SQUADRON ENERGY

# Spicers Creek Wind Farm

## Independent Planning Commission Public Meeting

29 August 2024

# Acknowledgement of Country

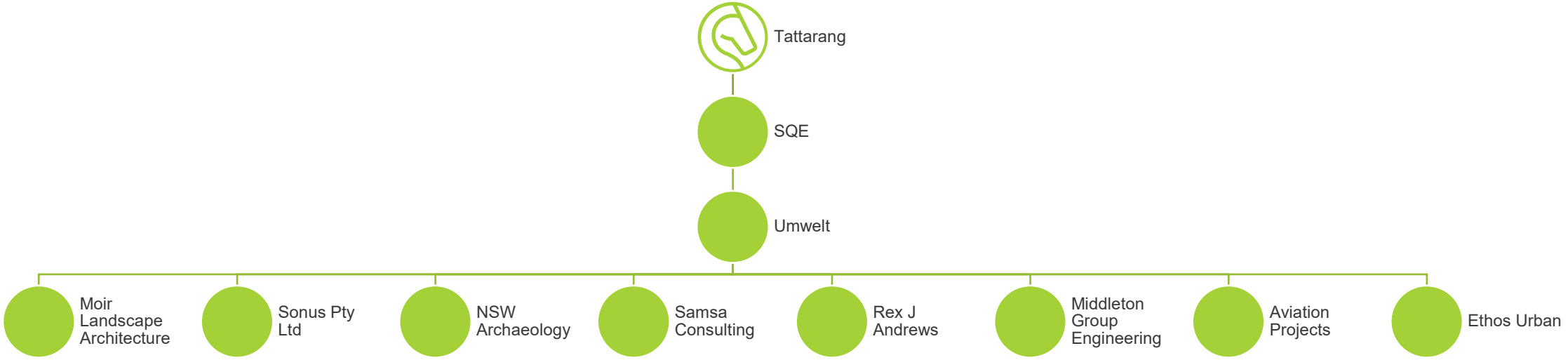
Squadron Energy would like to acknowledge the Wiradjuri people, the Traditional Custodians of the Land we are meeting on today.

We recognise and respect their continued connection to land, waters and community.

We would like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present and extend that respect to others who are present here today.

# Our team

- Spicers Creek Wind Farm Pty Ltd is the proponent for the **State Significant Development Application SSD-41134610** and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Squadron Energy, part of the Tattarang group of companies.
- **Tattarang** is the private investment group of Andrew and Nicola Forrest – it is one of Australia's largest private investment groups.
- The Spicers Creek Wind Farm team has worked with Umwelt as our lead environmental and social consultant, along with a team of specialists, to prepare the SSD application.



