

From: s 22 @business.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 20 February 2026 3:15 PM
To: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Subject: Major Projects - your recommended regulations



Major projects help tool

Your results

Based on your answers, you should consider the following regulations

Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975

Relevant because your project will involve foreign investors

Specified types of foreign investments within defined thresholds require approval from the Treasurer under the *Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975*.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [The Treasury](#)

Australian Jobs Act 2013

Relevant because your project will involve capital expenditure over AUD \$500 million

Eligible major projects with capital expenditure of AUD \$500 million or more require an approved Australian Industry Participation Plan under the *Australian Jobs Act 2013*.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [Australian Industry Participation Authority](#)

Migration Act 1958

Relevant because your project will employ overseas workers

All overseas workers and maritime crew arriving in Australia by sea require an appropriate visa to enter and work in Australia under the *Migration Act 1958*.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [Department of Home Affairs](#)

Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018

Relevant because your project will involve Australia's critical infrastructure

Owners, operators and direct interest holders of Australia's critical infrastructure assets must fulfil obligations designed to manage risks relating to critical infrastructure under the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018*.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [Cyber and Infrastructure Security Centre](#)

Native Title Act 1993

Relevant because your project will impact on areas subject to Native Title

Activity on areas subject to native title requires approval through negotiations with the relevant native title parties under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [National Native Title Tribunal](#)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984

Relevant because your project will affect areas or objects significant to First Nations heritage

First Nations Australians can apply for a declaration to be made under the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* to protect significant areas and objects. Declarations are rarely made but can occur during the course of a project and override project approvals.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water](#)

Heavy Vehicle National Law

Relevant because your project will involve heavy vehicles on roads

Under the Heavy Vehicle National Law, specified classes and types of heavy vehicles require an access permit or notice to operate on roads across Australia, except in the Northern Territory and Western Australia (different legislation applies in these jurisdictions, overseen by the relevant regulatory authority in those jurisdictions).

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [National Heavy Vehicle Regulator](#)

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Relevant because your project will have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance

Activities that may have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance require assessment and approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#)

Relevant authority: [Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water](#)

National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007

Relevant because your project will emit large amounts of greenhouse gases or consume or produce large amounts of energy

Organisations that emit large amounts of greenhouse gases or consume or produce large amounts of energy need to fulfil registration and reporting obligations under the *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*. Designated large facilities also need to meet emissions limits in accordance with the Safeguard Mechanism administered under the Act.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [Clean Energy Regulator](#)

Customs Act 1901

Relevant because your project will involve importing or exporting goods

A permit, licence, or written permission is required before specified goods can be imported into or exported from Australia under the *Customs Act 1901*. Imported goods must also be correctly labelled.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [Australian Border Force](#)

Biosecurity Act 2015

Relevant because your imports or conveyances will pose a biosecurity risk

Imported goods and conveyances arriving in Australia must comply with controls designed to mitigate biosecurity risks under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*. Specified goods require a permit prior to import, and all imports must be packaged and treated to meet biosecurity requirements.

For more information see the [fact sheet](#).

Relevant authority: [Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry](#)

Next steps

What you need to know

The tool covers the basic Australian Government approvals for developments and projects. You should also consider relevant state, territory and local legislation.

If you are not sure about the answers you have given or the information the tool has provided, it is a good idea to contact the Major Projects Facilitation Agency who can take into account your complete situation.

The Agency will ask you for more information about your project to work out if you should consider other government approvals.

Should you need more information on certain regulations, the relevant MPFA factsheets are a good place to start.

Talk to an expert

The Major Projects Facilitation Agency can provide information tailored to the needs of your project. Remember to save or print a copy of your results.

Contact the Major Projects Facilitation Agency

Email: mpfa@industry.gov.au



business.gov.au - simple access to useful information and services for Australian businesses

OFFICIAL

Attachment E

LETTERS FOR SIGNATURE

s 22

Energy North Pty Ltd – Project Ares – letters to:

- Mr Scott Criddle, Energy North
- Hon Tony Burke MP, Minister for Home Affairs
- Hon Lia Finocchiaro MP, NT Chief Minister

s 22

s 22



SENATOR THE HON TIM AYRES
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION
MINISTER FOR SCIENCE

MS26-000164

The Hon Tony Burke MP
Minister for Home Affairs
Parliament House
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Tony.Burke.mp@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister,

I am writing to inform you of my decision to approve Major Project Status (MPS) for Project Ares proposed by Energy North. This recognition highlights the strategic importance of the Project to Australia and its alignment with the priorities of the Australian Government.

Project Ares has an estimated capital expenditure of \$11.9 billion, providing 4,400 construction and around 300 ongoing jobs and will establish a new capability in digital services and Cloud/AI compute capacity, supporting Australia's digital sovereignty and regional economic development in the Northern Territory. The Project will deliver a 500 MW hyperscale data centre powered by integrated renewable energy in phase one, with the potential to expand to 1 GW in phase two.

The MPS is valid for three years from the date of this letter. During this period, the Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) will facilitate and assist Energy North in navigating government approval processes. The awarding of MPS does not imply Australian Government guarantee the Project's commercial success. The project will still be required to meet the requirements of all relevant regulatory, grant, or funding approval processes.

Energy North has identified the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 as relevant. The MPFA will engage with your department on the regulatory pathway for this Project.

Yours sincerely

TIM AYRES
/ /2026



**SENATOR THE HON TIM AYRES
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION
MINISTER FOR SCIENCE**

MS26-000164

Mr Scott Criddle
Energy North
Level 3 (A16), Suite 3, 435 Roberts Road
Subiaco WA 6004
scott.criddle@energynorth.com.au

Dear Mr Criddle,

Thank you for your application seeking Major Project Status (MPS) for Project Ares.

I am pleased to advise I have awarded MPS for three years from the date of this letter. The decision to award the status was based on Project Ares potential to deliver digital services and sovereign AI compute capability for Australia and regional economic development in the Northern Territory.

I have written to the Hon Lia Finocchiaro MP, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, and several of ministerial colleagues advising them of my decision and to encourage their assistance with your project.

The awarding of MPS does not imply Australian Government endorsement of your project or guarantee its commercial success. Your project still needs to meet the requirements of the relevant Australian, state government regulatory, grant or funding approval processes. MPS is subject to a requirement that the proponent, its directors, and officers continue to be fit and proper persons in compliance with the responsibilities of the project.

The Major Projects Facilitation Agency will be in contact with you regarding next steps. I wish you well in your endeavours.

Yours sincerely

TIM AYRES
/ /2026



SENATOR THE HON TIM AYRES
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION
MINISTER FOR SCIENCE

MS26-000164

The Hon Lia Finocchiaro MP
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory
Parliament House
DARWIN NT 0801

chief.minister@nt.gov.au

Dear Chief Minister

I am writing to inform you of my decision to approve Major Project Status (MPS) for Project Ares, proposed by Energy North.

The Project has an estimated capital expenditure of \$11.9billion, providing up to 4,400 construction and 200 ongoing jobs and will establish a new capability in digital services and Cloud/AI compute capacity, supporting Australia's digital sovereignty and regional economic development in the Northern Territory. The Project will deliver a 500 MW hyperscale data centre powered by integrated renewable energy in phase one, with the potential to expand to 1 GW in phase two.

The MPS is valid for three years from the date of this letter. During this period, the Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) will facilitate and assist Energy North in navigating government approval processes. The awarding of MPS does not imply Australian Government guarantee the Project's commercial success. The Project will still be required to meet the requirements of all relevant regulatory, grant, or funding approval processes.

I have written to several of my ministerial colleagues regarding this decision and to encourage their assistance with this Project.

TIM AYRES
/ /2026



MAJOR PROJECT STATUS APPLICATION FORM

Major projects with a capital investment of over \$50 million that are facing complex regulatory challenges may be eligible to apply for **Major Project Status (MPS)**.

The Minister for Industry and Science (the Minister) makes the decision to award a project with MPS. These are projects of national significance through their contribution to:

- Strategic priorities.
- Economic growth.
- Employment.
- Regional Australia.

Projects with MPS will receive tailored support and coordinated facilitation services to assist project developers to navigate Australian Government regulatory approvals. Projects must have completed at least a pre-feasibility study to apply for MPS. Additionally, to be eligible to apply and retain MPS, the Company as the applicant must have directors and officers that are fit and proper people in order to manage the Project.

Please ensure that your MPS application consists of sufficient information to outline the type and nature of your project and demonstrates how it meets the current eligibility criteria.

How we handle your application information

The Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in the [Privacy Act 1988](#), which regulates how agencies collect, use, disclose and store personal information, including sensitive information, and how individuals may access and correct records containing their personal information.

The MPFA also meets privacy requirements as outlined in the Department of Industry, Science and Resources [Privacy Policy](#).

Personal information you provide will be collected by the MPFA to carry out its functions including to communicate with you about your application, and to conduct due diligence and consultation on your application with other government agencies and regulators. Your information may also be used to:

- invite participation in opportunities to contribute to the development of Australian Government policy or regulation as relevant to your project.
- to notify you of other government programs and services opportunities.
- in review of the MPFA processes or policy.
- to brief Federal Ministers and their agencies of your project.

Confidential Information

MPFA will treat the information provided as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all the following conditions:

- the proponent clearly identifies the information as confidential;
- the information is commercially sensitive;
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the proponent or someone else; and
- the proponent provides the information on the understanding that it will stay confidential.

To help assess MPS applications and deliver services to the proponent effectively, the MPFA may disclose confidential information to:

- the Australian government employees and contractors;
- other Australian or State or Territory government departments and agencies;
- the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister;
- members of a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament; or
- organisations with the proponent's express consent.

The MPFA may also disclose confidential information in circumstances where:

- required or authorised by law to disclose it;
- the proponent agrees to the information being disclosed; or
- someone other than the MPFA has made the confidential information public.

To discuss confidentiality matters around the project further, please contact the MPFA at MPFA@industry.gov.au

Supporting Resources

1. [MPFA website](#)
2. Major Project Status (MPS) Guidelines
3. [Major Projects Help Tool](#)
4. Regulatory [fact sheets](#) to assist in your self-assessment
5. Any questions – contact your case manager or email MPFA@industry.gov.au

How to complete this form and submit your application

Step One: Review guidelines.

Read the **Major Project Status Guidelines** provided with this form before commencing.

Step Two: Prepare the MPS Application

Complete one Application Form for each Project seeking Major Project Status (MPS).

The Application Form is divided into three sections:

1. Proponent and Project information
2. MPS Application Eligibility Criteria
3. Declaration

Email your completed **DRAFT Major Project Status Application form** and supporting documentation to MPFA@industry.gov.au and cc your Case Manager.

Your Case Manager will provide feedback on your draft application, and the process to submit your formal application to the Minister for MPS consideration.

Step Three: MPFA consultation and submission.

The MPFA will:

1. Formally review your application against the relevant eligibility criteria and accept it as complete (up to 20 business days).
2. Engage with relevant regulators seeking their support or to raise any concerns with your application (up to 20 business days)
3. Seek our Minister's approval of your application form (approximately 10 business days).

Supporting Documentation

To enable a timely and thorough assessment of your application, you can supply additional documentary evidence to support your claims. Refer to the 'Supporting Documentation Checklist' at Appendix A.

Note: Where required, ensure all confidential information provided is marked accordingly in the:

- document title (when emailing);
- header and footer of the document; and
- 'Supporting Documentation Checklist' at Appendix A

When emailing supporting documentation:

- limit total volume of attachments per email to 10MB.
- Acceptable file formats include, .doc, .docx, .pdf, .ppt, .xls, .xlsx
- Contact your case manager if you need to transfer and upload attachments via alternate file/transfer methods.

Project Ares

Proponent Information as the entity directly responsible for the Project		
Company's legal name	Energy North	
Headquarter physical address	s 47F	
Headquarter postal address	s 47F	
Company's website	https://www.energynorth.com.au	
<u>Australian Business Number</u> (ABN)	48 667 570 872	
Australian Company Number (ACN)	667 570 872	
Key Contact Information		
Full Name	Daniel Hunter	
Position in Company or Project	VP Environment, Land and Government Relations	
Phone Numbers (include relevant area code or country code)	Landline: (0)	Mobile: s 47F
Email Address	s 47F	

Project Overview
Energy North is developing two strategically complementary but commercially separate projects at Murrarji Station in the Northern Territory. Project Ares, the subject of this application, is a Phase 1 500MW hyperscale data centre with integrated renewable energy generation, with potential expansion to 1GW (Phase 2) subject to commercial agreements. Project Sol, a separate export-scale green ammonia project, was awarded Commonwealth Major Project Status in November 2025 and continues to progress. While co-located, each project will be subject to independent regulatory assessment and has its own commercial structure, capital raising, and offtake arrangements. Project Ares will deliver sovereign AI compute capability for Australia while solving the critical power and water constraints that prevent hyperscale data centre deployment at scale. The project is one of Australia's largest planned behind-the-meter, renewable hyperscale developments, delivering fully integrated power generation, advanced cooling, and purpose-built data centre facilities underpinned by mature, scalable technology and strong market interest from global cloud and AI operators. The project addresses the National AI Plan's requirement for high-performance computing infrastructure by providing 500MW (expandable to 5GW+) of firm renewable power that metropolitan locations cannot deliver without grid impact or municipal water competition. Phase 1 (500MW) of Project Ares features: • 1,500 MWp with single-axis tracking and bifacial modules • 8 GWh BESS for grid stabilisation • 600 MW minimal/reliable gas backup for firm renewable power • Modular halls for phased deployment (Tier III) • Cooling/MEP Systems: s 47(1)(b) million total investment Staged deployment commences with 500MW (USD ~\$7.8 billion), expanding to 1GW (USD ~\$14 billion), with the infrastructure envelope supporting future expansion to over 5GW. This phased approach enables scalable growth aligned with market demand while establishing critical energy and connectivity infrastructure positioning the Territory for long-term participation in the global digital economy. The behind-the-meter design eliminates competition with residential and commercial power demand, while water usage represents less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield of 210 GL/year, solving sustainability challenges that constrain urban data centre development. The NT's world-class solar resources in its central regions (6.5-7.2 kWh/m²/day (World Bank Group, n.d.)) enable Project Ares to deliver firm power at ~s 47(1)(b) /MWh with 99.982% availability (Tier III standard with liquidated damages) (Uptime Institute, n.d.) - representing s47(1)(b) below global benchmarks* (USD \$110–160/MWh) and s 47(1)(b) below premium markets (North America ~USD \$100–200/MWh) (BloombergNEF, 2023). This cost competitiveness positions Australia to attract and retain hyperscale investment that would otherwise flow to competing jurisdictions. The off-grid, behind-the-meter design eliminates

metropolitan constraints where grid connection delays of 5-10 years prevent large-scale deployment, operating independently of urban electricity grids and water supplies with zero impact on community power supply or prices.

Murrarji Station benefits from exceptional connectivity infrastructure on the Adelaide to Darwin corridor, with direct access to 3 major terrestrial fibre networks providing connectivity to both international and domestic markets. Energy North's MOU with the NT Government also facilitates access to the proposed Territory Energy Link corridor for additional fibre deployment if required.

Comprehensive latency analysis demonstrates competitive positioning. Darwin to :

- Singapore 50–60 ms (45 ms faster than Sydney)
- Jakarta 48–55 ms (42 ms faster than Sydney); and
- Hong Kong 70–80 ms (50 ms faster than Sydney)

Darwin's subsea cable positions the NT as Australia's fastest route to Southeast Asian markets, a significant commercial advantage for attracting hyperscaler investment. The DataCo design incorporates 8 physically diverse fibre entry points (96-fibre capacity each) and 4 carrier-neutral meet-me rooms, enabling multiple provider redundancy for domestic and international requirements.

The project's power and connectivity architecture is optimised for AI workloads, supporting training and inference applications without latency constraints for the vast majority of cloud use cases. This AI-ready design, combined with ultra-competitive green power economics and strategic digital connectivity, positions Project Ares to attract significant investment while delivering substantial economic benefits to the NT and contributing to Australia's digital infrastructure sovereignty and renewable energy transition objectives.

Recent hyperscaler engagement confirms accelerating demand for large-scale, low-carbon compute infrastructure in politically stable Five Eyes nations with abundant renewable resources. Regional market analysis demonstrates intensifying competition for hyperscale investment, with governments across Asia-Pacific offering substantial fiscal incentives. Australia's competitive advantage lies in its unique combination of political stability, Five Eyes security alignment, world-class renewable resources, low water stress, and established regulatory frameworks - attributes that command premium value for sensitive AI workloads in financial services, defence, healthcare, and sovereign computing applications. Project Ares positions Northern Australia as the nation's hyperscale infrastructure hub, capturing domestic and international AI compute demand through the NT's strategic Indo-Pacific connectivity and globally competitive renewable power economics.

Project Ares benefits from a unique convergence of major infrastructure at a single location, delivering 10-20% cost savings versus comparable remote sites that strengthen Australia's competitive positioning against regional fiscal incentives.

Existing Infrastructure at site:

- **Adelaide to Darwin Railway:** Heavy freight corridor with proposed rail siding for direct site access, eliminating remote location logistics premiums
- **Stuart Highway:** Sealed all-weather road to site boundary (15 km spur road) enabling year-round access
- **Amadeus Gas Pipeline:** ~30 km along Stuart Highway; ~50 km lateral connection planned for backup gas generation
- **Vocus Fibre Backbone:** Operational, 20 Tbps capacity scalable to 480 Tbps, connecting to Darwin-Jakarta-Singapore subsea cable

Infrastructure planned or under construction:

- **Telstra Aura:** Under construction, \$1.6 billion Commonwealth investment, up to 55 Tbps per fibre pair, providing connectivity redundancy
- **Territory Energy Link:** NT Government 670 km multi-user infrastructure corridor from Elliott to Darwin (development ready 2028), supporting gas, water, optical fibre and hydrogen services; MOU provides Energy North easement for additional fibre if required

Site Infrastructure included in project CAPEX:

- 15 km sealed access road
- 4,500-bed construction camp
- 2,000 m sealed runway (B737 capable)
- 5 ML/day water treatment plant
- 50 ML detention basin
- concrete batch plants (2 × 200 m³/hr)
- communications (fibre, LTE, satellite).

The solar-first, battery-firmed architecture includes backup gas generation solely as last-resort resilience measure, with system designed to accommodate future decarbonisation as storage technologies advance.

The project architecture separates "PowerCo" (renewable energy generation) and "DataCo" (data centre infrastructure), allowing specialised infrastructure funds, hyperscalers, and strategic partners to participate at the asset level. **s 47G**

Project Ares establishes foundation infrastructure enabling Project Sol delivery while building local workforce expertise in solar and battery energy storage directly transferable to Project Sol's larger-scale operations. Both projects deliver significant opportunities for local businesses and employment in the Barkly region, supporting job creation (approximately 4,400 during construction and

200-300 during operations), infrastructure investment, and long-term economic diversification. Energy North is committed to maximising Aboriginal business participation and workforce development, ensuring transformational investment benefits are shared across Territory communities through structured participation pathways including the project's Territory Benefit Plan and Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

Please refer Appendix 1 for further details of Project Ares

**Based on Energy North's market research, which consolidates publicly available global renewable-energy pricing benchmarks and firming-cost datasets*

Project Information

Letter (primary category) and number using this link [ABS ANZIC code](#): e.g. Division code: B – Mining; Subdivisional Code: B07: Oil and Gas Extraction = B07

J59

Industry: J Information Media and Telecommunications

Project Lifespan: Total : 30+ years

Construction: 2-4 years

Operation: 25+ years

Decommission: 18 months

Project Status

Provide a brief outline of the Project's current status - Maximum 200 words.

Please provide a brief summary of where your project is currently at in line with your project timeline, such as selection and determination, stage of feasibility studies and commercial viability.

Technical Development

- Completed Pre-Front End Engineering Design (Pre-FEED)
- Front End Engineering Design (FEED) activities scheduled to commence in Q2 2026, with FEED anticipated to be completed in early-2027
- Final Investment Decision (FID) for 500MW phase targeted for mid-2027
- Project Development Agreement with the NT Government in development
- Baseline environmental and technical studies completed for Project Sol are directly transferable to Project Ares, delivering significant planning and approvals efficiencies.

Land and Infrastructure

- Land secured via Option Agreement at Murranji Station (895 km²) for initial development
- Executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NT Government via Project Sol for access to proposed Territory Energy Link Corridor.
- Water licence application in progress for groundwater extraction from the Georgina-Wiso Basin

Environmental and Heritage Assessment

- Project Referral documentation currently being prepared and planned to be issued to DCCEE and NT EPA following targeted fauna surveys and initial engagement activities with relevant Traditional Owners (through Northern Land Council).
- Comprehensive environmental and heritage impact assessment process underway
- Technical and environmental studies completed including: desktop groundwater assessment, site selection analysis, threatened species management framework and detailed desktop Ecology Assessment Report
- Comprehensive groundwater technical report completed to support groundwater extraction licence application, including hydrogeological modelling
- Meeting planned with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) in Darwin early March 2026 to discuss and agree with heritage assessment for Project Ares development area.

Stakeholder Engagement and Approvals

- Collaborative engagement underway with Northern Land Council (NLC) including planning upcoming post-wet season engagement activities with Traditional Owners, including activities associated with the project's ILUA.
- Regulatory approvals pathway from both NT and Commonwealth governments has been mapped extensively, with proven precedent significantly de-risking the approval timeline. SunCable's Powerlink project (~100 km south of Project Ares) obtained approvals from both Commonwealth and NT governments for comparable large-scale renewable energy

infrastructure, validating the regulatory framework and establishing clear approval pathway that Energy North is replicating.

- The project is well advanced in obtaining environmental baseline data, with extensive flora and fauna surveys already available from previous government assessments and detailed consultant studies (eliminating the typical 6-8 month study period required for baseline establishment). Targeted threatened fauna surveys are planned following the wet season to address specific Greater Bilby habitat assessment requirements. DCCEW, NT EPA and NT Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DPLE) will be consulted to get consent on survey methodology prior to undertaking survey.
- Active engagement with the Offices of Minister Ayres, Assistant Minister Charlton, Luke Gosling MP, Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA).
- NT Government agencies (including Department of Mining and Energy, Department Trade, Business and Asia Relations, Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (Flora and Fauna Department and Water Resources Branch), NT EPA, Land Development Corporation) are aware of and supportive of the project
- Planning to refer Project Ares to NT EPA and DCCEW in Q2 2026
- Engagement with NAIF, CEFC, EFA and Austrade.
- Ongoing engagement with adjacent landholders
- Engagement with APA with regard to future options for back-up gas power

Commercial Progress and Financial Validation

- Extensive financial model developed and rigorously tested, demonstrating commercial viability and validating long-term, globally cost-competitive energy pricing at ~USD s 47(1)(b)/MWh
- Strategic Partnerships Secured: Executed non-binding Power Purchase Agreement term sheet for 1GW firm power supply over 25 years with a s 47G s 47(1)(b) with Letter of Intent under development with a leading Asia-Pacific hyperscale cloud services provider to establish Joint Venture structure for integrated project delivery (expected Q1 2026)
- FEED Funding: s 47(1)(b) on pre-approved by a s 47G (assets under management exceeding s 47G identified to fully fund FEED, with binding documentation anticipated following Joint Venture term sheet execution, establishing a clear pathway to FID targeted for mid-2027
- Post-NDA discussions underway with three additional major international data centre developers and operators
- Active current engagement with major national and global hyperscalers and data centre operators including s 47G
- Strong sense of urgency across all counterparties, with alignment on accelerating execution
- Commercial progress demonstrates strong market validation, significantly de-risks the project, and positions Energy North to secure project financing and progress toward Final Investment Decision

Project Outcomes

Provide a succinct list of anticipated outcomes the Project will deliver – Maximum 200 words.

These outcomes can include significant project outputs, social, economic, and commercial value/s, innovative and technical advancements, industry development and regional growth opportunities.

- **Delivers sovereign AI compute capability for Australia:** Provides 500MW (expandable to 5GW+) hyperscale infrastructure on Australian territory addressing National AI Plan requirements for high-performance computing. Solves metropolitan constraints (5-10 year grid delays, municipal water competition, land limitations) through behind-the-meter renewable power and sustainable groundwater usage.
- **Captures economic benefits of AI growth** (projected 30% annually (MarketsandMarkets, 2025)) domestically while reducing reliance on foreign cloud platforms for sensitive government, defence, and enterprise workloads.
- **Demonstrates Australian infrastructure competes globally** on quality and capability - political stability, Five Eyes security, abundant renewables (USD s 47(1)(b)/MWh, s 47(1)(b) sustainable water, established regulatory frameworks, positioning Northern Territory as Australia's hyperscale hub attracting international investment under sovereign Australian jurisdiction.
- **Transformational investment scale:** Phased development commences with 500MW (USD ~\$7.8 billion) expanding to 1GW (USD ~\$14 billion), with infrastructure envelope supporting future expansion to 5GW+.
- **Foundation infrastructure and workforce development:** Establishes critical infrastructure (access roads, worker amenities, site services) enabling future Project Sol delivery while developing local workforce capabilities in solar and battery energy storage directly transferable to Project Sol's larger-scale operations. Delivers significant opportunities for Barkly region businesses and employment (4,400 construction and 200-300 operational roles), with Energy North committed to maximising Aboriginal business participation and workforce development.
- **Indigenous and regional economic participation:** Creates procurement pathways for Aboriginal-owned enterprises and NT businesses across construction, logistics, camp management, and site services. Indigenous employment targets and

long-term economic participation embedded through the ILUA and Territory Benefit Plan, developed in partnership with ICN NT and Traditional Owner groups.

- **Regional business development:** Project Ares generates significant opportunities for existing and emerging NT businesses in transport, engineering, environmental monitoring, land management, catering, and professional services. Energy North's phased development approach provides sustained demand across multiple construction stages, enabling local businesses to build capability and scale over time rather than relying on a single construction peak.
- **Smart infrastructure investment:** Builds large-scale, sustainable data centre capacity attracting significant global investment (USD \$14 billion) and international hyperscaler partnerships.
- **Strategic regional positioning:** Supports Australia as regional AI and data hub, leveraging strategic Indo-Pacific connectivity through Darwin's submarine cable infrastructure.
- **National policy alignment:** Meets national data centre sustainability principles through solar-first, battery-firmed, low-carbon design while supporting regional economic development - key themes of both National AI Plan (2025) and Future Made in Australia - by delivering employment and business opportunities to the Barkly region.

**Based on Energy North's market research, which consolidates publicly available global renewable -energy pricing benchmarks and firming-cost datasets*

Project Location/Site (add extra lines or sections under relevant sections for multiple project locations)

Has the project land/site(s) been secured? <i>For answers other than YES outline the status →</i>	Yes – 1 site Yes – more than 1 site (if more than 2 sites, add additional sections) ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐ Not commenced. Status:	
	Murrnaji Station	
Site ownership and title arrangements <i>Add/delete lines as needed</i>	Option area: Energy North has an option agreement with the current pastoral leaseholder to excise approximately 895 km² (~20% of the property) for renewable energy and data centre development. (~1.2x the size of Singapore). The exclusive, irrevocable Call Option Deed was executed on s 47G. The deed contractually secures the tenure conversion pathway with the landowner bound to cooperate in the conversion process. The landholder is very supportive of the proposed project. Key Terms: • Up to 895 km² of Crown Land within Murrnaji Station (Perpetual Pastoral Lease 1074) • Option Period: To s 47G extendable to s 47G • Exclusivity: Irrevocable and exclusive s 47G Development footprint (Project Ares): Up to 80 km² (to be confirmed via EIS process). PowerCo solar footprint alone is ~3,500 hectares. Expansion Capacity: The 895 km² option area provides substantial room for future expansion well	

	beyond the initial 500 MW Phase 1. Energy North's Accelerated 1 GW Plan (Phase 2) has been developed for a second 500 MW campus on the same site. Leasehold — NT Pastoral Lease Murrnaji Station is held under a pastoral lease in the NT. Energy North has an option agreement with the leaseholder to excise and convert the required area for renewable energy and data centre use. Current Tenure: The land is Crown Land held under a perpetual pastoral lease (PPL 1074). Tenure Conversion Required: To develop the project, a tenure conversion process is required. This pathway and process have been fully mapped and agreed with the NT Government: 1. Pastoral lease subdivision under s.61 Pastoral Land Act 1992 (NT) - splitting the Project Use Crown Land (up to 895 km²) from the balance of the station 2. Surrender of the current Perpetual Pastoral Lease (PPL 1074) to enable the creation and grant of two new leases 3. Crown grants two new leases: (a) a New Project Crown Lease over the Project Use Crown Land; and (b) a New Perpetual Pastoral Lease over the remaining land, retained by the Grantor for pastoral use 4. An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) under the Native Title Act, administered by the Northern Land Council (NLC) - which is currently underway.	
Project Site Physical address	Murrnaji Station	
GPS coordinates <i>Decimal Degrees up to 4 decimal points</i>	Murrnaji Station (Primary Project Location – Solar/BESS & Data Centre): Latitude: -17.0102 Longitude: 133.1083	
Federal Electorate Division/s	Lingiari & Solomon	
Local Government Area/s (LGA/s)	Barkly, Wickham	

Key Milestones and Product Outputs

Have you completed a Pre-feasibility or Feasibility study? <i>For answers other than YES, outline status →</i>	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐ Not commenced Status:
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Key Project Milestones

- List the Project's key milestones, from inception to close, in chronological order.
- Minimum Key Milestones (decision point)
- Add as many lines as is needed.

