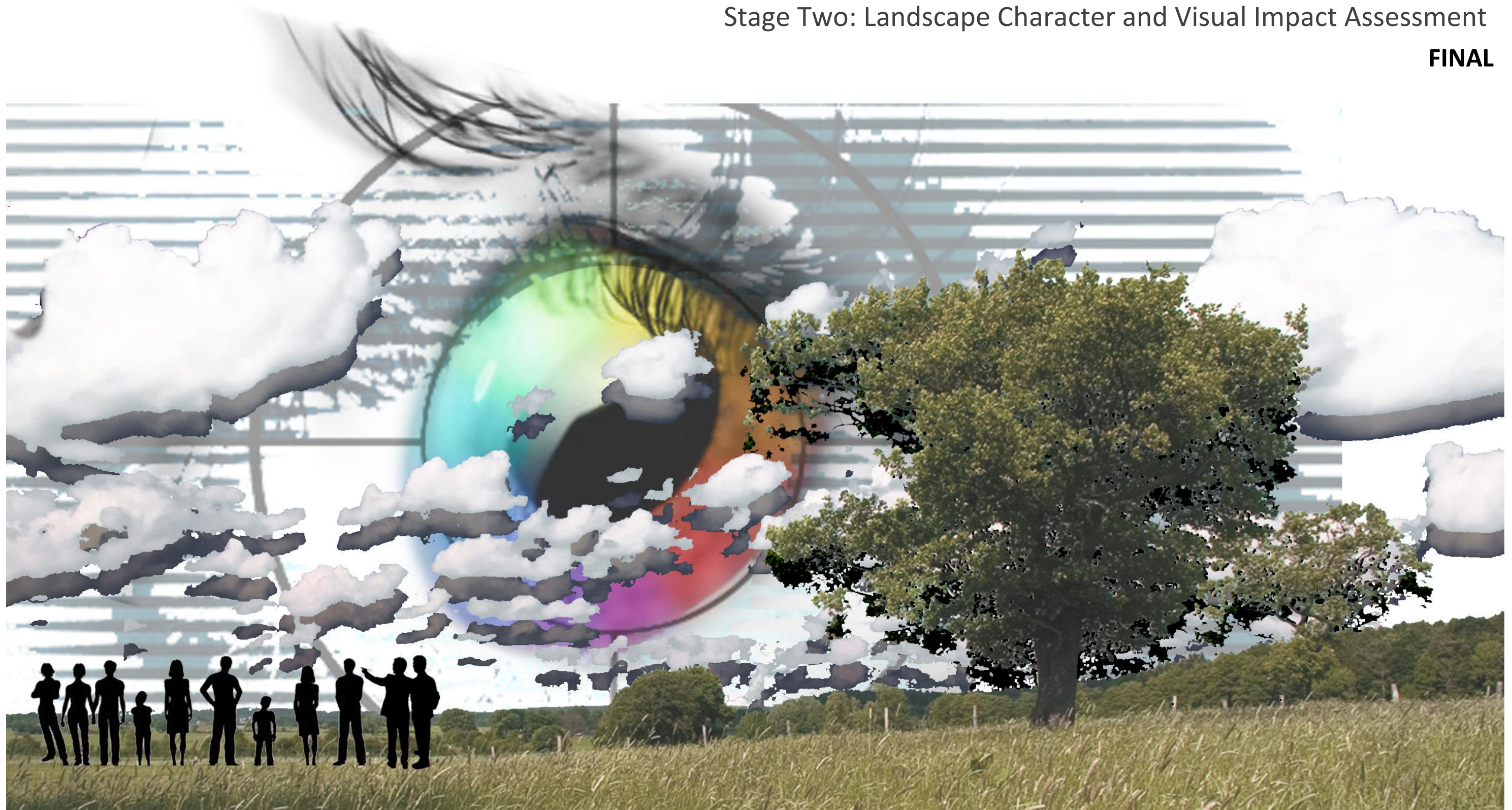


Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility

Stage Two: Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment

FINAL



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Contents

About the author	2
Glossary of Terms	3
Executive Summary.....	4
1.0 Introduction.....	6
2.0 Stage Two Considerations.....	6
2.1 Site Visit and Photography.....	6
2.2 Consideration of the pre-determined viewpoints.....	11
3.0 Likely Visual Impact Assessment.....	21
3.1 Construction Phase.....	23
3.2 Likely Visual Impact at the Identified 'Sensitive Receptors'	23
4.0 Summary and recommendations.....	30

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About the author

Stuart Heseltine, Registered Landscape Architect, Principal of Hemisphere Design.

Stuart is acknowledged as a leading practitioner in the area of landscape character and visual impact assessment. In considering each visual impact assessment exercise Stuart undertakes a qualitative landscape character assessment consistent with best practice as prescribed by the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (third edition), the Landscape Institute (UK) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (NSW) 2013.

Stuart has successfully applied this methodology to major projects across South Australia, the Northern Territories, New South Wales and Victoria. With relevance to this project Stuart has prepared assessments for the Adelaide, Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln Desalination Plants, the Lincoln Gap (Stage 3) and Barn Hill Windfarm Developments, the Chaff Mill, Taillem Bend Stage two, Frasers Solar Farm (Glengarry North Victoria), Mid Murray and Berri Solar Farm developments, the Clements Gap BESS and the Torrens Island Gas Power Station Expansion.

In 2020 Stuart and staff at Hemisphere Design completed a Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment for the Environment Effects Statement (EES) for Stage 2 of the Yan Yean Road Upgrade, a significant outer Melbourne transport corridor on behalf of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

Stuart provides regular advice on the likely visual impact of numerous infrastructure developments undertaken by Electranet SA and visual assessment exercises pertaining to Development Applications lodged in a numerous Adelaide metropolitan and regional council areas.

Stuart's particular expertise in undertaking visual assessments is highly sought after for the provision of expert evidence for the Environment, Resources and Development Court (SA).

Note: This document is prepared to be printed and read in A3 format

Disclaimer: Stuart Heseltine, Principal Hemisphere Design is the sole author of this report; all changes implemented without the authors consent after the final report has been issued may warrant the intellectual property contained in the report wholly or partially invalid.

