

DECISION ON PROJECT

Decision under section 8B(3)(a) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

Navarre Green Energy Hub (Referral Number 2023-R07)

Assessment through an environment effects statement (EES) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* **is required** for the reasons set out in the attached Notice of Reasons for Decision.

Procedures and requirements under section 8B(5) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

The procedures and requirements applying to the EES, 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 project (in the form referred) has the potential for significant environmental effects on native vegetation and biodiversity values that need to be further avoided and minimised, prior to progressing the main EES report.
- (ii) The EES should assess and document alternative siting, layouts, design and operational procedures for the project or its constituent parts to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of different avoidance, minimisation or mitigation of significant effects on:
 - a. biodiversity and ecological values including native vegetation, listed flora, fauna and communities through loss, degradation, or fragmentation of habitat, collision with turbines;
 - b. surface water environments, including local waterways and the broader catchment, as well as groundwater (hydrology, quality, uses and dependent ecosystems);
 - c. tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage values;
 - d. the amenity of nearby residences and other sensitive receptors;
 - e. socio-economic values; and
 - f. soils, land-uses, historic cultural heritage and landscape values during the construction and operation of the proposal.

The EES will also investigate the cumulative effects on biodiversity, ecology, social and landscape values from this and other proposed and approved projects in the area.

- (iii) The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES will be set out more fully in scoping requirements. Draft scoping requirements will be exhibited for 15 business days, before final scoping requirements are issued by the Minister for Planning.
- (iv) The proponent is to prepare and submit to DTP an adequate draft EES study program to inform the preparation of scoping requirements.
- (v) 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.

- (vi) DTP will convene an inter-agency technical reference group (TRG) to advise DTP and the proponent on the scoping requirements, the design and adequacy of the EES studies, and coordination with statutory approval processes.
- (vii) The proponent is to prepare and submit to DTP its proposed EES consultation plan for engaging with the public and stakeholders during the preparation of the EES. Once completed to the satisfaction of DTP, the EES consultation plan is to be implemented by the proponent, having regard to advice from DTP and the TRG.
- (viii) The proponent is also to prepare and submit to DTP its proposed schedule for the completion of studies, preparation and exhibition of the EES, following preparation of the scoping requirements. This schedule will be finalised in consultation with DTP and is intended to facilitate the alignment of the proponent's and DTP's timeframes, including for TRG review of technical studies and main report.
- (ix) The proponent is to apply appropriate peer review and quality management procedures to enable the completion of EES studies and documentation to a satisfactory standard.
- (x) The EES is to be exhibited for a period of 30 business days for public comment, unless the exhibition period spans the Christmas–New Year period, in which case 40 business days will apply.
- (xi) An inquiry will be appointed under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to consider environmental effects of the proposal.

Notification

The following parties (proponent and relevant Victorian decision-makers) are to be notified of this decision in accordance with sections 8A and 8B(4)(a)(i) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*:

- Neoen Pty Ltd (proponent)
- Minister for Environment
- Minister for Planning
- Secretary of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Environment Protection Authority
- Executive Director, First Peoples – State Relations
- Heritage Victoria
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- Wimmera Catchment Management Authority
- North Central Catchment Management Authority
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Pyrenees Shire Council

HON SONYA KILKENNY MP
Minister for Planning

Date:

16/5/2024