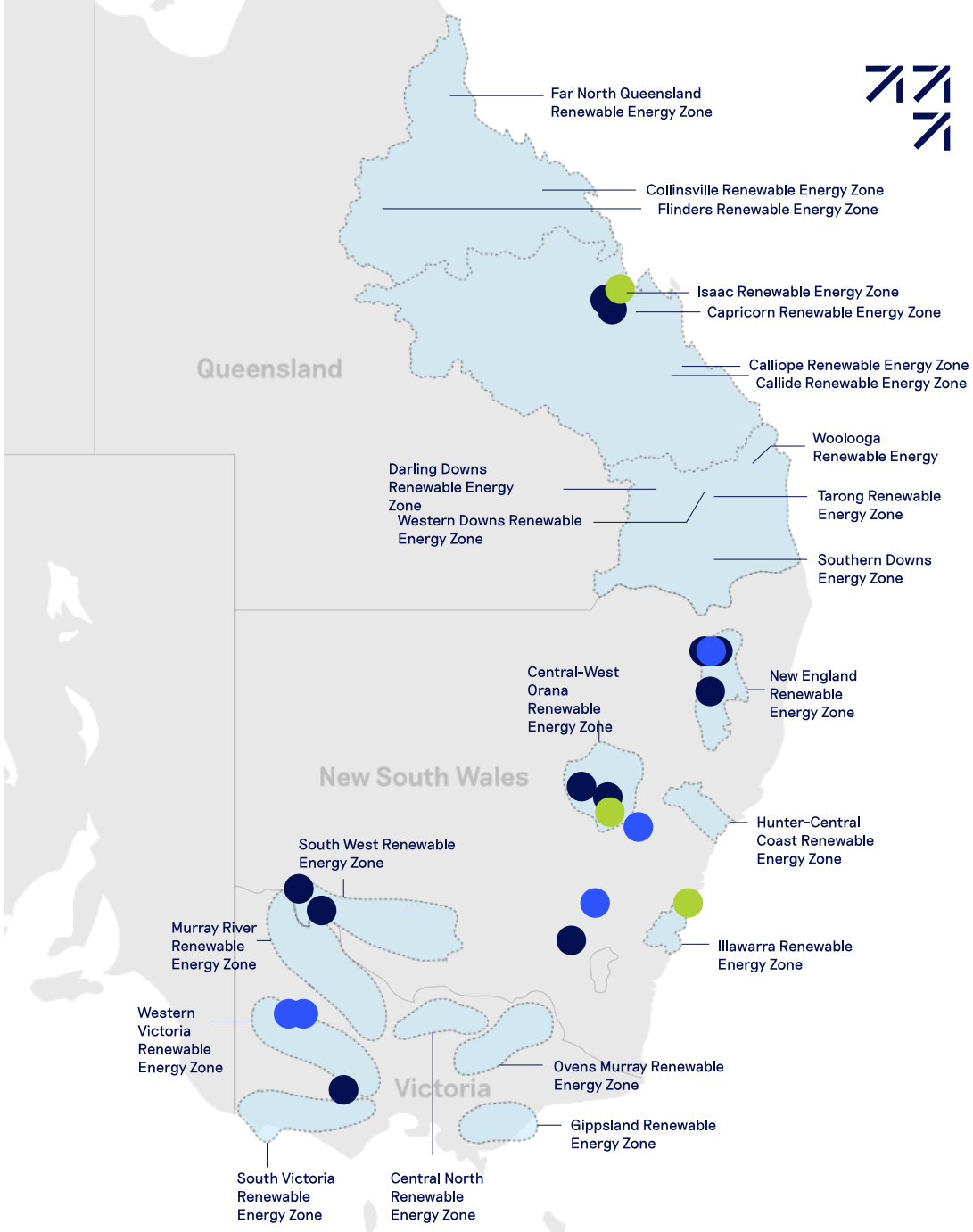
# About Squadron Energy

Squadron Energy is Australia's leading renewable energy company that develops, operates and owns renewable energy assets in Australia.

We are 100% Australian owned and have 1.1 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy assets in operation and 900 MW under construction.

With proven experience and expertise across the project lifecycle, we work with local communities and our customers to lead the transition to Australia's clean energy future.

- **In development**
- **Under construction**
- **Operating**



# Overview of Application

## Spicers Creek Wind Farm

# Project design

- The Project has been designed through a comprehensive process that incorporates community and stakeholder feedback, and the findings of environmental and social studies to maximise positive social, economic and environmental outcomes while minimising adverse impacts.
- Squadron Energy has undertaken extensive engagement with residents in the area and other stakeholders throughout the Project planning and assessment process.
- The Project has been designed using an iterative approach incorporating community and other stakeholder feedback from the ongoing engagement undertaken Squadron Energy since 2019, with the design of the Project changing as a result of this feedback.

# Design approach

The Project location has:

Land within the CWO REZ suitable for a viable commercial-scale wind farm project, with a low density of housing and in close proximity to the associated proposed high voltage transmission network

High quality wind resource

Overall positive sentiment within the local community regarding renewable energy, including interest from landowners in being involved in the wind farm

Access to major transport networks, including the Golden Highway, to the north of the Project Site

