



APPENDIX B

Stakeholder engagement materials

Stakeholder engagement strategy

Memorandum



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To Killian Wentrup
Natasha Lawrence
Toby Dove
From David Richards, Claire Burnes and Duncan Peake
Subject Stakeholder engagement strategy – New England Solar Farm

Dear Killian, Natasha and Toby,

1 Introduction

Expectations from both regulators and community for meaningful stakeholder engagement have increased in recent years, and consultation requirements are likely to be a key feature of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the New England Solar Farm (the project). In particular, if the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) requires or recommends that the guidelines from the environmental impact assessment (EIA) improvement project and/or the *Draft Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline* (DPE 2017) (Draft Solar Guideline) be adopted for the project, significant upfront focus and effort will be required for consultation with stakeholders during preparation of the preliminary environmental assessment (PEA) in order to satisfy the requirements of the associated guidelines.

The purpose of this stakeholder engagement strategy is to:

- identify stakeholders relevant to the project;
- describe the overall objective for consultation with each stakeholder (or stakeholder group);
- recommend timing, methods, and key matters to be discussed/resolved with each stakeholder; and
- consider the potential impacts on this strategy of the Draft Community and Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines (the guidelines), which are part of the draft EIA guidance series being developed by DPE as part of the EIA improvement project, as well as the Draft Solar Guideline.

To identify the relevant community, regulatory and other stakeholders, the guidelines encourage proponents to consider the following questions:

- What is the nature of the project and the extent of its environmental impacts?
- Who will be interested in the outcomes of the project?
- Who may have information that could be of value to the project?
- Who is directly affected by the project or might think they are affected by the project, and in what way?
- Who is likely to be upset if they are not informed or invited to participate?

- Who might be a person that others will look to for their opinions?

It is expected that this stakeholder engagement strategy will evolve as the project moves through the various stages of the EIA process. The stakeholder engagement strategy will be revised at key milestones during the EIA process for the project, such as, prior to the submission of the request for SEARs and prior to the lodgement of the environmental impact statement (EIS). This stakeholder engagement strategy will be maintained as a dynamic document that responds to issues identified during the consultation process, and acts as a record of consultation undertaken as part of the project.

It is recommended that engagement with key stakeholders, including Uralla Shire Council (Council), DPE, OEH, DPI, Members of Parliament, special interest groups and surrounding/adjoining landowners be commenced as early as possible.

Aboriginal stakeholders will need to be identified and consulted in accordance with OEH’s *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents* (DECCW 2010). As noted in the project inception meeting, consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders will be managed as part of a separate consultation strategy in conjunction with a detailed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) for the project. Further information on the key stages of Aboriginal consultation is provided in Section 2.1.

2 Stakeholder identification and consultation objectives

Initial identification of stakeholders to be consulted regarding the project commenced as part of the preparation of the approval pathway assessment in Q4 2017. The stakeholders identified to date for consultation, including overarching objectives for this consultation, are listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Stakeholder identification and consultation objectives

	Stakeholder	Consultation objectives
Regulatory	NSW Government agencies	Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.
	Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)	
	DPE Division of Resources and Geoscience (DRG)	Address matters raised by each of the listed agencies in correspondence provided with the SEARs, as well as any other matters that arise during consultation.
	Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH)	
	Environment Protection Authority (EPA)	
	Department of Primary Industries (DPI)	
	Roads and Maritime Services (RMS)	
	Northern Tablelands Local Land Services (LLS)	
	Department of Industry – Crown Lands and Water (CLAWD)	
	Forestry Corporation of NSW (Forestry NSW)	
	Commonwealth Government	
	Department of Environment and Energy (DoEE)	
	Local Government	
Uralla Shire Council (Council)		
Armidale Regional Council		
Community	Project landholders	Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.
		Where relevant, request information about on-site agricultural operations (including historical and potential agricultural productivity); aerial spraying; weed and pest management practices; and bushfire protection management measures.
		Demonstrate avoidance of highly productive agricultural land parcels.
		Address any concerns about the project.
		Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.
	Adjoining landholders (ie non-project related)	Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and

Table 1 Stakeholder identification and consultation objectives

	Stakeholder	Consultation objectives
	receptors)	<p>timeline.</p> <p>Where relevant, request information about on-site agricultural operations; aerial spraying; weed and pest management practices; and bushfire protection management measures implemented on adjoining land.</p> <p>Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to raise any concerns about the project.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.</p> <p>Present the findings of key technical assessments (eg traffic and visual) and discuss potential mitigation/management measures to address impacts (if required).</p> <p>Outline project benefits at regional and local level.</p>
	Interested members of the local community (in particular Uralla, but potentially also including the townships of Walcha and Armidale and smaller villages nearby (eg Kellys Plains))	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.</p> <p>Inform the general public about the appropriate avenues for input into the project.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p> <p>Outline project benefits at regional and local level.</p>
	Local businesses	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p> <p>Address enquiries about potential construction material requirements and employment opportunities.</p>
	Local radio, television and newspaper	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Encourage media coverage of important project milestones using UPC pre-approved messaging.</p> <p>Invite attendance at community workshop and request advertisements be placed in relevant bulletins.</p> <p>Outline regional and local benefits of the project.</p>
Aboriginal stakeholders	Registered Aboriginal parties (RAPs)	Introduce the project, including the preferred layout, its need and the project timeline.
	Other Aboriginal stakeholders	<p>Address any concerns about the project.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the proposed Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment process and the proposed methodology.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.</p> <p>Provide an opportunity for RAPs and Aboriginal stakeholders to comment on the proposed methodology for the Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment and to raise any concerns about the potential impacts of the project on Aboriginal cultural heritage.</p>
Industry and other stakeholders	NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and project timeline.</p> <p>Clarify whether the project investigation area is on bushfire prone land and discuss suitable bushfire protection measures for the project.</p>
	Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Clarify whether there is potential for the project to present a hazard to aviation.</p> <p>Obtain correspondence from CASA confirming absence of hazards</p>

Table 1 Stakeholder identification and consultation objectives

Stakeholder	Consultation objectives
	associated with the project (if required).
Fire & Rescue NSW	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and project timeline.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p>
Mining/mineral exploration license holders	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and project timeline.</p> <p>Determine whether there is any potential for cumulative impacts and/or conflicting land uses.</p> <p>Address any concerns about the project.</p>
Special interest groups (eg Zero Net Energy Town (Z-Net) and Regional Development Australia Northern Inland (RDANI))	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p>
Members of Parliament (including State and Federal Members and opposition)	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p>
NSW Renewable Energy Advocate	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p> <p>Build support for the project and, where relevant, engage with the NSW REA to help resolve issues as they may arise.</p> <p>Outline regional and local benefits from the project.</p>
NSW Regional Clean Energy Team Leader	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p>
NSW Farmers Association	<p>Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline.</p> <p>Clearly define and illustrate the approval process.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project.</p>
Electricity network service providers (NSPs) (ie TransGrid and Essential Energy)	<p>Introduce the project to the relevant asset / land management officers at the NSPs, in particular consult on the preferred layout, proposed access and easements and timelines.</p> <p>Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and its interactions with existing infrastructure, including Essential Energy’s local network, easements (330kV, 66kV and 11kV) and, if so, address any concerns.</p> <p>Note: Grid and connection-related matters will be addressed separate to this strategy by UPC.</p>

Table 1 Stakeholder identification and consultation objectives

Stakeholder	Consultation objectives
University of New England (UNE)	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Potential opportunities for ongoing involvement in the project.
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Potential opportunities for ongoing involvement in the project.
Transport for NSW (TfNSW)	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Interactions with level crossings on Barleyfields Road, Gostwyck Road and Thunderbolts Way and potential upgrade requirements.
Armidale Business Chamber	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Potential opportunities for ongoing involvement in the project.

As noted in Section 1, consultation with surrounding/adjoining landowners should be commenced as early as possible. The priority will be to engage with non-project related receptors within close proximity of the preliminary central and southern solar arrays. In the first instance, prior to the project going public, a letter will be distributed to introduce UPC, provide a high-level discussion of the project and assessment process and offer an invitation to meet with interested landowners and discuss the project further. Concerns raised by surrounding/adjoining landowners will likely be related to their proximity to project infrastructure and potential for impacts to the local road network. Further information on the consultation approach for surrounding/adjoining landowners is provided in Appendix B.

2.1 Aboriginal stakeholders

Aboriginal stakeholders will need to be identified and consulted in accordance with OEH's *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents* (DECCW 2010).

As noted in the project inception meeting, consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders will be managed as part of a separate consultation strategy in conjunction with a detailed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) for the project.

Further information on the key stages of Aboriginal consultation is provided below. As discussed during the project inception meeting, as the ACHA progresses, EMM will consider the suitability of additional face-to-face meetings with the RAPs prior to, during and/or after the fieldwork component of the ACHA.

2.1.1 Stage 1 – Notification of project and registration of interest

This will include identification of relevant Aboriginal stakeholders for the project, which will be undertaken via the following:

- a search of the NSW *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* to identify any Aboriginal owners within the project investigation area;
- a search of the National Native Title Tribunal to identify any additional registered Native Title claims, unregistered claimant applications or registered Indigenous land use agreements within the project investigation area; and

- public notifications inviting Aboriginal people who hold cultural knowledge to register their interest in the project.

Aboriginal stakeholders identified during this process will be formally asked to register their interest in a process of community consultation to provide assistance in determining the significance of Aboriginal object(s) and/or places in the vicinity of the project area.

2.1.2 Stage 2 – Presentation of information about the project

A project information pack will be provided to the RAPs identified in Stage 1. The project information pack will include information about the project, the Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment process, the project schedule, and the roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved in the project.

2.1.3 Stage 3 – Gathering information about cultural significance

RAPs will be provided with a copy of the project method outlining the proposed Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment process to be undertaken as part of the project. RAPs will be given 28 days to review and prepare feedback on the proposed methodology.

2.1.4 Stage 4 – Review of draft Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment report

The draft Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment report (ACHAR) will be provided to the RAPs for their review and comment. The RAPs will be given 28 days to provide their comments on the draft ACHAR.

3 Consultation strategy

3.1 Overview

The key messages to be addressed in all consultation for the project include:

- an overview of the project, including the preferred layout;
- an overview of key issues and proposed mitigation/management measures to address these issues;
- communicate the approval pathway and opportunities to provide feedback (ie consultation activities, direct feedback to project team via phone/email, submission during public exhibition);
- project benefits to the local community, NSW and Australia, as well as the environment in general;
- seek feedback and identification of issues of concern for assessment in EIS; and
- identify opportunities for further consultation (as required).

3.2 Consultation methods

Methods for consultation with stakeholders and their purpose are summarised in Table 2. Further information about various consultation options, the strengths associated with their application, and issues to consider during their application are also provided in Appendix B of the guidelines.

Table 2 Consultation methods and their purpose

Consultation method	Purpose
Face-to-face meetings and teleconferences	<p>To provide a direct means through which stakeholder-specific interests and other matters and/or concerns about the project can be addressed. Where appropriate, face-to-face meetings will be held in preference to teleconferences. However, due to scheduling conflicts and the location of different stakeholders, teleconferences may be required.</p> <p>This method is preferred for key stakeholders where key matters require detailed discussions such as DPE, Council, project landholders and adjoining landholders (eg complex or have potential project design implications).</p>
Email and phone correspondence	<p>To provide a direct means through which UPC can provide project information through teleconferences where a face-to-face meeting (and associated costs) are not warranted, as well as, address outstanding actions from previous consultation.</p> <p>This method is typically used for stakeholders (eg government agencies) where key matters are relatively straight-forward to address.</p>
Community information sessions	<p>To provide a general introduction to the project to a wide audience and provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to interact with representatives of the project team (including UPC and EMM).</p> <p>This method also allows for the community to provide feedback directly to the proponent with potential for improvements to be made to the project design. This process would be documented within the EIS.</p>
Community fact sheet	<p>To provide a general introduction to the project to a wider audience including a visual representation of the preferred layout.</p> <p>Provides an opportunity for the community to contact the project team and provide feedback and obtain information about the project.</p>
Local newspaper advertisement	<p>To advertise the event details for the community information sessions and as part of Stage 1 of the ACHA.</p>
Local project office / shop front drop in centre	<p>To provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to interact with representatives of the project team. This method will allow for the community to provide feedback directly to the proponent with potential for improvements to be made to the project design.</p> <p>This method will allow stakeholders to get the information they need without attending a long meeting or information session and will mean that contact details can be captured and used to</p>

Table 2 Consultation methods and their purpose

Consultation method	Purpose
	provide further information.
Local champions	To allow members of the local community to interact with local representatives who are well informed about the project. Feedback received by the local champions would be relayed directly to the project team on a regular basis. This method of consultation would also provide opportunities for engagement at community events within the township of Uralla and surrounds.
Project website (which will include a project-specific email address and contract number)	To provide a general introduction to the project to a wider audience including a visual representation of the preferred layout. To provide contact details for the community to share its views, concerns and ideas and an avenue through which general project-related enquiries can be made as well as contractor expressions of interest in the project at a general level. A mailing list to be set up to provide regular project updates to the community.
Council website	To provide a high level introduction to the project and inform a wider audience about important project milestones, as well as providing a link to the project website. To advertise the event details for the community information sessions.
Print and online journalism, television and radio (including: articles, interviews and media releases)	To allow information to be easily and quickly transmitted to a wider audience. To increase interest and awareness about the project.

3.3 Consultation program and register

A preliminary consultation program and register is attached in Appendix A. The consultation program identifies the major stakeholder groups for each stage of the approvals process. The consultation program and register have been provided for discussion purposes with initial steps to be confirmed and agreed upon during February 2018. The consultation register will be populated by EMM as consultation occurs and will detail the outcomes and actions of consultation. In those instances where a representative from EMM is not involved in consultation, UPC will provide details for inclusion in the consultation register. Actions arising from consultation will be included in the consultation register and discussed at project team meetings. This information will be adapted for inclusion in the PEA and EIS.

The suggested consultation methods, timing and potential interests of each of the identified stakeholder groups are tabulated in Table 3 (regulatory stakeholders), Table 4 (community stakeholders) and Table 5 (industry and other stakeholders). The key stakeholders for the first round of consultation in February 2018 have been highlighted in **bold** text. Where consultation has been completed, relevant items have been highlighted in **grey**.

As noted in Section 2.1, consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders will be managed as part of a separate consultation strategy in conjunction with a detailed ACHA for the project. Subsequently, consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders has not been included in the tables below.

Table 3 Consultation plan – Regulatory stakeholders

Stakeholder	Suggested consultation method	Timing	Interests relevant to the project	Other matters/further details
NSW Government agencies				
DPE	Face-to-face meeting	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Project introduction and assessment pathway Approach to community and stakeholder engagement BSAL and soil erosion assessment requirements	
DPE – DRG	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Impacts to exploration and mining of significant mineral resources. Demonstrate how the project will avoid/minimise impacts on exploration activities.	
OEH	Teleconference	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Confirmation of biodiversity assessment methodology, approach and timing.	
	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Biodiversity and offsets. Aboriginal cultural heritage. Historic heritage. Water and soil impacts. Flooding.	
EPA	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Potential impacts on noise, odour, water and air quality.	
DPI	Teleconference	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Impacts on agricultural production, BSAL and soil erosion assessment requirements	
	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Discuss potential opportunities for the project to co-exist with agricultural production. Flooding. Water supply. Soil erosion.	
RMS	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Roads under RMS jurisdiction. Consideration of impacts during establishment (construction), operations and decommissioning. Potential for distraction of, and for glare impacts on, passing motorists. Present the findings of the visual impact assessment and discuss potential mitigation/management measures to	

Table 3 **Consultation plan – Regulatory stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Suggested consultation method	Timing	Interests relevant to the project	Other matters/further details
Northern Tablelands LLS	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	address impacts (if required). Present the draft landscaping plan (if required). Present the findings of the traffic impact assessment. Impacts to Crown land (specifically travelling stock reserves). Property vegetation plans (PVPs) (need to demonstrate that existing PVPs won't be impacted). Land management - need to demonstrate that land management practices won't have a detrimental effect on soil and land capability. Impacts to native vegetation. Soil and land capability including potential for soil degradation, erosion and off-site sedimentation, weed invasion, altered land use and management. Biosecurity risks.	
CLAWD	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Responsible for granting licences/easements for use of Crown land.	
Forestry NSW	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Management of timber reserves on Crown land.	
Commonwealth Government				
DoEE	Pre-referral teleconference	After receipt of SEARs	Matters of national environmental significance as defined under the EPBC Act.	
Local Government				
Uralla Shire Council	Face-to-face meetings	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Project introduction and assessment pathway Approach to community and stakeholder engagement. Acquisition of Council laneways. Road use, traffic generation and site access. Socio-economic impacts and opportunities - training and employment, event sponsorship, scholarships, etc.	
Armidale Regional Council	Face-to-face meeting Invitation to community information	After receipt of SEARs	Project introduction and assessment pathway Approach to community and stakeholder engagement	

Table 3 **Consultation plan – Regulatory stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Suggested consultation method	Timing	Interests relevant to the project	Other matters/further details
	sessions. Provide community fact sheet.			

Table 4 Consultation plan – Community stakeholders

Stakeholder	Suggested consultation method	Timing	Interests relevant to the project	Other matters/further details
Project landholders	Face-to-face meetings	Ongoing	Project introduction and assessment pathway Potential concerns about the project.	
Adjoining landholders	Letter	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Project introduction and assessment pathway Invitation to meet to discuss further	
	Face-to-face meetings	Ongoing During preparation of PEA and PEA review	Project introduction and assessment pathway Potential concerns about the project.	
Local community (including the townships of Uralla and Armidale)	Invitation to community information sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Project website.	After receipt of SEARs	Preferred project layout and project timeline. Impacts of the project on the visual landscape. Mitigation/management measures to address any concerns.	
	Invitation to community information sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Project website. Local newspaper advertisement.	After receipt of SEARs	Preferred project layout and timeline. Potential for traffic, noise and visual impacts. Mitigation/management measures to address impacts.	
Local businesses	Invitation to community information sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Project website. Local newspaper advertisement.	After receipt of SEARs	Preferred project layout and timeline. Potential for traffic, noise and visual impacts. Mitigation/management measures to address impacts.	
Local radio, television and newspaper	Invitation to community information sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Media release – prior to community information session and in line with project milestones.	After receipt of SEARs	Preferred project layout and timeline. Potential for traffic, noise and visual impacts. Mitigation/management measures to address impacts.	

Table 5 Consultation plan – Industry and other stakeholders

Stakeholder	Suggested consultation method	Timing	Interests relevant to the project	Other matters/further details
RFS	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation. Invitation to community information session. Provide community fact sheet.	After receipt of SEARs	Potential impacts on bushfire prone land and implementation of appropriate bushfire protection measures. Consideration of asset protection zones.	
CASA	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Potential impacts on air traffic and surrounding airports.	
Fire & Rescue NSW	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation.	After receipt of SEARs	Fire or hazardous material incident response	
Mining/mineral exploration license holders	Letter to relevant assessment officer at DPE – DRG with follow-up phone conversation. If required, teleconference with license holders and invitation to community information sessions.	After receipt of SEARs	Preferred project layout and timeline. Transmission line route. Potential for cumulative impacts. Potential to sterilise resources.	
Special interest groups (eg Z-Net and RDANI)	Face-to-face meetings	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project.	
	Invitation to community information session. Provide community fact sheet.	After receipt of SEARs		
Members of Parliament (including State and Federal Members and opposition)	Face-to-face meetings	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project.	
	Invitation to community information session. Provide community fact sheet.	After receipt of SEARs		
NSW Renewable Energy Advocate	Face-to-face meeting	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Renewable energy opportunities in NSW. Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project.	

Table 5 Consultation plan – Industry and other stakeholders

Stakeholder	Suggested consultation method	Timing	Interests relevant to the project	Other matters/further details
NSW Regional Clean Energy Team Leader	Invitation to community information session. Provide community fact sheet.	After receipt of SEARs		
	Face-to-face meeting	February 2018 During preparation of PEA	Renewable energy opportunities in NSW. Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project.	
Electricity network operators (ie TransGrid and Essential Energy)	Invitation to community information session. Provide community fact sheet.	After receipt of SEARs		
	Face-to-face meetings Email and phone correspondence	Ongoing	Preferred project layout and timeline. Potential impacts on existing infrastructure and easements.	
NSW Farmers Association	Face-to-face meeting Email and phone correspondence	After receipt of SEARs	Introduce the project, including the preferred layout and timeline. Clearly define and illustrate the approval process. Determine whether there are any concerns about the project and, if so, address any concerns about the project. Discuss potential for benefit sharing and opportunities for the project to co-exist with agricultural production.	
UNE	Invitation to community information sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Project website.	After receipt of SEARs	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Potential opportunities for ongoing involvement in the project.	
CSIRO	Invitation to community information sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Project website.	After receipt of SEARs	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Potential opportunities for ongoing involvement in the project.	
TfNSW	Letter to relevant assessment officer with follow-up phone conversation. Invitation to community information	After receipt of SEARs	Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Interactions with level crossings on Barleyfields	

Table 5 **Consultation plan – Industry and other stakeholders**

Stakeholder	Suggested consultation method	Timing	Interests relevant to the project	Other matters/further details
Armidale Business Chamber	sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Project website.	After receipt of SEARs	Road, Gostwyck Road and Thunderbolts Way and potential upgrade requirements.	
	Invitation to community information sessions. Provide community fact sheet. Project website.		Project introduction and assessment pathway. Potential concerns about the project. Potential opportunities for ongoing involvement in the project.	

4 Draft EIA Guidelines

Guideline 6 of the draft EIA guidance series, *Community and Stakeholder Engagement* (the guidelines), describes how DPE expect proponents to engage with the community and other stakeholders during the EIA process for State significant projects. A copy of the guidelines can be found at:

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/~media/Files/DPE/Guidelines/guideline-6-draft-community-and-stakeholder-engagement-2017-06.ashx>

It emphasises the importance of earlier engagement, commencing during the scoping stage of a project, as well as improved participation throughout the EIA process.

The guidelines are not expected to be introduced until at least Q1, 2018. According to the revised schedule for the project, the preliminary environmental assessment and request for SEARs will be lodged with DPE for consideration in March 2018. Whilst this is likely to be prior to implementation of the guidelines, it is recommended that consideration of the guidelines be made during all consultation activities for the project as it is likely that these guidelines will be introduced during the EIA process. Evidence of early consultation and consideration of the guidelines will demonstrate UPC's commitment to communicating and engaging with the community and other stakeholders regarding its activities and will manage the risk of delays later in the approval process.

Further detail on the changes proposed to consultation expectations and requirements during the different stages of the EIA process are provided below.

4.1 Improved participation during the scoping of the EIS

One of the key changes proposed with regards to stakeholder engagement in the guidelines is the requirement to conduct consultation with the community during the scoping stage on the matters to be considered in the EIS. The guidelines note that during this early stage of the EIA process, proponents should focus on the communities and groups most likely to be affected by the potential environmental, economic and social impacts of a project. As noted in Section 1, the guidelines encourage proponents to consider a number of different questions when identifying the relevant community and other stakeholders for the project.

The answers to these questions will help to identify the relevant stakeholders during the early stage of the EIA process. Once identified, proponents will need to provide the community and other stakeholders with some reasonably detailed information about the project, as per DPE's engagement requirements which are set out in Table 3 of the guidelines. The requirements establish the minimum requirements for information to be provided during consultation, as well as what proponents should look to receive feedback on during consultation and how this feedback should be reported. The information to be provided by proponents is likely to include a project description, a map showing the local and regional context, the rationale for the project, alternatives considered, and relevant matters to be considered in the EIS.

It is also likely that the scoping report (submitted with the request for SEARs) would be publicly exhibited, which would need to be considered in the project schedule.

Further, should the guidelines be introduced, a Scoping Meeting would need to be arranged with DPE once sufficient information on the project and its potential impacts has been developed. The purpose of the Scoping Meeting would be to:

- introduce the project to DPE;
- discuss the assessment pathway;
- discuss the relevant matters to be considered in the EIA and the appropriate level of assessment;
- discuss the proposed approach to engaging the community and other stakeholders, which would be informed by the preliminary responses to the Approach to Engagement worksheet (refer to Table 2 in the

guidelines) and the requirements for engaging the community and other stakeholders (as defined within the guidelines); and

- discuss how the Scoping Report should be presented including documenting the results of engagement during scoping and the proposed approach to engagement during the EIS preparation stage.

DPE may request other government agencies to attend the Scoping Meeting depending on the nature of the project. It is noted that irrespective of the implementation of the guidelines, it is recommended that this Scoping Meeting be held with DPE for the project.

4.2 Participation during preparation of the EIS

The EIS for the project will be prepared in accordance with the SEARs issued by DPE, including requirements relating to engagement with the community and other stakeholders. As described in Section 4.1 of the guidelines, should a medium or high approach to engagement be identified as necessary during the scoping stage of the project, additional requirements for consultation with the community and other stakeholders may be listed within the SEARs for the project.

Based on the level of detail provided within the guidelines, it appears that the outcomes of consultation during the scoping stage of the project would likely play a major role in defining the level of consultation required during the preparation of the EIS. At a minimum, this would likely include the preparation of a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan (CSEP). This stakeholder engagement strategy would form the basis of any such required CSEP. Detailed guidance on what's likely to be required as part of the CSEP for the project is provided in Appendix A of the guidelines and detailed information about various potential engagement tools, the strengths associated with their application and issues to consider during their application is also provided in Appendix B of the guidelines.

