

# Stakeholder Engagement Plan





## Conargo Wind Farm and BESS

2 April 2024



Final Draft

**Revision Control**

Revision	Date	Issue	Author	Reviewed	Approved	Signature
A	01/08/23	Draft	Project Team	--	--	--
B	28/09/23	Draft	Project Team	--	--	--
C	01/02/24	Final Draft	Project Team	Project Manager	JP	
001	27/03/24	Final	Project Team	Head of Stakeholder and Community Engagement	KE	

**Document Review**

Document to be reviewed and updated every six (6) months or as required by the project team.

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# 1 Overview

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

## 1.1 About SQE

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

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

We are committed to delivering a 14GW development pipeline by 2030, powering the equivalent of six million homes.

This will deliver about one third of the renewable energy required for Australia to meet its 2030 renewable energy target of 82%.

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.

## 1.2 Purpose of this plan

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been developed for the Conargo Wind Farm and Battery. It outlines SQE's approach to community and stakeholder engagement throughout the development phase of the project. When the project progresses into the construction phase, this plan will be reviewed and updated to guide the ongoing stakeholder engagement requirements for the project.

## 1.3 Key terminology

**Table 1: Key Terminology**

Term	Description
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
CEC	Clean Energy Council
DPHI	NSW Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
DCCEEW	NSW 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
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements

Term	Description
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
SSD	State Significant Development
SQE	Squadron Energy
VPA	Voluntary Planning Agreement
WTG	Wind Turbine Generators

## 1.4 Our approach to stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is carried out by the SQE Project team, with input from SQE's Stakeholder Engagement team and supported by SQE's First Nations Engagement team. We consider it important that trusting relationships are developed between the people on the ground who are involved in the Project on a day-to-day basis, and the stakeholders that are part of, and connected to, their local community and region.

We begin with robust stakeholder mapping and analysis to understand the needs of the community and begin to build relationships from project inception.

## 1.5 Our values

SQE's values underpin and guide our work.

**Table 2: Squadron Energy Values**

Value	Description
Humility	Be vulnerable, take risks to trust others.
Family	Support each other, always be kind.
Safety	Look out for your mates and yourself.
Courage and Determination	NEGU – we never ever give up.
Frugality	Think of ways we can do things better, faster, cheaper, safer.
Stretch Targets	Always be uncomfortable with your level of challenge.
Empowerment	Go to your leader for advice, not permission.
Generating Ideas	Always be on the lookout for breakthroughs.
Enthusiasm	Be the most positive person in the room.
Integrity	Do what you say you are going to do.

## 1.6 Enquiries and complaints

During the development phases of the project, 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.

Key stakeholders will be provided with direct contact information and will be consulted on their preferred method of communication. Contact details are:

**Project Manager/Developer:** Jessica Petersen

**Email:** [conargowind@squadronenergy.com](mailto:conargowind@squadronenergy.com)

**Phone:** 0480 019 836

## 1.7 Government and industry guidelines

This plan has been prepared considering the following:

- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), (2018), *Spectrum of Engagement*
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), (September 2007)
- Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE), (February 2023), *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects*
- Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE), (July 2021), *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects*
- Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE), (December 2016), *Wind Energy Guideline for State Significant Wind Energy Development*
- Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE), (November 2023), *Draft Energy Policy Framework*

The focus of our engagement adheres to two key organisational guidelines, the Clean Energy Council, and the International Association of Public Participation.

### 1.7.1 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.

### 1.7.2 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 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 look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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## 1.8 Stakeholder Engagement objectives

Squadron Energy is committed to undertaking genuine and meaningful community and stakeholder engagement and consultation for the project. 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
- identify key stakeholders for further engagement and provide multiple opportunities and mechanisms for meaningful engagement with all stakeholders
- understand the potential social impact of the project to inform and implement mitigation measures
- 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; and
- build and maintain SQE’s social licence within the community.

# 2 The Project

## 2.1 Project Context

The NSW Government has developed a plan (Electricity Strategy and Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap) to deliver a number of Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) within the State of NSW. These REZs will play a vital role in delivering affordable, reliable energy generation to help replace the state’s existing power stations as they come to their scheduled end of operational life.

