SPARK RENEWABLES

WATTLE CREEK BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM

Summary

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Spark Renewables is proposing to develop the Wattle Creek Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project on the University's Arthursleigh property held by the University of Sydney, east of Big Hill, situated in the Upper Lachlan Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA) in NSW, approximately 15 kilometres (km) northwest of Marulan. The location is adjacent to the Wingecarribee Shire LGA (to the east) and Goulburn Mulwaree Council LGA (to the south).

Spark Renewables was selected by the University of Sydney to investigate and develop a hybrid renewable energy facility on the University's property which includes:

A hybrid solar farm with generation capacity of up to 265 megawatt (MW) combined with a 100 MW battery energy storage system (BESS).

A standalone BESS with 350 MW capacity.

Each of the two components are being assessed under separate approval processes but will share infrastructure and a proposed research test bed facility.

The Project responds directly to the energy policy of the Commonwealth and NSW governments, moving toward net zero energy generation and supporting the increased development and utilisation of renewable energy. As a large-scale energy storage system, the Project will also deliver direct benefits to the electricity grid, improving system strength and reliability.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

CHEMISTRY

Lithium-ion or similar.

DIMENSIONS

Either 40-foot containers in a purpose-built compound or smaller DC coupled units distributed within the wind farm.

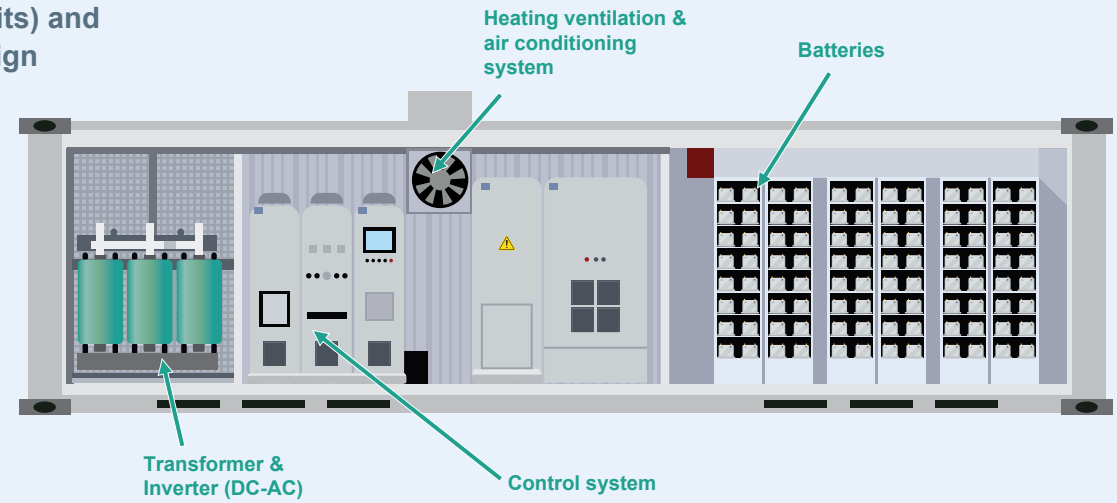
PURPOSE

- Provides firm generation 'on demand' for the electricity grid, aswell as a range of network services such as voltage support.
- Store excess electricity from the solar panels when the wind is blowing and then would distribute to the electricity grid when demand is at its highest.

Battery packs (smaller units) and containerised battery design

FIRE HAZARDS & RISK MITIGATION

Integrated within the battery design will be an Asset Protection Zone serving as a fire break, as well as a heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.



Key project components

A BESS with 350 MW capacity electrically isolated with its own transformers and metering infrastructure. The BESS is comprised of lithium-ion batteries containerised with bi-directional inverters and transformers installed adjacent to each inverter to step up the voltage to the internal reticulation voltage of the plant. Each container that makes up the BESS contains heating ventilation & air conditioning systems and integrated within the battery design will be an Asset Protection Zone serving as a fire break.

On-site collector substation to connect the BESS to the electricity transmission network via Marulan Substation.

Two transmission line options are being investigated, to allow for optionality during the assessment process and greater flexibility in the connection design. One transmission option will be constructed for each component, (i.e. one transmission option for the standalone BESS project and separate transmission option for the solar farm project, being considered in the separate development application), however, optionality to connect to the substation via one transmission line only is also being investigated therefore the two options are assessed separately.

A research Test-Bed Facility – comprising of a 2 ha hard stand area, demountable buildings, security fencing, parking, 200 kilovolt (kVa) power supply and 100 kVa dummy load (simulated electrical load for testing purposes).

If approved, the Wattle Creek BESS could store up to 350 MW of electricity and contribute to and support the National Electricity Market (NEM) by providing renewable energy storage capacity and improving the security, stability, and resilience of the NEM with the ability to respond quickly to fluctuations in grid frequency.

