

# State Significant Development Committee

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Business Paper

14 APRIL 2026



## State Significant Development Committee

### Terms of Reference

#### 1. Objective

The objective of the State Significant Development Committee (the Committee) is to enable submissions and responses relating to state significant development in the Muswellbrook Shire to be considered in a timely manner to meet timeframes set by the NSW Government.

#### 2. Scope

The scope of activities to be overseen by the Committee include:

- Assess State Significant Development and prepare submissions and responses relating to state significant development.
- Consider changes in Government legislation and guidelines on planning matters.
- Receive updates on proposed State Significant Development projects, and existing quarry operations.
- Authorise submissions and responses to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) on state significant development.

#### 3. Authority

Muswellbrook Shire Council authorises the Committee, within the scope of its role and responsibilities, to:

- Use delegated authority to authorise submissions and responses to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and the Independent Planning Commission (IPC).
- Assess State Significant Development and prepare submissions and responses relating to state significant development in the Muswellbrook Shire.
- Request information required to inform decision making (subject to their legal obligations to protect information and with prior consultation with the General Manager).
- Request information from employees (with approval of the General Manager) or Councillors.
- The Committee may request these persons to present information at Committee meetings to assist in understanding any matter under consideration.
- Obtain external legal or other professional advice, as considered necessary, to meet its responsibilities (in accordance with Council Budget and procurement arrangements and subject to prior consultation with the General Manager).

#### 4. Composition and Tenure

The members of the Committee shall be 9 Councillors elected by Council.

##### **Members (voting)**

All members of the Committee (Councillors) are entitled to one vote with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

**Attendees (non-voting)**

The following Council officers will act as liaison officers to the Committee:

Department	Role
Director – Planning & Environment	Liaison Officer
General Manager	Attendee
Director – Community & Economy	Attendee
Environmental Planning Officer	Attendee
Legal Counsel	Attendee

**Invitees (non-voting) for specific Agenda items**

Other officers may attend by invitation as requested by the Committee or the General Manager.

**5. Responsibilities of Members**

Members of the Committee are expected to:

- Agree that they are bound by Council's Code of Conduct.
- Understand the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements appropriate to Muswellbrook Shire Council.
- Contribute the time needed to study and understand the papers provided.
- Apply sound analytical skills, objectivity and judgement.
- Express opinions frankly, ask questions that go to the fundamental core of the issues, and pursue independent lines of enquiry.
- Act, and be seen to act, properly and in accordance with the requirements of the law and the terms of Council's Code of Conduct.
- Act in good faith and fidelity in the interests of Council and the community.

**6. Reporting**

Following each meeting, the minutes will be reported to the next Council Meeting and the Chair will be required to provide a brief summary.

**7. Meetings**

- The Committee will meet at 4pm on the second Tuesday of each month except for January.
- The need for any additional meetings will be decided by the Chair of the Committee, though other Committee members may make requests to the Chair for additional meetings.
- The Committee shall comply with Council's adopted Code of Meeting Practice and Code of Conduct.
- Councillors may attend and participate in meetings of the committee by audio-visual link with the approval of the committee.



## 8. Attendance at Meetings and Quorums

A quorum will consist of six (6) Committee members. Meetings can be held in person or by video conference.

### **Voting**

The Committee is expected to make decisions by consensus, however if voting becomes necessary, then the details of the vote are to be recorded in the minutes. Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to one vote only. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair will have a casting vote.

## 9. Secretariat

The General Manager will ensure that appropriate secretariat support is provided to the Committee. The Secretariat will ensure the agenda for each meeting and supporting papers are circulated at least one week before the meeting and ensure minutes of the meeting are prepared and maintained.

Minutes shall be approved by the Chair and circulated to all Committee members within one week of the meeting and filed in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy.

## 10. Conflicts of Interest

Members of Council committees must comply with the applicable provisions of Council's Code of Conduct in carrying out their functions as Council officials. It is the personal responsibility of Council officials to comply with the standards in the Code of Conduct and regularly review their personal circumstances with this in mind.

Committee members must declare any conflict of interest at the start of each meeting or before discussion of a relevant agenda item or topic. Details of any conflict of interest should be appropriately minuted.

Where members or invitees at Committee meetings are deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest, it may be appropriate they be excused from Committee deliberations on the issue where the conflict of interest may exist. The final arbiter of such a decision is the Chair of the Committee.

## 11. Induction

New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

## 12. Review of Committee Terms of Reference

At least once every two years the Committee will review this Committee's Terms of Reference and make recommendations on any changes to Council for its determination.

Any changes to the Committee Terms of Reference must be approved by Council.



MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

P.O Box 122  
MUSWELLBROOK

8 April, 2026

Cr J. Drayton (Chair)  
Cr D. Hartley (Deputy Chair)  
Cr C. Bailey  
Cr D. Douglas  
Cr L. Dunn  
Cr G. McNeill  
Cr D. Marshall  
Cr R. Scholes  
Cr S. Ward  
Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager)  
Ms S. Pope (Director – Planning & Environment)  
Ms S. Richards (Director - Community & Economy)  
Ms T. Folpp (Environmental Planning Officer)  
Ms A. Hathway (Legal Counsel)

You are hereby requested to attend the State Significant Development Committee to be held in the Meeting Room, Level 1 Tertiary Education Centre, 87 Hill Street, Muswellbrook on **14 April 2026** commencing at **4:00 pm**.

Sharon Pope  
**DIRECTOR – PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT**



# Order of Business

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## 1 Acknowledgement of Country

### Acknowledgement of Country

Council would like to respectfully acknowledge the local Aboriginal people who are the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which this meeting takes place

## 2 Apologies

## 3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting

### RECOMMENDATION

The Minutes of the State Significant Development Committee Meeting held on **10 February, 2026**, a copy of which has been distributed to all members, be taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

**Moved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Seconded:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MINUTES OF THE STATE SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL HELD IN THE MEETING ROOM, TERTIARY EDUCATION CENTRE, 87 HILL STREET, MUSWELLBROOK ON 11 FEBRUARY 2026 COMMENCING AT 4:14PM**

**PRESENT:** Cr J. Drayton (Chair), Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas, Cr L. Dunn, Cr D. Marshall, Cr R. Scholes and Cr S. Ward.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Cr R. Mahajan, Mr D. Finnigan (General Manager), Ms S. Pope (Director – Planning & Environment), Ms S. Richards (Director - Community & Economy), Mr J. Hogan (Chief Financial Officer), Ms T. Folpp (Environmental Planning Officer), Mrs T. Ward (Environmental Planning Officer), Mrs M. Sandell-Hay (Governance Officer), Ms L. Ward (EA to Mayor & GM), Mr N. Mowbray (Policy Officer) and Mr K. Oldham (ITC Officer).

### **1 Acknowledgement of Country**

The Acknowledgement of Country was read by Cr D. Hartley.

### **2 Apologies**

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Douglas and Cr S. Ward that:

The apology for inability to attend the meeting submitted by Cr G. McNeill be ACCEPTED.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr L. Dunn, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

### **3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Hartley and Cr D. Marshall that:

The Minutes of the State Significant Development Committee Meeting held on **9 December, 2026**, a copy of which has been distributed to all members, be taken as read and confirmed as a true record.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr L. Dunn, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

### **4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Nil

### **5 Business Arising**

Nil



## 6 Business

### 6.1 **Bengalla Mine Modification 8 – Council Comments on the Modification Report**

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Marshall and Cr R. Scholes that:

The submission tabled at the Committee Meeting be endorsed by the State Significant Development Committee.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr L. Dunn, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

### 6.2 **Muswellbrook Solar Farm - Council Comments on the Waste Management Plan**

#### **MOTION:**

RECOMMENDED by Cr D. Marshall and Cr D. Douglas that:

The response provided in Attachment B is endorsed by the State Significant Development Committee.

THE MOTION WAS PUT TO THE VOTE AND LOST

#### **ALTERNATE MOTION**

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Marshall and Cr D. Douglas that:

The response provided in Attachment B is endorsed by the State Significant Development Committee subject to the consultation period with Councillors being extended by one week, to 17 February 2026, to allow Councillors to provide further comments to Staff.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr L. Dunn, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil



### 6.3 Muswellbrook Solar Farm - Council Comments on the Accommodation and Employment Strategy

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Hartley and Cr L. Dunn that:

The response tabled at the Committee meeting is endorsed by the State Significant Development Committee subject to the consultation period with Councillors being extended by one week, to 17 February 2026, to allow Councillors to provide further comments to Staff.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr L. Dunn, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

### 6.4 Activities Summary for State Significant Development and Energy Generation Projects

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr S. Ward and Cr C. Bailey that:

The information contained in this report be noted.

In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas, Cr D. Marshall, Cr L. Dunn, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes

Against: Nil

## 7 Adjournment into Closed Committee

Nil

## 8 Closed Committee

Nil

## 9 Resumption of Open Committee

Nil

## 10 Date of Next Meeting

10 March 2026

## 11 Closure

The meeting was declared closed at 4:25pm.

.....  
Mr D. Finnigan  
General Manager

.....  
Cr J. Drayton  
Chairperson



#### **4 Disclosure of Any Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

#### **5 Business Arising**

Nil



## 6 Business

### 6.1 Hunter Transmission Project - Council comments on the Submissions Report and Amendment Report

**Responsible Officer:** Director - Planning & Environment

**Author:** Sustainability Officer

**Community Strategic Plan:** 3 - *Thriving Economy*

Our community has opportunities for employment, business and training, and we drive investment into our economy to benefit our community.

**Delivery Program Goal:** Not Applicable

**Operational Plan Action:** 3.4.1.3 - Advocate on behalf of the community on matters related to State Significant Development and the renewable energy roll-out.

**Attachments:** 1. Hunter Transmission Project Council comments on the Submission [6.1.1 - 19 pages]

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#### PURPOSE

To finalise Council's submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in relation to the Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) Submissions Report and Amendment Report.

As the project still intends to construct Temporary Workers Accommodation off Hebden Road, without clear legacy outcomes for Muswellbrook Shire, the submission contains an objection to that aspect of the development.

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The State Significant Development Committee ENDORSES the submission provided in Attachment A.

**Moved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Seconded:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### REPORT

The HTP is Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) (SSI-70610456) and a Priority Transmission Infrastructure Project (PTIP) and will be determined by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

The HTP is required for energy security in New South Wales by connecting the 500kV circuit that distributes energy across the State.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the HTP was placed on public exhibition by DPHI between 27 August and 24 September 2025. Council made a written submission on the EIS, which was considered at the September meeting of Council's State Significant Development Committee. The resolution was:



A Submissions Report has been prepared by EnergyCo that responds to submissions made during the public exhibition period. As a result of submissions and stakeholder feedback, EnergyCo is proposing several amendments and refinements to the HTP. These changes are detailed in a separate Amendment Report. A copy of the Submissions Report and Amendment Report is available on the [Major Projects website](#).

EnergyCo and Council Staff met on several occasions to discuss the Submission Report and Staff provided an 'Issues Tracker' and Temporary Workforce Accommodation (TWA) Site Suitability Assessment to EnergyCo in January 2026.

Council has reviewed the Submissions Report and Amendment Report against several relevant documents, including its previous submissions and correspondence, and detailed comments are provided in Attachment A.

It is recommended that Council OBJECT to the following aspects of the Hunter Transmission Project:

1. The proposed Temporary Worker Accommodation village off Hebden Road is not compliant with Council's TWA Accommodation Policy as it will provide poor living arrangements for workers and minimal positive legacy for Muswellbrook Shire.
2. The lack of meaningful consultation from EnergyCo regarding the proposed Temporary Worker Accommodation on Hebden Road. A design is still not available to allow consideration of visual impact or the management of waste or sewage; and
3. Safety and capacity concerns for Hebden Road and the Hebden Road / New England Highway Intersection. Relatively minor changes to line marking at the intersection and location of the commencement of the overtaking lane on the NEH would improve safety for the general community and the contractors/employees working on the HTP project.

Further detail is provided in Attachment A.



**Enquiries**  
**Please ask for** Theresa Folpp  
**Direct** 02 6549 3700  
**Our reference** CM 26/27325

XX April 2026

**Kurtis Wathen**  
**Assessment Officer**  
**Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure**

Dear Mr Wathen

**Hunter Transmission Project – Muswellbrook Shire Council comments on the Submissions Report and Amendment Report**

Reference is made to the following:

- *'Hunter Transmission Project – Submissions Report (2026) (Submissions Report);*
- *'Hunter Transmission Project Amendment Report (2026) (Amendment Report);* and
- Request to provide comment on the Submissions Report via the Major Projects Portal.

The Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) is both a Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) project and a Priority Transmission Infrastructure Project (PTIP). The HTP is required for energy security in New South Wales by connecting the 500kV circuit that distributes energy across the State.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was placed on public exhibition by the Department of Planning, Housing and Industry between 27 August and 24 September 2025. During the public exhibition period, Muswellbrook Shire Council made a written submission dated 29 September 2025. A Submissions Report has been prepared that responds to submissions made during the public exhibition period. As a result of submissions and stakeholder feedback, EnergyCo is proposing several amendments and refinements to the HTP. These changes are detailed in a separate Amendment Report.

EnergyCo and Council Staff met on several occasions to discuss Council's submission on the EIS. Council staff provided an 'Issues Tracker' and Temporary Workforce Accommodation (TWA) Site Suitability Assessment to EnergyCo via email on 28 January 2026.

Council has reviewed the Submissions Report and Amendment Report against the following:

- Muswellbrook Shire Council's submission on the EIS dated 29 September 2025;
- Actions arising from the meeting held with EnergyCo on 12 November 2026;
- The completed *Issues Tracker* and associated documentation, including Council's requirements relating to the TWA and the New England Highway / Hebden Road intersection, provided to EnergyCo via email on 28 January 2026; and
- Correspondence received by EnergyCo via email dated 24 March 2026.

Having considered the above, Council has resolved to OBJECT to the following aspects of the Hunter Transmission Project:

1. The proposed Temporary Worker Accommodation village off Hebden Road is not compliant with Council's TWA Accommodation Policy as it will provide poor living arrangements for workers and minimal positive legacy for Muswellbrook Shire.

<b>Muswellbrook Shire Council</b>	(02) 6549 3700	@ council@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au
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muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au	muswellbrook shire council	ABN 86 864 180 944

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2. The lack of meaningful consultation from EnergyCo regarding the proposed Temporary Worker Accommodation on Hebden Road. A design is still not available to allow consideration of visual impact or the management of waste or sewage; and
3. Safety and capacity concerns for Hebden Road and the Hebden Road / New England Highway Intersection. Relatively minor changes to line marking at the intersection and location of the commencement of the overtaking lane on the NEH would improve safety for the general community and the contractors/employees working on the HTP project.

**Inadequate definition of key project components and inappropriate reliance on contractor discretion**

EnergyCo has repeatedly relied on the justification that resolution of issues associated with the HTP project will be 'subject to the preference of the Design and Construct Contractor(s)'. This position has been used to avoid providing indicative designs for the TWA and to defer decisions regarding augmented health and paramedic services in the local area.

This approach is not consistent with standard practice for State Significant Development, where key project features are expected to be clearly defined and assessed as part of the approval framework. Deferring these matters limits the ability of consent authorities and infrastructure providers to assess impacts, coordinate regional service planning, and apply effective conditions of consent.

**Lack of meaningful consultation regarding the proposed TWA on Hebden Road**

There has been no meaningful consultation with Council in relation to the proposed location of the TWA on Hebden Road. Council clearly stated its position of not supporting 'out-of-town camps' in May 2024 through its submission on the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the HTP. Despite this early advice, limited consultation occurred with Council regarding the proposed location of the TWA between May 2024 and the public exhibition of the EIS in September 2025.

Council considers that, had its position been appropriately considered at the SEARs stage, there would have been a substantial opportunity to investigate alternative locations consistent with Council's position.

Furthermore, while EnergyCo has committed on several occasions to working with Council to identify opportunities for alternative legacy outcomes that the HTP could support, Council is yet to see these opportunities clearly defined or progressed.

**Safety and capacity concerns at Hebden Road and the Hebden Road / New England Highway intersection**

The safety of the intersection of Hebden Road and the New England Highway, and the operation of Hebden Road, remains a significant concern.

A Road Safety Audit has not been undertaken for Hebden Road, and Council is not confident that the existing carriageway width is sufficient to safely accommodate traffic associated with the HTP project.

In relation to the intersection, it is currently utilised by the Australian Rail Track Corporation and existing landowners and businesses within the Lake Liddell and Hebden area, and is also

proposed to support other major projects, including infrastructure associated with the Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone and the New England Renewable Energy Zone Transmission Line. The proposed restriction by EnergyCo, of the right-turn movement out of Hebden Road for two periods through the day, does not adequately address the underlying safety issues of the intersection, will be difficult to police, and limits the attractiveness of Muswellbrook as a service centre for construction workers. Modification to line marking could deliver safety improvements for general community and workers/contractors engaged on the HTP project.

Table 1 provides a summary of key Council comments on the EIS, EnergyCo's response and source, and Council comments on the Submissions Report or Amendment Report (where appropriate).

**Table 1 – Summary of Council Comments on the EIS and How Addressed**

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
<b>Temporary Workforce Accommodation</b>			
1	The results of Council’s Temporary Workforce Accommodation (TWA) Site Suitability Assessment should be considered and adopted (where relevant).	<p>Correspondence received from EnergyCo via email dated 24/03/26 - A desktop suitability analysis was undertaken for the fourteen sites identified by Council. Two of these sites, both owned by Council (sites E and L), rated as medium suitability. However, the implications of relocating the TWA from Hebden Road to an alternate site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A modification to planning consent (at a minimum a 4-month delay to the project);</li> <li>• Additional cost of approximately \$5 million; and</li> <li>• Potential social licence issues with additional community consultation required.</li> </ul>	<p>During a meeting with EnergyCo in December 2025, Council Staff noted that Council could potentially progress development of a TWA in accordance with the <i>Guidelines for Construction Workers Accommodation (May 2025)</i> and lodge a development application under Part 13 of the <i>Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 2021</i>, supported by the relevant environmental and social studies (including community consultation). Staff understood that, once approved, proponents could reference this facility in their planning approvals (where appropriate) without the need to duplicate studies or seek modifications to project approvals.</p> <p>The Guidelines identify a clear approval pathway for construction workers accommodation and recognise that such accommodation may service multiple eligible development projects. On this basis, it is not clear why use of an alternative site would require a modification to the HTP planning consent, as the Part 13 Housing SEPP pathway was intended to avoid this.</p> <p>Based on the current level of information available, the environmental assessment undertaken for the current Hebden Road construction support site is unlikely to be sufficient. There is no indicative site layout or design, design details for access via Hebden Road have only just become available in the Amendment Report, and ecological investigations appear to be limited to spring-season flora track surveys only, with no multi-seasonal flora surveys or targeted fauna surveys undertaken (including BAM plot surveys, rapid data point collection, camera trapping or spotlighting).</p>
2	The TWA needs to meet the expectations of Council’s <i>Temporary Workforce Accommodation Policy (TWA Policy)</i> which requires a proponent to demonstrate clear	Correspondence received from EnergyCo via email dated 24/03/26 - While Hebden Road will be retained for TWA purposes and returned to the landowner in its original condition, EnergyCo is exploring alternative opportunities to deliver	EnergyCo has committed on several occasions to working with Muswellbrook Shire Council to identify opportunities for alternative legacy outcomes that the HTP could support. <b>Council is yet to see these opportunities clearly defined or progressed.</b>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
	<p>legacy outcomes for the Muswellbrook community.</p> <p>The SIA describes the TWA as being ‘relatively isolated from the broader Muswellbrook community’, which is inconsistent with the TWA Policy.</p>	<p>legacy outcomes. This may include supporting enabling infrastructure (e.g. roads, electricity, water and sewer) at a Council-identified site to support short-term TWA use and future housing, including potential modular dwellings for longer-term social or affordable housing.</p> <p>EnergyCo is committed to working with Council to deliver meaningful legacy outcomes while ensuring the critical timeline for construction of the HTP is maintained.</p>	
3	<p>If the TWA remains on Hebden Road, EnergyCo must investigate opportunities to deliver a long-term legacy outcome that complements the adjacent Lake Liddell Recreation Area (Rec Area).</p> <p>Additional information in relation to the Rec Area was provided to EnergyCo via email on 19 November 2025.</p>	<p>EnergyCo recognises the importance of exploring opportunities to create positive housing and economic outcomes for local communities.</p> <p>EnergyCo is involved in ongoing discussions with councils regarding opportunities to provide legacy housing across EnergyCo’s portfolio of projects.</p>	Not addressed. See response to Comment 2.
4	<p>If the TWA remains on Hebden Road, the Proponent should demonstrate that water supply and wastewater infrastructure is designed to permanent standards and sized appropriately to support the site’s ongoing legacy use.</p>	<p>The site of the construction support site and temporary worker accommodation at Hebden Road would be leased temporarily from AGL for the construction of the project (the land is not owned by EnergyCo). This means that there would not be an opportunity to repurpose the site once construction is complete. As such, the temporary worker accommodation infrastructure is not currently proposed to be designed or certified as permanent infrastructure.</p>	Not addressed. See response to Comment 2.
5	<p>If the TWA remains on Hebden Road, the Proponent must assess shared use between other projects and confirm whether 300 workers is optimal or if a larger capacity (e.g. up to 500 workers) would better reduce the need for additional TWAs.</p>	<p>EnergyCo is seeking planning approval for up to 300 workers. The capacity of the construction support site/worker accommodation will be further refined by the appointed construction contractors and will be bound by the lease agreement between AGL and EnergyCo.</p>	Noted. See response to Comment 6.