Compatible land use zoning

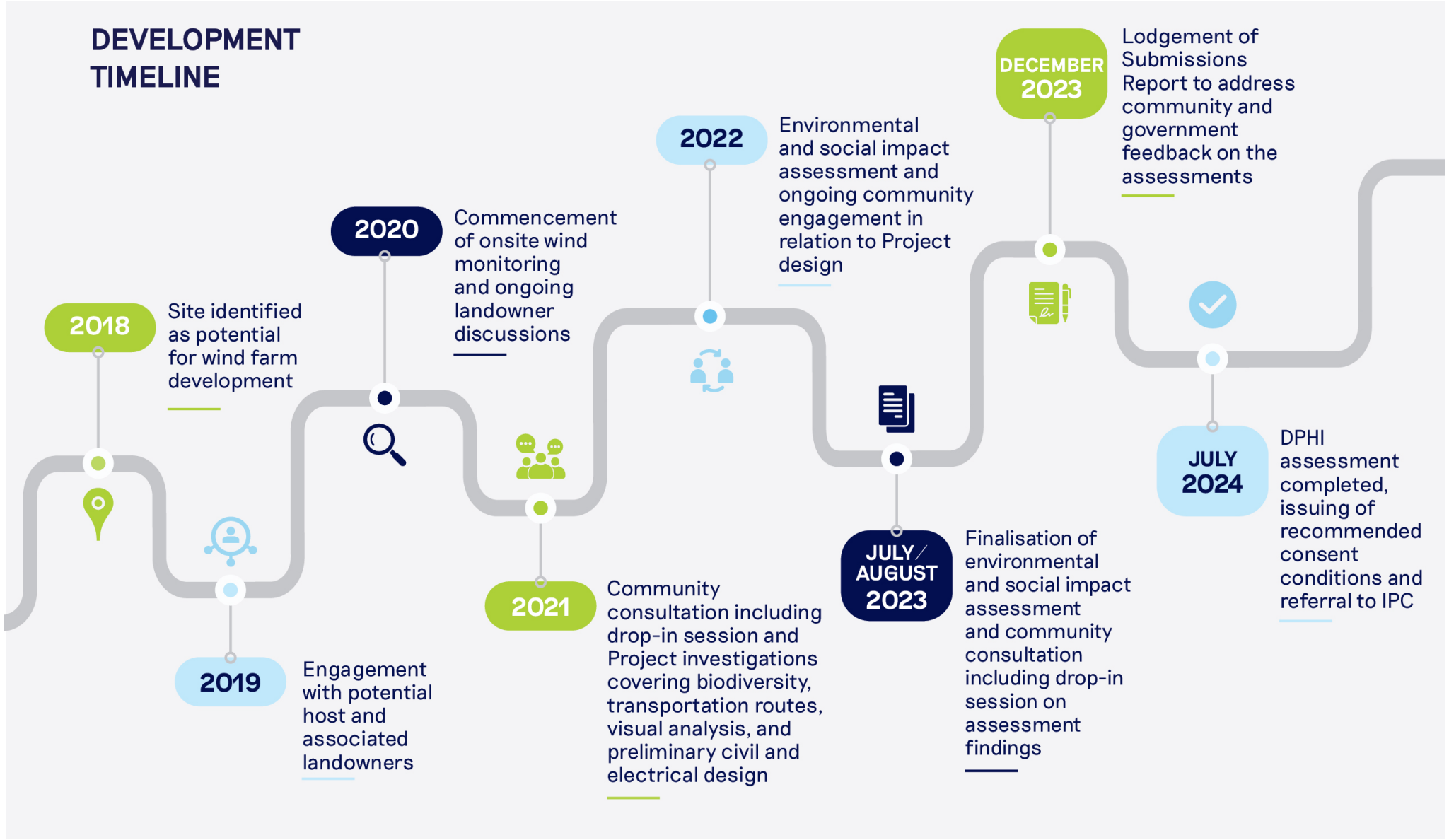
Environmental constraints that can be managed with appropriate mitigation and management

Landscape suitable for minimising the risk of substantial soil erosion during earthworks

Throughout the Project design, the avoid-minimise-mitigate-offset design hierarchy was adopted, incorporating the following specific principles:

- minimise vegetation clearing
- minimise land disturbance area
- protect functional riparian zones
- use previously disturbed land
- protect cultural heritage values
- protect agricultural values
- minimise direct and indirect impacts
- adopt a flexible approach to design.

