

APPENDIX C CONSULTATION

Community Consultation Plan

WELLINGTON SOLAR FARM

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES

Best practice community consultation involves the community in all decision-making stages of a project. There is a role for the community from project conception, through the assessment process and on to project development. Effective community consultation has three important functions:

1. It facilitates deeper understanding of issues and decisions required for the project;
2. It improves the quality of decisions made for the project; and
3. It allows people to be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

Important community engagement principles for a project include:

- Openness – combats assumptions and misinformation.
- Inclusiveness - consultation should be diverse and representative, not responding only to the most vocal stakeholders.
- Effective communication – requiring trust between parties and tools appropriate to the task.
- A communication strategy – clarity about what is being undertaken:
 - Inform - one-way communication to deliver information about the project.
 - Consult - two-way communication to seek input into the project.
 - Collaborate and involve – seek participation in elements of the project design and implementation.
- Early rather than late – to maximise engagement opportunities.
- Accountability – the process should be monitored and evaluated to ensure its aims are being achieved.

1.2 AIM OF THIS PLAN

NGH Environmental has developed this Community Consultation Plan (CCP) on behalf of First Solar, the proponent of the proposed Wellington Solar Farm. The aims of the plan are to:

1. Identify effective methods to inform the community about the proposed Wellington Solar Farm; and
2. Facilitate engagement with the community, including input into the environmental assessment process and project development.

The plan identifies:

- Community stakeholders for the project.
- Issues / risks related to the engagement of each stakeholder group.
- A consultation strategy for each stakeholder group.
- A set of activities against the project development time line to facilitate consultation.

Effective engagement will require an understanding of community stakeholders and prioritisation of potential impacts. It also relies on the community understanding the project and specific issues of interest to them, to contribute effectively. The focus of the consultation plan will be on providing this understanding and engagement.

1.3 STRUCTURE

The structure of this plan is:

1. Proposal overview.
2. Identification of community stakeholders for the project.
3. Issue management – what specific issues need consideration.
4. Project based activities – what vehicles will be utilised in the consultation process.

1.4 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION OF THIS DOCUMENT

The plan has been developed to coincide with the early planning and assessment stages of the project.

If the project is approved, consultation will also be required to continue into the construction and operational phases of the project. These phases will require a new or updated plan, to reflect any changes to consultation objectives but also the increasing knowledge gained about the community.

1.5 RELEVANT GUIDELINES

This CCP has been prepared with reference to the following guidelines / references:

- *Establishing the social licence to operate large scale solar facilities in Australia: Insights from social research for industry*, Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).
- *Beyond Public Meetings: Connecting community engagement with decision making*, Twyford Consulting 2007.

2 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

2.1 WELLINGTON SOLAR FARM

The Wellington Solar Farm site is located approximately 2 kilometres north east of Wellington, in western central NSW (refer Figure 2-1), within the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area (LGA). The extent of the 316 hectare solar farm site is illustrated in Figure 2-2 and defined as: Lots 89, 90, 91, 92, 99, 102, 103 and 104/DP2987; Lot 1/DP34690, Lot 1/DP520396; and Lot 2/DP807187. The solar farm would connect to the national electricity network via the existing Transgrid substation located to the south of the site (refer Figure 2-2), within Lot 1/DP1226751.

Goolma Road forms the southern and eastern boundaries of the site with the Mitchell Highway further west (Figure 2-2). The site and surroundings are generally farmed land with the Wellington Correctional Centre located approximately 400m east of the site.

The proposal would generate photovoltaic (PV) energy up to 174MW capacity and would comprise an array of solar panels approximately 316 hectares, a 132kV substation and related infrastructure as follows:

- PV modules (solar panels).
- Single Axis horizontal tracking (likely) or fixed mounting frames.
- 30-50 inverter stations with associated transformer.
- An onsite substation or substation within the existing Transgrid substation containing one transformer and associated switchgear.
- A 33kV or 132kV or 330kV transmission line to the adjacent existing Wellington Substation (100m).
- Underground or aboveground electrical conduits and cabling to connect the inverters to the onsite substation or substation within the existing Transgrid substation.
- 22-33kV underground and aboveground (mounted to module structure) DC cabling to connect the modules to the inverter stations.
- An access track off Goolma Road, approximately 4.6km north east of Mitchell Highway junction.
- Permanent site office and maintenance building with associated vehicle parking.
- Internal access tracks to allow for site maintenance.
- Perimeter security fencing up to 2.3m high.
- Energy storage.
- Native vegetation screening, where required to break up views of infrastructure to specific receivers, will be planted prior to commencement of operations.

2.2 CONSTRUCTION

Indicative timing for the receipt of Planning Approval for the Wellington Solar Farm is March 2018. The construction phase of the proposal is expected to take twelve months.

The Wellington Solar Farm is expected to operate for around 30 years. After the operating period the solar farm would either be decommissioned, removing all above ground infrastructure and returning the site to its existing land capability, or repowered with new PV equipment.