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
6	The TWA Policy requires proposals to assess potential market impacts, including oversupply, below-market pricing, and post-2030 workforce changes that may adversely affect existing accommodation providers, particularly in the Muswellbrook CBD and surrounds.	The project’s approach to use dedicated temporary accommodation rather than relying on local housing is consistent with Muswellbrook Shire Council’s policy objectives to prevent oversupply, below-market pricing and long-term underutilised infrastructure.	TWA is required due to local shortages of short-term housing. To be consistent with the TWA Policy and to appropriately manage potential market impacts (including oversupply and post-construction workforce changes), <b>Council requests that any approval for the Hebden Road TWA be limited to accommodation of workers associated with construction of the HTP only. Any proposal to accommodate workers from other projects should be prohibited.</b>
7	Section 5.1.2 of the Economic Assessment states that ‘the worker accommodation operator would have certain targets in relation to procurement of local goods and services. However, there may be a limit to local procurement because of local unavailability of required inputs’.  Council requests that a draft TWA Management Plan be provided in the Submissions Report (or earlier) for comment prior to project approval and that it includes commitments supporting local procurement (on-site catering, laundry, bathroom).	EnergyCo is unable to provide a temporary worker accommodation management plan ahead of the selection of construction contractors for the HTP.	While Council acknowledges that the EIS states that ‘the worker accommodation operator would have certain targets in relation to procurement of local goods and services’, and that a TWA Management Plan is not yet available, <b>any approval should set local procurement targets and require a plan demonstrating how they will be achieved.</b> Council has provided an example condition of development consent in Comment 14 that may address local procurement.
8	Council considers aesthetic appearance of TWA relevant for worker wellbeing and community perception and requests an indicative design of the TWA be included in the Submissions Report.	EnergyCo is unable to provide a design of the construction support site/temporary worker accommodation located at Hebden Road. This is because the design will be subject to the preference of the design and construct contractor(s) yet to be appointed for the HTP.	Council does not support the statement that project features will be ‘subject to the preference of contractors’. This is not consistent with standard practice for State Significant Development, where key project features are clearly defined and assessed as part of the approval framework, rather than allowed to be at the contractor’s discretion.
9	Anticipated arrival schedules and duration of stays should be provided to determine the appropriate scale, timing, and potential for shared use of TWA facilities across the Shire.	Detailed workforce metrics (including the final average and peak numbers, arrival schedules, and duration of individual stays) would be dependent on the construction methodologies and scheduling decisions made by the appointed design and construct contractor(s).	Noted. See response to Comment 6.

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
10	<p>In accordance with Clause 4.2.2 of the TWA Policy... 'the proponent will need to demonstrate how onsite water supply systems (including impact on council potable water processing capacity) and on-site sewerage will be managed'. This should be clarified in the Submissions Report.</p>	<p>Potable water would be sourced from Singleton Council potable water supplies and/or from Hunter Water. The updated project description, included in Appendix A (Updated project description) of the Amendment Report has noted the following additional information with regards to wastewater treatment:</p> <p><i>Wastewater management at temporary worker accommodation facilities and construction support sites would be provided by an on-site treatment system. The proposed treatment system would be a contained system and may include mechanical screening, biological and chemical treatment, filtration and disinfection. Waste solids produced by the treatment system would be emptied by a licensed contractor and disposed of at a nearby council operated wastewater treatment plant or other appropriately licensed facility.</i></p> <p><i>Treated effluent suitable for reuse for construction purposes, which is anticipated to include dust suppression and earthworks conditioning, would be stored in sealed tanks. The project does not propose to discharge treated wastewater into the receiving environment.</i></p> <p><i>Following completion of construction activities, all temporary wastewater management infrastructure would be decommissioned and removed from the project impact area.</i></p>	<p>Confirmation is required that potable and wastewater truck movements were considered in the traffic impact assessment.</p> <p>As a private drinking water supply is proposed any approval should include a condition that requires drinking water suppliers to have a Quality Assurance Program (QAP) that complies with the <i>Public Health Regulation 2022</i> and that the Proponent is to prepare a QAP for on-site drinking water in accordance with the <i>Public Health Regulation 2022</i> and obtain approval for the Drinking Water Quality Assurance Program from the local Public Health Unit (NSW Health).</p> <p>Wastewater - Council &amp; NSW Health are only able to accredit and approve domestic systems catering for under 2000L/day. It is likely a system to cater for 300 people will require an Environment Protection Licence.</p>
<b>Current short-term accommodation availability</b>			
11	<p>Section 4.3.7 of the EIS states that 'some workers may be required to be housed in short-term accommodation locally prior to the establishment of temporary worker</p>	<p>Cumulative impacts associated with accommodation and labour demand will be managed in accordance with the social impact</p>	<p>Council reiterates that multiple projects (mining, infrastructure and renewable energy based) are proposing arrangements that place pressure on both short- and long-term accommodation within the Muswellbrook Shire. In the absence of a coordinated</p>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
	<p>accommodation within construction support sites, however this is anticipated to be during pre-construction minor works and early works within the construction program and is not anticipated to lead to material impacts on local housing affordability or access.'</p> <p>There is currently limited capacity in Muswellbrook for any temporary worker accommodation, and this situation will worsen as other projects in the area commence construction. It would be useful to know the likely number to be housed in the short-term e.g. below 50.</p>	<p>management plan and HTP Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan.</p>	<p>workforce accommodation approach, unacceptable pressure on local rental vacancy rates and affordability may arise.</p> <p>As a minimum, Council requests that a Workforce Accommodation Strategy be prepared and implemented in circumstances where a TWA is not available for use when construction activity commences.</p> <p>Council will request the following condition of development:</p> <p><i>Any Accommodation Strategy, prepared in consultation with Council, is to include details in relation to the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) Demonstrate how accommodation demand will be managed during periods of high demand e.g during key regional events;</i></li> <li><i>b) Document an approach to informing regional accommodation providers of project workforce accommodation demands including anticipated timing;</i></li> <li><i>c) Enable the coordinated placement of the workforce in short-term accommodation throughout the Shire;</i></li> <li><i>d) Keep key stakeholders informed of predicted project accommodation demands with six-month lead times preferable; and</i></li> <li><i>e) Contain a monitoring framework incorporating 'triggers' in decisions about additional accommodation options.</i></li> </ul> <p>The proponent for the Muswellbrook Solar Farm is currently investigating short- and long-term accommodation options within the local housing market for a peak construction workforce period of Dec 2026 to June 2027, the Muswellbrook BESS is looking to commence construction in Feb 2027, and the Muswellbrook Bypass is also planned to commence construction in Feb 2027.</p>
<b>Health</b>			
12	<p>Section 9.4.3 of the EIS notes stakeholder concerns regarding existing capacity limitations in local health and emergency services. Section 5.6.6 also acknowledges that access to</p>	<p>Since exhibition of the EIS, DPHI released the revised <i>Social Impact Assessment Guideline</i> for State Significant Projects, including an updated significance matrix. Using this matrix, the impact</p>	<p>At a meeting with EnergyCo on 30 March 2026, Council Staff sought clarification as to whether on-site health and paramedic personnel would be provided to support the workforce at the proposed TWA. EnergyCo advised that this would be at the</p>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
	<p>emergency and health services in Muswellbrook and Singleton is constrained and that any influx of additional workers could affect service accessibility for local residents.</p> <p>The Proponent proposes first aid capability at the Hebden TWA, with Muswellbrook Hospital identified for higher-order care. However, both Muswellbrook and Singleton have fewer GPs per capita than the NSW average, and local GPs also support hospital services. Consistent with Council's TWA Policy, the Proponent should enter into agreements with local medical centres to support additional staffing capability where required.</p>	<p>rating for reduced access to health and community services due to the construction workforce changed from medium (negative) to low (negative) before mitigation, with the residual impact remaining low (negative). This outcome relies on mitigation measure S07, requiring preparation of a Temporary Worker Accommodation Management Plan in consultation with councils and health and emergency service providers, including provision for dedicated health and paramedic services to reduce demand on regional services.</p>	<p>discretion of the Design and Construct Contractor. Council does not support this position.</p>
<b>Community and Employment Benefit Program</b>			
13	<p>Section 6.5 of the EIS notes that consultation to inform the Community and Employment Benefit Program is expected to commence in 2026 and that the program's financial benefits cannot yet be evaluated due to limited detail on funding priorities and quantum.</p> <p>Council is concerned that, without this information, the Program cannot be assessed for equity across affected LGAs. Given that the HTP spans multiple LGAs with differing impact levels, and Muswellbrook Shire hosts multiple large-scale projects, a hybrid model combining a base allocation with impact-weighted adjustments may provide a fair and transparent framework.</p>	<p>EnergyCo is expecting to commence consultation with relevant communities in 2026 to inform the design and delivery of the community and employment benefit program in the Hunter-Central Coast region that will ensure benefits are shared with the local communities hosting the renewable energy transition, including those hosting the HTP.</p> <p>The community and employment benefit program will be developed in accordance with the Regional Communities Consultation Guide (NSW Premiers Department 2025) and the Grants Administration Guide (NSW Cabinet Office 2024).</p> <p>EnergyCo will work closely with Muswellbrook Shire Council to shape the community and employment benefit program.</p>	<p>Noted. Council looks forward to being involved in the community and employment benefit program.</p>
<b>Social and Employment</b>			

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
14	<p>Council notes the commitment to partner with local organisations, including TAFE NSW, to deliver targeted employment and training initiatives. Council encourages a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and youth to reduce reliance on non-local workers and support apprenticeship opportunities. The EIS also acknowledges the need for further engagement with local businesses. Council supports planned engagement with Aboriginal and local business representatives and encourages inclusion of the Muswellbrook and Denman Chambers of Commerce and the Sandy Hollow Progress Association. Council welcomes the commitment to prepare an industry and Aboriginal participation plan, including a target of 2.5% local procurement from Aboriginal businesses, with a stretch target of 10%.</p>	<p>Muswellbrook Shire Council’s support for the social and employment commitments for the project is acknowledged, including the focus on providing opportunities for local and Aboriginal businesses and people to be employed.</p>	<p>Noted. Council will request an appropriate condition of development consent from DPHI requiring an Employment and Procurement Strategy be prepared in consultation with Council, commensurate with similar types of projects, to ensure commitments are maintained, implemented and monitored throughout the construction phase.</p> <p>Council requests the following condition of development:</p> <p><i>An Employment and Procurement Strategy, prepared in consultation with Council, is to include details in relation to the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>a) Options for prioritising the employment and training of local workers and First Nations people during construction;</i></li> <li><i>b) Include a local procurement strategy; and</i></li> <li><i>c) Include a program to monitor and review the effectiveness of the strategy during construction</i></li> </ul>
<b>Traffic</b>			
15	<p><b>Section 138 Permit</b> Where a Section 138 Permit is required for works on a public road, Staff prefer that the principal entity submit the application, as this approach has proven to be more effective than relying on contractors.</p>	<p>Approvals under section 138 of the Roads Act are only required where works are proposed on classified roads or Crown roads by virtue of section 5 of Schedule 2 of the Roads Act. Irrespective, EnergyCo will continue to work with Muswellbrook Shire Council on the proposed design of the intersection upgrades on unclassified roads where Muswellbrook Shire Council is the relevant road authority.</p>	<p>Whilst Council acknowledges Section 5 of Schedule 2 of the Roads Act 1997, there remain important considerations around road safety, design standards, and responsibility for road impacts. Any required road upgrades still need to be designed to an appropriate safety standard, and proponents should be responsible for maintaining Council roads under a suitable maintenance agreement, rather than these costs or risks being borne by ratepayers. There are also broader safety considerations associated with construction traffic, including interactions with school buses and general road users.</p> <p>At a minimum, a Section 138 Permit application (or agreement) will be required to address the following works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dilapidation surveys and maintenance of Hebden Road, Thomas Mitchell Drive, Edderton Road, and Pikes Gully Road; and</li> </ul>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of the site access to the construction support site on Hebden Road.</li> </ul> <p>Council recommends that a Section 138 Permit application or agreement be submitted / negotiated as soon as practicable, and prior to project approval, to confirm requirements for dilapidation surveys and the preparation of a Road Maintenance Management Plan, which will require endorsement by Council resolution.</p>
16	<p><b>Hebden Road / New England Highway Intersection</b></p> <p>Section 5.3.2.1 of the EIS and Table 8.1 of the TTA indicate the New England Highway / Hebden Road North intersection currently operates at LoS A but is forecast to operate at LoS F by 2028 due to future base traffic conditions rather than construction traffic. Given the intersection would fail because of future base traffic conditions rather than as a result of construction traffic no upgrades are proposed, although construction traffic would be restricted to left-out movements in the AM peak and right-in movements in the PM peak.</p> <p>Council recommends a Road Safety Audit be undertaken for this intersection and along Hebden Road between the New England Highway and the site, including assessment of the right-turn movement onto the New England Highway and cumulative impacts associated with the HCC REZ Infrastructure Project.</p>	<p>Further assessment has been completed as part of the Appendix H (Revised traffic and transport impact assessment) of the Amendment Report in response to submission. For the Hebden Road/New England Highway intersection, it is acknowledged that the intersection is forecast to perform at LOS F in the weekday AM and PM peak hours in 2028 due to a small number of right turning movements (less than 3) from Hebden Road onto the New England Highway. The intersection would continue to perform at LOS F during the project construction and in the cumulative scenarios due to these future base conditions.</p> <p>To minimise the impacts during the network peak hour, mitigation measure TT3 has been amended to restrict HTP construction traffic to left out turns only in the AM peak (6-7am) and the PM peak (4.45-5:45pm) so as to not contribute to the delays. Variable message signs would also be implemented to communicate to road users of the potential delays at this intersection.</p>	<p>The intersection of the New England Highway and Hebden Road is currently utilised by Australian Rail Track Corporation and existing landowners and businesses in the Lake Liddell and Hebden area, and is also proposed to support multiple major projects, including the Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone infrastructure and the New England Renewable Energy Zone Transmission Line.</p> <p>Council does not support mitigation measure TT3 because it relies on short-term operational restrictions, does not adequately address the underlying safety and capacity constraints, and fails to deliver strategic legacy outcomes that would support cumulative traffic demands, long-term network performance, and future economic activity in the Lake Liddell precinct. It is also unclear how enforcement of TT3 will be achieved.</p> <p>A potential minor treatment for the intersection could be achieved through adjusting line marking to provide a sheltered right-turn lane (or modified seagull) for vehicles exiting Hebden Road and entering the New England Highway (see Appendix A Figure 1 and Figure 2). Similar treatments have been implemented at other intersections in the area, including Broke Road, and would improve safety and operational efficiency for both construction traffic and local community, particularly visitors to the GJs by the Lake facility.</p>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
			<p>Historically TfNSW has raised concerns about the absence of a safe acceleration and merging opportunity for northbound movements from this intersection towards Muswellbrook, given the high operating speeds on the New England Highway.</p> <p>The changes would also lengthen the right turn bay into Hebden Road improving queuing capacity for HTP construction vehicles, and move the commencement of the overtaking lane to the west of the intersection, improving safety for road users.</p>
17	<p><b>Condition of Hebden Road</b> Section 5.3.7 of the TTA indicates up to 189 daily two-way vehicle movements associated with the Hebden Road construction support site, representing approximately 38% of existing traffic volumes (~500 vehicles per day). Hebden Road is a rural sealed road of variable standard, with narrow sections, limited shoulders, and inconsistent linemarking. It is also periodically used by ARTC during rail shutdown maintenance, when traffic volumes increase. Council notes that a Road Safety Audit undertaken for the HCC REZ may be relevant to this Project and should be considered in preparing the Traffic Management Plan in consultation with Council.</p>	<p>EnergyCo acknowledge the RSA completed for the HCC REZ transmission project, and the concerns about the condition of Hebden Road. As required by mitigation measure TT1, a traffic management plan will be prepared in consultation with Muswellbrook Shire Council. This will include any required site-specific traffic control measures and required road safety controls.</p>	<p>As stated in the Traffic Impact Assessment for the Hunter Central Coast Infrastructure Project, 'Hebden Road is narrow in sections, and it may be difficult for two heavy vehicles to pass each other while travelling close to the posted speed limit of 80km, representing safety concerns'.</p> <p>Council requests a Road Safety Audit undertaken by an independent Road Safety Auditor accredited with TfNSW registration.</p>
18	<p><b>Use of Thomas Mitchell Drive and Edderton Road</b> Whilst a Safe Intersection Site Distance Assessment has been undertaken in the Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) for Edderton Road, the use of Edderton Road and Thomas Mitchell Drive and impact from the Project is unclear and requires clarification.</p>	<p>Edderton Road and Thomas Mitchell Drive would be used by light and heavy vehicles during transmission line strengthening and restringing works outside the peak construction traffic period, with volumes of approximately 10 light vehicles and five heavy vehicles per peak hour. Section 5.3.2 of Appendix H (Revised Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment) concludes the project would not affect the operation of the New England Highway / Thomas Mitchell Drive, Denman Road / Thomas Mitchell Drive, or</p>	<p>While the HTP proposes relatively low traffic volumes (approximately 10 light vehicles and five heavy vehicles per peak hour over a limited construction period), the corridor remains strategically important for cumulative regional freight and construction traffic. Council therefore requests clarification as to whether the project has considered the relevance of the Thomas Mitchell Drive corridor planning framework and any associated maintenance or upgrade coordination requirements as part of the broader cumulative traffic context.</p>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
		Denman Road / Edderton Road intersections, the intersections are SISD compliance and no upgrades are required.	
19	<p><b>McDonalds Road / Edderton Road Intersection</b></p> <p>The safety of the access point from Edderton Road to the 500 kV transmission line should be clarified.</p>	<p>The existing access track from Edderton Road (McDonalds Road) is a private road. Given the low HTP construction traffic volumes, no turn treatments are required. The intersection is SISD non-compliant, and additional controls (e.g. temporary speed reductions) would be implemented under mitigation measure TT2.</p>	<p>Council requires further detail on how the identified intersection non-compliance will be managed, including a risk-based assessment (e.g. <i>Safer by Design</i>) demonstrating that proposed mitigation measures are satisfactory. Council does not support reliance on reduced speed limits, as this section of road already has a reduced posted speed due to a history of crash clusters associated with vertical and horizontal geometry, but driver compliance is low due to remoteness of the location.</p> <p>The Proponent should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate use of the nearby constructed intersection for the Mount Arthur Mine, particularly for heavy vehicles; and</li> <li>• Clarify the types of heavy vehicles proposed and demonstrate that the intersection can safely accommodate the largest design vehicle movements</li> </ul> <p>Council will request a condition of development consent prohibiting project-related access to Edderton Road from the Golden Highway.</p>
20	<p><b>Site Access Point Upgrade</b></p> <p>Staff note the proposed Hebden Road / Construction Support Site access (I-48), including localised widening for turning movements and operation as a BAL/BAR intersection.</p> <p>Any upgrades should be undertaken in accordance with Austroads standards.</p>	<p>For the new site access to the construction support site, this intersection would be designed in accordance with the relevant Austroads guidelines (where relevant) as a basic left turn and basic right turn intersection and to accommodate the required vehicle swept paths. The strategic concept design for this intersection is provided in Appendix D of Appendix H (Revised traffic and transport impact assessment) of the Amendment Report. The detailed design of the intersection would occur in consultation with Muswellbrook Shire Council.</p>	<p>Council notes that the Strategic Concept Design provided in Appendix D of Appendix H (Revised traffic and transport impact assessment) of the Amendment Report has not been reviewed by Council's engineers as the design will be reviewed and approved through the Section 138 permit process. The Strategic Concept Design does not fetter Council's ability to request reasonable changes to the final design.</p> <p>It is unclear why the intersection at the construction support site on Hebden Road allows for a right turn out onto Hebden Road when the EIS and Amendment Report only allows traffic to turn left onto Hebden Road.</p>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
21	<p><b>Dilapidation and Road Maintenance</b></p> <p>Staff note the EIS commitment (Section 5.3.7 of the TTA) that the construction contractor will undertake pre-condition (dilapidation) surveys and routine inspections of local construction routes, particularly where councils have identified pavement concerns, to maintain safe access during construction in consultation with the relevant road authority.</p> <p>Dilapidation surveys should include the condition of pavement, drainage structures, and other road-related infrastructure.</p> <p>The principal entity will need to prepare a Maintenance Management Plan in consultation with Council for the use of local roads.</p>	<p>Pre-construction road dilapidation surveys and routine inspections will be completed along all nominated construction routes on local roads (mitigation measure TT6).</p>	<p>As part of the Section 138 approval (or agreement), pre and post construction dilapidation surveys will be required, to Council's satisfaction (see response to Comment 15).</p> <p>A Road Maintenance Management Plan will also be required, prepared in accordance with the Transport for NSW QA Specification M3 Routine Services.</p> <p>For the avoidance of any doubt, the Proponent will be required to maintain all construction affected roads (Hebden Road, Thomas Mitchell Drive, Edderton Road, and Pikes Gully Road).</p>
22	<p><b>Cumulative Construction Traffic</b></p> <p>Where construction overlaps with other projects (e.g. HCC REZ Infrastructure or ARTC works), the Proponent must liaise with relevant parties to agree on dilapidation responsibilities and report outcomes to Council. Council relies on pre- and post-construction surveys to seek road repairs and has no mechanism to apportion damage between multiple projects.</p>	<p>The updated cumulative impact assessment undertaken in the Amendment Report, identifies all relevant projects potential to cause cumulative traffic impacts. The project will continue to liaise with Muswellbrook Shire Council concerning the construction access routes and will work with Muswellbrook Shire Council to resolve how road dilapidation would be reported and addressed.</p>	<p>See response to Comment 15 in relation to submitting a Section 138 approval (or agreement) and EnergyCo assuming maintenance of Hebden Road.</p>
23	<p><b>Pikes Gully Road</b></p> <p>It appears only a small section of Pikes Gully Road within the Muswellbrook LGA which will require dilapidation surveys only. No upgrades or new intersections are proposed; however, this requires clarification.</p>	<p>Various treatments would be required at the intersection of Pikes Gully Road/new access road to the Pikes Gully Road construction support site in Howick (Singleton LGA).</p>	<p>Council is interested in understanding impacts within the Muswellbrook LGA. As stated in comments on the EIS, it appears that only a small section of Pikes Gully Road within the Muswellbrook LGA will be utilised for the Project.</p>
24	<p><b>Traffic Management Plan</b></p>	<p>A traffic management plan will be implemented for the project and will be prepared in consultation with Muswellbrook Shire Council.</p>	<p>Noted. Council will request an appropriate condition of development consent from DPHI.</p>

