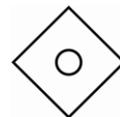


K2 PLANNING

Dr Kate Kerkin - Expert Evidence Statement
Western Renewables Link Environmental Effects Statement
Social Impact Assessment
Expert Review

Prepared for the Moorabool Shire Council
October 2025





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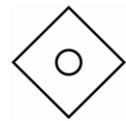


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List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CAG	Council Advisory Group
CCG	Community Consultative Group
CBS	Community Benefit Sharing
CBP	Community Benefit Plan
DE	Department of Education
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EPRs	Environmental Performance Requirements
LGA	Local Government Area
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
RAPs	Registered Aboriginal Parties
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
TRG	Technical Reference Group
VTIF	Victorian Transmission Investment Framework
WRL	Western Renewables Link

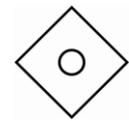


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1. Preliminaries

Full name and address

My name is Dr Kathryn (Kate) Lynne Kerkin and I am the Director of K2 Planning Pty Ltd, P.O. Box 6282 Highton Victoria (ABN 43 691 437 127).

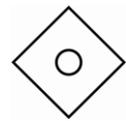
Qualifications, experience and area of expertise

I hold a Bachelor of Arts (Hons 1) degree from the Australian National University majoring in urban geography, a Master of Public Policy (University of New England) and a PhD in Architecture and Planning (University of Melbourne). I have over 25 years' experience in urban and social planning.

My area of expertise includes socio-demographic analysis, policy analysis, social impact assessment, community infrastructure planning, and social planning. I have undertaken work in these areas across the sectors of housing policy, community facilities planning and gaming. I have prepared more than fifty social impact assessments for over fifteen local government clients, six private developers, two non-government organisations and two private secondary schools with a focus on residential subdivisions, proposed national park, retirement villages, palliative care hospice, liquor licence applications and electronic gaming machine applications. I have also run statewide planning workshops on social impact assessment and provided social impact assessment mentoring to private sector clients. Project examples include:

1. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) – Planning Permit Amendment – Indian Place of Assembly
4 Margaret Street Oakley Sankat Mochan Samiti Inc. 2024
2. Kingswood Country Golf Course Development Application – Social Impact Assessment
Kingston City Council 2021
3. Polish Community Association Inc. Geelong - Application to Increase the Number of
Electronic Gaming Machines Social and Economic Impact Assessment 2019
4. Ballarat Clarendon College - Planning Scheme Amendment C207
Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Expert Evidence Report 2018
5. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) – Mentoring Tract 2018
6. Palliative Care Hospice Geelong Social Impact Assessment Anam Cara 2018
7. Social Impact Assessment - On-Premise Licence Liquor Application 590 Main Street
Mordialloc Kingston City Council 2017
8. Clayton Business Park (CBP) Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Peer Review and Revised
Assessment Kingston City Council 2017
9. Gen Fyansford Development Plan West (Stage 8 & 9) Social Impact Assessment 2017
10. Social Impact Assessment Proposed Great Forest National Park Yarra Ranges Shire with
Dench McClean Carlson 2016
11. Brooklyn Greens Methane Gas Leak Social Impact Assessment and Supreme Court
Expert Evidence Presentation Slater and Gordon 2010

My short curriculum vitae is provided in Attachment 6.1



Instructions defining the scope of the report

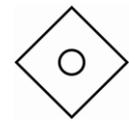
I have been instructed in this matter by Gabrielle Guthrie, Principal, Guthrie Legal, acting for the Moorabool Shire Council (Council) in relation to the Western Renewables Link (WRL) Environmental Effects Statement (EES).

My instructions included:

- a) **review** the EES documents (including relevantly **Chapter 5: Project Development - Section 5.4.2; Technical Report F - Social Impact Assessment Report**; Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8; and Attachment IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report);
- b) confer with instructing solicitors and Counsel, Louise Hicks, where necessary;
- c) prepare an expert report which **addresses social impact issues within Moorabool Shire**, including impact of the proposed Ballan temporary laydown area and accommodation site;
- d) as necessary, participate in any expert conclave; and
- e) appear at the EES Hearing for the purposes of presenting your expert opinion concerning these matters.

My opinion was sought on the following matters:

- a) having regard to the development of the Project as described in Attachment I; sections 3.1-3.7 and 3.8 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment; Chapter 7 and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your **opinion on the adequacy of the approach to assessment of social impacts during Project development and the impact of that approach on the Project**;
- b) having regard to section 3.8 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your **opinion on the extent to which any changes to the outcomes of visual impact assessments, bushfire impact and any other assessments may impact the conclusions on social impact**;
- c) having regard to section 4.5.5 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and section 21.5.4 of Chapter 21 and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your **opinion on the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism**;
- d) having regard to the EES materials and any other matters you consider relevant, your opinion on:
 - i. **the overall social impacts of the project within Moorabool Shire**;
 - ii. section 7.3 of the Attachment III **Draft Planning Scheme Amendment with respect to social impacts**;
- e) having regard to sections 2.3.4 and 11.2.1 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Chapter 7, Attachment IV and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your **opinion on the adequacy of proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing**;
- f) having regard to Chapter 21, Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and Section 8 of Attachment I and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the **approach to social impacts with respect to workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project**. We ask that your analysis considers the **impacts of a proposed facility rather than the need for accommodation for workers**;



- g) having regard to social impacts, section 11 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, and Section 11.1 of Technical Report G – Economic Impact, please provide your **opinion on the proposed Environmental Performance Requirements** presented in Table 29.2 of Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework; and
- h) any other matter you consider relevant to social impacts of the proposal in Moorabool Shire.¹

My instructions are provided in Attachment 6.2

Documents relied upon

The documents I have relied upon to complete my expert evidence are those:

- Provided by Guthrie Legal in the ‘Letters of Instruction’– refer to the Attachments ‘Letters of Instruction’. Critical documents I have relied on are:
 - i. *WRL Environmental Effects Statement Chapter 21 Social*
 - ii. *WRL Environmental Effects Statement Technical Report F Social Impact Assessment*²
 - iii. *WRL Environmental Effects Statement - Attachment I Project Development and Assessment of Alternatives*
 - iv. *WRL Environmental Effects Statement - Attachment III Draft Planning Scheme Amendment*
 - v. *WRL Environmental Effects Statement - Attachment IV Stakeholder and Community Engagement Consultation Report* including Appendix A: the EES Consultation Plan
 - vi. Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP) 2021 *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria A guide for renewable energy developers* Updated July
 - vii. VicGrid 2025 *Victorian Transmission Plan* August
- Specified in Section 4 – Project Context
- Referenced in footnotes throughout the report

Facts, matters, assumptions, documents and other materials considered

This assessment assumes that all data and research I have referenced from other sources and provided in this report, and the information provided in the ‘Letters of Instruction’, are correct.

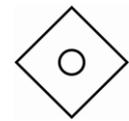
Particular issues or matters outside my field of expertise

This report has been completed in the knowledge that specific expert evidence is beyond the scope of my expertise including subject matter in other documents. I have not sought to address matters that are beyond my expertise including the demand for active and passive recreation and open space. I also note that I am not an expert in the legal aspects of land acquisition and compensation and I have commented on the social implications of this only.

Identity of person who carried out any tests - No tests were undertaken

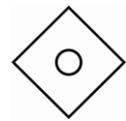
¹ Emphasis has been added in **BOLD** to highlight my specific instructions.

² These two documents are referred to throughout this Expert Review as the WRL Social Impact Assessment, with direct references provided when a direct quote is used.



In preparing this evidence statement I have carried out the following tasks:

1. Completed a desk top review of the *WRL Environmental Effects Statement Technical Report F Social Impact Assessment* (WRL Social Impact Assessment) including:
 - a) Desk Top Review - Existing Conditions Sct 4: Review of scope of material provided in summary of existing conditions; Provision of recommendations regarding additional or improved data relating to social conditions that could inform social impact assessment
 - b) Desk Top Review - Workforce and Social Profile Sct 7: Review of approach taken to workforce profile; Provision of recommendations related to a potential increase in the proportion of local workforce engaged in the Project and anticipated measures and social impact of increase local workforce engagement
 - c) Desk Top Review - Land Use and Amenity Sct 8: Review of the scope and impacts considered related to land uses; Provision of recommendations for a revised methodology that would enable a more detailed and localized assessment of land uses and potential impacts
 - d) Desk Top Review - Decommissioning; Cumulative Impacts; Managing Performance; Scts 9 -12: Review of the scope, detail and adequacy of the proposed mitigating strategies provided in the WRL Social Impact Assessment; Confirmation of the legal scope for providing mitigating strategies related to land uses etc.; Provision of recommendations for a revised methodology that would localize and increase the number and detail of mitigating strategies proposed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment
 - e) Desk Top Review - Methodology Sct 3: Review of the approach taken to completing the WRL Social Impact Assessment; Provision of recommendations regarding additional methods that would contribute to a more localized and detailed Social Impact Assessment
2. Reading of:
 - a) *WRL Environmental Effects Statement - Attachment I Project Development and Assessment of Alternatives*
 - b) *WRL Environmental Effects Statement - Attachment IV Stakeholder and Community Engagement Consultation Report*
 - c) *WRL Environmental Effects Statement - Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework; Section 11.1 of Technical Report G – Economic Impact; Chapter 11 Landscape and Visual; Chapter 14 Economic;*
3. Reading and commenting on *WRL Environmental Effects Statement - Attachment III Draft Planning Scheme Amendment* and scope of social impacts
4. Desk top summary of relevant comparable case studies of large-scale infrastructure developments that have engaged local workforce including:
 - a) Infrastructure details
 - b) Demonstrated social/ community impacts/benefits
5. High level desktop assessment of the existing infrastructure and workforce capacity across Moorabool Shire Council including:
 - a) Unemployment by age and gender
 - a) Skills match to WRL skills requirements



Conclusions

My Expert Review of the EES documents including **Chapter 5: Project Development - Section 5.4.2; Technical Report F - Social Impact Assessment Report**; Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8; and Attachment IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report finds the following:

1. **My opinion is that the approach to assessment of social impacts during Project development and the impact of that approach on the Project is inadequate and is severely limited due** to a range of factors including:
 - a. A **narrow focus that only considered location options that were pre-set by AUSNET** for: the transmission lines; the laydown areas; and the worker accommodation facilities
 - b. A **narrow focus of site selection criteria** for new terminal station[s] which severely limited the social impact criteria that were considered through Project development (see EES Chapter 5: Project Development pp. 5 – 57-58)
 - c. **No consideration of, or reference to, the broad range of issues that would usually be considered in a social impact assessment** including: social values and connections; community cohesion; wellbeing/poor wellbeing etc.
 - d. Very **limited data** on the capacity of existing areas in the Moorabool Shire to accommodate workers
 - e. No consideration of the potential **benefits of integrated accommodation options or alternate accommodation models**
 - f. An assumption that the Project workforce would be **disruptive to communities**
 - g. Very little scope for exploring and responding to **community opposition** to the Project and the contribution of this opposition to community wellbeing

In my professional opinion these limitations contribute directly to the limited scope of material assessed, and the limited Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs), detailed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment.

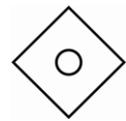
2. **My opinion on the extent to which any changes to the outcomes of [landscape] visual impact assessments, bushfire impact and any other assessments may impact the conclusions on social impact.**

Visual Impact

Given that the WRL Social Impact Assessment relies almost entirely on the results of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to consider visual impact, it is my professional opinion that any changes to the outcomes of visual impact assessments would have significant implications for the conclusion of the WRL Social Impact Assessment.

Bushfire Impact

The WRL Social Impact Assessment identifies a number of social impacts related to bushfires relying almost entirely on the results of the Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment. Given this reliance on the primary report, it is my professional opinion that any changes to the outcomes of bushfire impact assessments would have significant implications for the conclusion of the WRL Social Impact Assessment. It is my also professional opinion that a social



impact assessment of the Project should provide a more detailed assessment of the potential social impacts of increased bushfire risk.

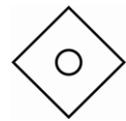
3. **My opinion on the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism is that the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism in the WRL Social Impact Assessment is inadequate** due to:
 - a. A lack of assessment of the potential social impacts of tourism
 - b. A reliance on mitigation strategies that respond to the needs of land owners only and do not address any boarder community values and concerns related to the appeal of the area for recreational tourism, etc.
 - c. Inadequate mitigating responses to identified impacts of the Project on specific areas, eg. the Bald Hill Activation Area, Lerderderg State Park and Long Forest
 - d. No recognition of the role of the Moorabool Shire in the current bid for UNESCO World Heritage of the Victorian Gold Fields³
 - e. Inadequate recognition of the strategic significance of tourism within the Moorabool Shire

4. **My opinion on the approach to social impacts with respect to workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project is that this approach is extremely inadequate** due to:
 - a. An assessment only of potential amenity impacts of the proposed facility
 - b. No consideration of alternative workforce models
 - c. Inadequate documentation of available accommodation options within existing settlements
 - d. An assumption that the Project workforce would be disruptive to communities
 - e. No consideration of the potential social benefits of integrated accommodation options

5. **My opinion on the adequacy of proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing (CBS) is that these proposed arrangements are extremely inadequate** given the following:
 - a. No acknowledgement of the State Government CBS Guidelines for renewable energy developers⁴ and the key steps set out in those guidelines
 - b. A particular lack of response to steps in developing CBS that would help inform, and or respond to, potential social impacts of the Project
 - c. No acknowledgement of VicGrid policy direction and principles related to community benefit sharing
 - d. No recognition of the existing labour market gaps, apprenticeship and training needs evident in the Moorabool Shire
 - e. No pathways for worker transitions between declining to emerging industries

³ Victorian Goldfields - The Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid

⁴ DEWLP 2017 Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers



- f. No assessment of the potential social impacts of the fact that the majority of construction positions would be filled by workers living beyond commuting distance from the worksite
- g. No recognition of CBS in the proposed EPRs

6. Other matter you consider relevant to social impacts of the proposal in Moorabool Shire.

In my professional opinion the following gaps in the WRL Social Impact Assessment contribute to the inadequacy of the approach to assessment of social impacts:

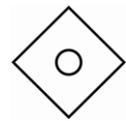
- a. Limited analysis of social profile data for small areas in Moorabool other than Darley and Bacchus Marsh
- b. Resultant limited analysis of the varied and complex social characteristics of Moorabool small areas including the potential range of interests and issues related to the Project
- c. Use of the WRL Social Impact Assessment authors 'professional judgement' to ascribing values to 'pin point' data provided by landowners rather than direct consultations with landowners themselves
- d. Very poor analysis of sources of community conflict and opposition to the Project and a resulting lack of any detailed attempt to understand, and respond to, community opposition
- e. Failure to apply the approaches to understanding community values, including conflicts, as set out in the DELWP 2017 guidelines referred to in Section 5.5
- f. Failure to acknowledge social conflicts within other communities affected by renewable energy projects and the potential of these conflicts in the current Project, eg. conflicts between landowners who will benefit from transmission tower locations and other social groups
- g. A failure to consider how the Project will respond to an enduring sense of loss and powerlessness
- h. A need to better understand the potential negative response, and potentially negative social impacts, of the Project on residents of Darley
- i. I also note that the WRL Social Impact Assessment does not respond to the proposed minimum expectations for creating social value and economic benefits set out in the Draft Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects 2025

7. My opinion about the overall social impacts of the project within Moorabool Shire

It is my professional opinion that the limitations of the WRL Social Impact Assessment, outlined above, mean that it is not possible to determine the overall social impact of the Project within Moorabool Shire and a revised social impact assessment is required.

8. My opinion is that Section 7.3 of the Attachment III Draft Planning Scheme Amendment with respect to social impacts is inadequate given that it includes:

- a. Little reference to material covered in the WRL Social Impact Assessment
- b. A focus on employment impacts and worker accommodation facilities only
- c. Reference to broader positive social impacts that were *not* considered in the WRL Social Impact Assessment



9. **My opinion having regard to social impacts is that the proposed Environmental Performance Requirements are inadequate** given that:
- a. The EPR's cited in the WRL Social Impact Assessment relate to employment only
 - b. Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework does not include 'social'
 - c. The EPRs reference AUSNET materials that are not yet developed

Provisional opinions not fully researched

The attached report includes the full range of opinions that fall within the scope of a social planner's expertise and experience.

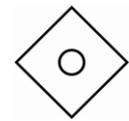
Completeness of the Report

This report is complete.

Declaration

I, Dr. Kate (Kathryn) Lynne Kerkin, declare that I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Inquiry and Advisory Committee.

Dr Kate Kerkin October 2025



2. Key Findings

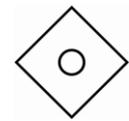
1. Resilient communities are defined as communities with ‘the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems to survive, adapt and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience’⁵
2. Renewable Energy Projects across Australia have been documented as contributing to social divisions that, in turn, undermine community resilience⁶
3. Social Impact Assessments related to renewable energy projects provide an opportunity to: address the social impacts that accompanying renewable energy projects; respond to social impacts in a way that reinforces, rather than undermines, community cohesion, social connection and community resilience
4. This opportunity has not been addressed in the Social Impact Assessment (WRL Social Impact Assessment) completed as part of the Western Renewables Link (WRL) Environmental Effects Statement (EES) as shown in the evidence provided in this report and summarised in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Key Findings

Review Item	Key Finding
<p>1: My opinion on the approach to assessment of social impacts during Project development and the impact of that approach on the Project</p> <p>Refer to Section 4.1 below</p>	<p>My assessment finds that the approach to Project development was inadequate and was severely limited due to a range of factors including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Impact being listed as one out of seven themes in the DTP 2023 2. AUSNET Project development including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a narrow focus on location options that were pre-set by AUSNET for: transmission lines; laydown areas; and worker accommodation b. a narrow focus on the directly defined criteria applied to Project development c. no consideration of, or reference to, the broad range of issues that would usually be considered in a social impact assessment including: social values and connections; community cohesion; small business, workforce development etc. 3. Other significant gaps in the Project development documents that contributed to a narrow scope for the WRL Social Impact Assessment include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Very limited data on the capacity of existing areas in the Moorabool Shire to accommodate workers b. No consideration of: the potential benefits of integrated accommodation options: alternate accommodation models c. An assumption that the Project workforce would be disruptive to communities d. Very little scope for exploring and responding to community opposition to the project and the contribution of this opposition to community wellbeing

⁵ The 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) Program was founded by the Rockefeller Foundation to support the 100RC member cities and Chief Resilience Officers through a Global Resilient Cities Network. See Rockefeller Foundation et al 2015. <http://www.100resilientcities.org/#section-2>; summarised from Kinetica and K2 Planning 2021 *Building Resilience in New and Emerging Communities*, Prepared for the Northern Metropolitan Partnership Group.

⁶ See for example: [Renewable energy projects divide farming communities - ABC News](#); [Australian producers divided on wind farms with farmland earmarked for development - ABC News](#)



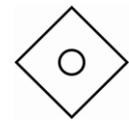
Review Item	Key Finding
	<p>It is my professional opinion that these limitations contributed directly to the limited scope of material assessed, and the limited Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs), detailed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment</p> <p>In my professional opinion the scope of the WRL Social Impact Assessment is inadequate and reflects a failure of the authors of the WRL Social Impact Assessment to set the agenda for identifying and assessing social impacts due to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over-reliance on other WRL EES documents to identify potential social impacts 2. Limited stakeholder and community engagement conducted as part of the WRL Social Impact Assessment 3. Limited site visits conducted as part of the WRL Social Impact Assessment
<p>2: My opinion on the extent to which any changes to the outcomes of visual impact assessments, bushfire impact and any other assessments may impact the conclusions on social impact</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.2 below</p>	<p><i>Visual Impact</i></p> <p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment refers to the assessment of the EES Chapter 11: Landscape and Visual (LVIA) to list numerous potentially negative social impacts related to the visual impact of the Project, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major to moderate residual social impacts on directly affected land owners 2. Detracting from the amenity of affected dwellings, and potentially diminish the enjoyment of homes and valued lifestyles, of surrounding land holders 3. High visual impact on the Bald Hill Bald Hill Activation Area leading to some local residents of Darley may avoid the facility, particularly those who are highly sensitive to the Project's presence in their local area 4. Potentially dissuading use of the Merrimu Reservoir facility for some people 5. Detract from the appeal of the Coimadai Memorial Park and Avenue of Honour for some users and may have a noticeable effect on the amenity of the facility 6. 'High' and 'moderate' visual impacts on rural properties in Section 4 7. Potentially reducing the attractiveness of smaller equine properties and lifestyle properties in Darley and surround <p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment relies directly on the Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) listed in the LVIA for any recommended responses to the identified social impacts associated with visual impacts.</p> <p><i>Bushfire</i></p> <p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment relies almost entirely on the Bushfire Assessment Technical Report to identify a number of social impacts related to bushfire impact including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adaptation to local firefighting tactics 2. Diminished effectiveness of firefighting response 3. Emergency access to key bushfire areas may be impeded <p>Given this reliance on the Technical Reports, any changes to the outcomes of the LVIA or bushfire impact assessments would have significant implications for the conclusion of the WRL Social Impact Assessment.</p>
<p>3: My opinion regarding the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.3 below</p>	<p>It is my professional opinion that the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism in the WRL Social Impact Assessment is inadequate due to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A lack of assessment of the potential social impacts of tourism 2. A reliance on mitigation strategies that respond to the needs of land owners only (<i>Business Mitigation and Support Strategy</i>) and do not address any boarder community values and concerns 3. Inadequate mitigating responses to identified impacts of the Project on specific areas, eg. the Bald Hill Activation Area, Lerderderg State Park and Long Forest



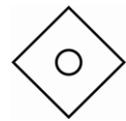
Review Item	Key Finding
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. No recognition of the role of the Moorabool Shire in the current bid for UNESCO World Heritage of the Victorian Gold Fields⁷ 5. Inadequate recognition of the strategic significance of tourism within the Moorabool Shire
<p>4: My opinion regarding the approach to social impacts with respect to workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project. We ask that your analysis considers the impacts of a proposed facility rather than the need for accommodation for workers</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.4 below</p>	<p>It is my professional opinion that the approach to social impacts considered within the WRL Social Impact Assessment is extremely inadequate with respect to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project 2. Potential impacts of the proposed worker accommodation facility <p>Evidence of the limits of the WRL Social Impact Assessment includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment was only conducted of potential amenity impacts of the proposed facility 2. No consideration was given to of alternative workforce models 3. Inadequate documentation was provided of available accommodation options within existing settlements 4. An assumption was made that the Project workforce would be disruptive to communities and therefore that separate worker accommodation facilities were required 5. No consideration was provided of the potential social benefits of integrated accommodation options
<p>5: My opinion regarding the adequacy of proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing (CBS)</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.5 below</p>	<p>It is my professional opinion that the proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing outlined in the WRL Social Impact Assessment is extremely inadequate given the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No recognition of CBS in the proposed EPRs 2. No acknowledgement of the State Government CBS Guidelines for renewable energy developers⁸ and the following key steps set out in those guidelines: 3. A particular lack of response to steps in developing CBS that would help inform, and or respond to, potential social impacts of the Project, eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the community expectation around benefit sharing? - Are there prevalent community concerns - expectations of different segments of the community - Will these benefits be different to those offered to other non-host neighbours? 4. No acknowledgement of VicGrid policy direction and principles related to community benefit sharing 5. No recognition of the existing labour market gaps, apprenticeship and training needs evident in the Moorabool Shire 6. No pathways for worker transitions between declining to emerging industries 7. No assessment of the potential social impacts of the fact that majority of construction positions would be filled by workers living beyond commuting distance from the worksite

⁷ [Victorian Goldfields - The Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid](#)

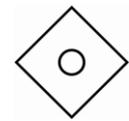
⁸ DEWLP 2017 Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers



Review Item	Key Finding
<p>6: My opinion on the overall social impacts of the project within Moorabool Shire; including impact of the proposed Ballan temporary laydown area and accommodation site</p> <p>Refer to Section 4.1 and 5.2 below</p>	<p>In my professional opinion it is not possible to determine the overall social impact of the Project within Moorabool Shire given the limitations of the WRL Social Impact Assessment, outlined above.</p> <p>Indeed, the Conclusion to the Executive Summary in the WRL Social Impact Assessment suggests an overall highly negative social impact of the Project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Changes to land use and amenity brought about by the Project would be both unpopular and potentially impactful for various individuals and social groups who live, work and/or recreate in the study area.</i> - <i>... it does have substantial potential to undermine the value that people attribute to [existing social and cultural]</i> - <i>...the Project may to varying degrees, reduce satisfaction obtained from particular land uses, including residential occupation, recreation, etc. and any associated sense of connection to the various places and communities which exist in the study area</i> - <i>In some parts of the study area, impacts would be of sufficient magnitude and extent to precipitate reductions in community capacity and cohesion in the short to medium term</i> - <i>...if the Project proceeds, some members of existing communities within the study area who live through the change process, may never be comfortable with the Project</i> - <i>...for those who strongly resist the Project in an attempt to preserve the integrity of their property and/or business and the prevailing amenity and character of their homes and local area, its approval may leave an enduring sense of loss and powerlessness.</i> <p>The WRL EES Stakeholder and Community Engagement Consultation Report similarly identifies significant negative social impacts:</p> <p><i>Potential for strong family histories and ties to farming properties to be disrupted</i></p> <p>These negative social impacts are not properly analysed and no clear mitigating strategies are proposed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment making it impossible to determine the overall social impact of the Project.</p> <p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment findings of minor to negligible positive social impacts focus primarily on economic impacts related to workforce and are inconsistent with the findings cited above.</p>
<p>7: Any other matters</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.6 below</p>	<p>The following gaps in the WRL Social Impact Assessment contribute to the inadequacy of the approach to assessment of social impacts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited analysis of social profile data for small areas in Moorabool other than Darley and Bacchus Marsh 2. Resultant limited analysis of the varied and complex social characteristics of Moorabool small areas 3. Use of the WRL Social Impact Assessment authors 'professional judgement' to ascribing values to 'pin point' data provided by landowners 4. Very poor analysis of sources of community conflict and opposition to the Project 5. Failure to apply the approaches to understanding community values, including conflicts, as set out in the DELWP 2017 guidelines 6. Failure to acknowledge social conflicts within other communities affected by renewable energy projects and the potential of these conflicts in the current Project, 7. A failure to consider how the Project will respond to an enduring sense of loss and powerlessness 8. A need to better understand the potential negative response, and potentially negative social impact, of the Project on residents of Darley



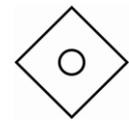
Review Item	Key Finding
	<p>9. The WRL Social Impact Assessment does not respond to the proposed minimum expectations for creating social value and economic benefits set out in the Draft Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects 2025</p>
<p>8: My opinion on Attachment III Draft Planning Scheme Amendment with respect to social impacts</p>	<p>It is my professional opinion that the Draft Planning Scheme Amendment is inadequate in relation to social impact due to the following limitations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reference to broader positive social impacts that were <i>not</i> considered in the WRL Social Impact Assessment 2. Very little reference to material covered in the WRL Social Impact Assessment 3. Referencing of potential social impacts that were raised in other EES Chapters and/or Technical Reports and not addressed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment for example 4. Repeated referencing to AUSNET materials that are not yet developed
<p>9: My opinion on the Proposed Environmental Performance Requirements (EPR's)</p>	<p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment coverage of proposed EPRs is based on reference to Technical Report F and only includes the following three performance recommendations that respond to workforce issues only:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Avoid and minimise potential negative social impacts of the Project construction workforce b. Develop and implement a Code of Conduct to avoid and minimise potential social impacts of the construction workforce c. Develop and implement initiatives to maximise employment opportunities for local communities, First Nations people and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups <p>I also note that Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework does not include ‘social’</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communications and engagements 2. Fire weather and bushfire 3. Biosecurity 4. Pollutions 5. Threatened flora and fauna 6. Land stability 7. Heritage 8. Noise and vibration 9. Water quality 10. Roads



3. Recommendations

My recommendations that respond to the limitations of the WRL Social Impact Assessment are set out below.

Review Item	Recommendations
<p>1: My opinion on the approach to assessment of social impacts during Project development and the impact of that approach on the Project</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.1 below</p>	<p>1. It is my professional opinion that a revised Social Impact Assessment should reflect a more comprehensive approach to social impact including addressing the following themes:</p> <p>Wellbeing themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Healthy</i> - <i>Secure</i> - <i>Sustainability</i> - <i>Cohesive</i> - <i>Prosperous</i> <p>Issues of poor social impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Isolation</i> - <i>Lack of support</i> - <i>Poor social</i> - <i>Unhealthy relationships</i>: Engaging in relationships with a lot of conflict or an imbalance of power
<p>2: My opinion on the extent to which any changes to the outcomes of visual impact assessments, bushfire impact and any other assessments may impact the conclusions on social impact</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.2 below</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is my professional opinion that a social impact assessment of the visual impacts of the Project should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide a more detailed assessment of the following criteria commonly applied to social impact assessments associated with visual amenity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Experiences – views and visual experiences of resident, workers, tourists and other stakeholders - Mental Wellbeing - changes to visual amenity that can affect people’s psychological comfort and sense of place and directly influence the wellbeing of residents and the broader community - Sense of place – including the impact of the Project on community perceptions of neighbourhood character and wellbeing etc. b. Provide clear EPRs that respond directly to each of the social impacts identified 2. It is also my professional opinion that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A social impact assessment of the Project should provide a more detailed assessment of the potential social impacts of increased bushfire risk b. Social Impacts related to landscape and visual impact should form part of community benefit sharing models developed in relation to the current Project
<p>3: My opinion regarding the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.3 below</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is my professional opinion that a revised Social Impact Assessment should include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Detailed consideration of the Moorabool Shire Council aspirations for tourism in the region and the potential social value of tourism and related Project impacts b. A detailed assessment of the social impacts of the Project in relation to tourism, particularly impacts on community values associated with tourism ventures and opportunities, local area appeal and related social impacts

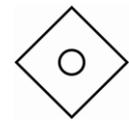


Review Item	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Considered mitigating strategies that reduce any negative social impacts of the Project in relation to tourism, eg. declining visitation, reduced visitor experience etc.
<p>4: My opinion regarding the approach to social impacts with respect to workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project.</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.4 below</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is my professional opinion that a revised Social Impact Assessment should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A more detailed assessment of existing accommodation options available within existing settlements b. Consideration of alternate models for workforce accommodation including integration within existing settlements c. Identified social impacts, both positive and negative, of potentially integrating the workforce within existing communities, eg. contribution to community connection and social cohesion, increased local awareness of and involvement in the project etc.
<p>5: My opinion regarding the adequacy of proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing (CBS)</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.5 below</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is my professional opinion that a revised Social Impact Assessment should apply the approaches to Benefit Sharing set out in DELWP 2017 and updated in 2021 with an aim to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preventing contestation, agitation or conflict and helping bring the entire community together toward achieving net-zero emissions b. Ensuring financial and social gains are distributed locally and regionally with a long-term view c. Creating a positive legacy in the local community d. Delivering opportunities for sustained and inclusive social improvements that are tailored to the needs of local communities e. Establishing and maintaining positive long-term connections between new energy projects and local communities by contributing to the future vitality of the regions where projects are located⁹.
<p>6: My opinion on the overall social impacts of the project within Moorabool Shire; including impact of the proposed Ballan temporary laydown area and accommodation site</p> <p>Refer to Section 5.7 below</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is my professional opinion that, in order to determine the overall social impact of the Project on the Moorabool Shire a revised Social Impact Assessment would need to adopt the recommendations proposed in section 5.7 below which respond to the current gaps in the WRL Social Impact Assessment and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A narrative analysis of the conflict evident in the large gap between those opposed and those who support the project in Section 3 (Moorabool areas) in particular b. Detailed case study interviews – directly affected landholders; adjacent landowners c. Group-based qualitative research method that gives participants freedom to shape discussion on a given topic with minimal intervention from researchers d. An approach to site mapping that allows participants to share their thoughts on the character of the local landscape and what this means to local people and what the perceived impacts may be to inform the context narrative and identification of key social risks and key stakeholders, particularly in relation to tourism impacts and small area impacts e. A priority to explore the specific impact of the project on residents of Darley, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community group consultations • Narrative analysis of local media • Focus group interviews with residents and land holders • Case study insights – aspirational residents and potential social impacts etc.



Review Item	Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Site specific understanding of the detailed impact of the Project on each of the significant areas of Moorabool Shire associated with tourism including: area-based case studies; user group interviews etc. g. More detailed analysis of the Moorabool Shire’s aspirations h. More data on visitation numbers and the potential impact of the Project i. Direct connection between the impacts identified in the WRL Social Impact Assessment and mitigation measures proposed in other WRL impact assessments j. A much more detailed mitigation strategy highlighting key aspects of a CBS approach including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Benefit Fund details • A list of initiatives the Project can implement in collaboration with key stakeholders • Compensation details and process for directly affected land holders etc.
<p>7: My opinion on any other matters relevant to social impacts of the proposal in Moorabool Shire</p>	<p>It is my professional opinion that a revised Social Impact Assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to the now widely recognised social conflicts within communities affected by renewable energy projects including conflict between landowners who agree to have transmission towers located on their land and other land owners¹⁰ 2. Provide evidence of the minimum expectations for creating social value as set out in the State Government of Victoria Draft <i>Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects 2025</i>
<p>8: My opinion on Attachment III Draft Planning Scheme Amendment with respect to social impacts</p>	<p>In my professional opinion the Draft Planning Scheme Amendment needs to be informed by a revised Social Impact Assessment that responds to the gaps and proposed approach recommended above.</p>
<p>9: My opinion on the Proposed Environmental Performance Requirements (EPR’s)</p>	<p>The EPRs reference AUSNET materials that are not yet developed including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Wide Property Access Management Plan (PAMP) 2. Western Renewables Link Community Benefit Fund 3. Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan <p>In my professional opinion these proposed AUSNET materials are respond to managing social impacts and should be developed in detail prior to the Planning Scheme Amendment being adopted</p>

¹⁰ See for example: [Renewable energy projects divide farming communities - ABC News](#); [Australian producers divided on wind farms with farmland earmarked for development - ABC News](#)



4. Project Context

This Section briefly explains the context to the *Western Renewables Link Social Impact Assessment – Expert Review* including high level details about:

1. The Western Renewables Link ('the Project')
2. *Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link*
3. Attachment IV Stakeholder and Community Engagement Consultation Report, and
4. Contemporary approaches to conducting Social Impact Assessments related to renewable energy projects through Community Benefit Sharing

4.1 Western Renewables Link

Key Elements¹¹

The Western Renewables Link (the Project) consists of a new overhead double circuit 500kV transmission line, approximately 190km long, from near Bulgana in Victoria's west to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west. The Project includes the following works:

1. The construction and operation of a new overhead double circuit 500kV transmission line from a new 500kV terminal station near Bulgana to the Sydenham Terminal Station
2. The construction and operation of a new 500kV terminal station near Bulgana
3. Expansion of the existing Bulgana Terminal Station and connection to the proposed new 500kV terminal station near Bulgana via a single circuit 220kV transmission line, comprising paired single circuit 500kV towers (i.e., 500kV towers strung with 220kV conductors)
4. Connection works at the Sydenham Terminal Station including the modification of a bay and a bay extension with associated infrastructure
5. Upgrade of Elaine Terminal Station, through the diversion of an existing line
6. Protection system upgrades at connected terminal station sites.