4.3 Recommendations

As explained above, the biggest change to consultation requirements proposed as part of the guidelines is in relation to the level of consultation undertaken *prior* to the lodgement of the request for SEARs. If the project continues as per the current schedule, the SEARs request will be lodged prior to the implementation of the guidelines. However, given that the guidelines are likely to be implemented at some stage during the project, it is recommended that:

- a session be held on the stakeholder engagement strategy during the project inception meeting to confirm the approach, taking into account the anticipated implementation of the guidelines; and
- a Scoping Meeting be held with DPE, and that their consultation expectations be discussed at this meeting given the timing of this project and the anticipated implementation of the guidelines.

5 Information requirements

Once identified, UPC will need to provide the community, regulatory, industry and other stakeholders with some reasonably detailed information about the project, as per DPE's engagement requirements which are set out in Table 3 of the guidelines. The requirements establish the minimum requirements for information to be provided during consultation, as well as what proponents should look to receive feedback on during consultation and how this feedback should be reported. The information to be provided by UPC is likely to include a project description, a map showing the local and regional context, the rationale for the project, alternatives considered, and relevant matters to be considered in the EIS.

6 Conclusion

The implementation of this stakeholder engagement strategy will satisfy the likely consultation requirements for the project. We envisage that undertaking the recommended level of engagement with identified regulatory, community, Aboriginal, industry and other stakeholders to identify and address matters of concern will facilitate a more efficient government agency assessment process for the project and manage the risk of schedule delay.

As noted in Section 4, should the guidelines be introduced, early engagement with the community and other stakeholders would be required. The level of engagement proposed during the preparation of the PEA would likely satisfy these requirements. In addition, the introduction of the guidelines would also likely include a requirement to hold a Scoping Meeting with DPE once sufficient information on the project and its potential impacts has been developed. The meeting scheduled with DPE on 15 February should satisfy this requirement. As noted in Section 4, it is recommended that consideration of the guidelines be made during all consultation activities for the project as it is likely that these guidelines will be introduced during the EIA process.

Appendix A

Preliminary consultation program and register

Note: A copy of the project's consultation register has been provided as part of Appendix B of the EIS. Additional information on outcomes of specific consultation activities is available on request.

Appendix B

Consultation priorities with surrounding/adjacent landowners

i Introduction

Consultation with surrounding/adjoining landowners should be commenced as early as possible. The priority will be to engage with non-project related receptors within close proximity of the preliminary central and southern PV arrays. Consultation with the cluster of landowners north-east of the preliminary northern PV array will also be required; however, due to undulation in the landscape at this location and distance to the local road network that will be utilised during the project's construction, consultation with these landowners has been placed on hold until the completion of the preliminary viewshed analysis.

In the first instance, prior to the project going public, a letter will be distributed to non-project related receptors within close proximity of the preliminary central and southern PV arrays to introduce UPC, provide a high-level discussion of the project and assessment process and offer an invitation to meet with interested landowners and discuss the project further. Letters will be distributed to each of the landholders identified on Figure 1.

The concerns raised by surrounding/adjoining landowners in the early stages of consultation will likely be related to their proximity to project infrastructure and subsequent visual amenity impacts and the impact of the project on the local road network (namely The Gap Road and Gostwyck Road).

ii Priorities for early consultation

Table 6 identifies the landowners that have been identified as priorities for early consultation and their approximate distance from the preliminary solar array.

Key outcomes of consultation with the landowners identified in Table 6 will be included in the project consultation log in Appendix A.

Note: Table 6 and Figure 1 were removed from this document in respect of the adjoining landowners' privacy. This additional information is available on request.

Figure 1 **Non-project related receptors – preliminary southern array**

Summary of the consultation register

Note: Outcomes of consultation, including meeting minutes have been kept confidential, but can be made available on request and subject to consent from the stakeholders involved.

Agency/stakeholder	Date	Form of consultation	Purpose/content
Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 6 February 2018	Face-to-face meeting	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and preliminary development footprint
REA	Wednesday, 14 February 2018	Face-to-face meeting	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and preliminary development footprint Key dates in EA schedule
DPE	Thursday, 15 February 2018	Face-to-face meeting	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and preliminary development footprint PEA structure Key dates in EA schedule Battery and energy storage components Stakeholder engagement expectations
OEH	Friday, 16 February 2018	Teleconference	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and preliminary development footprint Assessment requirements for potential impacts on biodiversity Proposed timing for survey effort and seasonal requirements Outcomes of preliminary biodiversity field surveys
Local community (near neighbours)	Friday, 16 February 2018	Letters distributed	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Invitation to meet and discuss further
DPI	Tuesday, 20 February 2018	Phone call	Determine appropriate assessment officers to consider interactions with BSAL Arrange teleconference to introduce the project
S6	Thursday, 22 February 2018	Email	Confirmed receipt of letter and would like to find out more - specifically location, potential impacts, community benefits and availability of the resource for Uralla community
OEH	Tuesday, 27 February 2018	Email with signed letter	Follow-up on matters raised during the teleconference on Friday 16 February
OEH	Wednesday, 28 February 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of email and letter correspondence
DPI	Wednesday, 28 February 2018	Teleconference	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Agricultural production within the project investigation area and surrounds
S6	Monday, 5 March 2018	Meeting	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Potential concerns about the project
Adam Marshall (Member for Northern Tablelands)	Monday, 5 March 2018	Meeting	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process
Uralla Shire Council	Monday, 5 March 2018	Meeting	Project update
DPI	Tuesday, 6 March 2018	Site inspection	Site inspection and follow-up on key items of discussion from last week's teleconference
DPI	Wednesday, 7 March 2018	Email	Response to letter/meeting notes
S2	Tuesday, 13 March 2018	Email Phone call	Confirmed receipt of letter and would like to meet to find out more
S9	Thursday, 15 March 2018	Phone call	Introductions Confirmation of receipt of letter
S1	Thursday, 15 March 2018	Phone call	Introductions Confirmation of receipt of letter
S3	Thursday, 15 March 2018	Phone call	Introductions Confirmation of receipt of letter
S5	Thursday, 15 March 2018	Phone call	Introductions Confirmation of receipt of letter
S7	Thursday, 15 March 2018	Phone call	Introductions Confirmation of receipt of letter
S4	Thursday, 15 March 2018	Phone call	Introductions Confirmation of receipt of letter
Z-Net Uralla	Monday, 19 March 2018	Phone call	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process
S7	Thursday, 22 March 2018	Phone call	Arrange meeting
Z-Net Uralla	Thursday 29th March 2018	Meeting	Introduce the company and the project to representatives from Z-Net. Gauge community feedback on the project and potential community-scale solar developments. Discuss options for supporting Z-Net's activities in solar/energy efficiency in the community.

Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 3 April 2018	Phone call Email	Arrange a meeting to brief the Council.
S7	Wednesday, 4 April 2018	Phone call	Arrange a meeting to discuss the project.
S5	Wednesday, 4 April 2018	Phone call	Arrange a meeting to discuss the project.
S9	Wednesday, 4 April 2018	Phone call Email	Arrange a meeting to discuss the project.
Z-Net Uralla	Wednesday, 4 April 2018	Email	Follow-up email following discussions in face-to-face meeting
DPE	Wednesday, 4 April 2018	Phone call	Project update Timing of submission of PEA
OEH	Wednesday, 4 April 2018	Email	Targeted flora survey approach
OEH	Thursday, 5 April 2018	Email	Targeted flora survey approach
Multiple	Friday, 6 April 2018	Letters and emails	Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation
S2	Friday, 6 April 2018	Email	Arrange a meeting to discuss the project.
S9	Friday, 6 April 2018	Email	Confirmation of why UPC would like to consult with landholder
S9	Friday, 6 April 2018	Email	Confirmation of why UPC would like to consult with landholder
DPE	Friday, 6 April 2018	Phone call	Project update and confirmation of submission of PEA
Adam Marshall (Member for Northern Tablelands)	Sunday, 8 April 2018	Email	Project update and confirmation of submission of PEA Inform potential for media interest from WC 9 April
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors - April Meeting	Tuesday, 10 April 2018	Meeting (Council Chambers)	Introduce the company and the project to elected council members. Outline project timing and next steps in the assessment process. Outline community and regulator consultation performed to date and planned. Gauge Council's feedback on the project and potential community-scale solar developments and benefit sharing initiatives. Field questions from elected council members about the project (open forum).
S9	Tuesday, 10 April 2018	Meeting (Residence)	Introduce the company and the project. Outline project timing and next steps in the assessment process. Request feedback on their concerns about the project. Field questions about the project. Inspect potential views of the project from the residence and immediate surrounds. Discuss potential benefits from the project. <u>Provide a community factsheet and direct line of contact</u>
S5	Tuesday, 10 April 2018	Meeting (Residence)	Introduce the company and the project. Outline project timing and next steps in the assessment process. Request feedback on their concerns about the project. Field questions about the project. Inspect potential views of the project from the residence and immediate surrounds. Discuss potential benefits from the project. <u>Provide a community factsheet and direct line of contact</u>
S7	Tuesday, 10 April 2018	Meeting (Residence)	Introduce the company and the project. Outline project timing and next steps in the assessment process. Request feedback on their concerns about the project. Field questions about the project. Inspect potential views of the project from the residence and immediate surrounds. Discuss potential benefits from the project. <u>Provide a community factsheet and direct line of contact</u>
General public	Wednesday, 11 April 2018	Project website; email address and community information line	Inform the general public about the project; and <u>Provide opportunities for the general public to voice their opinions and liaise with the project team.</u>
S2	Wednesday, 11 April 2018	Meeting (Armidale)	Introduce the project and follow-up on previous dialogue. Provide a copy of the community fact sheet. Provide an update on project timing. <u>Address any preliminary concerns.</u>
S12	Wednesday, 11 April 2018	Meeting (Alternate Root)	Introduce the project and follow-up on previous dialogue. Provide a copy of the community fact sheet. Provide an update on project timing. <u>Address any preliminary concerns.</u>
S6	Wednesday, 11 April 2018	Meeting (Residence)	Follow-up on previous dialogue. Inspect potential views of the project from the residence and immediate surrounds. Provide a copy of the community fact sheet. <u>Provide an update on project timing.</u>

Local community (near neighbours)	Wednesday, 11 April 2018	Letters distributed	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Provide community factsheet Invitation to contact UPC through project email or community information line
S4	Thursday, 12 April 2018	Letter	Follow-up letter with copy of the community factsheet. Invitation to meet and discuss the project further. Contact details were provided.
S1	Thursday, 12 April 2018	Letter	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Provide community factsheet Invitation to contact UPC through project email or community information line
S3	Thursday, 12 April 2018	Letter	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Provide community factsheet Invitation to contact UPC through project email or community information line
S13	Thursday, 12 April 2018	Letter	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Provide community factsheet Invitation to contact UPC direct through mobile and email provided.
Armidale Express	Friday, 13 April 2018	Public notice	Public notification of the project for registration of Aboriginal parties.
N32	Tuesday, 17 April 2018	Email	General community enquiry
N32	Thursday, 19 April 2018	Email	Response to community enquiry
S7	Thursday, 26 April 2018	Email	Provide minutes/notes from initial meeting at residence
S9	Monday, 30 April 2018	Meeting	Follow-up meeting to discuss the project and discuss a number of matters including: potential exclusion zones; concerns; compensation/"neighbour" arrangements; confidentiality; other ideas for benefits; and other ideas for mitigation of impacts.
S9	Tuesday, 1 May 2018	Email	Provide minutes/notes from meeting at residence
DPE	Wednesday, 2 May 2018	Phone call	Confirm timing of receipt of SEARs
S2	Thursday, 3 May 2018	Phone call	Acknowledge receipt of letter correspondence Express concern over potential visual amenity impacts and property devaluation
S2	Friday, 4 May 2018	Phone call	Response to phone call and voice mail to community information line
S9	Friday, 4 May 2018	Emails	Arrange for follow-up meeting.
DPE	Friday, 4 May 2018	Phone call	Confirm timing of receipt of SEARs
DPE	Tuesday, 8 May 2018	Phone call	Confirm timing of receipt of SEARs
DPE	Tuesday, 8 May 2018	Email	Distribute SEARs
DPE	Wednesday, 9 May 2018	Phone call	Preliminary discussion of SEARs content
Adam Marshall (Member for Northern Tablelands)	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Email	Follow-up contact/project update
S2	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Meeting	Follow-up contact/meet and greet
S9	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Meeting	Discussion at community feedback session
Multiple	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Community drop in session	Introduce the project to the general community Address questions/concerns and provide opportunities to provide feedback Give the broader community a chance to come and meet the project team Provide an opportunity to register for further updates
Armidale Express	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Email	Request input on scheduled newspaper article for Friday 11 May
Armidale Express	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Email	Provide input on newspaper article for Friday 11 May
Z-Net Uralla	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Face to face	Community drop-in information session
Uralla Shire Council - Councillor	Thursday, 10 May 2018	Face to face	Community drop-in information session
Uralla Shire Council	Friday, 11 May 2018	Email	Project update
Adam Marshall (Member for Northern Tablelands)	Tuesday, 15 May 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding media coverage
Adam Marshall (Member for Northern Tablelands)	Tuesday, 15 May 2018	Email	Update on media coverage and intention for future media announcement
Adam Marshall (Member for Northern Tablelands)	Tuesday, 15 May 2018	Email	Coordination of attendance at media announcement
Community member - feedback	Tuesday, 15 May 2018	Online feedback form	Completed online feedback form
DRG - GSNSW	Wednesday, 16 May 2018	Phone call	Acknowledge receipt of submission on SEARs Coordinate a meeting
DPI	Wednesday, 16 May 2018	Phone call	Acknowledge receipt of submission on SEARs Discuss LUCRA requirement and how it should be addressed
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Thursday, 17 May 2018	Email	Register interest in employment opportunities
DPE	Thursday, 17 May 2018	Email	Request example project for potential resource conflicts
S8	Friday, 18 May 2018	Phone	Introduction to the project
CASA	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Introduction to the project Request input on potential impacts on air traffic

EPA	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of SEARs and agency input Offer opportunity to discuss the project further
RFS	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of SEARs and agency input Offer opportunity to discuss the project further
John Holland	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of SEARs and agency input Offer opportunity to discuss the project further
NSW Fire and Rescue	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of SEARs and agency input Offer opportunity to discuss the project further
SafeWork NSW	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of SEARs and agency input Offer opportunity to discuss the project further
RMS	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of SEARs and agency input Offer opportunity to discuss the project further
DPI	Monday, 21 May 2018	Email	Additional information on LUCRA
S9	Monday, 21 May 2018	Meeting	Update on project Feedback on proposed mitigation measures Discuss options, ideas for managing impacts, addressing concerns
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Tuesday, 22 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of email
Community member - feedback	Tuesday, 22 May 2018	Email	Provide feedback form link
S14	Tuesday, 22 May 2018	Phone	Project introduction
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Tuesday, 22 May 2018	Email	Crown reserve 95655
DPE	Tuesday, 22 May 2018	Email	Follow-up on DRG consultation and staging of consent
DPE	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Phone	Follow-up on DRG consultation and staging of consent
Community member - feedback	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of community feedback form
S13	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Phone Email	Introduction to the project Provide a copy of the fact sheet and invite to community drop in session
C5	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Email	Requested no further information be distributed in relation to the proposal.
Community member - sponsorship request	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Phone	Sponsorship
N36	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Phone Email	Introduction to the project Provide a copy of the fact sheet and invite to community drop in session
S2	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the flyer for the community drop in session
S14	Wednesday, 23 May 2018	Phone Email	Provide a copy of the fact sheet and invite to community drop in session
DRG - GSNSW	Thursday, 24 May 2018	Teleconference	Introduction to the project Respond to submission on the SEARs Discuss potential mineral deposit
S3	Thursday, 24 May 2018	Phone call	Introduction to the project
DRG - GSNSW	Friday, 25 May 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the meeting minutes/notes
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 25 May 2018	Phone call	Address query on Crown reserve 95655
Armidale Regional Council	Friday, 25 May 2018	Phone call	Project Introduction
DRG - GSNSW	Tuesday, 29 May 2018	Email	Confirmation of receipt of meeting minutes/notes
N1	Tuesday, 29 May 2018	Phone call Email	Project introduction
N36	Tuesday, 29 May 2018	Email	Offer to meet
S14	Tuesday, 29 May 2018	Email	Offer to meet
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Wednesday, 30 May 2018	Email	Crown reserve 95655
S9	Wednesday, 30 May 2018	Meeting	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts. Describe construction timeframes and explain typical solar farm infrastructure. Describe assessments currently being undertaken as part of the EIS.
S13	Wednesday, 30 May 2018	Phone call	Overview of the project and the planning process. Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts.
S12	Wednesday, 30 May 2018	Meeting	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts. Describe assessments currently being undertaken as part of the EIS.
S7	Thursday, 31 May 2018	Meeting	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts. Describe construction timeframes and explain typical solar farm infrastructure. Describe assessments currently being undertaken as part of the EIS.
S13	Thursday, 31 May 2018	Property inspection	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts.
DPE	Thursday, 31 May 2018	Phone call	Potential staging of the development consent. Discussed potential assessment approach. Potential for staged commitments based on array staging and industry precedents in this regard.

S14	Thursday, 31 May 2018	Meeting	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts. Describe construction timeframes and explain typical solar farm infrastructure. Describe assessments currently being undertaken as part of the EIS.
Armidale Regional Council	Thursday, 31 May 2018	Meeting	Introduction to the project and UPC. Address any concerns about the project. Request information on projects within the Armidale LGA with potential for cumulative impacts.
S6	Thursday, 31 May 2018	Email Phone call Property inspection	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts.
S2	Friday, 1 June 2018	Meeting	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts. Revisit solar farm views from his aspect.
S3	Friday, 1 June 2018	Meeting	Capture photographs for use in photomontages to demonstrate potential visual amenity impacts. Revisit solar farm views from his aspect.
Multiple	Friday, 1 June 2018	Advertisement for the community drop-in session	Provide a copy of the flyer for the community drop in session
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 1 June 2018	Email	Crown reserve 95655
John Holland	Monday, 4 June 2018	Phone Email	Discuss potential interactions between the project and the Main Northern Railway and relevant level crossings
EPA	Monday, 4 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
RFS	Monday, 4 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
NSW Fire and Rescue	Monday, 4 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
SafeWork NSW	Monday, 4 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
RMS	Monday, 4 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
S7	Monday, 4 June 2018	Email	Invite to attend community information session on Tuesday 12 June
Local Land Services	Tuesday, 5 June 2018	Phone Email	Introduction to the project Request input on assessment requirements should it be required
Local community (near neighbours)	Tuesday, 5 June 2018	Letter	Invite to attend community information session on Tuesday 12 June
RMS	Tuesday, 5 June 2018	Phone Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
SafeWork NSW	Tuesday, 5 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
RFS	Wednesday, 6 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of email regarding input on SEARs
Office of the Registrar ARLA 1983	Wednesday, 6 June 2018	Email	Search results for Aboriginal Land Claim
OEH	Thursday, 7 June 2018	Email	Request advice/guidance on the quantum of acceptable impact on biodiversity associated with SSD solar projects.
Uralla Shire Council - Councillor	Friday, 8 June 2018	Phone	Project update
S9	Friday, 8 June 2018	Phone	Update on extent of community consultation performed for the upcoming information session
C5	Friday, 8 June 2018	Phone Email	Provide details of upcoming community information session on Tuesday 12 June
C1	Friday, 8 June 2018	Phone	Provide a project update and discuss easement options
N13	Tuesday, 12 June 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of invitation to community drop-in session
S6	Tuesday, 12 June 2018	Online feedback form	Completed online feedback form
N1	Tuesday, 12 June 2018	Phone	Provide a reminder about the community drop-in session
Multiple	Tuesday, 12 June 2018	Community drop in session	Provide further information about the project to the local community Provide an opportunity for the local community to interact with the project team
John Holland	Tuesday, 12 June 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of information requested to facilitate assessment of impacts on Main Northern Railway and level crossings.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Wednesday, 13 June 2018	Face to face	Discuss contracting opportunities and potential locations for construction accommodation village.
S6	Wednesday, 13 June 2018	Face to face	Project update
S9	Wednesday, 13 June 2018	Face to face	Capture additional photos for potential photomontages
N1	Wednesday, 13 June 2018	Phone	Request permission to access property to better understand potential visual amenity impacts
N1	Wednesday, 13 June 2018	Email	Raise concerns about potential impacts of the project
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Thursday, 14 June 2018	Email	Provide an overview of the second drop in session.
OEH	Friday, 15 June 2018	Email	Provide a response to enquiry about avoidance of impacts on biodiversity.
Uralla Shire Council - Councillor	Wednesday, 20 June 2018	Phone call	Return Councillor's call to the community information line. Provide suggestions to UPC about the project.
DPE	Thursday, 21 June 2018	Meeting	Provide a project update, including summary of project refinement, stakeholder engagement and timing for submission of the EIS. Discuss staging of construction across the three array areas. Discuss potential conditioning within the development approval. Discuss potential requirement for a construction accommodation village.
Armidale Regional Council	Thursday, 21 June 2018	Email	Provide contact details for further consideration of potential cumulative impacts.
S13	Saturday, 23 June 2018	Online feedback form	Completed the online feedback form.
John Holland	Tuesday, 26 June 2018	Email	Follow-up contact to confirm receipt of previous correspondence.
John Holland	Tuesday, 26 June 2018	Email	Provide comments on potential interactions between the project and the Main Northern Railway.
Local Land Services	Tuesday, 26 June 2018	Email	Follow-up contact to confirm receipt of previous correspondence.

DPE	Tuesday, 26 June 2018	Email	Follow-up contact to discuss outstanding agenda items
DPE	Wednesday, 27 June 2018	Email	Follow-up contact to discuss outcomes of conversations with David Kitto
John Holland	Wednesday, 27 June 2018	Phone Email	Follow-up contact to discuss assessment requirements from John Holland/Country Rail Network in relation to level crossings.
S11	Thursday, 28 June 2018	Phone Email	Introduce the project. Address any concerns about the project. Offer to meet face-to-face to discuss the project further.
S10	Thursday, 28 June 2018	Phone	Introduce the project. Address any concerns about the project. Offer to meet face-to-face to discuss the project further.
S13	Thursday, 28 June 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of community feedback form.
GHD	Tuesday, 3 July 2018	Phone Email	Introduce the project. Request an update on the Armidale High School redevelopment.
DPE	Tuesday, 3 July 2018	Phone	Follow-up contact to discuss outstanding agenda items
S13	Tuesday, 3 July 2018	Face to face	Follow-up contact following receipt of feedback form.
S9	Wednesday, 4 July 2018	Face to face	Provide a project update and discuss exclusion areas in the southern array.
N1	Wednesday, 4 July 2018	Face to face	Follow-up contact to address concerns about the project.
S11	Wednesday, 4 July 2018	Face to face	Introduce the project. Address any concerns about the project.
S13	Thursday, 5 July 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the vegetation screen fact sheet.
S9	Thursday, 12 July 2018	Face to face	Provide a project update and discuss exclusion areas in the southern array.
DPE	Friday, 13 July 2018	Phone	Provide a response to queries in relation to soil erosion, landscaping, visual impacts, interactions with watercourses and staging of consent conditions.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 13 July 2018	Phone	Request additional information/advice in relation to the project's potential impacts on first and second order watercourses.
DPI	Monday, 16 July 2018	Email	Request input on survey approach for soil erosion assessment.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Monday, 16 July 2018	Email	Request additional information/advice in relation to the project's potential impacts on first and second order watercourses.
N1	Tuesday, 17 July 2018	Email	Provide a response to queries in relation to review of management plans.
DPI	Tuesday, 17 July 2018	Email	Provide input on survey approach for soil erosion assessment.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Wednesday, 18 July 2018	Phone call	Request additional information/advice in relation to the project's potential impacts on first and second order watercourses.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Wednesday, 18 July 2018	Email	Provide a project update.
N1	Thursday, 19 July 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of email and availability for future correspondence.
Multiple	Friday, 20 July 2018	Letter	Introductions High-level discussion of the project and assessment process Provide community factsheet Invitation to contact UPC through project email or community information line
S16	Friday, 20 July 2018	Letter	Acknowledge their attendance at the community information session. Offer to meet face to face to discuss the project further.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 20 July 2018	Phone call	Request additional information/advice in relation to the project's potential impacts on first and second order watercourses.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Tuesday, 24 July 2018	Email	Provide appropriate contact for Senior Water Regulation Officer.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Tuesday, 24 July 2018	Email	Request additional information/advice in relation to the project's potential impacts on first and second order watercourses.
Local Land Services	Tuesday, 24 July 2018	Email	Request input on assessment requirements should it be required.
John Holland	Tuesday, 24 July 2018	Email	Follow-up contact to discuss assessment requirements from John Holland/Country Rail Network in relation to level crossings and the Main Northern Railway.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Wednesday, 25 July 2018	Phone call and email	Coordinate teleconference to discuss watercourse interactions.
Uralla Shire Council	Wednesday, 25 July 2018	Phone call	Provide an update on community consultation and details of upcoming information and drop in session. Offer opportunity to be involved in stakeholder briefing.
S9	Thursday, 26 July 2018	Meeting	Project update. Discuss southern array refinements and mitigation measures.
C1	Thursday, 26 July 2018	Meeting	Discuss potential ETL easement across the property.
S9	Sunday, 29 July 2018	Email	Follow-up information from previous meeting.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Tuesday, 31 July 2018	Email	Request additional information/advice in relation to the project's potential impacts on first and second order watercourses.
GHD	Wednesday, 1 August 2018	Email	Introduce the project. Request an update on the Armidale High School redevelopment.
S9	Thursday, 2 August 2018	Email	Advise of upcoming information session.
S13	Thursday, 2 August 2018	Email	Arrange a time to meet to provide a project update.
S7	Thursday, 2 August 2018	Email	Arrange a time to meet.
S6	Thursday, 2 August 2018	Email	Arrange a time to meet.
S9	Thursday, 2 August 2018	Email	Advice on upcoming information session.
S9	Thursday, 2 August 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of advice on upcoming information session.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Thursday, 2 August 2018	Teleconference	Request additional information/advice in relation to the project's potential impacts on first and second order watercourses.

