Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Boorolong Wind Farm

28 July 2025

SQUADRON ENERGY
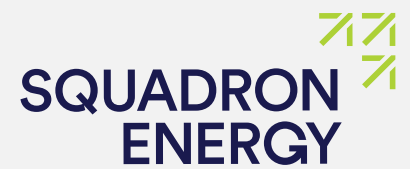
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Revision Control

Revision	Date	Issue	Author	Reviewed	Approved	Signature
1	22/11/23	Draft	SN/KM			-
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6	28/7/25	Final/Issued	HF	KO/DA	KE/TM	*[signature]*

Document Review

Document to be reviewed and updated every 12 months or as required by the project team.

Confidentiality

Disclaimer

Contents

1 Overview

Squadron Energy is committed to genuine, proactive and meaningful engagement with the community, developing long-term relationships and maintaining open lines of communication.

1.1 About Squadron Energy

Squadron Energy (SQE) is the leading renewable energy company that develops, operates and owns renewable energy assets in Australia. It will be the biggest single contributor to helping Australia meet its 2030 target of 82% renewable energy.

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

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

1.2 Purpose of this plan

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been developed for the Boorolong Wind Farm (BOWF). It outlines SQE's understanding of the communities surrounding the project and our approach to community and stakeholder engagement. The plan also outlines the project's potential impacts and provides examples of opportunities that could be developed in consultation with local partners and communities depending on need.

Table 1: Key terminology

Term	Description
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
BOWF	Boorolong Wind Farm
CEC	Clean Energy Council
DPHI	NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
DCCEEW (NSW)	NSW Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water
DCCEEW (Cth)	Australian Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EnergyCo	Energy Corporation of NSW
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	Local Government Area
NEM	National Energy Market
NEREZ	New England Renewable Energy Zone
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SSD	State Significant Development
SQE	Squadron Energy
VPA	Voluntary Planning Agreement
WTG	Wind Turbine Generator

1.3   Our approach to stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders vary, and can include host and neighbouring landowners, local communities, community interest groups, First Nations groups, government representatives, industry groups, and media among others. Our approach is multi-faceted, to ensure comprehensive engagement across all groups, utilising the skills of our various teams. Landowners and hosts will most likely be engaging directly with project teams. Broader stakeholder groups may be engaging with a wider group of staff with expertise, including First Nations engagement, government relations, media and communications and community engagement.

We begin our engagement process by undertaking robust stakeholder mapping and analysis to understand the needs of the community and begin to build relationships from project inception.

This allows us to work collaboratively with communities and stakeholders to identify impacts, mitigate these, and also identify mutually beneficial legacy opportunities in areas where we locate our projects.

1.4 Our values

SQE's values underpin and guide our work.

Table 2: SQE Values

Value		
Humility	Family	Integrity
Courage and Determination	Frugality	Safety
Empowerment	Generating Ideas	Stretch Targets
Enthusiasm		

1.5 Enquiries and complaints

Throughout the project lifecycle, stakeholders and members of the community have the opportunity to contact SQE via the project specific email address and phone number listed below.

The project team will respond to and resolve all complaints and enquiries as soon as possible. SQE tracks complaints, enquiries and action items.

Project Manager: Kristy Old

Email: boorolongwind@squadronenergy.com

Phone: 0483 923 676

Our complaints management procedure outlines how we will manage any complaints.

1.6 Government and industry guidelines

This plan has been prepared considering the following:

- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), (2018), Spectrum of Engagement (currently under review)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), (September 2007)
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), (February 2023), Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), (March 2024), Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), (November 2024), Wind Energy Guideline- Guidance for State Significant Wind Energy Development
- Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), (November 2024), Renewable Energy Planning Framework
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), (November 2020), NSW Electricity Strategy
- Office of Energy and Climate Change, (September 2022), Renewable Energy Sector Board's Plan

Our engagement approach adheres to guidelines from two key organisations, the Clean Energy Council, and the International Association of Public Participation.

1.6.1 Clean Energy Council

The Clean Energy Council has prepared Community Engagement Guidelines (CEC, 2018) which outline four principles which underpin best practice community engagement. In addition to incorporating our company

values in our engagement with the community, SQE is committed to these best practice principles of openness, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and accountability.

