Social Impact Assessment

Bunyip North Battery Energy Storage System

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Bunyip North Battery Energy Storage System

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BNPC	Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd (the Proponent)
BRAG	Bunyip Renewable Action Group
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DSDIP	Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
EPA Victoria	Environmental Protection Authority Victoria
ERM	Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GW	Gigawatt
ha	Hectare
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
km	Kilometres
km/hr	Kilometres per hour
kV	Kilovolt
LEP	Local Employment Plan
LGA	Local Government Area
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Co-Ordinator
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt Hours
RAI	Rental Affordability Index
RES	RES Australia Pty Ltd
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
SAL	Suburbs and Localities
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
STE	State
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM) has been appointed by RES Australia Pty Ltd (RES) to undertake a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the proposed Bunyip North BESS Project ('the Project').

The Project is located in Bunyip North, north of the Princes Freeway, and approximately 3 kilometres (km) from Bunyip, in the Shire of Cardinia Local Government Area. The Project comprises a 400 megawatt / 2,400 megawatt hours standalone battery energy storage system (BESS).

The Victorian Government is in the process of establishing a new approach to manage how proponents of renewable energy projects gain access to the State's transmission network – the Victorian Access Regime. Whilst the Project is being undertaken prior to the commencement of the Victorian Access Regime, this SIA has been developed to address the relevant aspects of the *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects (June 2026)* (the 'Social Value Guidelines'), which has been prepared by the Victorian Government to support the new regime.

As Victoria does not have statutory SIA guidance, this SIA has been guided by the requirements of the Queensland planning framework, in particular, *the Social Impact Assessment Guideline Version 2.0, July 2025* (the 'SIA Guideline'), and provides the necessary information to support the development of a Community Benefits Fund / Social Value and Economic Benefits Program.

SOCIAL STUDY AREA

The Social Study Area for the Project is divided into a Primary and Secondary Social Study Area. The Primary Social Study Area includes the locations in which the most substantive potential social impacts are likely to occur and can be summarised as comprising the following three components:

- The **Project Area and immediate surrounding areas**, inclusive of properties and dwellings located within 2 km. The 2 km extent captures non-associated dwellings surrounding the Project Area, including those located along McConnell Road, Tonimbuk Road, Wimpole Road, and within the town of Bunyip. The 2 km extent is broader than both the area within which most technical assessments have identified may be directly impacted by the Project and the notification undertaken for the Planning Application.
- The **surrounding towns and communities** of Bunyip North, Bunyip, and Garfield, which may provide goods and services or host accommodation or Drive-in Drive-out workers, to support the Construction Phase of the Project; and
- The **likely transportation and haulage route**, comprising part of the heavy vehicle route from the Port of Melbourne to the Project Area, and potential light vehicle routes to/from the Project Area from the surrounding towns (i.e. Bunyip and Garfield).

The Secondary Social Study Area comprises the surrounding towns and communities of Longwarry North, Longwarry, Tynong, Drouin, Nar Nar Goon, Warragul, and Pakenham, which may benefit from the economic opportunities associated with the project (e.g. goods and services, accommodation opportunities, etc.).

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Community and stakeholder engagement for the Project was undertaken over a 12 month period (August 2025 to July 2026, prior to the commencement of the formal public notification process for the Planning Application), supplemented by targeted SIA stakeholder interviews completed between May and June 2026, and additional stakeholder interview and correspondence in September 2026.

Engagement activities for the Project provided multiple accessible channels for participation, including community events, direct communications, digital platforms, and stakeholder-specific consultation.

Key engagement activities conducted by RES included:

- Community information stalls at local events, resulting in 65 direct conversations with Surrounding Community Members, and a drop-in information session at Bunyip Hall on 18 July 2026, resulting in a further 30 direct conversations;
- Direct engagement with 168 Immediate Neighbours within approximately 1.5 km of the Project Area (as part of the Planning Application public notice), and distribution of a Project newsletter to approximately 1,275 households;
- Establishment of a Project website with feedback mechanisms, mailing list registration, and direct contact channels, supported by media releases and newspaper advertisements in local publications; and
- Ongoing engagement with Traditional Owners and various other key stakeholder groups of relevance to the Project.

Feedback obtained through engagement reflected a mix of information-seeking enquiries and concerns regarding potential Project impacts. Key themes included protection of rural character and agricultural land, visual and amenity impacts, bushfire and emergency management, cumulative impacts associated with other proposed developments in the locality, property values, social infrastructure capacity, environmental values, and the need for transparent and ongoing communication. Stakeholders also identified opportunities for local economic participation, community infrastructure investment, and environmental initiatives.

The sentiment recorded through engagement changed over the engagement period, with a higher proportion of concerns expressed following public notification of the Planning Application. Public notification broadened awareness of the Project and provided further opportunities for community participation. Concern is most strongly and consistently expressed by residents living in proximity to the Project Area, while in principle support for renewable energy development remains evident amongst other stakeholders and within the wider LGA. However, that due to the different engagement methods used and the self-selected nature of participation in later stakeholder engagement activities, these findings cannot be interpreted as representing a broader change in sentiment across the wider community.

To-date, engagement outcomes have been used by RES to inform the Project design and assessment, including refinements to avoid environmentally and culturally sensitive areas, adjustments to assessment scopes, and enhancements to the Project's engagement methods.

Feedback provided by stakeholders has been used in this SIA to inform the scoping of social issues and potential impacts to ensure that these concerns are adequately captured in the impact assessment.

As this SIA is separate from, and does not form part of, the Planning Application, the specific matters raised through submissions on the Planning Application are addressed through the statutory planning process and considered by the responsible authority in its assessment of the application. Notwithstanding, RES captures feedback received across all Project activities to support its understanding of community interests and concerns. Relevant feedback received through the planning process has therefore been considered in this SIA for the purpose of assessing potential social impacts.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

A total of **11 potential social impacts** were identified. The impacts were identified based on the characteristics of the Project, issues raised by stakeholders, technical studies undertaken for the Project, and local socio-economic context in which the Project is situated.

Potential cumulative impacts were assessed as part of the impact assessment. Of the 11 potential social impacts identified, **nine were considered to have the potential to contribute to cumulative impacts**. Given the proximity of the Project to the proposed Wimpole Battery (AMPYR Australia Pty Ltd) and the Bunyip North Granite Quarry (Heidelberg Materials Pty Ltd), there is the possibility that community concerns relating to social amenity, community health and safety, and increased demand on social infrastructure and services, may be amplified.

The significance of each impact was assessed based on the likelihood of occurrence, and the expected magnitude of the impact (the degree of change expected and informed by receptor vulnerability). The impact significance ratings derived in the assessment were then re-assessed after the application of mitigation and/or enhancement strategies were applied to provide a residual impact significance rating for each impact.

Based on the current Project description, available social baseline data, and proposed management measures, the assessment did **not identify any residual social impacts rated as 'Major'**. Residual ratings should be reviewed as the workforce profile, accommodation arrangements, and/or technical assessment outcomes change as part of ongoing design development.

Table E-1 provides an overview of the potential social impacts identified and assessed, including their post-mitigation/enhancement residual impact significance rating.

TABLE E-1 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL SOCIAL IMPACTS

Potential Impact Descriptor	Potential Cumulative	Project Phase	Residual Impact Significance
Social Impact #1: Creation of Direct Employment Opportunities	Yes	Construction	Positive
		Operation	Positive
Social Impact #2: Increased Economic Benefits	Yes	Construction	Positive
		Operation	Positive
Social Impact #3: Reduced Community Cohesion	Yes	Construction	Moderate
		Operation	Moderate

Potential Impact Descriptor	Potential Cumulative	Project Phase	Residual Impact Significance
Social Impact #4: Reduced Trust and Confidence in Community Engagement	No	Construction	Moderate
		Operation	Moderate
Social Impact #5: Accommodation of the Non-Local Workforce	Yes	Construction	Minor
		Operation	Negligible
Social Impact #6: Potential for Skills Shortages	Yes	Construction	Minor
		Operation	Negligible
Social Impact #7: Potential Impact on Social Infrastructure and Services	Yes	Construction	Minor
		Operation	Negligible
Social Impact #8: Perceived Land Use Incompatibility and Impact to Land Values	Yes	Construction	Minor
		Operation	Moderate
Social Impact #9: Potential Impact on Social Amenity	Yes	Construction	Minor
		Operation	Moderate
Social Impact #10: Potential Impact on Community Health and Safety	Yes	Construction	Moderate
		Operation	Moderate
Social Impact #11: Potential Impact on Cultural Heritage	No	Construction	Moderate
		Operation	Negligible

SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT

A suite of management measures/actions for the Project has been developed through an understanding of the baseline social environment, community and stakeholder engagement outcomes, and an assessment of potential social impacts. The purpose of these management measures/actions is to minimise, mitigate, or manage potential negative impacts and to enhance potential positive impacts and opportunities.

In addition, a social impact monitoring framework has been prepared in order to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the management measures/actions.

SOCIAL VALUE AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS PLAN INITIATIVES

In order to support the development and implementation of a Community Benefits Fund / Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan, a number of community benefit initiatives for further consideration have been identified in **Table E-2**. These initiatives are to benefit the communities within the Primary Social Study Area (i.e. Bunyip North, Bunyip, and Garfield) in the first instance, and may be extended to the communities within the Secondary Social Study Area.

TABLE E-2 SOCIAL VALUE AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Initiative Descriptor	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries
#1 Community Benefit Fund	• Community Benefit Funds are a recognised mechanism for creating shared value • Responds to locally identified needs and priorities • Supports a mix of short-term and long-term benefits • Focuses on community capacity and resilience • Delivers multi-dimensional social value (social, environmental, economic) • Promotes equitable and transparent benefit distribution • Encourages collaboration and partnerships • Targets benefits proportionate to community context and impacts • Supports long-term sustainability and reduced reliance on funding	• Addresses issues associated with social cohesion • Support for hosting / providing community events • Assistance with infrastructure improvements	• Surrounding Community Members
#2 Neighbour Shared Benefit Scheme	• Delivers direct benefits to impacted neighbours • Benefits are proportionate to project impacts through a proximity-based framework • Provides ongoing long-term value across construction and operations • Establishes transparent eligibility and benefit arrangements • Builds trust and social acceptance amongst neighbouring landholders • Reflects recognised Victorian best practice for neighbourhood benefit sharing	• Aligns with interest in neighbour-specific benefit mechanisms • Addresses the perception of limited direct local economic benefits • Assists in alleviating the concern that current perceived benefits are not commensurate with scale of Project impact	• Immediate Neighbours

Initiative Descriptor	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries
#3 Support for New and/or Upgrades to Community Infrastructure within the Primary Social Study Area	• Aligns with infrastructure as a core social value initiative • Responds to community-identified needs and priorities • Supports both immediate and long-term outcomes • Builds community capacity and resilience • Addresses impacts and changing local conditions • Promotes multi-benefit outcomes (social, environmental, economic) • Encourages collaboration and co-delivery • Supports coordinated and place-based delivery • Promotes equitable and needs-based funding • Reflects scalable and proportionate benefit influence	• Addressing issues associated with social cohesion • Support for hosting / providing community events • Assistance with infrastructure improvements • Environmental management	• Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities
#4 Upskilling/ Worker Transition	• Aligns with workforce development as a core benefit area • Supports local industry participation and skills pipelines • Responds to future workforce needs of the energy transition • Contributes to long-term economic and social value • Supports community capacity building • Aligns with collaboration with education and training providers • Targets benefits to impacted/local communities • Supports inclusive and accessible opportunities	• Prosperous Economies – encouraging urban and rural business and local employment • Creating opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education • Technical and vocational education and training programs	• Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries

Initiative Descriptor	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries
#5 Small Businesses to Participate in Renewable Energy Procurement Processes	• Aligns with local industry participation expectations • Builds local business capability and capacity • Supports supply chain development and diversification • Improves access to procurement opportunities • Contributes to local economic development • Encourages collaboration with local stakeholders • Supports inclusive and accessible participation • Aligns with workforce and supplier development pathways • Targets benefits proportionate to local context	• Prosperous Economies – encouraging urban and rural business and local employment	• Immediate Neighbours • First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries
#6 Educational Partnerships	• Aligns with community capacity building objectives • Supports workforce development pathways • Responds to community-identified priorities • Delivers long-term social value outcomes • Promotes collaboration with education and community organisations • Supports locally tailored, place-based initiatives • Delivers multi-dimensional social and environmental value • Strengthens community participation and inclusion • Supports coordinated delivery through established organisations	• Prosperous Economies – encouraging urban and rural business and local employment • Creating opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education • Technical and vocational education and training programs	• Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental Resources Management Australia Pty Ltd (ERM) has been appointed by RES Australia Pty Ltd (RES) to undertake a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the proposed Bunyip North BESS ('the Project'), located in Bunyip North, north of the Princes Freeway, and approximately 3 kilometres (km) from Bunyip, in the Shire of Cardinia Local Government Area (LGA).

The proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) will have a storage capacity of up to 400 megawatts (MW) / 2,400 megawatt hours (MWh) (400 MW for six hours), which could supply electricity to over 138,000 households at times of peak demand. The Project is designed to support the sustainable transition of Victoria's energy network, enabling greater integration of renewable energy and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, while maintaining grid reliability.

This SIA identifies, predicts, evaluates and develops responses to the potential social impacts of the Project. A key outcome of the SIA is the development of management measures/actions to enhance potential positive impacts and minimise, mitigate, or manage potential negative impacts, along with ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements. In addition, the SIA provides the necessary information to support the development of a Social Value and Economic Benefits Program.

1.1 PROJECT PROPONENT

RES Group is the world's largest independent renewable energy company. Established in 1981, RES Group has over 40 years of renewable development experience and an actively expanding project portfolio of currently in excess of 27 gigawatts (GW). RES Group is active in 24 countries working across onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage and transmission and distribution. RES Group has internal expertise in development, engineering and technical assessment, construction, project finance, project operations, and construction and asset management.

RES Group, via its Australian subsidiary, RES, has been developing renewable energy projects in Australia since 2004. With a workforce of over 200 Australian employees, RES has a development pipeline of over 9 GW and currently has a portfolio of 2.5 GW of operational renewable assets in Australia. The company has offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and multiple regional locations, and is engaged in all technologies: wind, solar, and storage, offering development, construction, and asset management services across Australia.

RES has developed several projects in Victoria including the Ararat Wind Farm, Murra Warra I Wind Farm, Murra Warra II Wind Farm, Murra Warra Solar Farm and BESS, and Baringhup Solar Farm. RES has an additional 1 GW of projects in development in Victoria including the Watta Wella Wind Farm. The portfolio also includes projects in other states, such as Taralga Wind Farm in NSW, and the Dulacca Wind Farm and Emerald Solar Park in Queensland.

Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd (BNPC) in its capacity as trustee for the Bunyip North Project Trust is the Proponent for this Project, which is wholly owned by RES, and was established specifically for the purpose of owning and developing the Project.

The relevant Proponent details are:

- **Name:** Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd;
- **ACN:** 688 916 672; and
- **Address:** Suite 6.01, Level 6165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW 2060.

1.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The SIA has been prepared to support BNPC in identifying the potential social impacts of the Project, demonstrating industry good practice, and informing future decision-making in relation to stakeholder engagement and the development of a Social Value and Economic Benefits Program.

The Victorian Government is in the process of establishing a new approach to manage how proponents of renewable energy projects gain access to the State's transmission network – the Victorian Access Regime. Accordingly, this SIA has been developed in consideration of the relevant aspects of the new *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (June 2026) ('the Social Value Guidelines'), which has been prepared by the Victorian Government to support the new regime (Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action [DEECA] and VicGrid, 2026).

Victoria does not currently have statutory SIA guidance. The Social Value Guidelines also do not prescribe statutory SIA requirements, but rather identify an SIA as a means by which a Proponent can provide additional evidence of a project's social performance. As such, this SIA has been guided by the requirements of the Queensland planning framework, in particular, the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline Version 2.0, July 2025* (SIA Guideline) (Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning [DSDIP], 2025a), and the *Social Impact Assessment Supplementary Material for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Projects under the Social Impact Assessment Guideline (July 2025), Version 2.0, July 2025 (Supplementary Material)* (DSDIP, 2025b).

Specifically, this SIA will:

- Establish a baseline of the key aspects necessary to assess relevant Project impacts;
- Assess the known and potential impacts of the Project (positive and negative; direct and indirect) on the communities surrounding the Social Study Area; and
- Identify relevant and effective impact avoidance, mitigation and management options, and explore benefit enhancement measures.

1.3 AUTHORSHIP

This SIA Report was prepared by [redacted] at ERM. [redacted] has over 16 years' experience in Town Planning and Social Performance, inclusive of preparing numerous SIAs, socio-economic baselines, social management plans, Human Rights Impact Assessments, and development of benefit sharing initiatives. [redacted] holds a Bachelor of Regional and Town Planning from the University of Queensland and is a Full Member of the Planning Institute of Australia.

The SIA Report was completed in good faith in accordance with the relevant ethical frameworks, and to the knowledge of the author does not contain any false or misleading information.

1.4 QUALIFICATIONS

The SIA has been undertaken based on the Project Description presented in **Section 2**. Any changes to the Project Description may result in changes to the predicted social impacts, including their significance. Should this occur, the proposed management measures will need to be reviewed and updated accordingly.

ERM has relied on information provided by RES to inform the scoping, social baseline and impact assessment, including previous community and stakeholder engagement activities undertaken since 2025, as well as relevant documentation and technical studies prepared for the Project. The findings presented in this SIA should therefore be considered in the context of this reliance.

ERM also undertook targeted stakeholder engagement to inform the SIA between 12 May 2026 and 18 June 2026, and again between 17 September 2026 and 24 September 2026. This engagement enabled the qualification of baseline data and assessment findings. Outcomes from this engagement relevant to this SIA are captured in **Section 7** and have been integrated into the social baseline, impact assessment, management and monitoring framework, and proposed social value and economic benefit initiatives.

Additionally, this SIA has been undertaken prior to the release of data from the 2026 Census, which is anticipated to occur progressively between June 2027 and early 2028. Accordingly, it is recommended that the social baseline be reviewed and updated once this data becomes available to account for any changes since the 2021 Census. Any updates to the social baseline may have consequential implications for the impact assessment and associated management measures.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project is located within Bunyip North, approximately 3 km to the north of the town of Bunyip, and approximately 80 km southeast of Melbourne, within the Cardinia LGA.

As depicted in **Figure 2-1**, the Project is to be developed within a Project Area comprising approximately 27.6 hectares (ha) of private freehold land ('the Site'), and 3.2 ha of public land to accommodate a proposed new vehicular access from the Princes Highway.

The Site is formally described as Lot 2 on PS315155, with a street address of 30 Tonimbuk Road, Bunyip North, and comprises rural land currently used for agricultural purposes, primarily dairy cattle grazing and seasonal cultivation of hay and silage. There is an existing 220 kilovolt (kV) transmission line that traverses the southern part of the Site. The accessway, located to the south of the Site, is contained within Lot 2 on TP871515.

RES has selected the Project Area due to its strategic location between the Latrobe Valley generation centre and Melbourne's primary electricity demand centres. The Site is well positioned along established transmission infrastructure corridors and is accessible from the Princes Freeway, supporting efficient grid connection and project logistics.

2.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Project involves the development of a standalone BESS with a capacity of 400 MW / 2,400 MWh. The Project will store excess energy (e.g. excess wind, utility, and rooftop solar energy), which will be discharged during peak times to reduce reliance on existing energy generation assets within regional Victoria.

Development is proposed to occur within an indicative Development Footprint of approximately 17.5 ha within the Project Area (depicted in **Figure 2-2**), and will include:

- A series of battery units, inverters, cooling systems, medium voltage transformers, protection devices and connecting infrastructure;
- Control room, switch room and maintenance buildings;
- Utility connections;
- Aboveground infrastructure and underground alternating current cables;
- Sealed main site access at the entrance to the Site;
- Unsealed internal access tracks for access to and move around the Site;
- Fire protection equipment, including water tanks, booster pumps, and hydrants;
- Installation of perimeter security fencing; and
- Temporary construction laydown and vehicle turning area for the purpose of the construction.

Connection of the Project to the established Victorian Declared Shared Network will be achieved via a new 220 kV terminal station, the Bunyip North Terminal Station. This new terminal station will connect into the existing 220 kV transmission line between Yallourn and Rowville via a direct cut-in arrangement.

An Indicative Site Layout for the Project is provided in **Figure 2-3**.

2.1.1 PROJECT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Project is proposed to consist of the key electrical, civil, and supporting infrastructure, including:

- BESS units – modular containerised units comprising battery banks and associated management systems;
- Power Conversion System – bi-directional inverter(s) and transformer skids to convert direct current output from the batteries to alternating current (and vice versa) for transformer voltage step-up and grid connection;
- On-site Substation – including 33/220 kV step-up transformer(s), switchgear, busbars, earthing, protection and metering equipment, reactive power plant and connection points to the terminal station;
- Underground Low Voltage/Medium Voltage Cabling – to connect battery enclosures, inverters (power conversion system units), and auxiliary systems;
- High Voltage Connection Infrastructure – to connect the on-site substation to the terminal station via either overhead or underground connection, to be confirmed through detailed design and in consultation with the network operator;
- Control Room – a combined facility housing medium-voltage switchgear, protection and control systems, and communications equipment for operation of the BESS; and
- Operations and Maintenance storage area – for maintenance equipment.

2.1.2 ACCESS ARRANGEMENT AND PARKING

A new accessway is proposed along the southern boundary of the Project Area, connecting to the Princes Freeway to support construction and operational vehicle movements. This access may include dedicated acceleration and deceleration lanes to facilitate safe entry to and exit from the Site, addressing the requisite Transport for Victoria safety standards.

Internal access roads (gravel or sealed) will be developed to provide access for construction, operational, and emergency vehicles within the Project Area.

Car parking requirements will be confirmed during detailed design, with the number of spaces to be determined based on the anticipated peak construction workforce.

2.2 CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Construction of the Project is anticipated to commence in Quarter 3, 2027, with construction works taking in the order of up to 27 months to complete. During the Construction Phase, it is anticipated that the Project will generate up to 75 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) direct jobs.

The Project will not include on-site worker accommodation facilities. While some workers may be sourced from nearby towns and cities, non-local personnel will be accommodated in existing short-term accommodation. RES is currently engaging with relevant stakeholders to identify appropriate accommodation options for the non-local construction workforce. While locations such as Bunyip and Garfield are being considered, these locations are unlikely to accommodate the majority of the workforce. It is anticipated that most non-local workers will be housed in larger regional centres, including Pakenham and Warragul, as well as the Greater Melbourne area.

Construction activities likely to be undertaken for the purposes of the Project include:

- Site mobilisation and preparation – involving initial earthworks and clearing vegetation for the purpose of establishing infrastructure and the erection of temporary facilities;
- Civil works – establishment of hardstand areas, creation of stormwater management systems, and trenching to support underground cabling;
- Installation of BESS and key electrical, civil, and supporting infrastructure – arrival of components to the Site and subsequent installation;
- Testing and commissioning – conducting various tests to verify installation; and
- Rehabilitation – removal of temporary facilities, and rehabilitation of areas that have been disturbed during construction.

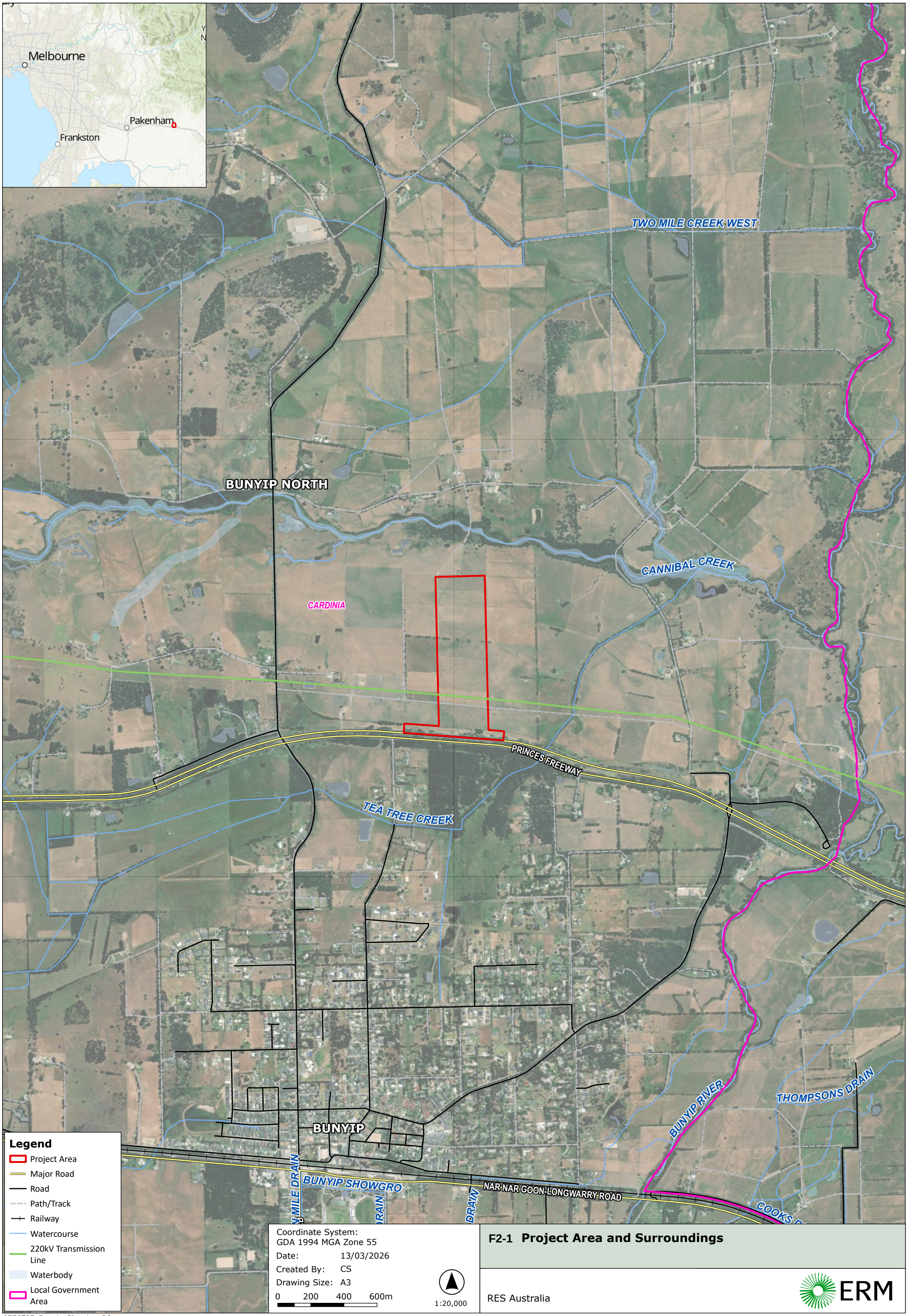
Construction activities for the Project will typically be limited to standard construction hours (i.e. 7 am to 6 pm), however there may be temporary periods of work outside of these hours to accommodate specific construction activities.

2.3 OPERATION PHASE

The Project is intended to commence operation in 2029, and have an operational life of 20 to 30 years, following which time the Project may be decommissioned or refurbished, dependent upon regulatory requirements, technological developments, and market conditions.

A permanent workforce will be required to undertake routine maintenance and administrative services throughout the life of the Project. It is therefore expected that up to 5 FTE direct jobs will be created during the Operation Phase.

Additionally, there may be the potential for specialist contractors to be engaged to conduct on-site activities such as civil works maintenance, weed and pest control, and general environmental activities expected of a rural landowner.



F2-1 Project Area and Surroundings

RES Australia

ERM

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CANNIBAL CREEK

PRINCES FREEWAY

NASH ROAD

A TREE CREEK

Legend

- Project Area
- Indicative Development Footprint
- Path/Track
- Watercourse
- Cadastre
- Waterbody

Coordinate System:
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

Date: 30/01/2026

Created By: CS

Drawing Size: A3

0 40 80 120m

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F2-2 Indicative Development Footprint

RES Australia

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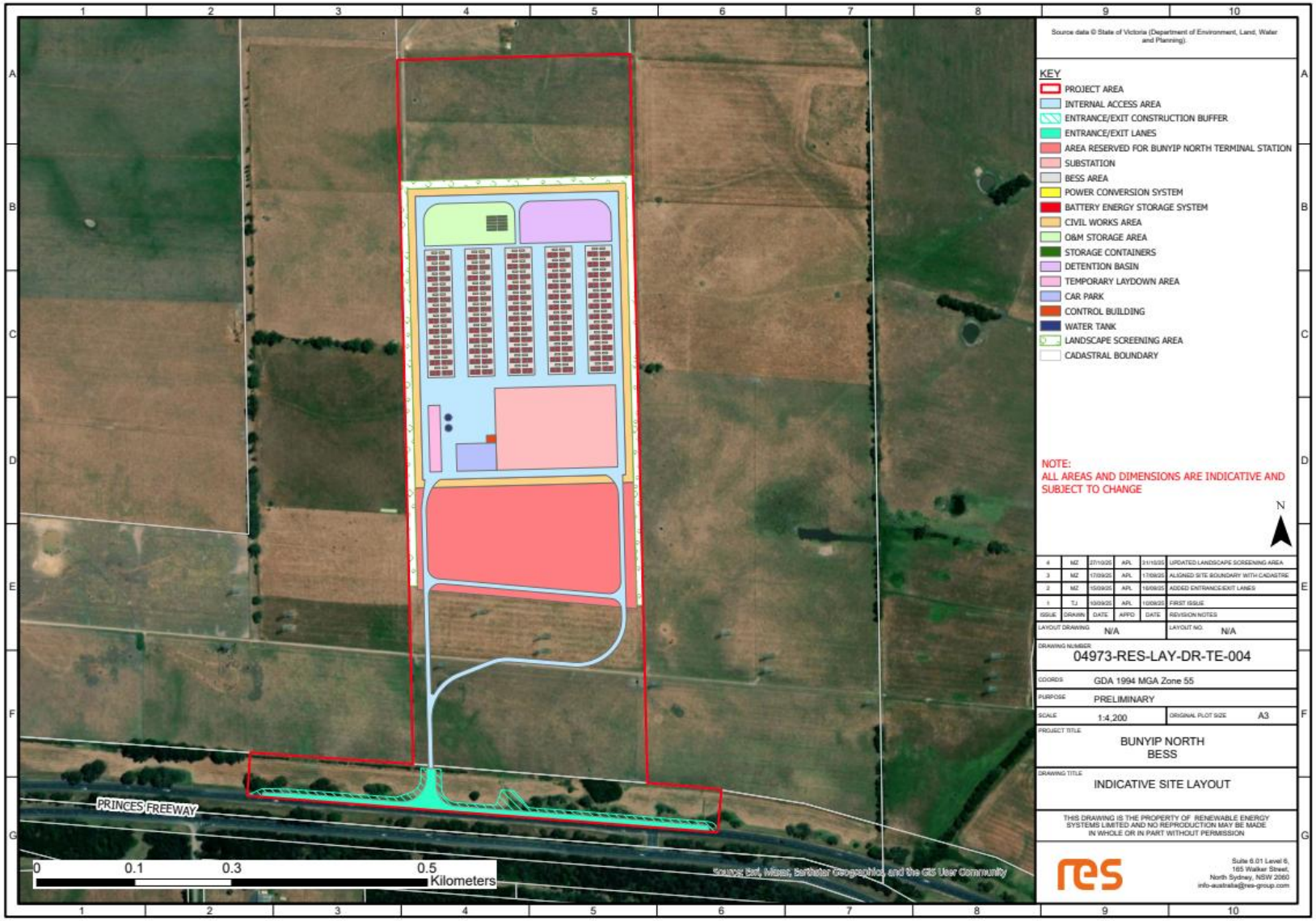


Source: RES Group, 2026.

FIGURE 2-3 INDICATIVE SITE LAYOUT

3. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This section provides an overview of the legislative drivers and requirements relating to the Project as relevant to the preparation and development of this SIA.

3.1 VICTORIAN ACCESS REGIME

The Victorian Government, together with the DEECA, is in the process of establishing a new approach to manage how proponents of renewable energy projects gain access to the State's transmission network – the Victorian Access Regime. This new approach seeks to encourage and facilitate development in defined areas of Victoria, known as Renewable Energy Zones, and give developers more confidence they can supply energy into the market (VicGrid, 2026).

Each Renewable Energy Zone established by the Victorian Government is to have defined access limits. These limits will establish a limit on the availability within the transmission network to support new renewable energy projects within the zone. As such, projects will be required to apply to VicGrid to access the transmission network. Projects located outside of an established Renewable Energy Zone will need to undertake a Grid Impact Assessment, wherein the developer/proponent will need to demonstrate that the project is unlikely to disrupt generation supplied by projects in zones (VicGrid, 2026).

A core component of the Victorian Access Regime is the increase in transparency related to the means by which grid access can be secured by developers/proponents. Access is to be governed by a process that sets expectations related to stakeholder engagement and the delivery of meaningful social value and economic benefits to landholders, local communities and Traditional Owners/First Nations communities.

At the point of preparing this SIA, draft documentation related to the Victorian Access Regime had been made available for public feedback, with VicGrid stating that it was working through the feedback received and will release an update in relation to next steps (VicGrid, 2026).

3.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL VALUE GUIDELINES

As part of the Victorian Access Regime, the Victorian Government has released the new Social Value Guidelines. The Social Value Guidelines set the minimum expectations for developers/proponents with respect to stakeholder engagement and delivery of social value and economic benefits (DEECA and VicGrid, 2026).

With respect to stakeholder engagement, the Social Value Guidelines specify a need for the Developer/Proponent to facilitate early engagement, and subsequently maintain ongoing, meaningful dialogue throughout the project lifecycle with project-related stakeholders (DEECA and VicGrid, 2026). The Social Value Guidelines emphasise early, ongoing and meaningful engagement with:

- Communities Surrounding the Project – identification and engagement with all affected communities (including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, First Peoples communities, cross-organisational and government partnerships, charitable community foundations, civic and representative groups, Local Government, Country Fire Authority (CFA), etc;
- Host Landholders – maintain open communication and negotiate fair agreements on hosting infrastructure, access, and compensation. Time is to be allowed for independent advice to the be sought;

- Neighbours and Nearby Landholders – sharing clear information on potential impacts and consulting on mitigation measures; and
- Traditional Owners – engage early, respectfully, and in a culturally safe way. Developers/Proponents are to uphold legal rights, support self-determination, and pay for time, knowledge, and expertise of Traditional Owner representatives.

Under the provisions of the Social Value Guideline, Developers/Proponents are required to deliver long-term social value and economic benefits tailored to local priorities, such as investments in local infrastructure, community projects, community capacity building, community benefit funds or collaborative projects. These benefits are to be provided in addition to, not in place of, statutory compensation, obligations, fee or rates payments (DEECA and VicGrid, 2026).

To this end, Developers/Proponents are to demonstrate how they are meeting the following expectations in the design and delivery of social value and economic benefits:

- Design a mix of initiatives that deliver strategic or long-term social value and economic benefits for the community;
- Develop community capacity by identifying opportunities that build on local strengths, assets, capabilities and resources;
- Consider the needs, priorities and strategies identified by local communities, government, industry, and research;
- Collaborate with other Proponents/Developers, local industry, community, and government to achieve collective impact, including coordinating on resourcing, initiatives, information sharing and engagement, and leveraging shared networks; and
- 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.

A Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan under the Social Value Guideline is intended to identify how planned initiatives will meet the minimum expectations set by the State Government and create positive social, economic, environmental, and cultural outcomes of individuals, communities, and regions (DEECA and VicGrid, 2026). The Social Value Guideline provides detail as to the information that is to be included in the Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan, including:

- An overview of the program;
- A list of the social and economic benefit initiatives;
- Detail as to the governance arrangements; and
- A description as to how the program will be reviewed and updated throughout the Project lifecycle.

Both the Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan, and the stakeholder engagement conducted for the Project can be informed by other relevant information, including a SIA, if conducted.

4. SIA METHODOLOGY

As Victoria does not have statutory SIA Guidance, this SIA has been prepared in accordance with the Queensland SIA Guideline with a view to minimise social impacts and enhance benefits, in-line with international industry good practice. Despite this however, this SIA has also been prepared with consideration of the new Social Value Guidelines of the Victorian Access Regime, and support the future development of a Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan (or similar).

The SIA was completed sequentially, through five tasks, as depicted in **Figure 4-1**, and described in the following sections.

