



Planning,  
Industry &  
Environment

# Springdale Solar Farm

---

## Independent Planning Commission Public Meeting

Nicole Brewer  
Director  
Energy Assessments  
29 January 2021

# Assessment Process

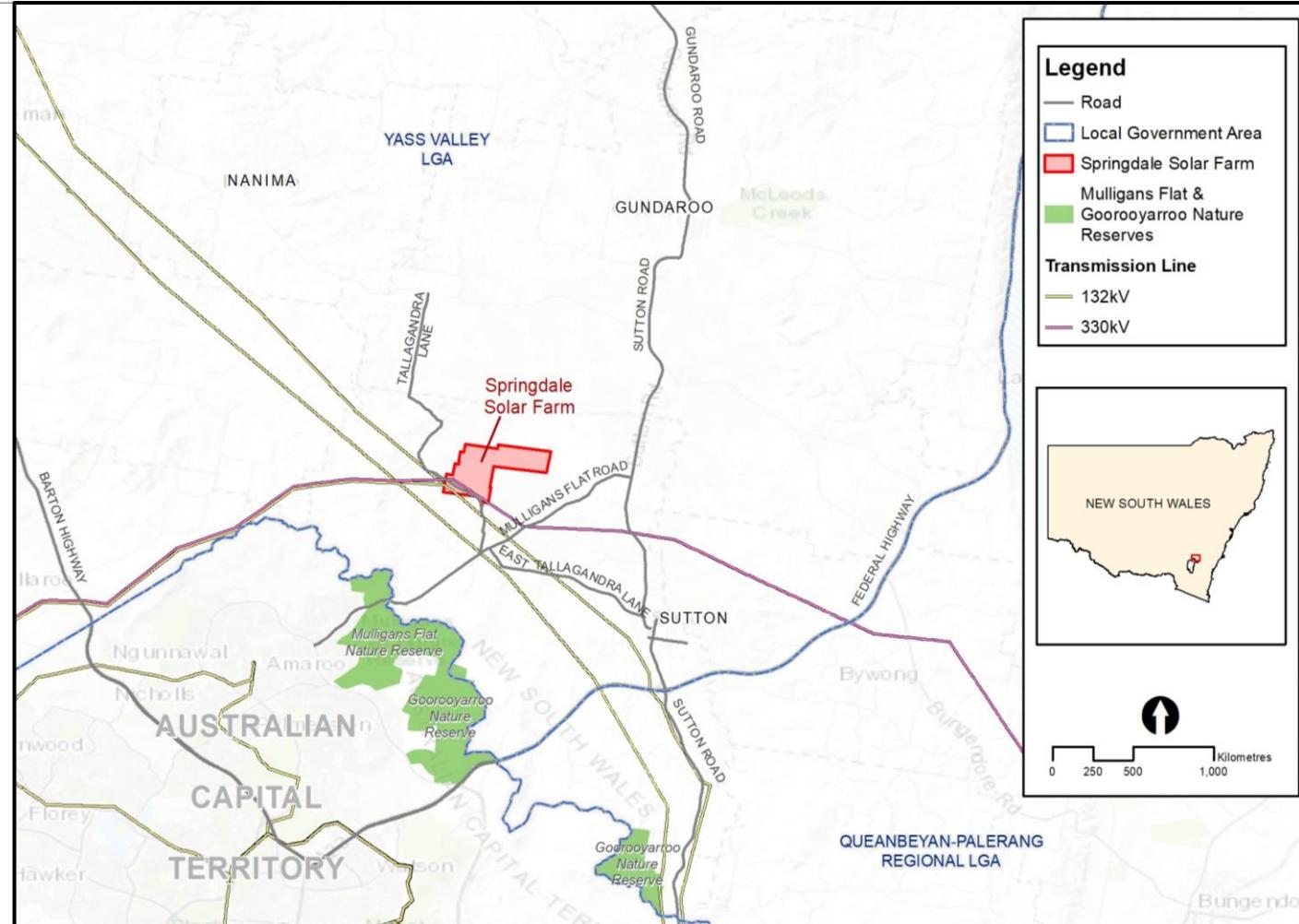
---

- Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979
- State Significant Development
- Department of Planning, Industry & Environment
- Whole of Government Assessment
- Independent Planning Commission - Determination
  - > 50 Objections