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Revision Number	Date Issued	Author	Approved By	Date Approved	Revision Type	Issued to
N/A	8.12.21	Stuart Heseltine	Stuart Heseltine	8.12.21	Draft Final	C. Holmes
Rev. #01	12.08.22	Stuart Heseltine	Stuart Heseltine	16.08.22	Final	G. Beazley

Glossary of Terms

CL	Contextual Landscape
HD	Hemisphere Design
Locality	The position or site of something
Landscape Assessment	An assessment of the elements that collectively make up the landscape, such as landform, vegetation, land-use and cultural influences
Sensitive Receptor (SR)	Locations from where it was considered the desalination plant is likely to be wholly or partially visible and, in some instances, prominent
Sensitive Receptor Locality (SRL)	Where a number of collocated viewpoints, e.g., adjacent or nearby dwellings, would be subject to the same degree of visual exposure to the proposed development
Viewpoint (VP)	A position providing an appropriate view of the proposed desalination plant which has been assessed to consider landscape character and the likely potential of visual impacts which may result as a consequence
Viewpoint Locality (VPL)	Where a number of collocated viewpoints, e.g., adjacent or nearby dwellings, have been assessed to consider landscape character and the likely potential of visual impacts which may result as a consequence of the proposed development
Visibility shadow	Areas within the likely ZTVI where it is predicted that the proposed development will not be visible because there are a combination of ridgelines and depressions, specific blocks of vegetation and built form between the viewer and the proposed site that potentially blocks all views

Visual Exposure	A measure of the degree to which an observer at a location can see or potentially see the area to be affected by the proposed development. The visual exposure is subjectively classified as either none, low, moderate or high
Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI)	The ZTVI is the defined area within which modification to the contextual landscape as a result of the proposed development could be discernible to the naked eye. A 2 km radius from the centre of the proposed site was adopted as the likely furthest extent of the likely ZTVI

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Executive Summary

Lochard Energy propose to develop an Energy Reserve 1 Facility (the Facility) at 386 Lee Road, between Nelson Road and the Hume Freeway, in the Winton North region of the Benalla Rural City Council, Victoria. The proposed Facility is within former agricultural land, 9 Km east of the township of Benalla in the Victoria Central North Renewable Energy Zone.

The project will utilise hybrid technology with Li-Ion batteries and fast-start high-efficiency dual-fuel gas reciprocating engines and will comprise:

- A 200 MW GPG facility with a powerhouse of potentially up to 15 m high and with several stacks to a typical height of 25 m
- A ~200 m gas pipeline including metering station connecting the GPG facility to the APA gas pipeline
- A BESS facility where the array of transformers will be approximately 5 m high
- An electrical substation for both the GPG and BESS facility which will then feeds into the local network where infrastructure will be up to 8 m high
- A ~3 km 220 kV underground transmission line from the Glenrowan terminal Station (GTS) to the subject site. The transmission line will cross the Hume Freeway and follow the existing AusNet easement northwest from the GTS. It will then head east within the road reserve of Lee Road before entering the subject site.
- Auxiliary service buildings and services including: a workshop, administration buildings, lube oil and water tanks in the order of up to 5 m in height

- Internal access roads and vehicle turning areas, security fencing, Landscaping, earthworks and associated drainage works
- The Facility will require the removal of native vegetation

To assist in the submission of a Development Application conducted a two-stage Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LCVIA) had been undertaken.

As a consequence of Covid travel restrictions the Stage One LCVIA exercise comprised a desk top study with the aid of Google aerial mapping and 'street view' and conceptual layout images of the Facility provided by WSP. The Stage One Report:

- concluded that the existing landscape is of **low to moderate** scenic quality and has a **low sensitivity** to change, i.e., it can readily absorb a development of this nature
- identified seven potential locations or viewpoints from which potentially the Facility could be visible
- from the seven viewpoints identified five potential sensitive receptors

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Image: Township of Glenrowan, 12 km east of project site 'the Facility'.

The Stage One LCVIA report recommended that these findings should be corroborated through a detailed onsite assessment to further assess the likely visual impact of the Facility at the identified potential sensitive receptors.

The Stage One LCVIA Report is appended for consideration.

The findings of the on-site assessment are presented in this Stage Two LCVIA Report in written and illustrative form and with the aid of photomontage imagery.

The onsite assessment undertaken in the Stage Two LCVIA Report:

- confirmed the landscape is of **low to moderate scenic quality** and has a low sensitivity to change
- established that from the seven viewpoints only two are relevant as sensitive receptors
- concludes that in a landscape experiencing irrevocable change though the development of numerous solar farms located within a designated 'Renewable Energy Zone' the introduction of the Facility both singularly and cumulatively will result in a **no change** to a **slight to moderate adverse** visual impact on the two identified sensitive receptors.

The Facility will introduce a new visual element into the landscape which, from elevated vantage points to the east and the Mokoan Rest Area – southbound will evoke curiosity, becoming a prominent 'incidental' infrastructure feature of merit and a best practice example of progressive renewable energy delivery.

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1.0 Introduction

The Stage Two Report provides a more detailed assessment of the likely visual impact of the Facility from the seven publicly accessible viewpoints identified in the Stage One Report.

The Stage Two Assessment;

- Verified the existing contextual landscape character identified in the Stage One Report.
- Visited and considered the seven pre-determined publicly accessible viewpoints within the wider contextual landscape to affirm which of the seven viewpoints are likely to be a sensitive receptor.
The presence of more extensive tracts of mature vegetation affording a greater degree of informal screening subsequently revealed that only two only and not, as previously considered, five of the seven viewpoints were relevant sensitive receptors.
- Qualitatively assessed the likely visual impact of the Facility within the contextual landscape from the two identified sensitive receptors
- The degree of likely visual impact is presented in a tabulated form and supported by photomontage imagery.

Where relevant, the photomontage imagery provides guidance on the appearance, form, materiality and finishes of the proposed structure and other associated infrastructure.

2.0 Stage Two Considerations

2.1 Site Visit and Photography

A site visit was undertaken over the 29th and 30th November 2021, photographs were taken at the seven pre-determined viewpoints to assist in the more detailed assessment of the two identified sensitive receptors. Refer Map (HD_Y003_AD01 Sheet 4).

Photographs were taken using a Canon 35 mm Single Lens Reflex (SLR) camera with an approximate lens setting of 43 mm.

The site visit revealed that potentially there are commercial and residential properties (considered to be small in number) at elevated locations within wider the contextual landscape which are located some distance off publicly accessible roads. Viewpoints adjacent these properties have not been visited and likely impacts considered due to their relative seclusion and inaccessibility.

The site visit corroborated the findings of the Stage One LCVIA desk top study with regards to prevailing land use activities, the extent of the 'Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence' (ZTVI), the footprint of the 'visibility shadow' and the significance of existing vegetation within both the local and wider landscape in providing visual screening. Refer Maps (HD_Y003_AD01 Sheet 1) (HD_Y003_AD01 Sheet 2) (HD_Y003_AD01 Sheet 3) and (HD_Y003_AD01 Sheet 4).

The site assessment also reaffirmed that the landscape character is of one of a **low to moderate** scenic quality and has a **low sensitivity** to change i.e., it can readily absorb a development of this nature.

