## L.1 Response to individual concerns

| Level of concern | Topic | Response |
|---|---|---|
| HIGH | Location, scale, visibility, project expansion, valley infrastructure | BCSF is significantly less visible to close neighbours than the previously approved Capital Solar Farm which is situated along Tarago Road. The approval for this sits with the Founder and he has committed to handing back the approval if BCSF proceeds.<br><br>BCSF is situated in the low, flat country and will have low visibility in the region and distant views (5-7+km from the other side of the lake).<br><br>The size of BCSF has been substantially reduced since the initial conversations in November 2020 from 1,200ha. BCSF footprint now comprises approximately 650ha with the solar panels sited on approx 325ha and 650ha of sheep grazing. The economics of large-scale renewable Projects require a certain size to be viable.<br><br>Both requests for tree planting have been agreed to by the Founder. The Proponent has provided visual images to articulate the effect of tree planting along the length of Butmaroo Creek from Currandooley Road to Lake George / Weereewa / Lake Ngungara which significantly mitigates visual impacts.<br><br>The Project area has been heavily farmed for 170 years and includes an old sand mine and is naturally cleared. The most important consideration for solar farm siting is proximity to strong parts of the electricity transmission network, and the population centres they are designed to serve. It is significantly more challenging to develop a solar farm in remote, outback locations due to the very high costs associated with transmission line extensions and the energy losses that occur when electricity is transported over longer distances to consumers.<br><br>At a meeting on 3 December 2021 BCSF agreed to remove a section of more elevated panels following a request from two residents. BCSF also agreed to plant trees to obscure panels on a northern section of the Project.<br><br>The NSW Government's objective is to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 to help Australia share in tackling climate change. Energy production needs to be close to the population (in particular, Sydney) rather than in the outback, as people tend to prefer.<br><br>These projects provide drought resistance to farmers and help to ensure family farms aren't divided into unviable portions for future generations. For the Founder this represents a significantly less industrial and damaging way of generating power and a more palatable option than subdivision.<br><br>Farming will play a big role in the transition to a lower carbon economy.<br><br>The BCSF Founding farmer acknowledges he is only in control of his own land and is not able to control what other people in the valley will do. He has committed to not build the 9 approved turbines on the BCSF site and the approved Capital Solar Farm on the eastern side of his property if BCSF proceeds with satisfactory conditions. The solar farm cannot expand on his land because of the constraints identified in the EIS studies. |

| Level of concern | Topic | Response |
|---|---|---|
| | | Studies conducted by BCSF show the grid is a limiting factor – and our preliminary grid studies indicate that the 330kv line that goes across the land will be close to capacity if this solar farm connects. |
| HIGH | Glare | SLR Consulting Glare Study indicated there was no potential for glare for surrounding residences during normal operations. The results from the glare analysis have been presented at the online community information sessions, reported in the local newspaper on two occasions, published on the website, provided link to residents, available at the Open Day. |
| HIGH | Lake George / Lake Ngungara / Weereewa | The Founders share concerns about the natural world and the importance of Weereewa / Lake Ngungara / Lake George being preserved. The western edge of the solar farm has a buffer that varies between approx. 600m and 1.3km from the edge of Lake George / Weereewa/Lake Ngungara. If the Project proceeds it will include an area of approx. 200ha ha or 2km$^2$ on the edge of the lake which will be preserved for what the Founders are hoping will become an Indigenous Cultural and Heritage learning zone. The Indigenous Cultural and Heritage Learning Zone is between the lake and BCSF.<br><br>This particular area has been heavily farmed and sand mined. The most interesting part of this Project for the Founders has been learning more about the Indigenous heritage on their farm which has identified what needs protecting and how the land was shaped. |
| HIGH | Land values | This is a common question amongst communities where renewable energy projects are proposed. Since the neighbouring Capital wind farm was built the Valuer General has assessed the BCSF site land value to have increased 60%. Studies into the potential impact of wind farm developments on property prices have been undertaken both in Australia and overseas. A study by the NSW Valuer-General (2009) concluded that there is no correlation between wind farms and long-term property prices. |
| HIGH | CBSS | The Project Founders of BCSF want to be as fair as possible and share the financial benefits. This includes contributing $3.5m over the lifetime of the project to the local community including $1,235,000 to the local swimming pool over 30 years. It is not attempting to be compensation, but rather a recognition by the Founders of key stakeholders who live in the community up to 6.5km that we believe we should share the financial benefits with.<br><br>The Project Founder will inform The NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment via the EIS that not everyone who participates in the CBSS supports the Project. |
| MEDIUM | Screening | Both requests for tree planting have been agreed to by the Founder. The Proponent has provided visual images to articulate the effect of tree planting along the length of Butmaroo Creek from Currandooley Road to Lake George / Weereewa / Lake Ngungara |