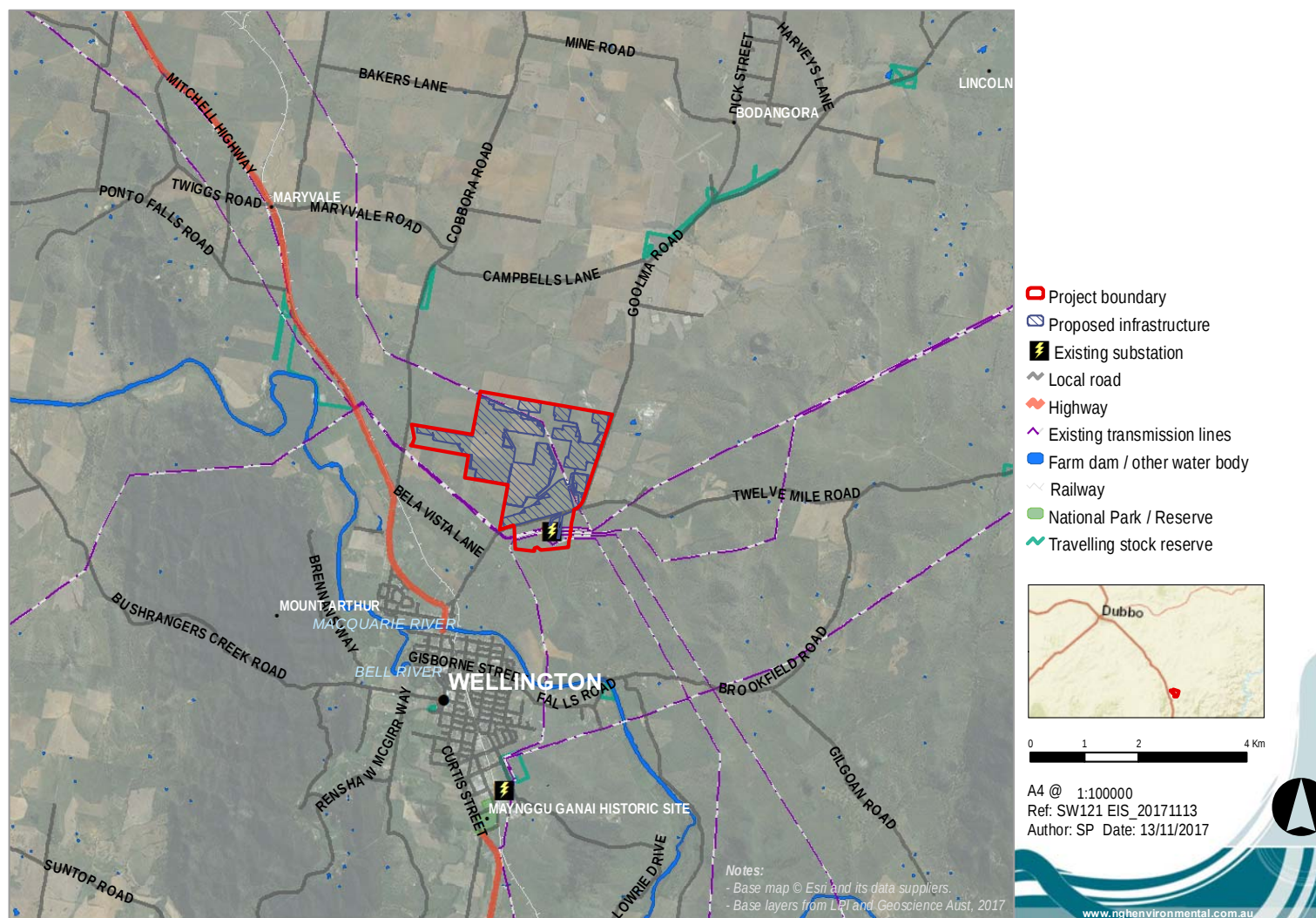


Figure 2-1 Proposal location

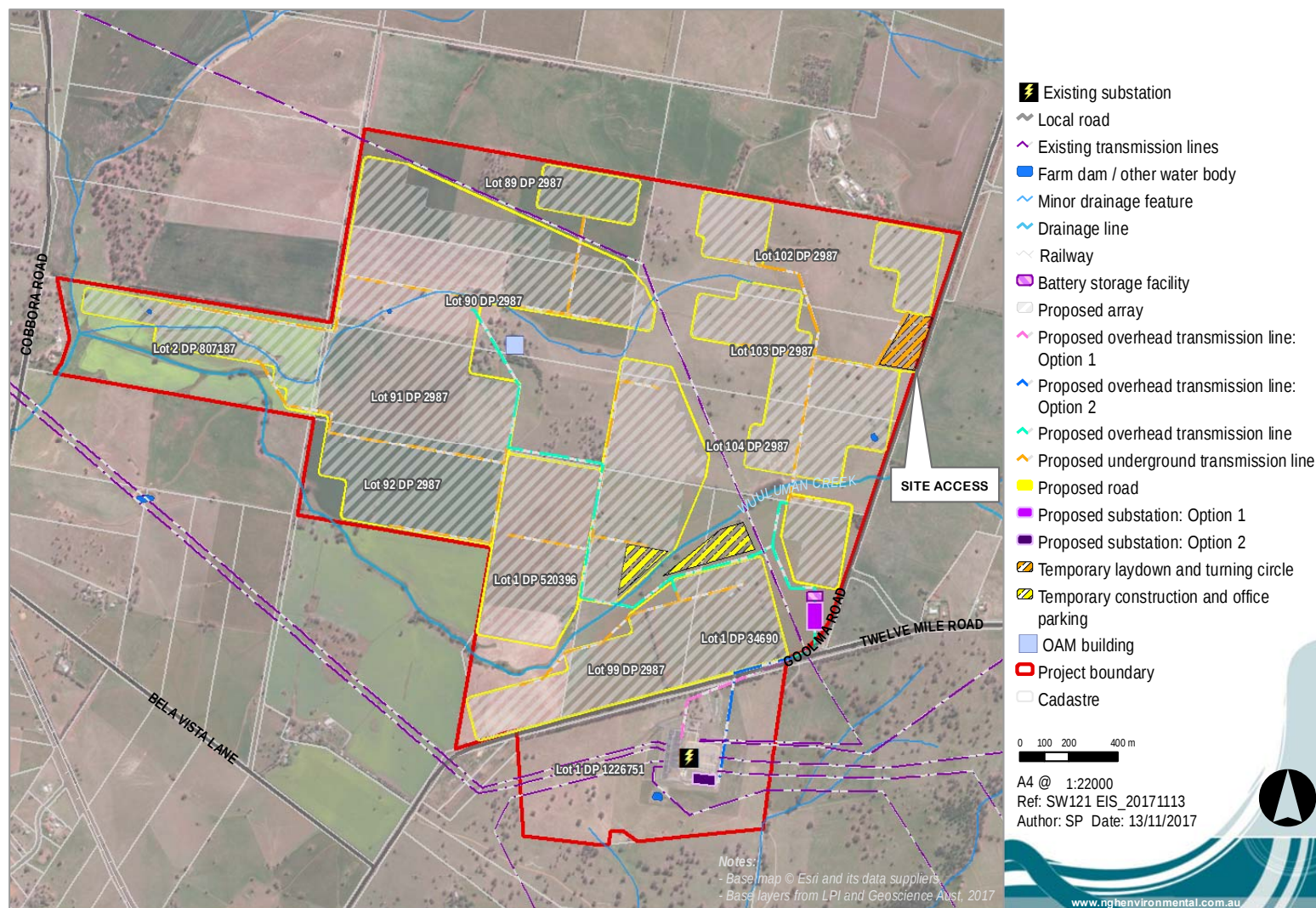


Figure 2-2 Proposal site

2.3 PLANNING PATHWAY

The proposal to construct and operate Wellington Solar Farm requires development consent under Part 4 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The proposal is development for the purpose of electricity generating works with a capital cost in excess of \$30 million and is therefore classified as State Significant Development under *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011*.

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required to be prepared for State Significant Developments. The EIS would document all community consultation activities undertaken for the Wellington Solar Farm.

3 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Understanding the makeup and values of the community is essential to finding effective ways to reach the community as well as beginning to identify ways that the project may impact the community. This section provides a broad overview of the LGA and nearest major town of Wellington, the locality of Bodangora, village of Geurie and the regional centre of Dubbo.

3.1 DUBBO REGIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Dubbo Regional Council was established on 12 May 2016 as an amalgamation of the former Dubbo City and Wellington Shire Councils and covers an area of 7,536 square kilometres. Prior to the amalgamation the proposal site was located within the Wellington LGA which covered an area of 4,110 square kilometres.

The estimated resident population within the Wellington LGA in 2011 was 8,833, which grew to 9,073 by 2015 (ABS 2017). The median age of residents within the Wellington LGA in 2015 was 42.1 years, higher than the Australian average of 37.4 and higher than the median estimated age of 40.3 in 2011 (ABS 2017).

