

FINLEY BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM SSDA

Engagement Outcomes Report

Prepared for

BESS PACIFIC, C/O GRANSOLAR DEVELOPMENT

AUSTRALIA

March 2025

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Acknowledgement of Country

Urbis acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands we operate on.

We recognise that First Nations sovereignty was never ceded and respect First Nations peoples continuing connection to these lands, waterways and ecosystems for over 60,000 years.

We pay our respects to First Nations Elders, past and present.

The river is the symbol of the Dreaming and the journey of life. The circles and lines represent people meeting and connections across time and space. When we are working in different places, we can still be connected and work towards the same goal.

Title: Sacred River Dreaming
Artist Hayley Pigram
Darug Nation
Sydney, NSW

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ABBREVIATIONS

Table 1 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
DP	Deposited Plan
DPHI	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EP&A Act	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
GDA	Gransolar Development Australia
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
LGA	Local Government Area
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt Hour
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SSDA	State Significant Development Application
SSD	State Significant Development

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Engagement Outcomes Report (report) has been by Urbis Ltd (Urbis) to accompany a detailed State Significant Development Application (SSDA) prepared by **BESS Pacific c/o Gransolar Development Australia (the Proponent)** for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the corner of Canalla Road and Broockmanns Road (eastern side), Finley, known as Lot 3 DP740920 Riverina Highway, Finley NSW 2713 (the site).

1.1. ENGAGEMENT CARRIED OUT

To ensure engagement was consistent with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's (DPHI) *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* and complied with the engagement requirements outlined in the SEARs, engagement was undertaken with:

- Government stakeholders, including DPHI
- Berrigan Shire Council, including Julia Cornwell Mckean Mayor, Berrigan Shire Council Mayor and Councillors, as well as staff across multiple teams including Planning and Development, Economic Development and Transport
- Members of Parliament including State Member for Murray, Helen Dalton (independent) and Federal Member for Farrer, Sussan Ley MP (Liberal)
- Relevant agencies, including Transport for NSW, Transgrid, Lumea, The Australian Energy Market Operator, NSW Rural Fire Service and Murray Irrigation Limited (MIL)
- Aboriginal Land Council
- Community stakeholders, including site owner, neighbouring dwellings, the wider Finley community, and community and representative groups.

The following engagement activities were undertaken to inform and consult the community about the proposal:

- A community newsletter, including information about the proposal and how to provide feedback
- Dedicated project website, including detailed information about the proposal and how to provide feedback
- Newspaper print advertisements, and digital advertisements including details about the proposal, how to provide feedback, as well as an invitation to the community to attend information pop-up sessions
- Community information pop-up sessions – one weekday evening and one weekday morning – including information display boards and attended by members of the project team
- Individual project briefings to capture feedback from government agencies
- Feedback survey as part of the Social Impact Assessment, with a QR code to the survey included on the community newsletter and pop-up session display boards
- Enquiry channels via an 1800 phone number and email.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Proponent has prepared a State Significant Development (SSD) Application to construct and operate a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the corner of Canalla Road and Broockmanns Road (eastern side), Finley (the site). The site is legally described as Lot 3 of DP740920.

The proposal aims to contribute to supporting Australia's transition to a renewable energy future, supporting an increased reliability to the transmission network.

If approved, the proposal will include:

- Installation of up to 80 20-foot lithium-ion battery containers, each approximately 6m long, 2.4m wide and 2.9m high, with a capacity of up to 100 MW and 200 MWhours (MWh), with associated power conversion systems, switchgear, and a control building
- On-site parking, water tank, storage area, stormwater management infrastructure and security lighting and fencing, internal access tracks and temporary construction laydown area
- Utilisation of existing site access arrangements from Riverina Highway, plus two new driveway crossovers proposed, one off Broockmanns Road and one off Canalla Road.
- The BESS will be connected to the Finley substation via a series of underground cables.

The anticipated operational life of the BESS is 20-25 years. If approved, the proposal will support around 55 jobs during an 11-month construction period (with a peak around 3 months) and around 5-10 staff required for commissioning and 1-3 staff required during the operational life.

2.1. LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

A proposal for a SSD application is considered state significant if it:

- Is over a certain size
- Is in a sensitive environmental or culturally important area, or
- Will exceed a specific capital investment value.

In NSW, the preparation and evaluation of environmental assessments for state significant developments is legislated through the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). The EP&A Act outlines a series of statutory requirements for proponents seeking development approval. The EP&A Act includes specific requirements to provide community members and stakeholders with opportunities to participate in the planning process.

As such, this Outcomes Report has been prepared in line with the following guidelines and requirements:

- The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) issued for this project
- The NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) *Undertaking Engagement for State Significant Projects guidelines*
- DPHI's *Benefit Sharing Guideline* (November 2024) DPHI's *Community Participation Plan* (April 2024)
- The International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum.

2.2. RESPONSE TO SEARS

This Engagement Outcomes Report has been prepared to address the SEARs, as issued by the DPHI. The SEARs require demonstration of how the engagement to be undertaken for this project is consistent with DPHI's *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects*.

Table 2 provides the SEARs that are relevant to the delivery of community and stakeholder engagement for this project.

Table 2 Response to SEARs – SSD-72430958

SEARs item	Project response
Consultation	
<p>During the preparation of the EIS, you should consult with the relevant local, State or Commonwealth Government authorities, infrastructure and service providers, community groups, affected landowners and any exploration licence and/or mineral title holders. In particular, you must undertake detailed consultation with affected landowners surrounding the development, relevant government agencies, including the relevant local Council.</p> <p>The EIS must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detail how engagement undertaken was consistent with the Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects (DPIE, 2024); and ▪ Describe the consultation process and the issues raised and identify where the design of the development has been amended in response to these issues. Where amendments have not been made to address an issue, an explanation should be provided. 	<p>In accordance with NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) expectations around early and effective engagement for state significant projects, a Communications & Engagement Strategy was prepared and implemented to ensure the Proponent delivered an engagement program consistent with DPHI's Undertaking Engagement Guide: Guidance for State Significant Projects.</p> <p>The Proponent's approach aimed to connect with the relevant local and state government authorities, relevant agencies and community stakeholders.</p>

3. PROJECT AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

This section includes a summary of the proposal and the site and community context.

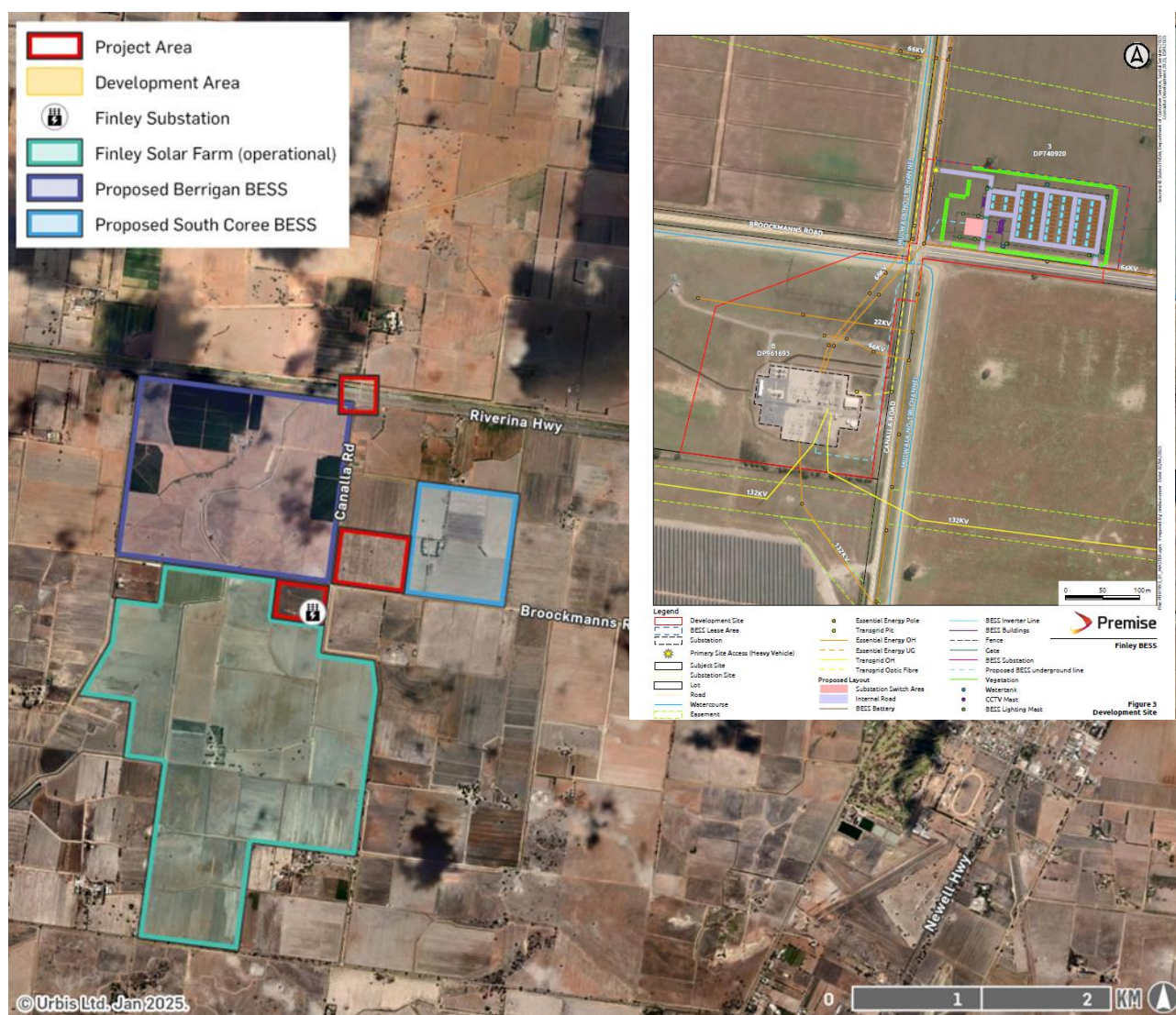
3.1. PROJECT SITE

The Proponent is proposing to develop a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the corner of Canalla Road and Broockmanns Road (eastern side), Finley, within the Berrigan Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA).