| Level of concern | Topic | Response |
|---|---|---|
| | | which significantly mitigates visual impacts from the west. |
| MEDIUM | Reduction of valuable Farmland | The Office of Environment and Heritage soil classification Land and Soil Capability (LSC) has assessed 6.6% of the land to be a classification of 5 (Moderate-low Capability Land) and 93.4% of the land to be classification 6 (Low Capability Land). These soil studies show this is light sandy country with very little organic content that has been heavily farmed for over 150 years. The solar farm is sited on low grade sandy soils - next to an operating sand mine - in fact part of it is an old sand mine. The solar array area is approx 650ha. The panels themselves will only cover approx 325 ha with generous spacing in between to allow for agri-solar. Sheep will graze on the whole of the 650 ha. By carrying out our farming activities using the principles of regenerative agriculture the landholder can restore grazing land and rebuild biodiversity and soil health at the same time as increasing productivity and sustainability. Sheep and solar make a perfect combination because the sheep get protection from the wind, rain and sun from the panels, and the grass or pasture under the panels help keep the panels at the optimum temperature to maximise electricity production. |
| LOW | Climate change | A 350MW solar farm will produce around 735,000 MWh per year – enough energy to power more than 124,000 houses. This would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 600,000 tonnes p.a which is equivalent to the pollution produced by almost 220,000 cars. |
| LOW | Bushfires | All local fire brigades have been consulted. A comprehensive fire management plan will be prepared and implemented if the Project proceeds. Local Fire Brigades will be inducted onto the site pre operation. Rotational grazing sheep through the Project will be used to manage the grass. |
| LOW | Ownership | A Project of this size requires an investor to complete the detailed design, procure components and raise capital. The Founders have selected Octopus Investments Australia OIA, a subsidiary of a British energy investor and fund manager. Importantly, OIA shares the founder's commitment to good environmental, social and cultural outcomes from this project as well ongoing commitment to Agri-solar. OIA's investment may require Foreign Investment Review Board approval. |
| LOW | Size of substation | The substation is approx 6 ha and is hidden in an old pine forest out of view of the community. |
| LOW | Renewable Energy Zones | The BCSF site may be considered to be within the Illawarra zone. |
| LOW | Trig station | Protection for the trig station will be enhanced. The trig station currently sits in the paddock and has no protection from livestock or machinery. If the solar farm is |

| Level of concern | Topic | Response |
|---|---|---|
| | | constructed it will be protected by a steel fence. |
| LOW | Energy supply and costs | Local energy supply will be unaffected because the project connects to the transmission system and not the distribution system.<br><br>NSW is witnessing a transition to renewables. This is now driven by the fact that these technologies are cheaper than the fuel cost of fossil fuel generators (coal and gas) and the fact that coal assets are reaching end of life. Additionally, capital markets are favouring investments in clean technologies due to concerns about climate change and stranded asset risk. Initially, subsidised renewables and the carbon price may have marginally pushed up prices. However, the wholesale price is now reducing, which has partially flowed onto consumer bills. This is a large and cost-effective project and can be expected to further this declining cost trend.<br><br>One challenge of the transition is reliability. Installing renewables over a large geographic range and improving interconnections between states helps, but storage is also required. This is why the project incorporates a large battery system, capable of shifting the entire output of the solar farm into morning and evening demand peaks. |