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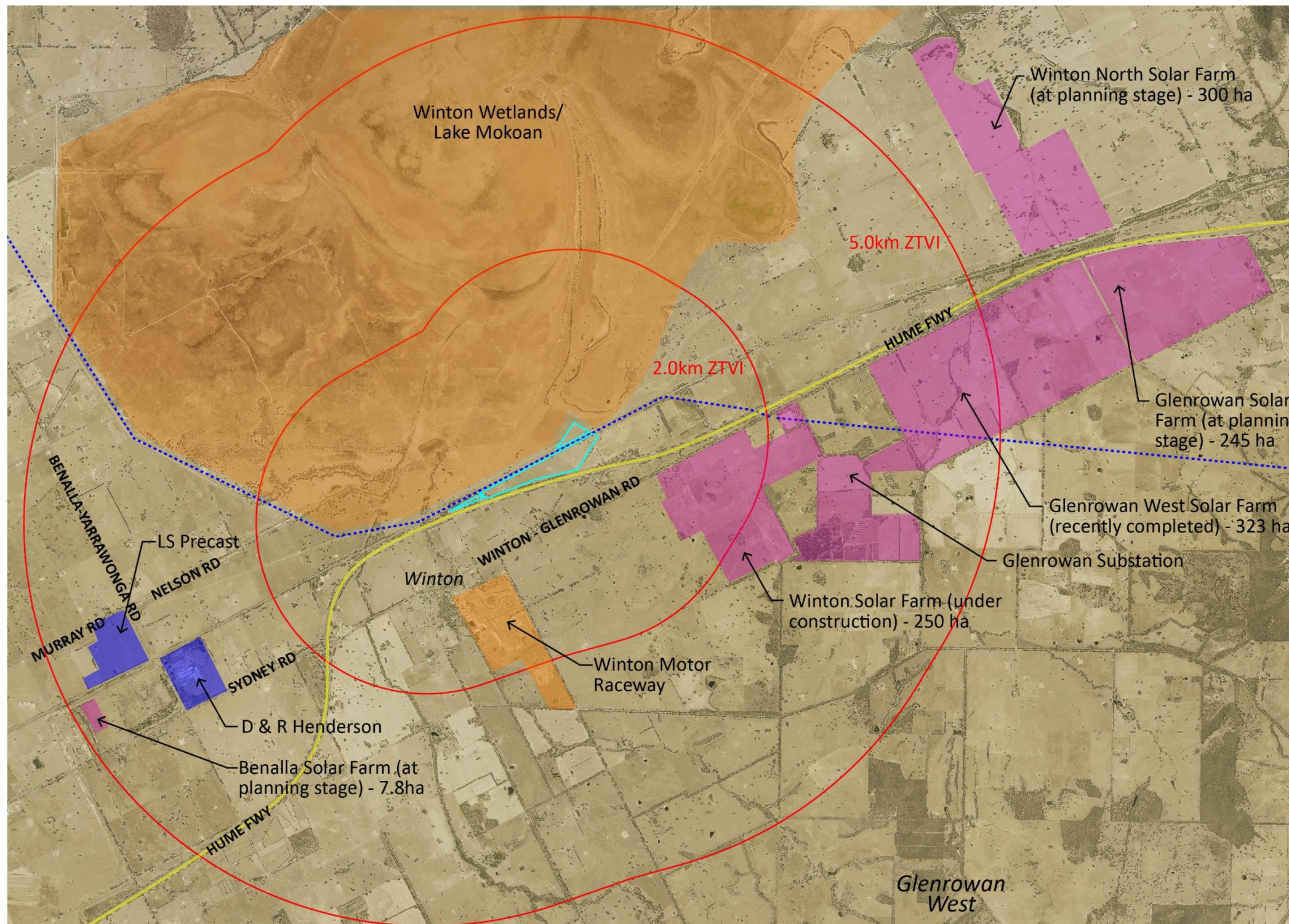
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Image: View north east within contextual landscape from Day's Lookout. Winton Solar Farm is largely conspicuous, the colour of the PV panels blends in effortlessly with the surrounding landscape. The visual impact of the Facility is envisaged to be similar

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- LEGEND**
-  Project site 'the Facility'
 -  Industrial
 -  Recreational
 -  Energy and utility
 -  Existing 220 kV transmission towers and lines
 - ZTVI Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence

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TITLE	Current and Future Land Use Activity		
PROJECT	Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility		
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HD_Y003_AD01	-	1	A
DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE	
SW	SRH	12/21	