S9	Friday, 3 August 2018	Email	Provide a copy of previous meeting notes.
S9	Sunday, 5 August 2018	Email	Provide comments on previous meeting notes. Provide appropriate time to drop in as part of site inspection.
S9	Sunday, 5 August 2018	Email	Respond to comments on previous meeting notes.
N1	Tuesday, 7 August 2018	Email	Request a time to meet and provide a project update.
Multiple	Tuesday, 7 August 2018	Letter	Advise of upcoming information session. Advise of community reference group. Advise of public workshop.
Multiple	Tuesday, 7 August 2018	Email	Advise of Armidale Express Article
S7	Tuesday, 7 August 2018	Phone call	Advise resident of the latest changes to the Southern Array, upcoming drop in session.
DPE	Tuesday, 7 August 2018	Email	Request guidance on inclusion of construction accommodation village.
S6	Wednesday, 8 August 2018	Phone call	Advise resident of the latest changes to the Southern Array, upcoming drop in session.
Community member - feedback	Wednesday, 8 August 2018	Phone call	Noted interest in having their property considered as part of the project.
Community member	Wednesday, 8 August 2018	Email	Requested location of the project.
Community member	Wednesday, 8 August 2018	Email	Respond to community enquiry.
Multiple	Wednesday, 8 August 2018	Flyer	Advertising upcoming information session.
S9	Thursday, 9 August 2018	Email	Respond to invitation to information session. Progress proposed mitigation measures.
N1	Thursday, 9 August 2018	Email	Availability for photos from residence.
N1	Thursday, 9 August 2018	Email	Availability for photos from residence.
Multiple	Friday, 10 August 2018	Email	Advise of upcoming information session. Advise of community reference group. Advise of public workshop.
N1	Monday, 13 August 2018	Email	Advise of upcoming information session. Advise of community reference group. Advise of public workshop.
S9	Monday, 13 August 2018	Emails	Multiple emails to coordinate further discussions on Thursday.
DPE	Wednesday, 15 August 2018	Email	Request guidance on inclusion of construction accommodation village. Advise of upcoming information session and media coverage.
Multiple	Wednesday, 15 August 2018	Community drop in session	Third community information and drop in session. Presentation at The Alternate Root followed by open forum Q&A.
C2	Wednesday, 15 August 2018	Phone	Neighbour to project landholder received the letter regarding the drop in session and CRG nominations. Would like UPC to come and see them to answer a few questions about the project.
Armidale Regional Council	Wednesday, 15 August 2018	Phone	Discussed muster points and UPC suggested some locations for 50 vehicles. Council representative would like UPC to send through the list for him to consider.
Tamworth Regional Council	Wednesday, 15 August 2018	Face to face	Discussed muster points to cater for a workforce originating from Tamworth. Representative informed UPC that they were not the appropriate person to be making these decisions and to contact their manager.
S9	Thursday, 16 August 2018	Face to face	Mitigation measures discussions.
DPE	Friday, 17 August 2018	Phone call Email	Project update. Provide an overview of the third drop in session. Request guidance on inclusion of construction accommodation village.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Sunday, 19 August 2018	Email	Provide an overview of the third drop in session.
Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 21 August 2018	Email	Response to overview of the third drop in session.
Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 21 August 2018	Email	Response to overview of the third drop in session.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Thursday, 23 August 2018	Phone call	Follow-up to meeting on 2 August to request preliminary classification of watercourses within the refined project boundary.
S9	Friday, 24 August 2018	Email	Update on timing of revised mitigation measures and revised project map.
DPE	Friday, 24 August 2018	Phone call	Request guidance on inclusion of construction accommodation village.
S3	Tuesday, 28 August 2018	Face to face	Discuss project refinement in the southern array area.
Uralla Shire Council	Friday, 31 August 2018	Letter	Provide additional information sheets to Uralla Shire Council.
Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 4 September 2018	Email	Data requests from Uralla Shire Council.
John Holland	Tuesday, 4 September 2018	Email	Request update on appropriate assessment process for project's impacts on Main Northern Railway.
DPE	Wednesday, 5 September 2018	Phone call	Discuss EIS exhibition timing and lodgement process.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 7 September 2018	Phone call	Follow-up to meeting on 2 August to request preliminary classification of watercourses within the refined project boundary.
DPE	Friday, 7 September 2018	Phone call Email	Provide project update and discuss project boundary terminology.
RMS	Sunday, 9 September 2018	Email	Request an update on New England Highway upgrade works.
DPE	Monday, 10 September 2018	Email	Submit request to amend the project description in the SEARs.
OEH	Tuesday 11 September	Email	Targeted flora survey approach.
RMS	Thursday, 13 September 2018	Phone call Email	Discuss New England Highway upgrade works.

Uralla Shire Council	Thursday, 13 September 2018	Phone call Email	Discuss preliminary findings from the traffic impact assessment. Discuss preferred haulage routes for the project.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Multiple	Phone call	Follow-up to meeting on 2 August to request Tim's preliminary classification of watercourses within the refined project boundary.
Community member	Thursday, 13 September 2018	Phone call	General community enquiry
RMS	Friday, 14 September 2018	Phone call	Discuss New England Highway upgrade works.
John Holland	Tuesday, 18 September 2018	Email	Request update on appropriate assessment process for project's impacts on Main Northern Railway.
Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 18 September 2018	Email	Provide an update on the project and identify potential local impacts.
DPE	Tuesday, 18 September 2018	Email	Construction accommodation village
C2	Tuesday, 18 September 2018	Email	Discuss the New England Solar Farm and their concerns.
C2	Tuesday, 18 September 2018	Email	Respond to concerns and arrange a time to meet to discuss further.
Uralla Shire Council	Wednesday, 19 September 2018	Teleconference	Provide an update on the project and identify potential local impacts.
Armidale Express	Thursday, 20 September 2018	Phone call	General media enquiry.
RMS	Thursday, 20 September 2018	Email	Discuss New England Highway upgrade works.
DPE	Thursday, 20 September 2018	Email	Construction accommodation village.
OEH	Thursday 20 September	Email and signed letter	Targeted flora survey approach.
S9	Thursday, 20 September 2018	Email	Project update and draft photomontages.
N1	Thursday, 20 September 2018	Email	Advised out of the country.
John Holland	Monday, 24 September 2018	Email Phone call	Request update on appropriate assessment process for project's impacts on Main Northern Railway.
Local Land Services	Monday, 24 September 2018	Email	Request input on assessment requirements should it be required.
RMS	Wednesday, 26 September 2018	Email	Provide additional information in relation to use of New England Highway and Barleyfields Road (North) intersection.
Uralla Shire Council	Wednesday, 26 September 2018	Teleconference	Provide an update on the project and identify potential local impacts.
Uralla Shire Council	Thursday, 27 September 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Uralla Shire LGA.
Armidale Regional Council	Thursday, 27 September 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Armidale LGA.
Tamworth Regional Council	Thursday, 27 September 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Tamworth LGA.
S17	Thursday, 27 September 2018	Face to face	Provide an introduction to the project and assess potential for visual impacts from shearer's quarters.
C2	Friday, 28 September 2018	Face to face	Provide an update on the project, identify potential local impacts and respond to concerns.
S9	Friday, 28 September 2018	Face to face	Provide an update on the project, provide draft photomontages and further discussions of mitigation measures.
John Holland	Friday, 28 September 2018	Email	Request update on appropriate assessment process for project's impacts on Main Northern Railway.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Friday, 28 September 2018	Email	Notify councillors and council officers of upcoming community information session.
S9	Sunday, 30 September 2018	Email	Requested an opportunity to discuss the project and proposed mitigation in further detail.
S9	Monday, 1 October 2018	Email	Provide detailed meeting notes and request additional contact details.
RMS	Tuesday, 2 October 2018	Teleconference	Provide an update on the project, discuss the TIA and potential use of New England Highway and Barleyfields Road (North) intersection.
Adam Marshall (Member for Northern Tablelands)	Tuesday, 2 October 2018	Email	Advise of next community information session and provide project update.
N1	Tuesday, 2 October 2018	Email	Project update.
Armidale Regional Council	Tuesday, 2 October 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Armidale LGA.
Tamworth Regional Council	Tuesday, 2 October 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Tamworth LGA.
S9	Tuesday, 2 October 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the draft mitigation measures in full.
RMS	Wednesday, 3 October 2018	Email	Provide an update on the project, discuss the TIA and potential use of New England Highway and Barleyfields Road (North) intersection.
Uralla Shire Council	Wednesday, 3 October 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Uralla Shire LGA.
S9	Wednesday, 3 October 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the meeting minutes/notes.
DPE	Wednesday, 3 October 2018	Phone call	Requested an update on timing of receipt of revised SEARs. Provide an update on consultation with S9.
S9	Thursday, 4 October 2018	Email	Provide an update on request for contact details.
S9	Thursday, 4 October 2018	Email	Provide an update on request for contact details.
S9	Thursday, 4 October 2018	Email	Acknowledged receipt of meeting minutes/notes and clarification.
Armidale Regional Council	Thursday, 4 October 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Armidale LGA.
DPE	Thursday, 4 October 2018	Email	Provide draft photomontages from S9.
Uralla Shire Council	Friday, 5 October 2018	Email	Request input on available waste management facilities in Uralla Shire LGA.
DRG - GSNSW	Friday, 5 October 2018	Email	Provide an update on project refinement and request data in relation to 'area of higher mineral significance'.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 5 October 2018	Email	Discuss the project's potential impacts on Crown roads.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 5 October 2018	Email	Discuss the project's potential impacts on Crown roads.
DPE	Friday, 5 October 2018	Email	Requested an update on timing of receipt of revised SEARs. Respond to photomontages from S9.
Multiple	Monday, 8 October 2018	Email	Notify local community of upcoming community information session.
Multiple	Monday, 8 October 2018	Letter	Notify local community of upcoming community information session.
Multiple	Wednesday, 10 October 2018	Email	Notify local community of upcoming community information session.
Tamworth Regional Council	Monday, 8 October 2018	Phone call	Request input on available waste management facilities in Tamworth LGA.
Community member - resident of Munsies Road	Wednesday, 10 October 2018	Email	Respond to community enquiry.
Community member - feedback	Wednesday, 10 October 2018	Email	Community enquiry

DPE	Thursday, 11 October 2018	Email Phone call	Revised SEARs
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Thursday, 11 October 2018	Email Phone call	Discuss the project's potential impacts on Crown roads.
DPE	Friday, 12 October 2018	Email	Provide public exhibition timeframes over Christmas/New Year period.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Saturday, 13 October 2018	Email	Reminder regarding upcoming community information session.
Community member - feedback	Monday, 15 October 2018	Email	Respond to community enquiry
Armidale Regional Council	Monday, 15 October 2018	Phone call	Request input on available waste management facilities in Armidale LGA.
S14	Monday, 15 October 2018	Email	Advise of opportunity to create photomontages. Invitation to upcoming community information and drop in session.
S3	Monday, 15 October 2018	Email	Advise of opportunity to create photomontages. Invitation to upcoming community information and drop in session.
S2	Monday, 15 October 2018	Email	Advise of opportunity to create photomontages. Invitation to upcoming community information and drop in session.
C2	Monday, 15 October 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the project layout. Invitation to upcoming community information and drop in session.
S9	Tuesday, 16 October 2018	Email	Provided an opportunity to meet with UPC over 17-19 October.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Tuesday, 16 October 2018	Email	Discuss the project's potential impacts on Crown roads.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Wednesday, 17 October 2018	Email	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
S14	Thursday, 18 October 2018	Face to face	Provide an update on the project. Capture additional photographs for potential use in photomontages.
Multiple	Thursday, 18 October 2018	Community drop in session	Fourth community information and drop in session - Uralla Bowling Club 6-8pm. Provided an update on the project, the approval process and outcomes of preliminary investigations into the community benefit sharing initiative.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Thursday, 18 October 2018	Meeting	Discuss southern array and potential impacts on their land.
DPE	Friday, 19 October 2018	Email	Request a response to clarifications around potential exhibition timeframes. Offered to provide an overview of the fourth community information and feedback session. Provided links to recent media coverage.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Friday, 19 October 2018	Email	Provide an overview of the fourth community information and feedback session. Provided links to recent media coverage.
Uralla Shire Council	Friday, 19 October 2018	Email	Coordinate a time to address Uralla Shire Council.
Uralla Shire Council - Councillor	Friday, 19 October 2018	Email	Thanked UPC for commitment to community engagement.
S9	Friday, 19 October 2018	Email	Response to outstanding items from meeting on 28 September 2018.
John Holland	Friday, 19 October 2018	Email	Request update on appropriate assessment process for project's impacts on Main Northern Railway.
John Holland	Friday, 19 October 2018	Email	Request update on appropriate assessment process for project's impacts on Main Northern Railway.
Community member	Saturday, 20 October 2018	Email	General community enquiry.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Monday, 22 October 2018	Phone call	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
John Holland	Monday, 22 October 2018	Email	Rail movements on Main Northern Railway.
Community member	Monday, 22 October 2018	Email	Include details in database of local resources.
Armidale Tree Group	Tuesday, 23 October 2018	Email	Suggested UPC partner with Armidale Tree Group.
S14	Tuesday, 23 October 2018	Email	Confirm photo for use in photomontage.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Tuesday, 23 October 2018	Email	Confirm timing for submission of landowner's consent application.
S9	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Email	Response to additional information provided to address matters raised during consultation.
S12	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the draft photomontage.
S3	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the draft photomontage.
S2	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the draft photomontage.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Email	Confirm timing for submission of landowner's consent application.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Meeting	Discuss southern array and potential impacts on adjoining landholder's land.
Community member - resident of Munsies Road	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Meeting	Discuss the landholders concerns relating to the solar farm development and in particular traffic related concerns along the Big Ridge Rd and Munsies Rd.
Community member - resident of Big Ridge Road	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Phone call	Provided an introduction to the project and offered to meet to discuss the project in further detail.
Armidale Tree Group	Wednesday, 24 October 2018	Email	Arrange a meeting to discuss vegetation screening and Armidale Tree Group.
Community member	Thursday, 25 October 2018	Email	Response to general community enquiry.
DPE	Thursday, 25 October 2018	Phone call	Discuss timing of submission of the EIS.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Thursday, 25 October 2018	Meeting	Discuss southern array and potential impacts on adjoining landholder's land.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Thursday, 25 October 2018	Email	Response to expression of interest for upcoming work.
Community member	Thursday, 25 October 2018	Email	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Friday, 26 October 2018	Email	Provide a copy of the meeting notes recorded during the meeting held on Wednesday 24 October.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Monday, 29 October 2018	Email	Response to meeting notes and emphasise objections to project.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Tuesday, 30 October 2018	Email	Response to meeting notes and emphasise objections to project.

Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Tuesday, 30 October 2018	Meeting	Introduce and provide an overview of the New England Solar Farm project to the landholder. Discuss potential impacts and concerns relating to the southern array.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors - October Meeting	Tuesday, 30 October 2018	Meeting (Council Chambers)	Presentation encompassed: - Project update - Construction staging and workforce estimates - Outcomes of the CBSI - Planning and environmental assessment update - Overview of key local impacts (ie traffic, waste and local infrastructure and services) - Proposed management plans and strategies to address impacts - Opportunities for further input (public exhibition of the EIS and preparation of management plans in consultation with Council)
Armidale Tree Group	Tuesday, 30 October 2018	Meeting	Discuss vegetation screening and Armidale Tree Group initiatives.
S9	Wednesday, 31 October 2018	Email	Respond to queries/concerns relating to photomontages; construction noise; traffic and hotline response.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Thursday, 1 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment/contracting opportunities during construction (earthing systems).
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Thursday, 1 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment/contracting opportunities during construction (pile driving).
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Thursday, 1 November 2018	Email	Acknowledge receipt of meeting notes.
Community member	Thursday, 1 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment opportunities.
Community member	Thursday, 1 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment opportunities.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Thursday, 1 November 2018	Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Friday, 2 November 2018	Email	Thank Uralla Shire Council and elected councillors for opportunity to present to Council as part of the October meeting.
N1	Friday, 2 November 2018	Email	Provided a copy of the draft photomontages from the residence and provided a project update.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Monday, 5 November 2018	Email	Response to email regarding meeting notes and opposition to the project.
N1	Monday, 5 November 2018	Email	Response to photomontages and provide list of concerns.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Wednesday, 7 November 2018	Phone call Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Wednesday, 7 November 2018	Email	Interested in consulting opportunities (emergency planning and safety).
DPE	Thursday, 8 November 2018	Email	Confirm timing of EIS submission.
DPE	Thursday, 8 November 2018	Email	Confirm timing of EIS submission.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Thursday, 8 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment opportunities.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 9 November 2018	Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Friday, 9 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment/contracting opportunities during construction (fencing).
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Monday, 12 November 2018	Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Monday, 12 November 2018	Email	Response to interest in employment/contracting opportunities during construction (fencing).
Essential Energy	Friday, 16 November 2018	Phone call	Discuss the proposed transmission line route connecting the southern array to the central / northern array which would cross essential energy's existing 66kV line from Armidale to Walcha / Uralla.
DPE	Friday, 16 November 2018	Phone call	Confirm timing of EIS submission and exhibition timing.
S9	Friday, 16 November 2018	Phone call	Discuss timing of submission of the EIS and public exhibition and address queries in relation to proposed mitigation measures.
Community member	Monday, 19 November 2018	Phone call Email	Opportunity for additional solar development on land parcel off Hillview Road.
N1	Monday, 19 November 2018	Meeting	Project update.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Tuesday, 20 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment/contracting opportunities during construction (piling).
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Wednesday, 21 November 2018	Email	Interested in employment/contracting opportunities during construction and operations (signage).
Kentucky Tree Nursery	Thursday, 22 November 2018	Email	Confirmation of timing for vegetation screening.
DPE	Monday, 26 November 2018	Email Phone call	Revised CIV.
S3	Monday, 26 November 2018	Email	Confirm receipt of photomontage.
Uralla Shire Council - Elected councillors	Tuesday, 27 November 2018	Email	Clarify refinements to the southern array area and provide a copy of the latest project fact sheet.
DPE	Wednesday, 28 November 2018	Phone call	Confirmation of timing for receipt of comments from DPE and update on engagement with Sunhill Dairy Goats.
Uralla Shire Council - Councillor	Wednesday, 28 November 2018	Email	Clarification of extent of southern array area.
Uralla Shire Council - Councillor	Thursday, 29 November 2018	Email	Clarify refinements to the southern array area and provide a copy of the latest project fact sheet.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Friday, 30 November 2018	Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
DPE	Friday, 30 November 2018	Email	Confirmation of timing for receipt of comments from DPE.
DPE	Monday, 3 December 2018	Phone call	Confirmation of timing for receipt of comments from DPE.
Community member	Monday, 3 December 2018	Phone call Email	Impact of the project on goat herds and goat milk production.
DPE	Tuesday, 4 December 2018	Email	Confirmation of timing for receipt of comments from DPE.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Wednesday, 5 December 2018	Email	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
DPE	Thursday, 6 December 2018	Phone call	Confirmation of timing for receipt of comments from DPE.
DPE	Friday, 7 December 2018	Email	Confirmation of timing for receipt of comments from DPE.
DPE	Monday, 10 December 2018	Phone call	Confirmation of timing for receipt of comments from DPE.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Monday, 10 December 2018	Phone call	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
DPE	Monday, 10 December 2018	Email	Provide DPE comments following adequacy review of EIS.

DPE	Wednesday, 12 December 2018	Phone call	Provide DPE comments following adequacy review of EIS.
Uralla Shire Council	Wednesday, 12 December 2018	Email	Proposed ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road easement.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Thursday, 13 December 2018	Phone call Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
Uralla Shire Council	Thursday, 13 December 2018	Phone call	Request landowner's consent for lodgement of EIS.
Uralla Shire Council	Friday, 14 December 2018	Phone call	Request landowner's consent for lodgement of EIS.
Multiple	Friday, 14 December 2018	Email	Provide an update on submission of EIS.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Monday, 17 December 2018	Email	Requested information regarding agreements that are in place between UPC Renewables and the tenure holders of the Crown roads which will be traversed by the development.
Uralla Shire Council	Monday, 17 December 2018	Email	Provide an update on submission of EIS.
Uralla Shire Council	Monday, 17 December 2018	Email	Request landowner's consent for lodgement of EIS.
DPE	Wednesday, 19 December 2018	Meeting Emails	Discuss DPE's adequacy review comments.
Community member	Wednesday, 19 December 2018	Email	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
Community member	Thursday, 20 December 2018	Email	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Thursday, 20 December 2018	Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
Adjoining landholder - southern array area	Thursday, 20 December 2018	Phone call	Project update.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Thursday, 3 January 2019	Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Monday, 7 January 2019	Email	Lodge landowner's consent application form.
DPE	Monday, 7 January 2019	Email	Discuss DPE's adequacy review comments.
Department of Industry - Lands & Water	Tuesday, 8 January 2019	Email	Landowner's consent application form.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Tuesday, 8 January 2019	Phone call	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Tuesday, 8 January 2019	Email	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
DPE	Wednesday, 9 January 2019	Email	Discuss DPE's adequacy review comments.
Community member	Thursday, 10 January 2019	Phone call	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
Community member	Thursday, 10 January 2019	Phone call Email	Provide link to community action group.
Community member	Thursday, 10 January 2019	Email	Respond to community enquiry.
C2	Friday, 11 January 2019	Email	Requested information regarding the central array substation.
DPE	Friday, 11 January 2019	Email	Discuss DPE's adequacy review comments.
C2	Monday, 14 January 2019	Email	Requested information regarding the central array substation.
Uralla Shire Council	Monday, 14 January 2019	Phone call Email	Discuss ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road reserve.
Community member	Monday, 14 January 2019	Phone call	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
DPE	Tuesday, 15 January 2019	Email	Discuss DPE's adequacy review comments.
Uralla Shire Council	Wednesday, 16 January 2019	Meeting Email	Discuss ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road reserve.
Community member - employment/contracting opportunities	Thursday, 17 January 2019	Email	Expression of interest for upcoming work.
Armidale Express	Friday, 18 January 2019	Phone call Email	Discuss an upcoming news article in the Armidale Express.
Uralla Shire Council	Monday, 21 January 2019	Phone call Email	Discuss ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road reserve.
Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 22 January 2019	Phone call Email	Discuss ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road reserve.
DPE	Wednesday, 23 January 2019	Email	Provide response to DPE adequacy review.
Community member	Wednesday, 23 January 2019	Email	Raise concerns about potential impacts of the project.
Community member	Thursday, 24 January 2019	Email	Question in relation to project technology.
Uralla Shire Council	Friday, 25 January 2019	Meeting	Discuss ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road reserve.
DPE	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Email	Confirm timing of response to DPE adequacy review and copy of community objection flyer.
Community member	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Email	Address concerns about potential impacts of the project.
Community member	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Email	Respond to question in relation to project technology.
Uralla Shire Council	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Email	Discuss ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road reserve.
C2	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Email	Request a copy of a figure identifying the extent of the central array.
Uralla Shire Council	Thursday, 31 January 2019	Email Phone call	Discuss ETL alignment in Gostwyck Road reserve.
DPE	Thursday, 31 January 2019	Email Phone call	Issue DPE response to adequacy review comments.
DPE	Friday, 1 February 2019	Email	Response to DPE adequacy review comments.

Community Benefit Sharing Initiative: Options Paper

Community Power Agency (CPA 2018)

Community Benefit Sharing Initiative: Options Paper

Recommendations developed by the
Community Reference Group for UPC
Renewable's New England Solar Farm

October 2018



Picture courtesy of Westmill Cooperative, UK.

Document prepared by Dr. Jarra Hicks and Dr. Franziska Mey, Community Power Agency.

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Acronyms

UPC	UPC Renewables
CBSI	Community Benefit Sharing Initiative
CRG	Community Reference Group

1. Introduction

Uralla has a great solar resource and we believe communities should benefit from hosting solar development.

UPC Renewables Australia ('UPC') proposing the New England Solar Farm ('the solar farm') a 600 to 800 Megawatts (MW) AC solar PV electricity generator east of Uralla. UPC is committed to being part of the Uralla and the New England communities and to contribute to the future vitality and success of the region. They intend to own and operate the solar farm, and thus seek to establish a positive long-term connection to the area and be a good neighbour.

UPC has committed to contribute \$250 per year for every MW (AC) of solar power installed. For the planned 600 to 800 MW (AC) solar farm, this means somewhere between \$150,000 to \$200,000 per year for 25 years, which is the typical "asset life" of a solar farm. The contribution will start at a baseline of \$50,000 during construction and increase as the solar farm is installed and becomes operational.

