

Middlebrook Solar Farm

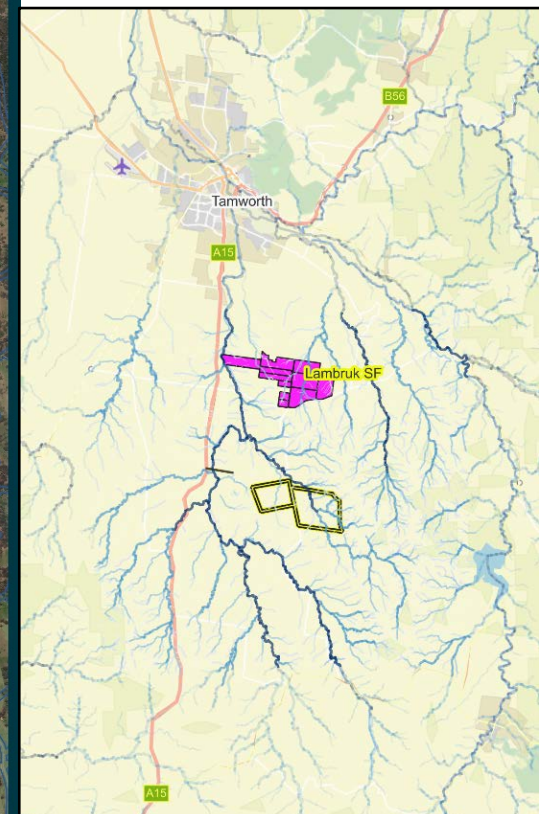
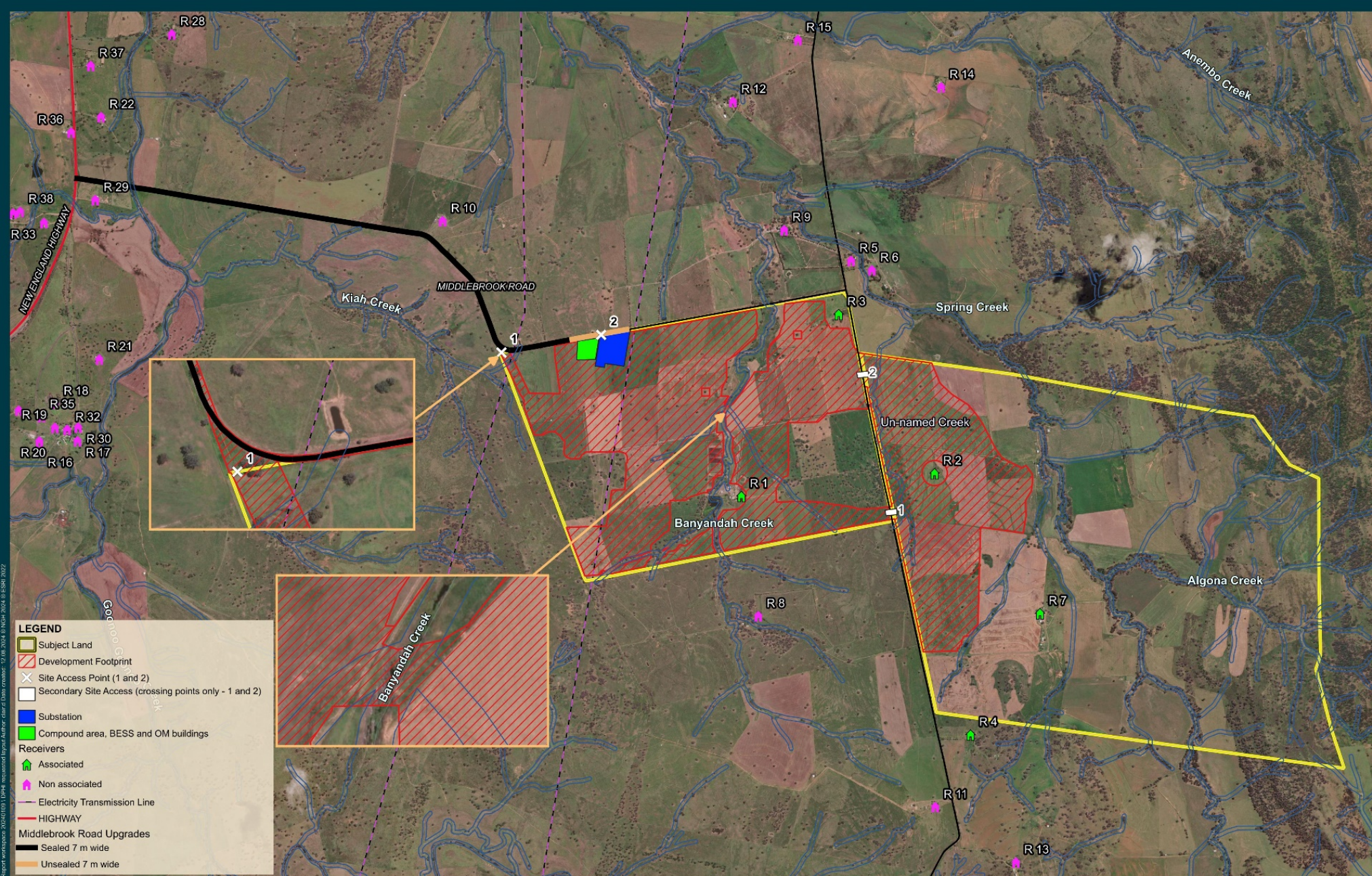
Independent Planning Commission Briefing