The estimated resident population of the Dubbo Regional LGA as at June 30, 2015 was 51,007 people. Between 2005 and 2015 the Dubbo Region estimated resident population increased by 3,969 people (8.44%), with an average annual compound population growth of 0.81% between 2005 and 2015. (Dubbo Regional Council, 2016). Between 2016 and 2036, the population of Dubbo Region is projected to increase by 5,750 people, which is less than the average growth rates experienced over the previous 10 years (Department of Planning and Environment, 2016).

The main industries in the Dubbo Regional LGA are health, retail, education, government services, tourism, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, business services and transport (Dubbo Regional Council, 2016). The Region is also well positioned as a growing mining services centre with mining and exploration projects, both established and emerging, flourishing across the surrounding region (Dubbo Regional Council, 2016).

The output generated by Dubbo Region economy is estimated at \$5.493 billion, with manufacturing accounting for \$790 million, followed by rental, hiring and real estate services (\$597 million) and construction (\$546 million) (Dubbo Regional Council, 2016).

The total employment estimate for Dubbo Region as at the 2011 Census was 19,217 jobs. The health care and social assistance industry sector is the largest sector (3,084 jobs); followed by retail trade (2,467 jobs) and education and training (1,870 jobs) (Dubbo Regional Council, 2016). Workers in Dubbo Region are predominately in the 45 to 54 (23.5%), 35 to 44 (21.8%) and 25 to 34 (18.4%) year age groups, with 4.3% of workers aged 65 years and over.