UPC has called this a Community Benefit Sharing Initiative (CBSI).

UPC want the solar farm to bring lasting value to the local area, and engaged Community Power Agency to lead a process to gather guidance from the local community about how the CBSI can create a positive, lasting and meaningful impact for the local community.

Community Power Agency was contracted by UPC to design and facilitate a CBSI community engagement process, and their role has been to act as an independent intermediary, including facilitating community workshops and collating this document. Community Power Agency is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works with communities to support them to participate in and benefit from the renewable energy transition.

Local people have contributed their ideas and considerations about the CBSI through one-on-one meetings, a community workshop, an online feedback form and the establishment of a Community Reference Group (CRG). The CRG has deliberated over all ideas and inputs received from the broader community to come up with the following recommendations for the CBSI.

This Options Paper outlines the community process that was delivered to enable community input into the CBSI and presents the recommendations for the CBSI developed by the CRG.

1.1 Purpose of this document

This Options Paper outlines the CRG's recommendations for:

- Principles to underpin the CBSI;
- Options for activities and initiatives to be funded through the CBSI;
- The geographic scope of the CBSI; and,
- High-level governance principles and options for a fund structure.

This document represents the culmination of the community consultation process on the CBSI and is intended to inform UPC's decision-making process regarding the design of the CBSI and the form it will take.

2. Method: A community process

Local people and organisations played an integral role in co-designing these recommendations for the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative (CBSI). Recommendations included in this Options Paper have been developed by the CRG in partnership with the Community Power Agency, drawing on a broader program of community involvement.

Community Power Agency was responsible for the design and delivery of the community engagement process associated with developing the CBSI. Community Power Agency acted as an independent intermediary, enabling community input into the CBSI design. Their role involved on-the-ground delivery of meetings and workshops, building relationships with key community groups and conducting face-to-face conversations to gather ideas. This work was undertaken by Jarra Hicks and Franziska Mey, who travelled to the region a number of times. Jarra is originally from Uralla Shire and drew on existing relationships and knowledge of the area to deliver this work effectively within the short time frame available.

The process to gather community ideas and input has involved:

- One-on-one meetings with 7 key local organisations (Uralla Business Chamber, Rotary, Starfish, Z-NET Uralla, Uralla Neighbourhood Centre, Uralla Shire Council, Lions Club) and four local business owners;
- A public community workshop with 20 attendees from across Uralla Shire;
- Feedback on benefit sharing options via an online feedback form, with 13 responses; and,
- The establishment of a CRG with 8 members representing a range of interests and demographics.

This process provided opportunities for people to contribute ideas into what benefit sharing activities/ initiatives they would like to see, and to set the principles that should inform future decisions about how benefits are shared and how the CBSI is governed, as well as the recommended geographic scope of the CBSI. From this, a shortlist of desirable and appropriate benefit sharing activities and options has been identified.

Community Power Agency also undertook background demographic research of the Uralla Shire and analysis of relevant local and regional strategy documents to inform the CBSI development. The documents reviewed were the Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland’s *Southern New England High Country Regional Economic Development Strategy* (2018); the Uralla Shire Council’s *Community Strategic Plan (2017-2027)* and *Uralla Community Climate Change Forum* (2008); Z-NET Uralla’s (Zero Net Energy Town) *Blueprint* (2017); and the New England Sustainability Strategy (2010). This research helped to frame conversations around the CBSI in relation to other existing priorities based on previous community consultation processes.

UPC first started discussing ways to support the community and gathering ideas from local residents at the first community drop in session held in May 2018 and again at the second drop in session in June 2018. The targeted community engagement process on the CBSI commenced in early August 2018 and finished in early October 2018 with the preparation of this report. Opportunities for community involvement, including the nomination process for the CRG were advertised using a variety of means, including:

- Posters in local shops and notice boards in Uralla, Armidale and surrounding localities;
- Hard copy letters to all those in close proximity to the proposed solar farm footprint;
- Phone calls and email to over 15 Uralla-based community organisations;
- One-on-one meetings and word of mouth; and,
- The email newsletters and Facebook pages of local organisations (e.g. Z-NET Uralla, Starfish, Farming the Sun, Sustainable Living Armidale).

In addition, the community workshop was advertised in Z-NET Uralla column of the Uralla Shire Council newsletter, which is posted out to all households in the Uralla Shire.

The CRG was established recognising that local people know their community best and will be able to make informed decisions about how the CBSI can best deliver lasting value. Sixteen nominations were received for the CRG, from which 9 were chosen for their ability to represent a range of interests and demographics. One selected member later advised they were unable to attend the meeting dates and forfeited their position. Selection was via unanimous decision by a selection panel comprised of a UPC representative, a Community Power Agency representative and one representative from the region (a member of staff at Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland).

The CRG met three times to generate ideas, review the broader community input and develop the recommendations included in this Options Paper. The CRG has played an important role in providing a platform for community co-design and decision-making associated with developing recommendations for the CBSI.

The recommendations for the CBSI presented in this Options Paper are ideas that have strong conceptual support from the CRG. However, it is beyond the scope of this stage of the CBSI development to have refined and tested the ideas in detail. The final form of the CBSI will need to be informed by a detailed planning and testing process, to ensure the recommendations are viable, feasible and desirable in practice.

UPC has committed to undertake detailed feasibility and planning for the CBSI after development approval is received for the solar farm. See recommendations for next steps in Section 5.

3. Recommendations

The Community Reference Group (CRG) has developed the following recommendations to inform the design of UPC's Community Benefit Sharing Initiative (CBSI) for the New England Solar Farm.

3.1 Recommended General Principles

The CRG identifies the following general principles as providing an important foundation for steering the CBSI.

The CBSI should operate in such a way that:

- Delivers a broad range of benefits to the local community;
- Enhances the unique nature of Uralla Shire, particularly its history and high levels of community involvement and connection;
- Showcases Uralla region as a sustainable energy leader; and,
- Delivers ongoing and lasting financial, social and/or environmental benefits to the community through:
 - Supporting community groups and initiatives;
 - Helping to resource education and skill-development;
 - Supporting local business and local job creation;
 - Building local sustainability and resilience (e.g. climate change readiness);
 - Seeking to address social equity issues (e.g. youth opportunities, supporting indigenous culture); and,
 - Reducing energy costs for households, community groups and local businesses.

Recommended CBSI Vision Statement:

The community adjacent to the solar farm and the broader Uralla Shire community share in the benefits from the existence of the New England Solar Farm.

Recommended CBSI Mission Statement:

The CBSI contributes to a resilient and vibrant community, and establishes UPC and the New England Solar Farm as valuable community members.

In support of the Vision Statement, the CBSI will deliver an annual funding amount based on the installed capacity of the New England Solar Farm, to community-identified programs, funding opportunities and activities. The CBSI will allocate funding in a way that creates a long-lasting legacy and delivers a range of benefits broadly in the local community. In particular, the fund will seek to: enhance the unique community identity of Uralla Shire; establish the Uralla region as a sustainable energy leader; support community organisations and initiatives, as well as education and work opportunities; address social equity issues; and, increase community sustainability and resilience.

3.2 Recommended Activities & Initiatives

All streams of the community engagement process provided ideas for the types of activities and initiatives that should be funded through the CBSI, in order to deliver meaningful and lasting local benefits. A wide range of activities and initiatives came to the fore as a result, a shortlist of which is summarised in Appendix 1. The community workshop was used as an opportunity to both generate and prioritise activity options.

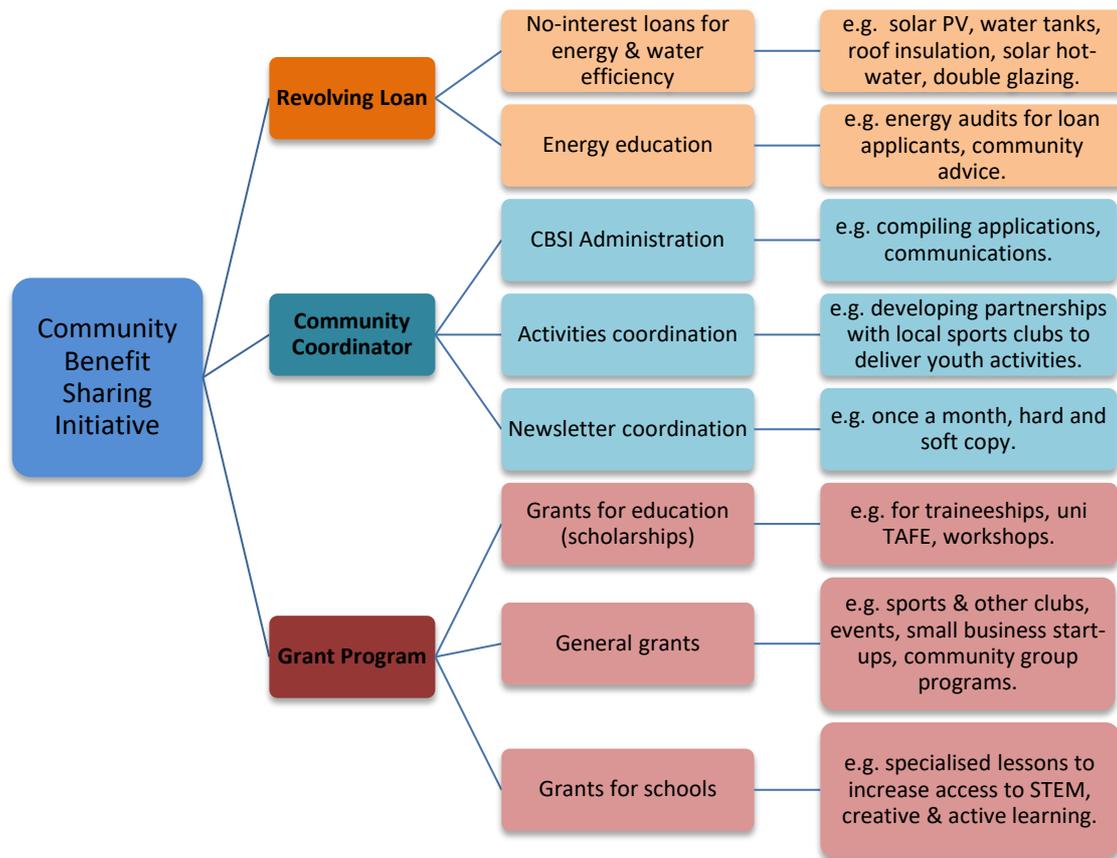
The three most popular activities were a revolving no-interest loan fund for energy and water upgrades; a community coordinator to coordinate activities (e.g. for youth); and a community newsletter. In line with the general principles above, there was a strong desire for the CBSI activities to deliver energy-related benefits, educational benefits and contribute to enhancing Uralla's uniqueness as an active and strong community - and to do these things in ways that opens up opportunities for youth and local job creation.

The CRG continued this prioritisation and refinement process to develop the following recommendations for a package of CBSI activities:

It is recommended that the CBSI is comprised of three activities: A revolving no-interest loan fund for energy and water efficiency; a grant program; and a Community Coordinator whose role includes coordinating community activities and compiling a community newsletter.

These three activities and their sub-components are represented in Figure 1 and described in detail below.

Figure 1: The three recommended activities of the New England Solar Farm’s Community Benefit Sharing Initiative



Revolving Loan Fund & Energy Education

This revolving no-interest loan fund would help to increase energy efficiency, renewable energy and water sustainability in the community, as well as increasing energy education and awareness, thereby building on Uralla’s identify as sustainable energy leader¹. The Revolving Loan Fund will provide no-interest loans for energy efficiency retrofitting, solar PV installation, solar hot water and water efficiency measures for households, public buildings, community organisations and clubs (not-for-profits) and local small businesses. It will help loan applicants to save money on bills, increase self-sufficiency and sustainability, and cut greenhouse gas emissions through the uptake of energy efficiency and renewable energy. It will help to address social equity issues by enabling lower-income households (who could not afford the up-front cost) to access energy and water saving measures, which will help them save money over time. In addition, by being able to loan towards a range of energy and water efficiency measures, it is flexible enough to respond to local needs and priorities as they change over time.

There was a desire to build the Revolving Loan Fund of \$1-1.5 million, through an allocation of the CBSI funding each year until it reached the desired funding pool. Overtime, as loans are re-

¹ Through Z-NET Uralla and its vision of being a ‘zero net energy’ town, Uralla has become a leader in sustainable energy issues at a community level, including renewable electricity and heating as well as energy efficiency.

paid, they can be loaned out to new applicants – as such, the money can keep delivering value in the community beyond the 25-year life of the CBSI. People felt this fund was central to delivering on-going benefit in the local community.

Loans are to be delivered in partnership with a Home Energy Review program to make sure people are getting the most out of their energy efficiency retrofitting and solar PV investments. Basic energy advice will also be available to the broader community (e.g. a drop-in information desk to help people understanding bills and energy efficiency options, as run by Z-NET Uralla at present).

CORENA, a volunteer-run not-for-profit organisation based in South Australia, has been operating a very similar no-interest loan fund for a number of years with great success. CORENA are willing to share their knowledge, expertise and financial/ legal templates to assist with the establishment of this CBSI activity. For longevity and ease of implementation here, the CRG recommends that a local banking institution with a strong track record in financial management and community engagement do the financial management of the loan fund. Preliminary conversations have been had with Regional Australia Bank and they are interested to work with UPC, Community Power Agency and the community to develop a model for its delivery.

The CRG foresees that it could operate as such: a Discretionary Trust could hold all money in a bank account (e.g. term deposit), the bank (e.g. Regional Australia Bank) would then administer the loans (including application process and default management), drawing on the CORENA model. The Trust contracts Z-NET Uralla to deliver the energy education and promotion of the loan, including energy efficiency reviews for those participating in the loan fund. This arrangement is reviewed at 5 years with the option to contract another body to do the ‘front end’ if desirable, or a Trust employee/contractor could take it on.

First year of the Revolving Loan Fund could prioritise solar PV for community buildings, in order to have the broadest and most visible immediate impact. This could include sporting clubs or community buildings (e.g. hall, preschool) in Uralla, Kelly’s Plains, Kentucky and Salisbury Plains.

Grant Program

The grant program would provide grants to local initiatives and organisations in order to promote education, arts, sustainability, active lifestyles and community development. It would contribute to maintaining Uralla’s region’s unique community identity by enabling a variety of community-driven initiatives and organisations to benefit. Would increase the capacity and resources of local individuals & organisations.

The CRG recommends that there are three streams to the Grant Program:

1. Grants for education (scholarships for all forms of further education, especially those that enhance local resident’s job opportunities; with the potential to prioritise renewable-energy related applications);
2. General Grants (to go towards arts, sustainability, active lifestyles, community development, addressing social equity issues and other initiatives proposed by local individuals, not-for-profit community organisations, businesses, etc.); and,

3. Grants for Schools (to access programs currently out of their reach and not covered by public funding, such as specialised programs for STEM, creative/ arts and active/ sports).

Each year, the Grant Program would distribute a portion of the CBSI funds to eligible applicants whose proposals will deliver local (and, ideally, lasting) benefits. Grants would be open 1 or 2 times per year and available to individuals, community organisations, clubs, and businesses. Grants are seen as a ‘catch-all’ option that can be responsive over time and leverage the impact and connection of existing community leaders, organisations and initiatives. For example, some of the activities raised in the community engagement program (see Appendix 1), which are not specified for funding under the CBSI, could apply for grants – e.g. Tree planting, electric vehicle charging stations, tourism signage, public disabled toilets. Examples of possible uses of grant funds include:

- Bush or creek lands regeneration by a local conservation group;
- New sporting equipment for a local sports club;
- Supporting a Scouts/ Girl Guides program;
- In-school workshops to augment creative, specialist & active education (e.g. a STEM Punks workshops); and,
- Support for new local business start-ups.

Enhancing local education opportunities (for youth and others) was an important priority that emerged from the community engagement process. The CRG wants the CBSI to support local people to build their skills and knowledge, in order to make the most of future employment options in the region. Scholarships will support local people who want to use their skills locally to support them to pursue apprenticeships, short-courses, workshops, TAFE diplomas and University degrees. The Grants for Schools will enhance opportunities provided through local schools, helping to augment and value-add in ways that increase local children’s sense of opportunity and pride. For example, this could be done by funding an external specialist provider to come in and run workshops with students and training with staff.

There is also a desire for grants to be available to initiatives that are not strictly charitable, such as supporting a new small business to develop a sound business plan, helping them with start-up or expansion costs. It is also seen as important that the grants support activities and initiatives that will help to build community connectedness and participation, including links between the towns and villages within Uralla Shire and beyond.

The Grant Program would need to establish clear governance arrangements, grant-making guidelines and eligibility criteria, in line with the recommended geographic scope and principles for the CBSI, and will require ongoing administration and promotion. This includes the need to establish a transparent and easy-to-use application and reporting process. The CRG recommends that community representatives are involved in decision-making.

The CRG recommends that the Grant program be delivered by a purpose-built Discretionary Trust (see governance recommendations section), and administered by the Community Coordinator. It could also be delivered as a sub-fund of an existing community trust or grant-giving body. However, initial conversations with Uralla Shire Council indicated that their grant-making guidelines are narrow and constrained, and would not be able to accommodate the objectives of the CBSI Grant Program as conceived by the CRG. There were no other appropriate local organisations identified that could fulfil this role.

Community Coordinator

The CRG recommends that the CBSI funds a part-time Community Coordinator who compiles a community newsletter and helps to coordinate community activities. The community engagement process revealed a need and demand for more social, fitness and capacity building activities in our community, especially for youth. There is no shortage of innovative ideas; the limiting factor is time for coordination. For example, the Community Coordinator could work in partnership with existing sporting groups to develop and coordinate a range of youth activities using existing local sporting facilities, such as tennis coaching. The proposed role is not one of delivery; rather, it is to identify what is already happening, identify gaps, link resources and opportunities, and assist existing clubs and their volunteers in setting up self-supporting delivery pathways. This would increase range of local activities available by tying in with and supporting existing facilities and clubs. This assumes that fees cover the cost of actually delivering the activities (e.g. facility hire and coaches). The CRG identified the following recent examples where a Community Coordinator could deliver benefit:

1. Recently some parents decided that it would be good to organise a tennis activity for kids. They put the word out and 46 kids turned up. Those involved did not have the time and resources to turn this into a productive longer-term activity. In this instance, a Coordinator could follow up the interest with the families, explore how the local tennis club (a small but keen group of mainly adult players) could help, identify structured tennis programs that could be set up with coaches and equipment, and support the families to self-organise an ongoing activity.
2. Another example is the summer Swim and Survive program that operates at the Uralla pool. This is well resourced but often under subscribed. The cost is about \$75 per child. While this is good value the cost still puts it out of reach to many families. The Coordinator could work with the local community to give a path for individuals to sponsor an enrolment. The Coordinator could approach community groups like Lions and Rotary to make sponsorship of 6-8 positions a funding campaign for the year.
3. Many kids end up at the Uralla Library as de facto after school care. It is warm and safe. While the Library staff do what they can, they do not have the resources to research and coordinate programs for these kids. A Coordinator could work with Library staff to explore appropriate options.

The Community Newsletter is a proposal for a fortnightly or monthly hard and soft copy newsletter covering community news and notifying people of upcoming events and opportunities. Hard copies would be available for pick up at central locations (e.g. shops, cafes, library). It would be delivered Independent of Uralla Shire Council, whose existing community newsletter has a very narrow remit of Council content only.

It is envisioned that the newsletter will increase the connectedness of people in the Uralla Shire and increase community awareness of and participation in events by communicating what is happening. It would also celebrate the positives of the local community, including celebrating the outcomes of the CBSI. It would also provide an avenue to provide CBSI updates and notice of opportunities (e.g. when grant rounds are open), as well as offering an additional means of communicating UPC project updates.

See Appendix 2 for a draft role description for the Community Coordinator role, this was developed by the CRG to give a more detailed understanding of the position.

The CRG felt that there would be value-added benefits to having the Community Coordinator responsible for CBSI administration. To be most effective, many of the recommended activities will require good integration into the community (e.g. so people know about the availability of the grants and loans, and to help ensure high quality applications are received; so that the newsletter and education activities that take place are high-value and relevant). And, of course, all of the CBSI activities will require administration, including providing a public point of contact, calling for and receiving grant applications, promoting the revolving-loan opportunities, arranging home energy audits, and coordinating other communications, promotion and outreach activities associated with the CBSI.

Given that both the community coordination activities and the CBSI administration requirements would be part time, it could make sense to combine them into one 3 day per week position. The Community Coordinator remit, then, would be to coordinate the newsletter, the grant program, the revolving loan fund², the community activities and other CBSI administration tasks. While this sounds like a big workload, it is important to remember that all of these activities are scalable to available time and funding. For example, scheduling could mean that the grant program and community activity coordination happen at different times of year. In the first years, when funding is lowest, there may be very little community activity coordination, and the Coordinator could focus on establishing the systems necessary to administer the CBSI effectively. The Community Coordinator would be ongoing, though it is likely that their role will change over time.

As yet, it is not resolved where the Community Coordinator might be based or what the mode of engagement would be. The CRG recommends that the Community Coordinator is a contractor to, or an employee of, a Discretionary Trust established to govern and deliver the CBSI. The role is not a natural fit with UPC or Uralla Shire Council, and both these options would have significant additional over-heads (e.g. +40% of the wage rate).

Implementation recommendations

It is important to note that all CBSI activities will be subject to detailed feasibility and planning studies before being confirmed as viable CBSI activities. At present this list of priorities is based on people's high-level support for the activities and their predicted benefits at a conceptual level. Detailed feasibility and planning for the CBSI will take place following NSW Department of Planning and Environment Development Approval. In addition, all activities will be subject to review during the evaluation process recommended at 5-year intervals.

The CRG recognises that there is a need for CBSI activities in the first year to require little to no establishment time and that they be very easy to deliver while having high impact and visibility, as well as the change in funds available as more MW from the solar farm are commissioned. As such, the CRG recommends slightly different approaches for CBSI activities in years 1, 2 and 3; activities in year 3 would be repeated each year after that, subject to the evaluation process recommended every 5 years.

² While the Community Coordinator would promote the loan fund, support people to apply and coordinate the energy audits, the financial administration and application vetting would sit with a suitable qualified partner organisation (e.g. Regional Australia Bank).

- Year 1** Community Coordination of activities and the newsletter (1 day per week)
Grants to solar PV and/or energy efficiency measures in public buildings, contributions to local schools and community events (e.g. the Lantern Parade, Thunderbolts Festival). Given the application process for the Grant Program will not be established yet, it is recommended that decisions for grants be made by UPC and the CRG, in line with the general principles included in this document. In a sense, grants would operate more like sponsorship in Year 1.
- Year 2** Community Coordination of activities and the newsletter (1 day per week)
CBSI Administration by the Community Coordinator (1 day per week)
Grant program – is established and an application process is run to determine grant allocations. Decisions on successful applications are made by the CBSI governance body (e.g. Discretionary Trust).
Revolving Loan Fund – is established and the application process opens. Is delivered in partnership with finance and program delivery organisations (e.g. Regional Australia Bank and Z-NET Uralla) and the CBSI governance body (e.g. Discretionary Trust).
- Year 3** Community Coordination of activities and the newsletter (2 days per week)
CBSI Administration by the Community Coordinator (1 day per week)
Grant program – as per above.
Revolving Loan Fun – as per above.

Figure 2: Recommended funding allocation per activity for the first 3 years of the CBSI.

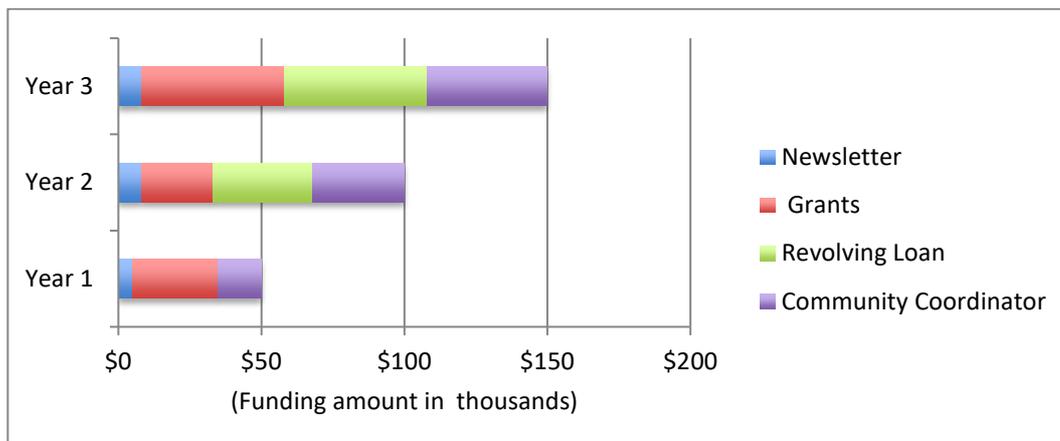


Table 2: A breakdown of cost allocation for activities by year.

	Year 1 \$50,000	Year 2 approx. \$100,000	Year 3 & ongoing** \$150,000 +
\$15k	Community Coordinator (1 day per week)	\$32k	Community Coordinator (3 days per week)
....	
\$5k	Newsletter printing	\$8k	Newsletter printing
\$30k	Grants*	\$35k	Loan fund & education
		\$25k	Grants

* Not seeking applications in the first year, operating more like sponsorship.

