

Managing ecology at Rutherglen Battery

Understanding and protecting the native plants, animals and waterways around the project — from survey to operation.

The Rutherglen Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and switchyard is proposed on rural land (Lot 132 FD700) approximately 7 km from Bororen, within the Gladstone Regional Council area. Two independent Ecological Assessment Reports were prepared by 4 Elements Consulting for the whole 1,277ha of Lot 132, to inform the Development Application for the project. This included an assessment of the specific 23.6ha development site in late 2025 to support the ultimately successful application to the Federal Government for approval under the EPBC Act.

In March 2026, the Federal Government provided an **environmental clearance under the EPBC Act in determining the project to be a non-controlled action**. The determination accepted the on-site environmental studies that concluded areas of high ecological value and associated wildlife habitats will not be adversely impacted by the project.

1 The environmental requirements we need to meet

The project is assessed against Commonwealth and Queensland environmental law, and against State Code 27 for battery storage facilities. These requirements ensure the site's ecology is understood and protected.

- National significance (EPBC Act 1999).** Protect nationally listed threatened and migratory species (MNES).

Waterways (Fisheries Act 1994, State Code 16). Protect watercourses, fish passage and water quality.

- State significance (Nature Conservation & VM Acts).** Protect state-listed species, habitat and native vegetation (MSES).

Local significance (Gladstone RC codes). Biodiversity Overlay Code and weed obligations (Biosecurity Act 2014).

2 What the studies identified

23.6ha
Development area analysed in second assessment, following first assessment of 1.27ha

12.5ha
Disturbance footprint

188
Plant species recorded

66
Animal species recorded

Field surveys in 2024 and 2026 found that **the existing condition of the site was highly disturbed**, with long-grazed pasture and standing dead trees — no living native woody vegetation. It sits entirely within non-remnant "Category X" vegetation, so the layout avoids clearing any native bushland.



- Flora** — 188 plant species across 36 families; **no threatened plants found**. Examples of flora in the area include:

Blue gum (E. tereticornis) Black spear grass
Melaleuca nervosa Acacia leiocalyx
- Fauna** — 66 animal species recorded across the wider property. Examples of fauna in the area include:

Eastern grey kangaroo Whiptail wallaby Rainbow bee-eater
Wedge-tailed eagle Laughing kookaburra Eastern brown snake
- Threatened species** — two vulnerable birds recorded near (not on) the site:

Southern squatter pigeon (V) White-throated needletail (V)

✓ **Key finding:** because the site avoids all native vegetation and no threatened species habitat is present, the assessment concluded the project is **unlikely to significantly impact** matters of national, state or local environmental significance.



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3 Management measures the project will adopt

Measures are brought together in a **Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)** and **Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP)**, following the mitigation hierarchy — avoid impacts first, then minimise, rehabilitate and offset.

STEP 1

Avoid

Design around sensitive habitat.

STEP 2

Minimise

Reduce the footprint of works.

STEP 3

Rehabilitate

Restore disturbed areas.

STEP 4

Offset

Protect habitat elsewhere.



Waterways & the Reef

- Certified Erosion & Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) protects Baffle Creek and the Great Barrier Reef.
- Cross the watercourse perpendicularly with vegetated buffers.



Wildlife

- Species Management Program (SMP) for protected breeding places (e.g. squatter pigeon), reviewed by DETSI.
- Fauna spotters to be used during any clearing.
- Retain habitat features beyond the footprint.



Weeds & vegetation

- Manage lantana and giant rats tail grass (Weeds of National Significance).
- Machinery hygiene to stop weed seed spread.
- Use of non-residual herbicides near waterways.



Plans & monitoring

- CEMP, OEMP and Environmental Management Plan for all development and operational works.
- Monitoring of water quality, weeds and rehabilitation.
- Results reported to regulators.

Why the impact is low

The land has been cleared and grazed for many years, so it holds no living native bushland and no threatened-species habitat. By keeping all works within this already-cleared pasture and away from the single waterway, the project protects the higher-value habitat found elsewhere on the property.

4 Next steps

1

Prepare the CEMP, ESCP and Environmental Management Program before works.

2

Obtain approvals, including waterway crossing permits (State Codes 16 & 27).

3

Build and operate with controls, monitoring and community updates.