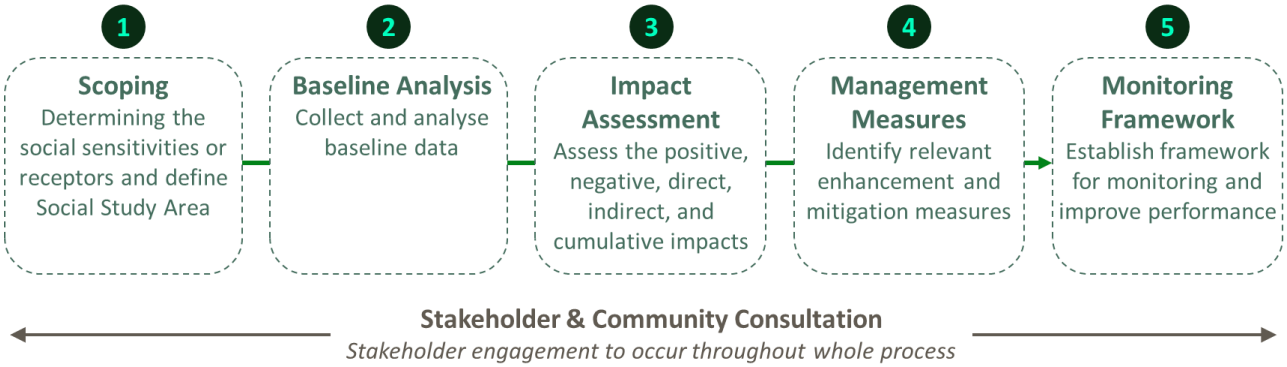


FIGURE 4-1 SIA PROCESS

4.1 TASK #1: SCOPING

Task #1 establishes the scope of the SIA, ensuring it is appropriately scaled and consistent with the SIA Guideline. The scoping process helps to confirm the impacts that are likely to occur and should be considered further in the SIA, as well as identify the impacts that are unlikely to occur and should not be considered further in the SIA (or are scoped out).

The first step is to confirm the Project Description (refer to **Section 2**) and define the Social Study Area, as this will provide the grounding from which the direct and indirect potential social impacts of the Project can be readily identified.

As per the requirements of the SIA Guideline (DSDIP, 2025a), the Social Study Area considers the following:

- The nature and scale of the proposed Project, including associated infrastructure;
- The scope of the potential social impacts (throughout the Project lifecycle);
- The location and characteristics of potentially affected communities (refer to **Box 4-1**) and receptors (refer to **Box 4-2**) – including urban/rural centres and land use patterns;
- Key built and natural features, such as infrastructure;
- Native Title rights and other interests held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; and
- The location of other projects in the region which may contribute to cumulative social impacts over time.

BOX 4-1 POTENTIALLY AFFECTED COMMUNITY DEFINITION

Potentially affected communities are defined in the SIA Guideline (DSDIP, 2025a, p.7) as, *"…those local and/or regional communities that may be affected by a proposed project, whether negatively or positively."*

BOX 4-2 RECEPTOR AND STAKEHOLDER DEFINITIONS

The term **stakeholder** is used to define individuals or groups who may be affected by or have an interest in a project or operation. Not all stakeholders will experience social impacts from a project and/or operation, those who do are termed as **receptors**.

4.2 TASK #2: BASELINE ANALYSIS

The baseline describes the local social context of the Social Study Area. It provides a benchmark against which potential social impacts can be predicted and analysed.

As per the SIA Guideline (DSDIP, 2025a), the following has been considered, where relevant, as part of the baseline analysis:

- The demographic profile of potentially affected communities;
- Community characteristics, such as community culture and values;
- Capacity of those potentially affected to participate in community and stakeholder engagement;
- Land uses and key industries in the region;
- Capacity and accessibility of infrastructure, facilities and services, including education, health and emergency services;
- Existing housing and accommodation market, including availability, capacity and affordability;
- Local travel behaviours, such as methods of travel and key transport infrastructure and services;
- Local and regional labour market conditions, including an assessment of the likely availability of personnel with skills relevant to the Project; and
- Other renewable, resource, and infrastructure projects in the area, both planned and currently operating, based on publicly accessible information.

The data used in the social baseline is drawn from a range of reports and assessments commissioned by RES. In addition to the data provided by RES, data collected and presented in this SIA is based on a review of available data from a range of primary and secondary sources. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS);
- Victorian Government Department data;
- Community and stakeholder engagement outcomes – including community insights, issues and concerns, gathered through the community and stakeholder engagement process; and
- Local and State government planning, policy, and strategy documentation.

4.3 TASK #3: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Following Tasks #1 and #2, the direct, indirect and cumulative social impacts were predicted and evaluated in accordance with the process outlined in **Figure 4-2**. In assessing the potential impacts, consideration was given to:

- The characteristics of the Project, including the timing, duration and intensity of the proposed construction and operational activities;
- Relevant issues raised by stakeholders as part of community and stakeholder engagement conducted for the Project; and
- The outcomes of the technical studies undertaken for the Project.

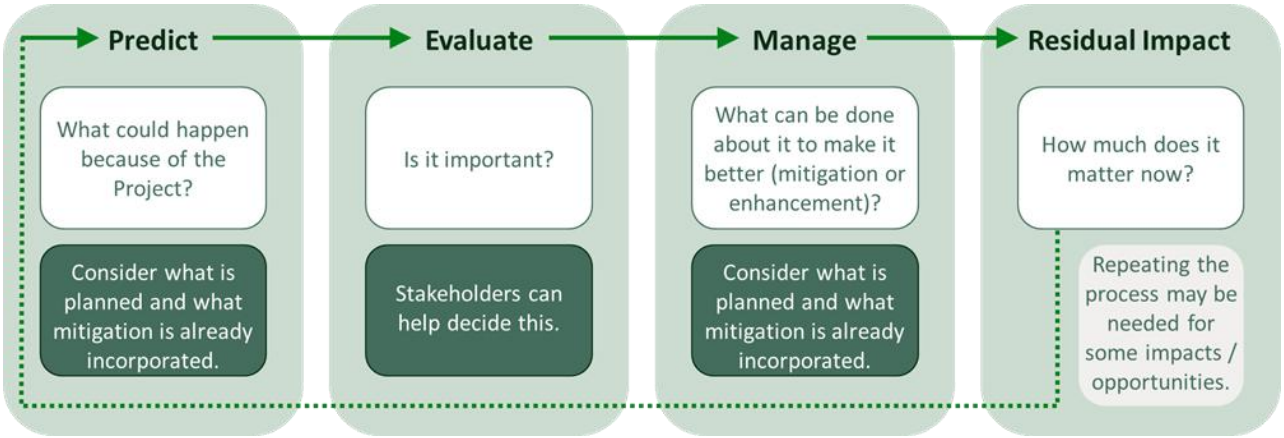


FIGURE 4-2 IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The predicted social impacts were assessed to determine their significance, based on the likelihood (defined in **Table 4-1**) of the impact occurring, and the potential magnitude of the impact, should it occur.

Magnitude reflects the 'size' or degree of change caused by the impact; it is a function of one or more characteristics including the extent, duration, scale and frequency of the impact (refer to **Table 4-2** and **Table 4-3**). Receptor sensitivity is captured as part of the 'extent' characteristic, and considers both the geographical 'reach', as well as the potential receptors of the impact. Vulnerability is identified at the point of stakeholder / receptor identification as part of Task #1, as it is considered in the context of the broader population.

TABLE 4-1 LIKELIHOOD LEVELS

Likelihood Level	Meaning
Low	The event is unlikely but may occur at some time during normal construction and/or operational conditions.
Medium	The event is possible or likely to occur at some time during normal operating construction and/or operational conditions.
High	The event will or is almost certain to occur during normal construction and/or operational conditions.

TABLE 4-2 MAGNITUDE CHARACTERISTICS

Magnitude Level	Extent	Duration	Scale	Frequency
Negligible	Household	Temporary	Minor change	Rare
Small	Local Communities / Businesses	Short-term	Perceptible change	Occasional
Medium	Regional	Medium-term	Evident change	Often
Large	Victoria	Long-term	Substantial change	Constant

TABLE 4-3 MAGNITUDE LEVELS

Magnitude Level	Description
Negligible	The change that occurs remains within the range commonly experienced by receptors.
Small	There is a perceptible difference or change from the baseline conditions. The impact is local (i.e. affects local communities and local businesses), occurs over a short period of time, and/or is rare.
Medium	The difference or change from the baseline conditions is evident. The impact is experienced by the receptors in the Social Study Area over a long period of time.
Large	There is a substantive change from the baseline conditions. The impact is experienced throughout the Social Study Area (or beyond) and is persistent.

The likelihood of an impact occurring along with its magnitude combine to yield a rating of its significance, as described in **Table 4-4**. Where a positive social impact is identified, it is designated as 'positive'.

When assessing the potential social impacts, the precautionary principle has been employed. Accordingly, where there is uncertainty in relation to the magnitude criteria, the higher criteria was assigned to ensure sufficient management measures are put in place. As the Project evolves, this uncertainty may change; when this occurs, the impacts should be reviewed and the significance amended accordingly.

TABLE 4-4 IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE MATRIX

		Likelihood		
		Low	**Medium**	**High**
Magnitude	**Negligible**	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
	Small	Negligible	Minor	Moderate
	Medium	Minor	Moderate	Major
	Large	Moderate	Major	Major
	Positive	Positive		

4.4 TASK #4: MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Once the significance of the potential social impacts has been identified, where avoidance or minimisation is not possible, management strategies are identified. Where an impact is predicted to be positive, measures to enhance potential positive impacts are identified to help maximise the benefit to the community.

Social impact significance, as outlined in **Table 4-4** is used to determine the level of management required with a proportional focus on impacts with a higher impact significance (i.e. moderate and major).

The following factors were considered in developing the management measures:

- Ensuring a clear connection between the mitigation measure and the negative social impact being mitigated;
- Whether there is an applicable standard that defines what is acceptable;
- Whether the Project is the sole or primary cause of the negative social impact, and the scale of its relative contribution to the impact;
- Whether the mitigation measure requires action by another party separate to the proponent;
- Whether the mitigation measure itself is likely to cause secondary social impacts;
- Whether the mitigation measure is reasonable and practicable;
- Whether and in what ways the mitigation measure is acceptable to affected people;
- Whether the mitigation measure will address all reasonably foreseeable scenarios; and
- Whether the mitigation approach is prescribed in a government policy, or if alternative formalised arrangements are required.

The impact assessment and impact significance ratings derived in the assessment are revised after the application of management and mitigation measures have been applied to provide a residual impact significance rating for each impact.

In addition, opportunities to be further explored by RES and Project stakeholders in relation to the future development of a Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan (or similar), have also been identified (refer to **Section 10**).

4.5 TASK #5: MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The accuracy of the impact assessment and the effectiveness of management measures recommended should be verified via ongoing monitoring. Accordingly, a monitoring framework is proposed (refer to **Section 9**) which includes a program for monitoring predicted social impacts against actual impacts as well as the effectiveness of the management measures.

The framework proposed describes the:

- Activities to be undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of the management measure;
- Indicator(s) that will be used to monitor change and the effectiveness of the management measure; and
- Frequency of monitoring.

5. SCOPING

This section summarises the outcomes of the scoping exercise, including the Social Study Area that has been defined for the Project. Establishing a Social Study Area was the first task of the SIA and helps ensure that the assessment is appropriately scaled to the nature of the anticipated impacts as well as consistent with respective regulatory guidelines.

5.1 APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING THE SOCIAL STUDY AREA

Determining the Social Study Area for the Project involves understanding the nature of the Project, the characteristics of the surrounding communities, and how potential positive and/or negative impacts may be experienced by stakeholders and/or receptors.

In determining the Project's Social Study Area, the following aspects were taken into consideration:

- The Indicative Site Layout, including the battery units and ancillary infrastructure such as the control room, switch room and maintenance buildings, utility connections, substation, terminal station, cabling, access tracks, fire protection equipment, security fencing, and temporary construction laydown and vehicle turning area;
- The location of Project components within the Project Area relative to surrounding sensitive land uses. This includes consideration of the:
  - Tenure;
  - Proximity to neighbouring dwellings;
  - Nature and character of towns/townships and communities;
  - Environmental values; and
  - Key topographical features;
- Construction, Operation and Decommissioning Phase activities, such as:
  - Civil works and site preparation;
  - Maintenance of Project Area access tracks;
  - Workforce requirements, including skills required and associated accommodation arrangements;
  - Goods and services required by the Project; and
  - Haulage and light vehicle routes that will be utilised by the Project;
- The outcomes of relevant technical studies and management plans for the Project.

When considering these aspects, it was determined that the Project's Social Study Area should comprise both a Primary and Secondary Social Study Area. The Primary Social Study Area is to include the locations in which the most substantive social impacts may occur. This includes the Project Area and Development Footprint, transport routes where amenity impacts may be experienced, and the communities of Bunyip and Garfield that may provide workers, goods and services, and/or accommodation opportunities for the Project.

The Secondary Social Study Area comprises the towns of Longwarry, Pakenham, Nar Nar Goon, Tynong, Drouin and Warragul, which are unlikely to experience substantive negative impacts, and may provide workers accommodation, and/or goods and services for the Project.

A description of the Social Study Area is provided in **Section 5.2**.

5.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SOCIAL STUDY AREA

The Social Study Area for the Project comprises a Primary Social Study Area (refer to **Section 5.2.1**) and a Secondary Social Study Area (refer to **Section 5.2.2**), depicted in **Figure 5-1**.

5.2.1 PRIMARY SOCIAL STUDY AREA

The Project Area is located in Bunyip North, approximately 3 km to the north of the town of Bunyip, and approximately 80 km southeast of Melbourne, within the Cardinia LGA.

The Project Area comprises a single allotment of 27.6 ha, bounded by agricultural land to the east, west, and north, and the Princes Freeway to the south. Cannibal Creek is located approximately 250 metres to the north. The land use of the Project Area is generally homogenous with those in the surrounding area, comprising rural and agricultural related uses. Further south, across the Princes Freeway is the Bunyip Native Sanctuary and the town of Bunyip.

It is anticipated that goods and services to support the Construction Phase of the Project will be sourced in large part, where possible, from Melbourne. The proposed transport and haulage routes to/from the Project Area will make use of the Princes Highway, however it is expected that light vehicle travel may occur on adjacent local roads within the communities of Bunyip North, Bunyip, Garfield, or elsewhere within the Cardinia LGA.

The Project will not include on-site worker accommodation facilities. RES is currently engaging with relevant stakeholders to identify appropriate accommodation options for the non-local construction workforce within the Social Study Area. While locations within the Primary Social Study Area (i.e. Bunyip and Garfield) are being considered, it is unlikely that these locations will be used to accommodate the entire workforce given the limited accommodation options available. Approximate travel distances and times to/from the Project Area access location are summarised in **Table 5-1**.

TABLE 5-1 APPROXIMATE TRAVEL DISTANCES

Location	Travel Distance	Travel Time
Bunyip North	N/A	N/A
Bunyip	4.7 km	5 minutes
Garfield	6.9 km	5 minutes

Accordingly, the Primary Social Study Area is depicted in **Figure 5-1**, and can be summarised as comprising the following three components:

- The **Project Area and immediate surrounding areas**, inclusive of properties and dwellings located within 2 km. The 2 km extent captures non-associated dwellings surrounding the Project Area, including those located along McConnell Road, Tonimbuk Road, Wimpole Road, and within the town of Bunyip. The 2 km extent is broader than both the area within which most technical assessments have identified may be directly impacted by the Project and the notification undertaken for the Planning Application;

- The **surrounding towns and communities** of Bunyip North, Bunyip, and Garfield, which may provide goods and services or host accommodation or Drive-in Drive-out workers, to support the Construction Phase of the Project; and
- The **likely transportation and haulage route**, comprising part of the heavy vehicle route from the Port of Melbourne to the Project Area, and potential light vehicle routes to/from the Project Area from the surrounding towns (i.e. Bunyip and Garfield).

5.2.2 SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDY AREA

The Secondary Social Study Area has been selected to encompass towns and communities that are likely to provide goods and services or accommodate Drive-in-Drive-out workers during the Construction Phase of the Project. These towns include Longwarry North, Longwarry, Tynong, Drouin, Nar Nar Goon, Warragul, and Pakenham. Their proximity and established infrastructure make them suitable for supporting workforce needs and supply requirements. Approximate travel distances and times to/from the Project Area are summarised in **Table 5-2**.

TABLE 5-2 APPROXIMATE TRAVEL DISTANCES – SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDY AREA

Location	Travel Distance	Travel Time
Longwarry North	5.5 km	5 minutes
Longwarry	8.5 km	9 minutes
Tynong	12.4 km	10 minutes
Drouin	15.3 km	13 minutes
Nar Nar Goon	17.0 km	12 minutes
Warragul	23.8 km	17 minutes
Pakenham	24.0 km	18 minutes

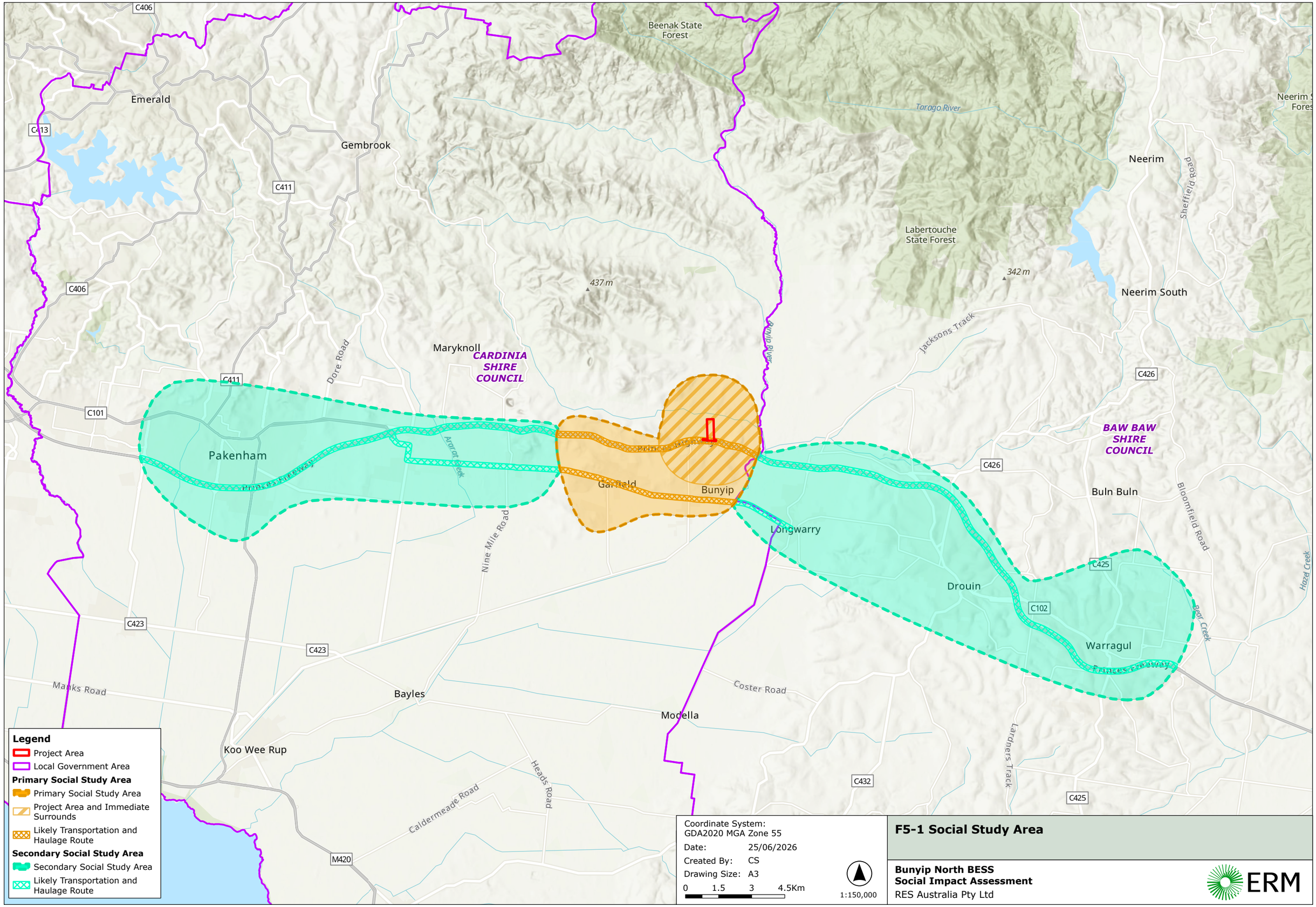
As stated in **Section 5.2.1**, it is anticipated that goods and services to support the Construction Phase of the Project will be sourced in large part from Melbourne. Dependent upon Project requirements however, there is the possibility that the larger surrounding towns of the Secondary Social Study Area (i.e. Pakenham, Drouin and Warragul) may also provide a means to support the Project with respect to goods and services, as well as accommodation opportunities. Accordingly, the proposed transport and haulage routes to/from the Project Area and other potential routes associated with workforce travel from these locations has also been considered in the Secondary Social Study Area.

5.2.3 EXCLUSIONS FROM THE SOCIAL STUDY AREA

The Social Study Area does not include the following:

- The complete extent of haulage route/s from the Port of Melbourne where within the confines of the port (i.e. port berth and storage areas) and where State/National highways (i.e. Princes Highway) are to be used by the Project, apart from the sections directly adjacent to the Project Area. The rationale for this exclusion is as follows:
  - Large parts of the haulage routes identified for potential use by the Project have already been designed and constructed to accommodate large-scale industrial vehicles (i.e. B-Doubles); and

- Sections of haulage routes to be included in the Social Study Area have been limited to those which are relevant to where localised community impacts (e.g. landscape and visual, traffic disruptions, etc.) may be experienced, or are likely to be used for non-material transport related purposes (e.g. worker movements, local school bus routes, etc.).



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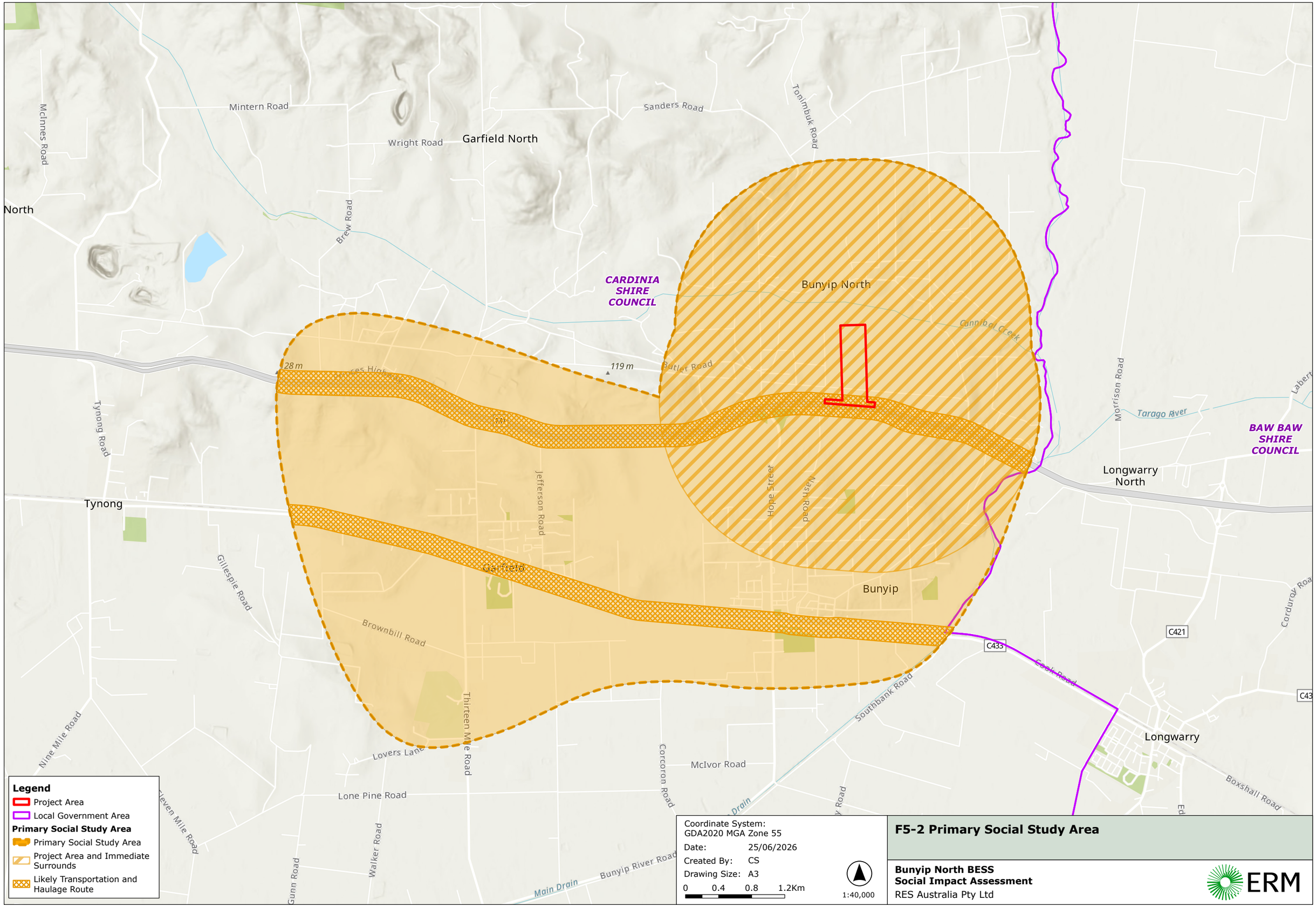

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5.3 STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

Based on the Project's Social Study Area (refer to **Section 5.2**), the key stakeholder groups identified as potentially affected by and/or interested in the Project are outlined in **Table 5-3**. Those stakeholders who are likely to be affected by the Project are identified as receptors. Specific vulnerable groups within these key stakeholder groups have been identified in the social baseline (refer to **Section 6**).

TABLE 5-3 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder	Receptor (Y/N)
Host Landholder	Landholders with the potential to host infrastructure, have already been engaged regarding infrastructure hosting options, or have agreed to host infrastructure. There is one Host Landholder for the Project.	Yes
Immediate Neighbours	Neighbouring dwellings and properties within 2 km of the Project Area. The 2 km extent is broader than both the area within which most technical assessments have identified may be directly impacted by the Project and the notification undertaken as part of the Planning Application, and captures non-associated dwellings surrounding the Project Area, including those located along McConnell Road, Bunyip-Tonimbuk Road, Wimpole Road, and within the town of Bunyip.	Yes
Surrounding Community Members	Community members who live within localities surrounding the Project, comprising: • Bunyip North; • Bunyip; • Garfield; • Longwarry North; • Longwarry; • Pakenham; • Nar Nar Goon; • Tynong; • Drouin; and • Warragul.	Yes
First Nations Communities	• Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation • First Peoples Assembly Victoria • First Peoples - State Relations • Biik Bundjil Cultural Organisation	Yes
Local Community Groups	Community groups located within the Social Study Area, including but not limited to: • Bunyip Scout Group; • Bunyip-Garfield Probus Club; • Bunyip Historical Society; • Bunyip and District Strikers Soccer Club; • Bunyip Football Club; • Bunyip Bulls Basketball Club; • Bunyip Netball Club; • Lillico and District Pony Club (Bunyip);	Yes

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder	Receptor (Y/N)
	• Bunyip Masonic Lodge; • Bunyip Men's Shed; • Bunyip Returned and Services League; • Bunyip Community Singers; • Bunyip Hall; • Bunyip Auditorium Committee of Management; • Bunyip Community Market; • Bunyip and District Agricultural Society; • St Thomas' Anglican Church (Bunyip); • Bunyip and District Uniting Church; • Bunyip Cemetery Trust; • Bunyip Landcare Group; • Bunyip Renewable Action Group (BRAG); • Cardinia Environment Coalition; • Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds; • Friends of Mount Cannibal Flora and Fauna Reserve; • Mount Cannibal and District Preservation Group Inc; • Cannibal Creek Catchment Landcare Group; • Cannibal Creek Reserve Committee of Management; • Rotary Club of Bunyip Garfield; • Garfield Community Association Inc; • Garfield Community Garden; • Moy-Yan Neighbourhood House (Garfield); • Garfield Rec Reserve Enviro Group; • Garfield Sporting and Social Club; • Longwarry & District Progress Association; • Longwarry & District Lions Club; and • Cardinia Community Foundation.	
Business and Industry Organisations	Local and regional business and industry organisations, including, but not limited to: • Victorian Farmers Federation (Cardinia Branch); • West Gippsland Progress Association; and • Warragul Business Group Inc.	Yes
Local Businesses and Industries	Local businesses and industries within the Social Study Area, including, but not limited to: • ProLodge (Bunyip); • Garfield Hotel; • The Robin Hood Inn (Drouin); • Drouin Motel; • The Royal Hotel Drouin; • El-Paso Caravan Park (Drouin); • Drouin Caravan Park; • Mercure Pakenham; • Pakenham Caravan Park; • The Valley Motel (Pakenham); • Serenity Home 11 by Hiverooms (Pakenham); • Orchard Cottage (Pakenham); • Comfort Inn & Suites (Warragul); • Edinburgh Motor Inn (Warragul); • Warragul Gardens Holiday Park;	Yes

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder	Receptor (Y/N)
	• Mercure Warragul; • Warragul Views Motor Inn; and • Gumbuya World (Tynong North Operations Pty Ltd).	
Infrastructure Owners / Operators	Owners/Operators of surrounding infrastructure, including: • AusNet; • VicGrid; and • Port of Melbourne .	Yes
Emergency Services	Local branches of emergency services that are located within the Social Study Area, including but not limited to: • Cardinia Municipal Emergency Response Co-Ordinator (MERC); • Bunyip CFA Fire Station; • Bunyip State Emergency Service; • Bunyip Police Station; • High St Medical Centre; • West Gippsland Hospital; and • Nar Nar Good Fire Brigade.	Yes
Educational Organisations	Educational Organisations, including but not limited to: • Bunyip Primary School; • Columba Catholic Primary School (Bunyip); • Sparrow Early Learning Centre (Bunyip); • Birches Early Learning Centre (Bunyip); • Bunyip Kindergarten; • Garfield Primary School; • Garfield Kindergarten; • Longwarry Primary School; • Longwarry Kindergarten; • Drouin Secondary College; • Pakenham Secondary College; • Warragul Regional College; • Beaconhills College (Pakenham Campus); • STEM Zone (Drouin); • Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Gippsland - Warragul Campus; and • Community College Gippsland - Warragul Campus.	No

Local Council	Cardinia Shire Council representatives and executives, including but not limited to:
	• Chief Executive Officer, James Collins;
	• Mayor, Councillor (Cr) Brett Owen (Beacon Hills Ward);
	• Deputy Mayor, Cr Liz Roberts (Henty Ward); and
	• Councillors:
	  ◦ Cr. Alanna Pomeroy (Bunyip Ward);
	  ◦ Cr Collin Ross (Central Ward);
	  ◦ Cr Samantha-Jane Potter (Officer Ward);
	  ◦ Cr Jack Kowarzik (Pakenham Hills Ward);
	  ◦ Cr David Nickell (Ranges Ward);
	  ◦ Cr Casey Thomsen (Toomuc Ward); and
	  ◦ Cr Trudi Paton (Westernport Ward).
		No

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder	Receptor (Y/N)
State / Federal Government	Federal Departments, including but not limited to: • Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water; • Civil Aviation and Safety Authority; • Regional Development Australia; • Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner; and • National Native Title Tribunal. State Departments, including but not limited to: • Department of Transport and Planning; • VicRoads; • DEECA; • Parks Victoria; • Environment Protection Authority; • First Peoples – State Relations; • Department of Premier and Cabinet; • Melbourne Water (Catchment Management Authority); and • Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. Members of Parliament: • Jason Wood MP (Liberal), Federal Member for La Trobe; • Mary Aldred MP (Liberal), Federal Member for Monash; • Wayne Farnham MP (Liberal), State Member for Narracan; and • Emma Vulin (Labor), State Member for Pakenham.	No
Local, State and National Media	Various media entities distributed within the Social Study Area, including but not limited to: • Bunyip and District Community News; • The Bunyip Press; • Garfield Spectator; • Tynong Tabloid; • Connect Magazine (Cardinia Shire); • Mirage News; • Berwick Gazette; • Pakenham Gazette; • Warragul Drouin Gazette; • Garfield Community Website; • Latrobe Valley Express; • Gippsland Times; • Meander Mountain District Radio Inc (3DMR); • Sherbrooke Community Radio Club; • Vk3KID; • Cardinia TV (YouTube); • ABC Gippsland (3GLR); • WIN News Gippsland; and • Commercial TV 7/9/10.	No

5.4 VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability refers to an individual or group's capacity to adapt to, or cope with changes in their environment and is influenced by a range of different socio-economic factors. Some individuals or groups may be more vulnerable than others due to certain existing socio-economic characteristics including (but not limited to) age, livelihood, language proficiency and health status.

On this basis, the following stakeholders have been identified as being potentially vulnerable within the Social Study Area:

- Communities that display diverse languages, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, traditions, societal structures, and/or religions – known as CALD communities;
- Youth and elderly populations;
- First Nations peoples; and
- Community members who experience socio-economically disadvantages.

Vulnerability is explored further in **Section 6.11** of the Social Baseline.

6. SOCIAL BASELINE

This section provides an overview of the social baseline for the Project's Social Study Area. In line with the SIA Guideline, the social baseline describes the Social Study Area without the Project and aims to present a clear overview of the current conditions, providing a reference point against which the impacts of the Project can be assessed and measured in **Section 8**.

While the social baseline has been principally informed by publicly available information the outcomes of the community and stakeholder engagement undertaken (refer to **Section 7**) has helped to validate the information contained therein and inform the development of the following sections of this report.

6.1 ABS DATASETS

While not all data used in this SIA has been sourced from the ABS, 2016 and 2021 Census data has been used to provide a basis for key components of the Social Baseline.

The ABS Suburbs and Localities (SAL) data for Bunyip North, Bunyip, Garfield, Longwarry North, Longwarry, Tynong, Nar Nar Goon, Pakenham, Drouin and Warragul has been used. Additionally, LGA level data for the Cardinia LGA and State (STE) level data for Victoria are used to provide an understanding of the broader and comparative social context within which the Project is located.

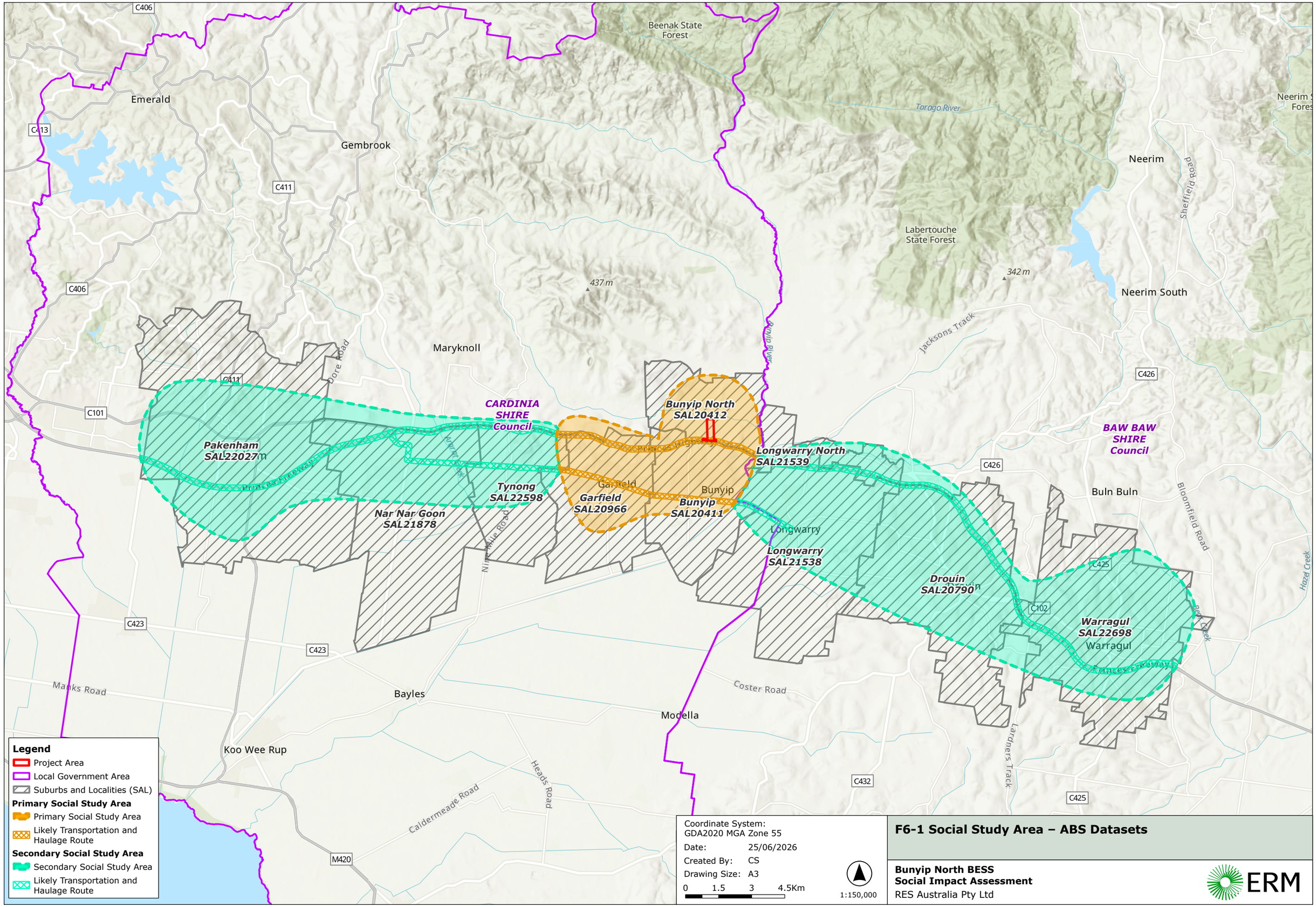
Table 6-1 outlines the ABS datasets used in the Social Baseline, with providing a visual understanding as to how they relate to the Social Study Area.

