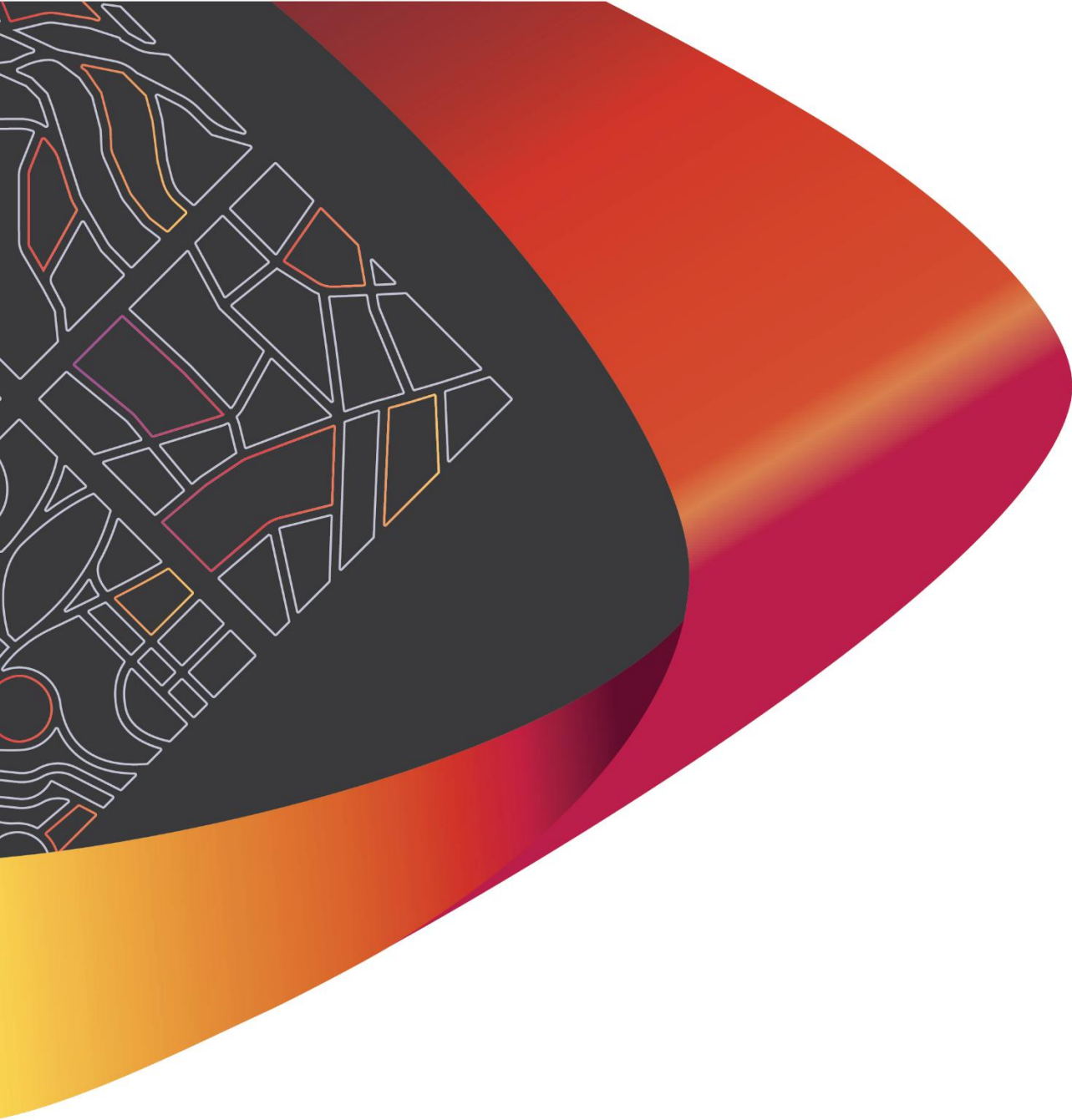




VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Dungog Battery Energy Storage System

