

STATEMENT OF REASONS

OVERVIEW

Name of proposal	<i>Australia-ASEAN Power Link Project – Notice of Significant Variation - Darwin region facilities re-location and upgrade to system specifications</i>
Proponent name	<i>Sun Cable Pty Ltd</i>
Description of proposal	<p><i>Sun Cable proposes to relocate the Darwin facilities component of the proposal, due to various constraints. Additionally, the proposed capacity rating of the solar farm and transmission system has been increased to reflect the latest solar module specifications and electricity demand forecasts, which in turn require additional cables and converter infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>The Darwin Converter Site and Cable Transition Facilities will be relocated from the current proposed location on Middle Arm Peninsula and Channel Island in Darwin Harbour, to Murrumujuk, 31km north-east of Darwin. A segment of the Overhead Transmission Line and Subsea Cable System will be re-routed to connect into the facilities at this new location.</i></p>
Nature of proposal	<i>Energy (renewable)</i>
Location of proposal	<i>Darwin region; Murrumujuk; Shoal Bay (outer Darwin Harbour)</i>

JUSTIFICATION

The NT EPA, in its Statement of Reasons issued for the original proposal, considered that the Project has the potential to significantly impact environmental values associated with 12 environmental factors¹. Sun Cable considers that the variation to the proposal is not likely to affect any additional environmental factors but could alter the nature of potential impacts to the Terrestrial Ecosystems factor due to the different vegetation communities and habitats that occur in the new footprint.

The new segment of the Overhead Transmission Line traverses the Black Jungle Conservation Reserve, drainage lines which have the potential to support the threatened plant *Stylidium ensatum* and modelled patches of sandsheet heath vegetation, a significant vegetation type that can support several listed threatened species. The Cable Transition Facilities traverse areas where the threatened plant species *Typhonium praetermissum* has been recorded. The shore crossing traverses the southern end of Gunn Point Beach where there are records of listed threatened and migratory shorebird species. Field surveys are required to verify the presence/absence of these environmental

¹ [NT EPA Environmental factors and objectives](#)

values, so that the significance of potential impacts to the Terrestrial Ecosystems factor can be assessed in the EIS.

Terms of Reference (TOR) Sun Cable has provided draft amendments to the original EIS TOR for the Terrestrial Ecosystems factor to include further consideration of the additional listed threatened and migratory species that could occur in the new footprint. For all other environmental factors, the current TOR are considered to adequately capture the potentially significant impacts that require consideration in the EIS. Further minor amendments have been proposed to remove reference to the Middle Arm Peninsula, which will no longer be affected by the Proposal.

Conclusion

The variation to the components of the AAPowerLink Proposal in the Darwin region is not likely to affect any additional environmental factors or Matters of National Environmental Significance, when compared to the original proposal. However, the variation could alter the nature of potential impacts to the Terrestrial Ecosystems factor due to the different vegetation communities and habitats that occur in the new footprint. For this reason, Sun Cable considers that the proposal can be assessed using the existing EIS method with an amended TOR.