We also reference CEC's document, A Guide to Benefit Sharing Options for Renewable Energy Projects. SQE is also a signatory to the CEC's Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Developments.

The Best Practice Charter is a set of voluntary commitments by Clean Energy Council members to engage respectfully with the communities in which they plan and operate projects, to be sensitive to environmental and cultural values and to make a positive contribution to the regions in which they operate.

The Clean Energy Council has published annual reports which disclose how signatories are engaging respectfully with the communities they operate in. SQE's annual report for 2024 is available here.

1.6.2   International Association of Public Participation

Our approach to engagement is also informed by the Public Participation Spectrum developed by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). The IAP2 Spectrum outlines levels of engagement to suit varying degrees of impacts in the community.

Figure 1: IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Increasing impact on the decision

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and／or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and／or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

1.7   Stakeholder engagement objectives

Squadron Energy is committed to undertaking genuine and meaningful community and stakeholder engagement and consultation for the project. Success is critical to earning and maintaining social licence within the community. The communication and engagement objectives for the project are to:

- seek feedback from the local community regarding the proposed project and integrate this feedback into the project planning and design as far as possible

- keep the community informed about the project, its likely impacts, and likely benefits, through the provision of early, accurate and timely information

- understand the potential social impact of the project to inform and implement mitigation measures

- provide multiple opportunities and mechanisms for meaningful engagement with all stakeholders

- ensure that the team developing the project fully understands the local context, including any local impacts that it may have or opportunities that it could provide

- enable a smooth transition from the development to delivery and operational phases, maintaining community links and information.

2 The Project

2.1 Project location

BOWF is situated approximately 15 km northwest of Armidale, within the Northern Tablelands region of NSW, and in the Northern Tablelands state electorate. The project site is located within the Armidale Regional Council Local Government Area (LGA) and the Uralla Shire Council LGA.

The project is located in the New England Renewable Energy Zone (NEREZ), an area identified by the NSW Government as suitable for renewable energy projects due to its strong renewable energy resource potential, proximity to the existing electricity network, and in consideration of potential interactions with existing land uses, including agricultural lands and biodiversity conservation.

BOWF and other projects within the NEREZ will assist in delivering on the objectives for the NSW Government's plan for a reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity future that supports a growing economy (the NSW Electricity Strategy).

The closest operating wind farms are White Rock Wind Farm, owned and operated by CECEP Wind Power and Goldwind, and Sapphire Wind Farm, owned and operated by SQE. New England Solar Farm Stage 1, owned by ACEN Renewables, is approximately 22 km from the project site.