G8 Energy Pty Ltd

P003764 VIA 01

Rev: C

9 March 2026



Premise

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Premise Australia Pty Ltd (Premise) has been engaged by G8 Energy (the Applicant) to undertake a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for a proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

The VIA has been prepared to assess the landscape character and visual implications associated with the development of the BESS. The report assesses the visual impacts of the proposed BESS works on its immediate surrounds, cumulative visual impact of the BESS as well as suggests mitigation measures to further reduce any impacts (if applicable).

1.2 The Proposed bess

The BESS would include battery enclosures (approximately 14.57m long x 2.9m high x 2.44m wide), power conversation driver and local controller. No lighting is proposed for the proposed BESS and therefore a night-time visual impact assessment has not been completed. The proposed development also includes an underground connection between the proposed BESS and the existing Dungog substation. The layout of the proposed development is shown in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1 Project site and BESS footprint



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methodology overview

The method used to assess the BESS landscape character and visual impact has followed the following stages:

- > Determine the study area. There is no pre-determined study area size for a BESS only a 4km study area for large-scale solar energy projects as per the Technical Supplement (NSW DPHI, 2024). Due to the size of the proposed BESS being significantly smaller than a large-scale solar energy projects a 1.5km study area has been selected.
- > GIS viewshed mapping of the visual catchment area from LiDAR point cloud data.
- > Attend site and surrounding areas to inspect locations identified in GIS mapping with a potential view to the project.
- > Identification of viewpoints.
- > A photographic survey using a 50mm focal length lens digital camera. A handheld GPS unit was used record the location of each viewpoint.
- > A description of the existing landscape character.
- > Identifying the landscape character sensitivity, magnitude of change and assigning impact levels.
- > Refine and classify Viewpoints.
- > Assess visual impact from public viewpoints
- > Cumulative impact of the proposal together with the existing Dungog substation.
- > Impact summary and mitigation measures if relevant.
- > The large-scale solar energy guideline technical supplement for landscape character and visual impact assessment has been used as a guide to assess the landscape character and visual impact of the proposed BESS.

2.2 Landscape character impact assessment methodology

The landscape character assessment has followed the following steps:

- > Identify landscape character zone for the site and surrounding study area.
- > Describe the existing conditions of the landscape character zone.
- > Identify the sensitivity of the landscape character zone.
- > Identify the magnitude of change created by the proposal.
- > Combine these factors to assign a level of landscape character impact.

2.2.1 IDENTIFY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ZONES

The first step in the landscape assessment is identifying the landscape character zones. Identifying the landscape zones will divide the landscape into common distinguishing visual characteristics including landform and major land cover patterns. The patterns can be a combination of vegetation, water bodies, landforms and land use, from which the key landscape features can also be identified.



2.2.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY

Landscape character sensitivity has been described by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in the *Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline Technical Supplement for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment* (Technical Supplement) as ‘the inherent capability of the area to absorb changes from the project’ (NSW DPHI 2024). Premise has developed a table to provide a rating of the landscape character sensitivity as shown in **Table 1**.

2.2.3 MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

The magnitude of change levels is determined by the changes to landscape character that would occur because of the proposal. The Technical Supplement (NSW DPHI, 2024) recommends that the following items are considered when assessing the magnitude of change for landscape character. **Table 2** includes examples of the size and scale and geographical area factors that contribute to assigning a magnitude of change level.

- > Size and scale of the change, including:
 - The extent of the existing landscape elements that may be lost and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape.
 - The extent to which the project becomes a minor or major element in the landscape and its dominance in the visual catchment
 - The extent to which the project changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.
- > Geographical area – the area of the landscape over which the effects will be experienced, having regard to the nature and scale of the project’s effect. This could vary from the immediate setting of the site to larger scales where the project may influence several landscape characters zones.