Between the 2006 and 2011 Census periods, there was a net increase of 336 jobs in Dubbo Region, building on the 18,881 jobs in 2006 (ABS 2017). The largest increase in terms of the number of jobs was the health care and social assistance sector, increasing by 467 jobs (17.84%) (Dubbo Regional Council, 2016). The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector experienced the largest decline in jobs (Dubbo Regional Council, 2016).

Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a suite of indexes that have been created by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) from social and economic Census information. Each index ranks geographic areas across Australia in terms of their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, with LGA scores ranging from 121 (most disadvantaged) to 1,193 (least disadvantaged). The SEIFA score for Dubbo Region in 2011 was 961.

3.1.1 Wellington

Wellington is the nearest township to the proposal site, located approximately 2 km to the south. The town of Wellington has approximately 4,500 people and is located 362 km north-west of Sydney and 50km south east of Dubbo (Regional Development Australia – Orana, 2016).

Wellington is located at the junction of the Mitchell Highway, Bushrangers Creek Road, Cobbora Road and Goolma Road. The town is located on the Main Western railway line and served by a daily NSW TrainLink XPT service between Sydney and Dubbo.

Agriculture is the key industry in Wellington, with the steeper land to the east supporting mainly grazing activities and the gentle undulating land to the west supporting mainly cereal production. Mining exploration activity is of continuing interest, with a number of mineral deposits within the area. (Regional Development Australia – Orana, 2016).

Of the total 19,217 jobs in the Dubbo Region there are: 16,959 jobs in the former Dubbo LGA (88.25 %) and 2,258 jobs in the former Wellington LGA (11.75 %). The SEIFA score for Wellington in 2011 was 788 (compared to 961 for the overall Dubbo Region) (REMPAN 2017).

Wellington Correctional Centre, an Australian maximum security prison, is located approximately 400m east of the proposal site, accessed via Goolma Road. The facility is operated by Corrective Services NSW and employs over 200 staff. The facility is to be expanded during 2017.

The proposed solar farm would provide opportunity of employment diversification as NSW moves towards a carbon neutral economy by the year 2050. The unemployment rate for the Wellington LGA for 2011 was high at 8.3%, compared to the Australian average of 5.6% (ABS 2011).

The local newspaper *The Wellington Times*, a Rural Press title, is published three times a week.

Wellington provides support to the villages of Geurie, Elong Elong, Mumbil, Stuart Town and Euchareena and its features include:

- Tourism attractions including the Wellington Caves Complex, Phosphate Mine and Japanese Gardens, Lake Burrendong, Burrendong Botanic Garden and Arboretum, Mt Arthur Reserve, several wineries and boutique galleries (Dubbo Regional Council)
- Events include: the annual Wellington Boot race meeting, Agricultural Show and various markets, (Destinations NSW 2017).
- Recreational and sporting facilities include: Burrendong Dam, basketball and netball courts, soccer, rugby union and rugby league fields, cricket pitches, touch football fields, tennis courts, athletics track, tennis courts, Olympic and children's swimming pools, parks and gardens (Destinations NSW 2016b).
- Community facilities and clubs include: Soldiers Memorial Club, Race Club a memorial hall, branch library, cemetery, (Destinations NSW 2017).
- Health services include: Wellington Hospital, Wellington Aboriginal Corporation Health Service, Bellhaven Aged Care Facility and Maranatha House care facility (Service NSW 2017).
- Services include: banks, supermarkets, post office, real estate, trades people, machinery and farming services, hotels, accommodation, cafes and restaurants, fire station (Destinations NSW 2017).
- Education facilities include: pre-school, primary schools, high school (Dubbo Regional Council 2017).

- Churches – Uniting Church, Baptist Church, Anglican Church, Christian Community Church, Baha’i Faith, Catholic Church, Jehovah’s Witnesses, International Network of Churches, Jachin Boaz Ministries (Dubbo Regional Council 2017).
- The Wellington Airport, also known as Bondangora Airport, is owned and operated by Dubbo Regional Council.

3.1.2 Bodangora

Bodangora is a small rural locality approximately 12 kilometres north east of Wellington and approximately 6 kilometres north east of the Wellington Solar Farm site. The locality of Bodangora is a collection of larger rural properties accessed from Goolma Road. Bodangora has an airfield for small planes and an old cemetery.

There was no data available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on population, businesses or number of dwellings in the Bodangora locality.

3.1.3 Geurie

Geurie is a small village located between Wellington (21 km) and Dubbo (29 km) on the Mitchell Highway. Geurie is approximately 17 kilometres north west of the proposed Wellington Solar Farm site. The village is on the Main Western railway line and served by a daily NSW TrainLink XPT service between Sydney and Dubbo.

At the 2011 census, Geurie had a population of 895 (REMPPLAN 2017). The SEIFA score for Geurie in 2011 was 996, (compared to 961 for the overall Dubbo Region) (REMPPLAN 2017).

Geurie has a swimming pool, some services, cross country mountain biking trails, parks and reserves.