Legend

- Project Area
- Local Government Area
- Roads
- Watercourses
- Access Road Works
- Access Point
- Existing Substation
- Marulan Gas Fired Power Station Project Area

Existing Transmission Lines

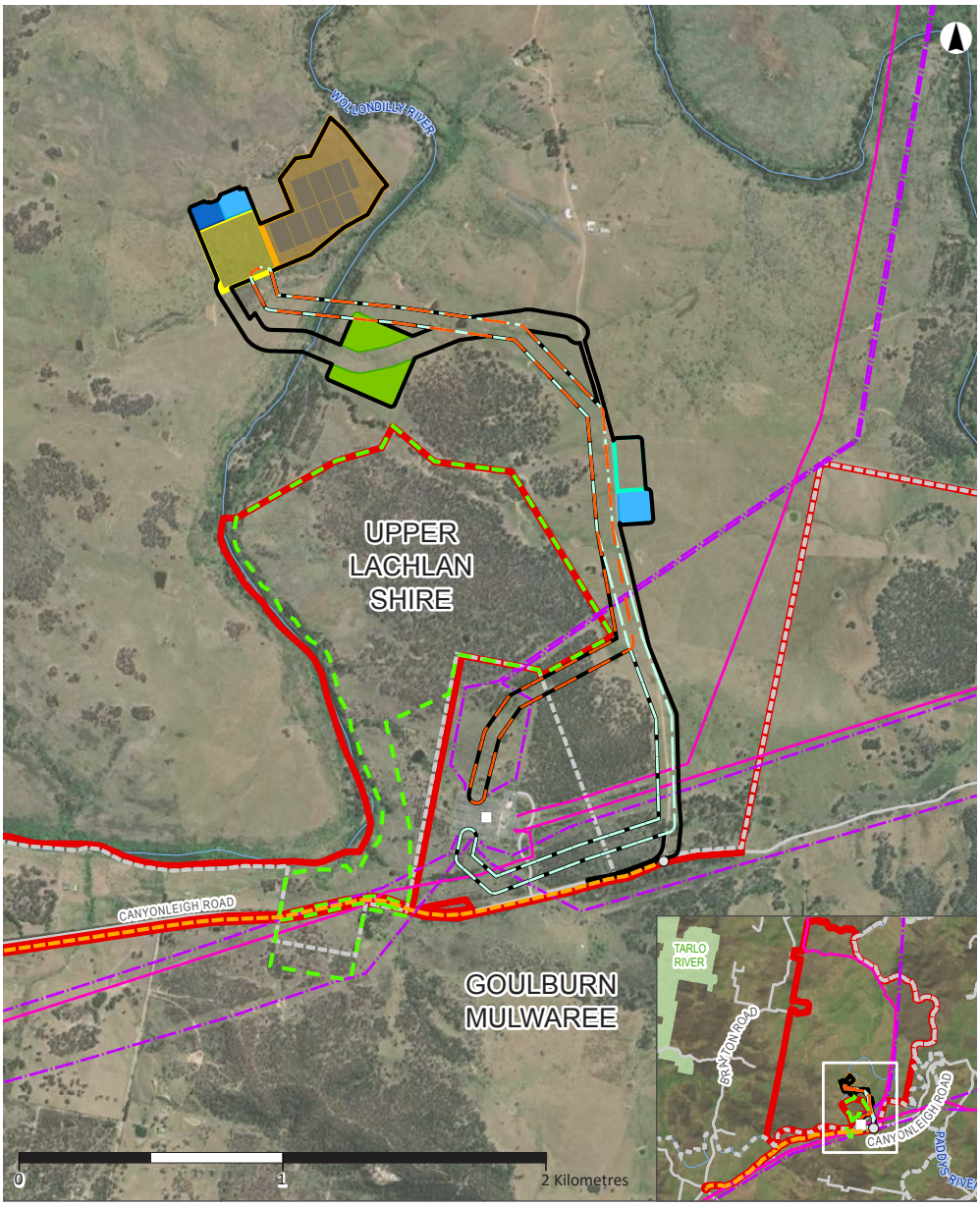
- 330kV
- 132kV

Proposed Transmission Line

- Proposed Transmission Line Option 1 Easement
- Proposed Transmission Line Option 2 Easement

BESS

- Development Footprint – BESS
- BESS Site
- BESS Layout
- BESS Substation
- Test Bed Area
- Construction Compound
- O&M Facility
- Laydown Area



WHY IS THE PROJECT NEEDED?

The NSW Government is actively seeking investment in renewable energy generation and storage as part of its strategic initiatives to facilitate a systematic shift from coal fired energy production. The goal is to reduce the emissions associated with the electricity generation sector This efficient transition is essential for delivering electricity across NSW at a cost-effective rate to consumers.

Various government strategies, plans and policies such as the NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy and NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, identify the importance of renewable energy technology in providing an effective and economical way to deliver affordable, clean energy to NSW energy consumers.