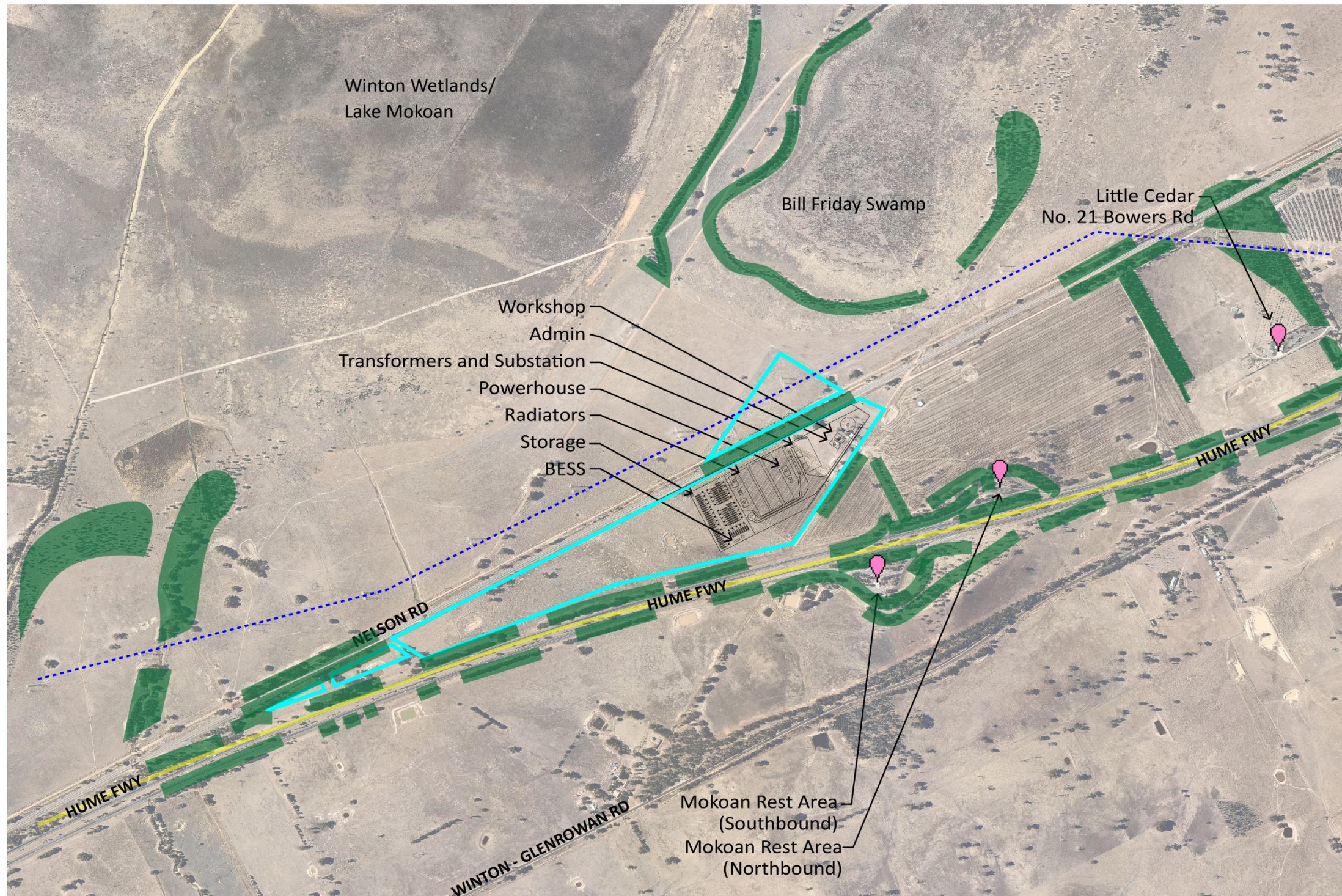





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- LEGEND**
-  Project site 'the Facility' and notional concept site plan
 -  Existing 220 kV transmission towers and lines
 -  Existing screen planting

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TITLE **Project Site Plan and Surrounding Existing Screen Planting**

PROJECT **Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility**

DWG NO	SCALE	SHEET NO	REVISION
HD_Y003_AD01	-	2	A

DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE
SW	SRH	12/21

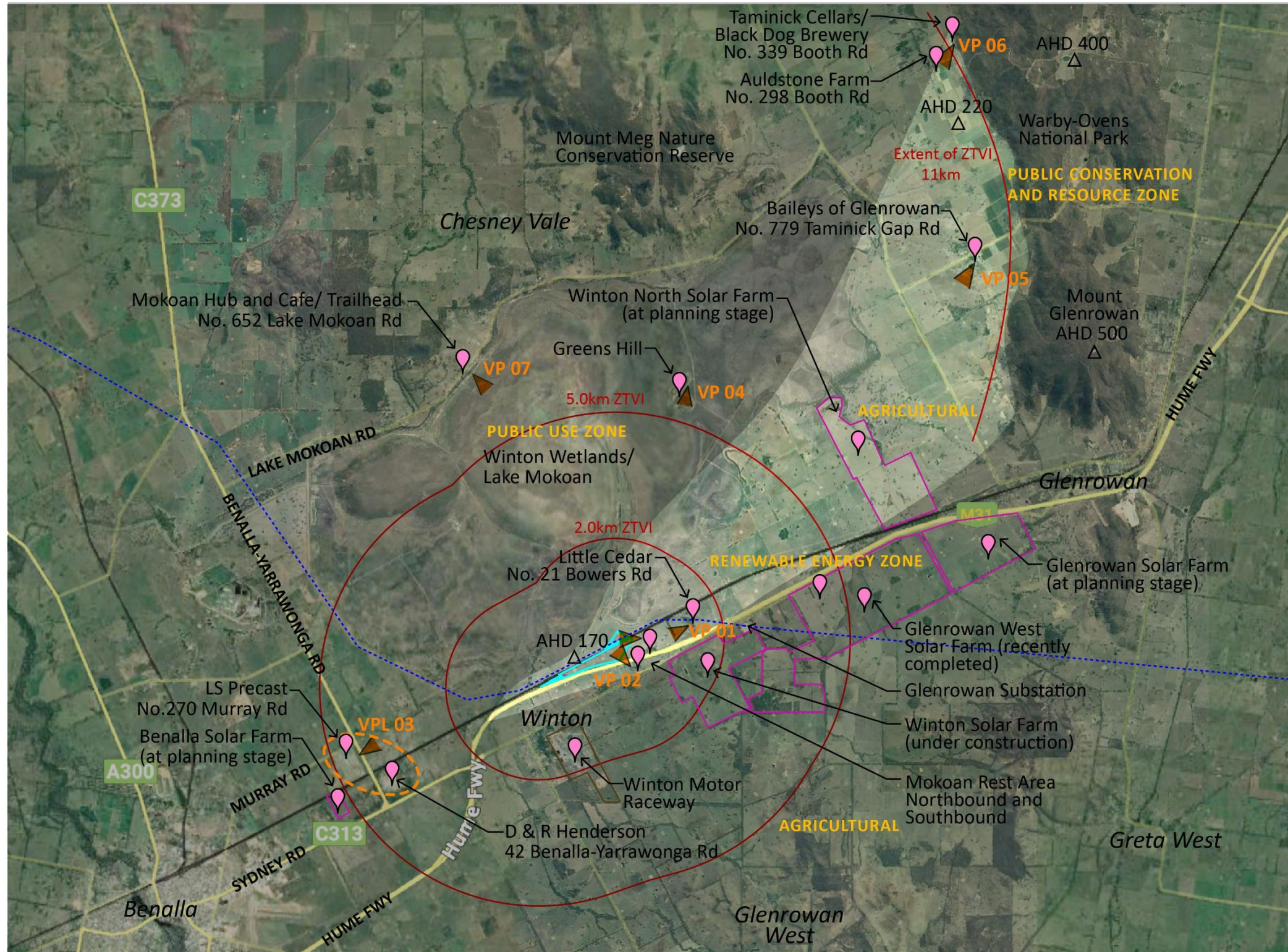


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LEGEND

- Project site 'the Facility'
- VP 01-02, 04-07 Viewpoint (VP)
- VPL 03 Viewpoint Locality (VPL)
- ZTVI Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence
- Visibility shadow
- Solar farm
- Existing 220 kV transmission towers and lines

Planning Zones:

- AGRICULTURAL
- PUBLIC USE ZONE
- RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONE - CENTRAL NORTH
- PUBLIC CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE ZONE

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Note:
1. Visibility Shadow based Stage 1 desktop analysis using Google Earth 'Street View'.

TITLE	Viewpoints, Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence (ZTVI) and Visibility Shadow Map		
PROJECT	Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility		
DWG NO	SCALE	SHEET NO	REVISION
HD_Y003_AD01	-	3	A
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2.2 Consideration of the pre-determined viewpoints

Seven pre-determined viewpoints within the 2.0 km and 5.0 km ZTVI have been visited and consideration was given to all likely visual impacts to determine whether, and to what degree each viewpoint could be considered a sensitive receptor.