# Appendix L.2 Social impact assessment considerations to inform engagement

Prior to commencing the stakeholder consultation, a social impact assessment of the potential negative and positive feedback was done based on the Founders / Landholders knowledge of their local community and based on their experience and knowledge of other renewable energy projects. This work was completed by the engagement team. The results are presented below.

| SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - POTENTIAL NEGATIVE FEEDBACK | |
|---|---|
| **ISSUE** | **MANAGEMENT** |
| Concern about the visibility of the project in a valley with sand mines and a wind farm. Concerns about Weereewa / Lake Ngungara / Lake George and its connection to Traditional Owners, spiritual and cultural context. | The project sits in heavily farmed, low lying country between a Bungendore Sand & Gravel sand mine and Capital wind farm and will be hidden from many residences because of the natural topography. Visibility will be limited to houses on the escarpment 6-7km from BCSF and 5.7 km from the low lying residences across the lake. Three near neighbours will have broken views of the project with one residence having expansive views from 3km. The view for these close neighbours will be less impactful than Capital Solar Farm which is approved directly across the road. BCSF has worked with residents to arrange visual imagery so key stakeholders understand the visual impacts of BCSF from their home or property. Weereewa / Lake Ngungara / Lake George is a significant spiritual and cultural site for Indigenous people. The site has undergone extensive test pitting and archeological studies and if the project proceeds the landholders would like to continue to work with Traditional landholders in the future to preserve 2sq km of land near the lake for an Indigenous archeological cultural and heritage zone. BCSF sits between 600m and 1.3km back off the lake edge. The landholders are committed to working with First Nations people to ensure Indigenous people are given priority to jobs. |
| Concern about the scale of the project in the valley. | A 350MW solar farm is a major project. The initial study area will reduce significantly once the constraints are understood. Since the inception of the project the area being studied has been halved as a result of constraints identified during the EIS studies. Because of the agricultural aspects of the project a gap of between 5-9m will be required between the panels which will almost double the land requirements for BCSF. |
| Concerns about glint, glare and reflection from the solar panels. | A full glare and glint study will be conducted to give the community confidence there will be no glare or glint issues associated with tracking panels on BCSF. |
| Concerns about protecting Indigenous heritage and cultural aspects of the project. | The Founders / Landholders of BCSF have valued the archeological aspects of the project and previous studies which have taught them important knowledge about the Indigenous heritage of the property. Access to the lake is currently closed on the eastern side. The landholders are keen to continue working with the local Traditional Owners and have suggested if the project proceeds they will close off 2sq km of country near the lake for further Indigenous heritage and cultural learning. The land where BCSF is situated has been heavily farmed for 170 years and parts of it are an old sand mine. The project sits between 600m - 1.3km back from the lake edge. |