NSW has a strong pipeline of renewable energy projects which have the potential to contribute to achieving the current transition targets. However, significant investment is required from the private sector to achieve sufficient renewable energy supply to support NSW's transition to renewable energy and the retirement of the existing fossil fuel generated supply.

The Project aligns with local and regional strategies to deliver diversification in local economies, yield supplementary income for associated landowners, develop employment opportunities across both construction and operational phases, contribute to regional investment, offer indirect employment to local service providers throughout the Project's lifecycle, and offer benefits to the local community through the execution of a community benefit fund (or similar). Furthermore, the Project prioritises the preservation of areas with high environmental value, a focal point of the local strategic framework for development across the region. Spark Renewables have sought such relationships throughout the design process to align the Project with community priorities and local strategic plans.

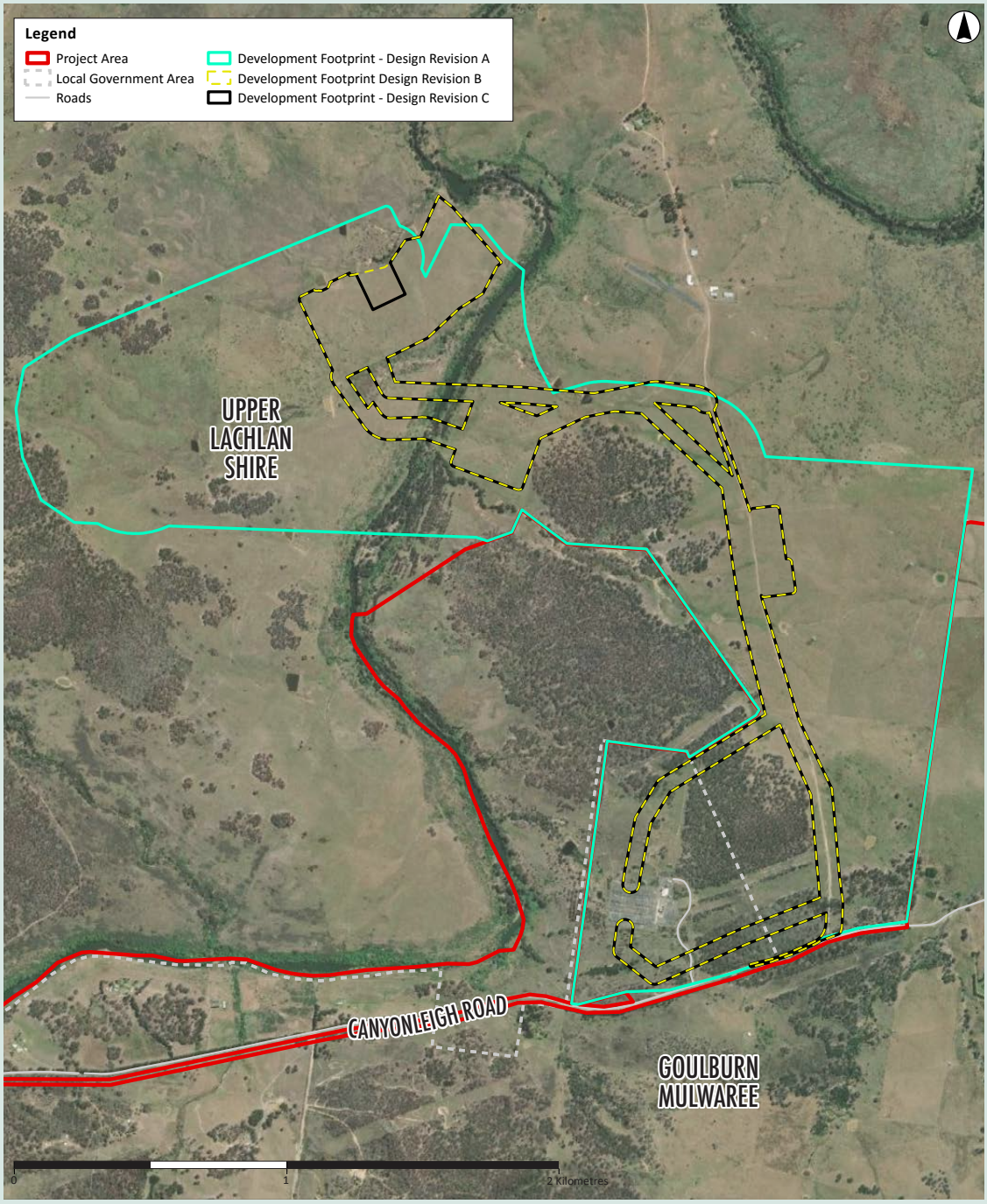
BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT INCLUDE

- Contribute to and support the National Electricity Market (NEM) by providing renewable energy storage capacity and improving the security, stability, and resilience of the NEM.
- Provide energy storage for sustainable renewable energy to enable continuous and reliable electricity output as part of a rapidly expanding industry in NSW.
- Supporting local businesses, regional and Australian economy as part of the energy transition.
- Creating generational employment and training opportunities for those currently active in workforce and those emerging.
- Indirect benefits to local services through the construction and operation phases.

