommissioned and the solar farm footprint returned to its pre-existing land use, suitable for grazing of sheep and cattle, or another land use as agreed by the Project owner and the landholder at that time.

Project decommissioning will require disturbance of the development footprint during the removal of equipment. A significant number of FTEs, including both staff and contractors, and vehicle movements will be required during the decommissioning stage of NES.

3.2 Cumulative impacts

Consent condition 28 requires the consideration of the cumulative impacts associated with other approved or proposed State significant development projects in the area. According to the DPE's Major Project's website [<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects>], there are a number of projects within the nearby area.

3.2.1 Uralla Shire LGA

There are two projects reported as SSD projects on the Major Projects Portal, New England Solar and Thunderbolt Wind Farm. It is worth noting that Salisbury Solar has withdrawn its SSD application (SSD – 10347).

3.2.1.1 Assessment

The following project is in “Assessment” phase meaning there is a small possibility that at the end of construction for NES, this project may commence construction works.

- SSD- 10807896 - Thunderbolt Windfarm – Assessment

The 192MW Thunderbolt windfarm is proposed for a site on New England Highway, approximately 15km south of Uralla. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for the Project and was publicly exhibited between 27 April 2022 and 24 May 2022 by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). During the public exhibition period, 132 submissions were received from members of the public, community organisations and government agencies (excluding duplicates). On 25 May 2022, DPE requested that Neoen prepare and submit a Submissions Report which responds to the issues raised in the submissions (including from local Councils) and agency advice, as required under section 59(2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 (EP&A Regulation).

A Submissions report and a separate amendment report was submitted in August to DPE.

Due to more than 50 submissions being received the project will be reassigned to the Independent Planning Commission for project Approval. DPE has requested further information from Thunderbolt Wind Farm which was to be provided by the 8th of September 2023. As part of this request, further justification of social impact of the workforce and accommodation has to be provided by Thunderbolt Wind Farm. Thunderbolt Wind Farm has not been in contact with NES Management and no data has been uploaded to the Major Projects Portal.

Based on currently available information, it is assumed that NES will be fully constructed and operational by the time the Thunderbolt Wind Farm commences construction. Concurrent operation of NES is unlikely to be material, given the limited operational workforce requirements.

3.2.2 Armidale Regional LGA

There are eight projects reported as SSD projects on the Major Projects Portal, three projects are in the “Prepare EIS” phase, one project is in “Assessment” phase and four projects as “Determined”.

3.2.2.1 Prepare EIS

The following projects are in “Prepare EIS” phase meaning the construction of these projects are unlikely to occur prior to the conclusion of construction for NES. As such these are not addressed as part of this AES but their status will be reviewed during the construction of NES.

- SSD – 49505734: Eathrope BESS – Prepare EIS
- SSD – 23515853: Armidale Battery Energy Storage System – Prepare EIS
- SSD- 10476 Rangoon Wind Farm – Prepare EIS

3.2.2.2 Assessment

The following project is in “Assessment” phase meaning there is a small possibility that at the end of construction for NES, this project may commence.

- SSD- 10346: Oxley Solar Farm - Assessment

The nameplate 300 MW Oxley Solar Farm with up to 30 MW battery storage is proposed for a site on Gara Road, approximately 10 km east of Armidale, within the Armidale LGA. The Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) were issued on 2 August 2019. The EIS was exhibited in March and April 2021. During the public exhibition period, 95 submissions were received from members of the public, community organisations and government agencies. On 21 April 2021, DPE requested that Oxley Solar Development prepare and submit a Submissions Report which responds to the issues raised in the submissions (including from local Councils) and agency advice, as required under section 59(2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 (EP&A Regulation).

A Submissions report was submitted in October 2022 and in November 2022 an Amendment report was submitted to DPE.

Due to more than 50 submissions being received the project will be reassigned to the Independent Planning Commission for project Approval. On 20 September 2023 the Oxley Solar Farm provided information to the outstanding request of Additional information raised by the Department.

Based on currently available information, it is assumed that NES will be fully constructed and operational by the time the Oxley Solar Farm commences construction. Concurrent operation of NES is unlikely to be material, given the limited operational workforce requirements.

3.2.2.3 Determination

The following projects are in "Determination" phase meaning the construction of these projects could potentially occur at the same time as NES or have already finished construction.

- SSD- 9619: Tilbuster Solar Farm – Determination

The 152 MW (revised from 300 MW) Tilbuster Solar Farm site is located on the western side of the New England Highway, approximately 6 km north-west of the Tilbuster locality. The site is located within the Armidale Regional Local Government Area. Armidale is approximately 13km south east from the site and is the closest regional centre. The SEARs were issued on 12 October 2018, and the project was approved on 3 March 2022 (SSD 9619).

It is alluded in media reports that the project was sold in March 2023, from Enerparc Australia to IKEA (Inga Investments) as part of portfolio sale with included two other operational solar farms. There have been no further media releases around when Tilbuster Solar Farm is expecting to commence construction.

If the construction of the Tilbuster Solar Farm occurs around the same time as NES it is expected to require direct local employment for civil works, fencing and landscaping. Local businesses including accommodation, catering, trades and other services will also be used throughout the duration of construction. It is unlikely that the peak period of Tilbuster Solar Farm will coincide with NES. Tilbuster Solar Farm has predicted a construction period of 12 months, with a peak period of 3-4 months. The predicted workforce is 115. However, based on currently available information, it is assumed that NES will be fully constructed and operational by the time the Tilbuster Solar Farm commences construction. Concurrent operation of NES is unlikely to be material, given the limited operational workforce requirements.

- SSD- 9613: UNE New Wright Block – On Hold

The University of New England (UNE) received approval on 21 September 2020 for the development of a new Wright Block within the UNE Armidale Campus, consisting of three residential blocks, each three storeys in height with a total of approximately 345 beds and a hub building; demolition of the existing Wright Centre; and the addition of 188 car spaces. In September 2022, UNE advised that construction of the Wright Block was currently on hold without a known re-commencement date. There may be some construction overlap and depending on construction schedules, there may be opportunities for the new UNE development to provide additional accommodation for construction workers during construction of NES Stage 2a and 3a.

- SSD – 9095: Armidale High School – Construction finished

The redevelopment to combine the existing Armidale High School and Duval High School to establish a new, purpose built high school with a capacity for approximately 1,580 students received consent on 29 May 2019. Construction was completed in 2021. As such, the construction of the College did not have an impact on the construction of NES.

- SSD – 7931: Metz Solar Farm – Construction finished

The nameplate 115MW Metz Solar Farm has been approved for a site immediately north of Waterfall Way, approximately 18 km east of Armidale and within Armidale Regional Council's LGA. It received development consent (SSD 7931) in July 2017. AEMO and TransGrid grid-connection approval was secured in July 2018, and it is anticipated that the construction will commence in Q4 2020. The EIS estimated that the construction of the Metz Solar Farm project could provide jobs for up to 100 workers over the course of a year.

Construction was completed in 2022. As such, the construction of Metz Solar Farm did not have an impact on the construction of NES.

4 Employment Strategy

NES needs to be considered in two separate modes - construction and operation. Any impacts associated with NES would predominantly arise during the construction period for Stage 2a and Stage 3a, estimated to be approximately 24 months. Furthermore, the key impacts during the construction period derive from the workforce required for the construction of NES. There are various factors related to the influx of a large workforce which can be managed and mitigated. These factors include the size of the overall workforce and the spread of demand; the movement of that workforce; and the accommodation of the workforce amongst others.

The NES construction schedule has been staged to reduce the peak workforce numbers; this means that the peak employment period for Stage 1 is separated from the peak employment period of Stage 2 and Stage 3. This is the most effective way to mitigate the overall impact of the Project's construction workforce (and potentially accommodation) and was driven in part by the feedback received during community consultation. The deliberate separation of peaks in worker demand for the construction stages has been proposed to mitigate the impact on local communities and also as an effective way for ACEN Australia to maintain a level of work availability for the workforce, i.e. by avoiding demobilisation and remobilisation. The latter also benefits those people in the local community who are employed by NES, by enabling greater continuity in employment.