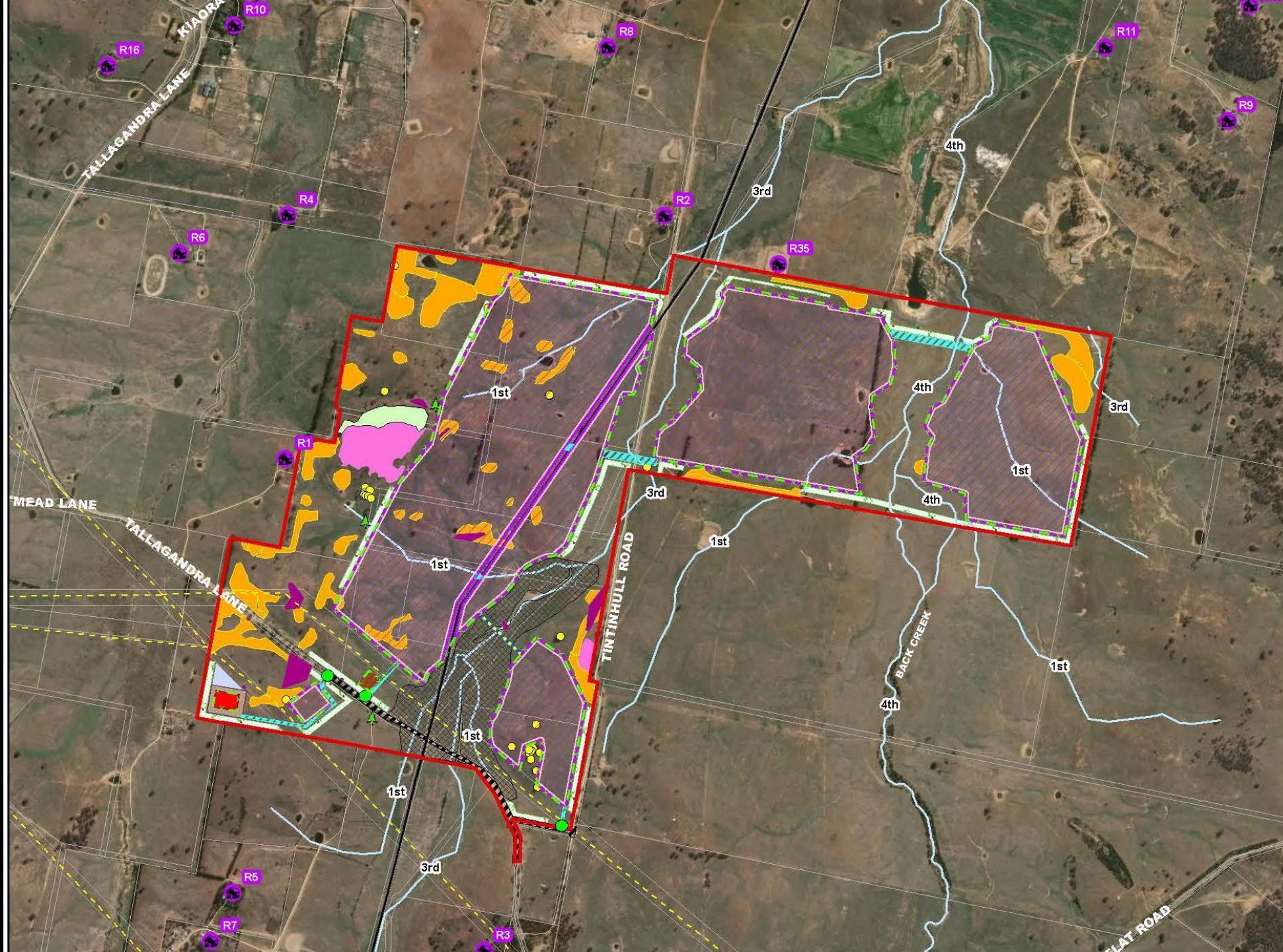
# Proposed Project

- RES Australia Pty Ltd
- 100 MW solar farm
- 260,000 panels - 4 metres high
- Direct connection to TransGrid's 132 kV Transmission Line, which transects the south west of site
- On site substation
- 35 years (but can be extended)
- 185 hectare development footprint
- \$120 million investment
- \$1.2 million contributions to Council
- 200 construction jobs



## SPRINGDALE SOLAR FARM

### CONSTRAINTS AND LAYOUT PLAN - FINAL



# Community Engagement

---

- Public Exhibition
  - 225 submissions (110 object, 114 support, 1 comment)
  - 5 submissions from Special Interest Groups (1 object, 3 support, 1 comment)
  - Advice from government agencies – Yass Valley Council; DPI Agriculture; Transport for NSW; Biodiversity Conservation Division; DPIE Water; Crown Lands; Mining, Exploration and Geoscience; Heritage NSW; Fire & Rescue NSW; Rural Fire Service; EPA – no objections
- Site Visit – 7 August 2018
- Meeting with Sutton Solar Action Group - 26 June 2020
- Consultation with Landowners

