


## DIRECTION TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Direction given under section 83 of the Environment Protection Regulations 2020

<b>Name of proposed action</b>	Australia-Asia PowerLink Project (AAPowerLink)
<b>Proponent</b>	AA Powerlink Australia Assets Pty Ltd
<b>NT EPA reference</b>	EP2020/002
<b>Description of proposed action</b>	<p>To establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a large-scale (12, 000 hectare) solar farm and energy storage facility on Powell Creek Station (NT Portion 2094), near Elliot in the Barkly region, NT</li> <li>a high-voltage direct current transmission network including approximately 800 km of overhead transmission lines, from the solar farm to Murrumujuk on Gunn Point Peninsula, north-east of Darwin</li> <li>the Darwin converter site (DCS) incorporating up to 4 voltage source converters, batteries, alternating current (AC) substations and ancillary infrastructure</li> <li>a sub-sea cable through Northern Territory, National and International waters to Singapore.</li> </ul>
<b>Nature of proposed action</b>	Energy (renewable)
<b>Method of environmental impact assessment</b>	Assessment by Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
<b>Direction</b>	The proponent is directed to provide additional information in relation to the EIS (refer to Attachment A)
<b>Submission period</b>	The additional information must be submitted to the NT EPA within 12 months of the date of this Direction.
<b>Document to be published</b>	Additional information to the EIS
<b>Person authorised to give direction</b>	<p>Dr Paul Vogel AM – Chairperson, Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA)</p> <p>Delegate of the NT EPA under section 36 of the <i>Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority Act 2012</i>.</p>
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date of direction</b>	10 January 2024

## Attachment A – Additional information

### AA PowerLink Assets Pty Ltd – AA PowerLink Project

**Table 1.** Additional information to be provided in accordance with regulation 83

Item #	Context	Additional information required
1.	<p><b>Community and economy – noise from operation of the proposed action</b></p> <p>The Additional information did not describe potential mitigation options to fully address item 14(3) of the NT EPA's Direction and new information about noise exceedances during operation was presented.</p> <p>Noise modelling outputs in the Additional information identified that, with all reasonable and feasible mitigation measures in place, the project specific assigned noise level (35 dBA) would be exceeded up to 1.8 km from the boundary of the DCS affecting the proposed Murrumujuk residential community.</p>	<p>a) Identify proposed measures to further mitigate operational noise emission exceedances from the Darwin converter site. Discuss the consideration of alternatives (available technologies, best practicable mitigation technology, methods such as underground in proximity to residences) and reasons for either selecting or not selecting the option. If the option is not selected because it was considered not economically feasible, a comparison of the environmental effectiveness of the options must still be included.</p> <p>b) Provide revised noise model outputs for the Darwin converter site with all proposed mitigation measures in place. Demonstrate compliance with the Northern Territory noise management framework guideline (2018), specifically in relation to the noise-sensitive residential and rural residential land uses identified for the Murrumujuk Township within the proposed updates to the Litchfield Subregional Land Use Plan<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>c) Discuss any expected residual significant impacts and proposed management of those.</p>
2.	<p><b>Terrestrial ecosystems – Ghost bat</b></p> <p>Although additional information has been provided, uncertainty regarding the potentially significant impacts to Ghost bats associated with the proposed action remain.</p> <p>The proponent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>did not provide avoidance/ mitigation approaches nor any substantial discussion about the effectiveness and confidence in</li> </ul>	<p>a) Taking into account confidential information provided by DEPWS Flora and Fauna Division, identify and assess avoidance and mitigation measures for significant impact on Ghost bats from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OHTL operational noise</li> <li>risk of collision with powerlines</li> <li>static magnetic field and/or static electric field that will be emitted by the OHTL</li> <li>all of the above combined / cumulative impacts.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Proposed updates to Litchfield subregional land use plan Gunn Point peninsula, July 2020

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	<p>the measures and any residual significant impacts as per item 8(4) of the NT EPA's Direction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has not demonstrated how the precautionary principle was applied (as per item 8(5) of the NT EPA's Direction).</li> <li>• has not adequately demonstrated that the OHTL alignment will not have unacceptable impacts on the globally-important Kohinoor Adit specifically, and on Ghost Bats in both the Pine Creek and Katherine regions more generally.</li> </ul>	<p>Avoidance by relocation of the OHTL further away from the Kohinoor Adit <u>must</u> be considered and discussed. Include discussion about the effectiveness and confidence in the measures.</p> <p>b) Compare the selected measures and alternatives and provide reasons for selecting or not selecting each. If an option is not selected because it was considered not economically feasible, a comparison of the environmental effectiveness of the options must still be included.</p> <p>c) Demonstrate how the environment protection and management measures (Part 2 of the EP Act – including the precautionary principle) have been applied. Include an evaluation of how serious or irreversible harm to Ghost Bats has been avoided to the maximum extent practicable. Provide an assessment of the risk weighted consequences of various management options.</p> <p>d) Discuss any expected potentially significant residual impacts and proposed offsets.</p>
3.	<p><b>Terrestrial ecosystems – threatened flora</b></p> <p>The Additional information states that further surveys are proposed to determine the presence and extent of <i>Cleome insolata</i> (Vulnerable under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Act 1976), <i>Stylidium ensatum</i> (Endangered under TPWC Act and EPBC Act) and <i>Helicteres macrothrix</i> (Endangered under TPWC Act and EPBC Act) within the disturbance footprint. However the maximum potential impact has not been assessed (NT EPA Direction items 5(2), 6(2), and 9(2)).</p>	<p>a) Provide the maximum proportion of suitable habitat for <i>Cleome insolata</i>, <i>Stylidium ensatum</i> and <i>Helicteres macrothrix</i> (across the total range, and in a local context) that would be cleared.</p> <p>b) Discuss any potential significant residual impacts (e.g. habitat loss and removal of any plants) that cannot be avoided or mitigated and proposed offsets.</p>
4.	<p><b>Extent of the proposed action</b></p> <p>The extent of the action described in the 'Response to NT EPA Direction to provide additional information' (3 November 2023), was increased by 57 ha due to increasing the OHTL construction footprint by 81 ha to allow for the use of 60 m wide construction pads for all structures as contingency.</p>	<p>a) Provide shape files of all components of the proposed action footprint, as described and illustrated in the 'Response to NT EPA Direction to provide additional information', including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powell Creek solar precinct</li> <li>• Overhead transmission line</li> <li>• Darwin converter site</li> <li>• Cable transition facilities</li> <li>• Subsea cable system.</li> </ul>