3.1.4 Dubbo

Dubbo is a major regional centre located approximately 50 km northwest of Wellington and 45 km north west of the proposal site. Dubbo is located at the junction of the Mitchell, Newell and Golden Highways (three major highways). Dubbo is also serviced by Main Western Railway Line (with daily XPT services) and the Dubbo City Regional Airport (180 flights a week to/from Dubbo).

The population of Dubbo in 2011 was 32,326. The estimated population for Dubbo in 2016 was 41,934 with a median age of 39 (Evocities <http://evocities.com.au/dubbo/>).

Dubbo’s facilities include:

- 14 primary schools (7 public and 7 private); 6 secondary schools (3 public and 3 private), 4 tertiary education campuses, 5 Preschools and 12 Long Day Care Options.
- Retail Services: 6 shopping centres, with over 90 speciality stores and CBD specialty shops.
- Leisure and Dining: In excess of 120 eateries including licensed hotels and clubs, restaurants, cafes and food halls.
- Health: 5 aged-care centres, 1 public, 1 private and 1 rehabilitation hospital.
- The Dubbo arts industry includes the Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre and the Western Plains Cultural Centre.
- There are more than 66 resident GP’s as well as specialists in key areas including oncology, paediatrics, mental and aged care.

- Tourist attractions include: Taronga Western Plains Zoo, historic Dundullimal Homestead and the historic Old Dubbo Gaol.

The unemployment rate in Dubbo is typically below the State average and is currently at 4.9% compared to 5.6% for NSW (Dubbo City 2017).

It is estimated that 16,959 people work in Dubbo[^], the majority of whom work a 35-39 hour week. By August 2018 is estimated that total employment in Dubbo will be at 21,919 jobs, which represents an annualised growth rate of 2.20%. Of the 16,959 workers in Dubbo 17.98% are classified as Professionals, 12.02% Managers, 14.62% Technicians and Trade Workers, and 10.75% Labourers. (Evocities 2017).

Dubbo has a proud and passionate sporting heritage and boasts more than 120 sporting and interest clubs and more than 150 acres of dedicated sporting grounds and facilities. In addition to sport, there are a host of other recreational activities including the nationally recognised Taronga Western Plains Zoo.

Local print media includes *The Daily Liberal* (called the *Weekend Liberal* on Saturdays).

A number of community organisations across a range of interests, plus business and professional organisations including the Dubbo City Development Corporation, Dubbo Chamber of Commerce and Orana Business Enterprise Centre.

3.1.5 Bodangora Wind Farm

The approved Bodangora Wind Farm, located approximately 10 kilometres to the north east of the Wellington Solar Farm site is due to begin construction mid-2017.

The EIS for the original wind farm proposal was publicly exhibited in mid-2012, with the Department of Planning and environment receiving over 100 objections. Opposition to the wind farm was covered in the local press.

The previous negative publicity associated with the wind farm, may influence local community members' perception of the solar farm proposal in either a positive or negative manner. When meeting with members of the local community, the community engagement team should emphasise the unobtrusive visual nature of the Wellington Solar Farm proposal.

4 STAKEHOLDER GROUPS AND CONSULTATION STRATEGIES

It is important to identify all key stakeholder groups and relevant characteristics and tailor engagement strategies to suit each group. Different levels of engagement suit varying degrees of potential impacts in the community. Where impacts are less significant, for example, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) consultation spectrum suggests approaches such as 'Inform' and 'Consult'. Greater impacts on communities require approaches such as 'Involve', 'Collaborate' and 'Empower'. Appropriate strategies are set out below for each stakeholder group.

Table 4-1 Summary of stakeholder groups and strategies, to be detailed further in the next table

Inform only	Inform and Consult
- Local Media - Broader community - Mid-Western Shire	- Adjacent neighbours - Near neighbours - Local businesses - Wellington Correctional Centre - Special Interest groups - Quota International - Wellington Race Club - Wellington Pony club - Aero club - Golf Club - Polo Club - Representative bodies - Wellington Business Chamber - Dubbo Regional Council

Stakeholder group	Defining characteristics	Consultation strategies	Status and timing
1. Adjacent neighbours	Neighbours adjacent to the project and those who may be directly affected, for example: those with a view of infrastructure, noise or vibration from haulage route or construction activities.	Meet first – Inform and consult Understanding the values and potential impacts to this group is highly important. Face to face consultation and direct feedback is required. Mitigation strategies may require changes to the project or the development of specific plans of management i.e. screening visual impact. All consultation should be documented.	First consultation occurred in May/June 2017 Letters and feedback forms have been left when neighbours weren't available Follow up consultation as needed
2. Near neighbours	Neighbours to the project and those who may be directly affected, for example: those with a view of infrastructure, noise or vibration from haulage route or construction activities. Being a major development close to a town, direct impacts may be of great interest to residents and businesses. This is a large development with potential to define the locality in many ways. This group includes residences within 2km of the site (including residences on the northern side of Wellington) and may experience direct impacts.	Inform and Consult Understanding the values and potential impacts to this group is highly important. It will assist the assessment process and development of appropriate mitigation strategies. Face to face consultation and direct feedback is required. All consultation should be documented.	First consultation occurred in May/June 2017 Letters and feedback forms have been left when neighbours weren't available Follow up consultation as needed

