Chapter 17

Socio-economic

Acknowledgement of Country

Neoen Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land in which we live, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present. The Gunditjmara are the original custodians of the Country on which the Project is located and we acknowledge them as the original custodians. We are committed to Aboriginal engagement and reconciliation and aim to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, local communities and the councils along for the journey to strengthen relationships and enhance local community outcomes.

Disclaimer

17 Socio-economic

This chapter describes the potential socio-economic impacts and benefits associated with construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project, as well as the mitigation measures proposed to avoid, minimise and manage potential adverse impacts.

This chapter summarises the outcomes of the **Social Impact Assessment (SIA) (Appendix R)** and the **Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) (Appendix S).**

17.1 Overview

The *Guide to Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria* (DELWP, 2021) defines social impacts to include all issues associated with a renewable energy project that affect local and regional communities, both directly and indirectly, in a positive or negative way. Social impacts are considered to be changes that occur to communities (as a result of a project) to one or more of their quality and way of life, health, safety and wellbeing, livelihoods or economic prospects, access to cultural resources, community services, infrastructure or social values. The impacts can be perceptual or physical and can be felt by individuals, families, social groups, workplaces and other segments of the community. An economic impact is considered to be a financial effect that something, especially something new such as development of a wind farm, has on a situation, person or industry.

Through research and consultation with stakeholders and input-output economic modelling, potential socio-economic impacts from the Project have been identified, including:

- population change (influx and outflux)
- disruption to existing land uses (agricultural and forestry activities)
- altered access to short term accommodation, recreational areas, and local infrastructure and services
- visual and amenity impacts on the local area which may affect how people experience their surrounds and sense of place.

Some stakeholders also raised concerns about the perceived effect the Project could have on property values, as well as livelihoods of those with surrounding agricultural operations and the broader tourism industry. Perceived health and public safety concerns from operation of the Project were also raised by nearby residents and the broader community, largely associated with bushfire risk.

As outlined in **Chapter 4 *Project development***, the Project has undergone several iterations whereby clusters of turbines were removed or relocated following the identification of constraints and opportunities to avoid or minimise impacts. These changes were made to protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate. A 1 km buffer was applied to all turbines. Where dwellings were within 1 km, written agreements from landholders were obtained for the placement of turbines. The Project's transmission line has also been developed through an iterative design process with consideration of technical and commercial requirements in conjunction with environmental, heritage, and social values.

The Project is expected to have significant economic and social benefits at a local, regional, and state level from both construction and operation of the Project. The most significant social benefits associated with the Project include provision of training and upskilling for local people, and local employment and procurement opportunities. Depending on how the Project is constructed, in either a single stage or over two stages, up to a peak of 350 workers would be required to construct the Project. If a single stage construction program is assumed, an estimated 350 employees would be required, with close to 253 full-time workers required across the State during the two-year construction period, 52 of which are expected to be apprentices and trainees. There is strong and consistent evidence that the provision of apprenticeship and trainee opportunities during construction of a project would benefit the individuals involved by increasing their probability of employment and expected hourly weekly wage rate in subsequent years. Neoen Australia Pty Ltd (the Proponent) will also implement a Shared Benefits Strategy to ensure the benefits of the Project are proactively and purposefully shared with local communities.

Construction of the Project would help support businesses in the Glenelg Local Government Area (LGA) and across the State more broadly, with potential to generate direct, indirect and induced economic benefits of up to $164.8 million for the Glenelg LGA and up to $659.3 million for the State of Victoria (assuming 25 % employment from the study area). Operation of the Project has potential to generate up to $49.9 million for the Glenelg LGA, and up to $62.3 million for the State of Victoria.

17.2 EES evaluation objective

The specific environmental matters to be investigated and documented in the Project's EES are set out in the *Scoping Requirements for Kentbruck Green Power Hub Environment Effects Statement* (Scoping Requirements). The Scoping Requirements provide evaluation objectives that describe the desired outcomes to be achieved for each of the matters being addressed in this EES.

The following draft evaluation objective is relevant for the SIA and EIA:

- ***Land use and socioeconomic*** *– To avoid and minimise adverse effects on land use, social fabric of the community, local infrastructure, aviation safety and to neighbouring landowners during construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project.*

This chapter and the associated technical reports address the Project's specific social and economic matters in response to the Scoping Requirements.

17.3 Assessment methodology

Consideration of international best practice social impact assessment has been used to guide the approach adopted in the SIA, including:

- International Principles for Social Impact Assessment (Vanclay, International Principles for Social Impact Assessment, 2003).
- Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects (Vanclay, Esteves, Auchamp, & Franks, 2015).
- New South Wales (NSW) Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment (DPIE) Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects (2021) (NSW SIA Guideline).

The following approach was undertaken for the SIA and EIA:

- Established the study area from which to develop a social and economic baseline.
- Developed an understanding of the existing social settings and economic land uses through preparation of a social and economic baseline, by gathering knowledge from both primary and secondary data sources to form a basis from which social impacts can be predicted, monitored, and managed. Data sources included the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census as well as local, regional and State government plans and policies and local media.
- Consultation with key stakeholders and community members through meetings and interviews, community information sessions, feedback surveys and group feedback forums. Key stakeholders consulted include:
    - host landholders
    - neighbouring landholders
    - broader community residents
    - Local Government
    - Traditional Owners
    - local business and service providers
    - community and environmental groups
    - the Project's Community Advisory Committee (CAC).
- Identification and assessment of potential socio-economic impacts associated with construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project.
- Identification of potential opportunities for the Project to provide social and economic benefits for residents and businesses.
- Development of mitigation measures, including strategies to avoid, minimise or manage potential adverse social and economic impacts as well as strategies to ensure benefits are realised and enhanced.
- Assessment of the residual impacts and benefits with the implementation of mitigation measures.

Impact ranking in the SIA follows the regulatory requirements of the NSW SIA Guideline. It does this by considering both the magnitude of the potential social impact (minimal, minor, moderate, major and transformational) and the likelihood of the impact occurring (very unlikely, unlikely, possible, likely and almost certain). This ranking is then used to determine an overall evaluation of the social impact as 'low', 'medium', 'high' or 'very high'. **Table 17.1** provides a brief summary of each social impact ranking.

Table 17.1: Social impact ranking

Low	**Little noticeable change experienced by the community with a low likelihood of occurring**
Medium	Mild to noticeable change to something the community may value with a low to moderate likelihood of occurring
High	Noticeable to substantial change to something the community values of lasts for a significant amount of time with a moderate to higher likelihood of occurring
Very High	Substantial change, displacement or effect on the community with a higher likelihood of occurring

17.4 Existing conditions

This section provides an overview of the existing social and economic setting within and surrounding the Project Area, forming a basis from which socio-economic impacts from the Project can be identified, assessed and managed.

17.4.1 Study area

The study area for the SIA considered the 'area of social influence' for the Project. The area of social influence is defined as follows:

- The communities situated on land or those who have ties to the geographical area that the Project Area and any ancillary infrastructure is located on or traversed.
- Townships or population centres closest to the Project Area.
- Key suburbs or communities that would host transportation routes for the Project and/or from which Project workforces (construction and operations) may be sourced.
- The LGA of Glenelg which represents the broader locality of the Project Area.
- The broader community that may access or use natural or physical features in the Project Area (including areas in South Australia).

Each of the components in the area of social influence is described in **Table 17.2** and shown on **Figure 17.1** as informed by the ABS**.**

Table 17.2: Area of social influence

Geographic area	ABS area
Region	Great South Coast in Victoria
Local government areas	Glenelg LGA Mount Gambier LGA
Major centres	Portland Statistical Area 2 City of Mount Gambier
Victorian State Suburbs (SSCs)	• Portland West • Nelson • Mount Richmond • Gorae • Heathmere • Heywood • Drumborg • Cashmore • Gorae West • Cape Bridgewater
South Australian SSC	• Donovans • Wye • Caveton • Ob Flat

The study area for the EIA comprised the following three geographic catchments (see **Figure 17.1**):

- the State of Victoria
- the Great South Coast Region
- the Glenelg Shire LGA.