The Project's broad components are summarised in Figure 1 and the location is shown in Figure 2.

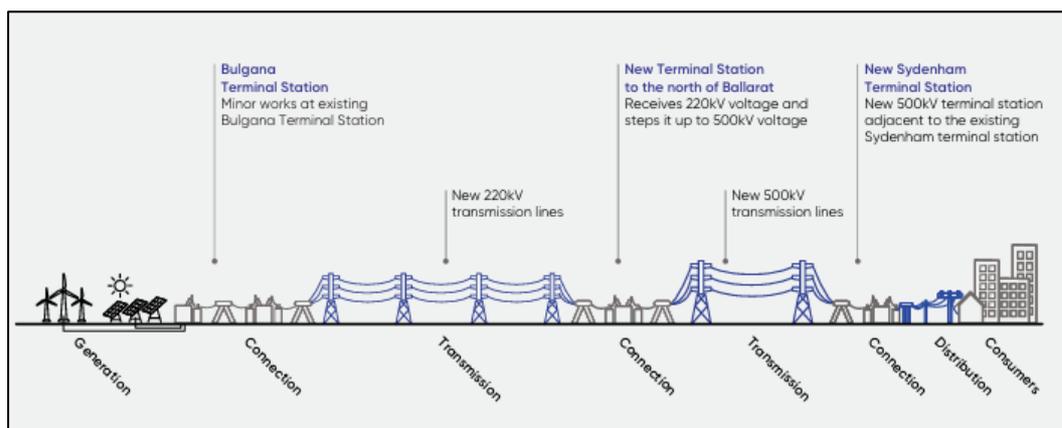


Figure 1: Western Renewables Link – Proposed Route

Source: *Western Renewables Link Chapter 06 Project Description* p. 6-3

¹¹ Material in this Section is taken substantially from *Western Renewables Link Chapter 06 Project Description*

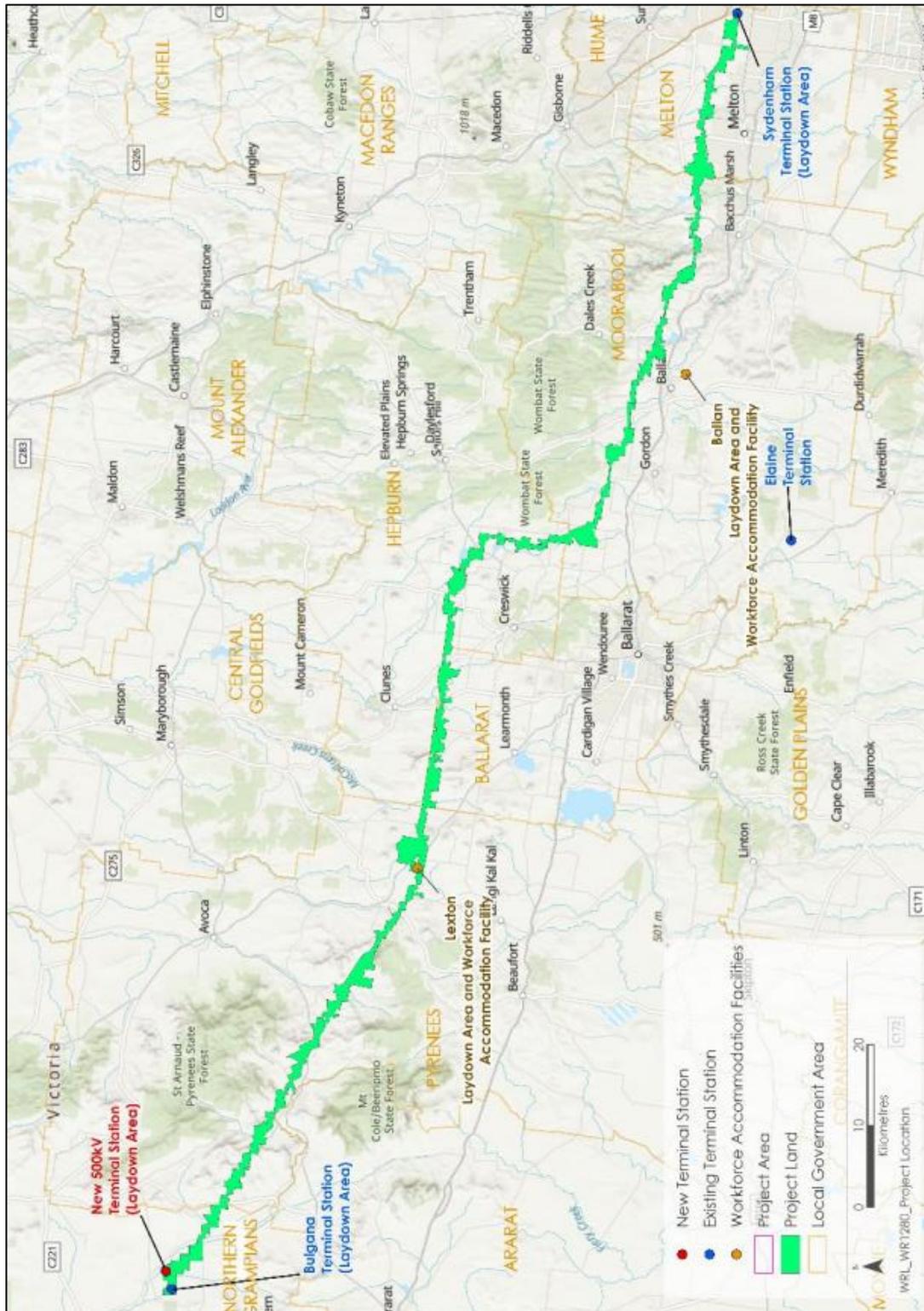
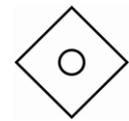


Figure 2: Western Renewables Link – Project Location and Proposed Route

Source: Western Renewables Link Chapter 06 Project Description p. 6-4



The Project will install the infrastructure shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Western Renewables Link – Project Infrastructure – Key Components

Double circuit 500kV lattice towers	418 double circuit towers
Single circuit 500kV lattice towers**	36 single circuit towers, 18 sets of two side-by-side
Approximate length of 500kV transmission line route	Approximately 190km, between near Bulgana in Victoria's west to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west
Approximate length of 220kV transmission line route**	Approximately 2.5km, between the existing Bulgana Terminal Station to the new 500kV terminal station near Bulgana
Terminal stations	A new 500kV terminal station and associated infrastructure near to the existing Bulgana Terminal Station
	An expansion of the existing Bulgana Terminal Station
	A connection to the Sydenham Terminal Station, including the modification of a 500kV bay and a new 500kV bay extension with associated infrastructure
	Relocation and diversion of existing 220kV transmission lines at Elaine Terminal Station
Approximate total length of all access tracks	155km

* These figures are approximate and subject to final detailed design, which will consider further landholder consultation and geotechnical, site and other investigations.

** The 220kV transmission line route is assumed to be 8 sets of paired single circuit 500kV lattice towers (16 towers in total), strung with 220kV conductors

Source: *Western Renewables Link Chapter 06 Project Description* p. 6-5

Project Stages¹²

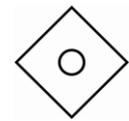
The Project will be completed through following stages:

1. Construction late 2026 - late 2028
2. Operation
3. Decommissioning – see Table 3.

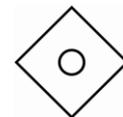
Table 3: Project Stages

Project Stage	Key Activities
Construction Late 2026 - late 2028 <i>Approximately two years</i> <i>From initial works to final works, the</i>	Actions – Preparatory activities (e.g., site investigations, establishment of laydown areas etc.), establishment of temporary infrastructure (such as water and wastewater infrastructure, power supplies), construction of towers and transmission line stringing works; construction works at terminal stations; site rehabilitation works; and pre-commissioning activities; Once construction is complete, site rehabilitation will occur and commissioning activities would include final inspections and other safety and pre-operational checks

¹² The Project Stages noted in this section are taken from the WRL *Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment*. I note that there have been changes to Project Stages published on the Project webpage.



Project Stage	Key Activities
<p><i>cumulative duration of construction work at each tower will be approximately 9 to 22 weeks over the two-year construction stage</i></p>	<p>Approach - Work crews will move through sections of the Project, with specialist work crews following one another. Construction may occur at multiple towers at any one point in time and the construction steps may occur across an extended time period for each tower. Once foundations are complete, work may cease for several months until crews return to assemble and erect the transmission towers. Work may then cease again for several months until crews return for stringing of the overhead conductors</p> <p>Key activities associated with the construction of towers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - site preparations, including necessary vegetation clearing - construction of vehicle access tracks and minor upgrades to existing roads and tracks - tower foundation works - tower structure assembly and erection - transmission line stringing works - commissioning - site rehabilitation. <p>The works proposed at the new 500kV terminal station near Bulgana, the existing Bulgana Terminal Station and Sydenham Terminal Station will be constructed over a period of approximately 20 months, with key activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - site preparations, access and necessary vegetation clearing - earthworks - construction of footings, foundations and drainage systems - installation of structures and equipment - commissioning - landscaping and rehabilitation.
<p>Operations</p>	<p>The operation and maintenance of transmission lines are subject to stringent regulatory controls to ensure public safety and the uninterrupted supply of electricity. All transmission line operators are required to comply with these controls and provide regular reports to the relevant authorities, including Energy Safe Victoria.</p> <p>The key operational stage activities for the transmission line include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - scheduled inspections of the transmission line and easement (either by vehicle patrols or LiDAR/aerial surveys) - ongoing vegetation management to maintain safety clearances under the transmission line - tower maintenance inspections - repairs and maintenance to address issues found in above inspections. - While the terminal stations are operated remotely, staff are present at stations for inspections or maintenance. Routine inspections would occur every two months, with personnel checking the overall condition of the terminal station's assets.
<p>Decommissioning</p>	<p>The Project's transmission line is designed for a service life of 80 years, while the terminal station works have been designed for a minimum life of 45 years. The terminal station works would be maintained and upgraded to enable the terminal stations to remain operational for the service life of the transmission line. At the end of the service life of the transmission line, the infrastructure will either be decommissioned or upgraded to extend its service life to maintain the security and reliability of the transmission network as determined by the network planner at that time. In the event of decommissioning, the key activities may involve:</p>



Project Stage	Key Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- lowering the overhead transmission line and ground wires to the ground and cutting them into manageable lengths to roll onto drums or reels for disposal as scrap metal- removing insulators and line hardware from structures at the site and disposal at an approved waste facility- dismantling towers in manageable sections, removing from the site and selling steel as scrap- excavation of footings below finish surface level- decommissioning and removal of terminal stations- easement restoration and rehabilitation, where require

Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May 2025 pp. 5 – 6 summarised by K2 Planning July 2025.

Social Impact Assessment¹³

The aims of the WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link included:

- assess the potential social impacts associated with the Project
- define any Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) necessary to determine the environmental outcomes that the Project must meet, to be achieved through the implementation of mitigation measures during construction, operation and decommissioning, and address the EES evaluation objectives

Source: Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May p. 1

The data sources, approach to identifying potential social effects and consultations conducted through the development of the WRL Social Impact Assessment are summarised in Table 4 showing that:

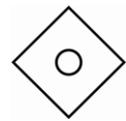
1. The data sources used to compile the WRL Social Impact Assessment comprised Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data and other AUSNET technical reports
2. Sources used to identify potential social impacts included other WRL EES documents; one workshop with AUSNET; minutes from AUSNET Council Advisory Group (CAG) and AUSNET Community Consultative Group (CCG)
3. Consultations conducted to compile the WRL Social Impact Assessment included: meetings with the authors of other AUSNET technical reports; attendance at two community engagement sessions; one site visit; one targeted community meeting; one interview with a neighbouring landowner

¹³ Material in this Section is taken substantially from WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May



Table 4: WRL Social Impact Assessment - Data Sources, Approach and Consultations

Data sources used to compile the WRL Social Impact Assessment	Sources and activities used to identify potential social effects...the spatial range over which social effects may be experienced and in turn a geographic focus	Consultations conducted to compile the WRL Social Impact Assessment
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical Report D: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 2. Technical Report E: Land Use and Planning Impact Assessment. 3. Technical Report G: Economic Impact Assessment. 4. Technical Report H: Agriculture and Forestry Impact Assessment. 5. Technical Report J: Aviation Impact Assessment. 6. Technical Report O: Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. 7. Technical Report P: Transport Impact Assessment. 8. Technical Report I: Air Quality Impact Assessment. 9. Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment. 10. Technical Report L: Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) and Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF) Impact Assessment. 11. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) statistics and other relevant secondary data sources. <p><i>Source: Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May p. 13; – summarised by K2 Planning</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A review of the document, Western Renewables Link EES – Final Scoping Requirements FAQs, November 2023. 2. Initial Workshop - prior to commencement of the WRL Social Impact Assessment, a workshop was undertaken with the proponent (AusNet) to determine the nature of the Project and its potential effects, and to begin to identify the individuals and groups that may be affected (the social receptors). Communication with the proponent regarding social receptors continued throughout the WRL Social Impact Assessment process. 3. Council Advisory Group (CAG) – AusNet has established a Council Advisory Group for the Project, comprised of representatives of local governments traversed by the Project. CAG members were consulted to gather their views regarding issues which the WRL Social Impact Assessment should address. 4. Community Consultative Group (CCG) - AusNet has established a Community Consultative Group (CCG) comprised of landholders, residents, community groups, government entities, industry and market participants, etc. Feedback collected from the group prior to commencement of the WRL Social Impact Assessment was relayed to the author. In addition, the author interviewed four CCG members including the chair, to further inform the scoping of the WRL Social Impact Assessment <p><i>Source: Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May p. 11 – summarised by K2 Planning</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One site visit 2. Two community engagement sessions 3. Two interviews with AUSNET’s Land Access team 4. One interview with a neighbouring landowner 5. One targeted community meeting - Coimadai War Memorial committee and Council 6. Multiple meetings with the author of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 7. One workshop and follow up meetings with Community Advisory Group members 8. One-on-one interviews with four members of the CCG 9. Inspection of AUSNET data including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - survey data collected via an online survey administered by AusNet - ‘Pinpoint’ spatial data set compiled by AusNet comprises spatially georeferenced verbatim feedback from community members using AusNets interactive online mapping tool to obtain feedback from the community on important destinations, sites, and features in their local area - data generated through the stakeholder and community engagement conducted by AusNet - spatial data provided by AusNet showing the extent of directly affected landholdings, current land use and sentiment of the landholders <p><i>Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May p. 13-14 – summarised by K2 Planning</i></p>



Assessing significance

The WRL Social Impact Assessment states that the significance of social impacts was assessed considering the magnitude of effects likely to generate impacts and the sensitivity of social receptors to these effects:

1. *Magnitude of social effects, taking account of: intensity of change (i.e., **how large is the change relative to existing conditions**); scale (**number of people affected**); and **duration** of the change.*
 2. ***Sensitivity of affected** receptors to the predicted effects, taking account of: the compatibility of predicted effects with use and enjoyment of a community resource; the **value attributed to an affected community resource by the receptor(s)**; and the **adaptive capacity of relevant receptors**, or rather their ability to adjust in order to cope with a predicted effect.*
 3. *...the significance ratings provided in the WRL Social Impact Assessment **reflect the overall level of disruption** caused by different aspects of the Project... the ratings are provided to give the reader a sense of the **relative importance of impacts and draw attention to those which require mitigation**.*
Source: Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 15 summarised by K2 Planning – emphasis added
- See Attachments 8.4 for the rating scale applied in the WRL Social Impact Assessment

‘Sentiments’ were also assessed using a rating framework:

Landholder Sentiment Definition

Attitude toward the project ‘on balance’, considering all relevant factors including the Project’s impact on their property.

Rating Framework

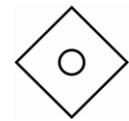
1. **Strongly Support or Support:** *Applied when landholder has explicitly indicated that they are comfortable with the Project being on their property*
2. **Strongly Oppose or Oppose:** *Applied when landholder has explicitly indicated that they are not comfortable with the Project being on their property and/or when the landholder has refused to deal with the Project.*
3. **Undecided/Unknown:** *Applied when landholder’s level of comfortable with the Project being on their property is not known with any confidence.*

Source: Summarised from Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Appendix 1

Expert Review Comments

In my professional opinion the **scope of the WRL Social Impact Assessment is inadequate** and reflects a failure of the authors of the WRL Social Impact Assessment to set the agenda for identifying and assessing social impacts due to the following:

1. Over-reliance on other WRL EES documents to identify potential social impacts
2. Limited stakeholder and community engagement conducted as part of the WRL Social Impact Assessment
3. Limited site visits conducted as part of the WRL Social Impact Assessment
4. Extremely limited consultations with effected land owners



4.2 Community Benefit Sharing

Renewable energy projects around the world are increasingly adopting a Community Benefit Sharing model (CBS) within their industry policy¹⁴. CBS involves distributing, or sharing, the financial and other benefits of a renewable energy development with local and other stakeholders, often targeting those community members in closest proximity to the development, as well as residents of nearby settlements¹⁵.

It is widely acknowledged that Australia's abundant, low-cost renewable energy resources present a significant comparative economic advantage on the world stage and that renewable energy developments **should aim to provide a new economic engine for regional areas**¹⁶.

Regional communities set for major energy infrastructure developments need support to **harness population and labour market shifts and the increased demand for services and social infrastructure**. This support ensures that regional areas remain attractive and cohesive places to live and do business. Integrating community benefit sharing into spatial industry policy would strengthen the renewable energy sector and improve its **contribution to the green economic transition**¹⁷.

Community benefit sharing refers to offering the following types of benefits throughout a project's development:

1. Local jobs and procurement
2. Neighbourhood benefit programs (including neighbour payments, solar PV installations, screening vegetation)
3. Beyond compliance level activities associated with visual amenity, television reception and sound dampening
4. Sponsorship and community benefit funds (grants) and/or legacy community benefit initiatives (long term programs or services)
5. Employee volunteerism
6. Innovative products (including electricity products)
7. Innovative financing (including co-investment and co-ownership)¹⁸

National and international examples of CBS include:

¹⁴ Peacock, B. (2023). *NSW Gov Proposes "Standard" Benefit Sharing and Revised Approval Pathways to Accelerate Renewables*. Available at: <https://www.pv-magazine-austra...>

¹⁵ ClientEarth (2021). *Benefit Sharing and Community Contracting: From Legal Design to Full Operation*. Available at: <https://www.clientearth.org/me...>

¹⁶ LGIU (2022). *A New Engine for Economic Development: Benefits of Developing a Local Industry Development Plan*. Available at: <https://lgiu.org/briefing/a-new-engine-for-economic-development-benefits-of-developing-a-local-industry-development-plan/> [Accessed by SGS: 12 September 2024].

¹⁷ Gill, J. (2023). *Sectoral, Systemic and Spatial: Rethinking Australia's Approach to National Industry Policy*. Available at: <https://sgsep.com.au/assets/ma...>

¹⁸ DEWLP 2017 Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers p. 26



1. In **New South Wales**, projects bidding for a long-term energy supply agreement from the state government must comply with the Indigenous Procurement Policy, which requires a **minimum 1.5 per cent Aboriginal workforce and 1.5 per cent contracts value awarded to Aboriginal businesses**
2. In the **United States**, Community Benefit Plans are **mandatory** for funding recipients of clean energy **grant programs**
3. The **Scottish Government** has also set ambitious **targets for community and locally-owned renewable energy projects**, aiming to have at least 2GW of renewable energy in the hands of communities by 2030 and proposing that developers provide **10-20 per cent co-ownership in renewable energy projects**¹⁹

State Government of Victoria

In Victoria, the *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing Guide*, introduced in 2017, outlines best practices for ensuring that local communities benefit from renewable energy projects, such as through community consultative committees and local economic development initiatives²⁰. The Victorian Government encourages proponents **to work with communities to develop a benefit sharing model** that is fit for purpose to:

1. Create strategic opportunities
2. Drive local innovation or
3. Meet significant needs in the local region²¹

The Victorian Government guide highlights a range of **benefits of CBS** including the ability to:

1. ... **prevent contestation, agitation or conflict and help bring the entire community together** toward achieving net-zero emissions
2. ... **further improve project impacts by ensuring financial and social gains are distributed locally and regionally with a long-term view**
3. ... **creat[e] a positive legacy in the local community**²²

However, the Victorian CBS guide also notes that CBS requires a particular approach to community engagement and social impact assessment which includes:

1. **Community Co-Ownership:** Local communities may own a stake in the project, allowing them to receive profits or dividends directly and have a say in investment priorities

¹⁹ Community Energy Scotland (2024). *Scottish Community Coalition on Energy Community Shared Ownership Paper*. Available at: <https://communityenergyscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Scottish-Community-Coalition-on-Energy-Community-Shared-Ownership-Paper-FINAL-1.pdf> [Accessed by SGS 12 Sep. 2024] – emphasis added

²⁰ Lane, T. and Hicks, J. (2017). *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide for Applicants to the Victorian Renewable Energy Target Auction*. Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Victorian Government, Melbourne. Available at: <https://www.cvga.org.au/upload...>

²¹ DEWLP 2017 *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers*

²² DEWLP 2017 *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers*



2. **Legacy Funds:** Funds are established to provide long-term financial support for community projects, infrastructure, or services
3. **Community Benefit Funds:** Financial contributions are made to community funds to support local development projects
4. **Infrastructure Development:** Investment in local infrastructure such as roads, schools, or healthcare facilities as part of the project's community benefit commitments
5. **Environmental Stewardship/Offsets:** Initiatives aimed at preserving or improving local ecosystems to compensate for the project's environmental impact²³

A recent update of the Victorian Government guidelines to community benefit sharing differentiates between: general community benefit and neighbour benefits; direct benefits and legacy benefits as follows:

General community benefits under a benefit sharing strategy might be **based on Local Government Area (LGA) boundaries, postcodes or a geographic radius from the project.**

Neighbour benefits are usually offered according to proximity to the renewable energy infrastructure. They can include a blanket offer to anyone within a certain radius, or graduated benefits that decrease with the distance from project infrastructure. In the latter model, benefit sharing is based on concentric circles around project infrastructure. Both neighbour benefits and general community benefits need to be tailored to those specific groups' needs and the development's impact.

Direct benefits are immediate, transactional, and straightforward, responding to what an impacted community wants and providing immediate wins for the proponent's reputation and SLO. These benefits are expected by regional communities, and are **a minimum standard for renewable projects in Victoria.**

Legacy benefits are described by the CEC as "delivered in partnership with local organisations and are larger and longer-term programs aimed at delivering strategic local benefits to a local community" (Clean Energy Council (2019). A guide to benefit sharing options for renewable energy projects.)

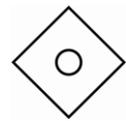
Source: DELWP 2021 *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria A guide for renewable energy developers* Updated July p. 18, summarised by K2 Planning.

The updated guidelines also define economic development benefits and community benefits, including local procurement standards, training local suppliers to be part of the development, training local people for ongoing employment, involvement of local people in the management and governance of community benefit funds and in-kind contributions such as providing knowledge, labour and equipment free of charge to local community projects:

*There are two sets of benefits which will be considered as part of ...evaluation — **economic development benefits and community benefits** —*

- Holding contractors to the same **local procurement standards** as they are committed to.
- **Communicating early about opportunities** that will be available at each stage of the development cycle and promoting these through multiple communication channels.
- Making sure communication channels are fit for purpose for the community.
- Ensuring transparency in the process, particularly when communicating budgets and realistic timelines.
- Providing **briefings or training to support local suppliers' ability to be part of the development.**

²³ DEWLP 2017 *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers* p. 24



- **Discussing with local providers how to develop education opportunities to encourage skill development.**

- **Training local people for ongoing employment** in maintenance and operation of projects

Sponsorship and community benefit funds, including grants and donations, can provide direct and legacy benefits and are often popular within local communities. The level of sponsorship can start early (for example at site selection stage), giving developers the opportunity to build brand awareness, and increase their commitment over time once a project is operational and embedded in the community. The most effective way to set up a **community benefit fund is to involve local community members in its management and governance**. Innovation outside the typical grant or donation framework is welcome as part of VRET2. P. 23

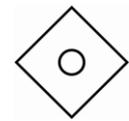
In-kind contributions (employee volunteerism) Examples of in-kind contributions include companies providing knowledge, labour and equipment free of charge to assist the local community with projects that might require their expertise. Source: DELWP 2021 *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria A guide for renewable energy developers* Updated July p. 24, summarised by K2 Planning.

The updated Victorian Guidelines provide a number of best practice case studies, including the Dundonnell Wind Farm north east of Warrnambool in Victoria where community benefits included:

1. A mini-grid program [including] customer-designed solutions based on their energy use, connection and available solar resource;
2. Company subsidised system with a lump sum payment of up to \$15,000 per installation
3. Support for a regional suicide prevention program
4. Construction of safe housing for local people experiencing domestic violence

*Tilt Renewables' mini-grid program entitled eligible property owners to a renewable energy generation installation at their property, consisting of a **customer-designed solution based on their energy use, connection and available solar resource**. System elements included solar PV, a suitably sized battery and a smart meter at a discounted price. The company subsidised each system with a **lump sum payment of up to \$15,000 per installation**. The program was initially offered to 35 dwelling owners (those within five kilometres of the wind farm), with a plan to progressively extend it further out if any of the first round property owners declined to participate. Tilt Renewables also offered to fully fund a solar PV and battery system for the Dundonnell Country Fire Authority, however upon further consultation, a contribution of \$30,000 was made in lieu of inclusion in the program. Aside from the mini-grid initiative, Tilt Renewables looked for other, meaningful ways to provide community benefit. The company is funding a **dedicated staff member for 10 years as part of a regional suicide prevention program**, and has contributed **\$500,000 towards the construction of safe housing for local domestic violence victims and their families**. Additionally, as part of the benefit sharing plan, Tilt Renewables included a road safety fund to address local traffic issues, established a community fund and looked for local education opportunities to support further education and training for all ages. During the wind farm's build, Tilt Renewables encouraged its construction partners to procure locally wherever possible. This supports the community, by using local labour, materials, transport, accommodation and food, but it also makes sense in terms of efficient project delivery. The company has focused on providing regional support before and during the wind farm's construction, creating a positive, lasting legacy into operational life.*

Source: DELWP 2021 *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria A guide for renewable energy developers* Updated July p. 20, summarised by K2 Planning.



In 2024 the Victorian Government created **VicGrid** to implement a new approach to planning transmission and renewable energy infrastructure, incorporating community views from the start of the process to make better decisions, minimise impacts and maximise tailored benefits for communities. VicGrid is guided by the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VTIF), and is responsible for developing the *Draft Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan*, May which identifies the following community benefits:

1. Community benefits include **delivering opportunities for sustained and inclusive social, economic or environmental improvements that are tailored to the needs of local communities.**
2. Community benefits initiatives aim to **establish and maintain positive long-term connections between new energy projects and local communities** by contributing to the future vitality of the regions where projects are located²⁴.

VicGrid 2025 *Victorian Transmission Plan* August notes:

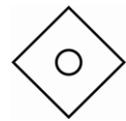
1. **Proposed renewable energy zones** across Victoria for onshore renewable energy and a shoreline REZ to coordinate offshore wind connections
2. That the establishment of REZs creates an **opportunity for rural and regional communities to harness the economic development opportunities** associated with renewable energy projects
3. That VicGrid is committed to working together with REZ communities to realise these opportunities and **build long-term, community wide benefits from the renewable energy transition**
4. That **new community energy funds will be created for each region hosting a REZ** to support projects aimed at improving energy supply, reliability, efficiency and affordability for businesses, communities and households (REZ Community Energy Fund). These funds will also support initiatives that drive economic development through the energy transition
5. That the *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria Guide for renewable energy developers* outlines the Victorian Government's expectations of **leading practice in community engagement and benefit sharing** providing an opportunity to set consistent updated expectations for community engagement and the creation of social value in both renewable energy and transmission projects (p. 119 – emphasis added).

The Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action 2025 *Draft Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects*²⁵ propose **minimum expectations for creating social value** and economic benefits including:

- *Design initiatives that deliver strategic or long term social value and economic benefits for the community.*

²⁴ State Government of Victoria 2024 *Draft Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan*, May

²⁵ <https://engage.vic.gov.au/download/document/42651>

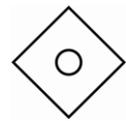


- *Develop community capacity by identifying opportunities that build on local strengths, assets, capabilities and resources.*
- *Align benefits with the needs, priorities and strategies already identified by local communities, government, industry and research.*
- *Collaborate with industry and community to achieve collective impact, including coordinating on resourcing, initiatives, information sharing and engagement, and leveraging shared networks.*
- *Provide transparent information to the community about the project's social value and economic benefit commitments, including by publishing a Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan (summarised from p. 18).*

This section has summarised relevant recent policy positions related to community benefit sharing and social value. Key messages include:

1. Community benefit sharing has been adopted by renewable energy projects worldwide
2. Victoria has had guidelines for community benefit sharing since 2017 which VicGrid has recently referred to as 'leading practice' guidelines
3. According to VicGrid key aims of community benefit sharing include:
 - a. delivering opportunities for sustained and inclusive social, economic or environmental improvements that are tailored to the needs of local communities.
 - b. establishing and maintain positive long-term connections between new energy projects and local communities by contributing to the future vitality of the regions where projects are located
4. Current draft guidelines for renewable energy and transmission Projects in Victoria set minimum expectations for creating social value that should be adopted by developers

These key messages will be considered below in an assessment of the approach to social impact and community benefit sharing WRL Social Impact Assessment.



5. Expert Review

5.1 Adequacy of Approach to Assessment of Social Impacts During Project Development

As outlined above, my instructions included:

My opinion on the adequacy of the approach to assessment of social impacts during Project development and the impact of that approach on the Project based on a review of the following EES documents:

1. Chapter 5: Project Development - Section 5.4.2
2. Technical Report F - Social Impact Assessment Report
3. Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8
4. Attachment IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report

I also note Department of Transport and Planning 2023 *Scoping Requirements Western Renewables Link Environment Effects Statement Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The approach to Project development summarised in these documents includes a focus on:

DTP 2023 - Scope

1. Planning scheme provisions and other relevant policies
2. Agricultural weeds or pathogens
3. Aviation operation and safety
4. Fire and emergency management
5. Farming and agriculture, other businesses, employment and local and regional economy
6. Tourism and tourist attractions and recreation
7. Social impacts

Other Documents – Scope

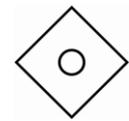
1. Location options for Laydown Areas
2. Location of Transmission Line Routes
3. Location of Worker Accommodation facilities

For further details refer to Attachments 6.3 'Approach to Project Development'.

Expert Review Comments

In my professional opinion, the approach to assessment of social impacts during the Project development was inadequate as it was severely limited due to:

1. Social Impact being listed as **one out of seven themes in the DTP 2023** scoping document with no elaboration provided of what these impacts might include
2. Very limited scope set out in the AUSNET Project development with a **narrow focus that only considering location options that were pre-set by AUSNET** for: the transmission lines; the laydown areas; and the worker accommodation facilities
3. This narrow focus **directly defined the site selection criteria** for new terminal station[s] which included: capacity, cost, tenure (properties affected), resource tenure, land use planning, land use, occupation (number of proximate dwellings); biodiversity; heritage Aboriginal cultural; heritage sites; constructability. These site selection criteria limit the social impact criteria that were considered through Project development (see EES Chapter 5: Project Development p. 5 – 57-58).

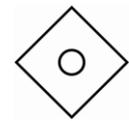


4. I note that an aim of Project development associated with the site selection of Laydown Areas was to 'avoid material social ...impacts', however the scope of this aim was **limited to lease of land** and a vague reference to 'social values' identified through other reports:
To avoid material social, environmental and heritage impacts to the greatest extent practicable, including via the lease of private land with minimal to no environmental values, or industrial or commercial land or Council or Agency-owned land which is already highly modified, together with avoidance of impacts on known social, environmental and heritage values identified through technical reports and community and stakeholder engagement
Source: EES Chapter 5: Project Development p. 5 – 60
5. The Project development documents provide **no consideration of, or reference to, the broad range of issues that would usually be considered in a social impact assessment** including: social values and connections; community cohesion; wellbeing/poor wellbeing etc. ²⁶
6. Other **significant gaps** in the Project development documents that contributed to a narrow scope for the WRL Social Impact Assessment include:
 - a. **Very limited data on the capacity of existing areas in the Moorabool Shire to accommodate workers**, i.e. Lexton West (currently 231 residents only) and Ballan East (ballan accommodates 3,392 residents but only the small area of Ballan east was considered)
 - b. No consideration of the **potential benefits of integrated accommodation options**
 - c. No consideration of alternate **accommodation models used in other comparable projects**, particularly those that aim to achieve Community Benefit
 - d. An **assumption that the Project workforce would be disruptive to communities** and therefore that separate worker accommodation facilities were required
 - e. Very little scope for **exploring and responding to community opposition to the project** and the contribution of this opposition to community wellbeing ²⁷

It is my professional opinion that this limited acknowledgement of potential social impacts in the Project Development material **contributed directly to the limited scope of material assessed, and the limited Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs), detailed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment** – refer to section 5.9 below for further details.