** The CRG recommends that an evaluation process take place every 5 years, which may result in changed future priorities & distribution.

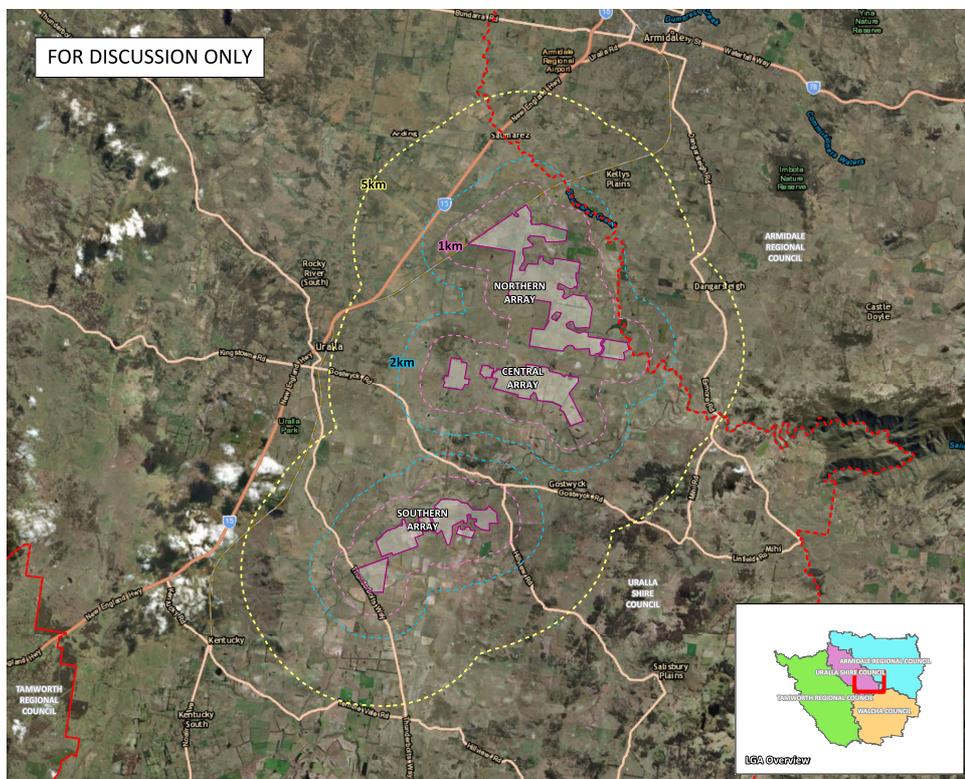
The CRG has developed recommendations for the governance of the CBSI, which will influence the mode of delivery for the activities. The CRG recommendation to establish a Discretionary Trust to govern and deliver the CBSI is included in the Governance Recommendations section below.

3.3 Recommended Geographic Scope

It is imperative that the geographic scope of the CBSI is founded on a clear and easy to understand rationale that accepted as being a fair and reasonable way to share the benefits of the solar farm with the local community. After considering various options, the CRG voted to determine that the most appropriate recommendation is that:

The CBSI should be open to all residents of Uralla Shire Council, as well as Kelly's Plains and Dangarsleigh.

This ensures that all localities adjacent to the solar farm – and all people that reside there – will experience the CBSI in-line with UPC's desire to be a good neighbour. Because the solar farm and all associated infrastructure is located inside the Uralla Shire Council area, the Shire at large should also benefit from the solar farm. Given Kelly's Plains village is in close proximity (see map below) to the solar farm but it is half in Uralla Shire and half in Armidale Shire, it was considered particularly important to enable Kelly's Plains residents to access the benefits of the CBSI. This geographic scope will draw on already-established and respected boundaries of the Uralla Shire and the cadastral maps for Kelly's Plains and Dangarsleigh.



It should be noted that we were not able to reach a consensus on this recommendation; the vote revealed that 56% of CRG members supported the option presented above. The next most popular option (with 33%) was to use the Uralla Shire Council boundary only. It should also be noted that all CRG members are Uralla Shire residents.

3.4 High-level Recommendations for Governance

The CRG recommends that the CBSI is governed in such a way that it:

- Meets the needs for longevity over the 25 year life of the CBSI;
- Upholds transparency in decision-making and communication
- Is accessible and facilitates broad community participation in line with the Mission of the fund;
- Follows due diligence & conduct, following a clear charter and guidelines;
- Addresses potential and/or perceived conflicts of interest;
- Is appropriately, yet efficiently, resourced to cover effective administration
- Involves community members in decision-making;
- Enables responsiveness to changing circumstances over the 25-30 year term of its operations, while contributing to a strategic long-term vision;
- Evaluates and reviews the impact of the CBSI at 5-year intervals, and involves the community in this process;
- Directs funding to things that do not already have a readily-available alternative source of funding (e.g. the activity is not already covered by an existing funding pathway or responsible entity who covers this as part of their core business);
- Is able to direct support to local individuals, community organisations and businesses (both not-for-profit and for-profit) that meet Mission of the fund; and,
- Leverages co-funding and co-contributions (e.g. in-kind, voluntary), where appropriate.

Regarding potential and perceived issues of conflict of interest: This is particularly an issue in small communities where people in decision-making roles may also be involved in groups applying for funding. It was raised that there needs to be a way for these groups not to miss out on CBSI opportunities. For example, people with the perceived conflict could simply remove themselves when decisions on those specific applications are being made.

The CRG is keen to see a CBSI governance structure in which local people play a role in oversight, evaluation and decision-making. This would need to include a transparent and rigorous nomination and appointment process, where community representatives are renewed (or re-appointed) regularly.

The CRG is keen to see regular reporting back to the local community about CBSI progress and opportunities, such as through the Community Newsletter. This includes celebrating its achievements and contributions in the community. It also includes providing feedback on applications, both successful and unsuccessful.

Recommended Governance Structure: A Discretionary Trust

The CRG recommends that a Discretionary Trust is considered and investigated as a possible means to structure and govern the CBSI. The CRG identified a number of potential strengths of this model as an efficient and effective means to deliver the CBSI:

- Setting a sound and purpose-built structure will give certainty and longevity to the CBSI over the 25 years.
- A Trust gives UPC a clear, ongoing and well governed community engagement structure that allows shared governance and decision making between UPC and elected community representatives.
- The Trust will allow contributions by UPC to be clearly defined and will mitigate against unexpected demands on UPC staff time and resources.
- The Trust will simplify administrative activities for UPC such as assessment of grants, coordination of the newsletter, monitoring and evaluation of activities, and the Trust can manage tenders and oversee roles such as the Community Coordinator and provision of services (e.g. the energy education component of the Revolving Loan Fund).
- A Trust provides a separate legal identity that makes insurance and liability for undertaking funded activities is simple and separate from UPC. The option of a Corporate Trustee (with individuals acting as Directors of the Company) provides additional personal liability protection.
- A Trust will signal to the community that the funds are really there for community benefit and will be used accordingly.
- A Trust will receive strong community support, ensuring that the CBSI is well received and embeds UPC as a legitimate part of the community.
- The Trust could leverage pro bono and in-kind support from Trustees and other community members (assessing grants, referring people for the revolving loan, promoting CBSI activities).

Initial investigations by the CRG indicated that a Discretionary Trust would cost about \$4,000 to set up and that ongoing administration of a Trust would require approximately \$1,500 (including auditing, regulatory reporting and insurances). These and other potential costs would need to be investigated in detail during the feasibility stage of the CBSI.

A Trust Deed would be developed to give structure and longevity to the intent of the CBSI. The Trust (and the Trust Deed) can be used as the vehicle for reviewing and updating community priorities for funding.

The Trust would be governed by a voluntary board of UPC representative(s) and community members selected through nomination process. The community member Trustees would serve a fixed term giving the opportunity for renewal.

The CRG developed a diagram to illustrate the components of a Discretionary Trust and how these would operate. This can be found in Appendix 3.

4. Recommendations for next steps

Is there an ongoing role of the Community Reference Group (CRG)?

Should both UPC and CRG members agree, there may be a useful ongoing role for the CRG to provide feedback and advice on developing the next layer of detail required to implement the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative (CBSI), or on other aspects of the New England Solar Farm. This may involve deciding to re-convene on an ad-hoc, as-needed basis during the period before a formalised CBSI governance structure is established. For example, the CRG could play an important role in establishing the Discretionary Trust, if this idea proceeds, including incorporating the Principles and Governance sections of Options Paper into a Trust Deed, setting the guidelines and assessing the grant allocations in year 1, and assisting the Coordinator to set up systems for administration and programs for Year 2 and 3.

Detailed CBSI plans

Implementing the CBSI will require developing detailed studies to determine the viability of the recommended activities. It will also require doing further research to ascertain the most appropriate and effective ways to govern and deliver the CBSI, including investigating the option of establishing a Discretionary Trust. It is recommended that involvement of the local community is sought in this process, as this is when local knowledge will be particularly useful.

The CRG also recommend developing a good, catchy yet descriptive name that is less technical than 'Community Benefit Sharing Initiative' and gives some point of reference to the New England Solar Farm (e.g. New England Energy Trust [NEET]).

Developing partnerships

To effectively and efficiently deliver the recommended CBSI activities, it is recommended that UPC develop partnerships with key local organisations. Organisations such as Z-NET Uralla, Regional Australia Bank, Starfish, CORENA and Council already have significant expertise and experience relevant to the implementation of aspects of the CBSI.

6. Other

Viewing Platform

The CRG sees the establishment of an information and viewing platform as being an essential addition to the solar farm, as it will form a key interface with the local community and visitors to the area. People also raised its importance as a safety feature, to avoid people just pulling off the road at inappropriate places. There was a strong view that such a viewing platform sits outside the scope of the CBSI. The Group highly recommends that such a viewing platform be built, as part of the general construction project budget.

Tours of the Solar Farm

People raised the importance of having tours of the solar farm once it is operational, to aid in its integration into the local community and to enhance local knowledge of solar PV and renewable energy. The CRG supports UPC's commitment to running tours.

Community Solar Farm

There was widespread interest in the idea of a community solar farm, especially if the feasibility and establishment costs are covered by UPC separate to the CBSI funding allocation. People felt that a Community Solar Farm would especially be valuable if it can open up solar PV ownership and direct benefit (i.e. lower electricity prices) to low income households and renters, as in the 'solar gardens' arrangement (currently being trialled by Community Power Agency in partnership with others), and if it could provide a return on investment and keep money circulating in the local economy. If this idea does proceed, it will be important to ensure that community shareholders hold a controlling interest (majority share) in the Community Solar Farm.

Acknowledgements

Community Power Agency wishes to acknowledge the significant voluntary contributions made by all members of the Community Reference Group in developing the recommendations presented in this Options Paper.

Appendix 1: Activities and initiatives recommended for funding under the CBSI.

The table below presents the shortlist of ideas gathered during the community engagement process. Ideas that received less support, or were deemed unviable or inappropriate for the CBSI have been excluded from this table. All activities in the table were well supported by the community, having been raised in two or more of the methods of engagement (e.g. by the CRG and at the community workshop). Those at the top of the table received greater support as activities to be prioritised under the CBSI.

Activity: what is it?	Inputs: where did the idea come from?	Why is it important? Valuable? Who is it benefiting?	Estimated cost	Delivery requirements options/	Appropriate for what stage?
<p>No-interest revolving loan fund & energy education – to increase energy efficiency, renewable energy & water sustainability, as well as increasing energy education & awareness.</p> <p>First year prioritises community buildings to have broadest immediate impact.</p>	<p>One-on-one meeting/s; Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>Loans would be for energy efficiency retrofitting, solar PV installation, solar hot water & water efficiency measures for households, public buildings, community organisations & clubs (NFPs) & local small businesses. Would involve an energy education component for those receiving loans, as well as the broader community (e.g. understanding bills, energy efficiency options). Addresses social equity (by enabling low-income people to afford these measures and will help them save money over time) and sustainability issues (climate readiness; reduced CO2). Offers a means to deliver perpetual community benefit, as the fund is self-replenishing as loans are repaid and so ongoing after the 25-year CBSI funding period. Allows for flexibility to change with the needs of the community. Helps achieve Z-NET goal. Would increase local awareness, understanding and connection to energy issues & the solar farm.</p>	<p>\$30-50k per year; building to a fund that manages \$1-1.5mil overtime.</p>	<p>e.g. Trust would hold all money in a bank account; bank (e.g. Regional Australia Bank) administers loans (including application process, default management) and/or drawing on the CORENA model. Trust contracts Z-NET Uralla to deliver the energy education and promotion of the loan, including energy efficiency reviews for those participating in the loan fund. This is reviewed at 5yrs with the option to contract another body to do the ‘front end’ if desirable, or a Trust employee could take it on.</p>	<p>Construction & Operations</p>

<p>Community coordinator - fund a part-time (2-3 days per week) coordinator to coordinate a range of community activities (e.g. energy education, youth) as well as to administer the other CBSI initiatives. For example, they could work with parents & sporting groups to organise activities for youth.</p>	<p>Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>There is demand for more youth activities (e.g. swimming, tennis) but adults/ parents lack time to organise and coordinate. This would increase range of local activities for youth by tying in and supporting with existing facilities & clubs; would support/ make better use of existing facilities & clubs. Assumes that fees cover the cost of delivering the activities (e.g. facility hire & coaches). There is also a need to coordinate and administer the other aspects of the CBSI and this could be part of the Community Coordinator role, helping to embed UPC in the community. Links with the community will help to ensure the effectiveness of other CBSI activities.</p> <p>The first year could involve greater emphasis on setting up CBSI systems, later more emphasis on coordinating activities. Administration of CBSI would occur throughout.</p>	<p>\$20-40k per year</p>	<p>Unclear where the Community Coordinator would be housed/ who they would be employed by. Not a natural fit with UPC or Council and both these options would have significant overheads (e.g. +40% of the wage rate). Would involve setting up partnerships with existing clubs & schools. e.g. could be a contractor of the Trust in the first 1-2 years, then become an employee of the Trust.</p>	<p>Construction & operations</p>
<p>Community newsletter – a fortnightly or monthly hard & soft copy newsletter. Hard copies available for pick up at central locations. Independent of Uralla Shire Council.</p>	<p>Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>Increase the connectedness of people in the shire and increase community awareness of and participation in events by communicating what is happening. Could also celebrate the positives of the community. Would also provide an avenue to provide CBSI updates and notice of opportunities (e.g. when grant rounds are open) and celebrate CBSI outcomes.</p>	<p>\$5-8k per year (printing costs)</p>	<p>Community Coordinator would collate it & promote it to ensure content was relevant/ useful to the community.</p>	<p>Construction & operations</p>
<p>Scholarships - provide scholarships to go to people doing traineeships, degrees, diplomas, short courses, training, etc. Preference those based in or seeking to apply their new skills & knowledge in Uralla.</p>	<p>One-on-one meeting/s; Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>Would provide a means to support education and the up-skilling of Uralla Shire residents, thereby increasing the capacity of the workforce. Could be open to all ages. Would support education without need to coordinate an education (workshops & training) program, but rather supports Uralla Shire residents to undertake these being offered elsewhere.</p>	<p>\$1,00-5,000 per scholarship pool of \$20k</p>	<p>Would need basic financial administration capacity. Would need a transparent application process. Would need to be advertised. Prioritise applications relating the renewable energy (and which meet all the required criteria)</p>	<p>Construction & Operations</p>
<p>Community Grants Program - a grant open 1 or 2 times per year for activities that deliver education, arts, sustainability & social equity benefits & that contribute to building community connectedness/ participation; open to community organisations, clubs, individuals and businesses.</p>	<p>One-on-one meeting/s; Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>Would contribute to maintaining Uralla's region's unique community by enabling a variety of community-driven initiatives and organisations to benefit, especially those that build community. Would be responsive to the changing needs of the community over time. Would increase the capacity and resources of local individuals & organisations. E</p> <p><i>Scholarships (above) could be delivered as a stream of the grants program, to streamline administration.</i></p>	<p>\$1-8k each grant, a pool of \$20-50k per year.</p>	<p>Would need criteria and ongoing grant management, administration & promotion. Would require a transparent & easy/ accessible application process & reporting. Could be administered by the Community Coordinator.</p>	<p>Operations (Maybe sponsorship could deliver similar benefits in during construction.</p>

<p>Electric Vehicle charging station – could be funded via the loan fund, or installed in partnership with local businesses. This would be a once-off activity.</p>	<p>One-on-one meeting/s; Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>Tourism benefits; increase local energy awareness & uptake of electric vehicles; could be in a visible/ prominent place. Could be an in-town, visible link to the solar farm. Ideally matching funding would be secured from local business sponsors, council and other grants.</p>	<p>\$5-8k each (EVSE EO quote)</p>	<p>Needs to be located somewhere & someone to do billing. Would need Council approval.</p>	<p>Operations</p>
<p>Tree planting - Streetscape tree planting for shade and beauty.</p>	<p>Community workshop</p>	<p>Keeping the towns and villages beautiful and comfortable by providing greenery and shading. Would increase climate change readiness, provided appropriate trees were chosen.</p>	<p>Scalable</p>	<p>Would require a Vegetation Streetscape Plan to be developed & approved by council if plantings were going to be on verges or public land. Private property plantings would be fine.</p>	<p>Operations</p>
<p>Disabled Toilet - install a disabled toilet in a central location in town (e.g. in grassed area of the carpark behind the main street)</p>	<p>One-on-one meeting/s; Community workshop.</p>	<p>Would support inclusion of people with disabilities to main public spaces and shops in Uralla; would support businesses through easier trade. Questionable whether or not this is the remit of local or state funding.</p>	<p>\$50k-\$180k</p>	<p>Would need to be developed in conjunction with USC plans for public facilities in the Bridge Street Precinct. Would need USC to agree to maintain it.</p>	<p>Operations</p>
<p>Tourism: history & attractions signage – develop the content for signage and a revised booklet on local historical and other attractions to increase/ enhance local tourist attractions. Council would then pay for the signs and installing and maintaining them.</p>	<p>One-on-one meeting/s; Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>Would celebrate Uralla’s history and uniqueness. Would encourage tourism and related employment. Could build increased awareness of the regions assets & businesses. Would be done in partnership with council and local historians.</p>	<p>\$15k</p>	<p>Would need to be developed in conjunction with USC plans for tourism and signage, as well as agreeing to pay for the signs and maintain them. Would need coordinating to determine what signs, where. Information would need to be researched/ written.</p>	<p>Operations</p>
<p>Community-owned solar farm - fund a feasibility study (with a solar garden component) so that the community is fully informed as to the detail & viability of this proposal. This would likely be 0.5-1 Megawatt & completely separate to the NESF.</p>	<p>One-on-one meeting/s; Community workshop; Community Reference Group.</p>	<p>Would determine if the community-owned solar farm would be viable & deliver local benefit (e.g. lower electricity cost; return on investment). Could be delivered in partnership with a local business (e.g. Meralli projects). If done as a ‘Solar Garden’ it would include renters, low-income households & people with shaded roofs to participate.</p>	<p>UPC would contribute staff time & cover costs in return for a % equity stake in the project.</p>	<p>Would require detailed feasibility studies to determine if it would be beneficial (pay a return/ decrease energy prices for members). UPC would do technical & grid feasibility. Would also involve community & business model/ ownership structure feasibility.</p>	<p>Operations</p>

Appendix 2: Community Coordinator Job Description

The Uralla Community Coordinator key responsibilities are to compile a community newsletter and help to coordinate community activities.

Rationale for the Position

There is a recognised need and demand for more social, fitness and capacity building activities in our community, especially for youth. There is no shortage of innovative ideas; the limiting factor is time for coordination. Some specific examples raised during the consultation process for the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative (CBSI) are given at the end of this document.

The proposed Coordinator role is not one of delivery – it is to check out who is doing what, identify gaps, link resources, and assist in setting up self-supporting delivery pathways.

The Coordinator would also provide support for Trust administration such as providing the public with a point of contact for the Trust, calling for and receiving grant applications, liaising with scholarship programs and schools, and coordinating outreach activities.

Role Description

The Coordinator is to develop and provide leadership for the collaborative process of a continuum of activities that are listed in this job description for the youth, elderly and community members of the Uralla Shire and Kellys Plains.

The Coordinator will report to the CBSI Trust (the Trust) on a fortnightly basis with measurable results.

The Coordinator will develop and maintain effective relationships with service providers, community stakeholders, funding bodies and relevant networks to identify partnership arrangements to increase social and community support for Trust activities. The Coordinator will assist in setting up delivery pathways that can operate independently within the community.

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Design and implement a monthly online and paper community newsletter within the set budget, that:

- Is inclusive of and engages all sectors of the community with a fair, unbiased and autonomous ethos
- Extends a section to community groups and organisations for their contributions
- Advertises local events
- Can administer paid advertising
- Promotes Trust activities and events, and reports to community on Trust achievements
- Updates the community of issues related to the construction and operation of the New England Solar Farm.

The newsletter role and operation will be designed and reviewed in the context of other local initiatives to ensure it complements rather than competes with existing and future initiatives.

YOUTH

In partnership with existing community groups, develop and coordinate a range of youth wellness programs and/or events using local sporting facilities:

- Pool; e.g. NSW Office of Sport Swim and Survive Program
- Uralla Tennis Courts; e.g. Learn Tennis
- Football field
- Skate park

Advertise and promote the programs and events effectively through:

- Schools and pre-schools
- Uralla Council
- Noticeboards
- Uralla Shire Business Chamber (U.S.B.C.)
- Local media (print, radio and social media)

Coordinate with partners to assist, promote and enhance educational and youth social programs for community that may already be operating:

- School holiday activities program – Uralla Community Hall
- Library youth events – Uralla Library

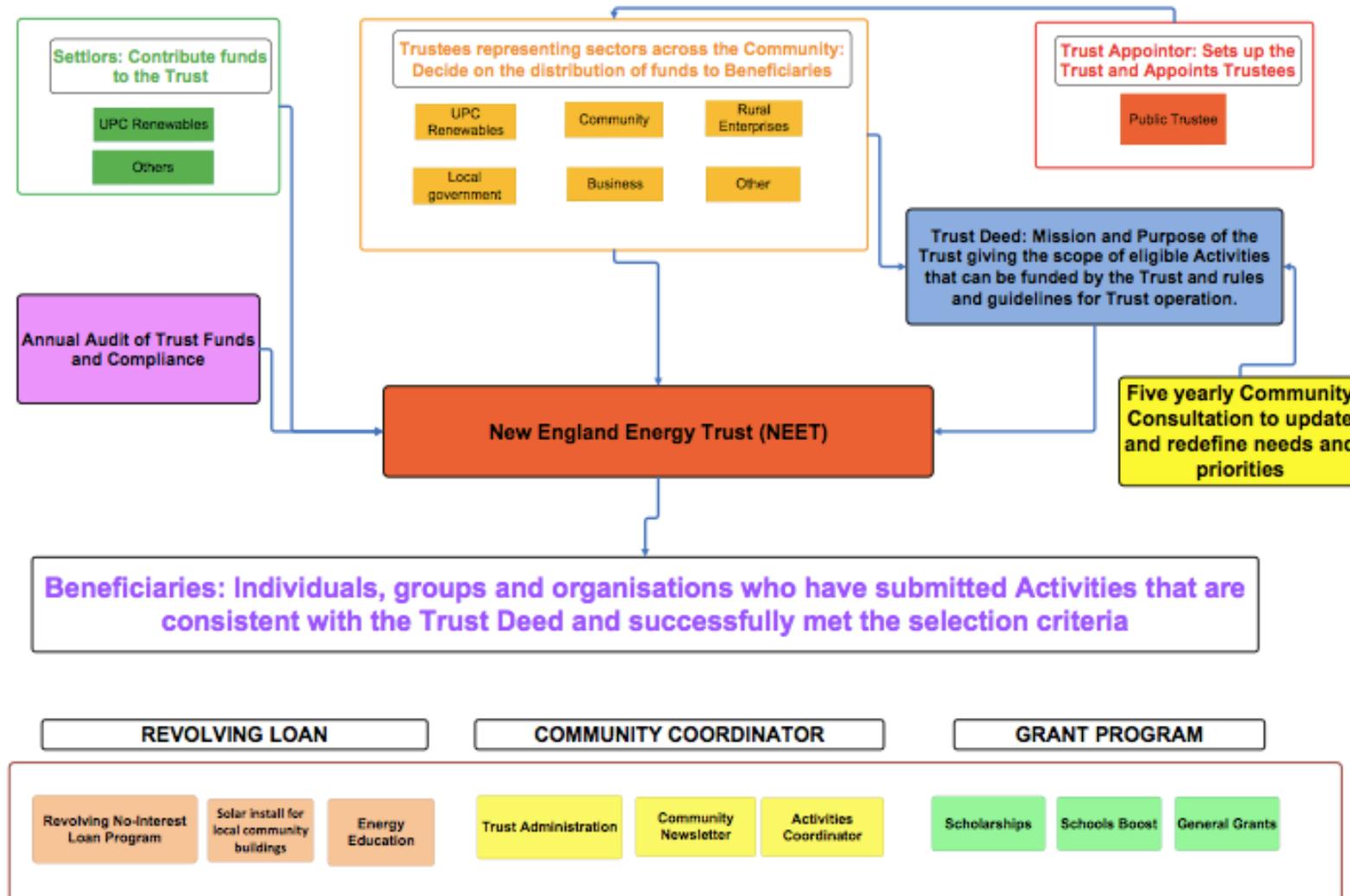
ELDERLY

Liaise with aged care organisations to identify the need and opportunity for Trust activities to complement and/or extend existing programs of community support.