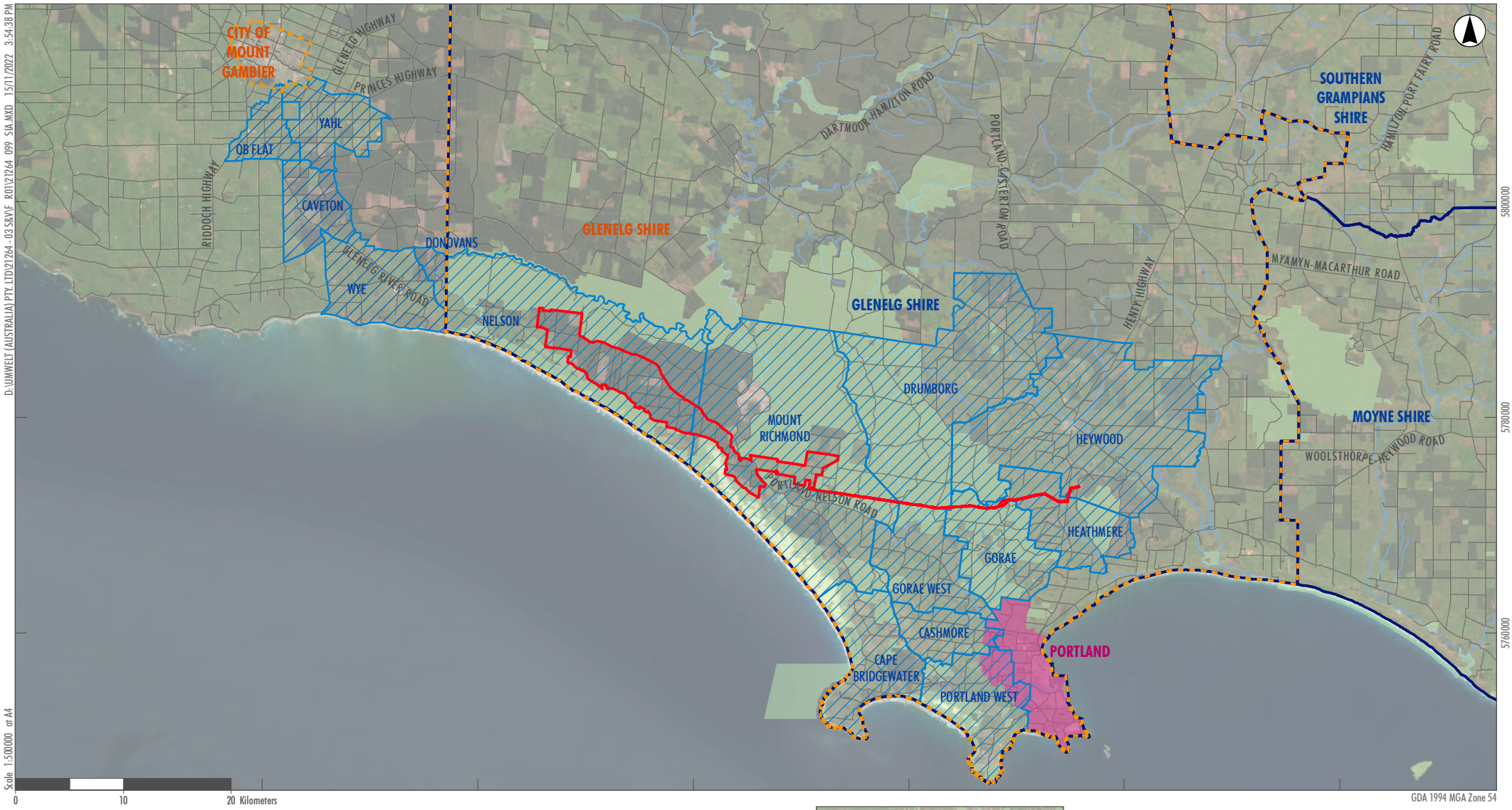
The Great South Coast Region comprises the Glenelg LGA and the surrounding LGAs of Southern Grampians, Moyne, Warrnambool and Corangamite. It was included in the EIA study area because the region is expected to be used for the provision of labour and services for the Project. The geographic catchment of the Glenelg LGA was included within the EIA study area because the entire Project Area is located within the LGA. All references in this chapter to the 'local' area refer to the Glenelg LGA area.

17.4.2 Great South Coast Region

The Project is located within the Great South Coast Region of Victoria (see **Figure 17.2**), which spans 2.3 million ha from the Otway Ranges in the east to the South Australian border in the west and is home to over 100,000 people. The region is known for its recreational and tourism attractions such as the Great Ocean Road, Port Campbell National Parks, and the Grampians National Park (Great South Coast Group, 2014).

The Great South Coast Region faces challenges as a low-growth economy with a need to establish higher-value industry investment, greater productivity and skilled labour (Fraser & Downie, 2019). To overcome these challenges, the Great South Coast Group has identified priorities across five focus areas, including 'Great Eco-Tourism'. Tourism to the Great South Coast Region is predominately driven by its natural attributes including the coastlines, forests, plains, ancient rock formations and native flora and fauna (DJPR, 2020). The area also benefits from tourists extending their journeys along Victoria's famous Great Ocean Road, which approximately 7 million people visited during 2019 (TEVE Research Unit, 2021).

The 'Great Eco-Tourism' priority area specifically identifies key actions to develop industrial areas that benefit from renewable energy generation (Great South Coast Group, 2020). The region is described as an alternative energy (renewable sources and natural gas) production hub, to which well-established wind energy projects are a notable contributor. Renewable energy is identified as a major economic growth opportunity for the region that can help the region achieve its strategic goals of economic development and in addressing climate change. The Great South Coast Group highlights abundant renewable energy resources as a key asset for the region and seeks to encourage local energy production and appropriately sited energy facilities (Great South Coast Group, 2014).



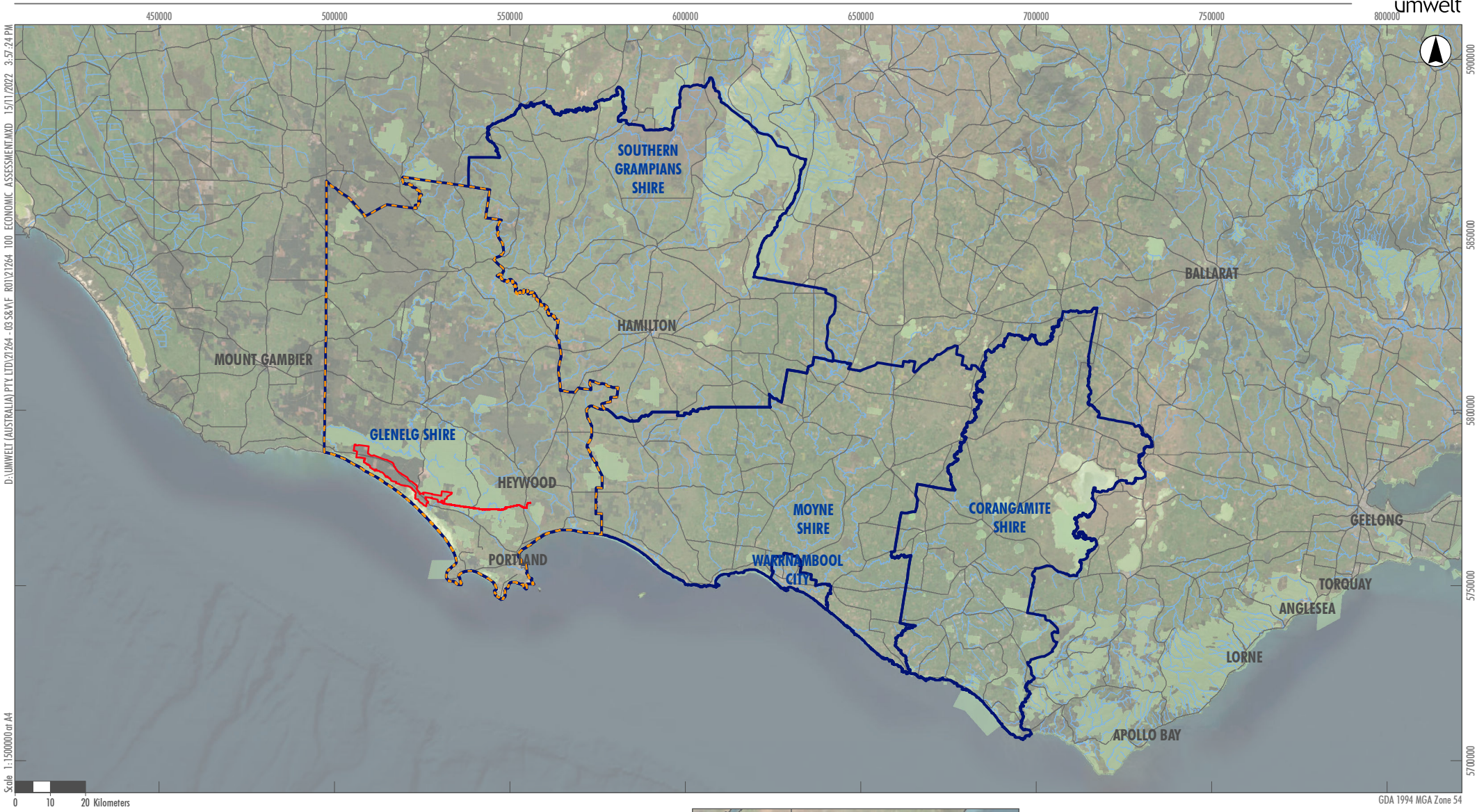
Legend

- Project Area
- LGA Boundary
- Great South Coast Region
- State Suburb Class Boundary
- Statistical Area 2 Boundary
- Parks and Reserves
- Road
- Watercourses

FIGURE 17.1

Social Impact Assessment Study Area

Image Source: ESRI Basemap (2022) Data source: Geoscience Australia; DELWP (2021)



Scale 1:1500000 at A4

Legend

- Project Area
- Great South Coast Region
- Glenelg LGA Boundary
- Parks and Reserves
- Road
- Watercourses

FIGURE 17.2

Economic Impact Assessment Study Area

Image Source: ESRI Basemap (2022) Data source: Geoscience Australia; DELWP (2021)

Potential benefits of renewable energy that are identified for the region include manufacturing of local components, economic diversification particularly in rural areas and the potential to develop a renewable energy research centre. However, the Great South Coast Group highlights specific challenges that may be associated with renewable energy development in the region such as:

- potential impacts on amenity and the environment
- cumulative impacts on road condition
- impacts on housing affordability and accessibility arising from localised influxes of workers on major projects including wind farms and forestry
- a need to develop and improve the local electricity distribution network which is at 90 % capacity.