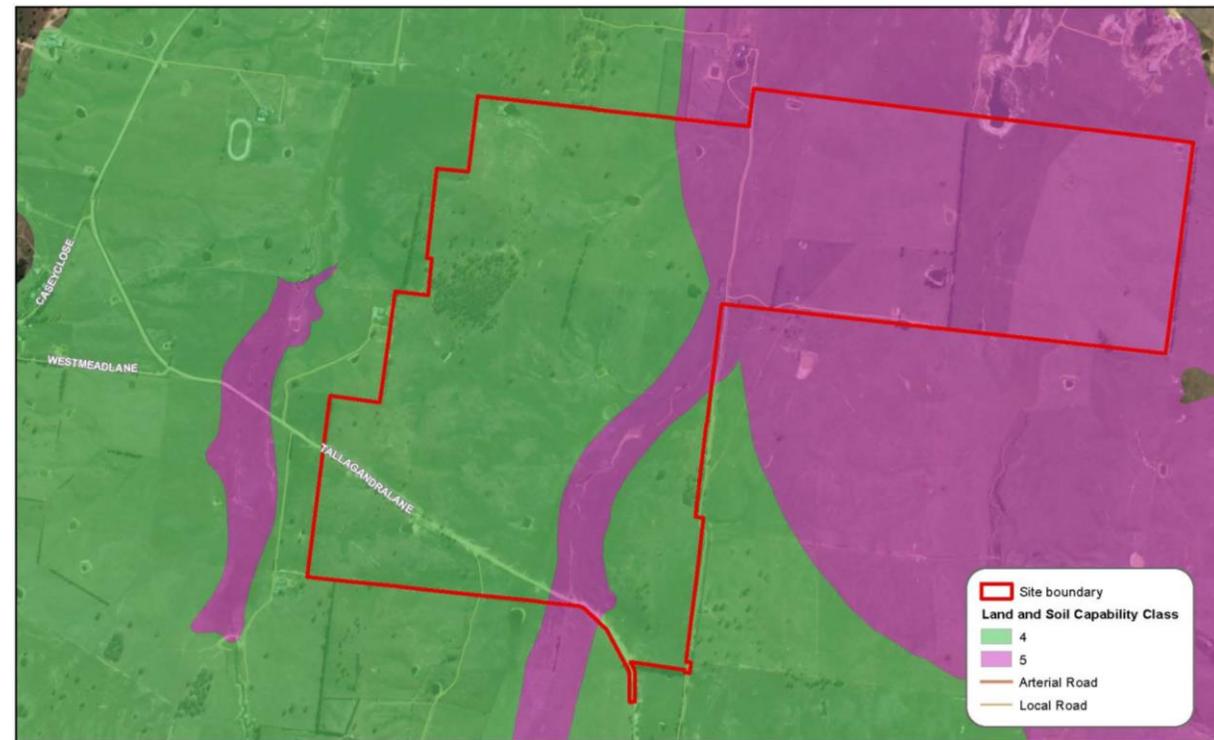
# **Key Issues**

---

- Impacts on agricultural land
- Visual impacts on the landscape and local residents
- Biodiversity impacts
- Impacts on local roads
- Amenity impacts - noise
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