Stakeholder group	Defining characteristics	Consultation strategies	Status and timing
3. Local Businesses	Businesses within 2km of the site which may experience direct impacts. This includes Wellington Correctional Centre, which is accessed via Goolma Road, in close proximity to the solar farm site.	Inform and Consult Understanding the values of this group will assist the assessment process and development of appropriate mitigation strategies. Direct contact and direct feedback is required. Potential opportunity to distribute project information and understand community sentiment. All consultation should be documented.	First consultation occurred in May/June 2017 Letters and feedback forms have been left when business owners weren't available Follow up consultation as needed
4. Special interest groups	Special interest groups, for example, recreational groups, sporting groups. A number were identified specific to this proposal. These include: • Quota International • Wellington Race Club • Wellington Pony club • Aero club • Golf Club • Polo Club • Rotary Club	Inform and Consult These should be directly contacted. Specific information or assessment may be required to understand and mitigate impacts for these groups. An avenue to provide feedback or ask questions should be provided.	

Stakeholder group	Defining characteristics	Consultation strategies	Status and timing
5. Representative bodies	Representatives of groups such as: - Wellington Business Chamber - Dubbo Regional Council	Inform and Consult Specific information may be required for this group. An avenue to receive information and provide specific feedback or ask questions should be provided.	Dubbo Regional Council has been consulted in June; First Solar stays in direct contact with Dubbo Regional Council. Presentation to Councillors is expected to take place in October/November 2017. Consultation with the Wellington Business Chamber has occurred in October 2017. A letter to the business is schedule to be provide in November 2017.
6. Media	Outlets to ensure a clear message is delivered: Local radio, television, newspapers.	Inform A contact should be provided to this group, for further information if required.	Wellington Time advertised for Community Open Day 27 September 2017
7. Broader community	The town of Wellington is approximately 2 km from the proposed solar farm. There are numerous residences and business located in and around the township. Direct impacts are a possibility for residences on the northern side of Wellington and the project would be a large new development for the broader community.	Inform Newspaper articles, website information used to relay information about the project. A contact should be provided to this group, for further information if required.	First Solar completed a mail out to broader community 19 April 2017, 3 July 2017, 7 August, 13 September 2017.

Stakeholder group	Defining characteristics	Consultation strategies	Status and timing
8. Mid-Western shire	The region has had a rich agricultural history. The proposed solar farm would provide an economic stimulus for the area, during construction, and would be a positive step forward in the renewable energy sector. While direct impacts are unlikely, the project would be a large new development for the broader community.	Inform Newspaper articles and website information used to release information about the project. A contact should be provided to this group, for further information if required. Direct contact with specific representative groups (Chamber of Commerce).	First Solar made contact with Viv Wellington and Barry Jeffrey, Wellington Business Chamber in October 2017.

5 ISSUE MANAGEMENT

A set of project-specific issues and risks to maximising community engagement in the project have been identified below. These issues pose potential risks to the effective identification and mitigation of impacts important to the community. Mitigation strategies have been developed below, specific to the identified issues. These have been incorporated into the Project-based Activities, in Section 6.

Issue	Risks	Mitigation strategies
The project may define / overwhelm the locality	This may polarise the community. They may not feel that the project reflects their values. The scale of the project may overwhelm the existing local character.	Education material about the role of solar energy in the country's energy mix, the technology and its impacts. Early dissemination of information about the project and its specific justification and benefits, particularly with reference to developing new income streams on agricultural land and the ability to restore the land capability after decommissioning. Seek direct input into how the project may reflect the communities 'personality' and values and how the benefits of the project may be spread to the local community. Clear communication of key environmental impacts and mitigation strategies of the project. Offer direct contact to project manager.
Misinformation: Word of mouth / rumours first source of information	Feel left out, disengaged, misinformed.	Direct communication early to local community – adjacent landowners first, near neighbours second, then the wider community.

Issue	Risks	Mitigation strategies
Lack of support for project	Lack of interest, leading to low levels of public support. Unaddressed concerns may generate opponents of this project. Large proportion of jobs in local area are reliant on coal mining may influence support of development of renewable infrastructure.	Early dissemination of information about the project and its justification and project benefits. Clear communication of key environmental impacts and mitigation strategies. Make participation easy – to ensure all concerns are addressed. Be creative – seek support for renewable project that demonstrates how benefits are felt at the local level.
The approvals process can be complex.	Perception that the process is too difficult to become involved in. Suspicion that input will not be valued.	Clearly illustrate approvals process. Clearly define opportunities for community input including what is required and when it is required. Communicate back, identifying where input has been used. Reinforce this at each relevant stage for community input – pre lodgement, during public exhibition etc.
Distrust in environmental assessment process.	Distrust of impact identification and mitigation strategies.	Establish credentials of assessment team and First Solar. Present these in the EIS and in newsletters etc. Make participation easy – create opportunities to discuss issues with the team.
Fear of unknown / complex information	Exaggerated fears / misunderstanding of information.	Layman explanations of issues. Offer to follow up – one on one, or special interest meetings.