Iwan Davies
Director, Energy Assessments

September 2024

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- Context
- Engagement
- Key issues
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- Evaluation



Datum: GDA94 / MGA zone 56

EIS Public Exhibition:

- 7 July – 3 August 2023
- 120 Objections
- 4 Comments
- 5 Supports

Other Engagement:

- The Department engaged with 10 Government Agencies throughout the assessment process
- The Department engaged with Tamworth Regional Council throughout the assessment process
- The Department inspected the site in May 2024 and met with nearby landowners

Key Issues

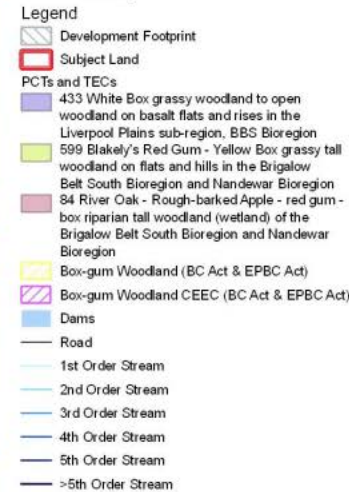
- Land use compatibility
- Biodiversity
- Traffic and transport
- Visual impacts

Land Use Compatibility

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- The proposed development is located on land within the RU1 Primary Production zone under the Tamworth LEP, which is a prescribed non-residential zones for which electricity-generating development is permissible via the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP.
 - Consistent with the Tamworth LEP and the *New England North West Regional Plan 2041*, which includes a direction to leverage new renewable energy opportunities and contribute to the State's transition to lower emissions.
 - Development footprint comprises of 515.41 ha of primarily Class 4 and 5 agricultural land, which has limited agricultural capabilities.
 - Land subject to development would be capable of returning to usable agricultural land following decommissioning.
 - The cumulative impacts which the development footprint would have on regional productivity would be negligible.

Biodiversity

Middlebrook Solar Farm
Figure 3-10 PCTs and TECs within the
Subject Land (Stage 1: Biodiversity
Assessment)



0 500 1,000 m

Data Attribution
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Ref: 22-180 Middlebrook BDAR workspace 230307
\\Figure 3-10 PCTs and TECs within the Subject Land (Stage 1: Biodiversity Assessment)
Author: D. Perovic
Date created: 21.08.2023
Datum: GDA94 / MGA zone 56