# Timeline

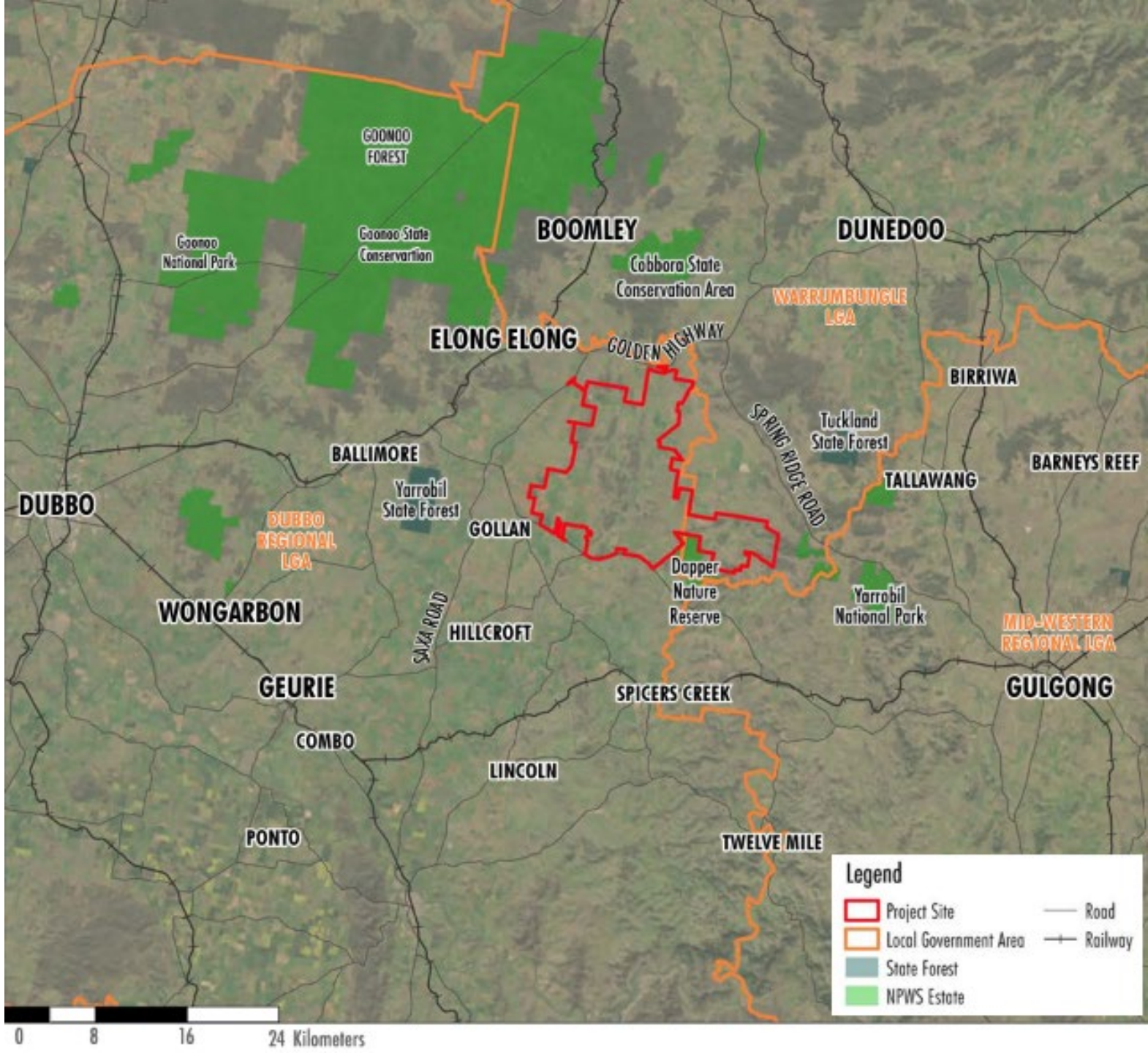

DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE
2018
Site identified as potential for wind farm development
2019
Engagement with potential host and associated landowners
2020
Commencement of onsite wind monitoring and ongoing landowner discussions
2021
Community consultation including drop-in session and Project investigations covering biodiversity, transportation routes, visual analysis, and preliminary civil and electrical design
2022
Environmental and social impact assessment and ongoing community engagement in relation to Project design
JULY / AUGUST 2023
Finalisation of environmental and social impact assessment and community consultation including drop-in session on assessment findings
DECEMBER 2023
Lodgement of Submissions Report to address community and government feedback on the assessments
JULY 2024
DPHI assessment completed, issuing of recommended consent conditions and referral to IPC

# Project overview

## Location

The Project is located approximately 25km north-west of Gulgong and 35km north-east of Wellington within the Dubbo Regional and Warrumbungle Shire Council areas.