²⁶ See for example: Australian Federal Treasury *Measuring What Matters Framework 2023*; QLD Government Social Impact Assessment Guideline–July 2025 p. 7; pp. 17-18 community values – an analysis and summary of the core community values within the study area(s), typically covering community cohesion, key aspirations, fears and values relevant to the project; community lifestyles and cultural practices, amenity value, social character, and community cohesion; measures to mitigate potential health and well-being impacts on local communities, and enhance potential benefits; details of any community development programs to be implemented, and the outcomes to be achieved; NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure Social Impact Assessment Guideline For State significant projects July 2025

²⁷ The extend of strong opposition to the Project, its proposed location and overhead design is noted in the Stakeholder and Community engagement report: *This opposition has resulted in some stakeholders disengaging with the Project and influencing others within their community to follow. Project opposition groups have subsequently formed and run public campaigns against the Project, including:* • Regional Victoria Power Alliance (also represents people impacted by the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) project) • Moorabool and Central Highlands Power Alliance • Stop AusNet's Towers • *Piss Off AusNet* Source: Attachment IV I Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report pp. 7-8. **I note that I respond to this issue further in Section 5.5 below.**



The WRL Social Impact Assessment responded to what I would define as the minimal requirement for a Social Impact including:

1. Amenity and Character
2. Access and connectivity
3. Function and viability of community infrastructure
4. Property acquisition and relocation – dealt with very minimally, and I argue poorly, in the WRL Social Impact Assessment, see Section 5.6 below ‘Other Identified Social Impacts’

By contrast, a **more comprehensive approach to social impact** would be suitable for a project of this scale and should include consideration of the following social criteria and the potential impact of the Project on each of these criteria:

People’s:

- Way of life
- Culture
- Community
- Political systems
- Environment
- Health and wellbeing
- Personal and property rights
- Fears and aspirations

safe, have financial security and access to housing, trust in others and in institutions

- *Sustainability*: a society that sustainably uses natural and financial resources, protects and repairs the environment and builds resilience to combat challenges
- *Cohesive*: a society that supports connections with family, friends and the community, values diversity, and promotes belonging and culture
- *Prosperous*: a society that has a dynamic strong economy, invests in people’s skills and education and provides

broad opportunities for employment and wellbeing

Examples of poor social wellbeing:

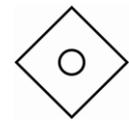
- *Isolation* – isolation and loneliness can negatively affect physical and mental health
- *Lack of support* – not having a supportive network of friends or family
- *Poor social skills* - Inability to develop and maintain friendships or adapt to social settings
- *Unhealthy relationships*: Engaging in relationships with a lot of conflict or an imbalance of power

Wellbeing themes:

- *Healthy* – a society in which people feel well and are in good physical and mental health, can access the services they require and have access to the information they require to take action to improve their health
- *Secure* – a society where people live peacefully, feel

Endorsement of this scope of social impact is provided through the fact that the above criteria have been summarised from the following range of references from both Federal and State Governments and private sector organisations:

1. Australian Federal Treasury *Measuring What Matters Framework 2023*
2. NSW Dept Planning, Housing and Infrastructure *Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects July 2025*
3. Queensland Government *DRAFT Social Impact Assessment Guidelines Version 2 May 2025*
4. [HIF Health Hub](#)



5.2 Impact of any changes to visual impact and bushfire assessment

As outlined above, my instructions included:

'...having regard to section 3.8 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the extent to which any changes to the outcomes of visual impact assessments, bushfire impact and any other assessments may impact the conclusions on social impact'

Visual Impact Assessment

WRL Social Impact Assessment

The WRL Social Impact Assessment refers to the assessment of the EES **Chapter 11: Landscape and visual (LVIA)** to list **numerous potentially negative social impacts related to the visual impact** of the Project, including:

1. **Major to moderate** residual social impacts on directly affected land owners
2. **Detracting from the amenity** of affected dwellings, and potentially diminish the enjoyment of homes and valued lifestyles, of surrounding land holders
3. **High visual impact on the Bald Hill Bald Hill Activation Area** leading to some local residents of Darley may avoid the facility, particularly those who are highly sensitive to the Project's presence in their local area
4. **Potentially dissuading use of the Merrimu Reservoir** facility for some people
5. **Detract from the appeal of the Coimadai Memorial Park and Avenue of Honour** for some users and may have a noticeable effect on the amenity of the facility
6. **'High' and 'moderate' visual impacts on rural properties** in Section 4
7. **Potentially reducing the attractiveness of smaller equine properties and lifestyle properties** in Darley and surround
 - Refer to Section 6.4 'High Level Summary of Visual Impacts identified in the WRL Social Impact Assessment' for further details

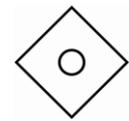
The WRL Social Impact Assessment also notes that residents of Moorabool Shire nominate landscape features are as contributing to their sense of identity:

...Landscape features nominated by residents of Section 4 as being of value and contributing to a sense of identity and well-being include Lerderderg State Park, Long Forest Reserve, Lerderderg River and Gorge, the Bald Hill Activation Area, Pentlands Hills to the west of Darley, and Mount Kororoit near Leakes Road in Melton. EES Chapter 21 Social p. 22

The WRL Social Impact Assessment also notes that residents who are located along the proposed route are **'consistently negative with regard to the appearance of the proposed infrastructure (typically described as ugly, an eyesore, etc) and its expected incongruence with prevailing landscape qualities'**:

5.3 *Rural Character and Amenity*
Visual Amenity

Feedback from the communities located along the Proposed Route was consistently negative with regard to the appearance of the proposed infrastructure (typically described as ugly, an eyesore, etc) and its



expected incongruence with prevailing landscape qualities. Concerns were raised in the context of valued landscape features (such as rural vistas, mountains and mountain ranges, volcanic cones and plains), **the visual setting of particular homes and properties and community facilities (such as outdoor recreation areas, reservoirs and sporting complexes) as well as focal points for tourism.** In many instances, feedback from the community was expressed using strong language, and suggested that **the appeal of various locations would be substantially diminished by the Project, undermining benefits individuals obtain when spending time in the identified places** (see Table 5-2). Feedback received in Section 1 and the eastern part of Section 4 (Melton and Hillside), **while negative in the main**, was moderated by the prevailing context, which includes the presence of transmission infrastructure in Section 1, and a highly eclectic and evolving peri-urban landscape in Section 4. In contrast, **voluminous and very negative feedback was received from residents of Darley and surrounds**, and from throughout Sections 2 and 3. When providing feedback regarding the Project's potential impact on visual amenity, it was common for community members to suggest that the Project should be built underground, and furthermore to suggest that, if this approach was used the majority of the Project's potential negative impacts would be ameliorated.

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 54 – emphasis added.

The WRL Social Impact Assessment **relies directly on the EPRs listed in the LVIA** for any recommended responses to the identified social impacts associated with visual impacts, including:

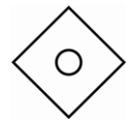
The following EPRs were recommended in other technical reports or have been proposed by AusNet to manage or mitigate these impacts:

1. EPR LV1: Minimise visual impacts – Public domain, which will develop and implement a process to consult with relevant landholders and/or land managers to determine appropriate measures to mitigate visual impacts to Merrimu Reservoir and War Memorial, Bald Hill Activation Area and Bolwarrah Weir
2. EPR LV2: Minimise visual impacts – Private domain landscape screening program, which will develop and implement a program to provide offers to fund landscape screening for eligible dwellings to minimise visual impacts of the Project. EES Chapter 21 Social p. 23
3. EPR LV1: Minimise visual impacts – Public domain, which will develop and implement a process to consult with relevant landholders and/or land managers to determine appropriate measures to mitigate visual impacts to Merrimu Reservoir and War Memorial, Bald Hill Activation Area and Bolwarrah Weir EES Chapter 21 Social p. 27
4. EPR LV1: Minimise visual impacts – Public domain, which will develop and implement a process to consult with relevant landholders and/or land managers to determine appropriate measures to mitigate visual impacts to Merrimu Reservoir and War Memorial, Bald Hill Activation Area and Bolwarrah Weir
5. EPR LV2: Minimise visual impacts – Private domain landscape screening program, which will develop and implement a program to provide offers to fund landscape screening for eligible dwellings to minimise visual impacts of the Project. EES Chapter 21 Social p 20

Expert Review Comments

It is my professional opinion that **WRL Social Impact Assessment response to the range of social impacts associated with visual impacts is inadequate** as it relies entirely on the LVIA assessment, which was not addressed to potential social impacts. This inadequacy stems from the **limited scope of the Social Impact Assessment** as noted by the author themselves:

*Section 3.8 Limitations, uncertainties and assumptions **The SIA relies on estimates of the nature and magnitude of physical changes to the environment that would arise as a consequence of the Project, as outlined in other Technical Reports The SIA is based primarily on a desktop review of publicly available data and information generated by AusNet led community engagement activities. Most of this activity occurred prior to the engagement of the author (September 2023)....There have been relatively few high voltage transmission line projects in Victoria in recent decades, and as a result, empirical data***



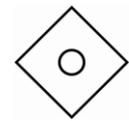
on the way that individuals and communities have adapted to the development of such infrastructure are difficult to obtain. The author made enquiries regarding impacts associated with the Bass Link Project, in the form of interviews with local councillors and members of a community advisory group who oversaw the Project and who had connections into the community at the time the Project was being planned and implemented. The information generated was not sufficient to inform development of a detailed case study, but nevertheless informed the author's thinking with respect to the SIA. Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 17 – emphasis added.

Other recent WRL Social Impact Assessments of large-scale projects clearly identify a range of social impacts related to visual amenity which in turn impact upon ‘people’s ability to go about their day-to-day lives’:

- *Community perceptions of neighbourhood character*
- *Community perception of neighbourhood wellbeing – due to a reduced level of engagement with nature and open spaces etc*
- *These social impacts are more pronounced where residents are exposed to a change in local character for an extended periods of time*
- *Construction works would also impact direct views from residences and ...could impact residents' enjoyment of their property, backyards, outdoor spaces which can lead to changes in lifestyles*
- *Changes to amenity due to proposed changes to the visual landscape and increased noise levels during daytime and night time would **impact people's ability to go about their day-to-day lives***
Source: Summarised from Victoria's Big Build EES Chapter 17 Social, pp. 16 - 17

It is my professional opinion that:

1. A social impact assessment of the visual impacts of the Project should:
 - a. Provide a more detailed assessment of the following criteria commonly applied to social impact assessments associated with visual amenity:
 - Community Experiences – views and visual experiences of resident, workers, tourists and other stakeholders
 - Mental Wellbeing - changes to visual amenity that can affect people’s psychological comfort and sense of place and directly influence the wellbeing of residents and the broader community
 - Sense of place – including the impact of the Project on community perceptions of neighbourhood character and wellbeing
 - b. Provide clear EPRs that respond directly to each of the social impacts identified
2. Given that the WRL Social Impact Assessment has relied almost entirely on the results of the LVIA, any changes to the outcomes of visual impact assessments would have significant implications for the conclusion of the WRL Social Impact Assessment
3. Social Impacts related to landscape and visual impact should form be part of community benefit sharing models developed in relation to the current Project



Bushfire Impact

The WRL Social Impact Assessment identifies a number of social impacts related to bushfire impact including:

1. Adaptation to local firefighting tactics
2. Diminished effectiveness of firefighting response
3. Emergency access to key bushfire areas may be impeded

8.2.4 Bushfire Risk As set out in *Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment*, firefighting tactics **may need to be adapted locally in some parts of the study area to account for the presence of the Project infrastructure**, although field access to fire water supplies would not be materially affected by the Project. While the impact of the Project in this respect has been assessed to be 'low', *Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment* acknowledges that risks cannot be eliminated at all locations across the Project Land.³⁰ In this context, *Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment* indicates that in **some settings, the Project may diminish the effectiveness of firefighting responses, leading to fires within the study area having greater impact than would otherwise be the case.**

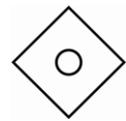
In addition, *Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment* acknowledges that the **Proposed Route crosses several key bushfire access and egress routes identified in local government Municipal Fire Management Plans**, which service bushland in the Pyrenees Ranges, Wombat State Forest, and Lerderderg and Long Forest areas. Specifically, the assessment finds that **emergency access to / egress from these areas could be impeded** if severe wind or structural failure led to collapse of a tower or towers and / or a transmission powerline dropping to the ground (noting that application of appropriate design and asset management standards would eliminate this risk under reasonably foreseeable extreme wind conditions). Notwithstanding, the study finds that relatively safe alternative egress / access routes are available at all key locations apart from North Darley (Swans Road), where the proposed transmission route crosses dead end roads that provide access into areas which include a small number of dwellings.

Source: Summarised from *EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment*, p, 73 – emphasis added

Expert Review Comments

The social impacts of bushfires, and bushfire risk are significant and include:

1. **Community Impact** – severe impact on community framework, isolation and anger
 - affects on the firefighters, support personnel and their families – stress, psychological trauma
 - injury or death for people fighting the fires or from breathing in a lot of smoke
 - loss of valuables and possessions
 - strains on people's relationships, resulting in divorces, arguments and broken families
 - unemployment for many people as their workplaces have been destroyed
 - depression and even violence and crime as people have nothing to do or they are trying to provide for themselves because they have no money.
 - strain on Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) such as Lifeline and the NSW Rural Bushfire Service.
 - homeless and without any possessions, leading to many people having to stay at homeless centres.
2. **Public Health Impacts**
 - Intense smoke and air pollution stemming from the fires contribute to poor air quality index
 - Harmful smoke can cause fatalities
 - Older people, people with cardiorespiratory diseases or chronic illnesses, children, and people who work outdoors are particularly vulnerable.
3. **Mental health costs**



- Many people experience mental trauma from the experience of emergency evacuation and losing homes, pets, belongings, livestock or other sources of livelihoods
- Some communities find themselves unable to evacuate quickly when lost electricity meant fuel stations weren't operational or blocked roads kept people trapped in high risk areas.
- Some are forced to seek safety on beaches and on boats, sheltering children overnight while witnessing unprecedented firestorms
- Such experiences can have lasting mental health impacts across affected communities.

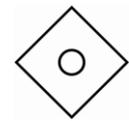
4. Economic costs

- The price tag to the Australian economy is still being analyzed, but it's clear that infrastructure has been damaged and that impacts extend to industries such as farming and tourism. Some businesses and institutions have been forced to close their doors during periods of excessive levels of air pollution.

Source: Summarised from <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/ten-impacts-australian-bushfire> and State Government of Victoria A literature review on the economic, social and environmental impacts of severe bushfires in south-eastern Australia Fire and adaptive management Catherine Stephenson Research Officer, Centre for Risk and Community Safety RMIT University and Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre report No. 87

It is my professional opinion that:

1. A social impact assessment of the visual impacts of the Project should provide a more detailed assessment of the potential social impacts of increased bushfire risk
2. Given that the WRL Social Impact Assessment has relied almost entirely on the results of the Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment, any changes to the outcomes of bushfire impact assessments would have significant implications for the conclusion of the WRL Social Impact Assessment



5.3 Assessment of Social Impacts Associated with Tourism

As noted above, my instructions included:

'...having regard to section 4.5.5 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and section 21.5.4 of Chapter 21 and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism'

WRL Social Impact Assessment

The WRL Social Impact Assessment coverage of tourism is limited including:

- the suggestion that the tourism sector is small and potentially insignificant, in the Moorabool Shire:

The tourism sector in Section 3 is in its infancy, with current visitation focussing on day trips to the area's natural features. In this context, the Moorabool Shire Visitor Economy Strategy 2023-27 seeks to build awareness of the Shire's attractions and grow the visitor economy, leveraging an abundance of nature, quality produce, and quaint towns to fulfill (our) potential. Section 4.5.5 WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 38 – emphasis added.

- the following limited information related to tourism:
 1. Map of existing tourism businesses – see Figure 6, p. 92 in Attachments
 2. List of tourism businesses located in within 2km of the Proposed Route – see Table 12, p. 93
 3. Three other tourism events and/or attractions, with the following one located in Moorabool Shire: Bald Hill Activation Area

The following TWO paragraphs are devoted to a description of tourism within the 'Section 4', which includes the Moorabool Shire:

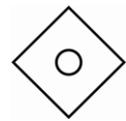
Natural reserves such as Lerderderg State Park, Long Forest and Mount Kororoit, and elevated views from nearby locations, are notable drivers of tourist visitation to Section 4. Bed and breakfast and farm-stay style accommodation providers are situated to capitalise on the area's scenic qualities. The Bald Hill Activation Area (see Section 21.3.4) is expected to become a key driver of tourist visitation, once fully developed.

Other tourist attractions in Section 4 include the Dingo Discovery Sanctuary and Research Centre, which includes an interpretative and education centre, and Melton Aerodrome, which provides flight training, aircraft maintenance, refuelling, aircraft parking and hangarage services, charter flights, scenic tours and pleasure flights. Source: WRL EES Chapter 21 Social, Section 21.5.4 p. 14

The following tourism features within the Moorabool Shire are noted by the WRL Social Impact Assessment:

1. The significance of the Bald Hill Activation Area to tourism within the Moorabool Shire:

*In addition to **providing recreational opportunities for the communities of Moorabool Shire and in particular, Darley and Bacchus Marsh, the Bald Hill Activation Area, is expected to be a substantial driver of tourist visitation.** To illustrate, an assessment of the economic and social benefits of the Concept Plan estimates that almost **200,000 people would visit the completed Regional Park from outside the immediate residential catchment**, with walking being the most common reason for*



visiting (80,000 visits per annum). The study estimates that the benefit for the local economy would be **approximately \$3.3 million per annum**, which would occur alongside benefits for locals and visitors to the area associated with social activity and exercise.

Source: Summarised from Section 4.5.5 WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment – emphasis added.

2. The fact that the community has identified Lerderderg State Park and Long Forest, both located within Moorabool Shire, as key drivers of tourist visitation Source: WRL EES Technical Report F: Social p. 51
3. The social and environmental significance of Long Forest Source: WRL EES Chapter 21 Social, Section 21.5.4 p. 14

The WRL Social Impact Assessment refers to the WRL EES *Technical Report G: Economic Impact Assessment* to identify a range of potential social impacts of the Project on local businesses, including:

- reduced visitations to businesses within 2km of the Project
- negative impacts on businesses that rely on visual amenity

The Project may affect businesses in the ‘Accommodation and Food Services’ and ‘Arts and Recreation Services’ industries such as golf clubs, equestrian academies, cellar doors and bed and breakfast accommodation providers (see Chapter 14: Economic)...Businesses that rely on the amenity of the natural landscape to attract visitation may experience modest negative economic effects during Project operation due to reduced visual amenity. This may result in social effects such as loss of employment, which in turn may lead to extended commuting times, financial strain, or the need to relocate, or reductions in access to goods and services, which could lead to lower living standards. Business in rural areas may be relied on heavily by the local community as a source of employment or particular goods and services, and may function as important recreational focal points....There are 27 businesses classified as ‘Accommodation and Food Services’ and ‘Arts and Recreation Services’ in the study area that have been identified as potentially susceptible to potential effects on amenity, as they are dependent to some extent on the existing aesthetic quality of their surrounds to attract visitors. Of these 27 businesses, 16 are within 2km and the remaining 11 are located from 2km to 9.2km of the Project. Source: WRL EES Chapter 21 Social, p. 28

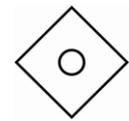
The WRL Social Impact Assessment summarises **significant community concerns** about the visual impact of the Project on Bald Hill, and in turn tourism, in the Moorabool Shire including:

- destroy[ing] the widely held view of the region as being a clean, green, healthy, semi-rural lifestyle surrounded by pleasant landscapes and natural assets
- reduc[ing] the appeal for recreational tourist (*sic*)

*Bald Hill is the proposed site of a major funded local tourism project to construct 1001 steps to the peak of Bald Hill to take in the views. This project **will be significantly affected if the overhead transmission lines proceed**....These massive towers will **destroy the widely held view of the region as being a clean, green, healthy, semi-rural lifestyle, surrounded by pleasant landscapes and natural assets. Devaluing the ‘appeal’ of the region will have flow-on effects and will impact tourism***

*Overhead transmission infrastructure will **reduce the appeal for recreational tourist**. This distinctive landscape is scarce within the context of the broader regional landscape, in close proximity to Melbourne. It attracts over 500,000 visitors annually.*

Source: Summarised from *Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Table 5-2 p. 58* – emphasis added.



The WRL Social Impact Assessment again refers to the *WRL EES Technical Report G: Economic Impact Assessment* to identify strategies for mitigating impacts of the Project on tourism:

*The Project will develop and implement a **Business Mitigation and Support Strategy for directly affected businesses** to avoid and minimise impacts as a result of the transmission line easement being placed on land associated with the business, to the extent reasonably practicable (EPR EC1; see **Chapter 14: Economic**). The Project will also develop and implement a Business Mitigation and Support Strategy for eligible businesses within 2km to avoid and minimise to the extent reasonably practicable impacts from the Project to existing businesses that would not be supported under EPR EC1 but which are within 2km of the Project and rely on the existing character of the natural landscape to attract customers (EPR EC3; see **Chapter 14: Economic**). Source: WRL EES Chapter 21 Social, p. 28*

Expert Review Comments Inadequate response

It is my professional opinion that the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism provided in the WRL Social Impact Assessment is **extremely inadequate** due to the following factors:

1. A lack of assessment of the potential social impacts of tourism:

*...a **detailed assessment of the Project's implications for particular businesses was not undertaken**. AusNet has undertaken a preliminary desktop assessment of businesses operating in the industry categories 'Accommodation and Food Services' and 'Arts and Recreation Services' within the study area. Specifically, AusNet sought to establish whether there is any potential for businesses in the study area to be negatively affected by the Project, considering factors such as the nature of the services offered, whether clients visit the business premises, etc. As Table 8-4 shows, Ausnet identified 37 relevant businesses, 27 of which were assessed as having some potential to be negatively impacted.*

*In rural areas in particular, **existing business may be relied on heavily by the local community as a source of employment and/or particular goods and services, or may function as an important recreational focal point**. In this context, **the absence of a precise characterisation of business impacts, prevents an assessment of associated social impacts**.*

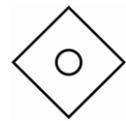
Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Section 8.6.4 Business p. 99 – emphasis added.

*There is some potential for interference with the operation of tourism-based businesses, although the nature and severity of associated social impacts has not been determined. **To the extent that there are impacts, these would add to the overall strain the Project would place on the local community***

Source: WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 102 – emphasis added.

- 2. A reliance on mitigation strategies that respond to the needs of land owners only** (*Business Mitigation and Support Strategy*) and do not address any boarder community values and concerns, eg. 'destroy[ing] the widely held view of the region as being a clean, green, healthy, semi-rural lifestyle surrounded by pleasant landscapes and natural assets'; reduc[ing] the appeal for recreational tourist, etc.
- 3. Inadequate mitigating responses to identified impacts of the Project on specific areas, eg. the Bald Hill Activation Area, Lerderderg State Park and Long Forest** – see Table 13, p. 94
- 4. No recognition of the role of the Moorabool Shire in the current bid for UNESCO World Heritage of the Victorian Gold Fields**²⁸

²⁸ Victorian Goldfields - The Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid



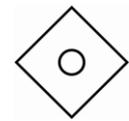
5. Inadequate recognition of the strategic significance of tourism within the Moorabool Shire:

- a. Of the approximate 55 businesses listed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment as being located within 2km of the proposed route at least TEN (18%) are located within Moorabool Shire Source: WRL EES Technical Report F: Social p. 118
- b. Moorabool Shire Council has a range of Strategies and Plans that explicitly promote Tourism:
 - i. Moorabool Shire Council - Council Plan 2025 – 2029
 - ii. Moorabool Shire Economic Development Strategy 2023 – 2027
 - iii. Moorabool Shire Council – Visitor Economy Strategy 2023 – 2027

These Strategies and Plans identify:

- i. Significant opportunities to increase the contribution of tourism industry to local economy
- ii. Developing a visitor economy strategy creating jobs and generating direct local expenditure
- iii. Strategic Opportunities
 - Agritourism, food and wine, nature, and arts, culture and heritage, have opportunity to be developed as the Shire’s product pillars, and have strong strategic alignment to the broader region.
 - Strengthen and support the tourism industry to become ‘Visitor Ready’ through training, capacity building, and supporting skilled workforces attraction

See Attachments 6.4 ‘WRL Social Impact Assessment Tourism and Hospitality Data’ for details



5.4 Proposed Workforce Accommodation Facilities

As noted above, my instructions included:

- a) *having regard to Chapter 21, Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and Section 8 of Attachment 1 and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the approach to social impacts with respect to workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project. We ask that your analysis considers the impacts of a proposed facility rather than the need for accommodation for workers.*

WRL Social Impact Assessment

The WRL Social Impact Assessment provided an **assessment of the potential social impacts of accommodating the required WRL workforce within existing townships** which identified the following impact on established communities, prior to any EPRs:

1. Demand for housing and community facilities - Severe Negative
2. Uplift in employment opportunities and spending – Minor Positive
3. Unsettling and intimidating existing community members – Major Negative

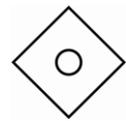
Table 5: WRL Social Impact Assessment Summary of Residual Impacts - Workforce and Social Profile

Section	Receptor	Changes & Impacts	Construction		Operation
			Pre-EPR	Residual	Residual
Sections 1-4	Established Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imported workers increase demand for housing and community facilities and services within established communities leading to housing stress and limiting service accessibility. 	▪ Severe Negative	▪ Negligible	▪ Negligible
Sections 1-4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minor uplift in employment opportunities and the spending of imported workers, contributes to economic and social sustainability during construction. 	▪ Minor Positive	▪ Moderate - Minor Positive	▪ Negligible
Section 1 & 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The presence of workers in existing settlements is unsettling and potentially intimidating for existing community members, leading to reduced social cohesion and negatively affecting perceptions of comfort and safety. 	▪ Major Negative	▪ Negligible	▪ Negligible

Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 68

The WRL Social Impact Assessment notes that, in order to avoid the **‘severe social impacts’** of the Project’s construction workforce on demand for housing and community services in the study area, the Project was amended to incorporate an **Operational Management Plan with** the following elements:

1. A commitment to develop two workforce accommodation facilities, one near Lexton, the other near Ballan...The facilities would have capacity to accommodate up to 350 workers each. The facilities would include individual accommodation units, communal kitchen and meals area, laundry, gym facilities, mobile services and boosters (where feasible), internet and Wi-Fi boosters (where feasible), serviced cleaning and kitchen facilities.
2. A commitment that all construction workers working on the Project who live outside the region and cannot commute to work from their current residence would be required to reside within the workforce accommodation facilities, while on a rostered shift and return to their permanent place of residence on rostered breaks, unless otherwise agreed with the relevant Local Authorities.
3. Details regarding the manner in which workers would be transported from the workforce accommodation facilities to the relevant worksite, working hours, rostering and rotations.



4. A protocol for managing worker access to settlements in proximity to workforce accommodation facilities. The management protocol would limit visits to essential trips, unless otherwise agreed with the relevant Local Authorities.
5. A commitment to service the workforce accommodation facilities with medical services. A consulting space would be developed within the facilities for provision of the services. The nominated medical professionals would be available on-call and via programmed visits, to attend to the medical needs of workers.

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 61

The WRL Social Impact Assessment **considers amenity impacts** only to conclude that the proposed workforce accommodation facility at Ballan would have ‘only modest implications for existing residential amenity’ and would deliver a ‘net social benefit’:

*Overall, the proposed workforce accommodation facility **would only have modest implications for existing residential amenity**, with traffic volumes and associated noise on Ingliston Road having the greatest potential to cause annoyance for neighbours. In this context (and as discussed in Section 7), it is noted that the proposed workforce accommodation facility would ameliorate potential severe impacts resulting from the Project’s effect on demand for housing and community services and would limit the impact of the construction workforce on social dynamics within existing communities. That is, the **proposed facility would deliver a net social benefit**.*

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Section p. 90 – emphasis added

The WRL Social Impact Assessment:

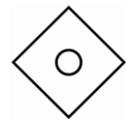
- *.....**assume[s] that no material social impacts** would arise due to displacement of an existing land use.....given that the landholder would consent to the facility being constructed on their land and benefit financially from this...*
- *...focusses (sic)... on **potential changes to amenity** in the immediate surrounds of the proposed facilities and associated impacts for residents and other visitors to the area.*

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Section 8.2.3 Workforce Accommodation Facilities p. 72 – emphasis added

As part of the proposed mitigation strategies the WRL Social Impact Assessment notes that the following actions will be taken prior to construction:

1. *... develop and implement a Code of Conduct for the Project workforce in consultation with local councils **to avoid and minimise the potential for negative social impacts of the construction workforce on local communities**.*
2. *The Code of Conduct must set out AusNet’s expectations of staff when interacting with members of the local community....**The Code of Conduct would include as a minimum, matters relating to dress standards and alcohol consumption**.*

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment pp. 66 & 61 – emphasis added



Expert Review Comments

It is my professional opinion that the approach to social impacts considered within the WRL Social Impact Assessment is **extremely inadequate** with respect to:

1. Workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project
2. Potential impacts of the proposed worker accommodation facility

Evidence of the limits of this assessment includes:

1. An assessment only of potential **amenity impacts** of the proposed facility
2. **No consideration of alternative workforce models**
Other renewable energy projects across the world provide a range of alternative models for resourcing the workforce requirements – see for example, see Table 6 below.
3. **Inadequate documentation of available accommodation options within existing settlements**
The data cited was for the Lexton West (currently 231 residents only) and Ballan East (Ballan accommodates 3,392 residents but only the small area of Ballan, Ballan East, was considered) A high-level desktop audit of current accommodation facilities shows that there is capacity to accommodate the following number of workers within existing accommodation options:
 - Moorabool Shire – 150 workers
 - Northern Grampians Shire - 268 workers – see Attachment 6.4 ‘Desktop Audit – Accommodation’
4. An **assumption that the Project workforce would be disruptive to communities** and therefore that separate worker accommodation facilities were required. No evidence is provided to support this assumption. Instead, the Code of Conduct promotes the view that the Project workforce is likely to bring undesirable social behaviours, related to ‘dress standards’ and ‘alcohol consumption’ for example. By its nature this mitigating strategy separates the future Project workforce from the existing communities and pre-empts negative social impacts between the two groups
5. No consideration of the **potential social benefits of integrated accommodation options**
 - An assessment of the potential social impacts of accommodating workers within existing townships should have considered a range of indicators other than the impact on housing markets and community facilities. For example, integrated accommodation options may have impacted on: community connections through shared tenancies; community cohesion through shared experiences etc. Such impacts may have potential reduce community concerns about the Project and contribute to improved social outcomes of the Project overall.

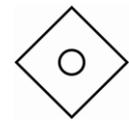
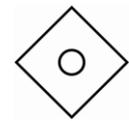


Table 6: Renewable Energy Projects - Alternative Workforce Models

Project	Employment Initiatives
<p>Community Driven development of offshore wind in New York</p> <p>off shore wind farm being developed in New York</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offshore Wind Ecosystem Fund, a \$5 million clean energy community fund to support sustainable growth, empowerment of underserved areas, and climate justice in the offshore wind ecosystem in New York City 2. Develop career pathways in the offshore wind ecosystem through job education and training 3. Support New Yorkers from historically marginalized communities 4. Supporting and fostering innovation by local small, minority-owned, women-owned, and disadvantaged business enterprises – eg innovation hub. 5. Addressing workforce development gaps <p>Source: Summarised from: <u>Community Offshore Wind Awarded NYSERDA Offtake Contract to Develop 1.3 GW of Offshore Wind for New York</u></p>
<p>Cowra Biomass Project, New South Wales</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A community ownership model is being developed with key stakeholders 2. Benefits created, both environmental and social, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - local jobs creation- biomass harvesting and handling/ energy conversion and distribution/ bio-products manufacture - local circular economic system enhanced - local distributed energy generation. dispatchable and decentralised <p>Source: Summarised from Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2017 <i>Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers</i> p. 26</p>



5.5 Adequacy of Proposed Approach to Community Benefit Sharing

As outlined above, my instructions included:

- a) *having regard to sections 2.3.4 and 11.2.1 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Chapter 7, Attachment IV and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the adequacy of proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing*

WRL Social Impact Assessment

Community Benefit Sharing is referred to briefly in the following EES documents:

2.3.4 Community Benefit Fund

AusNet intends to implement a Community Benefit Fund, which would be co-designed in partnership with the community and key stakeholders. Under the fund, it is expected that grants will be provided to projects or initiatives that make a positive contribution to the local community, with preference given to those that create ongoing benefits. The fund framework and assessment criteria would be determined through a co-design process, involving Traditional Owners, Indigenous people and young people (17 to 25 years), as well as the CCG and CAG. Opportunities to partner with Commonwealth and State Government funding programs, and with identified local government expenditure, would be explored to deliver maximum benefit to the community

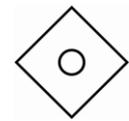
Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 6 – emphasis added

- *There are multiple ways in which benefits will be shared through the delivery of the Project, with four key activation streams...These streams include the Project's Social Value Framework and initiatives, **benefit sharing arrangements with Traditional Owners, the Community Benefit Fund, and Victorian Government policy arrangements that the Project will administer***
- *The **Social Value Framework** operates as **a list of initiatives the Project can implement in collaboration with key stakeholders***
- ***Subject to community appetite and project approval**, the Project team will implement a **Community Benefit Fund** that will be co-designed in partnership with the community and key Project stakeholders*
- *The key difference between the **Community Benefit Fund and the Social Value Framework is that with the Community Benefit Fund a larger level of control is handed over to the community.***

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder Engagement p. 7-8 – emphasis added

The Community Benefit Fund is a way to give back to the community impacted by the Project in a way that the community concludes is equitable and meaningful, within the approved Community Benefit Fund budget. Significant opportunities exist to partner with Commonwealth and State Government funding programs, and **with identified local government expenditure**, to maximise what can be achieved through the Community Benefit Fund....will also specifically seek input from **Traditional Owners, Indigenous people and young people (17 to 25 years)** who are often under-represented in engagement processes. It is likely that **grants will be provided to projects or initiatives that make a positive contribution to the local community**, with preference given to those that create ongoing benefits. ... The co-design process will decide how and when the funds are administered.

