Thank you for taking the time to review the documents for the proposed Goorambat East Battery Energy Storage System (GoBESS).

We have answered your questions as fully as we can at this stage. Some details depend on the final battery supplier and equipment, which are chosen during the detailed design stage. That stage will begin if a Planning Permit is granted.

During detailed design, ENGIE will carry out further assessments and must meet the conditions set out in the permit. This process will allow us to give you more complete answers to some of your questions.

Noise

The Community requires an agreement on the current (pre-BESS project) noise levels, we demand that the BESS noise does not have any dB increase at any frequencies, at any residence within the town and surrounding district.

While it is not possible to guarantee that there will be no increase in noise at any frequency, ENGIE understands the community's concern. The BESS will be designed and operated to comply with the applicable Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) noise requirements.

In response to the concerns raised, ENGIE will undertake additional noise modelling and monitoring during detailed design to identify and, where reasonable practicable, further reduce potential noise impacts.

Once the BESS is operational, any noise concerns can be raised through ENGIE's complaints process, which is attached for reference.

Fire Safety

Access / Egress improvements be made to each zone of the proposed BESS Facility. Minimum of 4 gates to BESS compound allowing access regardless of wind direction.

The Country Fire Authority (CFA) Guidelines for Renewable Energy Facilities, Version 4, set out the access and egress requirements for these facilities and currently require a minimum of two access points.

The current concept layout for GoBESS includes four access points from the BESS area, connecting to either the external road network or the internal solar farm access roads: one to the north, two to the south and one to the east. It also shows four gates, and a fifth western gate which is associated with access to the solar farm inverters only. The layout will be refined during detailed design, and ENGIE will ensure the final access and egress arrangements comply with CFA guidelines.

Proposed minimum enclosure standard be best practice for a BESS in bushfire prone areas. IP66 enclosure + fire-resistant materials + ember-proof ventilation + APZ + detection/suppression systems. BESS containers to be fitted with fire suppression systems not just detection systems.

IP66 enclosure – The IP rating describes how well an enclosure keeps out dust and water. GoBESS currently specifies a minimum of IP54 for the battery enclosures. The Fire Risk Management Plan considers this sufficient to make ember ingress unlikely.

A higher IP rating doesn't necessarily make a battery system safer from a fire perspective. The enclosure also has to support the supplier's cooling, ventilation and emergency venting systems, which are key safety functions. Requiring IP66 across the whole enclosure could limit these functions, depending on the supplier's design.

The project will commit to a minimum of IP54, with the final rating confirmed through supplier selection and detailed design.

Fire resistant materials - ENGIE supports the use of fire-resistant and non-combustible materials wherever practicable and appropriate. However, not every component within a BESS can be fire resistant, as battery cells inherently contain combustible and reactive materials. This risk will be managed through the overall system design and fire-safety measures.

Ember proof ventilation – Appropriate ember protection will be considered as part of the final design. The final arrangement will depend on the selected manufacturer's ventilation and fire-safety design, with a focus on preventing fire initiation and spread through enclosure design, separation distances, monitoring and tested fire-safety systems.

APZ – ENGIE agrees with this approach. The current GoBESS design includes a minimum 10-metre firebreak around the BESS perimeter and related infrastructure. It will be constructed using non-combustible material and integrated with emergency vehicle access.

Detection/suppression system - ENGIE can confirm that the project will include fire detection and appropriate suppression and protection measures. The final system will be confirmed through equipment selection and detailed design.

Fire water runoff / containment is fitted with an automated valve shutoff systems which function upon detection.

The drainage design will provide a means of isolating fire-water runoff so the potentially contaminated firefighting water can be directed to, and retained within, the dedicated fire-water containment system, rather than discharged off-site. The final isolation arrangement, including how valves are activated, will be confirmed during detailed design.

The proposed facility is intercepted by a designated waterway. Clarity is to be provided on how this waterway will be protected from fire water runoff.

As agreed with Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA), ENGIE will maintain a 15-metre buffer from the designated waterway. More information about how the waterway and fire-water runoff will be managed will be provided as the design is developed.

Runoff from the BESS area drains through the site drainage system to a dedicated firewater retention basin.

The risk assessment of a fire having an offsite impact has a residual risk rating of HIGH, this is considered to be an unacceptable level of risk to the community. Details are to be provided associated with this to ensure everything is done to reduce this risk as far as reasonably practicable and reduced to at least moderate rather than high.

ENGIE understands the community's concern regarding the high residual risk rating identified in the assessment.

The risk assessment follows AS ISO 31000:2018 Risk management – Guidelines, as adopted in the National Emergency Risk Assessment Guidelines.

