



Bendemeer Solar Farm Project Summary

The Bendemeer Solar Farm, as part of the Bendemeer Renewable Energy Hub, will involve the construction, operation and decommissioning of a large-scale solar facility located in the New England region of NSW. Consisting of up to 430,000 solar panels, the project will have an electricity generating capacity of approximately 280 megawatts (MW) Direct Current. The project will also include a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of approximately 150 MW / 300 MW hour (MWh), and associated infrastructure. *See the project layout overview on page 2 for further information.*

The Bendemeer Solar Farm has been deemed a State Significant Development under State Environmental Planning Policy 2021 and therefore requires development consent from the NSW government under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

This project is being developed by Athena Energy Australia (Holdings) Pty Ltd, which is wholly owned by Metis Energy Limited, a fully integrated renewable energy company, with a number of renewable energy projects across the Asia Pacific region.

Key Benefits

The Bendemeer Solar Farm will significantly aid in the sector-wide transition from traditional fossil fuel power generation to renewable energy production, as well as contribute to key greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets set out by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

Key benefits of the Bendemeer Solar Farm include:

- Producing enough electricity to power 74,000 NSW homes annually.
- Significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 420,000 tonnes CO₂ annually.
- A 'Community Benefit Fund' which will see \$50,000 contributed per annum over the life of the project, to be put towards growth and improvement of local community, infrastructure, services and events.
- A diversified income stream for rural landholders that enables them to continue grazing.
- Employment of up to 307 jobs through construction, and up to 15 jobs during operations.
- Opportunities for local businesses and contractors to provide services directly to the Project during construction and operation.
- Delivery of economic benefits to the regional economies of Tamworth, Armidale, Uralla and Walcha.
- During construction, the project will annually provide \$162 million of additional economic output (i.e. the total value of goods and services) and \$33 million in additional household income across the region.¹
- During operation, the project will annually provide \$32 million of additional economic output and \$3 million in additional household income across the region.

1. Bendemeer Solar Farm Economic Assessment, Gillespie Economics, July 2023



\$50,000/Year
in a Community Benefit Fund



300+
New jobs generated during construction



POWERING 74,000
NSW homes each year



Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by **420,000 TONNES** CO₂ each year