It is also located within the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWO REZ).



# Project overview

## Spicers Creek Wind Farm

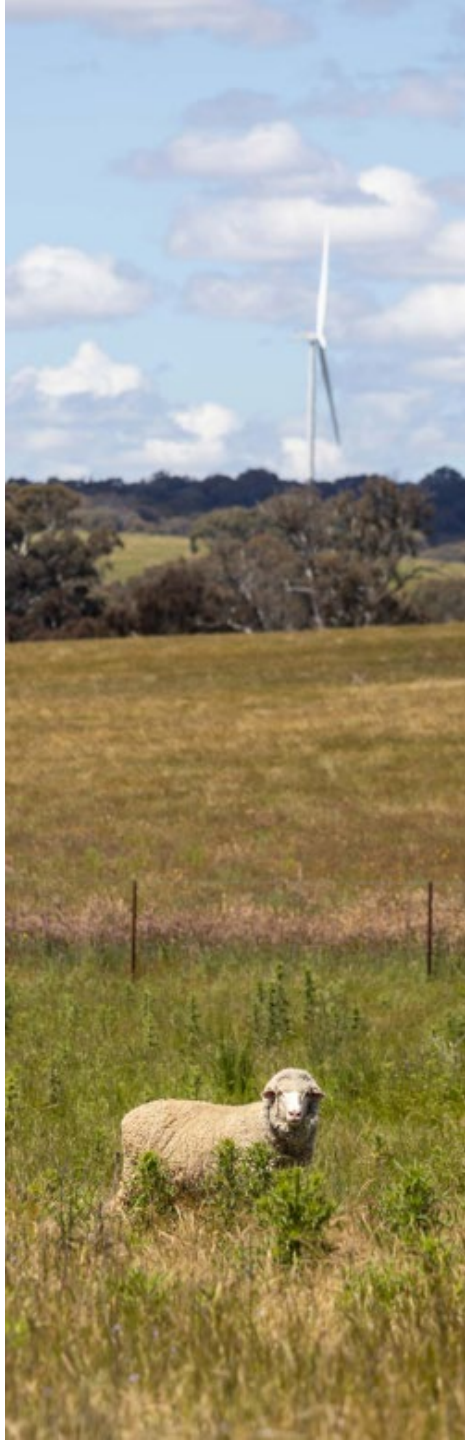
$2 billion capital investment value

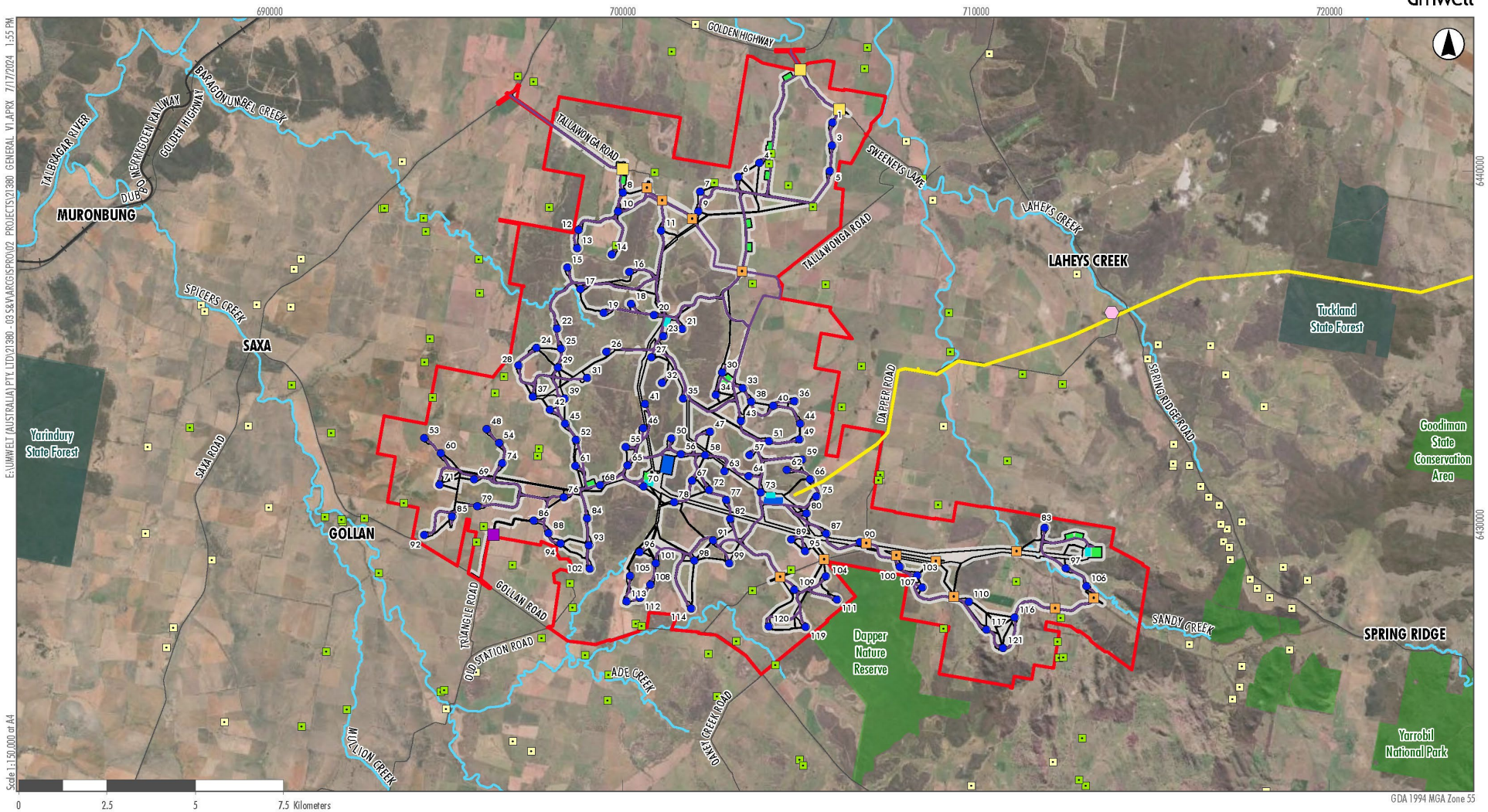
Clean energy to power around 12% of all NSW homes.

**700MW**
Expected capacity

**397k**
Expected homes powered

- Up to 117 wind turbines
- Battery storage
- Temporary construction facilities, including on-site concrete batching plants during the construction phase
- Local road network upgrades
- Roads and tracks
- Electrical infrastructure to connect the Project to the electricity grid, including underground cables and overhead powerlines, substations and transmission lines
- Buildings used to operate the wind farm






# Development Corridor and Development Footprint

Image Source: ESRI Basemap Data source: NSW DFSI (2021), CWP Renewables (2022)

# Project benefits


SQE and Dubbo Regional Council plan to deliver water security to the region through a public-private partnership to build a new advanced wastewater treatment facility at Dubbo Sewage Treatment Plant.
SQE has committed $3.6m to fund the facility. This is the entire project budget.

# Project benefits

The Project will:

- Contribute significant capital investment within the CWO region
- Generate jobs during the construction and operational phases
- Provide benefits to local services throughout the life of the Project
- Deliver additional income to host and other associated landowners
- Provide benefits to the local community through the implementation of the proposed Community Benefit Sharing Program and planning agreements with local Councils
- Include payment of network infrastructure access fees to EnergyCo for the CWO REZ which will include a component to fund community benefit and employment programs

# Community benefit sharing

## Ensuring water security with Dubbo Regional Council

## Squadron Link

## Economic Development


## Landowner Payments


## Permanent local presence

## Building skills

# Community benefit sharing

## Planning Agreements


## Accommodation


## Community Sponsorships


# Key issues

> **The Department notes that the assessment of a wind farm of this size in this location has been comparatively straightforward to other wind farm projects given the project has been sited and designed to minimise potential impacts, including locating turbines and associated infrastructure within areas of relatively low biodiversity values, and reducing the amenity impacts to the landscape and surrounding non-associated receivers by implementing minimum setback distances from turbines in accordance with the NSW government guidelines.**

NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Spicers Creek Wind Farm State Significant Development Assessment Report (SSD 41134610), July 2024.