WHAT PROJECT ALTERNATIVES WERE INVESTIGATED?

Spark Renewables initially (prior to submission of the Scoping Report) investigated the inclusion of a wind farm component within the Project Area. Spark Renewables is not proceeding with the wind farm component following detailed on site wind monitoring and initial community engagement and is focused on developing the solar and BESS components only.

Spark Renewables has taken the approach of avoid in the first instance, and if that is not possible, seek to reduce, offset or mitigate the impacts.The Project has been continuously refined during development as preliminary findings, were made available through the technical assessments, allowing for Project design modifications to mitigate identified constraints.



Refinements to the conceptual design of the Project have sought to:

Refine the extent of the Development Footprint to maximise the utilisation of previously cleared land, reducing additional impact to vegetation and/or impact habitat for flora and fauna species.

Avoid impacts to Aboriginal Heritage and sensitive landforms where possible.

Place siting the proposed infrastructure in proximity to the existing electricity transmission infrastructure to reduce impact associated with transmission easements as far as practicable.

Application of minimum 10 metre separation between proposed infrastructure and vegetation to minimise potential of bushfire risk.

Minimise infrastructure and assets within flood prone land.

Maintain a minimum setback of 30 m from the high bank of the Wollondilly River.

PLANNING AND APPROVALS PROCESS

The components of the Wattle Creek BESS Project and the Wattle Creek Solar Farm Project are being assessed under two separate approval processes but will share project related infrastructure including the switching site substation, overhead high voltage transmission line, internal electrical reticulation, temporary construction facilities, permanent operation facilities, project access and a research test bed facility.

The Project requires approval under the NSW environmental and planning legislation. Under NSW Planning legislation, the Project is State Significant Development and requires approval under Part 4 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The EIS prepared for the Project describes the Project, its impacts (both positive and negative), how the impacts are proposed to be managed, mitigated and offset, the benefits and the justification.

The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is the primary environmental and planning regulatory instrument relevant to the Project at the Commonwealth level. Under the EPBC Act, approval from the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water is required for any action that may have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES).

The Project was referred under the EPBC Act to the Minister via the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and was determined to be a controlled action. The Project is to be assessed under the Assessment Bilateral Agreement between the Commonwealth and NSW Governments.

Environmental Impact Assessment Phase	Social Impact Assessment Activities and Outputs
SCOPING	
PRE-LODGEMENT: Preliminary assessment studies commence	Engagement with local landholders and key stakeholders
PRE-LODGEMENT: Scoping Report lodged with NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure	
PRE-LODGEMENT: NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure issues project specific Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs)	
EIS PREPARATION	
APPLICATION: Refinement of plans and preparation of assessment studies	Continue engagement with local landholders and key stakeholders
APPLICATION: Lodgement of DA supported by the EIS including SIA **WE ARE HERE**	Preparation of Social Impact Assessment
PUBLIC EXHIBITION	
APPLICATION: NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure places EIS on public exhibition	
RESPONDING TO SUBMISSIONS	
APPLICATION: Preparation of Submissions Report that explains how submissions have been addressed	
ASSESSMENT	
APPLICATION: NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure assesses the Project and provides its findings to the consent authority	
DETERMINATION	
APPLICATION: Consent authority decides whether to approve or refuse the Project, including conditions of consent if approved	
POST APPROVAL	
NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure regulates Project to ensure compliance with the conditions of consent **Implementation of mitigation and enhancement measures and monitoring and management framework**	

ENGAGEMENT WITH POTENTIALLY AFFECTED PEOPLE AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Spark Renewables is committed to engagement with all relevant stakeholders and to undertaking genuine and meaningful engagement with the community as part of planning and assessing the Project. This includes a focus on developing long-term relationships and maintaining open lines of communication. Since March 2023, Spark Renewables has met with landholders, community groups, service providers, Aboriginal groups, local councils, and government agencies to build relationships with the local and broader community and to understand stakeholder needs.

A community and stakeholder engagement program (CSEP) was implemented for the Project to gain input from the community and other stakeholders and understand their perspectives on the Project.

Engagement mechanisms such as community newsletters, drop-in sessions, personal meetings or interviews, online surveys and a website were used to provide opportunities provided to engage with the community.

This ongoing engagement has resulted in changes to the Project design and has assisted in development of management and mitigation measures proposed for the Project. This engagement has further informed the design of the Project and has been ongoing throughout the assessment process, and if the Project is approved, the engagement will be ongoing during the life of the Project.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

The Project has been designed through a comprehensive process that incorporated the findings of environmental studies, community and stakeholder feedback and engineering design considerations. Spark Renewables has engaged with stakeholders throughout the Project planning and assessment process and has designed the Project to avoid impact as far as practicable.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Noise and vibration associated with both the construction and operation of the Project has been assessed as part of the EIS.