Energy Corporation of NSW (EnergyCo) is the statutory authority responsible for leading the delivery of REZs.

The NSW South West REZ was formally declared by the Minister for Energy in November 2022. The region was chosen due to its *‘strong renewable energy resource potential, proximity to the existing grid and other*

*considerations of potential interactions with existing land uses including agricultural lands and biodiversity conservation'* (EnergyCo. (n.d.). *South West Renewable Energy Zone*, Apr. 2024).

A REZ involves the coordinated development of new grid infrastructure 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 NSW homeowners and business, 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, including interactive maps and project updates are available on EnergyCo's website; [South West Renewable Energy Zone EnergyCo.](#)

## 2.2 Project overview

The Project includes the installation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a wind farm of up to 53 wind turbine generators, a battery energy storage system, ancillary infrastructure and temporary facilities. The Project could have a generating capacity of approximately 300 MW. The power generated by the Project (from wind turbine generators and released from battery storage) would feed into the electricity grid (NEM) via direct connection to either the existing Transgrid 132 kV Deniliquin – Coleambally transmission line or the proposed VNI West transmission line.

The key components of the project include:

- Up to 53 wind turbine generators, with a blade-tip height of up to 270m and generation capacity of approximately 300 MW
- Battery energy storage system (capacity and type to be determined)
- Permanent ancillary infrastructure including:
  - operation and maintenance compounds
  - substation and switch station
  - internal roads and hardstands
  - transmission lines (underground and overhead cabling)
  - wind monitoring masts
  - telecommunication facilities
  - utility services
- Temporary facilities and activities including:
  - site compounds, laydown and storage areas
  - stockpiling and rock crushing
  - concrete batch plants
  - temporary roads
  - temporary monitoring masts.

## 2.3 Project location

The project is located approximately 9 km east of Conargo within the Edward River Local Government Area (LGA) on Wamba Wamba and Perepa Perepa Country.

The Edward River LGA is located in the Riverina Murray Region of south-western NSW, about 700 kilometres south-west of the Sydney CBD and 300 kilometres north of the Melbourne CBD. The Edward