Table 17.3 outlines the key townships within the Great South Coast Region and their populations. The closest township to the Project is Nelson, which is located approximately 3 km west of the Project Area. Nelson is characterised as a "small, connected community" and is located on the banks of the Glenelg River (GSC, 2020). Portland is the closest regional centre to the Project Area and is the largest settlement in the Glenelg Shire LGA.

Table 17.3: Key townships in the Great South Coast Region

Township	LGA	Population (ABS, 2021)	Approx. location relative to Project Area
Nelson	Glenelg Shire	190	3 km west
Donovans	Glenelg Shire	83	30 km north-west
Dartmoor	Glenelg Shire	322	30 km north
Portland	Glenelg Shire	10,928	45 km south-east
Heywood	Glenelg Shire	1,726	47 km east
Casterton	Glenelg Shire	1,668	80 km north
Hamilton	Southern Grampians Shire	9,974	106 km north-east
Port Fairy	Moyne Shire	3,340	112 km east
Warrnambool	City of Warrnambool	33,655	146 km east

17.4.3 Glenelg Shire

The Glenelg Shire LGA is situated within the south-west corner of Victoria, bordering South Australia. Current land use in the LGA is predominately agricultural, comprising mostly dryland pasture and some horticulture. Forestry and agricultural activities within the shire are dependent on the use of natural resources in the area, as well as the condition of these resources. These activities rely on arable land, prime climatic conditions, topography, and natural water sources including high, reliable rainfall and favourable soils that are found within the region (Great South Coast Group, 2014). Natural attributes and agricultural productivity suggest that agricultural land prices are high, with land values in south - west Victoria amongst the highest of any plantation region across the country (Agriculture Victoria, 2020).

The natural environment is of high value to residents of the Glenelg Shire, as emphasised through community engagement undertaken for Glenelg Shire Council (GSC)'s 2040 Community Plan (GSC, 2020). The Glenelg Shire has 107 national parks and conservation reserves covering 25 % of the Shire's land. The local area around the Project includes several areas protected for native forest and coastal ecosystems including Cobboboonee National Park and Cobboboonee Forest Park (the Parks), Lower Glenelg National Park, Discovery Bay Coastal Park (and associated Marine National Park), Mount Richmond National Park, and the Glenelg Estuary and Discovery Bay Ramsar site (the Ramsar Site). These protected areas are popular for recreation and tourism activities, including sightseeing, walking, camping, and recreational fishing. The Great South West Walk (GSWW) was established in the early 1980s as a circular 250 km walking trail starting in Portland and running through the Nelson area (Friends of the GSWW, n.d.).

Glenelg Shire has a population of approximately 20,100 people (ABS, 2021). This includes more than 3,400 construction-related workers (or one-third of the labour force in the Glenelg LGA) in roles such as technicians and trades workers, machinery operators and drivers, and labourers who may have the types of skills required for the construction of a wind farm. In addition, close to 160 (employing) construction and transport businesses are located in the LGA which could service the Project (ABS, 2021).

The GSC notes that its key industries include the Port of Portland, the Portland Aluminium Smelter, renewable energy, timber production and processing, commercial fishing, agribusiness and tourism (GSC, 2020). According to two employment service providers surveyed during Project consultation, the prominent labour hire sourced in the region is for construction workers, labourers and machine operators. There is also significant tourism in the LGA, with approximately 380,000 tourists visiting annually. There was a significant decline in tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic (GSC, 2020).

Wind farm tourism is a niche within Portland and Victoria and South Australia more broadly, providing tourists the opportunity to see and learn about renewable energy. For example, the Codrington Wind Farm Tours in Portland integrate visiting the Codrington Wind Farm with a rural country scenic experience (InVictoria, n.d.), presenting the Codrington Wind Farm as a complementary part of the rural coastal landscape.

The community has raised road safety concerns with GSC in relation to the current volume of heavy freight traffic on the local road network and associated deterioration of road condition and safety accessibility challenges for local road users, which relates in part to a lack of rail options in the area and heavy use by forestry and agricultural industries (GSC, 2020). Social infrastructure provision has been reported across the LGA as insufficient to service the community. This includes limited health services that result in many residents having to travel long distances or wait long periods for medical services, a lack of reliable telecommunication services, and a lack of transportation to connect the Glenelg Shire to major cities, including poor public transport and rail infrastructure which limits economic activity and tourism, as well as people's access to education and training (particularly young people) (GSC, 2020).

17.4.4 City of Mount Gambier

The social baseline has also considered the regional centre of Mount Gambier, South Australia (located within the City of Mount Gambier LGA), as the Project would likely access services, facilities, labour and supplies from this area throughout its construction and operational phases.

The South Australian border is approximately 5 km west of Nelson with the large regional centre of Mount Gambier approximately 40 km from the Project Area. Mount Gambier services several surrounding communities due its central location between Adelaide and Melbourne and hosts a large transport industry. Mount Gambier has a population of approximately 26,276 (ABS, 2021).

17.5 Consultation and information provision

Community participation is critical for the planning and development of any project, in which the community is informed of changes expected to occur and provided with the opportunity to contribute to decisions that may affect livelihoods and/or surroundings. Community engagement was undertaken in alignment with a Community Engagement Strategy which involved engagement with the community throughout the Project lifecycle, from site selection and design through to decommissioning. The Proponent understands that the success of the Project is dependent on the development of genuine, open, and ongoing relationships with key stakeholders and members of the local community. An overview of the Community Engagement Strategy and consultation activities undertaken by the Proponent for the Project is provided in **Chapter 6 *Community and stakeholder engagement***. The outcomes of these activities have been reviewed and consolidated as part as of the SIA.

Engagement and consultation activities undertaken for the purpose of the SIA include the following:

- personal meetings and interviews with stakeholders
- community information sessions
- community feedback survey
- local business and service provider survey.

A consultation program was also undertaken as part of the SIA to complement the Proponent's community consultation activities.

Other consultation and engagement activities that have been undertaken by the Proponent for the Project, and have informed the SIA include:

- individual host landowner meetings
- interviews with neighbouring residents within 3 km of the Project Area
- community information drop-in sessions
- community feedback survey forms (107 have been completed)
- local business and service provider surveys
- meetings with community groups
- on-site tour with the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (GMTOAC) and engagement through a Cultural Values Assessment
- participation in a business forum with GSC and Committee for Portland

- meetings with potential transmission line hosts
- meetings with local Members of Parliament (MPs)
- distribution of Project information handouts
- Council briefings
- The Proponent's employment of a local Community Liaison Officer
- establishment of a Kentbruck Green Power Hub office in Portland, manned by the Community Liaison Officer on Monday and Wednesdays from 4 pm to 7 pm and Saturday from 11 am to 2 pm
- communication methods including a Project website, email account, broadcast emails to notify of Project milestones, media releases and advertisements in local media.

A community survey was conducted in 2019 and again in 2022 to understand the community's attitudes towards the Project which is detailed in the SIA. Broadly, there is strong community support for the placement of the wind farm site on plantation land, with some stakeholders suggesting that the Kentbruck locality is a highly appropriate location for the Project due to its more remote location which they anticipate would impact on fewer residents and landowners.

Conversely, other stakeholder groups have raised concern and opposition to the Project, largely due to the location of the Project in proximity to valued cultural and biodiversity conservation areas, including the Lower Glenelg National Park, Discovery Bay Coastal Park, the Ramsar site and the Parks.

Of the service providers and businesses surveyed as part of the SIA, the majority expressed a desire to see the Project approved to bring local employment and business opportunities to the region. In this regard, local businesses surveyed were asked to quantify their attitude towards the Project by providing a rating from one very negative to ten very positive, with an average score of 8.9 out of 10 obtained.

Similarly, as part of the community survey undertaken by the Proponent between 2019 and 2022, members of the broader community were asked to rate their general attitude toward the Project on a scale of zero to ten , with zero reflecting no support and ten reflecting strong support. Overall, the broader community was also highly in favour of the Project, with an average acceptance rating of 8.3 out of 10 obtained.

The Proponent will continue to engage with the community and other stakeholders in a proactive, thorough and transparent manner throughout the Project lifecycle, from planning and assessment through to construction and operation, in accordance with its Community Engagement Strategy (see **Chapter 6 *Community and stakeholder engagement***). This will help ensure that there are opportunities for people to participate and collaborate on Project matters and to inform the development and implementation of impact and management strategies (see mitigation measure MM-SE01). The residual social impact is considered low with the implementation of these measures.