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder Engagement p.15 – emphasis added



The WRL Social Impact Assessment proposed EPRs include reference to **employment opportunities** as follows:

1. *Develop and implement initiatives to **maximise employment opportunities for local communities, First Nations people and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups***
 - *Prior to construction commencing, develop and implement a plan to maximise potential benefits of the Project with regard to employment opportunities for local communities, First Nations people and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.*
2. *The local employment initiatives must:*
 - i. *Aim to recruit as many as possible of the required employees for the Project from within local communities.*
 - ii. *Include strategies focused on employment of First Nations people, apprentices, trainees, people with disability and women.*
 - iii. *Support local workforce growth by hiring regional Victorian workers, particularly those under 25.*
3. *The plan must include a commitment to deliver training and upskilling, including through apprenticeships, traineeships, and cadetship*

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 67 – emphasis added

The WRL Social Impact Assessment also notes that alongside the Operational Management Plan, AusNet would develop a **Local Jobs First Policy and Local Industry Development Plan** and that the majority of construction positions would be filled by workers living beyond commuting distance from the worksite:

*...the aim of which would be **that employment opportunities created by the Project can be accessed by local residents, including through training and upskilling programs** such as apprenticeships, traineeships, and cadetships, and it is AusNet's intention to recruit as many of the required employees from within the local community as possible.*

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 62 – emphasis added
*However, given the size of the local labour force and the specialised nature of some of the work, **a large majority of the construction positions associated with the line and the new terminal station near the existing Bulgana Terminal Station would be filled by workers living beyond commuting distance from the worksites, and these workers would reside in the proposed workforce accommodation facilities.** With regard to the workforce for the connection to the Sydenham Terminal Station, it is expected that all employees would be sourced from, or would take residence within, Melbourne, Bacchus Marsh, etc.*

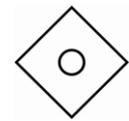
Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 62 – emphasis added

WRL EES Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder Engagement also acknowledges the following **AUSNET initiatives related to community benefit sharing:**

In Western Victoria, AusNet is consulting with the local community to determine a range of benefit sharing programs addressing the region's social, economic and environmental needs. Planned programs include a Community Benefit Fund to provide opportunities for community input into the Project's legacy, so that it makes a positive contribution to the region. AusNet has consulted with the CCG, CAG and local communities on the development of regional initiatives.

*As an example of work already completed, AusNet has conducted an assessment of energy demand and use at Ballarat Community Health's seven sites. AusNet provided advice on demand management, retailer and tariff selection and the optimal mix of additional infrastructure (solar and batteries)... The Project team is identifying **opportunities to use the Project construction stage to deliver economic and community value. Planned programs could include training and skills development programs** and building energy resilience by providing support to facilitate community energy projects as well as support to emergency services, small grant programs and sponsorship programs.*

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder Engagement p.42 – emphasis added



Expert Review Comments

I note that relevant recent research in Australia has identified that, in order to achieve successful CBS employment outcomes there is a need for:

1. early identification of **workforce and skills barriers** in the Renewable Energy Zone regions to inform tailored policies
2. clear **pathways for worker transitions** between declining to emerging industries
3. **First Nations employment** to securing an inclusive and equitable shift to renewable energy
4. **Benchmarks around employment quotas** including:
 - starting wages
 - the proportion of certified workers, and
 - hours spent on health and safety training^{29, 30}

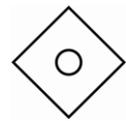
It is my professional opinion that the proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing (CBS) outlined in the WRL Social Impact Assessment is **inadequate** due to the following limitations:

1. No **recognition of CBS in the proposed EPRs**
2. No acknowledgement of the **State Government CBS Guidelines for renewable energy developers**³¹ and the following key steps set out in those guidelines:
 - How has [CBS] been co-developed **with directly impacted neighbours and stakeholders**? With the broader community and/or Community Reference Group?
 - How will the rationale and method for calculating community benefit be **explained to the community**?
 - How will changes made to the program be communicated to the community, especially where feedback from the community has influenced the change?
 - **Who will benefit** from the different aspects of your benefit sharing program? Is this equitable?
 - How could this program best serve the **needs of the local area**? What do **local government plans** offer in regards to information on local needs?
 - What **other initiatives already exist in the local area** and how can these be complemented rather than duplicated? Are there opportunities for strategic partnerships, i.e. with the community bank, local government grants programs or local education facilities?
 - What is the **available funding** for benefit sharing and will this fluctuate over time? Will it be linked to annual profit margin or be a static amount?
 - What form will benefit sharing take in **different stages of the project**?
 - Who will be responsible for delivering the Program? How will effective **governance** and transparency be achieved?
 - What other **partnerships** could amplify the benefit?
 - Is there interest in **community investment** in the project or other local renewable energy generation project ideas that you could promote?

²⁹ See for example TasNetworks and SGS Economics and Planning (2022). *Capturing the Economic Development Opportunities from Renewable Energy Investments in North-West Tasmania*. Available at: <https://ehq-production-austral...>

³⁰ U.S. Department of Energy (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.energy.gov/sites/d...> [Accessed: by SGS 12 September 2024].

³¹ DEWLP 2017 Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers



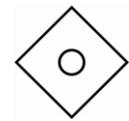
- If developing a fund, what is **best practice** in regards to amount per MW per year for the given technology, management, and governance?

3. A particular lack of response to steps in developing CBS that would help inform, and or respond to, potential social impacts of the Project

- What is the **community expectation** around benefit sharing?
- Are there **prevalent community concerns** that can be addressed via a benefit sharing program, such as a neighbourhood focus or a new sanctuary area for potentially impacted wildlife?
- How will the **expectations of different segments of the community** be managed; for example, hosts who end up with a reduced number of turbines, and in some cases no turbines? How will benefits be shared with these people? **Will these benefits be different to those offered to other non-host neighbours?**
- **who has been engaged** in developing the benefit sharing program; **what options were considered** for benefit sharing; and **how the proposed program meets the needs and/or preferences of the stakeholders**
- a description of any clauses included in benefit sharing contracts that **limit a signatory's ability to raise issues, speak publicly about the project or seek future additional benefit/compensation**
- Could your staff and contract partners be involved in **volunteerism in the local community?**
- Are there any at **risk portions of the local community** who could be a focus of the program?
- Is there potential to use a portion of generation to create a **locally promoted electricity retail or Renewable Energy Certificate product?**

Source: summarised from DEWLP 2017 Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers – emphasis added

4. No acknowledgement of **VicGrid policy direction and principles** related to community benefit sharing
5. No recognition of the **existing labour market gaps, apprenticeship and training needs evident in the Moorabool Shire** – see for example Table 21, 124 in Attachments
6. No pathways for **worker transitions** between declining to emerging industries
7. No assessment of the potential social impacts of the fact that **majority of construction positions would be filled by workers living beyond commuting distance from the worksite**



5.6 Other Identified Social Impacts

As noted above, my instructions included:

‘...any other matter you consider relevant to social impacts of the proposal in Moorabool Shire’

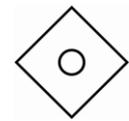
Expert Review Comments

In my professional opinion the following **gaps in the WRL Social Impact Assessment contribute to the inadequacy of the approach to assessment of social impacts:**

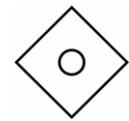
1. Limited analysis of social profile data for small areas in Moorabool other than Darley and Bacchus Marsh
 2. Resultant limited analysis of the varied and complex social characteristics of Moorabool small areas including the potential range of interests and issues related to the Project
 3. Use of the WRL Social Impact Assessment authors ‘professional judgement’ to ascribing values to ‘pin point’ data provided by landowners rather than direct consultations with landowners themselves
 4. Very poor analysis of sources of community conflict and opposition to the Project and a resulting lack of any detailed attempt to understand, and respond to, community opposition
 5. Failure to apply the approaches to understanding community values, including conflicts, as set out in the DELWP 2017 guidelines referred to in Section 5.5 above
 6. Failure to acknowledge social conflicts within other communities affected by renewable energy projects and the potential of these conflicts in the current Project, eg. conflicts between landowners who will benefit from transmission tower locations and other social groups
 7. A failure to consider how the Project will respond to an enduring sense of loss and powerlessness
 8. A need to better understand the potential negative response, and potentially negative social impact, of the Project on residents of Darley
- See Table 7 for further details

Table 7: Other Matters Relevant to Social Impacts

WRL Social Impact Assessment Item	Identified Gap	Proposed Response
Moorabool Local Area Description	<p>Very limited description of Moorabool demographics; little reference to areas other than Bachus Marsh and Darley</p> <p>Not clear how analysis of the social profile relates to statements taken from the community pinpoint data</p>	<p>More detailed understanding required of the varied and complex social characteristics of Moorabool small areas and potential range of interests and issues</p> <p>More analysis needed of the links between the social characteristics described and the pin point data – this analysis would be particularly helpful in understanding sources of community conflict and opposition to the Project</p>
Relative impact on each community	<p>It is not clear how the relative impacts to each of the impacted communities is measured</p> <p>Is impact to communities for the entire LGA deemed as the same, irrespective of distinct townships?</p>	<p>WRL Social Impact Assessment needs to provide a clear summary of the social impacts, and proposed responses, for each of the settlements in the Moorabool Shire as well as the LGA overall</p>



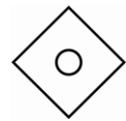
WRL Social Impact Assessment Item	Identified Gap	Proposed Response
<p>Ascribing community value</p>	<p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment author noted: <i>All ratings comprise a professional judgment regarding the nature of a potential impact, having regard to factors such as the value attributed to a community resource. The judgements are informed by empirical data (qualitative and/or quantitative) collected as part of the SIA.</i></p> <p>It is not possible distinguish how the values expressed by particular communities has been understood in order to measure and mitigate impact to specific values</p> <p>There is a disconnect between the intangible values being analysed and understood by the consultant when it comes to attachment to views and how this influences local identity and connections described by the community</p>	<p>Community values should not be identified based on 'professional judgement'</p> <p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment should use a range of engagement approaches to seek a more in-depth of values ascribed by community members themselves</p> <p>Useful approaches are available in the DELWP 2017 guidelines referred to in Section 5.5 Community Benefit Sharing</p>
<p>Landholder views</p>	<p>WRL Social Impact Assessment: <i>Sentiment and land use data were compiled based on the subjective judgment of AusNet Officers rather than self-reported values from landholders</i></p> <p><i>Rating Framework</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Strongly Support or Support: Applied when landholder has explicitly indicated that they are comfortable with the Project being on their property</i> 2. <i>Strongly Oppose or Oppose: Applied when landholder has explicitly indicated that they are not comfortable with the Project being on their property and/or when the landholder has refused to deal with the Project.</i> 3. <i>Undecided/Uknown: Applied when landholder's level of comfortable with the Project being on their property is not known with any confidence.</i> <p>Appendix 1. P. 117 Technical Report F</p>	<p>It is inappropriate for AusNet to ascribe views on whether or not landholders support, are neutral to or opposed to the project without any input from the individuals themselves.</p> <p>Landholders should be able to nominate their own views anonymously, and at the same time, for consistency and accuracy.</p> <p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment should use a range of engagement approaches to seek a more in-depth of values ascribed by landholders themselves</p> <p>Useful approaches are available in the DELWP 2017 guidelines referred to in Section 5.5 Community Benefit Sharing</p>
<p>Opposition to Project</p>	<p>WRL Social Impact Assessment:</p> <p>51.6% of landholders were assessed by AusNet as being opposed to the Project, whereas only 29.1% were assessed as being supportive</p> <p>Opposition to the Project from residents living in Section 4 ranged from 42.9% – 60.2%</p> <p>See Table 8 below.</p>	<p>A major gap in the WRL Social Impact Assessment is the lack of any detailed attempt to understand, and respond to, community opposition to the Project</p> <p>Elements of community cohesion such as connectedness to place and local history, relationship to rural/natural landscapes and features, are discussed in the context section yet there is no detailed analysis provided of the potential impacts of the project on these social characteristics</p> <p>Useful approaches are available in the DELWP 2017 guidelines referred to in Section 5.5 Community Benefit Sharing and include analysis of: what people value; local policy positions; recent changes; existing points of conflict etc.</p>



WRL Social Impact Assessment Item	Identified Gap	Proposed Response
<p>Conflict management approach</p>	<p>The proposed response to conflict management noted in the EMF relates to amenity only</p> <p><i>EPRs EM7 (Develop and implement a Complaints Management System) and EM10 (Develop and implement a Residential Mitigation and Support Strategy) (See Chapter 29: Environmental Management Framework). These EPRs aim to record, manage and resolve complaints received from affected stakeholders, and mitigate and manage impacts to directly affected residents (such as direct disturbance and amenity impacts, including visual impacts) from the Project to the extent reasonably practicable. Social chapter p. 23</i></p> <p>There is no discussion of any potential approach to managing conflict between residents and land owners who do not have transmission towers located on their land</p> <p>The failure to address mitigation measures to manage this conflict is a major gap in the WRL Social Impact Assessment and undermines its usefulness for informing ongoing social impact mediation strategies</p>	<p>This gap in the WRL Social Impact Assessment contributes significantly to the failure to analyse the impact of the Project on community resilience</p> <p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Respond to the now widely recognised social conflicts within communities affected by renewable energy projects including conflict between landowners who agree to have transmission towers located on their land and other land owners³² 2. Provide evidence of the minimum expectations for creating social value as set out in the Draft <i>Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects</i>³³ including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design initiatives that deliver strategic or long term social value ... for the community. • Develop community capacity by identifying opportunities that build on local strengths, assets, capabilities and resources. • Align benefits with the needs, priorities and strategies already identified by local communities, government, industry and research. • Collaborate with industry and community to achieve collective impact, including coordinating on resourcing, initiatives, information sharing and engagement, and leveraging shared networks. • Provide transparent information to the community about the project's social value and economic benefit commitments, including by publishing a Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan (summarised from p. 18).

³² See for example: [Renewable energy projects divide farming communities - ABC News](#); [Australian producers divided on wind farms with farmland earmarked for development - ABC News](#)

³³ <https://engage.vic.gov.au/download/document/42651>



WRL Social Impact Assessment Item	Identified Gap	Proposed Response
<p>Lasting impacts of transmission lines</p>	<p>There is little discussion in the WRL Social Impact Assessment of the lasting amenity impacts of permanent overhead transmission line infrastructure</p> <p>WRL Social Impact Assessment: <i>Over time, the population of the study area would adapt, grow and change, and a new equilibrium would evolve.... Nevertheless, if the Project proceeds, some members of existing communities within the study area who live through the change process, may never be comfortable with the Project. Moreover, for those who strongly resist the Project in an attempt to preserve the integrity of their property and/or business and the prevailing amenity and character of their homes and local area, its approval may leave an enduring sense of loss and powerlessness</i> WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Executive Summary, Conclusions.</p>	<p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment should respond more clearly and directly to these identified lasting impacts, eg. <i>How does the Project respond to enduring sense of loss and powerlessness?</i></p> <p>Lasting social impacts related to the Project should be more clearly defined and analysed and relevant mitigation measures proposed</p>
<p>Darley</p>	<p>Darley and surrounds - potential impacts during operation would be major to moderate. P. 23</p> <p>...voluminous and very negative feedback was received from residents of Darley and surrounds...when providing feedback regarding the Project’s potential impact on visual amenity, it was common for community members to suggest that the Project should be built underground, and furthermore to suggest that, if this approach was used the majority of the Project’s potential negative impacts would be ameliorated. <i>Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 54 – emphasis added.</i></p> <p>... the Project would influence the attractiveness of various locations within Darley, including focal points for recreation. While the level of change is not sufficient to compromise the useability of these locations, these effects would add to and compound social impacts experienced by members of the Darley community. WRL Social Impact Assessment p. 92</p> <p>Bald Hill Activation Area...The visual impact from northern sections of the sculptural trail and all abilities sculptural trail (Telford Park) would be high ...Some local residents of Darley may avoid the facility, particularly those who are highly sensitive to the Project’s presence in their local area. p. 25 Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 39 - 40– emphasis added.</p>	<p>There is a clear need for a more detailed assessment of the potential social impacts of the Project on Darley including more targeted consultations and case study investigations with members of the Darley community</p>

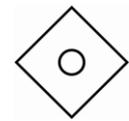


WRL Social Impact Assessment Item	Identified Gap	Proposed Response
Compensation	There is no discussion evident in the WRL Social Impact Assessment about either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compulsory acquisition 2. Compensation 	Any AUSNET compensation arrangements with affected landowners, and their relationship to identified social impacts, should be included in the WRL Social Impact Assessment

Table 8: Project Sentiment Among Directly Affected Landholders by Section, Size and Land Use

	Opposed	Undecided/Unknown	Supportive
Total	51.6%	19.3%	29.1%
Section			
Section 1	17.6%	24.3%	58.1%
Section 2	75.9%	10.3%	13.8%
Section 3	76.8%	16.1%	7.1%
Section 4	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%
Proportion of Affected Property Covered by Proposed Easement			
Coverage <2%	30.2%	32.6%	37.2%
Coverage 2% to 6%	53.3%	15.2%	31.5%
Coverage >6%	60.2%	17.0%	22.7%
Dwelling on Property			
Dwelling	54.8%	23.5%	21.7%
No Dwelling	48.1%	14.8%	37.0%
Predominant Agricultural Land Use			
Horticulture	93.1%	3.4%	3.4%
Cropping	60.3%	12.8%	26.9%
Grazing	33.3%	27.1%	39.6%
Equine	30.0%	40.0%	30.0%
Rural Living	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%

Source: AusNet 2024 cited in WRL Social Impact Assessment Technical Report p. 53



5.7 Overall Social Impacts of the Project within Moorabool Shire

As noted above, my instructions included:

*'... having regard to the EES materials and any other matters you consider relevant, your opinion on:
i. the overall social impacts of the project within Moorabool Shire'*

The limitations of the WRL Social Impact Assessment, outlined above, means that it is not possible to determine the overall social impact of the Project within Moorabool Shire. The Conclusion to the Executive Summary in the SRL CIA suggest an **overall highly negative social impacts** of the Project including:

- *Changes to land use and amenity brought about by the Project **would be both unpopular and potentially impactful for various individuals and social groups who live, work and/or recreate in the study area.***
- *... it **does have substantial potential to undermine the value that people attribute to [existing social and cultural]***
- *...**the Project may to varying degrees, reduce satisfaction obtained from particular land uses, including residential occupation, recreation, etc. and any associated sense of connection to the various places and communities which exist in the study area***
- *In some parts of the study area, **impacts would be of sufficient magnitude and extent to precipitate reductions in community capacity and cohesion in the short to medium term***
- *...if the Project proceeds, some members of existing communities within the study area who live through the change process, may never be comfortable with the Project*
- *...for those who strongly resist the Project in an attempt to preserve the integrity of their property and/or business and the prevailing amenity and character of their homes and local area, its approval may leave an enduring sense of loss and powerlessness.*

Source: Summarised from WRL EES Technical Report F: Social Executive Summary, Conclusions – emphasis added

The WRL EES Stakeholder and Community Engagement Consultation Report similarly identifies **significant negative social impacts**:

- *Potential for **strong family histories and ties to farming properties to be disrupted***
 - *When raising concerns about the Project's potential effect on agriculture, visual amenity and health and safety, investigations found that community members typically did so in terms of factors associated with the experience of **place attachment**. For example, many indicated their family had lived in an area, or on a particular property, for generations. **Community members concerned about the potential for the Project to disrupt strong family histories and ties to farming properties** have been invited to participate in one-on-one meetings with specialists, information sessions and Q&As.*
- Source: Summarised from ATTACHMENT IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report p. 54 – emphasis added*

Table 9 summarises key gaps in the WRL Social Impact Assessment related to social impacts identified within the Moorabool Shire area and proposes responses for an improved Social Impact Assessment that should address these gaps. The gaps identified in Table 8 are examples only and many other instances are evident in the WRL Social Impact Assessment. In order to determine the overall social impact of the Project on the Moorabool Shire a revised Social Impact Assessment would need to adopt the recommendations proposed in Table 8 as a response to the current gaps in the WRL Social Impact Assessment.

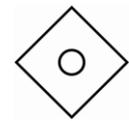
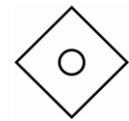
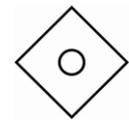


Table 9: Expert Review – Overall Social Impact and Recommended Response

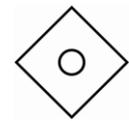
Project Area – WRL Social Impact Assessment Response	Identified Gap	Recommended Response
Context Narrative		
<p>Chapter 4 existing conditions Pop and dwelling densities Predominant land uses Age etc.</p> <p>Chapter 5 Reactions to the Project Section 3 76.1% oppose;7.1% Support Section 4 42.9% oppose;28.6% support</p> <p>Section 3 (55 properties directly affected, 34 with a dwelling, 11 of which are within 300m; 255 dwellings within 2km) Approximately three quarters of landholders oppose the Project</p> <p>In Section 3, it would be common for affected landholders to consider that the Project undermines an aspirational lifestyle and disrupts intergenerational connections to their properties (mainly Darley) Project may disrupt an aspirational lifestyle, and may not be readily accepted</p>	<p>Analysis of the following data proposed in CBS guides is not applied to the WRL Social Impact Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dominant local community narratives that are associated with the renewable energy technology and the proposed project • Legacy issues that are important to consider about the project • Analysis of gap/conflict between views of established community and newer aspirational community • Impacts of policy of all levels 	<p>A revised Social Impact Assessment should analyse the material gathered in the Context Narrative according to the approach set out in CBS guides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing a ‘story’ of the local context, including its key attributes, values and features...identify ways that a development can align with the local context • Provide a narrative analyse the conflict evident in the large gap between those opposed and those who support the project in Section 3 (Moorabool areas) in particular
Land Use Impacts		
<p>8.4 Directly Affected Landholders 35 within Section 4 55 within Section 3 Directly Affected Landholders – The majority of affected land holdings currently support some form of agricultural production and where this is the case, the construction stage may result in lower productivity and financial losses for landholders.</p>	<p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment provides:</p> <p>No detailed case study insights into the impact of the construction stage on the production capacity and operations of directly affected landholders</p>	<p>A revised Social Impact Assessment should include: Detailed case study interviews – directly affected landholders; adjacent landowners</p>
Site Mapping		
<p>Mapping applied throughout project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape qualities - Section 4 Distribution of community facilities and settlements - Section 8 directly affected land owners - Section 10 cumulative impacts 	<p>Community participation in development of map and identification of significant issues is limited</p>	<p>CBS guides promote participatory mapping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group-based qualitative research method that gives participants freedom to shape discussion on a given topic with minimal intervention from researchers • The purpose is to allow as much space as possible for participants to share their thoughts on the character of the local landscape and what this means to local people and what the perceived impacts may be • This process is particularly useful in the feasibility stage of a project



Project Area – WRL Social Impact Assessment Response	Identified Gap	Recommended Response
		<p>and can be used to inform the context narrative and identification of key social risks and key stakeholders</p> <p>This approach to site mapping would provide significant insight into the social impact of the project in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Impacts on small areas
Visual Amenity Impacts		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of the Project from dwellings in Darley would be common, including from living areas, and outdoor entertaining areas. Feedback from Darley community members indicates that many view the proposed infrastructure as a threat to their residential amenity, which is a defining feature of their lifestyle and identity • Adaptation through relocation would not be practical for the majority of those affected • Affected residents may harbour ongoing frustration and resentment toward the Project • Major to moderate in Darley and surrounds (Section 4 of the study area), due to the Project's effect on the attractiveness of smaller equine properties and lifestyle properties and fears relating to bushfire safety may contribute to landholder concerns in this area 	<p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment presents a significant gap in understanding the impact of the project on residents of Darley, including detailed insights into the impact on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land values 2. Community aspirations 3. Social connection 	<p>Given the proximity of the route to Darley there is a priority to explore the specific impact of the project on residents of Darley, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community group consultations 2. Narrative analysis of local media 3. Focus group interviews with residents and land holders 4. Case study insights – aspirational residents and potential social impacts etc.
Tourism Impacts		
<p><i>Lerderderg State Park</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When accessing the park, visitors would travel under the transmission line on Lerderderg Gorge Road • the principal driver for visitation is the park itself, and in this context the Project would not detract materially from the park's appeal. <p><i>Coimadai Memorial Park and Avenue of Honour</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Moderate – High' due to the sensitivity and use of this area • the Project may detract from the appeal of the facility for some users 	<p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment presents:</p> <p>Limited understanding of the role of these resources in promoting and supporting tourism in the area</p> <p>Little consideration of Moorabool Shire Council policy context related to Tourism promotion</p> <p>Argument that 'tourism is in its infancy' is inappropriate in the context of local policy</p>	<p>Site specific understanding of the detailed impact of the Project on each of the significant areas of Moorabool Shire associated with tourism</p> <p>Area based case studies User group interviews etc.</p> <p>More detailed analysis of the Shire's aspirations More data on visitation numbers and the potential impact of the Project</p>



Project Area – WRL Social Impact Assessment Response	Identified Gap	Recommended Response
Mitigating Strategies		
<p>The WRL Social Impact Assessment notes:</p> <p>... it is assumed that all mitigation measures proposed in other impact assessments are adopted by the proponent and form part of the Project</p> <p>Section 11 Managing Performance The following EPRs are proposed to enable avoidance and mitigation of the Project’s potential social impacts</p>	<p>No details provided of mitigating effects proposed in other reports</p> <p>Mitigating strategies are limited to EPRs</p>	<p>Specific details should be provided showing the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct connection between the impacts identified in the WRL Social Impact Assessment and mitigation measures proposed in other WRL impact assessments <p>A revised Social Impact Assessment should provide a much more detailed mitigation strategy highlighting key aspects of a CBS approach including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Benefit Fund details • A list of initiatives the Project can implement in collaboration with key stakeholders • Compensation details and process for directly affected land holders etc.



5.8 Proposed Environmental Performance Requirements and Planning Scheme Amendment

As outlined above, my instructions included:

...having regard to social impacts, section 11 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, and Section 11.1 of Technical Report G – Economic Impact, please provide your opinion on the proposed Environmental Performance Requirements presented in Table 29.2 of Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework

and

..your opinion on: 'ii. section 7.3 of the Attachment III Draft Planning Scheme Amendment with respect to social impacts'

The WRL Social Impact Assessment coverage of proposed EPRs includes:

1. A summary of the Proposed EPRs as follows:
 - d. *Avoid and minimise potential negative social impacts of the Project construction workforce*
 - e. *Develop and implement a Code of Conduct to avoid and minimise potential social impacts of the construction workforce*
 - f. *Develop and implement initiatives to maximise employment opportunities for local communities, First Nations people and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups*
- Source: See WRL Technical Report F: Social p. 112

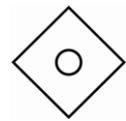
Reference to the EPRs set out in Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework which cover:

1. Communications and engagements
2. Fire weather and bushfire
3. Biosecurity
4. Pollutions
5. Threatened flora and fauna
6. Land stability
7. Heritage
8. Noise and vibration
9. Water quality
10. Roads

The Draft Planning Scheme Amendment includes the following with respect to social impacts:

Planning Scheme Amendment 7.3.1 Social Effects

*The Technical Report G: **Economic** Impact Assessment prepared for the EES found **new employment** (both direct and indirect) in the economic study area due to the Project peaks in FY2028 at 346 workers. Additional direct and indirect jobs are expected in other areas of Victoria, with total employment in Victoria due to the Project peaking at 2,089 full-time-equivalent positions in FY2028. The employment impacts represent not only jobs required directly for the construction of the Project, but also indirect employment effects. This accounts for any additional employment in the upstream and downstream industries providing goods or services in the construction of the Project. Potential employment benefits for local communities will depend on the availability of specialist skills in the local labour force (such as construction workers with experience in the construction of towers and terminal stations and stringing of transmission lines) and the level of unemployed labour available for positions such as traffic management and labouring. **Training opportunities,***



such as apprenticeships, will also be created for local residents during the construction stage of the Project. AusNet is seeking government support for subsidised TAFE courses that align with roles required for the construction and operation of the transmission line, including electrical lines work, civil construction and engineering. P. 30

The Amendment cites the following reference to the temporary workforce accommodation as assessed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment:

*The **temporary workforce accommodation facilities** are proposed to avoid and minimise social impacts by: avoiding impacts on the use and availability of existing accommodation in the region; avoiding population increases in towns in the Project Land and wider region; and minimising disruptions to, and changes in demand for, the **use of community facilities and services**. Management of any social impacts of the temporary workforce accommodation on the towns is proposed (via an EPR) to include the implementation of a process to manage workers' access to the nearby settlements and to require workers to comply with a Code of Conduct outlining AusNet's expectations of workers when interacting with local communities p. 30*

Expert Review Comment

Having regard to the EES materials and any other matters I consider relevant, my opinion on Section 7.3 of the Attachment III **Draft Planning Scheme Amendment and the Proposed EPR's with respect to social impacts** is that these documents are **inadequate in relation to social impact** due to the following limitations:

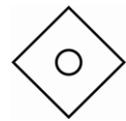
- 1. Very little reference to material covered in the WRL Social Impact Assessment and a focus on employment impacts and worker accommodation facilities only**
- 2. Reference to broader positive social impacts that were *not* considered in the WRL Social Impact Assessment**

The Amendment identifies 'important social benefits' that were not addressed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment:

The amendment is expected to facilitate a range of positive social effects... provision of electricity transmission infrastructure is an important social benefit for the entire Victorian community...The Reserve Bank of Australia has observed that renewable energy investment in Australia has supported activity and employment, particularly in regional areas where large-scale renewable generators tend to be located p. 30

By comparison the WRL Social Impact Assessment only identifies **minor to negligible positive social impacts**, for example:

- *Residual social impacts in relation to workforce and social profile are considered to be minor to negligible positive during construction and operation with application of the EPRs p. 21*
- *Minor uplift in employment opportunities and the spending of imported workers could contribute to economic and social sustainability (moderate to minor positive potential impact) p. 21*
- *The Project would generate local employment opportunities and in doing so has the potential to make a positive contribution to the economic and social sustainability of local communities. P. 21*
- *As decommissioning would relieve landholders of restrictions on land use imposed by the Project, this would likely be perceived to have a positive effect on the amenity and character of the study area, with positive social impacts. P. 22*



- *Residual workforce and social profile impacts of Project construction would be minor to negligible (positive) p. 22*

In my professional opinion there is a disjuncture between the ‘important social benefits’ identified in the Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment and the potential social impacts identified in the WRL Social Impact Assessment.

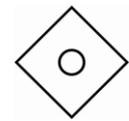
3. **A reliance on potential social impacts identified in other EES Chapters and/or Technical Reports and not addressed in the WRL Social Impact Assessment, particularly new employment and training opportunities**

In my professional opinion that creation of local employment and training opportunities are significant social impacts that should be considered in the WRL Social Impact Assessment.

4. **The EPRs reference AUSNET materials that are not yet developed including:**

- ***Project Wide Property Access Management Plan (PAMP)** will be prepared that details the process and procedures to be followed to access landholder’s property for investigation, construction, and operation of the Project...The PAMP is identified as an EPR in Technical Report H: Agriculture and Forestry Impact Assessment*
- ***Western Renewables Link Community Benefit Fund** – seek[ing] input from traditional owners, Indigenous people and young people (17-25 years age group) who are often under represented in more traditional engagement processes. It is likely that grants will be provided to projects or initiatives that make a positive contribution to the local community, with preference given to those that create ongoing benefits. AusNet will work with stakeholders and the community to determine the most appropriate allocation of this funding, recognising each community’s unique needs and circumstances p. 32*
- ***Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan** for the construction stage*
- *AusNet proposes to enter into an option **for easement agreement with landholders to facilitate the transmission line and associated accessways for all Project components** (except for the site of the new terminal station near Bulgana, which has been purchased by AusNet). The Proposed Route will directly impact on approximately 651 land parcels. Over the operational life of the transmission line, the easement will result in some minor restrictions to land use activities (i.e., prohibiting the use of aerial crop spraying), however will primarily not result in a change of land use.*
- *The introduction of Project infrastructure will result in changes to the landscape and visual environment for residents, visitors, tourists and workers as well as amenity impacts to affected landholders during the construction period. However, through the implementation of **EPRs**, the amenity, social and landscape and visual impacts are expected to be appropriately mitigated (refer to Technical Report D: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Technical Report I: Air Quality Impact Assessment and Technical Report O: Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment of the EES).*

In my professional opinion these proposed AUSNET materials are significant responses to managing social impacts and should be developed in detail prior to the Planning Scheme Amendment being adopted.



6. Attachments

6.1 Curriculum Vitae

Dr Kate Kerkin

Kate is an urban policy and planning professional with extensive experience in planning for community infrastructure. Kate has worked with local and state governments, non-government organisations and private developers to plan for community services and facilities. She has also developed guidelines on building resilience in growth area communities. Kate also brings significant experience in planning for social and affordable housing and an in-depth understanding of the specific community infrastructure needs of high density 'vertical' communities.