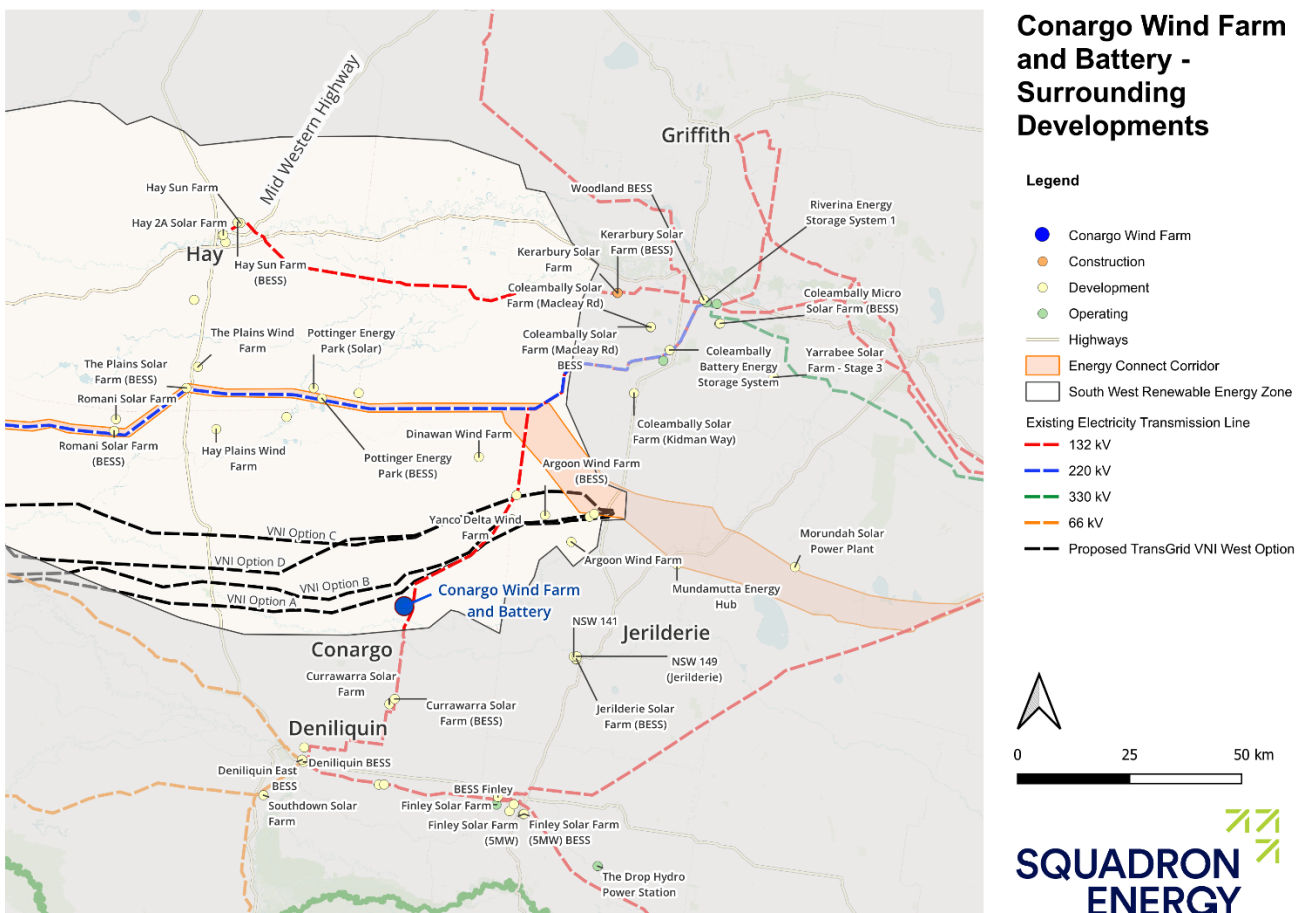
River LGA covers an area of about 8,880km<sup>2</sup> and is bounded by Hay Shire in the north, the Murrumbidgee Council area and Berrigan Shire in the east, and the Murray River Council area in the south and west.

At the 2021 Census, the Edward River LGA and township of Conargo had a population of 8,457 and 117 respectively. The Conargo township is surrounded by the nearby villages of Blighty, Mayrung, Pretty Pine, Wanganella and Booorooban. Residents of Conargo are primarily employed in the agriculture industry (grain sheep or grain beef farming and specialised sheep farming). The nearest population centre is Deniliquin (population of 7,432) which is about 50 km south west of the Project Site.

The project site consists of a total of 19 lots which are privately owned and used for agriculture (grazing and some cropping). The project site is zoned as RU1 Primary Production under the Conargo Local Environmental Plan 2013, as is all surrounding land.

The topography is generally flat with some minor undulations. The project site is located within the Riverina Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) bioregion which is characterised by extensive riverine floodplains with low relief, associated with the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan rivers. Shrublands and associated grasslands predominate. Other types of vegetation include box woodlands, mallee woodlands, native grasslands and wetlands.

The location is well suited to host wind turbine generators due to a reliable wind resource and position within the South West REZ. The project is strategically located in an area identified by the NSW Government as suitable for renewable energy projects and will assist the NSW Government in delivering on the objectives for the Electricity Strategy and the South West REZ.