17.6 Construction impacts

The following table provides an overview of the social and economic impacts identified in the SIA and EIA. These impacts are relevant to the construction phase of the Project, acknowledging that some impacts are also relevant across multiple phases of the Project (refer to **Table 17.4**)

Table 17.4: Economic and social construction impacts

Impact	Impacts Identified in the SIA and EIA	Stage[1]	Mitigation	Affected Stakeholder Group	Impact Nature	Post Mitigation Ranking
Changes to sense of place, community relations and social cohesion	Population Change caused by the construction workforce may cause temporary change in community composition	C	Mitigations are provided in subsequent sections that consider the indirect impacts of population change	Broader community Local government Local service providers Tourists	Social	N/A
	Disruption to sense of place due to population influx during construction	C	Workforce Accommodation Management Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE04)	Smaller communities of Nelson, Heywood and Cape Bridgewater	Social	L

[1] P = Planning, C = Construction, O= Operation, D = Decommissioning

Impact	Impacts Identified in the SIA and EIA	Stage[1]	Mitigation	Affected Stakeholder Group	Impact Nature	Post Mitigation Ranking
			Local Participation and Social Procurement Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE03)			
Disruption to existing land uses	Disruption to agricultural operations due to hindered ability to access land and/or potential dissection of properties, resulting in impacts on personal livelihoods and accessibility	C & O	Community Engagement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE01) Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02) Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE03)	Host landholders –Heywood Option and Host landholders – Portland Option	Economic & Social	L
	Impacts on the commercial viability of the Green Triangle Forestry associated with timber clearing.	C & O	Community Engagement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE01)	Local Businesses	Economic	L
	Impacts on access to and enjoyment of proximal nature reserves during construction and operation of the Project	C,O	2 km exclusion zones have been implemented around GSSW campsites to reduce views and noise impacts from turbines Project design has resulted in noise levels below the criteria determined in accordance with *NZS 6808:2010 Acoustics – Wind farm noise* (NZS 6808) Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Visitors, tourists and recreational users of surrounding conservation areas	Social	M
	Impact of noise generated by wind turbines and construction on social amenity	C,O	Community Engagement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE01) Complaint Investigation and Response Plan and Complaints Register (see mitigation measure MM-SE06)	Host landholders Neighbouring landholders Visitors to proximal nature reserves Broader community	Social	L
	Disruptions to access to the GSWW and Cobboboonee National Park during construction	C	Community Engagement Strategy (MM-SE01) Also see mitigation measure MM-TP01in ***Chapter 15 Transport***	Visitors to the Parks, Lower Glenelg National Park and Discovery Bay Coastal Park	Social	M
Disruption to environmental values	Impacts on natural amenity and community values associated with environmental features including impacts on key habitats, birds, animals, plants, pests and weeds	C,O	Community Engagement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE01) Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Community groups Environmental groups Broader community Visitors, tourists and recreational	Social	M

Impact	Impacts Identified in the SIA and EIA	Stage[1]	Mitigation	Affected Stakeholder Group	Impact Nature	Post Mitigation Ranking
				users of surrounding conservation areas Traditional Owners		
Access to infrastructure and services	Reduced access to short- term accommodation and crowding out of tourists due to competition for housing with incoming non-resident workforce	C	Workforce Accommodation Management Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE04) Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE03)	Heywood, Nelson, Cape Bridgewater Tourists / visitors	Social & Economic	L
	Reduced access to affordable housing due to competition for housing with incoming non-resident workforce leading to housing stress or displacement	C	Workforce Accommodation Management Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE04) Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE03)	Low-income households Tenants Local community	Economic & Social	L
	Population influx of construction workers putting pressure on access to key health services	C	Workforce Accommodation Management Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE04)	Broader Community	Social	L
	Disruption due to Project-related traffic (inaccessibility, road closures, increased travel time, road deterioration causing public safety risk)	C	See MM-TP01 and MM-TP02 in ***Chapter 15 Transport***	Road users	Social & Economic	L
Aboriginal Cultural Values and Land Rights	Disruption to Aboriginal cultural values through land use change and impacts on ecosystems.	P, C, O, D	Aboriginal Participation Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE05)	Traditional Owners and Native Title rights holders Gunditjmara community	Social	M
Community Engagement and Information Sharing	Poor community engagement leading to feelings of powerlessness or lack of ability to make informed choices	P, C, O, D	Community Engagement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE01)	Host landholders Broader community Community groups Neighbouring landholders Broader community	Social	L

17.6.1 Changes to sense of place, community relations and social cohesion due to population increase

Changes to sense of place of place and social cohesion are likely to arise in response to population increase associated with incoming workforces during Project construction.

Changes to population are fundamental impacts within the SIA, given that the size, composition, and behaviours of a community are underpinned by its population and characteristics. Population change (influx and outflux) is usually described as a first order social impact which has the potential to create second order social impacts, such as impacts on community infrastructure and services, changes in sense of community, sense of place, social cohesion and community networks etc.

Construction of the Project is expected to last for 24 months over one stage, with the construction workforce predicted to peak at 350 employees. If constructed over two stages, the construction period would be extended to 2.5 years and have a smaller peak workforce. The average workforce would be 250 workers for single stage construction and 190 workers for two stage construction. Construction workforces can typically result in some specific social impacts on the communities in which they are housed, as construction work is transient, and workers often do not bring their families. To assess population change and resulting social impacts, two scenarios relating to construction workforce have been considered (see **Table 17.5**) This change represents the non-resident workforce.

Table 17.5: Construction workforce scenarios

Scenario	Description	Population increase
Scenario 1	Assumes 75 % of the workforce will migrate into the region	260
Scenario 2	Assumes 50 % of the workforce will migrate into the region	175

Through consultation, community members expressed concern about the Project impacting on the local area from an increase in population. Concern was raised on the social fabric of Nelson in particular, the closest town to the Project Area, with the potential for the town's rural amenity and sense of place to be altered due to an influx of Project workforce during construction. However, it is unlikely that the construction workforce would use Nelson as a staging point due to its small size and lack of appropriate accommodation and facilities. There may be a temporary (for the period of construction) increase in the number of people using the Nelson facilities including the food and fuel providers, however most of the workforce is expected to base themselves at the larger regional centres of Portland and Mount Gambier. The Proponent will finalise and implement a Workforce Accommodation Management Plan which will emphasise the need to avoid large accommodation concentrations in Nelson to protect the sense of community and existing tourism (see mitigation measure MM-SE04). The Workforce Accommodation Management Plan will ensure aspects such as the dispersion of workers and early sourcing of long-term accommodation is thoroughly considered to avoid influx impacts.

The potential post-mitigation social impact from the Project's construction on people's attachment to place and community cohesion is considered a medium impact for host and neighbouring landholders, and a low impact on the broader community. Potential social impacts associated with population change will be mitigated through the Workforce Accommodation Management Plan, Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy to increase local employment and reduce population influx and a Community Engagement Strategy to ensure there is consistent and consultative engagement with communities throughout the Project's construction (see mitigation measures MM-SE01, MM-SE03 and MM-SE04). These strategies will help ensure that population influx in Nelson is minimised as much as possible by encouraging local employment and procurement and by dispersing population increases to larger population centres such as Mt Gambier and Portland This mitigation will result in a low residual social impact.

17.6.2 Disruption to existing land uses

Existing land uses within the Project Area mainly include commercial forestry, grazing operations and national/ state parks. The potential impact of the Project on existing agricultural activities was considered at both the regional scale and in relation to individual farms and agricultural businesses.

At the Project scale, construction of the transmission line is a concern to affected landholders due to the perceived effect on agricultural operations and private properties. Disruption to agricultural operations as a result of reduced access during construction is considered a medium social impact after mitigation and will be mitigated through individual planning with host and neighbouring landholders (see mitigation measure MM-SE01). The economic impact on agricultural landholders and the local farming industry will be marginal with the compensation schemes in place for landholders and the relatively small amount of grazing land that would be affected.

The Proponent has an agreement with Green Triangle Forest Products (GTFP) to limit timber clearing within the plantation to approximately 350 ha during construction of the wind farm, which represents close to 2 % of the net plantation area of GTFP and around 0.1 % of the total plantation area located within the Green Triangle. The Green Triangle is Australia's second-largest collective plantation and wood processing zone and one of Australia's major forest regions. A compensation scheme has also been developed whereby GTFP is compensated for loss of tree crop, disruption impacts and ongoing loss of commercial value of land. The economic impact on GTFP and the local timber processing industry would be low with the proposed compensation scheme for the associated economic losses from tree clearing, and the opportunity to re-plant trees within the Project Area following construction and decommissioning.

17.6.3 Amenity, recreation and visual impacts

Construction of the Project has the potential to temporarily cause changes in noise, lighting and vibration levels and visual amenity within the local area. This can affect how people experience their surrounds and sense of place. Community values associated with natural features or environmental assets, and the potential for the Project to affect such values, has been a key community concern raised through consultation, particularly in relation to nearby conservation areas, the Parks, the Ramsar site, local wildlife habitats and the GSWW. This was raised as a concern both during Project construction and Project operations.

Concerns around potential accessibility issues for visitors to the area for recreation and leisure were raised during consultation, particularly in relation to crossings associated with public recreational areas and local attractions such as the GSWW during Project construction.

The GSWW crosses over Boiler Swamp Road where the underground transmission line is to be installed. To manage potential disruptions to walkers along the GSWW at this crossing, traffic control will be implemented to manage walkers and employ signage notifications along the track at 1 km before the crossing is reached to advise walkers of any potential delays to timing and information about the construction works. Temporary rest stops will be provided either side of Boiler Swamp Road, for walkers to rest and wait if they reach Boiler Swamp Road at the time when trenching machinery is installing the underground cabling at this location. Installation of cabling at this location where the GSWW crosses Boiler Swamp Road would only take 30 minutes, after which walkers will be assisted to cross Boiler Swamp Road safely. Information on construction timeframes and potential impacts on the GSWW will be provided to the community, to assist in mitigating any unexpected delays for walkers. However, should walkers reach this crossing during the time of cable laying, a short delay of 30 minutes is considered a minor impact. The Proponent will continue to engage with Friends of the GSWW and other stakeholders such as Parks Victoria and the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), to identify ways in which potential impacts on the GSWW can be minimised, including accessibility of the Boiler Swamp Road crossing and amenity impacts at campsites. This is discussed further in **Chapter 15** ***Transport***, **Chapter 14** ***Noise and vibration*** and **Chapter 12** ***Landscape character and visual amenity***,

A Communications Plan will be implemented to ensure construction-related information is shared with the local community, and to ensure impacts on access to roads and other infrastructure is communicated to affected stakeholders (see mitigation measure MM-TP01 in **Chapter 15** ***Transport***). Implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy will ensure that there is adequate understanding of the impacts and how community members may experience it (see mitigation measure MM-SE01). A Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) will also be developed and implemented to manage potential amenity impacts during construction (see mitigation measure MM-NV01 in **Chapter 14** ***Noise and vibration.*** The residual impact on natural amenity, environment and recreational activities during construction would therefore be low.