The construction staging and minimal overlap between Stage 1 and Stage 2 means that the greatest demand will be in the vicinity of 450 workers. Conversely, if NES were to not have separated the peaks of construction through staging, the overall workforce during a joint peak period would be close to 700 people. However, without staging, the development of NES would likely occur over a shorter timeframe. Ultimately, a more even spread of employment demand through the specified Project staging avoids the 'boom and bust' consequences of sharp adjustments in Project employment.

Actions to encourage local employment are presented in Table 6.1 in Section 6.

4.1 Local employment opportunities

As described in Section 3, both Stage 2a and Stage 3a of the construction is estimated to require a combined peak workforce of approximately 450 people on-site, with the construction activities divided into civil, piling, mechanical and electrical works. The types of labour and skills required align with the construction phase of each stage:

- construction manager, foremen and leading hands
- surveyors;
- earthmoving and road construction plant and equipment operators;
- piling operators;
- module installers;
- trenching and underground cabling;
- electricians;
- general labourers;

- HSE and QA/QC personnel;
- human resources personnel; and
- security.

As the works are very similar to Stage 1a works, it is expected that the proportions of skilled and unskilled roles are similar for the construction of Stage 2a:

- Qualified (University or TAFE qualified (engineers, electricians, etc)): 19%
- Specialised trained (machine operator, mechanical moulder, etc): 36%
- Unskilled: 45%

The types of labour and skills required for the operational phase of NES are predominantly centred around electrical and maintenance (cleaning, mowing and road maintenance). Highly technical operation and maintenance activities will typically be undertaken by specialist contractors and/or equipment manufacturers, whereas routine activities such as fencing maintenance and vegetation management will be offered to local contractors. Training for some of the specialised trained roles could be undertaken locally to upskill potential employees to fill these roles. NES also provides an opportunity for local people and local businesses to benefit from investment associated with construction of NES; through the Uralla Grants scheme. Local businesses will be encouraged to participate in the NES project on the basis of providing competitive terms of business, price, quality and delivery, as well as taking into account safety and environmental considerations. NES will partner with businesses which are appropriate and suitable for the Project, which will take into account experience, qualifications, value for money and shared values.

During construction, there will be a preference for employment of local and regional residents where they are able to demonstrate relevant skills and experience and a cultural fit with ACEN Australia and its contractors, where applicable. The origins of the Project's peak construction workforce are estimated to include:

- Uralla Shire LGA - approximately 10 %;
- Tamworth Regional LGA - approximately 20 %; and
- Armidale Regional LGA - approximately 20 %.

The remaining 50 % of the Project's peak construction workforce are anticipated to originate from outside of these LGAs.

The assumption of around half the construction workforce coming from the surrounding region has appeared to be true for Stage 1a works and it is anticipated that Stage 2a will have similar numbers. An assessment of workforce locality for Stage 1a was most recently conducted in September 2022. The assessment estimated that 38% of site workers are based locally, 42% of site workers are based in the broader region within NSW, and 20% of the workforce are based nationally. This is consistent with the previous assessment conducted in May 2022, which indicated 36% of site workers are based locally, 43% of site workers are based in the broader region within NSW, and 21% of the workforce are based nationally.

4.2 Recruitment strategy

General economic impact management measures include:

- ensuring regional residents are made aware of employment opportunities and lead contractors are encouraged to hire regional residents where they have the required skills and experience and are able to demonstrate a cultural fit with the organisation;
- participation in business group meetings¹, events or programs in the regional community designed to make regional businesses aware of upcoming contracting opportunities and requirements; and
- encouraging lead contractors to purchase local non-labour inputs to production, where local producers can be cost and quality competitive, to support local industries.

A local business participation program will be undertaken to attract and engage local workers. This program will consist of three steps:

- **Step 1 - Expressions of interest**
Businesses with an ABN register their business and submit expressions of interest on the [ICN Regional Gateway](#). The ICN Regional Gateway system allows a streamlined process between major projects like NES and businesses with a service offering. Businesses which have registered their interest with ACEN Australia or the Contractor prior will be directly contacted by the Contractor and notified of the EOI process.
- **Step 2 - Further information**
The Contractor with ACEN Australia's support will hold information sessions in Uralla and Armidale to provide local businesses with additional information about the available work packages and the process of bidding for subcontracting or supply opportunities with the main subcontractor(s). The database prepared by the Contractor in step 1 will be used to contact interested business to participate in the information sessions.
- **Step 3 - Engagement of suppliers and subcontractors**
The Contractor and main subcontractor(s) engage the suppliers and subcontractors directly according to their procurement processes. A target local worker ratio may be imposed to allow an estimate of non-local workers and to measure effectiveness of the AES.

ACEN Australia will engage with relevant stakeholders such as Business Chambers and Councils in Uralla and Armidale, prior to construction, and on an 'as needed' basis during the operational phase of NES. This would allow ACEN Australia to communicate the timing of upcoming construction activities, provide local businesses with advanced notice of resource needs and allow the businesses to plan for material needs and peaks and troughs in demand.

ACEN Australia will also set up a dedicated employment opportunity platform on the NES homepage [<https://www.newenglandsolar.com.au/>] in coordination with the contractor. Relevant worker details will then be shared with the main subcontractor(s) for direct engagement through their own employment processes.

¹ Note that due to COVID-19 restrictions, any meetings or community session may need to be held through web conferencing

4.3 Prioritising local employment

ACEN Australia will support local employment opportunities and this has been communicated to the local community at each of the community information and drop-in sessions and within media releases. There will continue to be a preference for employment of local and regional residents where they are able to demonstrate relevant skills and experience and a cultural fit with ACEN Australia, the contractor and the relevant subcontractor(s).

Local employees are highly desirable where relevant skills are available, since these employees will avoid the costs associated with provision of transportation, meals and accommodation that are associated with a transient workforce. This applies to both the construction workforce with a peak number of up to 450 people, and the operation workforce of up to 15 people.

ACEN Australia will seek to maximise local participation in the construction and operation of NES, where relevant skills and trades are available. ACEN Australia has encouraged local businesses and community members to express their interest to participate in the construction of Stage 2a and 3a via email, which simplifies the application process and collects relevant details. Once the Contractors are appointed by ACEN Australia, the database will be shared for them to approach desired candidates. The Contractors will also organise supplier sessions, which will be run in conjunction with ACEN Australia and the relevant subcontractors.

The purpose of the sessions will be to help local businesses and interested suppliers better understand how they can apply for work, the types of jobs that are available and the metrics that the construction contractor will consider.

ACEN Australia has also committed to supporting local employment opportunities by encouraging the subcontractors to engage local businesses to supply goods and services, provided the required level of reliability, quality and financial competitiveness can be satisfied.

5 Accommodation Strategy

NES will have both positive and negative impacts on accommodation in the regional area, dependant on the extent to which accommodation demand exceeds the level of occupancy for existing accommodation.

Accommodation for construction workers is likely to be sourced from nearby centres, such as Armidale and Uralla, and further afield centres such as Walcha and Tamworth; either workers residing in their own homes or through temporary accommodation. A significant proportion of NES's non-local construction workforce may be required to reside at local short-term and rental accommodation during the peak period of construction. An influx of workers requiring accommodation to facilitate the construction of NES could place pressure on local short-term accommodation and may have adverse flow-on effects. For example, construction workers may restrict the availability of supply of short-term accommodation to other users during peak tourist periods such as school holidays and the region's major festivals and annual events.

Based on Stage 1a works, ACEN Australia is confident that a large component of NES's construction and operations workforce will be sourced from local workers within the neighbouring Armidale and Tamworth local government areas, and as such will not need 'Project' accommodation. Workers for Stage 1a were able to be housed in the nearby region, creating shorter travel times to NES, reducing Health and Safety risks.

Actions to encourage local accommodation are presented in Table 6.2 in Section 6.

5.1 Short-term accommodation

Local short-term accommodation providers (hotels/motels) were contacted to obtain occupancy data at the time of preparing this plan in October 2023. This enabled an average occupancy rate for Uralla and Armidale LGAs to be calculated, which ranged between 60-90%, fluctuating depending on the day of week. Noting that short term accommodation is typically required during weekdays only for NES, an assumed rate of 70% is taken as the occupancy rate, as the higher occupancy rates reflected weekend occupancy or peak periods within the region. Updated occupancy rates for Tamworth were not able to be obtained, however the previous study suggested that rates were generally consistent around 50%. It was also identified that during peak periods, most accommodation rates would increase to 100%.