2.2.4 ASSIGNING IMPACT LEVELS

The landscape character impact level has been determined by combining the sensitivity and magnitude level according to the matrix in **Table 3**. A level of high, moderate or low is assigned to the impact level.

Table 1 - Landscape character sensitivity levels

Sensitivity Level	Details
High	Landscape features (landform, vegetation, waterbodies, social/cultural, human presence) are predominantly of high scenic quality (refer to table 2, page 25, NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)
Moderate	Landscape features (landform, vegetation, waterbodies, social/cultural, human presence) are predominantly of moderate scenic quality (refer to table 4, page 27, NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)
Low	Landscape character includes features (landform, vegetation, waterbodies, social/cultural, human presence) which have low scenic quality values (refer to table 2, page 25, NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)

(Developed by premise with reference to the NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)

Table 2 - Magnitude of change levels

Magnitude	Size and Scale	Geographical Area
High	High loss of existing landscape elements. The extent of the existing landscape elements that may be lost is high. The contribution of the proposed development to the character of the landscape is high. The extent of the project is a major element in the landscape, and it would dominate the visual catchment. The extent of the project would have a high effect on changing the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.	High Geographical area impacted. The area of the landscape over which the effects will be experienced is high.
Moderate	Moderate loss of existing landscape elements. The extent of the existing landscape elements that may be lost is Moderate. The contribution of the proposed development to the character of the landscape is moderate. The extent of the project is a major element in the landscape, and it would somewhat dominate the visual catchment. The extent of the project would have a moderate effect on changing the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.	Moderate Geographical area impacted. The area of the landscape over which the effects will be experienced is moderate.
Low	Low loss of existing landscape elements. The extent of the existing landscape elements that may be lost is Low. The contribution of the proposed development to the character of the landscape is Low. The extent of the project is a minor element in the landscape, and it would not be prominent in the visual catchment. The extent of the project would have a low effect on changing the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.	Low Geographical area impacted. The area of the landscape over which the effects will be experienced is low.

(Developed by premise with reference to the NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)

Table 3 – Landscape character impact levels

	High sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Low Sensitivity
High magnitude	High	Moderate	Moderate
Moderate magnitude	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Low magnitude	Moderate	Low	Low

(Developed by premise with reference to the NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)

2.3 Public viewpoints and private receiver visual impact methodology

The visual impact from public viewpoints has been assessed by the following steps:

- > A preliminary analysis and site visit.
- > Identify, refine and classify viewpoints.
- > Describe each existing public viewpoint.
- > Identify visual sensitivity:
 - Determine the viewpoint sensitivity of the view (refer to **Table 4**)
 - Determine the scenic quality of the view (refer to **Table 5**)
 - Combine the viewpoint sensitivity and scenic quality rating to determine the visual sensitivity (refer to **Table 6**)
- > Identify the magnitude of change created by the proposal (refer to **Table 7**)
- > Combine the viewpoint sensitivity and magnitude of change characteristics to assign a level of visual impact (refer to **Table 8**)

2.3.1.1 Visual sensitivity

The Technical Supplement defines visual sensitivity as 'the quality of the view and how sensitive it is to the proposed change'. Visual sensitivity is determined by combining viewpoint sensitivity (**Table 4**) with the scenic quality of the view (**Table 5**). **Table 6** combines viewpoints sensitivity and scenic quality of view to determine the visual sensitivity and is based of the 'Visual sensitivity matrix' contained in the Technical Supplement (Table 6, p.30, NSW DPPI, 2024)

2.3.1.2 Magnitude of change

The magnitude of change has been determined by characteristics of the view, considering the distance from the proposed development, landform, back drop and vegetation. It will also consider characteristics of the proposed development such as scale, form and colour. **Table 7** lists the categories used to describe the magnitude of change.