**Figure 2: Surrounding Projects in the South West REZ**

There are a number of operational (solar) and proposed (wind, solar and battery) renewable projects within the South West REZ, surrounding the project in Figure 2. Approved and proposed renewable energy projects (based on current publicly available information) within 50 kilometres of the project are shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Surrounding renewable energy projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Indicative distance from Project (km)</b>
<b>Currawarra Solar Farm and BESS</b>	SSD-8437	Approved	17
<b>Yanco Delta Wind Farm and BESS</b>	SSD-41743746	Approved	27
<b>Dinawan Wind Farm</b>	SSD-50725708	Planning	33
<b>Argoon Wind Farm and BESS</b>	SSD-64935522	Planning	33
<b>Tarleigh Park Solar Farm and BESS</b>	SSD-8436	Approved	36
<b>Deniliquin East BESS</b>	SSD-61612229	Planning	37
<b>Dinawan Solar Farm and BESS</b>	SSD-50725959	Planning	42
<b>Finley Solar Farm</b>	SSD-8540	Operational	45
<b>Bullawah Wind Farm</b>	SSD-50505215	Planning	45
<b>Pottinger Energy Park (Wind)</b>	SSD-59235464	Planning	47
<b>Southdown Solar Farm</b>	SSD-10458	Planning	49
<b>Pottinger Energy Park (Solar)</b>	SSD-59254709	Planning	50