Peak occupancy periods typically relate to Queensland and NSW school holidays, UNE graduation periods and local and regional events such as sports finals, the Big Chill Festival, and the Tamworth Country Music Festival. Table 5.1 presents the major festivals and annual events in the region in 2023 and 2024. During these periods, the region's supply of temporary short-term accommodation is almost completely utilised. As such, consideration of possible mitigative measures to reduce the impacts and utilisation of local accommodation during these periods may be required to reduce impacts to the local community.

Table 5.1 - Major festivals and annual events

Location	Event	Indicative Start Date	Indicative End Date
Tamworth	Fiesta La Peel	14-Oct-23	21-Oct-23
Uralla	Thunderbolt Festival	28-Oct-23	28-Oct-23
QLD Schools	QLD School Holidays (Summer)	15-Dec-23	22-Jan-24
NSW Schools	NSW school Holidays (Summer)	20-Dec-23	7-Feb-24
Tamworth	Country Music Festival	19-Jan-24	28-Jan-24
Uralla	Uralla Show	3-Feb-24	3-Feb-24
Armidale	Armidale & New England Show	1-Mar-24	2-Mar-24
Uralla	Seasons of New England	23-Mar-24	23-Mar-24
Uralla	Uralla Lantern Parade	23-Mar-24	23-Mar-24
QLD Schools	QLD School Holidays (Autumn)	28-Mar-24	15-Apr-24
Armidale	UNE Graduations	Apr-24	Apr-24
Armidale	Autumn Festival	6-Apr-24	6-Apr-24
NSW Schools	NSW School Holidays (Autumn)	15-Apr-24	26-Apr-24
Armidale	Big Chill Festival	18-May-24	19-May-24
QLD Schools	QLD School Holidays (Winter)	21-June-24	8-Jul-24
NSW Schools	NSW School Holidays (Winter)	8-Jul-24	19-Jul-24
Armidale	UNE Graduations	Aug-24	Aug-24
QLD Schools	QLD School Holidays (Spring)	13-Sep-24	30-Sep-24
NSW Schools	NSW School Holidays (Spring)	30-Sep-24	11-Oct-24
Armidale	TroutFest	7-Oct-24	9-Oct-24
Tamworth	National Thunder Motorcycle Rally	TBC - 2024	TBC - 2024
Tamworth	NCHA Futurity	11- Nov- 24	7- Dec- 24
Armidale	UNE Graduations	Dec-24	Dec-24
QLD Schools	QLD School Holidays (Summer)	13-Dec-24	20-Jan-25
NSW Schools	NSW School Holidays (Summer)	23-Dec-24	6-Feb-25

Tables 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 provide the approximate number of rooms available within Walcha, Uralla, Armidale and Tamworth respectively and are summarized in Table 5.2. The room numbers do not consider caravans (powered/unpowered sites) or camp sites. Periodic consultation occurs with key accommodation providers being used by contractor and employees to confirm availability during peak construction.

Table 5.2 – Summary Short term accommodation availability

Location	Approximate Capacity
Uralla	115
Walcha	80
Armidale	762
Tamworth	1,309
Total rooms available across Uralla, Walcha, Armidale and Tamworth	2,266 Rooms

Table 5.3 - Accommodation providers in Walcha

Walcha accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Walcha Caravan Park	14 cabins
Apsley Arms Hotel	7 rooms
Commercial Hotel	6 rooms
Walcha Road Hotel	4 cabins
Walcha Royal Cafe & Accommodation	9 rooms
New England Hotel Motel	10 rooms
Walcha Motel	19 rooms
Cairnie Country Cottage	1 room
Plumtree Cottage	4 rooms
Awesome Separate Cottage (Entire cottage hosted by Louise)	3 rooms
Country Cottage (Farm stay hosted by Jai)	2 rooms
Historic Homestead (Farm stay hosted by Vinnie)	1 room
Total rooms available in Walcha	80 rooms

Table 5.4 - Accommodation providers in Uralla

Uralla accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Altona Motel	16 rooms
Aurelia's Farm	2 rooms
Bushranger Motor Inn	17 rooms
Country Road Caravan Park	8 cabins
Dingle B&B	3 rooms
Elmswood B&B	1 room
Grace Cottages	2 cottages
Thunderbolt Inn	7 rooms
Top Pub	15 rooms
Wayward Jerseys Farmstay	3 rooms
Woodhaven Cottage B&B	1 room
Camellia Cottage Kentucky B&B	1 room
Lochiel Cottage	3 rooms
Retreat Shearers Quarters	3 rooms
Myanbah Cottages	3 rooms
The Bower Uralla	1 room
King's Cottage Uralla	2 rooms
Hillview AirBnB	3 rooms
Barking Dog Gallery Bedsit	1 room
The Willmont	1 room
Art Studio (home hosted by Sophie)	3 rooms
Eve Residence	3 rooms
The Pomegranate studio	1 room
Unique solar house (guest suite hosted by Althea)	1 room
Rental unit hosted by Phill	3 rooms
Rental unit hosted by Phill	2 rooms
The Gatehouse Uralla	3 rooms

Apartment on Salisbury Street	3 rooms
Clover Cottage Uralla	2 rooms
Orto Uralla Shed Stay	1 room
Total rooms available in Uralla	115 rooms

Table 5.5 - Accommodation providers in Armidale

Armidale accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
UNE Residential System – short-term accommodation	100 rooms
Country Comfort Armidale	42 rooms
Lindsay House Country Hotel	7 rooms
City Centre Motor Inn Armidale	40 rooms
Petersons Armidale Winery & Guesthouse	7 rooms
Moore Park Apartments	8 rooms
Hideaway Motor Inn Armidale	22 rooms
Alluna Motel	20 rooms
Abbotsleigh Motor Inn	32 rooms
Rydges Armidale	56 rooms
Moore Park Inn	20 rooms
Armidale Pines Motel	19 rooms
Deer Park Motor Inn	24 rooms
Armidale Motel	21 rooms
Elite Motor Inn	14 rooms
Estelle Kramer Motor Inn	16 rooms
Sandstock Motor Inn Armidale	12 rooms
Club Motel	18 rooms
Cedar Lodge Motel	2 suites
New England Motor Inn	10 rooms
Acacia Motor Inn Armidale	15 rooms
Cotswold Gardens	24 rooms

Armidale accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Armidale Tourist Park	40 cabins
White Lanterns Motel	13 rooms
Westwood Motor Inn	17 rooms
Westside Studio Apartments	9 rooms
Loloma Bed and Breakfast	2 rooms
Armidale Rose Villa Motel	10 rooms
Guyra Summit Caravan Park	7 rooms
Top of the Range Retreat	3 rooms
Central South East Unit	2 rooms
Hedgerow Farm	4 rooms
Country garden cottage	1 room
Poppys Cottage B&B	2 rooms
Armidale Wejalee B&B	1 room
The Homestead at Murrungundy	1 room
Cedar Cabin	1 room
Ridgeview cottage	2 rooms
Hidden Pines Guest House	1 room
North Hill Suites	3 rooms
'Time out on Taylor' Cottage	2 rooms
Costa Park Cottage Ena	3 rooms
Tralea Cottage	3 rooms
The Coop	2 rooms
Frida's Place	1 room
Portobello	4 rooms
The Creekland Studio	1 room
Creekland Cottage	2 rooms
The Reformatory	3 rooms
Brewery guest house	3 rooms

Armidale accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Billie's Cottage	3 rooms
Butler Lane Cottage	3 rooms
Hillgrove Cottage	1 room
Barney - Bungalow in Armidale	3 rooms
The Bower Armidale	3 rooms
Bright 3-bedroom apartment	3 rooms
Laurel House	3 rooms
Quinn's Cottage	3 rooms
Cumquat Cottage	2 rooms
New King Suite	1 room
Central Park Boutique Apartment	2 rooms
Rusden Den	2 rooms
Guesthouse at Stone Water Rill	1 room
Kyhillah Cottage	2 rooms
Garden-nestled Granny Flat	1 room
Twodogfolly Cottage and Studio	2 rooms
Tallowood Apartment	2 rooms
Story of transformation (home hosted by Stan)	3 rooms
Home hosted by Ju	1 room
Belmont New England	5 rooms
Entire home hosted by Kim	3 rooms
The Armidale House	3 rooms
Marsh House	3 rooms
Belmore Cottage	2 rooms
Bakers Cottage	1 room
Armidale Cottage	6 rooms
The haven	2 rooms
HomeBound	2 rooms