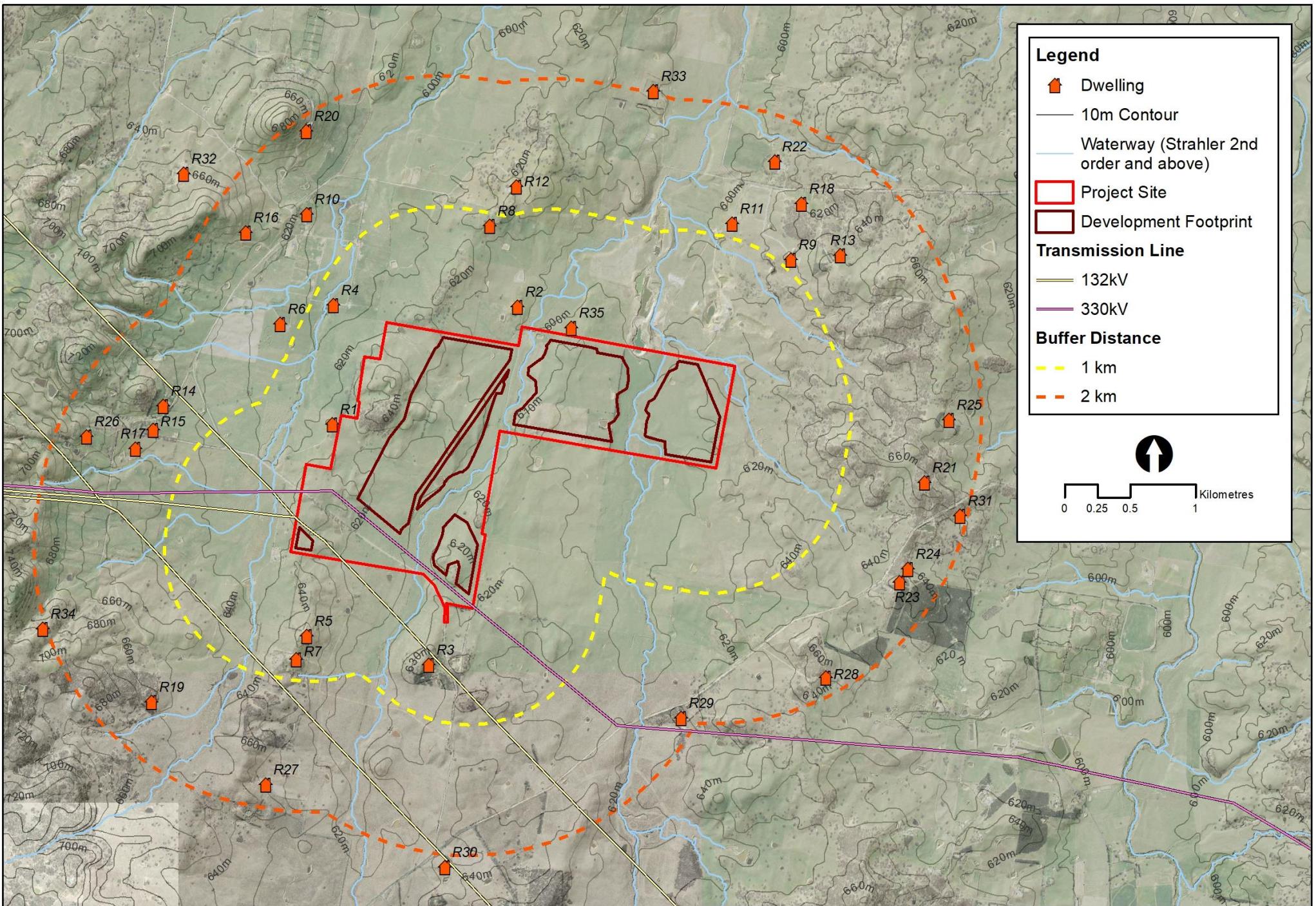
# Agricultural Capability

- Site currently used for cattle grazing
- Surrounding land mostly rural lifestyle lots
- Class 4 and Class 5 under *Land and Soil Capability Mapping for NSW*
- Project site - 370 ha
- Development footprint - 185 ha
- Sheep grazing under and around solar panels during operation
- Manage and restore land capability for agriculture following decommissioning



# Visual

- Reduce visual impacts on key local residences (R1, R2, R5, R8, R35):
  - panels removed south of Tallagandra lane to reduce visual impacts for R5 and R7
  - infrastructure setback to 90 m from nearest residence (R35)
  - relocating the onsite substation to reduce visual impact to R5
  - vegetation screening
  - retaining key areas of vegetation





Photomontage looking south towards the site from Residence R35 with a 50 m setback without visual mitigation



Photomontage looking south towards the site from Residence R35 with a 50 m setback with an artistic impression of vegetation screening proposed



Photomontage looking south towards the site from Tintinhull Road in the vicinity of Residence R2 without visual mitigation



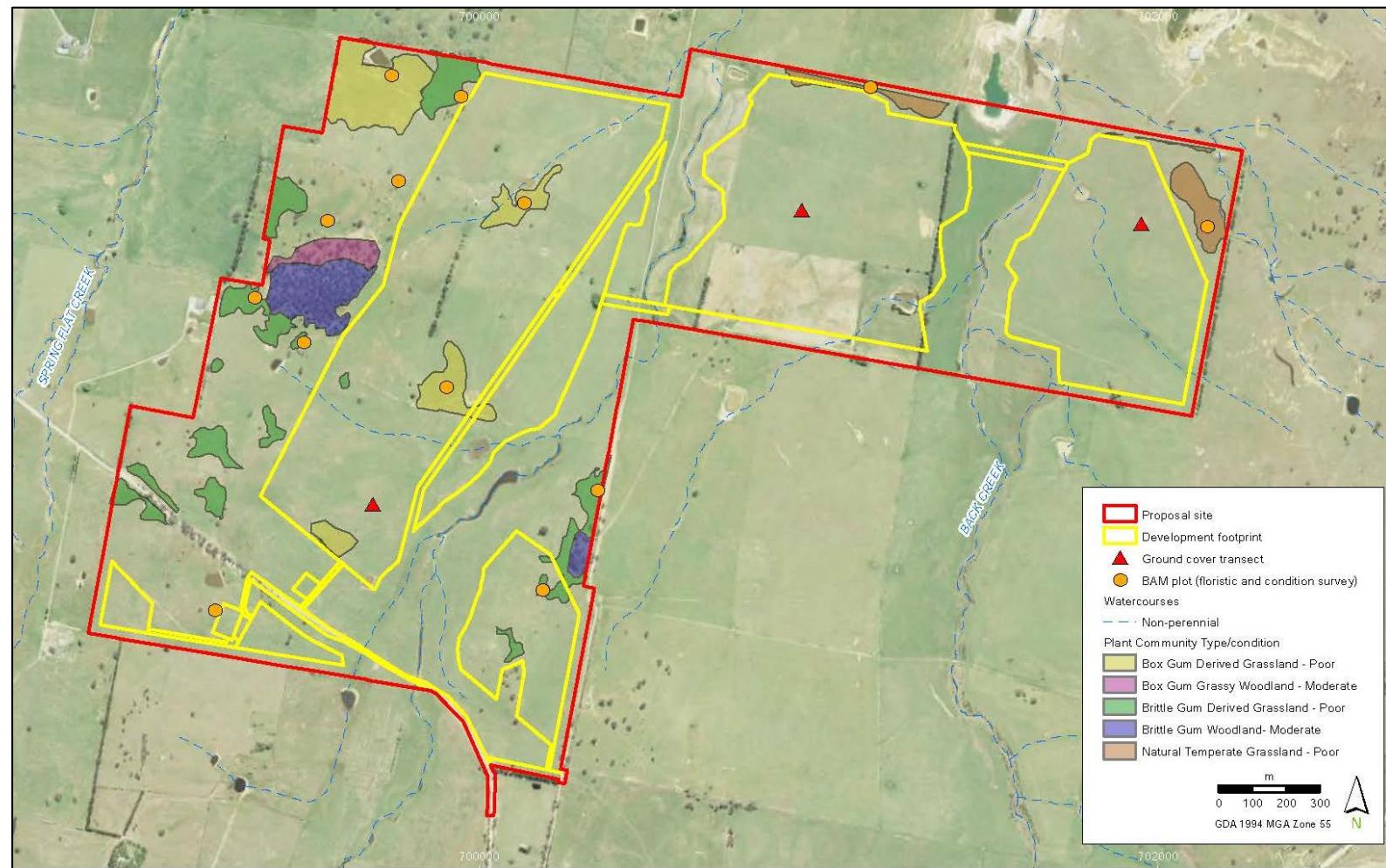
Photomontage looking south towards the site from Tintinhull Road in the vicinity of Residence R2 with an artistic impression of vegetation screening proposed