Key Milestone	Date	Actual Date Delivered or Indicative Target Date	Current Status	Comments (if any)
Concept & Strategy development	June 2025	October 2025	Complete	
Preliminary Front-End Engineering Design (Pre-FEED)	November 2025	February 2026	Complete	
FEED	April 2026- January 2027	January 2027	Not Commenced	
Enabling Works Engineering	June 2026- January 2027	January 2027	Not Commenced	
FID	June 2027	June 2027	Not Commenced	
Government Approvals (parallel)	April 2026- June 2027	June 2027	In Progress (ahead of schedule)	
Construction	June 2027- Feb 2030	Feb 2030	Not Commenced	
Early Works & Site Establishment	Sept 2026- June 2028	June 2028	Not Commenced	
PowerCo Development	June 2027- July 2029	July 2029	Not Commenced	
DataCo Development	June 2027- Feb 2030	Feb 2030	Not Commenced	
Commissioning, Integration & COD	Nov 2028- July 2030	July 2030	Not Commenced	
Commencement of 500MW Operations	November 2029	November 2029	Not Commenced	
Commencement of Additional 500MW (total 1GW) Operations	July 2030	July 2030	Not Commenced	

Project Product Output/s

Add in additional columns for each additional product as required

Forecast Average Product Output (e.g. tpa, MWh)	Hyperscale Data Centre Capacity (Compute & Storage)	Renewable Power Generation (Self-Consumed)
Phase 1 - 500MW	500 MW Power	4,388,000 MWh/pa
Phase 2 – Additional 500MW	500MW Power	4,388,000 MWh/pa
Total per Annum (at full capacity)	1GW Power	8,776,000 MWh/pa
Total over 25 years (Operating Life)	1. 25GW Power	2. 219,400,000MWh
Forecast Average Revenue including Exports	Power & Data Centre Tenancy	<Product Name>
Per Annum (DataCo only)	s 47(1)(b)	A\$X
Total over 25 years of production (DataCo only)	s 47(1)(b)	A\$X

Major Project Status Application: Eligibility Criteria

The information you provide will inform MPFA's assessment of your application against the three application eligibility criteria outlined below. Ensure you provide accurate and relevant details against each criterion as requested.

Criterion 1

The project is of strategic significance to Australia and must demonstrate:

- a) an estimated capital investment that exceeds A\$50 million; and
- b) National or regional significance to Australia.
Your Project must align with the Australian governments' strategic priorities and significantly contribute to economic growth, industry development, innovation, exports, employment, and upskilling, or have an economic benefit to regional Australia, considering a region's investment needs.

The objective of this Criterion is to determine the benefits of the Project to the economy or region.

a. Project Capital Expenditure (CAPEX)

Provide a breakdown of the predicted capital expenditure in the table below.

Include: major elements of total capital expenditure, and significant capital equipment items.

Exclude: land, capitalised lease costs, and sunk costs.

Insert additional lines to accommodate all relevant items.

Item	Cost (USD\$b)
Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)	s 47(1)(b)
Solar PV Arrays & Mounting	
Gas Generation Components (Turbines & Balance of Plant)	
Data Centre Buildings & Fit-Out	
Electrical Powertrain (Switchgear, UPS, Transformers)	
Mechanical Cooling Systems	
Non-Core Site Works (Roads, Rail Sliding, Airport)	
Other PowerCo Infrastructure (Substations, Cabling)	
Other DataCo Infrastructure (Security, Comms, DCIM)	
Contingency & Professional Fees (Balance of Project)	
TOTAL (must be greater than A\$50 million)	US\$7.81

b. National or Regional Significance to Australia

Provide information under the following headings to demonstrate how the Project contributes to the Australian government's strategic priorities, and the Project's contribution to economic and social and outcomes.

Project alignment with Australian Government and State/Territory Government strategic priorities and initiatives:

- Identify which Australian Government priorities and initiatives for developing Australia, the region or industry which your Project aligns.
- Briefly outline how the Project aligns with these.

Alignment with Australian Government Strategic Priorities/Initiatives

Strategic priority/Initiative	Rationale for Project alignment with strategic priority/initiative
<i>for example: renewables and low emissions technologies</i>	

Future Made in Australia	Project Ares directly supports the Future Made in Australia ambition by building sovereign capability in critical digital infrastructure. By co-locating hyperscale compute with renewable energy generation, the project ensures Australia's data and AI processing capabilities are retained onshore, secure, and powered by 99% renewable energy, reducing reliance on offshore data processing while positioning Australia as a global leader in green digital economy. The project delivers 500MW to 1GW hyperscale capacity (expandable to 5GW+) required to scale AI adoption across Australian industries, ensuring economic benefits flow domestically while attracting up to ~USD \$7.8B private capital (Phase 1) through public-private partnership model demonstrated by Energy North's engagement with Commonwealth financing agencies (NAIF, CEFC, EFA). While regional APAC governments offer substantial fiscal incentives, Australia's FMIA approach emphasises quality and sovereign capability over transactional subsidies. Project Ares demonstrates this differentiation: political stability, Five Eyes alignment, abundant renewable resources (~USD s 47(1)(b) firm power, s 47(1)(b) sustainable water (<2% of basin sustainable yield versus metropolitan competition), and established rule of law create compelling value for hyperscalers seeking trusted jurisdictions for sensitive workloads. The project will create 4,400+ construction jobs and approximately 200-300 permanent operational roles across data centre operations, renewable energy generation, and site infrastructure management. Energy North is committed to Indigenous participation pathways and skills development in renewable energy and data centre operations transferable to broader economy, establishing the NT as Australia's digital infrastructure hub with sustained economic development beyond single project cycle, supported by partnerships with NT's Industry Capability Network (ICN). <i>*Based on Energy North's market research, which consolidates publicly available global renewable-energy pricing benchmarks and firming-cost datasets</i>
Supporting Australia's Clean Energy Transition and positioning Australia as a renewable energy superpower	The project will significantly accelerate Australia's clean energy transition by leveraging the Barkly Region's exceptional solar resources to power an initial 500MW hyperscale data centre campus, expandable to 1GW, entirely from 1.5GW of behind-the-meter renewable energy generation. The project will also position the NT as a key player in the rapidly growing Asia-Pacific data centre market, reinforcing Australia's role as a renewable energy superpower and a leader in sovereign AI compute capability.
Driving Regional Economic Development and diversifying industry	The project will drive significant economic development and industrial diversification in the Barkly region. It will create over 4,400 direct construction jobs and approximately 200-300 permanent operational roles across data centre operations, renewable energy generation and site infrastructure management, with significant indirect employment across transport, engineering, and human services - providing a substantial boost to local employment, skills development, and First Nations workforce pathways that will foster long-term economic resilience.
Environmental Stewardship and Global Climate Diplomacy	The project will significantly promote environmental stewardship and global climate diplomacy by delivering 99% renewable-powered digital infrastructure for international hyperscale customers. The project will help position Australia as a proactive contributor to global decarbonisation goals, enhancing its credibility in international climate negotiations and fostering strategic

	partnerships with countries seeking green-powered AI and compute capacity, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.
International Trade and Strategic Alliances	The project will significantly enhance Australia's role in international trade and strengthen strategic alliances, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Hyperscale data centre capacity powered by renewable energy is in growing demand globally, especially as AI operators seek genuine carbon-free operations to meet ESG mandates. The project will deepen Australia's trade relationships and position it as a reliable partner in the global digital and energy transition, providing sovereign compute capability and energy security. The project's scale, expandable to 5GW+ will attract foreign investment and facilitate partnerships in infrastructure, logistics, and research, reinforcing strategic alliances and economic integration with key trading partners across the Asia-Pacific.
Northern Australian Infrastructure Fund (NAIF)	Project Ares directly supports NAIF's priority areas across economic infrastructure, energy, and water. The ~USD\$7.8 billion hyperscale data centre campus in the Barkly Region will create over 4,400 construction jobs and drive long-term industrial diversification for the NT. Phase 1 of the project deploys 1.5GW of solar generation and ~8GWh of battery storage to deliver 99% renewable firm power, advancing Northern Australia's clean energy capacity. Water requirements represent less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield of 210 GL/year. The project aligns with NAIF's emphasis on Indigenous participation, attracting private investment, and building sovereign capability, providing a pathway for domestic AI compute independence under the FMIA initiative. Project Ares represents a transformative investment that directly advances NAIF's mandate to develop Northern Australia.
National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) initiative	The project strongly aligns with multiple NRF priority areas: Renewables and Low-Emissions Technologies: Project Ares deploys 1.5GW of solar PV and 8GWh of battery storage as part of an integrated behind-the-metre energy system delivering firm, 99% renewable power at scale in regional Australia. Value-Adding in Resources: The project captures the value of Australia's world-leading solar irradiance onshore by converting it into high-value sovereign AI compute capability, rather than exporting raw energy. Enabling Capabilities: Project Ares delivers critical digital and physical infrastructure, including a hyperscale data centre, potential additional fibre optic connectivity via the Territory Energy Link corridor, and water and transport connections, that underpin advanced technology sectors and unlock further industrial development in the NT. Critical Technologies: The project provides a pathway for increased domestic compute capabilities and independence in Australia's AI transition, reducing reliance on offshore data processing
Clean Energy Fund Corporation (CEFC)	Project Ares directly supports the CEFC's priority areas of renewable energy generation and clean energy innovation. The project addresses the CEFC's focus on accelerating Australia's energy transition by demonstrating that behind-the-meter renewable generation can reliably power energy-intensive industries at scale, eliminating grid reliance while delivering firm power at a competitive s 47(1)(b) . It aligns with the CEFC's growing emphasis on decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors, as the global data centre industry faces mounting pressure to meet carbon-free energy mandates driven by AI demand growth of 30% per year (MarketsandMarkets, 2025). The project is commercially viable with a projected IRR of s 47(1)(b) supporting the CEFC's requirement to generate a positive return on investment while advancing Australia's net-zero objectives and positioning the country as a renewable-powered digital infrastructure leader in the Asia-Pacific.

Export Finance Australia (EFA)	Project Ares supports EFA's mandate to finance projects that deliver national interest outcomes and strengthen Australia's export and trade capabilities. The project positions Australia as a competitive, renewable-powered hyperscale data centre destination in the Asia-Pacific, the fastest-growing data centre market globally at 21% CAGR (Mordor Intelligence, 2025a), enabling the export of sovereign AI compute capacity and digital services to high-demand markets across the Indo-Pacific. The ~USD\$7.8B investment will strengthen Australia's international trade relationships and attract foreign investment in infrastructure, logistics, and technology partnerships with key trading partners. The project aligns with EFA's focus on supporting strategically significant infrastructure by delivering critical digital and energy export capability, with 1.5GW of solar generation powering 500MW of hyperscale capacity expandable to 5GW+. It further supports EFA's national interest account criteria through substantial regional economic impact in the NT, including over 4,400 construction jobs, Indigenous participation commitments, and direct alignment with the FMIA initiative. The project's commercially viable structure with a projected IRR of s 47(1)(b) and strong government backing, including an MOU with the NT Government and engagement with Commonwealth financing agencies, demonstrates the investment readiness and strategic significance that underpin EFA's assessment framework.
Northern Australia Action Plan (2024-2029)	Project Ares directly supports the Northern Australia Action Plan's priority areas of boosting investment, building a skilled workforce, unlocking regional growth, and delivering enabling infrastructure and networks. The project represents one of the largest private capital investments in Northern Australia's history, delivering USD ~\$7.8 billion (Phase 1), expanding to USD ~\$14 billion at full 1GW capacity, into the Barkly region and creating approximately 4,400 construction jobs and 200-300 permanent operational roles. The project's commitment to First Nations workforce pathways, Indigenous business participation, and meaningful Traditional Owner engagement through the ILUA process aligns with the Action Plan's central commitment to advancing First Nations outcomes. By establishing the NT as Australia's hyperscale digital infrastructure hub, Project Ares delivers the kind of transformational, complex project that the Action Plan identifies as a priority for diversifying Northern Australia's economy beyond traditional resource and agricultural sectors.
Territory Benefit Policy and Plan	Guided by the Territory's Benefit Policy, Energy North will work closely with organisations such as the NT's Industry Capability Network (ICN) to develop and implement strategies that maximise local industry participation and workforce development as much as practicable across all project phases, including Indigenous employment and the engagement of Indigenous suppliers and service providers. Energy North's approach will be documented in a comprehensive project-specific Territory Benefit Plan, alongside an Australian Industry Participation (AIP) Plan in accordance with the <i>Australian Jobs Act 2013</i> . Energy North is committed to championing job opportunities for First Nations people, women, and diverse communities, and will collaborate with local educational institutions and specialist workforce organisations to build a skilled, locally based workforce. Project Ares will create in excess of 4,400 direct jobs over the three construction phases, with a projected operational workforce of approximately 200-300 personnel at full capacity, and deliver significant downstream economic benefits to the local supply chain across the Territory and surrounding communities.
Australia-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement (SADEA)	Project Ares will facilitate cross-border data flows, enable digital trade, and strengthen bilateral cooperation in emerging technologies between Australia and Singapore. SADEA's provisions on data innovation, digital identities, and fintech collaboration create an enabling framework for Project Ares to serve as critical digital infrastructure supporting Singapore-based hyperscale operators seeking Australian sovereign capacity. The agreement eliminates barriers to

	digital services trade and establishes mutual recognition frameworks that facilitate the project's positioning as a strategic digital gateway serving Singapore's constrained data centre market, while supporting both nations' objectives to accelerate AI capabilities, enhance cybersecurity cooperation, and build resilient digital supply chains across the Indo-Pacific region.
Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)	Project Ares serves as a critical infrastructure implementation of the Australia-Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) 2.0 (2025–2035), which elevated bilateral ties to a new 10-year framework in October 2025. The project directly supports the CSP 2.0's priorities in AI collaboration and digital economy cooperation by providing 500MW+ hyperscale compute capacity that enables shared ecosystem development between the two nations. Beyond digital trade, the project's location and scale align with the deep security relationship defined in the framework, supporting the strategic stability necessary for the enhanced defence cooperation and reciprocal base access provisions that underpin the 2025–2035 roadmap.
MoU on Cooperation on AI between Australia and Singapore (December , 2024)	Project Ares directly supports the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation on Artificial Intelligence (December 2024). By establishing a 500MW (expandable to 5GW+) renewable-powered hyperscale data centre, the project provides critical infrastructure that underpins the MoU's focus on building shared AI ecosystems and facilitating increased access to AI technologies and talent. Specifically, Project Ares acts as a sovereign, low-latency gateway between Australia and Singapore, enabling the joint development, testing, and commercialisation of AI applications in a secure and sustainable environment. This infrastructure-led approach aligns with the MoU's goal of building linkages between research and industry to ensure the transformative potential of AI is realised for businesses across both nations.
The Pax Silica Declaration (2025)	The Pax Silica Declaration, launched in December 2025 and coordinated by the U.S. Department of State, establishes a shared framework among allied nations - including Australia as an original signatory - to secure the full AI supply chain from critical minerals and energy inputs through to advanced semiconductor manufacturing and AI infrastructure. The Declaration's central premise, that 21st century strategic and economic power is built on compute and the energy systems that enable it, directly reinforces Australia's domestic policy agenda, including the Future Made in Australia initiative and the government's commitment to positioning Australia as a renewable energy and technology superpower. Project Ares is purpose-built to translate this declaration-level commitment into ground-level delivery: an Australian-owned, investment-grade hyperscale AI compute facility powered by 99% renewable energy, strategically located to serve allied Indo-Pacific partners, and representing exactly the kind of sovereign infrastructure asset required for Australia to fulfil its obligations and seize its opportunity within this emerging international framework.

Exports/Imports

Outline the anticipated market channels for the product internationally and/or domestically.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Project Ares will export digital services, Cloud and AI Compute capacity, to Asia-Pacific markets, leveraging Australia's geographic, political, and regulatory advantages.

Primary Export Channel: Existing Fibre Networks and/or Territory Energy Link to Darwin

The site provides direct access to 3 major terrestrial fibre networks providing high-capacity, low-latency connectivity from the inland data centre to Darwin. In addition, Energy North's MOU with the NT Government provides access to the Territory Energy Link corridor, enabling Energy North or its tenants to deploy, if required, additional fibre optic infrastructure to Darwin. From

Darwin, high-capacity subsea cables connect directly to major Asian digital economy hubs including Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Hong Kong, and Tokyo, positioning the NT as Australia's strategic digital gateway to Asia.

Hyperscaler Tenant Strategy

Project Ares' primary focus is securing global hyperscale cloud service providers as anchor tenants. These operators are actively seeking to establish or expand their Australian presence but face significant constraints in markets like Singapore (development moratoriums, land scarcity, power limitations) and southern Australian cities (limited expansion capacity).

Project Ares offers hyperscalers with existing or planned Australian operations:

- **Large-scale capacity:** 500MW+ per facility with multi-phase expansion to 5GW+ impossible in constrained metropolitan markets
- **Competitive renewable energy:** 99% green power at ~USD s 47(1)(b)/MWh (s 47(1)(b)) for energy-intensive AI and high-performance computing workloads, meeting ESG commitments
- **Sustainable water solutions:** Regional groundwater access (<2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield) avoiding metropolitan community opposition and regulatory constraints
- **Five Eyes security:** Australian sovereign territory with stable regulation, strong rule of law, robust data protection, and established regulatory frameworks for sensitive workloads
- **Strategic connectivity:** Lower latency to Asian markets than southern Australian locations while maintaining Australian jurisdiction, with direct access to domestic and Asia-Pacific markets via existing fibre optic cable, the Territory Energy Link and subsea cables
- **Operational advantages:** Cooler ambient temperatures reducing costs versus tropical alternatives, behind-the-meter design eliminating grid delays (5-10 years in metropolitan areas)
- **First-mover positioning:** Australia's emerging digital infrastructure corridor in the NT

Recent commercial engagement with global hyperscalers and data centre developers confirms strong market interest validating these competitive advantages. These hyperscaler tenants will generate substantial export revenue by serving international customers through their cloud platforms while simultaneously delivering services to Australian enterprises and government agencies seeking local access to global cloud capabilities.

Non-binding commercial agreements under negotiation with tier-one international counterparties demonstrate genuine market demand and validate project economics. Export opportunities complement domestic sovereign capability rather than competing with it - hyperscalers serving Asia-Pacific markets from Australian infrastructure strengthen Australia's strategic positioning while delivering domestic investment and employment.

Broader Asian market connectivity (Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Tokyo) represents future optionality rather than immediate primary targets. The current focus centres on hyperscalers establishing Australian sovereign capacity for their growing domestic and regional operations.

DOMESTIC MARKETS

Project Ares connects to Australian markets via terrestrial fibre links to Adelaide and Darwin, integrating with the national telecommunications backbone.

Primary Channel: Hyperscaler-Mediated Services

The primary domestic channel operates through hyperscale tenant platforms serving Australian enterprise and government customers. This market-aligned approach recognises that organisations increasingly consume digital infrastructure through cloud platforms rather than direct data centre arrangements.

This enables Australian organisations to access world-class cloud platforms on sovereign territory with data sovereignty compliance, geographic diversity from coastal concentrations, scalable capacity without capital investment, and integration with existing cloud deployments.

Future Optionality

Project Ares' infrastructure design creates future optionality for direct engagement with government, defence, and enterprise sectors should market conditions evolve. Potential applications include classified workload processing, defence systems, financial services, healthcare data processing, resources sector operations, AI development, and business continuity services. These represent strategic optionality for future phases rather than current primary targets.

STRATEGIC BENEFITS

Project Ares' hyperscaler-focused strategy establishes the NT as critical infrastructure in Australia's digital landscape by:

- Establishing the NT as Australia's digital gateway to Asia through hyperscaler platforms
- Generating substantial export revenue from digital services to international customers
- Strengthening Australia's digital sovereignty by ensuring major cloud platforms maintain Australian sovereign infrastructure
- Creating high-value technology employment and skills development in the NT
- Delivering economic diversification beyond traditional resources and agriculture
- Supporting Indigenous economic participation through partnerships in high-technology sectors

The phased development approach targets anchor hyperscaler tenants establishing or expanding Australian operations initially, while maintaining flexibility to capture emerging opportunities as Australia's digital economy and sovereign capability requirements evolve.

**Based on Energy North's market research, which consolidates publicly available global renewable-energy pricing benchmarks and firming-cost datasets*

If known, list the type of products, materials, machinery, etc., to be imported or exported. Add lines as required.

Importing/Exporting + Country	Product/s, Material/s, Machinery	Qty (for Phase 1 500MW)
Exporting (to Asia-Pacific - likely Singapore)	Data (Compute & Storage)	500 MW (up to 1GW)
Power Co		
Importing (China)	Solar PV Modules: s 47G Hi-MO 6 / s 47G Bifacial 580W	2,586,207 pcs
Importing (USA)	Single-axis Trackers: s 47G NX Horizon with AI	21,552 units
Importing (China)	BESS Battery Units: s 47G 5 MWh LFP	1,600 units
Importing (Finland/Austria)	Gas Reciprocating Engines: s 47G 34SG s 47G 20 MW	25 units
Importing (China)	Solar String Inverters: s 47G SG333HX 333kW	4,500 units
Data Co		
Importing (USA/EU)	Centrifugal Chillers: s 47G 10MW Oil-free	60 units
Importing (China/Korea)	Static UPS Units: 2MW Rotary-free with Lithium-ion batteries	320 units
Importing (USA/EU)	CRAH Units: s 47G 500kW Perimeter units	1,040 units
Importing (USA/UK)	Raised Access Flooring: s 47G 600mm	280,000 m ²
Importing (Global)	Structural Steel: s 47G fire-rated hot-rolled steel	25,000 t

Full list of all PowerCo and DataCo imports/equipment list is seen in Appendix 2

Employment and Skills Training/Development

Provide an update to the number of full-time equivalent jobs per annum

Phase	Full-time equivalent jobs	
	Employees	Contractors
Construction	100	4,355 (Peak Workforce: 1,555 PowerCo + 2,800 DataCo)
Operations	200-300	500
Decommission	40	1000

Outline any additional employment benefits to the local and regional communities.

Employment Benefits to Local and Regional Communities

Given the transformative scale of Project Ares, the development will create long-lasting regional and local benefits throughout the project lifecycle by generating significant opportunities for NT participation, workforce development and positive social and economic impacts.

Guided by the Territory Benefit Policy, Energy North will work closely with the NT's Industry Capability Network (ICN) to maximise local industry participation and workforce development across all project phases, including Indigenous employment and engagement of Indigenous suppliers and service providers. Energy North's approach will be documented in a comprehensive project-specific Territory Benefit Plan.

Indirect Employment

At full capacity, the hyperscaler tenant will support an additional permanent operational workforce of approximately 150-200 highly skilled personnel in data centre operations and technical support roles.

In addition, Project Ares will generate substantial indirect employment opportunities within the NT including transport and logistics, engineering and technical services, hospitality and camp management, professional services, construction support, and ongoing maintenance contractors. Economic multiplier effects suggest the project will support approximately 2-3 additional indirect jobs for every direct permanent position, potentially generating over 10,000 indirect jobs during construction and 400-600 ongoing indirect positions during operations.

Furthermore, hyperscaler tenants will create upstream employment in server manufacturing, network infrastructure, and AI chip integration, with Australian coordination and logistics roles supporting these global supply chains.

Workforce Development and Community Benefits

Energy North will champion job opportunities for First Nations people, women, and diverse communities, encouraging gender equity in hiring particularly in leadership and technical roles while supporting flexible work arrangements. The project will create pathways for Indigenous employment through partnerships with Traditional Owner groups (Mudburra, Djingili, and Anmatjere peoples), develop training programs in renewable energy and data centre operations, and build local capacity in high-value technology sectors. By prioritising NT residents for operational roles and supporting local business capability development, Project Ares represents a generational opportunity to establish the Territory as a hub for digital infrastructure expertise with sustainable, high-skilled employment extending well beyond construction.

Foundation for Future Development

Project Ares establishes critical foundation infrastructure, including access roads, an airport, worker accommodation and amenities, and site services, that will enable Energy North's Project Sol hydrogen and green ammonia facilities to be delivered more efficiently. Critically, the project builds local workforce capability across solar PV installation, battery energy storage construction and operations, high-voltage electrical systems, and renewable energy management, skills that are directly transferable to Project Sol's larger-scale renewable energy infrastructure. This sequential development approach creates sustained employment pathways for NT workers, allowing the local workforce to progress from Project Ares construction through to long-term careers in the Territory's emerging clean energy and digital economy sectors.

Have you Identified any supply chain issues that may impact on the delivery of your Project?

☐ No

Yes - (if you have identified gaps, please list the supply chain gaps, and how they will impact on the delivery of the Project).

Energy North has proactively identified and addressed potential supply chain considerations for Project Ares through comprehensive planning and strategic partnerships to ensure successful project delivery. Project Ares will be delivered as a powered shell model, with Energy North's scope encompassing all infrastructure including power generation, cooling systems, connectivity, and data hall fit-out. IT compute hardware (GPUs, servers, racks) is procured directly by the hyperscaler tenant through their established manufacturer relationships, consistent with industry standard practice for hyperscale facilities. This model isolates Project Ares from global chip supply constraints while ensuring Energy North retains full control over all infrastructure delivery within its scope.