Armidale accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Home on Rusden	3 rooms
Kalimna	3 rooms
The Beardman Armidale	3 rooms
Yellow Door - City centre hideaway	4 rooms
Lumiere	2 rooms
Entire home hosted by Kari	3 rooms
House on the Hill	4 rooms
Total rooms available in Armidale	762 rooms

Table 5.6 - Accommodation providers in Tamworth

Tamworth accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Best Western Sanctuary Inn	60 rooms
Quest Tamworth	40 rooms
Quality Hotel Powerhouse	81 rooms
City Sider Motor Inn	38 rooms
CH Boutique Hotel	62 rooms
The Tamworth Hotel	12 rooms
Aaron Cottage	3 rooms
Almond Inn Motel	27 rooms
The Duck Inn Apartments	6 rooms
Kootingal Land view Motel	12 rooms
Tamworth City Motel	31 rooms
Motel Grande Tamworth	11 rooms
Motel 359	55 rooms
Golden Grain Motor Inn	13 rooms
Country Capital Motel	31 rooms
The Roseville Apartments	25 rooms
Abraham Lincoln Motel	15 rooms
Ibis Styles Tamworth	111 rooms

Tamworth accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Best Western Motor Inn	33 rooms
Tamworth Lodge Motel	17 rooms
Sundance Park Motel	25 rooms
Amberoo Apartments	12rooms
Econo Lodge	60 rooms
Tamworth Central Motel	5 rooms
Mercure	52 rooms
Town & Country Motor Inn	18 rooms
Best Western Plus All Settlers Motor Inn	30 rooms
The Stagecoach Motor Inn	24 rooms
Roydons Motor Inn	12 rooms
Colonial Inn	33 rooms
Edward Parry Motel & Apartments	15 rooms
McNevin's Tamworth Motel	22 rooms
City Gate Motel	11 rooms
Tamwell Motel & Coffee Lounges	16 rooms
Golden Guitar Motor Inn	30 rooms
Cadman Motor Inn & Apartments	20 rooms
Golf Links Motel	21 rooms
Motabelle Holiday Units	8 rooms
Ashby House Motor Inn	21 rooms
The Retreat at Frog Moore Park	5 rooms
Galloway Getaway	4 rooms
Tamworth Country Escape	5 bedrooms
Cottage with views	2 rooms
Coastal Hamptons in the Country	5 rooms
Mountain View Cottage	2 rooms
Kumbogie Cabin	1 room

Tamworth accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Chimes on Church	4 rooms
Denne Street Bungalow	3 rooms
The Heights unit	2 rooms
Grans Lodge	1 room
Carthage Cottage	3 rooms
The Farm Shed	2 rooms
Rural Paradise – Cottage in Timbumburi	2 rooms
Marayin Hut. Serene Log Cabin	3 rooms
The 1888 Cottage	2 rooms
Kurrajong Lodge	4 rooms
Griffin Cottage	3 rooms
Entire home hosted by Mark	4 rooms
The Barn	1 room
Tranquility in Tamworth	3 rooms
Studio Daruka	1 room
Cute Cottage on Mathews	3 rooms
Runway – Home in Westdale	2 rooms
Short Stays on Ebs - Cottage in West	4 rooms
Dew Drop Inn	1 room
Zest – Home in West Tamworth	2 rooms
Griffin House Tamrowth	1 room
Villa in Calala – Tamworth's Hidden Gem	2 rooms
Tranquil Retreat – East Tamworth Home	4 rooms
Peaceful Cabin – 164 Royal Oaks	1 room
King's Park	3 rooms
The Pool House	1 room
Home in Hillvue	3 rooms
Arch Park – Cottage in Taminda	1 room

Tamworth accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Location with luxury – Guesthouse in Hillvue	1 room
Annleigh	2 rooms
The Train Station	2 rooms
Home in West Tamworth – Home away from home	3 rooms
Views on Crown	3 rooms
Hillvue Hideaway	1 room
Country Sunsets in East Tamworth – Rental Unit	2 rooms
Bounty on Bligh	1 room
Home in Oxley Vale	3 rooms
Family Retreat East Tamworth	4 rooms
Katie's Place	3 rooms
Jacks on Rawson	3 rooms
Hillvue Lodge	6 rooms
Tamworth Griffin House	1 room
A modern country oasis – Home in Calala	3 rooms
The Gallery - Art Inspired Studio	1 room
Matilda Retreat	4 rooms
55 A Retreat East Tamworth	1 room
Studio 367	1 room
Coco's Cottage	2 rooms
Spacious Retreat – Home in East Tamworth	5 rooms
Studio on Denne	1 room
Ellessa – Home in South Tamworth	3 rooms
Stargazer Retreat	4 rooms
The Retreat – Townhouse in Tamworth	3 rooms
Johnston and Friends	3 rooms
123 Fitzroy	4 rooms
Grey House Tamworth	4 rooms

Tamworth accommodation provider	Approximate capacity
Little Chalkie's Guest Suite	1 room
Cadman Apartments	2 rooms
East Tamworth Charm	4 rooms
Leafy Lodge	4 rooms
Palo Retreat	1 room
Annleigh Unit	3 rooms
Share Unit, backpacker room	2 rooms
Ella's Bed and Breakfast	3 rooms
Country Delight Tamworth	2 rooms
Antique retreat on Janison	3 rooms
Quintet 1-155	2 rooms
Total rooms in Tamworth	1,309 rooms

5.2 Rental accommodation

The proportion of occupied private dwellings generally reflects the non-metropolitan state average in most of the local areas, but mostly sit below the NSW overall occupation levels. There is a general prevalence of separate houses, as opposed to semi-detached or apartment dwellings. Uralla Shire LGA has a slightly higher rate of separate house dwellings in comparison to Tamworth and Armidale LGAs, mostly due to these areas being established as regional city areas, with greater populations and more diverse dwelling types.

Median rent prices for a house in Armidale is \$440 per week and a unit is \$300 per week. Within the month of the investigation (September 2023), 166 houses and 65 units were available in Armidale (realestate.com.au, 2023). Median rent prices for a house in Uralla is \$450 per week and for a unit is \$345 per week, with 18 houses and 5 units available within the investigation month (realestate.com.au, 2023).

Vacancy rates for the Armidale and Uralla rental markets have been between 1-3% in 2023 according to the local real estate reports. SQM Research for property data indicates an increasing trend in Armidale for 2023, with January's vacancy rates at 1.7% and the steady increase throughout the year resulting in a 2.8% rate for August (SQM Research, 2023). Vacancy rates are nationally at 1.2% as of August, which suggests that Armidale has a higher vacancy rate compared to the national average. Property data at SQM Research suggests that as of August 2023, the vacancy rate was 4.4% in Uralla (SQM Research, 2023).

A review of long-term rental housing available in the main towns and communities within the study area was undertaken in 2023 using various websites. Table 5.6 reviews the long-term housing availability. There was a higher proportion of dwellings being purchased and a lower proportion being rented in the Uralla Shire LGA in comparison to Tamworth and Armidale LGAs.

Table 5.7 - Long-term rental housing availability

Location	House and unit size				Approximate total number of properties available for rent
	1-BR	2-BR	3-BR	4+-BR	
Uralla	2	3	13	5	23
Walcha		2	1		3
Armidale	23	18	58	31	130
Tamworth	9	43	71	45	168
Total	34	66	143	81	324

Source: www.realestate.com.au; domain.com.au; rental.com.au

As identified in Table 5.6, in 2023 there were 66 properties available across the region with two-bedroom rentals and 224 properties available with three- and four or more bedrooms for rent, with a total of 324 rental properties available.

A review of the local property and real estate websites identified publicly advertised rental properties. Most of the properties on the rental market are for family use as they offer more than one bedroom or can be used as shared housing. The majority of the rental properties identified as part of this review are three- to four-bedroom houses within the Armidale LGA.

There are minimal one-bedroom units available for rent in Walcha and Uralla. One-bedroom rental properties are also not publicly available in a number of surrounding townships and rural localities, including Arding and Invergowrie.