The residential township of Finley is approximately 5 km east of the site. The site is legally described as Lot 3 of DP740920 and has a development area of approximately 3.5 ha.

The BESS will connect to an existing transmission substation at 168 Canalla Road, Finley NSW 2713 (Substation Site), approximately 250m to the southwest of the BESS Site. A proposed transmission line (TL) route would be tunnelled below the Broockmanns Road intersection and continue underground to point of connection to the substation.

Figure 1 Aerial showing project location including proximity to other BESS proposals and the Finley substation



Source: Urbis

3.2. THE SURROUNDING LOCALITY

As show in Figure 1 the area surrounding the site includes:

- **North:** Immediately north of the site are agricultural land uses, and the township of Jerilderie is approximately 35km northeast of the site.
- **East:** Immediately east of the site are agricultural land uses. After 5km, the residential township of Finley stands, and beyond that Berrigan town (approximately 30km east of the site).
- **South:** Immediately south of the site is the Finley Solar Farm, and beyond are agricultural land uses. These uses continue further south, in addition to the township of Tocomwal (located approximately 20km southeast of the site) and the New South Wales and Victoria border.
- **West:** Immediately west of the site is the Finley Solar Farm. Further west is land used for agricultural purposes, and approximately 50km west northwest is Deniliquin.

3.3. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As show in Figure 1, there are several other proposed BESS projects in Finley. The proposed South Coree BESS and the proposed Berrigan BESS are also located within 2km of the site.

Therefore, cumulative impact has been addressed in a range of technical reports considered as part of the EIS, particularly social, noise and visual impact assessments. For detailed information on how cumulative impact has been considered, please refer to these reports.

Cumulative impact has also informed the design of the engagement process given the potential impact and increased awareness within the community.

Consideration of cumulative impact included:

- Primary focus of engagement activities on near neighbours through distribution of a project newsletter and early engagement
- Proactively identifying the two other proposed BESS facilities in project communications to ensure cumulative impacts are identified and well-understood
- Provision of information on proposed mitigations e.g. fire suppression measures
- Opportunities for input into considerations for community benefit mechanisms.

4. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

This section outlines the engagement activities delivered to raise community and stakeholder awareness and invite feedback on, the proposal.

4.1. ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH

The engagement approach was informed by the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2's) Public Participation spectrum, the Clean Energy Council *Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects* and the NSW Government's *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects*.

IAP2's spectrum describes goals for public participation, and the corresponding promise to the public (see Figure 2).

The engagement approach was determined based on the anticipated level of impact of the project on the surrounding community and stakeholders. As the level of impact was likely to be low-moderate, the objective of this engagement to support the Finley BESS is to inform and consult stakeholders and the community.

Figure 2 Public Participation spectrum

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Source: IAP2

For this project, the engagement approach involved:

- Providing consistent, relevant, jargon-free and up-to-date information on the proposed BESS, impacts, benefits, and the planning process through accessible, tailored open lines of communication.
- Identifying potential impacts on stakeholders and the community, as well as measures to enhance potential positive impacts and minimise potential negative impacts, through genuine and consistent consultation.
- Providing methods for monitoring and opportunities for the community to give feedback to help inform the planning process.

- Responding appropriately and in a timely manner to concerns or questions raised by the community and stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- Facilitating information flow to the project team by establishing working relationships to ensure stakeholder and community views and local knowledge are appropriately incorporated into the design of the project.
- Managing expectations by closing the feedback loop and sharing how stakeholder and community views influenced the proposal.

4.2. STAKEHOLDERS

The community stakeholders have been identified due to their proximity to the site, potential concerns about the project impacts, intersection with other interested stakeholders through community connection, and general interest in the project.

Figure 3 below outlines the stakeholders that were engaged during the project scoping phase and through the development of the EIS.

Figure 3 Stakeholder categorisation

GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES	RELEVANT AGENCIES	SURROUNDING COMMUNITY	FIRST NATIONS STAKEHOLDERS
<p>Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)</p> <p>Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)</p> <p>Berrigan Shire Council (officers, Mayor, Councillors)</p> <p>Federal MP Minister for Environment, Sussan Ley</p> <p>State MP for Murray, Helen Dalton</p>	<p>Transport for NSW (TfNSW)</p> <p>WaterNSW</p> <p>Transgrid</p> <p>Murray Irrigation Limited (MIL)</p> <p>NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire & Rescue NSW</p> <p>Exploration license and/or mineral title holders</p>	<p>Landowner</p> <p>Near neighbours, including residents on Brookmanns Road and Canalla Road</p> <p>Wider Finley community</p> <p>Community and special interest groups</p>	<p>Traditional knowledge holders</p> <p>Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) and Aboriginal Land Councils</p>

4.3. PREVIOUS CONSULTATION

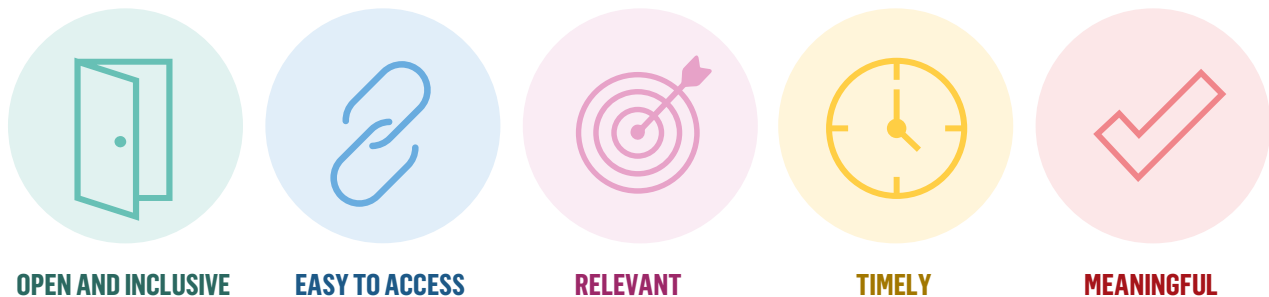
Consultation undertaken during the SEARs request phase was primarily through targeted discussions with Council, State Government and regulatory authorities. Additionally, consultation with a landowner located to the west of the site informed changes to the detailed design process, particularly the under-boring of a section of the TL network. Consultation with a second (adjacent) landowner has been unsuccessful despite multiple attempts.

5. ALIGNMENT WITH BEST PRACTICE

5.1. DPHI COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN

This engagement approach is in line with the principles in DPHI's *Community Participation Plan*, which is the Department's own Plan for engaging with the community and key stakeholders when executing their planning functions. The principles of this plan are shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 Engagement principles in DPHI's Community Participation Plan



5.2. CLEAN ENERGY COUNCIL BEST PRACTICE CHARTER FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

The engagement approach also responds to the Clean Energy Council's (CEC) Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy projects, which is a set of commitments that govern best practice delivery of clean energy projects.

The commitments in the Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects, related to engagement, are:




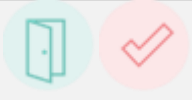

1. We will engage respectfully with the local community, including Traditional Owners of the land, to seek their views and input before submitting a development application and finalising the design of the project.
2. We will provide timely information and be accessible and responsive in addressing the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the life of the project.
3. We will consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project, and on the mitigation options.
4. We will offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project, and consult them on the options available, including the relevant governance arrangements.

5.3. ALIGNMENT

The table below highlights how the engagement approach is aligned with DPHI's Community Participation Plan and the CEC Charter, mentioned above.