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
	Any Traffic Management Plan (TMP) should be developed in consultation with Council, prior to commencement of construction.		
<b>Visual</b>			
25	Council is concerned about the cumulative visual impacts to motorists travelling along the Golden Highway toward Denman, particularly the combined effect of coal mines and energy infrastructure on the perception of the Shire. In its EIS submission, Council requested assessment of northbound views along the Golden Highway, including existing and potential visual treatments to mitigate cumulative impacts.	Views from the Golden Highway were assessed in Section 6.2 of Technical Report 3 (LVIA), including Viewpoint 3, which represents northbound motorists toward Denman from approximately 1.4 km away. The photomontage indicates the transmission towers would be visible but generally not prominent and likely to be missed by the casual observer.	No transmission towers are shown in Viewpoint 3, as they are either not visible from this location or have been omitted from the photomontage.
<b>Resource Recovery, By-products and the Circular Economy</b>			
26	A Resource Recovery and Materials Management Plan is to be prepared in consultation with the relevant authority and Council's Waste Operations unit. A copy should be provided to Council outlining anticipated material streams, volumes, classifications, disposal or processing methods, and expected delivery timing.	The project will prepare a waste management and resource recovery plan prior to construction (see mitigation measure WM1). the type and approximate volume of waste streams will be refined as the design and construction methods are finalised. These estimates will inform discussions with Muswellbrook Shire Council.	Noted. See response to Comment 28 in relation to commercial quantities of waste.
27	Opportunities exist to incorporate recycled materials in the project (e.g. recycled steel, aggregates, cement substitutes, aluminium, and plastics), and these should be considered in the Submissions Report. Council notes no targets are proposed for recycled material use, with construction assumed to rely on virgin materials, which is inconsistent with the objectives of the energy transition. Council also notes that other State agencies, such as Transport for NSW, apply minimum	While the EIS commits to applying circular economy principles and the waste hierarchy, it does not specify minimum recycled content targets for construction materials. These details will be developed through the waste management and resource recovery plan in consultation with the NSW EPA and relevant councils.	Noted. Council will request an appropriate condition of development consent from DPHI requiring minimum (or consideration of) recycled content targets for construction materials to support the National Waste Policy target of 80% resource recovery rate by 2030.

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
	recycled material inclusion standards in procurement policies.		
28	Proponents often state that materials will ‘be recycled’ without identifying facilities. Given the expected recycling volumes, Council requests proponents nominate the receiving facilities and confirm their capacity to manage the additional material.	While the EIS commits to applying circular economy principles and the waste hierarchy, it does not identify the exact facilities where recycling would occur.	<p>Council reiterates its comments on the EIS.</p> <p>Council’s Waste and Recycling Facility is intended for household-scale waste quantities only. While some HTP materials may be received, Council does not undertake processing or recycling on site. Use of the facility would result in it being utilised as a stockpile area, which may place additional financial and operational burdens on Council, including management, handling, supervision, and impacts on facility capacity.</p> <p>The Regional Major Infrastructure Studies for the New England Renewable Energy Zone identified that local government capacity constraints, including staffing, funding, equipment, and expertise limitations, will restrict the ability to effectively manage increased waste volumes without strategic support and coordination.</p>
<b>Water</b>			
29	Council engineers have raised concerns regarding the capacity of the Council managed water treatment facilities, that generate potable water, to support the cumulative demands of all temporary construction workforce projections.	Potable water will be sourced from Singleton.	<p>Noted. No further comment.</p> <p>Council will continue discussions with EnergyCo in relation to cumulative water demand.</p>
30	Staff are developing a strategy to enable project proponents to use recycled water for construction activities where potable water is not required.	EnergyCo has consulted Muswellbrook Shire Council regarding the supply of non-potable water for the project and will consider this into the detailed design stage of the HTP.	Council is not aware of consultation directly related to the use of recycled water but welcome these discussions.
31	Section 4.3.10 of the EIS states that Council-owned stormwater lines will require adjustment, likely alongside Hebden Road; however, this requires clarification.	Appendix B of the Amendment Report indicates Council-owned stormwater lines are not expected to be impacted by the HTP; however, this will be confirmed during detailed design in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including Council if required.	Noted. No further comment.

No.	Key Council Comments on EIS	EnergyCo Response*	Council comments on the Submissions Report
<b>Other</b>			
32	Technical Report 19 (Economic Impact Assessment) does not include the Muswellbrook Bypass in the cumulative projects table (p.48), despite construction expected to commence in late 2027.	The Muswellbrook Bypass has been included as a relevant cumulative project in Section 5.20 of Chapter 5 (Assessment of Impacts) of the Amendment Report.	Noted. No further comment.
33	-	-	In relation to the Amendment Report, the only changes in the Muswellbrook Shire were at the Bayswater Substation, however as demonstrated in Figure 1.1 of the Amendment Report, these do not impact Muswellbrook Shire Council as the substation is on the Shire boundary and EnergyCo will still be accessing the site using the same roads. Hence, Council has no comment on this change to the HTP.

\*Response provided in the Submissions Report unless otherwise specified.

Council appreciates the opportunity to provide input and would be pleased to provide additional information if requested. Should you need to discuss the above, please contact Theresa Folpp, Environmental Planning Officer on 02 6549 3700 or email [council@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au).

Yours faithfully

Sharon Pope  
**Director Environment and Planning**

**APPENDIX A – INDICATIVE LINE MARKING AMENDMENTS FOR HEBDEN ROAD / NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY INTERSECTION**



**Figure 1 - Existing Intersection Line Marking (Hebden Road / NEH)**



**Figure 2 - Proposed Line Marking Treatment for Intersection (Hebden Road / NEH)**



## 6.2 Muswellbrook Solar Farm - Revised Accommodation and Employment Strategy

**Responsible Officer:** Director - Planning & Environment

**Author:** {Environmental Planning Officer}

**Community Strategic Plan:** 3 - *Thriving Economy*

Our community has access to regional services, infrastructure and facilities.

Our community has opportunities for employment, business and training and we drive investment into our economy to benefit our community.

**Delivery Program Goal:** 3.6.1 - Deliver improved economic outcomes on mining and energy impacted lands.

**Operational Plan Action:** 3.4.1.3 - Advocate on behalf of the community on matters related to State Significant Development and the renewable energy roll-out.

**Attachments:**

1. Attachment A - Muswellbrook Solar Farm Response to Submission Table Accommoda [6.2.1 - 5 pages]
2. Attachment B - Revised Muswellbrook Solar Farm Accommodation and Employment Strategy [6.2.2 - 47 pages]

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### PURPOSE

To consider Council's comments on the Muswellbrook Solar Farm's Accommodation and Employment Strategy.

### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The State Significant Development Committee:

1. Notes the responses in the Table that is Attachment A;
2. Supports the revised Accommodation and Employment Strategy for Muswellbrook Solar Farm subject to the commitments in that Strategy being fulfilled; and
3. Advises that the use of accommodation built for the Hunter Transmission Project (HTP), if built in Hebden Rd, is not supported by Council due to traffic safety and lack of legacy outcomes. This Temporary Worker Accommodation will only be used for the HTP project then decommissioned.

**Moved:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seconded:** \_\_\_\_\_

### REPORT

The Muswellbrook Solar Farm is an approved large scale solar photovoltaic (PV) generation facility and associated infrastructure including a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), located adjacent to the former Muswellbrook Coal Mine.



Muswellbrook Solar Farm was required to prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy to explain how they intended to accommodate and employ their workers, especially considering the number of projects planned for Muswellbrook Shire.

A draft Strategy was reported to the State Significant Development Committee on 10 Feb 2026, and the resolution was:

*RESOLVED on the motion of Cr D. Hartley and Cr L. Dunn that:*

*The response tabled at the Committee meeting is endorsed by the State Significant Development Committee subject to the consultation period with Councillors being extended by one week, to 17 February 2026, to allow Councillors to provide further comments to Staff.*

*In Favour: Cr J. Drayton, Cr D. Hartley, Cr C. Bailey, Cr D. Douglas,  
Cr D. Marshall, Cr L. Dunn, Cr S. Ward and Cr R. Scholes*

*Against: Nil*

A revised Strategy was submitted on 3 March 2026.

Staff have reviewed the updated document and have prepared a table showing Council's original comments, the response from Muswellbrook Solar, and Council Staff comments to these responses.

The peak construction workforce is currently predicted to fall in the period December 2026 to June 2027. This is expected to be before the construction workforce for the Muswellbrook bypass project becomes significant.

The current Accommodation and Employment Strategy relies heavily on accommodation at Lofberg Ct and Tindale St, however there is no agreement in place for the use of these facilities due to the current stage the project. Muswellbrook Solar has given a commitment to monitor the accommodation situation and review the Strategy monthly once construction commences.

The current Accommodation and Employment Strategy has stated that they will consider using the Hunter Transmission Project Temporary Worker Accommodation (TWA) if it is available. There are two issues with this option:

- It is unlikely to be constructed when the Muswellbrook Solar Farm commences construction; and
- If built in Hebden Rd, its use by other projects is not supported due to traffic safety and lack of legacy outcomes. This TWA will only be used for the HTP project then decommissioned.



Muswellbrook Accommodation and Employment Strategy – Ox2 response to Council comments on the AES dated 20 February 2026

No.	Muswellbrook Council Comments	Ox2 Commitment	Staff Response																																												
1	<p>The total construction workforce, including the proportion of local and non-local hires, and the associated accommodation requirements are unclear. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 3.1 of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy states that 'Construction of the project is estimated to require a peak workforce of approximately 79 workers of which 64% are expected to be local workers'. However, Figure 3.1 shows a peak construction workforce of 220; and</li> <li>Section 4 of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy states that 'construction is estimated to require a peak workforce of approximately 79 workers of which 36% are likely to be non-local workers ... accommodation will potentially be required for approximately 36% of the project workforce'. However, Figure 4.1 shows that 79 beds are required.</li> </ul> <p>Given these inconsistencies, Council considers that the total construction workforce, the proportion of local and non-local hires, and the associated accommodation requirements have not yet been clearly defined.</p> <p><b>Council requests that, closer to the commencement of construction, once the final workforce numbers, employment proportions, and accommodation arrangements are confirmed, this information be reported back to Council for review and comment.</b></p>	<p>Numbers of peak workforce and peak accommodation requirements have been corrected throughout the updated AES.</p> <p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>220 total peak workforce</li> <li>27% non local workforce – approximately 60 non local workers.</li> <li>Increased peak timeframe to reduce impact.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Table 1: Workforce breakdown at construction peak</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Workforce Category</th> <th>Personnel</th> <th>Basis</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Local workforce (within 50 km, incl. Singleton and Scone)</td> <td>160</td> <td>Based on labour hire discussions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-local workforce (requiring accommodation)</td> <td>60</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total peak workforce</b></td> <td><b>220</b></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Table 2: Proposed accommodation arrangements for up to 60 non-local workers</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Employer</th> <th>Personnel</th> <th>Accommodation Type</th> <th>No. of Properties</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Principal Contractor</td> <td>15</td> <td>Purpose-built worker accommodation</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principal Contractor</td> <td>9</td> <td>Private residential accommodation (families)</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principal Contractor</td> <td>1</td> <td>Private residential accommodation (specialist)</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principal Contractor</td> <td>15</td> <td>Other accommodation e.g. Brightway/Brightlands (subject to agreement)</td> <td>Not specified</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ox2 Employees</td> <td>Not specified</td> <td>Brightway/Brightlands</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Subcontractors</td> <td>Up to 36</td> <td>Brightway/Brightlands, Brook Village (subject to agreement), shared accommodation, or hotels where required.</td> <td>Not specified</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td><b>76</b></td> <td></td> <td><b>15</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Staff note that there are still some discrepancies with the total number of workers e.g in-text says 60 (Table 1) but when added together, totals 76 (Table 2). There are also some discrepancies regarding the length of time for peak construction e.g some instances say two months, some say five months.</p> <p><b>Accommodation Summary</b>  OX2 is proposing a revised accommodation approach comprising (see Table 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five properties within purpose-built worker accommodation;</li> <li>Eight properties within the local community; and</li> <li>Up to 51 rooms and two properties within Brightway/Brightlands, Brook Village (this refers to accommodation in Tindale Street and Lofberg Ct), shared accommodation, or hotels where required.</li> </ul> <p><i>'If commercial agreements with accommodation providers cannot be secured, alternative options within Muswellbrook, including the HTP Temporary Workforce Accommodation (if available), and neighbouring townships may be considered to avoid impacts on the local rental market' (Section 7.3).</i></p> <p>Staff note that renting of private residential properties, purpose-built worker accommodation or hotels/motels was not approved as part of the EIS process for the Project. OX2 was approved for up to 52 personnel to be accommodated at Ironbark Road under an agreement with the Freedom Group.</p> <p>Project accommodation requirements are illustrated in Figure 4.1 of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy (AES) and reproduced in Figure 1. The period with high numbers of staff falls between Dec 2026 and June 2027 and are associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 1A: construction and commissioning of the southern solar farm, including the switchyard and substation (excluding escorted high-risk vehicle movements);</li> <li>Stage 1B: construction and commissioning of the southern solar farm, including the switchyard and substation (including escorted high-risk vehicle movements); and</li> <li>Stage 2: construction and commissioning of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).</li> </ul> <p><b>Figure 1: Construction staffing.</b></p>	Workforce Category	Personnel	Basis	Local workforce (within 50 km, incl. Singleton and Scone)	160	Based on labour hire discussions	Non-local workforce (requiring accommodation)	60		<b>Total peak workforce</b>	<b>220</b>		Employer	Personnel	Accommodation Type	No. of Properties	Principal Contractor	15	Purpose-built worker accommodation	5	Principal Contractor	9	Private residential accommodation (families)	7	Principal Contractor	1	Private residential accommodation (specialist)	1	Principal Contractor	15	Other accommodation e.g. Brightway/Brightlands (subject to agreement)	Not specified	Ox2 Employees	Not specified	Brightway/Brightlands	2	Subcontractors	Up to 36	Brightway/Brightlands, Brook Village (subject to agreement), shared accommodation, or hotels where required.	Not specified	<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>15</b>
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No.	Muswellbrook Council Comments	OX2 Commitment	Staff Response
			<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Report against local and non- local workforce in the monthly update to Council.</li> <li>2 Clarify the location of the purpose-built worker’s accommodation.</li> <li>3 Use of Accommodation built for the HTP, if built in Hebden Rd, is not supported by Council due to traffic safety and lack of legacy outcomes. This TWA will only be used for the HTP project then decommissioned.</li> </ol>
2	<p><b>Apprentices / Trainees</b> The Developer is to employ four (4) apprentices/trainees during construction sourced from residents within the Muswellbrook Local Government Area.</p> <p><b>Council requests that the Proponent provide updates to Council every month during construction phase to report on and track progress – see Procurement and Employment section below.</b></p> <p><b>Outline the process for managing apprentices beyond construction.</b></p>	<p>In Section 1.6 page 4 - “In regard to training of local workers, the project commits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment of four local, that is residents of Muswellbrook Shire, apprentices/trainees on the site during construction phase</li> <li>• “An apprentice Connect Australia Provider manages the administrative and compliance process for establishing or transferring an apprenticeship.... If the apprentice needs to move to another employer, the provider coordinates the transfer documentation and submits it for approval, ensuring the qualification continues without interruption.</li> </ul>	Commitment noted.
3	<p><b>Office in the Muswellbrook Central Business District</b> The Developer or Construction Company are to have an office in the Muswellbrook CBD from the commencement of construction and for the entire period of construction.</p> <p><b>Council requests that the Proponent provide updates to Council every month during construction to report on location of office, number of days OX2 are available in-person at the Office and general feedback on community drop-ins/meetings held at the office – see Procurement and Employment section below.</b></p>	<p>In Sections 1.6 and 8.4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “OX2 is continuing to engage with Council and EnergyCo regarding the use of the Muswellbrook Energy &amp; Resources Centre based in the Muswellbrook Central Business District. OX2 propose to utilise this space to hold meetings and interact with the local community.”</li> <li>• Section 7.3 commits to reporting data to Council monthly</li> <li>• Section 10 Monitoring and Evaluation.</li> </ul>	Commitment noted.
4	<p><b>Procurement Plan</b> The Developer is to develop a procurement plan for Council approval which includes initiatives to prioritise to the extent reasonably practicable the procurement of goods and services from local businesses.</p> <p><b>Council requests that the Proponent provide updates to Council every month during construction to report on achievement of targets, and general information on the types of employees and</b></p>	<p>In Section 1.6 “The Principal Contractor will establish and manage subcontractors that support the social procurement and diversity objectives (i.e. apprentices, trainees, women in construction, indigenous participation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subcontractors including labour hire suppliers to report on local, gender and indigenous workforce participation)</li> <li>• Principal Contractor to provide structured feedback and guidance to Subcontractors to ensure alignment with OX2’s procurement targets”</li> </ul>	Commitment noted.



