

# Bellambi Heights Renewable Project

**Project Update**  
November 2022

Environmental Impact Assessment

## The Project

Vena Energy Australia's proposed Bellambi Heights Renewable Project (BHRP) includes a 200 megawatt (MW) solar farm and 200 MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

The BHRP project area is located just outside of Beryl, approximately 6.5 kilometres (km) north-west of Gulgong, New South Wales and within the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ). The project area is on the junction of Puggoon Road and the Castlereagh Highway.

The BHRP solar farm would generate the equivalent of approximately 400 gigawatt hours (GWh) of energy annually, which is enough to power approximately 92,000 homes. The BESS would have two hours of storage capacity, which is equivalent of powering approximately 161,000 homes annually.

## Scoping Phase complete

Since our last update issued in February 2022, we have completed and submitted a Scoping Report to the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE).

In May 2022, DPE issued the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs), which outline the site investigations, studies and consultation required, as part of undertaking environmental, social and economic impact assessments, and preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Project.

The Scoping Report and SEARs can be found online at:  
<https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/bellambi-heights-solar>

## Community engagement

During the Scoping Phase of the project, key stakeholder and community feedback was received. Thank you to those who have provided feedback and comments about the Project.

Please see the back page of this update, for a summary of the feedback received and contact details and opportunities for the community to ask questions and provide feedback to the project team during the preparation of the EIS.

## Project assessment and approval process

The project is being assessed as State Significant Development (SSD), under Part 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

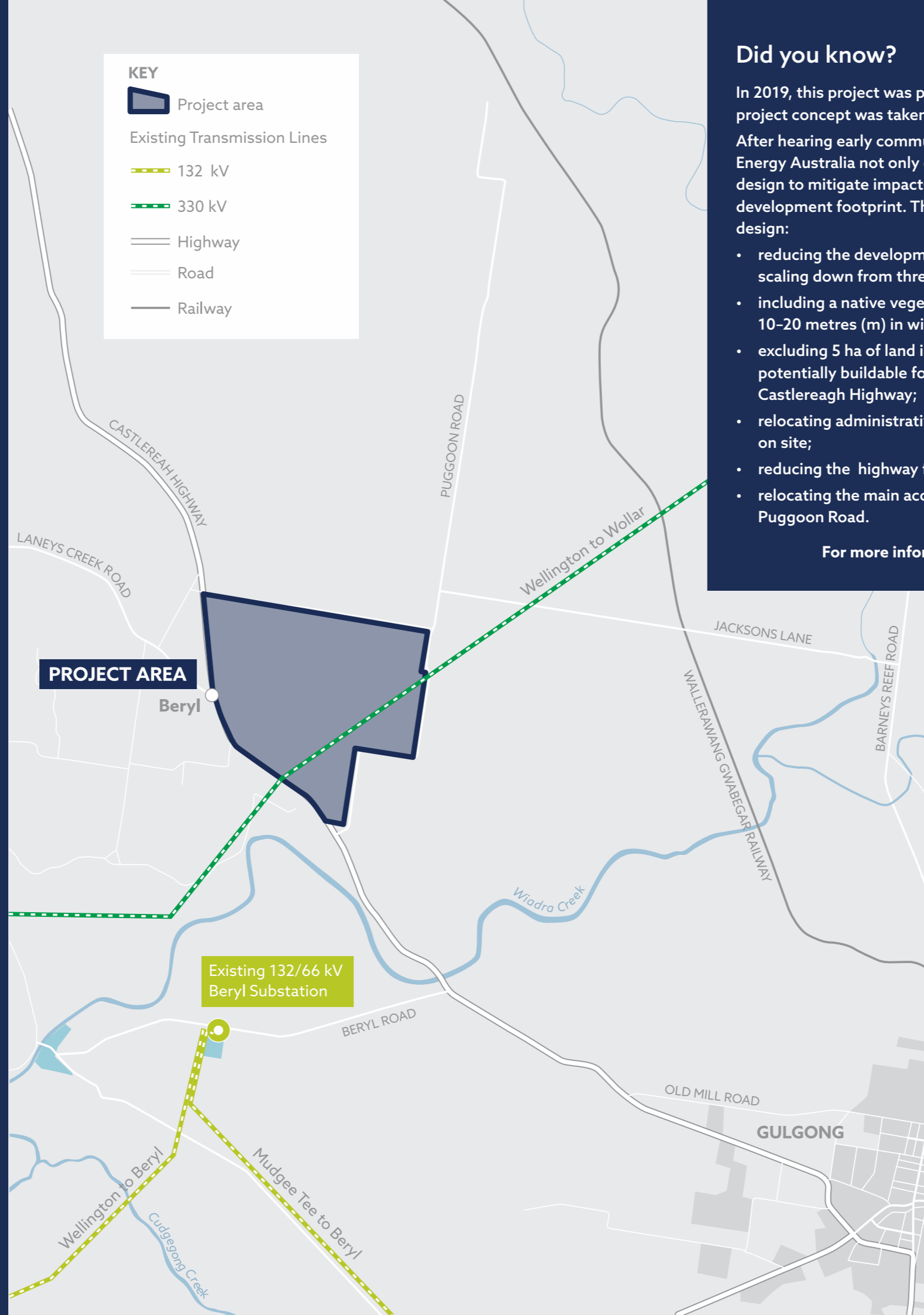
As outlined in the SEARs for the Project, the following impact assessment investigations and studies are being undertaken as part of preparing the EIS:



Vena Energy Australia has engaged EMM Consulting Pty Ltd to undertake the environmental, social and other technical studies required as part of preparing the EIS.