Table 3 How the engagement approach is aligned with best practice

Approach	Alignment with Community Participation Plan	Alignment with CEC Charter
Providing consistent, relevant, jargon-free and up-to-date information on the proposal, impacts, benefits, and the planning report process through accessible, tailored open lines of communication.		1, 3

Approach	Alignment with Community Participation Plan	Alignment with CEC Charter
Identify potential impacts on stakeholders and the community, as well as measures to enhance potential positive impacts and minimise potential negative impacts, through genuine and consistent consultation.		3, 4
Providing methods for monitoring and opportunities for the community to give feedback to help inform the planning process.		1, 2, 3, 4
Responding appropriately and in a timely manner to concerns or questions raised by the community and stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of the project.		1, 2
Facilitating information flow to the project team by establishing working relationships to ensure stakeholder and community views and local knowledge are appropriately incorporated into the design of the project.		1, 2, 3
Managing expectations by closing the feedback loop and sharing how stakeholder and community views influenced the proposal.		2, 4

5.4. ALIGNMENT WITH UNDERTAKING ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR STATE SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS

This Outcomes Report has been prepared in line with DPHI's *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines*, which provide guidance for the effective delivery of engagement to support the development of state significant projects in NSW. The *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines* provides a series of objectives for the effective engagement. These community participation objectives are detailed in this table also outlines where each objective has been addressed.

Table 4 Alignment with community participation objectives

	Objective	Where has this been addressed
1	Identify the people or groups who are interested in or are likely to be affected by the project.	People and groups who are interested in or likely to be affected by the project are identified in the Communications and Engagement Strategy and detailed in Section 4.2
2	Use appropriate engagement techniques. This includes: considering the accessibility of how information is delivered	For an overview of engagement activities, see Section 6

	Objective	Where has this been addressed
	<p>the avoidance of technical language and jargon so information can be easily interpreted by the audience</p> <p>the adoption of non-written forms of engagement, where needed.</p> <p><i>Appropriate engagement techniques are particularly important when engaging with specific groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, where engagement should be a discrete, planned activity undertaken by and with experienced Indigenous engagement specialists.</i></p>	See the appendix for the project communications that were distributed to the community and key stakeholders.
3	Ensure the community are provided with safe, respectful and inclusive opportunities to express their views	For an overview of engagement activities, see Section 6
4	Involve the community, councils and government agencies early in the development of the proposal, to enable their views to be considered in project planning and design	For details of the approach to engagement with key stakeholders, such as community, council and government agencies, see Section 8.4
5	<p>Be innovative in their engagement approach and tailor engagement activities to suit the:</p> <p>context (e.g. sensitivity of the site and surrounds)</p> <p>scale and nature of the project and its impacts</p> <p>level of interest in the project.</p>	For a summary description of the project, see Section 3
6	Provide clear and concise information about what is proposed and the likely impacts for the relevant people or group they are engaging with.	<p>The Communications and Engagement Strategy developed to support the proposal includes an assessment of likely level of impact for each stakeholder group.</p> <p>See the appendix for community notifications about the project.</p>
7	Clearly outline how and when the community can be involved in the process.	See Section 6 for the engagement activities undertaken for this project and opportunities for the community to provide feedback.
8	Make it easy for the community to access information and provide feedback.	
9	Seek to understand issues of concern for all affected people and groups and respond appropriately to those concerns.	
10	Provide feedback about how community and stakeholder views were used to shape the project or considered in making decisions.	For an overview of the project response to questions and feedback from the community and key stakeholders, see Section 8

	Objective	Where has this been addressed
11	Be able to demonstrate how the demography of the area affected has been considered in how and what engagement activities have been undertaken.	The Communications and Engagement Strategy outlines the community profile and how that has informed the overall engagement approach.

Source: DPHI's Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects – March 2024

6. ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND REACH

This section outlines the engagement activities that were implemented during the consultation process to support the preparation of the EIS, including the number of stakeholders that were reached through these activities.

The activity selection was determined based on the community profile, the stakeholder mix and their communication needs, and the requirements of the SEARs.

Wherever possible, Urbis integrated the SIA survey with project communications, to ensure people could provide feedback through this mechanism.

The table below maps the purpose of each engagement activity to stakeholder groups.

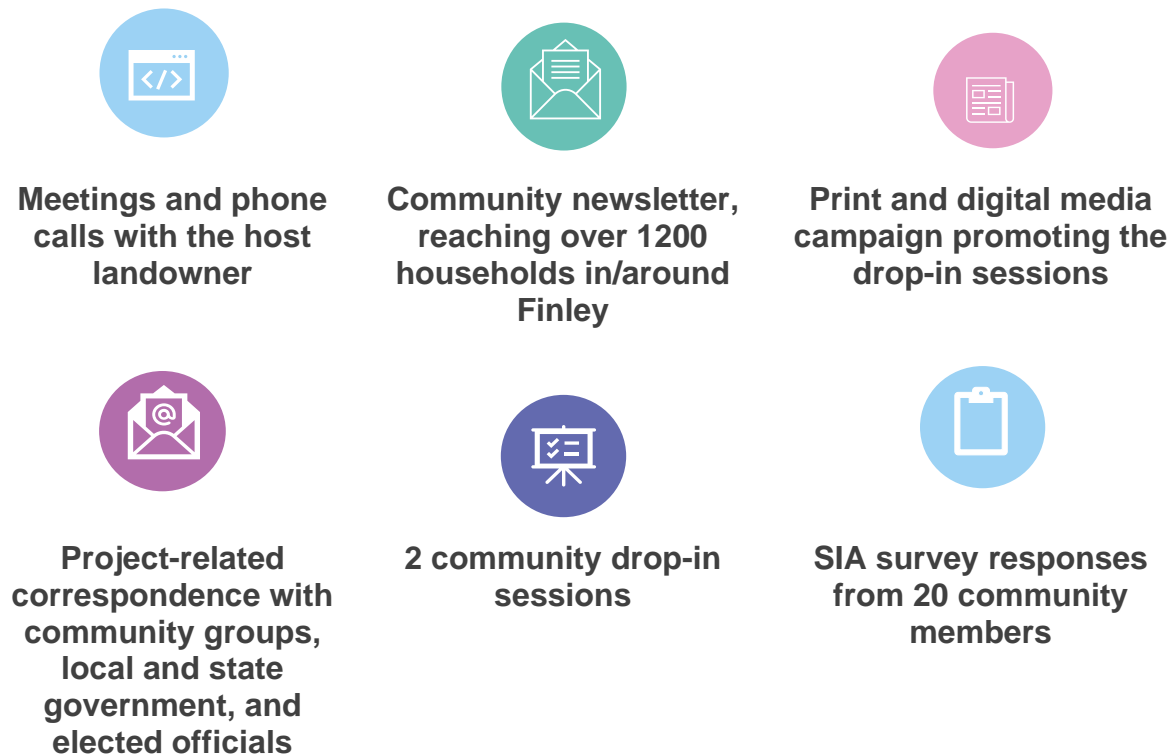
Table 5 Summary of engagement activities

Engagement activity	Target stakeholder	Description
Invitation to individual briefings	Current site landowner	Outbound email to invite to attend community pop-up information sessions, or otherwise individual briefing.
	Neighbouring dwellings	
	Council's elected officials	
	State and Federal MPs	
	Community groups	
Community newsletter	Neighbouring dwellings	<p>A Community newsletter was distributed to 1200 residents on 20 January 2025.</p> <p>The newsletter included details about the proposal and how to provide feedback, as well as an invitation to attend the information sessions and invitation to undertake the SIA survey.</p> <p>A copy of the newsletter is included in Appendix A of this report.</p>
Newspaper advertisement	All community stakeholders	<p>Four print advertisements were published in Southern Riverina News and The Border Mail on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wednesday 22 January 2025 Wednesday 29 January 2025 <p>A digital advertisement was published on 22 January 2025 promoting the SIA survey. The advertisement included details about the proposal and how to provide feedback, as well as an invitation to attend the information sessions. A copy of the newspaper and</p>

Engagement activity	Target stakeholder	Description
		digital advertisement is included in Appendix C of this report.
Community information pop-up sessions	All community stakeholders	<p>Two community information pop-up sessions were held at Finley School of Arts Hall, on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thursday 30 January 2025, 5:00pm – 7:00pm and ▪ Friday 31 January 2025, 10:00am – 12:00pm <p>There was a total of 4 attendees across the two sessions.</p> <p>A copy of the display materials used at these sessions is included in Appendix B of this report.</p>
SIA	All community stakeholders	<p>A community survey was developed to understand local sentiment and feedback on the proposal.</p> <p>The survey was open from 20 January until late February and received 20 responses in total.</p>
Enquiry channels	Enquiry channels	To date, no phone calls have been received via the 1800 phone line.

6.1. ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

Figure 5 Engagement snapshot



Picture 1 Community information pop-up session held at the Finley Arts Hall.

7. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUMMARY

7.1. GENERAL SENTIMENT

Sentiment towards the Finley BESS was generally neutral, with most understanding the need for renewable energy generation. Although the four community members who attended the community information sessions raised specific concerns about various impacts and issues, the discussions about the proposal and mitigations for these impacts were balanced overall. Similar concerns were also mirrored in the SIA survey feedback.

Across all community stakeholders, Urbis identified three themes that emerged throughout the engagement program.

Figure 6 Top themes of community feedback



Fire risk



**Workforce
arrangements**



Visual impact

7.2. FIRE RISK

All community members that attended the pop-up sessions raised concerns about potential fire risks associated with BESS technology.

One community member enquired about the specific technology that will be used to control hazards, particularly F-500 EA fire extinguishers.

Another community member questioned the materials that will be used to construct the battery, suggesting that lithium batteries are more flammable than other types.