Figure 2: Boorolong Wind Farm location overview
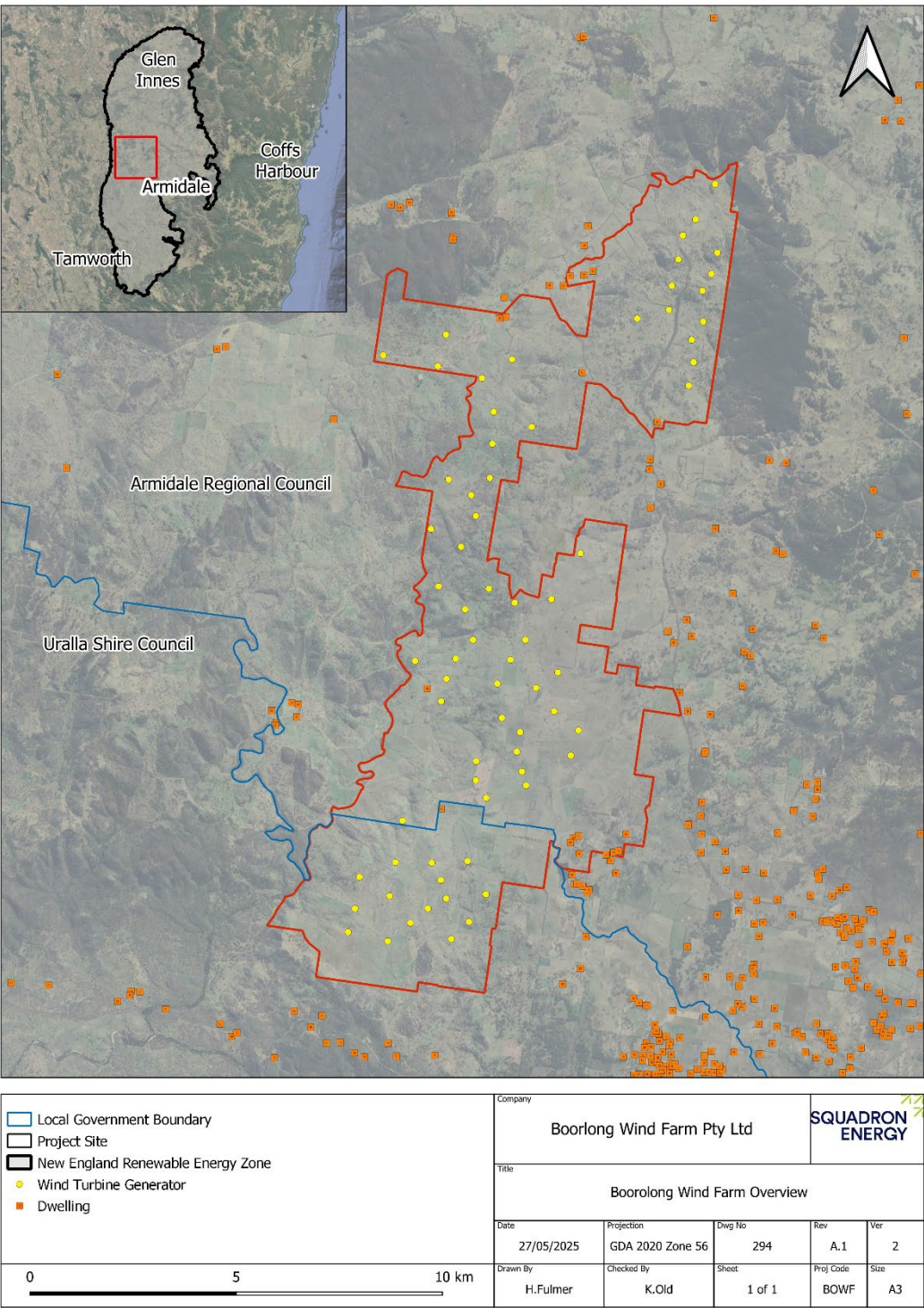
2.2　Project Context

BOWF is classified as a State Significant Development (SSD). As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project, a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) will be prepared in accordance with the Social Impact Assessment Guideline (DPIE, 2023) and associated Technical Supplement which sets mandatory requirements for SIAs conducted in NSW.

2.2.1 New England Renewable Energy Zone

The NSW Government has set out a plan to deliver five Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) within the state. These REZs will play a vital role in delivering affordable, reliable energy generation to help replace NSW's existing power stations as they come to their scheduled end of operational life. Energy Corporation NSW (EnergyCo) is the statutory authority responsible for leading the delivery of these REZs. The New England Renewable Energy Zone (NEREZ) was formally declared on 17 December 2021. The NEREZ will unlock 8 gigawatts of new network capacity (EnergyCo, 2022).

A REZ involves the coordinated development of new grid infrastructure in energy rich areas to connect multiple renewable energy generators (such as solar and wind farms) in the same location. The designation of a REZ is intended to result in the development of additional capacity for renewable electricity generation, producing low-cost power for Australian homeowners and businesses, driving down carbon emissions within the electricity generation sector, and creating job growth and employment opportunities through facilitating significant investment into the regions.

Further information about the NEREZ, including interactive maps and project updates are available on EnergyCo's website New England Renewable Energy Zone EnergyCo.

2.3 Project overview

BOWF will generate renewable energy to supply more than 200,000 Australian homes. The project will include the construction and operation of wind turbine generators (WTGs), battery storage, and associated infrastructure including operation and maintenance buildings, substations, civil works and electrical infrastructure. BOWF will also complete targeted road network upgrades to facilitate the delivery of wind turbine components to the site as required.

The project site encompasses the localities of Boorolong and Dumaresq along the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range. The dominant land use is for agriculture, mostly cattle and sheep grazing. The landscape comprises rolling foothills and plateaus at approximately 900-1250m above sea level. The project site is located within the New England Tablelands IBRA Bio-region.

BOWF will be designed through a comprehensive process that incorporates community and stakeholder feedback and the findings of environmental and social studies to maximise the positive social, economic and environmental outcomes, while minimising adverse impacts.