Qualifications

- PhD University of Melbourne 2002
- Masters of Public Policy University of New England 1991
- Bachelor of Arts, Hons (1) Australian National University 1984

Professional Association Memberships

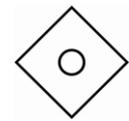
- Planning Institute of Australia (PIA)
- Privacy Impact Assessment Training (Privacy Commissioner Victoria)
- Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS)
- International Cities, Town Centres and Communities
- Advisory Group Member National Institute of For Purpose Leaders
- Board Member/ Chair Sirovilla Retirement Village 'For Purpose' Organisations providing affordable housing to independent seniors

Awards

- **2025 Australian Urban Design Awards Shortlist – Melton Town Centre Revitalisation Plan**- Urban Fold, Echelon Planning, Urban Enterprise, Institute for Sensible Transport, K2 Planning
- Planning Institute Australia (PIA) **Victoria Planning Excellence Awards 2014 Commendation Community Engagement** – Monash City Council, Kingston City Council and *K2 Planning Strengthening Clayton and Clarinda Project*
- Planning Institute Australia (PIA) **Victoria Planning Excellence Awards 2010 Social and Community Planning Commendation** - K2 Planning and Mount Alexander Shire Council for the *Mount Alexander Review of Community Services and Facilities*
- **PIA Victoria Planning Excellence Awards 2005 Social and Community Planning Commendation** City of Greater Geelong – Bellarine Peninsula Strategic Plan (Dr Kate Kerkin Project Manager)
- **PIA Victoria Planning Excellence Awards 2009 Urban Planning Achievement Commendation** CPG Australia - Addressing Gaming in the Victorian Planning Framework (Dr Kate Kerkin Project Manager)
- Finalist **2014 Telstra Business Women's Award** (Dr Kate Kerkin)

Relevant Social Impact Assessments

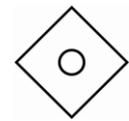
1. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) – Planning Permit Amendment - Place of Assembly
4 Margaret Street Oakley Sankat Mochan Samiti Inc. 2024
2. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) - Application for Planning Permit D/474/
25 Separation Street Northcote Darebin City Council 2021
3. Kingswood Country Golf Course Development Application – Social Impact Assessment
Kingston City Council 2021
4. Hotel 520 - 520 Sayers Road, Tarneit – Application to Extend Operating Hours
Social Impact Assessment Wyndham City Council 2021
5. Social Impact Assessment 1,201 High Street Wantirna South Tract 2021
6. 21-27 Robinson Road, Narre Warren North - Social Planning Assessment and
Expert Evidence Report MWB Fund 8 Pty Ltd 2020



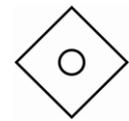
7. Waurm Ponds Hotel - Application to Increase the Number of Electronic Gaming Machines Social and Economic Impact Assessment City of Greater Geelong	2020
8. Clifton Springs Golf Club application to increase the number of electronic gaming machines Social and Economic Impact Assessment City of Greater Geelong	2020
9. Polish Community Association Inc. Geelong - Application to Increase the Number of Electronic Gaming Machines Social and Economic Impact Assessment	2019
10. Ballarat Clarendon College - Planning Scheme Amendment C207 Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Expert Evidence Report	2018
11. Social Impact Assessment (SIA) – Mentoring Tract 2018	
12. Castello Cardinia Hotel Pty LTD - Application to Increase the Number of Electronic Gaming Machines (EGM's) Social and Economic Impact Assessment Casey City Council	2018
13. Palliative Care Hospice Geelong Social Impact Assessment Anam Cara	2018
14. Social Impact Assessment - On-Premise Licence Liquor Application 590 Main Street Mordialloc Kingston City Council	2017
15. Clayton Business Park (CBP) Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Peer Review and Revised Assessment Kingston City Council	2017
16. Gen Fyansford Development Plan West (Stage 8 & 9) Social Impact Assessment	2017
17. Social Impact Assessment Proposed Great Forest National Park Yarra Ranges Shire with Dench McClean Carlson	2016
18. Camperdown Uniting Church Land Use Feasibility Study and Social Impact Assessment Hansen Partnership	2015
19. Sustainable Garden Project Social Impact Assessment Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College	2015
20. Local Planning Policy Workshop – Social Impact Assessment Victorian Local Governance Association	2013 - 2015
21. Peer Review – Browns Corner Hotel VCGLR Application Moreland City Council Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA)	2012
22. Red Lion Hotel Ballarat EGM Licence Application Social Impact Assessment City of Ballarat	2011
23. Beveridge Township Social Impact Assessment Halcyon Property Group	2011
24. Brooklyn Greens Methane Gas Leak Social Impact Assessment Slater and Gordon	2010
25. West Maddingley Community Infrastructure Report	2010
26. Ashwood Chadstone Gateway Project Social Impact Assessment Port Phillip Housing	2010
27. Corner Hotel Social Impact Assessment Maddocks Lawyers	2009
28. Edgewater Club EGM Application Maribyrnong (VCAT)	2009
29. Bells Hotel Port Phillip EGM Application (VCGR)	2009
30. Kennington Retail Development Bendigo	2009
31. Burnside North Residential Development Melton	2008
32. Wightsands Retirement Village Cowes	2008
33. Lakes Hotel Pakenham EGM Application (VCGR)	2008
34. Romsey Hotel Macedon EGM Application (VCAT)	2008
35. Bells Hotel Port Phillip EGM Application (VCAT)	2008
36. Edgewater Club EGM Application Maribyrnong (VCGR)	2008
37. Chirnside North Residential Subdivision	2007
38. Big Hill Residential Development Bendigo	2007
39. Drive-In Site Retail Redevelopment Shepparton	2007

Recent Community Infrastructure Projects

- Confidential Social Housing Project Community Infrastructure Assessment(Six Degrees Architects)2024
- Manningham Civic Precinct Community Infrastructure Audit (with Tract) 2024
- Surf Coast Shire Kindergarten Feasibility Assessment 2024
- Greenhill Precinct Masterplan (Mitchell Shire) (with Williams Ross Architects) 2023
- Confidential Social Housing Project Community Infrastructure Assessment (Six Degrees Architects)2023
- Cardinia Hills Region Early Years Feasibility Study 2023
- Hume Youth Crisis Facility Feasibility 2023
- Anglesea Community and Health Precinct Masterplan Community Infrastructure (Tract) 2023



• Assessment of the Demand and Models for responding to Youth Homelessness	2023
• Hume Multicultural Centre Feasibility Study	2022
• Diamond Creek Community Infrastructure Assessment (with Williams Ross Architects)	2022
• Koo Wee Rup Region Early Years Feasibility Study	2022
• Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative – Early Years Needs Assessment	2022
• Anam Cara End of Life Facility–Understanding the Needs of Diverse Ethnic Groups	2021
• Lilydale Integrated Community Hub (with Williams Ross Architects)	2021
• Melton Town Centre Revitalisation Project – Community Infrastructure Technical Report	2021
• Building Resilience in New and Emerging Communities (with Kinetica)	2020
• Brimbank Early Years Facilities Review – Planning 5 New Children’s/Community Hubs	2020-21
• Assessment of Demand for Medical Services- Armstrong Creek	2021
• Kingswood Country Golf Club Redevelopment Community Infrastructure Assessment	2021
• Building Resilience in New and Emerging Communities (with Kinetica)	2020
• Highett Integrated Early Years Hub	2020
• Anam Cara House Palliative Care Community Hub User Needs Study Stage 1	2020
• Sunshine Leisure Centre Community Infrastructure Assessment (with Williams Ross)	2020
• Glenelg Early Years Facilities Update	2020
• Darebin Intercultural Centre Feasibility Study	2019
• Preston Library Feasibility Study	2019
• Doveton Eumemmerring Community Needs Analysis	2019
• Darebin Intercultural Centre Relocations Options Report	2019
• Apollo Bay, Skenes Creek, Marengo Community Infrastructure Assessment (with Tract)	2019
• Jamiesons Way Community Infrastructure Assessment Point Cook (with Tract)	2019
• Hampton Activity Centre Social Needs Assessment (with Navire)	2019
• Spotswood Social Needs Assessment	2018
• Former Gas and Fuel Site Highett Community Infrastructure Assessment	2018
• Clayton Town Centre PSP Community Infrastructure Background Report (with Tract)	2018
• Highett Gas and Fuel Site Community Infrastructure Assessment	2018
• Casey Community Facilities Engagement	2018
• Marinda Park Master Plan	2018
• 54-76 Southern Road Mentone Community Infrastructure Assessment	2018
• Kingswood Country Golf Club Community Infrastructure Assessment	2017
• Cranbourne Town Centre Community Infrastructure Analysis	2017
• Hampton Park Community Infrastructure Assessment	2017
• Clayton Business Park Community Infrastructure Assessment	2017
• Endeavour Hills Community Infrastructure Assessment	2017
• Greenvale North Community Infrastructure Assessment	2017
• Knox Asset Development Plan for Council’s 5 Senior Citizens Centres	2017
• City of Whittlesea Long Term Infrastructure Plan	2016
• Kingston Golf Club Community Infrastructure Assessment	2016
• Glenelg Early Years Feasibility Study and Infrastructure Plan	2015
• Warrnambool Child Care Assessment Report	2015
• Bayside Kindergarten Assessment Bayside City Council	2014
• Colac Early Years and Family Services Logic Mapping Report	2014
• Sunbury South PSP Community Infrastructure Assessment MPA	2014
• Lancefield Road PSP Community Infrastructure Assessment MPA	2014
• Centre Road Narre Warren Community Infrastructure Assessment	2014
• Brierly Reserve Community Hub Feasibility Study Warrnambool	2013
• Warrnambool Community Services Infrastructure Plan	2013
• Moorabool Community Infrastructure Needs Assessment	2013
• Hume North Growth Corridor Health Master Plan	2013
• Children’s Services Infrastructure Plan City of Greater Geelong CoGG	2012



6.2 Letters of Instruction

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Our Ref: GG:040-001

Confidential & Subject to Legal Professional Privilege

Dr Kate Kerkin
Director
K2 Planning

By email only: kate@k2planning.com.au

15 July 2025

Dear Dr Kerkin

WESTERN RENEWABLES LINK ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT

We act for Moorabool Shire Council (**Council**) in relation to the above matter.

Background

1. AusNet Transmission Group Pty Ltd (**AusNet**) has proposed a new electricity transmission line between Bulgana and Sydenham called the Western Renewables Link (the **Project**). The Project includes proposed new infrastructure and upgrades to existing transmission lines. The Project traverses Moorabool Shire.
2. A planning scheme amendment is proposed as the primary approval for the Project. The Project is proposed to be delivered through Planning Scheme Amendment GC209 to the Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Ballarat, Hepburn, Moorabool and Melton Planning Schemes. A draft Planning Scheme Amendment has been published with the EES. In Moorabool Shire, the Planning Scheme Amendment would amend the Schedule to Clause 45.12 (Specific Controls Overlay) to introduce a new Incorporated Document, the “Western Renewables Link, Incorporated Document XXX 2025” to facilitate the use and development of the Project on land relating to the Project. It would also include Schedules to Clause 72.03 and amend existing or insert new planning scheme maps to reflect the application of the Specific Controls Overlay.
3. On 22 August 2023, the Minister for Planning decided to require Ausnet to prepare an Environment Effects Statement (**EES**) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to assess the potential environmental effects of the Project. The EES is a comprehensive environmental assessment that describes the potential environmental, economic and



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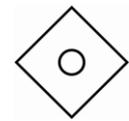
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social impacts of the proposal. The EES is comprised of 30 Chapters and 20 technical reports. Subject to the outcome of the EES process, AusNet has stated that it would request that the Minister for Planning exempts notice requirements, adopt and approve the Planning Scheme Amendment GC209.

4. The EES has been placed on exhibition from 30 June 2025 to 22 August 2025. Council will make a submission on the EES.
5. On 25 June 2025, the Minister for Planning appointed the Western Renewables Link Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee (**Western Renewables Link IAC**). The Western Renewables Link IAC is appointed to inquire into, and report on, the Project and its environmental effects in accordance with Terms of Reference.
6. Hearings in relation to the Western Renewables Link IAC have been listed on the following dates:
 - a. Directions Hearing – 15 September 2025; and
 - b. Public Hearing – 27 October 2025 (projected to be held for approximately for 7 to 9 weeks).
7. A further update will be provided to you in due course in relation to the hearing schedule.

Your engagement

8. We are instructed to engage you to:
 - a. review the EES documents (including relevantly Chapter 5: Project Development - Section 5.4.2; Technical Report F - Social Impact Assessment Report; Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8; and Attachment IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report);
 - b. confer with instructing solicitors and Counsel, Louise Hicks, where necessary;
 - c. prepare an expert report which addresses social impact issues within Moorabool Shire, including impact of the proposed Ballan temporary laydown area and accommodation site;
 - d. as necessary, participate in any expert conclave; and



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- e. appear at the EES Hearing for the purposes of presenting your expert opinion concerning these matters.
9. A supplementary letter of instruction will be provided in relation to specific matters on which your expert opinion is sought.
10. An update will also be provided in relation to the deadline for circulation of expert reports and any requirements associated with expert reports or presentations.

Brief of documents

11. You have been provided with access to a SharePoint folder with the EES documents for your review.
12. If you require any other information or data, please let us know.

Duty of expert witness

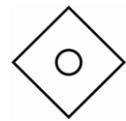
13. We attach a copy of Planning Panels Victoria, Practice Note 1 in relation to Expert evidence. Please ensure that you read this prior to preparation of your expert report.
14. Please note that an expert witness:
 - a. has a paramount duty to the Western Renewables Link IAC and not to the party retaining the expert;
 - b. has an overriding duty to assist the Western Renewables Link IAC on matters relevant to the expert's expertise; and
 - c. is not an advocate for a party to a proceeding.

Client details – Fee estimates and invoicing

15. Please arrange for your fee estimate and invoices to be provided directly to our mutual client:

Catherine McLay
Special Projects Lead
Moorabool Shire Council
PO Box 18, Ballan, VIC 3324

By email to: cmclay@moorabool.vic.gov.au



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Confidentiality

16. This letter and all future communications between you and Guthrie Legal and/or Counsel are confidential (**Confidential Information**), and are subject to a claim for privilege and must not be disclosed without our consent or the consent of our client.
17. The duty of confidentiality will continue beyond the conclusion of your instructions.
18. You must take all steps necessary to maintain Confidential Information and notes in strictest confidence.

Change of opinion

19. If for some reason, you change your opinion after delivering your report, please advise us as soon as possible. If that change is material, a supplementary report will need to be prepared, which explains the reasons for the change in your opinion.

Should you require any further information, please telephone Gabrielle Guthrie on 0450 266 779.

Yours faithfully

Gabrielle Guthrie
Principal
Guthrie Legal

Email: gabrielle@guthrie-legal.com
Tel: 0450 266 779

Att: Planning Panels Victoria - Practice Note 1



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Our Ref: GG:040-001

Confidential & Subject to Legal Professional Privilege

Dr Kate Kerkin
Director
K2 Planning

By email only: kate@k2planning.com.au

22 August 2025

Dear Dr Kerkin

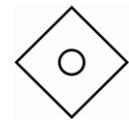
**WESTERN RENEWABLES LINK
ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY LETTER OF INSTRUCTION**

We continue to act for Moorabool Shire Council (**Council**) in relation to the above matter.

Further to our letter of instruction on 15 July 2025, the purpose of this letter is to provide further background information relating to the EES process, the EES materials and to provide instructions on the matters on which your expert opinion is sought.

Background

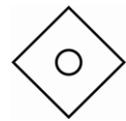
1. The Western Renewables Link Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee (**IAC**) is appointed to inquire into, and report on, the proposed Western Renewables Link (the Project) and its environmental effects in accordance with the [Terms of Reference](#) dated 25 June 2025.
2. The IAC is appointed pursuant to:
 - a. section 9(1) of the *Environment Effects Act* 1978 (EE Act) as an inquiry; and
 - b. part 7, section 151(1) of the *Planning and Environment Act* 1987 (**P&E Act**) as an advisory committee, to consider the draft planning scheme amendment (**PSA**) GC209 to the Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Ballarat, Hepburn, Moorabool and Melton Planning Schemes.



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3. You are instructed to consider both the exhibited EES materials into which the IAC will conduct an inquiry and the draft PSA which the IAC will also consider.
4. For the purposes of draft PSA, it is noted that:
 - a. the objectives of planning in Victoria under the P&E Act include:¹
 - (a) to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land;
 - (b) to provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;
 - (c) to secure a **pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians** and visitors to Victoria;
 - (d) to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value;
 - (e) to protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community;
 - (f) to facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e);
 - b. the objectives of the planning framework established by the P&E Act include:
 - (a) to ensure sound, strategic planning and co-ordinated action at State, regional and municipal levels;
 - (b) to establish a system of planning schemes based on municipal districts to be the principal way of setting out objectives, policies and controls for the use, development and protection of land;
 - (c) to enable land use and development planning and policy to be easily integrated with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels;

¹ Section 4, *Planning and Environment Act 1987*



(d) to ensure that the effects on the environment are considered and provide for explicit consideration of social and economic effects when decisions are made about the use and development of land;

{Emphasis added}

5. The [decision of the Minister for Planning](#) dated 22 August 2023 in relation to the requirement for an EES included the following statement:

The procedures and requirements applying to the EES process, in accordance with both section 8B(5) of the Act and the Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines), are as follows.

(i) The EES is to document investigations of potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including the feasibility of associated environmental mitigation and management measures, in particular for:

- a. alternative corridors, alignments, site locations, designs or other options for the planning, construction or operation of the project;
- b. potential effects on biodiversity, including loss, degradation or fragmentation of habitat;
- c. effects on Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values;
- d. impacts on visual and landscape values; and
- e. other effects on land uses and the community.

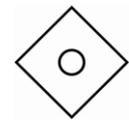
(ii) The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES are set out more fully in scoping requirements.

(iii) The level of detail of investigation for the EES studies should be consistent with the approach set out in the scoping requirements and be adequate to inform an assessment of the significance and acceptability of its potential environmental effects, in the context of the Ministerial Guidelines.

{Emphasis added}

6. The [Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*](#)² state that:

² Eighth edition, 2023



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For the purposes of the Act, the environment is broadly defined. The environment encompasses all physical, biological, **social**, spiritual and economic systems, processes and attributes.³

{Emphasis added}

7. The Ministerial Guidelines also state that an EES should provide an assessment of a project's potential effects on the existing environment (including identified future trends such as projected changes to the climate)⁴. The assessment should address effects on (amongst other matters):

- economic aspects including employment, business and industry viability and economic well-being at local, regional and national scales;
- **social aspects** including amenity (related to air quality, noise, vibration and traffic and visual changes), continuation of social and recreation activities, access to social infrastructure and community cohesion; and
- human health for example related to changes in air quality and the noise environment or changes to public safety.

{Emphasis added}

8. The [Scoping Requirements Western Renewables Link Environment Effects Statement](#) dated November 2023 set out additional details with respect to the EES. Section 3 includes the general approach to assessment and other matters. Section 4 outlines the matters to be addressed in the EES and the assessment of specific environmental effects. Please note sections 4.3 and 4.4 with respect to social impacts and community amenity.

The EES Documents

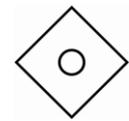
9. The EES is comprised of 30 Chapters and 20 technical reports and a number of attachments.

10. Matters concerning social impact are included in the below EES documents:

- a. [Chapter 21 – Social](#);
- b. [Technical Report F – Social Impact Assessment](#);
- c. [Attachment I – Project development and assessment of alternatives](#).

³ Page 6, Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978

⁴ Page 25, Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978



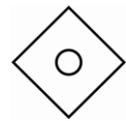
11. In addition, the below EES documents are relevant:

- a. [Chapter 7 - Community and stakeholder engagement](#);
- b. [Attachment IV - Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report](#);
- c. [Technical Report G: Economic Impact Assessment](#);
- d. [Technical Report K: Bushfire Impact Assessment](#), including operations impact assessment at Section 8;
- e. [Technical Report D – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment](#);
- f. [Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework](#);
- g. [Attachment III – Draft Planning Scheme Amendment](#).

Expert opinion

12. Your opinion is sought on the following matters:

- a. having regard to the development of the Project as described in Attachment I; sections 3.1-3.7 and 3.8 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment; Chapter 7 and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the adequacy of the approach to assessment of social impacts during Project development and the impact of that approach on the Project;
- b. having regard to section 3.8 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the extent to which any changes to the outcomes of visual impact assessments, bushfire impact and any other assessments may impact the conclusions on social impact;
- c. having regard to section 4.5.5 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and section 21.5.4 of Chapter 21 and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the quality of assessment of social impacts associated with tourism;
- d. having regard to the EES materials and any other matters you consider relevant, your opinion on:
 - i. the overall social impacts of the project within Moorabool Shire;
 - ii. section 7.3 of the Attachment III Draft Planning Scheme Amendment with respect to social impacts;
- e. having regard to sections 2.3.4 and 11.2.1 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Chapter 7, Attachment IV and any other matters you consider



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relevant, please provide your opinion on the adequacy of proposed arrangements for community benefit sharing;

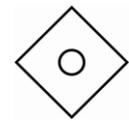
- f. having regard to Chapter 21, Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment and Section 8 of Attachment I and any other matters you consider relevant, please provide your opinion on the approach to social impacts with respect to workforce accommodation facilities during the construction of the proposed Project. We ask that your analysis considers the impacts of a proposed facility rather than the need for accommodation for workers;
- g. having regard to social impacts, section 11 of Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, and Section 11.1 of Technical Report G – Economic Impact, please provide your opinion on the proposed Environmental Performance Requirements presented in Table 29.2 of [Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework](#); and
- h. any other matter you consider relevant to social impacts of the proposal in Moorabool Shire.

Should you require any further information, please telephone Gabrielle Guthrie on 0450 266 779.

Yours faithfully

Gabrielle Guthrie
Principal
Guthrie Legal

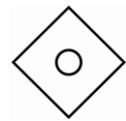
Email: gabrielle@guthrie-legal.com
Tel: 0450 266 779



6.3 Relevant WRL Material

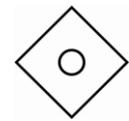
WRL Social Impact Assessment - Approach

1. **attended a site visit** of the Proposed Route, including townships and recreational facilities near the route (October 2023)
2. **attended two community engagement pop-up sessions** in September 2024 (Bacchus Marsh and Creswick)
3. **conducted two interviews with the proponent's Land Access Team** which covered the sentiment of landholders with regard to the Project and challenges facing landholders (October 2023 and September 2024)
4. **interviewed one neighbouring landholder** (Section 1) at their property, to explore their views regarding the Project's impacts on their property and lifestyle
5. **attended a community meeting with Coimadai War Memorial committee and Council**, at the War Memorial facility to discuss the Project's potential impacts and how these may be mitigated (September 2024)
6. **conducted multiple meetings with the author of the LVIA...** [landscape and visual impact assessment] ...to discuss the content of this study and the LVIA author's interactions with members of the communities of the study area (September 2023 to May 2024)
7. **inspected survey data collected via an online survey** administered by AusNet (November 2024)
8. **conducted a workshop with CAG members** to establish the character and amenity of locations within the study area and potential impacts for existing communities (October 2023)
9. **conducted follow-up meetings with CAG representatives** from Pyrenees Shire, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire and City of Melton, to further explore the character and amenity of locations within the study area and potential impacts for existing communities (October to December 2023)
10. **conducted separate one-on-one interviews with four members of the CCG**, three of whom are residents of the study area (Clarkes Hill in Section 2, Bacchus Marsh in Section 4 and Darley in Section 4), and one being a key member of the Moorabool and Central Highlands Power Alliance, to discuss potential impacts of the Project within their local community (throughout 2024)
11. **inspected the 'Pinpoint' spatial data set...compiled by AusNet**, and comprises spatially georeferenced **verbatim feedback from community members**. To generate the data, AusNet established an **interactive online mapping tool** to obtain feedback from the community on **important destinations, sites, and features in their local area**. The tool allowed people to drop a pin on a specific location and make a comment. The map was open from 16 June 2020 to 09 November 2020 and then again from 15 March 2021 to 02 May 2021. More than 3,400 pins were dropped on the map identifying important destinations, sites, and features during the first round and a further 1,700 pins dropped on the map during the second round.
12. inspected data generated through the **stakeholder and community engagement** conducted by AusNet as part of the preparation of the EES, as set out in the report: EES Attachment IV: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Consultation Report



13. inspected spatial data provided by AusNet showing the **extent of directly affected landholdings, current land use and sentiment of the landholder** with respect to the Project (current as at October 2024)

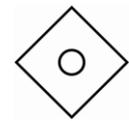
Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May 2025 pp. 13-14 – summarised by K2 Planning and emphasis added



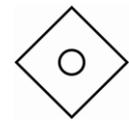
WRL Social Impact Assessment Approach

Table 10: WRL EES Approach to Project Development – Key Documents

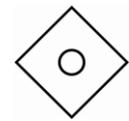
WRL EES Chpt 5 – Project Development	Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8	ATTACHMENT IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report
<p>4.4 Land use and socioeconomic Mitigation measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate whether the project is consistent with relevant planning scheme provisions and other relevant policies (including approved management plans for adjacent public land). • Outline measures to avoid or minimise potential adverse effects of the project and enhance benefits to the community and businesses in or near the project area of interest. • Describe measures to prevent establishment or spread of agricultural weeds or pathogens. • Describe proposed mitigation or management measures to reduce potential effects on aviation operations and safety with regard to advice from Civil Aviation Safety Authority and emergency services. <p>Likely effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential long and short-term effects of the project on existing and foreseeable land uses, public infrastructure and fire and emergency management. • Identify potential economic effects of the project, considering direct and indirect consequences on land use, farming and agriculture, other businesses, employment and local and regional economy. • Identify potential social impacts arising from the project. • Identify potential impact on tourism and tourist attractions and recreation within and around the project area of interest. <p>Source Department of Transport and Planning 2023 Scoping Requirements Western Renewables Link Environment Effects Statement Environment Effects Act 1978</p>		
APPROACH		
<p>...the process involved the progressive refinement of feasible alternative corridor options within an area of interest that aligned with the Project objectives. The refinement of the area of interest considered the environmental, social, cultural, land use and planning constraints, opportunities provided by existing linear infrastructure corridors, and feedback and information gathered through consultation with community groups, government departments and agencies, and other stakeholders. P. 13</p> <p>The considerations....also incorporate community/social values. For example, landscape and visual impact is a key concern of affected communities and agricultural land uses including potato farming land are highly valued. P. 13</p>	<p>Social Impacts Considered:</p> <p>Location of workforce accommodation facility and laydown areas</p> <p>Transmission line route options – table 9.2 p. 170 summary key route selection criteria – capacity, cost, tenure (properties affected), resource tenure, land use planning, land use, occupation (number of proximate dwellings); biodiversity; heritage Aboriginal cultural; heritage sites); constructability</p> <p>Laydown areas... located at approximately equal intervals along the Proposed Route to minimise travel times for fatigue management and achieve cost and logistics efficiencies for the Project</p>	<p>Technical Reference Group</p> <p>Three Community Consultation Groups</p> <p>Council Advisory Group (CAG)</p> <p>Energy Regional Advisory Panel (ERAP)</p> <p>Seeking input about: Proposed route location important input about their local areas included key social and recreational assets, productive farming areas, tourism assets, liveability aspects, Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage sites.</p> <p>Social Pinpoint data and early investigations, the AOI was narrowed to an identified corridor</p>



WRL EES Chpt 5 – Project Development	Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8	ATTACHMENT IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report
DETAILED ASSESSMENT		
<p>Sct 5.4.2 Laydown areas Laydown areas are required at the three terminal stations (Bulgana, the new terminal station and Sydenham), and at additional intermediate locations along the Proposed Route; required to store construction materials such as steel; minimise travel times for fatigue management and achieve cost and logistics efficiencies for the Project.</p> <p>Key objectives for site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimise total number of laydown areas - Locate within reasonable proximity of regional towns and centres with suitable road access - Spaced at approx.. equal intervals - In low bushfire risk locations - To avoid social, environmental and heritage impacts to the greatest extent practicable...avoidance of impacts on known social...values identified through technical reports and stakeholder engagement - On properties available for lease or purchase from willing landowner - Other considerations included: - Close to the Project – reducing travel distances 	<p>Key objectives for selecting the sites for the intermediate laydown areas were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To minimise the total number of laydown areas (which minimises duplication of facilities required at each laydown area, including meeting rooms, lunch rooms, toilet blocks, water tanks, generators, tool sheds, workshop spaces, and parking areas for personnel vehicles and construction vehicles, as well as pedestrian walkways, fencing, gates, security and lighting. - To locate each laydown area within reasonable proximity of regional towns and centres, within reasonable proximity of the Proposed Route, and with suitable main road access. - To locate the laydown areas so they are spaced at approximately equal intervals along the Proposed Route ...in low bushfire risk locations. - To avoid material social... impacts to the greatest extent practicable... together with avoidance of impacts on known social... values identified through technical reports and community and stakeholder engagement. - To locate the laydown areas on properties available for lease or purchase from willing landholders. 	<p>In February 2021, the Project team published an EES Consultation Plan (Appendix A), setting out the measures the Project will take to inform the public and obtain input from stakeholders while preparing the EES.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A series of online and face-to-face engagement activities followed between March and May 2021, including an online mapping tool (open from 15 March to 30 April) enabling community members to share their knowledge about the multiple Project corridors within the AOI. - Participants were asked to identify important destinations, sites, and features of the local area by dropping a pin on a specific location and leaving a comment or image. In late March and April 2021, 10 five-hour community engagement sessions were hosted in areas surrounding the Proposed Route. Sessions were held at Newlyn, Ballarat, Gordon, Daylesford, Joel Joel, Balliang, Melton, Myrning, Darley and Waubra. - In addition to these sessions, landholders and the community could contact the Project team at any point via phone or email, or by posting a question directly to the website. - Meetings with key government departments and agencies progressed, as the development of the EES created a need for greater consultation with these stakeholders. Regular meetings with the TRG, CAG, CCG and newly formed ERAP also continued from early 2021. Consultation with councils and TRG member organisations on the draft PSA for the Project began in January 2021 and is ongoing as part of the development of the EES.
WORKFORCE ACCOMODATION FACILITIES		
<p>AusNet has sought to minimise effects on visitor accommodation and affordable rental accommodation due to increased demand from the Project construction workforce establish dedicated workforce accommodation facilities (to be co-located with laydown areas at Site 8 (Ingliston Road, Ballan) and Site 20 (Sunraysia Highway, Lexton) to service the east and west sections of the Project.</p> <p>The need for dedicated workforce accommodation facilities was confirmed following an investigation into existing accommodation capacity available at</p>	<p>Siting of the workforce accommodation facilities considered the same key objectives as the laydown areas (see Section 8.1), with the additional consideration of workforce safety with regard to fatigue management. P. 158</p> <p>Together with the insufficient supply of available accommodation in preferred locations, the Project was amended to avoid these impacts through the incorporation</p>	<p>Section 4 summary themes</p> <p>Social and community: proximity to houses, impact on rural amenity and lifestyle, community facilities at Merrimu Reservoir, proximity to social and recreational facilities (Coimadai Primary School) and townships of Darley and Myrning p. 62</p>



WRL EES Chpt 5 – Project Development	Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8	ATTACHMENT IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report
<p>specific locations along the Proposed Route</p> <p>The investigation confirmed that neither Lexton nor Ballan has sufficient available accommodation to cater for the peak construction workforce requirements of approximately 350 personnel in each location. The two locations together had an estimated four properties (11 total bedrooms) available.</p> <p>These locations help achieve cost and logistics efficiencies for the Project, and minimise travel times and distances, while evenly spreading transport requirements and keeping traffic volumes on local roads to a minimum p. 62</p> <p>Utilising this amount of accommodation for all or most of the two-year duration of Project construction, would remove large amounts of stock from the market for a significant period of time, meaning other uses, such as business travel and tourism, would be significantly impacted p. 63</p> <p>Ballarat was another alternative location that was considered...ruled out as, despite its central location, it would have resulted in unacceptable driving times when Project personnel would be required to work toward the eastern or western ends of the Proposed Route. p. 63</p> <p>Further detail on the evaluation of site options, which included consideration of co-located workforce accommodation facilities and laydown areas as discussed in the section above, is provided in Attachment I: Project development and assessment of alternatives. P. 64</p>	<p>of two purpose-built workforce accommodation facilities p. 158</p> <p>Figure 8.2 p. 157 bar chart of available accommodation properties and bedrooms including Stawell West, Ararat West, Lexton West, Ballan east</p>	
SOCIAL IMPACTS OF WORKFORCE ACCOMODATION		
<p>Given the peak construction workforce would be large (approximately 700 workers) and working in areas that are relatively sparsely populated, the construction workforce was identified as having the potential to result in severe social impacts relating to the potential demand for housing and community services... potential for adverse social impacts on housing and community services</p>	<p>The potential effect of the Project’s construction workforce on demand for housing and community services surrounding the Proposed Route was identified in the development of WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment.</p> <p>The construction workforce was identified as having the potential to result in severe social impacts relating to the potential demand for housing and community services.</p>	<p>Since March 2021, the Project team has reported security incidents relating to: • Protests/crowds (7) • Obstruction hazards (3) • Physical threats (4) • Verbal abuse (63) • Threats involving vehicles (14) • Social media (130) • Other (41).p. 7</p> <p>Feedback from several communities along the Proposed Route suggests that although people understand that the Project is needed to support Victoria’s transition to renewable energy, there is strong opposition to its proposed location and overhead design. This opposition has resulted in some stakeholders disengaging with the Project and influencing others</p>



WRL EES Chpt 5 – Project Development	Attachment I Project development and assessment of alternatives - Section 8	ATTACHMENT IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report
		<p>within their community to follow. Project opposition groups have subsequently formed and run public campaigns against the Project, including: • Regional Victoria Power Alliance (also represents people impacted by the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) project) • Moorabool and Central Highlands Power Alliance • Stop AusNet’s Towers • Piss Off AusNet Energy Grid Alliance (formerly Darley Power Alliance). These groups have actively campaigned against the Project in its proposed form and have positioned themselves as advocates for their communities and landholders.</p> <p>p. 7-8</p>
ALTERNATIVE WORKER ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS		
<p>...a hybrid arrangement whereby a significant proportion of the workforce was accommodated in existing available accommodation (and the remainder in the workforce accommodation facilities) was discounted. Alternative arrangements may be agreed with local authorities where there is potential for positive socioeconomic outcomes while avoiding and minimising potential negative social impacts, in accordance with the Project’s Environmental Performance Requirements p. 63</p>		

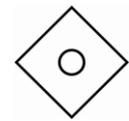
Source: WRL EES material summarised by K2 Planning August 2025



Rating	Recommendation		Factors Relevant to a Significance Assessment			Magnitude of Environmental Change		
	Importance	Mitigation (if negative)	Compatibility	Sensitivity Importance to Receptors	Adaptive Capacity	Intensity	Duration	Extent
Severe	Impact is intolerable/essential	Significant investment in mitigation and/or project redesign is required	Change is highly disruptive/ necessary	Resource is essential	Receptors have little to no capacity to cope	Very large change relative to baseline	Greater than 10 years	Affects many people across a wider area.
Major	Impact is significant in the context of the net benefit assessment	Additional mitigation measures would be highly beneficial	Change causes considerable/ disruption benefit	Resource is very important	Receptors have limited capacity to cope	Large change relative to baseline	3-10 years	Affects many people across a wider district
Moderate	Impact is material but can be tolerated/forgone	Additional mitigation measures should be considered in particular circumstances	Change is disruptive/ beneficial.	Resource of considerable importance	Receptors have some capacity to cope	Considerable change relative to baseline	1 to 3 years	Affects many within a local community.
Minor	Impact is of minor importance	Impact can be tolerated, but mitigation encouraged where practicable.	Change is somewhat disruptive/desirable	Resource is of minor importance	Receptors have capacity to cope	Noticeable change relative to baseline	3 months to 1 year	Affects discrete sections of a local community
Negligible	Impact is not material	N/A	Minimal implications	Resource is not valued	Receptors are unaffected.	Little to no change relative to baseline	Less than 3 months	Affects a small number of individuals.