“As it’s been well documented that these types of battery’s are volatile and prone to fire, the negative impacts of the toxic smoke and chemicals can not be reduced “ Survey respondent

7.3. WORKFORCE ARRANGEMENTS

Two of the four community members that attended the pop-up sessions enquired about workforce arrangements during construction and operation of the Finley BESS.

One community member asked about how the workforce would be housed and expressed that there are several vacant houses in Finley. This community member also suggested a local real estate agent to the Proponent should they look to house the workforce in Finley. In contrast to this, one survey respondent suggested a housing shortage for local residents would be worsened.

All enquired about the employment opportunities for locals.

“ More jobs in the short term” Survey respondent

“Employment for local families” Survey respondent

7.4. VISUAL IMPACT

One community member (near neighbour) enquired about potential visual impacts associated with the proposed BESS and proposed planting scheme. This community member is a near neighbour of the site and enquired specifically about the height and colour of the BESS units.

“Landscape around the site so it's visually appealing from external roads.” Survey respondent

“Can they be painted a different colour to blend into the environment better?”
Community pop up attendee (near neighbour)

8. DETAILED STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The following table outlines the issues raised by key stakeholders and community, and the project response.

Table 6 Key stakeholders: Issues raised and project response

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
Authorities			
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure	Project scoping meeting held on 24 October 2023	DPHI expressed a preference not to have multiple corridor options included in the EIS; all initial surveys should consider footprints to adequately address environmental constraints, rather than considering multiple options.	All requested matters were addressed in the request for SEARs, issued 18 July 2024. Requested technical reports will be submitted as part of the EIS for the SSDA.
		DPHI confirmed that a traffic route analysis will need to be submitted as part of the request for SEARs and the EIS may require a more details analysis.	
		DPHI advised that preparation and submission of a Noise Impact Assessments will be critical, and that this should also contain on-site mitigations.	
		DPE confirmed that deeds of release/ letters from associated receivers can be obtained prior to lodgement of EIS confirming the landowner is happy to accept impacts and has no objection to the proposal. DPE also confirmed other proponents are investigating acquisitions for impacted properties.	
		DPHI advised that social license and community benefit are a significant part of assessment, and the Proponent should proactively identify required upgrades in preparing a Voluntary Planning Agreement with Council.	

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
		The Proponent should contact Biodiversity Conservation Divisions early on.	
		DPHI advised that the Proponent should submit a detailed view analysis at the scoping phase, in line with the NSW Solar guidelines.	
		DPHI advised that the Proponent should be mindful about encroaching on land with cultural heritage value.	
		DPHI advised that water supply and waste generated during construction should be addressed in the request for SEARs.	
		DPHI advised that the Proponent should consider impacts associated with workforce accommodation in the request for SEARs.	
		DPHI advised that the Proponent should include measures to mitigate impact on nearest sensitive receiver (400-500m away) in the request for SEARs.	
	Email correspondence to share minutes from Scoping Meeting on 2 November 2023	DPHI advised that irrigation corridors may exist through site.	The Proponent will continue to update the Department as they approach the request for SEARs

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
	Letter correspondence and correspondence through DPHI Major Projects Portal; 18 July 2024	None.	All requirements of the SEARs are addressed in the SSDA. DPHI issued project-specific SEARs for the Finley BESS, outlining considerations to be addressed and reports to be provided for consideration as part of the SSDA.
Local government			
Berrigan Shire Council (officers)	Outbound email to introduce project in December 2023.	Preliminary engagement commenced with the Berrigan Shire Council, with details of the project being provided via email on 8 December 2023.	Engagement with the Berrigan Shire Council officers has been ongoing and summarised below. The Proponent values the positive relationship with and will continue to keep them informed as the proposal progresses.
	Introductory meeting for the project; 28 February 2024	Key items raised during this meeting included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The need for a Biodiversity Impact Assessment covering waterways and stormwater management, off-site amenity impacts such as glare and acoustic issues, site operations ▪ A Construction Management Plan detailing all works required ▪ A Traffic Impact Assessment to consider impacts on Council assets, remediation works and timing post-project, and community benefits from the development were discussed. ▪ Additional matters included a 14-day application exhibition, no development contributions, and an internal referral to the Council's traffic engineering unit. 	These items are being addressed in subsequent project stages, in ongoing consultation with the Council. As a result of Council engagement, to improve access to the site, multiple entry points are being considered. The Proponent has engaged Urbis to prepare and execute a community engagement strategy for this project, including delivering 2 x face-to-face pop-up information sessions

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
	Emails and meetings re Voluntary Planning Agreement for the community benefit sharing component of the project.	A representative of Council's Economic Development team questioned whether THE PROPONENT would be taking engagement with the community, including whether face-to-face engagement would be part of the engagement program.	The Proponent has been in ongoing conversation discussions with Council since February 2024 to determine understand the requirements of a Voluntary Planning Agreement. what the VPA will look like. And remains committed to delivering this in collaboration with Council.
	Outbound email to invite Council to attend community pop-up information sessions, or otherwise individual briefing; 24 January 2025	Council advised it is aware of engagement being undertaken with the community but would not attend the pop-up sessions in January 2025. Council expressed interest in participating in an interview for the Social Impact Assessment.	This feedback will inform the Social Impact Assessment as part of the EIS.
	On 11 March, Council issued Land Owner Consent Form	From Berrigan Shire Council CEO In accordance with Clause 23(1)(b) of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000</i> , I, the undersigned, being the landowner(s) of the Broockmanns and Canalla Road road reserves, Finley, do hereby provide my formal consent for the lodgement of a State Significant Development (SSD) application following the form and specifications set out in the Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements dated 18 July 2024 and with the reference of SSD-72430958.	Noted
	Interview with Council to determine potential social impacts and suggested mitigation measures; 12 February 2025 Meeting with Council on 24 February 2025 to understand	Discussion included: Social and site context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The representatives noted that Finley has experienced a significant level of change since the commencement of the Murray Darling Basin Implementation Plan in 2012. 	This feedback will inform the Social Impact Assessment as part of the EIS.

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
	<p>the local character of the community and any other potential positive or negative social impacts associated with the proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specifically, it was noted that Finley was once a key service town in the region, however Finley has since experienced a decline in residential population and many local community services and retail tenancies have withdrawn from Finley. ▪ As a result of the above, the representative noted that Finley residents predominantly comprise of lower socio-economic groups who are unable to access the same level of local services as they previously could. ▪ The representatives noted they believe that residents who have left Finley have likely moved to nearby regional centres, such as Albury. <p>Workforce and housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The representatives noted the community understands the proposal will provide positive impacts for the wider community in relation to providing enhanced grid stability. However, the community does not understand how renewable energy projects will directly benefit them. ▪ They expressed a concern relating to the loss of agricultural land and noted the community is interesting in knowing if the land can be remediated back to agricultural uses if the site is decommissioned. ▪ Given the large number of renewable energy and BESS projects occurring in the community, the representatives explained that the community is experiencing difficulty in differentiating the projects and understanding their locations in relation to one another. Council emphasised the importance of clear community communication to minimise confusion and 	

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
		<p>improve their capacity to provide feedback on each project.</p> <p>Potential social impacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The representatives noted the community understands the proposal will provide positive impacts for the wider community in relation to providing enhanced grid stability. However, the community does not understand how renewable energy projects will directly benefit them. ▪ They expressed a concern relating to the loss of agricultural land and noted the community is interesting in knowing if the land can be remediated back to agricultural uses if the site is decommissioned. ▪ Given the large number of renewable energy and BESS projects occurring in the community, the representatives explained that the community is experiencing difficulty in differentiating the projects and understanding their locations in relation to one another. Council emphasised the importance of clear community communication to minimise confusion and improve their capacity to provide feedback on each project. <p>Community benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The representatives explained the community's sentiments towards renewable energy projects, noting they are sceptical towards renewable energy developers and their ability to give back to the community they are impacting. ▪ Specifically, the representatives noted the community felt that a previous renewable energy 	

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
		<p>developer over promised and under delivering on the community benefits they were going to provide as part of the proposal. They noted this was particularly in relation to the employment of local construction companies and use of local trades workers, as the community was encouraged to apply for these roles but only one or two businesses were successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council didn't believe that any particular group should be the primary beneficiary of the proposed benefit-sharing program, but rather it should go towards facilities and services that support the whole community. ▪ Specifically, the representatives noted that some local community services have been financially supported through a government financial support program which is due to end this year. They noted that monetary contributions to support the operation of local community services, such as allied health professionals, would benefit the community. ▪ It was also noted that Finley has several large and quality recreation facilities that have a high maintenance cost. Therefore, the representative identified an opportunity for the community benefit sharing scheme to provide monetary contributions to support the maintenance of these recreational facilities. <p>Other comments</p> <p>The representative noted how the community dislikes that solar energy projects are referred to as 'solar farms', as they do not consider them to be farms.</p>	

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
Elected officials			
Julia Cornwell Mckean Mayor, Berrigan Shire Council Mayor and Councillors	Outbound email to invite elected officials to attend community pop-up information sessions, or otherwise individual briefing; 24 January 2025	Council, on behalf of the Mayor and Councillors advised it is aware of engagement being undertaken with the community but would not attend the pop-up sessions in January 2025.	The Proponent will continue to keep Mayor Cornwell Mckean informed through the planning process.
State Member for Murray, Helen Dalton (independent)		At the time of writing this report, no response has been received.	The Proponent will continue to keep the Member for Murray informed through the planning process.
Federal Member for Farrer, Sussan Ley MP (Liberal)		The Office of the Hon Sussan Ley MP thanked the project team for the invitation, and advised there may be opportunities to discuss further following community consultation.	The Proponent will continue to keep The Hon Sussan Ley MP informed through the planning process.
Relevant agencies			
Transport for NSW	Outbound email to introduce the project; 8 December 2023.	No response to this email was received.	None.
	Inbound email and letter correspondence; 18 January 2024	TfNSW highlighted the need to consider traffic volumes, characteristics, capacity analysis, heavy vehicle routes, cumulative impacts, accommodation and transport needs, road safety, project schedule, vehicle routes, road upgrades, internal road layouts, rail corridor impacts, SEPP 33 controls, and a draft TMP.	All items discussed will be included in a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) for the EIS.