2.3.1 Indicative project timeline

Key project milestones along with indicatives timeframes for the development of BOWF project are outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Indicative project timeline

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Early feasibility studies - landowner discussions commence	Key preliminary constraint studies and initial community engagement	Project enters the planning system - DPHI sets requirements	EIS submission and exhibition	State and Commonwealth development approval	Construction expected to begin	Wind farm operations commence
2020	2022	2025	2026	2027	2029	2032

2.4   Community overview

BOWF is located within the rural towns of Boorolong and Dumaresq. Adjoining communities include the rural residential areas of Black Mountain to the east and Invergowrie and Saumarez Ponds to the south. The nearest regional centre is Armidale, which is approximately 15 km from the project.

The median age for these localities ranges from 42 to 47. The local and regional areas have a slightly older average population than the NSW median of 39. This is typically the result of young adults (20-34 years) leaving regional areas to pursue tertiary education and employment opportunities.

Table 3: State Suburb data 2021 Australian Census

State Suburb	Boorolong	Dumaresq	Invergowrie	Saumarez Ponds	Black Mountain
People (no.)	71	80	794	416	291
Male (%)	53.4	47.4	50.5	48.3	55.4
Female (%)	46.6	52.6	49.5	51.7	44.6
Median Age	46	42	43	46	47
Aboriginal residence (no.)	3	6	35	5	7

Two LGAs make up the regional area; Armidale Regional LGA and Uralla Shire LGA. 7.6% of residents in the Armidale Regional LGA and 9.6% of residents in the Uralla Shire LGA, identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander. These percentages are higher than the NSW average of 3.4%. Table 4 provides the 2021 Australian Census data for the Armidale Regional LGA and Uralla LGA.

Table 4: Local Government Area data

LGA	Armidale Regional	Uralla Shire
People (no.)	29,124	5,971
Male (%)	48.1	48.3
Female (%)	51.9	51.7
Median Age	37	47
Aboriginal residence (no.)	2,205	569
Australian Born (%)	75.1	85.4

Source: ABS, Census 2021

The regional area has a total labour force of approximately 16,139 people. Agriculture is the primary industry of employment across the local areas of Boorolong and Dumaresq. For the larger community across Armidale Regional Council and Uralla Shire Council, agriculture, education and training and healthcare are the primary areas of employment. (ABS 2021).

3 Stakeholder identification and analysis

3.1 Stakeholder identification process

At the beginning of the project, we identify all stakeholders who would be affected by the project and compile demographic insights about the local community. This enables us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders and communities surrounding our projects. To gain this understanding, we use census data and may undertake local community research to inform our understanding of local community characteristics. During this process, we also identify the following:

Stakeholder types

- relevant political representatives at all three levels of government

- local businesses and the types of industries in the area

- First Nations groups in the area and the broader region

- local print media publications

- other local publications, such as community newsletters

- local radio and television media

- council list of community groups

- government offices present in the area

- emergency services nearest to the project

Other considerations

- sensitive receivers

- any significant historical or recurring events in the area.

SQE team members also frequently visit the area to understand the local community and confirm and expand on the information found during the project feasibility stage.

3.2 Stakeholder overview

The key stakeholder groups identified for BOWF are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Identified stakeholders

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders
Host landholders	landholders with the potential to host WTGs and/or project infrastructure
Neighbouring landholders	neighbouring dwellings within 8 km of the potential turbine locations

Communities within the Social Locality
 	
(The term 'social locality' is similar to 'Area of social influence' that is commonly used in Social Impact Assessment practice)
	• local community:
	   – Boorolong
	   – Dumaresq
	   – Invergowrie
	   – Saumarez Ponds
	   – Armidale
	   – Guyra
	   – Black Mountain

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders

Government – State	• Crown Lands
	• Department of Customer Service – Telco Authority
	• Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)
	   − Environment Protection Authority (EPA)
	• Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW), including:
	   − Biodiversity Conservation and Science (BCS)
	   − Heritage
	• Department of Primary Industries (DPI), including:
	   − Agriculture
	   − Fisheries
	   − Biosecurity
	• Department of Communities and Justice, including:
	   − Fire and Rescue
	   − Rural Fire Service
	• Regional NSW – Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG)
	• Transport for NSW (Transport)
	• TransGrid
	• Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo)
	• WaterNSW
	• NSW Renewable Energy Sector Board
	• National Parks and Wildlife Services