# Landscaping Plan



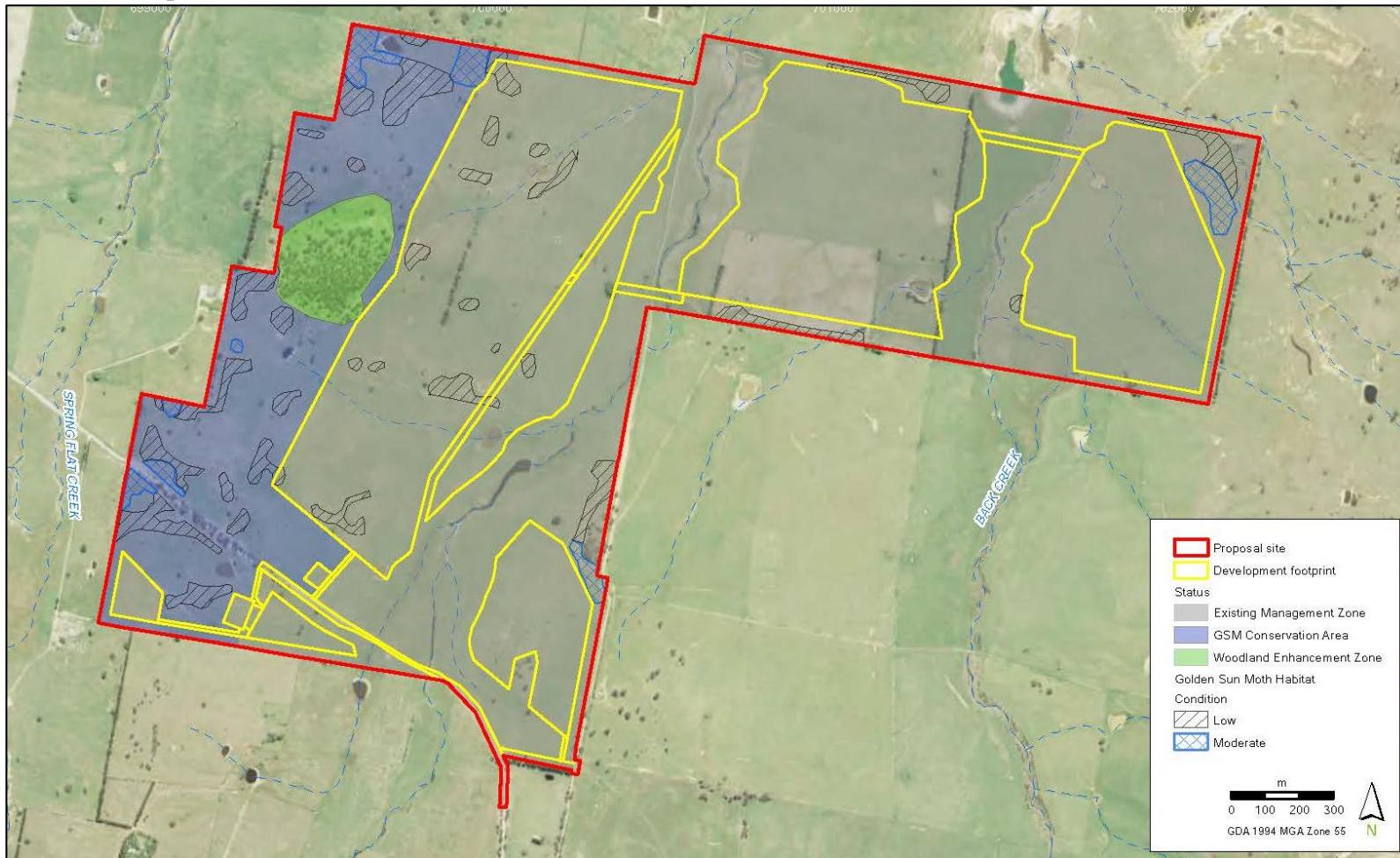
# Biodiversity

- History of clearing of native vegetation and heavy disturbance from grazing cattle
- Project designed to largely avoid impacts on remaining native vegetation and threatened species habitat
- Reduced additional 2.9 ha of the development footprint to avoid potential Striped Legless Lizard and Superb Parrot habitat
- Of the 185 ha development footprint, 5.38 ha of native vegetation and 33 paddock trees would be impacted