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
		<p>TfNSW highlighted the need to consider the following as part of the SEARs request:</p> <p>Traffic volumes and characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road capacity ▪ Heavy vehicle routes ▪ Cumulative impacts on local roads and traffic ▪ Accommodation and transport needs for the workforce ▪ Road safety including potential road upgrades ▪ The timing of the project ▪ Provision of a draft Traffic Management Plan (TMP) 	
Transgrid	Consultation with TransGrid has been ongoing since December 2022 for grid connection.	Key engagements include initial correspondence and a connection enquiry in December 2022, a positive response in January 2023, a recap meeting in February 2023, and a proposal for an alternative connection route in April 2024	The Proponent has continued consultation with Transgrid and proposed the alignment of the proposed connection to the existing substation. This is detailed in the Development Plans submitted as part of the EIS.
NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)	Engagement with the NSW RFS commenced in October 2024	Standard requirements to be met	<p>The NSW RFS requirements for the EIS will be met. Details will be included in the specialist chapter in the EIS.</p> <p>The Proponent will continue to engage with the NSW Rural Fire Service (and local service if required) to keep informed on the proposals progress and next steps and identify and</p>

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
			mitigate any concerns raised throughout the process.
Murray Irrigation Limited (MIL)	<p>The proponent has been engaging with Murray Irrigation periodically since 2023.</p> <p>This includes emails, meetings and phone calls to discuss trenching under the Mulwala No. 19 canal, which runs through the site; 11 April 2023</p>	<p>Engagement with MIL began on 11 April 2024 to discuss trenching under the Mulwala No. 19 canal. MIL's primary concern is adherence to their Works Policy, Murray Irrigation Limited advised any works must adhere to their Works Policy.</p>	<p>The Proponent will continue to work with MIL to ensure the proposal design adheres to MIL's Works Policy.</p>
Cummeragunja Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC).	<p>As part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) THE PROPONENT as required to determine the cultural significance of objects and/or places on and surrounding the site.</p> <p>An advertisement and letter were issued in October 2024 with an Expression of Interest to invite groups and individual knowledge holders to participate in the ACHAR process.</p> <p>A range of contact methods were used including email and phone. A site walkover with Land Council and other representatives was</p>	<p>Four local groups joined the site walk on 11 January. There were no clarifications received at the site walk or during the 30-day consultation period which closed on 12 March 2025.</p>	<p>Further details about the engagement process and feedback from the LALC is provided in the ACHAR, submitted as part of the EIS.</p> <p>The Proponent used the ACHAR to inform the proposal's approach to, and understanding of, the potential impacts affecting this community.</p>

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
	undertaken on 11 January 2025		
Surrounding community			
Site landowner	Engagement with the host landowner has been ongoing since November 2023 through a series of regular phone calls, online meetings and emails.	<p>Through ongoing engagement with the site landowner, we've been able to gather insights into his neighbours sentiment towards the project and local concerns. Discussion with the landowner has included the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capacity of substation for multiple projects ▪ Approval authority and process ▪ Relationship with Berrigan Shire Council and his neighbours (anticipated objection from one neighbour) ▪ Access options for the site ▪ Intel on local road network ▪ Local supply chain opportunities 	<p>A Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) was provided to the landowner on following the first engagement. The purpose of the LUCRA was to understand past, present and future land use of the proposal site.</p> <p>The Proponent is committed to ongoing engagement with the site landowner, including the finalisation of the lease agreement, and values his input to the project.</p>

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
<p>Near neighbours within a 2 km radius including residents at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 384 Broockmanns Road (proposed South Coree BESS site) 16731 Riverina Highway 16891 Riverina Highway (proposed Berrigan BESS site) 198 Canalla Road 589 Broockmanns Road 276 Broockmanns Road 56 Marantellis Road 402 Canalla Road 311 Broockmanns Road <p>Broader Community</p>	<p>Project newsletter distributed to near neighbours; Monday 20 January</p> <p>Community pop-up information sessions; 30 and 31 January 2025</p> <p>Enquiry management through the duration of the project</p> <p>Social Impact Survey, open between 20 January and late February 2025.</p>	<p>One resident from a neighbouring dwelling provided feedback at the community information pop up, with concerns relating to visual amenity and fire risk.</p> <p>We received a balance of positive and negative feedback from the community information pop ups and SIA survey including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most understood the need for renewable energy and were aware that more projects were in planning for the area There was some confusion, or lack of awareness about other projects, including renewables, in the region Fire risk was the number one concern from community There was interest in the job opportunities the project would provide if approved Concern about potential ecological impacts, including impacts on local bat populations Concern about community division and social cohesion, related to conflict about the growth of renewables in the area. Concern about the reduction of arable agriculture and farm land Concern about potential visual impacts Positive feedback about the economic benefits of bringing in an external workforce Positive feedback about “greenwashing” Australia’s power supply Workforce arrangements and housing 	<p>The Proponent is committed to understanding and managing potential impacts of the proposed BESS.</p> <p>Technical assessments</p> <p>The EIS requires the project to identify and scope potential issues and impacts, and detail how the project will address and manage these impacts. To ensure we plan for the project responsibly, the Proponent will develop the site in accordance with the relevant planning, statutory and environmental regulatory approval requirements.</p> <p>Fire risk</p> <p>In consultation with NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire & Rescue NSW, the Proponent has designed the BESS to comply with all relevant fire safety standards.</p> <p>The proposal includes an on-site 75k L firefighting water tank as part of the fire safety measures of the proposal.</p> <p>The Proponent will continue to engage with the NSW Rural Fire Service (and local service if required) to keep informed on the proposals progress and next steps and identify and mitigate any concerns raised throughout the process.</p>

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual impacts <p>No other enquiries or questions have been received through project enquiry lines.</p>	<p>The SSD will include an assessment of potential bush fire risks associated with the proposal, including mitigation measures.</p> <p>If approved, the proponent will prepare a plan to manage the risks of bushfires on-site and outline safety protocols.</p> <p>Visual impact</p> <p>The proposal includes landscaping to offset visual impacts. The colour and height of the BESS units are yet to be determined, noting feedback received on colour of the BESS container.</p> <p>The Proponent is preparing a Visual Impact Assessment for the project, which will assess potential impacts on neighbours' views of the site and propose measures to minimise these impacts. This assessment will be submitted as part of the SSDA.</p> <p>Workforce arrangements</p> <p>An assessment of workforce and housing considerations will be considered as part of the SIA submitted as part of the EIS.</p> <p>Wherever possible, The Proponent will recruit locally for the Finley BESS. The Proponent is proposing to house out-of-area employees working on the Finley BESS in the town of</p>

Stakeholder	Channel and date of engagement	Feedback received	Project response
			<p>Finley. If this is not possible, they will be housed in nearby Albury and bussed to site.</p> <p>Local job opportunities</p> <p>The project will provide economic investment in the Finley region and create employment opportunities with approximately 50 local jobs during construction peak, as well as providing opportunities for the local supply chain wherever possible, stimulating the local economy.</p>
<p>Community groups, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finley Men's Shed ▪ Murray Landcare Collective ▪ Lion's club ▪ Finley Returned Services Club ▪ Finley Chamber of Commerce 	<p>Outbound email to invite community groups to attend community pop-up information sessions, or otherwise individual briefing; 24 January 2025</p> <p>Enquiry management through the duration of the project.</p> <p>Social Impact Survey, open between 20 January and late February 2025.</p>	<p>At the time of writing this report, no response from any of the community groups listed has been received.</p>	<p>The Proponent will continue to keep these groups informed through the planning pathway.</p>

9. FUTURE COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Proponent expects to submit the EIS later this year, including this Engagement Outcomes Report.

After the development application has been lodged, the local community will be notified via a process called 'exhibition'. The community will be formally invited to provide feedback to DPHI as part of the exhibition.

The Proponent will continue to keep stakeholders, and the community informed of the project approval process through the exhibition and determination phases by:

- Continuing to engage and inform the community about the project, its impacts, and the approval process.
- Enabling the community to seek clarification about the project through two-way communication channels.