The noise modelling results indicate that noise mitigation measures will be required to minimise the potential construction noise impacts at residences surrounding the Project Area. No receivers were predicted to be highly noise affected.

Operational noise levels are predicted to comply with the relevant criteria at all residential receivers surrounding the Project Area

Increased traffic noise during construction may be noticeable for nearest receivers along Canyonleigh Road. Whereas noise mitigation options for traffic impacts are limited, Spark Renewables will offer Disruption Payments to residents located between the Brayton Road and the Project Area entrance along Canyonleigh Road during construction to address traffic and noise disruptions.

Spark Renewables has committed to the development and implementation of appropriate noise and vibration management, mitigation and monitoring measures.

BIODIVERSITY

The disturbance area associated with the Project largely comprises areas that have previously been disturbed and historically cleared for agricultural purposes.

Overall, the Project area features a mix of exotic pasture, native grasslands, scattered paddock trees, and intact woodland. Over half of the Development Footprint is comprised of land which has minimal biodiversity value and is unlikely to provide suitable habitat for threatened flora and fauna species. This land has no native over storey or mid storey cover (uppermost and middle layers of vegetation, consisting of the tallest and median height trees forming a canopy) and met the definition of non-native vegetation.

One Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) being White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland critically endangered ecological community, was recorded in the development footprint and two threatened flora, and four threatened fauna species were recorded within the Project Area during surveys. The Project will not fragment any areas of high-quality TEC, due to the existing fragmentation of remnant vegetation from historical and current agricultural land use in the Project Area and surrounds. Any fragmentation associated with the Project will occur through the removal of areas of highly degraded native pasture vegetation and scattered trees. The retained areas will remain connected to other vegetation communities, both within the Project Area and the adjoining landscape.

Spark Renewables has committed to the development and implementation of biodiversity management measures which will include pre-clearance and tree-felling procedures, non-inhibiting fauna fencing, traffic control, weed management, fencing and access control, erosion and sediment control, and workforce education and training. Where impacts to biodiversity cannot be avoided, the NSW Biodiversity Assessment Process requires use of the NSW Government online credit calculator to generate the associated biodiversity credits, informed by the results of the biodiversity survey and associated area of impact.

The credits need to be offset by Spark Renewables prior to construction commencing. Spark Renewables is currently proposing to utilise a combination of different options to secure the biodiversity credits required to offset the residual impacts of the Project on biodiversity including utilising intact areas of native vegetation in the Project Area for offsetting.

ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Project Area is on the Gundungurra Nation within the Pejar Local Aboriginal Land Council (PLALC) and Gundungurra (LALC). An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) was undertaken to assess the potential impact of the Project on Aboriginal cultural heritage in consultation with the Broken Hill Local Aboriginal Land Council and other Registered Aboriginal Parties. The ACHA included field survey and a test excavation program.

Survey and test excavation results:

A total of 30 newly recorded cultural heritage sites were identified within the Project Area during the surveys including 5 artefact scatters, 12 isolated artefacts and one scarred tree.

A total of 79 test pits were excavated across seven test zones within four landforms during the test excavation program. 25 stone artefacts were recovered from 13 test pits.

The Project Area is part of a broader landscape of cultural significance utilised for foraging activities, however following European settlement the use within the Project Area has mostly orientated toward agricultural practices. The Project Area contains archaeological sites that establish a link to traditional cultural activities.

In total 8 Aboriginal archaeological sites would be impacted by the Project, however all sites are assessed as being of low archaeological significance. For the sites within the transmission line easement, as much of the easement will remain undisturbed, there will only be partial impacts to many of these sites. These impacts will be primarily related to pole construction and access tracks which will only impact discrete areas.

Based on the synthesis of the evidence collected during field survey and test excavation, the ACHA recommends a program of staged salvage prior to construction impacts, with surface salvage occurring for artefacts within the Development Footprint. Spark Renewables will develop an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (ACHMP) in consultation with the RAPs and relevant government agencies, to manage Aboriginal cultural heritage values during construction and operation of the Project.

HISTORIC HERITAGE

The Project Area is comprised of the property known as the Arthursleigh Farm purchased by Thomas Holt in 1853 and remained in the family until acquired by the University of Sydney in 1979. The current use for the estate is as a working farm and research facility by the University of Sydney. Several historic buildings are located within the Project Area that appear on the non-statutory National Trust Register. This group of buildings are referred to as the Arthursleigh Group and include the Homestead, Woolshed, Shearers Quarters, and Former Staff Quarters.

The Historic Heritage Assessment included a review of the documented heritage values for the area and survey of the Project Area to assess the likelihood, extent and nature of potential impacts on identified listed or unlisted items of heritage significance within the Project Area.