No.	Muswellbrook Council Comments	OX2 Commitment	Staff Response
	<p><b>procurement occurring – see Procurement and Employment section below.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table 9.1 Commits to providing data to council monthly as per table 9.1</li> </ul>	
5	<p>In its letter to DPHI dated 26 August 2024, the Proponent stated that <i>‘the availability of accommodation through the Freedom Development Group provides us with a reliable contingency and ensures security of supply’ .... and that the Freedom Development Group ‘could provide accommodation for workers not covered by the agreed accommodation arrangement described in RF1 73202478, if required’.</i></p> <p><b>Council considers that the Proponent must identify and secure an accommodation arrangement that is consistent with the approved development and that clearly demonstrates compliance with Condition B36 part (a).</b></p>	<p>Section 7 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Proponent and Principal Contractor are aiming to negotiate commercial terms for accommodation provided by Brightlands Living at the Lofberg Court and / or Brook Village Tindale St.</li> <li>Additional local existing accommodation may also be utilised to accommodate families or individuals for which the Lofberg Court or Brook village locations are not suitable or available.</li> <li>If suitable commercial terms are unable to be reached with an individual provider, other accommodation options will be considered in Muswellbrook including the HTP TWA if available and neighbouring townships to prevent negative impact on the rental market in Muswellbrook.</li> <li>If workers need to be accommodated in neighbouring towns, shuttle buses can be provided to help manage fatigue.”</li> <li>“Overall, the total number of project personnel requiring accommodation at peak is expected to be approximately 60 workers. The peak accommodation demand period is now anticipated to occur for two to three months, rather than one month, which will further reduce the potential impact on local rental housing availability.”</li> </ul> <p><u>Principal Contractor Employees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These employees are separated into their own category due to their differing profile. Approximately 25 will require accommodating.</li> </ul> <p><u>OX2 project team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OX2 will require two properties for project management staff and specialist during construction – Brightways/ Brightlands.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul> <p><u>Non-Local (FIFO) Workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 non-local FIFO personnel accommodated in purpose built workers accommodation. Approximately 5 properties required</li> <li>9 non-local personnel relocating with families (long term stay) requiring private housing. Approximately 7 properties required.</li> <li>Other non-local FIFO (15 personnell ) will use contractor managed or worker accommodation such as Brightlands/Brightways should commercial terms be agreed.</li> </ul> <p><u>Subcontractors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire locals first.</li> <li>Up to 36 workers are expected to require short term accommodation. These workers are expected to utilise existing worker accommodation facilities such as Brook Village (59 Tindale Street contains 44 rooms plus 12x2 bedroom villas and 2 x 1 bedroom villas – 70 beds) and or shared accommodation or local accommodation/hotels where required.</li> </ul>	<p>See response in Comment 1.</p>
6	<p>Council notes the workforce accommodation requirements outlined in Section 4 of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy and understands that these requirements will be further refined closer to the commencement of construction.</p> <p><b>Council requests that, once the construction workforce numbers, timing, and accommodation arrangements are finalised, this information be reported to Council for review and comment.</b></p>	<p>This commitment is included in Section 7.3:</p> <p>“The Principal Contractor will monitor and review in conjunction with accommodation providers and report on the percentage of project workers residing locally. This data will be provided to Council every month during the construction period.”</p>	<p>Commitment noted. Staff will provide this data monthly to the State Significant Development Committee as part of the Activities Summary.</p>
7	<p><b>If the Proponent is unable to secure workforce accommodation in a manner consistent with the approved development, the Proponent</b></p>	<p>The proposed AES is consistent with the approved development.</p>	<p>See response to Comment 1.</p>



No.	Muswellbrook Council Comments	OX2 Commitment	Staff Response
	<b>should consult with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to confirm the appropriateness of any alternative accommodation arrangements.</b>		
8	Council acknowledges the case study demonstrating that some project workers and their families may become longer-term members of the local community and looks forward to further exploration of this potential once accommodation arrangements are finalised.		See response to Comment 1 in relation to long-term workforce and families.
9	<b>Council also requests that, once accommodation arrangements are finalised, the Proponent demonstrates how accommodation demand will be managed during periods of high demand, including during major local events. Council notes that the timing of major events in Muswellbrook is publicly available on Council's website.</b>	In Section 7.3 :  " To further reduce accommodation requirements for the project, it may be possible to subcontract to additional local companies. During major local events, the Proponent commits to avoid discretionary, non-time critical works.	Commitment noted.
10	<b>In accordance with Condition B36(b), the Proponent is required to 'identify any opportunities for the co-location of worker accommodation with other major energy projects'. Council notes that both Council and EnergyCo are progressing work to facilitate the delivery of at least one Temporary Workforce Accommodation (TWA) facility within the Shire by 2027. Council therefore requests that the Proponent include a clear commitment that the Proponent will actively consider the use of an available TWA (once operational) as part of its accommodation strategy.</b>	Commitment included in Section 7.3  "The Proponent will liaise with EnergyCo on the development of the Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) and actively consider the use of available Temporary Workers Accommodation (TWA) once operational."	<b>Use of Accommodation provided for the HTP, if built in Hebden Rd, is not supported by Council due to traffic safety and lack of legacy outcomes. This TWA will only be used for the HTP project then decommissioned.</b>
11	Council notes the commitment from Section 10 of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy that <i>'The Principal Contractor will monitor and review in conjunction with accommodation providers and report on the percentage of workers residing locally'</i> .  <b>Council requests a monthly update on the availability of housing and short-term accommodation.</b>	In Section 7.3 and Section 10 "The Principal Contractor will monitor and review in conjunction with accommodation providers and report on the percentage of project workers residing locally. This data will be provided to Council every month during the construction period."	Commitment noted. Staff will provide this data monthly to the State Significant Development Committee as part of the Activities Summary.
12	<b>Council generally supports the procurement and employment targets outlined in Table 9.1 of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy and requests that the Proponent provide updates to Council every two months during construction to report on and track progress against these commitments. This should also include an update on the status of utilising the Muswellbrook Energy &amp; Resources Centre.</b>	Section 10 - The Principal Contractor will report all project procurement and employment targets monthly to Council.	Commitment noted. Staff will provide this data monthly to the State Significant Development Committee as part of the Activities Summary.
13	Council has reviewed the commitments outlined in Table 9-1 of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy and provides the following comments and requests:  <b>In addition to the employment, skills and training opportunities, Council requests that the Proponent include at least one further contractor procurement workshop and information about ongoing procurement and work opportunities on the Project webpage.</b>	In Section 9.1.4 there is a commitment to establishing an ICN (Industry Capability Network) Gateway. It's an online procurement and business networking platform. ICN can assist with an industry briefing session.	Commitment noted. The ICN Gateway will be promoted through the Project website, Council's local business database and via other local media.
14	<b>In addition to engaging with Wanaruah Nation Aboriginal Corporation for opportunities for business and workers, Council requests the Proponent engage through Council's Inclusion Committee.</b>	This commitment is included in Section 9.12 ii:  "The Principal Contractor will seek to achieve, as far as reasonably practicable, a target of 3% First Nations participation across the construction workforce. This target will be pursued through early	Commitment noted. It is understood that Ox2 engaged with the Inclusion Committee in the week of 30 March 2026.



No.	Muswellbrook Council Comments	OX2 Commitment	Staff Response
		engagement, local recruitment, and collaboration with labour hire partners and Aboriginal community organisations. The Proponent and Principal Contractor will also engage through the Muswellbrook Shire Council Inclusion Committee”	
15	15–20% of total procurement has been proposed to be sourced from local and regional businesses.  <b>Council seeks clarification on the definition of ‘regional businesses and requests further detail on the types of goods and services required for the Project, including a review of which of these could reasonably be sourced from within the Shire.</b>	In both Table 9.1 and Section 10 of the AES the following commitment is made:  “Where practicable, 15 to 20% of total procurement spend sourced from local and regional businesses”.  Once appointed, the Principal Contractor will conduct supplier capability mapping to identify local/regional businesses in civil, electrical, fencing, logistics trades, accommodation, catering, trades, hire companies, equipment, consumables, waste and recycling.  This information can be shared with Council.	Commitment noted and Council requests capability mapping be supplied.
16	<b>Council seeks further information on how the list of ‘local suppliers’ was compiled. Council also requests that, during the quote and tender process, the Proponent provide relevant procurement communications to Council to enable distribution through Council’s local business database.</b>	In section 9.1.4  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suppliers who contacted the developer or contractor.</li> <li>• Via Energy Co workshops</li> <li>• Via Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Via direct outreach by Principal Contractor</li> </ul> This process is ongoing and additional local suppliers will be identified during the supplier capability mapping exercise and via ICN Gateway.	Commitment noted.
17	<b>Council requests that, during the quote and tender process, the Proponent provide a simple guideline to assist local businesses in navigating the tender process, including information on how to submit expressions of interest, respond to requests for quotation or tender, and understand evaluation timeframes. This guideline should be prepared to assist businesses that may not currently have the appropriate capability to readily understand procurement requirements or processes.</b>	Commitment included in Section 9.1.4  ICN Gateway page being established. The ICN platform will support businesses by providing guidance on capability statement, compliance requirements, and prequalification processes, helping them better align with project specifications.	Commitment noted.



## **Accommodation and Employment Strategy**

### **Muswellbrook Solar Farm**

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Prepared for OX2 Australia

March 2026

## Accommodation and Employment Strategy

### Muswellbrook Solar Farm

OX2 Australia

E250586 RP16

March 2026

Version	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Comments
1.0	14 October 2025	Brooke Theobald Caroline Wilkins	Sam McCrea	Draft for review
2.0	20 January 2026	Caroline Wilkins	Dan Keegan	Draft for stakeholder review
3.0	4 March 2026	Caroline Wilkins	Samantha McCrea	Final

Approved by

*Sam McCrea*

**Samantha McCrea**

Associate Director

4 March 2026

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## Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AES	Accommodation and Employment Strategy
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BOCSAR	Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
CoA	Condition of Approval
DIDO	Drive in drive out
EIS	Environmental Impact Assessment
FIFO	Fly in fly out
FTE	Full time equivalent
LGA	Local government area
MSC	Muswellbrook Shire Council
MW	megawatt
PV	photovoltaic
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SSD	State Significant Development
VPA	Voluntary Planning Agreement

## 1 Introduction

OX2 Australia (OX2) propose to develop a large-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) generation facility and associated infrastructure within the Muswellbrook local government area (LGA). The project site is on Wonnarua Country and within the localities of Muswellbrook and Muscle Creek, approximately 2.5 kilometres (km) east of Muswellbrook township.

The Muswellbrook Solar Farm (the project) would require the installation of solar PV panels and associated infrastructure including a 2.5 km 132 kilovolt (kV) transmission line to connect into the grid.

The Proponent is ESCO Solar Farm 9 Pty Ltd (ACN 660 380 110) as trustee for the ESCO Solar Farm 9 Trust (ABN 88 366 226 320), (a wholly owned subsidiary of OX2 Holdings Pty Ltd). From here on the proponent is referred to as OX2.

### 1.1 Approved Project

The Muswellbrook Solar Farm consists of the following key components:

- a network of solar PV panels and associated mounting infrastructure with a generating capacity of up to 135 megawatts alternating current (MWac)
- a battery energy storage system (BESS) with a capacity of up to 135 MWac and a storage duration of up to two hours
- electrical collection systems (BESS collection station and solar farm collection station), transformer substation, and switchyard
- an operations and maintenance facility, including demountable offices, amenities, equipment sheds, storage and parking areas
- internal access roads
- a temporary construction compound (during construction and decommissioning only)
- electricity transmission line infrastructure connecting to the grid and connecting the north and south areas of the solar farm.

### 1.2 Project staging

Project activities and associated management plans, reports and other documents will be delivered in stages in accordance with Condition C3, as approved by the Planning Secretary in a letter dated 27 November 2025.

The project staging is as follows:

- Stage 1A: Construction and commissioning of the southern solar farm, including switchyard and substation, excluding high risk vehicle movements requiring escort.
- Stage 1B: Construction and commissioning of the southern solar farm, including switchyard and substation, including high risk vehicle movements requiring escort.
- Stage 2: Construction and commissioning of the BESS.
- Stage 3: Operation and maintenance on the southern solar farm and BESS.

- Stage 4A: Road upgrades and site access upgrades at the Sandy Creek Road intersection, to enable construction of the northern solar farm.
- Stage 4B: Construction and commissioning of the northern solar farm, including high-voltage connection to the south.
- Stage 5: Operation and maintenance of the northern solar farm and associated infrastructure.
- Stage 6: Decommissioning.

It is noted that some stages may occur concurrently.

This Accommodation and Employment Strategy (AES, the Strategy) will be updated prior to Stage 4A.

### 1.3 Purpose of this Strategy

The purpose of this Strategy is to outline how the Proponent and Contractor will manage the project's accommodation requirements while minimising community impacts and maximising benefits to the local economy. The Strategy also sets out the measures to be implemented to maximise local employment opportunities and support skills development within the local community.

This Strategy incorporates a Local Procurement Strategy, as required under the Planning Agreement with Muswellbrook Shire Council (Council). The Agreement stipulates that:

The Developer is to develop a procurement plan for Council approval which includes initiatives to prioritise to the extent reasonably practicable the procurement of goods and services from local businesses.

This Strategy will also fulfil the requirements of the Planning Agreement, enabling a single consolidated document to be submitted to and approved by Council.

### 1.4 Development consent - SSD 46543209

The Condition of Approval relevant to this Strategy is listed in Table 1.1. A cross reference is also included to indicate where the condition is addressed in this Strategy or other project management documents.

**Table 1.1 Conditions of Approval relevant to the AES**

CoA No.	Commitment	Document reference
B36	Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the development in consultation with Council. The strategy must:	
	a) propose measures to ensure there is sufficient accommodation of the workforce associated with the development, including during periods of high demand	Section 7
	b) consider the cumulative impacts associated with other state significant development projects in the area and identify any opportunities for the co-location of worker accommodation with other major energy projects	Section 6
	c) investigate options for prioritising the employment and training of local workers and First Nations people for the construction and operation of the development, where feasible	Section 9
	d) include a local procurement strategy	Section 8

CoA No.	Commitment	Document reference
	e) Include a program to monitor and review the effectiveness of the strategy over the life of the development, including regular monitoring and review during construction.	Section 10
	The Applicant must provide a copy of the Accommodation and Employment Strategy to the Planning Secretary prior to commencement of construction, and implement the plan throughout construction	

## 1.5 Approved environmental management measures

Relevant Environmental Mitigation Measures are listed in Table 1.2. This includes reference to required outcomes, the timing of when the commitment applies and cross reference to indicate where the requirement is addressed in this Strategy or other project management documents.

**Table 1.2 Approved Environmental Management Measures relevant to this Strategy**

AEMM No.	Commitment	Timing	Document Reference
SOC3	A local procurement strategy will be implemented and include consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engagement with local businesses and provision of support to businesses to invest in service offerings to the renewable energy sector</li> <li>employment of local workers where possible</li> <li>an indigenous employment program for the broader indigenous population</li> <li>a local employment and training strategy</li> <li>partnership with local organisations to implement and Indigenous and non-Indigenous prison employment program</li> <li>engagement with the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>encouragement of local spending by the project workforce.</li> </ul>	Construction and operation	Section 7
SCO4	An Accommodation and Employment Strategy has been developed and includes consideration of innovative housing solutions such as refurbishment of existing unoccupied dwellings in exchange for rent given the significant availability of this dwelling type in Muswellbrook. The external workforce would be encouraged to consider residing in surrounding towns to further reduce the impact on Muswellbrook. The Accommodation and Employment Strategy will be regularly monitored and updated.	Construction and operation	It is noted that this AES has been created to provide a current strategy for implementation by the project

## 1.6 Voluntary Planning Agreement

Relevant matters from the Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) are listed in Table 1.3. This includes reference to required outcomes, the timing of when the commitment applies and cross reference to indicate where the requirement is addressed in this Strategy or other project management documents. The proponent will provide updates to Council every month, during the construction period, to report on the items listed below in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3 VPA matters relevant to this Strategy**

Item No.	Commitment	Timing	Document Reference
6	The Proponent is to employ four (4) local, that is, residents of Muswellbrook Shire, apprentices/trainees on the site during the construction phase	Construction	Section 9.1
8	The Construction Company and Proponent to have an office in the Muswellbrook Central Business District (CBD) from commencement of the project and for the period of construction	Construction	Section 8
9	The Proponent to provide a procurement plan to demonstrate local spend for Council's approval	Construction and operation	Section 8

The Proponent and Principal Contractor (EQUANS) are in discussion with Training Services NSW to assist with the management of apprenticeships.

An Apprentice Connect Australia Provider manages the administrative and compliance process for establishing or transferring an apprenticeship. Once an employer and apprentice agree to commence (or transfer) employment, the Provider prepares and lodges the official Training Contract, explains the rights and obligations of both parties, and ensures the apprenticeship is registered with Training Services NSW. They also help connect the apprentice with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), facilitate the development of the formal Training Plan, and provide ongoing support throughout the apprenticeship. If the apprentice needs to move to another employer, the Provider coordinates the transfer documentation and submits it for approval, ensuring the qualification continues without interruption.

## 1.7 DPHI Request for Information

During the Planning Approval stage, DPHI provided a Request for Information to OX2 requesting *“an update on the status of consultation undertaken to date with accommodation providers and update the Accommodation and Employment Strategy to demonstrate the intended means of accommodating local workforce as necessary.”*

OX2 noted at the time that they had developed and entered into an Agreement for Lease Heads of Agreement with Freedom Development Group Pty Ltd at Ironbark Road as of June 2024. The Agreement related to accommodation for 52 people over the life of the construction of the project.

Since project approval, further investigation has occurred regarding employee accommodation. Section 7 of this AES details the revised accommodation strategy for the project. While temporary worker accommodation still features as a component of the strategy due to the diversity of worker accommodation needs including length of time on project, family requirements and employment or engagement type, the strategy has been refined to include additional options.

## 2 Regional profile

The project is situated within the traditional country of the Wonnarua Peoples. It is located adjacent to the Muswellbrook Coal Mine, approximately 2.5 km east of the town of Muswellbrook in Muswellbrook LGA. The region is dominated by coal mining with numerous open pit coal mines operating in the surrounding area. However, Muswellbrook is experiencing a period of change with the imminent closure of NSW's largest coal-fired power stations and the early closure of several coal mines in the region.

Muswellbrook's community of over 12,000 residents is young with a median age of 35 years. Overall, the town's population experiences high socioeconomic disadvantage (Muswellbrook LGA is ranked in the lowest 10% of the SEIFA index related to education and occupation, and the lowest 20% for relative socio-economic disadvantage). This is characterised by low high school completion rates, low incomes, high unemployment and very high crime rates (Muswellbrook LGA is ranked #9 in NSW for violent crime (BOCSAR, 2025)). Town residents experienced higher rates of asthma, diabetes, lung condition and mental health condition. Further, the Muswellbrook had higher proportions of social housing (17.5%) compared to NSW (12.8%).