2.3.1.3 Assigning impact levels

The visual impact of each viewpoint has been determined by combining the visual magnitude and visual sensitivity using **Table 8**. The table is based off the 'visual impact matrix' contained in the Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline (Table 7, p.30, NSW DPPI, 2024)



Table 4 - Viewpoint Sensitivity Level

Viewpoint Type	Very Low Viewpoint Sensitivity	Low Viewpoint Sensitivity	Moderate Viewpoint Sensitivity	High Viewpoint Sensitivity
Private receiver	Private recreation areas and sporting fields (defined as land zoned RE2)	Secondary view from dwelling rural area (zoned RU1, RU2, RU3, RU4 and RU6), large lot residential areas (zoned R5) and environmental or conservation areas (zoned C2, C3 and C4)	Primary view from dwellings in rural areas (zoned RU1, RU2, RU3, RU4 and RU6), large lot residential areas (zoned R5) and environmental or conservation areas (zoned C2, C3 and C4) Tourist and visitor accommodation (bedand-breakfasts, motels and hotels) and places of worship	Dwellings in residential and rural villages (zoned R1, R2, R3, R4 and RU5) Historic rural homesteads/ residences on the national, state or local heritage list
Public viewpoint	State highways, freeways and classified main roads Local sealed and unsealed roads	Cemeteries, memorial parks Tourist roads and scenic drives 4. Significant entry ways to regional towns and cities Walking tracks and navigable waterways	Tourist uses in tourist areas (zoned SP3) Publicly accessible green and open spaces, including picnic areas, parks, public recreation areas and lookouts Town centres and central business districts	N/A

(Table 2, page 25, NSW DPPI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)

Table 5 - Frame of reference for scenic quality values

Viewpoint type	Very Low scenic quality	Low scenic quality	Moderate scenic quality	High scenic quality
Landform	Large expanses of flat or gently undulating terrain. Indistinct, dissected or unbroken landforms that provide little illusion of spatial definition or landmarks with which to orient	Mostly flat or gently undulating terrain with isolated areas of undulating topography	Steep, hilly and undulating ranges that are not visually dominant Broad shallow valleys Moderately deep gorges or moderately steep valley walls Minor rock outcrops	Isolated peaks, steep rocky ridges, cones or escarpments with distinctive form and/or colour contrast that become focal points Large areas of distinctive rock outcrops or boulders Well defined, steep sided valley gorges

Viewpoint type	Very Low scenic quality	Low scenic quality	Moderate scenic quality	High scenic quality
Vegetation	Extensively cleared and cropped areas with very limited variation in colour and texture Pastoral areas, human created paddocks, pastures or grasslands and associated buildings typical of grazing lands	Predominantly cleared and cropped areas with small areas of variation in colour and texture Most pastures or grasslands with small blocks of distinct native vegetation	Predominantly open forest or woodland combined with some natural openings in patterns that offer some visual relief Vegetative stands that exhibit a range of size, form, colour, texture and spacing including human influenced vegetation such as vineyards, and orchards	Strongly defined patterns with combinations of native forest, naturally appearing openings, streamside vegetation and/or scattered exotics Distinctive stands of vegetation that may create unusual forms, colours or textures in comparison to surrounding vegetation
Waterbodies	Absence of natural waterbody Farm dams, irrigation canals or stormwater infrastructure	Minor water forms, such as creeks and streams	Intermittent streams, lakes, rivers, swamps and reservoirs	Visually prominent lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams, wetlands and swamps Presence of harbour, inlet, bay or open ocean
Social/cultural	Places of worship, cemeteries/memorial parks, private open spaces	Places of worship, cemeteries, memorial parks, private open spaces Local heritage sites	Local heritage sites Distinguishable entry ways to a regional city identified in the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP	Culturally important sites, world heritage areas, national parks/reserves, Commonwealth and state heritage sites
Human presence	Dominating presence of infrastructure, human settlements, highly modified landscapes and higher density populations such as regional cities, industrial areas, agricultural transport or electricity infrastructure	Highly modified landscapes with visible infrastructure, such as transmission lines and railway corridors	Dispersed yet evident presence of human settlement such as villages, small towns, isolated pockets of production and industry, lower scale and trafficked transport infrastructure	Natural/undisturbed landscape Minimal evidence of human presence and production