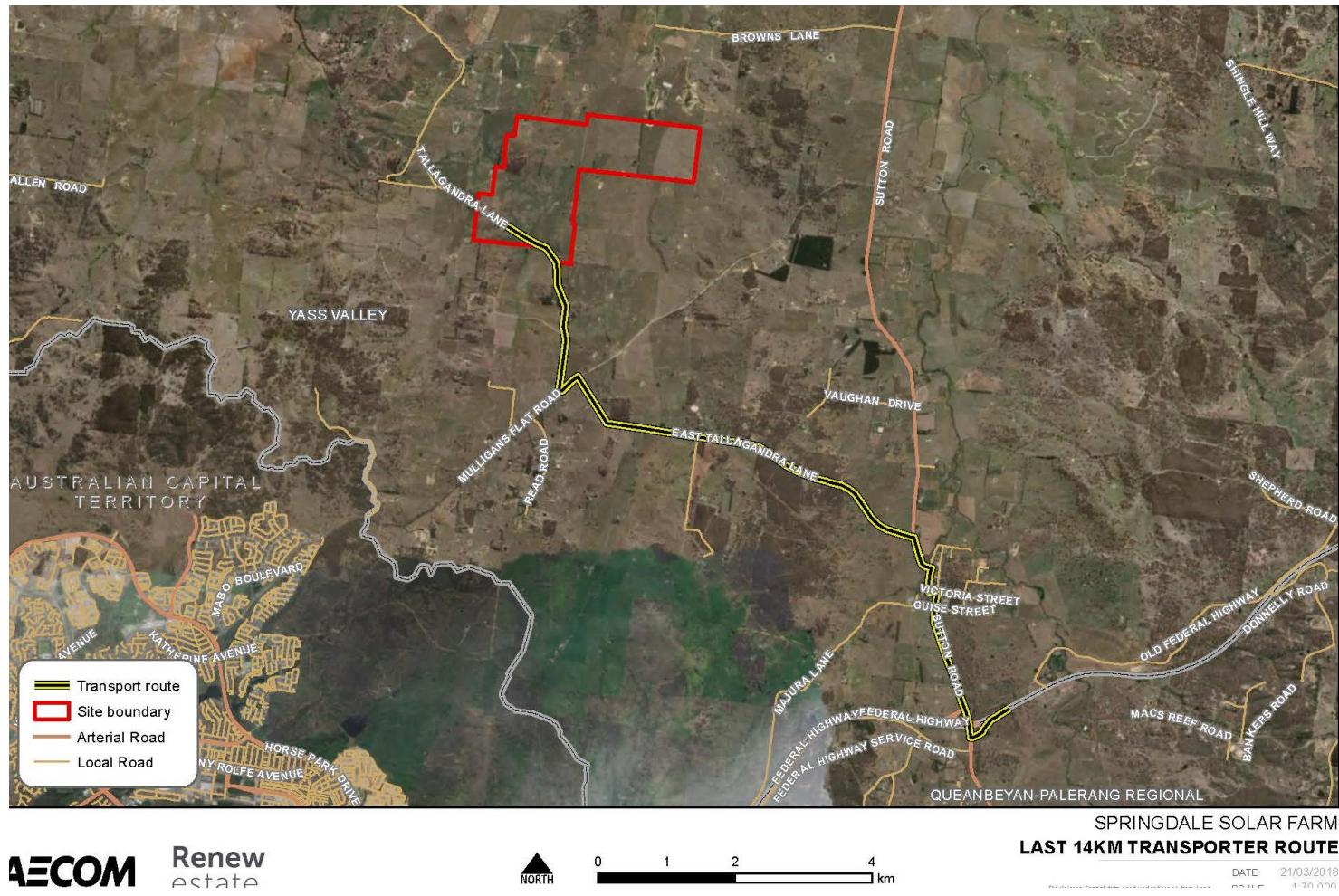
# Biodiversity (continued)

- Total of 43 species credits (38 for Golden Sun Moth and 5 for Superb Parrot)
- Applicant required to retire applicable biodiversity offset credits in accordance with the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme
- Applicant has committed to establish:
  - fencing buffer area around retained Golden Sun Moth habitat outside of development footprint;
  - a 60 ha Golden Sun Moth conservation area through the west of the site – protect and enhance habitat area; and
  - a woodland enhancement zone



# Traffic and Transport

- Transport route: Federal Highway to site (via Sutton Village) prioritizing use of State road network
- Alternate route considered
- Road maintenance requirements for local roads
- Traffic Management Plan includes measures to avoid school zone period for Sutton Primary School
- Road upgrades:
  - Tallagandra Lane from end of existing seal to furthest site access point, 7 m width gravel re-sheeting
  - Tintinhull Road from Tallagandra Lane to site access point, 5.5 m width gravel re-sheeting