No heritage items or places listed on the Commonwealth, National or State Heritage lists are located within the Project Area as confirmed by the visual field inspection of the Project Area. Furthermore, no items listed on any Heritage and Conservation Registers (NSW State agency heritage registers) of a Local Environmental Plan are located within the Project Area. The historic buildings associated with the Project Area were assessed as having moderate to high historic significance however; due to the distance from these buildings the Development Footprint and work will not have a detrimental impact on the identified heritage items.

The statement of significance and description for the Arthursleigh heritage sites does not identify any associated significant view, and it is unlikely that any views of the Project from the homestead building would contribute to the overall significance of the item. Whilst the Project would be visible from this heritage item, it would not change, or degrade, any identified significant views or vistas. Additionally, the immediate setting of this heritage item would not be subject to change as part of the Project and any visual impacts are likely to be minor and would not result in an adverse impact to the overall significance of the heritage item.

The Historic Heritage Assessment concluded that the Project would not have a significant impact on the heritage values of the Arthursleigh property associated with the Project Area, however Spark Renewables is committed to continue to implementing management and mitigation measures to ensure that historic values of the Project Area are retained.

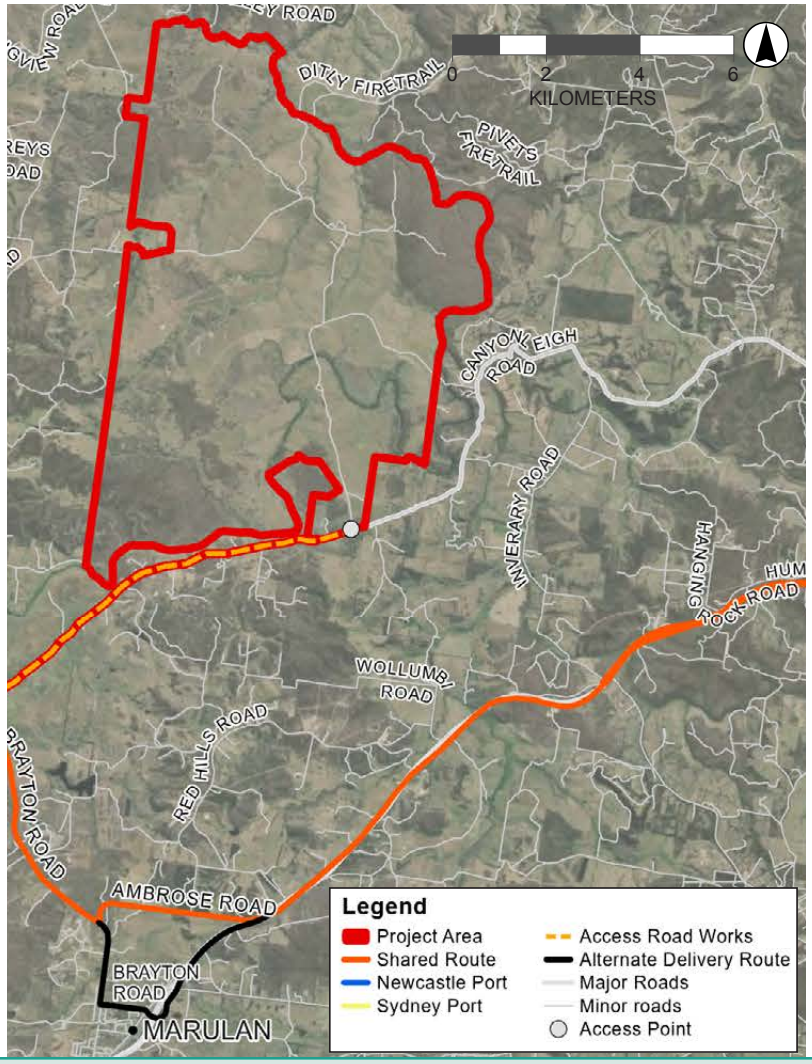
TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

The Project Area will be accessed from Canyonleigh Road. Two transport route options from the Hume Highway to the Project Area have been considered (Red Hills Road/ Ambrose Road/Brayton Road or Brayton Road only). The main access to the Project Area is located on the southern boundary via Canyonleigh Road. A secondary access is also located on the eastern side of the Project Area via the existing access at Arthursleigh Road. This access would be utilised for emergency access/egress and alternate flood free access during construction and operation (if required).

The majority of components to construct the Project from either Port Botany in Sydney (approximately 128 km northeast of the Project Area) or Port Kembla south of Wollongong (approximately 76 km northeast of the Project Area) and transported to the Project Area by truck via the Hume Highway.

The Traffic Impact Assessment found that the existing road network and key intersections have high levels of service and significant spare capacity. Based on the low background volumes on Canyonleigh Road in the vicinity of the access to the Project Area, it is proposed that the access be upgraded generally in accordance with Council's rural access standard.

Spark Renewables has committed to the development and implementation of a detailed Traffic Management Plan which will address the required management and mitigation of potential traffic related impacts.



WATER RESOURCES

The potential for the Project to impact on both surface water and groundwater was assessed as part of the EIS. This included consideration of water supply, flooding and flows, water quality and interaction with groundwater.