(Table 4, page 27, NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)

Table 6 - Visual Sensitivity Matrix

	High quality scenic	Moderate quality scenic	Low quality scenic	Very low quality scenic
High viewpoint sensitivity	High	High	Moderate	Low
Moderate viewpoint sensitivity	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Low viewpoint sensitivity	Moderate	Low	Low	Very Low
Very low viewpoint sensitivity	Low	Very low	Very low	Very Low

(Table 6, page 30, NSW DPPI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)

Table 7 - Magnitude of Change Levels

Magnitude level	Description
High	The proposed development is visually dominant and/or contrasts substantially with the character of the view. It would result in a substantial change in the view.
Moderate	The proposed development is somewhat dominant and/or is not compatible with the character of the view. It would result in a noticeable change in the view.
Low	The proposed development is not visually dominant and/or is visually compatible with the character of the view. It would result in a slight change in the view.

(Developed by Premise)

Table 8 - Visual Impact Levels

	High sensitivity	Moderate sensitivity	Low sensitivity	Very low sensitivity
High magnitude	High	Moderate	Moderate	Low
Moderate magnitude	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
Low magnitude	Moderate	Low	Low	Very Low

(Developed by Premise)

2.4 Cumulative impact methodology

The cumulative impact assessment considers the landscape character and visual impact of the proposed BESS with other nearby projects within 1.5km of the development site.

Projects with a potential cumulative impact with the proposed BESS were identified through a review of publicly available online databases in September 2025, including the DPPI's Sydney and Regional Planning Panels and the NSW Major Projects Hub.

3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

3.1 Landscape character assessment

3.1.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The study area of the development has three distinct landscape character zones (LCZ) associated with the North Coast Railway, Williams River and agricultural plains. For this report the zones have been named the Dungog agricultural plains landscape character zone (LCZ1), the Williams River corridor landscape character zone (LCZ2) and the North Coast Railway landscape character zone (LCZ3).

The agricultural plains are interrupted by undulating hills, consisting of low rolling hills surrounding the project site. The landscape character includes agricultural land used for livestock grazing and crops, with associated rural dwellings and sheds. Many of the dwellings in this landscape are grouped with agricultural associated buildings.

Vegetation in this landscape character zone mostly runs along the Williams River, which is located west of the development footprint. In addition to the Williams River there are a number of associated creeks.

There are existing transmission lines that follows Stroud Hill Road through the landscape as well as the North Coast Railway that influence the character of this zone.

Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4 show the existing landscape character and features of the Dungog agricultural plains LCZ.



Figure 2 Agricultural Plains



Figure 3 Vegetation along the Williams River



Figure 4 North Coast Railway



3.1.2 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACT

The analysis undertaken for the assessment of impacts on the Dungog agricultural plains (LCZ1), Williams River corridor landscape character zone (LCZ2) and the North Coast Railway landscape character zone (LCZ3) can be found in **Table 9**, **Table 10** and **Table 11**.

It has been determined that the combined landscape character impact would be a **low**. This is a result of low/moderate scenic quality, landscape sensitivity and magnitude of change found in all landscape character zones.