TABLE 6-1 SUMMARY OF RELEVANT ABS DATASETS

Location	Area (sq kms)	ABS Data Reference
Primary Social Study Area		
Bunyip North SAL	16.8	SAL20412 (2021)
		SSC20410 (2016)
Bunyip SAL	24.2	SAL20411 (2021)
		SSC20409 (2016)
Garfield SAL	26.4	SAL20966 (2021)
		SSC20959 (2016)
Secondary Social Study Area		
Longwarry North SAL	9.6	SAL21539 (2021)
		SSC21529 (2016)
Longwarry SAL	49.1	SAL21538 (2021)
		SSC21528(2016)

Location	Area (sq kms)	ABS Data Reference
Tynong SAL	21.3	SAL22598 (2021)
		SSC22585 (2016)
Nar Nar Goon SAL	52.0	SAL21878 (2021)
		SSC21866 (2016)
Pakenham SAL	85.4	SAL22027 (2021)
		SSC22015 (2016)
Drouin SAL	52.4	SAL20790 (2021)
		SSC20784 (2016)
Warragul SAL	55.3	SAL22698 (2021)
		SSC22685 (2016)
Social Context		
Cardinia LGA	1,282.6	LGA21450
Victoria STE	227,496	Area Code 2

It is to be noted that the ABS makes random adjustments to protect the confidentiality of data due to small population sizes. Accordingly, in small populations, some data values may be adjusted or suppressed, and totals may not match.



F6-1 Social Study Area – ABS Datasets

Bunyip North BESS
Social Impact Assessment
RES Australia Pty Ltd

ERM

0776507_Bunyip_SIA_R0.aprx

6.2 POLICY AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section provides the policy and strategic context relevant to the Project and the Social Study Area to contextualise the Social Baseline.

6.2.1 RENEWABLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN

Victoria's Renewable Energy Action Plan (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017) sets out a clear pathway to transition from a carbon-intensive energy system to one that is renewable, affordable and reliable. The plan leverages large-scale renewable energy technologies while prioritising grid stability to ensure security of supply. It forms part of Victoria's broader commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2050, aligning with legislated renewable energy targets under the *Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017*.

The plan brings together a suite of initiatives designed to accelerate investment and innovation in renewable energy. These actions aim to drive long-term growth in the sector while complementing existing infrastructure and enhancing network resilience. By focusing on system security, weighting will be given to projects and technologies that strengthen overall energy reliability, ensuring that the transition does not compromise supply stability.

Collaboration is central to the success of the Renewable Energy Action Plan. The Victorian Government emphasises engagement with stakeholders across industry, communities and investors to transform how energy is generated, stored and consumed. This cooperative approach ensures that the benefits of renewable energy, such as job creation, regional development and reduced emissions, are shared widely across the state.

Victoria is actively working with leading Australian and international businesses to attract investment and establish the state as a hub for renewable energy innovation. By learning from past experiences and capitalising on current opportunities, the plan positions Victoria to lead the nation in clean energy transformation, delivering environmental, economic and social benefits for decades to come (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017).

6.2.2 2025 VICTORIAN TRANSMISSION PLAN

As part of the Victorian Government's new approach to planning and developing transmission infrastructure in Victoria, VicGrid is required to prepare and publish a Victorian Transmission Plan at regular intervals to provide greater transparency and certainty for communities and industry about locations and timeframes for new transmission infrastructure.

The 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan (VicGrid, 2025b) identifies proposed Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) in Victoria, which have been sized and located to accommodation Victoria's renewable energy generation from 2025 to 2040. In 2026, six REZ were declared in preparation for the 2027 Victorian Transmission Plan that is currently under development.

The Project is strategically sited along the existing Yallourn Power Station to Rowville Terminal Transmission Line, which connects Gippsland to Metropolitan Melbourne. The Project's location on this existing transmission line allows the BESS to make productive use of established transmission infrastructure that will otherwise carry reduced generation following Yallourn's scheduled retirement, supporting an efficient transition of the network from coal to renewables. The Project would therefore support future network services to enhance grid stability in the region from renewable energy sources in the nearby declared Gippsland REZ.

6.2.3 PLAN MELBOURNE 2017-2050

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 is a State-level planning document outlining the strategic framework for the Melbourne region to 2050. The document encourages the redevelopment of underutilised land, particularly urban renewal areas, with close proximity to employment, various services and public transport infrastructure.

Specifically, Plan Melbourne 2017-2050:

- Seeks to respond to the challenges of population growth, driving economic prosperity and liveability;
- Defines what kind of city Melbourne will be and identifies the infrastructure, services and major projects which need to be put in place to underpin the city's growth;
- Is the State Government's blueprint for Melbourne's future prosperity, liveability and sustainability; and
- Addresses Melbourne's infrastructure, housing, employment and environmental challenges with an integrated approach to planning, based broadly on principles of transit-oriented development that includes land use, transport and social and community infrastructure.

Whilst the areas within the Primary Social Study Area are not specifically mentioned within Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, Pakenham, within the Secondary Social Study Area, is considered a Major Activity Centre and has been earmarked for future industrial investment and growth.

6.2.4 CARDINIA PLANNING SCHEME

The Cardinia Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme) contains the various policies and provisions that control land use and development within the Cardinia LGA. The intent of the Planning Scheme is to provide a framework within which decisions about land use can be made in the context of Government and community expectations, and policy decisions.

The Planning Scheme provides a Planning Policy Framework which seeks to ensure that the objectives of planning in Victoria are fostered through appropriate land use and development policies and practices. The Planning Policy Framework informs the preparation and implementation of local planning policy objectives and the introduction of zone and overlay controls, and seeks to integrate relevant environmental, cultural, social and economic factors in the interest of net community benefit and sustainable development. The clauses of the Planning Policy Framework of most relevant to the Project are outlined in **Table 6-2**.

TABLE 6-2 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY CLAUSES

Clause	Objective
12.01-1S Protection of biodiversity	• To protect and enhance Victoria's biodiversity.
Clause 12.05-2S Landscapes	• Protect and enhance significant natural landscapes so development does not undermine their natural qualities.
Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire Planning	• To strengthen the resilience of settlements and communities to bushfire through risk-based planning that prioritises the protection of human life.

Clause	Objective
Clause 13.03-1S Floodplain Management	• To assist the protection of: ◦ Life, property and community infrastructure from flood hazard; ◦ The natural flood carrying capacity of rivers, streams and floodways; ◦ The flood storage function of floodplains and waterways; and ◦ Floodplain areas of environmental significance or of importance to river, wetland or coastal health.
13.05-1S Noise Management	• To assist the management of noise effects on sensitive land uses.
Clause 13.07-1S Land use compatibility	• To protect community amenity, human health and safety while facilitating appropriate commercial, industrial, infrastructure or other uses with potential adverse off-site impacts.
Clause 14.01- 1S Protection of Agricultural Land Clause 14.01-1R Protection of agricultural land Clause 14.01-1L Protection of agricultural land	• To enable ongoing investment, diversification and appropriate infrastructure for both traditional and intensive animal industries, while ensuring new development is well-located and protects the environment and surrounding amenity.
Clause 14.02-1S Catchment Planning and Management	• To assist the protection and restoration of catchments, waterways, estuaries, bays, water bodies, groundwater, and the marine environment.
Clause 17.01-2S Innovation and Research Clause 17.03-2S Sustainable Industry	• To create opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education. • To facilitate the sustainable operation of industry.
19.01-1S Energy supply 19.01-2S Renewable energy 19.03-2S Infrastructure design and provision	• To facilitate appropriate development of energy supply infrastructure. • To support the provision and use of renewable energy in a manner that ensures appropriate siting and design considerations are met. • To provide timely, efficient and cost-effective development infrastructure that meets the needs of the community.

The Planning Scheme also establishes zoning within the Cardinia LGA, with the Project located within the 'Green Wedge Zone', and the accessway via the Princes Freeway within the 'Principal Road Network' zone. The relevant aspects of the 'Green Wedge Zone' are:

- To provide for the use of land for agriculture;
- To recognise, protect and conserve green wedge land for its agricultural, environmental, historic, landscape, recreational and tourism opportunities, and mineral and stone resources;
- To encourage use and development that is consistent with sustainable land management practices;

- To encourage sustainable farming activities and provide opportunity for a variety of productive agricultural uses;
- To protect, conserve and enhance the cultural heritage significance and the character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes; and
- To protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area.

The Project lies across two different sections of the Green Wedge in the eastern metropolitan area of Melbourne, Western Port Green Wedge and Southern Ranges Green Wedge. The Southern Ranges Green Wedge Management Plan is yet to be prepared, however the Cardinia Western Port Green Wedge Management Plan, adopted in May 2017, establishes a strategic framework to protect the agricultural, environmental, landscape and cultural heritage values of the Green Wedge while accommodating essential infrastructure that delivers a net community benefit.

Overall, the Project gives effect to the vision, guiding principles and strategic directions of the Cardinia Western Port Green Wedge Management Plan by accommodating essential energy infrastructure in a manner that protects agricultural, environmental, landscape and cultural heritage values, and delivers a clear net community benefit.

6.2.5 COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2029

Cardinia Shire is one of Victoria's fastest-growing municipalities, with three new households joining the community each day and a projected population increase of almost 40,000 over the next decade (Cardinia Shire Council, 2025a). This growth will place increasing demand for community infrastructure and services. The municipality's vision is that the Cardinia LGA will be developed in a planned manner to enable present and future generations to live healthy and productive lives and to enjoy the richness of the Shire's diverse and distinctive characteristics.

The Council Plan 2025–2029 (Council Plan) is Cardinia Shire Council's principal strategic document (Cardinia Shire Council, 2025a) guiding activities and decision-making over the four-year Council term. It sets out how the organisation will respond to community needs and address the opportunities and challenges facing Cardinia LGA. The Council Plan reflects community priorities and provides a roadmap for delivering the long-term Community Vision 2040, which describes aspirations for the Shire's future.

The Council Plan is structured around five strategic objectives:

1. Thriving Communities - The programs, facilities and places that we support are safe, inclusive, and enhance participation, wellbeing and resilience;
2. Vibrant Places - We value our well-designed towns and infrastructure that fosters belonging and connections;
3. Adaptive Environments - We care for our natural environment and support recovery from challenges;
4. Prosperous Economies - We encourage urban and rural business and local employment to grow; and
5. Responsible Leaders - We demonstrate responsible leadership and financial stewardship.

6.2.6 CARDINIA SHIRE'S LIVEABILITY PLAN 2017-29

Cardinia Shire Council has developed the Liveability Plan 2017-29 to provide a framework for public health planning within the Cardinia LGA. The intent of the plan is to outline the common agenda that Cardinia Shire Council, partners, and the community will work towards. This agenda is encapsulated in the vision of the Liveability Plan 2017-29 which is that, *"Cardinia Shire is a liveable, resilient community where the environment flourishes and residents are healthy, included and connected"* (Cardinia Shire Council, 2025b, p.13).

In order to achieve this vision, the Liveability Plan 2017-29 outlines seven outcomes (and associated objectives) for improving health and social considerations through local planning and partnership arrangements, comprising:

1. Improve mental wellbeing;
2. Improve social cohesion;
3. Improve safety;
4. Improve healthy eating and active living;
5. Reduce family violence;
6. Improve financial wellbeing and resilience; and
7. Reduce harm from tobacco, vaping, alcohol, drugs and gambling.

The Liveability Plan 2017-29 also outlines considerations for improving neighbourhood liveability within the Cardinia LGA, these include:

- Active Travel and Transport: Increase access to and connectivity of public transport, cycling routes and footpaths;
- Education: Increase access to, and participation in, local education across the lifespan;
- Employment: Increase access to and participation in local employment and volunteering;
- Food: Increase access to affordable, sustainable and nutritious food;
- Community Infrastructure and Services: Increase equitable access to community infrastructure and services within the Shire;
- Housing: Increase access to appropriate and affordable housing;
- Environment and Open Space: Increase sustainability and protection of the environment and open space; and
- Environment and Open Space: Increase access to and quality of public open space.

6.3 LAND USE CONTEXT

Land use and character provide essential context for understanding how communities interact with their environment and how proposed developments may influence local identity, amenity, and land-based livelihoods.

The Cardinia LGA is located on the south-eastern fringe of Melbourne and covers approximately 128,260 ha. It extends from the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges in the north to Western Port Bay in the south. The LGA comprises rural and agricultural land, which are highly valued by residents, however, it is also undergoing a significant urban transition, with new development areas emerging in and around key population centres such as Pakenham and Officer. As a result of this growth, Cardinia is increasingly recognised as the forefront of Melbourne's south-east growth corridor and is among the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria (Compelling Economics Pty Ltd, 2026).

The Project Area covers approximately 27.6 hectares and comprises a single freehold land parcel. It is bounded by agricultural land to the west and east, the Princes Freeway to the south, and Cannibal Creek to the north. The Bunyip Native Sanctuary is located to the south of the Princes Freeway, opposite the Project Area.

Land use within the Project Area is generally homogenous with the surrounding locality, consisting predominantly of rural and agricultural activities. Under the relevant Planning Scheme, the Project Area is zoned 'Green Wedge', consistent with adjacent properties, while the access location is zoned 'Principal Road Network' (Princes Highway). The Green Wedge Zone applies to non-urban land outside Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary and is intended to protect agricultural, environmental, landscape, and rural values. In doing so, it provides controls on development, which has practical consequences for landholders in the locality, a number of whom have farmed the area across multiple generations.

Historically, the Project Area has undergone extensive land clearing to facilitate agricultural use. In addition, high-voltage electricity transmission infrastructure traverses the southern portion of the Project Area.

The area surrounding Project Area is also the subject of other proposed developments, including AMPYR's Wimpole BESS and Heidelberg Materials Australia Pty Ltd's proposed Bunyip North Granite Quarry, the latter being subject to an Environment Effects Statement process.

6.4 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 6-3 draws on the ABS datasets listed in **Table 6-1** to provide a current demographic overview of the Social Study Area.

Analysis of the data presented in **Table 6-3** identifies:

- The Pakenham SAL had the lowest median age in the Social Study Area in both 2016 (34) and 2021 (34). The main driver of the lower median age is the larger proportion of SAL residents under 14 years of age (23.3.%), which is higher than both the Cardinia LGA (23.6%) and Victoria STE (18.0%);
- The communities within the Primary Social Study Area have a high percentage of the population over the age of 65, comprising 20.1% in the Bunyip North SAL, 17.8% in the Garfield SAL, and 17.1% in the Bunyip SAL, each of which are either consistent with, or exceed the percentages for the Cardinia LGA (12.6%) and Victoria STE (18.8%);
- The Bunyip and Longwarry SAL's both experienced a population growth between 2016 and 2021, being an increase of 26.87% and 21.56%, respectively;
- The Longwarry North SAL had a substantive population sex difference in 2021, with a population difference between of 19%, favouring males;
- The Bunyip North SAL experienced a population decrease of 15.2% between 2016 and 2021. The median age of the population within the SAL also increased from 45 to 47, which is higher than both the Cardinia LGA (34) and Victoria STE (38);
- The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander populations are relatively consistent throughout SALs in 2021 (0.8% to 2.6%), with the exception of the Longwarry North SAL with 2.6%. All but the Garfield SAL, exceeded both the Cardinia LGA (1%) and Victoria STE (1%) population percentages. The Bunyip North SAL, on the other hand, recorded no Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders in 2016 and 2021; and

- The percentage of households where a non-English language is used experienced an increase between 2016 and 2021, with the exception of Bunyip SAL, wherein the number of households decreased by 5.7 percentage points (from 9.4% to 3.7%). The average percentage of households where a non-English language is used across the SALs is lower than the Cardinia LGA (19.8%) and Victoria STE (30.2%) percentages.

TABLE 6-3 KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Population	Population Change	Median Age	Population Sex		Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Pop. (%)	Pop. Over 65 Years of Age (%)	Pop. Under 14 Years of Age (%)	Households where a Non-English Language is Used (%)
					Males (%)	Females (%)				
Primary Social Study Area										
Bunyip North SAL	2021	95	↓ 15.18	47	51.1	48.9	-	20.1	16.8	8.4
	2016	112		45	55.5	44.5	-	17.0	27.7	0.0
Bunyip SAL	2021	3,131	↑ 26.87	38	49.4	50.6	1.0	17.1	22.9	3.7
	2016	2,468		40	48.3	51.7	1.1	17.1	21.7	9.4
Garfield SAL	2021	2,114	↑ 18.38	39	49.4	50.6	0.8	17.8	20.7	4.5
	2016	1,786		39	50.0	50.0	0.9	15.5	22.03	5.2
Secondary Social Study Area										
Longwarry North SAL	2021	230	↑ 6.98	55	59.5	40.5	2.6	32.4	10.1	8.3
	2016	215		48	54.7	45.3	1.9	22.6	13.8	3.4
Longwarry SAL	2021	2,436	↑ 21.56	34	49.1	50.9	1.8	13.9	23.3	5.9
	2016	2,004		34	47.8	52.2	1.1	13.2	23.1	5.3
Tynong SAL	2021	523	↑ 14.69	41	49.4	50.6	1.3	12.3	17.9	4.7
	2016	456		41	49.4	50.6	1.3	12.3	17.9	4.7
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	1,023	↑ 1.09	41	50.2	49.8	1.7	14.8	18.4	6.2
	2016	1,012		42	49.7	50.3	1.0	13.8	17.5	5.0

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Population	Population Change	Median Age	Population Sex		Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Pop. (%)	Pop. Over 65 Years of Age (%)	Pop. Under 14 Years of Age (%)	Households where a Non-English Language is Used (%)
					Males (%)	Females (%)				
Pakenham SAL	2021	54,118	↑ 16.58	33	48.8	51.2	1.2	11.9	24.1	24.5
	2016	46,421		32	48.4	51.6	0.9	11.1	25.2	17.9
Drouin SAL	2021	15,287	↑ 23.78	39	47.7	52.3	1.8	21.6	20.5	7.1
	2016	12,349		40	47.8	52.2	1.6	21.0	20.4	6.5
Warragul SAL	2021	19,856	↑ 26.01	40	47.6	52.4	1.1	21.6	18.3	8.4
	2016	15,757		42	47.5	52.5	0.9	21.1	18.4	7.3
Social Context										
Cardinia LGA	2021	118,194	↑ 25.57	34	49.3	50.7	1.0	12.6	23.6	19.8
	2016	94,128		34	49.2	50.8	0.8	11.9	23.0	13.9
Victoria STE	2021	6,503,491	↑ 9.73	38	49.2	50.8	1.0	18.8	18.0	30.2
	2016	5,926,624		37	49.1	50.9	0.8	15.6	18.3	27.8

Note1. *Further information relating to the youth, the elderly, linguistical diversity, and First Nations is provided in* ***Section 6.11****.*

Note2. ↓ *Decrease* ↑ *Increase.*

Source: ABS, n.d.a

Population projections relevant to the Cardinia LGA were investigated in order to understand how the population is expected to change over the coming years – an aspect of particular importance given that the Construction Phase of the Project is not due to start until 2027. Populations typically increase and decrease based on a range of factors, including employment opportunities, income, housing availability, and accessibility to services. Based on current estimates, the Cardinia LGA is expected to grow to approximately 203,880 people by 2051 (Compelling Economics Pty Ltd. 2026).

6.5 ECONOMIC PROFILE

The key economic indicators within the Social Study Area are outlined in the economic profile. These include data relevant to the labour force (refer to **Section 6.5.1**), education (refer to **Section 6.5.2**), income (refer to **Section 6.5.3**), and local business characteristics (refer to **Section 6.5**).

6.5.1 LABOUR FORCE

In 2021, the total labour force within the Social Study Area was approximately 48,156 workers, an increase of 9,373 workers from 2016. **Table 6-4** provides an overview of the employment status of residents within the Social Study Area, with the following identified:

- Within the Social Study Area, the Pakenham SAL and Warragul SAL had the largest number of persons employed within the labour force in 2021, with 26,788 and 9,613 people employed, respectively;
- The percentage of those unemployed within the Social Study Area varies between the SALs, with the highest percentage of unemployment in 2021 observed in the Longwarry North SAL (6.7%) and the lowest percentage in the Bunyip North SAL (no unemployment); and
- Compared to 2016, the percentage of unemployed persons within the SALs trended downward, except for the Longwarry North, Garfield, and Nar Nar Goon SALs, that reported increases (0.9%, 1%, and 0.8% respectively). Despite this however, only the Pakenham SAL and Longwarry North SAL exceeded the 2021 unemployment rate in the Victoria STE.

TABLE 6-4 LABOUR FORCE STATUS

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Total Labour Force (#)	Unemployed (#)	Unemployed (%)
Primary Social Study Area				
Bunyip North SAL	2021	45	0	0.0
	2016	52	0	0.0
Bunyip SAL	2021	1,529	41	2.8
	2016	1,156	40	3.5
Garfield SAL	2021	1,069	43	4.4
	2016	855	29	3.4

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Total Labour Force (#)	Unemployed (#)	Unemployed (%)
Secondary Social Study Area				
Longwarry North SAL	2021	89	6	6.7
	2016	105	5	4.8
Longwarry SAL	2021	1,157	57	4.7
	2016	911	63	6.9
Tynong SAL	2021	275	10	3.2
	2016	220	15	6.8
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	569	24	4.2
	2016	581	20	3.4
Pakenham SAL	2021	26,788	1,425	5.3
	2016	22,274	1,531	6.9
Drouin SAL	2021	7,022	288	4.1
	2016	5,319	323	6.1
Warragul SAL	2021	9,613	389	4.0
	2016	7,310	415	5.7
Social Context				
Cardinia LGA	2021	61,310	2628	4.3
	2016	47,551	2601	5.5
Victoria STE	2021	3,330,560	167,667	5.0
	2016	2,929,593	193,465	6.6

Source: ABS, n.d.a

An updated region summary for the Cardinia LGA estimated that in 2025, there were 113,508 jobs. In 2024, the working age population (individuals aged 15-64 years) was 65%, slightly below the Australian rate of 65.1% (ABS, n.d.b).

Table 6-5 characterises the economic profile of the Social Study Area through the key occupations of employment. The three top occupations that are likely to have transferable skills to work on the Project are Technicians and Trades, Machinery Operators and Drivers, and Labourers.

As identified in **Table 6-4**, in 2021 the Cardinia LGA had an approximate workforce of 61,310 workers. Of these workers, 21,110 had relevant occupations and skill sets to the Project. This translates to 34.4% of the labour force with relevant occupations, comprising Technicians and Trades (10,124 workers), Machinery Operators and Drivers (4,821 workers), and Labourers (6,165 workers).

Of the communities and towns identified in the Social Study Area, as potential sources of local labour for the Project, the following was identified:

- The Bunyip SAL increased its total workforce by 32.3% between 2016 and 2021. In 2021, 38.7% of the Bunyip SAL labour force had occupations Technicians and Trades Workers (323), Machinery Operators and Drivers (111) and Labourers (158);
- The Bunyip North and the Longwarry North SALs have the smallest available workforce relevant to the Project. In 2021 their combined workforce was 134, of which 40.3% (54 workers) were employed in these three occupations;
- Whilst they have small labour forces, both the Bunyip North and the Longwarry North SALs also experienced a decrease in workforce numbers between 2016 and 2021 being 13.5% and 15.2%, respectively. This decline was felt most prominently by Labourers in the Bunyip North SAL, and by Technicians and Trades Workers in the Longwarry North SAL; and
- In the Secondary Social Study Area, the Nar Nar Goon SAL experienced a decline in the labour force between 2016 and 2021 by 2.1%. This decline was experienced by Technicians and Trades Workers with a loss of nine workers. Despite this decline however, in 2021, 40.4% of the Nar Nar Goon SAL labour force remains employed as Technicians and Trade Workers (105), Machinery Operators and Drivers (58), and Labourers (67)

TABLE 6-5 RELEVANT OCCUPATIONS

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Technicians and Trades Workers (#)	Machinery Operators and Drivers (#)	Labourers (#)
Primary Social Study Area				
Bunyip North SAL	2021	9	3	3
	2016	11	4	10
Bunyip SAL	2021	323	111	158
	2016	235	103	106
Garfield SAL	2021	218	71	116
	2016	173	73	78
Secondary Social Study Area				
Longwarry North SAL	2021	12	9	14
	2016	19	6	14
Longwarry SAL	2021	227	102	157
	2016	156	84	144
Tynong SAL	2021	60	25	32
	2016	37	28	24
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	105	58	67
	2016	114	57	58

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Technicians and Trades Workers (#)	Machinery Operators and Drivers (#)	Labourers (#)
Pakenham SAL	2021	4,176	2,548	3,053
	2016	3,598	1,974	2,526
Drouin SAL	2021	1,163	527	878
	2016	887	430	706
Warragul SAL	2021	1,314	518	1,171
	2016	1,107	366	847
Social Context				
Cardinia LGA	2021	10,124	4,821	6,165
	2016	8,196	3,708	4,813
Victoria STE	2021	399,460	187,939	277,292
	2016	358,749	159,193	247,428

Source: ABS, n.d.a

Table 6-6 provides a categorisation of the top five industries of employment within the Social Study Area, which comprises:

- Manufacturing;
- Construction;
- Health Care and Social Assistance;
- Transport, Postal and Warehouse; and
- Retail Trade.

Based on the data provided **Table 6-5**, the following was identified as relevant to the industries of employment within the Social Study Area:

- Within the Cardinia LGA, the top industry of employment in 2016 was Construction, and in 2021 was Health Care and Social Assistance. These industries employed 6,077 and 7,882 people, respectively;
- In 2021, all the SALs and the Cardinia LGA averaged approximately 16.0% of employment in the manufacturing industry; and
- The second highest average across the SALs and the Cardinia LGA was Health Care and Social Assistance, averaging 1,327 employees in 2021.

TABLE 6-6 RELEVANT INDUSTRIES

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Manufacturing (#)	Construction (#)	Health Care and Social Assistance (#)	Transport, Postal and Warehouse (#)	Retail Trade (#)
Primary Social Study Area						
Bunyip North SAL	2021	0	12	5	0	3
	2016	7	11	11	3	3
Bunyip SAL	2021	98	273	180	75	129
	2016	91	202	118	66	101
Garfield SAL	2021	61	203	104	42	108
	2016	64	153	84	42	72
Secondary Social Study Area						
Longwarry North SAL	2021	14	7	11	3	8
	2016	8	14	16	3	11
Longwarry SAL	2021	94	168	124	56	100
	2016	77	117	81	47	87
Tynong SAL	2021	18	53	20	11	28
	2016	12	35	18	15	17
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	51	87	41	36	38
	2016	59	80	33	34	62
Pakenham SAL	2021	2,672	3,046	3,670	1,490	2,739
	2016	2,305	2,541	2,503	1,211	2,607
Drouin SAL	2021	534	940	1,049	272	669
	2016	444	640	632	208	454
Warragul SAL	2021	590	1,143	1,511	282	794
	2016	473	748	896	221	674
Social Context						
Cardinia LGA	2021	5,496	8,092	7,882	2,845	5,807
	2016	4,601	6,077	4,966	2,280	4,933
Victoria STE	2021	220,823	297,981	445,906	147,258	297,471
	2016	212,723	228,149	341,999	130,069	279,636

Source: ABS, n.d.a

6.5.2 EDUCATION

Table 6-7 provides an overview of the education indicators for the Social Study Area, with the following identified:

- The Longwarry SAL saw the largest increase in vocational training within the Social Study Area, increasing 9.0 percentage points between 2016 and 2021. This increase stands as an outlier amongst the SAL, which may signify a shift in demographics, employment market changes, and/or governmental changes to education policy or programs;
- All locations within the Primary Social Study Area, except for the Bunyip North SAL, score equal or above the Victoria STE (25.8%) for vocational training, but lower for university-related educational attainment. This indicates that the vocational training pathway remains the dominant educational pathway in the Primary Social Study Area;
- While still lower than vocational training, university related educational attainment, on the whole, is showing a gradual increasing across most locations in the Primary Social Study Area, aligning with state-level trends;
- The Bunyip North SAL (33.6%) and the Pakenham SAL (15.0%) are substantially higher than the Cardinia LGA (14.6%) and Victoria (14.9%) with respect to Year 12 (or equivalent) educational attainment; and
- The educational profile of the Social Study Area indicates a capacity to source some workers locally for the Project, given the strong base in vocational training.

TABLE 6-7 KEY EDUCATION INDICATORS

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Educational Attainment Year 12 or Equiv. (%)	Educational Attainment, Vocational Training (%)	Educational Attainment, University (%)
Primary Social Study Area				
Bunyip North SAL	2021	33.6	0.0	0.0
	2016	33.3	0.0	0.0
Bunyip SAL	2021	12.6	25.8	13.2
	2016	11.4	24.2	10.4
Garfield SAL	2021	13.5	24.6	14.0
	2016	13.0	23.4	11.0
Secondary Social Study Area				
Longwarry North SAL	2021	11.4	26.1	9.9
	2016	13.0	22.8	11.4
Longwarry SAL	2021	11.4	31.8	9.9
	2016	11.6	22.8	8.2
Tynong SAL	2021	13.6	22.3	14.9
	2016	13.0	23.4	11.0

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Educational Attainment Year 12 or Equiv. (%)	Educational Attainment, Vocational Training (%)	Educational Attainment, University (%)
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	13.1	27.0	9.7
	2016	10.9	25.4	10.9
Pakenham SAL	2021	15.0	20.6	17.9
	2016	11.7	24.3	7.9
Drouin SAL	2021	12.2	24.1	14.2
	2021	12.2	20.3	20.3
Warragul SAL	2021	12.2	20.3	20.3
	2016	12.1	19.8	16.8
Social Context				
Cardinia LGA	2021	14.6	21.1	19.1
	2016	14.3	22.2	13.8
Victoria STE	2021	14.9	25.8	29.2
	2016	15.9	14.4	24.3

Source: ABS, n.d.a

6.5.3 INCOME

Table 6-8 provides an overview of the key income indicators within the Social Study Area. Based on the data presented, the following was identified as relevant to characterising the Social Study Area:

- The Cardinia LGA witnessed a modest increase in median weekly household income (25.18%) between 2016 and 2021. In 2021, only the Bunyip SAL and the Tynong SAL in the Social Study Area had higher median weekly household incomes than the Cardinia LGA and the Victoria STE.
- The median weekly household income has increased across the majority of the Social Study Area between 2016 and 2021, with the largest increase seen in the Tynong SAL (42.98%). The smallest change was observed in the Nar Nar Goon (8.26%), while the Longwarry North SAL saw a decline (-19.5%)
- In 2021, the Longwarry North SAL had the lowest median total personal income of $546 (decrease of 3.7% from 2016). The Bunyip SAL had the highest median personal income of $779, which was an increase of 28.3% from 2016.
- Between 2016 and 2021, the Longwarry North and the Nar Nar Goon SALs experienced increases in the percentage of low-income families, with the Longwarry North SAL increasing by 36.8% and the Nar Nar Goon SAL increasing by 2.3%.
- There was a decrease in the percentage of low-income families in the Primary Social Study Area, evident in the Bunyip SAL which saw a 4.7% decrease between 2016 and 2021.

TABLE 6-8 INCOME INDICATORS

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Median Total Personal Income ($)	Median Weekly Household Income ($)	Change in Median Weekly Household Income 2016-2021 (%)	Less than $650 Total Household Weekly Income (%)
Primary Social Study Area					
Bunyip North SAL[2]	2021	-	1,624	↓ 9.37	-
	2016	-	1,792		-
Bunyip SAL	2021	779	1,927	↑ 31.26	14.7
	2016	607	1,468		19.4
Garfield SAL	2021	743	1,677	↑ 21.34	14.0
	2016	620	1,382		21.0
Secondary Social Study Area					
Longwarry North SAL	2021	526	883	↓ 19.5	36.8
	2016	546	1,097		4.5
Longwarry SAL	2021	733	1,464	↑ 19.11	15.5
	2016	564	1,229		21.4
Tynong SAL	2021	776	1,976	↑ 42.98	14.9
	2016	620	1,382		17.6
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	776	1,664	↑ 8.26	17.7
	2016	671	1,537		15.4
Pakenham SAL	2021	783	1,664	↑ 21.11	14.0
	2016	660	1,374		17.1
Drouin SAL	2021	693	1,432	↑ 23.98	19.4
	2016	558	1,155		23.5
Warragul SAL	2021	754	1,563	↑ 31.01	18.0
	2016	594	1,193		23.5
Social Context					
Cardinia LGA	2021	831	1,874	↑ 25.18	12.4
	2016	680	1,497		15.7
Victoria STE	2021	803	1,759	↑ 23.96	16.4
	2016	644	1,419		20.3

Note1. *Some data unavailable for SAL.*

Note2. ↓ *Decrease* ↑ *Increase.*

Source: ABS, n.d.a

6.5.4 LOCAL BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

Data relating to the 'Counts of Australian Businesses' was used to provide insight in the characteristics of local businesses within the Social Study Area for the period between June 2021 and June 2025. While this data is not available at SAL level, it is available for the Cardinia LGA and is presented in **Table 6-9**.

Table 6-9 identifies the following business characteristics:

- The Cardinia LGA hosts a total of 12,389 businesses, the majority of which are non-employing businesses (i.e. sole traders/partnerships); and
- The top industry is Construction, employing a total of 2,972 workers, with Transport, Postal and Warehousing second, employing 2,018 workers.

Counts are heavily influenced by entry and exits within Australia's small business sector, and the scope of business counts is limited to businesses actively remitting in a Goods and Services Tax role only.

TABLE 6-9 LOCAL BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS IN THE CARDINIA LGA

Industry		**Business Type**		
		Total	**Non-Employing[1]**	**Small Business[2]**
Industry #1	Construction	2,972	1,701	1,241
Industry #2	Transport, Postal and Warehousing	2,018	1,727	285
Industry #3	Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	997	879	116
Total businesses in the Cardinia LGA				**12,389**

Note1. Non-employing businesses are sole traders/partnerships
Note2. Businesses that have fewer than 20 employees

Source: ABS, 2025

6.6 COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

This section provides a profile of the communities within the Social Study Area. The analysis draws on current data and local knowledge from desktop research and stakeholder engagement to identify community strengths, vulnerabilities, and diversity.

6.6.1 COMMUNITY HISTORY

A snapshot of each local community's history is provided in the following sections.

Bunyip North

Bunyip North developed as a rural locality north of the railway and Princes Highway, taking its name from its proximity to Bunyip. Unlike Bunyip proper, it never evolved into a formal township, although remnants of the early township of Buneep, later spelled Bunyip, were centred in and around the locality before European settlement spread southward (Odd Australian History, n.d.).

Bunyip

Bunyip originated in the 1840s as the Buneep Run, named after the Aboriginal word for a mythical water spirit (Odd Australian History, n.d.). The town relocated several times to follow shifting major roads, initially near a ford across the Bunyip River, until the arrival of the Gippsland railway in 1877 fixed its current site (Odd Australian History, n.d.). Community infrastructure followed: a school opened in 1880, Anglican and Methodist churches in the 1880s and 1890s, a Mechanics' Institute in 1906, and a police station in 1903 (Odd Australian History, n.d.). The drainage of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp in the 1890s transformed the area into rich dairying land (Odd Australian History, n.d.).

Garfield

Originally known as Cannibal Creek, the locality was settled in the mid-1860s with coach services to Gippsland crossing the creek (Victorian Places, n.d.a). The opening of a timber railway siding in 1877 marked its transformation into a timber and brickworks centre for the region (Victorian Places, n.d.a). The town was renamed Garfield in 1887 to honour US President James A. Garfield (Victorian Places, n.d.a). Development accelerated after the draining of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp in the 1890s, ushering in dairying, market gardening and orchards (Victorian Places, n.d.a). The first primary school opened in 1886, renamed Garfield Primary School in 1888; a picture theatre and electricity arrived in the 1920s (Victorian Places, n.d.a).

Longwarry North

Part of the original Longwarry pastoral run established in 1855, Longwarry North was first leased under licensing acts in 1849 to 1851 (Victorian Places, n.d.b). The district was gradually subdivided under Victorian land selection acts in the 1860s, requiring settlers to improve the land before taking up leaseholds. Small communities formed as settlers built dwellings and fences, cultivating beef properties alongside early timber extraction (Victorian Places, n.d.b).

Longwarry

The Longwarry area began as pastoral leases in the 1850s, known as the Longwarry, Heifer Creek or Musk Creek runs (Victorian Places, n.d.b). As the timber industry expanded in the 1870s, sleepers were cut and tramways built into the forests. A siding named Fraser's Siding evolved into Longwarry railway station in 1886, firmly establishing the township (Victorian Places, n.d.b). Bushfires in 1926 and 1939 devastated surrounding mills; as forests receded, dairying became predominant, with a cooperative formed in 1921 (Victorian Places, n.d.b). The post office opened in 1881, and the railway connection anchored the town socially and economically (Victorian Places, n.d.b).