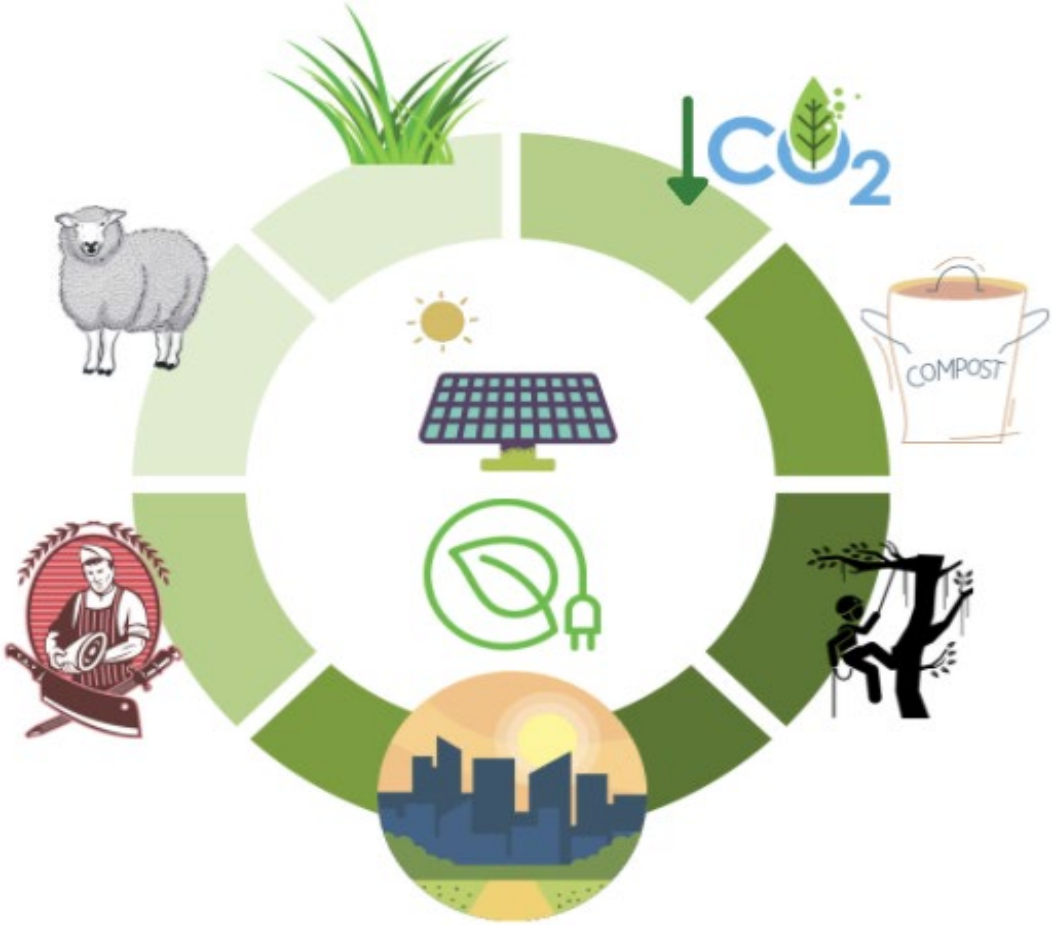
| | |
|---|---|
| Concerns about using prime farming country for energy generation. | BCSF sits on sandy, marginal country that has been heavily farmed for 170 years. Parts of it are a disused sand mine. BCSF combines agriculture and solar energy production. The Founder / Landholder intends to raise organic fat lambs under the panels and to use rotational grazing methods to improve the soil biodiversity. A carbon sequestration project is currently being registered for part of the landholding. |
| Concerns about the motivation for the CBSS. | The Founders / Landholders are members of the local community. They recognise the project is large and believe it is fair that the financial benefits of the project should be shared with the wider community particularly those who have visibility of the project. Their desire is to be good neighbours and good members of their community. |
| Concerns that the community hasn't been informed. | There have been concerns in the community about lack of consultation on a range of recent developments. As members of the local community the Project Founders / Landholders intend to ensure the communications of the project are outstanding. Communications with the local community will include phone calls, email, website, media releases, advertisements, brochure drop, site visits, online meetings, open days to ensure there is opportunity for members of the community to understand about BCSF and to ask questions. The project has prioritised communications with near neighbours and other stakeholder groups. |
| Concerns about land values | Since the neighbouring Capital wind farm was built the Valuer General has assessed the BCSF site land value to have increased 60%.<br><br>Studies into the potential impact of wind farm developments on property prices have been undertaken both in Australia and overseas. This is consistent with a study by the NSW Valuer-General (2009) which concluded that there is no correlation between wind farms and long-term property prices. |
| Potential impacts on tourism | There is limited impact on tourism as there is no access to the lake from the eastern side. There is a car park for viewing the lake from the western side on the Federal highway which is over 10kms from BCSF. |
| Potential for bushfires. | There is no inherent risk of bushfires on a solar farm. The project is on the eastern side of the lake which provides protection from the prevailing wind and westerly bushfires. There is no inherent risk of bushfires on a solar farm. Grass will be managed with intensive rotational grazing of sheep. A bushfire study and management plan will be completed as well as induction of all site workers. |
| Increased traffic during construction. | A comprehensive traffic plan will be undertaken to reduce the burden on local residents. |
| Local job seekers and service providers have priority. | Wherever possible members of the local community and local region will be prioritised for roles. BCSF is currently collecting names of local people interested in jobs, services, consulting or materials to the solar farm. This list will be provided to the EPC Contractor. |
| Concerns about European heritage | There is an important trig station on the BCSF site which will be fenced off to ensure it is protected. |
| Concerns about noise | |
| Concerns about dust | |
| | |

| SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - POTENTIAL POSITIVE FEEDBACK | |
|---|---|
| **ISSUE** | **MANAGEMENT** |
| Local farmer led project | There is a greater level of trust amongst rural communities of locals rather than city based corporations. The local farmer / Founder of BCSF has undertaken all the local stakeholder engagement. |
| Renewable energy | There is generally in the local community support for renewable energy. |
| Stronger regional communities | BCSF supports the NSW government's commitment to invest in rural communities and builds on the NSW Transmission Infrastructure Strategy and supports the implementation of the Australian Energy Market Operator's Integrated System Plan. |
| Agri-solar | One of the most prevalent concerns regarding solar farms is the change in land use. BCSF will co-exist with agricultural practices and in fact, will assist them. The panels create shade and protection from wind and rain for lambs; They also reduce the temperature of the ground; The dew run-off from the panels increases the moisture of the ground and intensive rotational grazing of sheep will assist with soil biodiversity; The increased ground coverage of grass cools the panels an optimises the solar energy production. |
| Emissions reduction | This project supports the NSW Government's commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and reach zero emissions by 2050. When built, a 350MW solar farm will produce around 735,000 MWh per year – enough energy to power more than 124,000 houses – and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 700,000 tonnes - equivalent to the pollution produced by almost 220,000 cars. |
| Cheaper energy | BCSF will assist in delivering affordable energy to help replace the state's existing power stations as they retire over the coming decades, and will provide economic development opportunities for regional communities to capitalise on their location within the 'green' energy network |
| Indigenous heritage | The studies for BCSF have provided the Traditional Owners and the landholders with invaluable insight into the archeological heritage of the land. This will inform future land practices for the landholders. Currently there is no access for local Indigenous people to the eastern side of the lake. If the project proceeds the landholder would like to work with the local Indigenous communities to create a 2sq km cultural and heritage learning zone. |
| Indigenous jobs | BCSF will work with local Indigenous job networks / Canberra Institute of Technology and ANU to prioritise Indigenous people working on the BCSF. |
| Local jobs | Based on similar projects BCSF will provide approx 150 local jobs for the community of Bungendore, Tarago, Queanbeyan, Goulburn. Many job seekers in the Bunggendore community seek work in Queanbeyan and Canberra because of limited local opportunities. |
| Local economy | Employment is stimulated not only in the construction and maintenance of renewable projects, but all the way through the local business supply chain. This benefit is shared by cafes, pubs, B&Bs, fuel and hardware suppliers, vehicle and machinery servicing, as well as many other businesses. Furthermore, our Community Benefit Sharing Program will focus on returning financial benefits back to the community. This will be beneficial to the local communities who are struggling post drought, bushfires and Covid |

| | |
|---|---|
| | lockdowns. |
| Community Benefit Sharing Scheme | Blind Creek Solar Farm will contribute $330 per MW per year to the bespoke Community Benefit Sharing Program. For a 350MW project this will allow key stakeholders and the community to share between $2m and $3.4m, depending on whether the funds are spent up front or over the 30 year project life. This will scale up or down depending on the size of the project. The funds are for local projects which are aligned with a vision of sustainable agriculture, environmental restoration and community building. The recipients of funds will be required to spend the money locally so the money stays in the community. The beneficiaries of the project include the wider community - the project will contribute $1,235,000 to the local swimming pool over the life of the project, as well as provide funding to an Indigenous Cultural and Heritage learning zone near the lake, and share financial benefits with key stakeholder groups. |
| Securing family farms for future generations | Lease payments from BCSF will assist with inter-generational land transfer and assist in ensuring that land is not subdivided to manage generational change. It will also help secure landholdings during droughts. The founders / landholders are shifting their approach to help with the move towards a more sustainable future. This includes rehabilitating environments, rebuilding the soil and sequestering carbon while improving our land for animal production. BCSF is part of a broader program to increase the resilience of our property while enhancing its carrying capacity and addressing climate change. As part of this refocus, it makes sense to use degraded country to become renewable energy farmers. The solar farm will co-exist with lamb production, regenerative agriculture, a soil carbon project, a green-waste humus compost facility and restoration works to improve the biodiversity and water-holding capacity of the catchment. |
| Securing European heritage | The trig station which is currently exposed to farming machinery and animals will be secured with a metal fence. |
| Circular Economy | SEE IMAGE BELOW |