17.6.4 Disruption to environmental values

The construction and operation of the Project is likely to impact community values associated with highly valued ecosystems and biodiversity. Specific concerns have been raised in relation to bird and bat strike, impacts on brolga breeding grounds and land clearing. Traditional Owners also raised concerns about impacts on places, ecosystems and species arising from Project construction and operation.

Impacts will be partially mitigated through the communication of actions taken to manage and minimise environmental impact (see mitigation measure MM-SE01), through strategic use of Community Benefit Funds to support environmental conservation and research efforts (see mitigation measure MM-SE02) and through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP)

17.6.5 Access to infrastructure and services

The temporary increase in population from Project construction workers has the potential to place pressure on access to accommodation and community services within the study area for existing community members and visitors to the region. Specific concerns have been raised in relation to the duration of the construction peak and alignment with the local tourist and visitation season. Construction activities may place additional pressure on accommodation services further affecting accessibility and availability for other user groups not.

The construction workforce is likely to be housed in the main service centres of Portland and Mount Gambier. Accommodation providers in this area have indicated they are under capacity. It is unlikely that the construction workforce would be housed within the smaller townships of Nelson, Cape Bridgewater and Heywood as they have extremely limited capacity to house the Project's expected construction workforce. This will be managed through the Workforce Accommodation Management Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE04) to ensure sufficient accommodation is acquired at an early stage in appropriate locations.

Given the estimated construction workforce numbers required for the Project and the possibility that the peak construction period could overlap with the local tourist season, the potential impact on access to short-term accommodation is considered a high social impact, and the potential impact on access to health and community services is considered a medium social impact. A Workforce Accommodation Management Plan will be implemented to mitigate the social impact from the construction workforce on other people's continued access to accommodation, housing, and services, by avoiding concentrating workforce accommodation in smaller townships (see mitigation measure MM-SE04). The Proponent will also encourage non-local staff to access routine health services in their place of residence, rather than in proximity to the Project Area. With the implementation of these measures the residual social impact on access to short-term accommodation is low, and the residual impact on access to health and community services is low.

Construction traffic may cause changes to local road conditions, potentially resulting in traffic disruptions, road safety risks for users, reduced accessibility due to road closures or oversize overmass (OSOM) vehicle movements, and increased travel time for locals. The local road network surrounding the Project Area is perceived by community members to be inadequate to handle an increase in heavy traffic levels associated with the Project, with landowners who reside along local roads raising concern over the safety risk at intersections, crests, and property access points. Members of the broader community also raised concerns regarding the level of traffic on small rural roads caused by other wind farm projects developed in the region in recent years. Key stakeholders and the broader community also noted concerns relating to the condition of local roads following the construction of the Project, with road maintenance highlighted as a pre-existing and ongoing issue associated with general use and cumulative use for multiple large scale renewable energy developments in the region.

The impact of construction traffic on access to and use of local roads, including potential road safety impacts, is considered a temporary low social impact, and will be mitigated through the Project's Traffic Management Plan (TMP) (see mitigation measure MM-TP02 in **Chapter 15 *Transport***) and Communications Plan, which will proactively communicate the impact of construction activities and any anticipated traffic implications and outline mechanisms for providing feedback and asking questions (see mitigation measure MM-TP01 in **Chapter 15 *Transport***). The use of a workforce shuttle bus will also be considered to further reduce potential traffic impacts (see mitigation measure MM-TP02 in **Chapter 15 *Transport***). Implementation of these mitigation measures would result in a low residual impact on road infrastructure and safety.

17.6.6 Aboriginal cultural values and land rights

Construction and operation of the Project has the potential to disrupt Aboriginal cultural values, shared beliefs, customs, values, language, and dialect, as well as their local culture, heritage and their ability to access cultural resources. Feedback gathered from Traditional Owners who are native title holders of a portion of the Project Area identified significant concerns with regard to the destruction of Country and outlined a number of areas of significant cultural values. These include, but are not limited to groundwater springs, Mount Richmond, Bats ridge limestone, Ramsar site, Karst Springs, Lake Mombeong and Swan Lake. The Cultural Values Assessment undertaken by the GMTOAC focused on: Gunditj Mirring as a resources and gathering place; as a place with important sounds of Country; as a place with important Sky Country, including Lake Mombeong as a place that reflects Sky Country; as a place with cultural viewlines; as a place with cultural linkages between Nyamat Mirring (Sea Country), Bocara Mirring (River Country) and Woorrowarook Mirring (Forest Country) and as a place with trauma lines associated with damage done to the Gunditjmara and Gunditj Mirring by the British invasion and colonial occupation.

The potential impact on cultural values and land rights has been ranked as a medium. This will be partially mitigated and managed through the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) and in accordance with the Cultural Values Assessment (CVA). Beyond this, an Aboriginal Participation Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE05) will support the development and implementation of participation, employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal community members.

17.6.7 Community engagement and information sharing

On-going community and stakeholder engagement is a critical aspect of Project planning and development, whereby people are informed of changes to occur and provided with the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect their lives and/or surrounds. The lengthy and uncertain planning process associated with the Project caused some concern among stakeholders, with some people noting in 2022 that they thought the Project was not proceeding. Such uncertainty can lead to anxiety and concern within communities. Similarly, a lack of genuine engagement can reduce capacity for stakeholders to make informed decisions about the Project. A consistently applied Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE01) will mitigate this impact.

17.7 Operation impacts

The following table provides an overview of the social and economic impacts identified in the SIA and EIA. These impacts are relevant to the operational phase of the Project, acknowledging that some impacts are also relevant across multiple phases of the Project (refer to **Table 17.6**)

Table 17.6: Social and economic operation impacts

Impact	Impacts Identified in the SIA and EIA	Stage[2]	Mitigation	Affected Stakeholder Group	Impact Nature	Post Mitigation Ranking
Property Values and Livelihoods	Property devaluation due to proximity to the Project	P, C, O	Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Neighbouring landholders to wind farm and transmission line	Economic	L
Tourism	Reductions to local tourism sector due to establishment of the Project due to industrialization of the landscape	C, O	Community Engagement Strategy (MM-SE01) Shared Benefits Strategy (MM-SE02) Communications Plan (see MM-TP01 in ***Chapter 15 Transport)***	Tourists / visitors Local service providers and businesses Broader community Community groups Recreational users of surrounding conservation areas Local government	Economic	L
Community Health & Public Safety	Increased land management and public safety risks associated with increased illegal access to the site.	C,O	Communications Plan (see MM-TP01 in **Chapter 15 *Transport)***	Project Area Tourists People illegally accessing the site	Social	L
	Reduced personal and public safety due to fire risk (given location on forestry land and issues with aviation routes for water bombing)	C,O,D	Community Engagement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE01)	Host landholders Neighbouring landholders Forestry workers	Social	L
	Increased risk of collisions and road injuries and fatalities	C,O	See MM-TP01 and MM-TP02 in **Chapter 15 *Transport***	Road Users	Social	M
	Increased risks to aviation activities due to the presence of turbines	C,O	N/A	Host and neighbouring landholders	Social	L

[2] P = Planning, C = Construction, O= Operation, D = Decommissioning

Impact	Impacts Identified in the SIA and EIA	Stage[2]	Mitigation	Affected Stakeholder Group	Impact Nature	Post Mitigation Ranking
				Broader community Fire services		
Sense of Place and Amenity	Impacts on visual amenity due to industrialisation of the landscape	C,O	Buffer zones around residences and reference to the **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (Appendix L)** in siting turbines has reduced visual impacts on residences Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Host landholders Neighbouring landholders	Social	M
	Impact of noise generated by wind turbines and construction on social amenity	C,O	Community Engagement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE01) Complaint Investigation and Response Plan and Complaints Register (see mitigation measure MM-SE06)	Host landholders Neighbouring landholders Visitors to proximal nature reserves Broader community	Social	L

17.7.1 Property values and livelihoods

At the regional scale, community members highlighted that the location of the Project within the commercial forestry plantation represented a positive example of complementary land uses. They felt that it was an ideal site choice and reduced the likelihood of disruption to other sectors, such as agriculture.

The ongoing presence of the overhead transmission line that was initially proposed for the Project was identified as a significant concern to affected landholders due to perceived safety risk (including bushfires) and visual amenity impacts, as well as the perceived effect on agricultural operations and private properties. The Project has since been revised to locate the entire transmission line underground (see **Chapter 4 *Project development***) which mitigates these landholder concerns. Concerns were also raised about biosecurity risks associated with contractors entering properties for maintenance works. Disruption to agricultural operations as a result of access issues, biosecurity and/or potential dissection of properties due to the transmission line could affect individual or household livelihoods. However, it is considered that only marginal economic impacts would result from easement acquisition for the transmission line over the medium-to-long term once compensation arrangements have been accounted for.