Figure 1

Project Layout Overview

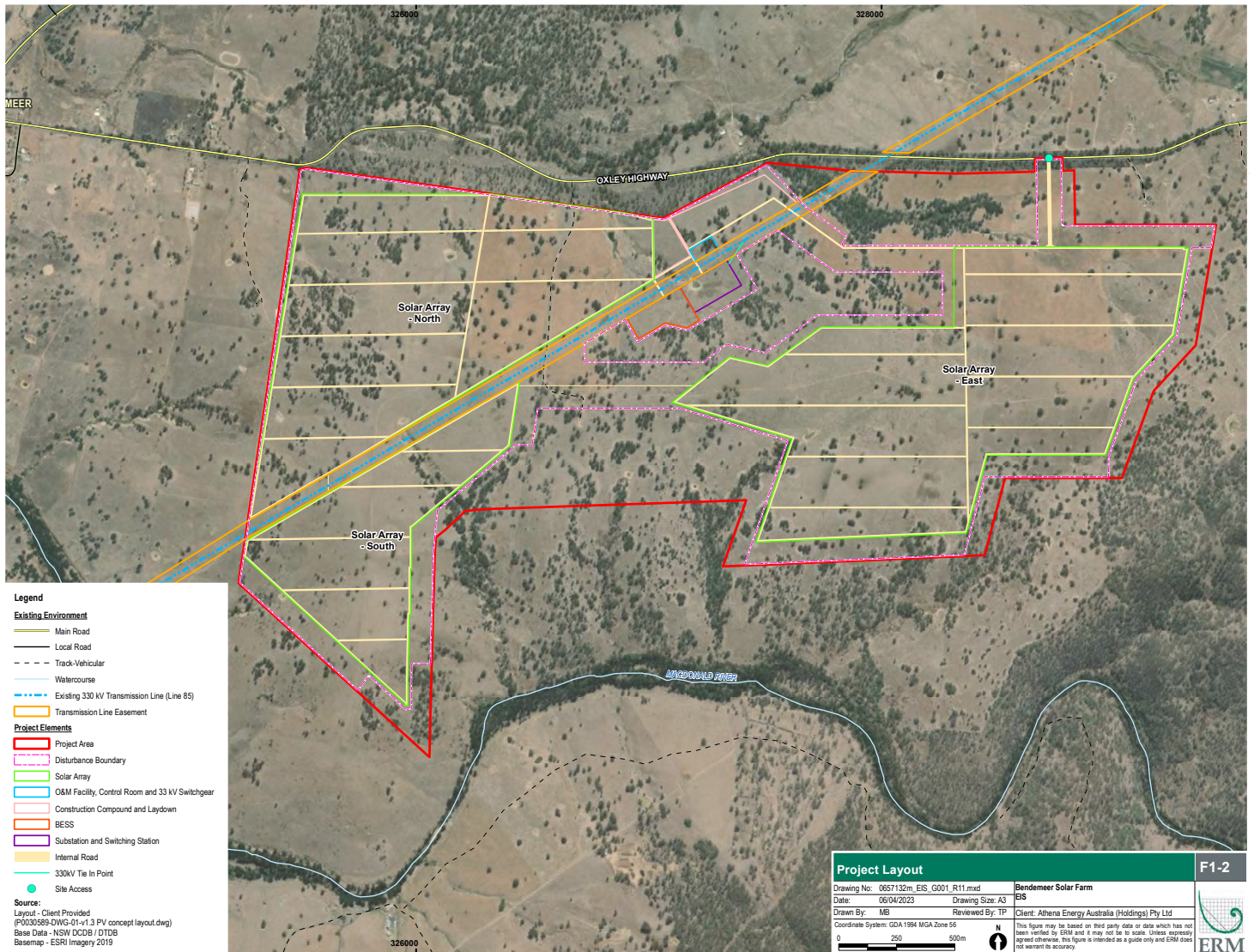
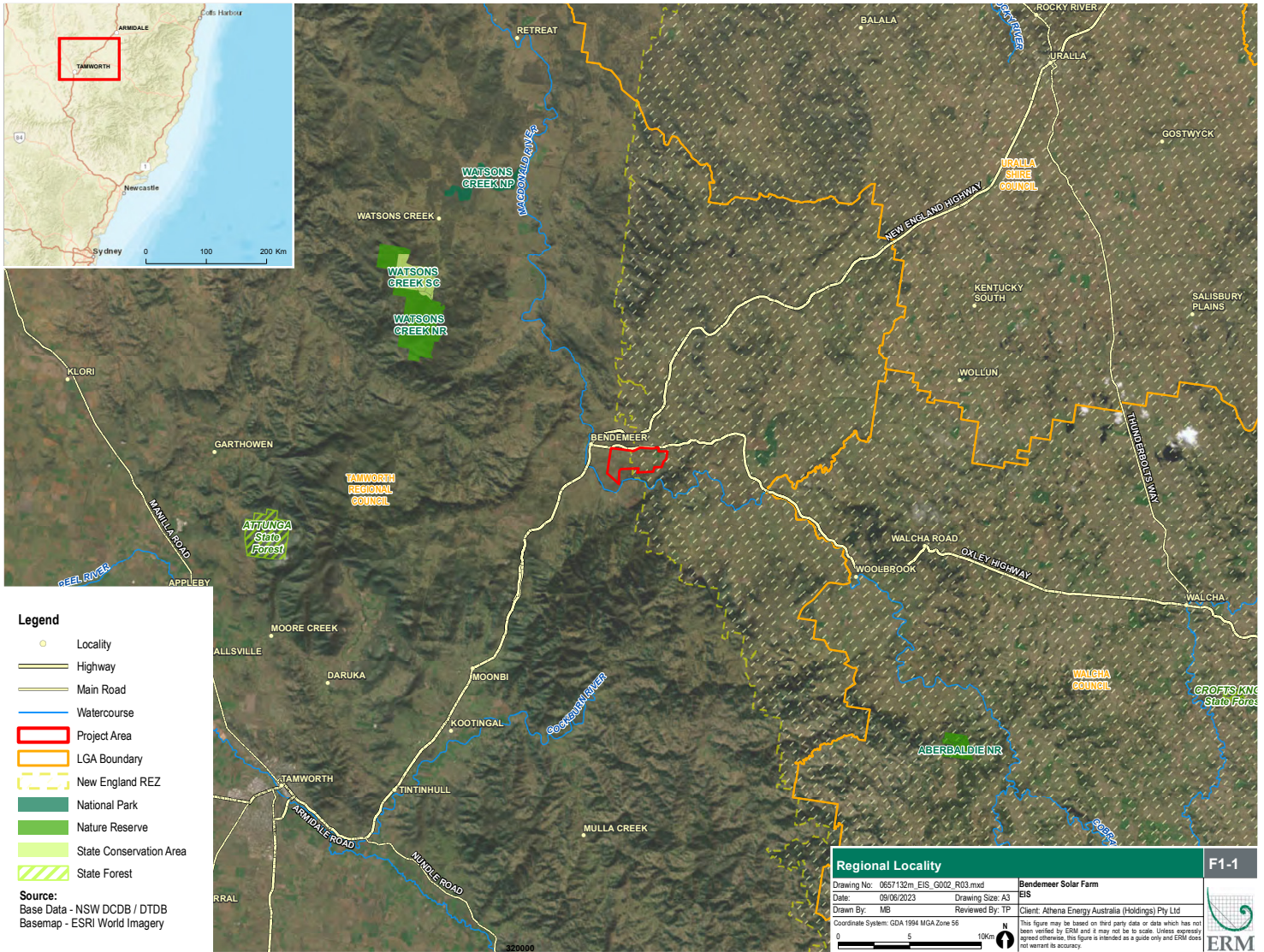