Based on this review, it appears that there are rental properties available for rent during the construction phase. These options are mainly for family-based, larger household or shared housing configurations. There are limited opportunities for one-bedroom units in proximity to NES. Given that the construction period is estimated to take approximately 24 months, it has been assumed that some of the workers are likely to relocate their families to the local area. It has also been assumed that those relocating with their families would demonstrate similar household characteristics (e.g. household size) to those of NSW (averaged).

5.3 Prioritising local accommodation

Consent condition 28 states that this AES is to ensure that there is sufficient local accommodation for the workforce available in the area. Consultation will be undertaken with local councils (Uralla Shire Council and Armidale Regional Council) to identify unexpected pressures on local facilities like local accommodation due to NES during peak construction. Should these pressures be identified by any of the listed councils, ACEN Australia can be contacted via the contact details below.

To help priorities local accommodation, ACEN Australia has established a phone hotline and project email which can both be used by accommodation providers as an open and direct communicate platform with ACEN Australia. This will give providers comfort that any issues relating to project staff can be reported directly to ACEN Australia.

Contact details:

email info@newenglandsolar.com.au or

via phone at 1800 844 889.

Utilising existing accommodation in Uralla and Armidale is the most favourable option for several reasons:

- it minimises daily travel time to the site for workers. Travel times by car from the New England Solar site are as follows:
 - NES to Armidale: 26 minutes (30 km)
 - NES to Walcha: 40 minutes (53 km); and
 - NES to Tamworth: 80 minutes (100 km)
- it maximises accessibility to local business services in Uralla that may be used by the workforce (e.g. cafes, restaurants, supermarkets, service stations and retail services); and
- it maximises economic benefits for the local economies.

The priorities for using local accommodation for the construction workforce, in order of preference, is detailed in Table 5.7.

Table 5.8 - Accommodation priorities

Priority	Accommodation type	Approximate total	Availability *
1	Short term local temporary accommodation (rooms) such as motels, hotels, caravan parks and B&Bs in Uralla, Armidale	877	263
2	Rental accommodation in Uralla, Armidale (houses and units)	153	153
3	Short term local temporary accommodation such as motels, hotels, caravan parks and B&Bs in Tamworth & Walcha	1,389	678
4	Rental accommodation in Tamworth & Walcha (houses and units)	171	171
	Total (approximate)	2,590	1,266

* Room availability based on an occupancy rate of 70 % for Walcha, Uralla and Armidale, and 50 % for Tamworth (Section 5.1)

As identified in Table 5.7, based on an occupancy rate of 70% for Uralla, Walcha and Armidale, and 50% for Tamworth for short-term accommodation outside of peak periods, the

total number of rooms within a 40 km radius from NES is estimated at 416. Within a 100 km radius, this estimate increases to approximately 1266.

Combining the priority to maximise local employment with the expectation that approximately 50% of the peak construction workforce of 450 workers will originate from the Uralla, Armidale and Tamworth LGAs, the total number of rooms required at the peak of construction would be approximately 225. With approximately 416 rooms available in the Uralla and Armidale LGAs at normal occupancy rates, there is likely to be sufficient accommodation for the workforce at all times.

It is not expected that major events in Tamworth will have any effect on the availability of accommodation in Uralla, Armidale or Walcha.

As detailed in Section 3.2, based on currently available information, it is assumed that the other State significant developments in the area that are either approved or proposed would have an impact on the local and regional availability of short-term or rental accommodation if construction was to occur at similar time to Stage 2a and Stage 3a. However, as there are no projects proposed to commence construction in the near term, the cumulative effect on accommodation will form part of the regular monitoring for the AES.

6 Strategy Implementation

6.1 Action plans

As detailed in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2, implementation actions have been developed to achieve the respective employment and accommodation objectives of the AES, which are to encourage and prioritise local employment for NES, and where non-local contractors or workers are recruited, to prioritise the use of local accommodation in Uralla, Armidale and Walcha. These action plans mainly relate to when the peak workforce is being generated which occurs during construction. Some of the below actions relate to operations but will only be relevant time to time, hence they are not specified in the below.

Note that the actions are not listed in order of priority.

Table 6.1 - Actions to encourage local employment

No.	Action	Timing
1	Host information sessions to engage with the community and local businesses who can provide inputs or services and other prospective contractors/subcontractors, regarding construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements.	Prior to construction
2	Engage local media including radio, newspaper and social media to advertise expressions of interest for employment or provision of services or materials	Prior to construction
3	Engage with the local employment agencies to identify access pathways for local workers. Assess the candidate pool to determine suitable labour, trade or other employment for NES.	Prior to construction
4	Investigate any local and regional community social media channels which can disseminate information to the community and local businesses which can provide inputs or services and prospective subcontractors	Prior to and during construction
5	Set up a ICN Regional Gateway which creates a dedicated employment opportunity platform in consultation and coordination with each contractor. Relevant worker details will then be shared with the main subcontractor(s) for direct engagement through their own employment processes.	Prior to and during construction
6	Consult with the Uralla Shire and Armidale Business Chambers and the New England North West Business Enterprise Centre to provide their members with relevant details such as Project construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements.	Prior to construction
7	Implement shuttle bus services where practical to enable local workforce in the respective locations to easily commute to NES. These services may discontinue depending on demand.	Prior to and during construction
8	Encourage businesses with an ABN register their business and submit expressions of interest on the ICN Regional Gateway	Prior to and during

No.	Action	Timing
		construction
9	Provide opportunities for local businesses to submit proposals and tenders and prioritise the use of goods and services that can be sourced locally and are competitive for price and quality	Prior to and during construction
10	Encourage subcontractors to employ local workers wherever possible and reasonable	Prior to and during construction
11	Use local presence and content as a criterion when awarding contracts to subcontractors	Prior to and during construction
12	Identify positions where training would allow additional local workers, and encourage local workers and businesses to undertake training to provide for specialist works	Prior to and during construction
13	Consultation frameworks with local providers to ensure fairness, open communication and forward planning, and grievance mechanisms via implementation of ACEN Australia and its contractors codes and policies	Prior to and during construction

Table 6.2 - Actions to encourage local accommodation

No.	Action	Timing
1	Explore available accommodation options in Uralla, Armidale, Walcha and Tamworth to accommodate the workers (refer to Tables 5.2 to 5.5 respectively).	This AES
2	Prioritise practical local accommodation options (refer to Table 5.7)	This AES
3	Host information sessions to engage with the community and local businesses who can provide inputs or services and other prospective contractors/subcontractors, regarding construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements.	Prior to construction
4	Investigate local and regional community social media options to disseminate information to local accommodation operators and rental property owners, such as construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements.	Prior to construction
5	Host information sessions to engage with Council, the community and local businesses regarding construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements.	Prior to and during construction
6	Consult with Uralla Shire Council, Armidale Regional Council and Tamworth Regional Council to minimise pressure on local resources.	Prior to and during construction

No.	Action	Timing
7	Contact the local accommodation operators to provide Project information such as construction timing, workforce estimates and accommodation requirements.	Prior to and during construction
8	Provide a register of local accommodation options and contact details to contractors and subcontractors.	Prior to and during construction
9	Maintain a register of local property owners who have expressed interest in offering dwellings for rent. Provide this register to contractors and subcontractors.	Prior to and during construction
10	Review workforce predictions every six months during construction to ensure that accommodation requirements are met in accordance with the objectives of this AES.	Prior to and during construction
11	Identify any overlaps with peak demand periods for accommodation during the following six months and engage with key stakeholders.	Prior to and during construction
12	Maintain a register of local, regional and national workforce breakdown by company on site	Prior to and during construction
13	Regularly consult with local property owners and accommodation providers to manage occupancy to maximise use of local accommodation, without preventing its use for major event and holiday purposes.	Prior to and during construction
14	All workers to subscribe to ACEN Australia and it's Contractor's policies and procedures, including Codes of Conduct (Attachment C).	Prior to and during construction

6.2 Provision of medical support

A commitment to provide medical support was described in the EIS, specifically to alleviate pressure on the two General Practitioners (GPs) in Uralla. Three key measures to manage this matter are:

- The Project site includes an Emergency Response Team and a First Aid room. The First Aid room is located at the main site compound.
- Remote workers are encouraged to seek medical attention near their place of residence (e.g. Brisbane, Sydney etc).
- When not on site, the concentration of workers will be spread across the region (i.e. Uralla, Walcha, Armidale, and Tamworth) and therefore the spread of potential medical services required will also be distributed throughout the region (in particular, Armidale and Tamworth have more advanced medical services than Uralla).