## 2.4 Indicative project timeline

### Proposed timeline



Figure 2: Proposed project timeline

## 2.5 Project layout

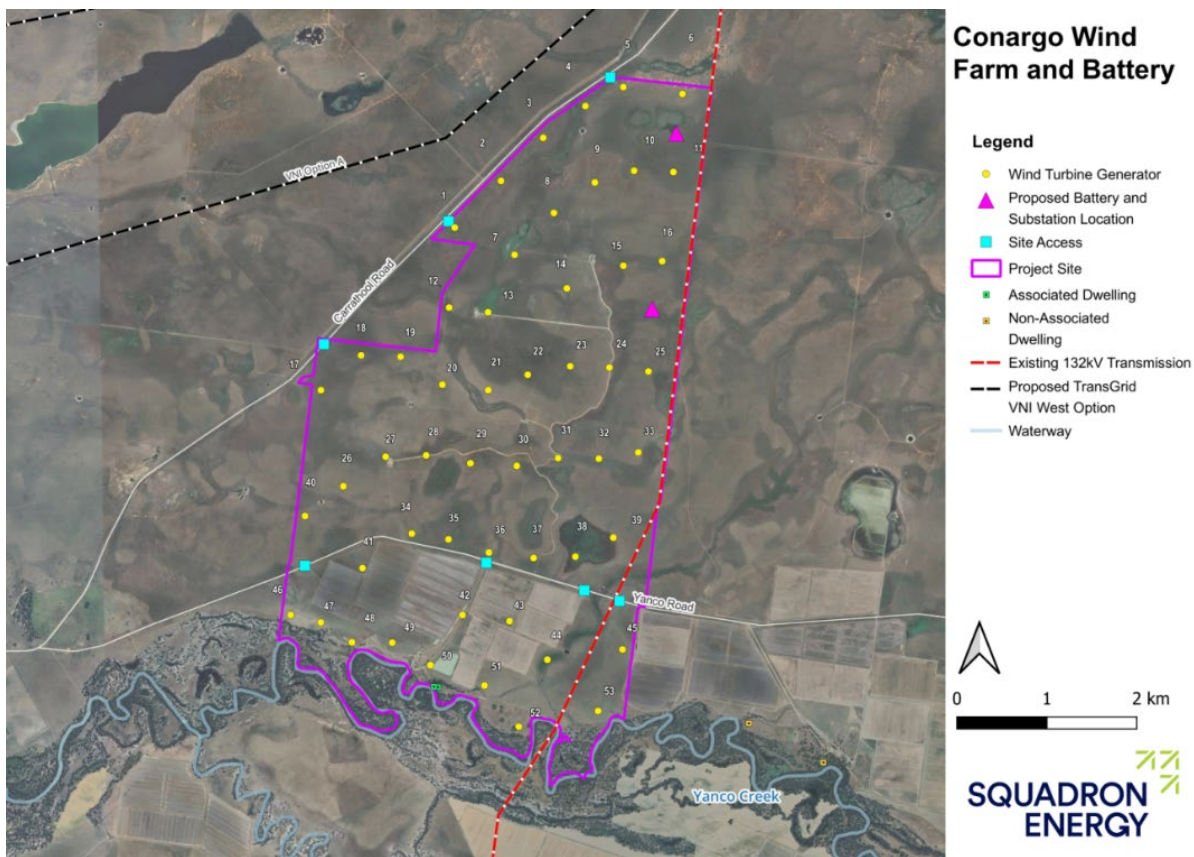


Figure 3: Indicative project layout

## 2.6 Community overview

The communities nearest to Conargo Wind Farm consist of Conargo, Deniliquin, Hartwood and Jerilderie. Conargo is located approximately 13 km to the south west and Deniliquin is 50 km to the south west of the project site. Deniliquin is the largest town of the south western Riverina region, with a range of government and commercial services available to residents. Hartwood is located 36 km to the south east and Jerilderie 67 km to the east of the project site. The median age for these localities ranges from 36 to 49. The NSW median average is 39 and the QLD median average age is 38.

4.8% of residents in the Edward River LGA identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which is higher than the NSW average of 3.4%. The median personal income for the Edward River LGA is \$701, compared with \$813 in broader NSW.

**Table 4: State Suburb data 2021 Australian Census**

State Suburb	Conargo	Deniliquin	Hartwood (2016)	Jerilderie
People (no.)	117	7,432	19	922
Male (%)	59.3	48.6	68.4	51.3
Female (%)	40.7	51.4	31.6	48.7
Median Age	48	47	40	51
Aboriginal residence (no.)	4	397	0	49

**Table 5: Australian Census data for the Edward River LGA**

LGA	Edward River
People (no.)	8,456
Male (%)	49.3
Female (%)	50.7
Median Age	46
Aboriginal residence (no.)	410
Australian Born (%)	43.8

ABS, Census 2021

## 3 Stakeholder identification and analysis

### 3.1 Stakeholder identification process

At the beginning of the project, a thorough process is undertaken to identify our stakeholders and the local community. To gain this understanding, we research:

- relevant political representatives at all three levels of government
- businesses and the type of industry in the area
- census data
- First Nations groups in the area and the broader region
- local print media
- other local publications such as community newsletters
- local radio and television media
- Council list of community groups
- Government offices present in the area

- sensitive receivers such as places of worship, educational facilities, aged care homes or facilities used by people with a disability
- emergency services nearest to the project; and
- any significant historical or recurring events in the area.

The project team also frequently visit the area to understand the local community and attest the information found during the research phase. The project team continue to visit the area regularly as the project progresses.

### 3.2 Stakeholder groups

The key stakeholder groups identified for the Conargo Wind Farm and Battery include:

**Table 6: Identified stakeholders**

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders
<b>Host Landholders</b>	The project is located wholly on freehold land owned as one individual landholding
<b>Neighbouring Landholders</b>	There are 8 neighbouring dwellings within 8km of the project area
<b>Communities within the Social Locality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conargo</li> <li>- Hartwood</li> <li>- Deniliquin</li> <li>- Jerilderie</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Government – State</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Finance, Services, and Innovation – Telco Authority</li> <li>• Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate (BCSD)</li> <li>- Energy Corporation</li> <li>- Water Group</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) including Crown Lands</li> <li>• Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture and Fisheries (DPI)</li> <li>• Environment Protection Authority (EPA)</li> <li>• Fire and Rescue NSW</li> <li>• Heritage NSW</li> <li>• NSW Rural Fire Service</li> <li>• Regional NSW – Mining, Exploration and Geoscience (MEG)</li> <li>• Transport for NSW (Transport)</li> <li>• TransGrid</li> <li>• NSW Energy Sector Board</li> </ul>
<b>Government - Federal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Airservices Australia</li> <li>• Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)</li> <li>• Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE)</li> <li>• Department of Defence</li> </ul>