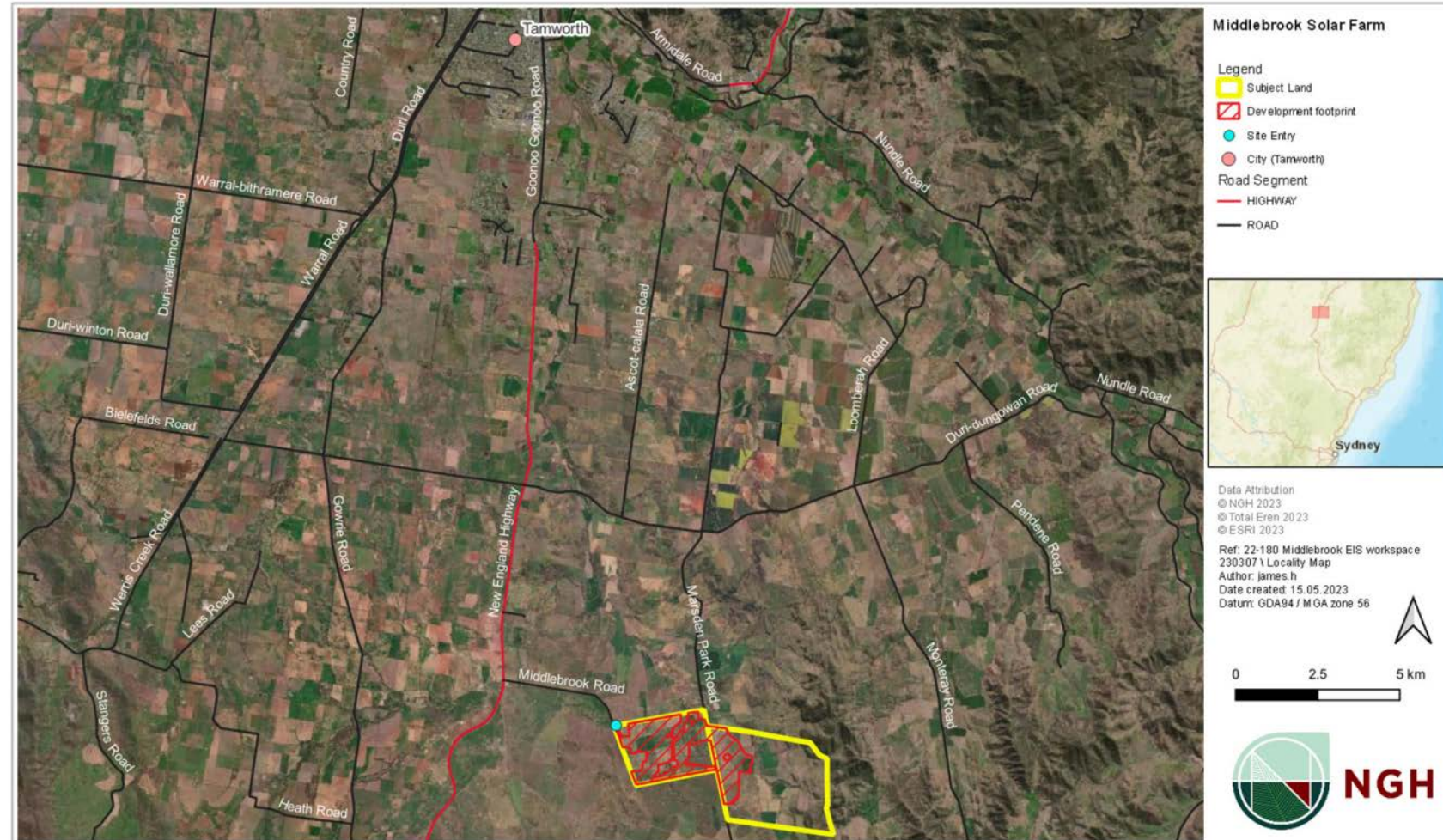
- The site has been historically cleared for grazing and some cropping
- Clearing of 4.3 ha of native vegetation.
- The majority of the site is Category 1 – Exempt Land and does not require offsetting

Would generate:

- 40 species credits for the Squirrel Glider
- 77 ecosystem credits and;
- 159 scattered tree credits for the clearing of 189 scattered trees, of which 115 contain hollows