Table 9 – Dungog agricultural plains LCZ1 Landscape Character Impact Assessment

Consideration	Assessment	Result
Landscape Character Sensitivity Level	Landscape character includes features (landform, vegetation, waterbodies, social/cultural, human presence) which have low scenic quality values (refer to table 4, page 27, NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)	Low
Magnitude of Change Values		
Size and Scale	The extent of the project is a minor element in the landscape, and it would not be prominent in the visual catchment.	Low
Geographical Area	Low Geographical area impacted. The area of the landscape over which the effects will be experienced is low.	Low
Magnitude of change Level		Low
Landscape Character Impact		Low

Table 10 – Williams River corridor landscape character zone LCZ2 Landscape Character Impact Assessment

Consideration	Assessment	Result
Landscape Character Sensitivity Level	Landscape character includes features (landform, vegetation, waterbodies, social/cultural, human presence) which have moderate scenic quality values (refer to table 4, page 27, NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)	Moderate
Magnitude of Change Values		
Size and Scale	The extent of the project is a minor element in the landscape, and it would not be prominent in the visual catchment.	Low
Geographical Area	Low Geographical area impacted. The area of the landscape over which the effects will be experienced is low.	Low
Magnitude of change Level		Low
Landscape Character Impact		Low

Table 11 – North Coast Railway landscape character zone LCZ3 Landscape Character Impact Assessment

Consideration	Assessment	Result
Landscape Character Sensitivity Level	Landscape character includes features (landform, vegetation, waterbodies, social/cultural, human presence) which have low scenic quality values (refer to table 4, page 27, NSW DPHI Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2024)	Low
Magnitude of Change Values		
Size and Scale	The extent of the project is a minor element in the landscape, and it would not be prominent in the visual catchment.	Low
Geographical Area	Low Geographical area impacted. The area of the landscape over which the effects will be experienced is low.	Low
Magnitude of change Level		Low
Landscape Character Impact		Low

4. VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Visual Catchment

The visual catchment is defined by the area from which the proposal may be seen. This area has been identified by using a digital elevation model of the landform using GIS software.

The visual catchment identifies locations where there is the potential for a direct line of sight between the BESS and surrounding areas. Receivers surrounding the BESS were selected to assess their potential for direct line of sight with the BESS.

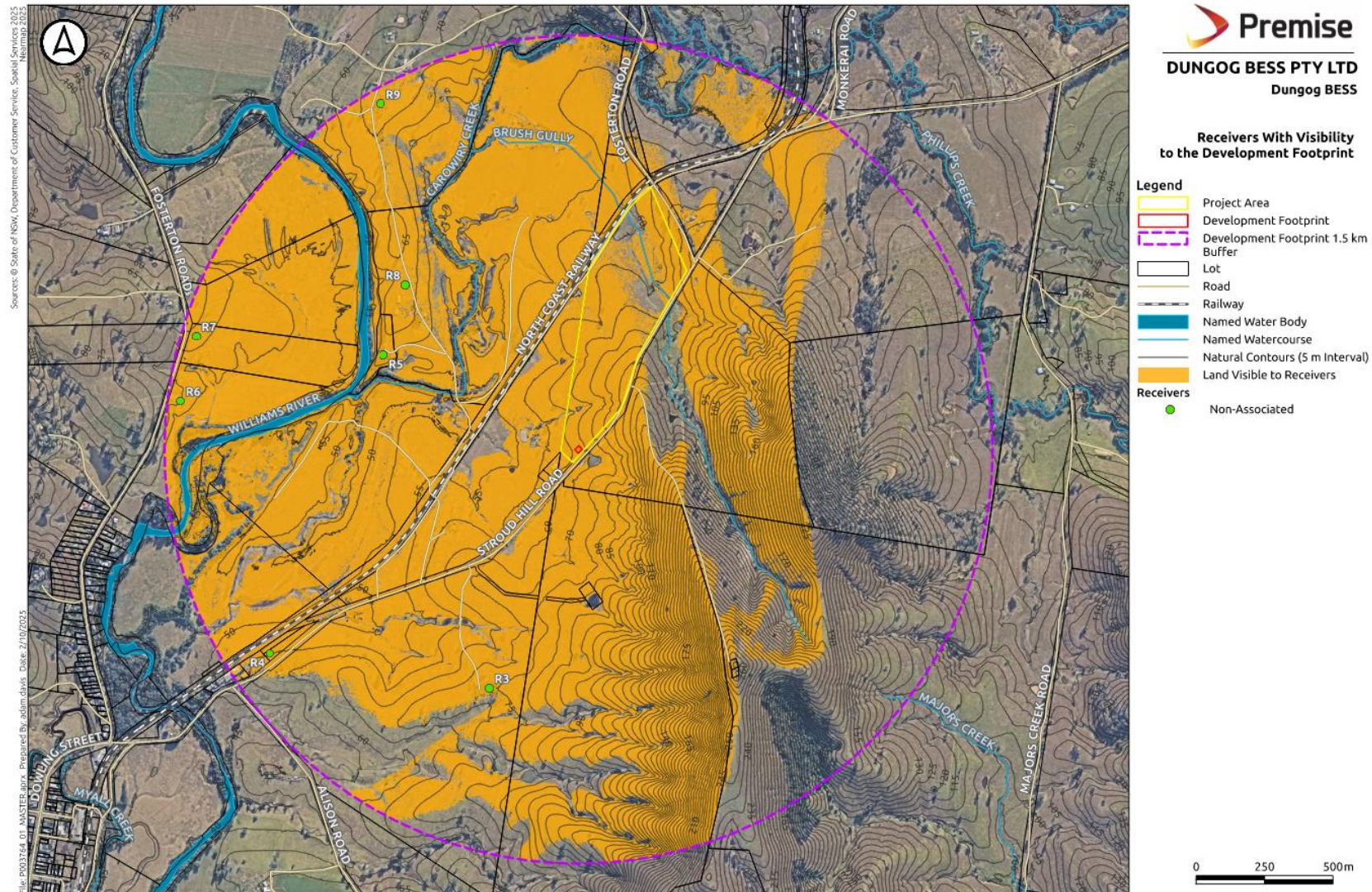
The visual catchment map (**Figure 5**) shows that views to this proposal is restricted by the surrounding landform.