Issue	Risks	Mitigation strategies
Relationship with community	Risk that during the long approval and assessment process, the community will lose enthusiasm, become disengaged or negative.	Milestone events should be identified early and celebrated.
Representative	Risk of biased consultation, serving only the most vocal community members. Sections of the community may be “overpowered” and may be marginalised.	Ensure community is engaged in a forum that minimises risk of debate being side tracked. Follow up with smaller groups where required. Use established social (and media) channels in dissemination of materials, i.e. sport clubs.
Unified message	Differing messages may create confusion and mistrust.	Limit points of contact. Have message clearly set out for use, rather than reinventing it for each consultation activity.
Unequal distribution of benefits	Residents close to the development are likely to feel more strongly.	Identification of stakeholder groups should reflect differences in impacts.

6 PROJECT BASED ACTIVITIES

The following table outlines the different project stages and associated community consultation objectives and activities, in chronological order. The stages include:

- Decision to proceed with early investigations, proposal development
- Receipt of SEARs
- Detailed assessment and proposal development
- EIS on public exhibition, submissions reporting
- Approval determination
- Construction contract award
- Construction commences
- Operation commences
- Decommissioning commences

6.1 ENGAGEMENT TEAM

First Solar's engagement team will consist of the project developer and support team.

Mirjam Tome First Solar (Australia) Pty Ltd Project Manager will lead the engagement.

Support will be provided by Jennifer Abbott, Senior Manager – Communications and Public Affairs and Bianca Alexander – Development Support.

6.2 MILESTONES

Milestone events should be celebrated, and used as an opportunity to keep the community on board. Milestones can include:

1. Announce project – notify near residents first, follow up with consistent information
2. Receipt of SEARs
3. Early studies update – meet the community face to face
4. EIS submitted – explain avenues for input
5. Submissions Report submitted – explain avenues for input
6. Approval – celebrate in a way that involves the community
7. Construction contractors awarded - opportunity for local employment
8. Construction commences - sod turning ceremony
9. Operation commences – public open day

6.3 THROUGHOUT PROCESS

Relevant to all activities:

- One person would remain key spokesperson, this would be Mirjam Tome, First Solar (Australia) Pty Ltd Project Manager, to:
 - o Limit points of contact, ensuring a clear message and no contradictions in terminology or project information.
 - o Retain personal direct relationship with the community, identifiable face for the project.

- Feedback would be sought using a standard form where possible, allowing this information to inform the assessment (example provided in Appendix A). This form would be made available during meetings and on the project website.

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement activities	Format
Decision to proceed with early investigations, proposal development, and receipt of SEARs				
Adjacent landowners	May define locality Lack of support Other concerns	Inform and engage	Early dissemination of information about solar development generally. Early dissemination of information about the project and its justification and benefits. Seek direct input to include in assessment approach and development of proposal.	Face to face meeting Include feedback form and encourage direct contact with Project Manager.
Council	Misinformation Lack of support	Inform and engage	Ensure that the information is available Build relationship to understand their key issues	Face to face meeting
Near neighbours	May define locality Lack of support Unequal distribution of benefits Other concerns	Inform and engage	Early dissemination of information about solar development generally. Early dissemination of information about the project and its justification and benefits. Provide contact information for near neighbours to seek further information, provide comments on the proposal and to register for regular updates.	Letter Drop Provide contact information to of the Project Manager
	Distrust in environmental assessment process	Inform	Ensure the timelines and the stages for community input are clearly documented - use graphics and indicate where we are now at for the assessment. Make information on the project team and assessment team available	Factsheet showing stage of the process and opportunities for input Website, links to other projects and accreditations

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement activities	Format
Local business owners	Misinformation	Inform and engage	Ensure that the information is available to the local community first. As well as letter drop, meet local business owners and offer to leave information with them to distribute. Build relationship with these owners and staff as they may assist to 'get the word out'.	Face to face meeting with local business owners as requested
Broader community	Distrust in environmental assessment process. The approvals process can be complex.	Inform	Preliminary project announcement, including stage of assessment, likely timelines, ways in which the community can be involved.	Media release, link to website
Detailed assessment and proposal development				
Adjacent landowners	May define locality Lack of support	Inform and engage	Feed information into the final assessment to ensure all their issues have been identified and addressed by the project.	Face to face meeting / Phone call
Near neighbours	May define locality Lack of support	Inform and engage	Identify ways the community can participate in the project and seek input on these: • Vegetation screen planting, adopt a tree (one for project, one for landowner?) • Signage / logo for solar farm (will be prominent part of the town?) • Other renewable or energy saving programs that the proponent could support?	Depends on initiative identified

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement activities	Format
Near neighbours	Fear of unknown, complex information	Inform and engage	Identify ways simplify and present the key information, seek feedback.	Open house – specialist and project information
Broader community	Unequal distribution of benefits Risk of biased consultation, serving only the most vocal community members.	Consult and inform	Feed information into the final assessment to ensure all community issues have been identified and addressed by the project, differentiating between stakeholder groups	Fact Sheet, Website
EIS on public exhibition, submissions reporting				
Adjacent landowners	Relationship with landowners and community	Inform and engage	Reinforce stage in the project and ways to have input	Face to face meeting / Phone call
Near neighbours	Relationship with community	Inform and engage	Celebrate milestone, reinforce stage in the project and ways to have input	Newspaper article, Website link
Near neighbours	Fear of unknown, complex information	Inform and engage	Special interest groups – address specifically in meeting.	Meeting with group, if required.
Approval determination				
Near neighbours	Relationship with community	Inform and engage	Celebrate milestone, reinforce stage in the project and ways to have input. Thank the community for their support	Letter Drop