Selection Criteria

1. Experience working with community groups, managing volunteers, and building collaborative cross-organisational solutions to deliver community initiatives.
2. Skills in Project Management Support – well organised document and data management, skills in scheduling and organising meetings and events, responding to enquiries in an efficiently and timely manner, preparing written reports on progress and achievements.
3. Excellent communications skills and ability to deliver communication in a range of forms including digital platforms. Publishing and design skills are desirable.
4. Proven ability to work with minimal direction/supervision, setting and prioritising achievable work goals, documenting progress and achievements, and reporting to the Trust.
5. Available to participate in some weekend and evening activities.
6. Have access to a car, own laptop and phone (reasonable expenses will be reimbursed).

Appendix 3: Outline of a Discretionary Trust model for CBSI governance and delivery.



Selection of community consultation materials

- Community fact sheets
- Information boards
- Posters
- Flyers
- Feedback forms

UPC Renewables Australia is developing the New England Solar Farm, a major grid-connected solar farm within the Uralla Shire Council.

Proposed site

The New England Solar Farm is proposed on a site located approximately 6km east of the township of Uralla and will cover a development footprint of up to 2,400 hectares across three areas of land currently used for grazing. There is high potential for the continuation of sheep grazing within the development footprint of the New England Solar Farm.

Reasons for choosing the proposed site include:

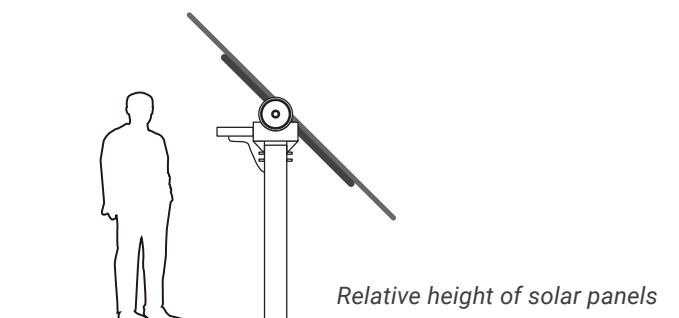
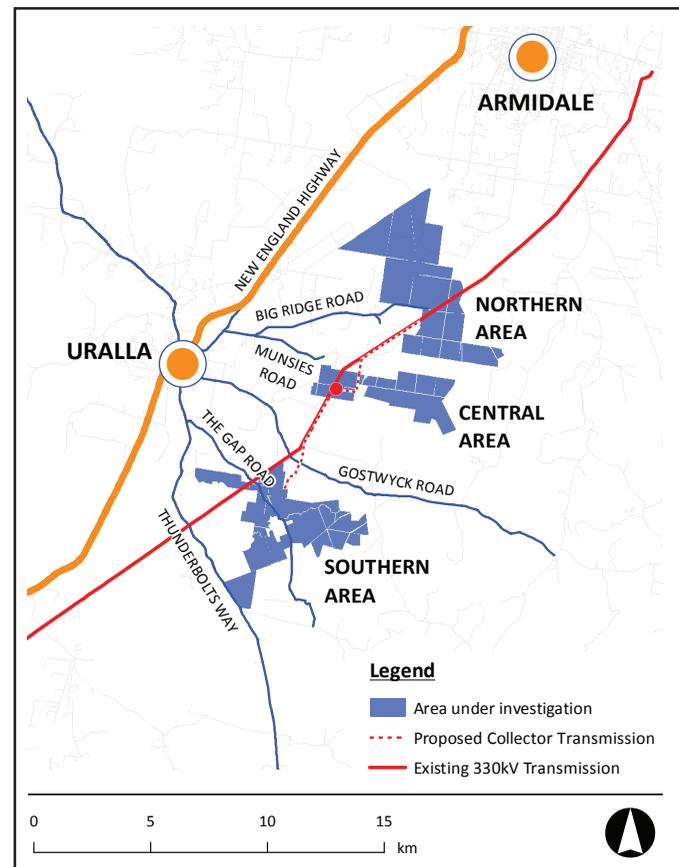
- combination of high solar irradiance and elevation across the site is ideal for energy production;
- TransGrid's existing 330 kV transmission line passes through the site; and
- relatively flat land.

Project overview

The New England Solar Farm will utilise ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels similar to those used on rooftops around Australia. Based on preliminary designs, the project will involve:

- three separate solar fields of PV modules, either on a fixed tilt or single axis tracking system, inverters and an underground cable network;
- new overhead transmission lines and a solar farm substation at each of the three solar fields;
- a central substation to connect the project to TransGrid's electricity transmission network;
- access roads from the local road network and internal access tracks; and
- stock-proof fencing around each of the solar fields.

UPC is also considering the integration of a battery energy storage system (BESS) as part of the project.



Benefits of the project

The project will provide a number of benefits including:

- direct and indirect business opportunities for the local and regional economy;
- employment opportunities, with several hundred employees needed during the construction period of 12-24 months;
- helping meet the NSW and Commonwealth government renewable energy targets;
- annual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and generation of enough clean renewable electricity to power more than 250,000 NSW homes; and
- increasing energy security by replacing ageing fossil fuel generators when they retire from service.

Assessment process

The project is State Significant Development and therefore a development application and environmental impact statement (EIS) will be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. UPC will also consult with other regulatory authorities including Uralla Shire Council and with the local community, Aboriginal groups and other stakeholders.

The EIS for the project will contain a comprehensive assessment of the environmental, social and economic impacts of the New England Solar Farm. Where potential impacts are identified, appropriate mitigation and management measures will be developed.



Smiths Falls Solar Farm, Canada

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MORE INFORMATION

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Proposed site

The New England Solar Farm is proposed on a site located approximately 6km east of the township of Uralla and will cover a development footprint of up to 2,400 hectares across three areas of land currently used for grazing. There is high potential for the continuation of sheep grazing within the development footprint of the New England Solar Farm.

Reasons for choosing the proposed site include:

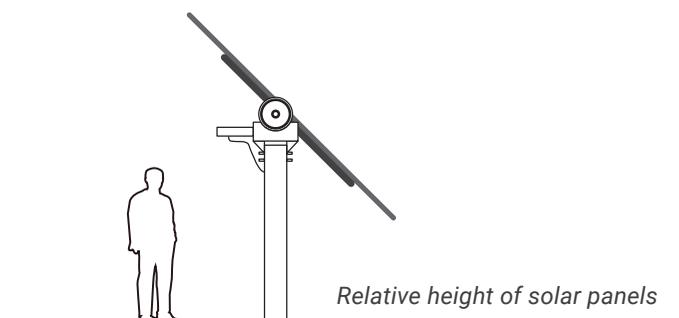
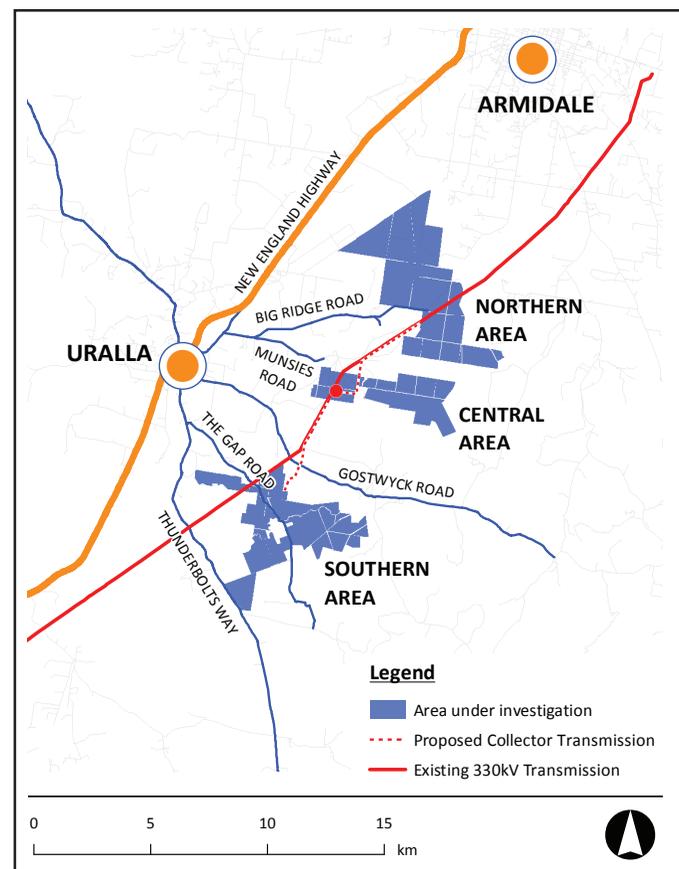
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Benefits of the project

The project will provide a number of benefits including:

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- employment opportunities, with several hundred employees needed during the construction period of 12-24 months and 10-15 ongoing jobs during operations;
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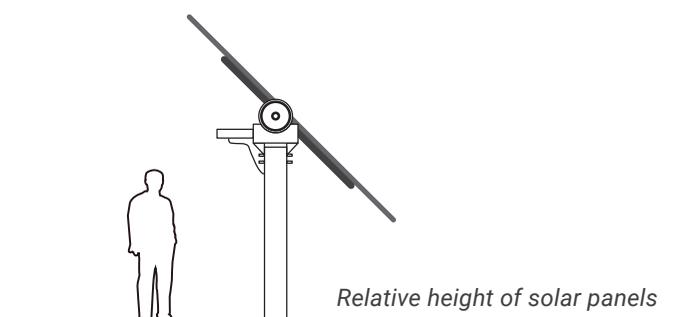
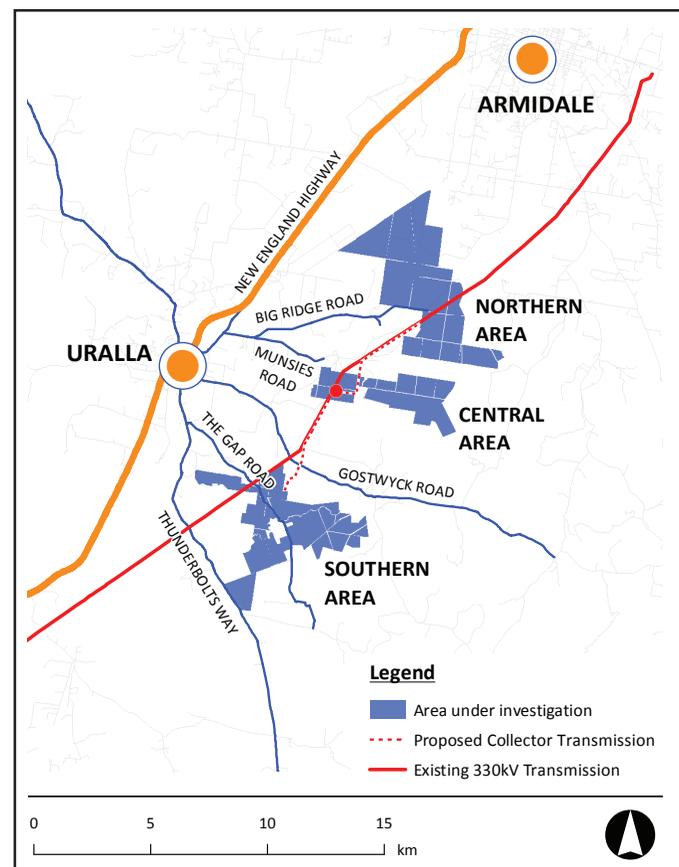
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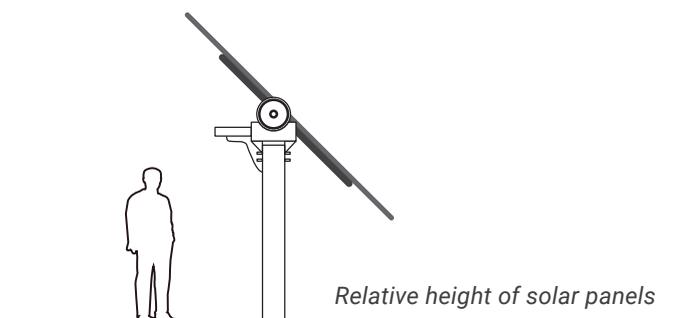
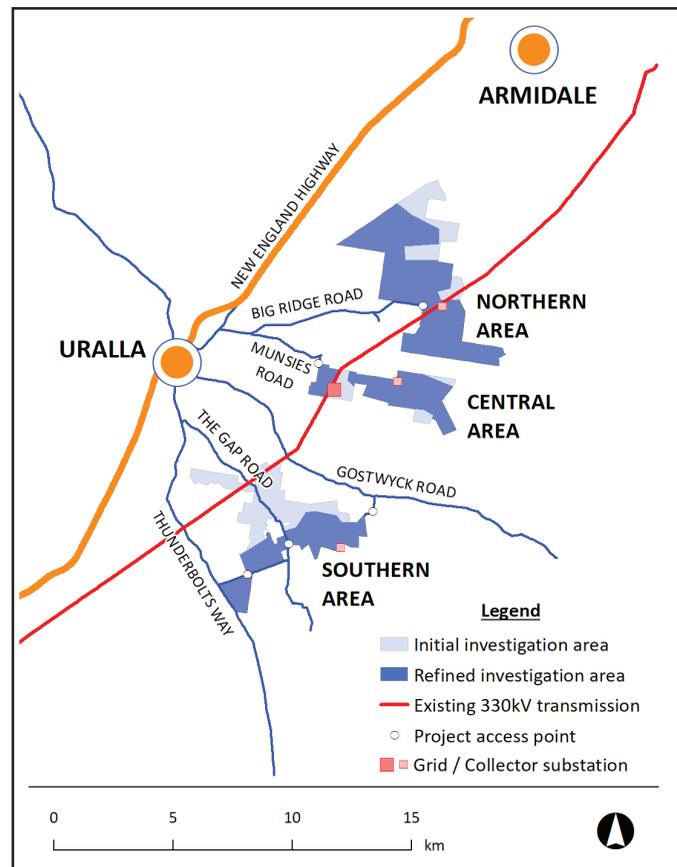
The area under investigation has been refined in response to feedback from the local community and the results of a number of key assessments, including flooding, Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage and biodiversity.

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Benefits of the project

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- employment opportunities with several hundred employees during construction and up to 15 ongoing jobs during operations;
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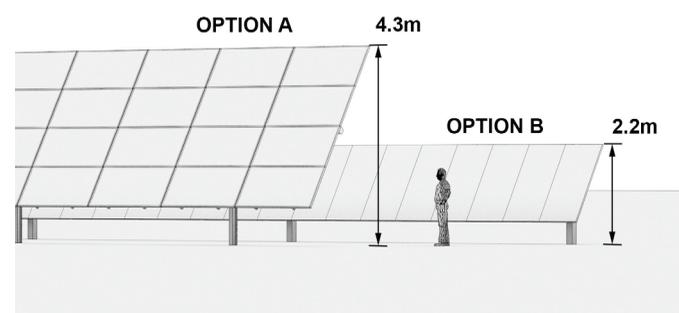
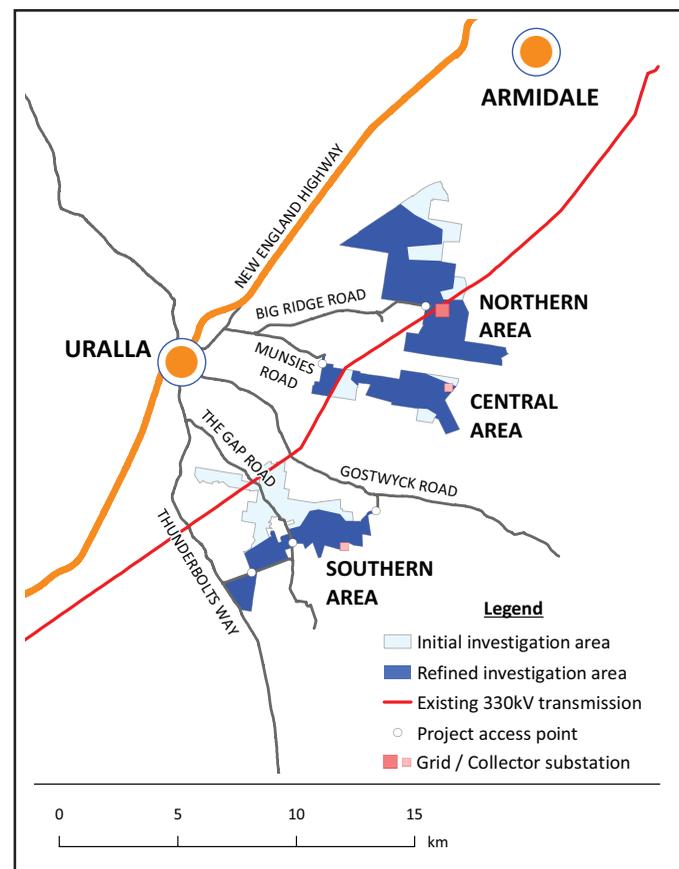
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Benefits of the project

The project will provide a number of benefits including:

- community benefit sharing contributions of \$250 per megawatt per year for 25 years;
- direct and indirect business opportunities for the local and regional economy;
- employment opportunities for up to 700 employees during construction and up to 15 ongoing jobs during operations;
- helping meet the NSW and Commonwealth government renewable energy targets;
- annual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and generation of enough clean renewable electricity to power more than 250,000 NSW homes; and
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Local businesses can also use the email address to register their interest in upcoming contracting opportunities.

What is a community benefit-sharing initiative?

UPC is delighted to be working with the community of Uralla and its surrounds. We want to share the benefits the project may bring with as much of the community as we can. There are a number of ways this can be achieved, from providing grants for community projects and organisations in the local area to improving local roads and public amenities or even helping to build a community solar farm.

We've listed a few options that members of the community have suggested or that are common practice in the solar industry, but we also want to hear from you.

What do you think of these options?

Are there any alternatives that aren't on the list that you think we should consider?

Feedback



If you'd like to share your ideas and feedback, please complete one of our community feedback forms and email it to us at:

info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

Or post it to:

Tim Kirk
UPC Renewables
Level 21, 233 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000

You can also complete the form online through the project website:

www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au/feedback

<i>Potential community benefit</i>	<i>How could this be achieved?</i>
Improve mobile phone coverage	UPC could organise and pay for the construction of mobile phone infrastructure to improve coverage for residents and visitors.
Develop a community solar farm	UPC could assist with the design and development of a community-owned 1-5 MW solar farm, which would be connected to the Uralla distribution network.
Future proofing Council rates	UPC could provide Council with the means to procure rooftop solar or energy storage systems, which would be installed on Council facilities to help lower electricity costs.
Provide community grants	UPC could provide grants to fund a range of community projects focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainability; • disadvantaged members of the community; • sporting facility upgrades; • team sponsorships; or • improvements to parks and public amenities.
Provide education and training opportunities	UPC could support the creation of a qualification, course, curriculum or scholarship by a local educational institution that's focused on developing skills in renewable energy.
Upgrade the local road network	UPC could organise and pay for road upgrades in the vicinity of the project to improve access and conditions for residents and visitors.



What is an EIS?

The project is State Significant Development, and therefore UPC is required to submit a Development Application (DA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to obtain approval.

The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the project were released in May 2018 and inform the content of the EIS.

The EIS will assess the project's potential impacts on the environment, including consideration of the following key matters:

- biodiversity
- Aboriginal cultural heritage
- historic heritage
- visual
- surrounding land uses
- noise
- transport
- surface water and flooding
- socio-economics
- soil erosion

UPC is currently completing all of the studies and environmental assessments that are required as part of the NSW planning process.

UPC is also currently undertaking engineering design of the project, with the design and location of project infrastructure being informed by the environmental assessments and refined in response to ongoing stakeholder engagement that will continue in the coming months.

UPC currently anticipates that the EIS will be submitted to DPE in Q4 2018. The EIS and all supporting studies will be made available to the public once accepted by DPE, and the community will have the opportunity to make submissions on the project during the public exhibition period.

Stakeholder engagement

As part of the preparation of the EIS, UPC will continue to engage with the local community, surrounding landowners, Uralla Shire Council, regulators, industry stakeholders, and Aboriginal stakeholders.

If you'd like to share your ideas and feedback, please complete one of our community feedback forms, email us at info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au or call us on 1300 250 479.

More information about the project is also available at: www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

Preliminary environmental assessment

- Constraints analysis and site investigations commenced in 2017.
- Preliminary environmental assessment submitted April 2018.

SEARs released

- Issued May 2018.
- Specify matters to be addressed in the EIS.

Prepare DA and EIS

- EIS is currently in preparation.

Public exhibition of DA and EIS

- Anticipate EIS submission in Q4 2018.
- Public exhibition for 30 days.
- The community can make a submission online.
- UPC will respond to issues raised in the submissions in Q1 2019.

Assessment of DA and EIS

- NSW Government will assess the DA and EIS and determine whether the project should be approved in Q1/Q2 2019.

Grid connection with TransGrid

- An application has been submitted to TransGrid to allow the project to connect to the electricity network. An Offer to Connect is expected prior to the start of construction in 2019.

Financial close

- Financial institutions will complete a due diligence process to lend against the project. This is expected to conclude prior to the start of construction in 2019.



What is a Community Benefit Sharing Initiative?

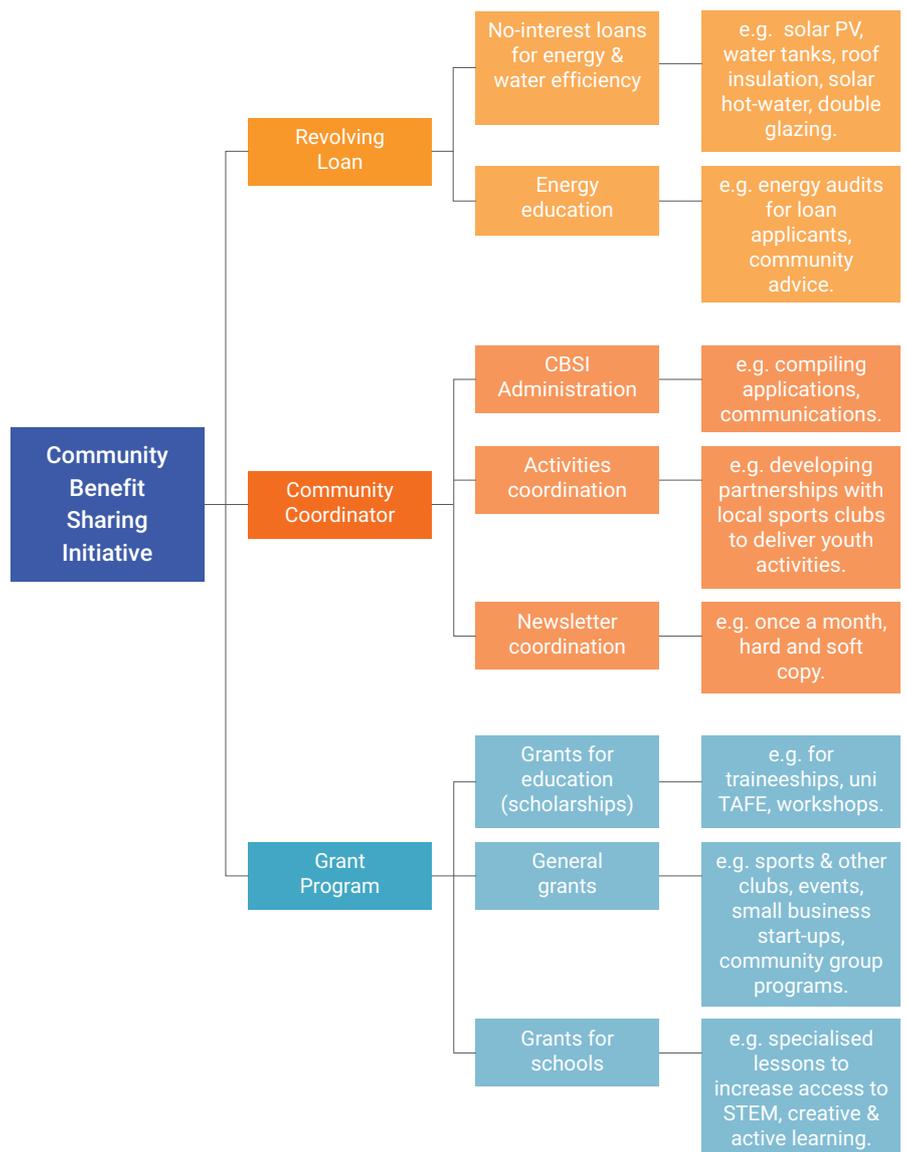
UPC is delighted to be working with the community of Uralla and its surrounds. We want to share the benefits the project may bring with as much of the community as we can. This is why we have committed to provide \$250 per MW(AC) per year to the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative to fund activities the Uralla community values.

To help understand the community's ideas and preferences we asked the Uralla community for volunteers to form a Community Reference Group. This group held several workshops and has issued UPC with a recommendations paper to consider.

We've listed the activities the community and the Community Reference Group recommended, but we also want to hear from you.

What do you think of these activities?

Is there anything else that you think we should consider?