Viewpoint 01 (VP 01) – Little Cedar No. 21 Bowers Road – view west

Listed as a tourist retail outlet, café and residential dwelling. Access to the property was not obtained at the time of the site visit. The existing 220 kV transmission towers and powerlines are incongruous features within the immediate locality. The presence of mature, dense screen planting on all property boundaries suggests the proposal may be screened from views within the property. However, given the relative proximity this location is considered a sensitive receptor and considered further in this assessment.



Image: VP 01 Little Cedar No. 21 Bowers Road, view west

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Viewpoint Locality 02 (VPL 02) – Mokoan Rest Area (Northbound and Southbound), Hume Freeway, Winton

Public car park, Mokoan Rest Area - northbound on Hume Freeway. The presence of mature, dense foreground vegetation largely conceals views to the proposed site. At the northbound rest area the visual impact will be no change where the eye of the observer is likely to be cast both forward to the south and the expansive alpine ranges and east towards the higher ground of the Rutherglen township enveloped by an expanse of dense mature vegetation. The viewpoint was not considered a sensitive receptor.

Public car park at Mokoan Rest Area – southbound. Intermittent views are obtained through and under a sparse collection of mature tree canopies over grassed verges when exiting the rest area. The views received confirmed that this location is a sensitive receptor, considered further in this assessment.

←————— Mature and dense foreground vegetation —————→
largely conceals views to project site



Image: VPL 02 – Mokoan Rest Area Northbound entrance, view south

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Image: VPL 02 – Mokoan Rest Area Northbound car park, view south

Project Site 'the Facility'
concealed by vegetation

Freight rail line

Existing 220k
transmission tower

Existing powerlines
and poles



Image: VPL 02 – Mokoan Rest Area Northbound walking track, view north

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← Mature and dense foreground vegetation largely conceals views to project site →

Intermittent views only to project site

← Mature and dense foreground vegetation conceals views to project site →



Image: VPL 02 – Mokoan Rest Area Southbound exit, view north west

← Mature and dense foreground vegetation conceals views to project site →



Image: VPL 02 – Mokoan Rest Area Southbound car park, view north west

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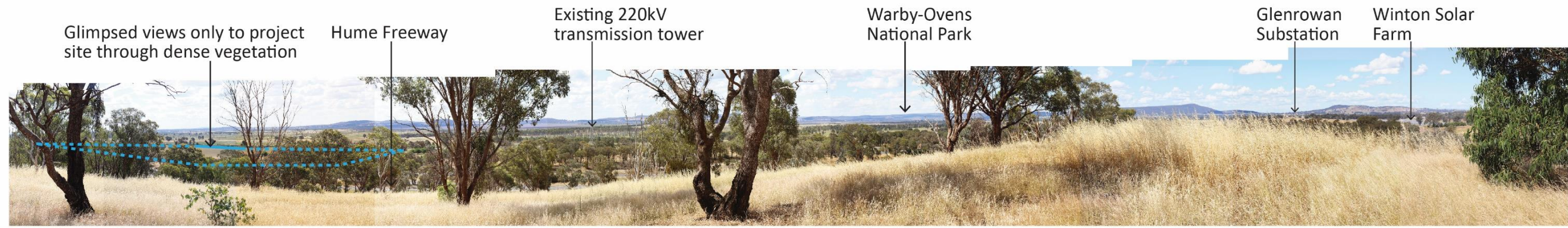


Image: VPL 02 – Mokoan Rest Area Southbound, Day's Lookout, view south east - north

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Viewpoint Locality 03 (VPL 03) – A viewpoint centred on No. 42 Benalla-Yarrawonga Road and 270 Murray Road, Benalla

A viewpoint chosen to best represent the likely views east from D&R Henderson (No. 42 Benalla – Yarrawonga Road) and LS Precast (No. 270 Murray Road) towards the proposed site. Intermittent fore and mid ground planting of dense copses of large trees and shrubs preclude views to proposed site. This viewpoint was not considered as a sensitive receptor.

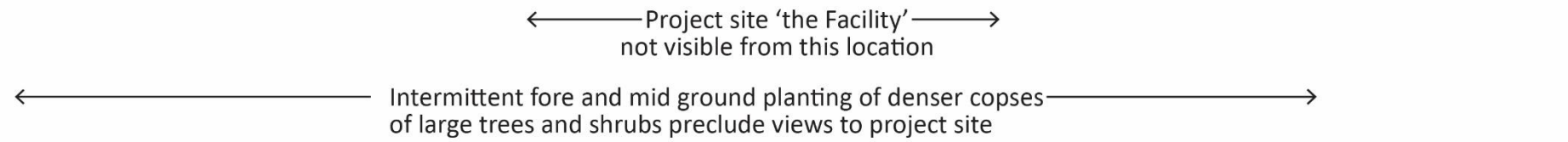


Image: VPL 03 – Benalla-Yarrawonga Road adjacent LS Concrete, view east

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Viewpoint 04 (VP 04) – Greens Hill, Winton Wetlands

Greens Hill, Winton Wetland looking south. Mature dense vegetation around the swamp will likely conceal views of all proposed infrastructure and buildings. This viewpoint was not considered as a sensitive receptor.

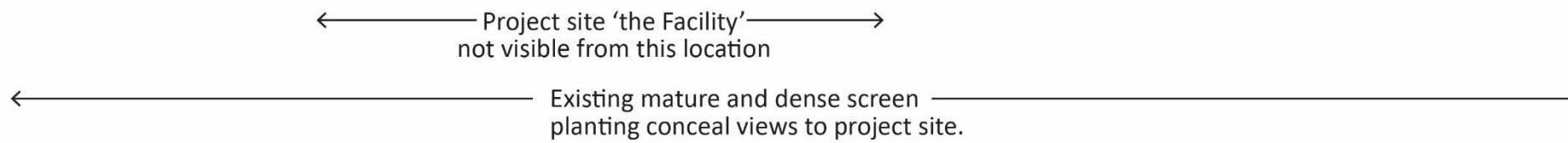


Image: VP 04 – Greens Hill, view south west

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Viewpoint 05 (VP 05) - Baileys of Glenrowan No. 779 Taminick Gap Road, Taminick

No. 779 Taminick Gap Road, a popular and well patronised winery and functions centre. The presence of evergreen vegetation plays a significant role in screening views of the proposed Facility within the contextual landscape. This viewpoint was not considered as a sensitive receptor.