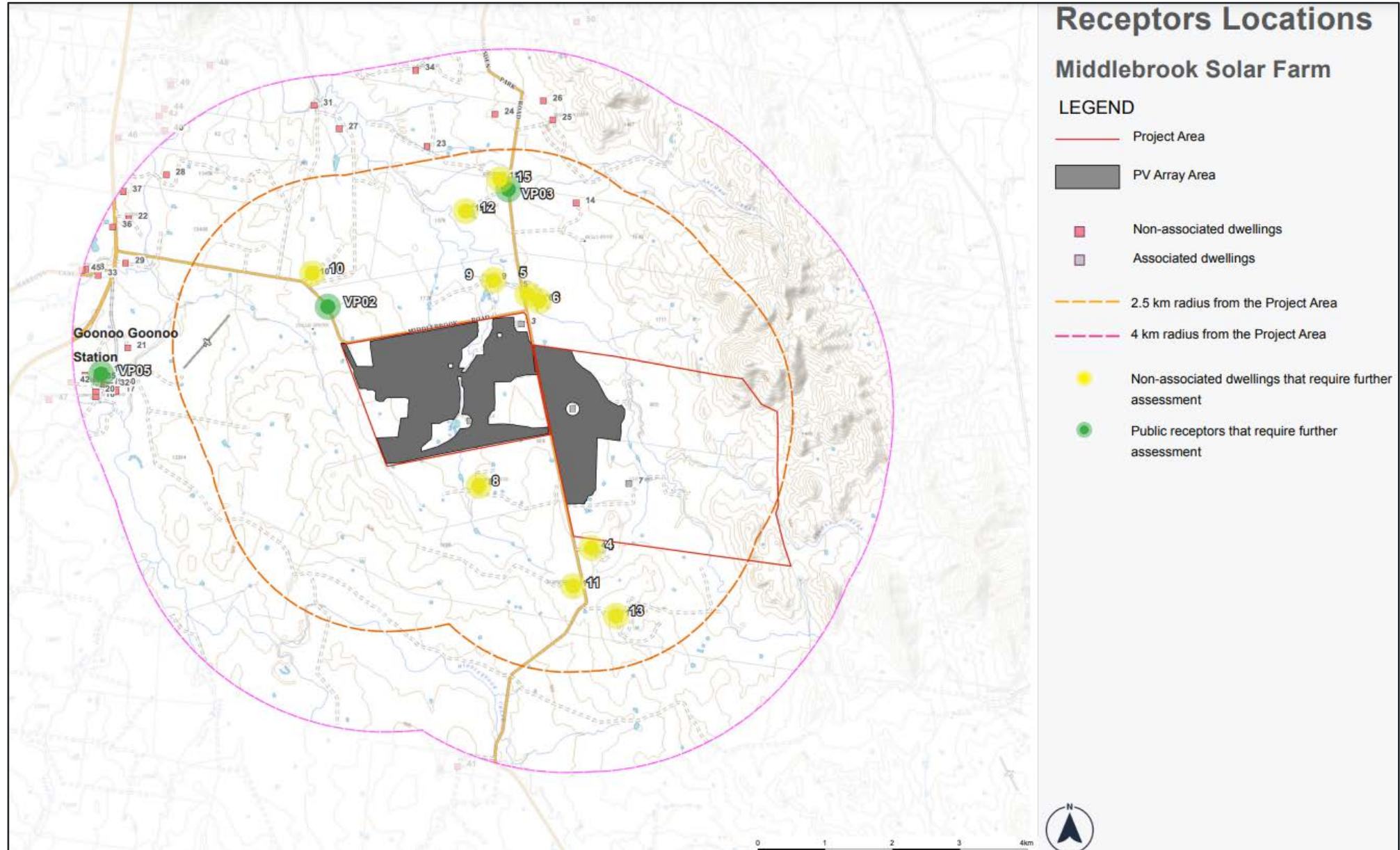
Traffic & Transport

- The haulage route for the project is via the New England Highway and Middlebrook Road
- Use of Middlebrook Road east of the second site access has been prohibited, except in emergencies
- Roadworks included within the proposed project includes sealing and road widening along Middlebrook Road, new site accesses and crossing points and intersection upgrades (New England Highway / Middlebrook Road)



Source: NGH Pty Ltd

Visual Impacts



Other Issues

- Heritage
- Contamination
- Accommodation and workforce
- Cumulative
- Decommissioning and rehabilitation
- Community benefit
- VPA

-
- The Department has assessed the application, documents, submissions and advice, as per the requirements of the EP&A Act.
 - The site has good solar resources, access to the road network and direct access to the electricity network.
 - Changes made to the project through the assessment process have significantly reduced the residual impacts of the project.
 - With 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 project would:
 - provide significant economic and social benefits to the region
 - contribute to the transition of the NSW economy away from a reliance on fossil fuels
 - maximise the efficiency of the solar resource while minimising the potential impacts on surrounding land uses, local residents, and the environment.