The following supply chain considerations relate to Energy North's infrastructure delivery scope:

SUPPLY CHAIN CONSIDERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

1. High-Voltage Electrical Equipment

	Components: HV switchgear, transformers, MV switchboards Consideration: Extended global lead times for high-voltage electrical distribution equipment. Mitigation Strategy: Early procurement during FEED phase, standardised specifications, tier-one manufacturer partnerships s 47G, and secured EPC contracts with priority ordering provisions. 2. BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS Components: 8 GWh lithium-ion batteries, UPS battery systems, battery management systems Consideration: Strong global demand for utility-scale battery systems affecting delivery timelines. Mitigation Strategy: Multiple tier-1 supplier relationships s 47G, dual-source procurement approach, and proven battery technology selection. 3. LARGE-SCALE COOLING EQUIPMENT Components: Centrifugal chillers, evaporative cooling towers, computer room air handlers Consideration: Specialised cooling equipment requires advance manufacturing scheduling. Mitigation Strategy: Qualified vendor diversity s 47G, early FEED phase ordering, and standardised specifications across units. 4. SOLAR PV MODULES AND TRACKERS Components: 2.6 million bifacial solar panels, single-axis tracking systems Consideration: Large-volume procurement requiring coordinated manufacturer allocation and logistics planning. Mitigation Strategy: Established tier-1 manufacturer relationships s 47G, proven Australian supply channels, and early procurement commitments. 5. GAS GENERATION EQUIPMENT Components: Reciprocating gas engines with integrated systems Consideration: Specialised generation equipment from select manufacturers. Mitigation Strategy: Early engagement with proven manufacturers s 47G, established technology platforms, and phased delivery approach. 6. BULK CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS Components: Structural steel, concrete, cladding, cabling, and piping systems Consideration: Significant material volumes for remote NT location requiring coordinated logistics. Mitigation Strategy: Adelaide-Darwin Railway access for efficient bulk transport, advance procurement contracts, phased delivery scheduling, and substantial on-site warehousing. INTEGRATED SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT Project Ares benefits from a robust supply chain management framework: s 47G • Strategic EPC Relationships: Experienced contractors with established vendor networks • Phased Development Flexibility: Modular approach enabling supply chain optimisation between phases • Proven Technology Platform: Commercial-grade equipment from established global manufacturers • Vendor Diversification: Multiple qualified suppliers for all critical systems
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	Energy North's proactive approach to supply chain management, combined with early vendor engagement and experienced delivery partnerships, positions Project Ares for on-schedule delivery with first power targeted for late 2029.
Have you identified any skills gaps that will be required to deliver the Project?	☐ No X Yes - (if you have identified gaps, please list the skills gaps, and how they will impact on the delivery of the Project). Energy North has conducted comprehensive workforce planning for Project Ares and identified specific skills requirements that will be addressed through a structured training and recruitment strategy. IDENTIFIED SKILLS REQUIREMENTS Specialised Technical Skills • High-Voltage Electrical Systems: HV switchgear specialists, 132kV/33kV substation operators, power systems engineers with renewable integration experience • Low-Voltage Electrical Systems: Low-voltage electricians for data centre electrical infrastructure, UPS systems, distribution boards, and building services • Data Centre Infrastructure: Tier III operations personnel, critical facilities managers, BMS/SCADA operators, advanced cooling systems technicians • Battery Energy Storage Systems: Utility-scale BESS operations technicians, battery management specialists, energy dispatch operators • Renewable Energy Operations: Large-scale solar PV maintenance teams, tracker system technicians, renewable forecasting specialists • Gas Generation: Reciprocating engine technicians s 47G certified) NT Workforce Considerations • Limited local availability of specialised data centre and renewable energy skills • Small regional population base (Darwin ~150,000) relative to project scale • Current underrepresentation of First Nations people in specialised technical roles • Need for structured pathways connecting Traditional Owner communities with high-technology employment COMPREHENSIVE MITIGATION STRATEGY Multi-Source Recruitment Approach National and International FIFO Workforce Model • PowerCo: Brisbane (28%), Perth (22%), Darwin (12%), Adelaide (10%), Melbourne (8%), international (20%) (subject to anticipated Special Economic Zone Provisions) • DataCo: Brisbane (25%), Perth (18%), Darwin (15%), Sydney (12%), Melbourne (10%), international (20%) (subject to anticipated Special Economic Zone Provisions) • Leveraging NT's Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) program to fast-track interstate credentialing, with skills bridging programs developed for overseas personnel requiring qualification alignment with Australian standards • Subject to prospective Special Economic Zone Legislation, the project anticipates accessing international skilled labour from UK, Ireland, Singapore, and Philippines • Purpose-built 4,500-person construction village with proven FIFO infrastructure Training and Skills Development Programs

- Apprenticeship and education pathways
- Structured apprenticeships for Indigenous job seekers and youth
- STEM scholarships for Indigenous and female students
- Collaboration with Indigenous organizations.
- Energy North will collaborate with the NT's Industry Capability Network (ICN) and Charles Darwin University (CDU) to develop training and skills programs for renewable energy infrastructure and hyperscale data centre operations. CDU and local training providers will deliver vocational education in areas including solar PV and battery storage operations, data centre facilities management, high-voltage electrical systems, and advanced cooling infrastructure.
- Vendor-specific certification programs

Partnership with Industry and Education

- NT Industry Capability Network (ICN) collaboration to maximise local participation
- Education provider partnerships developing specialised curriculum for data centre operations, renewable energy systems, and critical facilities management
- Technology vendor training programs (ABB, Siemens, Schneider, Vertiv, Trane)

Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

Indigenous Employment

- Meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners (Mudburra, Djingili, Anmatjere peoples)
- ILUA incorporating employment pathways
- Support for Indigenous-owned businesses

Gender Equity Initiatives

- Targeted recruitment for women in leadership and technical roles
- Flexible work arrangements and non-traditional role opportunities

Inclusive Workplace Culture

- Culturally safe workplaces with anti-discrimination training
- Comprehensive health, safety, and wellbeing programs

Long-Term Capability Building

Sequential Project Benefits

Project Ares establishes workforce capabilities directly transferable to Project Sol hydrogen/ammonia facility:

- Solar PV and BESS construction/operations expertise
- High-voltage electrical systems skills
- Remote project delivery experience

This sequential approach creates sustained employment pathways for NT workers progressing from construction into long-term careers.

Regional Economic Impact

- 200-300 permanent operational roles at Project Ares
- Establishment of NT as a hub for digital infrastructure and renewable energy expertise
- Training programs building broader regional technical capacity
- Indigenous business development in high-technology sectors

Energy North's comprehensive workforce strategy addresses specialised skills requirements through national recruitment, structured training programs, Indigenous employment pathways, education partnerships, and proven FIFO infrastructure. This

	approach ensures workforce availability while building long-term technical capacity in the NT, positioning the region as a centre of excellence for digital infrastructure and renewable energy operations.
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Detail any training or skill development opportunities the Project will provide and how the opportunities will contribute to the industry and region (broadly). Include any linkages or partnerships with universities, TAFE or research institutions.

Name of Institution	Skill Development Opportunity	Benefits/Outcomes to region
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	Specialist Renewable & Data Centre Operations Training	Workforce Sovereignty: Develops a local talent pool capable of operating high-tech infrastructure, reducing reliance on FIFO workers for the 25-year operational life.
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	Micro-credentials in Project Management & STEM	Upskilling: Provides pathways for local Territorians to transition from traditional industries (mining/pastoral) into the digital and renewable economy.
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	Trade qualifications and pre-employment programs tailored for First Nations participants	Indigenous Capability: Culturally appropriate training delivery for remote and regional Indigenous communities in the Barkly region, building a pipeline of qualified Indigenous workers.
Industry Capability Network (ICN)	Supplier Capability Workshops	Business Growth: Assists local SMEs in understanding tender requirements and pre-qualification, ensuring they can bid for major work packages.
Local Indigenous Organisations	Apprenticeships & Traineeships	Inclusive Growth: Dedicated pathways for First Nations people in the Barkly region to gain trade qualifications in electrical and civil construction.
Indigenous Education & Research Centre (IERC)	Strategic education and research partnerships for Indigenous workforce development	Long-term Participation: Partners with Prof N M Nakata AM to design Indigenous participation pathways that connect education outcomes to specific operational roles on Project Ares, creating a replicable model for Indigenous employment on major infrastructure projects in Northern Australia.
Technology Vendors (ABB, Siemens, Schneider, Vertiv, Trane)	Vendor-specific certification programs for critical infrastructure systems	Industry Capability: Industry Capability: Brings manufacturer-specific certification programs to the NT for the first time. The project's scale and 25-year operational

		life creates a commercial basis for technology vendors to establish permanent NT service capability, with nationally and internationally recognised qualifications transferable beyond the project.
Reconciliation Australia	Cultural competency training and Reflect RAP implementation	Inclusive Workplace: Ensures culturally safe project environment and embeds reconciliation principles across all workforce engagement

Australian Industry Participation Plan: *If the Project's capex is greater than \$500 million, the project will require an Australian Industry Participation Plan (AIP Plan) under the Australian Jobs Act 2013. An AIP Plan ensures Australian entities have full, fair, and reasonable opportunity to bid for the supply of key goods and services for the project. A state-based industry participation plan may also be required.*

An AIP Plan must explain how proponents will communicate project opportunities to potential Australian suppliers. The Industry Capability Network (ICN) Gateway is one avenue proponents can use to promote opportunities and identify potential suppliers. More information can be found at [ICN Gateway](#).

Have you prepared and/or submitted an AIP?

☒ **No**

☐ **Yes** - (if you have identified gaps, please list the supply chain gaps, and how they will impact on the delivery of the Project).

Status/Comment:
An AIP Plan as well as a Territory Benefit Plan will be prepared during the FEED phase, once the design of infrastructure components is more advanced and key suppliers are better understood. Energy North has already initiated consultation with ICN NT (CEO level) and will continue to work closely with them throughout the development of these plans.

Criterion 2

The Project is challenged by complex Australian Government approvals administered under Australian Government legislation in order to proceed.

The objective of this criterion is to identify the extent to which MPS services will be of value to the Project.

Australian Government Regulatory Requirements

Provide an update on Australian Government regulatory approvals. Include approvals obtained and outstanding and their relevant status.

1. List the relevant Australian Government regulatory approvals the Project may trigger (including those already obtained).
 - Refer to the results of your [Major Projects Help Tool](#) session and [MPFA Factsheets](#) for assistance.
 - An example is listed below for reference.
2. Add all Australian Government regulatory approvals relevant to your Project.
3. Add additional lines as required.
4. Include contact details of government officials you are engaging with on these matters or mark as N/A.

Regulator	Regulatory approval required	Legislation	Status/Comments
COMMONWEALTH REGULATORY APPROVALS			
Attorney-General's Department	Indigenous Land Use Agreement And Consultation or negotiations with registered Native Title Holders	Native Title Act 1993	In Progress The whole of Murrniji Station is subject to Native Title determination (King vs NT of Australia, DCD2007/002). Energy North are currently liaising with NLC and have engaged local NT lawyers to assist with the process of developing an ILUA with relevant Traditional Owner groups. The first ILUA workshop with Traditional Owners is scheduled for March/April after the wet season.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	Declaration application	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984	Not Commenced Requirement of this approval is unlikely given the project's proactive engagement with AAPA, NLC, and Traditional Owners through the ILUA process, and compliance with the NT Sacred Sites Act. This will be confirmed following on-site surveys and consultation with relevant Traditional Owners. Energy North's approach to heritage management is designed to ensure NT heritage protections operate effectively, minimising the likelihood of a declaration application.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	Assessment and approval	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	In Progress (on track) The Project will require referral under the EPBC Act because of the likely presence of MNES within the Project area, including the Greater Bilby. Based on the scale of the Project and likely presence of MNES within the Project site, it is likely the Project would be considered a controlled action and assessment would be by EIS. A preliminary threatened species assessment has been undertaken for Murrniji Station and initial avoidance and mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise impact on potential Threatened Species within Murrniji, including Greater Bilby. Detailed site investigations and targeted threatened species surveys will be undertaken in 2026 to determine presence or absence of species and habitats.

The Treasury	Foreign investment approval	Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975	Not Commenced Project Ares' capital structure involves significant international equity and commercial partnerships, which are likely to trigger FIRB notification requirements. Energy North will engage with Treasury early in the FEED phase to confirm applicable thresholds, notification requirements, and any conditions that may apply. FIRB clearance is on the critical path to FID.
Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)	Approved Australian Industry Participation Plan	Australian Jobs Act 2013	Not Commenced Energy North's project capital expenditure will be greater than \$500 million, therefore an approved Australian Industry Participation Plan will be required. Energy North will develop the Australian Industry Participation Plan during FEED, aligned with the Territory Benefit Plan and Aboriginal procurement strategy.
Department of Home Affairs & Department of Employment and Workplace Relations	Appropriate working visas for international workers	Migration Act 1958	Not Commenced All overseas workers employed on the project will obtain appropriate visas to enter and work in Australia. Special Economic Zone (SEZ) provisions, if legislated, may provide additional visa pathways for skilled international workers. These provisions are not yet legislated and are not relied upon for project delivery. In the absence of SEZ provisions, international recruitment will proceed through existing visa frameworks including Temporary Skill Shortage (subclass 482) and Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) pathways.
Department of Home Affairs - Critical Infrastructure Centre	Compliance with obligations to protect infrastructure of national significance	Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018	Not Commenced Project Ares is likely to be classified as a critical infrastructure asset. Energy North will engage with the Critical Infrastructure Centre during FEED to confirm classification and applicable obligations, including Critical Infrastructure Risk Management Program (CIRMP), mandatory incident reporting, and government assistance provisions. Project security architecture and tenant arrangements will be designed to meet SOCI Act requirements from the outset.
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)	Specific import permits	Biosecurity Act 2015	Not Commenced Energy North will be required to import equipment and other goods associated with construction and operational phases of the project. Some specific incoming goods are likely to require a permit prior to import.
Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)	Communication and monitoring systems licensing	Radiocommunications Act 1992	Not Commenced Energy North will be required to install communication systems for monitoring and control of generation assets (SCADA systems) and telemetry from solar infrastructure which may require licensing under this Act.
Australian Border Force (ABF)	Import licensing / permits	Customs Act 1901	Not Commenced Energy North will require permits or licences under this Act for importing goods associated with the construction and operation of the project.
Digital Transformation Agency (DTA)	Hosting Certification Framework (HCF) certification	Hosting Certification Framework	Not Commenced To be pursued if government workloads are hosted. Certification level to be determined based on tenant requirements and security classification of hosted data.
Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)	Carrier licence or carrier authorisation for fibre optic infrastructure	Telecommunications Act 1997	Not Commenced To be assessed during FEED based on final telecommunications design and whether Energy North or tenants deploy fibre infrastructure.
Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)	Aerodrome registration or certification	Civil Aviation Act 1988	Not Commenced Required for the project's airstrip. Application to be progressed prior to construction phase.
Clean Energy Regulator	Registration and reporting under NGER scheme	National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007	Not Commenced The project's backup gas generation component is likely to trigger NGER reporting thresholds. Energy North will register with the Clean Energy Regulator and report greenhouse gas emissions, energy production, and energy consumption annually as required.

NORTHERN TERRITORY REGULATORY APPROVALS			
NT EPA	Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	Environment Protection Act 2019 (NT)	In Progress Referral is currently being prepared for submission in Q1 2026. Based on the project scale (~895 hectares of clearing), it is anticipated that the NT EPA will require an EIS. Terms of Reference are expected to be finalised following referral. Detailed field surveys (flora/fauna) commenced in 2025 and are ongoing.
Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA)	Authority Certificate	NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT)	Commenced Energy North has obtained an AAPA Abstract of Records Map for the Murrniji Station project area and has initiated preliminary engagement with AAPA regarding the Authority Certificate application process. No sacred site constraints have been identified to date that would preclude the proposed development footprint, however this will be confirmed through the formal Authority Certificate process. The NLC will coordinate Traditional Owner engagement in support of the process, consistent with their representative role for relevant Native Title groups. The Authority Certificate is a prerequisite for ground-disturbing works. The Authority Certificate application is programmed to commence in Q2 2026, aligned with the EIS program and FEED timeline.
Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI)	Development Permit / Planning Approval	Planning Act 1999 (NT)	Not Commenced Planning applications will be lodged following the completion of the EIS process. The project team is currently in pre-application discussions with DLI regarding the Exceptional Development Permit pathway given the project's strategic significance.
Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE)	Water Extraction Licence	Water Act 1992 (NT)	In Progress Application for a 4 GL/year Groundwater Extraction Licence (GWEL) from the Montejinni Limestone Aquifer is in progress, supported by comprehensive hydrogeological assessments by Eco Logical Australia confirming the project's water requirement represents less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield of 210 GL/year. Energy North is engaging with the DLPE Water Resources Division regarding the water licensing pathway and requirements.
Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE)	Land Clearing Permit (Non-Pastoral Use) and Crown Lease Conversion	Pastoral Land Act 1992 (NT)	In Progress Application to convert the project footprint (excised from the pastoral lease) to a Crown Lease (Industrial use) is in progress. A non-pastoral use permit is required for the initial clearing phases and approval for subdivision is required. The ILUA negotiation with the NLC will run in parallel with the lease conversion application to ensure Traditional Owner consent is secured before final tenure is granted.
Utilities Commission (NT)	Generation Licence	Electricity Reform Act 2000 (NT)	Not Commenced Energy North will apply for a generation licence for the 1,500 MWp solar array and 600MW gas backup generation closer to the commissioning phase (targeted for late 2029).
Heritage Branch (verify current department post machinery of government changes)	Heritage Clearance	Heritage Act 2011 (NT)	Not Commenced Heritage clearance is required to ensure Project Ares construction activities do not impact registered or significant heritage sites within the Murrniji Station development footprint. No significant sites have been identified to date, but clearance is required prior to construction.
NT WorkSafe	Dangerous goods storage and handling approvals; Major Hazard Facility assessment (if applicable)	Dangerous Goods Act 1998 (NT); Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)	Not Commenced Project includes lithium-ion battery storage and gas generation (backup). Threshold assessment to be completed during FEED to determine Major Hazard Facility classification. Dangerous goods approvals to be obtained prior to construction.
NT WorkSafe	Construction project notification; high-risk work licences	Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)	Not Commenced The project's scale (4,400 construction workforce) requires formal notification to NT WorkSafe as a construction project. A Principal Contractor will be appointed with responsibility for site WHS

			management plans, high-risk work licence compliance, and safe work method statements. To be progressed during EPC procurement.
NT EPA / Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE)	Waste discharge licence and waste management approvals	Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998 (NT)	Not Commenced Comprehensive Waste Management Plan to be developed during FEED covering construction waste, wastewater, and hazardous waste streams including end-of-life battery management.
Bushfires NT	Fire Management Plan	Bushfires Management Act 2016 (NT)	Not Commenced Murrnaji Station is within the Barkly Fire Management Zone. A Fire Management Plan will be developed during FEED addressing bushfire risk to project infrastructure during construction and operations, including firebreak requirements and emergency response protocols.

Complexity of Approvals

Do any approvals identified above have unknown, unclear, or immature path of implementation? If yes, explain.

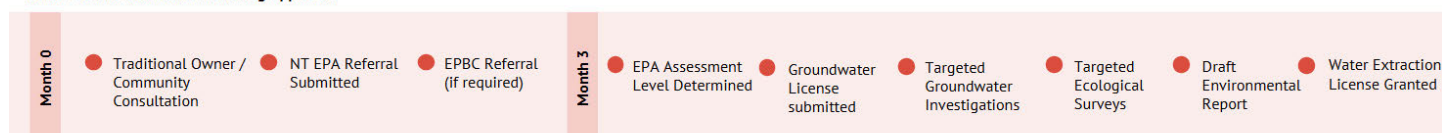
The NT Government, through the Department of Mining and Energy (DME), is providing project facilitation services for Project Ares, coordinating cross-agency engagement across Territory departments. Energy North is working closely with locally based environmental consultants and NT Government departments to navigate both Commonwealth and Territory regulatory requirements. Primary approvals relate to land tenure, planning, cultural heritage, and environment. The regulatory framework for large-scale renewable energy and digital infrastructure projects in the NT continues to evolve, and Energy North is working closely with both Commonwealth and Territory agencies to ensure approvals are progressed efficiently.

SunCable's Australia-Asia PowerLink project (~100 km south of Project Ares) has obtained approvals from both Commonwealth and NT governments, setting a significant precedent that supports Energy North's regulatory pathway. The project is well advanced in obtaining environmental baseline data, with extensive flora and fauna surveys already available from previous government assessments and detailed consultant studies. Targeted fauna surveys are planned for Q2 2026 following the wet season.

Energy North maintains ongoing engagement with key regulatory agencies - including NT EPA and DCCEEW - alongside relevant Commonwealth and Territory Ministers, ensuring a collaborative, "no surprises" approach. This proactive strategy aligns baseline data, impact assessments, and approvals pathways with government expectations, delivering robust and defensible environmental outcomes. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with multiple Commonwealth and Territory departments and Ministerial offices, all expressing strong support for the project. Over the past 24 months, Energy North has worked closely with Investment Territory, including the Department of Mining & Energy (DME), Land Development Corporation (LDC), Department of Infrastructure, Planning & Logistics (DIPL), Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (DTBAR), and Commonwealth DCCEEW. At the Commonwealth level, Energy North has received strong support from the MPFA and Assistant Minister Charlton's (Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy) office.

Pre-lodgement engagement with NT EPA and relevant agencies is completed. Project referral documentation for NT EPA and Commonwealth Government is scheduled for submission in April 2026. All major permits and approvals are either in-progress or programmed for commencement, with completion targeted by June 2027 (prior to FID). Key approvals include NT EPA referral, Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) certificates, DIPL infrastructure approvals, Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) clearance, and Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registration with the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT). The current indicative primary approvals pathway and timing for the project is shown below.

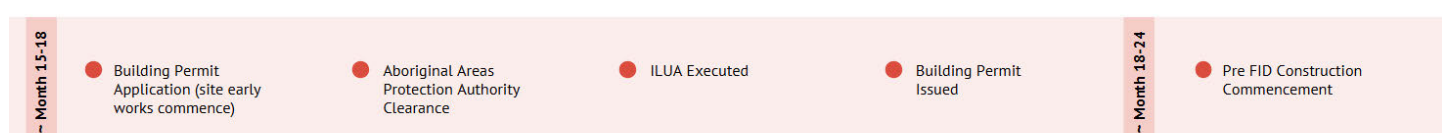
Phase 1: Environmental & Planning Approvals



Phase 2: Major Approval and Permits



Phase 3: Construction Permits & Commencements



Does your project span more than one state or territory? If yes, do any approvals have conflicting requirements with state and territory requirement? Explain

No conflicting requirements. While the fibre optic links connect to other jurisdictions, the primary environmental and planning approvals for the generation and data centre assets are solely within the NT jurisdiction.

Are any approvals unable to be resolved with the relevant regulator? If yes, explain.

No approvals have been identified as unable to be resolved with the relevant regulator. Engagement across all regulatory agencies has been positive and constructive. Water Extraction (DLPE) and Land Tenure (DIPL) are critical path items and both are progressing well, with hydrogeological modelling completed and the process required for Crown Lease conversion is well understood. The SunCable Australia-Asia PowerLink precedent has established clear regulatory pathways for large-scale renewable energy and infrastructure projects in the Barkly region, and Energy North's proactive pre-lodgement engagement with NT EPA, DCCEEW, DLPE and DIPL has not identified any regulatory obstacles that cannot be resolved through standard processes. Energy North will continue to work closely with the Department of Mining and Energy's facilitation services to coordinate cross-agency engagement and ensure approvals remain on track.

Does the project involve working with overseas governments and require approvals? If yes, explain.

Project Ares is located entirely within Australian jurisdiction in the NT. All construction and operational approvals are obtained through Commonwealth and Territory regulatory pathways. No overseas government approvals are required for the project's development or operation.

While no overseas approvals are required, Energy North maintains strategic engagement with international counterparts to support the project's commercial positioning. This includes regular engagement with Austrade and Australian Embassy offices in Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan to facilitate commercial arrangements, and coordination with Singapore's Economic Development Board (EDB) given Project Ares' role in serving Southeast Asian digital infrastructure demand. Project Ares directly addresses Singapore's structural infrastructure constraints, including electricity costs 2-3x higher than Project Ares (Energy Market Authority, 2025), positioning the NT as a complementary digital hub serving Southeast Asian demand through secure, cost-effective, renewable-powered infrastructure.

Domestically, coordination may be required with state governments for fibre optic access and telecommunications infrastructure corridors connecting the NT to national and international cable systems. These are commercial and diplomatic engagements, not regulatory approval requirements. However, strategic engagement with overseas governments enhances the project's commercial success and positions Australia as the digital gateway to Asia. Project Ares is designed to serve Asia-Pacific hyperscale markets, requiring coordination on digital connectivity infrastructure, data sovereignty frameworks, cross-border data flow regulations, and telecommunications licensing. Project Ares' strategic location and carrier-neutral connectivity infrastructure also positions the NT as a potential future connection point for international subsea cable systems serving the Asia-Pacific region.

The project utilises a structured financing approach with as 47(1)(b) ratio at FID:

Outline the market forecast for the product(s) produced and sold as part of the Project.

The global market for hyperscale data centre capacity is experiencing unprecedented growth, driven by the rapid adoption of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), cloud computing, and increasing demand for sovereign data storage. Market forecasts consistently predict a supply-demand imbalance, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, creating a prime opportunity for Project Ares.

- Global and Regional Market Dynamics:** According to recent industry analysis, global demand for AI-related compute capacity is projected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 30% through 2030 (MarketsandMarkets, 2025). The Asia-Pacific data centre market alone is expected to exceed US\$79 billion by 2030, (Mordor Intelligence, 2025a) yet the region faces a critical deficit of over 15-25GW of available capacity by 2028 (CBRE, 2025). This shortage is exacerbated by power constraints, high electricity costs, and land moratoriums in traditional hubs like Singapore and Tokyo, forcing hyperscalers to seek new markets with abundant, cost-competitive, renewable power.
- Australian Market Growth:** Australia is poised to benefit significantly from this shift in data gravity, with the domestic data centre market's CAGR forecasted at 4.3%, reaching US\$8.58 billion by 2030 (Mordor Intelligence, 2025b). Key drivers include the Australian Government's National AI Plan and FMIA policy, which emphasise the urgent need for onshore, sovereign computing capabilities to secure national interests, reduce reliance on offshore processing, and position Australia as a digital infrastructure leader in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Project Ares Competitive Positioning:** Project Ares is strategically positioned to capture this demand by solving the primary market constraint - power availability at globally competitive costs. Unlike constrained urban facilities facing 5-10 year grid connection delays, Project Ares offers 500MW of development-ready capacity (Phase 1), expandable to 1GW (Phase 2), within a site infrastructure envelope capable of supporting future expansion to 5GW+, powered by 99% renewable energy at ~USD s 47(1)(b)/MWh - representing a s 47(1)(b) cost advantage over traditional Asia-Pacific locations (Energy Market Authority, 2025; SemiAnalysis, 2024). This aligns perfectly with the decarbonisation commitments of Tier 1 hyperscalers s 47G who have committed to operating on carbon-free energy by 2030.
- Strategic Connectivity and Market Access:** The project's access to 3 major terrestrial fibre networks, and prospective dedicated fibre connectivity through the Territory Energy Link corridor to Darwin, combined with proximity to existing and planned subsea cable systems, positions Project Ares as Australia's digital gateway to Asia. This provides low-latency connectivity to high-growth markets including Jakarta, Singapore, Manila, and Tokyo, while delivering the sovereign security and Five Eyes alignment required by Australian Government, Defence, and commercial clients seeking trusted data residency.
- Commercial Traction and Market Validation:** Energy North has executed a non-binding Power Purchase Agreement term sheet for 1GW firm power supply over 25 years with a s 47G s 47(1)(b) with a Letter of Intent under development with a leading Asia-Pacific hyperscale cloud services provider for Joint Venture delivery (expected Q1 2026). s 47(1)(b) has been pre-approved by as 47G (assets under management exceeding s 47G to fully fund FEED, with binding documentation anticipated following Joint Venture term sheet execution. Active engagement is ongoing with s 47G . Energy North is also in advanced discussions (post-NDA) with three international data centre developers and operators. This commercial progress demonstrates strong market validation from Tier 1 international partners, reflecting Project Ares' compelling value proposition and establishing a clear pathway to FID targeted for mid-2027.
- Market Outlook:** The convergence of surging AI compute demand, regional capacity constraints, decarbonisation imperatives, and Australia's strategic geopolitical positioning creates an exceptional market opportunity for Project Ares. The NT is uniquely positioned to capture significant market share in hyperscale data centre services, delivering substantial economic benefits through job creation, technology transfer, and establishment of Australia as a critical node in the Asia-Pacific digital infrastructure ecosystem.

*

Proposed Capital Structure

Briefly outline your strategy to finance the Project towards Financial Investment Decision (FID).

Energy North's financing strategy for Project Ares is designed to de-risk the development phase while securing competitive capital for construction. The project leverages its collocated power and data centre infrastructure model to attract a diverse pool of institutional and strategic investors.