Tynong

Tynong developed as a rural settlement following the extension of the Gippsland railway in 1877, which provided a station and boosted closer settlement (Victorian Places, n.d.c). Early industries included timber cutting and quarrying, with Tynong granite later used in Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance (Victorian Places, n.d.c). Farming became dominant after the drainage of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp in the 1890s, supporting dairying and market gardening (Victorian Places, n.d.c).

Nar Nar Goon

Nar Nar Goon originated as a pastoral district in the mid-19th century, its name derived from an Aboriginal phrase meaning "water" or "swamp" (Victorian Places, n.d.d). The railway's arrival in 1877 transformed it into a service centre for timber and farming communities (Victorian Places, n.d.d). By the early 20th century, dairying and crop production were well established, supported by local schools and churches (Victorian Places, n.d.d).

Pakenham

Pakenham began as a pastoral run in the 1840s and grew into a township after the Gippsland railway opened in 1877 (Victorian Places, n.d.e). The town became a hub for agriculture, particularly dairying and potato growing, following the drainage of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp (Victorian Places, n.d.e). Today, Pakenham is the largest urban centre in Cardinia LGA, combining residential growth with retail and community facilities (Victorian Places, n.d.e).

Drouin

Drouin emerged in the 1870s as a timber and farming settlement, its growth accelerated by the railway connection in 1878 (Victorian Places, n.d.f). The town became a centre for dairying and butter production, with a cooperative factory established in the early 20th century (Victorian Places, n.d.f). Post-war years saw expansion in housing and services, making Drouin a key town in West Gippsland (Victorian Places, n.d.f).

Warragul

Warragul developed as a major Gippsland township after the railway reached the area in 1878 (Victorian Places, n.d.g). Its fertile soils supported dairying, horticulture and later manufacturing (Victorian Places, n.d.g). Warragul grew rapidly in the 20th century, becoming a regional centre for education, health and commerce (Victorian Places, n.d.g).

6.6.2 COMMUNITY CULTURE AND VALUES

Within the Cardinia LGA, urban and rural communities both uphold a strong sense of identity, resilience, and neighbourliness. Urban areas such as Pakenham are evolving into vibrant hubs with growing infrastructure and social connectivity, while more semi-rural towns like Bunyip, Garfield, Tynong, and Longwarry, maintain a distinct agrarian identity and preference for low-density living. In the views of some stakeholders, communities within the Social Study Area often perceive themselves as separate and unique, with strong local identities, with a preference for locally tailored solutions to problems rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

There appears to be a clear distinction between rural and urban lifestyles, with residents identifying as part of an outlying or non-metropolitan community, reinforcing a degree of separation from Melbourne's urban influence.

Community identity within the Primary Social Study Area has also been shaped by shared experience of natural hazard events, most notably the 2019 Bunyip Complex fires, which resulted in the loss of homes, outbuildings, fencing, livestock and personal property across the locality. Stakeholders described the collective response to, and recovery from, these events, including mutual assistance between neighbours, the evacuation of livestock, and the

subsequent rebuilding of homes, farms and community infrastructure, as a defining feature of local identity.

As is the case, the communities of the Primary Social Study Area in particular, value self-reliance and collective support, fostered through shared facilities, volunteer networks, and local events. Community life is underpinned by a strong tradition of volunteerism and participation in local organisations, including sporting clubs, environmental groups, schools, churches, and community groups, many of which rely on local volunteers to operate. Social cohesion is reinforced through events such as festivals, markets, and community initiatives, which play an important role in maintaining local identity and connectedness. While these networks remain strong however, some stakeholders noted increasing challenges in sustaining volunteer participation, particularly as demographic changes introduce more commuter households and residents with less of a desire to engage in community-based activities.

The Primary Social Study Area is characterised by a strong agricultural heritage and ongoing connection to land-based livelihoods. This is also evident within the smaller communities of the Secondary Social Study Area. Farming activities, including cattle grazing and horticulture, remain central to local identity, alongside active environmental stewardship through groups such as Landcare and other conservation initiatives. Connection to land is frequently intergenerational, with a number of families having owned and farmed local properties across two to four generations, and in some cases for close to sixty years. For these households, land is valued not solely as a productive or financial asset but as a family legacy, with an associated aspiration that future generations remain connected to the locality and to a rural way of life.

Stewardship is also described as an individual practice as well as a collective one, with residents referencing manual weed management in preference to chemical use, attention to soil condition, protection of creeks and waterways traversing their properties, and the production of food for household consumption. Protection of agricultural land and environmental assets is an important shared value, with green wedge planning and land-use controls reinforcing a desire to preserve rural character, biodiversity, and productive land. Community-led environmental initiatives, particularly along waterways such as Cannibal Creek, further highlight strong local commitment to conservation and sustainable land management.

Stakeholders located within areas outside of town of Bunyip were consistent in identifying the specific qualities underpinning their attachment to the locality, including peace and tranquillity, privacy, open space, a quiet acoustic environment and a dark night landscape. Several residents indicated that these characteristics were the express reason they chose to move to, or remain in, the area, and that they are regarded as defining attributes of local lifestyle rather than incidental features of it.

At the same time, the Social Study Area is experiencing gradual demographic and social change driven by population growth, housing development, and increasing connectivity to Melbourne. Stakeholders consistently noted an influx of new residents, particularly young families and commuters, contributing to a transition from a traditionally farming-based community to a more mixed rural–lifestyle setting. While this growth is seen to bring economic opportunity and the potential for new ideas, it also contributes to shifts in community cohesion, with longer-term residents perceiving changes to the small-town atmosphere and a reduced sense of familiarity and safety. This change is, however, experienced unevenly across

the Social Study Area. Stakeholders in Bunyip North and Tonimbuk indicated that their immediate locality has not undergone comparable transition and described the area as retaining an essentially rural character.

Overall, communities within the Social Study Area place strong value on maintaining their rural character, environmental quality, and close-knit social fabric, while acknowledging the inevitability of growth and change. There appears to be a shared aspiration to balance development with the preservation of local identity, lifestyle, and landscape values, all which are defining features that contribute to the area's sense of place and community cohesion.

6.6.2.1 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

There are a number of festivals and events occurring within the Social Study Area. These festivals and events are identified in **Table 6-10**, and are generally reflective of the core community values, with events such as local arts and craft shows, livestock exhibitions occurring within the rural localities, and live music and entertainment dominating the more urbanised areas.

In addition to the formalised festivals and events outlined in **Table 6-10**, the Social Study Area also hosts several informal and one-off events throughout the year. These typically involve local markets, workshops and cultural activities organised by Local Community Groups.

TABLE 6-10 SIGNIFICANT FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Location	Event/Festival	Description	Indicative Date
Bunyip	Bunyip Rodeo	Traditional rodeo featuring local competitors and community entertainment	February (Annually)
	Bunyip Show	Annual country show with livestock, produce, crafts, competitions and family entertainment.	March (Annually)
	Bunyip Country Music Festival	Live performances by country music artists and line-dancing events.	October (Annually)
	Bunyip Christmas Carnival	Carnival rides, market stalls, and family-based activities.	December (Annually)
	Bunyip Community Market	Features over 140 stalls, food trucks, local crafts and a community barbeque.	Last Sunday of the Month (Monthly)
Garfield	Country Stampede	Live country music revival, celebrating hits and classics in a lively outdoor setting.	December
	Garfield Christmas Festival	Music, food, and community celebrations along Garfield's main street.	December
Nar Nar Goon	Community Christmas Festival	Live entertainment, food and family-friendly activities.	November/ December (Annually)

Location	Event/Festival	Description	Indicative Date
Pakenham	Pakenham Agricultural & Horticultural Show	Annual county show with livestock, produce, crafts, competitions and family entertainment.	October (Annually)
	Fusion Festival	Multicultural festival with performances, global food stalls, kids' activities, and a documentary/Q&A.	June (Annually)
	Carols by Candlelight	Evening of carols, food, and Christmas activities, including fireworks.	December (Annually)
	Yakkerboo Festival	Themed street carnival with live music, carnival rides, food trucks, fireworks; celebrating 50 years in 2026	Annually
Various	100 Mile Dinner	Culinary event showcasing locally sourced produce and regional wines.	Annually
	Victorian Seniors Festival	Month-long celebration with 30+ workshops, performances, wellness days, exhibitions	October (Annually)

6.6.3 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Social Study Area is steeped in both Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. Prior to European settlement the area was home to members of the greater Kulin Nations. Across the Cardinia LGA, the Bunurong, Boonwurrung, and Wurundjeri peoples are recognised as Traditional Owners, represented by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party over the Project Area. The nearest mapped area of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity is associated with Cannibal Creek, to the north, approximately 10 m from the Project Area, and 188 m from the proposed Development Footprint at its closest point (ERM, 2026).

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan is currently being prepared by BNCP in consultation with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. At time of writing, no cultural heritage finds have been identified through the voluntary Cultural Heritage Management Plan’s assessment processes.

6.7 HOUSING PROFILE

Access to good quality, affordable housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of the community (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2025a) and housing costs are often a major component of total living costs (ABS, 2022).

Section 6.7.1 provides an overview of the key housing indicators, with trends across the property market within the Social Study Area outlined in **Section 6.7.2**. An understanding of the extent of short-term accommodation is available within the Social Study Area is provided in

Section 6.7.3. **Section 6.7.4** provides an overview of the social housing provided for within the Social Study Area.

6.7.1 KEY HOUSING INDICATORS

Key housing and accommodation indicators across the Project's Social Study Area are summarised in **Table 6-11**, with the data indicating:

- The average household size across the Social Study Area in 2021 was 2.65, which is lower than the Cardinia LGA (2.8), but higher than the Victoria STE (2.5). Larger household sizes, such as those in the Bunyip North, Bunyip, Garfield, Tynong, Pakenham SALs (2.8), suggest family-oriented communities, while smaller sizes, like the Longwarry North SAL (2.2), point to a higher proportion of single-person households;
- Dwelling occupancy rates are high across the Social Study Area, but unoccupied dwellings also increased in some locations between 2016 and 2021. For example, the Longwarry North SAL saw the percentage of unoccupied dwellings rise from 5.1% in 2016 to 8.6% in 2021. Similarly, the percentage of unoccupied dwellings in the Tynong SAL increased from 4.5% in 2016 to 8.7% in 2021. This trend may indicate potential economic and population shift; however, it may also reflect rural properties with multiple dwellings;
- Housing tenure patterns varied across the Social Study Area, however most SALs revealed a higher percentage of mortgaged properties. This trend was particularly prominent in the Bunyip and Longwarry SALs, with 52.1% and 50.7% of residents holding mortgages in 2021 – which is consistent with the Cardinia LGA (50.1%). Conversely, the Longwarry North SAL only had 26.2% of residents with mortgages in 2021, with most owning their home outright (44.0%). The Pakenham SAL had the highest percentage of renters, with 30.8%. These percentages indicate the potential for varying levels of housing security across within the Social Study Area;
- Housing stress is evident in most locations within the Social Study Area. In 2021, mortgage stress (where repayments >30% of household income) was highest in the Longwarry North SAL at 73.3%. The other SALs reported mortgage stress relatively consistent with the Cardinia LGA average of 31.4%, and slightly above the Victoria STE average (30.9%), with the exception of the Bunyip (25.6%) and Longwarry SALs (38.6%). The Tynong SAL differed from the other SALs with no residents identified as experiencing housing stress;
- Rental stress (where rent >30% of household income) was less common within the Social Study Area, with the highest rates experienced in the Nar Nar Goon (19.4%), Longwarry North (18.2%), and Pakenham SALs (16.7%). The other were below the Cardinia LGA average of 15.1%; and
- Household composition is predominantly family-based within the Social Study Area, with all SALs (with the exception of the Longwarry North SAL) comprising over 69.9% family households. It is noted however, that single-person households were the most prevalent in the Longwarry North SAL (35.3%), which may indicate ageing populations or different lifestyle preferences.

TABLE 6-11 KEY HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION INDICATORS

ABS Statistical Area	**Census Year**	**Average number of people per household** (#)	**Dwelling Count** Occupied / Unoccupied % (#)	**Housing Tenure** Owned Outright / Mortgage / Rented % (#)	**Monthly Repayments >30% Household Income** Weekly Rent / Mortgage % (#)	**Household Composition** Families / Single / Group % (#)
Primary Social Study Area						
Bunyip North SAL[1]	2021	2.8	- / 0.0 (86 / 0)	-	-	-
	2016	2.5	- / - (103 / 3)	- / - (15 / 5)	-	-
Bunyip SAL[1]	2021	2.8	93.9 / 6.2 (1,018 / 67)	33 / 52.1 / 11.5 (336 / 530 / 117)	25.6 / 13.0 (30 / 69)	79.3 / 19.2 / 1.5 (806 / 195 / 15)
	2016	2.8	91/9 (793 / 78)	33.9 / 48.6 / 12.8 (271 / 388 / 102)	4.3 / 10.0 (- / -)	79 / 19.3 / 1.8 (627 / 153, 14)
Garfield SAL[1]	2021	2.8	93.9 / 6.9 (706 / 52)	34.8 / 49.4 / 11.2 (246 / 349 / 79)	30.4 / 12.9 (24 / 45)	79.1 / 20.2 / 0.7 (555 / 142 / 5)
	2016	2.9	91.1 / 8.9 (574 / 56)	36.2 / 48.3 / 11.5 (208 / 278 / 66)	3.7 / 9.5 (- / -)	78.4 / 19.9 / 1.7 (456 / 116 / 10)
Secondary Social Study Area						
Longwarry North SAL[1]	2021	2.2	90.3 / 8.6 (84 / 8)	44 / 26.2 / 17.9 (37 / 22 / 15)	73.3 / 18.2 (11 / 4)	64.7 / 35.3 / 0.0 (55 / 30 / 0)
	2016	2.4	94.9 / 5.1 (75 / 4)	44.7 / 27.6 / 27.6 (34 / 21 / 21)	4.1 / 8.2 (- / -)	73.1 / 26.9 / 0.0 (57 / 21 / 0)

ABS Statistical Area	**Census Year**	**Average number of people per household** (#)	**Dwelling Count** Occupied / Unoccupied % (#)	**Housing Tenure** Owned Outright / Mortgage / Rented % (#)	**Monthly Repayments >30% Household Income** Weekly Rent / Mortgage % (#)	**Household Composition** Families / Single / Group % (#)
Longwarry SAL[1]	2021	2.6	93.9 / 6.6 (698 / 49)	23.8 / 50.7 / 21.2 (166 / 354 / 148)	38.6 / 13.9 (68 / 61)	69.9 / 27.4 /2.7 (491 / 192 / 19)
	2016	2.6	94.6 / 5.4 (695 / 40)	28.2 / 48.2 /21.3 (197 / 337 / 149)	8.2 / 14.1 (- / -)	75.4 / 21.9 / 2.7 (524 / 152 / 19)
Tynong SAL[1]	2021	2.8	92.3 / 8.7 (169 / 16)	32.5 / 46.2 / 14.2 (55 78 / 24)	0.0 / 10.3 (0 / 8)	76.4 / 21.8 / 1.7 (133 / 38 / 3)
	2016	2.8	95.5 / 4.5 (149 / 7)	34.9 / 48.3 / 12.8 (52 / 72 / 19)	4.8 / 6.2 (- / -)	69.3 / 23.5 / 7.2 (106 / 36 / 11)
Nar Nar Goon SAL[1]	2021	2.7	95.1 / 4.9 (352 / 18)	34.9 / 38.1 / 21.6 (123 / 134 /76)	34.2 / 19.4 (26 / 26)	76.1 / 21.3 / 2.6 (268 / 75 / 9)
	2016	2.8	92.9 / 7.1 (351 / 27)	35.1 / 38.5 / 21.3 (122 / 134 / 74)	6.3 / 7.6 (- / -)	79.4 / 17.4 / 3.2 (273 / 60 / 11)
Pakenham SAL[1]	2021	2.8	95.1 / 4.9 (18,448 / 955)	18.7 / 46.3 / 30.8 (3,445 / 8,536 / 5,679)	32.6 / 16.7 (1,849 / 1,425)	75.6 / 21.6 / 2.8 (13,952 / 3,985 / 515)
	2016	2.8	93.2 / 6.8 (15,525 / 1,137)	18.7 / 46.3 / 30.7 (2,898 / 7,196/ 4,766)	11.5 / 10.8 (- / -)	77 / 20.4 / 2.6 (11,965 / 3,167 / 409)
Drouin SAL[1]	2021	2.5	93.8 / 6.1 (5,730 / 374)	35.5 / 40.3 / 21.4 (2,035 / 2,312 / 1,225)	36.0 / 12.7 (441 / 293)	72.6 / 25.4 / 2.1 (4,164, 1,456, 118)
	2016	2.5	91.9 / 8.1 (4,438 / 391)	34.6 / 37.1 / 25.3 (1,537 / 1,650 / 1,126)	10.4 / 7.3 (- / -)	71.9 / 25.6 / 2.5 (3,190 / 1,136 /112)

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Average number of people per household (#)	Dwelling Count Occupied / Unoccupied % (#)	Housing Tenure Owned Outright / Mortgage / Rented % (#)	Monthly Repayments >30% Household Income Weekly Rent / Mortgage % (#)	Household Composition Families / Single / Group % (#)
Warragul SAL[1]	2021	2.5	93.9 / 6.2 (7,499 / 496)	37.3 / 37.4 / 22.5 (2,794 / 2,805 / 1,685)	32.8 / 10.7 (552 / 299)	71 / 26.7 / 2.3 (5,327 / 2,000 / 173)
	2016	2.4	90.5 / 9.5 (5,897 / 620)	38 /34.7 / 23.3 (2,238 / 2,043 / 1,372)	8.6 / 5.4 (- / -)	70.1 / 27.5 / 2.4 (4,130 / 1,623 / 139)
Social Context						
Cardinia LGA[1]	2021	2.8	94.9 / 5.1 (39,607 / 2,122)	23.4 / 50.1 / 23 (9,283 / 19,841 / 9,107)	31.4 / 15.1 (2,859 / 2,988)	78.4 / 19.3 / 2.2 (31,061 / 7,656 / 886)
	2016	2.8	92.8 / 7.2 (31,007 / 2,418)	24.4 / 49.1 / 22.8 (7,570 / 15,208 / 7,081)	8.1 / 10.7 (- / -)	79.1 / 18.6 / 2.3 (24,530 / 5,770 / 706)
Victoria STE[1]	2021	2.5	88.9 / 11.1 (2,390,232 / 298,029)	32.2 / 36.1 / 28.5 (768,730 / 862,658 / 681,419)	30.9 / 15.5 (210,437 / 133,287)	70.1 / 25.9 / 4 (1,676,129 / 619,549 / 94,559)
	2016	2.6	88.3 /11.7 (2,112,699 / 278,629)	32.3 / 35.3 / 28.7 (682,685 / 746,502 / 607,354)	10.4 / 7.5 (- / -)	70.8 / 24.7 /4.5 (1,495,290 / 521,828 / 95,588)

Note1. *Not all categories have been included to facilitate ease of understanding. As such, totals may not equal 100%.*

Source: ABS, n.d.a; ABS, n.d.c

6.7.2 HOUSING AND ACCOMMODATION TRENDS

The housing market is inherently complex, with changes in property values, availability and rental conditions influenced by a combination of factors including supply and demand dynamics, infrastructure provision, planning and regulatory settings, economic conditions, population growth, housing diversity, and local amenity. These factors operate at multiple spatial scales and can vary considerably between suburbs within the same urban area.

Cardinia Shire Council's *Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2018/25* (Cardinia Shire Council, 2019) has identified that the Cardinia LGA is facing housing availability, affordability, and accessibility challenges, including:

- Very low levels of dedicated social and affordable housing exist for lower income residents to access relative to demand;
- Homelessness, which is considered a hidden and significant issue that impacts disproportionately on women, single people, sole parent families, younger and older residents, people with mental illness and people with a disability; and
- The lack of housing options delivered by the private sector (e.g. lack of smaller dwellings for rent or purchase by single and couple households, and a lack of appropriate housing for people with special needs).

In order to address these issues, Cardinia Shire Council (2019) has committed to:

1. Increase the supply of affordable, social and community housing, for very low and low-income households and people with specialised needs;
2. Increase the supply of affordable private rental for very low and low-income households; and
3. Increase the diversity of dwelling types to respond to population demographics and needs.

This section examines housing market conditions using postcode-level data sourced from commercial property data providers. Postcodes have been adopted in preference to ABS statistical geographies, as they represent the most commonly used spatial unit for analysing residential property sales, housing availability, and rental market trends. To align housing market indicators with the datasets used for the Social Study Area, selected postcodes have been used as proxies for both the Primary and Secondary Social Study Areas.

6.7.2.2 HOUSING MARKET

Table 6-12 and **Table 6-13** provide an overview of the housing market and the unit and apartment market in the Social Study Area.

The data indicates that within the Primary Social Study Area, Bunyip North/Bunyip has the strongest housing market performance, with the highest sales activity (58 houses sold in the past 12 months) and price growth (18.4%), alongside relatively strong availability (21 listings). Garfield shows more moderate activity, with 36 houses sold, modest price growth (6.1%), and slightly higher availability (22 listings), suggesting a more balanced but less dynamic market. In the Secondary Social Study Area, Longwarry North/Longwarry has the highest overall housing turnover (76 sales), lower median prices ($625,000), and shorter time on market (47 days), indicating comparatively higher availability and turnover.

With respect to units and apartments, Bunyip North/Bunyip demonstrates strong market performance, with the highest median price ($607,500) and notable annual growth (26.6%), although sales volumes remain low (five sales) and availability limited (three listings). Garfield also recorded minimal activity, with five sales and no recorded availability in the previous month, indicating a very constrained market segment. In contrast, Longwarry North/Longwarry show a relatively higher turnover (12 sales) despite lower prices ($517,500), suggesting comparatively greater activity in the unit and apartment market within the Secondary Social Study Area.

TABLE 6-12 HOUSING MARKET INSIGHTS – HOUSES

Location (Postcode)	Median Housing Price ($)	Median Housing Price Growth in Past 12 Months (%)	House Availability Previous Month (#)	Housing Sales in Past 12 Months (#)	Median Time on Market (days)	Rental Yield (%)
Primary Social Study Area						
Bunyip North Bunyip (3815)	900,000	↑ 18.4	21	58	62	3.9
Garfield (3814)	775,500	↑ 6.1	22	36	57	3.9
Secondary Social Study Area						
Longwarry North Longwarry (3816)	625,000	↑ 5.9	19	76	47	4.6
Tynong (3813)	800,000	↓ 3.0	3	11	79	3.8
Nar Nar Goon (3812)	1,150,000	↑ 21.1	10	18	82	3.6
Pakenham (3810)	715,000	↑ 9.0	275	1,124	30	4.1
Drouin (3818)	665,000	↑ 5.6	110	418	55	4.5
Warragul (3820)	680,000	↑ 4.6	201	555	50	4.4

Note1. Data presented in this table were collected in June 2026.

Note2. ↓ Indicates a decrease and ↑ indicates an increase over the past 12 months.

Note3. All postcode-level values are simple (unweighted) averages and have been rounded to one decimal place for consistency.

Source: REA Group Ltd, 2026

TABLE 6-13 HOUSING MARKET INSIGHTS – UNITS AND APARTMENTS

Location (Postcode)	Median Unit and Apartment Price ($)	Median Unit and Apartment Price Growth in Past 12 Months (%)	Unit and Apartment Availability Previous Month (#)	Unit and Apartment Sales in Past 12 Months (#)	Median Time on Market (days)	Rental Yield (%)
Primary Social Study Area						
Bunyip North Bunyip (3815)	607,500	↑ 26.6	3	5	44	4.5
Garfield (3814)	590,000	↑ 12.4	0	5	34	4.5
Secondary Social Study Area						
Longwarry North Longwarry (3816)	517,500	↑ 12.5	3	12	76	4.6
Tynong (3813)[1]	-	-	-	0	-	4.7
Nar Nar Goon (3812)	490,000	↓ 7.6	0	3	29	4.5
Pakenham (3810)	557,500	↑ 15.0	21	154	33	4.5
Drouin (3818)	478,500	↑ 4.0	17	79	49	4.7
Warragul (3820)	450,000	0.0	20	58	40	4.8

Note1. *Some data unavailable for location.*

Note2. Data presented in this table were collected in June 2026.

Note3. ↓ Indicates a decrease and ↑ indicates an increase over the past 12 months.

Note4. All postcode-level values are simple (unweighted) averages and have been rounded to one decimal place for consistency.

Source: REA Group Ltd, 2026

6.7.2.3 RENTAL MARKET

There are two primary components of the private rental housing market that can indicate both existing pressures and socio-economic vulnerability: rental availability and affordability. These aspects are explored in the following section.

Rental Availability

Table 6-14 and **Table 6-15** provide an overview of the housing market and the unit and apartment market in the Social Study Area. The data indicates a high level of leasing activity within the Secondary Social Study Area, particular within Pakenham, with 1,386 houses leased in the past 12 months, alongside a relatively short median time on market (24 days),

suggesting strong demand. Within the Primary Social Study Area, leasing volumes are comparatively low in absolute terms but still reflect constrained supply, with a combined total of 21 houses leased across Bunyip North, Bunyip, and Garfield over the past 12 months, and minimal rental availability (one property recorded in the previous month). This indicates limited rental stock and tight market conditions.

Similar patterns are evident in the rental market for units and apartments. In particular, Pakenham and Drouin, located within the Secondary Social Study Area, recorded a combined total of 244 unit and apartment leases in the past 12 months. Both locations also demonstrate strong renter demand, with a combined renter interest of 890, reinforcing the presence of sustained demand across both housing typologies.

TABLE 6-14 RENTAL MARKET INSIGHTS – HOUSES

Location (Postcode)	Median Rental Price per week ($)	Median Rental Price Growth in Past 12 Months (%)	Rental Availability Previous Month (#)	Rentals Leased in Past 12 Months (#)	Median Time on Market (days)	Renter Interest (#)
Primary Social Study Area						
Bunyip North Bunyip (3815)	575	↑ 4.6	0	11	23	0
Garfield (3814)	608	↑ 10.6	1	10	36	131
Secondary Social Study Area						
Longwarry North Longwarry (3816)	540	↑ 6.3	4	23	28	197
Tynong (3813)	660	↑ 28.7	0	5	31	0
Nar Nar Goon (3812)	630	↓ 9.1	3	7	20	61
Pakenham (3810)	550	0.0	176	1,386	24	1,908
Drouin (3818)	570	↑ 7.6	39	233	26	699
Warragul (3820)	580	↑ 5.5	68	456	27	861

Note1. *Data presented in this table were collected in June 2026.*
Note2. *↓ Indicates a decrease and ↑ indicates an increase over the past 12 months.*
Note3. *All postcode-level values are simple (unweighted) averages and have been rounded to one decimal place for consistency.*

Source: REA Group Ltd, 2026

TABLE 6-15 RENTAL MARKET INSIGHTS – UNITS AND APARTMENTS

Location (Postcode)	Median Unit and Apartment Price per week ($)	Median Unit and Apartment Price Growth in Past 12 Months (%)	Unit and Apartment Availability Previous Month (#)	Unit and Apartment Sales in Past 12 Months (#)	Median Time on Market (days)	Renter Interest (#)
Primary Social Study Area						
Bunyip North Bunyip (3815)[1]	450	↑ 9.8	1	3	14	44
Garfield (3814)[1]	460	↓ 5.7	0	5	29	0
Secondary Social Study Area						
Longwarry North Longwarry (3816)	450	0.0	0	10	21	0
Tynong (3813)[1]	475	-	-	1	12	-
Nar Nar Goon (3812)[1]	420	-	0	1	14	0
Pakenham (3810)	500	↑ 5.3	17	176	22	654
Drouin (3818)	450	↑ 4.7	10	68	22	236
Warragul (3820)	420	↑ 6.3	5	51	24	275

Note1. *Some data unavailable for location*
Note2. *Data presented in this table were collected in June 2026.*
Note3. *↓ Indicates a decrease and ↑ indicates an increase over the past 12 months.*
Note4. *All postcode-level values are simple (unweighted) averages and have been rounded to one decimal place for consistency.*

Source: REA Group Ltd, 2026

Table 6-16 provides insights into historical and current vacancy data across the Social Study Area using the SQM Residential Vacancy Rates (SQM Research, 2026). The SQM Residential Vacancy Rate draws on a combination of ABS data and online data from monitoring major property listing sites to provide a time-series analysis on a monthly and postcode scale.

Table 6-16 provides an overview of the most recent residential vacancy data, which indicates:

- There was limited vacancy in the Primary Social Study Area, reflected in the number of available vacancies (one) and the highest vacancy rate being 1.0%; and
- In the Secondary Social Study Area, there were a higher number of vacancies, most in Pakenham (69), followed by Warragul (31) and Drouin (28), however the vacancy rate still remained low, varying between 1.1& in Pakenham and 2.1% in Drouin.

TABLE 6-16 RESIDENTIAL VACANCY RATES

Location (Postcode)	Current Number of Vacancies, May 2026 (#)	Current Vacancy Rate, May 2026 (%)
Primary Social Study Area		
Bunyip North Bunyip (3815)	0	0.0
Garfield (3814)	1	1.0
Secondary Social Study Area		
Longwarry North Longwarry (3816)[1]	2	0.7
Tynong (3813)	0	0.0
Nar Nar Goon (3812)	2	1.8
Pakenham (3810)	69	1.1
Drouin (3818)	28	2.1
Warragul (3820)	31	1.6

Note1. *Some data unavailable for location*

Source: SQM Research, 2026

Rental Affordability

Rental affordability is a key portion of the housing market that is likely to respond to worker influx prompted by large projects and is a key component for sustaining the economic vitality of communities and the wellbeing of individuals (Lawrie et al., 2011).

The extent of households experiencing rental stress in the Social Study Area has previously been considered in **Section 6.7.1**.

SGS Economics & Planning in partnership with National Shelter, Beyond Bank, and Brotherhood of St Laurence have published the Rental Affordability Index (RAI) since 2015 (SGS Economics & Planning, 2026). The RAI index is calculated via considering a household's income against its qualifying income[1], with the results identified through the affordability categories shown in **Figure 6-2**.

[1] Qualifying income refers to the income required to pay rent, where rent is 30 percent of income.



Source: SGS Economics & Planning, 2026

FIGURE 6-2 RENTAL AFFORDABILITY INDEX AND SEVERITY OF RENTAL UNAFFORDABILITY

The findings presented in **Table 6-17** indicate that:

- In comparing rental affordability using the average rental household income, the Secondary Social Study Area is considered to be Unaffordable to the east of the Project Area (i.e. Drouin and Warragul), whilst only Moderately Unaffordable or Acceptable west of the Project Area toward Melbourne; and
- Pakenham, Drouin, and Warrigal, all within the Secondary Social Study Area, are considered to be Very Affordable for dual income couples with children, and Acceptable to Affordable for minimum wage couples, single income couple with children, and single working parents. However, rentals are considered to be Unaffordable for pensioner couples in the same locations.

These findings align with the ABS data as presented in **Table 6-11** to provide further nuance to the rental stress numbers as presented in **Section 6.7.1**.

TABLE 6-17 RENTAL AFFORDABILITY, Q2 2025

Location (Postcode)	Average Rental Household Income	Dual Income Couple With Children	Minimum Wage Couple	Single Pensioner	Pensioner Couple	Single Income Couple With Children	Single Working Parent	Single Person On Benefits	Student Share House
Primary Social Study Area									
Bunyip North Bunyip (3815)	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null
Garfield (3814)	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null
Secondary Social Study Area									
Longwarry North Longwarry (3816)	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null

Location (Postcode)	Average Rental Household Income	Dual Income Couple With Children	Minimum Wage Couple	Single Pensioner	Pensioner Couple	Single Income Couple With Children	Single Working Parent	Single Person On Benefits	Student Share House
Tynong (3813)[1]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nar Nar Goon (3812)	114	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null	Null
Pakenham (3810)	121	236	128	Null	83	121	141	Null	115
Drouin (3818)	98	248	136	Null	88	127	149	Null	121
Warragul (3820)	88	256	140	Null	91	131	154	Null	125

Note1. *Data unavailable.*

Note2. *Data is available by postcode and it is noted that postcodes may include other locations / suburbs not listed in this table.*

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2025

6.7.3 SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION

Short-term accommodation such as hotels, motels, cabins and caravan parks are important in regional areas to provide accommodation for visitors and to support regional tourism and economic activity (Gurran et al, 2018). A review of the commercial and private short-term accommodation located within the local communities, towns and cities within the Social Study Area was undertaken in order to provide an understanding of the accommodation currently offered, and is provided in **Appendix A**.

It is noted that the communities within the Social Study Area are all located within a maximum driveable distance of 60 minutes based on access to/from the Project Area via the Princes Highway.

As per **Table 6-18**, the communities within the Primary Social Study Area have limited supply and mix of accommodation, noting the low number of motels, hotels, guest houses, caravan parks (including cabins). As such, Pakenham and Warragul provide the largest number of accommodation options within reasonable proximity to the Project Area.

Based on the review undertaken the following commercial accommodation options were identified in the Social Study Area:

- 12 hotels, motels, inns, lodges, and retreat centres; and
- 4 cabins, caravan/holiday parks, and accommodation villages.

TABLE 6-18 COMMERCIAL ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

Location	Establishments		Total Capacity (#)
	Hotels, Motels, Inns, Lodges, and Retreat Centres (#)	Cabins, Caravan/ Holiday Parks, and Accommodation Villages (#)	
Primary Social Study Area			
Bunyip North	0	0	0
Bunyip	1	0	14
Garfield	0	0	0
Secondary Social Study Area			
Longwarry North	0	0	0
Longwarry	0	0	0
Tynong	0	0	0
Nar Nar Goon	0	0	0
Pakenham	4	1	262
Drouin	3	2	165
Warragul	4	1	435
Total	**12**	**4**	**871**

Note1. *No commercial accommodation options in some locations.*

Note2. *Capacity details are not available for some establishments.*

6.7.4 SOCIAL HOUSING

Social housing in Victoria comprises short and long-term rental housing that is owned and administered by the Victorian Government or not-for-profit agencies. Social housing is available for people on low incomes who need housing, particularly those within the community who are and/or have recently experienced homelessness, family violence, or have special needs (Housing Vic, 2024).

Social housing is comprised of two types of housing – public housing and community housing:

- Public housing – form of long-term rental social housing managed by the Victorian Government; and
- Community housing – secure, affordable, long-term rental housing managed by not-for-profit organisations for people on low incomes or with special needs.

The Victorian Housing Register is used by the Victorian Government to manage and allocate public housing properties to disadvantaged Victorians throughout the State. Applicants proceed through an application process and if they meet the relevant eligibility criteria, they will be made an offer of housing based on their circumstances and the preferred housing location/areas identified in the application (Housing Vic, 2024).

Table 6-19 denotes the Victorian Housing Register location preferences as at 31 March 2026, based on new applications received. Based on the data presented, the highest number of new applicants for social housing (4,960) within the Social Study Area are from the Berwick/Pakenham District. This district includes the towns of Bunyip, Garfield, and Pakenham. Of those, there appears to be a relatively even distribution between those seeking Priority Access and those who have registered their interest in accessing social housing more broadly.

TABLE 6-19 VICTORIAN HOUSING REGISTER LOCATION PREFERENCES AT 31 MARCH 2026

Victorian Housing Register Waiting List Area	Priority Access[1]	Register of Interest[2]	Total Applicants
Berwick/Pakenham District (includes Bunyip, Garfield, and Pakenham)	2,528	2,432	4,960
Longwarry	72	60	132
Drouin	387	320	707
Warragul	625	420	1,045
Total	**3,612**	**3,232**	**6,844**

Note1. *Priority Access is for people who are homeless and receiving support; escaping or have escaped family violence; have a disability or significant support needs; or who need to move for health reasons.*

Note2. *Register of Interest is for people who do not meet the Priority Access criteria but are seeking to live in social housing.*

Source: Homes Victoria, 2026

6.8 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

This section provides an overview of the social infrastructure present in the Social Study Area, which contributes to the well-being of the local community. Social infrastructure includes community and recreational services (refer to **Section 6.8.1**), health and emergency services (refer to **Section 6.8.2**), and education services (refer to **Section 6.8.3**).

The local/regional centres that are likely to provide social infrastructure for the Project, and/or be impacted by the Project, are those within the Primary Social Study Area – primarily the towns of Bunyip and Garfield. This is due to their size, proximity, and ease of connectivity to the Project and Project workforce.

Cardinia Shire Council conducts a Community Satisfaction Survey each year to gauge community sentiment regarding its assets, services and programs. In the 2025 survey, conducted by Metropolis Research Pty Ltd (2025), overall satisfaction with Cardinia Shire Council's performance rose slightly, increasing by one point to 6.6 out of 10, maintaining a "good" level of satisfaction. This score is 4% higher than the long-term average of 6.2 recorded since 2012, however, remains below the metropolitan Melbourne average (7.1), southeastern region Council average (7.2), and the growth area Council average (6.8) (Metropolis Research Pty Ltd, 2025).