Investigations during 2022 have included further detailed environmental surveys to inform Vena's understanding of the existing environment, and as part of the EIS. These have included further ecological surveys, Aboriginal heritage surveys, historic heritage surveys and commencement of investigations for traffic, soil and land resources and water and hydrology. The results of these investigations will inform the development of the project design, and form the basis of technical assessments that will be prepared as part of the EIS.

Vena Energy Australia is a hands-on independent power producer with 37 GWh of renewable energy projects across the Asia Pacific region. We are determined to be a catalyst in Australia's transition to renewable energy, and answer the call for cleaner energy, paving the way for a more sustainable future.




## Did you know?

In 2019, this project was previously known as the 'Gulgong Solar Farm'. A project concept was taken to the community for feedback at that time. After hearing early community feedback on the original concept, Vena Energy Australia not only changed the project name, but also revised the site design to mitigate impacts to the community by significantly reducing the development footprint. The following key changes were made to the project design:

- reducing the development footprint from 820 hectares (ha) to 304 ha, by scaling down from three stages to one;
- including a native vegetation screening within the site, which varies from 10–20 metres (m) in width, beyond the existing vegetated road reserve;
- excluding 5 ha of land in the north-west corner of the site, from the potentially buildable footprint, to reduce views of development from the Castlereagh Highway;
- relocating administrative and control facilities to a less prominent location on site;
- reducing the highway frontage by more than 70%; and
- relocating the main access point from the Castlereagh Highway to Puggoon Road.

For more information, please visit [venaenergy.com.au](http://venaenergy.com.au)

## Project timeline

	<b>SCOPING</b> Scoping Report & SEARs	<b>1</b>	<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b> Engagement with potentially affected people and other interested parties
 Current Stage	<b>EIS PREPARATION</b> Environmental Impact Statement	<b>2</b>	
	<b>EIS SUBMISSION</b> Lodge development application and EIS to DPE	<b>3</b>	
	<b>PUBLIC EXHIBITION</b> Submissions can be made to DPE	<b>4</b>	
	<b>RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS</b> Submissions Report	<b>5</b>	
	<b>ASSESSMENT</b> Assessment Report & Recommended Conditions of Consent	<b>6</b>	
	<b>DETERMINATION</b> Approval or Refusal	<b>7</b>	
	<b>POST APPROVAL</b> Compliance & Modifications	<b>8</b>	

## Stakeholder and community feedback

During the Scoping Phase, the project team reintroduced the project to stakeholders, and received a variety of feedback from adjacent neighbours, landowners, local council and government agencies. Some of the topics raised included the following (listed in alphabetical order):

- accommodation and workforce demand on local services;
- construction impact;
- cumulative impact of renewable developments across the region and various topics about the Central West Orana REZ, including the grid connection;
- enforcement of consent conditions;
- fire risk;
- health and wellbeing;
- land formations and site suitability;
- land values;
- tourism impact; and
- visual impact.

All feedback has been shared with the EIS technical teams and will be further considered during the EIS preparation.

## Community information session

Stakeholder and community feedback on the proposed project is important to receive, as part of undertaking the environmental impact assessment. This includes targeted engagement with nearby residents and businesses, and the local community.

A drop-in community information session will be held during November 2022:

**Date** Saturday 26 November

**Time** Any time between 9am and 1pm

**Venue** Gulgong Memorial Hall,  
112 Herbert Street,  
Gulgong NSW 2852

We invite and encourage feedback via the 'Contact us' details provided below at any time.

## Social impact assessment

The Social Impact Assessment (SIA) is ongoing and aims to understand people's views, interests and concerns about the Project. The SIA engagement will build on the broader project engagement and include targeted stakeholder interviews and a survey. Hard copies of the SIA survey will be available at the in-person community information session and can be completed online.

To help inform the SIA, we invite you to complete the survey at <https://your-say.questionpro.com/BHRP> or scan the QR code. Any feedback will be considered as part of the SIA.



## Contact us

For more information about the Bellambi Heights Renewable Project EIS, please contact the project team or visit the Vena Energy Australia website:



**Website**  
[www.venaenergy.com.au](http://www.venaenergy.com.au)



**Phone**  
1800 841 229



**Email**  
[bhrp.mailbox@venaenergy.com](mailto:bhrp.mailbox@venaenergy.com)

*Vena Energy Australia is the largest independent renewable energy company in the Asia-Pacific region. Vena Energy Australia own, develop, construct, operate, manage, and commercialise renewable energy projects with a current Australian portfolio in solar, onshore wind, offshore wind, and energy storage projects.*