- **Development Capital (Current Phase):** Energy North is currently undertaking a capital raise of **s 47(1)(b)** to fund the project through FEED, comprehensive regulatory approvals, and commercial negotiations. This development phase investment transforms Project Ares into a development-ready asset with locked-in EPC contracts, secured land agreements, and binding commercial arrangements - significantly de-risking the pathway to FID.
- **Structured Equity Participation:** The project architecture separates "PowerCo" (renewable energy generation) and "DataCo" (data centre infrastructure), allowing specialised infrastructure funds, hyperscalers, and strategic partners to participate at the asset level. **s 47G**
- **Debt Financing Strategy:** Energy North is pursuing a multi-sourced debt strategy including export credit agencies (ECAs), commercial banks, and infrastructure debt funds. The project's compelling economics (firm power at ~USCs **s 47(1)(b)** MWh, **s 47(1)(b)** cost advantage vs. global benchmarks*), combined with hyperscale tenant creditworthiness, positions Project Ares for highly competitive debt pricing and terms.
- **Commonwealth Government Support:** Energy North is actively engaging with Commonwealth financing agencies including the NRF, NAIF, CEFC and EFA. The project aligns directly with national priorities for sovereign AI capability, renewable energy infrastructure, and Indo-Pacific digital connectivity, creating pathways for government co-investment or credit enhancement.
- **Revenue Certainty and Bankability:** Bankability is underpinned by securing long-term Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) and Hyperscale Service Agreements (HSAs) with investment-grade counterparties. Energy North is targeting binding commitments from Tier 1 hyperscalers requiring sovereign data infrastructure, ensuring revenue certainty for project financing and providing the foundation for FID in mid 2027.
- **Financial Investment Decision Timeline:** FID is targeted for mid-2027, subject to completion of FEED, regulatory approvals, and finalisation of anchor tenant agreements. First power delivery is targeted for late 2029, positioning the NT as Australia's premier hyperscale data centre hub serving Asia-Pacific markets.

**Based on Energy North's market research, which consolidates publicly available global renewable-energy pricing benchmarks and firming-cost datasets*

- List the remaining estimated costs to complete the significant government approvals required for your Project to reach FID.
- List the funding source/s to cover your costs to obtain these approvals for your Project.
- Add lines as required

Regulatory Approval	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Environmental, Heritage & Social EPBC Act Assessment & Approval (DCCEEW) Environmental Impact Statement (NT EPA) Indigenous Land Use Agreement (Attorney-General's Dept) Sacred Sites Authority Certificate (AAPA)	s 47(1)(b)	Current Capital Raise / Private Equity
Permitting & Land Tenure Development Permit / Planning Approval (DIPL) Water Extraction Licence (DLPE)	s 47(1)(b)	Current Capital Raise / Private Equity

Land Clearing Permit & Crown Lease Conversion (DLPE)		
Commonwealth Investment Approval Foreign Investment Approval (Treasury / FIRB)	s 47(1)(b)	Current Capital Raise / Private Equity

Partnerships and Agreements

- List major strategic investors/partnerships and/or company.
- Identify the extent of their support in the development/operation stage.
 - Add lines as required

Investor/Partner Name	Domestic/Foreign	Relationship with Project	Support	Capital %
s 47(1)(b)	Domestic	Founder / Developer	Seed Capital (Concept & Pre-Feasibility, and PreFEED Funding)	100% (Current)

Summarise any conditions associated with these agreements including the milestones required to unlock financing.

Energy North is executing a structured capital raise through corporate finance advisory group, s 47(1)(b) in Australia, coordinating with networks in the UK, America, Singapore, and the UAE. The financial framework integrates top-tier private equity, strategic infrastructure investors, government-backed hybrid debt, and government incentives aligned with the Future Made in Australia Initiative. Energy North is simultaneously approaching leading hyperscale operators as anchor tenants.

Founder's funding of s 47(1)(b) (market-to-market evaluation) successfully completed Phase 1 groundwork and Project Sol development, establishing a strong foundation for Project Ares.

The current s 47(1)(b) raise targets FEED completion, regulatory approvals, and anchor tenant negotiations. Follow-on rights enable investors to participate through FID, deploying capital across development while meeting minimum thresholds and supporting long-term financing stability.

Key Milestones to Unlock Financing:

- **Basis of Design (BOD) Completion:** Key performance and operational parameters agreed with hyperscale customers
- **FEED Completion:** Comprehensive engineering package for 500 MW Tier III facility with 1,500 MWp solar, 500 MW/8 GWh BESS, and 132kV infrastructure – Phase 1 500MW, with site infrastructure designed to support 1GW (Phase 2).
- **Regulatory Approvals:** All federal and NT environmental, heritage, and construction permits by June 2027
- **Land Tenure:** Murrnaji Station pastoral lease conversion to Crown Lease (Industrial) and ILUA execution
- **Project Development Agreement with NT Government:** Execution of Project Development Agreement with the NT Government, formalising government facilitation, infrastructure coordination, and development framework for Project Ares.
- **Anchor Tenant Commitment:** Binding PPAs and Hyperscale Service Agreements with investment-grade counterparties.
s 47G
- **Land Agreements:** Exclusive Option Agreement for land on Murrnaji Station, ILUA.
- **EPC Contracts:** Locked-in agreements across downstream (Tier III building), midstream (infrastructure), and upstream (solar, BESS, gas peaking)
- **Equity Close:** DataCo and PowerCo equity partnerships finalised to fund s 47(1)(b)

Investors are conducting due diligence. Commonwealth coordination is underway with NRF, NAIF, CEFC, and EFA to demonstrate government support and de-risk investment.

FID Conditions: FID targeted for mid-2027, conditional on FEED completion, regulatory approvals, anchor tenant agreements, land tenure conversion, EPC contracts, equity close, and committed debt financing. First power: late 2029. Project Ares positions Australia as the Asia-Pacific digital gateway with secure, cost-competitive, renewable-powered infrastructure.

s 47(1)(b), s 47G

s 47(1)(b), s 47G

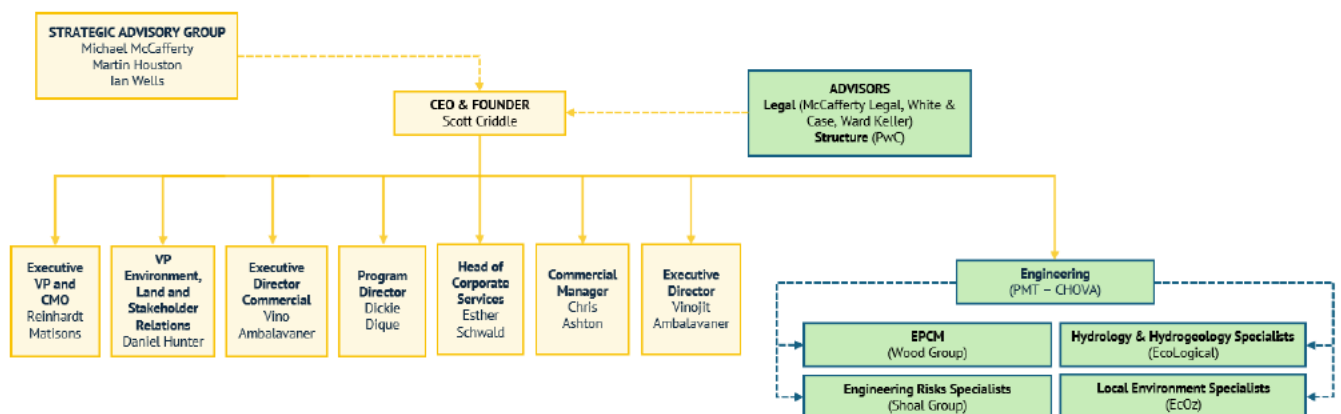
Company Structure and Senior Management

Outline any changes to the company structure, including parent and daughter companies.

- Provide an updated company structure diagram responsible for the development of the Project.
- If applicable, provide an additional broader company structure diagram of the company's associated parent and daughter companies with a description of relationships and ownership.

Energy North is led by CEO, Scott Criddle and a highly experienced senior management team and strategic advisory team with over 300 years of experience in developing mega-projects in Australia.

Refer to the Energy North organisational structure diagram below.



The Corporate Structure for Energy North's Project Ares will be finalised at FID, however an indicative structure is shown below. This indicative structure is subject to final tax, legal, financial and regulatory optimisation.

s 47(1)(b)

List the **top 5** shareholders of the company responsible for the development of the Project and their respective ownership shares/percentage.

Shareholder	Domestic or Foreign	Relationship to Company	Shares	Capital %

Provide a succinct biography for each key member of the company:

- Senior Executive Team.
- Board, if different to the Senior Executive Team.
- Experts and consultants engaged for the Project.

Name and Role	Experience and Education	Interest in shares
Scott Criddle Executive Chair. Founder & CEO	Scott was former CEO of engineering firm Decmil for c.18 years where he was involved in >AU\$500bn of energy and resource projects. He has over 30 years of experience and worked on various infrastructure works conducted within the LNG and Iron Ore industries. Scott formed Australian Owned Contractors (AOC) in 2018, uniting mid-tier contractors to lobby for an increased share of works for Australian infrastructure projects to build up sovereign capability.	100%

	Scott founded Energy North's \$22B Project Sol (green ammonia) and \$7.8B Project Ares.	
Martin Houston Strategic Advisor	Martin began his career as a geologist in 1979 and since then has worked worldwide, managing all forms of enterprise in the energy industry including as COO and Executive Director of British Gas Group for 32 years. Current Roles: • Vice-Chairman of Tellurian Inc • Chairman of the Energy Group at Moelis & Co • Non-executive Director of BUPA Arabia • Non-executive Director of CC Energy • Advisory Board of Radia Inc. and Global Energy Policy unit at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in New York • Mentor with Merryck and Company • Member of the National Petroleum Council of the United States	%
Ian Wells Strategic Advisor	Ian is an experienced senior executive and leader with corporate finance, multi-billion dollar funding, capital management and business transformation expertise. He has over 20+ years experience in management and financial accounting, financial markets, mergers and acquisitions and capital raising across multiple industries including manufacturing, electronics, health care, energy infrastructure and mining. Ian is former CFO of Fortescue Metals Group Limited, top 10 ASX listed at AU\$60bn market cap (2022)	%
Michael McCafferty Strategic Advisor	Michael has 35 years of legal experience, including 8 years in legal management, and was a partner at King & Wood Mallesons for 17 years. Since 1996, he has focused on the energy sector, advising clients on projects across Australia. His expertise spans industry restructures, transmission infrastructure, renewable energy zones, regulation, compliance, joint ventures, M&A, governance, and board advisory. Michael is also an experienced company director within the energy sector.	
Reinhard Matisons Executive VP & Chief Marketing Officer	Senior executive with >35 years of commercial experience in the energy sector, notably with ~25 years at Woodside Petroleum, Australia's leading independent oil and gas company. Successfully led complex commercial negotiations on behalf of Woodside, Joint Ventures and other companies that underpinned multi-billion-dollar investment decisions	
Daniel Hunter VP Environment, Land and Government Relations	25+ years' experience in environmental project feasibility and planning for major infrastructure developments. Led multidisciplinary environmental assessment teams for Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, and Woodside on mine developments, ports, pipelines, and energy projects throughout Australia and internationally. Expertise in regulatory approvals, stakeholder engagement, Traditional Owner consultations, and environmental sustainability integration across project lifecycles. Critical role in securing land rights and navigating NT and Federal environmental and community approval processes for Project Ares.	
Dickie Dique Program Director	35+ years in construction and operations management across civil, building, and infrastructure projects. As COO at Decmil during its high-growth phase (2004-2011), led operations while the company transformed into a publicly-listed major contractor, overseeing subsidiary P&L integration and operational excellence. Later served as MD/CEO (2018-2022) managing critical investor and financial institution relations. At Pindan, grew remote division exponentially while maintaining margin discipline and establishing successful maintenance business. Dickie brings proven expertise in remote mega-scale project delivery, FIFO operations, and stakeholder management across 70+ civil and building projects.	

	Experience spans Sunraysia Solar Farm (255MW) and Yandin Wind Farm (214MW) among numerous major developments.	
Chris Ashton Commercial Manager	25+ years managing large-scale complex projects (\$5M-\$1B AUD) across oil and gas, resources, and infrastructure sectors. Extensive experience in pre-contracts planning, methodology execution, and project delivery. At Decmil (2008-2023), served multiple senior roles including Executive Manager Civil Construction with business unit turnover of \$150M p.a. and 400+ staff, delivering projects for major clients including BHP, Chevron Gorgon and Wheatstone LNG developments, and Woodside's Pluto project. Previously served as Civil Manager for Fluor/SKM Joint Venture on BHP's Rapid Growth Project 6 (RGP6), managing HSEC compliance, budget control, and contract administration. Earlier roles included Executive General Manager Operations at DTMT Construction (\$400M p.a. turnover, 700 staff) and General Manager Civil West at Forge Group and NRW Civil & Energy North Pte Ltd Project Ares RIC Business Case Page 9 of 45 Mining. Chris brings critical commercial structuring, contract negotiation, and project controls expertise essential for USD \$7.8B+ project execution.	
Vinojit Ambalavaner Executive Director	30+ years in project development, engineering, and commercial management across minerals processing, chemicals, and energy infrastructure. Led feasibility studies and project execution formajor clients including BHP, Vale, POSCO, Worley, and Yara. As Director Commercial at Yara Pilbara (Burrup Fertilisers), managed contractual and commercial operations for one of the world's largest single-train ammonia plants. Recently provided commercial leadership for Allied Green and DRA Global. Extensive experience in debt financing, offtake negotiations, EPC contract structuring, and managing Tier 1 contractors, critical capabilities for Project Ares' USD \$7.8B capital raising and commercial development.	
Esther Schwald Head of Corporate Services	25 years' cross-sector experience spanning resources, construction, government, social impact, education, IT and real estate - providing the multidisciplinary capability needed to drive a project of Ares' scale and complexity.	
FEED Engineering Panel	Energy North is establishing an engineering panel to deliver FEED through discrete work packages aligned to the project's PowerCo (renewable energy generation and infrastructure) and DataCo (hyperscale data centre) scopes. The panel approach enables Energy North to engage specialist expertise across each discipline. The tender package is currently being assembled by CHOVA, with panel members expected to be selected by Q2 2026. Energy North is engaging with leading global engineering firms with demonstrated experience in large-scale renewable energy, battery energy storage, and hyperscale data centre	

EcOz	EcOz, NT based environmental consultants, have been engaged to undertake environmental baseline studies and EIS activities associated with regulatory approvals under the EPBC Act and NT EPA Act. EcOz brings established relationships with NT regulatory agencies and extensive local baseline data, positioning Energy North for efficient approvals. EcOz were involved with Suncable's Australia-Asia PowerLink project (approximately 100km south of Project Ares) obtaining approvals from both the Commonwealth and NT governments which sets a significant precedent supporting Energy North's approvals pathway.	
Eco Logical	Eco Logical Australia (ELA) - a Tetra Tech company - has been engaged as Energy North's lead hydrogeological and water resource consultant. ELA has extensive experience in the NT, including providing technical hydrogeological advice directly to the NT Government and managing water resource assessments for the Beetaloo Sub-basin Baseline Water Studies. They are responsible for the detailed groundwater constraints assessment at Murranji Station and the technical reporting required to support the 4 GL/year Groundwater Extraction Licence (GWEL) application from the Montejinni Limestone Aquifer. Eco Logical's established relationships with the NT Water Resources Division and expertise in the Georgina-Wiso Basin's regulatory framework are critical for securing sustainable water supply for the project's construction and operational requirements.	
TG Public Affairs	Energy North has engaged TG Public Affairs to provide strategic government relations support. TG Public Affairs is facilitating engagement with Federal Government Ministers and key advisors, ensuring alignment with national priorities such as the FMIA policy and the National AI Plan. Their involvement is	

critical for positioning Project Ares as a sovereign capability asset and securing government support for the associated enabling infrastructure.

s 47G

State and Territory and/or Local Government Engagement and Support

Outline the engagement and support demonstrated by State and Territory and/or Local Government/s. Add more lines as required		
Name of the government and/or government department	Engagement conducted, being conducted and/or planned	Status and outcomes of engagement including issues and solutions
Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) – Flora and Fauna Branch	Energy North has had initial consultations with the Flora and Fauna Division of DLPE Executive Director and Development Coordinators) to review the current planning and decision-making process regarding site selection of required project infrastructure. This includes assessing potential impacts of significant fauna, including Greater Bilby.	Initial discussions with DEPWS have led to in principle agreement on the proposed infrastructure locations and the proposed mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on threatened species. Further discussions with DEPWS are planned in March 2026 to refine our survey approach for post-wet season targeted threatened species surveys. DEPWS flora and fauna department are supportive of our approach to mitigate impacts of significant species.
Department of Lands, Planning and Environment (DLPE) – Water Resources Division	Energy North is currently engaging with the DLPE Water Resources Division regarding water resource planning for Project Ares and requirements for the project's imminent groundwater extraction licence application.	Energy North is currently in the process of applying for a 4 GL/annum Groundwater Extraction Licence (GWEL) from the Montejinni Limestone Aquifer at Murrarji Station.
NT Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	Energy North frequently engages with NT EPA to provide updates on our project activities and to review and assess the overarching approvals pathway for the project, to ensure the project has both a compliant and efficient regulatory approvals pathway. Pre-referral meetings jointly with DCCEEW are planned in Q1, 2026.	NT EPA are aligned with Energy North's planning approach and agree in principle with the proposed approvals pathway, required studies and mitigation measures to reduce impacts on the environmental as much as practicable. Preparation of Referral documentation is currently in progress.
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)	Energy North has maintained regular engagement with DCCEEW since July 2025 regarding the EPBC Act referral pathway and assessment requirements for Project Ares. Pre-referral discussions have focused on the likely presence of MNES within the project area, including the Greater Bilby, and alignment of the NT EPA EIS process with Commonwealth assessment requirements.	Engagement is ongoing and constructive, with the most recent meeting held in November 2025. DCCEEW has provided guidance on referral documentation requirements and the anticipated assessment methodology. DCCEEW are also encouraging joint pre-referral and progress meetings with NT EPA and DLPE to promote a no surprises approach with regards to approvals.
Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR)	Energy North has identified DISR as a key Commonwealth stakeholder given Australia's signing of the Pax Silica Declaration in December 2025 and the department's role in coordinating Australia's critical minerals, AI, and critical technologies strategy. Engagement planned to explore alignment between Project Ares and Australia's Pax Silica commitments	Engagement scheduled for Q2 2026.

Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI, formerly DIPL)	Energy North has engaged with DLI regarding the Territory Energy Link (TEL) infrastructure corridor. The TEL is a planned multi-user corridor from Elliott to Darwin coordinated by DLI, which may provide a corridor for Project Ares' fibre optic and water pipeline infrastructure. Energy North's engagement includes a TEL update (November 2025) and ongoing discussions regarding the corridor's potential alignment with Project Ares infrastructure requirements.	Engagement is ongoing and constructive.
Department of Mining and Energy	Energy North maintains structured, ongoing engagement with the NT Government, led by the Department of Mining and Energy (DME), to support the development of Project Ares. This engagement includes regular senior level facilitation meetings, formal project briefings, and coordinated whole-of-government involvement across land, energy, water, planning and infrastructure agencies. DME has established a standing facilitation framework with Energy North to monitor progress, manage risks and dependencies, and support timely decision making, including progression of a Project Development Agreement (PDA). This engagement demonstrates strong Territory Government support and a collaborative approach to enabling nationally significant infrastructure aligned with Northern Australia development and energy transition priorities.	Engagement with DME is active and ongoing, with a regular facilitation cadence in place and clear action tracking. Key outcomes include formal recognition of Project Ares as a priority investment, coordinated briefing of relevant decision-makers, and facilitation of cross-agency engagement on approvals, water resources and Traditional Owner processes. Overall, engagement has progressed constructively, with issues addressed collaboratively and no material barriers identified to continued facilitation support.
AAPA (Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority)	Energy North has obtained an AAPA Abstract of Records Map for the Murrniji Station project area and are planning to have an initial meeting with AAPA regarding the Authority Certificate application process.	The Abstract of Records Map has been obtained and reviewed. No sacred site constraints have been identified to date that would preclude the proposed development footprint, however this will be confirmed through the formal Authority Certificate process. The Northern Land Council (NLC) will coordinate Traditional Owner engagement in support of the process, consistent with their representative role for relevant Native Title Groups. The Authority Certificate application is programmed to commence in Q2 2026, aligned with the EIS program and FEED timeline.
Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (DTBAR)	Project Ares provides a significant opportunity for the NT Government to strengthen international investment and trade relationships, particularly across Asia, in support of energy-intensive digital and clean-energy-enabled infrastructure. Energy North engages regularly with executives and the senior leadership team at the DTBAR on international market development and investment attraction.	Engagement with DTBAR is ongoing and constructive. DTBAR's trade facilitation capabilities and established networks across Asia-Pacific markets are expected to support the project's international investment and commercial engagement as it progresses toward FID.
Office of the Territory Coordinator (NT) (formally Invest Territory)	The Office of the Territory Coordinator is an independent statutory role established under the Territory Coordinator Act 2025 to champion transformative projects, streamline government approvals, and coordinate whole-of-government	Through the Office of the Territory Coordinator, Energy North has been connected with all relevant NT decision-making authorities for the project. Project Ares is recognised as a significant private

	support for significant private sector investment in the NT. Energy North has engaged with the Office of the Territory Coordinator since its establishment, building on more than two years of prior engagement with its predecessor body, Invest Territory. The Territory Coordinator provides strategic oversight and statutory championing of Project Ares as a significant private sector investment, with day-to-day project facilitation led by the Department of Mining and Energy (DME). Energy North maintains regular executive-level engagement with the Territory Coordinator.	sector investment aligned with the NT Economic Strategy 2025. The Territory Coordinator Act 2025 provides a statutory framework to identify and address legislative or regulatory barriers to significant private sector investment, including the ability to recommend adjustments to regulatory settings where existing frameworks do not efficiently accommodate projects of national significance. Energy North's engagement with the Territory Coordinator ensures that any regulatory gaps or inefficiencies identified through the approvals process can be escalated through established statutory channels.
Minister Gerard Maley (Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Mining and Energy)	Energy North has been engaged with Minister Maley since his appointment in 2025, maintaining regular communication through in-person meetings when visiting the NT and providing project updates via email.	Minister Maley is providing full support for Energy North's projects, as the NT Government recognises the potential of the project to deliver substantial social and economic benefits to the NT.
Minister Robyn Cahill (Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations; Minister for Workplace Development; Minister for Advanced Manufacturing)	Energy North has been engaged with Minister Cahill since her appointment in 2025, maintaining regular communication through in-person meetings when visiting the NT. and providing project updates via email.	Minister Cahill is providing full support for Energy North's projects, as the NT Government recognises the potential of the project to enhance trade relations in Asia, and deliver substantial social and economic benefits to the NT.
Minister Steven Edgington (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development; Minister for Essential Services; Minister for Health; Minister for Mental Health; Minister for Alcohol Policy; and Member for Barkly)	Energy North has been engaged with Minister Edgington since his appointment in 2025, maintaining regular communication through in-person meetings when visiting the NT and providing project updates via email.	Minister Edgington is positive and supportive of Energy North's Project Ares, as the NT Government recognises the project's potential to deliver substantial social and economic benefits to the Barkly region and the wider Territory, including regional employment, population stability and long-term economic development. Project Ares represents a transformational investment for Barkly in particular, supporting improved service delivery, enabling infrastructure outcomes, and driving sustained regional growth aligned with the Minister's portfolio responsibilities and his role as Member for Barkly.
Minister Josh Burgoyne (Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment; Minister for Corporate and Digital Development; Minister for Water Resources)	Energy North has been engaged with Minister Burgoyne since his appointment in 2025, maintaining regular communication through in-person meetings when visiting the NT and providing project updates via email.	Minister Burgoyne has expressed strong support for Energy North's Project Ares, recognising the project's potential to deliver substantial economic development while ensuring responsible land use, environmental stewardship and sustainable water management. Project Ares aligns closely with Minister Burgoyne's portfolios for Lands, Planning and Environment, Water Resources and Corporate and Digital Development, representing a major, digitally enabled investment that can be progressed through structured planning and approvals pathways while supporting the Territory's

		digital economy objectives and long-term resource management priorities.
Minister Tim Ayres (Minister for Industry and Innovation and Minister for Science)	Energy North has written to the Minister to introduce the project, and engagement is progressing through the Commonwealth Major Project Status application process.	Project Ares is relevant to Minister Ayres given its scale, innovation content and contribution to Australia's sovereign digital and clean energy-enabled industrial capability.
Assistant Minister Andrew Charlton (Cabinet Secretary and Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy)	Direct engagement has occurred through a briefing with the Assistant Minister's office and correspondence focused on Project Ares' relevance to AI infrastructure, digital sovereignty and regional deployment of hyperscale capacity.	The Assistant Minister's Office has been directly briefed on 12 February 2026. Engagement focused on positioning Australia to capture hyperscale investment through quality and capability. Strategic timing aligns with accelerating hyperscaler location decisions and National AI Plan implementation requirements for domestic sovereign compute capability.
Minister Catherine King (Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government)	Energy North has been engaged with the Minister's office since 2025, initially in relation to Project Sol and now extending to Project Ares.	Minister King's office has been updated on Project Ares through engagement with Luke Gosling MP, Special Envoy for Northern Australia. A dedicated briefing on Project Ares is being scheduled with the Minister's office, with engagement focused on the project's regional development significance, enabling infrastructure requirements, and alignment with Northern Australia investment priorities.
Luke Gosling MP Special Envoy for Northern Australia	Ongoing engagement face-to-face and through his electorate office	Luke Gosling MP has expressed strong support for Energy North's Project Ares, with ongoing engagement positioning the project as a major Northern Australia investment aligned with AI infrastructure, energy security and regional employment priorities. Outcomes include advocacy and the escalation of Project Ares' strategic relevance within Commonwealth discussions. Any issues relating to national coordination are being managed through targeted ministerial briefings and referrals. Project Ares is relevant to Mr Gosling's role as Special Envoy of Northern Australia given its potential to deliver large-scale capital investment, high-quality regional employment and strategically significant digital and energy infrastructure that strengthens Northern Australia's long-term economic and strategic position.
Mayor Sid Vashist (Mayor of Barkly Regional Council)	Initial in person meeting planned for March 2026.	Engagement with Mayor Sid Vashist is planned with an initial meeting scheduled for March 2026 following the re-establishment of elected Barkly Regional Council governance. Project Ares is recognised as a significant regional economic opportunity, with early awareness of its scale, workforce implications and infrastructure requirements. Any local service or community interface issues will be managed through early dialogue and

		information sharing. Project Ares is relevant to the Mayor given its potential to drive employment, infrastructure investment and long-term economic stability across the Barkly region.
Industry Capability Network (ICN)	Initial engagement conducted in January 2025.	ICN was briefed on Project Sol in January 2025. A comprehensive Project Ares briefing will be provided in Q2 2026 to align local industry participation planning with FEED commencement and Territory Benefit Plan development.
National Reconstruction Fund (NRF)	Energy North has been engaged with the Chairman, CEO and CIO of NRF since 2025.	The NRF is supportive of Energy North, with engagement underway and a meeting being scheduled to discuss potential debt funding for Project Ares at FID, reflecting alignment with the NRF's mandate for nationally significant industrial and technology infrastructure.
Export Finance Australia (EFA)	Energy North has been engaged with EFA since 2025	EFA is supportive of Energy North, with engagement underway regarding potential financing for Project Ares at FID, reflecting alignment with EFA's mandate to support large scale energy and infrastructure projects that deliver Australian benefit and strengthen economic resilience.
Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)	Energy North has been engaged with NAIF since 2025	NAIF is supportive of Energy North, with engagement underway regarding potential financing for Project Ares at FID, reflecting alignment with NAIF's mandate to support large scale infrastructure that drives long term economic development in Northern Australia.
ARENA	Energy North has been engaged with ARENA since 2024.	Recent engagement with ARENA confirmed no current grant programs applicable to Project Ares; engagement will be maintained and ARENA monitored for any future FMIA-allocated funding relevant to AI-enabled clean-energy infrastructure.
National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)	Energy North has identified NIAA as a key Commonwealth stakeholder given the project's significant Aboriginal employment, training, and economic participation objectives. Engagement planned to explore alignment with Indigenous Advancement Strategy programs and Closing the Gap priorities.	Engagement scheduled for Q2 2026, aligned with on-country Traditional Owner consultation and Territory Benefit Plan development.

Evidence of any stakeholder support for the Project.

Energy North has undertaken extensive engagement with NT Government ministerial offices and departments over the past two years in relation to Project Sol, and more recently, Project Ares. Full records of stakeholder consultation and engagement outcomes will be submitted as the project advances through regulatory approval processes and formal consultation phases.

Preliminary assessments indicate that Project Ares is likely to receive broad community support, given its strong alignment with the NT's economic development priorities, environmental sustainability objectives, and strategic policy frameworks including the Digital Territory Strategy and NT Economic Strategy 2025. In a region characterised by limited industrial diversification and elevated unemployment levels, the project is expected to deliver substantial benefits, including employment during construction (peak workforce of 4,400), ~200-300 permanent operational positions, vocational training opportunities, and downstream economic activity supporting data centre operations and digital economy growth, with potential for long-term regional transformation.