Potential impacts from disruption to agricultural properties, activities and the community from the transmission line is considered a medium social impact. This will be mitigated and managed through the Community Engagement Strategy, which will involve consultation with affected landholders to form personal property plans and integrate refinements to Project design based on property features and concerns (see mitigation measure MM-SE01). This would result in a low residual impact on agricultural activities and properties.

The perceived reduction in rural property values associated with land, houses, or property adjacent to, or within eyesight of the Project's infrastructure, was considered by some stakeholders as detrimental to people's livelihood and their futures. There are several neighbouring properties to the Project that have raised concerns over property devaluation due to the Project. The potential social impact of the Project on property values is considered low. Domestic and international research has found no statistically relevant correlations between wind farms and property values, especially in rural areas. Neighbour Agreements would substantially mitigate this perceived impact by providing financial payment to adjacent landholders. The residual impact on property values within proximity to the Project is low.

The Community Engagement Strategy will ensure that there is consistent and consultative engagement with host and neighbouring landholders and ensure agreements are in place, and to provide opportunities for people to collaborate on Project design matters and input to preferred solutions to address potential property impacts (see mitigation measure MM-SE01).

17.7.2 Tourism

The local tourism sector may experience a decline due to establishment of the Project through the perceived industrialisation of the natural landscape which could decrease visitation over the Project's operational life. Changes to the visual amenity of the area from the Project's operation may also affect areas with high tourism or visitation activity such as the nearby Discovery Bay Coastal Park. While some community members raised concern over the perceived impact on the local tourism sector, others responded with neutral feedback. This neutral feedback obtained during community consultation reflects international literature reviews that have found 'there is very little academic evidence that the presence of wind farms has a significant negative economic impact on the tourism industry in rural localities' (Shannon, 2021). Furthermore, those with neutral feedback do not expect their future visiting behaviour to be affected by the presence of the wind turbines. However, the impact of wind farms of visitation behaviour is likely to be higher for older visitors and those visiting areas for their tranquillity, remoteness and scenic quality (Regeneris Consulting, 2014) – key attributes of the areas surrounding the Project. A more detailed review is provided in Section 4.7.4 of the **SIA** (**Appendix R**).

The estimated economic activity in Glenelg LGA from the operation of Project is estimated to be $30.5 million (direct and indirect only, see **Section 17.9.1** for further details), assuming 25 % local employment required to maintain the optimal condition of the Project over its useful life. Compared to the $53.55 million economic output of the tourism industry for 2018/19 (this year was chosen to as it was before the occurrence of COVID-19), the additional economic activity from operation of Project can offset up to a 57 % reduction in tourism activity.

The social impact relating to changes to levels of local tourism activity due to the establishment of the Project in a locality with prominent natural attractions and nature-based visitation is considered a low social impact. Proactive collaboration with local tourism providers and community groups to stimulate windfarm-based tourism in the region and support existing tourism attractions such as the GSWW could be a measure adopted by the Proponent to alleviate such impacts on the tourism sector. For example, the Proponent is in discussion with Friends of the GSSW to provide long-term funding to support the group's efforts to manage, maintain and improve the important walk for visitors and flora and fauna (see mitigation measures MM-SE01 and MM-SE02). This would result in low residual social impact.

17.7.3 Community health and public safety

Health and public safety concerns most frequently raised during consultation with nearby residents and the broader community were associated with bushfire risk, including the personal safety of fire fighters or emergency service workers. Concerns about wind turbines posing a safety risk to agricultural aircrafts flying in and out of Nelson were also identified. Some community members also perceived levels of public safety to be reduced due to the development of the Project, given its proximity to bushland and other natural features such as national parks, forestry land and conservation areas, therefore heightening the risk of fire.

A **Bushfire Risk Assessment (Appendix V)** and **Aeronautical Impact Assessment (Appendix T)** were undertaken for the Project and determined that the bushfire risk associated with construction and operation of the Project can be mitigated and would not increase bushfire risk in the landscape (see **Chapter 18** ***Safety, hazard and risk***). Consultation with the local community regarding bushfire management would be undertaken to address concerns amongst the community (see mitigation measure MM-SE01). The potential residual impact on health and wellbeing is considered a low social impact.

17.7.4 Sense of place and amenity

Community consultation identified that physical changes to the landscape character and perceived industrialisation of the landscape from the Project are likely to impact on some of the communities' sense of place and social amenity. Community survey respondents commonly referenced the natural beauty of the area with some referencing a sense of belonging, noting they considered the area home and had been born and raised in the area, or often returned home due to family connections. The impact on local community values and family ties associated with land, particularly where there is a strong family history, was raised as a concern by some stakeholders due to perceived Project-induced changes to the local landscape.

The Discovery Bay Coastal Park and Ramsar site are areas of particular concern as the Project may be viewable from different areas within the Parks. Community survey respondents also indicated that wind turbine noise was of concern. Environmental groups noted that the placement of wind turbines was considered critical in reducing impacts on the social amenity of visitors, walkers and campers accessing the area, and to limit the disturbance to local wildlife and conservation areas. To respond to the sensitivity of recreational/tourism places such as campsites, a 2 km buffer was applied to campsites within the vicinity of the wind farm site to mitigate potential noise and visual amenity impacts of turbines from these locations.

The potential impact of the Project on people's sense of place and visual amenity due to potential physical changes to the landscape and social amenity is considered a high social impact on host and neighbouring landholders and medium for the broader community. Community consultation revealed that the most substantial potential impacts on sense of place and visual amenity was likely to arise from overhead transmission lines, and turbines located close to campsites along the GSSW. Impacts have been mitigated by Project design decisions, particularly in relation to transmission line alignments to reduce the number of impacted landholders, and setting back turbines from campsites. Other measures include case-by-case arrangements with neighbouring landholders, financial support through neighbour agreements and investment in eco-tourism support for the national parks and GSWW as part of the Shared Benefit Strategy. With these Project design revisions and the implementation of measures identified above, the residual impact on visual amenity is considered medium for host and neighbouring landholders and low for the broader community and visitors to nearby national parks/nature reserves.

Noise generation of wind turbines and construction may also impact on social amenity and sense of place from some community members. Community survey responses indicated that wind turbine noise was a potential issue of concern, with noise understood to be caused by the rotation of wind turbines from the transmission line and substation static. The **Environmental Noise Assessment (Appendix O)** identified that the operation of the wind turbines is predicted to result in noise levels which are below the criteria determined according with NZS 6808. Further, the noise assessment indicated that operational noise levels arising from Project related infrastructure and the on-site quarry are below the applicable limits as listed in EPA Publication 1826.4 *Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises and entertainment venues* (the Noise Protocol) As perception of noise may differ from technical assessments, the Proponent will implement a Complaint Investigation and Response Plan and Complaints Register (see mitigation measure MM-SE06).

17.8 Decommissioning impacts

Impacts associated with the decommissioning phase of the Project would be similar to those anticipated for the construction phase and are discussed in **Section 17.6**.

Some community respondents noted their concerns regarding the longer-term environmental impacts associated with decommissioning of the wind farm, requesting further information regarding end-of-life plans and commitments by the Proponent. At the end of the life of the Project, the wind farm would either be decommissioned or upgraded with new turbines and ancillary infrastructure. Upgrading (repowering) the Project would extend the operational period of the Project. Decommissioning would involve the removal of all above-ground non-operational equipment, removal and clean-up of any residual contamination and rehabilitation of all storage areas, construction areas, access tracks and other areas affected by the Project.

17.9 Project benefits

Table 17.7: Project benefits impacts

Impact	Impacts Identified in the SIA/EIA	Stage[3]	Mitigation	Affected Stakeholder Group	Impact Nature	Post Mitigation Ranking
Economic Output	Recipients of shared benefits strategy to experience improved social outcomes through investment in community-identified enhancement opportunities	C,O	Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Broader community	Economic & Social	H
	Effects on Local Tourism Local tourism sector may experience increased visitation and a boost to eco-tourism due to visitors choosing to visit the area to see or learn about the turbines	O	Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Tourists / visitors Local service providers and businesses	Economic	H

[3] P = Planning, C = Construction, O= Operation, D = Decommissioning

Impact	Impacts Identified in the SIA/EIA	Stage[3]	Mitigation	Affected Stakeholder Group	Impact Nature	Post Mitigation Ranking
Local Employment and Procurement	Provision of training and upskilling for local people and local employment and procurement opportunities resulting in enhanced human and economic capital	P, C, O	Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02) Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE03)	Broader community Job seekers Gunditjmara community Service providers and businesses	Economic	H
Affordable Clean Energy	Provision of renewable energy and contribution to broader regional renewable energy transition	O	N/A	Broader community	Economic & Social	H
	Access to affordable energy for the Portland Aluminium Smelter, extending the life of the Smelter, thereby supporting one of the largest employers in the region	O	N/A	Portland Community Smelter employees	Economic	H
Neighbour Agreements and Income Generation	Neighbouring agreement and income generation Host landholder payments provide improved financial resources for recipients	C,O	Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Host landholders	Economic	H
Economic Output	Recipients of shared benefits strategy to experience improved social outcomes through investment in community-identified enhancement opportunities	C,O	Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Broader community	Economic & Social	H
	Effects on Local Tourism Local tourism sector may experience increased visitation and a boost to eco-tourism due to visitors choosing to visit the area to see or learn about the turbines	O	Shared Benefits Strategy (see mitigation measure MM-SE02)	Tourists / visitors Local service providers and businesses	Economic	H

17.9.1 Economic output

Economic output was assessed to understand how the Project would create value to the region through employment, procurement and growth opportunities provided by a large-scale renewable energy project.

