June 2025
Project Update

Richmond Valley Solar Farm

A photograph of the project area

Response to submissions

The development application and environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Richmond Valley Solar Farm was submitted in June 2024 and placed on public exhibition from 24 July until 21 August 2024.

Thank you to everyone who attended the EIS information session in Ellangowan during the exhibition period, and who took the time to read the EIS documents and make a submission.

Several issues were raised in submissions including visual and noise impacts, biodiversity, bushfire risk and changing land use. Ark Energy has now completed its Submissions Report responding to the issues that were raised.

Amendment Report

As a result of consultation, biodiversity considerations and design updates, several changes were made to the project to reduce impacts and improve constructability. Ark Energy has completed an Amendment Report outlining the changes, which include:

- Changes to the perimeter fence to align it better with existing farm fences.
- Updates to the size, model and number of inverters for the battery energy storage system (BESS).
- Updated location for the switching substation.
- Revised transport route for oversize vehicles.
- Updated solar panel design.
- Change to the size of the area for the connection point.
- Reduction in the development footprint from 803 ha to 789 ha.

Updated technical assessments have also been completed, including for noise, traffic, biodiversity, Aboriginal cultural heritage, hazards and bushfire impacts.

The Submissions Report, Amendment Report and updated technical assessments are now available from the Richmond Valley Solar Farm page in the NSW Major Projects Portal.

Visit: planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/richmond-valley-solar-farm

or scan QR code right.

Location

The project area for the proposed Richmond Valley Solar Farm is near Myrtle Creek, approximately 7 km east of Rappville and 25 km south of Casino, in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales.

The location is well suited for solar energy generation. The land was previously used for private forestry, is relatively flat, has an excellent solar resource and is close to the transmission network, with the Coffs Harbour to Lismore 330 kV powerline intersecting the north-west corner of the site.

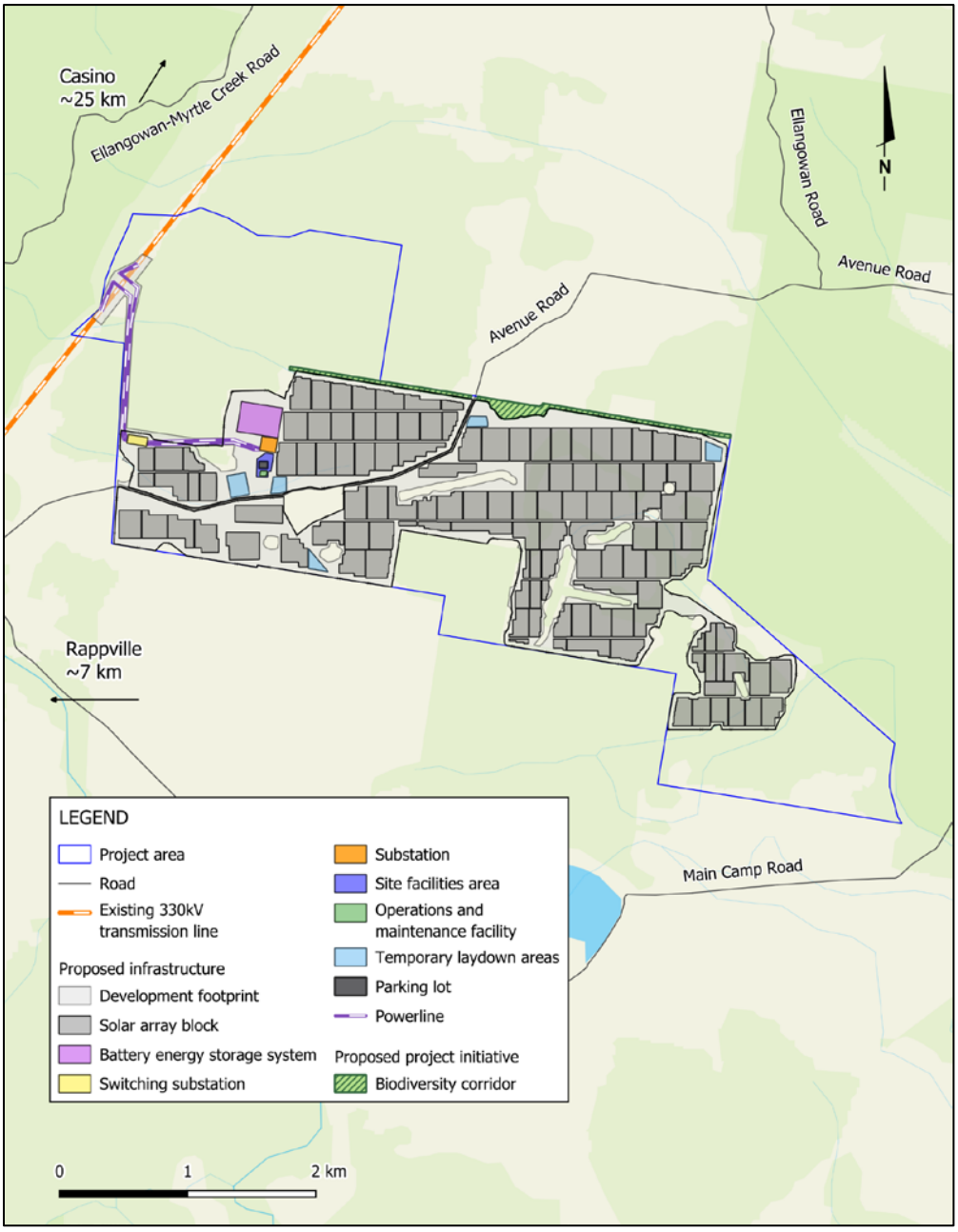
The Richmond Valley Solar Farm consists of a solar farm with a potential generation capacity of up to 500 MW and a battery energy storage system (BESS) with a power capacity of 275 MW and storage capacity of up to 2,200 MWh over eight hours.

Planning & assessment

Utility-scale solar farms in NSW are considered State Significant Development and assessed by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

1. Site selection and preliminary investigations ✓
2. Initial concept and consultation ✓
3. Scoping Report submitted to the former NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) ✓
4. Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) issued by DPE ✓
5. Referral to the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) for review under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). ✓
6. Determination by DCCEEW – controlled action (Ref 2023/09641) ✓
7. Studies, assessments, design ✓
8. Finalising EIS for lodgment ✓
9. Development application (DA) and EIS lodged with DPHI (formerly DPE) ✓
10. DA and EIS on public exhibition for comment ✓
11. Responses to submissions and additional information ✓
12. Assessment by DPHI — WE ARE HERE
13. DPHI assessment report and recommendation
14. Final determination by DCCEEW

Richmond Valley Solar Farm proposed site layout



The map above shows the amended design for the Richmond Valley Solar Farm including solar panels, a powerline connection corridor, laydown areas and battery storage system.

Next steps

Following submission of the Submissions and Amendment Reports, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) will complete its assessment and make a determination. Final approval under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) will also be required from the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

More information

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