The visual catchment map shows the potential for views extending from.

- > North to farmlands.
- > East to farmlands to around 800m.
- > South to farmlands and rural dwellings.
- > West into farmland and rural dwellings along Fosterton Road.

The visual catchment map was used to inform a preliminary site visit and the selection of viewpoints for the assessment of public and private dwelling viewpoints.

Figure 5 Visual catchment map



4.2 Identify, refine and classify Viewpoints

4.2.1 SELECTION OF VIEWPOINT ASSESSMENT LOCATIONS

Table 12 was used to review receivers and to determine if it is a private receiver or public viewpoint or neither and lists the selected views and their potential view of the proposed development.

The viewpoints that have a potential view to the proposed development, as noted in **Table 12**, will be assessed for their visual impact further into this report.

Table 12 – Views assessed for the proposed development

	Description	Viewpoint Type	Potential view to the proposed development (Y/N)	Justification/Comments
1	Viewpoint 1 from Stroud Hill Road	Public viewpoint (local sealed road)	Y	Visibility is high as proposed BESS is located close to the road. Refer to Table 14 for viewpoint assessment.
2	View from receiver R3	Private receiver (primary view from dwelling in rural area)	Y	Potential distant glimpse of the proposed BESS partially blocked by mature vegetation. Refer to Table 15 for viewpoint assessment.
3	View from receiver R6 and R7	Private receiver (primary view from dwelling in rural area)	N	Despite potential visibility of the BESS as indicated on the visual catchment map the view of the proposed BESS would be blocked by dense vegetation along the Williams River.
4	View from receiver R5	Private receiver (primary view from dwelling in rural area)	N	Despite potential visibility of the BESS as indicated on the visual catchment map the view of the proposed BESS would be blocked by dense vegetation along the Williams River.