The majority of water required to meet Project water demands would be imported and would most likely be sourced through a commercial arrangement with local suppliers.

Water supply:

Construction – Total water usage is estimated to be 10.7 megalitres (ML) over the 13-month construction period with an average daily demand of 30 kilolitres (kl) per day of raw water with 20 kl per day of potable water for construction personnel.

Operation – Minimal water demand would be required for ongoing maintenance activities, amenities, and potable purposes by operational staff as well as for stock. Operational water will be stored on site, separate to water supplies for the purposes of firefighting.

Potable water demands, will be minor and supplied by a small purification system or water tanker.

Throughout the construction phase, appropriate erosion and sediment controls will be implemented and maintained. The Project Area is associated with a very low erosion hazard however, a detailed Erosion and Sediment Control plan will be developed and included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan which will specify the locations of all necessary Erosion and Sediment Controls to achieve key principles of site management.

As the Project is located within the Sydney drinking water catchment and it must have a Neutral or Beneficial Effects (NorBE) rating water quality. The water quality modelling indicates that NorBE criteria is achieved for all water quality characteristics, with the exception of mean annual total nitrogen concentrations. The impacts to receiving water quality downstream of the Project are expected to be negligible provided effective rehabilitation of Project Area disturbance is undertaken post-construction. However, refinement of the water quality model will be undertaken during the detailed design phase of the Project to ensure the model reflects the detailed design and to optimise the operational Project stormwater treatment train. Through detailed design and implementation of management measures, water quality impacts during the operational phase are expected to be negligible.

The flooding within the Project Area poses a relatively low risk to both infrastructure and human safety. Due to the minimal change to existing flood conditions as a result of the Project, specific flood management measures have been recommended to consider the results of the flood modelling conducted.

A groundwater risk assessment was undertaken for potential impacts to groundwater associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project. Generally, impacts to groundwater resources are not expected given the groundwater table is unlikely to be intercepted during Project construction. Further, the anticipated depth to groundwater within the Project Area means that any hydrocarbon/chemical spills are unlikely to infiltrate to the groundwater table, noting that appropriate spill management measures will be implemented during all phases of the Project.

SOIL AND AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

New land use of energy generation within the Project Area will co-exist with agricultural activities currently undertaken, and support future “agrisolar” activities. A new Test Bed for research programs in collaboration with the University of Sydney is also proposed to be part of the Project.

A land use conflict risk assessment (LUCRA) identified the following key potential land use conflict risks:

- traffic (during construction and decommissioning)
- land use change and
- biosecurity.

These issues have been subject to assessment as part of the EIS and Spark Renewables has committed to implement appropriate management and mitigation measures as part of the Project. With the implementation of these measures, the LUCRA found that these risks will be mitigated to low risks and that the potential impact of the Project on the surrounding land and land users will be minimal.

The temporary impacts on agriculture are considered a negligible impact in the context of the gross commodity values and land use coverage of the agricultural industries operating within the Upper Lachlan Shire LGA. Further, at the scale of the enterprises operating within the Project Area, impacts are considered offset as involved landowners would be financially compensated.

Electromagnetic Fields and Health

Electromagnetic fields (EMF) occurs wherever electricity is produced, transmitted or used, and is commonly found in everyday life in household electrical devices. In Australia, electrical devices and infrastructure such as transmission lines and substations, operate at a frequency of 50 Hz which falls within the Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) range of EMF (between 0 and 300 Hz).

EMF modelling completed for the Project transmission infrastructure showed that, in each scenario, magnetic field strength will be at least five times lower than the recommended upper safe limit for human exposure.

Bushfire Assessment

Bushfire risk can be appropriately managed through the implementation of a bushfire emergency management plan including Asset Projection Zones, access, water supply, construction management practices and evacuation procedures.

Preliminary Hazard Analysis

The Preliminary Hazard Analysis concluded that the Project is not considered to exceed the acceptable risk criteria; hence, the Project would only be classified as potentially hazardous as defined under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021and would be permitted within the current land zoning for the Project Area. The risk assessment undertaken to inform the Preliminary Hazard Analysis identified a number of hazard events involving Lithium-Ion Batteries (LIBs) and electrical transformers with the potential for harmful off-site impacts. Due to the central location of the proposed infrastructure and separation distances to surrounding residential receivers, the assessment indicates there would be no impact offsite. A range of technical and non-technical risk mitigation and management measures including rigorous design standards and maintenance practices are proposed to be implemented by Spark Renewables to manage and mitigate potential risk associated with the Project.

Contamination

An assessment was conducted to evaluate potential risks of contamination caused by the Project. The greatest risk of a contamination event within the Development Footprint is during the construction phase. Activities such as increased vehicle movements, improper waste handling, equipment installation, and soil disturbance could lead to potential spills or contamination involving hazardous materials. With mitigation measures in place contamination risks are considered minor and with the implementation of erosion and sediment control measures, impacts are anticipated to be effectively managed and kept to a minimal level.