Blind Creek Solar Farm

# Circular Economy




This project is based on the concept of the Circular Economy. Renewable energy is produced and sent to the city. Organic wood waste from TreeWorks is composted on our farm enhancing our carbon sequestration project and enriching our soil and the pastures under the solar panels, where the lambs graze. These lambs are sold back to the city and towns, which then provide their organic waste and the process starts again.

## Appendix L.3 Queanbeyan-Palerang Region industry and social infrastructure services

Table L1 indicates a strong presence in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council area of the types of industries that are likely to be well-placed to service aspects of the Project.

Table L1 Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council area business structure for 2020

| Sector | Number businesses | % | % NSW |
|---|---|---|---|
| Construction | 1,221 | 24.6 | 16.0 |
| Professional, Scientific and Technical Services | 616 | 12.4 | 13.5 |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | 563 | 11.4 | 6.2 |
| Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services | 426 | 8.6 | 10.9 |
| Transport, Postal and Warehousing | 365 | 7.4 | 8.2 |
| Financial and Insurance Services | 261 | 5.3 | 9.2 |
| Other Services | 238 | 4.8 | 4.1 |
| Retail Trade | 227 | 4.6 | 5.6 |
| Manufacturing | 219 | 4.4 | 3.3 |
| Administrative and Support Services | 185 | 3.7 | 4.2 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 158 | 3.2 | 3.9 |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 152 | 3.1 | 6.2 |
| Wholesale Trade | 97 | 2.0 | 3.5 |
| Arts and Recreation Services | 69 | 1.4 | 1.3 |
| Education and Training | 67 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| Information Media and Telecommunications | 37 | 0.7 | 1.1 |
| Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services | 19 | 0.4 | 0.3 |

| Sector | Number businesses | % | % NSW |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public Administration and Safety | 17 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Industry not classified | 12 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Mining | 11 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Total | 4,960 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Table L2 Approximate number of accommodation facilities within 25km of the Project

| Locality | Establishments | Rooms | Cabins | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bungendore | 6 | 42 | 1 | 43 |
| Queanbeyan | 16 | 452 | 87 | 539 |
| Sutton | 3 | 157 | - | 157 |
| Gundaroo | 2 | 8 | - | 8 |
| Tarago | 1 | 11 | - | 11 |
| Total | 28 | 670 | 88 | 758 rooms/ cabins |

Whilst working on the Project, workers would utilise local services in the surrounding areas including those detailed below.

Table L3

| Town | Service offering |
|---|---|
| Bungendore | • Small amount of commercial accommodation<br>• Bungendore train station<br>• Grocery stores<br>• Pharmacy<br>• Medical Centre<br>• Library<br>• Various small cafes, and eateries<br>• Petrol station |

| Town | Service offering |
|---|---|
| | • Post office<br>• Police Station<br>• Recreation facilities including tennis courts and public swimming pool |
| Queanbeyan | • Commercial accommodation<br>• Bungendore train station<br>• Coles, Aldi and Woolworths<br>• Banks<br>• Kmart<br>• Pharmacies<br>• General Practitioners/medical centres<br>• Library<br>• Various cafes, takeaway shops and eateries<br>• Several hotels/pubs<br>• Petrol stations<br>• Post office<br>• Police Station<br>• Recreation facilities including indoor sports facilities, tennis courts, swimming pool and gyms |
| Sutton | • Post office<br>• Bakery |
| Gundaroo | • Small amount of commercial accommodation<br>• Gundaroo grocer<br>• Various small cafes, and eateries<br>• Post office<br>• Gundaroo Park |
| Tarago | • Tarago train station<br>• Café and hotel<br>• Petrol station<br>• Post office<br>• Tarago recreation area |