

Statement of Reasons

SUN CABLE PTY LTD - MIDDLE ARM BATTERY INSTALLATION AND OPERATION PROJECT

PROPOSAL

Sun Cable Pty Ltd (the Proponent) submitted a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Middle Arm Battery Installation and Operation Project (the Proposal) to the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) on 31 January 2020 for consideration under the *Environmental Assessment Act 1982* (EA Act). The NT EPA requested additional information on 7 February 2020 and a revised NOI was received on 20 February 2020.

The Proposal is located on section 1905, Hundred of Ayers immediately to the east of the Weddell Power Station along Channel Island Road within the Middle Arm Industrial Precinct, about 10 km south of Darwin and 12 km southwest of Palmerston.

The proposed action is installation and operation of a 100 MW/200 MWh capacity battery and associated infrastructure including security fencing and lighting, oil/water separation unit, car park, ablutions and operations and maintenance buildings and construction of a substation with three 100 tonne transformers.

The Proposal would be constructed on a 10 ha site (0.3 ha of which has been previously cleared) over a period of 12 months and is scheduled to be commissioned by 2021-2022. Construction deliveries would peak at about 70 trucks per day during concrete pours on up to 10 days in total.

The workforce would peak at about 100 personnel during the 12 month construction phase. Operation of the facility would be continuous (in either operation or standby mode) and the key activity would be charging and discharging of the battery into the 132kV electricity network. The facility would be staffed by up to five people during the daytime.

The Proponent designed the Proposal to provide lower cost electricity grid services and replace a portion of gas fired spinning reserve, to reduce the cost of electricity services for the Darwin Katherine Integrated System. The Proponent stated in the NOI that the Proposal would reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the reduced spinning reserve requirement and increased operating efficiency of existing gas-fired power generators.

The Proposal is a standalone facility and is separate to the Proponent's Australia-Singapore Power Link Project that was awarded major project status by the Northern Territory (NT) Government in July 2019.

CONSULTATION

The NOI has been reviewed as a notification under the EA Act in consultation with Northern Territory (NT) government advisory bodies (see Attachment 1) and the responsible Minister, in accordance with clause 8(1) of the Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures 1984 (EAAP).

DECISION

The proposed action, which was referred to the NT EPA by Sun Cable Pty Ltd, has been examined by the NT EPA. The NT EPA has decided that the potential environmental impacts and risks of the proposed action are not so significant as to warrant environmental impact assessment by the NT EPA at the level of a Public Environmental Report or Environmental Impact Statement, under provisions of the *Environmental Assessment Act 1982*.

The proposed action may require assessment and approval under the *Planning Act 1999*, and be subject to general environmental duty under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998* to ensure the environmental issues associated with the proposed action are effectively managed. This decision is made in accordance with clause 8(2) of EAAP, and subject to clause 14A the administrative procedures are at an end with respect to the proposed action.

REASONS FOR DECISION

The NOI was assessed against the NT EPA's environmental factors and objectives. The NT EPA did not consider that any of its environmental factors would potentially be significantly impacted by the Proposal. Reasons for this decision are outlined below:

- the Proponent would develop and implement an environmental management plan (EMP) prior to construction for the duration of the Proposal, to avoid, minimise and manage potential impacts to air quality and greenhouse gases; terrestrial environmental quality; terrestrial flora and fauna; inland water environmental quality; and social, economic and cultural surroundings. The proponent will be advised that the EMP should also include best practice measures to manage soil erosion and sedimentation.
- the Proponent's ecological assessment indicated that significant impacts of the proposal on terrestrial threatened species listed under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* that may occur in the vicinity of the proposal are unlikely
- the DENR Flora and Fauna Division confirmed that there is a low risk that the proposed action would have any significant negative impacts on biodiversity values associated with the NT EPA's environmental objective for terrestrial flora and fauna
- there are no expected air emissions associated with the Proposal (other than dust during construction which would be managed through the Proponent's EMP)
- there are no known protected heritage sites under the NT *Heritage Act 2011* that would be impacted by the Proposal
- consultation with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) identified that Authority Certificate C2019/029 was issued to the LDC in April 2019 under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* for activities associated with development of Middle Arm, including the Proposal area. There are no known Aboriginal sacred sites within the Proposal area
- the Proposal would not discharge any contaminated water to the receiving environment
- the Proposal footprint is limited to a 10 ha area which is appropriately zoned for the activity
- the Proposal would provide potential social and economic benefits to the NT through employment, contracting, potential lower cost electricity grid services and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The NT EPA is of the view that the potential environmental impacts of the proposal can be adequately managed through implementation of the proposal in accordance with the Proponent's mitigation and management commitments in the NOI and proposed EMP. The NT EPA has provided advice and comments to the Proponent to minimise potential impacts on the environment.



DR PAUL VOGEL AM MAICD

CHAIRPERSON

NORTHERN TERRITORY ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

1 MAY 2020

Attachment 1 - Northern Territory Government Advisory bodies consulted on the Notice of Intent

Department	Division
Department of Environment and Natural Resources	Environment Flora and Fauna
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics	Lands Planning
Department of Tourism, Sport and Culture	Heritage
Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority	Technical