Muswellbrook has a large Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population (13.1%) and offers a modest range of educational, medical, sporting facilities and community services.

### 2.1 Population and demography

In 2021 the estimated population of Muswellbrook and Singleton LGAs (identified as the sub-regional area) was 40,934 with a growth rate of 6.4% over the 10 years to 2021. There were 3,941 people or 9.6% identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, compared to the NSW average of 3.4% (ABS, 2021). In 2024, the estimated resident population of Muswellbrook and Singleton was 42,456, indicating a 3.7% increase since 2021 (ABS, 2025).

**Table 2.1 Population and socio-cultural characteristics, 2021**

	Local area*	Nearby townships**	Sub-regional area***	NSW
2021 population (#)	12,847	26,925	40,934	8,072,163
2011 population (#)	12,835	25,857	38,485	6,917,658
Population change over 10 years to 2021 (%)	0.1%	4.1%	6.4%	7.9%
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (#)	1,630	2,246	3,941	278,043
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (%)	12.7%	8.3%	9.6%	3.4%

Notes: \*defined as Muswellbrook SA2 and Muscle Creek SAL.

\*\* Nearby townships defined as Singleton, Denman, Aberdeen and Scone.

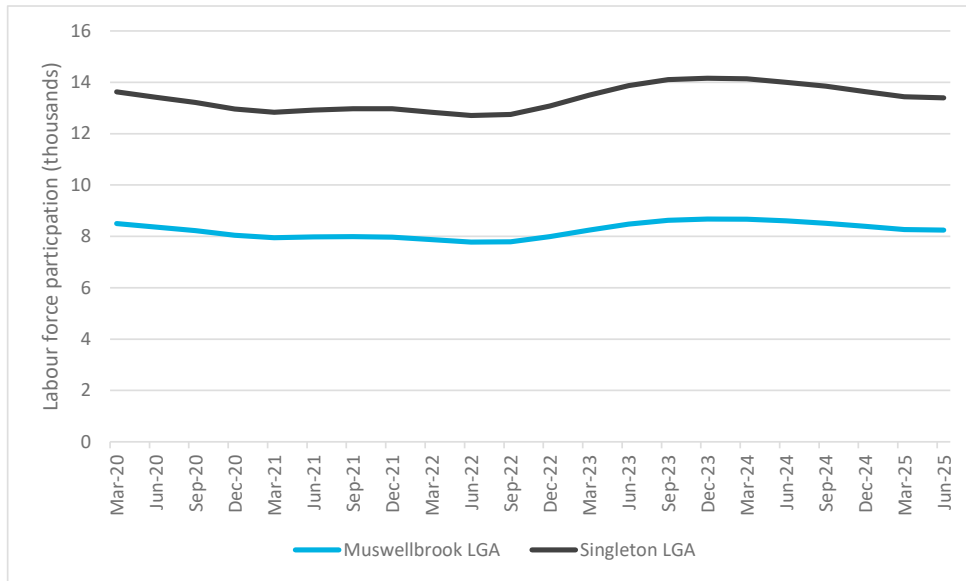
\*\*\*Sub-regional area defined as Muswellbrook LGA and Singleton LGA.

### 2.2 Labour market

#### 2.2.1 Labour force participation

The latest labour force participation data for Muswellbrook and Singleton LGA demonstrated 8,243 and 13,400 workers, or a total of 21,643 people or 52.9% in the sub-regional area (DEWR, 2025).

As shown in Figure 2.1, labour force participation grew in 2023 in the sub-regional area, before becoming stagnant to March 2025.

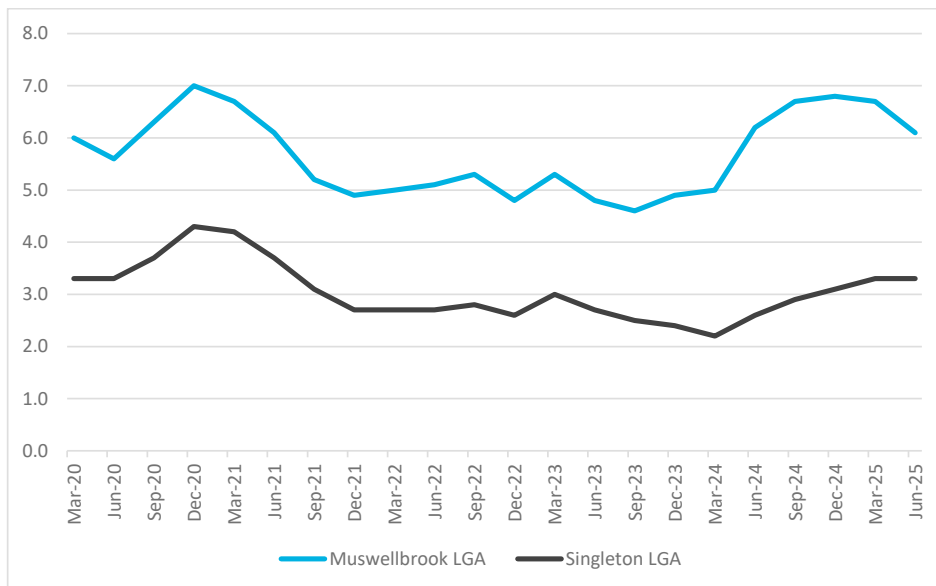


**Figure 2.1** Quarterly labour force participation, March 2020 to June 2025

In 2021, the Aboriginal labour force participation was lower across the sub-regional area with 37.4% in Muswellbrook LGA and 43.1% in Singleton LGA.

**2.2.2 Unemployment**

The latest unemployment data demonstrates Muswellbrook LGA’s unemployment rate has fallen over recent months to 6.1% while Singleton LGA experienced much lower unemployment at 3.3%.



**Figure 2.2** Quarterly unemployment, March 2020 to June 2025

In 2021, Aboriginal unemployment was higher across the region with 10.7% in Muswellbrook LGA and 8.0% in Singleton LGA (ABS, 2021).

### 2.2.3 Industry of employment

Table 2.2 demonstrates the top five industries of employment. Across the study areas, employment is dominated by mining with 8.8% to 9.8% of residents working in health care and social assistance. Relevant to the project, there were 7.2% of workers in Singleton LGA employed in the construction industry and 311 workers or 5.9% in Muswellbrook LGA.

**Table 2.2 Top five industries of employment, 2021**

Study area	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Muswellbrook LGA	Mining (21.5%)	Health care and social assistance (9.0%)	Retail trade (7.9%)	Agriculture, forestry and fishing (7.1%)	Accommodation and food services (6.8%)
Singleton LGA	Mining (21.6%)	Health care and social assistance (8.8%)	Retail trade (7.9%)	Construction (7.2%)	Public administration and safety (7.0%)
<b>NSW</b>	<b>Healthcare and social assistance (14.4%)</b>	<b>Retail trade (9%)</b>	<b>Professional, scientific, and technical services (8.9%)</b>	<b>Education and training (8.7%)</b>	<b>Construction (8.6%)</b>

### 2.2.4 Relevant industries of employment

Analysis of the regional labour market provides an understanding of the potential availability of skills to support Project construction. Occupations relevant to project construction include electricity, gas, water and waste services; transport, postal and warehousing; construction and professional, scientific and technical services.

In 2021, across the sub-regional area the construction industry provided employment for 1,288 workers. Across the other three related industries, an additional 1,681 workers were employed.

Across the Hunter Valley region, 24,886 people (18.1%) were employed in the four construction-related industries which provides a significant construction workforce for the Project. The construction industry accounted for 11,957 people, in addition to 12,929 employed in the other three related industries.

**Table 2.3 Occupations relevant to Project construction, 2021**

Area	Electricity, gas, water and waste services	Construction	Transport, postal and warehousing	Professional, scientific and technical services	Total
Singleton LGA	287	870	345	364	1,866 (14.8% of Singleton LGA workforce)
Muswellbrook LGA	282	418	217	186	1,103 (14.2% of Muswellbrook LGA workforce)
<b>Sub-regional area total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>1288</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>2,969 (14.6% of regional workforce)</b>

Area	Electricity, gas, water and waste services	Construction	Transport, postal and warehousing	Professional, scientific and technical services	Total
Area of reference (Hunter Valley)	2,004	11,957	5,339	5,586	24,886 (18.1% of area of reference workforce)
NSW	35,584	169,608	315,520	326,595	847,307

Source: ABS 2021, Census of Population and Housing: General Community Profiles.

### 2.2.5 Occupations and qualifications

Occupations of employment and tertiary qualifications in Table 2.3 demonstrate the key skills of the workforce. In Muswellbrook LGA, the most common occupations were technicians and trades workers, and machinery operators and drivers which are relevant to the Project. This is consistent with top occupations in Singleton LGA.

In terms of tertiary qualifications, engineering and related technologies as well as management and commerce featured heavily across the study areas.

**Table 2.4 Top three occupations of employment and tertiary qualifications, 2021**

Location	Occupations	Tertiary qualifications
Muswellbrook LGA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technicians and trades workers (19.4%)</li> <li>2. Machinery operators and drivers (18.0%)</li> <li>3. Labourers (13.8%)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engineering and related technologies (25.4%)</li> <li>2. Management and commerce (15.3%)</li> <li>3. Health (7.9%)</li> </ol>
Singleton LGA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technicians and trades workers (18.1%)</li> <li>2. Machinery operators and drivers (15.9%)</li> <li>3. Community and personal service workers (13.0%)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engineering and related technologies (27.5%)</li> <li>2. Management and commerce (16.8%)</li> <li>3. Society and culture (8.6%)</li> </ol>
NSW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professionals (25.8%)</li> <li>2. Managers (14.6%)</li> <li>3. Clerical and administrative workers (13%)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Management and commerce (21.8%)</li> <li>2. Engineering and related technologies (12.9%)</li> <li>3. Society and culture (11.8%)</li> </ol>

Source: ABS 2021, Census of Population and Housing: General Community Profiles.

## 2.3 Business and industry

### 2.3.1 Regional business and industry

In 2024, there were 1,105 registered businesses in Muswellbrook LGA. The most common industry for these businesses was agriculture, forestry and fishing, which accounted for 315, or 28.5%, of registered businesses (ABS, 2024). The second most common industry was construction, which accounted for 114, or 10.3%, of total registered businesses in Muswellbrook LGA. Most businesses were low employing, with 647 businesses having no employees, and 418 businesses with 1 to 19 employees. As such, there were 39 businesses in the Muswellbrook LGA that had over 20 employees.

In Singleton LGA, the most common industry of local businesses was also agriculture, forestry and fishing (604 businesses, or 25.8%) followed by construction (320 businesses, or 13.7%). Most businesses employed few employees, with 1,404 businesses employing no employees, and 852 businesses with 1 to 19 employees.

### 2.3.2 Indigenous-owned businesses

A search of Indigenous businesses on Supply Nation found 10 Indigenous-owned businesses within the study area, as seen in Table 2.5. Of the study area, there were six businesses operating in Muswellbrook LGA, three businesses in the Singleton LGA, and one business in the Scone township. There were nine businesses with potential relevance to the project.

**Table 2.5 Indigenous businesses, 2025**

Locality	Indigenous businesses	Business description
Muswellbrook LGA	Blackrock Industries	Excavators hire, earthworks, electrical equipment and supplies
	First Nation Industries	Access equipment hire and purchase, electrical services, electrical wire management devices and accessories
	Cre8ive Solutions	Graphic design, writing and editorial services, branding
	Blackroo Industries	Traffic management and control equipment, metal fabrication and welding, manufacturing services
	Supply Solutions Group	Janitorial and cleaning products, protective clothing, safety equipment
	Valley Service & Repairs	Vehicle accessories, body parts, and mechanical repairs
	<b>Total: 6</b>	
Singleton LGA	JobTrail	Recruitment, cultural awareness training, mentoring and coaching
	Yarrowalk	Environmental service, heritage advisory services, Aboriginal artefacts
	Wonnarua Mine Rehabilitation	Bush regeneration, fencing supplies and services, weed control and management
		<b>Total: 3</b>
	Budbudda Dreaming	Mentoring and coaching, Aboriginal artefacts
	<b>Total: 1</b>	

Source: (Supply Nation 2025)

### 3 Project workforce requirements

#### 3.1 Construction phase

Construction of the project is expected to commence in 2026. The anticipated period of construction for the project is approximately 25 months. Construction of the project is estimated to require a peak workforce of approximately 220 workers of which 73% (160 workers) are expected to be sourced locally and 27% or 60 workers) are expected to be non-local workers. This assumption is based on discussions with labour hire companies in the Muswellbrook area who are actively engaging in similar projects. The area for sourcing local workforce is defined as within a 50 km radius of Muswellbrook.

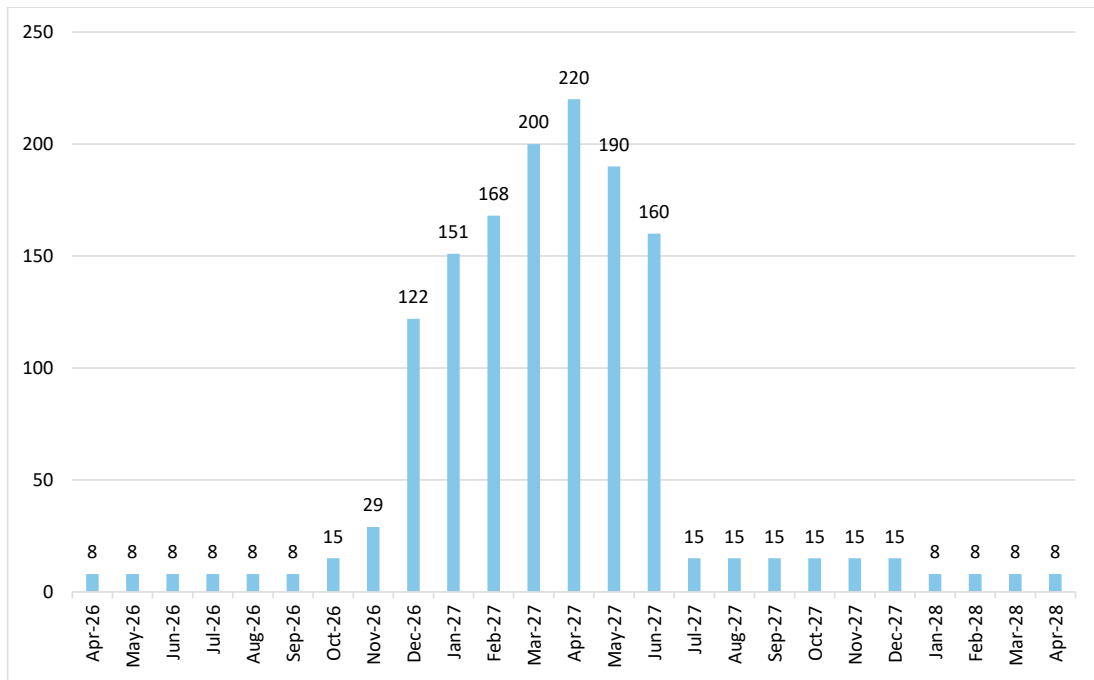
An indicative construction schedule with construction activities by phase is provided in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Indicative construction schedule**

Phase	Activities	Indicative timing
Phase 1 - Site Establishment	Establishment of site compounds, including minor earthworks as required Vegetation removal Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Salvage (if required)	Q1 to Q2 2026
Phase 2 Solar Farm Civil Works	Earthworks Access road construction Site drainage construction	Q1 to Q4 2026
Phase 3 Mechanical Construction (Panel Install)	Piling Tracker installation Panel installation Drive line and motor installation	Q2 2026 to Q4 2027
Phase 4 Solar Farm Electrical and communications connections	Trenching, cable install and backfill of cable routes Above ground cable installation Power Conversion Unit (PCU) install Combiner Box install Cable terminations	Q3 2026 to Q3 2027
Phase 5 Substation and switching station works and 132kV transmission line	Civil Works - footings, drainage and fencing Install 33 and 132 kV equipment Switching station and control room install Connection to Ausgrid network Substation install transformers and harmonic filters PV collection station building install BESS collection station building install Commissioning tasks	Q2 2026 to Q3 2027
Phase 6 BESS civil works	Earthworks Access road construction Footing construction Fencing construction	Q3 2026 to Q4 2026

Phase	Activities	Indicative timing
Phase 7 BESS battery installation	Skid installation PEMS Battery Installation Power Conversion Unit Installation Battery container installation	Q1 2027 to Q3 2027
Phase 8 BESS Electrical and communications connections	Trenching, cable install and backfill Cable terminations	Q4 2026 to Q3 2027
Phase 9 Solar Farm commissioning	Commissioning and testing	Q3 2027 to Q2 2028
Phase 10 BESS commissioning	Commissioning and testing	Q3 2027 to Q2 2028
Phase 11 Finalisation	Remove any waste Stabilise exposed surfaces for operation	Q3 2027 to Q3 2028

Figure 3.1 provides an indicative histogram displaying expected workforce numbers throughout the construction phase.



**Figure 3.1 Project construction workforce histogram**

The peak will occur in March / April 2027.

### 3.2 Operations phase

The operational lifespan of the project is expected to be in excess of 35 years. During this time, there will be primary activities such as daily routine operations, maintenance and security, along with specialised support from contractors for maintenance of specialised equipment. Once the project reaches the end of its operational life, a decision will be made to either decommission or re-power the facility, subject to approval requirements.

## 4 Project accommodation requirements

Construction of the project is estimated to require a peak workforce of approximately 220 workers of which 27% are likely to be non-local workers. The peak will occur in March / April 2027.

Therefore, accommodation will potentially be required for approximately 27% of the project workforce which equates to approximately 60 workers.

Figure 4.1 provides an indicative histogram displaying expected workforce accommodation requirements throughout the construction phase. Accommodation EQUANS refers to the number of rooms required by the Principal Contractor. Accommodation for Non-Local Subcontractors refers to subcontractors commissioned by EQUANS to provide construction services.

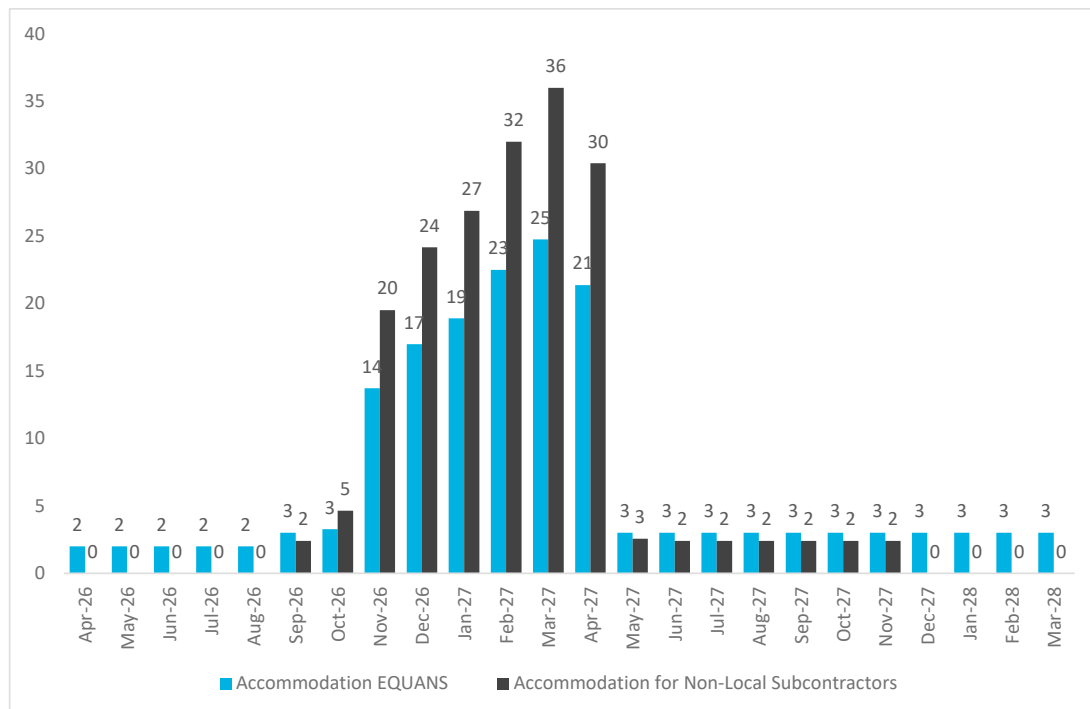


Figure 4.1 Project accommodation requirements

## 5 Current status of housing and short-term accommodation

### 5.1 Housing

The housing market in Muswellbrook is characterised by a large proportion of non-resident drive in drive out (DIDO) and fly in fly out (FIFO) workforce. It was estimated that of the 11,341 workers in Muswellbrook LGA, 5,040 or 44.4% of workers do not reside in Muswellbrook LGA (REMPPLAN, 2021). Some non-resident workers commute daily but most stay for a few days, taking up capacity of local rental housing and short-term accommodation ((MSC), February 2025). New housing supply is constrained by the high cost of services such as water, sewerage and power connections for greenfield housing.