10. DISCLAIMER

This report is dated March 2025 and incorporates information and events up to that date only and excludes any information arising, or event occurring, after that date which may affect the validity of Urbis Ltd (**Urbis**) opinion in this report. Urbis prepared this report on the instructions, and for the benefit only, of BESS Pacific Pty Ltd c/o Gransolar Development Australia (**the Proponent**) for the purpose of Engagement Outcomes Report (**Purpose**) and not for any other purpose or use. To the extent permitted by applicable law, Urbis expressly disclaims all liability, whether direct or indirect, to the Instructing Party which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose other than the Purpose, and to any other person which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose whatsoever (including the Purpose).

In preparing this report, Urbis was required to make judgements which may be affected by unforeseen future events, the likelihood, and effects of which are not capable of precise assessment.

All surveys, forecasts, projections, and recommendations contained in or associated with this report are made in good faith and on the basis of information supplied to Urbis at the date of this report, and upon which Urbis relied. Achievement of the projections and budgets set out in this report will depend, among other things, on the actions of others over which Urbis has no control.

In preparing this report, Urbis may rely on or refer to documents in a language other than English, which Urbis may arrange to be translated. Urbis is not responsible for the accuracy or completeness of such translations and disclaims any liability for any statement or opinion made in this report being inaccurate or incomplete arising from such translations.

Whilst Urbis has made all reasonable inquiries it believes necessary in preparing this report, it is not responsible for determining the completeness or accuracy of information provided to it. Urbis (including its officers and personnel) is not liable for any errors or omissions, including in information provided by the Instructing Party or another person or upon which Urbis relies, provided that such errors or omissions are not made by Urbis recklessly or in bad faith.

This report has been prepared with due care and diligence by Urbis and the statements and opinions given by Urbis in this report are given in good faith and in the reasonable belief that they are correct and not misleading, subject to the limitations above.

APPENDIX A COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



www.gransolar.com

PROPOSED NEW BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS), FINLEY NSW JANUARY 2025



ABOUT THE PROJECT





Gransolar Development Australia is proposing to develop a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the corner of Canalla Road and Broockmanns Road (eastern side), Finley (Lot 3 of DP 740920). The BESS will generate 200MWh and provide enough energy to power 80,000 homes. The proposed BESS will provide renewable energy to consumers across NSW when they need it most by improving reliability, stability and resilience of the NSW electricity network.

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

Four of the five coal-fired power stations in NSW are reaching their end of life and are scheduled to retire in the next decade which will leave a substantial gap in electricity generation capacity across the state.

Large-scale batteries like the one being proposed will provide for future capacity and resilience of the NSW energy network. Developing a new BESS in Finley will contribute to sustainable electricity generation into the future.

PROJECT BENEFITS

-  **Affordability:** BESS technology increases energy efficiency by storing excess energy during low-demand periods and releasing it during peak periods. This maximises the value of electricity produced and contributes to reducing the cost of energy assisting with energy management, reducing energy waste and conserving natural resources.
-  **Efficiency and Stability:** BESS technology provides fast and reliable response times to prevent blackouts and other disruptions, ensuring a more reliable and secure power supply.
-  **Environmental:** Reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions by assisting to integrate renewable energy sources into the grid, reducing reliance on fossil fuel.
-  **Economic:** The project will provide economic investment in the Finley region and create employment opportunities with approximately 50 local jobs during construction, as well as providing opportunities for the local supply chain during construction, stimulating the local economy.

WHAT IS A BESS AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) consists of a group of batteries that store excess energy from the grid generated when production is high and demand is low.

When the grid requires electricity, such as during peak hours of energy usage, the BESS discharges the energy it has stored from renewable sources such as wind or solar back into the grid.

SITE LOCATION

The site was selected for its proximity to the existing Finley substation (located at 168 Canalla Road Finley), minimising the impact to the environment and community and reducing the need to build new transmission infrastructure. A number of key selection criteria were also applied to limit impacts on the rural land character.

PROPOSED FINLEY BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS)

JAN 2025

PROJECT DETAILS

- ✓ Installation of up to 80 lithium-ion battery containers
- ✓ Connection of the BESS to the existing Finley substation
- ✓ Associated infrastructure and systems to convert power from the batteries into electricity
- ✓ Internal access tracks, on-site parking and a construction laydown area
- ✓ Permanent office and staff amenities
- ✓ Security fencing
- ✓ A firefighting water tank (minimum 20,000L)
- ✓ Landscaping to minimise visual impacts.

THE PLANNING AND APPROVALS PATHWAY

Gransolar is seeking approval to deliver the Finley BESS. This approval is being sought from the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), via the State Significant Development Application (SSDA) process.

July 2024

The first step in the SSDA process is to submit a request with DPHI for the list of the assessments and actions that Gransolar will need to include in the SSDA. This list was issued in July 2024 by DPHI and is called the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs).

WE ARE HERE

The next step is to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which is a document that summarises the assessments and key considerations to support the SSDA. These studies also include ways of minimising potential impacts from the construction and operation of the Finley BESS. **To inform the EIS, Gransolar is seeking your feedback.**

March 2025

Gransolar will then submit the EIS, including a Consultation Outcomes Report that summarises feedback from the community.

Mid 2025

After the SSDA is lodged, DPHI will notify the local community via a process that is called 'exhibition'. The community will be formally invited to provide feedback to DPHI as part of the exhibition.

Late 2025

Gransolar is expecting a determination within six to nine months of lodging the SSDA.

PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK

Community drop-in information sessions

We are inviting the community to learn more about the project and provide feedback at two community drop-in information sessions to be held at Finley School of Arts Hall, 85 Murray Street, Finley on:

Thursday 30 January 2025
5:00pm – 7:00pm and

Friday 31 January 2025
10:00am – 12:00pm

You can also share your thoughts on potential social impacts generated by the project by completing a short online survey.



To access the survey, scan the QR code.

The survey will close at 5pm on 7 February 2025.

More information:

Visit finleybess.com.au

☎ 1800 244 863

✉ engagement@urbis.com.au

Gransolar will consider all feedback received as we finalise design of the proposal and develop an EIS for the SSDA.

ABOUT GRANSOLAR

Gransolar is a group of companies that specialise in energy systems such as battery storage systems. Gransolar is committed to making a positive contribution to the wellbeing of society and the environment; a reflection of our aspiration to help build a fairer and more sustainable world.

PROPOSED FINLEY BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS)

JAN 2025

APPENDIX B POP-UP DISPLAY BOARDS

PROPOSED NEW BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (BESS) FINLEY NSW

Gransolar Development Australia (Gransolar) is proposing to develop a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at the corner of Canalla Road and Broockmanns Road (eastern side), Finley (Lot 3 of DP740920).

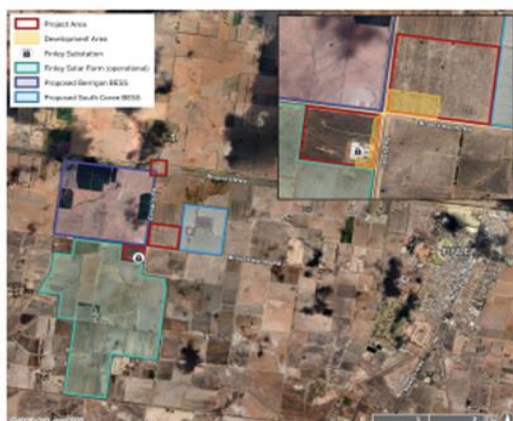
The proposed BESS will store 200MWh of electricity; enough to power 30,000 homes and provide renewable energy to consumers across NSW when they need it most by improving reliability, stability and resilience of the NSW electricity network.

ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Project location

The site is located at the corner of Canalla Road and Broockmanns Road (eastern side), Finley.

The site was selected for its proximity to the existing Finley substation (located at 168 Canalla Road Finley), minimising the impact to the environment and community and reducing the need to build new transmission infrastructure. A number of key selection criteria were also applied to limit impacts on the rural land character.



What is a BESS?

A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) consists of a group of batteries that store excess energy from the grid generated when production is high and demand is low.

When the grid requires electricity, such as during peak hours of energy usage, the BESS discharges the energy it has stored from renewable sources such as wind or solar back into the grid.

Batteries most commonly use lithium to store the electricity.

BESS technology is commonly used in electricity grids, electric vehicles, solar power installations, and smart homes.

Why is this needed?

Four of the five coal-fired power stations in NSW are reaching their end of life and are scheduled to retire in the next decade. This will leave a substantial gap in electricity generation capacity across the state.

Large-scale batteries like the one being proposed will provide for future capacity and resilience of the NSW energy network.

Developing a new BESS in Finley will contribute to sustainable electricity generation into the future.