Figure 3: Rating Scale Applied to Assess Significance of Social Impacts

Source: Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment, Western Renewables Link May p. 16



Community and Stakeholder Engagement

A Community and Stakeholder Engagement Report was also commissioned by AUSNET as part of the EES and incorporated as Chapter 7 in the EES material. Key issues drawn from that chapter include:

- *Project engagement began in early 2020, during the development stage, and **focused on understanding key community points of interest and engagement preferences**. The questions and feedback provided by the community during this initial engagement informed the Project team's communications and engagement approach*
- *The Project will be built across the **traditional lands of the five Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs)***
- *The Project team has formally engaged with these RAPs and First Peoples – State Relations about the Proposed Route since August 2020. These organisations are also represented on the Technical Reference Group (TRG)*
- *Stakeholder mapping for the Project identified the following **key stakeholder groups**:*
 1. **Members of the community** who are impacted by the Project to varying degrees including landholders, neighbouring landholders, community members and organisations
 2. **Government and regulatory authorities** including local councils, members of parliament and government entities
 3. **Industry-related stakeholders** including industry associations and market participants
 4. **Groups with a specific interest** in the Project including community and special interest groups, and formal opposition groups
 5. **Additional stakeholders** including members of the TRG and representative forums

Source: *Western Renewables Link Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder Engagement* p. 7-1 – summarised by K2 Planning and emphasis added

Figure 5 provides a snapshot of engagement activities completed for the Project between early 2020 and 1 November 2024.



Figure 4: Western Renewables Link – Engagement Snapshot

Source: *Western Renewables Link Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder Engagement* p. 7-12



According to the Community and Stakeholder Engagement report, the feedback gathered through community engagements helped to influence the following aspects of the Project:

1. Engagement approach and communication channels
2. Design development
3. Proposed Route of the transmission line
4. Development of the EES
5. Proposed Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs)
6. Proposed construction management planning

Source: Western Renewables Link Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder

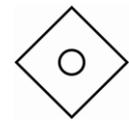
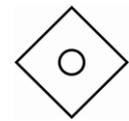
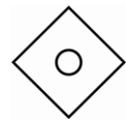


Table 11: Western Renewables Link EES – Engagement Tools

<p>Community consultation and advisory group meetings</p>	<p>CCG meetings Enables two-way communication between the Project and local communities. The CCG comprises an independent Chair, Project representatives and nine community and council representatives of communities along the Proposed Route. Meetings provide an opportunity to discuss key Project and community issues, share updates and seek local advice. Minutes and presentations from all CCG meetings are published on the Project website.</p> <p>Council Advisory Group meetings Keeps council representatives abreast of Project updates and enables feedback to be gathered and shared among the Project team. Includes a team member from each of the six councils along the Proposed Route, and members of the Project team. Information sharing in this formal setting complements routine briefings with councils and CEOs.</p> <p>Energy Regional Advisory Panel meetings Provides guidance on regionally appropriate approaches to energy and transmission projects, to identify energy development opportunities within the regions and to discuss relevant issues and concerns.</p>
<p>Land Liaison Officers</p>	<p>A dedicated team of LLOs provide one-on-one consultation with directly impacted landholders throughout all Project stages. LLOs focus on face-to-face meetings and direct email and phone channels and provide a consistent point of contact for landholders.</p>
<p>Information / drop-in sessions</p>	<p>Allow community members and landholders to speak directly with the Project team in an informal setting. The widely promoted sessions are attended by technical specialists and supported by a suite of take-home communication materials, such as guides and fact sheets.</p>
<p>Agriculture and industry events</p>	<p>Attendance at local events allows relevant stakeholders, community members and landholders to speak directly with the Project team in an informal setting.</p>
<p>Community discussion dinners</p>	<p>Discussion dinners presented an opportunity for people to meet various Project specialists, ask direct questions and talk over a meal.</p>
<p>Remote one-on-one meetings with technical specialists</p>	<p>Initially a COVID-safe pivot, these sessions are aimed at people who cannot attend in-person sessions. The remote sessions are held on Microsoft Teams and provide one-on-one access to Project specialists.</p>
<p>Webinars</p>	<p>Formal online sessions covering a range of Project-related topics. Webinars replaced face-to-face sessions during COVID-19 restrictions and are still used to provide geographically dispersed communities with access to a range of technical specialists. Recordings and transcripts from the webinars are posted on the Project website.</p>
<p>Website</p>	<p>A platform for community and other stakeholders to access up-to-date Project information, eUpdates, fact sheets, webinars and FAQs. Interested parties can engage directly via the website's virtual engagement room, interactive map and Contact Us functions.</p>



Virtual engagement room	Enables visitors to visually explore information about the Project at their own pace.
Project online map	Online map where layers can be toggled on or off to reveal detailed Project information. Layers include the AOI, multiple corridors, single corridor, Proposed Route (2021), updated Proposed Route (2022 and 2024), and features including Local Government Areas (LGAs), RAP boundaries and land parcels.
Social Pinpoint mapping	An interactive online mapping tool used to obtain feedback about what is important to people in their local community. Participants can drop a pin on a location to comment or post a photo.
Fact sheets and guides	A suite of Project fact sheets and landholder guides has been developed to keep the community informed of key aspects of the Project. Fact sheets are published on the Project website and distributed via eUpdates and printouts at events.
Videos	Project videos have been added to the website and virtual engagement room including 'Project Introduction', 'Designing the Project', 'Construction' and 'Farming around transmission' videos.
eUpdates	Emails sent to subscribers when Project developments occur. Visitors to the website can subscribe to receive updates to their inbox. These eUpdates are also published online.
Newsletter	External newsletter that addresses key themes and questions about the Project. Published monthly between October 2023 and April 2024 and then bi-monthly after that period.
Project hotline	A toll-free Project hotline that stakeholders can call to make Project specific enquiries and complaints. The Project hotline is available Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm and is advertised on the Project website and in communications materials such as fact sheets and guides.
Email and letters	<p>The Project inbox and Post Office Box allow stakeholders to email and write to the Project team. The addresses are published on the website, in Project team members' email signatures, and in communications materials such as fact sheets and guides.</p> <p>Stakeholders must register to receive these emails and letters and, when they do, their individual communication preferences are recorded and used to personalise contact. Project communications are customised by audience (e.g., landholders, neighbouring landholders) with a 'landholder first' engagement approach.</p>
Letterbox drops	Distribution of communication materials to unaddressed mailboxes within 2km of the proposed Project Route.



Direct engagement	Meetings, phone calls, texts and email communications with a variety of stakeholders, particularly landholders.
Government and key stakeholder briefings	Regular briefings to Commonwealth, State and local governments, members of the opposition, and Victorian public sector departments and agencies. Briefings are delivered by the appropriate members of the Project team with topics tailored to each stakeholder.
Social media	The Project uses AusNet's social media page to promote online and in-person engagement events via paid advertising.
Media and advertising	Local press, online and radio advertising to raise Project awareness and promote upcoming activities. Media releases are distributed as needed, and responses to Project media enquiries provided as appropriate.
Community engagement surveys	Surveys posted at various Project stages to seek community input on a range of matters.

Source: *Western Renewables Link Chapter 07 Community and Stakeholder Engagement* p. 7-13-15



WRL Social Impact Assessment Tourism and Hospitality Data

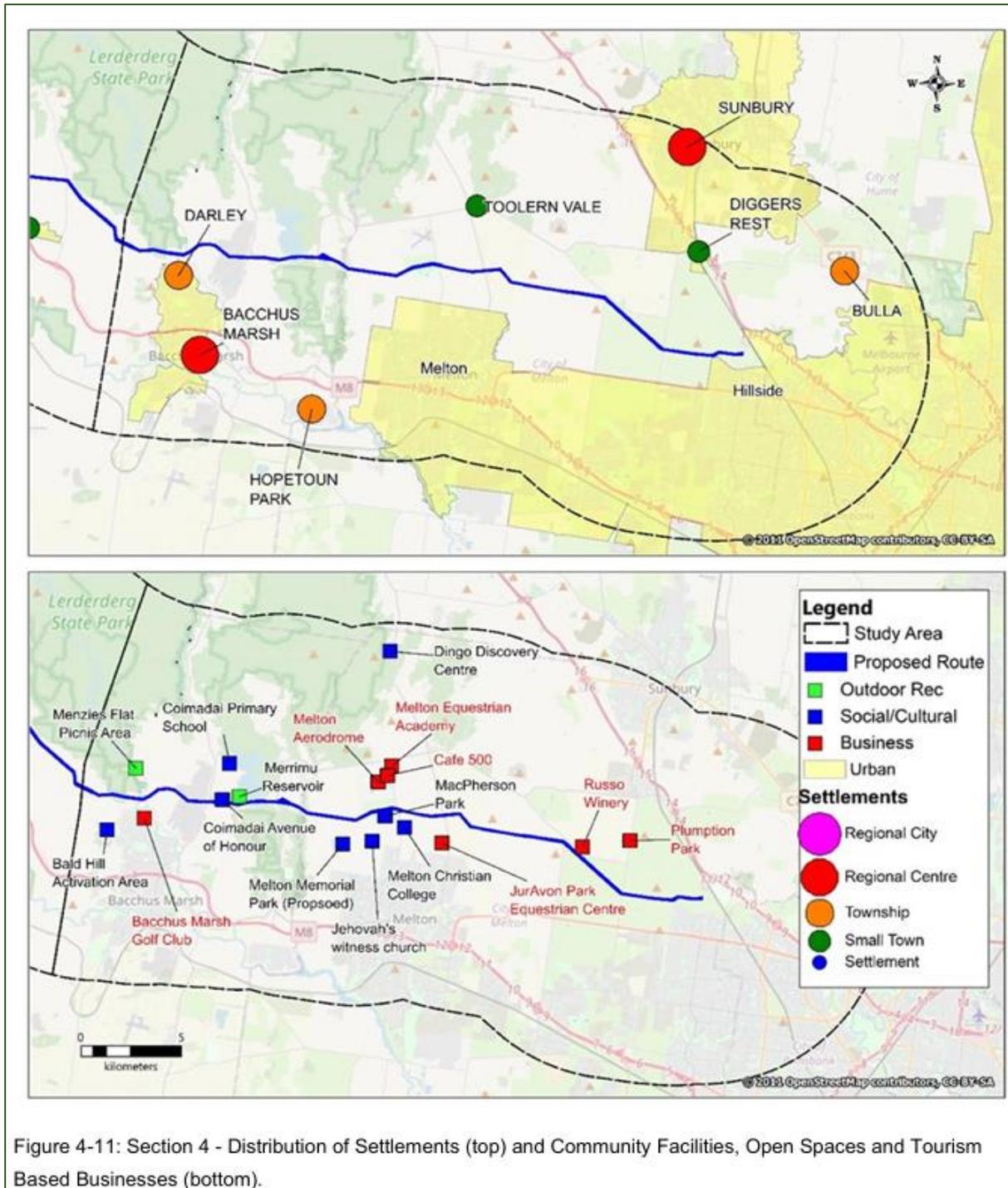


Figure 4-11: Section 4 - Distribution of Settlements (top) and Community Facilities, Open Spaces and Tourism Based Businesses (bottom).

Figure 5: WRL Social Impact Assessment - Tourism Businesses Map

Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social p. 41



Appendix 2 – Tourism and Hospitality Businesses Within 2km of Proposed Route

Business Name	Address	Category	Description
Dogrock Winery	114 Degraves Rd, Crowlands, Victoria, 3377	Tourism	Cellar door
Elmhurst Gold Club	20 Golf Course Rd, Elmhurst, Victoria, 3469	Recreation	Golf course
Calando Hill	42 Townsing Rd, Amphitheatre, Victoria, 3468	Tourism	Bed and breakfast accommodation
Pyrenees Farm Stay	359 Back Amphitheatre Rd, Amphitheatre, Victoria, 3468	Tourism	Bed and breakfast accommodation
Lexton Racecourse and Golf Course	Lexton, Victoria	Recreation	Golf course and racecourse
Mount Mitchell House and Stables	3056 Sunraysia Highway, Lexton, Victoria	Hospitality	Wedding Venue
Wayward Winery	76 Quoin Hill Rd, Waubra, Victoria, 3352	Tourism	Cellar door and restaurant
Anderson's Mill	9 Alice St, Smeaton, Victoria, 3364	Heritage site	Heritage flour mill used for events
The Commercial Hotel	410 Kingston Rd, Kingston, Victoria, 3364	Hospitality	Restaurant, bar and accommodation
Kingston Agricultural Society Inc & Show Ground	54 Church Pde, Kingston, Victoria, 3364	Recreation	Agricultural society
Mystic Views Country Farm Stay	140 Victoria Rd, Newlyn, Victoria, 3364	Tourism	Accommodation guest house
Pig and Earth Farm	450 Kingston-Newlyn Rd, Kingston, Victoria, 3364	Home based business (retail)	Online meat products
Hepburn Lagoon Trail Rides	60 Telegraph Rd, Newlyn North, Victoria, 3364	Recreation	Horse trail rides
Quirindi Stables	60 Telegraph Rd, Newlyn North, Victoria, 3364	Tourism	Wedding and event venue
Maze House	3155 Midland Hwy, Newlyn North, Victoria, 3364	Tourism	Maze attraction
Bank House Brewery	1360 Ballarat-Daylesford Rd, Dean, Victoria, 3363	Alcoholic beverages	Small beer brewery
The Centre for Mind Body and Spirit	167 Callaghans Lane, Gordon, Victoria, 3345	Tourism	Yoga and women's health retreat
Vivienne's Retreat	460 Moorabool West Rd, Gordon, Victoria, 3345	Tourism	Accommodation guest house
The Farmhouse	129 Calway Lane, Gordon, Victoria, 3345	Tourism	Accommodation guest house
Manna Gum Massage	73 Blakeville Rd, Ballan, Victoria, 3342	Home based business (services)	Massage therapist
Karmya Farm Greendale	776 Ballan-Greendale Rd, Greendale, Victoria, 3341	Tourism	Accommodation guest house
St. Anne's Vineyards	64 Garrards Lane, Mymiong, Victoria, 3341	Tourism	Cellar door, restaurant and wedding venue
Fara's Beauty Retreat	36 Manning Bvd, Darley, Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, 3340	Home based business (services)	Beauty salon
Absolutely Heavenly Massage	5 Bushby Ct, Darley, Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, 3340	Home based business (services)	Massage therapist
Bacchus Marsh Golf Club	Links Road, Darley, Melbourne, Victoria, 3340	Recreation	Golf club and restaurant
Melton Air Services and Flying School	995 Coburns Rd, Toolern Vale, Victoria, 3337	Services	Charter flights and flight training school
Carã 500	995 Coburns Rd, Toolern Vale, Victoria, 3337	Hospitality	Cafe
Melton Equestrian Academy	Coburns Road, Melbourne, Victoria, 3337	Recreation	Equestrian school
JurAvon Park Equestrian Centre	1748 Gisborne-Melton Rd, Kurunjang, Victoria, 3337	Recreation	Equestrian facility
Luxury Domes Glamping Australia	760 Holden Rd, Diggers Rest, Victoria, 3427	Tourism	Boutique accommodation
Russo Estate Winery	760-818 Holden Rd, Diggers Rest, Victoria, 3427	Tourism	Cellar door, restaurant and wedding venue
Plumpton Park	412 Plumpton Rd, Diggers Rest, Victoria, 3427	Tourism	Accommodation guest house
Chur Thai	1 Sanctuary Rd, Unit 6, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Thai restaurant
Patala House Indian Restaurant	1 Sanctuary Rd, Unit 4, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Indian restaurant
Fish Salt Hillside	Melton Highway & Sanctuary Road, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Fish and chip shop
Pinolos Pizza & Pasta	Sanctuary Road, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Pizza takeaway
Ollies Chicken Hillside	Melton Highway & Sanctuary Road, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Chicken takeaway shop
The Sugar Gum Hotel	2 Gourlay Rd, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Restaurant and bar
Baked Since 95	69 Wattle Valley Dr, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Cafe
Funky Feast	49-69 Royal Cr, Unit 8, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Kebab and burger takeaway shop
Hillside Pizza and Pasta	49 Royal Cr, Unit 6, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Pizza and pasta takeaway shop
Urban Pizza Project	49-69 Royal Cr, Unit 10, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Pizza takeaway shop
Second Street Shisha	49 Royal Cr, Unit 11, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Hospitality	Hookah bar
GoodLive Holiday Home	13 Silverwood Ct, Hillside, Melbourne, Victoria, 3037	Tourism	Accommodation guest house

Table 12: WRL Social Impact Assessment – List of Tourism and Hospitality Businesses within 2km of Proposed Route

Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social p. 118

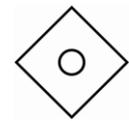
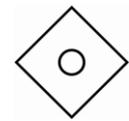
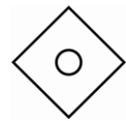


Table 13: WRL Identified Social Impacts Associated with Tourism

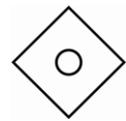
Report Section	WRL Social Impact Assessment	WRL EES Chapter 21 Social
Identified social impacts		The Project may affect businesses in the 'Accommodation and Food Services' and 'Arts and Recreation Services' industries such as golf clubs, equestrian academies, cellar doors and bed and breakfast accommodation providers
Specific Impacts and Proposed Response <i>Bald Hill Activation Area</i>	For potential users who are visiting from outside the local area, a trip to the Bald Hill Activation Area would be only one of many potential outings that the user could engage in , and at the margins any reduction in the appeal of the facility has the potential to reduce visitation. However, given the multifaceted nature of the facility and substantial variation in terms of the visibility of the Project from within the facility, visitation by non-locals would still be substantial. <i>Source: Summarised from WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 100 – emphasis added.</i>	Bald Hill Activation Area: The visual impact of the Project from parts of the Bald Hill Activation Area would be high , although in other locations, views of the Project would be screened by topography. Views of the Project would typically be considered an undesirable element by users of the facility . While a reduction in the appeal of the facility has the potential to reduce visitation , visitation by non-locals would still be substantial, given the multifaceted nature of the facility and variation in the visibility of the Project from within the facility.
Specific Impacts and Proposed Response <i>Lerderderg State Park</i>	Community submissions collected via the pinpoint tool, indicate that the scenic beauty of parts of Section 4, including natural reserves such as Lerderderg State Park, Long Forest and Mount Kororoit, and elevated views from locations in the vicinity of these natural areas, are notable drivers of tourist visitation . In line with this feedback, there are a number of bed and breakfast and farm stay style accommodation providers in Section 4, situated to capitalise on the area's scenic qualities <i>Source: Summarised from Section 4.5.5 WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment – emphasis added.</i>	The effect of the Project on the amenity and character of the Lerderderg State Park would be limited to the drive into the park along Lerderderg Gorge Road. This is unlikely to reduce visitation by individuals who live outside the local area .
Specific Impacts and Proposed Response <i>Long Forest</i>	Long Forest is a 600-hectare protected woodland reserve, managed by Parks Victoria... 400 native plant species and 160 bird species ...Dogs are not permitted...important conservation space and its flora and fauna...no campgrounds, drinking water or toilets...but visitors can enjoy a picnic at the Happy Valley Trailhead...a number of Grade 3 walking tracks through the reserve which offer a rewarding hike for well-prepared and self-sufficient walkers. Community feedback collected through the EES process identified Long Forest as an area valued for its ecological diversity and as a beautiful location to connect with nature . To illustrate: <i>Area of outstanding beauty with views from Steep Track back towards Lerderderg Gorge (pinpoint near Long Forest Reserve)</i> <i>Lovely views towards Bacchus Marsh with an incredibly varied terrain and wonderful and unique native plants (pinpoint near Long Forest Reserve).</i>	Landscape features nominated by residents of Section 4 as being of value and contributing to a sense of identity and well-being include Lerderderg State Park, Long Forest Reserve , Lerderderg River and Gorge, the Bald Hill Activation Area, Pentlands Hills to the west of Darley, and Mount Kororoit near Leakes Road in Melton. Long Forest , which is valued by the local community for its ecological diversity and as a beautiful location to connect with nature. The protected woodland reserve includes a picnic area at the Happy Valley Trailhead, and several walking tracks. Natural reserves such as Lerderderg State Park, Long Forest and Mount Kororoit, and elevated views from nearby locations, are notable drivers of tourist visitation to Section 4. Bed and breakfast and farm-stay style accommodation providers are situated to capitalise on the area's scenic qualities.



Report Section	WRL Social Impact Assessment	WRL EES Chapter 21 Social
	<p>Source: Summarised from WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Section p. 50, emphasis added</p>	
<p>Identified Impact level</p>	<p>Summary impacts: Section 4 - Darley and Surrounds and Section 4 – East of Darley</p> <p>There is some potential for interference with the operation of tourism-based businesses, although the nature and severity of associated social impacts has not been determined. To the extent that there are impacts, these would add to the overall strain the Project would place on the local community.</p> <p>Impact during Construction and Operation – Not Rated WRL Social Impact Assessment p. 104</p> <p><i>...during operation, businesses that rely on the amenity of the natural landscape to attract visitation to the area and/or their businesses in particular, may experience some modest negative impacts during operation, due to reduced visual amenity.</i></p> <p>Source: Summarised from WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Section 8.6.4 Business p. 99 – emphasis added.</p> <p>...during construction of the Project, noise, traffic and visual amenity impacts, may lead to reduced visitation to locations in proximity to the Project, in particular locations within 2km, potentially leading to negative impacts for businesses operating in industry category, ‘Accommodation and Food Services’ and ‘Arts and Recreation Services’. Such business include, golf clubs, equestrian academies, cellar doors and bed and breakfast accommodation.</p>	<p>Businesses that rely on the amenity of the natural landscape to attract visitation may experience modest negative economic effects during Project operation due to reduced visual amenity. This may result in social effects such as loss of employment, which in turn may lead to extended commuting times, financial strain, or the need to relocate, or reductions in access to goods and services, which could lead to lower living standards. Business in rural areas may be relied on heavily by the local community as a source of employment or particular goods and services, and may function as important recreational focal points.</p>
<p>Proposed Response</p>	<p>.... the effect of the Project on the amenity and character of the Lerderderg State Park would be limited to the drive into the park along Lerderderg Gorge Road. It is unlikely that this change to the user experience would result in reduced visitation by individuals who live outside the local area.</p> <p>Source: Summarised from WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 100 – emphasis added.</p>	<p>Bald Hill</p> <p>The Project will develop and implement a process to consult with the relevant landholder and/or land manager to determine appropriate measures to mitigate visual impacts to the Bald Hill Activation Area (EPR LV1; see Chapter 11: Landscape and visual). This will include consideration of landscape screening to filter views towards the Project from the six sculpture locations along the proposed sculpture trail and at the entrance from Swans Road, and selective screen planting to partially screen individual towers.</p> <p>The Project will develop and implement a Business Mitigation and Support Strategy for directly affected businesses to avoid and minimise impacts as a result of the transmission line easement being placed on land associated with the business, to the extent reasonably</p>



Report Section	WRL Social Impact Assessment	WRL EES Chapter 21 Social
		<p>practicable (EPR EC1; see Chapter 14: Economic). The Project will also develop and implement a Business Mitigation and Support Strategy for eligible businesses within 2km to avoid and minimise to the extent reasonably practicable impacts from the Project to existing businesses that would not be supported under EPR EC1 but which are within 2km of the Project and rely on the existing character of the natural landscape to attract customers (EPR EC3; see Chapter 14: Economic).</p>



High Level Summary of Visual Impacts identified in the WRL Social Impact Assessment

- **Impacts on directly affected land owners** - Residual social impacts from land use and amenity changes due to Project construction and operation would be **major to moderate** p. 20
- **Impacts on surrounding landholders** - The Project will result in changes to the visual setting of many (but not all) nearby dwellings...These changes would typically be viewed as **detracting from the amenity of affected dwellings, and potentially diminish the enjoyment of homes and valued lifestyles**. P. 20
- **Impacts on the broader community** - The broader community's direct experience of the Project would be limited to visual encounters as community members travel through the rural landscape or their township/urban area, and/or when they visit particular locations to engage in recreation. P. 23
- **Bald Hill Bald Hill Activation Area:** Visibility of the Project from within the Bald Hill Activation Area will vary. The visual impact from northern sections of the sculptural trail and all abilities sculptural trail (Telford Park) would be **high**, and the Project would be visible from the entrance to the facility...**Some local residents of Darley may avoid the facility, particularly those who are highly sensitive to the Project's presence in their local area**. p. 25
- **Merrimu Reservoir:** ... Establishment of landscape screening to filter views towards the Project when facing east from the existing barbeque and picnic facilities, and development of new public amenities to replace or replicate existing assets in a suitable location within Merrimu Reservoir which are oriented away from the Project are proposed to manage potential visual impacts for users of the picnic area ... **This would largely retain the appeal of the facility, although views of the Project would inevitably form part of the visitor experience, and may dissuade use of this facility for some people**. P. 26
- **Lerderderg State Park...**Visitors would travel under the proposed transmission line to access the park from Lerderderg Gorge Road, which passes through a picturesque valley. While the drive to the park through this setting **may contribute to the user experience in a minor way for some users**, the principal driver for visitation is the park itself, and the Project would not detract materially from the park's appeal. P. 26
- **Coimada Memorial Park and Avenue of Honour...** The visual impact of the Project on the Memorial Park was assessed **as high to moderate**.p. 27...ERP's.. would help to reduce visual impacts of the Project, the Project **may still detract from the appeal of the facility for some users and may have a noticeable effect on the amenity of the facility**. This may **compound existing frustrations** relating to previous disturbances to the facility associated with the development of Merrimu Reservoir.
- **Rural properties**, including equine properties, along Lerderderg Gorge Road and Camerons Road, where the potential for **'high' and 'moderate'** visual impacts exists
- **Further east** there are lifestyle properties that provide views of Merrimu Reservoir, Mount Sugarloaf, or Mount Kororoit. Occupants of these properties have expressed **opposition to the Project due to its potential visual impact**. P. 22
- The Project may reduce the attractiveness of **smaller equine properties and lifestyle properties in Darley and surrounds** (Section 4 of the study area) due to visual impacts and fears relating to bushfire safety. P. 21

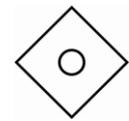
Landscape and Visual Impact report considers:

Construction impacts

- Visual impacts from construction activities: the physical presence of construction equipment, materials and activities including laydown areas and the workforce accommodation facilities
- Landscape impacts: the impact of physical activities on the landscape, such as earthworks or vegetation removal
- Potential lighting impacts: the potential for light pollution from construction sites, laydown areas and workforce accommodation facilities, which impact nearby residents.

Operation impacts

- Potential visual impacts on significant landscape values and landforms: the Project may be visible from significant landscapes valued for their environmental values, vegetation, landforms, open spaces and cultural significance, including recreational viewing locations surrounding water bodies and waterways



- Potential visual impacts for landholders, residents and community: visual impacts of the Project from sensitive receptors including open spaces, community buildings and places, and nearby residential dwellings
- Potential lighting impacts: light pollution from terminal station sites.

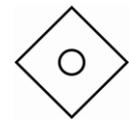
Table 11.4 Summary of significant landscape impacts: Peri-urban and Townships

Viewpoint	Distance and direction to Project	Assessed Impact
PU 1 – Werribee Gorge	5.0km northeast	Negligible
PU 2 – Lerderberg Gorge and State Park	A - 1.5km south B - 1.5km south C - 1.4km southeast	A - Nil B - Nil C - Negligible
PU 3 – Bald Hill	A - 1.5km northeast B - 2.4km north C - 1.9km north	A - Negligible (existing setting) - High (sculpture trail) - Negligible – nil (other locations) B - Low – negligible C - Negligible
PU 4 – Lerderberg Nature Trail	A - 1.8km northwest B - 1.6km northwest C - 1.6km northwest D - 525m northwest E - 500m north	A - Low B - Low C - Negligible – nil D - Negligible – nil E - Low
PU 5 – Merrimu Reservoir	A - 185m south (Merrimu Reservoir) B - 140m south (Merrimu War Memorial)	A - High, reducing to moderate with mitigation B - High – moderate

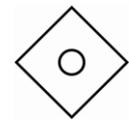
Source: EES Chapter 11: Landscape and Visual Technical Report, p. 22

Table 14: High Level Summary of Visual Impacts Identified in the WRL Social Impact Assessment

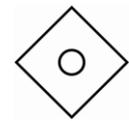
Impact Area	WRL Social Impact Assessment
Directly affected land holders	<p>Section 4 - 35 properties directly affected, 21 with a dwelling, 18 of which are within 300m ...smaller lifestyle and equine properties make up a relatively large proportion of the affected holdings, and sensitivity to the Project’s presence on these holdings is high among landholders.</p> <p>However, other land holdings, particularly toward the eastern end of Section 4, are held by land speculators. The concerns of these landholders relate to the development potential of their land, and financial compensation would be more likely to be effective in addressing these concerns</p> <p>Areas east of Darley The Project would cause inconvenience for all landholders and in some cases (such as properties located to the west of Macpherson Park) may be viewed an unwanted intervention with substantial consequences by particular landholders. However, this is unlikely to precipitate broader social impacts such as material changes to the composition of the community, reductions in social cohesion, etc Construction and Operation: Moderate Negative Views of the Project from local roads may detract from views of valued landscape elements including Mount Koroit, which is important local landmark. Likewise, the Project may affect views from locations such as Merrimu Reservoir and MacPherson Park, and in doing so, detract from local community members’ appreciation of the area’s landscape qualities and the enjoyment of particular recreational facilities and ultimately their sense of place (although the Project would not impede their use). Construction Minor Negative and Operation: Moderate Negative p. 104</p>



Impact Area	WRL Social Impact Assessment
<p>Surrounding land holders section 4</p>	<p>Section 4: 6,223 dwellings within 2km, 53 being within 300m. The majority of these dwellings are located within the urban areas of Hillside and Melton within conventional residential subdivisions.</p> <p>A substantial number of the nearby dwellings are located in Darley...consists of a series of undulating rises which provide expansive views to the north, towards the Project. Many of the dwellings located near the project in Darley have been designed to take advantage of this natural aspect and community feedback on the Project indicates that northward views contribute significantly to the amenity of dwellings and the suburb in general. In this context, the Project may disrupt an aspirational lifestyle, for a relatively large proportion of the Darley community.</p> <p>Similarly, the Project has the potential to disrupt an aspirational lifestyle for current residents of a cluster of dwellings (20) located in the rural conservation zone in Merrimu to the east of Darley. This may also be the case for rural homes which are zoned for farming/green wedge, but are used as lifestyle properties by current occupants, such as those on Swans Road, along Lerderderg Gorge Road and Camerons Road in Darley, and properties located near MacPherson Park to the east of Darley. In some cases, the level of change to the amenity of these properties would be high and may compromise the attractiveness of the dwelling as a place to live, potentially leading to ongoing frustration and resentment, and a desire to relocate.</p>
<p>The Broader Community</p>	<p>The broader community's direct experience of the Project would be limited to visual encounters as they travel through the rural landscape or their township/urban area, and/or when they visit particular locations to engage in recreation. These individuals may also experience the Project indirectly as part of their interactions with members of their community who are experiencing more acute impacts. In addition to various local roads, the following are locations where the Project may have a material influence on amenity:</p> <p>Locations within the Darley urban area, including the Bacchus Marsh Golf Club and various walking tracks, the Bald Hill Activation Area, Merrimu Reservoir, Coimadai Memorial Park and Avenue of Honour, and MacPherson Park.</p> <p>In all instances, the Project would not directly prevent the broader community from accessing locations or using existing community facilities. However, the influence of the Project on amenity of the affected locations may be sufficient to deter visitation in some cases.</p>
<p>Lerderderg State Park</p>	<p>The LVIA finds that there would be no visibility of the Project from most locations within the Lerderderg State Park, and where views are available towers would be a background element. When accessing the park, visitors would travel under the transmission line on Lerderderg Gorge Road, which passes through a picturesque valley. The drive to the park through this setting may contribute to the user experience in a minor way, for some users. However, the principal driver for visitation is the park itself, and in this context the Project would not detract materially from the park's appeal.</p> <p>Notes below: views from locations in the vicinity of these natural areas, are notable drivers of tourist visitation</p> <p>Views from Lerderderg State Park to the north of Darley, Mackenzies Flat Picnic Area, Lerderderg Gorge and Werribee Gorge will be screened by existing vegetation and topography, which will reduce the visibility of the Project's infrastructure. Views from many locations along the proposed Lerderderg Nature Trail will also be partially screened or filtered by existing topography and vegetation. As such, the Project's visual impact in these areas will be low to negligible.</p>
<p>Coimadai Memorial Park and Avenue of Honour Coimadai Memorial Park prior to mitigation</p>	<p>The Project would be located in close proximity to the Memorial Park and highly visible at this location, given the layout and orientation of the facility.</p> <p>Existing members of the Coimadai Avenue of Honor Restoration Association have expressed concerns regarding the Project's impact on the amenity of the facility, and a strong desire to protect the facility's integrity and attractiveness.</p> <p>while the Project runs along Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road in close proximity to the Avenue of Honor, the effect of the Project on the user experience of the avenue of honour would be limited.</p>