Feedback

If you'd like to share your ideas and feedback, please complete one of our community feedback forms and email it to us at:

info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

Or post it to:

Tim Kirk
 UPC Renewables
 Level 21, 233 Castlereagh Street
 Sydney NSW 2000

You can also complete the form online through the project website:

www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au/feedback



Overview

The New England Solar Farm is likely to be constructed in several stages. The northern, central, and southern arrays may be constructed independently. Construction of each array is expected to take up to nineteen months and will require a workforce of up to 300 during the peak construction period.

Once constructed, the New England Solar Farm will be operational for in the order of 30 years. During this time, a rigorous operations and maintenance regime will be followed to ensure appropriate and safe operation of the plant.

Opportunities and challenges

Employment:

There will be a large workforce required for the construction of the project. Where possible, UPC will maximise the opportunities provided to local businesses and labourers. Once operational, there may be up to 15 ongoing positions to carry out the operations and maintenance regime for the project.

Accommodation:

Accommodating the peak construction workforce may be a challenge. UPC is currently reviewing the options available to house the construction workforce. The project may require the construction of one or more temporary accommodation villages. This would ensure local short-term accommodation remains available for tourists and visitors.

Vegetation management:

The vegetation underneath the PV modules will need to be maintained. UPC is currently exploring the option of sheep grazing to assist with vegetation management throughout the project's operations.

Local businesses:

The project will benefit local businesses through direct expenditure. UPC is currently completing social and economic impact assessments, which will focus on the potential impacts of the construction and operation of the project on the local and regional community and economy.

Construction noise:

During construction, noise may be generated by a range of different activities, such as the installation of piles to provide support for the mounting framework required for the PV modules. A noise and vibration impact assessment has been undertaken to understand potential construction noise impacts from the project.

Road network:

Construction materials and infrastructure will be transported to the site via the local and regional road network. There may also be oversized vehicle movements for the delivery of high-voltage transformers. A traffic impact assessment has been prepared to help understand impacts of the project on the local and regional road network. A construction traffic management plan will be implemented during construction to ensure project-related traffic is managed appropriately and safely.

Construction process

Step 1

Construction permits and management plans in place



Step 2

Mobilise to site

Step 3

Embed piles



Step 4

Install tracker beams

Step 5

Secure modules to tracker beams



Step 6

Install inverter blocks

Step 7

Complete substation augmentation



Step 8

Test and commission the plant

NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM

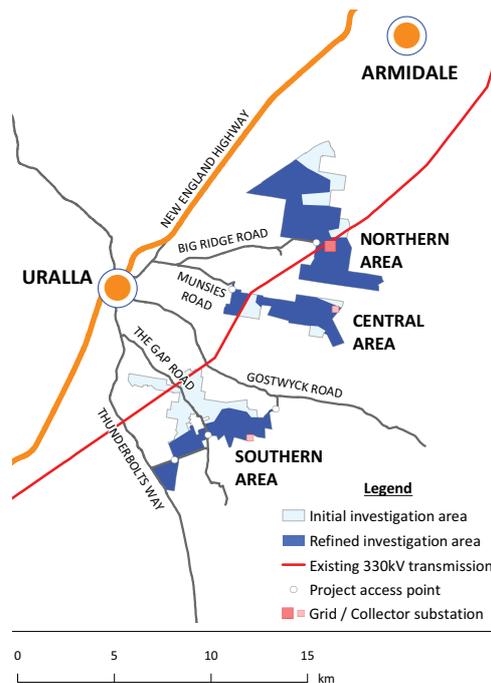
The New England Solar Farm is a major grid-connected solar farm project being developed in the Uralla Shire.

Project overview

- Ground mounted PV modules to be installed across three separate solar fields
- Targeted power generation capacity of 600-800 megawatts
- Grid connection via TransGrid's 330 kV transmission line
- State Significant Development to be assessed by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Benefits of the project

- Direct and indirect economic opportunities for Uralla and the surrounding region
- Up to 700 jobs in construction and up to 15 ongoing jobs
- Clean, renewable power for more than 250,000 homes
- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of up to 1.5 million tonnes per year
- Community benefit sharing contributions of \$250 per megawatt per year for 25 years



Community consultation

For more information or to share your ideas and feedback:

Website: www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

Email: info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

Phone: 1300 250 479





NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM COMMUNITY INFORMATION

We invite you to join us at The Alternate Root to find out more about the New England Solar Farm, a major grid-connected solar farm project being developed in the Uralla Shire.

This session is an opportunity for you and other members of the community to find out more about the project and share your knowledge and views with the project team.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK SESSION

Thursday 10 May from 11:30 am – 2:30 pm

Venue: The Alternate Root, 48 Bridge St, Uralla

You can meet with members of the project team to ask questions, discuss the project and share ideas and feedback.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about the New England Solar Farm is available at:

www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

If you can't make the session and would like to share your ideas and feedback:

info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

1300 250 479



NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM COMMUNITY INFORMATION

We invite you to join us at Uralla Memorial Hall to find out more about the New England Solar Farm.

This session is an opportunity for you and other members of the community to find out more about the project and share your knowledge and views with the project team. Catering will be provided and there will be a meat raffle with proceeds from ticket sales donated to Z-NET's program helping low income homes to prepare for winter.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK SESSION

Tuesday 12 June from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Venue: Uralla Memorial Hall, 27 Salisbury Street, Uralla

You can meet with members of the project team to ask questions, discuss the project and share ideas and feedback.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about the New England Solar Farm is available at:

www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

If you can't make the session and would like to share your ideas and feedback:

info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

1300 250 479



NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM COMMUNITY INFORMATION

*We invite you to join us at The Alternate Root
to find out more about the New England Solar Farm.*

This session is an opportunity for you and other members of the community to find out more about the project's progress and share your knowledge and views with the project team.

We'd also like to hear **your ideas** on how we can **share the benefits** of the project with the local community. We are currently taking nominations for a *Community Reference Group* to help gather ideas and develop recommendations on the best ways we can contribute lasting value to the local area.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK SESSION

Wednesday 15 August from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Venue: The Alternate Root, 48 Bridge Street, Uralla

Catering will be provided.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about the New England Solar Farm is available at:

www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

If you can't make the session and would like to share your ideas and feedback or nominate for the *Community Reference Group*:

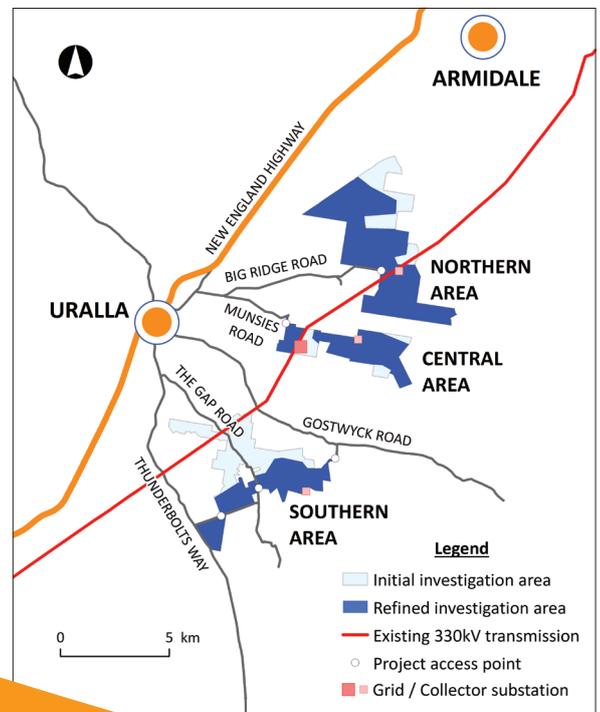
info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

1300 250 479



NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM (East of Uralla)

*How would you like this solar farm
contributing to your community?*



Get involved!

Come along to a **public workshop** on Saturday 15 September, 1-4pm at the Uralla Community Centre to contribute *your ideas* for the best ways to *share the benefits*.

UPC has committed to contributing \$250 per year for every megawatt of solar power installed. For the planned 600 to 800MW (AC) solar farm, this means somewhere between \$150,000 to \$200,000 per year - **for 25 years!**

UPC want the solar farm to bring lasting value to the local area, and are looking for guidance from the community about how these funds can create a meaningful local impact.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Saturday 15 September from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Venue: Uralla Community Centre
9 Hill St, Uralla

MORE INFORMATION

You can also contribute your ideas and feedback online:

www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

For details go to www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au,

email info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

or call 1300 250 479



NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM COMMUNITY INFORMATION

*We invite you to join us at Uralla Bowling Club
to find out more about the
New England Solar Farm (east of Uralla).*

This session is an opportunity for you and other members of the community to find out more about the project's progress and share your knowledge and views with the project team.

We will also be presenting the Community Reference Group's recommendations for how we can share the benefits of the project with the local community.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK SESSION

Thursday 18 October from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Venue: Uralla Bowling Club, Corner Queen and Hill Streets, Uralla

Catering will be provided.

MORE INFORMATION

More information about the New England Solar Farm is available at:

www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

If you can't make the session and would like to share your ideas and feedback:

info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

1300 250 479



New England Solar Farm - Community Feedback Form

New England Solar Farm
Community Feedback Form

In developing New England Solar Farm, UPC is seeking feedback from the local community to help shape the project. Your feedback is important to us. Your input will ensure that UPC understands all local concerns. Where relevant impacts are identified, UPC will investigate and develop appropriate mitigation measures.

The results of the feedback will be compiled and used in the assessment of the project. All contact details will be kept anonymous.

Once you have completed the feedback form, please hand it over to one of the project team members.

Project related updates are available at: www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

If you would like to share your ideas and feedback after today's session: info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au

1300 250 479



New England Solar Farm - Community Feedback Form

Your name:

Contact details

Telephone number:

Email address:

Address:

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- Less than 2 kilometres from the proposed site investigation area*
- 2-4 kilometres from the site investigation area*
- More than 4 kilometres from the site investigation area
- Not a member of the local community

* If you live less than 4 kilometres from the site investigation area please put a cross on the map to approximately indicate where your property is located. The map is on the next page.



New England Solar Farm - Community Feedback Form

Tell us below what you think about the local area and the proposed solar farm.

What do you value most about the local area? Circle one or more.

- a) Views
- b) Community / ancestry
- c) Historic / cultural values
- d) Work opportunities
- e) Recreation opportunities, including sporting, nature based etc.
- f) Environment
- g) Other

Discuss:

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What do you consider to be the benefits associated with solar farms?

- a) Clean energy generation
- b) Local economic opportunities – jobs, tourism, economic stimulus
- c) Drought proofing farming activities
- d) Cheaper electricity
- e) Other

Discuss:

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New England Solar Farm - Community Feedback Form

What concerns do you have about solar farms? Circle one or more.

- a) Visual impact
- b) Noise, during construction or operation
- c) Traffic, during construction or operation
- d) Effects on land use or land values
- e) Effects on the natural environment
- f) Other

Discuss:

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Please rank the following community benefit sharing initiatives from 1 to 7 (1 being the most preferred to 7 being the least preferred).

- Improving mobile phone coverage in the area (i.e. mobile phone towers)
- Community owned solar farm (on either council owned or private land)
- Future proofing council rates (solar PV on public buildings)
- Community grants (e.g. sporting facility upgrades, sporting team sponsorship, improvement of parks)
- Education (eg. Renewable energy related apprenticeships)
- Upgrading the project's main access roads
- Other

Discuss:

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New England Solar Farm - Community Feedback Form

What additional information would you like us to know in assessing the impacts of the solar farm proposed at New England?

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Copies of government and regulatory agencies consultation



Our Ref: DOC18/93396
Your Ref: letter dated 15/02/2018

Mr David Richards
EMM Consulting
PO Box 506
Newcastle NSW 2300

Dear Mr Richards

Re: New England Solar Farm EIS preparation – request for information

Thank you for your letter dated 15 February 2018 and subsequent tele-conference to discuss your progress in preparing the New England Solar Farm Environmental Impact Assessment (EIS). At the tele-conference the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) agreed to provide EMM Consulting with any available OEH mapping of important regent honeyeater habitat and a list of botanists that may have useful knowledge of threatened flora species in the project locality.

After liaising with relevant OEH threatened species officers we confirm that there is still no publicly available habitat mapping for the regent honeyeater. However, preliminary habitat modelling and existing records indicate the subject land is unlikely to represent important breeding habitat for the regent honeyeater. Consequently, assessment of the regent honeyeater as an "Ecosystem Credit Species" rather than a "Species Credit Species" would be appropriate when undertaking any further assessment of the project in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method.

Botanists likely to have relevant local knowledge of threatened flora species in the study area include:

- Professor Jeremy Bruhl – UNE – 6773 2429;
- Mr Lachlan Copeland – Eco Logical Australia – 6651 5484; and
- Ms Wendy Hawes – The Envirofactor – 0408 224 997.

I trust this information will assist you in completing the remaining ecological assessment components for the project EIS. If you have any further questions, Mr Don Owner, Senior Conservation Planning Officer, Regional Operations, OEH, can be contacted on 6659 8233 or at don.owner@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Dimitri Young 27 February 2018

DIMITRI YOUNG
Senior Team Leader Planning, North East
Regional Operations

Contact officer: DON OWNER
6659 8233

Memorandum



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E info@emmconsulting.com.au

www.emmconsulting.com.au

4 April 2018

To Don Owner, Senior Conservation Planning Officer
From Eugene Dodd
Subject Targeted surveys for Bluegrass (*Dichanthium setosum*)

Dear Don,

EMM Consulting (EMM) is currently working on the confidential UPC's New England Solar Farm project biodiversity assessment which will be undertaken in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM). One of the species credit species highlighted by the BAM is Bluegrass (*Dichanthium setosum*). The closest recent (2008) record of the species is approximately 4.3 km to the north-east of the northernmost tip of the project area. A second record occurs 3.3 km to the north-west; however, this record is from 1949.

The assessment area is approximately 4,200 ha, of which 1,671 ha has been mapped as native pasture/derived native grassland (DNG), 2,438 ha of exotic grassland and cropping, and 107 ha of woodland.

The areas mapped as native pasture are highly modified with most of the areas ripped, sown and improved with fertiliser. The species diversity in these areas is much reduced, with few forb species and typically a two or three dominant native grass species, such as Slender Rat's Tail Grass (*Sporobolus creber*), Redgrass (*Bothriochloa decipiens*) and Paddock Lovegrass (*Eragrostis leptostachya*). Exotic species such as Phalaris species, Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and Squirreltail Fescue (*Vulpia bromoides*) are prevalent and in many areas dominant.

Exotic grasslands mapped within the project area have very few native species present owing to seeding of exotic pasture species, ploughing and improvement with fertilisers. Woodland vegetation types are heavily modified and typically limited to small stands of remnant trees, over pasture.

EMM have consulted with Associate Professor Ralph (Wal) Whalley who is a recognised expert on the species and has provided advice to help target survey approach. Wal stated that *Dichanthium setosum* usually occurs on the Northern Tablelands on basalt soils or sometimes on heavy textured soils derived from other parent materials, but not usually on granite country. The species is rarely found on land that has been cultivated to sow improved pastures; however, it may occur in patches where the cultivation has not been possible – ie along the crest of gullies. Wal also stated that the species is susceptible to heavy, continuous grazing and so most stands are confined to travelling stock routes (TSRs). It is noted that this last point somewhat contradicts the advice provided in the OEH species profile.

Based on Wal's advice the native pasture areas of the project area provide sub-optimal habitat for Bluegrass at best. EMM intend to operate on a precautionary principle and conduct targeted survey for the species within native pasture areas of the project area. EMM have interrogated the OEH Soil Landscapes of Central and Eastern NSW (OEH 2017) for the project area with the soil landscapes 9236ir, 9236po, 9236ba and 9236kp most likely to provide suitable soil profiles for the species.

During a previous meeting between EMM and OEH it was stated that a representative sample approach was acceptable for the survey of Bluegrass. In consideration of this information and threatened species survey guidelines, our proposed survey methodology is provided below for your consideration;

- areas mapped as native pasture with underlying basalt or red loam soils will be targeted, especially those derived from Basalt, a total of 634 ha have been mapped within the project area;
- survey effort will be conducted within a representative 10 % of the total area of native pasture with suitable soil types;
- the survey area of 63.4 ha will be stratified across the project area to ensure spatial spread and to capture variation within the pasture between different landowners and differing management practices;
- linear transects will be walked with a 10 m spacing, which will equate to 63.4 kilometres of surveys effort;
- the survey will be conducted in April/May, within the required BAM survey timeframe (December to the end of May); and
- two areas of more optimal habitat for Bluegrass were observed within road corridors. These areas will be surveyed in their entirety (rather than being included within the representative sample approach).

It is considered very unlikely that Bluegrass could persist in the areas of exotic grassland, owing to the intensive agricultural practices used and dominance of exotic species. These areas are considered substantially degraded and no longer provide habitat for the species. Woodland vegetation is also considered for unlikely to provide habitat for Bluegrass as groundcover is typically in much lower condition than the surrounding grassland areas. Livestock have favoured the treed areas for shelter resulting in groundcover which is highly enriched, predominately exotic and grazed close to ground level.

Both the Woodland and Exotic Grassland areas are considered substantially degraded, such that in accordance with the BAM, no further survey effort is required.

Please do not hesitate to contact with me any questions regarding this approach. If possible please could you respond by Thursday 5 April as we plan to conduct field surveys between 9 and 13 April.

Regards,

Eugene Dodd

Senior Ecologist



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

Our Ref: DOC18/198472
Your Ref: email dated 04/04/2018

EMM Consulting
PO Box 506
Newcastle NSW 2300

Attention: Mr Eugene Dodd

Dear Mr Dodd

Re: subject

Thank you for your email dated 4 April 2018 about the proposed targeted flora survey methodology for the Biodiversity Assessment Report (BAR) component of the New England Solar Farm Environmental Impact Assessment seeking comments from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). I appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

We have reviewed the proposed survey methodology and note that it appears to be consistent with the *NSW Guide to Surveying Threatened Plants (OEH 2016)*. Therefore, the OEH supports the proposed methodology, and considers the proposed level of survey effort to be appropriate for preparation of the BAR for the project EIS.

Nevertheless, given that the survey will be undertaken late in the time frame recommended in the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) for detecting *Dicanthium setosum*, we recommend that the sampling regime include a known reference site for the species to confirm that flowering is occurring at the time of the survey.

If you have any further questions about this matter, Mr Don Owner, Senior Conservation Planning Officer, Regional Operations, OEH, can be contacted on 66598233 or at don.owner@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

DIMITRI YOUNG
Senior Team Leader Planning, North East Branch
Regional Operations



Our Ref: DOC18/386696

Your Ref: J17300

Mr Eugene Dodd
EMM Consulting
PO Box 506
Newcastle NSW 2300

Dear Mr Dodd

Re: New England Solar Farm - avoidance of vegetation clearing impacts

Thank you for your email dated 7 June 2018 about the ongoing biodiversity assessments for the New England Solar Farm Environmental Impact Statement seeking comments from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). I appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

In your email you expressed concern that it was unlikely that the New England Solar Farm project would be able to completely avoid biodiversity impacts due to several design constraints. You also enquired as to whether the OEH had any way of determining a quantum of acceptable impact for large-scale projects such as the New England Solar Farm.

The OEH does not quantify the "acceptability" of biodiversity impacts in terms of a proportion of the overall "development footprint", as suggested in your email. Alternatively, we rely on the outcomes generated through the correct application of the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM), which aims to ensure that the impacts of development result in no net loss of biodiversity.

Therefore, the OEH would consider the nature and extent of biodiversity impacts associated with the New England Solar Farm project to be acceptable when the applicant can demonstrate the project can be undertaken with no net loss of biodiversity by avoiding, minimising, mitigating and/or offsetting all biodiversity impacts in accordance with the BAM.

In addition to assessing potential impacts of the project on threatened entities protected under the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act), the applicant should also consider potential impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) protected under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and determine whether the project should be referred to the Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy for further consideration.

If you have any further questions about this issue, Mr Don Owner, Senior Conservation Planning Officer, Regional Operations, OEH, can be contacted on 6659 8233 or at don.owner@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

 15 June 2018

DIMITRI YOUNG
Senior Team Leader Planning, North East Branch
Regional Operations

Contact officer: DON OWNER
6659 8233

Memorandum



Suite 6, Level 1, 146 Hunter Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
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Newcastle, NSW, 2300

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E info@emmconsulting.com.au

www.emmconsulting.com.au

11 September 2018

To Don Owner, Senior Conservation Planning Officer
From Eugene Dodd
Subject Targeted surveys for Hawkweed (*Picris evae*)

Dear Don,

EMM Consulting Pty Ltd (EMM) is currently working on the biodiversity assessment for the New England Solar Farm; a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla. The assessment is being undertaken in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM). One of the species credit species highlighted by the BAM is Hawkweed (*Picris evae*). This memo details the proposed method for targeting Hawkweed as part of upcoming field surveys in September 2018. The method will be based on the approach previously undertaken for Bluegrass (*Dichanthium setosum*), which was reviewed and accepted by OEH in April 2018. Both Hawkweed and Bluegrass have similar habitat requirements, occupying similar soil types and some tolerance to disturbance.

The assessment area is approximately 2,780 hectares (ha), of which 1,303 ha has been mapped as native pasture/derived native grassland (DNG), 1,418 ha of exotic grassland and cropping, and 44 ha of woodland.

The areas mapped as native pasture are highly modified with most of the areas ripped, sown and improved with fertiliser. The species diversity in these areas is much reduced, with few forb species and typically two or three dominant native grass species, such as Slender Rat's Tail Grass (*Sporobolus creber*), Redgrass (*Bothriochloa decipiens*) and Paddock Lovegrass (*Eragrostis leptostachya*). Exotic species such as Phalaris species, Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*) and Squirreltail Fescue (*Vulpia bromoides*) are prevalent and in many areas dominant.

Exotic grasslands mapped within the assessment area have very few native species present owing to seeding of exotic pasture species, ploughing and improvement with fertilisers. Woodland vegetation types are heavily modified and typically limited to small stands of remnant trees, over pasture.

Hawkweed typically occurs north of the Inverell area (approximately 100 km from the assessment area), in the north-western slopes and plains regions. The closest records to the assessment area are outliers to the main species distribution, approximately 10 km to the east of the assessment area (dated 1990) and 65 km south-east (dated 1993). Hawkweed usually occurs on dark grey/black soils; however, this species are also known to occur on soils which red-brown and reddish clay-loam or medium clay soils. Whilst its main habitat is open Eucalypt forest, recent collections have been from modified habitats such as weedy roadside vegetation and paddocks. This species is likely to be susceptible to grazing.

The native pasture areas of the assessment area are considered sub-optimal habitat for the species given the high grazing pressure and improvements undertaken; however, the species cannot be ruled out given that the most recent collections have been made in fairly disturbed areas. Therefore, EMM intend to operate on a precautionary principle and conduct targeted survey for the species within native pasture areas of the

assessment area. EMM have interrogated the OEH Soil Landscapes of Central and Eastern NSW (OEH 2017) for the assessment area with the soil landscapes 9236ir, 9236po, 9236ba and 9236kp most likely to provide suitable soil profiles for the species.

During a previous meeting between EMM and OEH it was stated that a representative sample approach was acceptable for the survey of Bluegrass and we assume the same is the case for Hawkweed. In consideration of this information and threatened species survey guidelines, our proposed survey methodology is provided below for your consideration;

- areas mapped as native pasture with underlying basalt or red-brown loam soils will be targeted, especially those derived from Basalt, a total of 569 ha have been mapped within the assessment area;
- survey effort will be conducted within a representative 10% of the total area of native pasture with suitable soil types;
- the survey area of 57 ha will be stratified across the assessment area to ensure spatial spread and to capture variation within the pasture between different landholders and their differing management practices;
- linear transects will be walked with a 10 m spacing, which will equate to 57 km of survey effort;
- the survey will be conducted in September, within the required BAM survey timeframe (September to February); and
- if possible, a reference site will be sought to ensure the species is flowering at the time of the survey.

It is considered very unlikely that Hawkweed could persist in the areas of exotic grassland, owing to the intensive agricultural practices used and dominance of exotic species. These areas are considered substantially degraded and are unlikely to provide habitat for the species. Woodland vegetation is also considered unlikely to provide habitat for Hawkweed as groundcover is typically in much lower condition than the surrounding grassland areas. Livestock have favoured the treed areas for shelter resulting in groundcover which is highly enriched, predominately exotic and grazed close to ground level.

Both the woodland and exotic grassland areas are considered substantially degraded, such that in accordance with the BAM, no further survey effort is required.

Please do not hesitate to contact with me any questions regarding the proposed approach.

Regards,

Eugene Dodd

Senior Ecologist

edodd@emmconsulting.com.au

0427 566 396



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

Our Ref: DOC18/682715
Your Ref: J17300

EMM Consulting
PO Box 506
Newcastle NSW 2300

Attention: Mr Eugene Dodd

Dear Mr Dodd

Re: subject

Thank you for your email dated 11 September 2018 about the proposed targeted flora survey methodology for the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) component of the New England Solar Farm Environmental Impact Assessment seeking comments from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). I appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

We have reviewed the proposed survey methodology for hawkweed (*Picris evae*) and note that it appears to be consistent with the *NSW Guide to Surveying Threatened Plants (OEH 2016)*. Therefore, the OEH supports the proposed methodology, and considers the proposed level of survey effort to be appropriate for preparation of the BDAR for the project EIS.

Nevertheless, given that the survey will be undertaken early in the time frame recommended in the Biodiversity Assessment Method for detecting *Picris evae* and most likely during a period of drought, we recommend that the sampling regime include a known reference site for the species to confirm that flowering is occurring at the time of the survey.