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement activities	Format
Broader community	Differing messages may create confusion and mistrust. The approvals process can be complex.	Inform	Keep project information up to date. Provide link to relevant information including feedback form. Provide a contact for further information.	Newspaper article Website
Construction contract award				
Near neighbours	Relationship with community	Inform and engage	Celebrate milestone, reinforce stage in the project and ways to have input. What opportunities for local employment?	Media Release
Construction commences				
Near neighbours	Relationship with community	Inform and engage	Celebrate milestone, reinforce stage in the project and ways to have input. Notify about impacts that can be expected, avenues to complain, for more information.	Letter Drop Event: first module install
Broader community	Differing messages may create confusion and mistrust.	Inform	Keep project information up to date Provide link to relevant information including feedback form Provide a contact for further information	Website
Operation commences				
Near neighbours	Relationship with community	Inform and engage	Celebrate milestone, reinforce stage in the project and ways to have input Notify about impacts that can be expected, avenues to complain, for more information.	Letter Drop Event: public open day

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement activities	Format
Broader community	Differing messages may create confusion and mistrust.	Inform	Keep project information up to date Provide link to relevant information including feedback form Provide a contact for further information	Website
Decommissioning commences				
Near neighbours	Relationship with community	Inform and engage	Reinforce stage in the project and ways to have input Notify about impacts that can be expected, avenues to complain, for more information.	Letter Drop
Broader community	Differing messages may create confusion and mistrust.	Inform	Keep project information up to date Provide link to relevant information including feedback form Provide a contact for further information	Website

7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

To ensure this plan is effective during the implementation of activities, and adapts as required to new information, the following review actions will be undertaken alongside implementation activities:

- Appoint and maintain a consultation manager for the project to implement activities and review this plan regularly.
- Keep an accurate record of all feedback from consultation activities and all correspondence with the community.
- Monitor regularly and respond promptly to email and phone queries.
- Are the activities reaching a diverse and representative section of the community; do new activities need to be implemented?
- Has relevant information been passed back to:
 - Project developers
 - Assessment staff.

8 REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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APPENDIX A COMMUNITY FEEDBACK FORM

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK FORM: WELLINGTON SOLAR FARM

Your feedback is important to develop a solar farm project that best suits the local area and community.

Your comments ensure local feedback is understood by the developers and assessment team.

Please send your feedback to (or seek further information directly, from):

Mirjam Tome, First Solar Australia Pty Ltd
Level 3 16 Spring Street, Sydney, NSW 2000
wellington@firstsolar.com

For further information about the project, please see the project website at www.wellingtonsolarfarm.com.au

Your contact details: (this information will be treated as confidential)

Name: Address: Ph:

Circle which best describes how far you live from the proposed Wellington Solar Farm:

<1 km 1-2 km 2-5 km >5 kilometres Not a member of the local community

Tell us what you value about the local area:

What do you value most about the local area?

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What views or landscape characteristics in the region and local area are important to you?

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What do you like about solar farms?

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Do you have any concerns about solar farms?

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Do you have any specific concerns regarding the proposed solar farm at Wellington?

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APPENDIX B CONSULTATION STATUS

Date	Activity
April 2017	Letter has been sent to all landowners within 2km of the proposed solar farm.
May 2017	- Project Manager and Project Support Officer provided introduction to the project and provided a notification letter with the project contact information and a feedback form to all adjacent and close neighbours, including local businesses and agencies. - Project Manager met with Kathy Webb, Business Manager of the Wellington Correctional Centre. - An email was sent to Kathy Webb detailing interactions between solar panels and security cameras as well as responses to the questions raised.
June 2017	- Neighbours with potential views of the solar farm were met with in person. - Follow up calls and emails were sent to neighbours with potential views of solar farm. - Dubbo Regional Council (Liz Rich and Darryl Quigley) were consulted regarding the proposed solar farm.
July 2017	- Letters have been sent out to all landowners and members of the community who are on the distribution list, notifying them that the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) have been requested. - Letters have been sent out to all landowners and members of the community who are on the distribution list, notifying them that the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) have been received.
August 2017	- Neighbours with potential views of the solar farm were visited for a visual assessment consultant to take photos from viewpoints. - Meetings were scheduled with the project manager to share the photomontages, discuss impacts and mitigation options if appropriate. - Mineral Licence owners were consulted. - Aboriginal Parties were consulted for Cultural Heritage Study on site. - Dubbo Regional Council was consulted and informed about the progress of the project.
September 2017	- The Community Open Day took place at the Wellington Civic Centre. - Dubbo Regional Council was consulted and informed about the progress of the project. - Wellington Business Chamber has been consulted.
October 2017	Wellington Correctional Centre has been consulted and kept informed of progress.

Date	Activity
	• Dubbo Regional Council was consulted and informed about the progress of the project. A date to present to Councillors has been requested. • Neighbours have been visited and kept informed of progress.