The Project is anticipated to generate three types of economic outputs: direct, indirect, and induced. Outputs are defined as follows:

- A direct economic impact occurs immediately following expenditure for the Project, such as construction contracts and wage salaries to workers.
- An indirect impact is derived from the proportion of direct expenditure spent on other business work, such as subcontractors or consultants.

- An induced impact occurs when there is an increase in household spending due to an increase in direct and indirect expenditure, which benefits the local community benefits. For example, an induced impact would occur when an employee with an income from the Project spends money at local businesses (e.g. retail or hospitality).
- The total impact is the sum of direct, indirect and induced economic benefits.

Construction of the Project would help support businesses in the Glenelg LGA and across the State more broadly, and is estimated to generate total economic output (assuming 25 % employment from the study area) of between:

- $152.7 million and $164.8 million for the Glenelg LGA.
- $250 million and $270 million for the Great South Coast Region.
- $610.7 million and $659.3 million for the State of Victoria more broadly.

Operation of the Project would help support businesses in the Glenelg LGA and across the State more broadly, and is estimated to generate total economic output of between:

- $46.3 million and $49.9 million for the Glenelg LGA.
- $52.1 million and $56.1 million for the Great South Coast Region.
- $57.9 million and $62.3 million for the State of Victoria more broadly.

There is significant tourism in the area, with approximately 380,000 tourists visiting Glenelg LGA annually, and over 1,000,000 visitations per year in the Great South Coast Region (comprised of the municipalities of Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians, and Warrnambool). Tourism in Nelson includes repeat visitors to the area and has a focus on eco-tourism. The area also benefits from tourists extending their journeys along Victoria's famous Great Ocean Road, of which approximately seven million people visited during 2019. The area hosts key attractions including the GSWW, Cape Bridgewater, Discovery Bay, the Lower Glenelg National Park, the Cobboboonee National Park and Glenelg River.

Potential social benefits on local tourism have been identified, where the Project may increase tourism in the area by becoming a new attraction for visitors. Community consultation identified the opportunity to provide excursions and education on the Project to local schools. Members of the broader community have suggested that the Proponent could support eco-tourism ventures and promote the area as a green energy tourism location and develop a strong legacy in the area through support of local tourism ventures. The Shared Benefits Strategy to be implemented by the Proponent will include plans to partner with local tourism providers to promote Portland and surrounds as a green energy tourist destination, as well as support eco-tourism ventures in Nelson and the surrounding region.

17.9.2 Local employment and procurement

Local employment and service procurement for the Project were identified as key objectives for the community, with several stakeholders stressing the importance of realising local economic benefits through the Project's lifecycle. This included the desire for apprentices, trades people and contractors to be employed from local areas and for training and upskilling to be offered for locals. Furthermore, local communities anticipated receiving commercial benefit through procurement opportunities for local businesses and service providers, with an expectation that the Project would provide the ability to increase local service capacity. The extent of local social benefits to be realised through construction of the Project would be largely dependent on how many people are employed (both directly and indirectly) and how many local businesses are able to service the Project. It is assumed that at least 25 % of construction workers would be able to be sourced locally.

An estimated 350 employees would be required to construct the Project (if constructed in a single stage), made up of domestic and international contractors who would work on a varying basis (casual, part-time, full-time). Close to 253 full-time workers would be required during the two-year construction period, 52 of which are expected to be apprentices and trainees. There is strong and consistent evidence that the provision of apprenticeship and trainee opportunities during construction would benefit the individuals involved by increasing their probability of employment and their expected hourly weekly wage rate in subsequent years. Based on the number of apprenticeship and trainee positions anticipated during construction of the Project, and the average improved future employment outcomes, the overall benefit per placement of an individual in these positions is expected to be in the order of $500,000.

Unemployed labour resources provide additional capacity for the Glenelg LGA to support the Project, with construction of the Project able to provide new short-term employment opportunities for the region's labour force participants, and ongoing employment also supported once the facility is operational. Portland is also home to the only wind turbine tower manufacturer in Australia, Keppel Prince, which is the second largest employer in the Portland area. Keppel Prince employs a team of approximately 350 staff and is a significant contributor to the local economy through ongoing procurement benefits and flow-on regional economic benefits, which the Project could potentially utilise during construction.

Achievement of greater local participation targets, through the development and implementation of proactive and collaborative approaches, such as the Local Employment and Procurement Strategy would yield greater community benefits (see mitigation measure MM-SE04). Furthermore, implementation of the Aboriginal Participation Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE04) would increase access of local employment and procurement opportunities for the Aboriginal community.

17.9.3 Affordable clean energy

Community consultation indicated that the Project's ability to generate renewable energy was the most important benefit identified by community members, followed by its role in combatting climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and economic investment opportunities for regional areas. For many, the Project is considered part of a broader transition towards renewable energy in the region and across Victoria.

The Project is expected to produce 2,000 GWh of clean energy per annum, which is the equivalent of removing 616,000 cars from the road and displacing almost 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum, or planting three million trees.

There is an urgent need to progress generation, storage and transmission developments in eastern Australia, with the National Electricity Market (NEM) expected to experience a cluster of five announced coal-fired generator retirements in the next decade, while also needing resilience for potential future closures (AEMO, 2022). The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has predicted that there will be grid reliability issues in Victoria from 2026 onwards, which would increase the risk that customers are unable to be supplied with the energy they need.. The Project would play an important role in supplying electricity to the NEM over the coming decades.

Alcoa of Australia Limited (Alcoa) operates the Portland Aluminium Smelter. The smelter is the largest employer in the region, injecting approximately $61 million into the Victorian community in 2020 through direct salaries, wages and benefits, and $108 million in Victorian supply contracts (Alcoa, n.d.). The Proponent is investigating opportunities for the Project to supply renewable energy to the Portland Aluminium Smelter from 2026 onwards, to assist in Alcoa's plans to produce green aluminium products and reduce the smelter's reliance on aging coal power plants. The smelter's current electricity supply contract is due to expire in 2026, and the Project is currently one of the few options available to ensure the smelter can obtain low cost electricity and continue to operate. While offshore wind projects are proposed to supply electricity to the Portland Aluminium Smelter, they are not likely to meet the 2026 supply contract timeframe for the smelter. Whereas the Project's development timeframe is consistent with the smelter's electricity supply contract timeframe and represents a proven technology solution.

17.9.4 Neighbour agreements and income generation

During initial consultation with potential host landholders for the windfarm, there was a strong interest from some individuals to have infrastructure located on their property, due to the benefits of having an additional source of income for their properties through payment of annual compensation. As identified in **Section 17.9.1**, additional income into a household as a result of the Project can generate induced economic impacts. This occurs when an increase in household spending from an increase in direct and indirect expenditure benefits the local community. For example, an induced impact would occur when a landholder or neighbour with an income from the Project spends money at local businesses (e.g. retail or hospitality).

Several neighbouring landholders to those approached to be hosts have also raised that they would like to realise benefit from the Project; either through a neighbour compensation program, or alternatively through property acquisition by the Proponent. Further engagement conducted with host and neighbouring landholders at community information sessions in 2022 highlighted significant support for the Project among many.

Community expectations of personal financial gain from the Project and perceived distributive inequity between host landholders, adjacent landholders and members of the broader community may reduce community cohesion and damage interpersonal or neighbourly relations over time. The Proponent has undertaken early and consistent engagement with near neighbours since early 2019 to assist in enabling trust and relationship-building during and through the Project's development. The Proponent has developed a transparent and consistent approach to neighbour agreement payments, which provides monetary compensation to neighbours based on the proximity (distance) their residential dwelling is to a wind turbine, and the number of turbines (see mitigation measure MM-SE02). Neighbour and host agreements provide the opportunity to enhance positive social effects by providing greater financial security to host and neighbouring landowners, resulting in a high positive social impact.

In addition to landholder and neighbour agreements, implementation of a dedicated Community Benefit Fund will see broader funding and benefits reach the wider community through the funding of community initiatives and programs in the form of sponsorships or grants. The Proponent have developed a community fund for the Project that will provide a minimum of $150,000 annually for the life of the Project to selected local initiatives or projects.

The Proponent is establishing neighbour agreements for the Project which provides monetary compensation to neighbours based on the proximity (distance) of their residential dwelling to wind turbines (see mitigation measure MM-SE02). This would result in a medium residual positive social impact.

17.10 Mitigation measures

Table 17.5 outlines the mitigation measures developed to avoid, minimise, and manage socio-economic impacts from construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Project.