Stakeholder Group	Stakeholders
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)</li> <li>• Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO)</li> </ul>
<b>Local Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edward River Council</li> </ul>
<b>Government - Elected Representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Member for Farrer, Hon Sussan Ley MP</li> <li>• NSW Member for Murray, Helen Dalton MP</li> </ul>
<b>Community Interest Groups and Community Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deniliquin Lions Club</li> <li>• Rotary Club of Deniliquin</li> <li>• Country Women’s Association – Deniliquin</li> <li>• Deniliquin Lagoons Kolety Lagoons Landcare Group</li> <li>• Western LLS</li> <li>• Murray LLS</li> <li>• NSW Farmers Deniliquin</li> <li>• RFS Deniliquin and Conargo</li> <li>• North Conargo Land Management Group</li> <li>• Murray Local Community Advisory Group</li> <li>• Murray Aboriginal Community Advisory Group</li> <li>• Murray Regional Weed Committee</li> <li>• Yanco Creek and Tributaries Advisory Council – YACTAC</li> <li>• Conargo Hall and Recreation Ground Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conargo Public School</li> <li>• Deniliquin High School</li> <li>• Deniliquin North Public School</li> <li>• Deniliquin South Public School</li> <li>• TAFE Deniliquin</li> <li>• Conargo P&amp;C School Committee</li> <li>• Conargo School Council</li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Aboriginal Land Council</li> <li>• Deniliquin Local Aboriginal Land Council</li> <li>• Cummeragunja Local Aboriginal Land Council</li> <li>• Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Industry and Local Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deniliquin Business Chamber</li> <li>• Deniliquin Pastoral Times</li> <li>• ABC Riverina</li> <li>• END FM (radio)</li> <li>• 1521 2QN Deniliquin (radio)</li> <li>• Edge FM</li> <li>• Conargo Hotel</li> </ul>

### 3.3 First Nations engagement

SQE has a dedicated First Nations engagement team, with First Nations facilitators to be based in each of the REZs. 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 considering the relevant guidelines, including:

- NSW Government (2022), *First Nations Guidelines, Increasing income and employment opportunities from electricity infrastructure projects*
- NSW Government (2011), *Guide to Investigating, Assessing and Reporting on Aboriginal Heritage in NSW*
- NSW Government (2010), *The Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW*
- NSW Government (2010), *The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010*

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:

- 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; and
- 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:

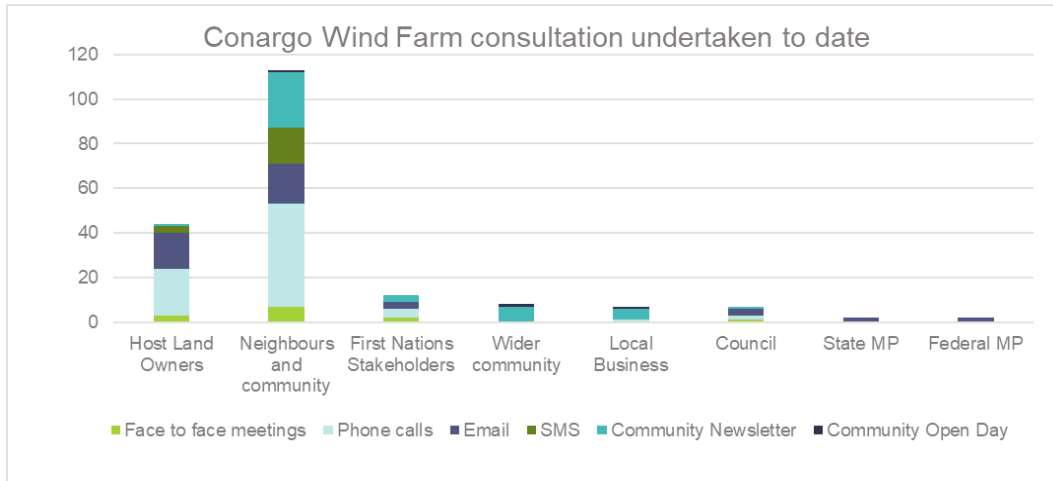
- apply relevant protocols for Aboriginal knowledge
- acknowledge and assess both tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage
- engage traditional owners or custodians who can speak for Country
- allow Aboriginal decision-making processes to function effectively
- avoid conflict between engagement activities and cultural practices
- engage in places, at times, and in ways that encourage participation; and
- ensure that engagement is undertaken by people with appropriate skills and experience.

The SQE team are currently developing a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. The plan includes multiple items that will review and measure SQE's engagement with First Nations stakeholders.