The risk rating combines two factors: how likely an event is and how severe its consequences could be. For this risk, the scenario is a fire spreading from the site to neighbouring properties through vegetation on a day of elevated fire danger. If that happened, the potential consequences to surrounding land and the community would be significant. The project's controls focus mainly on preventing a fire from starting and from spreading beyond the site, which lowers the likelihood. They don't change the potential consequences if a fire did escape, so the overall rating remains high even after controls are applied.

Vegetation management within the facility has been identified as a critical safety control measure, we require that all vegetation is no higher than 100mm and that excess fuel load be removed from the site.

Vegetation within the BESS facility will either be removed or maintained in accordance with the Fire Management Plan and CFA requirements. This will include the appropriate management of vegetation height and excess fuel loads.

On days of total fire ban / high fire danger or anytime the local tanker is directed elsewhere ENGIE to provide onsite firefighting resources.

GoBESS will provide the onsite firefighting infrastructure required by CFA, including dedicated firefighting water supply, emergency access and other measures determined through detailed design and emergency planning. Emergency response arrangements will be developed in consultation with CFA.

Reticulated water supply be installed. Fire hydrant systems that will reticulate the required water for at least 4 hours, approx. 1200 litres per min means a minimum storage of 300,000 litres of water. Fire hydrant heads should be no greater than 60 metres from any individual battery container.

The current design provides approximately 576,000 L of dedicated firefighting water storage. The project has been designed on the basis of providing a dedicated onsite static firefighting water supply in accordance with the applicable CFA requirements.

The final hydrant arrangement and coverage will be developed during detailed design to comply with the applicable CFA and fire-safety requirements.

That Consequence Modelling of hazards be performed and shared with the Community to demonstrate there is no net increase in risk to existing or future residences.

This modelling relies on product-specific information. This includes the battery's UL 9540A fire test results, the gas composition and release rates, the enclosure design and the final site layout. Modelling done now would have to rely on generic assumptions and wouldn't reliably represent the facility that will be built.

Following community consultation where this has been raised as a concern, ENGIE will carry out site-specific smoke and gas dispersion modelling once the battery supplier is selected and the design is developed. It will use the selected product's test data and local weather conditions.

Following this modelling, suitable mitigation measures will then be incorporated in response to the findings.

Flooding

The final BESS installation is to not to inhibit the waterway.

As agreed with GBCMA, ENGIE will comply with a 15-metre buffer from the designated waterway.

Localised assessment to be conducted during rain event to validate their assumptions and ensure no increase in flood levels on neighbouring properties and roadway.

A detailed Flood Impact Assessment has already been completed by specialist flood consultants. It considers existing and developed conditions, neighbouring properties, road access and major design flood events. ENGIE understands the request for local validation; however, observations during an unspecified rainfall event may not provide a reliable comparison with the design modelling unless the rainfall event and assessment criteria are clearly defined.

Ask batteries are green not white

BESS enclosures are typically supplied in light colours to minimise solar heat absorption and associated thermal load on the battery cooling system. Specifying a darker colour such as green could increase heat absorption and cooling demand, depending on the selected equipment and cooling system.

ENGIE will consider both visual and thermal performance in determining the final enclosure finish.

Where visual mitigation is required, this will be addressed through the broader landscape and visual screening design.

A 10-metre buffer of trees around the BESS site

Additional vegetation needs to take into consideration the setbacks required for the solar farm as well as the BESS.

The design requires a 10 m APZ/fire protection zone around the BESS, which needs to remain appropriately managed for fire safety. Providing an additional 10 m tree buffer to the west in particular would encroach into the required fire protection zone.

Visual mitigation on the western side is provided by the existing/proposed vegetation screening.

Community Benefit

$300k plus CPI to Goorambat Community on top of other benefit for the life of the BESS Site

Victoria does not currently prescribe a benefit-sharing rate for battery storage projects. ENGIE has therefore considered VicGrid's Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines alongside other like projects, when developing the proposed community benefit amount.

On this basis, ENGIE proposes to provide $30,000 per year for the life of the project, with the amount increasing annually in line with CPI. This is in addition to the $75,000 per year that is provided through the Goorambat East Solar Farm.

ENGIE looks forward to working with the local community to determine an appropriate and transparent approach to managing and distributing these funds.

Decommissioning Fund

To be established and reflective of industry best practise

Decommissioning costs are considered in the project budget from the outset. For projects on leased land, ENGIE is required at the end of the operating life to remove project infrastructure and rehabilitate the land to its former condition.

Although ENGIE owns the land proposed for the BESS, we remain committed to removing the project infrastructure at the end of its operating life and rehabilitating the land to its former condition.