Project details

If approved, the Finley BESS will include:



Installation of up to 80 lithium-ion battery containers housed within 20-foot shipping containers approximately 2.4m wide and 2.9m high



Connection to the existing Finley substation proposed to be both underground (beneath Broockmanns Road intersection) and overhead lines



Associated systems and infrastructure to convert power from the batteries into electricity



Internal access tracks, a construction laydown area and on-site parking



A small site office and staff amenities



Safety features including security fencing, lightning masts, and a firefighting water tank (minimum 200KL), and



Landscaping

BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

A reliable and clean energy source into the future



Affordability

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) technology increases energy efficiency by storing excess energy during low-demand periods and releasing it during peak-periods. This maximises the value of electricity produced and contributes to reducing the cost of energy.



Efficiency and Stability

Provides fast and reliable response times to prevent blackouts and other disruptions, ensuring a more reliable and secure power supply.



Environmental

Reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions by assisting to integrate renewable energy sources into the grid, reducing reliance on fossil fuel.



Economic

The project will provide economic investment in the Finley region and create employment opportunities with approximately 50 local jobs during construction, as well as providing opportunities for the local supply chain wherever possible, stimulating the local economy.

Community benefits

The transition to renewable energy will provide a range of direct and indirect benefits for regional communities. Community benefit sharing is about creating a positive legacy in the local community and can support communities be more resilient to change. Community benefit sharing also needs to be tailored to local circumstances, culture and need.

Gransolar is preparing a benefit-sharing program that aims to contribute to environmental, social and economic value to the local area. Our approach to community benefit sharing will be developed as the project progresses in consultation with stakeholders, Berrigan Shire Council and the community to ensure it is meaningful, appropriate and enhances the region.



Managing impacts

Gransolar is committed to understanding and managing potential impacts during construction and operation of the proposed BESS.

These impacts will be identified and assessed during the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as part of the development of the proposal. The EIS will summarise the assessments that are carried out to support the proposal. These studies also include ways of minimising potential impacts from the construction and operation of the Finley BESS.

If the proposal is approved, Gransolar will develop and implement an Operational Management Plan. This will outline how the site will be managed, including ensuring potential impacts on neighbours and the local community are minimised.

Cumulative impacts

Gransolar is aware that there are two other proposals for BESS's in Finley. While there are no technical restrictions to developing three adjacent BESS sites, there are important cumulative impacts which must be assessed. These impacts will be assessed as part of the EIS.

THE PLANNING PATHWAY

Gransolar is seeking approval to deliver the Finley BESS. This approval is being sought from the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), via the State Significant Development Application (SSDA) process.

July 2024

The first step in the SSDA process is to submit a request with DPHI for the list of the assessments and actions that Gransolar will need to include in the SSDA. This list was issued in July 2024 by DPHI and is called the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs).

We are here

The next step is to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which is a document that summarises the assessments that are carried out to support the SSDA. These studies also include ways of minimising potential impacts from the construction and operation of the Finley BESS. To inform the EIS, Gransolar is seeking your feedback.

March 2025

Gransolar will then submit the EIS, including a Consultation Outcomes Report that summarises feedback from the community.

Mid 2025

After the development application is lodged, the local community will be notified via a process that is called 'exhibition'. The community will be formally invited to provide feedback to DPHI as part of the exhibition.

Late 2025

Gransolar is expecting a determination within six to nine months of lodging the SSDA.

Key considerations of the proposal

As Gransolar develops the project, consideration is given to a range of technical, community and environmental factors, including:



Traffic, transport and access



Hazard and risk (including bushfire)



Noise and vibration



Socio-economic impacts



Water



Biodiversity



Heritage



Landscaping and visual

These reports and assessments will be submitted as part of the EIS.

Provide your feedback

Gransolar has engaged Urbis to prepare a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) to inform the SSDA for the proposed Finley BESS. An SIA is an independent, objective study undertaken to identify and analyse social impacts (positive and negative) associated with a proposed development.

To inform the SIA, Urbis is seeking feedback from the community to better understand the needs of the local area and the potential social impacts generated by the proposed BESS. Community feedback will also help to identify potential mitigation, management, and enhancement measures, and will inform the assessment and the proposal design. You can share your thoughts on potential social impacts generated by the project by completing a short online survey.

For more information:



Finleybess.com.au



1800 244 863



engagement@urbis.com.au

To access the survey, scan the QR code



The survey will close at 5pm on 7 February 2025.

Gransolar will consider all feedback received as we finalise design of the proposal and develop an EIS for the SSDA.

APPENDIX C PROJECT ADVERTISEMENTS

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SPORT

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In a dominant display with both bat and ball, the Coleambally Nomads' second grade side...

By Carl Chirgwin

NEWS

Angus Vic award for Erin

Tocumwal's Erin Chesworth has received a top honour at Angus Australia's 2025 NH Foods Angus...

By Southern Riverina News

MOST POPULAR

- Historic delivery**
- Arrest made for Toc break-in**
- Blood diamonds and boy soldiers**

Historic delivery

Xylar Mae Donnelly will go down in the local history books.

By Daniel Briggs

January 24, 2025
Finley, AU

27°C
Wind: 23 Km/h

Few Clouds

NEWS

Celebrate with fun, community and culture

Locals and visitors will have the chance to come together in Murrumbidgee this Australia Day...

By Contributed

SPORT

Tomahawk ready for Rams

Finley's favourite son, Tom Hawkins, will play at least one game for the Finley Cats...

By Daniel Briggs

Farmers need water to grow your food

The early but important message of 'water for food' is being used again to highlight the issues with water policy decisions being made by governments.

The Murray Regional Strategy Group says as we start another critical year in which action is needed to ease cost of living pressures, it is calling on governments to acknowledge past mistakes and identify future solutions.

It says food staples are under threat from poor government policy that is hurting the farming sector, yet can be easily rectified.

A coalition of farming and community organisations in the NSW Murray region, MRSRG says it is time to identify shortcomings in current

water policy and take proactive steps that will help the environment, farmers and Australian families.

"Recently released data shows that through numerous programs the water used by farmers in New South Wales and Victoria has declined by about 50 per cent in the past three decades," said MRSRG chair Geoff Moar.

"It has reached the point where we are forced to import more staple foods, and some farmers have stopped growing fruit and vegetables.

"We need sensible policy to turn this around, or there will be less clean, green Aussie grown food at the supermarket, and the prices will continue to rise."

Mr Moar said it is extremely

frustrating for farmers and the regional communities which depend on their prosperity, because they realise that a change of approach will help the environment, provide more water for food production and consequently ease food price pressures.

But to this point, governments seem reluctant to accept the need for change, or listen to those with lived experience who can provide informed advice.

"We have significantly reduced the amount of water for food production in the recognised food bowl that covers northern Victoria and southern New South Wales," Mr Moar said, adding that more than 80 per cent of water recovered under the

Basin Plan has come from the Southern Basin.

"Our group, and others, have highlighted for many years that all the water which has been recovered from this region, with governments insisting there is a lot more to come, will not solve key environmental issues in the Basin, in particular those of the Coorong and Murray Mouth, nor fish kills in the Darling system.

"All we are doing is taking water from food production and storing it in dams. That does not solve localised problems.

"What will have a positive impact are localised projects and complementary measures that address water quality and connecting the Darling to the Murray.

"Instead, we continue to see cumulative negative impacts of various water reform and policy changes.

"Yet the solutions fall on deaf ears because the focus remains on achieving political outcomes, rather than environmental and social benefit."

Mr Moar said as a nation we have a choice. We can continue down the current

path, which will not solve key environmental problems in the basin but will play a role in increasing the cost of food for all Australians.

Alternatively, he said we could take a fresh approach and focus on achievable, localised solutions that will benefit the environment, food producers, regional communities and could help ease food prices.

"It seems a simple choice, but we're at our wit's end trying to convince governments, especially the Albanese Government, of the best way forward," Mr Moar said.

On-call firefighter roles open now

By Anne Freestone

Fire + Rescue NSW will be conducting a recruitment drive from January 28 until February 16.

They particularly wish to encourage members of the Finley and Jerilderie communities to become involved in its various activities as on-call firefighters.

Finley's newly appointed Deputy Captain Hannah Ham, who is recruitment project officer (RPO) for the Regional South 3 area, said recruitment teams could be seen in both towns spreading information about applying for the position and the benefits of this opportunity during this period of time.

On-call firefighting is a paid position with leave entitlements and offers strong camaraderie and sense of community.

In the 2023-2024 financial year, Finley had 46 callouts and Jerilderie 27.

Incidents can include building/structure fires,

motor vehicle accidents, animal rescue, assist ambulance, recovery efforts after natural disasters (bushfire, flood and cyclone), home and factory fires, flood response, bush and grass fires.

"Fire + Rescue NSW is one of the world's largest urban fire and rescue services, serving our community with courage, care and without judgement," recruitment information states.

"Our workforce is diverse and highly skilled, made up of a variety of people, roles and skill sets.

"On-call firefighters are firefighters who wear multiple hats. They respond to calls from home or work when there is an emergency - true multi-taskers who protect and support their communities while balancing other work and family commitments."

There are many benefits gained by becoming an on-call firefighter and some of these include qualifications for medium rigid

drivers' licence, advanced life support including defibrillator, being able to operate self-contained breathing apparatus, atmospheric monitoring and gas detection, modules that contribute to Certificate II in Firefighting (TAFE), and work safely at heights qualifications to name a few.