6.3 Monitoring and reporting

Leading up to and during construction, the AES will be reviewed at least biannually (every six months), cognisant of changes in the construction schedule or circumstances regarding accommodation. For example, prior to a significant increase in workforce requirement or following a change in restrictions due to COVID-19.

Monitoring of the plan will be conducted concurrently with the review of this AES (ie every six months as a minimum leading up to and during construction).

A monitoring program will be undertaken to gauge the status of meeting the AES objectives in regard to maximising use of local accommodation; prioritising local employment; suitability of the AES for workforce predictions and accommodation availability; and incorporating feedback from Council, accommodation providers and other stakeholders.

The monitoring program includes:

- a review of workforce requirements, and ratio of local workforce to non-local workforce (once this has been established);
- a review of accommodation availability (including forward-looking bookings), utilisation and any actual or perceived impacts;
- consultation with Council, accommodation providers, and other stakeholders where required;
- a review of any relevant complaints and control measures; and
- a review of any impacts on the AES outside of ACEN Australia's control (e.g. COVID-19).

The results of the monitoring will be reviewed, assessed and reported from the Contractor to ACEN Australia and where relevant, changes to the AES or action plans may be made to achieve the objectives for the provision of adequate local accommodation and prioritising local employment. The monitoring results will also be provided to DPE and Council if requested.

During operations, monitoring and reviewing of this AES will occur if requested by the Council or DPE.

6.4 Complaints

The local community and other relevant stakeholders will be provided information about proposed and ongoing activities and impacts, in particular, those which could have potential to cause disruption, such as abnormal load deliveries.

A Facebook page has been set up to ensure pro-active notification of all transport issues and impacts, proposed management and mitigation.

The following contact details are available for the community to make a complaint or send an enquiry:

- A 24 hour telephone number (1800 844 889)
- An email address to which electronic complaints may be transmitted (info@newenglandsolar.com).

- A Facebook page has been established (<https://www.facebook.com/newenglandsolarfarm>).

These details are provided on the NES website (www.newenglandsolar.com.au).

6.5 Notifiable Incidents

6.5.1 Incident Procedures

Incidents that occur in relation to the Accommodation and Employment Strategy will immediately be reported to ACEN Australia.

6.5.2 Material Harm incidents

The Development Consent defines an incident as:

An occurrence or set of circumstances that causes or threatens to cause material harm.

The Development Consent defines material harm as harm that:

- *involves actual or potential harm to the health or safety of human beings or to ecosystems that is not trivial; or*
- *results in actual or potential loss of property damage of an amount, or amounts in aggregate, exceeding \$10,000 (such loss includes the reasonable costs and expenses that would be incurred in taking all reasonable and practicable measures to prevent, mitigate or make good harm to the environment).*

This definition of 'material harm' is consistent with the definition in Section 147 of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* and the associated legal obligations to notify the EPA where a 'pollution' incident occurs such that material harm to the environment is caused or threatened.

6.5.2.1 Immediate Response

Any incident that occurs that causes or threatens to cause material harm will be reported immediately to ACEN Australia's Project Manager (during construction and operations).

Upon receiving notification of an incident, ACEN Australia's Project Manager (or their nominee if off-site at the time of the incident) will immediately attend the incident and:

- Isolate the area affected by the incident
- Stop works around the area
- Implement containment measures to prevent the impact of the incident spreading
- Decide as to whether the incident has caused or threatens to cause material harm.

6.5.2.2 External Notifications

6.5.2.2.1 Duty to Report

If ACEN Australia's Project Manager (or their nominee if off-site at the time of the incident) has determined the incident has caused or threatens to cause material harm, he/she will, pursuant to requirements under Section 148 of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*

immediately notify the EPA, the NSW Ministry of Health, Fire and Rescue NSW and SafeWork NSW by verbal means.

These authorities will be notified (verbally) and provided the following relevant information:

- The time, date, nature, duration and location of the incident
- The location of the place where pollution is occurring or is likely to occur
- The nature, the estimated quantity or volume and the concentration of any pollutants involved, if known
- The circumstances in which the incident occurred (including the cause of the incident, if known)
- The action taken or proposed to be taken to deal with the incident and any resulting pollution or threatened pollution, if known.

The EPA may direct ACEN Australia to notify such other persons of the incident as the EPA requires.

6.5.2.2.2 Notifications

All agencies including DPE, will be notified immediately after becoming aware of an incident. Consistent with Schedule 4 Condition 7 of the Development Consent, notification to DPE will be in writing via the Major Projects website portal, including the following information:

- Identify the development (i.e. the NES) and the application number (SSD 9255)
- Set out the location and nature of the incident.

Seven days after the incident, ACEN Australia will prepare a report as per Appendix 7 of the Development Consent.

6.6 Non-Compliance

6.6.1 Commitment

A failure to comply with a Condition of Development Consent or statutory approval will constitute a non-compliance.

6.6.2 Response

In the event of a non-compliance, ACEN Australia and its contractor (where relevant) will undertake the five steps as outlined within Table 6-3 below, consistent with the guidance advice for ISO 14001 – Environmental management systems.

Table 6-3 Non-compliance Response

Step	Action
React	React to the non-compliance and, as applicable: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Act to control and correct it 2. Notify and communicate to relevant parties where required

	3. Deal with the consequences, including mitigating adverse environmental impacts.
Evaluate	Evaluate the need for action to eliminate the cause of the non-compliance in order that it does not recur or occur elsewhere by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewing the non-compliances 2. Determining the cause of the non-compliances 3. Determining if similar non-compliances exist or could potentially occur.
Act	Implement any action required.
Review	Review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken.
Change	Make changes to the environmental management plans, if necessary

6.6.3 Corrective Action

Any non-compliance will trigger a Corrective Action appropriate to the significance of the effect of the non-compliance. ACEN Australia and its Contractor (where relevant) will retain documented information as evidence of the nature of the non-compliance and any subsequent actions taken, and the results of the Corrective Action.

6.6.4 Notification

Consistent with Schedule 4 Conditions 8-10 of the Development Consent, DPE will be notified in writing via the Major Projects website portal within seven days after ACEN Australia and its Contractor becomes aware of any non-compliance. A non-compliance which has been notified as an incident does not need to also be notified as a non-compliance.

The notification will:

- Identify the development (i.e. as NES) and the application number (SSD 9255)
- Set out the Condition/s of Development Consent that the NES is non-compliant with
- The way in which it does not comply
- The reasons for non-compliance (if known)
- What actions have been done, or will be, undertaken to address the non-compliance.

DPE can also be contacted via the Major Projects Portal.

6.7 Record keeping

ACEN Australia has a comprehensive data management system for NES that outlines the policies and procedures that will be implemented to ensure that all data is managed in a consistent, efficient and effective manner. All monitoring data and reports relevant to this AES will be managed through this system.

6.8 Evaluation and review

The evaluation and review of this AES will occur every 6 months during construction and in accordance with the requirements of the CoC, specifically conditions 2 and 3 of Schedule 4; and the continuous improvement requirements of the EMS. The reason(s) for any revision (if required) shall be clearly summarised on the front page of this AES.

As per Schedule 4, consent condition 2, any revision of the AES requires approval by the Secretary prior to implementation.

References

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APPENDIX A STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION REGISTER

Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 14:18:28 Australian Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: RE: New England Solar: Amended Accommodation and Employment Strategy
Date: Friday, 27 October 2023 at 1:33:33 pm Australian Eastern Daylight Time
From: Toni Averay
To: 'Sarah Donnan'
CC: Tessa Verkerk, Kate Blackwood, Michael Raby, Wendy Westbrook
Attachments: image003.png, image002.png, image004.png

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Sarah
My apologies for the delay in our response.
I also note we are also yet to provide our comments on the draft TMP.

I've copied Mr Mick Raby on this email.
Mick is acting Executive Director Infrastructure and Planning and will be finalising our response on the TMP early next week.