From an environmental standpoint, Project Ares is consistent with both public and governmental commitments to decarbonisation and renewable energy development. By delivering a 500MW hyperscale data centre powered by 99% renewable energy, the project will provide critical digital infrastructure for AI and machine learning applications while supporting Australia's transition to clean energy. The project utilises minimal gas backup (<2% annual generation) and sources water sustainably from the Montejinni Limestone Aquifer, representing less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield of 210 GL/year, directly addressing community concerns over metropolitan data centre water usage.

Furthermore, Project Ares offers significant potential for collaboration and benefit-sharing with Aboriginal communities, particularly the Mudburra and Djingili peoples (Traditional Owners at Murrarji Station via the Northern Land Council). Energy North has commenced consultation with the Northern Land Council, with Traditional Owner workshops planned for Q2 2026 after the wet season. These opportunities include employment, skills development, Indigenous contracting participation under Territory Benefit Policy requirements, and long-term economic participation, aligning with principles of inclusive and sustainable development.

Importantly, Project Ares is expected to meet the regulatory expectations of both Commonwealth and NT Governments through careful planning and adoption of best-practice standards aimed at avoiding, reducing, and mitigating impacts on receiving environments. Energy North has undertaken pre-referral engagement with NT EPA and Commonwealth DCCEW regarding assessment pathways and mitigation approaches supporting a structured and efficient approvals process. In addition, the project will be underpinned by respectful and meaningful consultation with affected communities, with feedback actively integrated into project planning and design through all regulatory phases.

Outline the nature of any stakeholder resistance to the Project, as is relevant, and any mitigation strategies to address concerns.

Project Ares is expected to attract significant community interest and support. Given the scale of economic and employment benefits it will deliver to the Barkly region, including substantial opportunities for Aboriginal employment, skills development, local business participation, and economic participation in an emerging digital and AI infrastructure sector. However, a project of this scale in a remote location is also anticipated to raise community and stakeholder concerns, which Energy North will address through transparent planning, meaningful consultation, robust risk management, and adoption of best-practice environmental and social management standards.

Water Resource Management

A key concern relates to sustainable water use for data centre cooling operations in a region where water security is a strategic priority. Community and regulatory stakeholders may raise concerns regarding groundwater extraction impacts on the aquifer and broader environment. Project Ares requires ~4 GL per annum from the Montejinni Limestone Aquifer, representing less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield of ~210 GL/year (Georgina Wiso Water Allocation Plan 2023-2031). Energy North is currently applying for a 4 GL/annum Groundwater Extraction Licence (GWEL) and has engaged Eco Logical Australia (a Tetra Tech company) to conduct comprehensive hydrogeological assessments confirming aquifer capacity to sustainably support all project phases.

Water management will be guided by international best-practice standards for hyperscale data centres, including:

- Advanced liquid cooling and closed-loop technology to minimise groundwater draw and optimise Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE)
- Hydrogeological modelling demonstrating usage represents less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield
- Continuous groundwater monitoring to ensure long-term aquifer integrity
- Adaptive management responsive to monitoring outcomes
- Alignment with Territory Water Plan priorities for sustainable water supply supporting data centre infrastructure

Independent verification by Eco Logical Australia and ongoing engagement with the DLPE Water Resources Division demonstrates the project's commitment to ESG-aligned and sustainable water resource management.

Energy Infrastructure and Grid Independence

While Project Ares operates off-grid with 99% renewable energy generation (1,500 MWp solar PV, 8 GWh battery storage, and minimal gas backup <2%), concerns may arise regarding energy reliability for critical AI computing infrastructure. The project addresses these concerns through:

- Oversized solar generation with 8 GWh BESS providing extended firming capacity

- 600MW gas backup for rare multi-day weather events
- Gas supply through proximate NT pipeline infrastructure with 30+ days on-site storage Integrated system engineered to ensure uninterrupted power supply to hyperscale operations. This integrated approach provides hyperscale-grade reliability while maintaining the project's commitment to clean energy and minimal fossil fuel dependency.

Environmental Impacts on Threatened Species

At Murrarji Station, where renewable energy generation and data centre infrastructure will be located, vegetation clearing of approximately 895 hectares will be required in an area known to support threatened species, particularly the Greater Bilby (*Macrotis lagotis*). Environmental groups may raise concerns regarding potential biodiversity impacts from habitat clearing. In collaboration with the DLPE Flora and Fauna Division and EcOz Environmental Consulting (NT's longest established, locally-owned environmental consultancy), Energy North has completed a preliminary likelihood-of-occurrence assessment and identified the Greater Bilby as the primary species of concern.

Targeted field surveys will be undertaken by locally engaged environmental specialists to confirm species presence and activity. Existing survey data and assessments by EcOz indicate that areas to the east of the Adelaide to Darwin railway - proposed for solar, battery storage, and data centre infrastructure - are less likely to support active Greater Bilby populations.

Energy North is working closely with Greater Bilby specialists, DLPE, and the DCCEEW to develop and implement a suite of mitigation measures aimed at avoiding significant impacts on Greater Bilby habitat. These measures may include:

- Conducting targeted surveys to identify burrows and areas of activity, using the results to inform project siting in low-use or low-quality habitat areas;
- Incorporating exclusion zones for active burrow areas identified during surveys, with avoided areas protected from all construction and operational activities;
- Undertaking pre-clearing surveys prior to any vegetation removal in potential Greater Bilby habitat;
- Avoiding known active burrows by a minimum buffer distance of 50 metres;
- Restricting vehicle movement between sunset and sunrise within identified Greater Bilby habitat (except on formed roads with cleared verges and enforced speed limits of ≤ 25 km/h);
- Developing contingency protocols for relocation or translocation in coordination with regulators if an active burrow cannot be avoided; and
- An offset strategy to protect or enhance Greater Bilby habitat outside the project footprint, potentially including fire management, weed control, removal of cattle, and predator management, to be developed in consultation with DCCEEW and DLPE. Energy North is also exploring opportunities to support Greater Bilby conservation research, subject to survey outcomes and extent of impact. Both DEPWS and DCCEEW have expressed preliminary support for Energy North's site selection rationale and the proposed management measures to avoid and mitigate impacts on the Greater Bilby. Both agencies have indicated in-principle agreement with the proposed regulatory pathway and mitigation approach. Energy North will continue to liaise closely with both departments throughout the environmental assessment process and will adapt mitigation measures as necessary, based on the outcomes of further surveys, stakeholder input, and regulatory feedback.

Land Tenure Conversion

A concern for the Territory Government is ensuring the conversion of pastoral lease to a Crown Lease (Industrial use) complies with the Native Title Act. Energy North has prioritised the ILUA negotiation with the Northern Land Council (NLC) to run in parallel with the lease conversion application, ensuring Traditional Owner consent is secured before final tenure is granted.

Infrastructure Corridor and Land Access

The Territory Energy Link (TEL) corridor, a planned multi-user infrastructure corridor from Elliott to Darwin coordinated by the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI), may provide a corridor for Project Ares' fibre optic and water pipeline infrastructure. Energy North is engaging with DLI regarding the corridor's potential alignment with the project's infrastructure requirements. Project planning and operational activities will be coordinated with the TEL project to ensure regulatory alignment and efficient infrastructure delivery

Community Engagement and Support

Outline the stakeholder engagement conducted and/or being conducted regarding the Project. Add more lines as required

Stakeholder Name	Engagement conducted, being conducted and/or planned	Status and outcomes of engagement including issues and solutions
s 47G new landholder of Murrarji Station	Energy North has a long-standing and well-established relationship with s 47G built through successful collaboration on previous project work in WA. This foundation provides confidence in continued engagement and alignment on project development at Murrarji Station.	s 47G is positive and highly supportive of the project, with communication and engagement between the parties continuing on a regular and ongoing basis.
s 47G – Previous landholder of Murrarji Station	Energy North has undertaken extensive consultation with s 47G over the last 2 years which has led to an exclusive Call Option Deed to purchase 895km ² of land within the station for the project. s 47G is no longer a stakeholder for the project.	s 47G were always highly supportive of Energy North's project and Energy North subsequently executed a Call Option Deed which allows Energy North to enter and assess the land during Pre-FEED and FEED phases, as well as to purchase ~895km ² of land within the property at FID.
Hidden Valley Station	Initial in-person meetings have been conducted. Ongoing consultation will continue as the project advances. Hidden Valley Station has also been consulted with regards to Energy North's imminent groundwater extraction licence application.	Initial feedback from representatives of Hidden Valley Station have been positive. Key issues and concerns raised include fire management associated with infrastructure and drawdown impacts as a result of future groundwater extraction. These matters will be thoroughly assessed and mitigated as the project progresses.
Buchanan Downs Station	In person meetings are proposed following the wet season in relation to Energy North's imminent groundwater extraction licence application and more broadly to obtain feedback on the project and discuss any potential interface with station operations.	TBC
Sturt Plains Station	In person meetings are proposed following the wet season in relation to Energy North's imminent groundwater extraction licence application and more broadly to obtain feedback on the project.	TBC
Dungowan Station	In person meetings are proposed following the wet season in relation to Energy North's imminent groundwater extraction licence application and more broadly to obtain feedback on the project.	TBC
Hayfield Station	In person meetings are proposed following the wet season in relation to Energy North's imminent groundwater extraction licence application and more broadly to obtain feedback on the project.	TBC
Local communities in Elliott	On-ground community engagement activities are planned in Q2 2026. Several public information sessions will be held in Elliott to coincide with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) public consultation phase.	Planned for Q2 2026 (Dry Season).
NT Indigenous Business Network (NTIBN)	Consultation planned regarding Aboriginal business participation and procurement opportunities for Project Ares, aligned with Territory Benefit Plan development.	Engagement scheduled for Q2 2026.

Environment Centre of the NT (ECNT)	In person meetings are proposed to coincide with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) public consultation phase.	TBC
Arid Lands Environment	In person meetings are proposed to coincide with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) public consultation phase.	TBC
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	In-person meetings have been conducted to discuss collaboration opportunities including on-ground spatial data capture at Murrnaji Station using drone technology to support the collection of environmental baseline studies.	Future meetings with CDU are planned to identify potential opportunities for project collaboration.
NT Cattlemen's Association	In person meetings are proposed to coincide with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS) public consultation phase and pastoral land configuration approvals.	TBC

Outline the nature of any stakeholder support for the Project.

Energy North has received positive and supportive responses from stakeholders engaged to date. The current landholder of Murrnaji Station is highly supportive and engaged on an ongoing basis. The previous landholder, s 47G, was similarly supportive, resulting in the execution of a Call Option Deed providing Energy North with land access during Pre-FEED and FEED and the right to purchase the project area at FID. Initial engagement with Hidden Valley Station has been positive, with fire management and groundwater drawdown identified as matters to be addressed through the EIS process. Neighbouring pastoral stations will be engaged in Q2 2026 following the wet season.

Energy North has commenced engagement with the Northern Land Council (NLC) regarding Native Title and Traditional Owner consultation for the project, with Traditional Owner workshops planned for Q2 2026.

Community engagement activities are planned for Elliott in Q2 2026, including public information sessions aligned with the EIS public consultation phase. Environmental stakeholders including the Environment Centre of the NT and Arid Lands Environment Centre will be engaged during the same period.

Energy North has received strong support from the NT Government, with engagement across multiple ministerial portfolios and departments as detailed in the Government Engagement section. At the Commonwealth level, Energy North has received positive engagement from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility, Export Finance Australia, and Clean Energy Finance Corporation regarding potential financing at FID.

Commercial interest from multiple Tier 1 hyperscalers and international data centre developers, s 47G, provides strong market validation for the project.

Outline the nature of any stakeholder resistance to the Project, as is relevant, and any mitigation strategies to address concerns.

Neighbouring pastoral station, Hidden Valley Station, has raised concerns regarding fire risks associated with high-voltage electrical infrastructure and battery energy storage systems in a savannah landscape prone to seasonal fires. Energy North is developing a comprehensive Bushfire Management Plan incorporating extensive fire breaks around all electrical infrastructure and data centre facilities, vegetation management protocols, and on-site firefighting capabilities including water storage, firefighting equipment, and trained emergency response personnel. These fire safety measures form part of the project's capital works program and will be developed in consultation with Bushfires NT and Emergency Services and neighbouring landholders to ensure coordinated fire management across the region.

On-ground community consultation will commence in Q2 2026, including with relevant Traditional Owners, aligned with the EIS public consultation phase. Additional stakeholder concerns may be identified through this process and will be addressed through the project's environmental and social management frameworks. Anticipated areas of community interest include, but are not limited to:

- Impact on pastoral land use and cattle operations during construction and operations
- Groundwater drawdown effects on neighbouring bores and stock water supplies
- Increased traffic and heavy vehicle movements on local roads during construction
- Airstrip operations including flight paths and potential impacts on neighbouring aerial mustering activities
- Accommodation and housing pressure in Elliott and Tennant Creek from construction workforce

- Protection of sacred sites and culturally significant areas within the project footprint, if identified
- Access to country for cultural purposes during construction and operations
- Opportunities for local and Aboriginal employment, training, local business participation, and equitable economic participation for Traditional Owners
- Long-term benefits to the Barkly region including population growth and service delivery improvements

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Engagement and Support

Describe the engagement conducted or being conducted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples regarding the Project. Include the relevant Traditional Owner Groups of the Project site. Add more lines as required

Traditional Owner Group	Engagement conducted or being conducted	Status of engagement
Northern Land Council (NLC)	Energy North has established a working relationship with the NLC to facilitate Traditional Owner consultation for Project Ares. Multiple meetings have been held to discuss the project scope, ILUA requirements, and the proposed engagement approach. The NLC is currently identifying the affected and relevant Traditional Owners and groups in line with the proposed development footprint.	Engagement is positive and ongoing. The NLC has advised that Traditional Owners in the region are supportive of large-scale sustainable energy projects that bring real tangible benefits to Traditional Owners and their communities. The NLC will coordinate up-coming on-country engagement activities and ILUA discussions with Traditional Owners.
Traditional Owners	On-country workshops to be facilitated by the NLC, scheduled for Q2 2026 following the wet season. Workshops will cover project overview, ILUA terms, employment and training opportunities, sacred site processes, and Traditional Owner input into project planning.	The NLC is in the process of confirming the relevant Native Title holders and affected parties for the project area. ILUA workshops on country are scheduled for Q2 2026. These workshops are a critical milestone in securing Traditional Owner consent and progressing the land tenure conversion required for the project. Energy North recognises the ILUA process is on the critical path to FID and has allocated sufficient time for meaningful consultation. The ILUA will include benefit-sharing arrangements covering employment pathways, training opportunities, and Aboriginal business participation in project supply chains. All project personnel will complete cultural awareness training prior to commencing work on site, developed in consultation with Traditional Owners.

Outline any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and Traditional Owner Group support for the Project.

Engagement with the Northern Land Council (NLC) has been positive, with advice that Traditional Owners in the region are generally supportive of large-scale sustainable energy projects that provide genuine economic participation opportunities. Energy North is committed to meaningful consultation aligned with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles, and has formalised this commitment through a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The NLC is in the process of confirming the relevant Native Title holders and affected parties for the project area. On-country workshops are scheduled for Q2 2026 following the wet season, covering project overview, ILUA terms, employment and training opportunities, sacred site processes, and Traditional Owner input into project planning. Energy North recognises the ILUA process is on the critical path to FID and has allocated sufficient time for meaningful consultation and agreement. The ILUA will include

benefit-sharing arrangements to ensure Traditional Owners receive equitable and lasting economic benefit from the project, including employment pathways, training opportunities, and Aboriginal business participation in project supply chains	
Outline any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and Traditional Owner Group resistance to the Project, as is relevant, and any mitigation strategies to address concerns. No Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or Traditional Owner group resistance to Project Ares has been identified to date. The NLC has advised that Traditional Owners in the region are generally supportive of large-scale sustainable energy projects that provide genuine economic participation opportunities. - On-country engagement with Traditional Owners will commence in Q2 2026 following the wet season. Through this process, anticipated areas of Traditional Owner interest include, but are not limited to: - Protection of sacred sites and culturally significant areas within the project footprint, if identified - Access to country for cultural purposes during construction and operations - Equitable employment, training, and economic participation opportunities for Traditional Owners and their communities - Aboriginal business participation in project supply chains - Environmental impacts on water, land, and biodiversity of cultural significance - Adequacy of benefit-sharing arrangements under the ILUA Energy North will address these matters through the NLC-facilitated consultation process, the ILUA negotiation, and the AAPA Authority Certificate process, ensuring Traditional Owner concerns are identified early and integrated into project planning and design	
Are you Engaging with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)? <i>For answers other than Yes or No, outline the status →</i>	☐ Yes – provide details of NIAA representative you’re engaging with No ☒ In progress Status: Energy North has identified NIAA as a key Commonwealth stakeholder given the project’s significant Aboriginal employment, training, and economic participation objectives. Energy North will commence engagement with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) in Q2 2026 to explore alignment with Indigenous Advancement Strategy programs and Closing the Gap priorities, aligned with on-country Traditional Owner consultation and Territory Benefit Plan development.
Do you have a Native Title Determination/s for your Project? <i>For answers other than Yes or Not applicable outline the status →</i>	☒ Yes # DCD2007/002 # _____ # _____ ☐ No ☐ In progress ☐ Not commenced ☐ Not applicable. Status: The native title determination for Murranji Station was made on 26 September 2007, known as the “Newcastle Waters – Murranji Determination” (non-exclusive). Energy North will trigger the “future acts” process, and an ILUA will be developed and negotiated with the relevant Native Title holders, in close liaison with the NLC.
Do you have an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) for your Project? <i>For answers other than Yes or Not applicable, outline the status →</i>	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In progress ☐ Not commenced ☐ Not applicable. Status: Energy North is engaging with NLC to progress the ILUA for the project. On-country workshops with relevant Native Title holders are scheduled for Q2 2026, facilitated by the NLC. The ILUA is expected to address matters including land access, benefit-sharing arrangements, employment and training pathways, Aboriginal business participation, and cultural heritage management. Energy North recognises the ILUA is on the critical path to FID and has allocated sufficient time within the project schedule for meaningful negotiation and agreement.

Project Risk Identification and Mitigation Strategies

Insert Project risk analysis, including risk identification and mitigation measures associated with the Project. For example, these could include operational, financial, reputational etc.	
Key Risk Identified	Mitigation Measures including timeframe/s
Timeliness of regulatory approvals and addressing community concerns	Through careful site selection, the Data Centre and solar infrastructure will be located on pastoral land (Murrarji Station), helping to reduce the complexity of environmental approvals. To mitigate risks related to community concern - including those of Traditional Owners - Energy North will undertake inclusive and transparent engagement to secure Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), establish Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) with relevant Traditional Owners through the Northern Land Council, and conduct robust cultural and environmental assessments.
Changing policy landscape - Data Sovereignty and AI Regulation	To effectively manage risks associated with the rapidly evolving landscape of Data Sovereignty, Cybersecurity, and AI regulation, Energy North will establish strong, ongoing engagement with Commonwealth agencies. The project directly aligns with the Future Made in Australia and National AI Plan priorities. Legal and regulatory risks will be mitigated by engaging external advisors with expertise in data privacy, cyber security (SOC2 Act compliance), and energy regulation. Key commercial contracts - including Hyperscale Service Agreements - will include change-of-law provisions. Energy North will also diversify market exposure by securing offtake agreements with buyers across multiple jurisdictions (e.g., Singapore, Japan, US Hyperscalers) to hedge against region-specific policy changes.
Traditional Owner Engagement - Negotiations with multiple groups	To ensure an efficient consultation process with relevant Traditional Owners and the Northern Land Council (NLC), Energy North will undertake early and proactive engagement respecting adequate timeframes and cultural protocols. Energy North plan to engage experienced Indigenous engagement and Native Title law specialists to facilitate effective communication and support the development and negotiation of an ILUA. Additionally, Energy North will work collaboratively with Traditional Owners to co-design cultural heritage assessments and management plans, ensuring cultural integrity and regulatory compliance.
Identifying and securing sustainable water sources for cooling	To mitigate risks associated with water for Data Centre cooling, Energy North will adopt an integrated approach. Comprehensive hydrogeological assessments will ensure groundwater yields from the Montejinni Limestone Aquifer within the Georgina-Wiso Basin are sustainable. Energy North has commenced consultation with the DLPE Water Resources Division, regarding the water licencing pathway and requirements for the imminent groundwater extraction licence application. This aligns with the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan 2023-2031, which indicates an estimated sustainable yield of 210 GL/year, of which Project Ares' 4 GL/year requirement represents less than 2%. Furthermore, Energy North will implement closed-loop cooling systems and advanced liquid cooling technology to minimise water consumption, ensuring alignment with Territory Water Plan priorities and overall good water stewardship.
High Capital and Operational Costs	Energy North will adopt a phased development model (starting with Phase 1 500MW) to align infrastructure deployment with customer demand and incremental capital deployment. Modular design principles will be applied to the Data Centre and BESS to allow cost-effective expansion. Energy North is engaging with strategic partners and government agencies to access competitive financing and export credit guarantees. Operational efficiency will be driven by automation, AI-driven cooling optimisation (lowering PUE), and predictive maintenance. Long-term procurement agreements for solar panels, batteries, and key infrastructure components will help mitigate supply chain price volatility.
Skilled Labour Shortages	Energy North's mitigation strategy addresses the specific shortage of specialised data centre technicians and high-voltage engineers in the NT. This includes forming partnerships with Charles Darwin University (CDU) and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education to deliver targeted training in digital infrastructure, renewable energy operations, and trade qualifications for First Nations participants.

	Building local talent is essential; Energy North will offer scholarships for STEM qualifications and promote the NT's lifestyle to attract workers. International recruitment will leverage Australia's Global Talent Visa and skilled migration pathways to bring in experienced data centre professionals. In the short term, FIFO arrangements will be used for construction, while automation and remote monitoring (DCIM systems) will optimise operational labour efficiency.
Logistics and Remote Location	The remote location poses logistical challenges for delivering large-scale infrastructure. Energy North has mitigated this by strategically positioning the site at Murrarji Station, which sits directly on the Adelaide-to-Darwin railway and the Stuart Highway. This facilitates efficient unloading of heavy equipment (transformers, pre-fab modules). Energy North is also engaging with the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure (DLI) regarding planned road upgrades in the Barkly region to ensure the project's transport requirements are factored into regional infrastructure planning.
Supply chain risks / Global demand for equipment	High global demand for BESS and gas turbines creates lead-time risks. Delays in procuring these critical components could impact the First Power milestone. Energy North will mitigate this by securing long-term procurement agreements for high-demand items early in the FEED phase and engaging with multiple qualified suppliers to maintain competitive tension and reduce single-source dependency.
Technical Risks - Reliability and Cooling Efficiency	Data Centre Reliability / Firm Power requirement: Risk of downtime impacting Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The facility is designed to Tier III / Tier IV standards with redundant power and cooling paths (N+1 or 2N redundancy), and minimal gas backup for extended firming. Heat Management: Risk of cooling system underperformance / failure in high ambient temperatures. Design will utilise advanced cooling systems specifically designed for arid conditions, integrated with thermal storage buffers to handle peak heat loads. Cyber Security: Risk of data breaches. Implementation of physical security zones and compliance with the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 (SOCi), including vetted personnel and sovereign data controls.
Financial / Funding	s 47(1)(b)
Anchor Tenant and Counterparty Risk	
Geopolitical and Foreign Investment Risk	Project Ares involves significant international capital and commercial partnerships across multiple jurisdictions. Geopolitical shifts, changes to foreign investment policy, or evolving national security frameworks may impact investor appetite or impose additional compliance requirements. Energy North will mitigate this through early FIRB engagement, compliance with the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 (SOCi), and diversification of capital and commercial partners across multiple jurisdictions to reduce concentration risk.

Climate and Natural Disaster Risk	The project's location in the Barkly region exposes infrastructure to extreme heat events, bushfire, and seasonal flooding over a 25-year operating life. Energy North will mitigate this through climate-resilient design standards, including infrastructure rated for projected future climate conditions, comprehensive Bushfire Management Plans developed in consultation with Bushfires NT, and stormwater and drainage engineering designed for extreme rainfall events. Insurance and design requirements will be informed by climate risk assessments undertaken during FEED
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Declaration

- I declare all the information provided in this Application Form for Major Project Status (MPS), is true and accurate at the time of submission.
- I understand that giving false or misleading information may impact the progression of the application for MPS and may result in the application being paused or cancelled at any time.
- I have undertaken any required due diligence in collating and submitting this information to the Major Projects Facilitation Agency, and have verified and highlighted any information, including any attached documentation as sensitive and/or commercial in confidence etc.
- I confirm all relevant people of the project (management, board, executives, consultants etc) are fit and proper to conduct a major project of this nature.
- I confirm I have read and understood the privacy information located at the top of this form.
- *If submitting on behalf of the Proponent;* I confirm I have obtained approval from the Proponent's CEO (or equivalent) prior to submitting this Application Form.

Name: Daniel Hunter

Position: Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

Sig

Date: 20/2/2026

Supporting documentation

Project Information checklist:

Have you provided the following:

- ☐ Attachment **A:** Map/s of project site/sites indicating approx. project location/s
- ☐ Attachment **B:** Pre-feasibility or feasibility study
- ☐ Attachment **C:** Major Projects Help Tool results documenting Australian Government approvals required for the project to proceed.
- ☐ Attachment **D:** Current financial statements (preferably audited) to demonstrate the company's capacity to fund and develop the project.
- ☐ Attachment **E:** Company structure diagram of the company responsible for the development of the Project

Reference List

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World Bank Group. (n.d.). Global Solar Atlas 2.0: Solar resource data [Data set]. Solargis. <https://globalsolaratlas.info>



**SENATOR THE HON TIM AYRES
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION
MINISTER FOR SCIENCE**

MC26-000236

Mr Scott Criddle
Director and Founder
Energy North Pty Ltd
Level 3 (A16), Suite 3
435 Roberts Road
SUBIACO WA 6008

scott.criddle@energynorth.com.au

Dear Mr Criddle

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 January 2026 regarding Energy North's Project Sol and Project Ares. I appreciate the time you have taken to provide this update and your continued engagement as you progress the implementation of these projects.

I understand the Major Projects Facilitation Agency has been in contact with you regarding your request for an expedited consideration of Project Ares for Major Project Status. While eligibility requirements must still be confirmed, it is encouraging to hear that some of the recent information and assessment materials for Project Sol may be able to support an accelerated assessment of the application for Project Ares.

I look forward to learning more about Project Ares and gaining a deeper understanding how it may contribute to the Australian economy.

Yours sincerely

TIM AYRES
/ /2026



Ministerial Submission

MS26-000164

FOR ACTION – Major Project Facilitation Agency - Major Project Status Approvals April 2026

TO: Minister for Industry and Innovation; Minister for Science

TIMING

Routine

Recommendation

- That you **approve** Major Project Status for:
 - Energy North Pty Ltd – Project Ares (see Attachment A).

Approved / Not approved

s 22

- That you **sign and date** the letters to approved proponents, relevant Commonwealth Ministers and State Premier (see Attachment D).

Signed / Not signed

Signature

Date: / /2026

KEY POINTS

- The department recommends awarding Major Project Status (MPS) to 3 projects that have been assessed as meeting the publicly available criteria for Major Project Status. To be eligible for MPS, a project must:
 - Be of strategic significance to Australia with capital investment exceeding A\$50 million.
 - Face complex regulatory approvals under Commonwealth Government legislation.
 - Demonstrate sufficient financial resources and be commercially viable.
- As Minister for Industry and Innovation, you hold portfolio responsibility for the Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) and are the decision-maker for awarding MPS, following MPFA assessment against eligibility criteria and consultation across government and with relevant state and territory governments.
- The MPFA operates as a facilitation support service without enabling legislation or ministerial guidelines. It was established to meet private-sector demand for assistance navigating regulatory approvals and to provide a single-entry point to Government. MPS provides eligible proponents with tailored regulatory facilitation services to help navigate government approvals. Awarding MPS signals the Government's in-principal support for a project but does not guarantee regulatory approval or commercial success.
- The MPFA is continuing to work with Prime Minister and Cabinet and Treasury on potential options to consolidate regulatory facilitation functions across the Commonwealth as part of current budget processes. The department recommends that you maintain a business as usual approach and continue to assess applications for Major Project Status to meet business expectations. In the event of any decisions and machinery of government changes, these will still likely involve transitional arrangements.