Planning,  
Industry &  
Environment

AECOM

Renew  
Estate



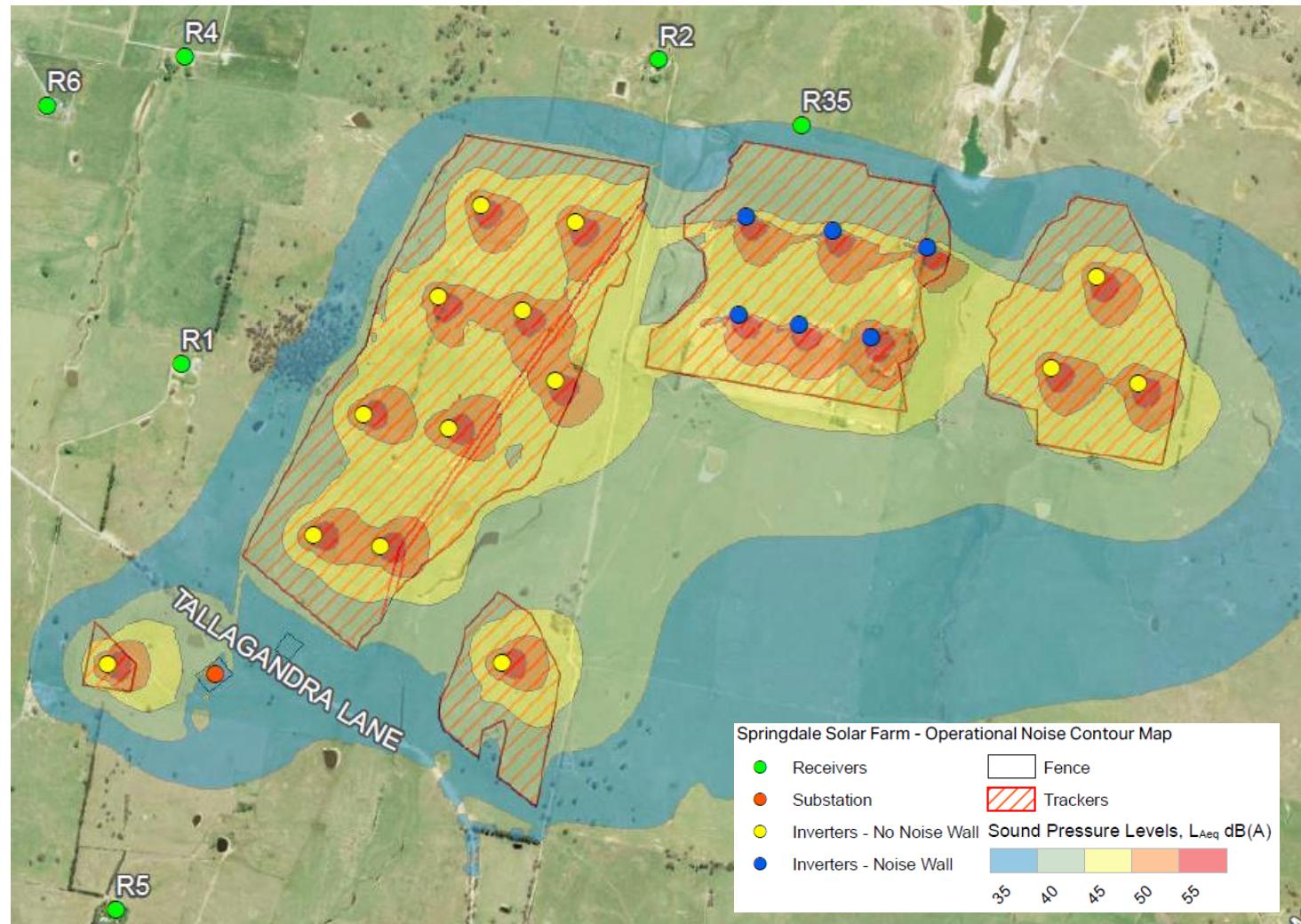
NORTH

0 1 2 4 km

SPRINGDALE SOLAR FARM  
LAST 14KM TRANSPORTER ROUTE  
DATE 21/03/2018  
TIME 1:30 000

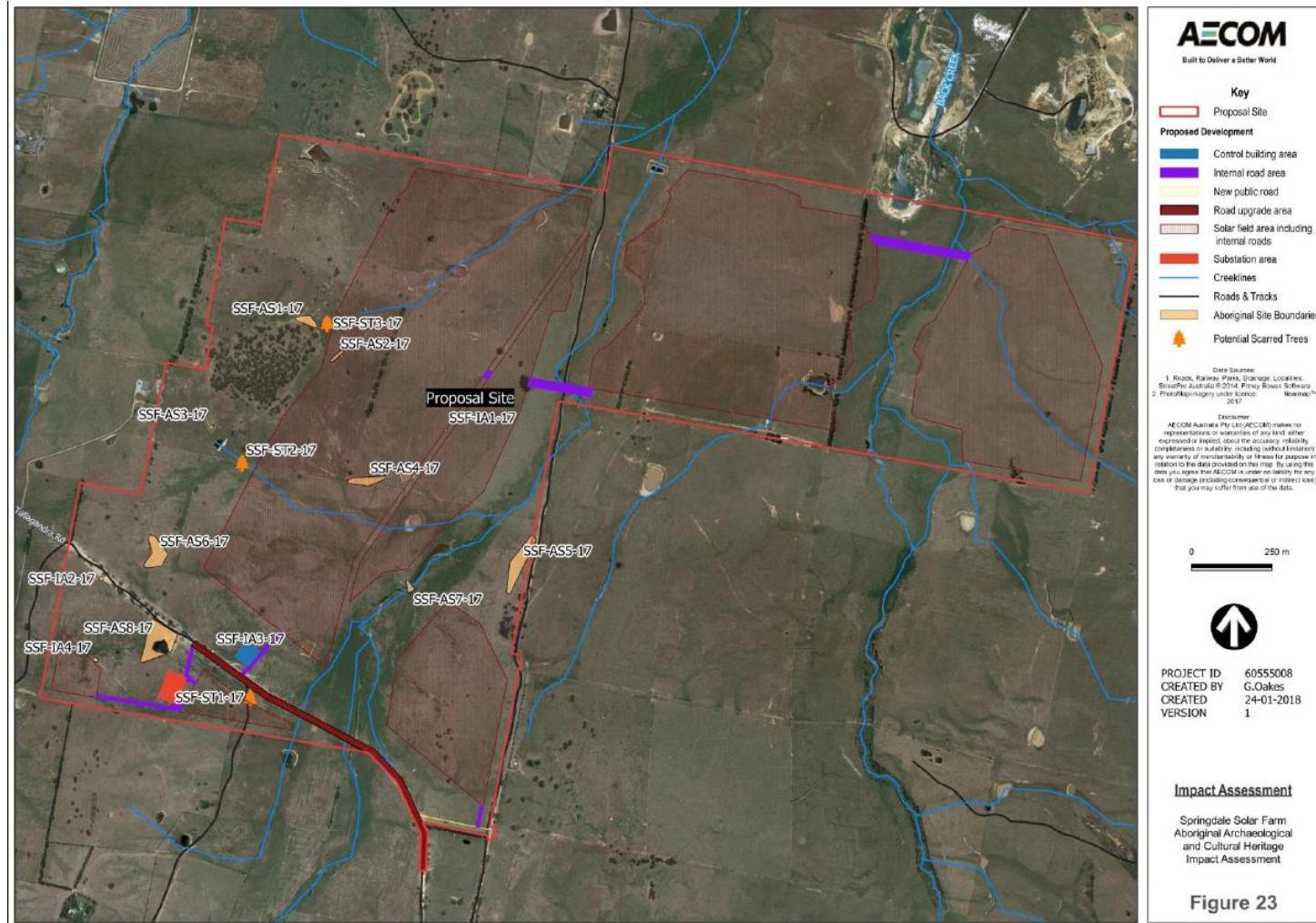
# Noise

- 10 month construction period
- Standard construction hours only – 7 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday and 8 am to 1 pm Saturday
- Comply with EPA noise criteria – except for intermittent exceedances at 5 residences when works undertaken in proximity to the residences
- Required to minimise noise generated during construction in accordance with best practice requirements in the EPA's *Construction Noise Guideline*
- Inclusion of noise walls around six inverters between Tintinhull Road and Back Creek would ensure negligible noise during operation



# Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

- The project would not impact important Aboriginal heritage sites present in the locality, including the Derrawa Dhaura Aboriginal Place 2.5 km away and the Reidsdale campsite 4.5 km away
- Heritage surveys undertaken with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) identified 15 Aboriginal heritage sites, 12 of which would be avoided
- Subsurface test excavations recommended to inform the project design due to high subsurface archaeological potential in parts of the site



# Conditions

---

- *Strict Conditions* – developed in consultation with agencies and Council
- *Management Plans* – Landscaping, Traffic, Biodiversity, Heritage, Emergency Plans
- Other key conditions:
  - *operating hours* – undertaking construction activities during standard construction hours
  - *biodiversity offsets* – retiring biodiversity offset credits in accordance with the *NSW Biodiversity Offsets Scheme*
  - *fire* – ensure that the development complies with the relevant asset protection requirements in the RFS's *Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019*
  - *decommissioning* – remove all infrastructure within 18 months of ceasing operations
  - *rehabilitation* – restore land to pre-existing agricultural land capability
  - *water and flooding* – ensuring the solar panels and ancillary infrastructure are designed, constructed and maintained to reduce impacts on surface water, flooding and groundwater on site.