Muswellbrook township demonstrated a rental stress level of 31.8%, which was significant given Muswellbrook had the highest proportion of renting (ABS, 2021). At the 2021 Census, there was no demonstrated mortgage stress in the sub-regional area. This is likely due to low rates of home ownership in the local area (59.2% in Muswellbrook SAL compared to 64.0% in NSW), high rates of renting (38.0% in Muswellbrook compared to 32.6% in NSW) and low incomes, consistent with high socioeconomic disadvantage.

#### 5.1.1 Housing availability

There is limited rental housing available in Muswellbrook, Singleton and surrounding townships.

Table 5.1 shows the housing types available for rent in key townships as of January 2026.

**Table 5.1 Available rental housing**

Study area	Post code	House and unit size				Number of properties available for rent
		1-BR	2-BR	3-BR	4+-BR	
Muswellbrook	2333	7	9	24	14	54
Singleton	2330	5	12	15	7	39
Denman	2328	0	2	1	3	6
Aberdeen	2336	1	1	3	2	7
Scone	2337	0	2	11	1	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>120</b>

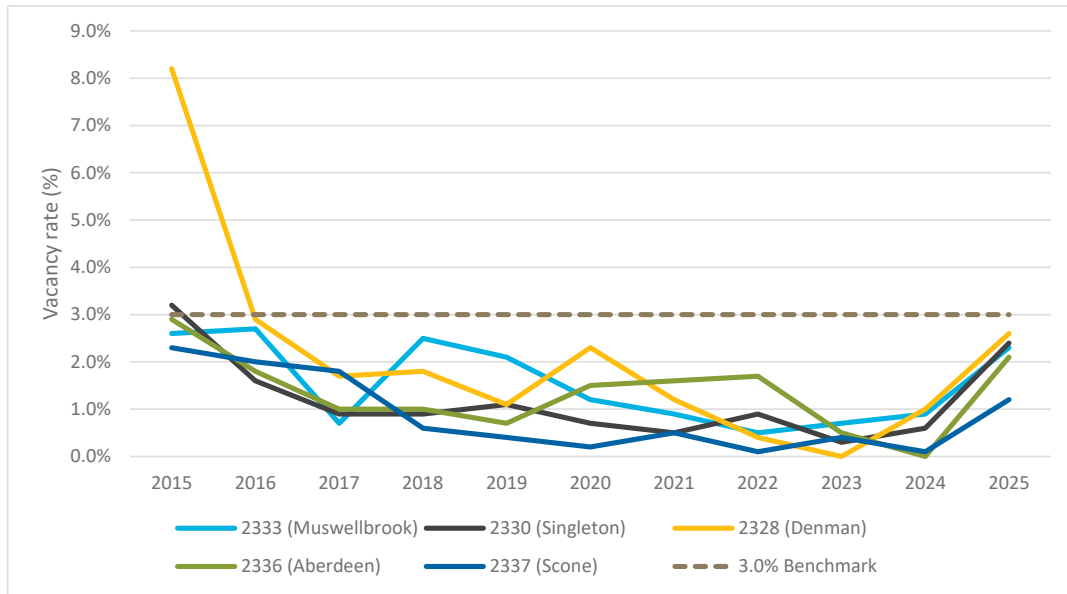
Source: REA Group, 2026

#### 5.1.2 Residential vacancy rates

The residential vacancy rates are provided by postcode. Data for postcode 2333 (Muswellbrook), 2330 (Singleton), Denman (2328), Aberdeen (2336), Scone (2337) is displayed below.

In December 2025 residential vacancy rates for each town were low indicating low availability of properties for rent. All towns experienced vacancy rates below 3% with 2.3% in Muswellbrook and 2.4% in Singleton. This translates into 84 properties available in the five towns, predominantly in Muswellbrook (38) and Singleton (46).

Figure 5.1 displays vacancy rates for Muswellbrook and nearby townships.



Source: SQM Research, 2025

**Figure 5.1 Residential vacancy rate – towns in sub-regional area**

## 5.2 Short-term accommodation

There is a range of short-term accommodation in the sub-regional area such as motels, hotels, serviced apartments, bed and breakfast, self-contained homes, caravan and camping parks.

Short-term accommodation providers in the broader region service a number of industry sectors while in Singleton and Muswellbrook LGAs capacity is largely taken up by the mining and electricity sector. Additional fluctuating demand is generated by industry such as maintenance shutdowns at the nearby major power stations.

Short-term accommodation is also used during busy periods of the year such as during community events and peak tourist periods. Other demand for short-term accommodation is from housing of vulnerable groups such as victims of domestic violence and people experiencing homelessness.

Within the local area, short-term accommodation is concentrated in the larger community of Muswellbrook and consists of a combination of hotels, motels, bed and breakfast accommodation, vineyard and country stays, cottages, holiday home rentals (Airbnb) and camping and caravan parks. The most abundant form of short-term accommodation in nearby townships and the sub-regional area is private holiday rentals through platforms such as Airbnb and booking.com.

The primary form of tourist accommodation is hotels/motels. There were 35 hotel and motel accommodation options in the local area, with approximately 864 rooms. This includes:

- 12 hotels/motels in Muswellbrook, with around 342 rooms
- 14 hotels/motels in nearby townships of Aberdeen, Denman, and Scone, with around 224 rooms
- nine hotels/motels in Singleton, with around 314 rooms.

There was an identified average occupancy rate of 80 to 90% based on Monday to Friday averages. With the occupancy rates applied to the number of rooms in each township, the total number of rooms available is 88 rooms. In addition to hotels and motels, there were at least 55 other accommodation providers including:

- 49 Airbnbs/B&Bs, cottages, and apartments
- 15 other establishments.

Table 5.2 shows the rooms available for short-term accommodation in October 2025.

**Table 5.2 Rooms available for workforce accommodation, 2025**

Location	Hotel/motel	Apartment/unit	House/cottage	Caravan park	Airbnb/Stayz
Muswellbrook	342	1	11	-	45
Denman	69	-	2	53	11
Aberdeen	26	-	-	-	-
Scone	129	8	4	27	38
Singleton	314	-	-	66	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>135</b>

Source: Google.com/travel; Upperhuntercountry.com/accommodation; Visitnsw.com/destinations; Singleton.nsw.gov.au/Experience/Visit/Visitor-Directory/Accommodation; <https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/>; Occupancy rates confirmed with representative accommodation providers via telephone in October 2025.

**Table 5.3 Rooms available for workforce accommodation, 2025**

Location	No. of facilities	No. of rooms	Occupancy rate	Proportion of rooms available	Total rooms potentially available for workforce
Muswellbrook	32	436	90%	10%	46
Denman	8	135	90%	10%	14
Aberdeen	1	26	80%	20%	21
Scone	26	206	80%	20%	42
Singleton	32	421	80%	20%	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1,223</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>203</b>

Source: Google.com/travel; Upperhuntercountry.com/accommodation; Visitnsw.com/destinations; Singleton.nsw.gov.au/Experience/Visit/Visitor-Directory/Accommodation; <https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/>; Occupancy rates confirmed with representative accommodation providers via telephone in October 2025.

### 5.2.1 Drivers of demand

The region has a number of events and labour market drivers which create demand on the short-term housing and accommodation market. Demand is primarily drawn from temporary workforces in the infrastructure and mining industries. There are also seasonal events which contribute to demand, including food and wine events. Drivers of demand were confirmed via phone call with a representative selection of large accommodation providers listed in Appendix A. In the short to medium term, proposed renewable energy projects may also be a source of demand. Based on publicly available information, the analysis assumes all projects will reach final investment decision in the timeframes stated publicly. However, it is likely that many of these projects will be delayed and commence from 2028 onwards. The drivers of demand for each township are detailed in the following sub-sections.

#### i Muswellbrook

Accommodation providers confirmed that the key drivers of demand are the construction, rail and mining industries, with temporary workforces accessing a large proportion of the town's short-term accommodation during the week. In October 2025, a key project creating demand for short-term accommodation is the Bayswater Power Station maintenance shutdown, which is expected to contribute to high demand for three months. There are also recurring users which contribute to short-term accommodation demand, including local mine staff and rail maintenance workers.

As part of the Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone, it is expected that Muswellbrook will experience significant short-term accommodation demand associated with temporary workforces for renewable energy projects in the near future.

Key projects located in Muswellbrook which may create cumulative demand include:

- Bayswater Power Station 90-day maintenance shutdown – timing unknown
- Muswellbrook Bypass – construction expected in 2027, 720 workers required
- Muswellbrook Pumped Hydro – peak construction expected in 2027, 650 workers required
- Bowmans Creek Wind Farm (Stage 1 and 2) – peak construction expected 2027 to 2028, 320 workers required across both stages
- Edderton Solar Project - peak construction expected 2027 to 2028, 450 workers required
- Kyuga Solar Farm - peak construction expected 2027 to 2028, 250 workers required
- Upper Hunter South Solar Farm - peak construction expected 2027 to 2028, 200 workers required.

Based on publicly available information, the estimated total cumulative demand for the above projects in 2027 (where numbers are known) is 2,590 workers. Many of these projects would also try to utilise local workers. However, a more realistic outcome is that many of the above projects will not reach an investment decision and will be delayed, commencing later than advised.

Figure 6.1 displays the surrounding solar and wind projects in Muswellbrook LGA. Cumulative workforce demand is detailed in Section 6.

## ii Denman

Accommodation providers in Denman stated that the main users of short-term accommodation included mine, road and rail workers during the week, with tourist and visitors for weddings more popular over the weekend. The Denman Wine, Food and Film Fair in November is an event which draws visitors to the region, with the festival bringing 11,000 visitors each year (Muswellbrook Shire Council, 2025). It is likely that during projected workforce peaks, short-term accommodation in Denman will be in high demand due to proximity to various proposed projects.

## iii Aberdeen

Aberdeen is a small residential town with limited accommodation options. One accommodation provider confirmed that the key users of accommodation in Aberdeen are temporary workers in the mining and construction industries, however there are more tourists present than in other surrounding towns. It is likely that during projected workforce peaks, short-term accommodation in Aberdeen will be in high demand due to proximity to various proposed projects.

Projects close to Aberdeen include:

- Upper Hunter BESS – peak construction expected 2027 to 2028, 150 workers required
- McCullys Gap BESS – peak construction expected 2027 to 2028, 100 workers required
- Kayuga Solar Farm – peak construction expected 2027 to 2028, 250 workers required.

## iv Scone

Accommodation providers in Scone confirmed that the key drivers of demand are construction workers and rail workers, as well as tourists. The Scone Horse Festival is a major event in the region, attracting 10,000 visitors over 10 days in May (Newcastle Herald, 2025). It is likely that during projected workforce peaks, short-term accommodation in Scone will be in high demand due to proximity to various proposed projects in Muswellbrook.

## v Singleton

Accommodation providers in Singleton confirmed that temporary workers from construction projects contribute to a large proportion of demand for short-term accommodation. Currently, there is high demand for accommodation in Singleton from the high number of workers constructing the Singleton Bypass. The Singleton Bypass requires approximately 1,300 workers and is expected to be completed in late 2026 (TfNSW, 2025). Other drivers of demand include temporary mining workforces and expected construction workers for renewable energy projects. The proposed Maison Dieu Solar Farm is expected to contribute to cumulative demand, with a peak workforce of 150 projected in 2027. As part of the Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone, it is expected that Singleton will experience significant short-term accommodation demand associated with temporary workforces for renewable energy projects in the near future.

## 6 Interaction with other projects

Figure 6.1 displays the surrounding renewable energy projects in Muswellbrook LGA, part of the Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone.

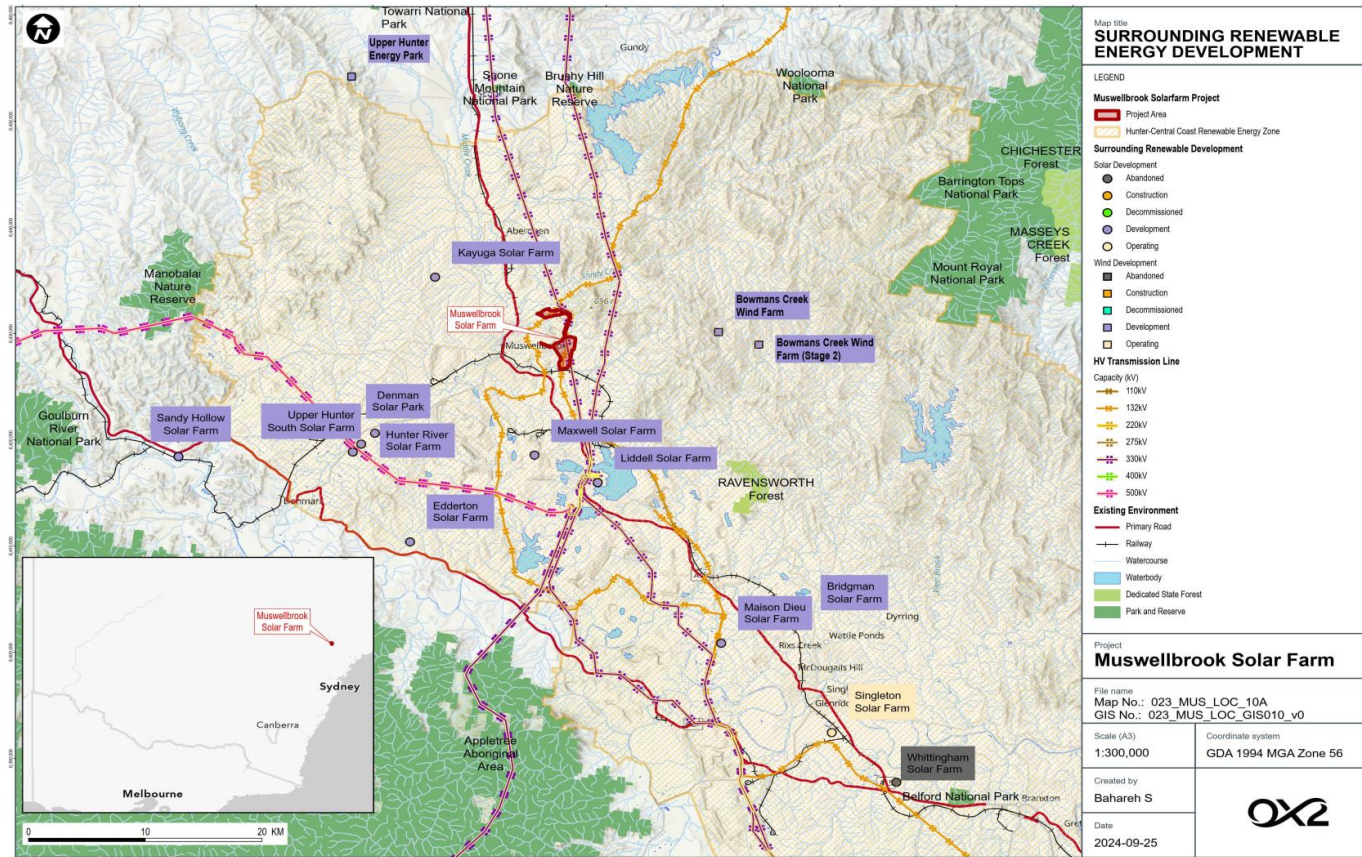


Figure 6.1 Cumulative projects in the region

## 6.1 Workforce influx

Figure 6.2 details the expected cumulative workforce numbers for proposed projects in the sub-regional area which have the potential to overlap with the project. Only approved projects have been included in the analysis. Where projects are not yet approved, it is assumed that construction is likely to commence from 2028 onwards given expected timeframes for environmental impact statement (EIS) submission and determination.

The total cumulative labour is expected to peak at 1,822 workers in 2027. This includes an estimated peak of 220 workers for the project and 1,963 for other projects. The contribution of the project to the peak cumulative workforce in 2027 is 11.2%. The cumulative demand for workers is expected to decrease in 2028 to 1,276.

A significant contributor to cumulative labour demand is the Muswellbrook Bypass project, which is anticipated to commence construction in 2027 and is expected to create 720 direct jobs.

The Hunter Gas Pipeline (HGP) is another contributor to cumulative labour demand, with 350 workers required between 2026 to 2028 (Santos, 2026)). The HGP spans over 800 km across 10 LGAs from Narrabri to Newcastle. It is expected that works will only occur in the sub-regional area during stage two of the HGP. It is unlikely that the peak workforce for the HGP will be present in the sub-regional area at any one time due to the linear nature of project infrastructure, large geographic area and construction staging. While specific information regarding how many workers will be required for HGP in each location is not available, an estimate of 50 workers has been used.

Cumulative workforce data shows that the Muswellbrook Solar project will have a small overall contribution to labour demand in the region, however the project is accompanied by various approved projects which will generate high demand for labour throughout the sub-regional area.

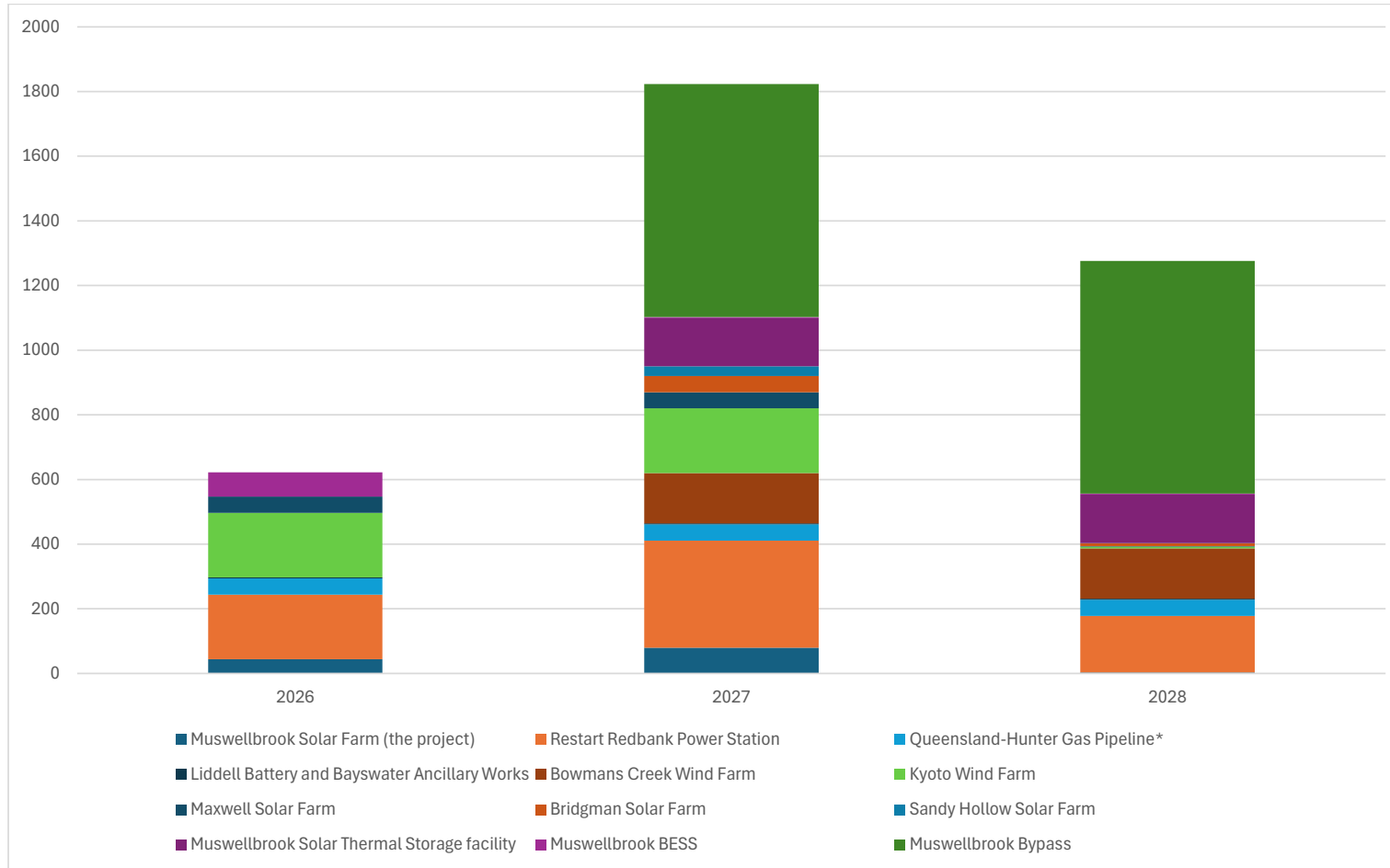
## 6.2 Housing and short-term accommodation

The peak construction workforce for the project is expected in 2027, with an estimated peak of 60 workers requiring accommodation during Stages 1 to 2. The peak of 60 project workers requiring accommodation is temporary and will only be required for two months, with the project requiring 60 non-workers for five months in 2027.