Energy North – Project Ares (new MPS application)

- Energy North proposes to develop Project Ares, a data centre project co-located with Project Sol at Murranji Station, Northern Territory. Project Sol, a large-scale green ammonia project, was awarded MPS on 14 November 2025. While complementary, each project is subject to independent regulatory assessments and will maintain its own commercial structure, capital raising, and offtake arrangement.
- Project Ares aims to deliver digital services, cloud and AI compute capacity. Phase 1 of the project is a 500 MW data centre powered by integrated renewable energy with the potential to expand to 1GW in Phase 2. Project Ares aims to create 4,400 construction jobs and up to 300 direct jobs with a CAPEX of A\$11.9 billion.

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s 47C

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NEXT STEPS

- Subject to your decision, draft letters at Attachment D notify successful project proponents of the award of MPS, as well as relevant Commonwealth Ministers, State Premiers and Chief Ministers, of your decision.
- If you choose not to award MPS, the MPFA can provide the project proponent with more limited support through its general services offering, which provides short-term assistance to proponents of projects over \$20 million to help them engage with regulators to resolve individual issues.

CONSULTATION

- Critical Minerals Office, Home Affairs, Attorney General, Environment and Water, Infrastructure, Technology & Digital Policy and Treasury.

Clearance Officer

John Krbalski

General Manager

Procurement Strategy & Project Facilitation Branch

s 22

Clearance Date: 15/04/2026

Contact Officer

s 22

Manager

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

s 22

ATTACHMENTS

A: Assessment: Energy North Pty Ltd - Project Ares

s 22

D: Letters to proponents, Federal Ministers, State Premiers and NT Chief Minister



MPFA Monthly Report

2 March 2026

s 22

MPFA Service Status

Awaiting Ministers Decision	
s 22	
Applications under Assessment	
MS26-000164 - MPS April Approvals Brief	s 22, Energy North, s 22
s 22	
Active Leads	
s 22	
Current Number of MPS Projects	Upcoming MPS Renewals
s	
2	



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Science and Resources

MPFA Monthly Report

31 March 2026

s 22

MPFA Service Status

Awaiting Ministers Decision

s 22

Applications under Assessment

MS28-000164 - MPS April Approvals Brief

s 22

Energy North

s 22

Active Leads

s 22

Current Number of MPS Projects

Upcoming MPS Renewals

s 22

Monthly Engagement Summary

s 22

s 22

s 22

20 Mar 2026	Energy North	s 22 /Project Ares	s 22 Energy Norths MPS application for Project Ares (currently with the minister's office for consideration) will lay the foundations for the progression of s 22
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s 22

From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: s 22
Subject: Energy North -Project Sol &Project Ares Update - March 2026
Date: Friday, 20 March 2026 12:39:29 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[MPFA update March 20206.pdf](#)

CAUTION - This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi s 22

Thanks again for catching up earlier.

As promised, please see slide deck attached FYI.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Have a nice weekend.

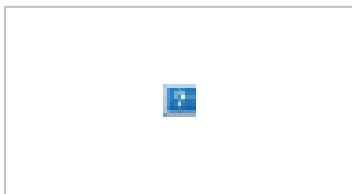
Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

W. www.energy-north.com



We only have one planet - please think of the environment before you print this email.

Energy North respectfully acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Owners / Custodians throughout Australia and pays its respects to Elders, children and young people of past, current and future generations.

This e-mail and any attachments are confidential and may contain legally privileged information and/or copyright material. It is intended solely for the addressee(s). Access to this e-mail and any attachments by anyone else is unauthorised. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, may be prohibited and unlawful.

From: s 22
To: s 22
Subject: FW: Major Project Status Approvals - April [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 1:53:48 PM
Attachments: [image004.jpg](#)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 1:48 PM
To: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Cc: Krbaleski, John <John.Krbaleski@industry.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Major Project Status Approvals - April [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s 22

s47(1)(b), s 47C

Thanks,

s 22

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: s 22 @finance.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 12:31 PM
To: s 22 @finance.gov.au>
Cc: s 22 @finance.gov.au>; s 22 @finance.gov.au>; s 22 @finance.gov.au>; s 22 @finance.gov.au>; s 22 @finance.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Major Project Status Approvals - April [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi s 22

Thanks for sharing these, we have consulted internally with Commercial.

s 47C, s47(1)(b)

s 47C, s47(1)(b)

s 22

Thanks

s 22

s 22

Industry and Science AAU | Budget Group
Department of Finance

s 22

From: s 22 <s22@finance.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 17 April 2026 2:55 PM
To: s 22 <s22@finance.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Major Project Status Approvals - April [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL:Sensitive

Hello

Would appreciate any feedback by next Wednesday.

Kind regards



s 22

Office of Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Minister for Finance
Minister for Women
Minister for the Public Service
Minister for Government Services
Senator for the ACT

s 22 @finance.gov.au

s 22

From: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 17 April 2026 2:53 PM
To: s 22 @dfat.gov.au>; s 22 @dfat.gov.au; s 22
@treasury.gov.au>; s 22 @dfat.gov.au; s 22
@dcceew.gov.au>; s 22
@homeaffairs.gov.au>; s 22 @dcceew.gov.au>;
s 22 @industry.gov.au>; s 22 @pm.gov.au>; s 22
@finance.gov.au>
Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Subject: Major Project Status Approvals - April [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi all,

DISR recommends that the Minister grant Major Project Status to the following projects.
All three are new applications.

- Project Ares – data centre (Energy North Pty Ltd), Northern Territory

s 22

Details attached, please let me know any issues by **EOD Wednesday 22 April**.

Thanks,

s 22

s 22

Office of Senator the Hon Tim Ayres
Minister for Industry and Innovation
Minister for Science
Senator for NSW

s 22

[@industry.gov.au](mailto:industry.gov.au)

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From: MPFA
To: s 22
Cc: s 22
Subject: Major Projects Facilitation Agency - Major Project Status application - Project Ares, Energy North [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Monday, 2 March 2026 5:02:59 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Dear AI Infrastructure team,

The Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) is seeking your agency/department's high-level input on an application by **Energy North** for Major Project Status (MPS) for **Project Ares**.

MPS is granted by the Minister for Industry and Innovation and recognises projects of national strategic significance that may involve complex Australian Government regulatory interactions. Your agency/department has been identified as potentially having regulatory responsibilities, policy interests or strategic relevance in relation to this project.

Your input will assist the MPFA in preparing its assessment and recommendation to the Minister, including identifying any high-level regulatory, strategic or reputational considerations. Responses are sought at a high level only, based on current policy and typical experience. This information will be used for early consideration purposes and does not constitute formal advice, assessment, or a commitment by your agency.

Project Summary: Energy North aims to develop Project Ares, a hyperscale data centre development to be co-located with Project Sol at Murrarji Station. The project will deliver a fully integrated turnkey solution, encompassing power generation infrastructure, cooling systems, and data centre facilities. The first stage delivers 500MW of firm renewable power, with room to grow to 5GW+ as demand increases. While Project Ares will be co-located with Project Sol, each project will be subject to independent regulatory assessment and has its own commercial structure, capital raising, and offtake arrangements.

Phase 1 includes:

- 1,500 MWp of solar with modern tracking and bifacial panels
- 8 GWh of battery storage to keep the system stable
- 600 MW of minimal gas backup to guarantee reliability
- Modular Tier III data halls for staged build-out
- s 47(1)(b) in advanced cooling and MEP systems

The project will roll out in stages, starting with 500MW (~USD \$7.8B) and then growing to 1GW (~USD \$14B), with the site designed to support future expansion beyond 5GW. This phased approach lets the project scale as demand increases while putting in place the essential energy and connectivity infrastructure needed for the Territory to play a long-term role in the global digital economy. Because the project is behind-the-meter, it doesn't compete with local homes or businesses for electricity. Water use is also minimal—less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield of 210 GL/year—which avoids the sustainability barriers that usually limit large data centres in urban areas.

Location: The project will be co-located with Project Sol at Murrarji Station, NT.

Proponent Website: <https://energynorth.com.au/project-ares/>

Request for agency input

To inform the MPFA's assessment and recommendation, your agency's high-level input is requested on the matters below:

Information Requested	Agency Comments
1. Regulatory relevance / interaction	
Please identify any legislation, regulatory frameworks, policies,	

programs or initiatives administered by your agency/department that may be relevant to this project. Does the project trigger, or have the potential to trigger, approvals, assessments, reporting requirements, funding, compliance activities, or other interactions with your agency/department?	
2. Strategic alignment and reputational sensitivities	
How does the project align with the strategic objectives, priorities or responsibilities of your agency/department? Are there any policies, initiatives, programs or sensitivities that the Minister should be aware of?	
3. Indicative timeframe	
If there is an approval required from the proponent from you, can you provide indicative timelines from submission to decision?	
4. Contact details	
Preferred contact point (team/role) and mailbox/portal link for MPFA internal use only.	

We would appreciate your response within **10 business days** to MPFA@industry.gov.au.

Should the project be awarded MPS, your agency/department may be invited to participate in subsequent coordination activities, including regulator roundtables.

Please treat this correspondence and any attachments as confidential and for official use only.

Kind regards,

s 22

Senior Project Officer

Whole of Industry Division

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

s 22

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

s 22

@industry.gov.au

| industry.gov.au ABN 74 599 608 295

Supporting economic growth and job creation for all Australians | We are collaborative, innovative, respectful and strive for excellence



Acknowledgement of Country

Our department recognises the First Peoples of this Nation and their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters, seas, skies, and communities.

We Acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians and Lore Keepers of the oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations Peoples.

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: MPFA
To: s 22 @homeaffairs.gov.au
Cc: s 22
Subject: Major Projects Facilitation Agency - Major Project Status application - Project Ares, Energy North [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Monday, 2 March 2026 5:03:16 PM
Attachments: image001.png

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Dear Home Affairs,

The Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) is seeking your agency/department's high-level input on an application by **Energy North** for Major Project Status (MPS) for **Project Ares**.

MPS is granted by the Minister for Industry and Innovation and recognises projects of national strategic significance that may involve complex Australian Government regulatory interactions. Your agency/department has been identified as potentially having regulatory responsibilities, policy interests or strategic relevance in relation to this project.

Your input will assist the MPFA in preparing its assessment and recommendation to the Minister, including identifying any high-level regulatory, strategic or reputational considerations. Responses are sought at a high level only, based on current policy and typical experience. This information will be used for early consideration purposes and does not constitute formal advice, assessment, or a commitment by your agency.

Project Summary: Energy North aims to develop Project Ares, a hyperscale data centre development to be co-located with Project Sol at Murrarji Station. The project will deliver a fully integrated turnkey solution, encompassing power generation infrastructure, cooling systems, and data centre facilities. The first stage delivers 500MW of firm renewable power, with room to grow to 5GW+ as demand increases. While Project Ares will be co-located with Project Sol, each project will be subject to independent regulatory assessment and has its own commercial structure, capital raising, and offtake arrangements.

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- 600 MW of minimal gas backup to guarantee reliability
- Modular Tier III data halls for staged build-out
- s 47(1)(b) in advanced cooling and MEP systems

The project will roll out in stages, starting with 500MW (~USD \$7.8B) and then growing to 1GW (~USD \$14B), with the site designed to support future expansion beyond 5GW. This phased approach lets the project scale as demand increases while putting in place the essential energy and connectivity infrastructure needed for the Territory to play a long-term role in the global digital economy. Because the project is behind-the-meter, it doesn't compete with local homes or businesses for electricity. Water use is also minimal—less than 2% of the Georgina-Wiso Water Allocation Plan's estimated sustainable yield of 210 GL/year—which avoids the sustainability barriers that usually limit large data centres in urban areas.

Location: The project will be co-located with Project Sol at Murrarji Station, NT.

Proponent Website: <https://energynorth.com.au/project-ares/>

Request for agency input

To inform the MPFA's assessment and recommendation, your agency's high-level input is requested on the matters below:

Information Requested	Agency Comments
1. Regulatory relevance / interaction	
Please identify any legislation, regulatory frameworks, policies,	

programs or initiatives administered by your agency/department that may be relevant to this project. Does the project trigger, or have the potential to trigger, approvals, assessments, reporting requirements, funding, compliance activities, or other interactions with your agency/department?	
2. Strategic alignment and reputational sensitivities	
How does the project align with the strategic objectives, priorities or responsibilities of your agency/department? Are there any policies, initiatives, programs or sensitivities that the Minister should be aware of?	
3. Indicative timeframe	
If there is an approval required from the proponent from you, can you provide indicative timelines from submission to decision?	
4. Contact details	
Preferred contact point (team/role) and mailbox/portal link for MPFA internal use only.	

We would appreciate your response within **10 business days** to MPFA@industry.gov.au.

Should the project be awarded MPS, your agency/department may be invited to participate in subsequent coordination activities, including regulator roundtables.

Please treat this correspondence and any attachments as confidential and for official use only.

Kind regards,

s 22

Senior Project Officer

Whole of Industry Division

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

s 22

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

s 22

@industry.gov.au

| industry.gov.au ABN 74 599 608 295

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Acknowledgement of Country

Our department recognises the First Peoples of this Nation and their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters, seas, skies, and communities.

We Acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians and Lore Keepers of the oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations Peoples.

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: [MPFA](#)
To: s 22
Cc: s 22
Subject: RE: : Major Projects Facilitation Agency - Major Project Status application - Project Ares, Energy North [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]
Date: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 2:08:38 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.png](#)

PROTECTED//CABINET

Hi s 22

Thank you for providing AI Infrastructure’s comments against the consultation request for Project Ares. The information provided will remain confidential and used for internal purposes only to carry out an assessment for Major Project Status.

Kind regards,
s 22

PROTECTED//CABINET

From: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2026 11:51 AM
To: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>; s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au>; s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: : Major Projects Facilitation Agency - Major Project Status application - Project Ares, Energy North [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]

PROTECTED//CABINET

Hi s 22

We provide this input under confidential conditions, and at a higher classification.

Thanks for engaging us in preparing your assessment. We will be in touch as our related work develops, as explained below.

Information Requested	Agency Comments
1. Regulatory relevance / interaction	
Please identify any legislation, regulatory frameworks, policies, programs or initiatives administered by your agency/department that may be relevant to this project. Does the project trigger, or have the potential	No regulatory items triggered. When released, the Data centre Expectations will help define if Project Ares’ development is alignment with Australia’s

to trigger, approvals, assessments, reporting requirements, funding, compliance activities, or other interactions with your agency/department?	overall national interests. We will reach out with an updated assessment when released. The Expectations are to be released late March/early April, subject to Ministerial decision making [please protect].
2. Strategic alignment and reputational sensitivities	
How does the project align with the strategic objectives, priorities or responsibilities of your agency/department? Are there any policies, initiatives, programs or sensitivities that the Minister should be aware of?	This project shows potential to align with the National AI Plan's <i>Action 1: Build smart AI Infrastructure</i>. s47(1)(b)
3. Indicative timeframe	
If there is an approval required from the proponent from you, can you provide indicative timelines from submission to decision?	N/A

4. Contact details	
Preferred contact point (team/role) and mailbox/portal link for MPFA internal use only.	s 22 @industry.gov.au

Kind regards,
If using assistive software, my message ends here. Email signature below.

s 22
Assistant Manager
AI Infrastructure | AI Policy | Technology and Digital Policy Division
Gadigal Country, Darling Park Sydney, GPO Box 2013 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia
Department of Industry, Science and Resources
s 22 [@industry.gov.au](#)



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PROTECTED//CABINET

Duplicate of Document 16

From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: [s 22](#); [Esther Schwald](#); [Scott Criddle](#)
Subject: MPS Project Application - Project Ares
Date: Friday, 20 February 2026 4:17:16 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[MPS Project Application Project Ares FINAL 200226.pdf](#)

CAUTION - This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear [s 22](#)

Please find Energy North's MPS application for Project Ares attached.

We will send through some supporting attachments on Monday.

In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions or require any more information.

Have a great weekend.

Kind regards,

Dan

Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

[s 47F](#)

W. www.energynorth.com.au

[s 47F](#)

08

Logo ☐ ☐ Description automatically generated



From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: [s 22](#) ; [Esther Schwald](#); [Scott Criddle](#)
Subject: RE: MPS Project Application - Project Ares
Date: Monday, 23 February 2026 1:46:18 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[MPS Project Application Project Ares FINAL 23022026 Rev 2.pdf](#)

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Hi [s 22](#)

We have just realised there was some missing information in Financial Metrics section on page 29. It appears that some of the details were accidentally deleted when updating the document last week.

I have attached the corrected document, where missing details have been restored. My apologies for this.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

[s 47F](#)

[W. www.energynorth.com.au](#)
[s 47F](#)

Logo ☐ ☐ Description automatically generated



Duplicate of Document 19

Duplicate of Document 19

From: [MPFA](#)
To: [Daniel Hunter](#)
Cc: s 22
Subject: MPS Application - Proj Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Wednesday, 4 February 2026 3:27:17 PM
Attachments: [MPS Application - Proj Ares.docx](#)
[2024-06-20 GUIDELINES - MPS Guidelines for proponents PDF.pdf](#)
[image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL

Hi Daniel,

Just letting you know that I have received notification from Minister Ayres re your letter for Project Ares expedited MPS application. The MPFA have discussed this internally and Energy North will still be required to complete a MPS application form. I have gone through the application and have semi-populated relevant information; Energy North will need to fact check the information already populated in the application and address any gaps that are highlighted.

The MPFA are looking to send the MPS brief to the Minister in March, if you could please action at your earliest convenience, that will support the MPFA to submit to the minister for MPS consideration in March.

Please find enclosed guidance information and a MPS application form for the project to be fully completed and submitted to the MPFA through the mailbox MPFA@industry.gov.au. I have additionally linked the [Major Projects Help Tool](#) which may assist you in gathering some general information regarding which Commonwealth regulators may be relevant to the project. The [Major Project Status eligibility criteria](#) will need to be addressed in your application.

Kind regards,

s 22

Senior Project Officer

Whole of Industry Division

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

s 22

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

s 22

@industry.gov.au

[| industry.gov.au](https://industry.gov.au) ABN 74 599 608 295

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oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations Peoples.

OFFICIAL



MAJOR PROJECT STATUS – GUIDELINES FOR PROPONENTS

The **Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA)** was established to encourage and facilitate major project investment for Australia. The MPFA provides tailored facilitation, referral and information services designed to help proponents navigate their Australian Government approval pathway, support proponents to develop their projects and improve the likelihood of success.

Major projects with a capital investment over \$50 million that are facing complex Australian Government regulatory challenges may be eligible to apply for **Major Project Status (MPS)**. MPS is generally awarded for a period of three years to support a project through its development phase.

The award of MPS is a discretionary decision of the Minister for Industry and Science (the Minister), for projects of national significance that contribute to:

- Government strategic priorities
- Economic growth
- Employment and education
- Development for regional and northern Australia.

Projects that have been awarded MPS align with Australian Government's strategic priorities and initiatives, including (but not limited to):

- National Reconstruction Fund
- Powering Australia
- Supply Chain Resilience
- Critical Minerals
- Regional Australia and Northern Australia development.

If a project with a capital investment over \$20 million is deemed unsuitable for MPS because it does not meet the MPS eligibility criteria, then the project proponent may request support via MPFA's **general services**. General services provide targeted support to address a specific Commonwealth regulatory challenge. For example, the MPFA can engage with regulators if the proponent is experiencing difficulty finding the appropriate channel, and/ or provide guidance to locate information on relevant policies and regulatory approvals required for their project.

MPS project proponents will be required to meet the requirements of relevant Australian or state/territory regulatory processes. Also, MPS does not imply Australian Government endorsement, recommendation or guarantee commercial success for the project.

Benefits and services provided to projects granted MPS

If MPS is awarded, project proponents are offered the following benefits and services:

1. A dedicated case manager to provide tailored facilitation services to support the progression of regulatory approvals and improve the proponent's familiarity with Australian Government agencies and programs. MPFA's services may include:
 - a) Advice and information on regulatory approvals as administered under Australian Government legislation;
 - b) The development of a project engagement plan that maps the project's approvals pathway and strategic approach to engaging with relevant regulators;
 - c) Facilitation of relationships between the proponent and key federal, state and territory government agencies and Australian Government regulators;
 - d) The ability to identify and respond to specific Australian government regulatory impediments or policy issues encountered during the approvals process or during project development;



Major Projects Facilitation Agency

- e) If deemed appropriate, a roundtable meeting may also be held for proponents. This will include representatives from relevant Australian regulatory agencies and policy leads, and representatives from state and territory governments as relevant to the project; and
 - f) Providing information on various Australian Government assistance programs.
2. A letter from the Minister for Industry and Science endorsing MPS for the project.
- a) The Minister will also write to relevant Ministerial colleagues, and the relevant State Premier or Territory Chief Minister, to encourage cooperation and advice on behalf of their governments and agencies.
 - b) At the discretion of the Minister, an Australian Government media release announcing the award of MPS and inclusion on the MPFA website. The Minister will determine the timing on announcement. If the proponent believes the announcement is market sensitive this needs to be discussed in advance with the MPFA on application.

Project Eligibility

For a project to be eligible to apply for MPS, the project must:

- exceed \$50m in capital investment;
- have a completed pre-feasibility study; and
- have successfully obtained necessary licence/s i.e not be subject to a competitive licencing decision.

The project must also meet all three (3) of the following criteria.

Criterion 1

The project is of strategic significance to Australia and must demonstrate:

- a) National or regional significance to Australia; and
Your Project must align with the Australian governments' strategic priorities and significantly contribute to economic growth, industry development, innovation, exports, employment and upskilling, or have an economic benefit to regional Australia, considering a region's investment needs
- b) An estimated capital investment that exceeds A\$50 million.

The objective of this Criterion is to determine the benefits of the Project to the economy or region.

MPFA assesses projects that are strategically important and nationally significant to the Australian economy. Generally, projects that are awarded MPS are supporting new and emerging industries, building sovereign capability, and/or contributing towards supply chain resilience.

To satisfy this criterion, the proponent must be able to:

- Demonstrate national and/or regional strategic significance
 - Describe how the project is significant in terms of regional development, industry development, contribution to economic and social outcomes, its alignment with Australian Government and, state or territory government priorities and initiatives. [Appendix A](#) to this document outlines what is considered 'strategic significance'.
 - Outline:
 - any new or improved innovative processes, products or technologies the project will implement or develop;
 - how the project supports commercial markets and contribution to supply chains both domestic and internationally (import and export); and
 - flow-on effects the project may offer and/or how it impacts other industries and sectors, including building or enhancing sovereign capability or other social/economic benefits.



Major Projects Facilitation Agency

- Describe and substantiate employment outcomes for various phases of the project. Examples include employment modelling/projections, or studies/analysis to support direct and indirect jobs to the region.
 - Include any programs or educational pathways in collaboration with education institutions the project will support or initiate.
 - Outline any identified skills shortages, and any related strategies to support skills development.
- Provide documentary evidence (such as a prefeasibility study) of the project capital expenditure. The value of land and capitalised lease payments are excluded from the total capital expenditure of the project.

Criterion 2

The project is challenged by complex regulatory approvals administered under Australian Government legislation in order to proceed/progress the project.

The objective of this criterion is to identify the extent to which MPS services will be of value to the Project.

The MPFA assists project proponents identify Australian Government regulatory approvals that may apply to the project. For example, *some* of these approvals can be identified through the online [Major Project Help Tool](#) and [Fact Sheets for regulatory approvals](#) available on [MPFA's website](#) hosted on Business.gov.au. Project approvals at the state and/or territory level can be supported through their respective government and facilitation services.

Generally, projects awarded MPS are challenged by complex regulatory approvals whereby;

- a) government regulatory frameworks and/or policies do not yet exist, are still in development, have not yet been applied to projects, or are not yet mature; and/or
- b) may consist of multiple cross-jurisdictional approvals i.e.:
 - the project spans more than one state or territory in addition to requiring Australian Government approvals;
 - the project spans international jurisdictions and has complex Australian Government approval requirements or policy considerations; and/or
- c) the project has regulatory approvals with conflicting requirements;

To satisfy this criterion, the proponent will be required to:

- Identify any foreseen challenges in government policy or regulatory frameworks where the project will require assistance from the MPFA.
- Outline the development approvals expected for the project at the Australian, state/territory and local levels. Detail the current status of these approvals, and any issues, barriers, delays or sensitivities.
- Outline engagement with Australian, state/territory and local government agencies to date, including details of approvals obtained.

Criterion 3

The Project and Proponent have sufficient financial resources to complete the Australian Government approval(s) process and there is demonstration of reasonable commercial viability.

The objective of this Criterion is to ascertain the likelihood of the project to progress through its approval process

To satisfy this criterion the Proponent must show evidence of adequate funding and associated support for the project. Projects awarded MPS must have sufficient financial support to complete the Australian Government approval process, through to financial investment decision (FID). As an example, the MPFA may seek further clarification on the following matters:



Major Projects Facilitation Agency

Commercial and financial viability

Demonstrate the extent of financial support for the project. The project must exhibit sufficient financial capability to (at least) carry it through the government approvals process. Evidence to support this criterion may include:

- Audited financial statements to demonstrate the company's capacity to fund Australian Government approval(s).
- Identify any major investors and partnerships (domestic and foreign) involved in the project/company and outline their relationships to both the proponent, and to the project.
- Outline the investment strategy for the project (e.g. direct investment, private placement, debt and equity investment and Initial Public Offering).
- Evidence of engagement with Australian Government funding agencies and/or grant programs where relevant.
- Outline any binding or non-binding offtake arrangements, letters of intent, supply contracts, expressions of interest, or memorandums of understanding.
- Evidence of end-markets and the drivers of demand, financial metrics, associated assumptions and calculations and market forecast.
- Key milestones for the project (achieved and forecast), activities, key components and processes for the project, and product outputs.

Company structure and management including technical capability

- Outline the company structure including relationship to parent and daughter companies.
- Provide the major shareholders/partners and their percentage of ownership, including any foreign investment or ownership in the company and/or in the project.
- Outline any strategic partners involved the project and the nature of the partnerships.
- Biographies for key management and decision makers for the project including Board members (if any)
- Outline any employees or consultants engaged to provide expert technical advice for the project development and operations including undertaking of expert research and studies to support the project.
- Include specific examples where the above identified person(s), consultants and/or contractors have previously delivered on similar projects.

Stakeholder engagement

- Provide evidence of any support from state/territory government, local government, community support (i.e. letters of support, outcomes from EIS engagement or other evidence that demonstrates broad community support).
- Detail the engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Traditional Owners, specialty groups and communities. The potential and proposed approach for local industry participation in the project.

Land and infrastructure

- the proposed location and site for the project, including:
 - ownership and title arrangements of the land/site;
 - the status of the acquisition of the land/site application with the relevant state/territory government;
 - the local government area in which the site is located; and
 - any (including potential) Native Title Determinations on the site, Indigenous Land Use Agreements, overall engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, Traditional Owners and Groups;
- potential to use existing infrastructure at the site and whether additional infrastructure is required (i.e. road, rail, port, power, water, gas);



Lodging an application

The application process involves:

1. The proponent contacts the MPFA seeking to apply for MPS.
2. A meeting with a representative of the MPFA is arranged to discuss the project, its alignment with the MPS eligibility criteria and project readiness to apply.
 - a. If you can demonstrate your project is relevant to the eligibility criteria, you will be provided an application form, associated guidelines and assigned an MPFA case manager.
 - b. If you are unable to demonstrate relevance to the eligibility criteria, you will be informed in writing and may be asked to provide additional information.
3. After receiving an application, the MPFA case manager is available to support the project proponent to complete and submit the form.
4. Within 5 business days of receipt, the MPFA will review the application for completeness and will notify the proponent of its acceptance for assessment.
5. A formal assessment of eligibility will be undertaken.
 - a. If you are deemed eligible, the MPFA will undertake a due diligence check and contact relevant regulators or agencies for their comments and sensitivities about the project. This will take up to 40 business days.
 - b. If your application is deemed not be eligible, the MPFA will inform you in writing as to why your application has not met the eligibility criteria.
6. For eligible applications, the MPFA will collate and assess the information and prepare a Ministerial Brief to support the Minister's determination in granting MPS. This step will take up to 10 business days.
7. The Minister will review the application assessment and determine whether to award MPS.
 - a. If the Minister awards MPS for the project, the proponent will be notified in writing along with relevant federal ministers including state/territory ministers.
 - b. If the proponent is not awarded MPS, the MPFA may be able to provide general services and assist the proponent with specific regulatory challenges.
8. Once MPS has been awarded, the proponent **must not** make any public announcement until advised by the MPFA. **The Minister reserves the first opportunity to make any media release awarding MPS decisions.** Your case manager will be in contact to commence your MPS service.