Figure 2

Project Locality



Key Findings of the Environmental Impact Statement include:

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Two potential archaeological deposits were identified, however are located outside the Disturbance Footprint and will be fenced off for additional protection and will not be disturbed.

Historic Heritage

The Project Area features a shearing shed and stockyards typical of agricultural properties. No historic heritage items within the Project Area are listed on the National or Commonwealth Heritage Listings, State Heritage Listings or Tamworth Regional Local Environmental Plan.

Historic Heritage Noise

Operational noise levels would not exceed limits at any dwellings surrounding the project site.

Construction noise levels will require management due to expected intermittent exceedances at 32 dwellings in worst-case scenarios. High noise impact activities, such as piling, are expected to be short in duration and will vary as construction progresses across the Project Area. Noise impacts will be mitigated through a construction noise management plan.

Visual

Visual impacts were rated as 'low' at all surrounding dwellings, and 'very low' from all public viewpoints.

Specific operational controls have been proposed on the solar tracking systems that will eliminate any potential glare of the project.

Soils and Agriculture

Sheep grazing would be maintained, and therefore impacts on agriculture will be minimal, temporary, and limited. Following decommissioning, there would be no permanent negative impacts on agricultural resources or enterprises in the Project Area.

Traffic

The project will generate up to 110 vehicle movements per day during peak construction, including 62 truck movements. Traffic will enter the Project Area off the Oxley Highway.

The road network can accommodate the traffic generated by the project during the construction, operation and decommissioning stages.

Road surface widening will be installed on the Oxley Highway to allow vehicles to safely enter and exit the project site.

Water Resources, Hydrology and Flooding

Increase in flood levels and velocities will not be significant (compared to existing flood levels) following project development, and surface water runoff will be managed by maintaining ground cover and implementing appropriate erosion and sediment controls.

Biodiversity

No single NSW or Commonwealth threatened flora or fauna species have been recorded in the Project Area throughout studies.

The Project Area includes potential habitat for three NSW threatened fauna species (Squirrel Glider, Eastern Pygmy-Possum, Tusked Frog) and a precautionary approach has been taken in the EIS. Additional surveys will be conducted to confirm the absence of the threatened fauna species.

Two NSW and Commonwealth threatened plant community types (i.e. habitat) were identified - the Red Gum and Yellow Box grassy woodland types. The Disturbance Footprint has been reduced by 40% during EIS to avoid and minimise impacts to biodiversity.

Preliminary Hazard Analysis

Potential hazards associated with the Project are typical of solar and battery developments, and include examples such as fire impacts, explosion, toxicity, property damage and accidental propagation and societal risk. Through strict controls, all hazards can be managed, and analysis has determined there are no impacts expected outside of the Project.

Bushfire

Bushfire protection measures will be required and implemented throughout construction and operations. This includes creating asset protection zones surrounding the project infrastructure, adequate site access and water supply. A Bushfire Emergency Management and Operations Plan (BFEMOP) will be developed in consultation with the NSW RFS and Tamworth Regional Council.

Waste Management

Waste management measures will be implemented to avoid potential contamination to land and water, and impacts to human health and wildlife. This will include separation of waste streams to maximise recycling and emphasise reuse of any excess material and vegetative matter.

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Want more information?

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