6.8.1 COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Table 6-20 identifies the community and recreational services available to residents of the Social Study Area, including the various sporting, religious, cultural, and hospitality related services, as well as general amenities like parks, cafes and community halls. These services play a crucial role in supporting the well-being of residents and accommodating workforce needs during the Construction and Operation Phases of the Project.

Table 6-20, indicates the availability of community and recreational services within the Social Study Area. Services are heavily concentrated in Pakenham and Warragul, which account for the majority of amenities, including the highest number of parks, sporting fields, fitness centres, libraries, and community groups. Outside of Pakenham and Warragul, Bunyip and Drouin offer a moderate level of service, including community and recreational services, parks, sporting fields, community halls, cafes, and sporting clubs.

TABLE 6-20 COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Service	Primary Social Study Area			Secondary Social Study Area						
	Bunyip North	Bunyip	Garfield	Longwarry North	Longwarry	Tynong	Nar Nar Goon	Pakenham	Drouin	Warragul
Parks	0	5	5	0	1	1	1	14	15	14
Sporting Fields	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	4
Swimming Pools	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	7	6	8
Fitness Centres	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	13
Golf Courses	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Shopping Centres	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	8	1	1
Libraries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	2
Community Halls	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	2
Cafes / Pubs / Restaurants	0	2	3	0	3	1	1	15	4	7
Religious Buildings or Groups	0	2	1	0	4	3	1	18	11	19
Community Groups (e.g. Lions, Rotary, CWA, Men's Shed, etc.)	0	6	1	0	0	0	0	4	2	2
Youth Organisations (e.g. Scouts, PCYC, etc.)	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	2
Sporting Clubs	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	10	2	3

Service	Primary Social Study Area			Secondary Social Study Area						
	Bunyip North	Bunyip	Garfield	Longwarry North	Longwarry	Tynong	Nar Nar Goon	Pakenham	Drouin	Warragul
Chamber of Commerce (or similar)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cultural Clubs or Groups	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	3
Total	**0**	**40**	**15**	**0**	**10**	**6**	**4**	**97**	**54**	**80**

As part of its Community Satisfaction Survey, Cardinia Shire Council reported the following satisfaction levels for community and recreational services (Metropolis Research Pty Ltd, 2025):

- Services for children (birth to 5 years) ranked 3rd, with an importance score of 9.3, well above average. Satisfaction rose three percent to 8.4, rated "excellent";
- Support services for people with disability ranked 4th, with an importance score of 9.2. Satisfaction rose six percent to 7.8, improving from "very good" to "excellent";
- Support services for seniors ranked 6th, with an importance score of 9.2, above average. Satisfaction slipped one percent to 7.8, still "excellent";
- Sports ovals and local sporting facilities ranked 9th, with an importance score of 9.1, above the overall average of 8.9. Satisfaction increased slightly to 8.0, maintaining an "excellent" rating;
- Services for youth ranked 10th, with an importance score of 9.1. Satisfaction improved two percent to 7.8, moving from "very good" to "excellent";
- Parks and gardens ranked 11th, with an importance score of 9.1. Satisfaction increased four percent to 7.7, rated "very good";
- Recreation and aquatic centres ranked 15th, with an importance score of 9.0. Satisfaction held steady at 7.7, a "very good" level;
- Libraries ranked 16th of 39 services, with an average importance score of 9.0 out of 10. Satisfaction remained stable, rising one percent to 8.6, which is considered "excellent";
- Community centres and neighbourhood houses ranked 22nd, with an importance score of 8.9. Satisfaction dipped one percent to 8.2, still "excellent"; and
- Community and cultural activities ranked 32nd, with an importance score of 8.6. Satisfaction fell two percent to 7.9, yet remained "excellent".

6.8.2 HEALTH AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Public health and emergency services in the Social Study Area have the potential to support the Project workforce, particularly during the Construction Phase. Accordingly, this section explores two components of community health – the existing long-term community health indicators, and the health and emergency services that are currently available.

Table 6-21 reports the existing long-term health conditions across the Social Study Area in 2021. This data is useful in establishing an understanding of the sensitivity of the communities within the Social Study Area to Project-induced changes. The data denotes that all localities within the Social Study Area have higher prevalence of neurocognitive and respiratory conditions, when compared to the Victoria STE.

TABLE 6-21 EXISTING LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

ABS Statistical Area	Neurocognitive[1] (%)	Respiratory Conditions[2] (%)
Primary Social Study Area		
Bunyip North SAL[3]	-	-
Bunyip SAL	10.5	10.3
Garfield SAL	8.8	11.4
Secondary Social Study Area		
Longwarry North SAL	10.9	13.5
Longwarry SAL	12.6	14.1
Tynong SAL	8.2	11.1
Nar Nar Goon SAL	9.9	12.1
Pakenham SAL	10.9	11.5
Drouin SAL	13.9	13.1
Warragul SAL	12.3	12.8
Social Context		
Cardinia LGA	9.8	10.9
Victoria STE	5.5	9.9

Note1. *Neurocognitive combines the following ABS categories: 'Mental health condition (including depression or anxiety)' and 'Dementia (including Alzheimer's)'*

Note2. *Respiratory combines the following ABS categories: 'Lung Conditions (including COPD or emphysema)' and 'Asthma'.*

Note3. *Data unavailable for SAL.*

Source: ABS, n.d.a

The relevant health and emergency services located within the Social Study Area are outlined in **Table 6-22**. As indicated by **Table 6-22**, the Social Study Area provides essential health and emergency services, including medical centres, mental health services, and a large hospital which includes an inpatient facility, emergency department, and an outpatient department. The majority of these health services are located within the Pakenham, followed by Warragul and Drouin.

In the event of a medical emergency on-site, it is likely that Project workers would be treated at West Gippsland Hospital (located in Warragul), however outside the Social Study Area in neighbouring Berwick also provides a hospital with a 24-hour emergency room (Casey Hospital), and therefore could provide medical assistance, if required.

The West Gippsland Hospital provides a 24-hour emergency department, acute medical and surgical, obstetric, residential aged care, and home and community-based services. Key hospital performance indicators for the West Gippsland Hospital for 2023/24 are presented in **Table 6-23**.

TABLE 6-22 HEALTH AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Service	Primary Social Study Area			Secondary Social Study Area						
	Bunyip North	Bunyip	Garfield	Longwarry North	Longwarry	Tynong	Nar Nar Goon	Pakenham	Drouin	Warragul
Police	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Ambulance	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
State Emergency Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fire and Rescue	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0
Rural Fire Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
24-hour Emergency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
General Medical	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Palliative Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mental Health	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
Maternity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Aged Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1
Pathology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Dental	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disability Support	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	10	5	5
Total	**0**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**26**	**10**	**11**

TABLE 6-23 HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2023/24

Performance Indicator		West Gippsland Hospital
Percentage of patients who commenced treatment within the recommended time, emergency department waiting times (%)	Emergency	83
	Urgent	72
	Semi-urgent	79
	Non-urgent	94
Percentage of patients who depart the emergency department within four hours of arrival (%)	Emergency	44
	Urgent	45
	Semi-urgent	65
	Non-urgent	85
Number of patients presenting to the emergency department (#)	Emergency	2,259
	Urgent	8,870
	Semi-urgent	9,601
	Non-urgent	1,838
Number of admissions to hospital (#)	Childbirth	855
	Emergency	6,957
	Non-Emergency	6,319
	Mental Health	0
	Palliative	45
	Rehabilitation	0
	Surgical (Emergency)	291
	Surgical (Non-Emergency)	3,186
	Total	18,674

Source: AIHW, 2025b

As part of its Community Satisfaction Survey, Cardinia Shire Council assessed resident perceptions of health and emergency services (Metropolis Research Pty Ltd, 2025). Emergency management and response ranked 19th out of 39 services and facilities, with an average importance score of 9.0 out of 10. Satisfaction with emergency management was reported at 7.5 out of 10 this year, which is considered a "very good" level of satisfaction.

In addition, as stated in **Section 6.2.6**, the Cardinia Shire Council's Liveability Plan 2017-2029 (Cardinia Shire Council, 2025) identifies a number of health and social priorities including improving mental health and wellbeing, improving safety, reducing family violence; healthy eating and active living, and reducing harm from tobacco, alcohol, drugs and gambling.

6.8.3 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Educational facilities located within the Social Study are outlined in **Table 6-24**, with additional detail as to these facilities provided in **Appendix B**.

As observed in **Table 6-24**, while the Primary Social Study Area only hosts limited educational facilities (i.e. pre-primary and primary education), the Secondary Social Study Area, particularly in Warragul and Pakenham, provides a greater range and level for educational facilities, including Secondary Schools and Tertiary education services.

TABLE 6-24 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Education Type	Primary Social Study Area			Secondary Social Study Area						
	Bunyip North	Bunyip	Garfield	Longwarry North	Longwarry	Tynong	Nar Nar Goon	Pakenham	Drouin	Warragul
Pre-Primary	0	2	1	0	1	0	1	3	5	4
Primary	0	2	1	0	1	1	2	9	3	5
Secondary	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	1	4
Tertiary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	**0**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**16**	**10**	**15**

6.9 ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

This section outlines the existing transport infrastructure and networks within the Social Study Area, including road networks and public transport services, and how these are currently used by local/regional communities.

6.9.1 ROAD NETWORK

Access to the Project Area will be via the Princes Highway (M1), located to the south of the Project Area and will connect to an internal access track. A new accessway is proposed which will include dedicated acceleration and deceleration lanes to facilitate safe entry to and exit from the Site.

The Princes Highway is a major transport route spanning 159 km, linking Melbourne to Geelong in the west, and Morwell in the east. The highway carries in the order of 30,000 vehicles per day (two-way traffic) with approximately 12% comprising heavy vehicles (Amber Organisation Pty Ltd, 2026).

The eastern section of the Princes Highway, known as Princes Freeway East, begins at Narre Warren as a six-lane dual-carriageway, narrowing to four lanes just west of Pakenham. Several highway-standard at-grade intersections exist, particularly between Nar Nar Goon and Longwarry, with speed limits of 100 kilometres per hour (km/h). The only 110 km/h section of the highway runs from Longwarry to Morwell.

Adjacent to the Princes Highway is the C433 route, which connects most of the towns located within the Primary and Secondary Social Localities. This route comprises Wellwood Road, Longwarry–Drouin Road, Drouin Road, and Nar Nar Goon–Longwarry Road.

6.9.2 AIRPORTS AND AERODROMES

The Social Study Area is serviced by the Tullamarine Airport, which located approximately 1.5 hours from the Project Area, and is owned and operated by Australia Pacific Airports (Melbourne) Pty Ltd.

6.9.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Social Study Area is serviced by V/Line coach routes and Public Transport Victoria regional buses operated by Warragul Bus Lines. These services connect key towns including Pakenham, Nar Nar Goon, Bunyip North, Bunyip, Longwarry, Drouin, and Warragul, with scheduled stops along the Gippsland corridor. V/Line coaches typically run on weekdays, complementing the regular V/Line train service between Pakenham and Warragul, which operates hourly and provides fast connections for commuters.

In addition, the West Gippsland Transit network offers regional bus routes linking Pakenham through Nar Nar Goon, Bunyip, Drouin, and Warragul, with services running Monday to Saturday and timed stops at major local points. These routes provide reliable public transport options for residents and visitors across the locality (V/Line, n.d.).

Operators such as Warragul Bus Lines and Simcock's Bus Services (Pakenham) have been transporting over 3,000 students daily to more than 18 schools in West Gippsland for over 70 years, highlighting their importance in connecting communities like Warragul, Drouin, Garfield, and Bunyip to educational institutions (Warragul Bus Lines, n.d; Simcocks' Bus Services, n.d). The broader Victorian School Bus Program, managed by the Department of Education, coordinates routes and bus stops to support families in rural and regional areas, ensuring equitable access to education (Transport Victoria, n.d.)

6.9.4 VEHICLE OWNERSHIP AND TRAVEL TO WORK

Table 6-25 summarises the number of motor vehicles per occupied private dwelling, and **Table 6-26** identifies the method of travel to work across the Social Study Area.

Based on the data, it can be observed that there is a high dependency on private vehicle use, with most people within the Primary Social Study Area having two motor vehicles per private dwelling. Private motor vehicle ownership appears to correlate with the way people within the Primary Social Study Area travel to work – via private motor vehicle.

As per **Table 6-26**, most people travel to work via car (driver), followed by car (passenger), truck, or motorbike. The higher number of private vehicles is likely due to the rural/regional nature of the communities.

TABLE 6-25 NUMBER OF MOTOR VEHICLES PER PRIVATE DWELLING

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	No motor vehicles	1 motor vehicle	2 motor vehicles	3 or more motor vehicles
Primary Social Study Area					
Bunyip North SAL	2021	0	5	11	6
	2016	0	5	14	10
Bunyip SAL	2021	28	226	399	184
	2016	32	194	286	152
Garfield SAL	2021	5	172	294	135
	2016	10	144	211	100
Secondary Social Study Area					
Longwarry North SAL	2021	3	30	22	16
	2016	0	16	18	19
Longwarry SAL	2021	23	275	357	124
	2016	22	186	291	114
Tynong SAL	2021	7	23	68	32
	2016	3	28	51	27
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	8	70	128	80
	2016	6	64	113	73
Pakenham SAL	2021	660	6,405	7,584	2,300
	2016	577	5,239	6,539	1,876
Drouin SAL	2021	181	1,933	2,325	778
	2016	166	1,504	1,752	558
Warragul SAL	2021	361	2,545	2,978	968
	2016	332	1,988	2,226	678
Social Context					
Cardinia LGA	2021	1,006	11,362	16,664	6,010
	2016	869	8,535	12,965	4,670
Victoria STE	2021	179,349	856,243	880,945	280,276
	2016	166,061	722,675	776,286	243,135

Source: ABS, n.d.a

TABLE 6-26 METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Bus/ Train	Taxi/Share Service	Car (driver)	Car (passenger)	Truck	Motorbike	Bicycle	Other	Walked	Total
Primary Social Study Area											
Bunyip North SAL	2021	0	0	23	0	4	0	0	0	0	27
	2016	0	0	35	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
Bunyip SAL	2021	14	0	893	50	21	0	0	0	18	996
	2016	22	0	753	44	27	0	0	0	21	867
Garfield SAL	2021	8	0	637	23	35	3	0	4	20	730
	2016	23	0	537	20	21	0	0	3	3	607
Secondary Social Study Area											
Longwarry North SAL	2021	0	0	51	3	6	0	0	0	0	60
	2016	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Longwarry SAL	2021	16	0	730	44	16	0	0	3	7	820
	2016	15	0	591	29	20	7	0	0	0	662
Tynong SAL	2021	3	0	151	4	8	0	0	0	3	169
	2016	8	0	637	23	35	3	0	4	20	730
Nar Nar Goon SAL	2021	3	0	297	19	21		0	6	10	356
	2016	14	0	373	25	14	4	0	0	16	442
Pakenham SAL	2021	538	48	15,654	1,082	190	59	49	106	221	17,747
	2016	914	23	14,938	933	169	73	44	83	188	17,165

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Bus/ Train	Taxi/Share Service	Car (driver)	Car (passenger)	Truck	Motorbike	Bicycle	Other	Walked	Total
Drouin SAL	2021	53	6	4,362	268	61	5	11	11	78	4,785
	2016	107	3	3,591	182	53	6	10	13	79	4,044
Warragul SAL	2021	59	13	5,887	439	35	24	22	30	176	6,685
	2016	141	17	4,873	387	51	16	24	23	181	5,713
Social Context											
Cardinia LGA	2021	891	71	35,089	2191	591	135	76	220	607	39,711
	2016	1502	26	31,883	1837	533	132	79	198	585	36,175
Victoria STE	2021	69,881	6,461	1,578,210	110,123	16,403	7,654	22,267	13,746	72,373	1,856,118
	2016	186,511	4,882	1,691,496	110,502	16,720	9,878	33,963	14,313	87,794	2,002,259

Source: ABS, n.d.a

6.10 CRIME

Communities can be vulnerable to crime-related impacts, particularly in rural and regional areas where limited policing resources and social disadvantage may influence crime patterns. **Table 6-27** provides the Victorian Police Service data on crime incidents over a year period to March 2026, and identifies the following:

- The majority of crime incidents within the Social Study Area occurred within Pakenham (52%), followed by Warragul (27%), which is likely a result of the higher populations comparative to other locations.
- The majority of crime incidents within the Social Study Area were property and deception offences, totalling 56%, followed by crimes against the person (20%).

TABLE 6-27 CRIME INCIDENTS, YEAR ENDING MARCH 2026

Location (Postcode)	Crimes against the person (#)	Property and deception offences (#)	Drug offences (#)	Public order and security offences (#)	Justice procedures offences (#)	Other Offences (#)	Total (#)
Bunyip North Bunyip (3815)	19	61	4	5	12	0	98
Garfield (3814)	16	47	0	3	22	1	89
Longwarry North Longwarry (3816)	43	89	13	14	44	0	203
Tynong (3813)	12	37	0	1	7	0	57
Nar Nar Goon (3812)	22	75	4	0	14	0	115
Pakenham (3810)	738	2,080	102	128	521	6	3,575
Drouin (3818)	196	466	35	41	146	1	885
Warragul (3820)	355	1,025	101	86	305	0	1,872
Total	**1,401**	**3,880**	**259**	**278**	**1,071**	**16**	**6,894**

Source: Crime Statistics Agency, 2025

6.11 VULNERABLE GROUPS

Vulnerability refers to an individual or group's capacity to adapt to, or cope with changes in their environment and is influenced by a range of different socio-economic factors. Some individuals or groups may be more vulnerable than others due to certain existing socio-economic characteristics including (but not limited to) age, livelihood, language proficiency and health status.

This section considers four groups across the Social Study Area with potential social vulnerabilities related to CALD (refer to **Section 6.11.1**), age (refer to **Section 6.11.2**), First Nations communities (refer to **Section 6.11.3**), and socio-economic disadvantage (refer to **Section 6.11.4**).

6.11.1 CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

CALD is a broad term used to describe communities with diverse languages, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, traditions, societal structures, and religions (Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria Inc., 2012). CALD groups are often considered vulnerable people. As per the SIA Guideline, special attention is required to ensure culturally appropriate and inclusive engagement.

In 2021, 71.5% of people in the Cardinia LGA were born in Australia, 6.5% higher than Victoria. The next highest was India (4.3%), followed by England (3.6%). Most persons within the Cardinia LGA have English ancestry, followed by Australia (35.3%) and Irish (8.7%).

Based on 2021 Census data, the majority of the population within the Cardinia LGA spoke English at home, followed by Punjabi (2.9%), and Sinhalese (1.8%) and Hindi (0.8%). Despite the small percentage of Punjabi speakers, this is higher than the Victorian and National averages.

Of the 118,194 residents in the Cardinia LGA, 1,630 people stated their proficiency of spoken English to be "Not well or not at all" in 2021, which represents approximately 1.4% of the total population. In Victoria, there was a total of 233,912 people who stated their proficiency of spoken English to be "Not well or not at all", which represents 3.6% of the total population. Additionally, the percentage of households where a non-English language is used in 2021 (refer to **Table 6-3**) in the Cardinia LGA is 19.8%.

Catholicism is the dominant religion in the Cardinia LGA with 17.7% of people identifying as Catholics. Despite this however, 43.8% of the Cardinia LGA's population recorded "no religion" in the 2021 Census, a 22.4% increase since 2016.

Based on the above considerations of the languages, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, and religions of the Social Study Area, the likelihood of CALD groups being excluded from engagement activities for the Project due to language barriers is deemed to be low.

6.11.2 YOUTH AND ELDERLY

Youth and elderly populations are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of large development projects due to their specific mobility, health, safety, and social needs. During the Construction, Operation and Decommissioning Phases, the Project impacts that have potential to exacerbate the needs of youth and elderly groups are typically concentrated to the immediate surroundings of the Project Area.

As per **Table 6-3**, collectively, the Cardinia LGA saw a 0.6 percentage point increase in the population of persons aged 14 years and younger between 2016 (23.0%) and 2021 (23.6%). This decline is reflected within the SALs of Garfield and Pakenham, with a slight decline experienced in Nar Nar Goon SAL, and a substantive decline in the Longwarry North SAL, which saw a drop of 3.7% between 2016 and 2021. Conversely, however, Bunyip SAL and Longwarry SAL experienced increases in the population under the age of 14 between the same period. The Bunyip SAL experienced a moderate increase of 1.2%, while the Longwarry SAL saw an increase of 0.2%.

Regarding populations over 65 years of age, **Table 6-3** indicates with the exception of the Bunyip SAL (no change at 17.1%) and Longwarry North SAL (decrease from 22.6% to 21.1%), all other SALs experienced an increase in the percentage of persons aged over 65 years between 2016 and 2021, a trend that is similarly experienced within the Cardinia LGA as a whole, which rose from 11.9% to 12.6%.

Several SALs, including the Bunyip and Longwarry SALs, depict a growing proportion of children under the age of 14 years, which suggests an influx of young families or higher birth rates in these localities. Conversely, SALs such as the Longwarry North SAL are experiencing aging trends, with an increase in the number of residents over the age of 65 years. Accordingly, the Project will need to ensure that it supports/protects the well-being of youth and the aging population who may be more susceptible to environmental hazards.

6.11.3 FIRST NATIONS

Table 6-28 provides ABS data on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population statistics, additional to **Table 6-3**, and identifies the following:

- Across both the Cardinia LGA and the Victoria STE, the percentage of the population who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander has increased. As of 2021, the Cardinia LGA has a lower percentage of total population who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander with 1.0% when compared to the State percentage of 1.0%;
- The amount of homelessness among Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders has increased by 525% between 2016 and 2021;
- Within the SALs there has been an increase in the number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, with Warragul, Pakenham, Nar Nar Goon, Garfield and Longwarry SALs recording a percentage change increase higher than the Cardinia LGA and State average between 2016 and 2021;
- Across the Social Study Area, the majority of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders live together in one family. Only in the Pakenham SAL was there more representation of multiple family household compositions than the State Average;
- The median age of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities within Primary Social Study Area skews relatively young (averaging 15.5 years). The median age of persons within the Bunyip SAL (19 years) and Garfield SAL (12 years), are lower than the Cardinia LGA (20 years) and the Victoria STE (24 years);
- The median weekly income for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander households in the Cardinia LGA is higher than Victoria as a whole. Within the Social Study Area, the Tynong SAL and Nar Nar Goon SAL have the highest median weekly household incomes of $2,749 and $2,250, respectively – both of which exceed both the Cardinia LGA ($1,811) and Victoria STE ($1,565). The lowest median weekly household income was identified in the Garfield SAL, which is $1749 – $184 below Victoria as a whole.

TABLE 6-28 ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STATISTICS

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Total Population (#)	Total Population Change (%)	Median Age (#)	Median Weekly Household Income ($)	In the Labour Force (#)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Household Composition One family / Multiple family / Other % (#)	Homelessness # (%)
Primary Social Study Area									
Bunyip North SAL[1]	2021	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
	2016	-		-	-		-	-	-
Bunyip SAL[1]	2021	32	↑ 18.5	19	1,875	14	7.7	55.0 (11) / 0.0 (0)	-
	2016	27		17	2,125	-	-	-	-
Garfield SAL[1]	2021	17	↑ 88.9	12	1,749	8	0.0	50.0 (4) / 0.0 (0)	-
	2016	9		15	1,125	-	-	-	-
Secondary Social Study Area									
Longwarry North SAL[1]	2021	6	↑ 50.0	21	1,625	-	-	-	-
	2016	4		39	-	-	-	-	-
Longwarry SAL[1]	2021	45	↑ 95.7	20	2,249	20	0.0	100.0 (14)/ 0.0 (0)	-
	2016	23		30	1,125		-	-	-
Tynong SAL[1]	2021	7	↑ 75.0	20	2,749	0	0.0	0.0 (0) / 0.0 (0)	-
	2016	4		36	-	-	-	-	-
Nar Nar Goon SAL[1]	2021	17	↑ 70.0	8	2,250	4	0.0	3.5 (3) / 0.0 (0)	-
	2016	10		12	0	-	-	-	-

ABS Statistical Area	Census Year	Total Population (#)	Total Population Change (%)	Median Age (#)	Median Weekly Household Income ($)	In the Labour Force (#)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Household Composition One family / Multiple family / Other % (#)	Homelessness # (%)
Pakenham SAL[1]	2021	637	↑ 52.7	19	1,663	228	10.5	82.8% (259) / 4.5% (14)	-
	2016	417		17	1,447	-	-	-	-
Drouin SAL[1]	2021	279	↑ 43.8	23	1,738	111	8.0	83.2% (114) / 2.9% (4)	
	2016	194		17	1,180	-	-	-	-
Warragul SAL[1]	2021	226	↑ 66.2	23	1,354	81	12.3	78.3% (94) / 0% (0)	-
	2016	136		20	1,100	-	-	-	-
Social Context									
Cardinia LGA[1]	2021	1,145	↑ 46.6	20	1,811	452	7.9	80.6% (466) / 4.8%(28)	50 (41)
	2016	781		21	1,530	299	11.7	81.3% (317) / 5.1% (20)	8 (8)
Victoria STE	2021	65,646	↑ 37.4	24	1,565	26,084	9.5	92% (24727) / 4.3% (1147)	-
	2016	47,788		23	1,200	17,874	14.0	73.8% (17551) / 3.2% (761) /	-

Note1. *To protect confidentiality in small populations, some data values may be adjusted, suppressed or unavailable, and totals may not match.*

Note2. ↓ *Population decrease* ↑ *Population increase.*

Source: ABS, 2023a; ABS, n.d.a

6.11.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the Census, with SEIFA 2021 based on Census 2021 data (ABS, 2023b).

The concept of relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage used in the SEIFA 2021 is the same as that used for the previous censuses (2006, 2011, and 2016). The ABS broadly defines relative socio-economic advantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society. This is broadly defined in recognition of the many concepts that have emerged in the literature to describe advantage and disadvantage (ABS, 2023b).

The latest SEIFA indicators (2021) across the Social Study Area are reported in **Table 6-29**. Each area receives a SEIFA score, referred to as the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage score. A lower score indicates that an area is relatively disadvantaged compared to an area with a higher score[2].

The SEIFA results in **Table 6-29** provide a percentile which divides all statistical areas within Australia into 100 equal groups. The lowest scoring 1% of statistical areas are given a percentile number of 1 and the highest 1% of statistical areas are given a percentile number of 100. A higher score, rank or percentile indicates a relative higher socio-economic condition for that area. **Table 6-29** indicates that the Cardinia LGA ranks above the median both nationally and within Victoria. This suggests that the LGA experiences comparatively lower levels of socio-economic disadvantage than many other LGAs across Australia and Victoria.

TABLE 6-29 2021 SEIFA INDICATORS

ABS Statistical Area	Score	Ranking within Australia		Ranking Within Victoria	
		Rank	Percentile	Rank	Percentile
Cardinia LGA	993	407	75	50	62

Source: ABS, 2023b

6.11.5 SIA CONSIDERATIONS

In consideration of the above, the vulnerable groups to be considered as part of this SIA are:

- Unemployed individuals, particularly within the First Nations population. Engagement may require targeted information sessions on job readiness and Project-related roles, including practical support such as workshops and transport assistance for attending sessions;
- Youth, particularly within the First Nations population. This group may require tailored engagement for accessibility. Engagement may require the use of youth-friendly formats such as visuals, social media, and interactive workshops, engage through schools, youth centres, and sports/community programs, and provide information on education and training pathways; and

[2] SEIFA indices have been designed to compare the relative socio-economic characteristics of areas at a given point in time (ABS, 2023b). For this reason, longitudinal analysis has not been undertaken.

- Low-income households, particularly households (including First Nations households) that have median household incomes below the Victorian average which are at an increasing risk of housing stress, limited access to health and social infrastructure. Engagement may require scheduled sessions at accessible locations and times, provide free transport or virtual options to reduce cost barriers, and share clear, easily understandable language materials about the Project benefits and support services.

6.12 SURROUNDING PROJECTS

There are number of projects within the Social Study Area that have the potential to cause cumulative impacts for stakeholders/receptors, primarily related to the Construction Phase of the Project. A summary of the available information of relevance to the consideration of potential cumulative impacts is provided in **Table 6-30**.

A review of the Victoria Department of Transport and Planning Renewable Energy Projects Victoria Map, as well as a search of local media, identified three projects within the Social Study Area, and two Projects within the neighbouring Baw Baw Shire Council LGA:

1. Wimpole Battery;
2. Longwarry BESS;
3. Shady Creek Solar Farm;
4. Delburn Wind Farm; and
5. Bunyip North Granite Quarry.

Based on publicly available data, the projects yet to be constructed which known workforce estimates have the potential to require up to 450 FTE (refer to **Table 6-30**). Despite this however, construction workforce sizes are not always provided and might eventually be different from announced and/or expected workforce sizes. Some of the anticipated construction periods may not be available or are subject to change.

Additionally, it is currently unknown whether these developments will make use of on-site temporary workforce accommodation camps/facilities.

TABLE 6-30 SUMMARY OF KEY SURROUNDING PROJECTS

Project	Developer	Scale	Proximity	Status	Construction Timeframe	Workforce	Potential Construction Phase Overlap[3]	Link
Wimpole Battery	AMPYR	375 MW	0 km (neighbouring allotment)	Proposed	2027-2029	Construction: 100 FTE (per stage) Operation: 10 FTE	Yes	[1]
Longwarry BESS	ENHAR	5 MW	~5.3 km	Approved (not operational)	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	[2]
Shady Creek Solar Farm	Elgin Energy	60 MW	~35 km	Approved (not operational)	2027-2029	Unknown	Yes	[3]
Delburn Wind Farm	SEC and OSMI Australia	205 MW	~53 km	Construction	2026-2028	Construction: 300 FTE Operation: 25 FTE	Yes	[4]
Bunyip North Granite Quarry	Heidelberg Materials Pty Ltd	N/A	~2 km	Proposed	Unknown	Construction: 50 FTE Operation: 15-20 FTE	Unknown	[5]

Source: AMPYR Australia Pty Ltd, 2026; Enhar, 2025; Urbis, 2024; SEC Victoria, 2025; Heidelberg Materials Australia Group Pty Ltd, 2026.

[3] The Project is proposed to commence construction in Quarter 3, 2027, with operation anticipated from 2029.

7. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This section summarises the community and stakeholder engagement activities and outcomes relevant to the SIA. This includes engagement that has been undertaken to date by the Project, and during targeted engagement for the SIA.

Accordingly, this section provides an overview of the key themes, including potential issues, concerns and expectations raised throughout the community and stakeholder engagement activities conducted for the Project. Furthermore, the outcomes included in this section have informed the scoping of social issues and potential impacts to ensure that these concerns are adequately captured in the impact assessment contained in **Section 8**.

7.1 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

A Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy has been prepared by RES to guide stakeholder engagement across the life of the Project.

The Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy is a living document that will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals (e.g. annually) by RES to reflect stakeholder feedback, changes in the Project program, and evolving community needs. It provides a structured framework to support inclusive, targeted, and responsive engagement throughout the Project lifecycle.

The Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy has been developed in accordance with best practice engagement principles, including openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and accountability. RES's approach to engagement is designed to facilitate early, ongoing and transparent dialogue with stakeholders. The intent is to build and maintain constructive relationships and ensure stakeholder views are understood and, where practicable, inform project planning and decision-making.

The Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy is aligned with relevant legislative requirements and recognised best practice frameworks, including the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. The IAP2 framework guides the level of engagement across "inform", "consult", "involve", "collaborate", and "empower". For this Project, engagement activities undertaken to date have primarily aligned with the "inform", "consult", and "involve" levels, with targeted opportunities for collaboration identified.

A range of consultation and communication methods has been implemented to inform stakeholders and collect feedback. These methods have included:

- Direct written communication, including neighbour letters to 168 properties and newsletters distributed to approximately 1,275 local households;
- Digital engagement via a dedicated project website, email updates, and online feedback channels;
- In-person engagement through community information stalls at local events and meetings with community organisations;
- Structured feedback mechanisms, including an online feedback form and documented feedback logs; and
- Tailored engagement with specific stakeholder groups, including ongoing engagement with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation as the Registered Aboriginal Party.

The engagement approach has been designed by RES to remain flexible and evolve as the Project progresses through planning, construction, and operation phases, with additional engagement activities and tools implemented as required to meet stakeholder needs.

The Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy is dynamic and will continue to be updated throughout the Project lifecycle to incorporate stakeholder feedback, respond to emerging issues, and maintain alignment with project design and assessment outcomes. Stakeholder input to date has informed a range of project refinements, including adjustments to the project footprint, expansion of technical assessment scopes, and the development of communication materials and engagement approaches tailored to community preferences.

7.1.1 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Community consultation for the Project was undertaken by RES over an approximate 12 month period from August 2025 to July 2026, prior to the commencement of the formal public notification process for the Planning Application. The outcomes of this community consultation, as provided by RES, has been incorporated into **Table 7-5** (refer to **Section 7.2**).

Consultation methods provided multiple accessible channels for community participation, including:

- Face-to-face engagement at three community events (Bunyip Community Markets in October 2025 and January 2026, and the Bunyip Show in March 2026), with 65 direct conversations with community members;
- Face-to-face engagement at a drop-in information session at Bunyip Hall on 18 July 2026, with 30 direct conversations with community members;
- Direct letters to 168 neighbouring properties within approximately 1.5 km of the Project Area (as part of the Planning Application public notice);
- Project website establishment, including:
  - Project information and news page updated throughout the consultation period;
  - Online feedback form (launched March 2026 with anonymous optionality); and
  - Mailing list registration form (32 subscribers as of April 2026) for direct updates over the Consultation Phase;
- Direct contact with the Project team via mobile number and Project email published on the Project website;
- Project newsletters (digital distribution via mailing list and website, unaddressed mailout to approximately 1,275 Bunyip households and distribution at three community events);
- Media releases issued to local media (resulting in coverage in the Pakenham Officer Star News August and October 2025); and
- Newspaper advertisements in the Bunyip & District Community News (September 2025 and March 2026).

Feedback on the Project is maintained by RES within RES's stakeholder engagement management platform (Borealis). Where an engagement raised substantive issues, questions, or concerns through written channels (website contact form, email enquiries, March 2026 feedback form) or during in-person discussions at information stalls, this was recorded by RES as a formal feedback log for response and analysis. Via this process, 17 formal feedback logs were recorded and categorised. Of these 17 formal feedback logs:

- Nine engagements expressed concerns about specific potential impacts; and
- Eight engagements were purely information-seeking.

7.1.2 TRADITIONAL OWNER ENGAGEMENT

RES has been engaging with the Bunurong People, represented by the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation since July 2025. Engagement has focused on sharing information about the Project, understanding cultural and environmental values, and exploring opportunities for participation in the Project. An overview of Traditional Owner engagement activities conducted by RES is provided in **Table 7-1**, with the outcomes of these engagements incorporated into **Table 7-5** (refer to **Section 7.2**).

TABLE 7-1 TRADITIONAL OWNER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Date	Engagement Method	Purpose
July 2025	Online Meeting	• Project introduction • Established preferred engagement pathway
November 2025	Online Meeting	• Information sharing and overview of cultural and environmental values assessment • Early consideration of BESS-related topics of interest (e.g. noise/emissions/ground disturbance) to inform technical assessments
December 2025	In-Person Meeting	• Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation "Energy Day", including face-to-face engagement • Ongoing communications and relationship progression
March 2026	Online and In-Person Meeting (Hybrid)	• Senior leadership introduction • Focussed discussion regarding Project progression (i.e. planning submission and technical assessment outcomes) • Benefit-sharing opportunities including potential pathways through procurement, employment and training

Source: Adapted from RES, 2026.

7.1.3 TARGETED STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

ERM and RES conducted a series of targeted stakeholder interviews for the Project to augment and validate previous stakeholder engagement outcomes (refer to **Section 7.1.1**). In selecting those to engage, the aim was to engage with a mix of stakeholders, with representatives from each stakeholder group. This provided an opportunity to capture a range of views as they relate to the Project (i.e. positive, neutral, and negative).

ERM/RES invited 18 stakeholders to participate in an interview. Of these 18 stakeholders, 10 agreed to participate in the SIA (refer to **Table 7-2**), seven did not respond, and one stakeholder responded outside of the timeframe for the SIA and will be contacted to facilitate a future discussion (refer to **Table** 7-3).

Each interview ran for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to guide the conversation, enabling space to explore the topics of interest and/or concern to the individual and/or group being interviewed. Interview questions covered topics including stakeholder connection to the rural towns and locations within the Social Study Area, short and long-term community needs, issues/concerns and general feedback on the Project, as well as their view on potential Project benefits and future engagement opportunities.

The outcomes of these stakeholder interviews have been incorporated into **Table 7-5** (refer to **Section 7.2**).