# Biodiversity

Squadron Energy considers that significant effort has been made to minimise biodiversity impacts as far as practicable through Project design. This is supported by DPHI’s assessment report. This has been achieved by:

- Locating infrastructure within areas of non-native vegetation
- Adopting buffers for important habitat features
- Avoiding threatened species habitat, including pine donkey orchid habitat and substantial areas of high-quality Box Gum Woodland.

SQE commits to:

- Biodiversity Offset Strategy to ensure that the credit liability of the Project can be acquitted in accordance with the requirements of the Biodiversity Offset Scheme and the Bilateral Agreement and prior to the commencement of construction
- Comprehensive biodiversity management plan
- Implementation of a Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan.

# Visual

Visual impacts were a key issue for stakeholders, including the size and scale of the wind farm, views from residences and cumulative impacts.

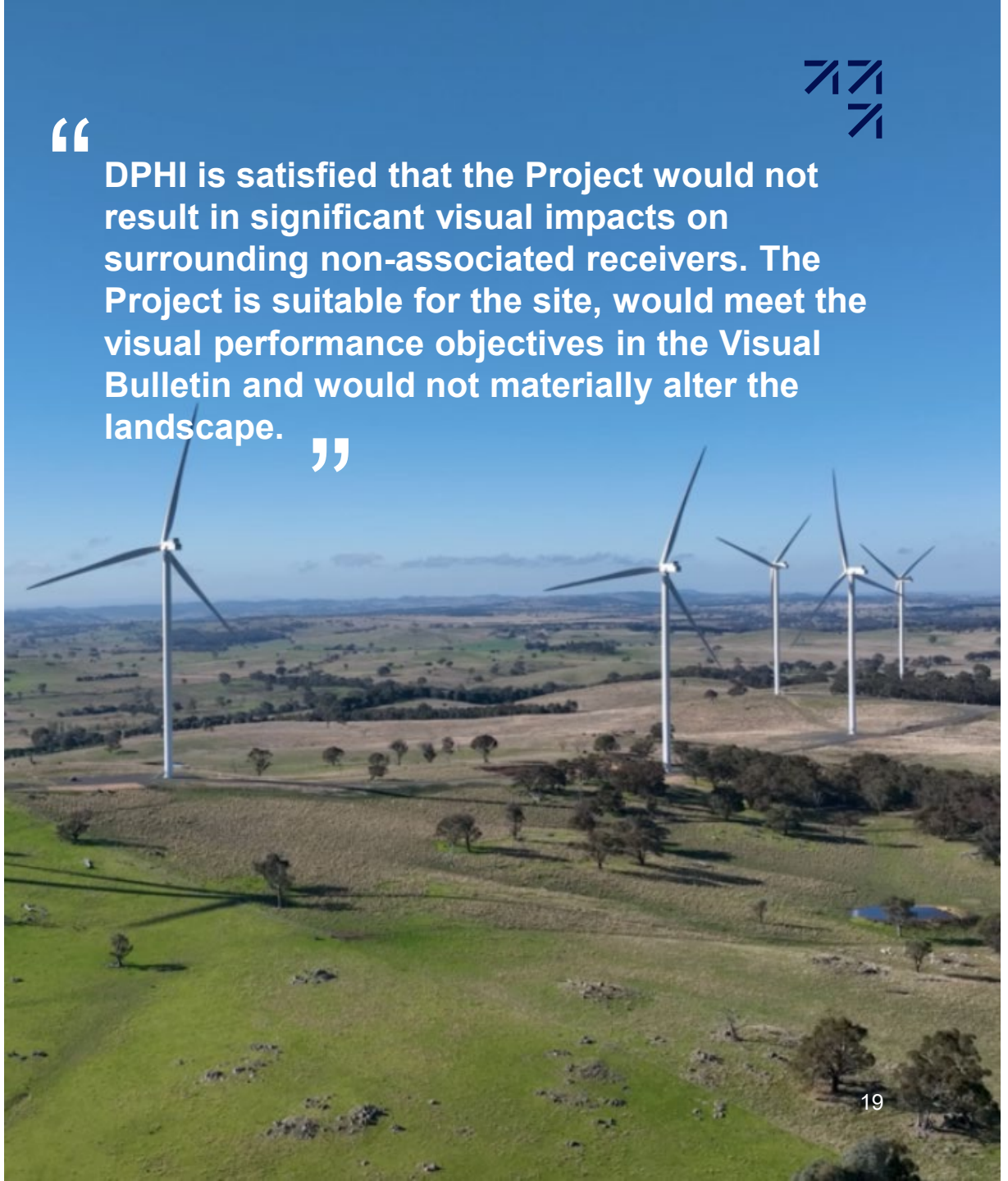
The Visual Bulletin identifies zones to examine the visual impacts of a wind farm on dwellings or key public viewpoints. For the Project these were:

- 3,400 m (black line or Zone 1) from each turbine
- 5,000 m (blue line or Zone 2) from each turbine.

**Visual impact assessment – non-associated dwellings**

| Potential level of impact | Zone 1 | Zone 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Nil/negligible | 0 | 5 |
| Low | 1 | 10 |
| Moderate | 2 | 3 |

Mitigation measures (including screen planting) have been recommended for the non-associated dwellings with a potential **moderate** visual impact rating. These measures are expected to significantly reduce the level of visual impact once established.



**“DPHI is satisfied that the Project would not result in significant visual impacts on surrounding non-associated receivers. The Project is suitable for the site, would meet the visual performance objectives in the Visual Bulletin and would not materially alter the landscape.”**

# Traffic and transport

The main increase in Project-related traffic would occur during the 40 month construction period with a peak period of approximately 6 months.

For most of the construction period, maximum daily traffic generation would be 236 light vehicle trips and up to 248 heavy vehicle trips per day, inclusive of 10 OSOM vehicle trips and 80 bus (return) trips.

Traffic Impact Assessment concluded that even during peak construction activities, all affected public roads would maintain satisfactory levels of service and adequately absorb construction-generated traffic.

SQE commits to:

- road and intersection upgrades to facilitate construction vehicle access to site (identified by the local community as a key benefit of the Project)
- engagement of a licensed and experienced transport contractor with experience in transporting similar wind farm component loads
- provision of bus services for construction staff
- Drivers' code of conduct

# Other matters

### Noise and vibration

- Most construction activities are unlikely to result in significant noise impacts.
- Noise from road upgrade works and construction traffic, which occur closer to non-associated dwellings, may require the implementation of noise management measures at some residences for a short period of time.
- Operational noise levels from turbines and ancillary infrastructure will achieve noise criteria at all non-associated dwellings.

### Heritage

- Ten Aboriginal artefact sites within the Development Corridor will require a combination of avoidance and/or salvage to protect heritage values, in line with a heritage management plan. Most were of low significance within a local context.
- No items of State or local historic heritage significance were recorded, however where heritage items occur within the Development Corridor they will be managed in accordance with the heritage management plan.

### Water, soils and land

- No impact on local or broader catchment flood regimes.
- Surface water impacts will be managed through erosion and sediment controls and materials storage and handling requirements.
- The long-term use of the land for agriculture purposes will not be compromised during the operation of the Project.

### Bushfire

- Squadron Energy will establish Asset Protection Zones around key infrastructure.
- Squadron has also committed to a number of mitigation measures and strategies, including the provision of on-site water supply for firefighting purposes, and appropriate bush fire emergency and evacuation plans.

# Other matters

## Social


## Economics

The Project would contribute to:

**840**
**Construction jobs**

**47**
**Operational jobs**

**$46.9m**
**New spending into regional economy**

**$410m**
**Net economic stimulus**

> **“The Department considers the project would not result in any significant impacts on the local community or the environment, is located on a suitable site for a wind farm development, and any residual impacts can be managed through the implementation of the recommended conditions.”**

NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Spicers Creek Wind Farm State Significant Development Assessment Report (SSD 41134610), July 2024.

# Conclusion

The Project is consistent with the principles of ESD and the objectives of the NSW Electricity Strategy and Infrastructure Road Map.

It will provide long-term strategic benefits to the State of NSW including:

- renewable energy supply to assist with fulfilling the current obligations under State and Commonwealth renewable energy targets
- providing for cleaner reliable electricity generation, assisting with meeting current load demand while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change
- providing regional investment in the NSW renewable energy sector
- making a positive contribution towards achieving the target of at least 3 GW of renewable energy generation from the CWO REZ.

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# Thank You

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