Government - Federal	• Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) • Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) • Department of Defence • Airservices Australia • Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) • Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) • Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)
Local Council	• Armidale Regional Council • Uralla Shire Council • Inverell Shire Council (adjacent) • Tamworth Regional Council (adjacent) • Walcha Shire Council (adjacent)
Government - elected representatives	• Federal Member for New England, Hon Barnaby Joyce MP • NSW Member for Northern Tablelands, Brendan Moylan MP
Community interest groups and community services	• Armidale Dumaresq Lions Club • Armidale Duval Lions Club • Armidale Lions Club • Armidale Central Rotary Club • Guyra Lions Club • Uralla Lions Club • Country Women's Association of NSW – Armidale Branch • Country Women's Association of NSW – Guyra Branch • Guyra Men's Shed • Armidale Men's Shed

Stakeholder group	Stakeholders
	• PCYC Armidale • Responsible Energy Development for New England (RED4NE) • Batting for Boorolong (B4B) • Southern New England Landcare • New England Northwest Landcare Network
First Nations Organisations	• NSW Aboriginal Land Council • Armidale Aboriginal Land Council • Guyra Local Aboriginal Land Council • Northern Region, NSW Aboriginal Land Council • Iwata Aboriginal Education Corporation • Anaiwan Traditional Owners • Newara Aboriginal Corporation • Armidale and Region Aboriginal Cultural Centre & Keeping Place (ACCKP) • Armidale Regional Aboriginal Advisory Committee • UNE Indigenous Students Association • Anaiwan Coalition of RAPs
Industry and local business	• New England Chamber of Commerce • Armidale Business Chamber • Guyra and District Chamber of Commerce • Uralla Shire Business Chamber • NSW Farmers Association • LM2 Metals (Exploration Licence holder, intersects project site)

3.3   First Nations engagement

SQE takes a place-based approach to engagement, understanding that different communities and regions have diverse cultural practices, histories and stories. We collaborate with First Nations stakeholders to identify opportunities and challenges during project planning and development.

SQE has a dedicated First Nations engagement team. The First Nations engagement team members work with project teams to provide guidance on culturally sensitive engagement and to develop a tailored approach to engaging with First Nations stakeholders.

SQE will engage with First Nations stakeholders in accordance with the relevant guidelines including:

• First Nations Guidelines, Increasing income and employment opportunities from electricity infrastructure projects (NSW Government, 2022)

• Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Heritage in NSW (NSW Government, 2011)

• The Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales (NSW Government, 2010) and,

• The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010 (NSW Government, 2010).

SQE:

• carries out detailed stakeholder mapping to understand all representative groups in the region

• seeks to build relationships as early as possible with First Nations stakeholders prior to any formal engagement and consultation process

• is informed about cultural practices and protocols which may impact engagement methods and timelines

- engages comprehensively with indigenous communities as early as possible, in a way that is meaningful, suits the ways in which they want to be engaged and the frequency of that engagement.

As part of the Social Impact Assessment Process, SQE works with First Nations stakeholders to:

- apply relevant protocols for Aboriginal knowledge

- acknowledge and assess both tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage

- engage traditional owners or custodians who can speak for Country

- avoid conflict between engagement activities and cultural practices

- ensure that engagement is undertaken by people with appropriate skills and experience.

The SQE team released their Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan in April 2024. The plan includes multiple items that will review and measure SQE's engagement with First Nations stakeholders.

3.4   Stakeholder engagement activities

Table 6 provides a snapshot of the key stakeholder engagement activity completed to date.

SQE has a dedicated Stakeholder Engagement and Community Relations team. These team members work with project teams to provide guidance on community and stakeholder engagement and to develop a tailored approach to engaging with communities and stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement is ongoing during the lifecycle of the project and the project team will continue to engage with the community, regularly through face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails.