TABLE 7-2 TARGETED STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW OVERVIEW

Date	Stakeholder Group	Representatives
12 May 2026	Emergency Services	• MERC
12 May 2026	Local Community Groups	• Bunyip Landcare Group
12 May 2026	Local Community Groups	• BRAG
15 May 2026	Immediate Neighbours	• Immediate Neighbour #4
18 May 2026	Local Community Groups	• Mt Cannibal & District Preservation Group Inc
19 May 2026	Local Businesses and Industries	• ProLodge
20 May 2026	Local Community Groups	• Garfield Community Association Inc
27 May 2026	Educational Organisations	• Bunyip Primary School Parents and Friends Committee • Bunyip Connect
9 June 2026	Immediate Neighbours	• Immediate Neighbour #2
18 June 2026	Local Council	• Cardinia Shire Council

In addition to those listed in **Table 7-2**, the stakeholders listed in **Table 7-3** were contacted but either did not respond or did not respond within the timeframe of the SIA.

TABLE 7-3 TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS UNABLE TO BE INTERVIEWED

Stakeholder Group	Representatives	Response
Immediate Neighbours	• Immediate Neighbour #1	No response received to correspondence
Emergency Services	• Bunyip CFA Fire Station	No response received to correspondence

Stakeholder Group	Representatives	Response
Business and Industry	• Longwarry & District Progress Association	No response received to correspondence
Business and Industry	• West Gippsland Progress Association	No response received to correspondence
Immediate Neighbours	• Immediate Neighbour #3	No response received to correspondence
Emergency Services	• High St Medical Centre	No response received to correspondence
Business and Industry Organisations	• Victorian Farmers Federation (Cardinia Branch)	No response received to correspondence
Local Community Groups	• Cardinia Community Foundation	No response received within the timeframe of the SIA – furthered engagement to be conducted by RES

7.1.4 ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW AND CORRESPONDENCE

As part of ongoing community consultation undertaken by RES for the purposes of the Planning Application, RES discussed the Project with members of the Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds. The Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds is a newly formed community group that aims to support local residents by raising and documenting concerns relevant to new developments within the Bunyip area.

As part of this engagement, RES requested that ERM interview the Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds to capture member feedback, issues and concerns about the Project for inclusion in the SIA. Surrounding Community Members associated with the group also provided correspondence by email (and supporting documentation) outlining their concerns regarding the Project, as did some non-affiliated stakeholders.

The interview with the Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds ran for approximately two hours, and centred on providing group members, and supporting stakeholders in attendance, the opportunity to provide comments, and voice their issues and concerns about the Project and other surrounding projects within the region.

The concerns raised in the interview with the Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds, as well as the issues identified in the email correspondence and documentation received, is incorporated into the stakeholder engagement outcomes outlined in **Table 7-5** (refer to **Section 7.2**) and has been used to inform the impact assessment (refer to **Section 8**).

TABLE 7-4 ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW AND CORRESPONDENCE

Date	Stakeholder Group	Representatives	Activity/ Correspondence
17 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Stakeholder #1	• Email Correspondence
18 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Stakeholder #2	• Email Correspondence

Date	Stakeholder Group	Representatives	Activity/ Correspondence
20 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Stakeholder #1	• Email Correspondence
21 September 2026	Immediate Neighbours	• Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Member #1	• Email Correspondence and Documentation
21 September 2026	Immediate Neighbours	• Stakeholder #3	• Email Correspondence and Documentation
21 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Stakeholder #4	• Email Correspondence and Documentation
21 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Member #2	• Email Correspondence
22 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Stakeholder #5	• Email Correspondence
22 September 2026	Local Community Groups	• Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Member #1 • Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Member #2 • Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Member #3 • Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Member #4 • Stakeholder #4 • Stakeholder #6	• Targeted SIA Interview
23 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Stakeholder #7	• Email Correspondence
23 September 2026	Surrounding Community Members	• Stakeholder #8	• Email Correspondence
24 September 2026	Immediate Neighbours	• Stakeholder #9 • Stakeholder #10	• Email Correspondence and Documentation
24 September 2026	Immediate Neighbours	• Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Member #1	• Email Correspondence

7.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

This section provides insights into the outcomes of engagement with stakeholders and receptors as relevant to the SIA. In-line with participatory research methods, the SIA recognises all stakeholders as potential knowledge holders who can provide valuable information about the local community, economy, infrastructure, and environment (Vanclay, 2003).

Accordingly, **Table 7-5** provides a summary of the key outcomes from the stakeholder engagement conducted by RES and ERM organised into topics.

TABLE 7-5 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
Community Values and Identity	• Strong perception of Bunyip as a close-knit, rural/agricultural community, despite population growth • Community identity is in transition between rural and urban influences with evidence of a strong "non-metropolitan / anti-urban identity" mindset among some residents • Preference to maintain lifestyle character, larger blocks, and semi-rural living • Distinct identities exist between Bunyip, Garfield and surrounding towns/communities • Community perception that each township is unique and requires tailored approaches to issues/concerns • Strong culture of volunteerism and community-led initiatives with Local Community Groups acting as key connectors and intermediaries • Declining volunteer participation despite growth • Deep multi-generational attachment to the area, with families having lived and farmed locally for two to four generations (in some cases, over 60 years), and the rural setting deliberately chosen for its peace, privacy, space and landscape • Perception among residents that the locality is being progressively industrialised 'piece by piece' and shifting from a rural/agricultural community towards an industrial/infrastructure precinct • Aboriginal heritage and connection to Country raised by residents as part of the cultural significance of the landscape, alongside questions regarding Cultural Heritage Management Plan requirements and Registered Aboriginal Party engagement	Social Impact #3: Reduced Community Cohesion (refer to **Section 8**)
Social Context	• Experiencing population growth which has resulted in new housing developments / subdivisions • Influx of metropolitan residents shifting community expectations and the nature of connection	Social Impact #3: Reduced Community Cohesion (refer to **Section 8**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
	• Perception of declining social cohesion/connection due to "commuter lifestyles" • Concerns about urban sprawl and loss of rural character • Mixed sentiments with growth seen as both opportunity and pressure to existing services • Localised concern regarding increase in crime and perceived reduction in safety associated with population growth • Lived experience of the 2019 Bunyip Complex fires remains central to community identity and sentiment, with residents describing homes lost, livestock evacuations and ongoing trauma • Concern regarding compounding trauma and cumulative stress, including erosion of trust in institutions, hypervigilance, fatigue of local support systems and potential social fragmentation over successive developments • Recognition that psychological burden may fall unevenly across the community, with particular concern for elderly residents, children, first responders and socio-economically disadvantaged households • Identification of potentially vulnerable cohorts, including elderly residents living alone, households reliant on tank water and residents with limited access to online information channels	
Land Use and Agricultural Character	• Concern regarding conversion of productive agricultural land to energy infrastructure • Strong emphasis on protection of farmland and agricultural identity • Views differ on land quality, with some stakeholders viewing the Project Area as important agricultural land and others seeing it as less productive grazing land • Concerns about future subdivision potential, property values, and land sterilisation • Concerns regarding biosecurity risks, weeds and contamination affecting agricultural operations • Importance placed on green wedge planning controls and agricultural land protection policy context • Strong perception of inequity between Green Wedge restrictions on local families (e.g. limits on subdivision and additional family dwellings) and the ability to propose large-scale infrastructure in the same landscape • Questions regarding whether land can realistically be restored to equivalent agricultural condition following decommissioning • Requests for transparent site-selection evidence, including what industrial, already-disturbed or lower-sensitivity locations were assessed and why they were rejected	Social Impact #3: Reduced Community Cohesion (refer to **Section 8**) Social Impact #8: Perceived Land Use Incompatibility and Impacts to Land Values (refer to **Section 8**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
	• Concern regarding fragmentation of productive land and effects on adjoining farming operations, including drainage, fencing, access and livestock management	
Amenity	• Visual impact of industrial infrastructure in a rural setting is a key concern • Perception that battery facilities may appear "industrial" or intrusive • Immediate Neighbours are seeking landscape screening to reduce the visual impact of battery infrastructure • Concerns regarding noise, vibration, fire risk, flooding and environmental impacts • Concern regarding runoff and potential soil or water contamination affecting adjacent farms • Concerns about light pollution (e.g. stargazing impacts) • Questions regarding long-term health impacts (e.g. noise and vibration) and safety • Concern about potential cumulative visual/industrial character when combined with other developments • Scepticism that proposed landscaping and existing vegetation will adequately screen the development • Concern regarding tonal and low-frequency noise (e.g. humming from cooling systems, inverters and transformers) in an acoustically open rural environment where sound carries over long distances • Concerns raised about night-time and seasonal baseline noise measurements (noting consideration of wind direction and atmospheric conditions) • Concern regarding cumulative visual, lighting and noise change when considered together with the AMPYR Wimpole BESS and the proposed Bunyip North Quarry • Specific amenity concerns raised by residents on Tonimbuk Road, McConnell Road, and Butler Road regarding loss of rural outlook and the 'dark night landscape'	Social Impact #9: Potential Impact on Social Amenity (refer to **Section 8**) Social Impact #10: Potential Impact on Community Health and Safety Concerns (refer to **Section 8**)
Property Values, Insurance, and Financial Security	• Challenge to the property-value evidence presented by RES on the basis that LGA-wide wind and solar statistics may not be applicable to properties immediately neighbouring a utility-scale BESS; and the lack of Australian-specific evidence on sale price, saleability, buyer demand and time on market for properties immediately adjoining comparable facilities • Stakeholders cite recent valuations and council rate notices reflecting reduced assessed values, and anecdotal evidence that one property reported as withdrawn from sale following prospective purchaser concern about the proposed developments	Social Impact #8: Perceived Land Use Incompatibility and Impacts to Land Values (refer to **Section 8**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
	• Some stakeholders raised requests for an independent property-protection, before-and-after valuation or compensation mechanism where a Project-related loss in value or saleability can be demonstrated • Concern regarding the availability, premiums, exclusions and terms of home, farm and public liability insurance for neighbouring properties • Questions raised in relation to who carries liability and how emergency costs, independent testing and replacement water would be funded while causation or insurance responsibility is being determined	
Traffic, Access, and Transport	• Existing concerns about traffic congestion and unsafe access to the Princes Highway • Increased population contributing to traffic pressure and congestion • Interest in major infrastructure upgrades (e.g. overpass improvements) • Specific concern regarding rural and farm access roads, including safety for agricultural vehicles • Temporary construction traffic impacts acknowledged as a "given" within the context of development • Tonimbuk Road / Princes Highway intersection identified as already unsafe, with residents referencing existing accident history • Tonimbuk Road described as effectively the only practical evacuation route, raising concern about outbound residents (including horse floats and livestock trailers) and inbound emergency vehicles sharing a constrained road network • Requests for cumulative traffic assessments with the proposed Bunyip North Quarry • Concern that local rural roads are not built to a standard suitable for sustained heavy and oversized industrial vehicle movements	Social Impact #10: Potential Impact on Community Health and Safety Concerns (refer to **Section 8**)
Social Infrastructure, and Services	• Concerns about whether infrastructure will keep pace with growth • Identified needs include community spaces, transport, services, and amenities • Demand for improvements in roads, education, and health related services • Identified need for affordable housing and social services (including alcohol/gambling harm programs) as part of council priorities • Strong interest in support for parks, playgrounds, walking tracks and community spaces • Opportunities for partnership with schools, sports clubs and community groups • Need for transparent, needs-based funding approaches	Social Impact #7: Potential Impact on Social Infrastructure and Services (refer to **Section 8**) Social Value and Economic Benefit Initiatives (refer to **Section 10**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
Environmental Values and Biodiversity	• Emphasis on downstream connectivity, including Cannibal Creek, Tea Tree Creek and the Bunyip River, and the seasonally waterlogged / wetland behaviour of the surrounding landscape • Strong importance placed on protecting Cannibal Creek and biodiversity, including that discharge should not enter the creek without treatment or approval • Concerns around stormwater, runoff and contamination risks • Groundwater concerns, including that no site-specific hydrogeological investigation has been completed, and potential cumulative drawdown, dewatering and effects on local springs associated with the proposed quarry • Recognition of the area as a biodiversity hotspot with sensitive habitats (e.g. platypus) • Support for environmental restoration, planting and Landcare initiatives • Desire for environmental screening using native vegetation • Desire to understand more in relation to future decommissioning and recycling of batteries • Concerns related to water sourcing for the Project, and household water security for tank-water dependent properties following smoke, ash or particulate fallout, including who undertakes and funds testing, tank cleaning and replacement water • Additional species identified by residents as present in the area, including platypus, Dwarf Galaxias, Australian Grayling, blackfish, Wedge-tailed Eagle, wombats, wallabies, kangaroos and deer • Concern regarding wildlife movement corridors, fencing, fragmentation, lighting impacts on nocturnal fauna and increased wildlife-strike risk from project traffic • Local flood history raised, with requests that firewater containment be assessed against heavy rainfall, saturated ground and simultaneous flooding	Social Impact #9: Potential Impact on Social Amenity (refer to **Section 8**)
Project Benefits	• Perception of limited direct local economic benefits • Interest in local procurement opportunities • Potential for positively contributing to the community through a Community Benefit Fund or similar • Desire for benefits to be equitable across the communities impacted by the Project • Opportunity to support environmental restoration and Landcare initiatives • Perception that large BESS projects deliver substantial temporary construction activity but comparatively few permanent operational roles	Social Impact #1: Creation of Direct Employment Opportunities (refer to **Section 8**) Social Impact #2: Increased Economic Benefits (refer to **Section 8**) Social Value and Economic Benefit Initiatives (refer to **Section 10**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
	• Ability to contribute to community infrastructure and local projects • Potential to improve energy reliability and support transition to renewables • Interest in neighbour-specific benefit mechanisms (e.g. annual payments for Immediate Neighbours) • Scope to partner with local organisations and community groups • Concern that current perceived benefits (e.g. grants) are not commensurate with scale of project impact • Concern regarding the timing and transparency of grants and sponsorships offered, and whether recipients remain free to raise concerns or object without affecting funding • Requests that benefits be proportionate to impact and directed to the most directly affected neighbours, rather than distributed solely through broader community programs • Requests for a public record of benefit-sharing commitments, and confirmation that commitments remain binding if ownership of the project changes	
Trust, Engagement, and Communication	• Strong need for clear, transparent and ongoing communication • Requests for regular updates, timelines and accessible information, with an expectation for engagement aligned to key project milestones rather than ad hoc updates • Concerns about lack of direct engagement with neighbours • Importance of using multiple communication channels to reach various parts of the community, including physical signs on roads, community noticeboard, mailouts to local communities • Ensure engagement is not limited to events with access restrictions (e.g. paid ticketing) • Concern about perceived bypassing of local processes to secure approvals • Some stakeholders identified that residents close to the Project did not receive direct contact from RES and remained unaware of the July 2026 drop-in information session at Bunyip Hall, with questions regarding the basis for the approximately 1.5 km direct notification radius • Commentary that statements made at community meetings should be confirmed or corrected in writing by RES • Requests for stakeholders to review the sections of the draft SIA prior to finalisation, and for unanswered questions to be formally recorded and responded to in writing • Reference to a 274-signature petition presented to the Victorian Legislative Assembly on 8 September 2026 naming the Bunyip North BESS and the AMPYR Wimpole Battery, raised	Social Impact #4: Reduced Trust and Confidence in Community Engagement (refer to **Section 8**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
	as evidence that direct participation in engagement activities should not be treated as the measure of community concern • Requests for meeting minutes or recordings to be provided to attendees, and for feedback received after the stakeholder meeting to continue to be accepted and recorded • Questions regarding consultant independence, who commissioned each assessment, and whether underlying data, assumptions and limitations will be available for stakeholder scrutiny	
Planning Assessment – Site Selection and Assessment Transparency	• Concerns raised in relation to the site-selection criteria and comparative assessment used to select the Bunyip North location by RES, including how proximity to the existing 220 kV transmission line was weighed against Green Wedge, agricultural, landscape, bushfire and community considerations • Opinion that consultation has occurred after key site-selection decisions were made, and concern that community feedback can still materially influence siting, design, mitigation, or conditions • Social consequences of unresolved technical uncertainty (e.g. groundwater, final supplier-specific fire design, terminal station configuration) on residents' sense of safety, land-use decisions and confidence in the assessment process • Requests that the SIA distinguish between impacts demonstrated to be acceptable and impacts where acceptability depends on later investigation or design • Support for independent peer review of high-consequence studies, disclosure of data gaps and assumptions, and confirmation that specialist assessments remain valid for the final advertised plans • Requests that the statutory and policy framework be clearly addressed the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the VicGrid Community Engagement and Social Values Guidelines • Requests for a process to provide materially new information to existing objectors prior to determination	Social Impact #4: Reduced Trust and Confidence in Community Engagement (refer to **Section 8**)
Safety, Risk, and Emergency Management	• Emphasis on the importance of fire, bushfire and emergency management planning • Requirement for integration with municipal emergency coordination frameworks and emergency services planning processes • Concerns regarding site security (e.g. theft, vandalism, protests, etc.) • Requirement for clear emergency coordination and access protocols	Social Impact #10: Potential Impact on Community Health and Safety Concerns (refer to **Section 8**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
	• Direct lived experience of the 2019 Bunyip Complex fires cited repeatedly, including homes lost, livestock rescue and evacuation • Questions raised in relation to thermal runaway, propagation between enclosures, reignition periods, toxic and flammable gas generation, smoke plume behaviour and explosion overpressure modelling • Concern that bushfire exposure temperatures will exceed the protection levels applied to the proposed equipment, and that the Fire Management Plan may address facility fire rather than external bushfire scenarios • Concerns related to firewater demand, flow rate and duration for a credible worst-case incident, availability of that water during a major bushfire, and containment of contaminated firefighting runoff • Concern regarding local CFA brigade capability, including BESS-specific training, breathing apparatus, gas detection and thermal imaging equipment, and requests for site familiarisation and a multi-agency exercise prior to commissioning • Requests for a joint emergency-response assessment considering a landscape fire simultaneously affecting the Project, the AMPYR Wimpole BESS and surrounding properties, including demand on emergency services and road networks • Proximity of the Bunyip State Park and Bunyip Bushland Reserve raised as compounding the potential bushfire exposure	
Decommissioning and Long-Term Liabilities	• Concern that obligations relating to fire safety, environmental management, monitoring, community benefit, remediation and decommissioning should bind future owners and operators, not only the original developer • Requests for legally enforceable and independently costed financial security (e.g. bond or bank guarantee) to protect the community in the event of insolvency, abandonment or corporate restructuring • Concerns regarding responsibility for damaged modules, contaminated material, routine battery replacement, transport, recycling and final disposal, and acceptable end-of-life pathways • Concern regarding residents' confidence that rehabilitation obligations relied upon to characterise impacts as temporary will actually be delivered decades into the future	Social Impact #4: Reduced Trust and Confidence in Community Engagement (refer to **Section 8**) Social Impact #8: Perceived Land Use Incompatibility and Impacts to Land Values (refer to **Section 8**)
Cumulative Impacts	• Cumulative impact identified by stakeholders as a substantial concern, reflecting the combined effect of the Project, the AMPYR Wimpole BESS, the proposed Heidelberg Materials Bunyip North Quarry and associated terminal/grid infrastructure	Social Impact #8: Perceived Land Use Incompatibility and Impacts to Land Values (refer to **Section 8**)

Topic	Feedback / Comments / Concerns	Where Addressed
	• Concern that each project is assessed in isolation while residents experience the total change, and that no single proponent or authority has assessed the combined scenario • Various stakeholder requests for cumulative assessment of emergency access and evacuation, fire service demand, heavy vehicles, noise, lighting, landscape change, habitat fragmentation, waterways and hydrology, air quality, property confidence, community cohesion and wellbeing • Some stakeholders have requested a pause or moratorium on determination until independent, cumulative assessment of both BESS proposals is complete	Social Impact #9: Potential Impact on Social Amenity (refer to **Section 8**) Social Impact #10: Potential Impact on Community Health and Safety Concerns (refer to **Section 8**)

Stakeholder engagement outcomes have also been used by RES to shape the Project, leading to refinements in Project design, the scope of technical assessments, and/or the approach to ongoing stakeholder engagement methods. **Table 7-6** identifies how stakeholder engagement conducted to-date has influenced the Project.

TABLE 7-6 PROJECT RESPONSES TO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Stakeholders	Issue/Concern	Project Integration
Local Community Groups Traditional Owners State / Federal Government	Protection of Cannibal Creek and waterways of environmental and cultural significance	***Design Refinement*** The Project Area was reduced in November 2025 to establish buffer from Cannibal Creek, avoiding mapped high-value native vegetation, aquatic habitat, and areas identified as culturally sensitive
Local Community Groups Local Council	Visual sensitivity of the Project from surrounding properties and elevated public vantage points, including Mount Cannibal	***Design and Assessment Scope Refinement*** Scope of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment refined to include additional viewpoints, and landscape screening provision was added to the Indicative Site Layout
Surrounding Community Members Local Community Groups	Desire for clearer understanding of the Project prior to lodgement, and advice from Local Community Groups on how best to reach the community	***Information Provision and Engagement Approach*** Amended engagement approach to include: • Plain-language summaries of technical assessments, layout and Frequently Asked Questions published ahead of Planning Application lodgement; • Community information stalls hosted at high-traffic local events on the recommendation of Local Community Groups; and • Project advertisements placed in the Bunyip & District Community News on Local Community Group recommendation to reach local readers

Stakeholders	Issue/Concern	Project Integration
Surrounding Community Members Local Community Groups	Project impacts on the existing agricultural land use	***Assessment Scope Refinement*** Commissioning of an independent Agricultural Impact Review to inform the Planning Application.

Source: Adapted from RES, 2026.

7.3 COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

Through desktop research and on-ground validation through community and stakeholder engagement, it was observed that residents of Cardinia Shire are generally receptive to renewable energy developments in principle, viewing such development as a future necessity when undertaken in an appropriate manner and in an appropriate location. There are Surrounding Community Members, however, who are actively against the Project.

Stakeholder feedback consistently distinguished between acceptance of energy storage technology generally and acceptance of the Project location, with a number of stakeholders indicating that their concerns relate to the suitability of a Green Wedge and the agricultural setting rather than to battery energy storage as a technology.

As part of their community engagement events, RES tracked the sentiment of stakeholders at the in-person information stalls and through the March 2026 feedback form. The intent was to capture the overall consultation context, including expressions of support, neutrality or concern.

At the in-person information stalls (65 total conversations), sentiment was recorded as follows:

- **October 2025:** 20 conversations; four raised concerns, resulting in two formal feedback items; 16 neutral/information-seeking. As the event was introductory, positive/supportive engagements were not logged;
- **January 2026:** 17 conversations; five positive/supportive, 12 neutral/information-seeking; no concerns raised; and
- **March 2026:** 28 conversations; 12 positive/supportive, 16 neutral/information-seeking; no concerns raised.

Analysis of the March 2026 online feedback form (eight submissions) identified a total of six positive/supportive respondents, and two negative respondents (resulting in two formal feedback logs).

Further, sentiment at the July 2026 drop-in information session at Bunyip Hall identified that of the 30 conversations, 10 were positive/supportive, 10 were neutral/information-seeking, and 10 were negative. This session coincided with the commencement of the formal public notice period for the Planning Application, and the proportion of negative sentiment recorded represents a marked change from the events prior.

Sentiment recorded through additional stakeholder interview and correspondence in September 2026 differed materially from that captured at the earlier RES events. Feedback received through this process was predominantly negative in nature, with recurring themes including bushfire and emergency management, cumulative impact, consultation reach,

property value and insurance, Green Wedge planning equity, and amenity. Several residents advised that they had received no direct contact regarding the proposal and were unaware of the July 2026 information session. It should be noted, however, that participation in this additional engagement was stakeholder-initiated, comprising stakeholders who elected to make contact following the commencement of public notice, including representatives of the Friends of Bunyip & Surrounds Local Community Group and residents who identified themselves as living in proximity to the Project Area. The extent to which these views are reflective of the wider community within Bunyip, Bunyip North and the broader Cardinia Shire is therefore not established.

Overall, the sentiment recorded through engagement changed over the engagement period, with a higher proportion of concerns expressed following public notification of the Planning Application. Public notification broadened awareness of the Project and provided further opportunities for community participation. Concern is most strongly and consistently expressed by residents living in proximity to the Project Area, while broader in principle support for renewable energy development remains evident amongst other stakeholders and within the wider LGA. It should be noted, however, that due to the different engagement methods used and the self-selected nature of participation in later stakeholder engagement activities, these findings cannot be interpreted as representing a broader change in sentiment across the wider community.

7.4 COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

RES has established a Complaints Management System for the purposes of receiving complaints, grievances, or concerns from stakeholders as a result of an activity or action (perceived or actual) undertaken by RES and/or its contractors in relation to the Project.

Complaints are to be communicated to RES through the following dedicated channels:

- Website: https://www.bunyipnorth-energystorage.com
- Email: info@bunyipnorth-energystorage.com

All contact through these channels, including enquiries, feedback and complaints, is recorded and managed through a centralised database (Borealis).

The Development Project Manager and Community Engagement Manager are responsible for managing enquiries and complaints, and logging the following information:

- Contact’s name and details;
- Nature of the enquiry/complaint;
- Response provided, action required and resolution timeframes; and
- Closure of enquires and complaints.

All interactions with stakeholders or the community are recorded promptly and consistently with urgent complaints during the Construction Phase to be responded to within 24 hours; all other complaints within two business days; and general Project enquiries and feedback within two business days. No complaints have been received by the Project to-date.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

As outlined in **Section 4**, the impact assessment methodology follows the approach reflected in the SIA Guideline (DSDIP, 2025a) and with consideration of the Supplementary Material (DSDIP, 2025b). Accordingly, the assessment has been undertaken against the key matters identified in the SIA Guideline, comprising:

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement;
- Workforce Management;
- Local Business and Industry Procurement;
- Housing and Accommodation; and
- Health and Community Well-being.

Impacts have been assessed based on the magnitude of the social impact (i.e. the degree of change caused by the impact), and the likelihood of occurrence. Positive and negative, direct and indirect, and cumulative impacts associated with the Construction and Operation Phases of the Project have been assessed.

In assessing the potential impacts, consideration has been given to:

- The characteristics of the Project, including the timing, duration and intensity of the activities (where known);
- The needs of the community as identified through the Social Baseline and/or stakeholder engagement process;
- Issues/concerns or prospective benefits raised by stakeholders during the engagement process; and
- Outcomes from technical studies undertaken by the Project.

The operational life of the Project is anticipated to be 20-30 years, after which time the Project may be decommissioned or re-powered. Given the extensive timeframe involved, the Decommissioning Phase has not been specifically addressed in this SIA, however it is anticipated that the potential social impacts will be similar to those of the Construction Phase. It is therefore recommended that the impacts associated with decommissioning be assessed closer to the anticipated time of decommissioning, to ensure that the potential impacts (and management measures) are accurate and relevant.

Cumulative impacts have the potential to occur, in large part due to overlaps in construction and/or operational timeframes with surrounding projects. Given the static nature of the Project during the Operation Phase, and the size of workforce, it is anticipated that the potential for cumulative impacts to arise is limited. For this reason, the cumulative impact assessment primarily focused on the surrounding projects that have overlapping construction phases – with particular reference to the Wimpole Battery (refer to **Table 6-30**). However, the identified projects may not receive approval from the Responsible Authority, gain access to the grid, or may not come to fruition due to other circumstances.

8.1 SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS

A number of technical assessments have been undertaken to support the Project. These technical assessments are summarised in the following sections and have been considered in assessing the potential social impacts.

8.1.1 TRAFFIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Traffic Impact Assessment (Amber Organisation Pty Ltd, 2026) evaluated the construction and operational traffic likely to be generated by the Project, along with the suitability and design of the proposed new access arrangement connecting the Site to the Princes Highway.

Based on the likely traffic demands during the up to 27 month construction period, Amber Organisation Pty Ltd (2026) determined that the Project is expected to generate up to 44 vehicle movements in each of the morning and evening peak periods, and 118 vehicle movements per day during construction, excluding occasional over-size over-mass vehicle movements required to facilitate the larger Project infrastructure. Calculated traffic volumes are summarised in **Table 8-1**.

TABLE 8-1 CONSTRUCTION PHASE – TRAFFIC GENERATION

Vehicle Type		Average Number of Daily Vehicles	Average Number of Vehicles during Peak Hour	Peak Number of Daily Vehicles	Peak Number of Vehicles during Peak Hour
Light Vehicles		52	26	76	38
Heavy Vehicles	Rigid	6	1	4	1
	Truck and Dog	10	1	14	2
	Semi-Trailer	14	2	24	3
Total		**82**	**30**	**118**	**44**

The Traffic Impact Assessment determined that the proposed Site access arrangement is suitable to accommodate the traffic generated during the Construction Phase without impediment to the safety of traffic on the Princes Highway. Additionally, the assessment noted that in order to ensure safe access to and from the Project Area for all motorists, all departure movements from the Project Area with a destination towards Melbourne (i.e. west), are to be managed to only use the Sand Road / Princes Highway interchange located in Longwarry North.

As part of the assessment conducted for the Construction Phase, cumulative traffic impacts were also considered. Amber Organisation Pty Ltd's (2026) assessment included the Wimpole Battery and the Bunyip North Granite Quarry.

Operational Phase traffic generation is expected to generate substantially less traffic per day compared to the Construction Phase, with the Traffic Impact Assessment concluding that vehicle movements would result in a negligible change to the traffic environment (Amber Organisation Pty Ltd, 2026).

8.1.2 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (INCLUDING FIRE SAFETY STUDY)

The Project Area is located within a designated Bushfire Prone Area and partially in the Bushfire Management Overlay under the Planning Policy Framework. Accordingly, a Risk Management Plan (including Fire Safety Study) was undertaken by Fire Risk Consultants Pty Ltd (2026) to assess bushfire and operational fire risk associated with the Project.

The assessment concluded that the Project is able to meet the requirements of the CFA's *Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities* (2023) and that fire risk can be managed to an acceptable level through a combination of design, infrastructure and operational controls. Key management measures include the provision of:

- Perimeter firebreaks, internal and perimeter access roads suitable for emergency vehicles;
- Adequate firefighting water supply and hydrant coverage, separation distances between infrastructure and vegetation;
- Integrated fire detection and suppression systems within battery units; and
- Preparation and implementation of a Fire Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan.

Accordingly, the Project is not expected to increase bushfire risk to surrounding land or communities and is consistent with the objectives of Clause 13.02-1S (Bushfire Planning) under the Planning Policy Framework.

8.1.3 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

An Ecological Assessment was undertaken by ERM (2026b), including a site survey conducted in April 2025. For the purposes of the assessment, an Ecology Assessment Area was defined to capture the Project Area and its immediate surrounds, allowing consideration of the context of on-site values with respect to those supported elsewhere on the property and potential indirect impacts to nearby ecological features.

The assessment concluded that while the Project Area is largely agricultural and highly modified, it sits adjacent to ecological features that may support important biodiversity values. As such, ERM (2026b) determined that the Project can proceed with minimal environmental risk, provided that established buffers, avoidance strategies, and vegetation management requirements are maintained.

The Ecological Assessment was incorporated into the Referral submission to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water on 17 April 2026 under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth). On 27 May 2026, a Referral Decision was received confirming that the Project is "not a controlled action" under the Act.

8.1.4 NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Noise Impact Assessment was undertaken by ERM (2026c), including background noise monitoring in accordance with the Environmental Protection Authority Victoria (EPA Victoria) 'Noise Limit and Assessment Protocol for the Control of Noise from Commercial, Industrial and Trade Premises and Entertainment Venues' (September 2025) (Noise Protocol) to establish Project-specific operational noise limits at Noise Sensitive Areas located near the Site.

The Noise Impact Assessment has considered the neighbouring Wimpole Battery immediately adjacent to the Project Area as part of the assessment to determine the cumulative noise impacts to Noise Sensitive Areas. As a Noise Impact Assessment for Wimpole Battery was not available, ERM (2026c) has applied the alternative assessment criteria for the 'Publication 1997 Technical Guidance: Measuring and analysing industry noise and music noise' (EPA Victoria, 2021) for multiple industrial premises, specifically those for proposed new industry or extension of existing premises in rural areas.

Two operational scenarios (day and evening/night) were modelled using SoundPLAN v9.1, covering battery units, inverters and transformers. The Noise Impact Assessment predicts that operational noise from the Project will comply with all applicable Noise Protocol limits across all periods (day and evening/night), and as such, no specific noise mitigation measures are required.

Compliance with the Noise Protocol noise limits is predicted for the identified Noise Sensitive Areas during the day, evening and night periods. In addition, no cumulative noise impacts with the proposed and adjacent Wimpole Battery are predicted based on the Project's compliance with Publication 1997 noise limits. As such, no additional noise mitigation measures related to cumulative noise emissions are required to be implemented.

It is noted that ERM (2026c) also considered General Environmental Duty requirements with respect to the selection of quieter equipment. As a result, margins of compliance of 8 dB and 5 dB are achieved at the worst-affected Noise Sensitive Receptor when considered against the Noise Protocol and Publication 1997 noise limits respectively. This approach aligns with the General Environmental Duty under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*, which requires risks to human health and the environment to be minimised so far as reasonably practicable.

8.1.5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was prepared by Landform Architects (2026) to assess the potential visual impacts of the Project.

Within the 2.5 km assessment area established by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landform Architects (2026) identified that there are no non-associated / neighbouring dwellings that would experience direct visual impacts. The closest dwelling, located approximately 650 m to the west, is associated with the Project.

Accordingly, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment determined that no visual mitigation measures, such as landscape screening, are considered necessary to reduce off-site residential or public views. Despite this, however, an area for potential landscape screening has been built into the Indicative Development Footprint, to allow for screening if required. Non-associated dwellings within the surrounding area are separated from the Project Area by public roads, vegetation along creek corridors, or are located at distances where existing vegetation provides partial screening or filtered views.

Further, Landform Architects (2026) identified that there are no elevated lookouts, public reserves or formal public vantage points in proximity to the Project Area or north of the Princes Freeway from which the Project would be readily visible. Regardless, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment considered the visual impact of the Project from the following publicly accessible viewpoints:

- Cannibal Hill Reserve Southern Lookout;
- Princes Freeway;
- Tonimbuk Road;
- Wimpole Road; and
- McConnell Road.

Across all viewpoints, the overall visual impact ranges from low to negligible, with no locations exhibiting a moderate or high impact rating. It was also noted that the Project Area is a low-lying, cleared agricultural landscape already influenced by the presence of the existing 220 kV transmission corridor.

8.1.6 FLOOD MODELLING ASSESSMENT

A Flood Modelling Assessment for the Project was undertaken by Water Technology (Water Technology, 2026). The assessment indicates that most of the Indicative Development Footprint is either flood-free or subject only to shallow sheet flow during flood events.

Within the indicative Development Footprint, predicted flooding is minor, with depths generally less than 0.15 m and flow velocities typically below 0.7 metres per second under the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability event. This represents a low flood hazard environment, with slow-moving overland flow that poses minimal risk to the Project's structures or operations. No riverine flooding is predicted to encroach upon the indicative Development Footprint (Water Technology, 2026).

The flood modelling completed for the Project has undergone independent review by Melbourne Water as part of early engagement undertaken to confirm that the baseline conditions were appropriate for the Project Area. Feedback provided by Melbourne Water supports the conclusion that the Project is located outside the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability flood extent of Cannibal Creek and that the predicted shallow, slow-moving overland flow within the indicative Development Footprint presents a low flood hazard environment.

Notwithstanding the low flood risk, the Project will mitigate potential surface water impacts through detailed design informed by a post-development flood impact assessment to be completed prior to construction. This approach will ensure that localised runoff is appropriately managed, existing overland flow paths are maintained and post-development flood behaviour remains consistent with baseline conditions.

8.1.7 AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENT

An Agricultural Assessment was prepared by Pinion Advisory (2026) to assess the potential impacts of the Project on agricultural productivity, farm viability, land capability and surrounding rural land uses. The assessment considered both on-farm impacts to the host dairy enterprise and off-farm impacts that may affect neighbouring agricultural landholders and rural communities.

The Project will occupy approximately 17.5 ha of land currently used for dairy and beef cattle grazing, representing approximately 15% of the available grazing land within the farming enterprise. While this will remove a portion of productive grazing land from agricultural use, grazing activities can be redistributed across other land under the same management, with the balance of the allotment retained for agricultural production (Pinion Advisory, 2026).

The assessment found that the Project will not fragment the agricultural landholding or restrict access to stock water supplies, farm infrastructure or agricultural operations. The proposed direct access from the Princes Freeway will also avoid interaction with, and impacts to, the balance of the farming enterprise.

As the Project Area comprises moderately productive agricultural land used for dairy and grazing activities and is not identified as strategic or high-value irrigated agricultural land at a regional or State level (Pinion Advisory, 2026). While agricultural production within the development footprint will cease during operations, the battery infrastructure can be removed at the end of the Project life and the land rehabilitated and returned to agricultural use.

Lease income associated with the Project is expected to offset the reduction in agricultural income resulting from the loss of grazing land and provide an additional source of income that is not subject to seasonal or market variability. Pinion Advisory (2026) also notes that lease income could be reinvested in pasture improvement, fencing, laneways and other farm infrastructure to support the ongoing operation of the farming enterprise.