While the project is sourcing a large number of local workers, a worst-case scenario has been applied to cumulative projects. It is assumed that 10% of the cumulative workforce will be locally sourced and will not need to access short-term housing. On this basis, 90% of the cumulative workforce will need to be accommodated in the sub-regional area and surrounds. In 2027, this will mean approximately 1,640 workers will have to be accommodated in the region.

An assessment of accommodation available in the sub-regional area and surrounding towns is available in Section 5 and Appendix A. There are 1,223 rooms available in the towns surrounding the project. Calls with accommodation providers confirmed that the weekday occupancy rate for the region is around 85%, with temporary workers from the mine, rail, road and construction industries accessing accommodation during the week. This research revealed that there is an approximate 15% vacancy rate for accommodation in the region during the week, or approximately 203 rooms.

It is expected that a significant portion of proposed projects will house their project workforce in project-specific temporary accommodation. In accordance with the Council's Temporary Workforce Accommodation policy (2025), worker accommodation is preferred to be located within or near existing urban areas and to be constructed in a way that ensures long-lasting benefit for the area. As a result, short-term accommodation may be able to be re-purposed by projects that do not have overlapping construction periods. Despite this, it is likely that the 2027 peak of construction workers will create high demand for short-term accommodation in Muswellbrook and surrounding areas. The low availability of accommodation in the form of hotels/motels and Airbnb's may create demand for rental housing, having flow on effects on overall housing availability in the region.



Source: Information from NSW Major Projects planning portal or respective project official websites

Note: \*the Hunter Gas Pipeline project will be constructed over a large spatial area and will be in three stages, meaning it is unlikely that the entire workforce will be present in the sub-regional area at one time.

**Figure 6.2 Cumulative workforce**

## 7 Accommodation strategy

Given the limited availability of rental housing and short-term accommodation in the local and sub-regional area, and in response to matters raised in submissions and outcomes of ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, the project has adopted the following strategy to house construction workers.

### 7.1 Providers and availability

To support non-local (FIFO/DIDO) roles, the Principal Contractor will secure properties for their staff. These properties will be sourced through local accommodation providers and real estate agents including:

- Brightway/Brightlands Living, in the first instance
- Raine & Horne
- Professionals
- Warburton Real Estate.

Brightway/Brightlands Living accommodation facilities comprise a mix of:

- a 70-bed accommodation facility at Tindale Street, Muswellbrook known as Brook Village approximately 10 km from the Project site
- a 40-bed facility at Lofberg Court, Muswellbrook approximately 8 km from the Project site.

Local real estate agents including Raine & Horne, Professionals and Warburton Real Estate have been engaged early in the project. These providers have indicated the availability of houses suitable for shared living arrangements for employees, as well as appropriate homes for families relocating to the area. The Principal Contractor will register with these providers to ensure suitable properties are identified and secured in line with workforce demand as construction progresses.

### 7.2 Non-local project construction workforce breakdown

Construction of the project is estimated to require a peak workforce of approximately 220 workers of which 27% (or 60 workers) are likely to be non-local workers. The peak will occur in March / April 2027 and last for approximately two months.

Non-local project workforce comprises three categories:

- Principal Contractor employees
- OX2 project team
- Subcontractor employees.

#### 7.2.1 Principal Contractor employees

Principal Contractor employees will make up approximately 18% of the project workforce, primarily workers relocating to the region for the duration of the project. Many of these employees will be part of family or partner units who will integrate into the local community throughout their stay. For this analysis, Principal Contractor employees have been separated as a category due to their differing profile.

Of the Principal Contractor workforce, approximately 25 personnel will require accommodation, comprising:

1. fifteen (15) non-local FIFO personnel accommodated in purpose-built worker accommodation (approximately five properties required)
2. nine (9) non-local personnel relocating with families (long-term stay) requiring private housing (approximately seven houses required)
3. one (1) non-local specialist role to be accommodated within one worker accommodation allocation (one property required)
4. other non-local FIFO component (15 personnel) will utilise accommodation options that minimise impact the private rental market, including contractor-managed or worker accommodation such as Brightway/Brightlands Living facilities should commercial terms be agreed.

### 7.2.2 OX2 project team

In addition, OX2 will require two properties for project management staff and specialists during construction. Discussions are underway with Brightway/Brightlands Living to source accommodation.

### 7.2.3 Subcontractor employees

Subcontractors will form the remaining portion of the construction team. To minimise housing impacts and promote local employment, the Principal Contractor will:

- prioritise local subcontractors in the first instance
- require labour-hire partners to source workers locally in the first instance, including from nearby projects that are demobilising or transitioning at the time Muswellbrook Solar Farm ramps up
- where non-local workers are required, the Principal Contractor will promote structured accommodation options such as Brightway/Brightlands Living and Brook Village, both of which help reduce pressure on the local rental market, unless this accommodation is unsuitable i.e. for families relocating
- provide Subcontractors with up-to-date information on local hotels, motels, caravan parks, and short-stay options identified through engagement with local providers.

Of the subcontractor workforce, up to 36 personnel (around 20% of subcontractors) are expected to require short-term accommodation (up to six months) during peak construction. These workers are expected to utilise existing worker accommodation facilities such as Brook Village and/or shared accommodation or local accommodation providers and hotels where required.

## 7.3 Other accommodation options

Other accommodation options in the area include caravan parks and individual room rentals. However, our preference is to use Brightlands facilities if suitable commercial terms can be agreed upon. If workers need to be accommodated in neighbouring towns, shuttle buses can be provided to help manage fatigue.

In addition, OX2 will liaise with EnergyCo on the development of the Hunter Transmission Project (HTP) and actively consider the use of available Temporary Workers Accommodation (TWA) once operational.

To further reduce accommodation requirements for the project, it may be possible to subcontract to additional local companies. During major local events, the Proponent commits to avoid discretionary, non-time critical works.

OX2 and Principal Contractor are aiming to negotiate commercial terms for accommodation to be provided by Brightlands Living at the Loftberg Court location and / or Brook Village location. Additional existing local accommodation may also be utilised to accommodate families or individuals where the Loftberg Court or Brook village locations are not suitable or available.

If suitable commercial terms are unable to be reached with an individual provider, other accommodation options will be considered in Muswellbrook including the HTP TWA if available and neighbouring townships to prevent negative impacts on the rental market in Muswellbrook.

Overall, the total number of project personnel requiring accommodation during peak periods is therefore expected to be approximately 60 workers. The peak accommodation demand period is now anticipated to occur for approximately two to three months, rather than one month, which will further reduce the potential impact on local rental housing availability.

The Principal Contractor will monitor and review in conjunction with accommodation providers and report on the percentage of project workers residing locally. This data will be provided to Council every month during the construction period.

#### 7.4 Case study - Long term work relocation for families

Across the Goorambat East Solar Farm project five families relocated from outside the region and established themselves as long-term temporary residents. Their presence has delivered stability for the project and tangible social and economic benefits to Benalla, Goorambat and the surrounding communities.

To reduce the pressure of short-term accommodation and support a more consistent workforce, Bouygues Construction Australia and EQUANS Solar and Storage encouraged and facilitated whole-family relocation where suitable. These relocations supported dual-income households, created local economic uplift, and built stronger connections between the project and the host community.

The five families, who relocated held a mix of roles across the project, including:

- key supervisors
- coordinators
- administrators
- department leads.

All families rented local properties and remained in the region between 8 to 18 months, contributing to improved workforce stability and continuity across critical project phases.

These families also embedded themselves into the local community:

- children enrolled in local daycares facilities
- children enrolled in primary and secondary schools
- joining playgroups and early-years community programs
- engagement with community and non-profit organisations
- participation in local sporting clubs
- regular weekend activity supporting local small businesses and regional tourism

- social involvement in town events and gatherings.

Regional and project benefits included:

- improved accommodation outcomes
- workforce stability: families staying long term provided reliable, dedicated workforce footprint
- economic value: Increased spending in retail, hospitality, tourism, essential services
- community connection: Integration helped build positive sentiment around the project and strengthen social licence.

### 7.5 Case study - Local jobs first

Goorambat East Solar Farm partnered with Protech Group to deliver a locally driven, highly responsive labour hire model. This collaboration strengthened local employment pathways, lifted diversity outcomes, and embedded a long-term labour presence in the community.

With an established reputation in the region and labour hire industry, Protech brought a strong local office and recruitment capacity. Their on-site presence and alignment with the project values helped deliver a workforce that reflected community and supported local participation from early in the project.

#### Local employment outcomes

- A local recruitment pipeline managed from the regional office.
- 68% local workforce at peak construction (within Benalla, Shepparton, Wangaratta LGAs).
- Bus transport from Benalla, Wangaratta and Shepparton.
- Onsite labour hire representatives integrated into the project team.
- Monthly workforce reporting and close collaboration to establish a diverse workforce.
- Dedicated 'local first' hiring practices guided jointly by project team and Protech.

#### Diversity and inclusion

- 3% First Nations participation.
- 20% women at peak workforce.
- Supporting for re-entering workers, youth and career transition.

A major achievement was projects targeted strategies, including:

- a joint open session with Rumbalara FNC and local First Nations jobseekers with 35+ attendees
- 15 First Nations candidates registering for work following the session
- a local First Nations women facing long-term unemployment and significant barriers returning to work, secured employment on the project and remained on crew for an extended period, marking a significant social impact story
- 11 electrical apprentices

- first fully qualified electrician on the project.

**Community integration**

Workers became part of local community. Their presence contributed positively to the project's reputation and community acceptance.

- Sporting clubs.
- Community groups.
- Cultural events.
- Gym memberships.

The strong partnership between the project and labour hire delivered a workforce that was local, diverse, community-minded, and reliable. The model ensured compliance, improved social value outcomes and created lasting connections with the regional community. This approach now stands as a blueprint for the future solar farm projects across Australia.

## 8 Local procurement strategy

The purpose of the local employment strategy is to provide workforce training and development opportunities for local workers and support regionally based businesses and workforce through industry partnerships.

The local procurement strategy and employment strategy has been developed with consideration of the following.

### 8.1 OX2 Local Engagement Policy

The OX2 Local Engagement Policy outlines the guidelines and procedures governing OX2's local activities. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all local engagement activities align with OX2's mission, values, business ethics and sustainability approach while maintaining transparency and consistency in local engagement activities.

Local engagement refers to any situation where OX2, or anyone acting on its behalf, provides contributions, through the provision of goods or services, to a third party at no cost or a discounted cost, or where OX2 makes charitable donations to third parties.

### 8.2 Industry engagement

The purpose of industry engagement is to maximise local business and workforce opportunities offered by the project. This will be achieved by increasing awareness of local businesses and other relevant stakeholders of upcoming project procurement and contracting opportunities and identifying and engaging with local suppliers.

The projects commitments include the following:

1. Prioritising suppliers who adhere to the OX2 Supplier Code of Conduct.
2. Provision of a Muswellbrook Solar Farm project webpage to provide information on the Project, community updates and an outline of supply and employment opportunities for Australian suppliers.
3. The Principal Contractor will collaborate with OX2 to list all procurement opportunities for Muswellbrook Solar Farm to include in engagement opportunities.
4. The Principal Contractor will conduct supplier capability mapping to identify local/regional businesses in civil, electrical, fencing, logistics trades, accommodation, catering, trades, hire companies, equipment, consumables, waste and recycling.
5. The Principal Contractor will work with local Government, local business and industry representative groups and associations, to identify potential local and regional Social Benefit Suppliers.
6. The Principal Contractor will provide Social Benefit Suppliers with the opportunity to register their interest through a pre-procurement expression of interest (EOI).
7. The Principal Contractor will review the availability of suitable Aboriginal enterprises, including through Supply Nation and provide them with the opportunity to register their interest through a pre-procurement EOI.
8. The Principal Contractor will build on the existing stakeholder register to establish a process to register supplier including social benefit suppliers and first nations businesses and develop management systems documenting how they will include social benefit and First Nations suppliers in the supply chain.

9. The Principal Contractor will collaborate with regional economic development and industry groups, as well as training providers to:
  - a) initiate coordination with Training NSW
  - b) explore pre-employment and entry-level training pathways with OX2
  - c) engage with TAFEs to promote careers in renewable energy and construction
  - d) participate in regional workforce forums to support local job creation
  - e) participate in any career's expos, open days prior to construction period.
10. The Principal Contractor will engage with Council and the local business community by:
  - a) attending Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce meetings/breakfast to promote procurement opportunities beginning with the Breakfast in February 2026
  - b) provide links and expression of interest form for local businesses to register interest
  - c) contribute to open community sessions to promote local jobs and subcontractor opportunities.
11. The Principal Contractor will establish partnerships with Aboriginal businesses by:
  - a) incorporating Indigenous business and employment targets into subcontractor scopes and labour hire contracts
  - b) engage with Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation for opportunities for business and workers
  - c) utilise Indigenous business directories such as Supply Nation to engage with potential business within local area and surrounding LGAs
  - d) implement cultural awareness induction across site teams in conjunction with local Indigenous area
  - e) explore options with OX2 and St Heiler's Correctional Centre and Second Chance for Change program through BlackRock Industries.

### 8.3 Business engagement

Engaging with local businesses through industry associations and directly will support the achievement of the Local Procurement Strategy by increasing awareness and improving readiness of local businesses for project opportunities.

Business engagement that has been undertaken to date and next steps are noted below.

- OX2 are members of the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry to foster connections and establish itself with the regional business network.
- The Principal Contractor will engage directly with Chamber of Commerce in attending monthly breakfast and sourcing local suppliers and trades, beginning February 2026.
- OX2 have been collaborating with BlackRock Industries, a 100% Aboriginal-owned company based in Muswellbrook and will introduce the Principal Contractor to BlackRock to continue to discuss potential opportunities for involvement with the project.

- The Principal Contractor will explore options for local trades and services for earthmoving, crane hire companies, environmental services, printing, mechanics, steel fabricators, traffic management, labour hire, tools and equipment, bus, freight, fleet hire, security.
- The Principal Contractor has participated in an open session to promote local jobs and subcontractor opportunities through the EnergyCo Ready for Renewables business workshops.
- OX2 have participated in the Second Chance for Change Program Steering Committee in conjunction with BlackRock. OX2 will introduce the Principal Contractor to the program to continue to discuss potential opportunities for involvement in the program.
- OX2 have met with Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation and discussed potential business opportunities for their business Wonnarua Mine Rehabilitation (WMR). This business has potential to offer required services during construction and operation for general maintenance, fencing and weed management. OX2 and the Principal Contractor will continue to discuss potential opportunities for involvement with the project.

**Table 8.1 Business Engagement Strategy Summary**

Engagement strategies to date	Proposed strategies for early 2026
Membership of the Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Speaker slot at the upcoming February 2026 Chamber of Commerce and Industry Breakfast meeting.
Energy Co ready for renewables business workshop attendance	Attendance at the proposed next round of workshops in early 2026, to be led by Energy Co with OX2 and Principal Contractor support.
Discussion with BlackRock Industries on potential involvement with the project	Introduction of the Principal Contractor to BlackRock to continue discussions and develop a potential partnership.
OX2 participation in the Second Chance for Change Program Steering Committee	Introduction of the Principal Contractor to the program to continue discussions and develop a potential partnership.
Discussion with Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation	Continued discussion and Introduction of the Principal Contractor to the corporation and their WMR business to continue discussions and develop a potential partnership.

A table outlining targets for procurement and employment is included in Section 9.1.2.

#### 8.4 Muswellbrook Energy & Resources Centre

OX2 is continuing to engage with Council and EnergyCo regarding the use of the Muswellbrook Energy & Resources Centre based in Muswellbrook Central Business District (CBD). OX2 and the Principal Contractor propose to utilise this space to hold meetings and interact with the local community.

## 9 Employment strategy

OX2 is committed to local hiring, provision of training and apprenticeship opportunities for local workers, and partnerships with local employment and training service providers with the aim of improving the capacity and skills of local workers and reducing the need for non-local workers.

The number of cumulative renewable energy projects that will be constructed in the five years to 2031 suggests a long-term pipeline of construction work. With industry collaboration there is an opportunity to draw a permanent resident local construction workforce to the regional area. This may have a positive effect on accommodation demand as workers may seek to relocate permanently to the regional area and secure long-term housing through purchasing if there is a clear pathway to long term employment, rather than drawing on short-term accommodation in the local area. Encouraging a permanent construction workforce in the regional area would benefit long term sustainability of these communities and the services and facilities they provide, as well as supporting long term economic benefits for business operators.

### 9.1 Construction phase

#### 9.1.1 Local employment opportunities

The types of labour and skills required for the construction phase of the project include:

- project managers
- construction managers
- civil engineers, supervisors, leading hands, and construction workers
- mechanical engineers, superintendent, supervisors, leading hands, and construction workers
- electrical engineers, superintendent, supervisors, leading hands, and construction workers
- labourers
- quality engineers and supervisors
- health safety environment manager, supervisors, and advisors
- commissioning managers and engineers
- apprentices/trainees
- administration staff
- security staff
- cleaning staff.

The Principal Contractor has provided an indication of expected proportions of skilled, specialised and unskilled labour based on its experience constructing large scale solar farms in Australia. The following proportions of skilled, specialised and unskilled roles is expected during construction of the project:

- Qualified (University or TAFE qualified) - engineers, electricians, etc.: 35%
- Specialised trained (machine operator, mechanical moulder, etc.): 45%

- Unskilled: 20%

### 9.1.2 Employment targets

This section outlines proposed employment targets for the project's construction workforce based on an assessment of the regional context including labour market and local business conditions, feedback from key stakeholders and consideration of potential cumulative demand from other projects within the Hunter Central Coast Renewable Energy Zone as detailed in Section 6.

#### i Employment and training of local workers

Construction workforce will be sourced from the local area as far as practicable. Local workers are defined as those with who have existing accommodation and reside within a one hour commuting distance of the project. For estimation purposes, the catchment includes Muswellbrook and Singleton LGAs.

It is assumed that approximately 73% of workers may be sourced from the local area. The other 27% will be non-local workers, of which consist of workers who will be situated in the area for short periods. The remainder of workers will relocate with families or partners to the local area. As in other project areas, families will bring an influx of local spending, involvement in schools and community groups. We estimate approximately 20% of non-local workers will situate themselves in the local area for the duration of the project.