- Compliance – monitoring and strict enforcement of conditions by the Department's Compliance Unit

# Benefits of the Project

---

- Up to 200 construction jobs
- Up to 5 operational jobs
- \$120 million in capital investment
- Contributions to Council of around \$1.2 million, prioritising funding for local projects
- Generate renewable energy to power over 37,000 homes
- Save over 211,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year
- Consistent with NSW and Commonwealth Policies:
  - *NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 - 2030*
  - *NSW Electricity Strategy*
  - *Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline*
  - *Paris Agreement on Climate Change*



# Evaluation

---

- The Department has completed a comprehensive assessment of the project in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act.
- This has included community consultation and detailed advice from government agencies.
- The Department fully acknowledges that some members of the community remain strongly opposed to the project, and that the project would result in a range of residual environmental and amenity impacts on the local community.
- However, the Department considers that the changes made to the project through the assessment process have significantly reduced the residual impacts of the project.

# Evaluation (continued)

---

- With these changes, and the implementation of the recommended conditions, the Department considers that the environmental and amenity impacts of the project can be managed to achieve acceptable outcomes.
- The Department also considers that the project would provide significant economic and social benefits to the region and would contribute to the transition of the NSW economy away from a reliance on fossil fuels in accordance with NSW Government policy.
- Overall, the Department considers that the project achieves an appropriate balance between maximizing the efficiency of the solar resource and the associated benefits of the project, and minimising the potential impacts on surrounding land uses, local residents and the environment.
- It therefore considers that the project is approvable, subject to strict conditions.



Planning,  
Industry &  
Environment

**Nicole Brewer**  
**Director, Energy Assessments**

---