

BRIEFING DETAILS

BRIEFING DATE / TIME	Wednesday, 30 August 2023, 9.30am – 11:30am.
LOCATION	MS Teams Teleconference

BRIEFING MATTERS

- PPSHCC-206 – Muswellbrook – DA2022/02147-15 - 981 New England Highway Aberdeen - Battery Energy Storage System
- PPSHCC-207 – Muswellbrook – DA 2023-66 - 105 Merriwa Road Denman - Battery Energy Storage System
- PPSHCC-208 - Cessnock – DA8/2023/426/1 - 2341 Broke Road Pokolbin - Electricity Generating Development
- PPSHCC-219 - Port Stephens – DA 16-2023-338-1 - 994 Clarence Town Road Seaham - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated shed structures

PANEL MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE	Alison McCabe (Chair), Tony McNamara and Roberta Ryan PPSHCC-206 & 207: Kellie Scholes and Granville Taylor PPSHCC-208: Anne Sander and Jay Suvaal PPSHCC-219: Ryan Palmer and Giacomo Arnott
APOLOGIES	None
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	None

OTHER ATTENDEES

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES	Mark Ihlein, Aprajita Gupta, Ron Lucerne-Knight and Rob Ashdown
COUNCIL ASSESSMENT STAFF: MUSWELLBROOK	Hamish McTaggart and Sharon Pope
COUNCIL ASSESSMENT STAFF: CESSNOCK	Sue Page
COUNCIL ASSESSMENT STAFF: PORT STEPHENS	Isaac Lancaster and Ryan Falkenmire
DEPARTMENT STAFF	Leanne Harris and Holly McCann

KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED

Joint briefing with Muswellbrook, Cessnock and Port Stephens Councils.

Muswellbrook Council –PPSHCC- 206, Aberdeen

- Site overview, located near Aberdeen, open RU1 zone, concrete batching plant on the site (historic approval in place)

Planning Panels Secretariat

- DA notified and no public submissions received.
- Mine Subsidence district.
- Accessed from New England Highway and TfNSW have raised questions about the proposed access arrangements.
- RFS referral – general comments received and no specific issues.
- Ausgrid referral.
- Has been referred to Upper Hunter Council who have made comments in relation to landscaping and noise impacts.
- Overview of other SSD storage facilities, approved and proposed in the LGA. Council position in relation to community benefit sharing and better visual impact assessment for these types of applications.
- Council has issued an RFI for a number of matters including the need for a visual impact assessment and preliminary hazard analysis.

Muswellbrook Council - PPSHCC-207 - Denman

- Site is located on the edge of Denman adjacent to an existing substation on IN1 zoned land.
- DA notified and one submission received.
- TfNSW have raised issues with the access arrangements for the site.
- Referred to RFS and no specific issues raised.
- Ausgrid referral.
- Main issue is that the site is flood affected which was not initially identified by the applicant. Flood impact assessment has been requested.
- No preliminary hazard analysis provided and has been requested particularly given proximity to residential development.

Cessnock Council – PPSHCC-208, Pokolbin

- Overview of the site.
- Permissibility is via the Infrastructure SEPP.
- DA has been referred to RFS and Ausgrid and Council has had discussion with RFS in relation to potential battery fires given the proximity of established grape vines.
- Exhibition finishes tomorrow with no submissions received to date.
- The application does not address the Council's site specific DCP chapter for the vineyards with a visual impact assessment and soil report being required and the siting does not meet the DCP setbacks. A survey plan with levels has not been provided.
- Council has concerns about the visual impacts and traffic access location and general site suitability.
- Council will issue a RFI following the briefing session today.

Port Stephens Council – PPSHCC-219, Seaham

- Overview of the site, RU2 zone, near the intersection of two heavily trafficked roads and contains an existing dwelling.
- 0.24 hectares of EEC to be cleared (99 trees) which has attracted significant community interest (preferred koala habitat). Other parts of the site are already cleared. No BDAR required as clearing is below the threshold.
- Extensive RFI requested – particularly in relation to ecology and site selection
- Visual impact of concern
- Council understands a number of similar DAs imminent (6 more coming) and close to a proposed SSD battery storage facility.

Planning Panels Secretariat

APPLICANT BRIEFING

- Overview of the proposal.
- Sites are chosen that are close to existing substations. Negotiations are undertaken with individual land- owners with long term lease arrangements.
- Seeking to gain consent under SEPP Infrastructure as electricity generating works.
- Typical layout and footprint, access, security and landscaping arrangements discussed.
- Description of each site, views and issues for further consideration as described in the presentation.
- Site selection is based on accessibility to the grid and working with the landowner to find a site that is acceptable from their perspective.
- Each battery storage facility connects to nearest 11 KV line – connections will be underground and via a separate approval process with Ausgrid.
- Sophisticated fire management systems are proposed.
- Will become essential services for the grid (critical infrastructure)

PANEL COMMENTS

- The Panel wants to understand the site selection process and how broader cumulative impacts will be considered having regard to other larger proposed and approved SSD battery projects. Site suitability is to be assessed.
- Detailed dimensioned plans with RLs are required to clearly demonstrate the size and scale of the proposed works and any cut and fill and retaining walls together with engineering details.
- Accurate visual impact assessment is required for each site and needs to be done in accordance with the LEC Practice Note. Existing and finished levels are required
- The Panel expect factual information in relation to hazard and risk analysis including combustibility and risk of battery fires. The applications need to be comprehensively documented in this regard.
- In terms of community benefit sharing the Panel seeks to have a consistent approach across the region and understands each of the Councils have a 7.12 contributions plan that applies in the absence of any other documented policy position. The Panel will facilitate information sharing amongst the Councils.
- Any fundamental and essential elements of the proposal (i.e. underground connections) need to be considered and assessed notwithstanding separate approvals required. This will include the need to consider impacts on trees for the Seaham site.
- The Panel want to understand the general life of the assets and any decommissioning arrangements.

The Panel expects the applicant to be responsive to any RFIs issued by the Councils and will schedule further briefings if required.