### **3.4 Stakeholder engagement activities**

Stakeholder engagement is ongoing during the development of the project. Graph 1 summarises the consultation activities undertaken to 25 March 2024.

**Graph 1: Stakeholder engagement activities**



### 3.5 Stakeholder engagement by development stage

Table 7 outlines the engagement objectives and activities identified for the Conargo Wind Farm and battery stakeholder groups, throughout life of the project, including what has been undertaken to date.

**Table 7: Stakeholder engagement during development for key project stages**

Project Stage	Engagement Objective	Engagement Activities	Target Stakeholders
<b>Site selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify local landholders within the potential project area</li> <li>Introduce the project concept and obtain initial feedback about the prospect of a windfarm development</li> <li>Seek agreements regarding access for further project feasibility investigations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phone calls</li> <li>Face to face visits</li> <li>Introductory letters</li> <li>Gather contact details for future communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential host landowners</li> <li>Potential neighbouring landowners</li> </ul>
<b>Project feasibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with landholders about the proposed project area</li> <li>Introduce the wind farm development process</li> <li>Identify community values, potential constraints and opportunities in the project area and inform the design process</li> <li>Identify and appropriately respond to community concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face to face visits</li> <li>One-on-one meetings and visuals tools to help inform discussions</li> <li>Email or letter updates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential host landowners</li> <li>Potential neighbouring landowners</li> <li>Local Councils</li> <li>Government-elected representatives</li> </ul>



Project Stage	Engagement Objective	Engagement Activities	Target Stakeholders
<b>Planning and Approvals – (Scoping Phase, EIS Phase)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain communication channels for enquiries and information</li> <li>• Continue to proactively gather feedback to inform the project design</li> <li>• Identify and appropriately respond to community concerns</li> <li>• Keep communications flowing to update the community</li> <li>• Collect data and insights and prepare the Social Impact Assessment (SIA)</li> <li>• Inform community of a formal opportunity to express their views on the proposed project</li> <li>• Educate community regarding outcomes of the EIS and technical studies</li> <li>• Inform the community of the progress of the approvals process and outcomes</li> <li>• Educate community regarding the Project-specific benefit sharing process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above for Project Feasibility phase, plus:</li> <li>• Establish and maintain Project website</li> <li>• Community Information Sessions</li> <li>• Community surveys</li> <li>• Project briefings for Local Councils and government agencies</li> <li>• Exploration of community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
<b>Construction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce community concerns by open dialogue and continuing to acknowledge and respond to issues in a timely manner</li> <li>• Demonstrate commitment to the wellbeing of the community</li> <li>• Avoid, minimise, and remediate impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above for Project Feasibility phase, plus:</li> <li>• Maintain and update website</li> <li>• Complaints management mechanism</li> <li>• Community partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
<b>Commissioning and operation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be an active member of the community</li> <li>• Strengthen collaboration through partnerships</li> <li>• Build a sense of community pride in a well-run wind farm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above for Construction Phase, plus:</li> <li>• Operational Community Engagement Plan</li> <li>• Evaluation of engagement and improvements as required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stakeholder groups</li> </ul>
<b>Decommissioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate decommissioning and rehabilitation process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above for Commissioning and Operation, plus:</li> <li>• Host landholder and neighbour briefings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host landowners</li> <li>• Neighbours</li> <li>• Local Councils</li> <li>• State and Commonwealth government agencies</li> <li>• Community interest groups e.g., Landcare</li> <li>• Aboriginal Groups</li> </ul>

### 3.6 Frequency of contact

SQE keeps in regular contact with key stakeholders and the wider community. We provide regular newsletters (more frequently during periods of high activity on the project) as well as regular phone calls and emails to hosts and neighbours. The frequency of engagement with stakeholders will vary depending on the project stage, but our aim is to tailor the frequency of engagement to the needs of stakeholders to ensure we are actively listening and responding, questions and concerns are addressed as they arise, and key activities are communicated as they occur.