Potential land use conflicts relating to fire safety, groundwater, biosecurity, dust, noise, traffic, visual amenity, dangerous goods and waste management were also assessed by Pinion Advisory (2026). Subject to the implementation of recommended management measures and design controls, these risks were determined to be acceptable. Further groundwater investigations during detailed design have been recommended in the Agricultural Assessment in order to confirm groundwater levels and assess potential contamination pathways due to the shallow groundwater conditions present beneath the Project Area.

Overall, the assessment concluded that agricultural production would be able to continue on the balance of the land and that the Project will not restrict access to farm infrastructure or water supplies. Furthermore, potential land use conflicts with surrounding rural land uses were assessed as acceptable with the implementation of the recommended management measures.

8.2 SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Several key social impacts were identified through the assessment process, which are presented in **Table 8-2**. These impacts were also reflected during community and stakeholder engagement, as well as understood based on experience with standalone BESS developments in Victoria and Australia.

Table 8-2 provides the assessment of social impacts, its pre-mitigation/enhancement rating significance, the relevant management measures to address the social impact, and its post-mitigation/enhancement significance rating.

Additional detail relating to specific proposed management measures are provided in the following sections:

- **Section 8.2.1** – Worker Code of Conduct;
- **Section 8.2.2** – Local Employment Plan;
- **Section 8.2.3** – Local Content Initiatives;
- **Section 8.2.4** – "Job Readiness" Assistance; and
- **Section 8.2.5** – Traffic Management Plan.

8.2.1 WORKER CODE OF CONDUCT

A Worker Code of Conduct will be developed and apply to all workers involved in the Project. The Worker Code of Conduct will include:

- Principles of behaviour: Guidelines for appropriate behaviour that will apply to interactions with all workers whether at work or out of work. Expectations of behaviours to be exhibited while representative of the Project, within the community;
- Anti-harassment, bullying and discrimination: Sets out the provisions for appropriate conduct and outlines potential consequences of breech to these provisions; and
- Work health and safety: Requires all workers to understand their obligations to comply with the relevant RES work health and safety procedures and their legislative requirements.

8.2.2 LOCAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Develop and implement a Local Employment Plan (LEP) for the Project. The LEP is to be prepared by BNPC and the Construction Contractor/s, and is to include the following measures:

- Aspirational targets for employment within the Social Study Area;
- Engagement with the local/regional employment agencies to identify access pathways for local workers. The candidate pool is to be assessed to determine suitable labour, trade or other employment on the Project;
- Engagement with media including local radio, newspaper and social media to advertise expressions of interest for employment;

  Encouragement for Construction Contractor/s and subcontractors to employ local workers wherever practicable and reasonable;
- Use of local presence and content as a criterion when evaluating contracts to subcontractors; and
- Identification of positions where training would allow additional local workers and encourage local workers to undertake training to support specialist works.

8.2.3 LOCAL CONTENT INITIATIVES

Develop and implement local content initiatives that encourage local procurement by the Construction Contractor/s. These initiatives are to be tracked and reported on throughout the life of the Project to demonstrate the extent to which local content is being accessed. Initiatives should include:

- Applying and communicating the Project's defined 'local area', comprising a tiered approach with preference given to the West Gippsland region, Victoria, and then Australia;
- Establishment of aspirational targets for 'local' procurement;
- Engage with the Business and Industry Organisations, and a selection of Local Businesses and Industries representatives, to identify access pathways for local businesses;
- Identify and communicate procurement lead times so that there is sufficient opportunity for local Business and Industry to plan for future tenders;
- Engage media including local radio, newspaper and social media to advertise expressions of interest for supply/services contracts – including within Cardinia Shire Council's newsletter (provided to over 3,000 local businesses); and
- Use local presence and content as a criterion when evaluating contracts to contractors.

8.2.4 "JOB READINESS" ASSISTANCE

BNPC and the Construction Contractor/s are to assist Local Businesses and Industries to become "job ready" by:

- Ensuring the Construction Contractor/s (and subcontractor/s) is encouraged to hire locally where business/industries can demonstrate the required skills and experience;
- Participating in Business and Industry Organisation and/or Cardinia Shire Council led meetings and events in the Social Study Area community to increase transparency in relation to upcoming opportunities; and
- Encouraging lead contractors to purchase local non-labour inputs to production, where local producers can be cost and quality competitive, to support local industries.

8.2.5 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Traffic Management Plan will be developed for the Project, that will seek to minimise the impact of the Project on the road network. The Traffic Management Plan will adhere to the relevant conditions of the Planning Permit for the Project, if granted. The Traffic Management Plan should include the following measures to mitigate the social dimension of the impact:

- Heavy vehicles should avoid travelling along school bus routes (if/where possible) and at peak school bus times, to limit the interaction of larger vehicles and vulnerable road users;
- Over-size or over-mass vehicle trips (if required) be timed so they do not coincide with other over-size or over-mass vehicles within the surrounding area to limit the impact to the road network;
- On-site speed restrictions;
- Appropriate dust suppression measures along local roads;
- Maintenance program for local roads to ensure safe movement;
- Loading and unloading is proposed to occur within the Project Area. No surrounding roads are to be used for material storage at any time; and
- Sufficient car parking is to be provided on-site to ensure that vehicles are not parked on the surrounding road network.

TABLE 8-2 SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance

Social Impact #1: Creation of Direct Employment Opportunities
• The Project will create direct employment opportunities:
  ◦ Construction Phase: Up to 75 FTE
  ◦ Operation Phase: up to 5 FTEs, in addition to specialist contractors responsible for civil works maintenance, weed and pest control, and other environmental management tasks.
• **Section 6.5.1** explores the labour force within the Social Study Area, and there appears to be workers in relevant occupations who may be able to support the Project – particularly within the Pakenham, Drouin, and Warragul SALs.
• **Section 6.11.3** indicates that there may be only limited capacity within the First Nations Communities based within the Social Study Area to participate in the Project.
• The Project will require the Construction Contractor/s to prioritise the recruitment of residents from within the Social Study Area, however it is expected that given the Project's proximity to Melbourne, the Project workforce may be recruited from areas further afield.
• The overall demand for suitably qualified construction workers driven by the Project, and other concurrent developments, is expected to result in cumulative positive economic impacts within the Social Study Area. Based on **Table 6-30**, surrounding projects with overlapping construction phases may collectively require approximately 400 FTEs.
• This demand is anticipated to be met through a combination of the existing unemployment pool, increased workforce participation, and transitions from other industries. The potential negative implications of this demand for workers is considered in Social Impact #6.
• It is unlikely that all labour requirements can be filled solely by local residents. Some positions are expected to be met through Drive-In-Drive-Out workers from the greater Melbourne region and/or within Victoria.
	• Workforce Management	• Host Landholder
		• Immediate Neighbours
		• Surrounding Community Members
		• First Nations Communities
			C	Positive	High	**Positive**	• **Local Employment Plan** to be developed and implemented and include, amongst other things, targets for local employment.
							• **First Nations Employment Commitments** should be included as part of the Local Employment Plan.
							• **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project.
							• **Workforce Upskilling and Training Opportunities** should be supported in partnership with Cardinia Shire Council, State Government and/or training institutions.
							• **Creating Community Awareness** to foster a better understanding of the ways prospective workers may be able to take part in the Project. This can be through potential partnerships with Cardinia Shire Council, and/or Business and Industry Organisations
								Positive	High	**Positive**

			O	Positive	High	**Positive**		Positive	High	**Positive**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance

Social Impact #2: Increased Economic Benefits
• The Project has the potential to provide opportunities for local procurement of goods and services, such as employment opportunities for local contractors and other increased business opportunities like flow-on effects in nearby townships.
• During the Construction Phase, the Project will increase demand for goods and services such as accommodation, warehousing and storage, transport and logistics, and administrative support. Where possible, the Project intends to meet these needs through local businesses and industries.
• The Operation Phase will also require specialist contractors. Subject to business availability and suitability, suppliers from within the Social Study Area will be sought, and the Project will work to maximise local procurement opportunities.
• Stakeholders identified that the Project has the potential to provide indirect economic benefits, including:
  ◦ Generation of economic benefits through local spend, particularly during the Construction Phase; and
  ◦ Contribution to meeting increased energy demands within the wider region;
• Despite these positives however, some stakeholders were concerned that any social investment spend or economic benefits provided to the local community as a result of the Project are likely to be minimal compared to the scale of the Project, or that the local community is unlikely to directly benefit from the Project at all.
• **Section 6.5.1** indicates that relevant skillsets exist within the Social Study Area.
• **Section 6.5.4** shows that construction is the top industry of business types within the Cardinia LGA. Approximately 99% of construction businesses are non-employing and small businesses. Non-employing and small businesses may experience challenges in undergoing procurement processes to participate in the Project, given their limited administrative capacity.
	• Local Industry and Procurement	• Surrounding Community Members
		• First Nations Communities
		• Local Community Groups
		• Business and Industry Organisations
		• Local Businesses and Industries
			C	Positive	High	**Positive**	• **Local Content Initiatives** should be developed and implemented by the Construction Contractor/s and should include aspirational targets for local procurement.
							• **First Nations Employment Commitments** should be included as part of the Local Content Initiatives.
							• **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project.
							• **"Job Readiness" Assistance** should be provided to assist local business and industry in being ready for the Project's procurement opportunities by prioritising a local workforce and having relevant skills required for the Project.
								Positive	High	**Positive**

			O	Positive	High	**Positive**		Positive	High	**Positive**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
Accordingly, BNPC should consider the provision of additional support in applying for procurement opportunities. • Other surrounding projects that require similar goods and services (such as the Wimpole Battery) will also influence the availability of opportunities for Local Businesses and Industries. • The ongoing pipeline of renewable energy developments and creation of Renewable Energy Zones by the Victorian Government may encourage regional businesses to adapt to growing demand for project components, creating further value for local communities. In the short term, however, Local Businesses and Industries may face pressure in meeting the cumulative demand generated by multiple projects, however, this is likely to be less of a concern given the proximity of the Social Study Area to Greater Melbourne.										
Social Impact #3: Reduced Community Cohesion • Reduced community cohesion, which can increase negative sentiment, may occur as a result of: ◦ Divergent opinions about the desirability of the Project, and the extent to which residents feel able to express those opinions openly; ◦ The timing, transparency and geographic distribution of community grants, sponsorships and benefit-sharing arrangements; ◦ Perceived inequity between the development restrictions applying to local landholders under Green Wedge controls and the scale of infrastructure proposed within the same landscape; ◦ Local disruptions caused by the Construction Phase, including construction workforce movements and associated traffic; and/or ◦ The combined effect of multiple major developments proposed within the same locality. • In close-knit communities and/or those where social change or prior collective trauma is already occurring, the erosion of community	• Community and Stakeholder Engagement • Workforce Management • Health and Community Wellbeing	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Local Community Groups • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries	C	Medium	High	**Major**	• **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders. • **Worker Code of Conduct** to be developed and implemented, that establishes clear behavioural standards for non-local workers to help support community cohesion. • **Project Inductions** to be undertaken by relevant Project workers, that includes an aspect on promoting understanding and	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**
			O	Medium	High	**Major**		Medium	Medium	**Moderate**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
cohesion can affect the social fabric and lead to negative mental health and well-being outcomes. • This potential impact is most likely to occur in the Primary Social Study Area, due to the close proximity of Bunyip North, Tonimbuk, Bunyip and Garfield to the Project Area. • Based on the outcomes from the social baseline and stakeholder engagement the communities within the Primary Social Study Area (Bunyip and Garfield) are characterised by a strong sense of local identity grounded in their rural setting and community connections. Stakeholders consistently described the towns as welcoming, family-oriented and traditionally close-knit, with a strong history of volunteerism and participation in local groups. At the same time, community identity is increasingly being influenced by population growth and demographic changes, with an influx of residents from metropolitan areas contributing to a more diverse and evolving social structure. Stakeholders in Bunyip North and Tonimbuk, however, indicated that their immediate locality has not experienced comparable change. Despite this however, there remains a strong perception, particularly in Bunyip and Garfield, as being distinct rural communities with a 'country town' character, valued for their relative proximity to Melbourne while retaining a rural/semi-urban identity. • Stakeholders reported that a reduction in community cohesion is already being experienced due to the Project and surrounding projects. Some stakeholders described differing views regarding the Project contributing to tension between residents, changes to everyday social interaction within the local area, and a perception that the community is less connected than it was previously. It was noted by other stakeholders however, that Bunyip already has divisions between those in Bunyip North, the town of Bunyip, and those located to the south. • A recurring theme raised through engagement was the distribution of community grants, sponsorships and benefit-sharing arrangements.							respect for the local community.			

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
Stakeholders expressed a perception that funded organisations are generally located further from the Project Area and are less directly affected by potential impacts, and raised concerns regarding the transparency of eligibility criteria and the timing of funding relative to the assessment and consultation process. • Related to the above, some stakeholders reported a reluctance among residents to express concerns publicly, particularly where households are connected to organisations that have received or may receive funding. These same stakeholders described a geographic pattern to these effects, distinguishing between residents of Bunyip North and Tonimbuk, who consider themselves most directly affected, residents within the Bunyip township south of the freeway, and communities further south who are perceived as less affected and more supportive of the Project. The perceived misalignment between the areas experiencing potential impacts and the areas receiving Project-related benefits is central to the cohesion concerns raised through engagement. • Some stakeholders identified ongoing development and urban encroachment as a key issue affecting the Primary Social Study Area, with population growth, housing subdivision and infrastructure expansion contributing to perceptions of change in community character. While these trends are largely driven by broader regional growth dynamics, there is concern among some stakeholders that new projects, including large-scale infrastructure or industrial developments (including BESS), may reinforce this trajectory and contribute to a gradual erosion of rural character. This includes concern that cumulative development could alter landscape values, land use patterns and the overall sense of place, particularly in communities that see their rural identity as central to their long-term future. • A related source of concern is the perceived inequity between the restrictions applying to local										

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
landholders and the scale of development proposed nearby. Stakeholders described families being unable to subdivide land or construct additional dwellings for their children under Green Wedge controls, while large-scale infrastructure is proposed within the same landscape, and identified this as a matter of fairness affecting confidence in the planning system. • Issues with renewable energy developments have been identified through public sources within the neighbouring Baw Baw Shire LGA, however, discussions with stakeholders within the Primary Social Study Area identified that the community (i.e. Bunyip and Garfield) is generally "pro renewable energy", in so far that it is developed appropriately and in the right locations. • Research indicates that disruptions to an individual's environment, such as those caused by new developments, can lead to a loss of place attachment and identity (Jozwik, 2024; Manzo, et al., 2023). The changes introduced by the Project may alter how individuals perceive and experience their locality, but these effects are subjective, and vary according to personal attachment, sense of belonging, and resilience to change. • There is potential for a cumulative impact to occur given the close proximity of the neighbouring BESS development, as well as the other non-rural developments within the Cardinia LGA. Rapid transformation within a short period can intensify existing social tensions and mental health challenges, especially among residents who feel that their community character and way of life are being reshaped without sufficient consultation or control.									

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
Social Impact #4: Reduced Trust and Confidence in Community Engagement • Meaningful engagement is critical for managing social impacts and building long-term, genuine relationships with stakeholders. • Causes of ineffective engagement can include poor communication, lack of information, misaligned expectations, inadequate conflict management, limited trust or transparency, insufficient accountability or follow-up, and cultural or contextual insensitivity. • The erosion of trust between local communities and the Project proponent also has the potential to exacerbate impacts on community cohesion. Additionally, there is a risk of misinformation or negative sentiment developing. Trust may be built and reinforced by implementing measures to mitigate or manage Project impacts in collaboration with stakeholders and receptors, and by ensuring stakeholders continue to influence decisions that affect their lives. • Ineffective or insufficient engagement can leave stakeholders feeling unheard or unable to influence Project decision-making, which may negatively affect community mental and physical health and well-being. • Stakeholders demonstrated a strong interest in understanding the Project and its potential effects, with consistent requests for access to clear, detailed and accessible information. This includes information relating to Project design, potential impacts and mitigation measures, which stakeholders identified as critical to forming informed views and determining whether they have concerns or require further clarification. • The reach and effectiveness of engagement conducted by RES was raised as a concern by some stakeholders. Residents identifying themselves as living in close proximity to the Project Area advised that they had received no direct contact regarding the proposal, were unaware of the July 2026 drop-in information session at Bunyip Hall,	• Community and Stakeholder Engagement • Health and Community Well-being	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Local Community Groups • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries	C	Medium	High	**Major**	• **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders.	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**
			O	Medium	High	**Major**		Medium	Medium	**Moderate**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
and became aware of the Project only through informal channels or shortly before the commencement of public notification for the Planning Application. Whilst stakeholders acknowledged that engagement activities had been undertaken, and their concern was directed at whether those activities were sufficiently broad, direct and repeated to reach potentially affected residents in time to participate meaningfully. • Related concerns were raised regarding the accessibility of engagement for vulnerable groups, including elderly residents, residents who do not regularly use websites or social media, and households without ready access to online information. Stakeholders also noted that the technical nature of planning and specialist material can limit the ability of residents without relevant professional background to understand and respond to a proposal of this scale within the available timeframes. • Stakeholders raised concerns regarding the timing of engagement relative to Project decision-making, particularly in respect of site selection. Several requested evidence that community feedback remains capable of materially influencing siting, design, mitigation or approval conditions, rather than informing residents after key decisions have been made, and requested the comparative site-selection criteria and the alternatives considered. • Some stakeholders raised concerns that the number of participants engaged by RES (or ERM) should not be interpreted as the extent of community concern regarding the Project, as a recent 274-signature petition presented to the Victorian Legislative Assembly (dated 8 September 2026) named the Project and the neighbouring AMPYR Wimpole BESS. • The timing of community grants and sponsorships was identified by stakeholders as affecting confidence in the integrity of engagement. Concerns related to whether benefits offered prior to completion of the SIA could influence the expression of community views, whether eligibility										

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
criteria and recipients were publicly known, and whether recipients remain free to raise concerns without affecting funding. • In addition to initial information provision, stakeholders emphasised the importance of ongoing communication throughout the Project lifecycle. This includes requests for regular updates on Project timelines, construction activities, and opportunities for local businesses and community involvement. Maintaining consistent communication was identified as an important mechanism to ensure stakeholders remain informed and able to participate meaningfully in Project-related discussions. • Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of transparency in Project engagement, including clear, open and timely communication regarding Project activities, impacts and decision-making processes. Where transparency is perceived to be lacking, there is potential for uncertainty and mistrust to emerge within the community. This, in turn, may influence perceptions of the Project and has the potential to affect community cohesion, particularly in communities that place a high value on local relationships and effective communication between proponents and residents. • Additionally, there is a risk of misinformation or negative sentiment developing. Trust may be built and reinforced by implementing measures to mitigate or manage Project impacts in collaboration with stakeholders and receptors, and by ensuring stakeholders continue to influence decisions that affect their lives.										
Social Impact #5: Accommodation of the Non-Local Workforce • Accommodation needs for the Project may: ◦ Exacerbate existing accommodation shortages; ◦ Exacerbate cost of living pressures (e.g. increased rents in areas of low vacancy); and/or ◦ Impact local tourism operations (e.g. accommodation to support	• Housing and Accommodation	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations	C	Medium	High	**Major**	• **Local Employment Plan** to be developed and implemented and include, amongst other things, targets for local employment. • **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and	Small	Medium	**Minor**
			O	Negligible	Low	**Negligible**		Negligible	Low	**Negligible**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
festivals/events will be reduced and tourists will be unable to visit, leading to a loss of revenue for tourism operators). • It is considered that this impact is unlikely to occur in the Operation Phase, given the small operational workforce (i.e. up to 5 FTE). • **Section 6.7** shows there is a tight rental market and limited social housing availability across the Primary Social Study Area, however there are opportunities within the Secondary Social Study Area (e.g. Pakenham, Drouin, and Warragul). • Given the proximity of the Project to Melbourne, workforce accommodation opportunities may also be available outside of the Social Study Area, and within a reasonable driving distance (i.e. less than one hour) – which will lessen the potential for this impact occurring in the Social Study Area. • Vulnerable populations are particularly at risk if this impact occurs, given that they may not have the socio-economic resources to secure alternative or long-term accommodation options. • There is the potential for cumulative impact to occur with surrounding projects (refer to **Table 6-30**) that may exacerbate the lack of accommodation availability and result in increased costs.		• Local Businesses and Industries					implemented for the life of the Project. • **Engagement with Accommodation Providers** to understand availability and establish long-term workforce accommodation arrangements. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders.			
Social Impact #6: Potential for Skills Shortages • There is the potential that the demand for workers from the Project may result in a skills shortage for local businesses if workers decide to leave their current jobs and work for the Project during the Construction Phase. • It is considered that this impact is unlikely to occur in the Operation Phase, given the small operational workforce (i.e. up to 5 FTE). • In the event that workers leave their existing jobs to work for the Project there is the potential that local businesses may be unable to fill their roles, which will either reduce service availability, quality, or performance. Additionally, it may compel local businesses to seek workers from outside the region.	• Workforce Management • Local Business and Industry Procurement	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries	C	Small	High	**Moderate**	• **Local Employment Plan** to be developed and implemented and include, amongst other things, targets for local employment. • **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders.	Small	Medium	**Minor**
			O	Negligible	Low	**Negligible**		Negligible	Low	**Negligible**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
• The daily lives of local community members may also be impacted if the Project leads to a shortage of tradespeople for general community tasks/ activities. • There is the potential for cumulative impacts to be experienced by the local community, given that there are other renewable energy projects occurring in the region. As such, skills shortages may become more pronounced or protracted.										
Social Impact #7: Potential Impact on Social Infrastructure and Services • The Project has the potential to increase demand for infrastructure and services within the Social Study Area. This may be associated with an influx of non-local workers increasing demand for goods and services, and social infrastructure. ***Increased demand for goods and services.*** • The Project may increase the demand for goods and services (e.g. groceries, tradespersons, etc.). • There is also the potential for the price of goods and services to increase in response to market factors, which may impact vulnerable populations who have limited socio-economic resources. • There may be cumulative impacts associated with worker influx from surrounding projects, dependent upon where they are accommodated (refer to **Table 6-30**). ***Increased demand for social infrastructure.*** • A non-local workforce may put pressure on social infrastructure (e.g. community / recreation, health and emergency, education, etc.), as the increased demand can strain resources and restrict access for local communities. • This demand may lead to overcrowding, extended wait times, and impact on their quality and functionality, which may lead to a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction among community members. • Stakeholders raised concerns regarding the existing social	• Workforce Management • Health and Community Well-being	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Local Community Groups • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries • Emergency Services • Educational Organisations	C	Medium	High	**Major**	• **Local Employment Plan** to be developed and implemented and include, amongst other things, targets for local employment. • **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders. • **Coordination with Other Proponents**, to manage influx and associated social infrastructure and services impacts.	Small	Medium	**Minor**
			O	Small	Medium	**Minor**		Small	Low	**Negligible**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
infrastructure (i.e. services, amenities) within their local communities being able to keep pace with the population increase already being experienced within Bunyip and Garfield. Of particular concern for some stakeholders was the accessibility to medical and childcare services, community spaces, and the current scarcity of suitable public areas for gatherings, such as playgrounds and community recreational infrastructure. • Whilst stakeholders did not directly link these concerns specifically to the Project (or other renewable energy developments), but rather to the wider population increase within the region, they expressed apprehension about the potential for additional pressures to be imposed by new projects, particularly as they believe that their communities are being overlooked for government support compared to other towns within the Cardinia LGA. • The cumulative impact may exacerbate shortages and/or delays in accessing social infrastructure, which may ultimately impact on the health and well-being of local community members.										
Social Impact #8: Perceived Land Use Incompatibility and Impact to Land Values • There is a broadly held perception across the Social Study Area that renewable energy projects are contributing to the conversion of productive agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. This is accompanied by stakeholder frustration that planning decisions do not adequately protect high-value farmland and are enabling both energy infrastructure development and the continued encroachment of residential subdivisions. • Some stakeholders expressed the view that the Project is incompatible with its rural setting, noting that its character is perceived as more consistent with an industrial landscape. In this context, it was suggested that the Project may be more appropriately located in less agriculturally valued areas, such as	• Community and Stakeholder Engagement • Health and Community Well-being	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities	C	Small	High	**Moderate**	• **Technical Mitigation / Management Measures** proposed within each technical assessment should be implemented. • **Construction Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Operational Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System**	Small	Medium	**Minor**
			O	Medium	High	**Major**		Medium	Medium	**Moderate**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
the 'swamp lands' south of Bunyip, or within established industrial or already-disturbed locations. • A related concern raised by some stakeholders relates to the perceived inconsistency between the development restrictions applying to local landholders under Green Wedge controls, including limits on subdivision and additional dwellings, and the scale of infrastructure proposed within the same landscape. This was described as a matter of fairness affecting confidence in the planning framework, however, rather than a concern regarding the Project's direct land use effects • Stakeholders also raised practical concerns regarding the co-existence of the Project with existing agricultural activities, including potential risks relating to biosecurity, land management, and environmental impacts. Notwithstanding these concerns, some stakeholders acknowledged that the Project is not located on high-quality agricultural land, while others contested this characterisation, describing the surrounding land as productive and well maintained. • An Agricultural Assessment was undertaken by Pinion Advisory (2026) which identified that the Project Area comprises moderately productive agricultural land used for dairy and grazing activities and is not identified as strategic or high-value irrigated agricultural land at a regional or State level. Additionally, the assessment concluded that agricultural production would be able to continue on the balance of the land, the Project will not restrict access to farm infrastructure or water supplies, and that potential land use conflicts with surrounding rural land uses were within acceptable limits subject to the implementation of recommended management measures. • Some stakeholders sought clarity regarding the extent of land expected to return to agricultural use at the end of the Project's operating life, noting that associated electricity network infrastructure may remain in place permanently. Confidence that							to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders.			

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
rehabilitation obligations will be delivered, including in the event of a change in ownership, was identified as relevant to how stakeholders perceive the reversibility of land use change. • Nevertheless, perceptions, combined with anticipated changes to the rural landscape, contribute to concerns that renewable energy developments may negatively affect land values or reduce the marketability of rural properties. Some stakeholders reported recent valuations and council rate notices reflecting reduced assessed values, and one property was reported as having been withdrawn from sale. Stakeholders did not assert that these outcomes were attributable to the Project, but identified them as heightening concern regarding future saleability and buyer confidence. • Some stakeholders questioned the applicability of property-value evidence cited in RES Project information, specifically a 2022 market report referenced by the Clean Energy Council recording median price growth of 35–51% across six New South Wales and Victorian local government areas containing major renewable projects. Stakeholders queried whether LGA wide statistics relating predominantly to wind and solar development are directly applicable to properties immediately neighbouring a utility-scale BESS. • Current literature analysing the effect of renewable energy developments on property values provides three key findings (Brinkley, et al, 2019; Abashidze, et al., 2022): ◦ **Mixed outcomes:** The effect of renewable energy developments on property values suggests mixed outcomes (either positive/increased value or negative/decreased value) for properties based on their underlying land use. ◦ **Landscape change:** There is a mixed view as to whether landscape changes that may influence or impact potential buyers outweigh the positive effects of increased economic activity and benefit sharing that									

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
result from renewable energy developments. ◦ **Agricultural productivity**: Land values for agricultural properties are closely linked to productivity rather than aesthetics, with higher productivity enhancing land valuation due to increased economic returns. • Potential environmental impacts associated with the Project (e.g. noise, visual amenity) are being assessed separately through the Development Application process and will be subject to appropriate mitigation and management measures. • While the direct effects of the Project on surrounding land use are expected to be limited, the persistence of these perceptions is recognised. As such, targeted management and engagement measures will be important in addressing stakeholder concerns.										
Social Impact #9: Potential Impact on Social Amenity • Social amenity refers to the tangible and intangible aspects of the surrounds within which receptors live and undertake daily activities. Aspects of the Project that may affect social amenity include noise emissions, air emissions (e.g. dust), visual impact, and/ or impacts to the surrounding environment / biodiversity. • Changes to social amenity may impact on receptors' health and well-being (e.g. sleep disruption, stress, etc.). • Stakeholders consistently identified peace and quiet, privacy, open space and a dark night landscape as defining attributes of the Primary Social Study Area, with several indicating these qualities were the express reason they chose to live in the area. Amenity change is therefore experienced by some stakeholders as affecting the basis of their attachment to the locality rather than as an incidental effect. • Impact on social amenity was raised during community and stakeholder	• Health and Community Well-being	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities	C	Medium	High	**Major**	• **Technical Mitigation / Management Measures** proposed within each technical assessment should be implemented. • **Construction Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Operational Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders.	Small	Medium	**Minor**
			O	Medium	High	**Major**		Medium	Medium	**Moderate**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
engagement, with stakeholders identifying the following concerns: ◦ **Visual amenity:** Concern that the Project may be visually intrusive within a predominantly open and low-intensity landscape, with stakeholders highlighting potential impacts on views from surrounding properties and the broader rural vista, particularly for Immediate Neighbours. Comments relating to visual change were typically linked to perceptions of reduced attractiveness of the local area for residents and visitors. Some stakeholders residing in proximity to the Project Area, including on McConnell Road and elevated land south of the freeway, stated that they expect the Project to be visible from their properties. ◦ **Water quality and hydrological impacts (particularly Cannibal Creek):** concern regarding the protection of local waterways, particularly Cannibal Creek, which is recognised as an environmentally significant feature supporting biodiversity (e.g. platypus habitat). Stakeholders emphasised that no runoff, contaminants or stormwater discharge from the Project should impact waterways, and noted the downstream connectivity of local waterways to the Bunyip River and beyond. ◦ **Biodiversity and environmental amenity:** Concerns regarding potential impacts on local flora and fauna, including riparian vegetation and habitat areas associated with waterways and remnant vegetation. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of protecting biodiversity hotspots, avoiding disturbance to native species, and maintaining ecological linkages and habitat quality. Additionally, some stakeholders identified opportunities for revegetation and environmental enhancement, indicating that amenity outcomes could be influenced by project design. ◦ **Light, noise and operational amenity:** concerns raised regarding potential operational impacts on local amenity, including										

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
the noise from BESS infrastructure and the artificial lighting and associated light pollution (which may also include impacts on residents' activities, such as stargazing). Some stakeholders emphasised that the low background noise levels of the locality allow sound to carry over considerable distances, and raised specific concern regarding continuous tonal or low-frequency noise from cooling systems, inverters and transformers, as distinct from the intermittent sounds associated with normal rural activity. • A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment was prepared by Landform Architects (2026) to assess the potential visual impacts of the Project. The assessment determined that there are no non-associated / neighbouring dwellings that would experience direct visual impacts, and that no visual mitigation measures, such as landscape screening, are considered necessary to reduce off-site residential or public views. This conclusion differs from the expectations expressed by some nearby residents during engagement, and from stakeholder requests for landscape screening. Some stakeholders also expressed scepticism that proposed planting would provide effective screening, noting that vegetation requires many years to mature. • A Flood Modelling Assessment was undertaken by Water Technology (Water Technology, 2026). The assessment indicates that most of the indicative Development Footprint is either flood-free or subject only to shallow sheet flow during flood events. Regardless, BNCP has committed to mitigating potential surface water impacts through detailed design informed by a post-development flood impact assessment to be completed prior to construction. Some stakeholders reported local observations of flooding and seasonally waterlogged conditions within the surrounding landscape, and requested that these observations be reconciled with modelling assumptions.									

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
• ERM (2026b) undertook an Ecological Assessment which identified that while the Project Area is largely agricultural and highly modified, it sits adjacent to ecological features that may support important biodiversity values. As such, ERM (2026b) concluded that the Project could proceed with minimal environmental risk, provided that established buffers, avoidance strategies, and vegetation management requirements are maintained. Additionally, a 200 m construction buffer from habitat around Cannibal Creek has been committed to, and was included within the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* Referral for the Project. Some stakeholders identified additional species they observe within the broader landscape, and raised concern regarding effects on wildlife movement, fencing and habitat connectivity beyond the Project Area. • ERM (2026c) completed a Noise Impact Assessment for the Project. The Noise Impact Assessment concluded that compliance with Noise Protocol limits for identified Noise Sensitive Areas can be achieved during day, evening and night periods, and as such, no specific noise mitigation measures are required. Regardless, ERM (2026c) proposed that the Project select quieter equipment in order to minimise any risks to human health and the environment. Notwithstanding the assessed compliance, some stakeholders indicated that predicted compliance with numerical limits would not, of itself, resolve their concern regarding the perceptibility and character of continuous industrial noise in a quiet rural setting. • It is anticipated that the Construction Phase will have a short-term environmental impact that may alter social amenity for residents within the Primary Social Study Area, such as emissions (i.e. dust, noise), and visual impacts of construction occurring. • There is the potential for cumulative impact to occur with the Wimpole Battery located adjacent to the										

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
Project Area. A concerted effort between RES and AMPYR will be necessary to minimise impacts to the Primary Social Study Area if construction timeframes overlap.										
Social Impact #10: Potential Impact on Community Health and Safety Concerns • Community health and safety have the potential to be impacted as a result of both construction and operational activities, including increased traffic movements and Project components causing or contributing to a fire. • There is the potential for injuries, or in the worst-case scenario, death to occur as a result of this impact. • Perceived impacts may also occur, causing stress and other mental health issues to receptors This is directly relevant given the community's direct experience of the 2019 Bunyip Complex fires. • Some stakeholders have provided feedback regarding potential health and safety impacts that may be experienced by community members as a result of the Project. ***Construction and Operational Activities*** • In general, construction and operational activities may result in health and safety impacts if not properly managed and can stem from the use of heavy machinery and/or poor site management practices. • During the Operation Phase, the impact may arise if the facility is not appropriately managed (e.g. interaction or tampering with infrastructure). • A suite of management measures will be implemented to minimise health and safety impacts, including the establishment of perimeter fencing, and adherence with Commonwealth and State legislation relating to health and safety. These management plans are to be reviewed regularly and adhere to the conditions of the Planning Permit, if granted.	• Health and Community Well-being	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Local Community Groups • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries • Emergency Services	C	Large	Medium	**Major**	• **Technical Mitigation / Management Measures** proposed within each technical assessment should be implemented. • **Construction Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Operational Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Traffic Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or feedback from stakeholders.	Medium	Medium	**Moderate**
			O	Large	High	**Major**		Medium	Medium	**Moderate**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
Increased Traffic Movements • Project-related traffic, such as transport of construction materials and components, and movement of workers will increase vehicle volumes on the road network. The increased traffic may: ◦ Cause or contribute to congestions or delays/interruptions for other road users, causing frustration to receptors; and/or contribute to stress and reduced wellbeing. ◦ Accelerate damage to roads, causing unsafe driving conditions that may increase the likelihood of accidents occurring. • The Traffic Impact Assessment (Amber Organisation Pty Ltd, 2026) calculates that the Project is expected to generate up to 44 vehicle movements in each of the morning and evening peak periods, and 118 vehicle movements per day during construction, excluding occasional over-size over-mass vehicle movements. Based on these vehicle movements, the Traffic Impact Assessment has determined that the existing road network is able to accommodate the traffic generated by the development during construction and operation. • Additionally, the Traffic Impact Assessment (Amber Organisation Pty Ltd, 2026) also found that if the proposed site access intersection on the Princes Highway is designed in accordance with the relevant requirements, the intersection will be able to accommodate Project traffic in a safe manner. • Stakeholders raised concerns in relation to traffic and road safety along the Princes Highway, particularly the ability to merge onto the highway or cross the highway to travel from Bunyip North to Bunyip during periods of peak traffic. Stakeholders specifically identified the Tonimbuk Road and highway intersection as presenting existing safety concerns, referencing prior accident history at that location. • Some stakeholders noted that while the Construction Phase of the Project will contribute to this issue, it is primarily the result of increased development and population growth										

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
within the region, with most traffic associated with commuters to/from Melbourne or Warragul, supplemented by traffic accessing nearby attractions (e.g. Gumbuya World). • Some stakeholders also raised concern regarding the suitability of local rural roads, including Tonimbuk Road, for sustained heavy vehicle movements, noting existing use by agricultural vehicles, livestock transport and horse floats. Requests were made for cumulative traffic effects to be considered alongside the proposed Bunyip North Granite Quarry, with community references to substantial daily truck movements associated with the quarry development. ***Project Components Causing or Contributing to a Fire*** • Some stakeholders have voiced concerns about the Project's potential to cause or contribute to a fire/bushfire, particularly given that the Project Area is prone to bushfires. The impacts of the 2019 Bunyip State Park bushfire, which resulted in the loss of 29 houses and 67 outbuildings (Wahlquist, C. 2019), was identified as a traumatic event for the local community. • Fire was the most frequently and consistently raised concern across targeted SIA engagement. Stakeholders described direct personal experience of the 2019 fires, including property and livestock losses, evacuation under emergency direction, and ongoing effects on wellbeing. Several stakeholders stated that these experiences continue to shape perceptions of risk, and described heightened anxiety in the lead-up to each fire season. • Additionally, some community members, as well as the MERC, highlighted the need for robust mitigation measures aligned with CFA guidelines to ensure community safety. • Stakeholders raised a distinction between fire originating at the facility and the performance of the facility during an external bushfire, indicating a perception that assessment to date has focused on the former. Related										

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
concerns included thermal runaway and propagation between enclosures, reignition and prolonged incident duration, and the generation of smoke and gases. Some stakeholders also raised the containment of contaminated firefighting water, particularly where an incident coincides with heavy rainfall or saturated ground. • Emergency access and evacuation were raised consistently by residents of Bunyip North and Tonimbuk, who identified Tonimbuk Road as effectively the only practical evacuation route from the locality. Concerns related to the simultaneous movement of evacuating residents, livestock transport, project or quarry traffic and inbound emergency vehicles on a constrained road network under smoke, road closure or collision conditions, and to the evacuation of elderly residents and those relocating animals. • Some stakeholders raised questions regarding local emergency response capability, including the specialised training, breathing apparatus and equipment available to responding brigades for a lithium-ion battery incident, and the availability of sufficient water during a concurrent major bushfire. • Some stakeholders also raised concern regarding the temperature exposure that the proposed infrastructure is designed to withstand relative to bushfire conditions, referencing a figure of approximately 200°C recalled from a RES community meeting against estimated bushfire temperatures substantially in excess of this. • Some stakeholders noted that properties in the Primary Social Study Area rely on rainwater tanks, and raised concern regarding potential effects on roof catchments and household water supply in the event of smoke, ash, or particulate fallout post-fire. • The Risk Management Plan (including Fire Safety Study) (Fire Risk Consultants Pty Ltd, 2026) assessed both bushfire and operational fire risk associated with the Project. The assessment concluded that:										

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
◦ The Project would meet the requirements of the CFA's Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (v4, 2023); ◦ Fire risk can be managed to an acceptable level through a combination of design, infrastructure and operational controls; and ◦ The Project is not expected to increase bushfire risk to nearby land or communities. • Notwithstanding these findings, stakeholder concern regarding fire risk remained substantially unchanged through engagement. Some stakeholders indicated that final battery supplier selection remains outstanding and requested that CFA review the final supplier-specific fire safety package prior to construction. • There is the potential for cumulative impact to occur with the AMPYR Wimpole Battery located adjacent to the Project Area, as well as the Bunyip North Granite Quarry. A concerted effort between RES, AMPYR, and Heidelberg Materials Pty Ltd will be necessary to minimise impacts to the Primary Social Study Area if construction timeframes overlap.										
Social Impact #11: Potential Impact on Cultural Heritage • Altered landscapes can impact both tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage, as well as historical heritage. • Physical changes can impact on sacred and archaeological sites, while disrupting traditional practices and cultural connections. Impacts have the potential to cause emotional stress and anguish to First Nations Peoples, as well as result in a mutual shared loss of values and/or artefacts of importance across the wider community. • ERM (2026) identified that there are no World, National, or local heritage places in the Project Area. • The nearest mapped area of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity is associated with Cannibal Creek, to the north,	• Health and Community Well-being	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities	C	Large	Medium	**Major**	• **Construction Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Operational Environmental Management Plan** to be developed and implemented. • **Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy** to be updated and implemented for the life of the Project. • **Complaints Management System** to be implemented throughout the life of the Project to receive concerns and/or	Large	Low	**Moderate**
			O	Small	Low	**Negligible**		Negligible	Low	**Negligible**

Impact Description	Key Matter	Receptors	Project Phase	Pre-Mitigation / Enhancement			Management Measures	Post-Mitigation/Enhancement		
				Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance		Magnitude	Likelihood	Significance
approximately 10 m from the Project Area, and 188 m from the proposed Development Footprint at its closest point (ERM, 2026). • A Cultural Heritage Management Plan is currently being prepared by BNCP in consultation with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.							feedback from stakeholders. • **Engagement with First Nations Stakeholders** should continue, to understand potential impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage. • **Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation)** finalisation and implementation for the life of the Project.			