Table 6: Stakeholder engagement activities

Date	Engagement activities
Since September 2020	Host landowner meetings
July 2022	Project website launch
Since June 2022	Neighbour meetings
July 2022	Community survey (2 months)
Since June 2022	Community newsletters (available on project website)
September 2022	Community drop-in session
March to July 2022	Host landowners visit Sapphire Wind Farm (operational SQE wind site)
Since January 2023	Community sponsorship program
February 2023	Stall at the Armidale & New England Show
Since February 2023	Engagement with Batting for Boorolong (B4B)
Since April 2023	Engagement with EnergyCo
November 2023	Neighbours and community members visit Sapphire Wind Farm
July 2024	Stall at the Farming Futures Expo
August 2024	Introduction of new Project Manager
September 2024	First Nations engagement Meeting with Batting 4 Boorolong committee
February 2025	Group meeting with host landowners Meeting with Uralla Council and Mayor
March 2025	Meeting with Armidale Mayor Second community survey (2.5 months)

Date	Engagement activities
	New England Renewable Energy Careers Expo
April 2025	Neighbour meetings

3.5   Stakeholder engagement by development stage

Table 7: Stakeholder engagement activities by project stage

Project Stage	Engagement Objective	Engagement Activities	Target Stakeholders
Site selection	• identify local landholders within the potential project area • introduce the project concept and obtain initial feedback about the prospect of a windfarm development • seek agreements regarding access for further project feasibility investigations	• phone calls • face-to-face visits • introductory letters • gather contact details for future communications	• potential host landowners • potential neighbouring landowners
Project feasibility	• engage with landholders about the proposed project area • introduce the wind farm development process • identify community values, potential constraints and opportunities in the project area and inform the design process • identify and appropriately respond to community concerns	• face-to-face visits • one-on-one meetings and visuals tools to help inform discussions • email or letter updates	• potential host landowners • potential neighbouring landowners • local councils • Government-elected representatives
Planning and Approvals – **(Scoping Phase, EIS Phase)**	• maintain communication channels for enquiries and information • continue to proactively gather feedback to inform the project design • identify and appropriately respond to community concerns • keep communications flowing to update the community • collect data and insights and prepare the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) • inform community of a formal opportunity of a formal opportunity to express their views on the proposed project • educate community regarding outcomes of the EIS and technical studies	as above for project feasibility phase, plus: • establish and maintain project website • community information sessions • community surveys • project briefings for local councils and government agencies • exploration of community partnerships	• all stakeholder groups

Project Stage	Engagement Objective	Engagement Activities	Target Stakeholders
	• inform the community of the progress of the approvals process and outcomes • educate community regarding the project-specific benefit sharing process		
Construction	• reduce community concerns by open dialogue and continuing to acknowledge and respond to issues in a timely manner • demonstrate commitment to the wellbeing of the community • avoid, minimise, and remediate impacts	as above for project feasibility phase, plus: • maintain and update website • complaints management mechanism • community partnerships • Construction Community Liaison Management Plan	• all stakeholder groups
Commissioning and operation	• be an active member of the community • strengthen collaboration through partnerships • build a sense of community pride in a well-run wind farm	as above for construction phase, plus: • operational Community Engagement Plan • evaluation of engagement and improvements as required	• all stakeholder groups
Decommissioning	• communicate decommissioning and rehabilitation process	• as above for commissioning and operation, plus: • host landholder and neighbour briefings	• host landowners • neighbours • local councils • state and Commonwealth government agencies • First Nations groups

4   Potential issues and opportunities

4.1   Potential social impacts

Table 8 summarises the potential impacts to people who are considered applicable to the project and the social impact categories that they may align to. The table also includes reference to typical project issues that may be identified during consultation that are considered in the EIS as part of other technical assessments (e.g. noise, air quality).

The list of potential social issues is not exhaustive and should be modified and enhanced as the Project progresses through the SIA process.

For the purpose of this SEP, the social impact categories outlined in the Social Impact Assessment Guideline (DPIE, February 2023) have been adopted.