### 3.7 Evaluation of community & stakeholder engagement performance

The project team, along with SQE's Stakeholder Engagement Manager regularly reviews the project's community and stakeholder engagement performance. This helps the project team to improve the quality of communications and consultation as the project progresses, but also for other SQE projects who may be at earlier stages of the development process.

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

Squadron Energy 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 8 with examples of Squadron Energy community benefits sharing across our projects.

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

Our focus on supporting community capacity relies on our understanding of the regions in which we operate, so we can tailor support systems and benefits to suit. When engaging with the local Conargo community, we will identify opportunities that are based on local community need. Our conversations with local people will inform us of the community's priorities, and the potential for generating partnerships and introducing tailor-made programs, infrastructure or benefit sharing.

**Table 8: Examples of Squadron Energy community benefit sharing across our projects**

<b>Voluntary Planning Agreements</b>	We enter into planning agreements 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. 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.
<b>Community sponsorship program</b>	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: <a href="https://www.squadronenergy.com/">https://www.squadronenergy.com/</a> . Local community groups are encouraged to apply for sponsorship via SQE's website: <a href="https://www.squadronenergy.com/communitysponsorship">https://www.squadronenergy.com/communitysponsorship</a> .

<b>Community Co investment</b>	<p>SQE 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.</p> <p>Following its success, we have announced a new co-investment program for community members at our more advanced development projects in the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) near Dubbo and Wellington. Co-investment funds provide residents in the region with the opportunity to participate in and reap the rewards of investing in Australia’s transition to renewable energy.</p>
<b>Telecommunications</b>	<p>We have conducted a company subsidised trial at our proposed Spicers Creek Wind Farm site, followed by the delivery of an internet connectivity scheme for landowners surrounding the Uungula wind farm. We plan to roll out telecommunications improvements at our projects to boost network and internet coverage for rural and regional communities. The program will boost network coverage through a fixed wireless network for landowners and neighbours, making stronger network coverage accessible at city-based prices.</p> <p>Strengthening internet coverage in rural and regional areas increases access and pathways into the digital economy and opens doors to new agricultural technology solutions.</p>
<b>Employment and business opportunities</b>	<p>We operate and own firming, solar and wind 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.</p>
<b>Training and skills development</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>First Nations employment</b>	<p>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.</p>

## 5 Potential issues and opportunities

### 5.1 Potential Social Impacts

Table 9 summarises the potential impacts to people considered applicable to the project and the social impact categories that they may align to. These potential impacts will either be realised or discarded as part of the engagement process for the Project and the social impact categories adjusted as required. 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 may 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, 2021) have been adopted.

**Table 9: 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surroundings</li> <li>• Way of life</li> </ul>
Increase in dust and noise during construction causing a decline in social amenity, health, or way of life for host landholders and nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dust</li> <li>• Noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of life</li> <li>• Surroundings</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing</li> </ul>
Operational noise generated by WTGs causing a decline in social amenity, health, or way of life for host landholders and nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of life</li> <li>• Surroundings</li> <li>• Health and Wellbeing</li> </ul>
Changes to existing land use resulting in a disadvantage to personal property (negative) for nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livelihoods</li> <li>• Health and well being</li> </ul>
Distributive equity of economic benefits, between the region and nearby neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of life</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>
Enhanced community wellbeing from job opportunities and community investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Way of life</li> <li>• Community</li> </ul>
Changes to the existing land use resulting in the loss of native flora and fauna change how people experience their environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surroundings</li> </ul>
Impacts on people's access to roads and other services, especially during construction Potential improvement in access during operations for landowners and emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic and transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility</li> </ul>
Further changes to land use affecting community character resulting in a sense of loss of heritage values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture</li> </ul>
Changes to land use during construction, affecting the availability of land for livestock, impacting livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livelihoods</li> </ul>
Potential reduction in security caused by unauthorised access and/or 'strangers' accessing land during both construction and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surroundings</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making systems</li> </ul>

## 6 Review

This plan will be reviewed every 6 months to reflect the progress of the Project, and stakeholder engagement activity completed throughout the year. This document is not static, as engagement with host communities is an ongoing activity.

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.