9. SOCIAL IMPACT MONITORING FRAMEWORK

This section provides an overview of the recommended monitoring framework for the social impact management measures that will be put in place during the Construction and Operation Phases of the Project.

For the post-mitigation impact significance levels to be achieved, as outlined in **Section 8**, the social impact management measures will need to be monitored in accordance with the Monitoring Framework Plan outlined in **Table 9-1**.

The objectives of monitoring are to:

- Verify the predicted impacts and identify any other impacts that may arise;
- Verify that management measures are being implemented as planned;
- Assess the effectiveness of the management measures; and
- Provide data for any necessary regulatory reporting to the Victorian Government or other internal compliance reporting.

Accordingly, **Table 9-1** identifies the following:

- **Social Impact Descriptor:** The social impact identified and assessed in **Section 8**;
- **SIA Guideline Key Matter:** The relevant key matter/s from the SIA Guideline associated with the management measure;
- **Management Objective:** The overarching goal is to minimise the negative social impacts associated with the Project and enhance the positive impacts/benefits. As such, specific objectives corresponding to each impact have been provided. These can be used to determine whether the management measures have been effectively implemented;
- **Management Measures:** The management measures identified as relevant to each social impact identified in **Section 8**;
- **Responsibility:** Assigns the relevant person and/or entity to take charge of the proposed management to achieve the management objective;
- **Timing for Implementation:** Specifies the timeframe (aligns with the Project phases) that the management measure will be implemented;
- **Monitoring Activities:** The monitoring activities proposed will ensure that relevant data is collected (e.g. the performance indicators) to ensure the effectiveness of the management measures;
- **Performance Indicator(s):** The indicators selected to provide a mechanism to determine whether the goals have been met; and
- **Monitoring Frequency:** Outlines the period for data collection.

TABLE 9-1 MONITORING FRAMEWORK PLAN

Social Impact Descriptor	SIA Guideline Key Matter	Impact Mitigation and Benefit Enhancement				Monitoring Protocol		
		Objective	Management Measure	Responsibility	Timing for Implementation	Monitoring Activities	Performance Indicator(s)	Monitoring Frequency
#1: Creation of Direct Employment Opportunities	• Workforce Management	Maximise local employment	Local Employment Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Record number of apprenticeships • Ensure Construction Contractor/s (and subcontractors) report on local employment • Record the number of training programs undertaken	• Percentage of people from the Cardinia LGA employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs offered • Number of apprenticeships offered	Monthly during construction, then as required
			First Nations Employment Commitments	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record employment of First Nations peoples (including those from the Traditional Owner group) • Record First Nations retention rate	• Percentage of First Nations peoples employed by the Project (including contractors) • Percentage of Traditional Owner group members employed by the Project (including contractors)	Monthly during construction, then as required
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Workforce Upskilling and Training Opportunities	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities with stakeholders about workforce upskilling/training opportunities	• Number of engagements about workforce upskilling/training opportunities	Quarterly
			Creating Community Awareness	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to commencement of construction • Prior to commencement of operation	• Record engagement activities with stakeholders about employment opportunities	• Number of engagement activities about the Project's employment opportunities	Monthly during construction, then as required
#2: Increased Economic Benefits	• Local Business and Industry Procurement	Maximise local procurement	Local Content Initiatives	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number and value of contracts with local and regional businesses	• Percentage of people from the Cardinia LGA employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs offered • Number of apprenticeships offered	Monthly during construction, then as required
			First Nations Employment Commitments	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record employment of First Nations peoples • Record First Nations retention rate	• Percentage of First Nations peoples employed by the Project (including contractors)	Monthly during construction, then as required

Social Impact Descriptor	SIA Guideline Key Matter	Impact Mitigation and Benefit Enhancement				Monitoring Protocol		
		Objective	Management Measure	Responsibility	Timing for Implementation	Monitoring Activities	Performance Indicator(s)	Monitoring Frequency
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			"Job Readiness" Assistance	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Ensure Construction Contractor/s report on local employment • Record engagement activities with stakeholders about the Project's procurement opportunities	• Number of engagements about the Project's procurement opportunities	Monthly during construction, then as required
#3: Reduced Community Cohesion	• Community and Stakeholder Engagement • Workforce Management • Health and Community Well-being	Minimise community complaints	Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
			Worker Code of Conduct	• Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record acknowledgement of Worker Code of Conduct • Record number of breaches of Worker Code of Conduct	• Percentage of workers who have read the Worker Code of Conduct • Number of non-compliances with Worker Code of Conduct	Monthly for the first three months, then quarterly
			Project Inductions	• Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record number of workers who have completed Project inductions	• Percentage of workers who have completed Project inductions	Monthly for the first three months, then quarterly
#4: Reduced Trust and Confidence in Community Engagement	• Community and Stakeholder Engagement • Health and Community Well-being	Maximise community engagement	Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BPNC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
#5: Accommodation of the Non-Local Workforce	• Housing and Accommodation	Maximise local employment and minimise potential impacts on accommodation availability	Local Employment Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Record number of apprenticeships • Ensure Construction Contractor/s (and subcontractors) report on local employment	• Percentage of people from the Cardinia LGA employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs offered • Number of apprenticeships offered	Monthly during construction, then as required

Social Impact Descriptor	SIA Guideline Key Matter	Impact Mitigation and Benefit Enhancement				Monitoring Protocol		
		Objective	Management Measure	Responsibility	Timing for Implementation	Monitoring Activities	Performance Indicator(s)	Monitoring Frequency
						• Record the number of training programs undertaken		
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Engagement with Accommodation Providers	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities with accommodation providers about the availability of accommodation	• Number of engagements about the accommodation availability	Monthly during construction
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
#6: Potential for Skills Shortages	• Workforce Management • Local Business and Industry Procurement	Maximise local employment and minimise potential impacts on community access to services	Local Employment Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Record number of apprenticeships • Ensure Construction Contractor/s (and subcontractors) report on local employment • Record the number of training programs undertaken	• Percentage of people from the Cardinia LGA employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs offered • Number of apprenticeships offered	Monthly during construction, then as required
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
#7: Potential Impact on Social Infrastructure and Services	• Workforce Management • Health and Community Well-being	Maximise local employment and minimise potential impacts on community access to social infrastructure and services	Local Employment Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record local employment • Record employee retention rate • Record number of apprenticeships • Ensure Construction Contractor/s (and subcontractors) report on local employment	• Percentage of people from the Cardinia LGA employed by the Project (including contractors) • Number of training programs offered • Number of apprenticeships offered	Monthly during construction, then as required

Social Impact Descriptor	SIA Guideline Key Matter	Impact Mitigation and Benefit Enhancement				Monitoring Protocol		
		Objective	Management Measure	Responsibility	Timing for Implementation	Monitoring Activities	Performance Indicator(s)	Monitoring Frequency
						• Record the number of training programs undertaken		
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
			Coordination with Other Proponents	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
#8: Perceived Land Use Incompatibility and Impact to Land Values	• Health and Community Well-being	Minimise impacts to amenity and rural character	Technical Mitigation and/or Management Measures	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number of non-compliances of mitigation and/or management measures adopted from technical assessments	• Number of non-compliances with the mitigation and/or management measures adopted from technical assessments	Monthly during construction, and quarterly during operation
			Construction Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record number of breaches of the Construction Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Construction Environmental Management Plan	Monthly during construction
			Operational Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number of breaches of the Operational Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Operational Environmental Management Plan	Ongoing
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
#9: Potential Impact on Social Amenity	• Health and Community Well-being	Minimise potential environmental and amenity impacts (i.e. noise, visual,	Technical Mitigation and/or Management Measures	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number of non-compliances of mitigation and/or management measures adopted from technical assessments	• Number of non-compliances with the mitigation and/or management measures adopted from technical assessments	Monthly during construction, and quarterly during operation

Social Impact Descriptor	SIA Guideline Key Matter	Impact Mitigation and Benefit Enhancement				Monitoring Protocol		
		Objective	Management Measure	Responsibility	Timing for Implementation	Monitoring Activities	Performance Indicator(s)	Monitoring Frequency
		dust, etc.) on receptors	Construction Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record number of breaches of the Construction Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Construction Environmental Management Plan	Monthly during construction
			Operational Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number of breaches of the Operational Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Operational Environmental Management Plan	Ongoing
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
#10: Potential Impact on Community Health and Safety Concerns	• Health and Community Well-being	Minimise community health and safety incidents	Technical Mitigation and/or Management Measures	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction • Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number of non-compliances of mitigation and/or management measures adopted from technical assessments	• Number of non-compliances with the mitigation and/or management measures adopted from technical assessments	Monthly during construction, and quarterly during operation
			Construction Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record number of breaches of the Construction Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Construction Environmental Management Plan	Monthly during construction
			Operational Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number of breaches of the Operational Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Operational Environmental Management Plan	Ongoing
			Traffic Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record number of breaches of the Traffic Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Traffic Management Plan	Monthly during construction
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing

Social Impact Descriptor	SIA Guideline Key Matter	Impact Mitigation and Benefit Enhancement				Monitoring Protocol		
		Objective	Management Measure	Responsibility	Timing for Implementation	Monitoring Activities	Performance Indicator(s)	Monitoring Frequency
#11: Potential Impact on Cultural Heritage	• Health and Community Well-being	Minimise the chance to damage, disturb or interfere with Historic or Aboriginal cultural heritage and local culture	Construction Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record number of breaches of the Construction Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Construction Environmental Management Plan	Monthly during construction
			Operational Environmental Management Plan	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of operation	• Record number of breaches of the Operational Environmental Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Operational Environmental Management Plan	Ongoing
			Community, Landholder and Traditional Owners Engagement Strategy	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities undertaken and outcomes	• Number of stakeholder engagement activities • Number of stakeholders engaged	Ongoing
			Complaints Management System	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record queries and complaints received from stakeholders	• Number of complaints • Percentage of complaints satisfactorily resolved in accordance with the Complaints Management System	Ongoing
			Engagement with First Nations Stakeholders	• BNPC	• Prior to the commencement of construction	• Record engagement activities with First Nations Stakeholders	• Number of engagements with First Nations Stakeholders	Monthly during construction
			Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation)	• BNPC • Construction Contractor/s	• Prior to the commencement of ground disturbance construction	• Record number of breaches of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan	• Number of non-compliances with the Cultural Heritage Management Plan	Ongoing

10. SOCIAL VALUE AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT INITIATIVES

Under the Social Value Guideline, developers/proponents are required to develop and deliver initiatives that contribute to long-term social value creation and economic benefits for local communities that are impacted by a renewable energy project.

Initiatives are to be devised based on an understanding of the needs and priorities of the communities wherein the Project is proposed. These social value and economic benefit initiatives are separate to the social impact management measures identified in **Section 8** and the Monitoring Framework Plan (refer to **Table 9-1**).

RES has committed to the development and implementation of a Community Benefits Fund / Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan which will include a range of social programs, initiatives, and/or measures that will have a positive long-term impact for the communities within the Primary Social Study Area (i.e. Bunyip North, Bunyip, and Garfield). Dependent upon the nature of the initiative/s, benefits may also look to be extended to the communities within the Secondary Social Study Area (i.e. Drouin, Warragul, Tynong, Nar Nar Goon, and Pakenham).

The Community Benefits Fund / Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan will provide an ongoing financial contribution to the local community throughout operations of $150 for every megawatt-hour of installed nameplate capacity[4] each year. For the Project, this could provide $7.2 million over 20 years of operation.

The Community Benefits Fund / Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan will be designed to deliver meaningful, locally relevant benefits and may include a combination of financial and non-financial measures, where appropriate. The final form of the Community Benefits Fund / Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan will be informed by:

- The scale and nature of project impacts as reflected in the SIA;
- Feedback received through ongoing stakeholder engagement; and
- Opportunities to support local priorities and long-term outcomes.

Consistent with Social Value Guideline, benefit sharing will focus on delivering value to the host community in a way that is transparent, proportionate and responsive to local circumstances, rather than being limited to a fixed or prescriptive funding model. This approach ensures that community benefit considerations remain integrated into project decision-making and that outcomes continue to align with the intent of the Victorian Access Regime and associated guidelines over time.

An initial suite of social value and economic benefit initiatives that warrant further investigation by RES for inclusion in the Community Benefits Fund / Social Value and Economic Benefits Plan are outlined in **Table 10-1**.

[4] Nameplate capacity is the maximum storage capacity of the BESS.

TABLE 10-1 SOCIAL VALUE AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT INITIATIVES

Initiative and/or Measure Description	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Priorities and Strategies	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Implementation
Community Benefit Fund Sponsorship of local community groups and organisations represents a key opportunity for BNPC to deliver community benefit within the Social Study Area. Stakeholder feedback indicates that support should be directed toward both established organisations and locally driven initiatives that contribute to community cohesion, environmental stewardship, and local amenity. Relevant groups identified through consultation with stakeholders include sporting clubs, environmental and sustainability groups, schools, and community-led organisations such as the Bunyip Men's Shed, Bunyip Football Club, Bunyip Community House, Bunyip Landcare Group, and BRAG, which play an active role in community life and depend on volunteer effort and external funding arrangements. Stakeholders identified interest in a range of community events and sponsorship models that provide both immediate and longer-term benefits. Suggested opportunities include environmental initiatives (e.g. community planting days and creek restoration activities), support for local sustainability programs, sponsorship of community events, and funding for upgrades to local recreational assets and public spaces. Stakeholders suggested a number of organisations, events, and programs that would benefit from grants/sponsorship including but not limited to: • Environmental and land management initiatives, including Landcare programs and revegetation or biodiversity projects associated with Cannibal Creek and surrounding areas; • Sustainability and education programs delivered by groups such as BRAG (e.g. waste reduction, energy efficiency, youth engagement and sustainable building initiatives); • Community-led projects and infrastructure, including playgrounds, walking tracks, parks, and recreation reserve improvements; • Equipment and resources for localised emergency services such as the Bunyip CFA Fire Station; and • Local schools (e.g. Bunyip Primary School) and community organisations (e.g. Bunyip Connect) in order to support community events, facilities and wellbeing programs. It is also noted that stakeholders expressed interest in ensuring that contributions from a Community Benefit Fund are distributed transparently and equitably across the Social Study Area, rather than concentrated within a single group or initiative. Establishing appropriate governance mechanisms was identified as a potential approach to support fair allocation of funding. Throughout the life of the Project, sponsorship should evolve to support long-term community outcomes. This includes prioritising initiatives that build local capacity,	• Community Benefit Funds are a recognised mechanism for creating shared value • Responds to locally identified needs and priorities • Supports a mix of short-term and long-term benefits • Focuses on community capacity and resilience • Delivers multi-dimensional social value (social, environmental, economic) • Promotes equitable and transparent benefit distribution • Encourages collaboration and partnerships • Targets benefits proportionate to community context and impacts • Supports long-term sustainability and reduced reliance on funding	• Vibrant Places – infrastructure that fosters belonging and connection • Thriving Communities - improvements to community facilities and services • Adaptive Environments – caring for the natural environment	• Addresses issues associated with social cohesion • Support for hosting / providing community events • Assistance with infrastructure improvements	• Host Landholder • Immediate Neighbours • Surrounding Community Members	• Local Council • Local Community Groups • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries	Ongoing for the life of the Project

Initiative and/or Measure Description	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Priorities and Strategies	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Implementation
reduce reliance on ongoing external funding, and provide long-term community value, such as investment in infrastructure, skills development, and environmental assets.						
Neighbour Shared Benefit Scheme BNPC will implement a Neighbour Shared Benefit Scheme to provide direct, ongoing financial benefits to eligible neighbouring landholders. The scheme will establish a transparent framework for annual payments based on clearly defined eligibility criteria, which are to be developed by BNPC. While the eligibility criteria are yet to be finalised, it is recommended that the level of financial benefit reflects a property's proximity to the Project, with neighbours located closest to the Project receiving the highest level of benefit where they elect to participate in the scheme. Eligible Immediate Neighbours should receive annual benefit payments commencing during the Construction Phase and continuing throughout the operational life of the Project.	• Delivers direct benefits to impacted neighbours • Benefits are proportionate to project impacts through a proximity-based framework • Provides ongoing long-term value across construction and operations • Establishes transparent eligibility and benefit arrangements • Builds trust and social acceptance amongst neighbouring landholders • Reflects recognised Victorian best practice for neighbourhood benefit sharing	• Thriving Communities – supporting the wellbeing, resilience and financial security • Prosperous Economies – delivering ongoing economic benefits • Responsible Leaders – providing a transparent and equitable framework for sharing Project benefits	• Aligns with interest in neighbour-specific benefit mechanisms • Addresses the perception of limited direct local economic benefits • Assists in alleviating the concern that current perceived benefits are not commensurate with scale of Project impact	• Immediate Neighbours	• Immediate Neighbours	Ongoing for the life of the Project

Support for New and/or Upgrades to Community Infrastructure within the Primary Social Study Area
Stakeholder feedback indicates an opportunity for BNPC to support the delivery of new and upgraded community infrastructure within the Primary Social Study Area. This includes provision of grants or funding to improve existing facilities and deliver new infrastructure that responds to population growth, changing demographics, and identified gaps in local service provision.
Key areas of need identified through consultation include improvements to community spaces, recreational facilities, and local amenities. Stakeholders highlighted a lack of suitable public spaces for community use, including parks, playgrounds, walking tracks, and multi-use facilities that cater to a growing number of young families and residents.
There is potential for BNPC to partner with local organisations and community groups (e.g. Bunyip Connect, sporting clubs, etc.) to support the delivery of infrastructure upgrades. Examples raised by stakeholders include:
• **Playground and family-focused infrastructure upgrades:**
  ◦ Additional or upgraded playground equipment, shade structures, seating, and barbeque facilities to better accommodate young families.
  ◦ Expansion of recently delivered community-led projects (e.g. playground upgrades near the BMX track in Bunyip).
	• Aligns with infrastructure as a core social value initiative
	• Responds to community-identified needs and priorities
	• Supports both immediate and long-term outcomes
	• Builds community capacity and resilience
	• Addresses impacts and changing local conditions
	• Promotes multi-benefit outcomes (social, environmental, economic)
	• Encourages collaboration and co-delivery
	• Supports coordinated and place-based delivery
	• Promotes equitable and needs-based funding
	• Reflects scalable and proportionate benefit influence
		• Vibrant Places – infrastructure that fosters belonging and connection
		• Thriving Communities - improvements to community facilities and services
		• Adaptive Environments – caring for the natural environment
			• Addresses issues associated with social cohesion
			• Support for hosting / providing community events
			• Assistance with infrastructure improvements
			• Environmental management
				• Immediate Neighbours
				• Surrounding Community Members
				• First Nations Communities
					• Local Council
					• Local Community Groups
					• Business and Industry Organisations
					• Local Businesses and Industries
						Ongoing for the life of the Project

Initiative and/or Measure Description	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Priorities and Strategies	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Implementation

• **Development or improvement of walking tracks and passive recreation infrastructure:**
  ◦ Development or extension of local walking tracks and shared-use paths.
  ◦ Improvements to maintenance, accessibility, and connectivity of existing paths, which were identified as underutilised due to current condition.
• **Enhancements to sporting and recreation facilities:**
  ◦ Upgrades to local recreation reserves and sporting facilities (e.g. lighting, amenities, multipurpose spaces).
  ◦ Support for initiatives such as sustainability upgrades at recreation reserves (e.g. renewable energy installations or efficiency improvements).
• **Improvements to community hubs and meeting spaces:**
  ◦ Upgrades to neighbourhood houses and community centres (e.g. Moy-Yan Neighbourhood House) to support delivery of programs and events.
  ◦ Support development of fit-for-purpose spaces for community gatherings, workshops, and local services, reflecting stakeholder concerns regarding limited access to suitable community venue.
• **Furthered development of environmental and nature-based infrastructure:**
  ◦ Revegetation works, planting programs, and habitat restoration along Cannibal Creek.
  ◦ Improvements to environmental assets such as the Bunyip Sanctuary, including boardwalks, signage, and visitor infrastructure to support community use and ecological outcomes.
Recent community-led initiatives (such as the playground upgrades at the Bunyip Recreation Reserve) demonstrate the capacity of local organisations to deliver projects where funding and support are available.
In delivering infrastructure-related support, stakeholders emphasised the importance of coordinating with Local Community Groups and Cardinia Shire Council and ensuring equitable access to funding across the Social Study Area. A needs-based approach to funding allocation was identified as preferable to fixed or uniform grant structures.						

Initiative and/or Measure Description	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Priorities and Strategies	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Implementation
Upskilling/Worker Transition Support for the retraining and/or upskilling of workers within the Primary Social Study Area to transition to occupations likely to be required by future renewable energy developments in the region (including within Renewable Energy Zones). This could include contributions to TAFE Gippsland, STEM Zone, or Community College Gippsland courses, or alternatively, support provided through other mechanisms open to residents within the Primary Social Study Area.	• Aligns with workforce development as a core benefit area • Supports local industry participation and skills pipelines • Responds to future workforce needs of the energy transition • Contributes to long-term economic and social value • Supports community capacity building • Aligns with collaboration with education and training providers • Targets benefits to impacted/local communities • Supports inclusive and accessible opportunities	• Prosperous Economies – encouraging urban and rural business and local employment • Creating opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education • Technical and vocational education and training programs	• Vocational training pathway is the dominant educational pathway • Diversifying the regional economy • Workforce capacity development • Increase employment opportunities for local community members	• Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries	• State Government • Business and Industry Organisations • Educational Organisations	Prior to and during construction, and ongoing for the life of the Project
Small Businesses to Participate in Renewable Energy Procurement Processes Opportunities exist to provide targeted support to small and locally based businesses, including assistance to navigate procurement requirements, improve tender readiness, and build capability to meet project standards. This may include providing guidance materials, information sessions, or access to support services that assist businesses with administrative requirements and tender processes. Stakeholders also highlighted the broader value of strengthening local supply chains and retaining economic benefits within the region. Supporting local procurement was identified as a means of contributing to local economic development, particularly where opportunities align with existing agricultural, service, and small business sectors within the Social Study Area. There is potential for RES to collaborate with relevant local Business and Industry Organisations (e.g. West Gippsland Progress Association, Warragal Business Group Inc., etc.) and Local Council to promote procurement opportunities and facilitate engagement with the local business community.	• Aligns with local industry participation expectations • Builds local business capability and capacity • Supports supply chain development and diversification • Improves access to procurement opportunities • Contributes to local economic development • Encourages collaboration with local stakeholders • Supports inclusive and accessible participation • Aligns with workforce and supplier development pathways • Targets benefits proportionate to local context	• Prosperous Economies – encouraging urban and rural business and local employment	• Providing an economic stimulus for local businesses • Assistance for local businesses to become “tender ready”.	• First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries	• Business and Industry Organisations • Local Council	Prior to and during construction
Educational Partnerships Stakeholder feedback identifies opportunities for BNPC to partner with local education providers and community organisations to support educational, youth, and skills-based initiatives within the Social Study Area. While stakeholders did not nominate specific tertiary institutions, there was clear support for initiatives that build local capacity, improve access to education, and support young people and families within the community. As such, partnership opportunities could be	• Aligns with community capacity building objectives • Supports workforce development pathways • Responds to community-identified priorities • Delivers long-term social value outcomes	• Prosperous Economies – encouraging urban and rural business and local employment • Creating opportunities for innovation and the knowledge economy within existing and emerging industries, research and education	• Vocational training pathway is the dominant educational pathway • Diversifying the regional economy • Workforce capacity development	• Surrounding Community Members • First Nations Communities • Business and Industry Organisations • Local Businesses and Industries	• State Government • Business and Industry Organisations • Educational Organisations	Prior to and during construction, and ongoing for the life of the Project

Initiative and/or Measure Description	Shared Value Guidelines Alignment	Community Priorities and Strategies	Community Needs, Concerns and/or Aspirations	Targeted Beneficiaries	Potential Partners	Timeframe for Implementation
established to support educational and vocational programs delivered in collaboration with tertiary education providers such as TAFE Gippsland, STEM Zone, or Community College Gippsland. Opportunities also exist to support education and training programs aligned with community needs, including environmental stewardship, sustainability, and trades or vocational pathways. Stakeholders highlighted interest in programs focused on sustainability education, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and youth engagement, particularly those led by local groups such as BRAG, the Cannibal Creek Catchment Landcare Group, and the Mount Cannibal and District Preservation Group Inc. There is also potential to collaborate on initiatives that integrate learning with local environmental assets, including Cannibal Creek and surrounding areas. Stakeholders identified opportunities for partnerships in activities such as revegetation programs, biodiversity enhancement, and environmental education, which could provide practical learning opportunities. School-based partnerships represent a further opportunity to support local educational outcomes. These may include collaboration with local primary schools (e.g. Bunyip Primary School) to support initiatives such as playground upgrades, educational programs, and community events that benefit young families. More broadly, stakeholders highlighted the value of partnering with established local organisations to deliver education and capacity-building initiatives. This includes supporting well-governed, community-based organisations to design and implement programs that respond to local needs, enhance community participation, and build long-term capability across the Social Study Area.	• Promotes collaboration with education and community organisations • Supports locally tailored, place-based initiatives • Delivers multi-dimensional social and environmental value • Strengthens community participation and inclusion • Supports coordinated delivery through established organisations	• Technical and vocational education and training programs				

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APPENDIX A SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS IN THE SOCIAL STUDY AREA

TABLE A-1 SHORT-TERM ACCOMMODATION IN THE SOCIAL STUDY AREA

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description/Approximate Capacity
Bunyip	1	**Provider:** ProLodge	**Capacity:** 14
		Accommodation Type: Holiday Home	**Address:** 190 Abeckett Rd, Bunyip VIC 3815
Sub-total	**1**	**Sub-total capacity**	**14**
Drouin	1	**Provider:** The Robin Hood Inn	**Capacity:** 20
		Accommodation Type: Hotel	**Address:** 655 Princes Way, Drouin West, VIC 3818
	2	**Provider:** Drouin Motel	**Capacity:** 30
		Accommodation Type: Motel	**Address:** 275 Princes Highway, Drouin, VIC 3818
	3	**Provider:** The Royal Hotel Drouin	**Capacity:** 20
		Accommodation Type: Hotel	**Address:** 2/4 Main S Rd, Drouin VIC 3818
	4	**Provider:** El-Paso Caravan Park	**Capacity:** 55
		Accommodation Type: Caravan Park	**Address**: 262-270 Princes Way, Drouin VIC 3818
	5	**Provider:** Drouin Caravan Park	**Capacity:** 40
		Accommodation Type: Caravan Park	**Address**: 284-290 Princes Way, Drouin VIC 3818
Sub-total	**5**	**Sub-total capacity**	**165**
Pakenham	1	**Provider:** Mercure Pakenham	**Capacity:** 150
		Accommodation Type: Hotel	**Address:** 77 Racecourse Rd, Pakenham VIC 3810
	2	**Provider:** Pakenham Caravan Park	**Capacity:** 50
		Accommodation Type: Caravan Park	**Address:** 105 Racecourse Rd, Pakenham VIC 3810
	3	**Provider:** The Valley Motel	**Capacity:** 50
		Accommodation Type: Motel	**Address:** 14 Toomuc Valley Rd, Pakenham VIC 3810
	4	**Provider:** Serenity Home 11 by Hiverooms	**Capacity:** 8
		Accommodation Type: Holiday home	**Address:** Tremont St, Pakenham VIC 3810

Location	#	Short-term Accommodation Provider	Description/Approximate Capacity
	5	**Provider:** Orchard Cottage	**Capacity:** 4
		Accommodation Type: Guesthouse	**Address:** 485 Toomuc Valley Rd, Pakenham VIC 3810
Sub-total	**5**	**Sub-total capacity**	**262**
Warragul	1	**Provider:** Comfort Inn & Suites	**Capacity:** 50
		Accommodation type: Hotel	**Address:** 1845 Princes Way, Warragul VIC 3820
	2	**Provider:** Edinburgh Motor Inn	**Capacity:** 40
		Accommodation type: Motel	**Address:** 61 Princes Way, Warragul VIC 3820
	3	**Provider:** Warragul Gardens Holiday Park	**Capacity:** 175
		Accommodation type: Caravan Park	**Address:** Warragul Gardens Caravan Park, 44 Burke St, Warragul VIC
	4	**Provider:** Mercure Warragul	**Capacity:** 120
		Accommodation type: Hotel	**Address:** 23 Mason St, Warragul VIC 3820
	5	**Provider:** Warragul Views Motor Inn	**Capacity:** 50
		Accommodation type: Motel	**Address:** 50 Rulemount Rd, Warragul VIC 3820
Sub-total	**5**	**Sub-total capacity**	**435**
Total	**19**	**Capacity**	**871**

APPENDIX B EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE SOCIAL STUDY AREA

TABLE B-1 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE SOCIAL STUDY AREA

Location	Educational Facility	Type	Address
Bunyip	Sparrow Early Learning Centre	Pre-Primary	65 Hope Street, Bunyip VIC 3815
	Bunyip Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	29 Princess Street, Bunyip VIC 3815
	Columba Catholic Primary School	Primary	28 Hope Street, Bunyip VIC 3815
	Bunyip Primary School	Primary	1290 Nar Nar Good – Longwarry Road, Bunyip VIC 3815
Garfield	Garfield Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	29 Garfield North Road, Garfield VIC 3814
	Garfield Primary School	Primary	84 Railway Avenue, Garfield VIC 3814
Longwarry	Longwarry Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	4 Ford Place, Longwarry VIC 3816
	Longwarry Primary School	Primary	5 McCrae Street, Longwarry VIC 3816
Tynong	St. Thomas Aquinas College	Primary and Secondary	1 Tynong Road, Tynong VIC 3813
Nar Nar Goon	Nar Nar Goon Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	13 Main Street, Nar Nar Goon VIC 3812
	Nar Nar Goon Primary School	Primary	27/35 Spencer Street, Nar Nar Goon VIC 3812
	St James Catholic School	Primary	60 Nar Nar Goon Road, Nar Nar Goon VIC 3812
Pakenham	Pakenham Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	27 Main Street, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Aspire Early Education and Kindergarten Pakenham	Pre-Primary	75 Station Street, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Little Beacons Learning Centre	Pre-Primary	Unit 30.34 Toomuc Valley Road, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Pakenham Primary School	Primary	50 Atlantic Drive, Pakenham VIC 3810
	John Henry Primary School	Primary	141 Henry Road, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Kuyim Primary School	Primary	10 Kenneth Road, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Pakenham Springs Primary School	Primary	5 Livingstone Blvd, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Pakenham Consolidated School	Primary	2 Rundell Way, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Pakenham Hills Primary School	Primary	15 Kennedy Road, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Pakenham Lakeside Primary School	Primary	23 Shearwater Drive, Pakenham VIC 3810
	St. Patrick’s Primary School	Primary	136 Princes Highway, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Pakenham Secondary College	Secondary	1020 Princes Highway, Pakenham VIC 3810

Location	Educational Facility	Type	Address
	Eden brook Secondary College	Secondary	133 Henry Road, Pakenham VIC 3810
	ECG College – Pakenham Campus	Secondary	126 Princes Highway, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Lakeside College	Primary-Secondary	2 Portobello Road, Pakenham VIC 3810
	Beaconhills College – Pakenham Campus	Primary – Secondary	Toomuc Valley Rd, Pakenham VIC 3810
Drouin	Sparrow Early Learning Drouin	Pre-Primary	214 Princes Way, Drouin, VIC 3818
	Drouin Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	Adam Court, Drouin VIC 3818
	Goodstart Early Learning Drouin	Pre-Primary	2 Lindman Street, Drouin VIC 3818
	Drouin Oak Street Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	6 Oak Street, Drouin VIC 3818
	Drouin Primary Kindergarten	Pre-Primary	15 School Road, Drouin VIC 3818
	St Ita's Primary School Drouin	Primary	50 Victoria Street, Drouin VIC 3818
	Drouin Primary School	Primary	153-161 Princes Way, Drouin VIC 3818
	Drouin South Primary School	Primary	3061 Westernport Road, Drouin South VIC 3818
	Drouin Secondary College	Secondary	52 Main South Road, Drouin VIC 3818
	STEM Zone	Tertiary	2/81 Main South Road, Drouin VIC 3818
Warragul	Warragul Community Preschool	Pre Primary	1 Mouritz St, Warragul VIC 3820
	Grace Berglund Kindergarten Warragul	Pre Primary	12 George St, Warragul VIC 3820
	St Andrew's Uniting Kindergarten Warragul	Pre Primary	210 Sutton St, Warragul VIC 3820
	Woodlands Long Day Care and Kindergarten Warragul	Pre Primary	3 Princess St, Warragul VIC 3820
	Warragul Primary School	Primary	44 Bowen St, Warragul VIC 3820
	Warragul North Primary School	Primary	5 Odowds Rd, Warragul VIC 3820
	St Angela of the Cross Primary School	Primary	181 Mills Rd, Warragul VIC 3820
	Saint Joseph's Primary School	Primary	167 Burke St, Warragul VIC 3820
	Warragul Regional College	Secondary	55 Burke St, Warragul VIC 3820

Location	Educational Facility	Type	Address
	Marist-Sion College	Secondary	165 Burke St, Warragul VIC 3820
	St Paul's Anglican Grammar School	Secondary	150 Bowen St, Warragul VIC 3820
	Warragul & District Specialist School	Primary – Secondary	55 Burke St, Warragul VIC 3820
	TAFE Gippsland - Warragul Campus	Tertiary	116/118 Queen St, Warragul VIC 3820
	Community College Gippsland - Warragul Campus	Tertiary	71 Korumburra-Warragul Rd, Warragul VIC 3820

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