4.3 Public viewpoint and private receiver assessment

4.3.1 VISUAL IMPACT FROM PUBLIC VIEWPOINTS

Figure 6 Viewpoint 1: View from Stroud Hill Road looking North, Existing View



Figure 7 Viewpoint 1: View from Stroud Hill Road looking North, Photomontage (without screening)



Figure 8 Viewpoint 1: View from Stroud Hill Road looking North, Photomontage (with screening)



Table 13 – Viewpoint 1 Assessment

Coordinates	32.388671° S, 151.775476° E	
Distance to Development	~ 80m	
Visual Magnitude	High The proposed development is visually dominant and contrasts substantially with the character of the view. It would result in a substantial change in the view.	
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Very Low (Public viewpoint from local sealed road)	
Scenic Quality	Low	
Landform	Mostly flat or gently undulating terrain with isolated areas of undulating topography	Low
Vegetation	Predominantly cleared and cropped areas with small areas of variation in colour and texture Most pastures or grasslands with small blocks of distinct native vegetation	Low
Waterbodies	N/A	N/A
Social/cultural	N/A	N/A
Human presence	Dispersed yet evident presence of human settlement, such as isolated pockets of production, and trafficked transport infrastructure	Moderate
Visual Sensitivity	Very Low	
Visual Impact	Low	
Mitigation	N/A	



4.3.2 VISUAL IMPACT FROM PRIVATE RECEIVERS

Figure 9 Receiver R3: Existing View



Figure 10 Receiver R3: Photomontage (without screening)



Figure 11 Receiver R3: Photomontage (with screening)



Table 14 – Receiver R3 Assessment

Coordinates	32.395864° S, 151.775476° E	
Distance to Development	~ 922m	
Visual Magnitude	Low The proposed development is not visually dominant. It would result in a slight change in the view.	
Viewpoint Sensitivity	Moderate (Primary view from dwelling in rural area)	
Scenic Quality	Low	
Landform	Steep, hilly and undulating ranges that are not visually dominant	Moderate
Vegetation	Predominantly cleared and cropped areas with small areas of variation in colour and texture Most pastures or grasslands with small blocks of distinct native vegetation	Low
Waterbodies	Minor water forms, such as creeks and streams	Low
Social/cultural	N/A	N/A
Human presence	Dispersed yet evident presence of human settlement, such as isolated pockets of production and trafficked transport infrastructure	Moderate
Visual Sensitivity	Moderate	
Visual Impact	Low	
Mitigation	N/A	

5. CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1.1 CUMULATIVE VISUAL IMPACT

The only project within the study area that has been considered to have a potential cumulative visual impact is the Dungog substation. The assessment notes that the proposed BESS and the existing Dungog substation could be viewed together. The cumulative impact of the BESS is expected to be minor due to the size of the BESS in relation to the existing Dungog substation.

Table 15 – Cumulative Visual Impact Assessment

Project	Current Status	Description	Distance	Cumulative impact
Dungog Substation	Completed	Large substation	~ 60m	Due to the location and size of the existing substation the cumulative impact is expected to be minor.

6. IMPACT SUMMARY

From the landscape character impact assessment, it has been determined that there would be a low landscape character impact on the Dungog agricultural plains LCZ, Williams River corridor LCZ and the North Coast Railway LCZ. This is a result of low landscape character sensitivity and low magnitude of change. A low landscape character sensitivity was due to the dominating presence of the existing Dungog substation.

From the site visit it was determined that there could be a potential view from two viewpoints with the proposed BESS as marked on the visual catchment map. A visual impact assessment was completed for the two viewpoints. The visual impact assessment for the public viewpoint on Stroud Hill Road determined that the visual impact would be low and additional mitigation measures were not required. The visual impact assessment for the private receiver determined that the visual impact would be low and additional mitigation measures were not required.

The assessment notes that the proposed BESS and the existing Dungog substation could be viewed together and therefore states that there would be a minor cumulative impact due to the size of the BESS in relation to the existing Dungog substation.