Impact Area	WRL Social Impact Assessment
<p>as 'Moderate – High' due to the sensitivity and use of this area, the orientation of key activities toward the Proposed Route.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding, the future expansion of the avenue of honour to the east, as desired by the Coimadai Avenue of Honor Restoration Association, would be limited by the Project.</p> <p>.... the proposed EPR LV1 requires the Project to set out a process for consulting with representatives of the War Memorial, to confirm sensitive viewpoints which are significantly impacted by the Project and determine appropriate measures (if any) for mitigating visual impacts. This process has commenced and a number of suggestions have been made to the Coimadai Avenue of Honor Restoration Association including: a) relocation of the Memorial Park within the Merrimu Reservoir picnic area - Locations toward the northern end of the picnic area are positioned away from the Project, and thus a redesigned facility located to the north of the picnic area has the potential to substantially reduce the Project's influence on visual amenity within the memorial park. Moreover, locations to the north of the picnic area are also located away from the Diggers Rest-Coimadai Road, which is a source of substantial traffic noise and would provide direct access to northward views over the reservoir (arguably the most attractive view available at the location). That is, as part of the master planned outcome for the Merrimu Reservoir picnic area, a relocated memorial facility which provides users with high amenity and overcomes some of the existing facility's shortcomings (such as a lack of a formal entry pathway), appears achievable. b) minor adjustments to the existing facility to minimise views of the Project from within the existing facility.</p> <p>Given the Association's assessment that the proposed mitigation measures are not suitable, the Project would likely have a noticeable impact on the amenity of the facility, which is clearly highly valued and well used. For the Coimadai Avenue of Honor Restoration Association, this would be a very disappointing outcome, which compounds existing frustrations relating to previous disturbances to the facility associated with the development of construction of Merrimu Reservoir.</p> <p>In response, the proposed EPR LV1 requires the Project to set out a process for consulting with representatives of the War Memorial, to confirm sensitive viewpoints which are significantly impacted by the Project and determine appropriate measures (if any) for mitigating visual impacts. This process has commenced and a number of suggestions have been made to the Coimadai Avenue of Honor Restoration Association including: a) relocation of the Memorial Park within the Merrimu Reservoir picnic area b) minor adjustments to the existing facility to minimise views of the Project from within the existing facility.</p> <p>While the suggestions listed above may reduce the impact of the Project on the existing facility, neither can eliminate views. As a result, even in a reconfigured and/or relocated state, the Project may detract from the appeal of the facility for some users. Moreover, it is understood that the Coimadai Avenue of Honor Restoration Association does not support relocation and/or alternations to the facility. By way of explanation, the Restoration Association has indicated that facility has been created through considerable effort on the part of the descendants of World War I volunteers from Coimadai, and is a monument befitting the sacrifice and extraordinary display of patriotism by these volunteers. In that context, the Association has indicated that the residents firmly believe, the monument must not be altered or diminished.</p>
<p>Merrimu Reservoir</p>	<p>The Proposed Route would be in close proximity to the Merrimu Picnic area (185m to the south) and as a result, the useability of the picnic area during construction would be affected by construction activity and noise, albeit for a limited period. During operation, due to the orientation of the picnic facility, the Project would be clearly visible in views over the reservoir from the picnic area (Viewpoint W5A; see Technical Report D: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment). In response, EPR LV1 recommends consultation with the relevant landholders and/or land managers for Merrimu Reservoir once detailed designs are available, to confirm sensitive viewpoints that are significantly impacted by the Project from a landscape and visual perspective. Where required, also via EPR LV1, appropriate measures for mitigating visual impacts would be determined with a particular focus on landscape screening to filter views towards the Project when facing east from the existing barbecue and picnic facilities at Merrimu Reservoir, and the development of new public amenities to replace or replicate existing assets in a suitable location within Merrimu Reservoir, which are oriented away from the Project. Assuming the final design successfully orients user</p>



Impact Area	WRL Social Impact Assessment
	<p>perspectives to the north and screens the transmission route from this location, then the appeal of the facility would be largely retained (particularly in light of the provision of improved picnic facilities), although views of the Project would inevitably form part of the visitor experience, and this may dissuade use by some.</p> <p>Visual impacts are also anticipated to be high at the existing picnic facilities and visitor areas associated with Merrimu Reservoir (see Error! Reference source not found. and Error! Reference source not found.) and high to moderate at the Merrimu War Memorial, due to the viewer sensitivity and orientation toward the Project of these areas. As with the Bald Hill Activation Area, the Project will engage with the relevant landholders and land managers to confirm sensitive viewpoints and determine the appropriate mitigation measures as detailed in EPR LV1. At this location AusNet will offer the following mitigations (at a minimum) to reduce the visual impacts of the Project: development of new public amenities at a suitable location that are oriented away from the Project, reconfiguration or redesign of the Merrimu Reservoir War Memorial, and implementation of landscape screening. It is anticipated that mitigation would reduce visual impacts at the Merrimu Reservoir and Merrimu War Memorial to moderate. Any mitigation would be subject to input and agreement with the land manager.</p>
<p>The Bald Hill Activation Area</p>	<p>The LVIA indicates that visual impacts from northern sections of the sculptural trail and all abilities sculptural trail (Telford Park) would be 'high', and that the Project would also be visible from the entrance to the facility. However, views of the Project are screened from other locations within the Bald Hill Activation Area, such as sections of the sculptural trail located on the east and south of the Bald Hill Summit. In this context, while the Project would typically be considered an undesirable element in the field of view by users of the facility, the facility's size and the variety of spaces and attractions it provides, would assist in diluting the effect of the Project on the quality of the user experience. Nevertheless, some local residents of Darley may avoid the facility, particularly those who are highly sensitive to the Project's presence in their local area.</p> <p>The Project will be visible from locations associated with Stage 1 of the Bald Hill Activation Area, including the proposed entrance and locations along the northern sculpture trail. In the current setting, visual impacts along the northern edge of Bald Hill are negligible. However, the sculpture trail and other features shown in the Bald Hill Activation Plan are currently under construction. Views from some viewing areas and lookouts within the Bald Hill Activation Plan face to the south and are oriented away, or oblique to the Project resulting in low to negligible visual impacts. In comparison, the visual impact from northern areas and nodes along the sculpture trail will be high. To reduce the visibility of the Project from these locations, the Project will offer landscape screening (as a minimum) from the six sculpture locations and entrance from Swans Road. However, it is recognised that the implementation of landscape screening would alter the northerly panoramic views available from Bald Hill. The Project will consult with the relevant landholders or land managers within the Bald Hill Activation Area to confirm sensitive viewpoints that may be significantly impacted by the Project and determine appropriate measures for mitigating impacts as detailed in EPR LV1. The visual impact assessment assumed that a high level of residual impact will remain.</p>
<p>MacPherson Park</p>	<p>The Project would traverse land adjacent the northern boundary of Macpherson Park. Given the proximity of the Proposed Route (within 50m to 100m of playing fields located to the north to the facility), construction activity and noise has potential to interfere with use of the facility (equestrian activities being particularly sensitive), albeit for a short period. In operation the Project would be clearly visible, and interfere with pleasant views from the facility to the north. Community members have raised concerns about the proximity of the proposed transmission infrastructure in the context of potential EMF related health effects (assessed as negligible, see Technical Report L), and also the effect of the Project on the aesthetic quality of the location.</p> <p>while initially the Project may result in a degree of disappointment among users, over time the facility would mature in a manner that limits the Project's influence on its attractiveness.</p>

Source: WRL Social Impact Assessment summarised by K2 Planning August 2025



Proposed Workforce Accommodation Facility Locations

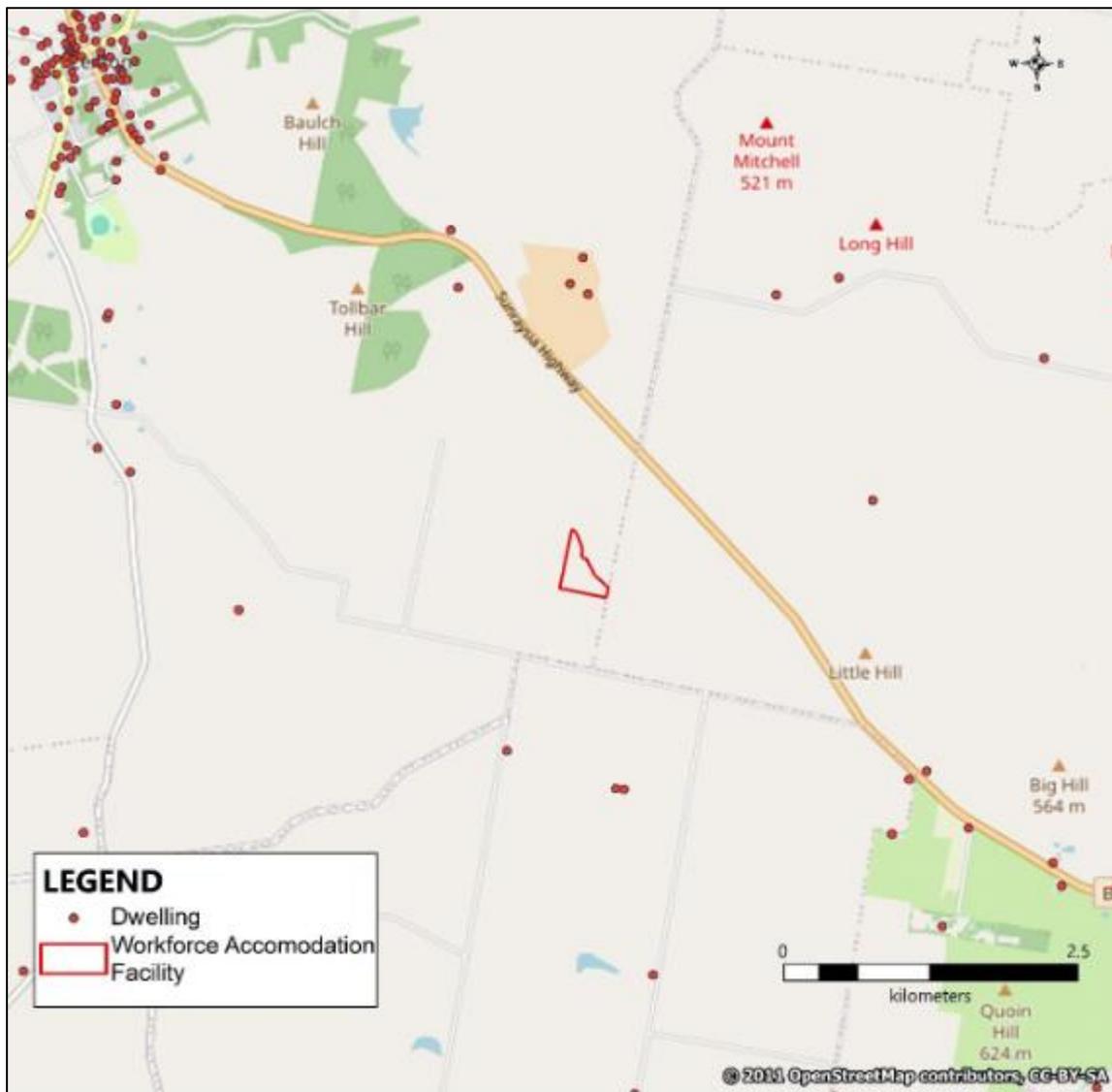


Figure 6: Proposed Workforce Accommodation Facility - Lexton

Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 123

workforce accommodation facility near Lexton, would be accessed via the Western Freeway (M8) and then Sunraysia Highway (B220). There are no dwellings or other noise sensitive receivers located on the route between the site and the highway, and thus the **impact of traffic generated by the facility for neighbours would be minimal**. the sheer presence of the facility, inclusive of its relatively large population, may be unsettling for nearby residents who are accustomed to living in a sparsely populated rural setting, and this may add to concerns and frustrations neighbours have regarding the Project. Notwithstanding, given the proposed management approach (see Section 7.1 and Section 7.4), **interactions between workers residing at the facility and neighbours would be infrequent and may not occur**. ... Overall, the proposed worker accommodation facility would alter the prevailing rural amenity of the location, and may represent an unwanted irritation and blight on the landscape for nearby residents. However, a substantial buffer exists between the site and nearby dwellings, and the facility would be temporary, limiting its impact. In this context (and as discussed in Section 7), it is noted that that the proposed workforce accommodation facility would ameliorate potential severe impacts resulting from the Project's effect on demand for housing and community services and would limit the impact of the construction workforce on social dynamics within existing communities. That is, the proposed facility would deliver a net social benefit. P. 89

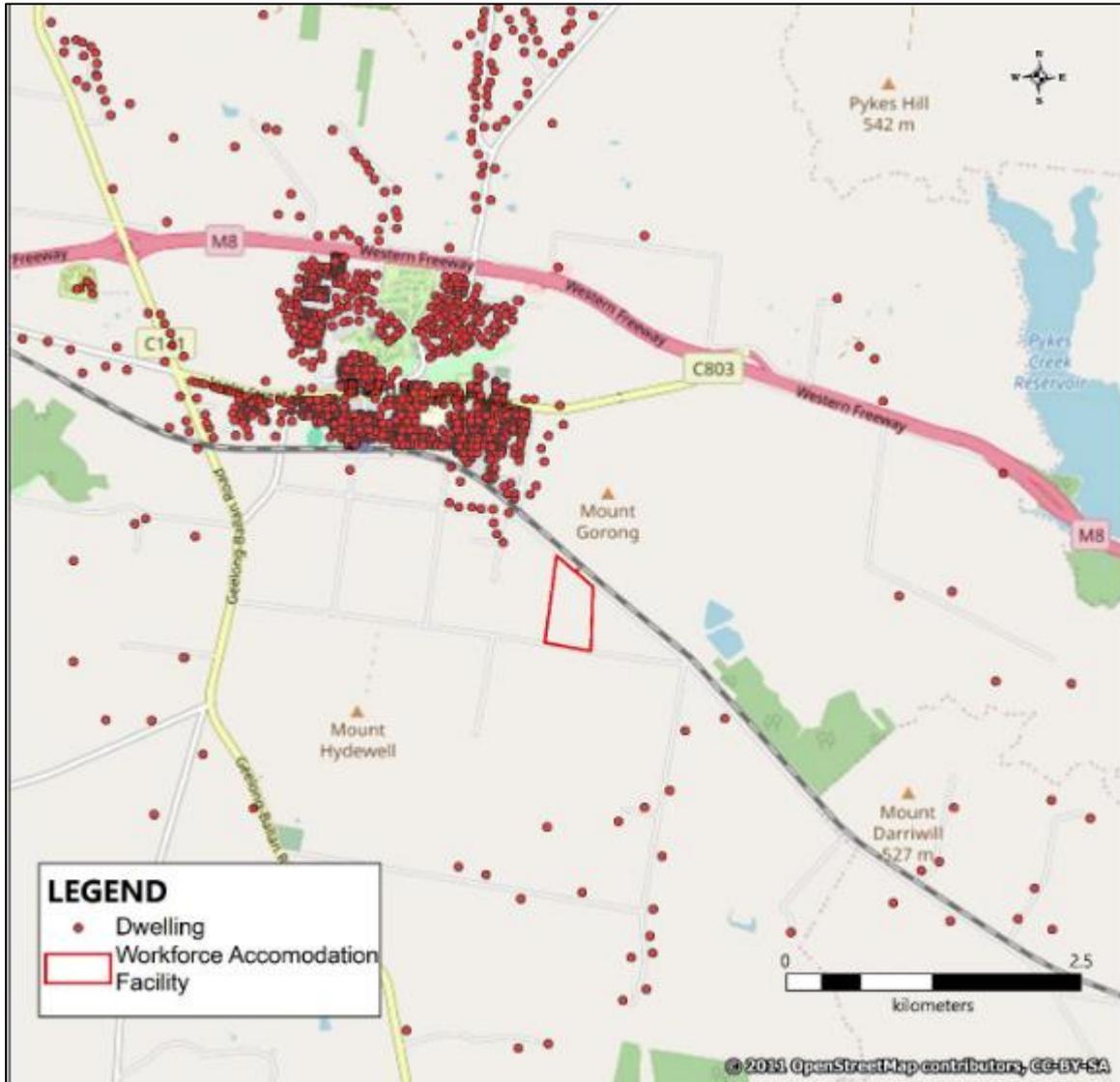
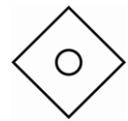
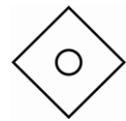


Figure 7: Proposed Workforce Accommodation Facility - Ballan

Source: WRL Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment p. 123



Community Benefit Sharing

WRL Social Impact Assessment

ATTACHMENT IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report

In western Victoria, AusNet is consulting with the local community to determine a range of benefit sharing programs addressing the region's social, economic and environmental needs. Planned programs include a Community Benefit Fund to provide opportunities for community input into the Project's legacy, so that it makes a positive contribution to the region. AusNet has consulted with the CCG, CAG and local communities on the development of regional initiatives. P. 42

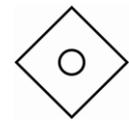
ATTACHMENT IV Stakeholder and community engagement consultation report

i. Benefit sharing activation streams There are multiple ways in which benefits will be shared through the delivery of the Project, with four key activation streams:

The Social Value Framework and initiatives - Social value initiatives for the Project aim to meet specific community needs by addressing local issues such as energy and telecommunications reliability and housing availability. Informed by social research and broad community and stakeholder engagement, these initiatives relate to social procurement, education and community benefit sharing. The Social Value Framework operates as a list of initiatives the Project can implement in collaboration with key stakeholders. As an example of work already completed, AusNet has conducted an assessment of energy demand and use at Ballarat Community Health's seven sites. AusNet provided advice on demand management, retailer and tariff selection and the optimal mix of additional infrastructure (solar and batteries). The Social Value Framework identifies ways in which AusNet can partner with the community to deliver long-lasting benefits. The Project team is identifying opportunities to use the Project construction stage to deliver economic and community value. Planned programs could include training and skills development programs and building energy resilience by providing support to facilitate community energy projects as well as support to emergency services, small grant programs and sponsorship programs.

Benefit sharing arrangements with Traditional Owners

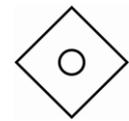
The Community Benefit Fund - 3.8.2. Community Benefit Fund Subject to community appetite, the Project team will implement a Community Benefit Fund that would be co designed in partnership with the community and key stakeholders. The Community Benefit Fund is a way to give back to the community impacted by the Project in a way that the community concludes is equitable and meaningful, within the approved Community Benefit Fund budget. Significant opportunities exist to partner with Commonwealth and State Government funding programs, and with identified local government expenditure, to maximise what can be achieved through the Community Benefit Fund. Exploring the leverage potential will form part of the co-design process, which will also specifically seek input from Traditional Owners, Indigenous people and young people (17 to 25 years) who are often under-represented in engagement processes. It is likely that grants will be provided to projects or initiatives that make a positive contribution to the local community, with preference given to those that create ongoing benefits. The fund framework and assessment criteria will include input from the CCG and CAG as part of the co-design process. The key difference between the Community Benefit Fund and the Social Value Framework is that with the Community Benefit Fund a larger level of control is handed over to the community. The co-design process will decide how and when the funds are administered. With the Social Value Framework, the initiatives are delivered in a strategic way in collaboration with the benefitting stakeholders. P. 15



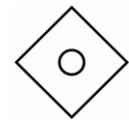
Environmental Performance Requirements Summary

Table 15: Environmental Performance Requirements Summary

Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework p. 1	Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Section 11 Managing Performance EES Chapter 11 - Social	Technical Report G – Economic Impact Section 11.1
<p>Table 29.7 includes: Monitor the effectiveness and responsiveness of communications and engagement Monitor fire weather conditions and bushfire emergency Monitor performance against the policies and/or procedures for biosecurity breach Monitor the emission of dust, exhaust emissions, fumes, odour and other pollution Monitor the ongoing presence of threatened flora species Inspect Project construction sites for land stability and erosion issues Implement any required monitoring programs, as required by Heritage Act 2017 consents and permits Monitor noise and vibration Undertake commissioning noise monitoring Monitor surface water quality on a site-specific basis Monitor surface water quality at designated waterways Monitor the process of achieving sustainability targets Monitor the energy and carbon use during construction Monitor road conditions on any council managed roads that are used by heavy vehicles during construction dilapidation surveys to identify roads that are degraded or damaged</p>	<p>SC1 Avoid and minimise potential negative social impacts of the Project construction workforce 1. Subject to 2 below, each Operational Management Plan for workforce accommodation facilities required by the draft Incorporated Document condition 4.13.6 must include the following to avoid and minimise potential negative social impacts of the Project construction workforce on surrounding communities: a) A commitment that all construction workers working on the Project who cannot commute safely to work from their current residence will be required to reside within the workforce accommodation facilities while on a rostered shift and return to their permanent place of residence on rostered breaks. b) The management protocol for worker access to settlements in proximity to the workforce accommodation facilities must limit visits to essential trips. c) A commitment to service the workforce accommodation facilities with medical services and to have nominated medical professionals available on call and via programmed visits, to attend to the medical needs of workers. 2. Despite 1(a) and 1(b) above, alternative arrangements may be agreed with the relevant Local Authorities ...i Utilise existing available accommodation in the areas surrounding the Project without resulting in negative effects on housing availability or affordability for local communities, or on the availability of tourist accommodation. ii. Allow non-essential trips to larger towns and urban centres under specific circumstances, while avoiding non-essential trips to smaller townships.</p>	<p>1. Develop and implement a Business Mitigation and Support Strategy for directly affected businesses (EPR EC1). 2. Develop and implement an Agriculture and Forestry Business Mitigation and Support Strategy (EPR AF1) 3. Develop and implement initiatives for procurement of goods and services from local communities and social enterprises (EPR EC2) 4. Develop and implement a Business Mitigation and Support Strategy for eligible businesses within 2km (EPR EC3) 5. Develop and implement a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Management Plan (CSEMP) (EM5) to guide communication and engagement activities during construction to ensure the timely and accurate provision of information and address matters required by other EPRs. 6. Develop and implement initiatives to maximise employment opportunities for local communities, First Nations people and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (EPR SC3) 7. Develop and implement Traffic Management Plans (EPR T1), to avoid and minimise traffic related disruption costs to the extent practicable. 8. Develop and implement a Decommissioning Management Plan (EPR EM11) prior to commencement of decommissioning, to minimise the risk of harm to human health or the environment of all activities associated with decommissioning.</p>
	<p>SC2 Develop and implement a Code of Conduct to avoid and minimise potential social impacts of the construction workforce 1. Prior to construction commencing, develop</p>	



Chapter 29 – Environmental Management Framework p. 1	Technical Report F: Social Impact Assessment Section 11 Managing Performance EES Chapter 11 - Social	Technical Report G – Economic Impact Section 11.1
	<p>and implement a Code of Conduct for the Project workforce in consultation with local councils to avoid and minimise the potential for negative social impacts of the construction workforce on local communities. 2. The Code of Conduct must set out AusNet’s expectations of staff when interacting with members of the local community. 3. The Code of Conduct must address matters relating to dress standards and alcohol consumption. 4. The Code of Conduct must stipulate the protocols for worker access to settlements as per EPR SC1. 5. Compliance with the Code of Conduct must be required of all staff and non compliances investigated and responded to in accordance with misconduct and disciplinary action protocols defined in the Code of Conduct.</p>	
<p>EPR SC3 Construction Stage Monitor the level of participation of local workers and businesses in the Project in accordance with the plan developed as per EPR SC3 To verify the maximisation of employment and business opportunities for residents and businesses in surrounding communities to participate in the Project</p>	<p>SC3 Develop and implement initiatives to maximise employment opportunities for local communities, First Nations people and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups 1. Prior to construction commencing, develop and implement a plan to maximise potential benefits of the Project with regard to employment opportunities for local communities, First Nations people and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. 2. The local employment initiatives must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Aim to recruit as many as possible of the required employees for the Project from within local communities. b. Include strategies focused on employment of First Nations people, apprentices, trainees, people with disability and women. c. Support local workforce growth by hiring regional Victorian workers, particularly those under 25. 3. The plan must include a commitment to deliver training and upskilling, including through apprenticeships, traineeships, and cadetships. 	



6.4 Other relevant Background Material

Moorabool Shire Data – Social Conditions

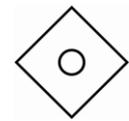
Table 16: Moorabool Shire – Social Data 2021

Social Indicator	Moorabool		Victoria Total	
	No.	% Pop.	No.	% Pop.
Indigenous Persons	558	1.6	65,646	1.1
DISADVANTAGE				
20–24-year-olds who had not completed yr 11		% 20–24-year-olds		% 20–24-year-olds
Males		17.5		9.7
Females		8.5		5.9
Persons		12.9		7.8
DISABILITY				
Male	1,127	6.4	173,340	5.7
Female	1,229	6.8	208,730	6.7
Persons	2,353	6.6	382,073	6.2
WORK DURATION				
Employed, worked full-time	3,935	63.2		1,666,825
Employed, worked part-time	3,143	50.5		919,740
Total	6,224	100		2,586,563

Source: ABS Census 2021 accessed through profileid.com and formatted by K2 Planning 2025

Table 17: Occupation by Industry – Moorabool 2021

Industry	Moorabool		Victoria	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	816	8.4	63,777	2.1
Mining	118	1.2	8,010	0.3
Manufacturing	406	4.2	218,668	7.2
<i>Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services</i>	103	1.1	34,969	1.2
Construction	1,200	12.3	244,309	8.1
Wholesale Trade	95	1.0	87,671	2.9
Retail Trade	886	9.1	294,515	9.7
Accommodation and Food Services	766	7.9	192,896	6.4
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	506	5.2	139,068	4.6
Information Media and Telecommunications	43	0.4	47,679	1.6
Financial and Insurance Services	124	1.3	126,629	4.2
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	116	1.2	45,266	1.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	439	4.5	258,825	8.6
Administrative and Support Services	212	2.2	85,941	2.8
Public Administration and Safety	472	4.8	174,371	5.8
Education and Training	1,178	12.1	272,474	9.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,163	11.9	432,140	14.3
Arts and Recreation Services	178	1.8	52,524	1.7
Other Services	478	4.9	105,757	3.5
Inadequately described	285	2.9	96,262	3.2



Industry	Moorabool		Victoria	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Not stated	158	1.6	41,910	1.4
Not applicable	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	9,746	100	3,023,646	100

Source: ABS Census 2021 accessed through profileid.com and formatted by K2 Planning 2025

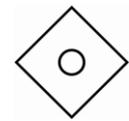
Table 18: Workforce Occupations – Moorabool 2021

Occupations	Moorabool		Victoria	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Number
Managers	1,261	12.9	431,561	14.3
Professionals	1,662	17.1	772,822	25.6
Technicians and Trades Workers	1,469	15.1	352,224	11.6
Community and Personal Service Workers	1,288	13.2	332,737	11.0
Clerical and Administrative Workers	1,063	10.9	385,728	12.8
Sales Workers	895	9.2	259,256	8.6
Machinery Operators and Drivers	773	7.9	177,515	5.9
Labourers	1,147	11.8	253,722	8.4
Inadequately described	92	0.9	34,118	1.1
Not stated	88	0.9	23,966	0.8
Not applicable	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	9,746	100	3,023,646	100

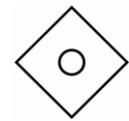
Source: ABS Census 2021 accessed through profileid.com and formatted by K2 Planning 2025

Table 19: Per Cent of Women Employed by Occupation – Moorabool 2021

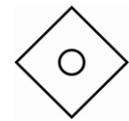
Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Food Trades Assistants	100.0
Laundry Workers	100.0
Sewing Machinists	100.0
Visual Merchandisers	100.0
Telemarketers	100.0
Models and Sales Demonstrators	100.0
Library Assistants	100.0
Human Resource Clerks	100.0
Conveyancers and Legal Executives	100.0
Switchboard Operators	100.0
Secretaries	100.0
Personal Assistants	100.0
Practice Managers	100.0
Travel Attendants	100.0
Tourism and Travel Advisers	100.0
Personal Care Consultants	100.0
Beauty Therapists	100.0
Other Hospitality Workers	100.0
Hotel Service Managers	100.0
Special Care Workers	100.0
Dental Assistants	100.0
Enrolled and Mothercraft Nurses	100.0
Diversional Therapists	100.0
Dental Hygienists, Technicians and Therapists	100.0
Gallery, Library and Museum Technicians	100.0



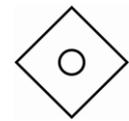
Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Wood Machinists and Other Wood Trades Workers	100.0
Clothing Trades Workers	100.0
Florists	100.0
Veterinary Nurses	100.0
Nurse Managers	100.0
Nurse Educators and Researchers	100.0
Midwives	100.0
Other Medical Practitioners	100.0
Specialist Physicians	100.0
Audiologists and Speech Pathologists \ Therapists	100.0
Podiatrists	100.0
Occupational Therapists	100.0
Complementary Health Therapists	100.0
Other Health Diagnostic and Promotion Professionals	100.0
Pharmacists	100.0
Medical Imaging Professionals	100.0
Nutrition Professionals	100.0
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages	100.0
Early Childhood (Pre-primary School) Teachers	100.0
Medical Laboratory Scientists	100.0
Life Scientists	100.0
Librarians	100.0
Archivists, Curators and Records Managers	100.0
Other Accommodation and Hospitality Managers	100.0
Other Education Managers	100.0
Child Care Centre Managers	100.0
Child Carers	98.1
Receptionists	97.2
Hairdressers	96.6
Education Aides	96.3
Registered Nurses	94.4
Bookkeepers	93.3
Psychologists	93.0
General Clerks	92.8
Pharmacy Sales Assistants	91.9
Keyboard Operators	91.5
Court and Legal Clerks	91.4
Office Managers	91.3
Health and Welfare Services Managers	90.2
Medical Technicians	89.8
Payroll Clerks	88.7
Cafe Workers	88.5
Primary School Teachers	87.1
Education Advisers and Reviewers	87.0
Cooks	86.7
Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	86.4
Social Workers	86.0
Aged and Disabled Carers	85.9
Special Education Teachers	84.6
Call or Contact Centre Workers	83.7
Housekeepers	83.3
Bank Workers	82.4
Domestic Cleaners	81.4



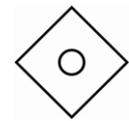
Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Service Station Attendants	81.3
Accounting Clerks	81.1
Human Resource Professionals	80.7
Insurance, Money Market and Statistical Clerks	80.6
Judicial and Other Legal Professionals	80.0
Welfare Support Workers	79.8
Training and Development Professionals	79.4
Massage Therapists	78.6
Corporate Services Managers	78.6
Intelligence and Policy Analysts	78.3
Photographers	78.3
Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers	77.8
Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers	77.7
Information Officers	77.1
Research and Development Managers	76.5
Waiters	75.3
Private Tutors and Teachers	74.4
Conference and Event Organisers	73.3
Commercial Cleaners	72.8
Sportspersons	72.7
Sales Assistants (General)	72.6
Filing and Registry Clerks	72.2
Social Professionals	72.2
University Lecturers and Tutors	71.9
Kitchenhands	71.1
Solicitors	70.6
Counsellors	70.0
Bar Attendants and Baristas	69.6
Physiotherapists	69.6
Interior Designers	69.2
Ticket Salespersons	68.4
Hotel and Motel Managers	67.9
Fitness Instructors	67.4
Vending Machine Attendants	66.7
Other Personal Service Workers	66.7
Cafe and Restaurant Managers	66.7
School Principals	66.7
Advertising and Marketing Professionals	65.6
Secondary School Teachers	65.5
Science Technicians	65.2
Public Relations Professionals	63.6
Other Information and Organisation Professionals	63.5
Veterinarians	62.5
Policy and Planning Managers	62.2
Credit and Loans Officers	61.7
Livestock Farm Workers	60.4
Contract, Program and Project Administrators	60.0
Vocational Education Teachers	60.0
ICT Sales Professionals	60.0
Packers	58.9
Sports Coaches, Instructors and Officials	58.3
Performing Arts Technicians	58.3
Nurserypersons	58.3



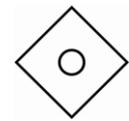
Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Insurance Agents	57.9
Animal Attendants and Trainers	57.9
Other Sales Support Workers	57.7
Outdoor Adventure Guides	57.1
Real Estate Sales Agents	57.0
Food and Drink Factory Workers	56.8
Graphic and Web Designers, and Illustrators	56.4
Finance Managers	55.7
Other Clerical and Office Support Workers	55.6
Retail Supervisors	55.1
Human Resource Managers	54.2
Debt Collectors	53.3
Architects and Landscape Architects	52.9
General Practitioners and Resident Medical Officers	52.6
Fashion, Industrial and Jewellery Designers	52.6
Retail Managers	52.6
Auditors, Company Secretaries and Corporate Treasurers	52.2
Ambulance Officers and Paramedics	51.5
Occupational and Environmental Health Professionals	51.4
Mail Sorters	50.0
Funeral Workers	50.0
Barristers	50.0
Film, Television, Radio and Stage Directors	50.0
Accountants	49.3
Other Miscellaneous Clerical and Administrative Workers	48.6
Inspectors and Regulatory Officers	48.0
Management and Organisation Analysts	45.8
Amusement, Fitness and Sports Centre Managers	45.0
Electronics Engineers	44.4
Call or Contact Centre and Customer Service Managers	44.3
Other Specialist Managers	44.0
Chiropractors and Osteopaths	43.8
Financial Investment Advisers and Managers	43.8
Urban and Regional Planners	42.9
Land Economists and Valuers	42.9
Financial Brokers	42.9
Purchasing and Supply Logistics Clerks	42.3
ICT Business and Systems Analysts	42.1
Prison Officers	41.3
Chefs	41.3
Sales Representatives	40.9
Other Machine Operators	40.0
Transport and Despatch Clerks	38.9
Bakers and Pastrycooks	37.9
Meat, Poultry and Seafood Process Workers	37.5
Gallery, Museum and Tour Guides	37.5
Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals	37.5
Shelf Fillers	36.8
Advertising, Public Relations and Sales Managers	35.9
Financial Dealers	35.7
Other Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers	35.1
Other Miscellaneous Labourers	34.9
Crop Farm Workers	33.3



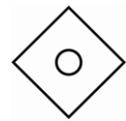
Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Gaming Workers	33.3
Precision Metal Trades Workers	33.3
Technical Sales Representatives	33.3
Police	32.3
Ministers of Religion	30.8
Storepersons	30.4
Garden and Nursery Labourers	30.2
Product Quality Controllers	30.0
Train and Tram Drivers	29.2
Surveyors and Spatial Scientists	28.6
ICT Managers	28.4
Livestock Farmers	28.3
Engineering Managers	28.0
General Managers	27.8
Other Miscellaneous Technicians and Trades Workers	27.3
ICT Support and Test Engineers	27.3
Journalists and Other Writers	27.3
Manufacturers	27.3
Environmental Scientists	26.9
Signwriters	26.7
Air Transport Professionals	26.7
Retail and Wool Buyers	25.0
Music Professionals	25.0
ICT Support Technicians	23.5
Other Natural and Physical Science Professionals	23.1
Fast Food Cooks	22.9
Electrical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians	22.7
Couriers and Postal Deliverers	21.9
Security Officers and Guards	21.7
Other Sales Assistants and Salespersons	21.1
Motor Vehicle and Vehicle Parts Salespersons	20.7
Greenkeepers	20.7
Automobile Drivers	20.0
Other Stationary Plant Operators	19.0
Agricultural and Forestry Scientists	18.8
Supply, Distribution and Procurement Managers	18.1
Chief Executives and Managing Directors	17.9
Production Managers	17.8
Other Cleaners	17.4
Software and Applications Programmers	16.9
Crop Farmers	16.9
Delivery Drivers	16.3
Importers, Exporters and Wholesalers	15.0
Gardeners	14.7
Architectural, Building and Surveying Technicians	14.5
Painting Trades Workers	13.8
Freight and Furniture Handlers	13.3
Other Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers	13.0
Fencers	12.5
Other Mobile Plant Operators	12.5
Product Assemblers	12.0
Fire and Emergency Workers	12.0
Telecommunications Trades Workers	11.5



Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers	11.3
Transport Services Managers	11.1
Bus and Coach Drivers	10.7
Car Detailers	10.3
Construction Managers	10.2
Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists	7.9
Forklift Drivers	7.6
Cabinetmakers	7.5
Handypersons	7.1
Industrial, Mechanical and Production Engineers	7.1
Concreters	5.4
Truck Drivers	2.5
Building and Plumbing Labourers	2.4
Plumbers	2.0
Electricians	1.9
Metal Fitters and Machinists	1.9
Motor Mechanics	1.3
Recycling and Rubbish Collectors	0.0
Printing Assistants and Table Workers	0.0
Motor Vehicle Parts and Accessories Fitters	0.0
Deck and Fishing Hands	0.0
Caretakers	0.0
Mixed Crop and Livestock Farm Workers	0.0
Forestry and Logging Workers	0.0
Aquaculture Workers	0.0
Other Factory Process Workers	0.0
Timber and Wood Process Workers	0.0
Plastics and Rubber Factory Workers	0.0
Metal Engineering Process Workers	0.0
Meat Boners and Slicers, and Slaughterers	0.0
Other Construction and Mining Labourers	0.0
Structural Steel Construction Workers	0.0
Railway Track Workers	0.0
Paving and Surfacing Labourers	0.0
Insulation and Home Improvement Installers	0.0
Earthmoving Plant Operators	0.0
Agricultural, Forestry and Horticultural Plant Operators	0.0
Engineering Production Workers	0.0
Drillers, Miners and Shot Firers	0.0
Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators	0.0
Textile and Footwear Production Machine Operators	0.0
Plastics and Rubber Production Machine Operators	0.0
Photographic Developers and Printers	0.0
Paper and Wood Processing Machine Operators	0.0
Industrial Spraypainters	0.0
Clay, Concrete, Glass and Stone Processing Machine Operators	0.0
Street Vendors and Related Salespersons	0.0
ICT Sales Assistants	0.0
Auctioneers, and Stock and Station Agents	0.0
Insurance Investigators, Loss Adjusters and Risk Surveyors	0.0
Survey Interviewers	0.0
Betting Clerks	0.0
Driving Instructors	0.0



Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Defence Force Members - Other Ranks	0.0
Indigenous Health Workers	0.0
Jewellers	0.0
Chemical, Gas, Petroleum and Power Plant Operators	0.0
Boat Builders and Shipwrights	0.0
Upholsterers	0.0
Canvas and Leather Goods Makers	0.0
Printers	0.0
Graphic Pre-press Trades Workers	0.0
Print Finishers and Screen Printers	0.0
Shearers	0.0
Butchers and Smallgoods Makers	0.0
Electronics Trades Workers	0.0
Electrical Distribution Trades Workers	0.0
Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics	0.0
Wall and Floor Tilers	0.0
Roof Tilers	0.0
Plasterers	0.0
Glaziers	0.0
Floor Finishers	0.0
Carpenters and Joiners	0.0
Bricklayers and Stonemasons	0.0
Vehicle Painters	0.0
Vehicle Body Builders and Trimmers	0.0
Panelbeaters	0.0
Toolmakers and Engineering Patternmakers	0.0
Aircraft Maintenance Engineers	0.0
Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers	0.0
Sheetmetal Trades Workers	0.0
Metal Casting, Forging and Finishing Trades Workers	0.0
Automotive Electricians	0.0
Telecommunications Technical Specialists	0.0
Other Building and Engineering Technicians	0.0
Safety Inspectors	0.0
Mechanical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians	0.0
Electronic Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians	0.0
Civil Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians	0.0
Primary Products Inspectors	0.0
Agricultural Technicians	0.0
Telecommunications Engineering Professionals	0.0
Computer Network Professionals	0.0
Multimedia Specialists and Web Developers	0.0
Surgeons	0.0
Psychiatrists	0.0
Anaesthetists	0.0
Dental Practitioners	0.0
Optometrists and Orthoptists	0.0
Middle School Teacher	0.0
Geologists, Geophysicists and Hydrogeologists	0.0
Chemists, and Food and Wine Scientists	0.0
Other Engineering Professionals	0.0
Mining Engineers	0.0
Electrical Engineers	0.0



Occupation	Per cent of Women in that occupation
Civil Engineering Professionals	0.0
Chemical and Materials Engineers	0.0
Marine Transport Professionals	0.0
Economists	0.0
Actuaries, Mathematicians and Statisticians	0.0
ICT Trainers	0.0
Authors, and Book and Script Editors	0.0
Artistic Directors, and Media Producers and Presenters	0.0
Actors, Dancers and Other Entertainers	0.0
Licensed Club Managers	0.0
Caravan Park and Camping Ground Managers	0.0
Senior Non-commissioned Defence Force Members	0.0
Commissioned Officers (Management)	0.0
Aquaculture Farmers	0.0
Legislators	0.0

Source: ABS Census 2021 accessed through profileid.com and formatted by K2 Planning 2025

- 31.1% of employed persons who are owners/managers in Moorabool are women
- 15th lowest out of all Victorian LGA's

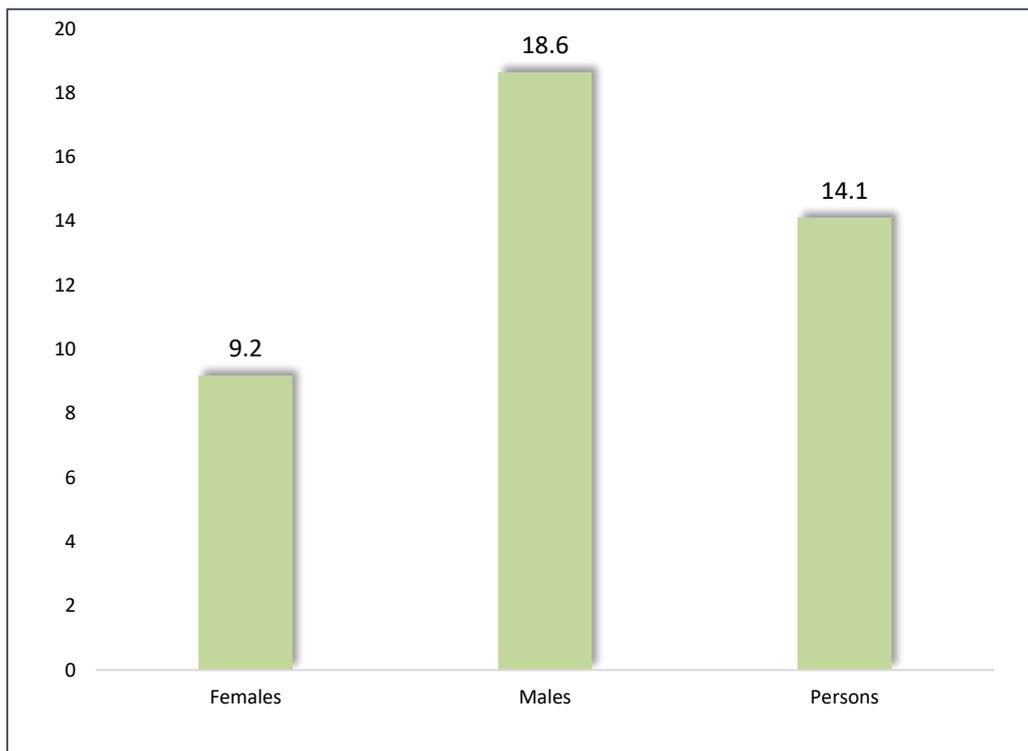


Figure 8: Per Cent of Employed Persons who are Owners/Managers by Gender – Moorabool 2021

Source: ABS Census 2021 accessed through profileid.com and formatted by K2 Planning 2025

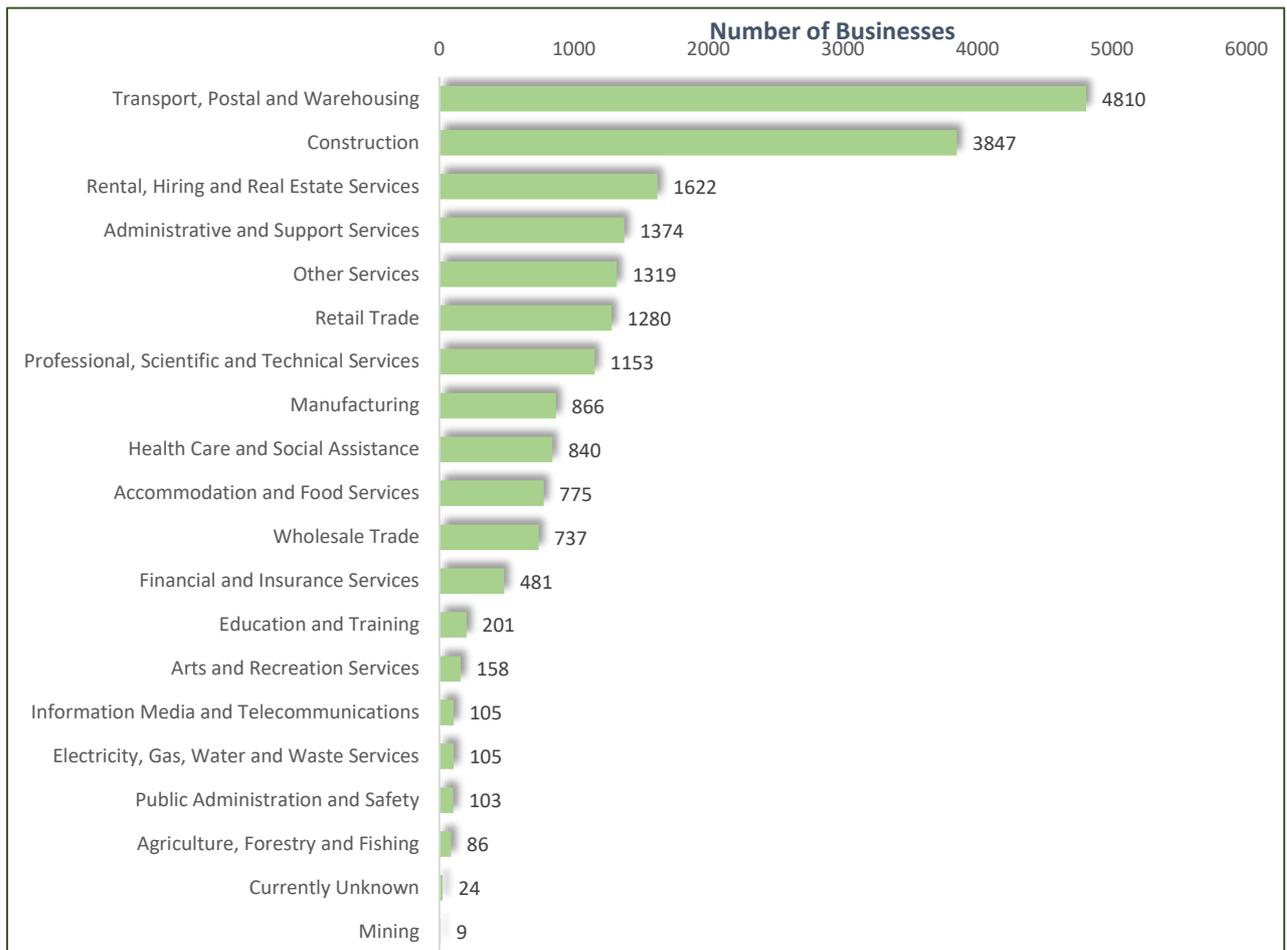
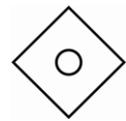


Figure 9: Number of Businesses by Type – Moorabool 2021

Source: ABS Census 2021 accessed through profileid.com and formatted by K2 Planning 2025

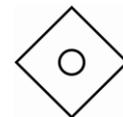


Table 20: Indicators of Social and Economic Conditions Among Indigenous Residents – Moorabool 2021

Social Indicator	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous: per cent higher or lower than non-indigenous
Early School leaving: 20-24 year-olds	9.4	13.3	-29
Per cent of 25-44 year-olds with tertiary qualifications	12.9	24.9	-48
Unemployment rate: persons aged 15-64	6.3	3.8	66
Median Individual Weekly Incomes	\$758	\$804	-6
Per cent of persons residing in housing rented from government or charities	26.1	11.6	124
Per cent of women aged 15-24 years with children	9.5	3.8	150
Per cent of families with children that are one-parent families	37.0	18.3	102
Per cent people aged 25-64 who have a severe or profound disability	5.5	3.7	49

Source: ABS Census 2021 accessed through profileid.com and formatted by K2 Planning 2025



DEWLP 2017 Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development; A Guide for Renewable Energy Developers

Key points from *Tools for Enhancing Social Outcomes DELWP 2017*

it is very important that a project's community engagement and benefit sharing strategies are **tailored to the local context**, and take into account the community's needs, concerns and values. The purpose of undertaking a social risk analysis is to identify and understand these factors. Through this process, key issues may be identified that require attention and may change the scope of the project.

The Social Risk Analysis is comprised of several parts:

- **Context Narrative - constructing a 'story' of the local context**, including its key attributes, values and features... it will identify key issues to be aware of and key people to include in future project stages... a summary of the dominant local community narratives that are characteristic of how local people identify themselves and the nature of their community; a summary of the dominant local community narratives that are associated with the renewable energy technology and the proposed project any legacy issues that are important to consider about the project ways the project can align with or enhance important aspects of the local context clarify local understandings of issues and the dominant narratives that surround them, rather than trying to identify a single 'truth' about an issue. Approach: history and demographics (for example, age, occupation, level of education, home ownership, level of civic engagement) of the local communities. Identify the Aboriginal Traditional Owners and investigate the relationship they have with their country.

There may be a number of settlements or towns nearby:

- How are they different from each other?
- How do they relate to each other? Identify and research the local community groups which are the most active in the town.
- What does this say about local people's values, hobbies and identity?
- **Which groups seem most influential in the life of the community?**
- **Who are the local members of parliament and what are the key issues raised by constituents?**

Interview or recall conversations with local people:

- What defines the local towns?
- Are they farming or holiday communities?
- Is this changing, and does that cause tensions?
- Are there weekly, monthly or annual events that are really important for the local community?
- What's the main source of employment and how does this affect the local identity?

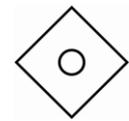
how would you summarise the type of local community

large landholders with no neighbours within 5-15kms of the renewable energy project

- large landholders with a small amount of neighbouring broadacre farms within 5kms
- ridge developments, with neighbouring hobby farmers in the valley who may be exposed to noise and visual impacts
- lifestyle properties with prized landscapes and hobby farmers who may be exposed to the noise and visual impacts
- island or remote community developments
- peri-urban/industrial
- sea change, tree change
- highly transient community
- Victorian Aboriginal and Traditional Owners with strong connection to country.

Consider the physical environment:

- What local landscape features are important to local people (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal)?
- **What happens in these places?**
- **What makes them important?**
- Are there important historical events and sites to be aware of?
- Where do people go for recreation?



- What have the historical reactions been to other infrastructure projects?
- What flora and fauna species are particularly important to local people
- **Has past policy change or uncertainty affected the project or local people's perceptions of the project or RE more generally?**
- How does the current policy and political landscape **affect the project and perceptions of renewable energy more generally? What is the dominant media narrative about the project, the technology and renewable energy generally?**

EG provided by DELWP... the developer should work with local farmers to identify marginal land to host the solar farm and work with the association and others to determine how the project can support the town's sense of independence and self-sufficiency — including local jobs, a community-controlled grant fund and an opportunity for locals to invest in the project

- **Social Impact Site Map** - The map is a visual display of a site-specific social impact analysis for wind and solar: indicate the layout and location of host and neighbouring residents within 3-5km for all technologies - create a map that represents the location of the renewable energy project and its proximity to settlements/towns within a 10-15km zone...show the location of substations and electricity grid infrastructure
- indicate cultural sites of significance for Victoria's Aboriginal and Traditional Owner groups
- include where any significant flora and fauna issues have been identified
- describe what the visibility and/or audibility will be for different stakeholders.

key issues highlighted in the map

One method to begin preparing a social impact site map is to do a participatory mapping exercise.

This involves "A group-based qualitative research method that gives participants freedom to shape discussion on a given topic with minimal intervention from researchers. Mapping can generate a rich understanding of the connections between people, places and organisations over space and/or time" p. 23. To do this, sit down with a map of the local area with a group of local hosts, neighbours and/or other community representatives and go through a series of prompting questions. <https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/do-it/techniquesapproaches/participatory-mapping>

The purpose is to allow as much space as possible for participants to share their thoughts on the character of the local landscape and what this means to local people and what the perceived impacts may be. This process is particularly useful in the **feasibility stage** of a project and can be used to inform the context narrative and identification of key social risks and key stakeholders

- Social Risk Matrix - outline the key social risks, evaluate them and make recommendations to mitigate them identify the policy (e.g. operating environment, regulatory), social (e.g. culture, history, values), physical (e.g. site location specific, environmental, visual) and economic (e.g. benefit sharing, local job creation) factors that create the social risk. Many of these may have been raised in the

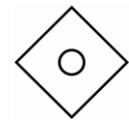
Context Narrative

- briefly explore how identified factors could raise risk
- rate the risk level, the consequence and the likelihood of the risk occurring, and
- **briefly state recommendations to mitigate the risk, and consider how these fit with other aspects of project planning such as community engagement and benefit sharing**

Some key considerations in a social risk matrix

How many hosts are involved? How many neighbours are there?

- Are there other significant energy projects nearby (e.g. within 50km) that are either planned or constructed? Will there be noise or visual amenity issues that could be compounded (cumulative impacts)?
- Will you be applying for a planning amendment? How has the community been consulted and communicated to? What social impacts could this have?
- **Are there any new neighbours in the area? How have they been contacted?**
- How have local Aboriginal representatives been involved?
- What is the relationship with local council? Are they willing to facilitate community discussions if needed?



- How does this project relate to the local strategic plans of the local council?
- What key issues were raised in environmental and other compliance studies? **How might these affect local community perceptions?**

• For wind (and others): what is the density of neighbouring properties within 3-5km (dependant on population and visibility) of proposed technology location?

Social Risk considerations through the operational phase may include:

- technology failure
- noise issues
- **health and safety issues**
- lighting of the generator or site — community nuisance
- **community expectations about local job creation, post operations**
- flora and fauna issues
- **lack of local knowledge and expertise to solve maintenance or operational issues**
- **decommissioning concern**

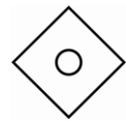
Tips for developing a community engagement strategy across technologies

- **Is there a focus on community education, such as visits to other facilities?**
- Are there clear communication materials available on the efficiency of the proposed plant, impacts on the price of electricity and impacts on local employment?
- Is there clear information about the types of services and jobs required for the project? **Is there a pathway for local people to register their interest?** *Source: DELWP 2017 p. 28*

DELWP 2017 A Benefit Sharing Program is a plan to strategically deliver added value to the local region over the lifecycle of the project. The program may change over time as the needs of the local area and the project change.

Some key questions to consider when designing the Program are:

- How will the Program be developed? **How has it been co-developed with directly impacted neighbours and stakeholders? With the broader community and/or Community Reference Group?**
- **How will the rationale and method for calculating community benefit be explained to the community?** How will changes made to the program be communicated to the community, especially where feedback from the community has influenced the change?
- **Who will benefit from the different aspects of your benefit sharing program? Is this equitable?**
- **How could this program best serve the needs of the local area? What do local government plans offer in regards to information on local needs?**
- **What other initiatives already exist in the local area and how can these be complemented rather than duplicated? Are there opportunities for strategic partnerships, i.e. with the community bank, local government grants programs or local education facilities?**
- **What is the available funding for benefit sharing and will this fluctuate over time? Will it be linked to annual profit margin or be a static amount?**
- **What form will benefit sharing take in different stages of the project?**
- **Who will be responsible for delivering the Program? How will effective governance and transparency be achieved?**
- **What is the community expectation around benefit sharing?**
- **What other partnerships could amplify the benefit?**
- **Are there prevalent community concerns that can be addressed via a benefit sharing program, such as a neighbourhood focus or a new sanctuary area for potentially impacted wildlife?**
- **How will the expectations of different segments of the community be managed;** for example, hosts who end up with a reduced number of turbines, and in some cases no turbines? How will benefits be



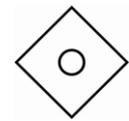
shared with these people? Will these benefits be different to those offered to other non-host neighbours?

- Is there interest in community investment in the project or other local renewable energy generation project ideas that you could promote?
- If developing a fund, what is best practice in regards to amount per MW per year for the given technology, management, and governance?
- Could your staff and contract partners be involved in volunteerism in the local community?
- Is the scale of your Program commensurate with the scale of the renewable energy project?
- Are there any at risk portions of the local community who could be a focus of the program?
- Is there potential to use a portion of generation to create a locally promoted electricity retail or Renewable Energy Certificate product?

Include in the Program a summary of the benefit sharing that has been undertaken to date and its outcomes. Items to include are:

- any agreements that may have been signed
- who has been engaged in developing the benefit sharing program; what options were considered for benefit sharing; and how the proposed program meets the needs and/or preferences of the stakeholders
- a description of any clauses included in benefit sharing contracts that limit a signatory's ability to raise issues, speak publicly about the project or seek future additional benefit/compensation.

Source: Tools for Enhancing Social Outcomes DELWP 2017 summarised by K2 Planning August 2025, red highlights gaps in WRL Social Impact Assessment approach



3.7 Preparing a benefit sharing program

A benefit sharing program delivers added value to the local region over the project's lifecycle and potentially beyond. It should be tailored to local community needs and aspirations, prepared with local community input, and flexible enough to be adapted over time.

Key questions to consider when developing a benefit sharing program include:

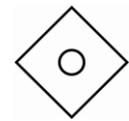
- How will the benefit sharing program be developed, and will it be co-developed with directly impacted neighbours, other stakeholders, or the broader community (for example, via a CRG)?
 - How has information on local needs and aspirations (e.g. local government plans, direct engagement) been sourced to guide the development of the benefit sharing program?
 - What is the community's expectation around benefit sharing?
 - How will the proponent inform and respond to expectations of different segments of the community regarding benefit sharing?
 - Who will benefit from the different aspects of the program? Is the program equitable?
 - What's the timeframe for each initiative or program? A balance between short-term, medium-term and longer-term benefits needs to be considered.
 - What other initiatives already exist in the local area and how can these be complemented rather than duplicated?
 - Are there opportunities for strategic partnerships, e.g. with the community bank, local government grants or local education facilities? What partnerships could amplify the benefits?
 - What is the available funding for benefit sharing and will this fluctuate over time? Will it be linked to annual profit margin or be a static amount?
 - What form will benefit sharing take in different stages of the project?
 - Who will be responsible for delivering the program? How will effective governance and transparency be achieved?
 - Are there prevalent community concerns that can be addressed via a benefit sharing program, such as a new sanctuary area for potentially impacted
- Is there interest in community investment in the project or are there other local renewable energy generation project ideas that could be promoted?
 - If developing a fund, what is leading practice regarding the amount contributed per MW per year for the given technology, management and governance?
 - How will the proponent's staff and contract partners be involved in volunteerism in the local community? (If this is not possible, justification should be provided.)
 - Is the scale of the benefit sharing program commensurate with the scale of the renewable energy project?
 - Are there any at-risk portions of the local community who could be a focus of the program?
 - Is there the potential to use some generation to create a locally promoted electricity retail or Renewable Energy Certificate product?
 - How will the rationale and method for calculating community benefit be explained to the community?
 - How will changes to the program be communicated to the community, especially where feedback from the community has influenced the change?

The benefit sharing program should also include a summary of engagement undertaken to date in relation to the program, such as:

- Any agreements that may have been signed. If/when appropriate, a description of any clauses included in benefit sharing contracts that may limit a signatory's ability to raise issues, speak publicly about the project, or seek future additional benefit/compensation.
- Who has been engaged in developing the benefit sharing program, what options were considered for benefit sharing and how the proposed program meets the needs and/or aspirations of the stakeholders.

Figure 10: Preparing a Community Benefit Sharing Program

Source: Taken from Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria A guide for renewable energy developers Updated July 2021 DELWP p. 33



Relevant Moorabool Shire Plans and Strategies - Tourism

Moorabool Shire Economic Development Strategy 2023 – 2027

...tourism is a key driver of economic development...p. 5

*Moorabool Shire has a developing visitor economy, which provides a relatively small contribution to total output (2%) and jobs (3%). Visitors to the Shire are relatively low-yielding (compared to surrounding destinations in Ballarat and Daylesford Macedon Ranges), which is attributed to the relative lack of commercial accommodation and commissionable products/ experiences. **This provides significant opportunity to increase the contribution of the tourism industry**, which will be established through the development of a Visitor Economy Strategy that will guide tourism development and investment to grow both the value and volume of tourism. Supporting a successful visitor economy is important for sustainable economic development in the Shire, as it diversifies the industry base, creates local jobs and generates direct local expenditure p. 21*

Tourism contributing to growth in employment

Diversification of industry supports sustainable economic growth. A more diverse industry base will help meet the growing needs of the economy and population and ensure the economy is more sustainable. This includes identification of opportunities for new and emerging industries, including those that can be leveraged off existing industry strengths (e.g. tourism, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, etc.) p. 25

The Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry is a key economic driver for Moorabool Shire, generating 11% of total output, 29% of regional exports and 10% of total employment.... Successful agribusiness branding could subsequently be leveraged to support 'food-based tourism'. P. 39

An Agricultural Strategic Plan is vital for the agriculture and forestry sectors to provide strategic direction and identify opportunities to facilitate growth. This will support the Rural Land Use Strategy developed by Council, which will provide a vision for future rural land use and support best practices in land use management. The Agricultural Strategic Plan should be a broad strategy that involves extensive consultation with industry to increase the value and volume of production, support local agricultural businesses as well as complementary industries. As such, this project should focus on: » Business diversification opportunities, including agritourism (e.g. farmgates) and small-scale renewable energy investment (e.g. wind/solar farms) p. 40

Moorabool Shire Council - Council Plan 2025 – 2029

Moorabool's prospective industries include agriculture – primary production, agribusiness – processing and value adding, health services, tourism, education, retail, and professional and business services. Many supporting industry sectors are anticipated to thrive due to the increased customer base driven by population growth. The liveability of the shire is key to attracting higher value workers and businesses. Aspects such as housing, skills, transport, access to community infrastructure, culture, health, the natural environment and social capital all influence the economic sustainability of Moorabool. Liveability and visitability are two sides of the same coin – as such tourism and awareness of the Shire's brand are key to our vision for growth. P. 13

OBJECTIVE 2 A dynamic and resilient local economy

Priority 3 Make the most of the shire's unique location and attributes to help drive visitation

Action - Establish a shire tourism brand and online presence 2025 – 29

Measures - Supporting jobs, tourism, and sustainable economic growth.

Increase in number of visitors to Moorabool Shire pp 20 – 21

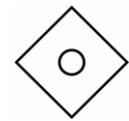
Moorabool Shire Council – Visitor Economy Strategy 2023 – 2027

Moorabool Shire's Visitor Economy Strategy will provide a strategic and unified direction for the evolution of the visitor economy between 2023 and 2027, with a focus on awareness, product development, and enabling infrastructure. This will be achieved by empowering and supporting the local industry, including measures that support the recovery of the tourism sector (and tourism businesses) from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

Destination Management Plans reflect the attributes of each destination, providing a blueprint for future investment in tourism including new experiences and attractions, and infrastructure requirements (roads, parks, technology) to support visitor growth.

The Visitor Economy Strategy for Moorabool Shire will follow the Guide to Best Practice in Destination Management, as developed by the Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN) p. 3

Accessible Tourism Market This is a **growing tourism market segment** that could be serviced by Moorabool Shire, given the breadth of soft nature experiences and the number of highly accessible locations. Ensuring



accommodation, attractions, towns and nature-based assets are accessible and inclusive, through access, signage, and adhering to standards, should be a best practice standard held by Moorabool Shire. P. 9
 Tourism Research Australia (TRA). Visitor numbers, TRA, 2019.
 574,000 Visitors \$65.3 Million Visitor spend p. 6

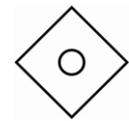
Strategic Opportunities Agritourism, food and wine, nature, and arts, culture and heritage, have opportunity to be developed as the Shire’s product pillars, and have strong strategic alignment to the broader region. Strengthen and support the tourism industry to become ‘Visitor Ready’ through training, capacity building, and supporting skilled workforces attraction. 9

Moorabool Shire - Key Workforce Data

The following table lists some of the key data that should inform a Workforce Development Plan that responds to employment needs across Moorabool Shire.

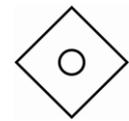
Table 21: Workforce Development Plan – Moorabool Data

Key Issue in Workforce Development Plan	Relevant Moorabool Data*
Addressing workforce development gaps	<p>Workforce shortages and staff retention is a key issue for local businesses, including retail, hospitality, health, education, which impacts operation and the ability to service residents and workers.</p> <p>Skills shortages in key consumer-facing industries such as hospitality, construction, childcare, community and aged care sectors will impact business operations and service provision for residents</p>
Pathways for worker transitions between declining to emerging industries	<p>Top industries by employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction 15% - Health Care & Social Assistance 12% - Education & Training 12% - Retail Trade 9% - Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing 9% <p>Agriculture and Construction are key drivers of economic growth. Local jobs are growing at a slower rate than population growth, contributing to relatively high unemployment. Low rate of job containment as resident workers commute to Metropolitan Melbourne and Ballarat. High proportion of spend leakage outside the municipality Expanding industries include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Logistics - Services
Training and upskilling	<p>Rate of population growth is considerably higher than the Regional Victoria average (1.3% p.a.) and will impact the level of demand and employment needs</p> <p>Adequate jobs growth in the Shire will be critical to provide local employment opportunities for the growing labour force</p> <p>Consideration should be given to strategies that promote skilled workforce attraction, as well as training and development opportunities to ensure the local workforce has the relevant skills to meet industry needs</p> <p>No TAFE or University located in Moorabool Shire</p>



Key Issue in Workforce Development Plan	Relevant Moorabool Data*
First Nations Employment	<p>1.6% of Moorabool population is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander compared to 1.1% for Victoria overall</p> <p>Moorabool Shire Indigenous residents' data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6.3% of 15 – 24-year-olds are unemployed, compared to 3.8% in the non-Indigenous population - \$758 median weekly individual income compared to \$804 non-Indigenous residents - 26% reside in government housing compared to 11.6% non-Indigenous - 37% one parent families compared to 18% non-Indigenous residents - 9.5% of women aged 15 – 24 years have children compared to 3.8% non-Indigenous - 5.5% of people aged 25 – 64 live with a profound disability compared to 3.7% non-Indigenous population
Supporting and fostering innovation by local small, minority-owned, women-owned, and disadvantaged business enterprises	<p>Industries that could represent a future diversified economy, based on the Shire's attributes, growth trends and major project pipeline, include:</p> <p>'Green economy', including clean technology, renewable energy, carbon renewal and other circular economy practices (leveraging existing renewable energy investment as well as the Western Victoria Transmission Network, which will support future energy investment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 31.1% of employed persons who are owners/managers in Moorabool are women - This is the 15th lowest out of all Victorian LGA's <p>Very low proportions of women employed in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Production engineering - Concreting - Truck driving - Building - Plumbing and Electrical
Benchmarks around employment quotas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Jobs Growth 2% p.a. 2017-2021 Victoria 1.9% p.a. - 40% of Small to Medium Businesses in Moorabool employ 1-19 employees

* Material is summarised from: Moorabool Shire Workforce Development Plan; MOORABOOL SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023 2027; ABS 2021



Desktop Audit – Accommodation

Table 22: High Level Desktop Audit – Accommodation Options

Facility Type	Facility Name	Address	Suburb /Town	LGA	Accommodation	Bed Capacity
Caravan Park	Bacchus Marsh Caravan Park	26 Main Street	Bacchus Marsh	Moorabool	8 x 2 brm cabins; 5 x studio cabins 1 - 6 people; house 10 people	55
Caravan Park	Ballan Caravan & Tourist Park	45 Jopling St	Ballan	Moorabool	6 cabins; 2 on site caravans	36
Long term BNB	Sweet Home in Bacchus Marsh		Bacchus Marsh	Moorabool	5 bedrooms	5
Long term BNB	Stay@Swans		Darley	Moorabool	6 beds	6
Motel	Bacchus Marsh Avenue Motel	272 MAIN Street	Bacchus Marsh	Moorabool		
Share Accommodation	Phoenix Park Ballan	5623 Geelong Ballan Road	Ballan	Moorabool	4 rooms consisting of 6 queen bed rooms 3 twin single bed rooms and 5 bunk rooms	48
Moorabool Shire Sub Total						150
Caravan Park	Lake Fyans Holiday Park	650 Mokepilly Road	Halls Gap	Northern Grampians	Cabins	101
Caravan Park	Breeze Holiday Parks - Grampians	2223 Grampians Road	Halls Gap	Northern Grampians	Cabins	67
Caravan Park	Breeze Holiday Parks - Halls Gap	Cnr School Road and Grampians Road	Halls Gap	Northern Grampians	Cabins	67
Motel	Gramians Motel	4904 Grampians Road	Halls Gap	Northern Grampians	Queen and family rooms	23
Long term BNB	The Grand Manor	302 Tunnel Road	Pamona l	Northern Grampians	5 bedroom house	5
Long term BNB	Lallibroch	2055 Pamonal Road	Pamona l	Northern Grampians	5 bedroom house	5
Northern Grampians Sub Total						268
Caravan Park	NRMA Ballarat Holiday Park	108 Clayton Street	Golden Point	Ballarat	20 rooms	
Caravan Park	Eureka Stockade Holiday Park	104 Stawell Street South	Ballarat East	Ballarat	27 rooms	
Caravan Park	Big4 Ballarat Windmill Holiday Park	56 Remembrance Drive	Cardigan	Ballarat		

Source: K2 Planning 2025

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