Table 8: Potential impacts to the community and stakeholders

Impact	Potential EIS issue	Social impact category
Changes to the aesthetic value and amenity affecting surroundings and way of life	• Visual	• Surroundings • Way of life
Increase in dust and noise during construction causing a decline in social amenity, health, or way of life for host landholders and nearby neighbours	• Dust • Noise	• Way of life • Surroundings • Health and Wellbeing
Operational noise generated by WTGs causing a decline in social amenity, health, or way of life for host landholders and nearby neighbours	• Noise	• Way of life • Surroundings • Health and wellbeing
Changes to existing land use resulting in a disadvantage to personal property (negative) for nearby neighbours	• Economic	• Livelihoods • Health and wellbeing
Distributive equity of economic benefits, between the region and nearby neighbours	• Economic	• Way of life • Community
Enhanced community wellbeing from job opportunities and community investment	• Economic	• Way of life • Community
Changes to the existing land use resulting in the loss of native flora and fauna change how people experience their environment	• Biodiversity	• Surroundings
Impacts on people's access to roads and other services, especially during construction Potential improvement in access during operations for landowners and emergency services	• Traffic and transport	• Accessibility
Further changes to land use affecting community character resulting in a sense of loss of heritage values	• Heritage	• Culture

Impact	Potential EIS issue	Social impact category
Changes to land use during construction, affecting the availability of land for livestock, impacting livelihoods	• Land use management	• Livelihoods
Potential reduction in security caused by unauthorised access and/or 'strangers' accessing land during both construction and operations	• Access management	• Surroundings
Lack of trust in engagement approach affecting people's ability to feel they have the power to make an informed decision or influence project design	• Community engagement	• Decision making systems
Reduced community cohesion related to tensions between neighbours who benefit from host agreements, near neighbour agreements or benefit sharing arrangements, (opposing views and unequal financial benefits)	• Community engagement	• Health and wellbeing • Community
An influx of construction workers into nearby townships may change the composition of local community, and so change the community feel of the town, it may also increase demand for local social and community infrastructure (e.g. health and community services) and may constrain the availability of housing for residents and tourism accommodation	• Economic	• Way of life • Accessibility • Livelihoods
Perceived impacts on water and impacts to water source	• Land use management	• Surroundings • Culture
Stress and anxiety related to change in the area and the proposed project	• Community engagement	• Health and wellbeing
Impacts to human physical and mental health, including from electromagnetic fields, low frequency noise and infrasound, shadow flicker (sunlight and moonlight as turbines rotate) and blade glint	• Community engagement	• Health and wellbeing
Biosecurity concerns with potential for the introduction of weeds from earth moving machinery impacting local farmers	• Land use management	• Surroundings
Potential for interaction with aviation services	• Land use management	• Way of life
Stabilisation of local populations due to the economic stimulus provided by the project	• Economic	• Community • Livelihoods
Project-provided Community Sponsorship Fund could improve	• Economic • Community engagement	• Way of life • Community

Impact	Potential EIS issue	Social impact category
community wellbeing and social cohesion through improved local service provision and targeted support to the community		• Livelihoods
Employment opportunities for First Nations stakeholders during the assessment and approval process	• Economic	• Culture • Livelihoods
Employment opportunities for local and regional workforce. This may include for young people, apprentices and trainees. Opportunities for local contractors across project supply chains	• Economic	• Way of life • Livelihood

5 Potential community benefit sharing

As the ultimate owner and operator of our projects, SQE is committed to being a positive contributor to the communities where we work. We share the benefits of our projects by supporting communities over the long term. We do this through a range of opportunities such as community benefit funds, neighbour agreements, voluntary planning agreements, community sponsorships and grant initiatives.

We recognise that each community is different and through partnerships with Councils and local groups, and consultation and engagement with the community, we tailor benefits at each project to make a positive lasting contribution to each region.

As part of our stakeholder engagement process, we identify potential community benefit sharing opportunities based on community needs. We understand that each community is different, and not all community benefit sharing initiatives will be suitable. By engaging early, we can develop benefit sharing offerings alongside the community, resulting in better uptake and more community buy-in.

SQE strives to be an active participant in building community capacity at the local level and across our full project portfolio. We do this in many ways, as outlined in Table 9 with examples of SQE community benefit sharing across our projects. These examples are a starting point for engagement, allowing communities to understand what has been possible in other areas. We use the examples to prompt discussions and provide confidence that SQE is the right partner. They have been developed with communities to meet specific, localised, community needs, and some are used on more than one project if appropriate. They may be replicated, or they may be prompts for communities to identify their own opportunities and approaches for collaboration and long-term benefit.