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Project site 'the Facility'
not visible from this location
← →

← → Mature and dense plantings around property and property boundaries conceal views to project site



Image: VP 05 – Entrance of Baileys of Glenrowan, view south west

Project site 'the Facility'
not visible from this location
← →

Mount Meg Nature
Conservation Reserve

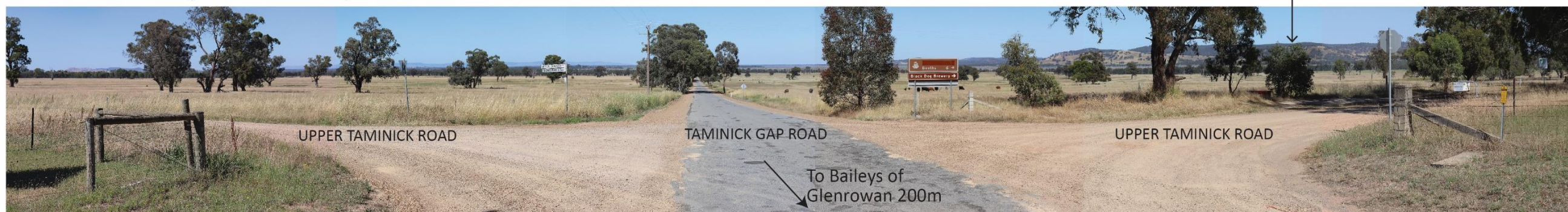


Image: VP 05 – Intersection of Taminick Gap Road and Upper Taminick Road, view south west

Viewpoint 06 (VP 06) – Locations along Booth Road, Taminick

Includes No. 298 Booth Road Auldstone Farm, a bed and breakfast accommodation, No. 339 Booth Road, comprising of Taminick Cellars, a cellar door winery and Black Dog Brewery Bar. The viewpoint on foothill of Warby-Ovens National Park is afforded elevated views south west. The presence of evergreen vegetation plays a significant role in screening views of the proposed Facility within the contextual landscape. This viewpoint was not considered as a sensitive receptor.



Image: VP 06 – Taminick Cellars, view south west

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Viewpoint 07 (VP 07) - Mokoan Hub, Café and Trailhead No. 652 Lake Mokoan Road, Winton

Mokoan Hub and Café looking south. The presence of mature, dense foreground vegetation precludes views to distant proposed site. This viewpoint was not considered as a sensitive receptor.



Image: VP07 - Winton Wetlands trailhead, view south

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3.0 Likely Visual Impact Assessment

Of the seven viewpoints visited the on-site assessment has identified two Sensitive Receptors:

- Viewpoint 01: - Little Cedar No. 21 Bowers Road - **Sensitive Receptor SR 01**
- Viewpoint 02: - **Mokoan** Rest Area (Southbound), Hume Freeway, Winton - **Sensitive Receptor SR 02**

The sensitive receptors are identified on drawing HD_Y003_AD01 Sheet 4.

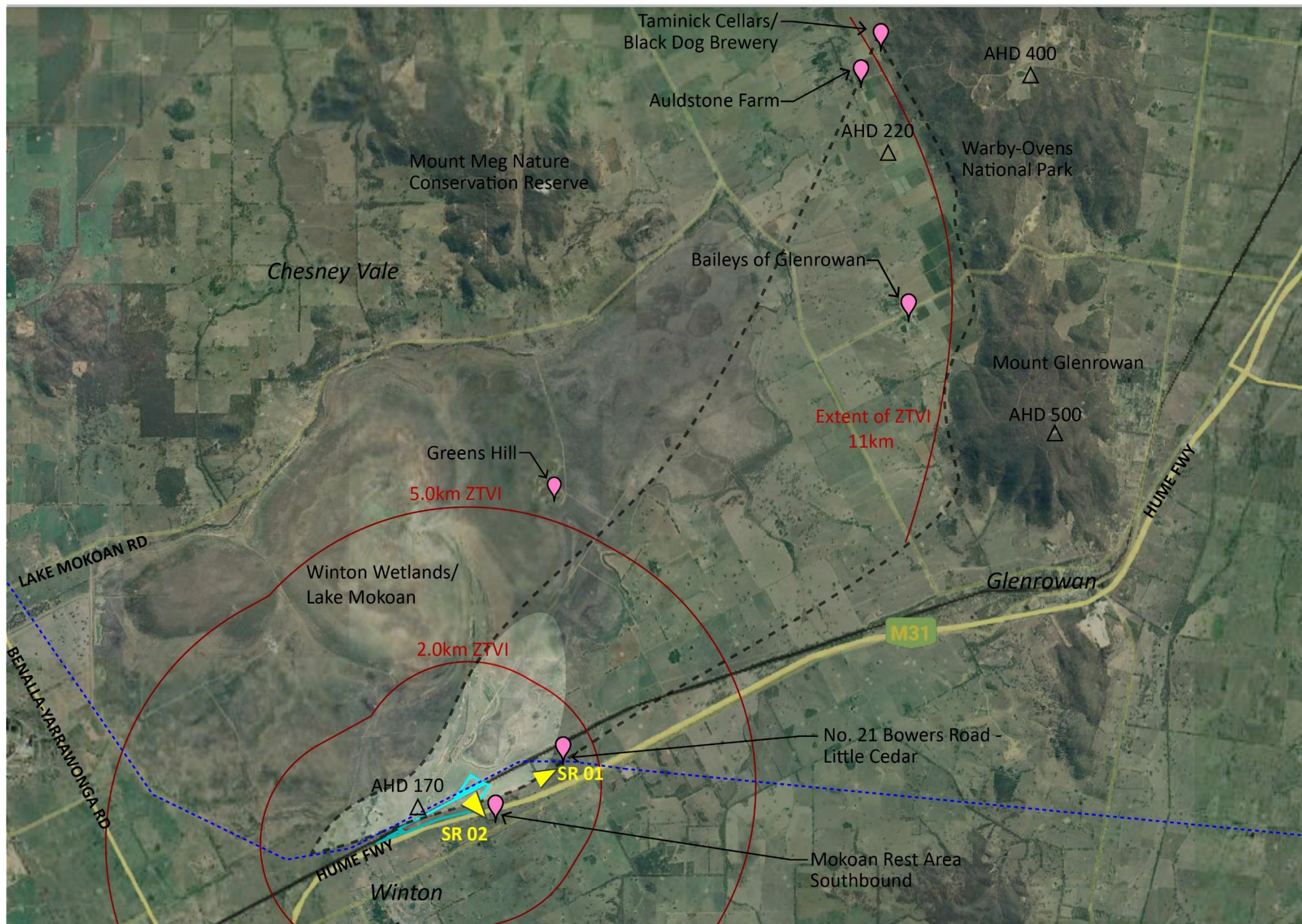
The assessment of the likely visual impact of the Facility has been confined to the two identified sensitive receptors.