ECONOMIC

The Economic Impact Assessment concludes the Project will provide the following:

- Support approximately $405 million in capital investment during the construction phase, of which approximately $61 million (or 15%) is anticipated to be retained in the local LGAs.
- Inject approximately $3.3 million in new spending into the economy over the construction phase from construction workers relocating to the region.
- Approximately 185 FTE positions would be supported in the national economy over the 18-month construction period (71 Direct FTE jobs and 114 Indirect FTE jobs). Once operational, approximately 60 FTE jobs will be supported by the Project (15 Direct FTE jobs and 45 Indirect FTE jobs).

AIR QUALITY

During construction, temporary dust particles and emissions may arise from activities like ground disturbance, civil construction, and plant or vehicle exhausts. These emissions will be localised and minor in the context of the overall Project Area. Appropriate dust reduction measures will be implemented to mitigate any potential air quality impacts.

SOCIAL

"Spark Renewables believe that the community has the right to question and critique incoming projects. It is the developers' responsibility to create robust risk management plans to address these concerns. The insights and local knowledge of the council and community are invaluable contributions to this process."

A Social Impact Assessment (SIA) was undertaken to assess the likely social consequences of the Project and work with Spark Renewables to develop options to improve outcomes for people.

SIA involves understanding impacts from the perspectives of those involved in a personal, community, social or cultural sense through the engagement process.

During engagement stakeholders were most concerned about:

- The loss of environmental values associated with the site
- Potential decline in property values
- Decreased social amenity as a result of visual impacts and noise impacts

Positive impacts associated with the Project included:

- Economy activity and employment opportunities during construction
- Employment opportunities and supporting local businesses during operation of the Project

As a result of the potential impacts on the local community, Spark Renewables has committed to the development and implementation of:

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy
- Aboriginal Participation Plan
- Accommodation and Employment Strategy

The SIA concludes that the identified negative social impacts of the Project can be reasonably mitigated or managed to reduce their significance, with positive impacts having the potential to be enhanced if appropriate strategies are put in place.

WASTE

Waste management as part of the Project will be carried out in accordance with relevant legislation and guidelines and based on the principles of the waste hierarchy (prevent, reduce, reuse, recycle, recover, dispose). Spark Renewables will develop and implement a waste management plan to guide management of waste.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

When viewed separately, the environmental, social, and economic effects associated with a Project may be limited or minor. However, when the impacts of numerous projects on the same recipients, communities, and surroundings are taken into account the significance of the impacts may change (both positive and negative). Cumulative impacts also provide opportunities for greater collaboration and innovation to manage and mitigate.

A review of the nearby projects with the potential to result in cumulative impacts with, or as a result of, the Project was conducted along with input from the specialist assessments undertaken. Cumulative impacts related to social and economic impacts, visual, noise, land use and agriculture, water, biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural and non-Aboriginal Heritage. These were considered in the assessment and identified to be minimal when appropriate management and mitigation measures identified in the specialist assessments were implemented.

VISUAL

Potential landscape and visual impact associated with the Project has been assessed as part of the EIS.

The assessment found that the dominate landscape character of the area includes modified pastures predominately used for grazing with large areas of retained vegetation, interspersed vegetated hills and ridgelines. As a result of this vegetation and undulated topography, views towards the Project are limited.

The proposed BESS will not be visible from surrounding residences. The proposed transmission line will be visible from public viewpoints outside of the Project Area. The assessment indicates the transmission lines will integrate with the existing landscape and is unlikely to alter or diminish the visual quality of key landscape features within the area.

Mitigation including the retention of vegetation surrounding the proposed infrastructure, consideration of project design (including colour and height) and controlled lighting will be implemented to integrate the Project into the surrounding landscape.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT

Potential Justifications of public interest:

The Project can use existing transmission lines to transport electricity to the grid, reducing the need for new infrastructure and minimising associated construction and disturbances.

Positive economic outcomes and socio-cultural impacts without significant biophysical harm.

Creation of employment opportunities and benefits to the local and regional economy.

Spark Renewables has first and foremost sought to avoid impact, then reduce, manage and mitigate impacts.

The Project has been assessed and determined to be consistent with the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, which indicates that while the Project, would have some impacts, these impacts can be effectively managed, mitigated and offset and the development will result in significant economic and environment benefits in the form job creation and production of renewable energy for the NEM.

The Project would provide long-term, strategic benefits to the State of NSW, including:

Contribute to and support the NEM by providing renewable energy generation and storage capacity and improving the security, stability, and resilience of the NEM.

Support the shift away from coal-fired power generation, supporting Australia's transition towards clean and renewable sources of energy.

Employment generation creating on average 71 direct jobs during the construction phase and 15 direct jobs nationally during the operational phase.

Indirect benefits to local businesses through the construction and operation phases.