Table 9: Community benefit sharing

Initiative	Description
Community sponsorship program	Each of our projects has a community sponsorship program which provides funds or in-kind support to community organisations and events in the local project area. Additional information regarding this program can be found on our website: https://www.squadronenergy.com/. Local community groups are encouraged to apply for sponsorship via SQE's Sponsorship page on our website. Details about BOWF's previous sponsorships has been included in Appendix A.
Voluntary Planning Agreements	We enter into voluntary planning agreements (VPAs) for our projects with local councils. A planning agreement can help deliver or fund public infrastructure, amenities, and services for the benefit of the public within the council areas in which we operate. It may include a community benefit fund component.

Initiative	Description
	We work closely with councils to develop the terms of the planning agreements, which include a committed value of 1.5% of the Capital Investment Value (CIV) of the project to be constructed. This is determined following our final investment decision. If the project is within multiple Local Government Areas (LGAs), the funds are divided on an agreed proportion, such as the number of turbines within each LGA.
Community Co investment	We rolled out Australia's first, large-scale, public, community investment into a utility-scale wind farm, via our Sapphire Wind Farm Community Co-Investment scheme. We are planning to extend the program to the other regions where we are developing projects over time. Community co-investment offers residents in the region the opportunity to participate in and benefit from investing in Australia's transition to renewable energy.
Telecommunications	Reliable connectivity is a challenge for many rural and regional communities across Australia. We recently completed a trial program to improve internet connectivity at one of our wind farm development sites in NSW. Following its success, we are now rolling out a connectivity improvement program for residents near our Uungula Wind Farm project. The program will boost network coverage through a fixed wireless network for landowners and neighbours, making stronger network coverage accessible at city-based prices. We are also piloting ag-tech grants as part of the program to enhance landowner's access to innovative agricultural technology to support their farming operations. We are looking at how we can roll out the program to our other wind farm projects where it's feasible, in consultation with nearby landowners and communities.
Employment and business opportunities	Early engagement in the development process can identify economic and employment opportunities. We operate and own renewable energy assets in local communities, creating jobs for 30+ years. For example, workforces during construction can peak as high as 500 in civil works, structural works, electrical works, wind turbine generation, battery and commissioning. Our Regional Economic Development team helps us to reach economic development and workforce targets and generate local content. For example, mandating of local content targets on the Bango and Crudine Ridge wind farms. Our tender assessment and contractor selection criteria includes weighting to favour local suppliers and businesses.
Training and skills development	Engaging with local communities allows us to identify opportunities for skills development. For example, Squadron Energy is collaborating with TAFE NSW to create and deliver a digital Microskill course: "Introduction to the wind energy industry." We are providing subject matter experts to create the lessons, and the course will be available to people interested in upskilling or cross skilling into the renewable energy sector.
First Nations employment	SQE is leading the industry on First Nations employment, with a First Nations engagement team focusing on creating pathways to employment and business opportunities. At the Uungula Wind Farm, we are working with an industry partner to fund and deliver two trainee wind turbine technicians, providing them with more than 30 years of employment opportunity. Engagement with local First Nations communities can help us to identify opportunities for First Nations economic development, skills and employment.

6   Review

This plan will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect the progress of the project, and stakeholder engagement activity completed throughout the year. It is not intended for this document to be static, as engagement activity is ongoing.

SQE is committed to continually reviewing and updating our engagement approach to ensure we build long-term and meaningful relationships with the communities that host our wind farms.

Appendix A

BOWF operates a Community Sponsorship Program which provides funds to support to community organisations and events in the local area. Initiatives supported to date include:

Table 10 BOWF community sponsorships

Community group	Application details
Armidale Women's Shelter	community food project
Aboriginal Cultural Centre & Keeping Place	contribution to build a BBQ area
Cultural Camps Aboriginal Corporation	Anaiwan Cultural Camp
New England Regional Art Museum	Wonders of Hinton exhibition
2023 Armidale & New England Show	trade pavilion
The Armidale School	supporting the annual fundraising dinner
Guyra Anglers Club	sponsoring the Gone Fishing Day
Pacific Nomads Rugby	playing kits for the U18 boys' team
University of New England Farming Futures	supporting the careers fair and industry dinner

Squadron Energy is Australia's leading renewable energy company. Proudly Australian owned, our mission is to be a driving force in Australia's transition to a clean energy future by providing green power to our customers.

We develop, operate and own renewable energy assets in Australia, with 1.1 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy in operation and a development pipeline of 20GW.

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

Squadron Energy acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

SQUADRON ENERGY