For each sensitive receptor the likely visual impact of the proposed development is described considering factors which may include:

- The visual qualities of the view and the duration and angle of the view in relation to the main activity of the viewer
- The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development
- The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible and the scale of the change in the view (loss or addition of features, changes in composition, proportion of view affected)
- The degree of contrast in form, scale, mass, line, height, colour and texture introduced into the view by the Facility
- The duration and nature of the effect (temporary, permanent, intermittent)
- The numbers and types of viewers affected

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- LEGEND**
-  Project site 'the Facility'
 -  SR 01-02 Sensitive receptor (SR)
 -  ZTVI Zone of Theoretical Visual Influence
 -  Visibility shadow
 -  Existing 220 kV transmission towers and lines

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Note:
1. Visibility Shadow based Stage 2 site assessment

TITLE	Sensitive Receptors and Visibility Shadow Map		
PROJECT	Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility		
DWG NO	SCALE	SHEET NO	REVISION
HD_Y003_AD01	-	4	-
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SW	SRH	12/21	



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3.1 Construction Phase

During the construction phase temporary changes to visual amenity will occur as a result of earthworks at all sensitive receptors. These changes will be due mainly, but not limited to the presence of construction equipment, earthworks and excavation activities and an overall increase in the number of people and vehicles at each site and at roadside locations.

All potential loss of vegetation will be minimised through sympathetic excavation works and where necessary new native plantings will be introduced to replace all potential losses.

The changing visual environment and activity during construction will be temporary, therefore is not considered in detail in the visual impact assessment.

3.2 Likely Visual Impact at the Identified ‘Sensitive Receptors’

The likely impacts at SR 01 and SR 02 are described using the following definitions:

Substantial adverse impact	where the scheme would cause a significant deterioration in the existing view
Moderate adverse impact	where the scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the existing view
Slight adverse impact	where the scheme would cause a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view
Slight beneficial impact	where the scheme would cause a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view
Moderate beneficial impact	where the scheme would cause a noticeable improvement in the existing view
Substantial beneficial impact	where the scheme would cause a significant improvement in the existing view
No change	No discernible deterioration or improvement in the existing view

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Sensitive Receptor 01 (SR 01) – No. 21 Bowers Road - Little Cedar



Image: Sensitive Receptor 01 – Little Cedar, view west

Location	No. 21 Bowers Road a retail outlet, cafe and residential dwelling. West of the site eastern boundary. The eastern boundary is the longest boundary of a site which appears on plan as an elongated recatangle of diminshing width as it extends west.
View directions	West.
Landscape and setting	Where the eye of the observer is drawn across a planar landscape dissected by the heavily trafficked Hume Freeway towards the distant slopes of 10 metres. The ordered form and appearance of the surrounding pastural fields create a sprawling patchwork of green hues punctuated by windbreaks comprising copses of evergreen trees and shrubs. The 220 kV transmission towers are prominent visual features as tall imposing structures within the expansive vista.
Distance from Project Site(s)	Approximately 1.5 Kilometres.
Visual exposure at receptor	Refer to HD Drawing: HD_Y003_section_SR01 Low, the mature planting boundary plantings between the site and this receptor at the eye of the observer creatives a visually impentrabale screen precluding views of the introduced infrastructure including the proposed, up to 25 m high, gas stacks refer Dwg. 'Section – Sensrive Recptor 01 (SR 01) Hd_Y003_section.

Predicted visual impact	<p>Dense evergreen trees and shrubs create a visual screen between the property's western boundary approx. 300 meters from the dwelling and retail outlet and the sites eastern boundary 1200 meters west adjacent Lee Road. Mature plantings around the Mokoan Rest Area Northbound will further restrict all direct views into the south eastern corner of the site.</p> <p>Singularly the visual impact of the proposal will be no change. In considering the likely future cumulative visual impact where several solar farms in the wider contextual landscape could envelope the Facility, the predicted visual impact will be no change.</p>
Mitigation	Not required where there are extensive tracts of dense mature vegetation.

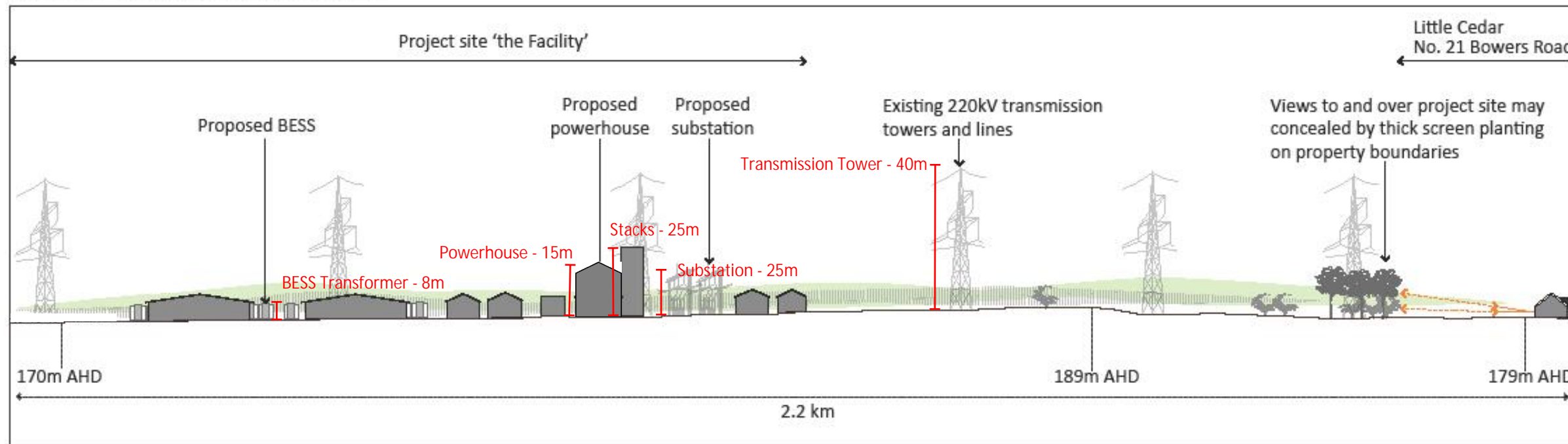
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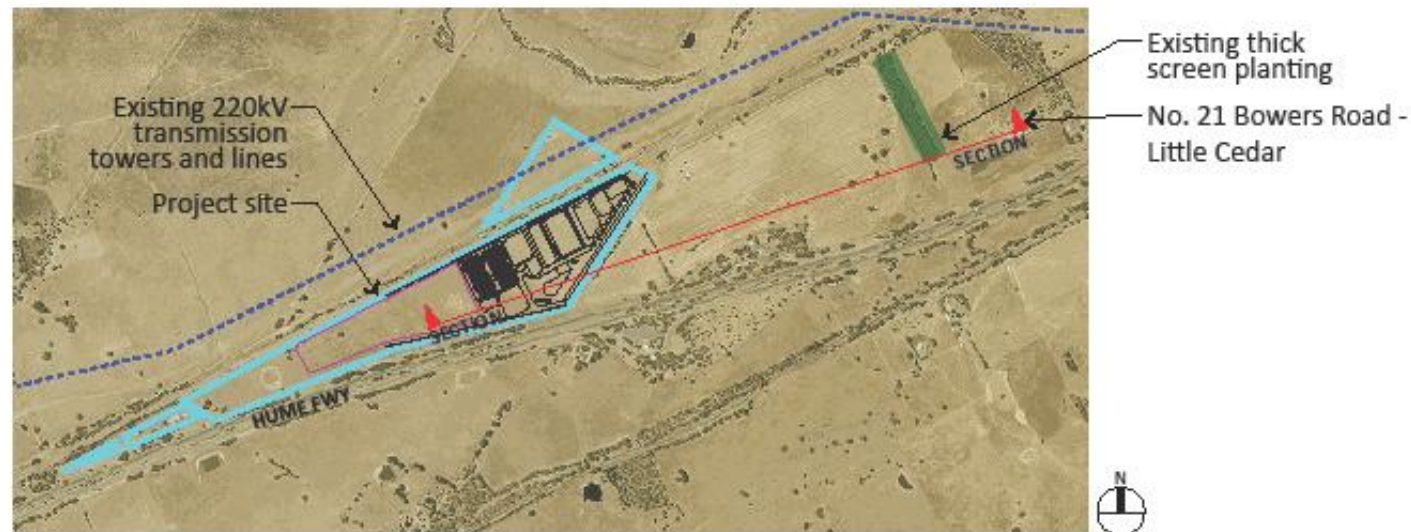
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ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