An information session and barbecue will be held at Finley on Thursday, February 6 at 6pm, and Jerilderie on Wednesday, February 5 at 6pm.

Zone Commander Frank Finley will attend at Finley, and Zone Commander Daryl Manson will be at Jerilderie where there will also be a drone demonstration.

Please feel free to attend either of these information sessions if you feel this might be the call you are looking for.

More information can be found at <https://careers.fire.nsw.gov.au/on-call-firefighting>. Both local stations also have active Facebook and Instagram pages.

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10:00am – 12:00pm

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More information:

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<https://urbis.questionpro.com.au/U/ARokgZROpr>



2025 RURAL AND REGIONAL SCHOOL TRAVEL

What's new?

Applications for free school travel will need to be completed online instead of using a paper form. You still need to contact Dyson Group at 89 McCrabb Road Deniliquin or phone (03) 9463 3987 to confirm your route and be allocated a time and pick up/drop off location.

Who can apply

To be eligible for free school travel students may need to live a minimum distance from their school.

A new application is required if the student has not been approved for free school travel before.

You may also need to update the student details online if the student:

- Is moving from Year 2 to Year 3
- Is moving from Year 6 to Year 7
- Is changing schools
- Is changing address

For more information visit transportnsw.info/school-students

If internet access is not available please call Transport NSW 131 500 or Dyson Group (03) 9463 3987 for assistance. Carbon copy forms are no longer being accepted.



89 McCrabb Road Deniliquin | (03) 9463 3987

Indigenous community rebuffs city's official event

Anthony Bunn

ALBURY'S Indigenous community staged its own event on Sunday while the city's official Australia Day proceedings unfolded at Noreuil Park.

Feeling disheartened by the council backflipping on citizenship ceremonies being held on January 26, the city's Indigenous advisory committee hosted a film screening at Albury Entertainment Centre.

The move also meant no welcome to country was conducted at the park and there was no yarning opportunity with Wiradjuri members as occurred in 2024 on January 26.

Instead, *Emu Runner*, a movie about an Indigenous girl from northern NSW dealing with the death of her mother, was screened at an event organised by advisory committee member Trish Cerminara to bring a greater understanding to Indigenous viewpoints.

"We decided that we wouldn't be involved in Australia Day because for us it's colonisation day, it's a day our people suffered bad-



Auntie Edna Stewart gives a welcome to country at the Albury Entertainment Centre before the screening of a movie on Australia Day. Picture supplied.

ly," Ms Cerminara said.

"We just felt that council had taken a backflip on what they had decided under [past mayor] Kylie King and we thought it was a step back."

That meant Wiradjuri elder Auntie Edna Stewart gave a welcome to country at the entertainment centre, while Cr King gave an acknowledgment of country at Noreuil Park.

il Park.

Ms Cerminara said an audience of around 150 gathered at the entertainment centre, with the event assisted by a grant from Albury Council.

"It was well attended and I hope next year we do the same thing if there's not going to be change because it's [Australia Day] not a celebra-

tion to us," she said.

"I was delighted with the conversations after people came out to see so many people engaged by the content of the movie."

The screening also occurred as Albury's federal MP Sussan Ley gave an Australia Day speech that omitted Indigenous history and stated "history shows us strong and

successful societies are not made up of survivors, they are built and maintained by citizens".

In response, Ms Cerminara offered up an allusion.

"If someone is in the water and drowning, the person that survived that ordeal is living with the nightmare, and we're still living with that nightmare," she said.

Man and baby hospitalised after Wodonga crash

Wodonga police are seeking witnesses to a car crash that left a man and a baby in hospital on Monday morning. Emergency crews were called to Osburn Street about 10.45am on January 27 after a silver SUV left the road.

The car crashed into a tree, leaving the driver trapped.

The baby was able to be removed from the car, and was taken to Albury hospital in a stable condition.

The male driver had to be cut from the vehicle by SES volunteers.

He was taken to Albury hospital with serious injuries.

Wodonga Highway Patrol members are investigating the circumstances of the crash, and seek witnesses, CCTV and dashcam footage.

"Please come forward with any relevant information," police said on Tuesday.

Call (02) 6049 2600 or 1800 333 000.

ACT OF REVENGE Child told mum of touching allegation before father then assaulted accused perpetrator

Dad's punch 'not the way to go about it'

Albury Court

A FATHER enraged by a suggestion his five-year-old daughter might have been molested then confronted and repeatedly punched the supposed perpetrator to the head.

The man had just turned up at the front door of the Lavington house that the girl's mother, another woman and the man shared.

After the child made her

claim, the mother began sobbing in her bedroom. This woke the man, who went to see what had happened.

Albury Local Court has been told how a knock was heard at the front door as the man discussed the allegation with the second woman.

He unlocked the door, saw the father and told him: "I don't know what has been going on, [the child's mother] has been acting differently the last two days."

Invited inside, the father asked the man: "What's going on with you touching my daughter?"

The father, who for legal reasons cannot be identified, grabbed the victim by the collar with two hands and punched him three times to his jaw. He then grabbed his daughter and left the house, the attack having lasted about 45 seconds.

The victim began to bleed inside his mouth and suf-

fered bruising and swelling to his left cheekbone.

The man, 39, pleaded guilty, through defence lawyer Mark Cronin, to a charge of assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

Mr Cronin submitted to magistrate Sally McLaughlin that his client had reacted to the information before him.

"He accepts it was not the way to go about it," he said.

Ms McLaughlin told the Lavington man that an al-

leged criminal act could never be remedied by committing another crime.

Rather, the community expected such matters to be dealt with in "an orderly manner if that occurred" through a report to the police, she said, and not through such violence.

Police told the court the victim was asleep in bed on October 20, about 8am when he woke to the sound of the mother's crying. He

asked what was going on. Police said the daughter "had indicated [the victim of the assault] had touched her inappropriately".

"[The victim] was shocked and confused by this allegation and immediately woke [the housemate]."

She was also shocked and confused by the allegation. It was while they talked that the father arrived.

The man was convicted and fined \$1000.

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NEWS

HEAVY LOAD Corryong FoodShare is helping 150 people - up from 35 before bushfires

Struggling community feels 'forgotten'

Jodie Bruton

From Page 1

Mrs Allen said the Upper Murray was now trying to manage increased demand for emergency food relief just as government funding was drying up on many levels.

She said Corryong FoodShare missed out on a \$50,000 Community Food Relief Program grant late last year. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Victoria made the announcement days before Christmas.

The state government had already cut funding to Foodbank Victoria in June.

"The bushfires put us on the map but they've forgotten about us now," Mrs Allen said. "A lot of organisations are feeling it; where do we go for help now? FoodShare's need has increased greatly; we had COVID right on the back of the fires."

Mrs Allen said Corryong FoodShare could no longer source frozen and refrigerated goods from Melbourne since the mid-year development and now relied solely on Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare for donations of supermarket items. They bought some meat from supermarkets and The Butcher at Arnold's.

"If it wasn't for Border Trust and Albury and Belvoir-Wodonga Rotary clubs we'd be struggling even more," she said.

Upper Murray Pizza Cafe

donates some meals too, all at their own expense."

Born-and-bred Corryong resident Graeme Benton, a FoodShare volunteer, said the cost of living pressures were tough on people still recovering from the bushfires.

He said residents struggled to buy food staples and the fuel price was now more than \$2 a litre in the town.

"People can't afford fuel," he said. "That's why we deliver; our Walwa delivery

route is a 150-kilometre round trip."

Corryong FoodShare still delivers emergency food parcels to residents at Walwa, Nariel and Cudgewa.

Mrs Allen, who was also a police chaplain, said the food drops served as welfare checks for some as well.

"We really need a refrigerated van," she said. "But that's not going to happen any time soon."

Mrs Allen said the escalat-

ing cost of utilities had also impacted the service's bottom line. She said their electricity bill was \$200 a month before the fires but was now nudging \$1000 a month.

"Everybody is doing it tough," she said.

"I'm really worried about older singles, especially, trying to survive after paying rent. Rents have gone up astronomically in Corryong; it was unheard of a few years ago to be paying \$350 to \$400

a week for rent like people do now."

Among myriad services offered at Corryong FoodShare were Upper Murray Family Care, Salvation Army, paramedic checks, Gateway Health, elder rights advocacy and a financial counsellor.

Mrs Allen said while bushfire recovery grant money had served the community very well, the toll on people's health was only coming to the fore now.

She said without the thorough community debrief that would have normally happened without COVID, there was a real risk of post-traumatic stress disorder for some.

"The hospital lost funding for mental health workers 12 months ago; it's incredible where the government has pulled funding," Mrs Allen said. "If people have to wait six weeks to see a counsellor, it's not good enough."



Corryong FoodShare Services volunteers Linda Finn and Graeme Benton help meet a vital gap for emergency food relief. Picture by Mark Jesser

Sarkon
Medical Centre

Wodonga Priority Primary Care Centre

8.30am to 9pm Monday to Friday
8.30am to 4.30pm Saturday & Public Holidays

**OPENING
HOURS**

1A & 2 White Box Rise Shopping Centre, Wodonga 02 6064 1900

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