How we handle your information

The MPFA is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in the [Privacy Act 1988](#), which regulates how agencies collect, use, disclose and store personal information, including sensitive information, and how individuals may access and correct records containing their personal information.

Personal information you provide will be collected by the MPFA to carry out its functions including to communicate with you about your application, and to conduct due diligence and consultation on your application with other government agencies and regulators. Your information may also be used to invite participation in opportunities to contribute to the development of Australian Government policy or regulation as relevant to your project, and to notify you of other government programs and services opportunities.

Freedom of Information

All documents held by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources (the department), including those submitted as a part of this report may become the subject of a request under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public the right to obtain access to documents held by the Australian Government, subject to limited exceptions and exemptions. For example, where it is necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons to whom the information relates.



Major Projects Facilitation Agency

Prior to making a decision to release a document under the FOI Act that contains your personal information or your organisation's business information, you will generally be provided with a reasonable opportunity to make submissions about whether an exemption applies to that material. If you make a submission, and a decision is made that does not reflect your submission, you will be given notice and an opportunity to seek a review of the decision before releasing the document. For more information on third party review rights, please visit: <https://www.oaic.gov.au/freedom-of-information/freedom-of-information-guidance-for-government-agencies/freedom-of-information-reviews/personal-and-business-information-third-party-review-rights>.

Confidential Information

MPFA will treat the information provided as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the following conditions:

- the proponent clearly identifies the information as confidential;
- the information is commercially sensitive;
- disclosing the information would cause unreasonable harm to the proponent or someone else; and
- the proponent provides the information on the understanding that it will stay confidential.

To help assess MPS applications and deliver services to the proponent effectively, the MPFA may disclose confidential information to:

- the Australian government employees and contractors;
- other Australian or State or Territory government departments and agencies;
- the responsible Minister or Assistant Minister;
- members of a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament; or
- organisations with the proponent's express consent.

The MPFA may also disclose confidential information in circumstances where:

- required or authorised by law to disclose it;
- the proponent agrees to the information being disclosed; or
- someone other than the MPFA has made the confidential information public.

To discuss confidentiality further, please contact the MPFA at MPFA@industry.gov.au

Appendix A | Characteristics of a Strategic Significant Project

Under Criterion 1, proponents must demonstrate the project's strategic significance to Australia. A list of characteristics to help address this criterion are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list. It is strongly encouraged that proponents clearly outline the benefits of their project to Australia when addressing Criterion 1.

Characteristics of a strategically significant project must include one the following, (inclusive of a detailed description how it aligns, pointing to specific associated Government policies or strategies);

- Aligns with the wider context of significant government policy, targets or initiatives.
- Aligns with broader strategic goals of government for developing the region/sector.

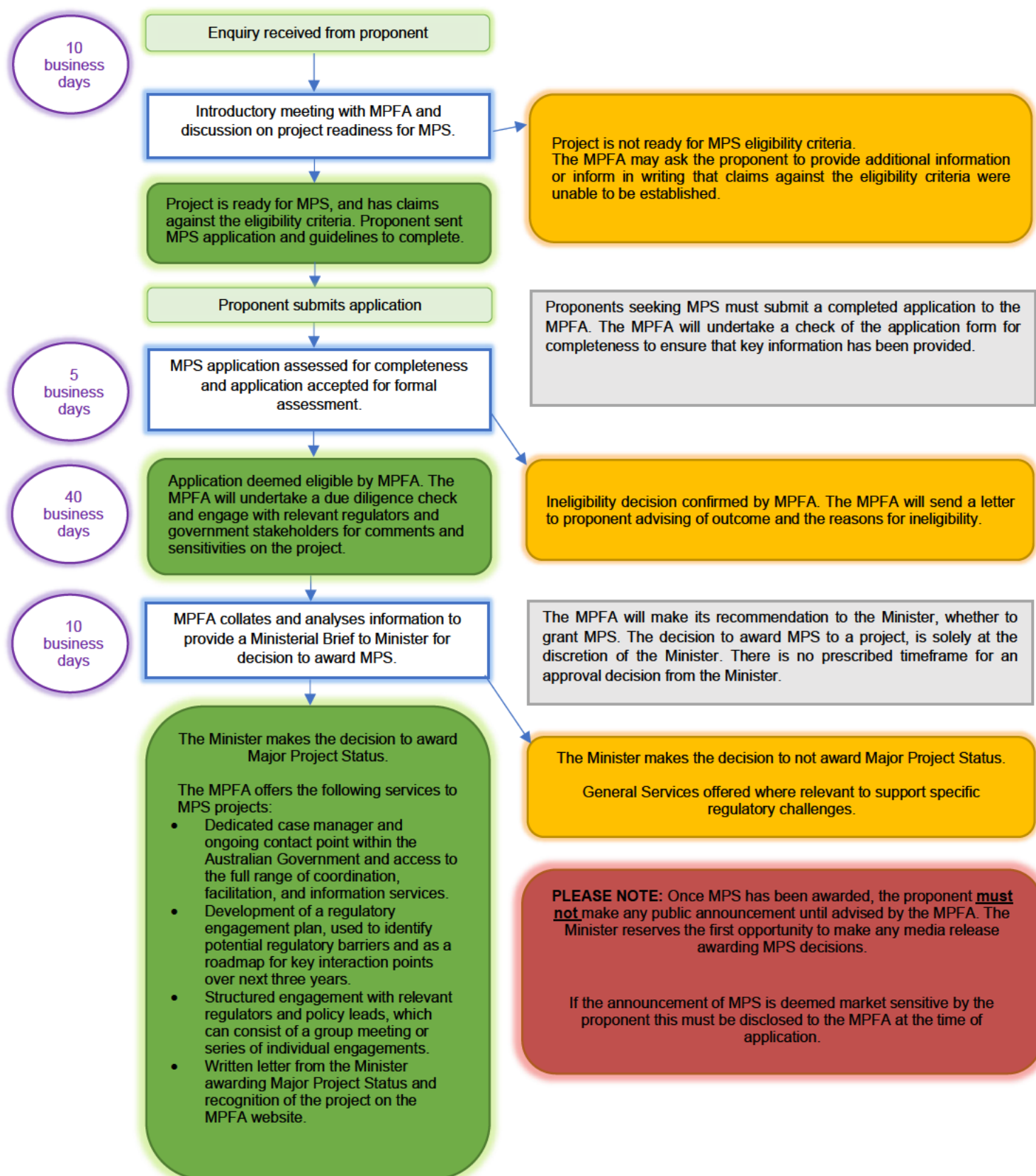
Strategically significant projects may also;

- Employs a high number of people in both the construction and operation phases of the project over a long period of time.
- Materially improves upon national productivity, and/or the productivity of the region.
- Generates revenue for governments through royalties and taxation.
- Contributes to the growth of an industry or product recognised as important to Australia's competitive advantage.
- Improves Australia's competitiveness through development of new technology, skills, processes or improvement of existing technology, skills or processes.
- Contributes to the development of northern Australia*.
- Located in a rural or regional area with the potential to contribute to the local and Indigenous communities through direct/indirect jobs, training of local/Indigenous workforce, use of locally based/Indigenous services and supplies, flow on benefits to local/Indigenous businesses and organisations.
- Investment in infrastructure with the capacity or potential to serve multiple users and that would improve access to services and facilities and improve social outcomes.
- Consistent with the relevant state or territory government and local council strategic policy objectives.
- Employs environmentally conscious methods or technologies above and beyond those required by legislation, such as in the areas of greenhouse gas emissions, recycling, waste management, heritage impacts, energy production and use, and water use.
- Links with other projects to assist in the development of the supply chain and required infrastructure.
- Comprises notable attributes that differentiate the project from similar projects either existing or in development.
- Addresses a current or future market/supply gap, including an analysis of the inability of similar existing or planned projects to address the identified gap.

** The definition of northern Australia includes all of the Northern Territory, and those parts of Queensland and Western Australia above the Tropic of Capricorn.*

Appendix B | Major Project Status process

Refer to the above MPS eligibility criteria, the following flowchart outlines the process for a proponent MPS application. Refer to the MPFA [online tool](#) and [factsheets](#) to determine which Australian Government approvals may apply to the project.



From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: [s 22](#) ; [Esther Schwald](#)
Subject: RE: MPS Application - Proj Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Wednesday, 4 February 2026 4:04:18 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

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Hi [s 22](#)

Thanks for your email and understood.

We will get onto this as a priority, and thanks so much for the effort you put into pre-populating the application with the information you had.

Could you please let us know if there is any possibility of sending the Minister's briefing pack earlier than March, perhaps within the next 2 weeks? We should be able to get the completed application to you by end of next week.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

[s 47F](#)

[s 47F](#)

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Duplicate of Document 21

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From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: [Esther Schwald](#); s 22
Subject: RE: MPS Application - Proj Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 6 February 2026 12:33:54 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

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H s 22

No problems and understood.

We are working on the application now and aiming to send to you next week.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

W. www.energynorth.com.au
s 47F

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From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 6 February 2026 9:38 AM
To: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Cc: Esther Schwald s 47F s 22
@industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: MPS Application - Proj Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Dan,

I have discussed the possibility of submitting the MPS brief before March, unfortunately, there are due processes we must comply with briefs going up to the minister's office. The February briefs have gone up this week, so we must wait until March for the next bundle of briefs to go up. We are also carrying out an expedited consultation and assessment process, the normal assessment time is 50 days. The earliest you can complete and send me the MPS application to me, the earlier I can start undertaking the assessment and get it completed to make the March briefs.

Happy to have a chat if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

Kind regards,

s 22

OFFICIAL

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Duplicate of Document 21

s 22

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

s 22

@industry.gov.au

| industry.gov.au ABN 74 599 608 295

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From: [MPFA](#)
To: [Daniel Hunter](#)
Cc: [Esther Schwald](#); s 22
Subject: RE: MPS Application - Proj Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 16 February 2026 5:39:33 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

OFFICIAL

Hi Daniel,

I am well, I hope you are well also.

Thanks for the update on the application, will keep an eye out for it.

Cheers,

s 22

OFFICIAL

From: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Sent: Monday, 16 February 2026 2:50 PM
To: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Cc: Esther Schwald s 47F s 22
@industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: MPS Application - Proj Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Hi s 22

Hope you're well.

We are currently busy working on the application, and we plan to send to you by the end of this week (sooner if we can).

Kind regards,

Dan

Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

W. www.energynorth.com.au
s 47F

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From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 16 February 2026 1:02 PM
To: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Cc: Esther Schwald s 47F s 22
@industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: MPS Application - Proj Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Danial,

I'm just checking in to see how you are coming along with the MPS application for Project Ares.

Kind regards,
s 22

OFFICIAL

Duplicate of Document 23

Duplicate of Document 23

OFFICIAL

Duplicate of Document 22

Duplicate of Document 21

Duplicate of Document 21

OFFICIAL

From: [Esther Schwald](#)
To: s 22
Cc: s 22 ; [Daniel Hunter](#)
Subject: Updated MPS application - Energy North - Project Ares
Date: Monday, 23 February 2026 2:01:31 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-Logo Desc.png](#)
[Outlook-fuangref.png](#)
[Outlook-A screen s.png](#)
[Outlook-44fd0v2x.png](#)
[MPS Project Application Project Ares FINAL 23022026 Rev 2.pdf](#)

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Dear MFPA team,

I hope you had a lovely weekend

We've just noticed that some information, specifically the table in the Commercial and Financial Viability - Financial Metrics section, on page 29 of our MPS application was accidentally deleted during our updates last week.

Please find attached the corrected version with all missing information restored on page 29.

Kind regards,
Esther

Ms Esther Schwald
Head of Corporate Services

s 47F

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s 47F

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From: [MPFA](#)
To: [Esther Schwald](#)
Cc: [Daniel Hunter](#); s 22
Subject: RE: Updated MPS application - Energy North - Project Ares [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 23 February 2026 2:05:35 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

OFFICIAL

Hi Esther,

Good pick-up, thank you for sending through the amended version.

Kind regards,
s 22

OFFICIAL

Duplicate of Document 25

Duplicate of Document 25

From: [Esther Schwald](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: [s 22](#) ; [Daniel Hunter](#)
Subject: Energy North - Project Ares MPS Application - Attachments
Date: Monday, 23 February 2026 4:10:59 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-Logo_Desc.png](#)
[Outlook-cloa1v25.png](#)
[Outlook-A screen.s.png](#)
[Outlook-nse5p21h.png](#)
[Appendix 1_Energy North Project Ares Hyperscale Datacentre IM MPFA 23022026.pdf](#)
[Appendix 2_Project Ares PowerCo Equipment List.pdf](#)
[Appendix 2_Project AC-res DataCo Equipment List.pdf](#)
[EN_Project Ares MP Help Tool Results.pdf](#)

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Dear MPFA Team,

Further to our MPS application on Friday for Energy North's Project Ares, please find attached copies of relevant attachments/appendices

- Appendix 1 – Project Ares IM and Project Overview
- Appendix 2 – Data Co and Power Co Equipment Lists
- Appendix 3 – Major Projects Help Tool Results

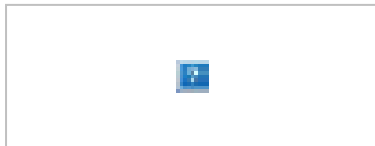
With kind regards,
Esther

Ms Esther Schwald
Head of Corporate Services

s 47F

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s 47F

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From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#); [Esther Schwald](#)
Cc: s 22
Subject: RE: Energy North - Project Ares MPS Application - Attachments [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 23 February 2026 7:43:55 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

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Hi s 22

Yes, confirming you now have all documentation.

As discussed earlier today, please contact me if you need anything else.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President - Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

s 47F

Logo ☐ ☐ Description automatically generated



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From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 23 February 2026 2:06 PM
To: Esther Schwald s 47F
Cc: Daniel Hunter s 47F s 22
@industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Energy North - Project Ares MPS Application - Attachments [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks Esther, does this conclude all the application supporting documents for Project Ares?

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Duplicate of Document 27

Duplicate of Document 27

From: [Esther Schwald](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: [Daniel Hunter](#); s 22
Subject: Re: Energy North - Project Ares MPS Application - Attachments [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 23 February 2026 7:56:56 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-mwglol0.png](#)
[Outlook-A screen s.png](#)
[Outlook-cpdjkzad.png](#)
[image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[Outlook-4ywfjgu.png](#)
[Outlook-A screen s.png](#)
[Outlook-j2bwildl.png](#)

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Hi s 22

Yes it does.

Kind regards,
Esther

Ms Esther Schwald
Head of Corporate Services

s 47F

s 47F

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<Outlook-Logo Desc.png>

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Duplicate of Document 28

Duplicate of Document 27

From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#); [Esther Schwald](#)
Cc: s 22
Subject: RE: Energy North - Project Ares MPS Application - Attachments [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 24 February 2026 7:20:41 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

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Hi s 22

Thanks very much for the update and information below. All understood.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

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s 47F

8

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OFFICIAL

From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 24 February 2026 4:37 PM

To: Daniel Hunter s 47F

Esther Schwald

s 47F

Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Energy North - Project Ares MPS Application - Attachments [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Daniel and Ester – thanks for confirming I now have all documentation for Project Ares.

I advise that your recently submitted Major Project Status (MPS) application form received on 23 February 2026 is hereby accepted as complete. As such, the completed form meets the information requirements for the Major Projects Facilitation Agency (MPFA) to undertake its assessment on the merits of your application to qualify as a MPS project.

The next steps involved in the assessment of your MPS application include:

- Consultation with Australian Government regulatory agencies and consideration the responses received.
- Finalisation of an assessment report on your MPS application, rated against the MPS eligibility criteria. Should your application not meet the eligibility criteria, you will be notified in writing.
- If your application proceeds, preparation of a briefing advice with a recommendation to approve, will be sent to the Minister.
- The Minister will review your case and decides to award or not award MPS, which is at the Minister's discretion.

Please note you may be contacted for further clarification on information presented in your MPS application form if required.

The MPFA's timeframe for completing its assessment will be expedited instead to the 50 days from the acceptance of your MPS application. The MPFA is not involved in your case when it is sent to the Ministers office, therefore **this timeframe may be longer**. The MPFA will keep you informed on the progress of your MPS application when there is any information to provide.

As your assigned case manager, I will be your key contact regarding your MPS application to reach out to at any time.

Kind regards,
s 22

From: s 22
To: s 22
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 22 January 2026 1:39:28 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

OFFICIAL

FYI – Spoke to Daniel – he is going to send his letter. I told him what I hope to do re: streamlined application:

1. Even though the project is same entity/ same land we would still need information about this new project.
2. Once the letter comes in we will go through his existing application and identify where there are gaps as it relates to the new project to determine eligibility.
3. That we would come back to him with a set list of questions to address these gaps.
4. That I would need approval from my HoD with the above process – so he is still a chance he could have to do an application form.

OFFICIAL

From: MPFA
Sent: Thursday, 22 January 2026 1:35 PM
To: 'Daniel Hunter' s 47F MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au; s 22 @industry.gov.au
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi Daniel,

As discussed, the best email for you to send your letter to the Minister is:
minister.ayres@industry.gov.au.

Get in touch if you have any other questions or need assistance,

s 22

Manager – Major Projects Facilitation Agency
Whole of Industry Division

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

From: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Sent: Wednesday, 21 January 2026 2:03 PM
To: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>

Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au>

Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi s 22

I hope you're well.

Just a quick update on our Project Ares green hyperscale data centre project. Things have s 47G, s47(1)(b)

Can you please confirm if Energy North's letter was provided to the Minister, and if you have any further update on our request? s 47G, s47(1)(b)

Please let me know if you'd like to organise a call to discuss.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

s 47F ^W www.energenorth.com.au

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OFFICIAL

From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 15 January 2026 2:12 PM

To: Daniel Hunter s 47F

Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au>

Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Daniel,

Thank you for your email. I will have to take a raincheck to meet in person. If you let me know ahead of your schedule when you come back to Darwin, we can pencil a meet on your next trip. Unless there is anything you need to raise via team or a phone call.

Kind regards,

s 22

OFFICIAL

From: Daniel Hunter s 47F

Sent: Thursday, 15 January 2026 9:16 AM

To: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>

Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au>

Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Good morning s 22

Hope you're well.

Just letting you know that I'm in Darwin, and will heading back to Perth tomorrow afternoon.

I have some availability tomorrow morning to catch up if you're free, otherwise I should be back in Darwin over the next 3-4 weeks.

Kind regards,

Dan

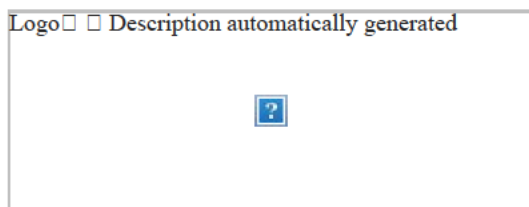
Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

W. www.energynorth.com.au

s 47F



OFFICIAL

From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 11:19 AM
To: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Cc: Esther Schwald s 47F ; s 22
@industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Daniel,

Thank you for your email.

s 22 and I have reviewed Energy North's letter to Minister Ayres and advise that it is well drafted. The MPFA will look into and consider what an expedited application could look like and come back to you on this matter.

Kind regards,
s 22

OFFICIAL

From: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Sent: Friday, 19 December 2025 7:03 PM
To: s 22 @industry.gov.au>; s 22
@industry.gov.au>; s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Cc: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>; Esther Schwald s 47F
Subject: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Dear s 22

As promised, please find attached the draft letter to Minister Ayres, along with the accompanying briefing paper, for your review.

I look forward to receiving your feedback and would be keen to finalise the documents with a view to sending them to the Minister early in the New Year.

Please feel free to contact me in the New Year should you wish to discuss any details in the documents further.

Thanks once again for your support.

I hope you all have a safe and Merry Christmas.

Kind regards,
Dan

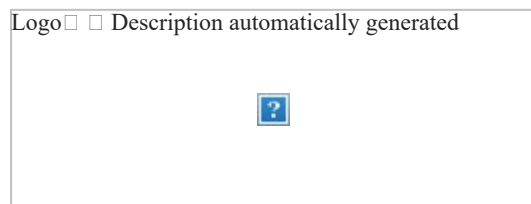
Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

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s 47F



OFFICIAL

From: Daniel Hunter
Sent: Wednesday, 17 December 2025 3:30 PM
To: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Cc: @industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: MPFA Initial meeting [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi

Thank you for your time today — much appreciated.

As discussed, I will provide the revised Project Sol schedule in January. I'm planning to send through a draft letter to the Minister by tomorrow for MPFA review.

If I don't speak with you beforehand, I hope you and your family have a safe and Merry Christmas.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and the team next year.

Kind regards,
Dan

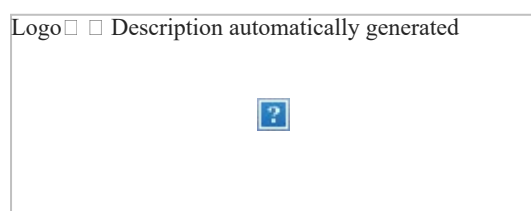
Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

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s 47F



From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>

Sent: Wednesday, 17 December 2025 3:13 PM

To: Daniel Hunter s 47F

Cc: @industry.gov.au

Subject: MPFA Initial meeting [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Daniel,

Thank you for meeting with the MPFA today to discuss the MPFA service delivery of MPS projects, Energy Norths Regulatory pathway and providing an update on Project Sol. As discussed in the meeting, can you please forward through Project Sol's project schedule so the MPFA can understand what we are working with. I will also keep an eye out for your draft email to the minister so the MPFA can review/assist.

Just a final reminder that I will be on leave from the 22 Dec and return on the 2 January, if you have any questions or issues, please don't hesitate to make contact via the MPFA@industry.gov.au and address to myself and s 22 someone in the team will pick it up and pass onto s 22 in my absence.

I hope you and your family have a safe and wonderful Christmas and New Year

Kind regards,

Senior Project Officer

Whole of Industry Division

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

@industry.gov.au

| industry.gov.au ABN 74 599 608 295

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Acknowledgement of Country

Our department recognises the First Peoples of this Nation and their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters, seas, skies, and communities.

We Acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians and Lore Keepers of the oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations Peoples.

OFFICIAL

From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: s 22
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 22 January 2026 1:42:07 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

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Hi s 22 thanks for your email, and contact details for Minister Ayres office.

We will send the letter today, with some additions to reflect the current status of Project Ares.

Look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President - Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

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s 47F

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From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: [MPFA](#)
Cc: s 22
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Friday, 23 January 2026 11:10:50 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

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Good morning s 22

Please let me know if you would like a copy of the letter / briefing doc I sent to Minister Ayres yesterday.

I have made some minor updates since the draft I sent you, reflecting the current status of Project Ares.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

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s 47F

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From: Daniel Hunter
Sent: Thursday, 22 January 2026 6:35 PM
To: 'MPFA' <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au; s 22 @industry.gov.au
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s 22

Thanks very much.

Our request and correspondence have been sent to the Minister.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

s 47F

Logo ☐ ☐ Description automatically generated



Duplicate of Document 32

From: [Esther Schwald](#)
To: s 22
Cc: s 22 ; [Daniel Hunter](#)
Subject: Re: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 21 April 2026 3:29:11 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[Outlook-sm40ca3.png](#)

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Hi s 22

Thank you for your email. Just a quick courtesy note to let you know that Daniel is travelling to Darwin today and is currently in transit, so it's unlikely he'll be able to meet this afternoon.

He will be in touch as soon as he lands to arrange a time to speak with you tomorrow.

Kind regards,
Esther

Ms Esther Schwald
Head of Corporate Services



s 47F

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From: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 21 April 2026 12:04 PM
To: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Cc: Esther Schwald s 47F s 22 @industry.gov.au>; s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Afternoon Daniel – I've received a couple of questions from our minister's office who are currently reviewing your MPS application – specifically against the data centre principles that were published in late March.

- RE water: What cooling technologies are you using in the data centre? Are you retaining/reusing the water/ how?
- RE end user: do you have any plans to reserve compute power for domestic use/ startups/ researchers/ not for profits?

We are preparing responses but are you free this afternoon or early morning/ late afternoon tomorrow to chat – I'd be keen to validate with you before we go back.

Thanks,

s 22

Manager – Major Projects Facilitation Agency
Whole of Industry Division

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

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Duplicate of Document 32

From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: s 22
Cc: [Esther Schwald](#); s 22
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 11:19:48 AM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)

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Hi s 22

I hope you're well. Thanks for the heads up, happy to jump on a call. I'm free later today from 4pm (Darwin). In the meantime, here's a first cut on both questions so your team can start shaping responses.

1. Cooling technology and water retention/reuse

Our position on cooling has evolved as engineering work has progressed and is consistent with what we will set out in our NT EPA referral (lodging in the coming weeks), shortly followed by EPBC referral:

- Engineering work to date has confirmed a closed-loop liquid cooling architecture as the design basis, with no evaporative cooling towers and no process water consumption during normal operations. Final configuration will be confirmed through FEED (commencing 1 July 2026) and assessed in detail through the EIS.
- Operational cooling water demand is expected to be a small fraction of conventional hyperscale benchmarks, an order-of-magnitude reduction compared to evaporative cooling at the same IT load.
- On water retention and reuse: under a closed-loop cooling system the coolant is continuously recirculated, with no blowdown and no makeup water required. Beyond cooling, total site operational water demand will be driven primarily by non-process infrastructure such as workforce accommodation, firefighting reserves, solar array maintenance, dust suppression, and internal road management across the ~65–70 km road network. Water efficiency and reuse measures will be incorporated across these uses, which may include treatment and reuse of wastewater from the workforce accommodation village, capture and reuse of stormwater where practicable, and reuse of treated water for dust suppression and landscaping. A Water Efficiency Management Plan will be maintained for the life of the project and reviewed regularly against advancing technology and industry standards.

This position aligns directly with Expectation 3 (water sustainability) under the National Data

Centre Expectations.

2. Plans to reserve compute power for domestic users / startups / researchers / not-for-profits

A brief point of context on our model: Project Ares is designed to be a wholesale powered-shell infrastructure project where we deliver the power, water and data centre shell, while hyperscale customers establish the compute (chips and racks) inside. Under the baseline wholesale model, compute allocation sits commercially with the anchor tenant. Energy North is also investigating structures under which a portion of compute capacity could be held directly within an Australian-domiciled entity, a structure that would create a more direct pathway for sovereign and Australian public-interest users.

The project's positioning creates a natural pathway to delivering on the intent of Expectation 5:

- Sovereign Australian users. Project Ares is deliberately designed as sovereign-grade AI infrastructure in a Five Eyes jurisdiction, 100% Australian-owned, behind-the-meter, off-grid, in AUKUS-aligned treaty geography. This positioning creates a natural alignment with Australian public-interest compute users, including Australian Defence, the broader intelligence community, and AUKUS Pillar II advanced AI cooperation. We see these as natural potential users of a facility with Project Ares's strategic characteristics, and we would welcome guidance from the Minister's office on how to appropriately progress those conversations through properly coordinated Commonwealth channels.
- Australian research, innovation and startups. Supporting Australian researchers, universities, startups and not-for-profit / public-interest users is a principle we intend to build into anchor tenant arrangements as those discussions progress. This is consistent with the commitments Anthropic has made to the Australian Government in its own MoU on supporting Australian researchers and startups.

We would welcome a conversation with the Minister's office about what an appropriate commitment framework looks like for a wholesale infrastructure proponent, recognising that Expectation 5 may have been drafted with operator-model proponents in mind and that we want to land on a commitment that genuinely delivers on the policy intent while remaining commercially workable.