Table 17.8: Socio-economic mitigation measures

MM ID	Mitigation measure	Project phase
MM-SE01	**Community Engagement Strategy** Implementation of an overarching Communications and Engagement Strategy to facilitate ongoing consultation between the proponent and the broader community. The strategy would: • provide an approach for ongoing engagement with the broader community about the long-term benefits and opportunities of the Project. • outline how the Proponent will maintain a stakeholder database throughout the life of the Project to assist identifying and resolving Project issues experienced by stakeholders efficiently, to put stakeholder ease of communication and issue resolution at the heart of stakeholder relations. • outline procedures and mechanisms for the regular distribution of accessible information about or relevant to the Project. • identify opportunities to provide timely, useful and accurate information regularly about construction activities, schedules and milestones. • include measures to notify affected landowners and neighbours well in advance about any specific construction issues with direct impacts on properties (e.g., traffic management, out-of-hours work) and how they can easily reach the Project team with questions. • detail the mechanisms for advising the community in advance of upcoming works (where necessary) and how the Proponent will work with community to mitigate the negative impacts from construction whenever possible. • be reviewed and adapted based on community feedback so that the communications and engagement approach is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the community. The Proponent will continue to implement its Community Engagement Strategy to ensure consistent and consultative engagement with communities throughout the Project's planning, pre-construction, construction and operation phases. The strategy is critical for ensuring social acceptance, strong local partnerships and overall, more successful and sustainable Project outcomes.	All phases
MM-SE02	**Shared Benefits Strategy** The Proponent will develop and implement a Shared Benefits Strategy that establishes an approach to proactively and purposefully share the rewards of the Project with local communities. The strategy will include three main components: 1. A dedicated Community Enhancement Plan, focussed on the funding of wider community initiatives or programs in the form of sponsorships or grants at the local and regional level. 2. A Neighbours Benefit Plan, focussed on the needs and interests of the Project's closest neighbours. 3. An Aboriginal Participation Plan (refer to mitigation measure MM-SE05), to ensure that the impacts on the Gunditjmara community and the Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation can be appropriately and formally responded to and prioritised.	All phases

MM ID	Mitigation measure	Project phase
MM-SE03	**Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy** The Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy will directly address and respond to the social impacts and opportunities for the Project's construction workforce. The strategy will involve the development and implementation of initiatives that would proactively enable the maximisation of local employment and sourcing for the Project's construction and operational needs. The strategy will include: • A Local Employment, Procurement and Training Plan. • Actionable targets with associated responsibilities, including mechanisms to involve local stakeholders in the plan's development and implementation. • Requirements for the provision of information in the pre-construction phase relating to the Project's construction activities. • Mechanisms for local businesses, job seekers and services to register their capabilities and interest in working with the Project, to be widely shared within the study area. The strategy will aim to: • Employ local residents preferentially where they have the required skills and experience, and demonstrate a cultural fit with the organisation. • Purchase local non-labour inputs to production preferentially where local producers can be cost and quality competitive. • Include a code of conduct for construction works with regard to behaviour in the contractor induction program.	Construction
MM-SE04	**Workforce Accommodation Management Plan** A Workforce Accommodation Management Plan will be developed in consultation with the Glenelg Shire Council (GSC) and implemented to manage the incoming construction workforce required for construction of the Project. The plan will be dependent on the number of incoming workers and their staging and will therefore be developed in accordance with the Local Participation and Social Procurement Plan (see mitigation measure MM-SE03). The Workforce Accommodation Management Plan will involve: • Engagement with relevant accommodation service providers, including caravan park providers. • Identification of measures to ensure there is sufficient accommodation for the Project workforce during all stages of development. • Consideration of cumulative impacts of workforce accommodation associated with other users, sectors/industries or development projects in the area. • Investigation of options for prioritising the employment of local workers. • Development of a program to monitor and review the effectiveness of the accommodation measures during construction and decommissioning. The following measures will be included in the Workforce Accommodation Management Plan: • Dispersion of workers across multiple locations/towns and across numerous providers. • Sourcing of long-term accommodation (with confirmation of long-term rates) as early as possible in the lead up to construction and decommissioning. • Consideration of the need for additional housing to support the influx of construction workers, for example through a temporary workers village or collaboration with local housing providers and local government. • Facilitation of an advertising campaign at the completion of the construction phase to encourage people to return to tourist accommodation. Information regarding employment and population level change will be provided early to GSC and relevant State Government agencies to facilitate early community infrastructure provision responses.	Construction

MM ID	Mitigation measure	Project phase
MM-SE05	**Aboriginal Participation Plan** The Proponent will develop and implement an Aboriginal Participation Plan which will aim to: • Work closely with the Gunditj Mirring and broader Gunditjmara community to better understand and respond to the Project's impacts and consequences on cultural values and Native Title rights holders of the Project Area and surrounds. • Provide strategies to enhance benefits to the broader Gunditjmara community and other Indigenous occupants of the social locality; develop targeted workforce, training and accommodation strategies (where suitable); and be supported by an Aboriginal engagement process. • To ensure comprehensiveness and a holistic understanding of cultural values in the region, the Plan will aim to encapsulate all Gunditjmara interests and priorities, to most appropriately set mutually agreed arrangements for working together. This will capture the findings from the cultural values assessment prepared by Gunditjmara which has focused on engagement with Gunditjmara to understand the Gunditj Mirring (Country) of the Project Area and its cultural values. Refer also to the mitigation measures relating to the protection of cultural values (MM-AH).	All phases
MM-SE06	**Complaint Investigation and Response Plan and Complaints Register** The Complaint Investigation and Response Plan will: • Respond to all aspects of the construction and operation of the wind energy facility. • Be prepared in accordance with AS/NZS 10002:2014 *Guidelines for complaint management in organisations.* Include a process to investigate and resolve complaints (different processes may be required for different types of complaints). Before development starts, a Complaints Register will be established which records: • the complainant's name and address (if provided), including (for noise complaints) any applicable property reference • a receipt number for each complaint, which must be communicated to the complainant • the time and date of the incident, and the prevailing weather and operational conditions at the time of the incident • a description of the complainant's concerns, including (for a noise complaint) the potential occurrence of special audible characteristics • the process for investigating the complaint, and the outcome of the investigation, including the actions taken to resolve the complaint.	Construction and Operation

17.11 Conclusion

A SIA and EIA were conducted to gain an understanding of the socio-economic baseline conditions of the Project and surrounding region and to identify potential socio-economic impacts and benefits associated with the Project. Social impacts are changes which may occur or which are perceived to occur to communities, because of the Project, to one or more of their quality and way of life, health, safety and wellbeing, livelihoods or economic prospects, access to cultural resources, community services, infrastructure, and social values. They can be perceptual or physical and can be felt by individuals, families, social groups, workplaces, and other segments of the community.

Construction and decommissioning of the Project would result in a temporary population increase which has potential to impact on access to short term accommodation, recreational areas, and local infrastructure and services. Construction and decommissioning works may also disrupt existing land uses, including agricultural operations on host properties, and generate amenity, recreation, and visual impacts on the local area, affecting how people experience their surrounds and sense of place. Residual impacts associated with construction and decommissioning of the Project would be low with the implementation of mitigation. Conversely, the temporary population increase during construction works could also generate induced economic impacts, whereby construction employees with an income from the Project spend money at local businesses (e.g. retail or hospitality).

The perceived reduction in rural property values associated with land, houses, or property adjacent to, or within eyesight of the Project's infrastructure, was considered by some stakeholders as detrimental to people's livelihood and their futures. However, research indicates that there are no statistically relevant correlations between wind farms and property values, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, only marginal economic impacts would result from easement acquisition for the transmission line over the medium-to-long term once compensation arrangements have been accounted for. Majority of the transmission line is located underneath Boiler Swamp Road, which further reduces potential economic impacts on private landholdings. Operation of the Project would also result in visual changes to the landscape, which may affect the local tourism industry and people's sense of place and attachment to the area. Residual impacts associated with operation of the Project would be low with the implementation of mitigation.

Potential social benefits on local tourism have also been identified, where the Project may actually increase tourism in the area by becoming a new attraction for visitors. The Shared Benefits Strategy to be implemented by the Proponent will include plans to partner with local tourism providers to promote Portland and surrounds as a green energy tourist destination, as well as support eco-tourism ventures in Nelson and the surrounding region.

The most significant social benefits associated with the Project include provision of training and upskilling for local people and local employment and procurement opportunities, which would lead to enhanced human and economic capital. An estimated 350 employees would be required to construct the Project, with close to 253 full-time workers required during the two-year construction period, 52 of which are expected to be apprentices and trainees. There is strong and consistent evidence that the provision of apprenticeship and trainee opportunities during construction would benefit the individuals involved by increasing their probability of employment and their expected hourly weekly wage rate in subsequent years. The Proponent will also implement a Shared Benefits Strategy to ensure the rewards of the Project are proactively and purposefully shared with local communities.

Construction of the Project would help support businesses in the Glenelg LGA and across the State more broadly, with the potential to generate up to $164.8 million for the Glenelg LGA and up to $659.3 million for the State of Victoria (assuming 25 % employment from the study area). Operation of the Project has potential to generate up to $49.9 million for the Glenelg LGA, and up to $62.3 million for the State of Victoria.

The following strategies and plans will be implemented to mitigate and manage potential adverse impacts and to enhance beneficial outcomes of the Project:

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Shared Benefit Strategy
- Aboriginal Partnership Plan
- Local Participation and Social Procurement Strategy
- Workforce Accommodation Management Plan.

It is therefore considered that the Project is capable of satisfying the relevant land use and socio-economic evaluation objective specified in the EES Scoping Requirements, to avoid and minimise adverse effects on the socio-economic fabric of the region, local community and infrastructure, and to neighbouring landowners.

NEOEN

Melbourne

Level 7
99 King Street
Melbourne, VIC 3000

P. 1800 966 206
E. contact@kentbruckgreenpowerhub.com.au

umwelt
Environmental & Social Consultants

Melbourne

Suite 2, Level 27
530 Collins Street
Melbourne 3000

P. 1300 793 267
E. info@umwelt.com.au
W. umwelt.com.au