Kate and I are really unable to provide any further direction regarding the Accommodation and Employment strategies at this time but will be working through a more holistic council position in coming months.
Our primary concern remains the cumulative impact of the high demand construction projects followed by an inevitable decline. The Mayor of Armidale described this as a sugar hit.
Collectively the REZ councils and developers need to ensure there is a sound approach taken that delivers positive outcomes for the local community and business.

I look forward to further engagement on these issues and the TMP.
Thanks.

Best regards

Toni Averay
Interim General Manager
Uralla Shire Council | PO Box 106 Uralla NSW 2358
p 02 6778 6302 |
taveray@uralla.nsw.gov.au | www.uralla.nsw.gov.au



From: Sarah Donnan [mailto:sarah.donnan@acenrenewables.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 20 October 2023 11:10 AM
To: Toni Averay <TAveray@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: Tessa Verkerk <tessa.verkerk@acenrenewables.com.au>; Kate Blackwood <KBlackwood@uralla.nsw.gov.au>; Council <council@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Re: New England Solar: Amended Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Good morning Toni,

I wanted to confirm two things in relation to the New England Solar Accommodation and Employment Strategy review:

1. The you did receive the documents on the email below. Sometimes the file size can be an issue!
2. That, as requested, I have also put the documents through the consultation area of the Major Projects Portal. But unfortunately I didn't upload correctly so now there are two submissions in there – PAE-63628714 and PAE-63647456. The latter number has all three documents on there, but they are all the same as the ones emailed through. So Council's response summary can likely be cut and paste to both.

Feel free to give me a call if you have any questions on the documents. The updates are in line with the consultation meeting we had with your colleagues on 20 August.

Department of Planning have asked what would be a likely timeframe on Council's side for the review. If you have an indicative idea, would appreciate if you could let me know.

Kind regards, Sarah

Sarah Donnan
Project Manager



ACEN Australia

M: +61 402 206 088

E: sarah.donnan@acenrenewables.com.au

Suite 2, Level 2, 15 Castray Esplanade, Battery Point, TAS 7004

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ACEN Australia acknowledges the resilience and knowledge of the Traditional Custodians of this nation. We pay our respects to elders past and present, the many Aboriginal people that did not make their elder status and to those that continue to care for country.

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From: Sarah Donnan <sarah.donnan@acenrenewables.com.au>
Date: Wednesday, 18 October 2023 at 8:36 pm
To: Toni Averay <TAveray@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: Tessa Verkerk <tessa.verkerk@acenrenewables.com.au>, Kate Blackwood <KBlackwood@uralla.nsw.gov.au>, Council <Council@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: New England Solar: Amended Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Hi Toni,

As you are aware, we had a meeting last month with Council and some Councillors in which we discussed the proposed updates to the Accommodation and Employment Strategy for New England Solar project.

We have now collated those updates into the next revision of the document.

Attached for Council review:

- A clean version in word of Version 4
- A tracked changes between Version 3 and Version 4 in word
- A pdf of Version 4

We have submitted these documents to Department of Planning and Environment in parallel to submission to Council, as agreed in the last meeting.

If you have any questions, happy to discuss.

Kind regards, Sarah

Sarah Donnan
Project Manager



ACEN Australia

M: +61 402 206 088

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ACEN Australia acknowledges the resilience and knowledge of the Traditional Custodians of this nation. We pay our respects to elders past and present, the many Aboriginal people that did not make their elder status and to those that continue to care for country.

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From: Tim Kirk <Tim.Kirk@upc-ac.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 2 December 2020 10:50 AM
To: Matt Clarkson
Cc: Terence Seymour
Subject: Re: Accommodation and Employment Strategy - New England Solar Farm UPC email to Tim Kirk 1 December 2020

Great, thank you Matt

This strategy will now be submitted to the Department for its approval.

Kind Regards,

Tim Kirk | Project Development Manager
UPC\AC Renewables Australia
A UPC Renewables and AC Energy Company



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Melbourne: 61 Cromwell Street, Collingwood VIC 3066
Sydney: Level 14, 77 King Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

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From: Matt Clarkson <MClarkson@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Date: Wednesday, 2 December 2020 at 10:30 am
To: Tim Kirk <Tim.Kirk@upc-ac.com>
Cc: Terence Seymour <TSeymour@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Accommodation and Employment Strategy - New England Solar Farm UPC email to Tim Kirk 1 December 2020

Hi Tim

Apologies for not getting back to you.

Council has reviewed the strategy and proposes no amendments.

Regards
Matt Clarkson
Manager of Development and Planning

Uralla Shire Council | Po Box 106 Uralla NSW 2358
p 02 6778 6310 | **f** 02 6778 6349 | **m** 0419 861 719



From: Tim Kirk [mailto:Tim.Kirk@upc-ac.com]
Sent: Wednesday, 2 December 2020 10:15 AM
To: Matt Clarkson
Subject: Re: Accommodation and Employment Strategy - New England Solar Farm

Hi Matt,

Hope you're well.

Just wondering how you are going with your review of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy?

Please let me know if you have any questions I can help with.

Kind Regards,

Tim Kirk | Project Development Manager
UPC\AC Renewables Australia
A UPC Renewables and AC Energy Company



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From: Matt Clarkson <MClarkson@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Date: Saturday, 21 November 2020 at 4:28 am
To: Tim Kirk <Tim.Kirk@upc-ac.com>
Cc: Terence Seymour <TSeymour@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Accommodation and Employment Strategy - New England Solar Farm

Thanks Tim.

That should be fine.

Regards

Matt Clarkson
Manager of Development and Planning

Uralla Shire Council | Po Box 106 Uralla NSW 2358
p 02 6778 6310 | f 02 6778 6349 | m 0419 861 719



From: Tim Kirk [<mailto:Tim.Kirk@upc-ac.com>]
Sent: Friday, 20 November 2020 5:50 PM
To: Matt Clarkson
Cc: Terence Seymour
Subject: Re: Accommodation and Employment Strategy - New England Solar Farm

Hi Matt,

We certainly recognise the importance of this particular strategy to council as it does respond to many of the council's initial concerns regarding the project.

As this plan needs to go through the Department for approval, it would be appreciated if we could receive the Council's feedback by the end of next week.

Enjoy your weekend,

Tim Kirk | Project Development Manager
UPC\AC Renewables Australia
A UPC Renewables and AC Energy Company



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E: tim.kirk@upc-ac.com

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From: Matt Clarkson <MClarkson@uralla.nsw.gov.au>
Date: Friday, 20 November 2020 at 3:36 pm
To: Tim Kirk <Tim.Kirk@upc-ac.com>

Cc: Terence Seymour <TSeymour@uralla.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Accommodation and Employment Strategy - New England Solar Farm

Hi Tim

This did seem like one of the bigger 'unknowns' for Council moving forwards, and I've fielded many calls from sundry parties interested in provision of the accommodation: some have obviously had conversations with UPC, and at the other end of the spectrum are some opportunistic landholders.

What is your desired timeframe for a considered response?

Regards

Matt Clarkson

Manager of Development and Planning

Uralla Shire Council | Po Box 106 Uralla NSW 2358

p 02 6778 6310 | **f** 02 6778 6349 | **m** 0419 861 719



From: Tim Kirk [<mailto:Tim.Kirk@upc-ac.com>]

Sent: Friday, 20 November 2020 2:30 PM

To: Matt Clarkson

Subject: Accommodation and Employment Strategy - New England Solar Farm

Hi Matt,

Hope you've been well.

UPC\AC Renewables has prepared the Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the New England Solar Farm, pursuant to Schedule 3 Clause 28 of the New England Solar Farm Development Consent. It would be much appreciated if you could provide any feedback on this strategy before it is submitted to the Department.

Please let me know if you wish to discuss any aspect of this strategy.

Kind Regards,

Tim Kirk | Project Development Manager

UPC\AC Renewables Australia

A UPC Renewables and AC Energy Company



M: +61 403 857 079

E: tim.kirk@upc-ac.com

Hobart: Suite 2, Level 2, 15 Castray Esplanade, Battery Point, TAS 7004
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APPENDIX B DPE APPROVAL LETTER

Sarah Donnan
Project Manager – NES
ACEN Australia
96b Bridge Street
Uralla, NSW, 2358

20/12/2023

Subject: New England Solar – Accommodation and Employment Strategy

Dear Mrs Donnan,

I refer to your submission requesting approval of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy for Stage 1b, Stage 2a and Stage 3a (Revision 4 dated 14 December 2023). I also acknowledge your response to the Department's review comments and request for additional information.