It is estimated that there would be approximately 2,969 workers with applicable skills working in relevant industries such as construction, electricity, gas, water and waste services, transport, postal and warehousing, and professional, scientific and technical services.

In regard to training of local workers, the project commits to:

- employment of four local, that is, residents of Muswellbrook Shire, apprentices/trainees on the site during the construction phase
- the Principal Contractor will establish and manage Subcontractors that support the social procurement and diversity objectives (i.e. apprentices, trainees, women in construction, indigenous participation)
- Subcontractors including labour hire suppliers to report on local, gender, and Indigenous workforce participation
- Principal Contractor to provide structured feedback and guidance to Subcontractors to ensure alignment with OX2's social procurement targets.

#### ii Employment and training of First Nations people

The Principal Contractor will seek to achieve, as far as reasonably practicable, a target of 3% First Nations participation across the construction workforce. This target will be pursued through early engagement, local recruitment, and collaboration with labour hire partners and Aboriginal community organisations.

The Proponent and Principal Contractor will also engage through the Muswellbrook Shire Council Inclusion Committee.

### 9.1.3 Apprenticeships and traineeships

The project will aim to support four local apprentices or trainees.

Apprenticeships/traineeships may include:

- civil construction
- electrical
- plant operations
- business administration.

These positions will be delivered in conjunction with the Principal Contractor, Subcontractors and Registered Training Organisations, with appropriate support provided where practicable.

#### **Women's Participation**

The project will also actively encourage and promote women's participation in construction and traineeship pathways, particularly in non-traditional trade roles. Where practicable, the Principal Contractor will work with Subcontractors including labour hire partners to identify, support and mentor women interested in entering the construction and renewable energy sectors.

### 9.1.4 Industry Capability Network (ICN) Gateway

The Proponent / Principal Contractor will establish an ICN Gateway Page for the project.

ICN Gateway is an online procurement and business networking platform that connects project owners, and tier-one contractors with capable local suppliers and service providers. By publishing upcoming projects and work packages, ICN Gateway creates structured advertising opportunities for local businesses, allowing them to showcase their capabilities, certifications, and past performance directly to decision-makers seeking local content participation.

This visibility ensures local businesses are informed early about tender opportunities and can position themselves competitively.

The platform also supports local businesses by providing guidance on capability statements, compliance requirements, and prequalification processes, helping them better align with project specifications.

Through transparent listing of contract opportunities and clear engagement pathways, ICN Gateway enables local companies to build relationships, demonstrate value, and improve their chances of winning contracts by responding strategically, meeting technical and safety standards, and highlighting their local expertise and economic contribution.

The ICN Gateway will be promoted through the Project website, through Council's local business database and via other local media.

ICN can assist with an Industry Briefing session.

**Table 9.1 Summary of project procurement and employment targets and reporting**

Safe and fair working conditions in the supply chain	Opportunities for local industry and SMEs	Social enterprise and female inclusion	Aboriginal business inclusion	Employment, skills and training opportunities
<p>Prioritising suppliers who adhere to the OX2 Supplier Code of Conduct.</p>	<p>Provision of a Muswellbrook Solar Farm project webpage to provide information on the project, community updates and an outline of supply and employment opportunities for Australian suppliers.</p>	<p>The Principal Contractor will work with local Government, local business and industry representative groups and associations, to identify potential local and regional Social Benefit Suppliers.</p>	<p>The Principal Contractor will review the availability of suitable Aboriginal enterprises, including through Supply Nation and provide them with the opportunity to register their interest through a pre-procurement EOI.</p>	<p>The Principal Contractor will collaborate with regional economic development and industry groups, as well as training providers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initiate coordination with Training NSW</li> <li>• explore pre-employment and entry-level training pathways with OX2</li> <li>• engage with TAFEs to promote careers in renewable energy and construction</li> <li>• participate in regional workforce forums to support local job creation</li> <li>• participate in any career’s expos, open days prior to construction period.</li> </ul>
	<p>The Principal Contractor will collaborate with OX2 to list all procurement opportunities for Muswellbrook Solar Farm to present during engagement opportunities.</p>	<p>The Principal Contractor will provide Social Benefit Suppliers with the opportunity to register their interest through a pre-procurement EOI.</p>	<p>The Principal Contractor will build on the existing stakeholder register to establish a process to register supplier including social benefit suppliers and First Nations businesses and develop management systems documenting how they will include social benefit and First Nations suppliers in the supply chain.</p>	

Safe and fair working conditions in the supply chain	Opportunities for local industry and SMEs	Social enterprise and female inclusion	Aboriginal business inclusion	Employment, skills and training opportunities
	<p>The Principal Contractor will conduct supplier capability mapping to identify local/regional businesses in civil, electrical, fencing, logistics trades, accommodation, catering, trades, hire companies, equipment, consumables, waste and recycling.</p>	<p>The Principal Contractor will build on the existing stakeholder register to establish a process to register supplier including social benefit suppliers and First Nations businesses and develop management systems documenting how they will include social benefit and First Nations suppliers in the supply chain.</p>	<p>The Principal Contractor will establish partnerships with Aboriginal businesses by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• incorporating Indigenous business and employment targets into subcontractor scopes and labour hire contracts</li> <li>• engaging with Wonnarua Nation Aboriginal Corporation for opportunities for business and workers</li> <li>• utilising Indigenous business directories such as supply Nation to engage with potential business within local area and surrounding LGAs</li> <li>• implementing cultural awareness induction across site teams in conjunction with local Indigenous area</li> <li>• exploring options with OX2 and St Heiler’s Correctional Centre and Second Chance for Change program through BlackRock.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of suppliers must comply with the OX2 Supplier Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• 100% of contractors undergo safety induction and compliance checks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where practicable, 15 to 20% of total procurement spend sourced from local and regional businesses.</li> <li>• 50% of procurement opportunities publicly listed for open participation.</li> <li>• 90% of identified local suppliers invited to quote/tender.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90% of identified Social Benefit Suppliers invited to participate in relevant EOI/RFQ processes.</li> <li>• 3% female participation where feasible in subcontract or labour hire packages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 to 6% of total procurement spend allocated to Aboriginal-owned businesses.</li> <li>• 3% Indigenous participation where feasible in subcontractor labour hire packages.</li> <li>• Utilisation of Aboriginal supplier directories (e.g. Supply Nation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment of four local, that is, residents of Muswellbrook Shire, apprentices/trainees on the site during the construction phase.</li> <li>• Minimum 2 to 3 structured training pathways established (TAFE, Training NSW, correctional reintegration programs). (Note: this could contribute to target above if local).</li> </ul>

## 9.2 Operations phase

As the region transitions from mining and fossil fuel-based energy generation to renewable energy, the demand for a workforce equipped with renewable energy skills will continue to grow.

During operations phase, the project will employ up to six (6) full-time staff and approximately three (3) full time equivalent (FTE) contractors.

OX2 is committed to prioritising local employment, providing training and apprenticeship opportunities, and partnering with local employment and training service providers to build the capability and skills of the local workforce.

Through the operator, the project will undertake the following actions:

- Conduct supplier capability mapping to identify local and regional businesses and workers with expertise in electrical services, fencing, consumables, waste and recycling, landscaping, general maintenance, and cleaning.
- Engage with local government, business, and industry representative groups and associations to identify potential local and regional Social Benefit Suppliers.
- Assess the availability of suitable Aboriginal enterprises, including those listed through Supply Nation, and provide them with the opportunity to register their interest through an EOI process.
- Collaborate with regional economic development bodies, industry groups, and training providers with the aim of ensuring the local workforce is prepared for employment in the renewable energy sector.

## 10 Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure the Accommodation and Employment Strategy remains effective, the Strategy builds in significant adaptability. The Strategy will be updated as required. The document will be regularly monitored and reviewed, and updated annually or at major project milestones, to ensure a culture of continuous improvement, and any lessons learned are incorporated.

The targets set out in Table 9.1 will be monitored and reported by the Principal Contractor to OX2 monthly. This data will be provided to Council every month during the construction period.

The Principal Contractor will monitor and review in conjunction with accommodation providers and report on the percentage of workers residing locally. This data will be provided to Council every month during the construction period.

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# Appendix A

## Short-term accommodation

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## A.1 Short-term accommodation overview

Table A.1 Short term accommodation overview

Accommodation provider	Type	Rooms	Vacancy rate*	Availability
<b>Muswellbrook</b>				
The Remington Muswellbrook	Hotel/motel	54	90%	5
Noahs Mid City Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	42		4
The Royal Hotel Muswellbrook	Hotel/motel	18		2
Baybrook Motor Inn and apartments	Hotel/motel	16		2
Red Cedar Motel	Hotel/motel	27		3
Centabrook Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	16		2
Muswellbrook Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	10		1
John Hunter Motel	Hotel/motel	70		7
Wayfarer Motel	Hotel/motel	25		3
The Hermitage Motel	Hotel/motel	37		4
Railway Hotel	Hotel/motel	18		2
Gibbagunyah Manor	Hotel/motel			-
Comfystay	Entire house	11		1
Muswellbrook North Side Bed & Breakfast	B&B			-
The Shamrock Hotel	Hotel	9		1
Upper Hunter Annex	Apartment/Unit	1		0
Muswellbrook Riverside Cabin and Van Park	Caravan Park	37		4
Airbnb/Stayz	Entire house (10) Guest suite (4) Unit (1)	45		5
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Denman</b>				
The Grapevine Motel	Hotel/motel	17	90%	2
Denman Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	16		2
Denman Hotel	Hotel/motel	36		4
Carellan Holiday Cottages at Ironbark Ridge Farm	Cabin/Cottage	2		0
Denman Van Village	Caravan Park	53		5

Accommodation provider	Type	Rooms	Vacancy rate*	Availability
Airbnb	Entire house (3)	11		1
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Aberdeen</b>				
Aberdeen Motel	Hotel/motel	15	<b>80%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Scone</b>				
Royal Hotel Motel Scone	Hotel/motel	10	<b>80%</b>	2
Isis Motel Scone	Hotel/motel	19		4
Belmore Hotel Scone	Hotel/motel	9		2
The Gable Inn	Hotel/motel	6		1
Scone Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	19		4
Colonial Motor Lodge	Hotel/motel	24		5
Airlie House Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	25		5
Strathearn Park Lodge	Lodge	4		1
INN Scone	Hotel/motel	5		1
Portman House	Apartment/Unit	8		2
Thoroughbred Hotel	Hotel/motel	12		2
Scone Caravan Park	Caravan Park	12		2
Highway Caravan Park scone	Caravan Park	15		3
Airbnb/Stayz	Entire house (4) Cottage (6) Unit (3)	38		8
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Singleton</b>				
Charbonnier Motor Inn Singleton	Hotel/motel	70	<b>80%</b>	14
Quest Singleton	Hotel/motel	35		7
Imperial Hotel Singleton	Hotel/motel	13		3
Royal Hotel Singleton	Hotel/motel	22		4
Mid City Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	43		9
Country Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	49		10
Benjamin Singleton Motel	Hotel/motel	10		2
Gowrie Agapanthus	Hotel/motel	9		2
Singleton Valley Accommodation	Apartment/Unit			-

Accommodation provider	Type	Rooms	Vacancy rate*	Availability
Francis Phillip Motor Inn	Hotel/motel	55		11
Royal Hotel Motel Singleton	Hotel/motel	8		2
Country Acres Caravan Park	Caravan Park	25		5
Singleton Caracourt Caravan Park	Caravan Park	41		8
Wyland Caravan Park	Caravan Park			-
Airbnb/Stayz	Entire house (9) Room (7) Cottage (1) Unit (1)	41		8
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>85</b>
Number of providers		Number of rooms (total)	Average vacancy rate	Average availability
<b>99</b>		<b>1,212</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>194</b>

Notes: \*Confirmed by phone call with local providers October 2025, nine of the listed accommodation providers were contacted and provided information regarding occupancy rates. Provided occupancy rates were compared, and averages were calculated for this assessment.

Note: Occupancy rates are generally lower on the weekends (Friday to Sunday)

Source: Data was gathered from multiple online sources, including provider websites where possible and Google (2025), Tripadvisor (2025), Airbnb (2025), Stayz (2025)

**Australia****SYDNEY**

Level 10 201 Pacific Highway  
St Leonards NSW 2065  
T 02 9493 9500

**NEWCASTLE**

Level 3 175 Scott Street  
Newcastle NSW 2300  
T 02 4907 4800

**BRISBANE**

Level 2, 95 North Quay  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
T 07 3648 1200

**CANBERRA**

Suite 2.04 Level 2  
15 London Circuit  
Canberra City ACT 2601

**ADELAIDE**

Level 4 74 Pirie Street  
Adelaide SA 5000  
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**MELBOURNE**

Suite 9.01 Level 9  
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T 03 9993 1900

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### 6.3 Mount Pleasant Mine MOD8 - Council comments

**Responsible Officer:** Director - Planning & Environment

**Author:** Sustainability Officer

**Community Strategic Plan:** 3 - *Thriving Economy*

Our community has opportunities for employment, business and training and we drive investment into our economy to benefit our community.

**Delivery Program Goal:** Not Applicable

**Operational Plan Action:** 3.4.1.3 - Advocate on behalf of the community on matters related to State Significant Development and the renewable energy roll-out.

**Attachments:** Nil

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#### PURPOSE

Mount Pleasant Modification 8 (DA 92-97) has been lodged and will be determined by either the Minister for Planning or the Independent Planning Commission.

The purpose of this report is to finalise Council's submission in relation to Mount Pleasant Modification 8.

#### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

The State Significant Development Committee ENDORSES the draft submission on Mount Pleasant Modification 8, to be tabled at the Committee Meeting, for submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

**Moved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Seconded:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### REPORT

MACH Mount Pleasant Operation Pty Ltd (MACH) has lodged Modification 8 to DA 92-97 (MOD8) with DPHI. MOD8 seeks the following changes:

- A six-year extension of permitted Run Of Mine (ROM) coal mining operations to 31 December 2032;
- An increase in approved ROM coal extraction rate from 10.5 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) to 12.5 Mtpa;
- Mining in the North Pit; and
- Continuation of a workforce with a maximum of 575 personnel.

A copy of the Modification Report is available on the [Major Projects website](#).

MACH previously lodged a development application and Environmental Impact Statement for the Mine Optimisation Project (SSD 10418) in 2020 under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), seeking to increase extraction to 21 Mtpa and extend operations until 2048. This was approved by the NSW Independent Planning Commission on 6



September 2022.

SSD 10418 was subsequently subject to legal proceedings in the Land and Environment Court of New South Wales and the New South Wales Court of Appeal, with special leave to appeal granted by the High Court of Australia in December 2025.

All coal mining approved under DA 92-97 would cease on 31 December 2026 if MOD8 is not approved.

In the context of the ongoing legal process associated with SSD 10418, MACH is seeking to extend the existing DA 92-97 to allow mining operations to continue until December 2032.

MOD8 commenced public exhibition on 16 February 2026 with submissions originally due at the end of March 2026. Due to the schedule of State Significant Development Committee meetings, Council Staff were given an extension until 17 April 2026 for Council's submission.

Given the amount of documentation to be reviewed by different Council Staff, a draft submission is still under preparation. A copy of the proposed submission will be provided to Councillors prior to the Committee meeting.

**6.4 Activities Summary for State Significant Development****Responsible Officer:** Director - Planning & Environment**Author:** Sustainability Officer**Community Strategic Plan:** 5 - Working Together

Our community is involved in decision making and resources are managed to align with the values and priorities.

**Delivery Program:** Not Applicable**Operational Plan:** Not applicable**Attachments:** Nil**PURPOSE**

To advise on recent activities of Council Officers and Councillors in relation to State Significant Development including Energy Generation Projects.

**OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

The information contained in this report be noted.

**Moved:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Seconded:** \_\_\_\_\_

**REPORT**

Project Name	Update
AGL Macquarie Power Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five new apprentices commenced in January 2026.</li> <li>• Roll out of 'lone worker' app.</li> <li>• Minor ash spill at Bayswater.</li> <li>• Removal of buildings at the Liddell Site underway.</li> <li>• Demolition likely May 2026, for safety reasons there will not be public viewing of demolition. Live stream option being explored.</li> <li>• Liddell Battery construction largely complete and first stage being commissioned shortly.</li> </ul>
Bengalla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff attended the February CCC.</li> <li>• MACH Energy has commenced clearing for construction of a 300 ML dam following relocation of a powerline; habitat features from the site are being stockpiled for rehabilitation works.</li> <li>• Bengalla Link Road access track construction (supporting an Ausgrid powerline and fibre optics) is expected to commence around July 2026 with an ~18-month duration; traffic controls will be required at tie-ins to the south, north and Roxburgh Road.</li> <li>• Western Diversion Levee works are scheduled for completion by</li> </ul>



Project Name	Update
	<p>March–April.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EL9431 has been granted.</li> </ul>
Dartbrook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOD 8 was approved on 26 February 2026, extending mine life to 2033, with updated conditions.</li> <li>• Approximately 15 kt of coal remains on stockpile; Vales Point (Delta) may seek approval to truck this material (modification required).</li> <li>• EnergyCo is continuing compulsory acquisition of an easement over part of the Dartbrook Mine Access Road; the landholder is Tre pang, and Dartbrook has now been issued a Deed.</li> <li>• Consideration being given to closing Dartbrook Mine Access Road at night.</li> <li>• Resources Regulator inspected site in December 2025.</li> </ul>
Mangoola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Dunn attended the February CCC.</li> <li>• The Terms of Reference were circulated to the CCC for review.</li> <li>• Council staff made a presentation to the CCC on road works that may impact the Mangoola site.</li> </ul>
Mount Arthur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and Councillors attended the CCC in March.</li> <li>• BHP staff have been consulted on their plans post closure.</li> <li>• BHP is assisting all non-contractor Staff with study. Staff that are keen to remain onsite to do rehabilitation works will be able to do so.</li> <li>• Mount Arthur are preparing a response to Council’s comments on the Closure Social Impact Management Plan.</li> <li>• A community planting day was organised Saturday 28th March from 9 am until 2 pm.</li> <li>• There was also a school's planting day on Friday 27th March.</li> </ul>
Mount Pleasant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Modification Report to vary DA 92/97 has been lodged with Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure in December. The modification seeks to allow mining to continue until 2032 and increase coal extraction to 12.5 million tonnes per annum. This will provide MACH Energy with flexibility to resolve the legal issues associated with SSD-10418.</li> </ul>
Maxwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and Councillors attended the CCC in February.</li> <li>• Underground conveyor installations are on track.</li> <li>• Longwall recruitment and training are progressing well.</li> <li>• Extraction scheduled to commence mid 2026.</li> <li>• 6400 trees and shrubs planted as part of the Spring tree planting program.</li> <li>• Resources Regulator update - Revegetation Targeted Assessment</li> </ul>



Project Name	Update
	Program (TAP) and rehabilitation completion criteria under development.
Liddell Coal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modification 9 Submissions Report lodged. Modification relates to backfilling of underground mine voids. Council Staff have prepared a submission with minor comments.</li><li>• Resources Regulator update - Advancing closure and rehabilitation completion, with focus on landform stability and Tailings Storage Facility drainage.</li></ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Muswellbrook Solar Farm have resubmitted their Accommodation and Employment Strategy and Waste Management Plan to Council. The Waste Management Plan was generally acceptable to Staff and addressed Council's comments.</li><li>• New 'NSW Coal Industry 2026-2050' policy released indicating no new standalone greenfield coal mines.</li><li>• Resource Regulator TAP for 2026 will focus on materials/soils and tailings (incl. Bengalla, Mount Arthur and Liddell).</li><li>• Resources Regulator update on Muswellbrook Coal - Reassessment underway including landform TAP, risk/geotechnical review (Pit 2), erosion repairs (by end Q2) and land evolution modelling; quarterly meetings established with Idemitsu staff.</li></ul>



**7 Closed Committee**

Nil

**8 Date of Next Meeting**

12 May, 2026

**9 Closure**