SECTION 1 - Sensitive Receptor 01 (SR 01)



Based on previous concept design



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TITLE Section - Sensitive Receptor 01 (SR 01)

PROJECT Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility

DWG NO	SCALE	SHEET NO	REVISION
HD_Y003_section	-	-	-

DRAWN	CHECKED	DATE
SW	SRH	12/21



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Sensitive Receptor 02 (SR 02) – Hume Freeway - Mokoan southern rest area



Location	Mokoan southern rest area located off southbound carriageway of Hume Freeway, a publicly accessible vehicle layby and rest area.
View directions	North west.
Landscape and setting	A traveller rest stop with WC facilities interpretive signage and walking trail immediately adjacent the Hume Freeway.
Distance from Project Site(s)	Approximately 300 metres.
Visual exposure at receptor	Refer to HD Drawing: HD_Y003_photomontage_SR02. High, with open views punctuated by only the occasional stand of sparsely vegetated trees. Infrastructure and built form would be clearly discernible from such a short distance away. However, the observer will be a traveller who is likely making an infrequent visit only to enjoy a brief respite from travelling along a busy freeway.
Predicted visual impact	Singularly the predicted likely visual impact at the south bound rest area will be slight to moderate adverse where the daylight frequency of constant traffic along the freeway is a notable visual intrusion in the immediate locality. In a locality overwhelmed by the movement of large volumes of vehicles along the freeway and a contextual landscape soon to be the location of an expansive array of solar panels visible for long stretches in both directions along the freeway, the cumulative visual impact will be slight adverse .

	From elevated vantage points along the Days Lookout walking trail the Facility will be largely anonymous, however the occasional glimpsed view will be afforded of the taller elements of proposed infrastructure including the 25 m high stacks. Notwithstanding the impact within a contextual landscape where 220 kV transmission towers march across the contextual landscape will be largely inconsequential .
Mitigation	Not required in a landscape where transport high volumes of vehicular movement dominate the vista.

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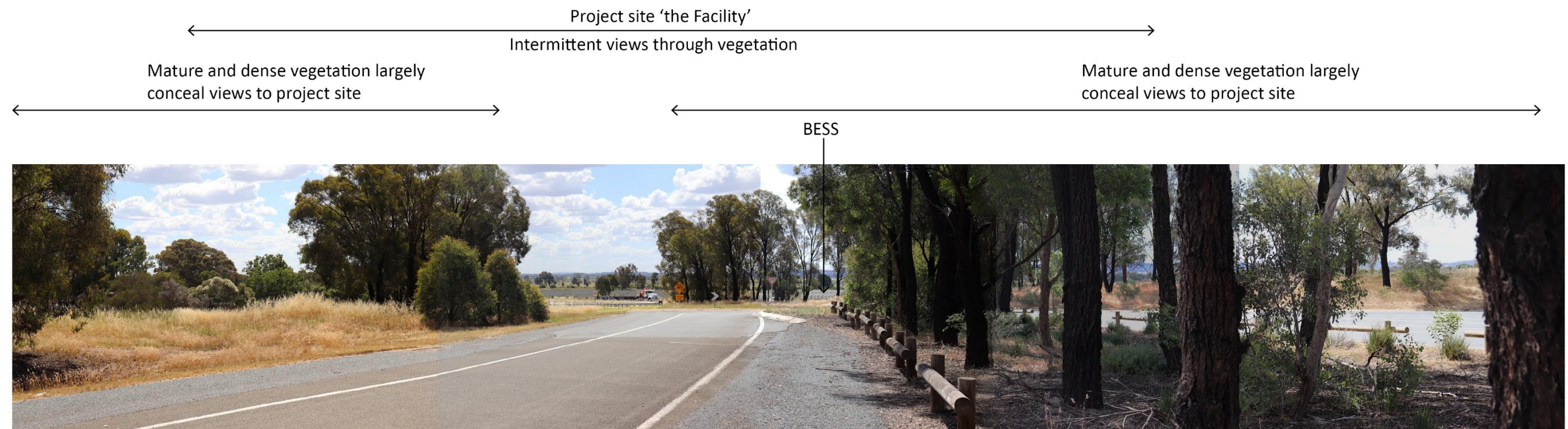
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Location: Mokoan Rest Area Southbound, Day's Lookout, view south east - north



Location: Mokoan Rest Area Southbound exit, view south east - north



**Winton Energy Reserve 1 Facility
Photomontage for Sensitive Receptor 02 (SR 02)**

Drawing no: HD_Y003 photomontage_SR02

Revision: -

Date: Dec 2021



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4.0 Summary and recommendations

Within a locality and landscape of **low scenic quality** the visual impact that is likely to be experienced by the Facility will be;

- Sensitive receptor SR 01 –Singularly and cumulatively **no change**
- Sensitive receptor SR 02 – **Singularly slight adverse to moderate adverse** whilst cumulatively **slight adverse**

Whilst mitigation through the introduction of screen planting is considered unnecessary consideration may be given in the design and construction of the Facility to the use of muted colours in material and finishes, for example Notre Dam grey to complement the colours and hues of the vegetation within the locality and wider contextual landscape

The Facility will introduce a new visual element into the landscape which, from elevated vantage points to the east and the Mokoan Rest Area – southbound will evoke curiosity, becoming a prominent ‘incidental’ infrastructure feature of merit and a best practice example of progressive renewable energy delivery.

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