The Department has carefully reviewed the document and is satisfied that it meets the requirements of the relevant conditions of consent (SSD-9255 as modified).

As nominee of the Planning Secretary, I approve the Accommodation and Employment Strategy for Stage 1b, Stage 2a and Stage 3a (Revision 4 dated 14 December 2023).

Please ensure you make the document publicly available on the project website at the earliest convenience.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact Katie Weekes on (02) 4927 3223 or via email at katie.weekes@dpie.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Iwan Davies
Director
Energy Assessments

As nominee of the Planning Secretary

APPENDIX C CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE CODE OF CONDUCT

NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM

Construction Workforce Code of Conduct

Document Number: NESF-OWD-EN-00GRL-REP-001

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1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct (the Code) outlines the standard of behaviour expected by all persons working at the New England Solar Farm (NESF) and while utilising temporary accommodation in the area during construction.

The purpose of the Code is to promote a safe, healthy and productive workplace at the NESF and promote acceptable behaviour for the workforce while residing in the NESF area during its construction. The Code's key principles are:

- act with professionalism, honesty, integrity and fairness;
- uphold specified standards of behaviour;
- treat others with respect and dignity;
- maintain a safe working environment;
- respect and maintain privacy and confidentiality; and
- identify and manage conflicts of interests.

These principles are explained in more detail throughout the Code.

The Code does not, and cannot, cover every possible action or scenario you may encounter at the NESF, however the Code's intent is to assist you understand expectations while working at the NESF and while residing in the NESF area during construction.

It is important that you understand the Code, and that a breach of the Code is a serious contravention of your working arrangement at the NESF, and may result in action being taken including termination of your employment or other engagement.

Where you feel that you are uncertain about your own position, or if you have any concerns about potential breaches of the Code, you are encouraged to raise this promptly with your immediate supervisor or manager, or another person with management responsibility.

2. Scope

The Code applies to all persons working at the NESF including at accommodation in the NESF area during construction.

The standards of behaviour set out in the Code are expected of you both during work hours and whenever your behaviour has the potential to impact UPC/AC Renewables Australia or Green Light Contractors, or your relationships with other workforce personnel. This may include but is not limited to:

- lunch or other breaks;
- a work trip conducted outside normal working hours;
- while at accommodation in the area during construction of the NESF;
- social functions with fellow workers (e.g. work functions or events); and
- activities on social media.

3. Standards of behaviour

3.1 ETHICAL STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors are committed to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, integrity and fairness. You must act in a manner consistent with this commitment by:

- respecting cultural, ethical and religious differences;
- being courteous, sensitive and honest in communications, and being considerate of the needs of others;
- working cooperatively and collaboratively with others to achieve common goals and to maintain a harmonious work environment and culture;
- behaving in a fair, consistent and ethical manner;
- not taking advantage of any property or information in relation to the NESF for personal benefit;
- taking all steps to ensure the protection of NESF assets, premises and resources; and
- abiding by all applicable laws and regulations.

There are several questions that personnel should ask when confronted with work related decisions. By way of illustration, you should ask yourself:

- Is it illegal?
- Would there be negative consequences for the NESF, UPC\AC Renewables Australia or Green Light Contractors?
- Would I prefer to keep this a secret?
- Would I be embarrassed if my actions were made public?

If the answer is yes to any of those questions, then your actions are likely to be in breach of the Code and what is expected of you.

3.2 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors will not tolerate unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour that impacts, or has the potential to impact, adversely on other personnel, or the company. Unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- harassment, bullying or victimisation, physical abuse or assault;
- threatening or intimidating behaviour towards others;
- ignoring safety and security procedures or standards;
- breach of relevant laws or regulations;
- theft or attempted theft;
- failure to disclose a conflict of interest, or potential conflict of interest;
- activities adversely affecting UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors reputation, including social media.

Any instances of misconduct will likely lead to disciplinary action, including possibly the termination of personnel's employment or engagement or removing access to site.

3.3 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors are concerned by factors affecting an employee's ability to safely and effectively do their work to a satisfactory standard. The company recognises that alcohol or other drug abuse can impair short-term or long-term work performance and is an occupational health and safety risk. UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors will do its utmost to create and maintain a safe, healthy and productive workplace for all employees. To achieve this, UPC Renewables and Green Light Contractors shall:

- maintain an alcohol and drug procedure and provide awareness training to all personnel (refer **GLC-IMS-HRE-PRC-014.00.IFU_Procedure - Alcohol and Other Drugs**);
- communicate and consult with its personnel to define the requirements of approved procedures and policies;
- conduct fair and appropriate testing in accordance with the alcohol and drug procedure and national testing standards; and
- prohibit the possession, use, or distribution of illegal substances.

UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors has a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use of illicit drugs or the consumption of alcohol at the NESF, or while attending other business-related premises (e.g. clients) while under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol. Contravening this policy will likely lead to disciplinary action, including possibly the termination of personnel's employment or engagement.

At times, during social events, the company may make alcohol available to staff over the age of 18. Limiting the consumption of any alcohol made available is the responsibility of the employee or contractor. Driving over the legal limit or under the influence of illicit drugs is illegal.

Further detail on UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors alcohol and drug related requirements are within **GLC-IMS-HRE-PRC-014.00.IFU_Procedure - Alcohol and Other Drugs**. Note that this procedure does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment, and UPC Renewables and Green Light Contractors reserves the right to withdraw or vary it at any time.

3.4 SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors will aim to operate a safe workplace that is free of injuries, property or equipment damage or environmental harm.

All personnel are responsible for their own safety and the safety and well being of others around them in the workplace and in the community that may be affected by their activities. This requires you to obey all reasonable instructions, work safely, wear protective equipment if required, follow correct procedures when working and report incidents.

You must comply with UPC\AC Renewables Australia and Green Light Contractors policies and procedures relating to health, safety, and the environment

3.5 INFORMATION AND PRIVACY

You must not use or communicate confidential and commercially sensitive information belonging to UPC\AC Renewables Australia or Green Light Contractors, for any purpose other than work purposes, unless you have express written permission to do so.

UPC\AC Renewables Australia or Green Light Contractors information includes intellectual property assets, such as patents, trademarks, copyright, design and other intellectual property assets. These assets are valuable assets which need to be protected, in the same way as physical assets.

You must not take improper advantage of any information gained in the course of your employment or engagement. If you do so, this could lead to serious consequences including disciplinary action or termination of your employment or engagement.

Following your employment or engagement at NESF you must not use confidential information and intellectual property obtained during your employment or engagement to advantage your prospective employer or business or disadvantage UPC Renewables or Green Light Contractors generally in its dealings with others.

Where your role involves handling the personal information of suppliers, customer or other employees, you need to take particular care to ensure that personal information is obtained in a fair and lawful manner, and that its use is limited to the purpose for which it is acquired.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Managers and supervisors must ensure they lead by example and strictly comply with the Code.

Managers and supervisors must take all reasonable steps to ensure all staff and contractors are aware of and comply with the Code. This includes ensuring all staff and contractors have received and continue to receive appropriate training.

Managers and supervisors must ensure they create an open and receptive environment in which employees feel comfortable enough to raise issues of concern. Upon becoming aware of such issues, managers and supervisors must promptly take action to address and escalate the issues as appropriate.

4.2 REPORTING BREACHES OF THE CODE

All personnel have a duty to observe the Code and ensure no breaches occur. Breaches require immediate attention and personnel have a duty to report known or suspected breaches of the Code.

Any personnel who in good faith, makes a complaint or disclosure about an alleged breach of the Code, will not be disadvantaged or prejudiced in the making of such a complaint or disclosure.

A complaint or disclosure should be made to your supervisor, or if you do not feel comfortable speaking to your supervisor to a more senior manager or another person with management responsibility.

4.3 CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THE CODE

Failure to comply with the Code will be considered a serious breach of UPC Renewables and Green Light Contractor requirements and will be investigated. Breaches of the Code may result in a range of personal consequences depending on the nature and severity of the breach, including termination of your employment or engagement.