Happy to walk through both of these in more detail if you still need to catch up later today.

Thanks,
Daniel

Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

W. www.energy-north.com



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From: [Esther Schwald](#)
To: MPFA
Cc: [Daniel Hunter](#)
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 1:14:49 PM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image001.png](#)
[Outlook-xbvu1opb.png](#)

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Hi [s 22](#)

Thank you for your email, Daniel is currently attending an event with Minister King, however I will work on the responses for the below in the mean time and we will get back to you later today.

Kind regards,
Esther

Ms Esther Schwald
Head of Corporate Services



[s 47F](#)

W. www.energy-north.com

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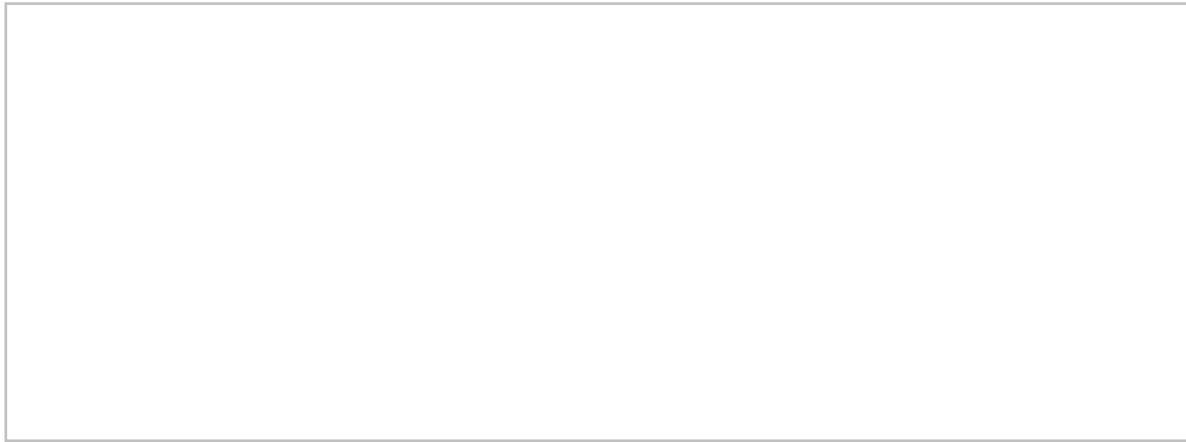
From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 10:32 AM
To: Daniel Hunter [s 47F](#) Esther Schwald [s 47F](#)
Cc: [s 22](#) @industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

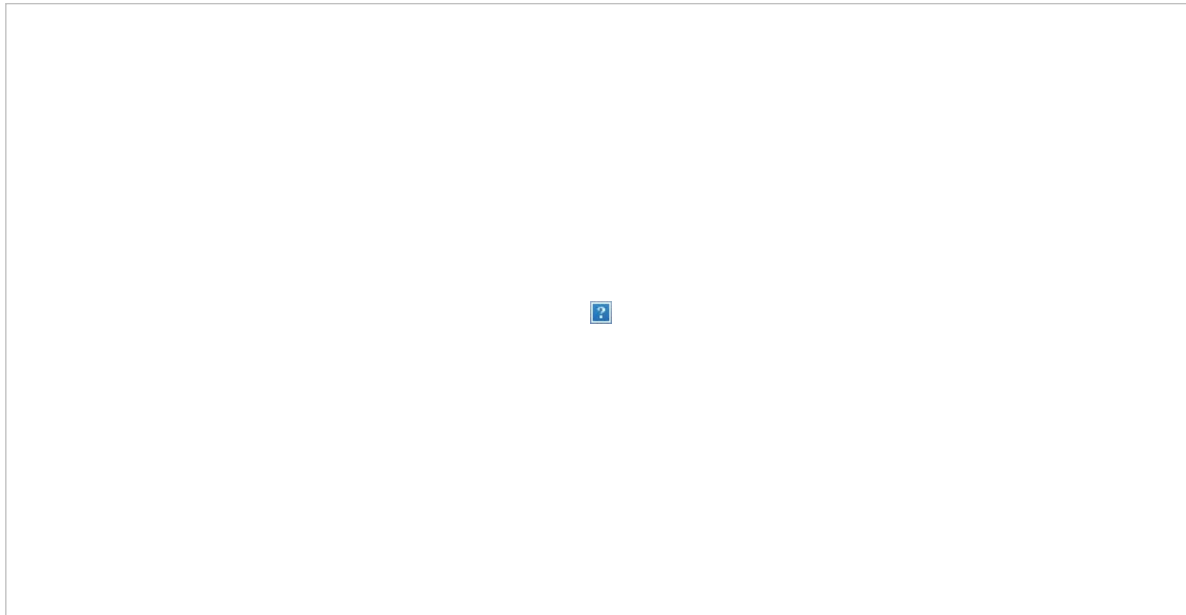
Hi Daniel and Esther,

Apologies to disturb you in the middle of your meetings and thank you for making contact as soon as you could regarding the information requested by the minister's office. Please see the addition questions from the minister office (in bold), followed by the MPFA's draft responses (in normal text) for your conformation. Please make edits as required, this information was pulled together without my input, I apologies if it is not completely accurate. Daniel [s 22](#) may still require touching base with you via phone after 2pm, hopeful this information will address and finalise the minister's office questions.

- **More information on the type of cooling technologies the data centre will use – the expectations refer to 'efficient cooling technologies, and where possible use non-potable water and apply circular water opportunities'**
 - Although cooling technologies will be determined as project engineering is finalised, the project's ESG framework specifies: 'implementation of circular economy practices like waste reduction and water recycling will be embedded in design and operations to optimise material use and minimise project waste'



- **More information on the skills and jobs expectation, including DEWR's view on their adherence to expectation 4? The expectation explicitly references 'fair, safe, secure and well-paid' jobs – could we get info on this? Is there any additional detail on the workforce capability plans you can share?**
 - DEWR provided the following advice: *this reflects the expectation of compliance with Australia's workplace laws including the Fair Work Act and relevant awards, and work health and safety laws, but also considering best practice approaches.*
 - In their application the business has provided an overview of their workforce capability planning, and this includes the deployment of training programs and partnerships based in Darwin to provide skilled labour.



- **Have they got any plans for enabling access to compute for Australian start-ups, innovative small businesses, researchers and not-for-profits on favourable terms?**
 - Project Ares does not currently have formal partnerships with universities. While the project establishes sovereign, onshore hyperscale compute capability that could support future research and education collaboration, no university engagement arrangements have yet been announced.
 - The company is open to engaging with start-ups, researchers, not-for-profits but the exact terms of access to third parties have not been determined.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

s 22

Senior Project Officer

Procurement Strategy and Project Facilitation Branch

Major Projects Facilitation Agency

s 22

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

s 22

s 22

[@industry.gov.au](mailto:industry@industry.gov.au)

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Duplicate of Document 32

From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: s 22
Cc: [Esther Schwald](#); s 22
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 7:29:56 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

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Hi s 22

Thanks for the follow-up questions from the Minister's office. Responses to both below, happy to walk through on a call if useful tomorrow.

s 47G, s47(1)(b)

s 47G, s47(1)(b)

Happy to walk through either of these in more detail on the call. Let me know if the Minister's office needs anything further.

Kind regards,

Dan

Daniel Hunter

Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

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From: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 2:40 PM
To: Daniel Hunter s 47F
Cc: Esther Schwald s 47F s 22
@industry.gov.au>; s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Sorry – further questions have come in relating to financing – give me a call if easier.

s 47G, s47(1)(b)

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From: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 1:15 PM
To: 'Daniel Hunter' s 47F
Cc: Esther Schwald s 47F s 22
@industry.gov.au>; s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks Daniel – this gives me enough to work with and get a response back and should more than sufficiently answer their queries - many thanks.

s 22

Manager – Major Projects Facilitation Agency
Whole of Industry Division

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

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Duplicate of Document 32

From: Daniel Hunter
To: MPFA; Esther Schwald
Cc: s 22
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]
Date: Thursday, 23 April 2026 1:37:29 PM
Attachments: image001.png
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image005.png
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Hi s 22,

Our pleasure. Likewise, thanks for your support getting everything over to the Minister's office.

Look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

W. www.energy-north.com



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From: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2026 1:29 PM
To: Esther Schwald s 47F Daniel Hunter s 47F
Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au>
Subject: RE: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

Hi Esther and Daniel,

I just wanted to thank you both for your timely actions in getting the responses the Miniter's office queries to support the Project Ares brief, hopefully they have all the information they need now.

Kind regards,
s 22

OFFICIAL: Sensitive

From: Esther Schwald s 47F
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2026 10:46 PM

To: MPFA <MPFA@industry.gov.au>

Cc: s 22 @industry.gov.au; Daniel Hunter s 47F @industry.gov.au

s 22

Subject: Re: ENERGY NORTH - Draft letter to Minister Ayres (with briefing paper) [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

CAUTION - This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear s 22

Thank you for your email below and my apologies for the late reply, we wanted to make sure we provided you with a comprehensive response and I just wanted to check a few things with our engineering team.

Points 1 and 2 were mostly addressed by Daniel's previous email to s 22. I have included Daniel's previous response below along with a couple of extra points (highlighted) that can be included to address the Minister's office's query on use of non-potable water and water source. I have also included a comprehensive reply for Question 2, along with some minor suggested amendments to drafted DEWR responses (in italics).

Please feel free to touch base with Daniel tomorrow should you wish to clarify any of the points below.

1. More information on the type of cooling technologies the data centre will use – the expectations refer to 'efficient cooling technologies, and where possible use non-potable water and apply circular water opportunities'

Although cooling technologies will be determined as project engineering is finalised, the project will be adopting efficient cooling technologies and the use of non-potable water where possible. The project's ESG framework specifies: 'implementation of circular economy practices like waste reduction and water recycling will be embedded in design and operations to optimise material use and minimise project waste'

Energy North's position on cooling has evolved as engineering work has progressed and is consistent with what Energy North will set out in their NT EPA referral (lodging in the coming weeks) incorporating, shortly followed by EPBC referral:

- Engineering work to date has confirmed an efficient closed-loop liquid cooling architecture as the current design basis, to be confirmed through FEED. This involves no evaporative cooling towers and no process water consumption during normal operations.
- Operational cooling water demand is expected to be a small fraction of conventional hyperscale benchmarks, an order-of-magnitude reduction compared to evaporative cooling at the same IT load.
- On water retention and reuse: under a closed-loop cooling system the coolant is continuously recirculated, with no blowdown and no makeup water required. Beyond cooling, total site operational water demand will be driven primarily by non-process infrastructure such as workforce accommodation, firefighting reserves, solar array maintenance, dust suppression, and internal road management across the ~65–70 km road network. Water efficiency and reuse measures will be incorporated across these uses, which may include treatment and reuse of wastewater from the workforce accommodation village, capture and reuse of stormwater where practicable, and reuse of treated water for dust suppression and landscaping. A Water Efficiency Management Plan will be maintained for the life of the project and reviewed regularly against advancing technology and industry standards.
- All water requirements for construction and operations will be sourced from groundwater in the Georgina-Wiso Basin. The project will not draw on any town water scheme or urban potable supply at any stage. Groundwater is the primary water source for the entire Barkly region, reflecting the absence of surface water resources in central Australia. The specific aquifer accessed by Project Ares produces groundwater that is non-potable in its natural state, with elevated mineral content and total dissolved solids typical of deep sub-artesian systems, meaning it is unsuitable for drinking without treatment and does not compete with or draw from potable water supplies serving Tennant Creek or other Barkly communities. This directly satisfies the Expectation's preference for non-potable water sources.
- Energy North submitted a groundwater extraction licence application with the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security in February 2026, currently under review. The application covers construction and operational water requirements. Independent hydrogeological assessment confirms aquifer capacity substantially exceeds project requirements across all project phases.

This position aligns directly with Expectation 3 (water sustainability) under the National Data Centre Expectations.

2. More information on the skills and jobs expectation, including DEWR's view on their adherence to expectation 4? The expectation explicitly references 'fair, safe, secure and well-paid' jobs – could we get info on this? Is there any additional detail on the workforce capability plans you can share?

DEWR provided the following advice: this reflects the expectation of compliance with Australia's workplace laws including the Fair Work Act and relevant awards, and work health and safety laws, but also considering best practice approaches.

In their application the business has provided an overview of their workforce capability planning, and this includes the deployment of training programs and partnerships based in Darwin to provide skilled labour – refer their response in the section Employment and Skills/Training Development of their submission (pages 20 – 22) for further details.

- **Fair and well-paid.** All Project Ares workers will be engaged under Fair Work Act-compliant Enterprise Agreements, with remuneration set at or above industry benchmarks for comparable remote resource projects and reflecting the FIFO/DIDO premium consistent with Australian resource industry practice. Energy North's leadership team has a proven track record of negotiating and delivering EBAs across oil, gas, and mining sectors, and this experience will be applied directly to Project Ares.
- **Secure.** Employment will be structured across sequential project phases with clear progression pathways. The project's 25-year operational life, combined with its sequential relationship with Project Sol (Energy North's green ammonia project), creates sustained long-term employment rather than a one-off construction boom. This provides a stable employment platform for workers, their families, and Barkly region communities.
- **Safe.** Workplace health and safety is a foundational commitment. The project will adopt a Safety Management System aligned with AS/NZS 4801 and ISO 45001, with dedicated HSE leadership embedded within the Project Management structure from FEED commencement. The purpose-built construction village includes an onsite medical centre with RFDS-compatible helicopter pad, providing emergency medical response capability appropriate to the site's remote location. Psychological safety, mental health support, regular R&R rotations, and employee assistance programmes are explicitly designed into the village model, consistent with best-practice remote workforce management and current WHS psychosocial safety obligations. Energy North's executive team brings extensive experience delivering remote accommodation and workforce infrastructure on major Australian and international resource projects, providing direct operational precedent for the Project Ares workforce model.

Scale of Employment

- Up to ~4,400 workers across DataCo and PowerCo, housed in a 4,500-person village at Murrarji Station
- 200–300 permanent operational FTE at full build
- Local and domestic labour prioritised
- Special Economic Zone (SEZ) provisions, if legislated, may provide additional visa pathways for skilled international workers. These provisions are not yet legislated and are not relied upon for project delivery. In the absence of SEZ provisions, international recruitment will proceed through existing visa frameworks including Temporary Skill Shortage (subclass 482) and Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186) pathways.
- The project's 25-year operational life and sequential relationship with Project Sol (Energy North's green ammonia project) creates sustained, long-term employment pathways, not a one-off construction boom

Local, domestic and First Nations labour prioritisation

Local and domestic labour will be prioritised at all stages of the project. Energy North's workforce model is being designed around a recruitment sequencing framework that exhausts domestic availability before accessing international labour pathways, with Australian labour content targets to be confirmed through the Workforce Capability Plan developed during FEED.

Indigenous employment and participation are central to the Project Ares workforce model. Structured pathways will be established through the Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) currently in negotiation, with quantified employment and procurement targets formalised through the ILUA and Territory Benefit Plan. Engagement with Batchelor Institute, the Indigenous Education and Research Consortium (IERC) and local Indigenous organisations ensures culturally appropriate training delivery and builds a sustainable pipeline of qualified First Nations workers beyond the project itself.

Education and Training Partners

Energy North has identified and commenced engagement with a core group of training and education partners, each addressing a specific workforce need:

Partner	Focus	Outcomes
Charles Darwin University (CDU)	Renewable energy & data centre operations; STEM micro-credentials	Builds local talent capable of operating high-tech infrastructure, reducing FIFO dependency over the project life
Batchelor Institute	Trade qualifications & pre-employment programs for First Nations participants	Culturally appropriate delivery for Barkly region communities; pipeline of qualified Indigenous workers
IERC / Prof N M Nakata AM	Indigenous participation pathways linked to specific operational roles	Creates a replicable model for Indigenous employment on major NT infrastructure projects
Industry Capability Network (ICN)	Supplier capability workshops for local SMEs	Helps NT businesses pre-qualify and bid competitively for major work packages
Local Indigenous organisations	Apprenticeships and traineeships in electrical and civil construction	Dedicated First Nations pathways in the Barkly region; formalised through ILUA and Territory Benefit Plan
Technology vendors (ABB, Siemens, Schneider, Vertiv, Trane)	Vendor-specific certification for critical infrastructure systems	Brings manufacturer certifications to the NT for the first time; qualifications are nationally and internationally transferable

Addressing Skills Gaps

Energy North has identified specific workforce requirements across HV electrical systems, data centre operations, BESS, large-scale solar PV, and gas generation - disciplines with limited NT depth. The mitigation strategy combines national FIFO recruitment, structured domestic training through CDU and Batchelor Institute, Indigenous employment pathways through the ILUA, and technology vendor certification programs that will leave lasting NT capability well beyond the project itself.

A comprehensive Workforce Capability Plan - covering recruitment, WHS obligations, training, Indigenous employment, and vendor certification will be developed during FEED in consultation with relevant government, union, and education stakeholders. Energy North welcomes ongoing dialogue with the Major Project Facilitation Agency on workforce outcomes as the project progresses.

3. Have they got any plans for enabling access to compute for Australian start-ups, innovative small businesses, researchers and not-for-profits on favourable terms?

Project Ares does not currently have formal partnerships with universities, however, Energy North has identified and commenced engagement with a core group of training and education partners as outlined above, each addressing a specific workforce need. While the project establishes sovereign, onshore hyperscale compute capability that could support future research and education collaboration, no university engagement arrangements have yet been announced.

The company is open to engaging with start-ups, researchers, not-for-profits but the exact terms of access to third parties have not been determined.

A brief point of context on Energy North's model: Project Ares is designed to be a wholesale powered-shell infrastructure project where we deliver the power, water and data centre shell, while hyperscale customers establish the compute (chips and racks) inside. Under the baseline wholesale model, compute allocation sits commercially with the anchor tenant. Energy North is also investigating structures under which a portion of compute capacity could be held directly within an Australian-domiciled entity, a structure that would create a more direct pathway for sovereign and Australian public-interest users.

The project's positioning creates a natural pathway to delivering on the intent of Expectation 5:

- Sovereign Australian users. Project Ares is deliberately designed as sovereign-grade AI infrastructure in a Five Eyes jurisdiction, 100% Australian-owned, behind-the-meter, off-grid, in AUKUS-aligned treaty geography. This positioning creates a natural alignment with Australian public-interest compute users, including Australian Defence, the broader intelligence community, and AUKUS Pillar II advanced AI cooperation. We see these as natural potential users of a facility with Project Ares's strategic characteristics, and we would welcome guidance from the Minister's office on how to appropriately progress those conversations through properly coordinated Commonwealth channels.
- Australian research, innovation and startups. Supporting Australian researchers, universities, startups and not-for-profit / public-interest users is a principle we intend to build into anchor tenant arrangements as those discussions progress. This is consistent with the commitments Anthropic has made to the Australian Government in its own MoU on supporting Australian researchers and startups.

We would welcome a conversation with the Minister's office about what an appropriate commitment framework looks like for a wholesale infrastructure proponent, recognising that Expectation 5 may have been drafted with operator-model proponents in mind and that we want to land on a commitment that genuinely delivers on the policy intent while remaining commercially workable.

With kind regards,

Esther

Ms Esther Schwald
Head of Corporate Services



s 47F

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Our department recognises the First Peoples of this Nation and their ongoing cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters, seas, skies, and communities.
We Acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Custodians and Lore Keepers of the oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to all First Nations Peoples.

OFFICIAL

From: [Daniel Hunter](#)
To: s 22
Cc: [MPFA](#)
Subject: Energy North Letter to Minister (inc briefing note)
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2026 4:45:54 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Letter to Minister Ayres 22012026.pdf](#)
[Briefing Note Minister Ayres 22012026.pdf](#)

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Hi s 22

Good to chat earlier.

As discussed, please find the letter and briefing note that we sent to the Minister FYI.

The briefing note provides some high level information about Project Ares, including project status etc. I will send additional information to you over the coming days.

The only noteworthy update since the briefing note was prepared is that the project is now expected to be implemented directly at 1 GW, rather than being staged from 500 MW to 1 GW.

Kind regards,
Dan

Daniel Hunter
Vice President – Environment, Land and Stakeholder Relations

s 47F

W. www.energynorth.com.au

s 47F

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Project Sol and Project Ares – Briefing Note

Prepared by Energy North | January, 2026

1. Project Sol Update

Despite challenging market conditions in the global green hydrogen and ammonia sector, Energy North has continued to progress Project Sol since being awarded Commonwealth Major Project Status in November 2025:

- Finalised detailed ecological and groundwater assessments for the upstream location at Murranji Station
- Commenced project development agreement process with NT Government
- Ongoing engagement with the Northern Land Council, with on-ground engagement activities with Traditional Owners planned to commence after the wet season in April/May 2026
- The Northern Territory Government continues to be very supportive and is currently providing full facilitation services

2. Current Market Conditions

The global green hydrogen and ammonia sector is currently experiencing a period of subdued investment. Key factors include:

- IMO's decision in October 2025 to delay adoption of its Net Zero Framework by 12 months
- Ongoing policy and regulatory uncertainty in target export markets
- Absence of a global certification standard for green ammonia
- Limited offtake agreements across the sector because of current market uncertainty

Energy North does not anticipate significant sector investment in the short-to-medium term. Additionally, Project Sol's development is inherently linked to NT Government-led enabling infrastructure, Middle Arm Precinct and the Territory Energy Link corridor, both of which have extended development timeframes.

3. Energy North's Strategic Approach

Given these conditions, Energy North is using this period to our advantage – investing strategically and prudently to further de-risk Project Sol so it is development-ready when market demand and investment appetite return. Over the short-to-medium term, we will undertake:

- Groundwater exploratory drilling

- Targeted threatened species surveys
- Continued technology assessment and stakeholder engagement

Energy North is committed to progressing both Project Sol and Project Ares in parallel, with each project strengthening the other's development pathway.

4. Project Ares – Overview

Project Ares is a hyperscale data centre development to be co-located with Project Sol at Murrarji Station. Energy North is planning to deliver a fully integrated turnkey solution, encompassing power generation infrastructure, cooling systems, and data centre facilities. The development will be move-in ready, with hyperscaler partners providing only their computing hardware and server racks.

The Northern Territory offers strategic advantages for data centre development, with international submarine cable infrastructure in Darwin providing low-latency connectivity to Asia and positioning the region as an emerging gateway for data exchange across the Indo-Pacific. Murrarji Station is located on the Adelaide-Darwin corridor, providing direct access to the terrestrial fibre network that connects to Darwin's submarine cable infrastructure.

Key project details:

- One of the largest planned behind-the-meter, low-carbon hyperscale data centre projects in Australia
- Phased development of up to 1GW capacity, commencing with an initial 500MW phase
- Initial phase (500MW) represents a capital investment of approximately USD \$8 billion, with the full 1GW build-out representing approximately USD \$16 billion
- Solar-first and battery-firmed, with backup gas generation included solely as a last-resort resilience measure to meet the high reliability requirements of a hyperscale data centre, with the system designed to accommodate future additional decarbonisation opportunities
- Gas for the project is planned to be accessed via APA's Amadeus Gas Pipeline, which runs parallel to the Stuart Highway on the doorstep of Murrarji Station. Alternative options are also being assessed in collaboration with local Territory gas providers.
- Responds to strong market demand from hyperscaler companies seeking low-carbon solutions at scale

Policy Alignment

Project Ares directly supports the Commonwealth's National AI Plan (2025) and Future Made in Australia initiative. Specifically, the project aligns with the National AI Plan's goal to "capture the opportunity" by:

- Building smart infrastructure through investment in large-scale, sustainable data centre capacity
- Attracting significant global investment (USD \$16 billion) and international hyperscaler partnerships
- Supporting Australia's position as a regional AI and data hub, leveraging strategic Indo-Pacific connectivity through Darwin's submarine cable infrastructure
- Meeting the forthcoming national data centre principles on sustainability through its solar-first, battery-firmed, low-carbon design

The project also supports regional economic development, a key theme of both policies, by delivering employment and business opportunities to the Barkly region.

5. Strategic Relationship Between Projects

While commercially separate from Project Sol, Project Ares is strategically complementary:

- Shorter development timeframe
- Unlike Project Sol, does not depend on Middle Arm Precinct or Territory Energy Link infrastructure
- Can deliver substantial economic benefits to the Northern Territory earlier
- Establishes foundation infrastructure – including access roads, worker amenities, and site services, that will enable Project Sol to be delivered more efficiently
- Builds local workforce capability across solar and battery energy storage construction and operations, skills that are directly transferable to Project Sol's larger-scale renewable energy infrastructure
- Baseline environmental and technical studies already completed for Project Sol are transferable to Project Ares given their co-location, providing significant planning and approvals efficiencies
- Both projects will deliver significant opportunities for local businesses and employment in the Barkly region, with Energy North committed to maximising Aboriginal business participation and workforce development

6. Project Ares – Current Status

s 47G, s47(1)(b)

- This progress provides strong evidence of commercial viability, significantly de-risks the project, and positions Energy North to secure project financing and progress toward Final Investment Decision. It also demonstrates confidence from major global investors and technology companies in both the project and the Northern Territory as a strategic location for data centre investment
- The NT Government, including the Department of Mining and Energy and NT EPA, are aware of and supportive of the project
- We are planning to refer Project Ares to the NT EPA and DCCEEW by March 2026.

7. Request

Project Ares – Major Project Status

Energy North respectfully requests that the Commonwealth consider granting Project Ares Major Project Status, with the same level of facilitation support currently provided to Project Sol. We would also welcome advice on whether the application process could be expedited given its direct connection to Project Sol, which already holds Major Project Status.

Granting Major Project Status to Project Ares would enable coordinated facilitation across both projects, provide important Commonwealth endorsement that strengthens confidence among international investors and hyperscaler partners, and accelerate the delivery of substantial economic benefits to the Northern Territory and Australia.

22nd January 2026

The Hon Tim Ayres
Minister for Industry and Innovation
Senate, Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Ayres,

Re: Energy North's Project Sol and Project Ares – Northern Territory

Thank you for awarding Project Sol Commonwealth Major Project Status in November 2025. I am writing to provide an update on the project and to introduce Project Ares, a complementary project co-located with Project Sol at Murrarji Station, which we believe also warrants consideration for Major Project Status. Together, these projects represent a combined investment of approximately USD \$38 billion and a significant opportunity for Northern Australia.

Project Sol

Since being awarded Major Project Status, Energy North has continued to progress Project Sol despite challenging market conditions in the global green hydrogen and ammonia sector. Energy North is using this period of market softness to our advantage, investing strategically and prudently to further de-risk Project Sol so it is development-ready when market demand and investment appetite return. The Northern Territory Government continues to be very supportive and is currently providing full facilitation services.

Project Ares

Project Ares is one of the largest planned behind-the-meter, low-carbon hyperscale data centre projects in Australia. It represents a phased development of up to 1GW capacity, commencing with an initial 500MW phase (USD \$8 billion), with the full build-out representing approximately USD \$16 billion. The project directly supports the Commonwealth's National AI Plan and Future Made in Australia initiative.

While commercially separate, Project Ares is strategically complementary to Project Sol. Importantly, it has a shorter development timeframe and can deliver substantial economic benefits to the Northern Territory earlier, while establishing foundation infrastructure and building local workforce capability that will enable Project Sol to be delivered more efficiently.

s 47G, s47(1)(b)

Request

Energy North respectfully requests that the Commonwealth consider granting Project Ares Major Project Status, with the same level of facilitation support currently provided to Project Sol. This would enable coordinated facilitation across both projects, strengthen confidence among international investors and hyperscaler partners, and accelerate the delivery of substantial economic benefits to the Northern Territory and Australia. We would also welcome advice on whether the application process could be expedited given its direct connection to Project Sol.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to brief you further on both projects at your earliest convenience. A detailed briefing note is attached for your reference.

Yours sincerely,

s 47F

Scott Criddle

Director and Founder
Energy North

Attachment: Project Sol and Project Ares - Briefing Note

From: [MPFA](#)
To: [Daniel Hunter](#)
Cc: [s 22](#)
Subject: RE: Energy North Letter to Minister (inc briefing note) [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Thursday, 29 January 2026 4:55:24 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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Thanks for this information Dan.

Cheers,
[s 22](#)

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