If you have any further questions about this matter, Mr Don Owner, Senior Conservation Planning Officer, Conservation and Regional Delivery, OEH, can be contacted on 6659 8233 or at Don.Owner@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

 20 September 2018

DIMITRI YOUNG
Senior Team Leader Planning, North East Branch
Conservation and Regional Delivery

David Richards

From: Warren Martin [warren.martin@crowland.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 1 June 2018 3:02 PM
To: David Richards
Subject: Reserve 95655
Attachments: Reserve 95655.pdf

Hello David

Apologies for the delay in sending this email. Regarding the Crown reserve that you enquired about in relation to the proposed solar farm at Uralla, I have had a look at what is on our system for this reserve.

The reserve details are (map attached): Lot 7006 DP 94070 Reserve number 95655, 5.18 ha gazetted 6th November 1981 for the purpose 'Future Public Requirements'. The reserve is split between two grazing licences/permissive occupancies (to the adjoining landholders either side) (permissive occupancy is an older version of what is now a licence).

There is no Aboriginal Land Claim over this reserve and no current Native Title Claim in this area, although Native Title may not be extinguished.

Other than that, there is little information on the reserve, although it appears to be cleared and largely grazing pasture. Maintaining the creek line for flows, etc would really be the main environmental concern for this area.

Other than that there is little information on this reserve.

Hope that is of assistance.

Regards

Warren

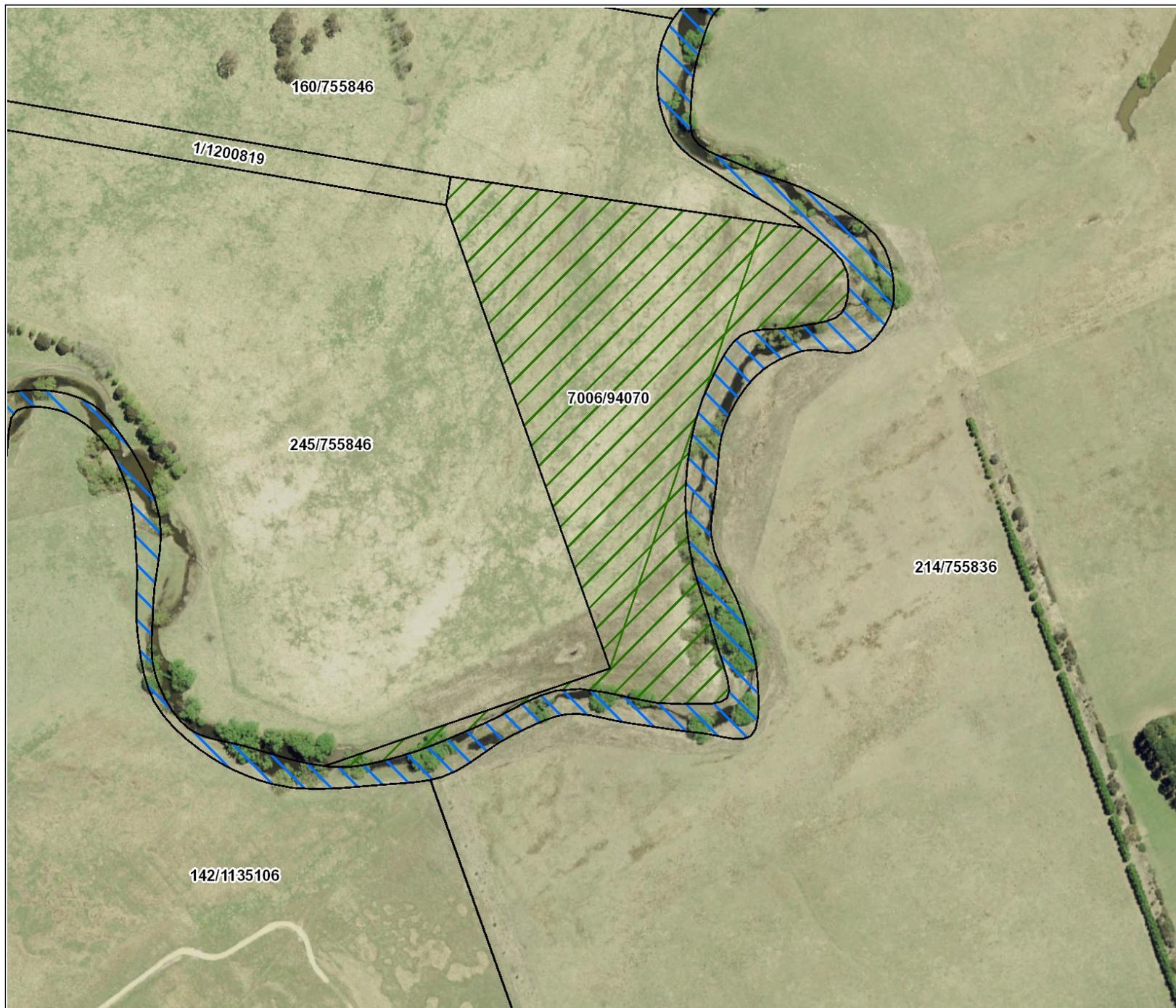
Warren Martin | Natural Resource Management Project Officer
NSW Department of Industry | Crown Lands and Water Division
Block K TAFE New England Campus
116 Allingham Street (between Beardy and Rusden Streets)
PO Box 1138 | Armidale NSW 2350
T: 02 6770 3118 F: 02 6770 3199

E: warren.martin@crowland.nsw.gov.au

W: www.crowland.nsw.gov.au

Please Note: Our office opening hours are by appointment only

This message is intended for the addressee named and may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient, please delete it and notify the sender. Views expressed in this message are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of their organisation.



- Legend**
- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Aboriginal Land Claim Boundary | Non Crown Land |
| Licence (Structure Point) | Crown Land - Undefined Status |
| Licence (Structure Line) | Crown Road |
| Licence (Structure Polygon) | Shared Crown / Council Road |
| Licence (Land Area) | Crown Road - Undefined Status |
| Crown Lease | Crown Waterway |
| Enclosure Permit | All Crown (Land, Road & Water) |
| Crown Reserve | Local Government Area |
| Crown Land (Other) | Suburb |
| Crown Land | National Parks Reserve |
| Crown Land - Status Unknown | State Forest |

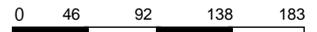
Crown Account Details

Parish: URALLA
 Country: SANDON
 LGA: URALLA
 Suburb: URALLA

Author: DPI\martinw
 Map Created: 1/06/2018 2:41:31 PM



Department of Industry
Lands

Scale 1: 4514

Projection: WGS_1984_Web_Mercator_Auxiliary_Sphere

Disclaimer: Scale is not accurate. DI Lands must not be liable for any loss or damage (including loss of profits, business, revenue or data) whether in contract, tort (including negligence) or otherwise arising from or in connection with any defect, error or inaccuracy of information or any part thereof or any products or services.

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David Richards

From: Tim Baker [tim.baker@dpi.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 17 September 2018 7:15 AM
To: David Richards
Subject: Re: FW: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Information for Thursday's teleconference
Attachments: NewEnglandSolar_watercourses.pdf

Hi David,

Further to your request for advice on key watercourses for consideration in developing the New England Solar Farm project please see the attached map where I've highlighted the likely key watercourses that Lands and Water will be interested in for review based on the Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land. Please note this is based on a review of satellite imagery, hence further advice may be provided once more site specific detail can be reviewed. If there are issues with viewing or interpreting the attached document please let me know.

Regards
Tim

Tim Baker | Senior Water Regulation Officer
Lands and Water
Department of Industry
209 Cobra St | Dubbo NSW 2830 | PO Box 717, Dubbo NSW 2830
T: 02 6841 7403 | F: 02 6884 0096 | M: 0428 162 097 | E: Tim.Baker@dpi.nsw.gov.au
W: www.water.nsw.gov.au | www.industry.nsw.gov.au

On 2 August 2018 at 09:13, David Richards <drichards@emmconsulting.com.au> wrote:

Thanks, Tim – look forward to discussing further this afternoon.

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

T 02 4907 4803 M 0405 593 675 F 02 4907 4899

Suite 6, Level 1, [146 Hunter Street, Newcastle NSW 2300](#)

PO Box 506, Newcastle NSW 2300

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From: Tim Baker [mailto:tim.baker@dpi.nsw.gov.au]

Sent: Thursday, 2 August 2018 9:04 AM

To: David Richards

Subject: Re: FW: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Information for Thursday's teleconference

Hi David,

Yes I've received it, havent looked at it yet but aim to before the meeting.

Thanks

Tim

Tim Baker | Senior Water Regulation Officer

Lands and Water

Department of Industry

[209 Cobra St | Dubbo NSW 2830](#) | PO Box 717, Dubbo NSW 2830

T: 02 6841 7403 | F: 02 6884 0096 | M: 0428 162 097 | E: Tim.Baker@dpi.nsw.gov.au

W: www.water.nsw.gov.au | www.industry.nsw.gov.au

On 2 August 2018 at 08:44, David Richards <drichards@emmconsulting.com.au> wrote:

Hi Tim,

Just confirming receipt of the email below and the attached information for this afternoon's teleconference (due to kick-off at 2 pm).

Dial in details will be as follows:

Dial in: 07 3025 7522

Passcode: 763 378 458 653

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

T 02 4907 4803 **M** 0405 593 675 **F** 02 4907 4899

Suite 6, Level 1, [146 Hunter Street, Newcastle NSW 2300](#)

PO Box 506, Newcastle NSW 2300

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From: David Richards
Sent: Tuesday, 31 July 2018 3:15 PM
To: 'tim.baker@dpi.nsw.gov.au'
Cc: 'Tim Kirk'; 'Killian Wentrup'; Claire Burnes
Subject: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Information for Thursday's teleconference

Hi Tim,

In preparation for our teleconference on Thursday afternoon, please refer to the attached PDF, which indicates the proposed project extent and potential interactions with first and second order watercourses and respective riparian corridors.

In addition, please refer below for some additional information about the project and the construction activities that may occur within the proposed project extent.

Design principles for large-scale solar farms

The key design principles that will be used to inform the placement of infrastructure within the proposed project extent include:

- working with the landscape to avoid the need for earthworks, where possible;
- flat or slightly undulating landscapes are preferred but not necessary;
- perimeter roads are generally required along the outer limits of the arrays for emergency access;
- in general, there will be one main entrance per isolated area with a second emergency access point;
- priority will be to avoid dense areas of vegetation and any areas depths of >300 mm are anticipated from modelled flood extents; and
- placement of infrastructure including inverter blocks and substations in flood prone areas will also be avoided.

Infrastructure within proximity of watercourses

Infrastructure and disturbance activities within proximity of the identified watercourses may include:

- installation/construction of road crossings including culverts;
- installation of piles for the PV modules;
- excavation for underground DC/AC cabling; and
- installation of site security fencing.

The attached spreadsheet provides a typical construction profile for a 200MW solar project. This has been provided for indicative purposes only and will hopefully give you an understanding of the key activities which may occur on-site and associated timelines.

I've also attached some images to demonstrate the potential level of ground disturbance associated with the development.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you'd like to discuss this further.

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

T 02 4907 4803 M 0405 593 675 F 02 4907 4899

Suite 6, Level 1, [146 Hunter Street, Newcastle NSW 2300](#)

PO Box 506, Newcastle NSW 2300

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Legend

-  Project Extent
-  Riparian Corridor
-  Impacted Riparian Corridor

Notes

1. Project extent shown is preliminary and subject to changes.
2. Riparian corridors shown are based on the maximum width from the DPI's *Guidelines for riparian corridors on waterfront land*.

Locality



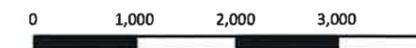
Project

New England Solar Farm

Title

Impacted Riparian Corridors

Drawing no. NESF-201	Date 31/7/18
-------------------------	-----------------



1:70,000 GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56





File Ref: 18/03259
Account No: 601299

Jennifer Lee
Phone: 02 6763 3016
jennifer.lee@crowmland.nsw.gov.au

UPC Renewables Pty Ltd
Level 21 233 Castlereagh St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

8 January 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

**Landowner's Consent for Lodgement of Applications
relating to development comprising: Development, construction and operation of solar PV
electricity generation facility which traverses numerous
Crown unformed roads
on Crown land: Lot 1 DP 227322 Parish Gostwyck County Sandon**

Consent is granted by the Minister for Lands to the lodging a development application under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, and other associated applications required under other legislation, for the development proposal described above.

This consent is subject to the following:

- (1) This consent is given without prejudice so that consideration of the proposed development may proceed under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and any other relevant legislation.
- (2) This consent does not imply the concurrence of the Minister for Lands and Forestry for the proposed development, or the issue of any necessary lease, licence or other required approval under the *Crown Lands Act 1989*; and does not prevent the Department of Industry - Lands & Water (Department of Industry - Lands & Water) from making any submission commenting on.
- (3) This consent will expire after a period of 12 months from the date of this letter if not acted on within that time. Extensions of this consent can be sought.
- (4) The Minister reserves the right to issue landowner's consent for the lodgement of applications for any other development proposals on the subject land concurrent with this landowner's consent.
- (5) Irrespective of any development consent or any approval given by other public authorities, any work or occupation of Crown land cannot commence without a current tenure from the Department of Industry - Lands & Water authorising such work or occupation.
- (6) UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd is to obtain authorisation for powerlines by applying for an easement and/or licence with the Department prior to works on Crown land commencing
- (7) Crown road affected by infrastructure or other development activity may also require closure and / or licencing to will require early engagement with the Department should the proposal proceed

This letter should be submitted to the relevant consent or approval authority in conjunction with the development application and/or any other application.

It is advised that the Department of Industry - Lands & Water will inform Department of Planning and Environment of the issue of this landowner's consent and will request that Department of Planning and Environment notify the Department of Industry - Lands & Water of the subsequent development application, for potential comment, as part of any public notification procedure.

You are required to forward to Department of Industry - Lands & Water a copy of any development consent or other approval as soon as practical after that consent or approval is received.

If any modifications are made to the application (whether in the course of assessment, by conditions of consent, or otherwise), it is your responsibility to ensure the modified development remains consistent with this landowner's consent.

This landowner's consent relates to the following plans and other documents as stamped and retained by the Department of Industry - Lands & Water:

- *Memorandum – J17300 – UPC New England Solar Farm – Project Overview*
- *PEA – J17300RP1 - New England Solar*

For further information, please contact Jennifer Lee via the details given in the letter head.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Lee', written in a cursive style.

Jennifer Lee
Department of Industry - Lands & Water

Memorandum



Ground Floor, Suite 01, 20 Chandos Street
St Leonards, NSW, 2065
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St Leonards, NSW, 1590

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5 October 2018

To Warren Martin
Natural Resource Management Project Officer
NSW Department of Industry – Crown Lands and Water Division

From David Richards

Subject J17300 - UPC New England Solar Farm - Project overview

Dear Warren,

I am writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) along with associated infrastructure, that is proposed approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla, which lies approximately 19 km south of Armidale in the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA) (refer to Figure 1) (the project).

As noted in discussions with my colleague, Claire Burnes, on 28 September 2018, there are a number of Crown roads within the project boundary. This was also noted in the NSW Department of Industry's (DoI's) submission to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to inform the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the project (document reference OUT 18/6476 / dated 3 May 2018).

The purpose of this document is to provide further information about how the project may impact these roads, as well as any Crown watercourses that traverse the landscape within the project boundary (namely Salisbury Waters).

This document provides a description of the project (Section 1), defines the approval pathway (Section 2), outlines potential ground disturbance activities (Section 3) and provides a high-level overview of the land impact assessment that will be included in full within the environmental impact statement (EIS) for the project (Section 4).

1 Project description

1.1 Introduction

The project will be developed within the Uralla Shire LGA. At its closest point, the project boundary is approximately 6 km east of the township of Uralla, and the northern array area starts approximately 8.6 km south of Armidale (refer to Figure 1).

The development footprint is the area within the project boundary on which infrastructure will be located (Figure 2). The development footprint encompasses a total area of 2,787 hectares (ha), which includes 1,418 ha within the northern array area, 625 ha within the central array area and 653 ha within the southern array area. Within the development footprint, approximately 1,000 ha will be required for the rows of PV modules. The remaining area is associated with power conversion units (PCUs), space between the rows, internal access tracks and associated infrastructure (including substations and BESSs). The development footprint also includes land required for connection infrastructure between the three array areas as well as land required for new internal

roads to enable access to the three array areas from the surrounding road network. Subject to detailed design and consultation with the project landholders, security fencing and creek crossings may be required on land outside of the development footprint, but within the project boundary.

The project boundary encompasses a total area of 8,694 ha. The project boundary intersects land legally described and identified in Table 1 and Figure 3. Based on the current design and lease agreements between UPC and the project landholders, no subdivision is proposed on the lots identified within Table 1 with the exception of land required for the grid substation.

Table 1 Involved lots within the project boundary

Lot number	Deposited plan (DP)	Label (refer Figure 3)	Project infrastructure component
2	DP567937	1	Northern - PV module array
82	DP755814	2	Central - Potential ETL easement
2	DP11311	3	Southern - PV module array
201	DP755827	4	Southern - Potential ETL easement
183	DP755827	5	Central - PV module array
183	DP755827	5	Central - Potential site access/ETL easement
154	DP755827	6	Central - PV module array
79	DP755814	7	Northern - PV module array
202	DP755814	8	Central - Potential ETL easement
109	DP755827	9	Central - Potential ETL easement
108	DP755827	10	Central - Potential site access/ETL easement
89	DP755827	11	Northern - PV module array
103	DP755827	12	Northern - PV module array
101	DP755827	13	Northern - PV module array
102	DP755827	14	Northern - PV module array
90	DP755827	15	Northern - PV module array
113	DP755827	16	Central - Potential site access/ETL easement
91	DP755827	17	Northern - PV module array
111	DP755827	18	Central - Potential ETL easement
110	DP755827	19	Central - Potential ETL easement
93	DP755827	20	Central - Potential ETL easement
92	DP755827	21	Central - Potential ETL easement
92	DP755827	21	Northern - PV module array
98	DP755827	22	Central - Potential ETL easement
122	DP755827	23	Central - PV module array
122	DP755827	23	Central - Potential ETL easement
123	DP755827	24	Central - PV module array
125	DP755827	25	Central - PV module array
124	DP755827	26	Central - PV module array
126	DP755827	27	Central - PV module array
4	DP172594	28	Northern - PV module array
B	DP172594	29	Northern - PV module array
78	DP755814	30	Northern - PV module array
84	DP755814	31	Northern - PV module array
83	DP755814	32	Northern - PV module array
80	DP755814	33	Central - Potential ETL easement
181	DP755827	34	Central - PV module array
181	DP755827	34	Central - Potential site access/ETL easement
182	DP755827	35	Central - PV module array
97	DP755827	36	Central - Potential ETL easement

Table 1 Involved lots within the project boundary

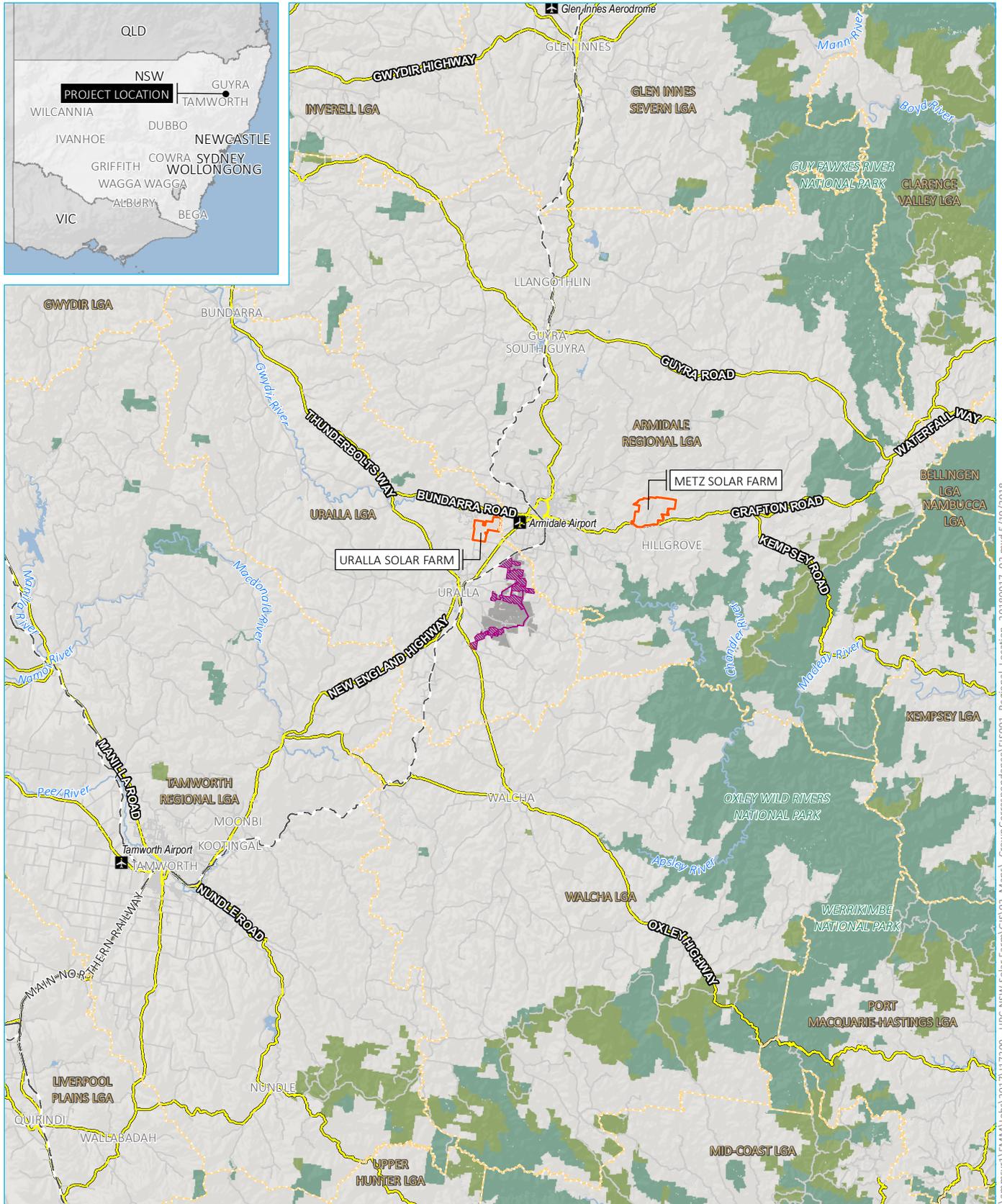
Lot number	Deposited plan (DP)	Label (refer Figure 3)	Project infrastructure component
2	DP127777	37	Northern - PV module array
1	DP127777	38	Northern - PV module array
39	DP755827	39	Northern - PV module array
38	DP755827	40	Northern - PV module array
5	DP127777	41	Northern - PV module array
1	DP405515	42	Northern - PV module array
37	DP755827	43	Northern - PV module array
296	DP755827	44	Central - PV module array
214	DP755836	45	Southern - PV module array
221	DP755814	46	Northern - PV module array
237	DP755835	47	Southern - Potential ETL easement
2	DP174053	48	Northern - PV module array
1	DP227322	49	Central - PV module array
8	DP173619	50	Central - PV module array
8	DP173619	50	Central - Potential ETL easement
2	DP1018290	51	Southern - PV module array
6	DP172594	52	Northern - PV module array
6	DP172594	52	Central - Potential ETL easement
6	DP1122757	54	Southern - PV module array
3	DP1122757	55	Southern - Potential ETL easement
2	DP1122757	56	Southern - PV module array
2	DP1122757	56	Southern - Potential site access/ETL easement
2	DP1122757	56	Southern - Potential ETL easement
1	DP1122757	57	Southern - PV module array
1	DP1122757	57	Southern - Potential site access/ETL easement
142	DP1135106	58	Southern - PV module array
142	DP1135106	58	Southern - Potential underground cabling
21	DP1167870	59	Northern - PV module array
23	DP1171290	60	Northern - PV module array
24	DP1171290	61	Northern - PV module array
1	DP1206278	62	Southern - Potential ETL easement

The land within the project boundary is zoned RU1 Primary Production under the Uralla Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Uralla LEP). As identified within Table 1, the project boundary encompasses 62 lots, the majority of which have been modified by historical land use practices and past disturbances associated with land clearing, cropping and intensive livestock grazing. The properties within the project boundary are currently primarily used for sheep grazing for production of wool and lamb, with some cattle grazing for beef production.

The project is ideally located close to Transgrid's 330 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, which passes through the northern and central array areas (Figure 2). It also has access to the regional road network, including the New England Highway and Thunderbolts Way (Figure 2).

A number of local roads traverse the array areas and their surrounds, including Gostwyck Road, Salisbury Plains Road, The Gap Road, Carlon Menzies Road, Munsies Road, Saumarez War Service Road, Hillview Road, Elliots Road and Big Ridge Road, and will provide access to the three array areas from the regional road network throughout the construction and operation of the project (Figure 2).

The primary site access points will be from The Gap Road, Salisbury Plains Road, Hillview Road, Munsies Road and Big Ridge Road. Emergency access points may also be required.



Source: EMM (2018); DFSI (2017); GA (2015)



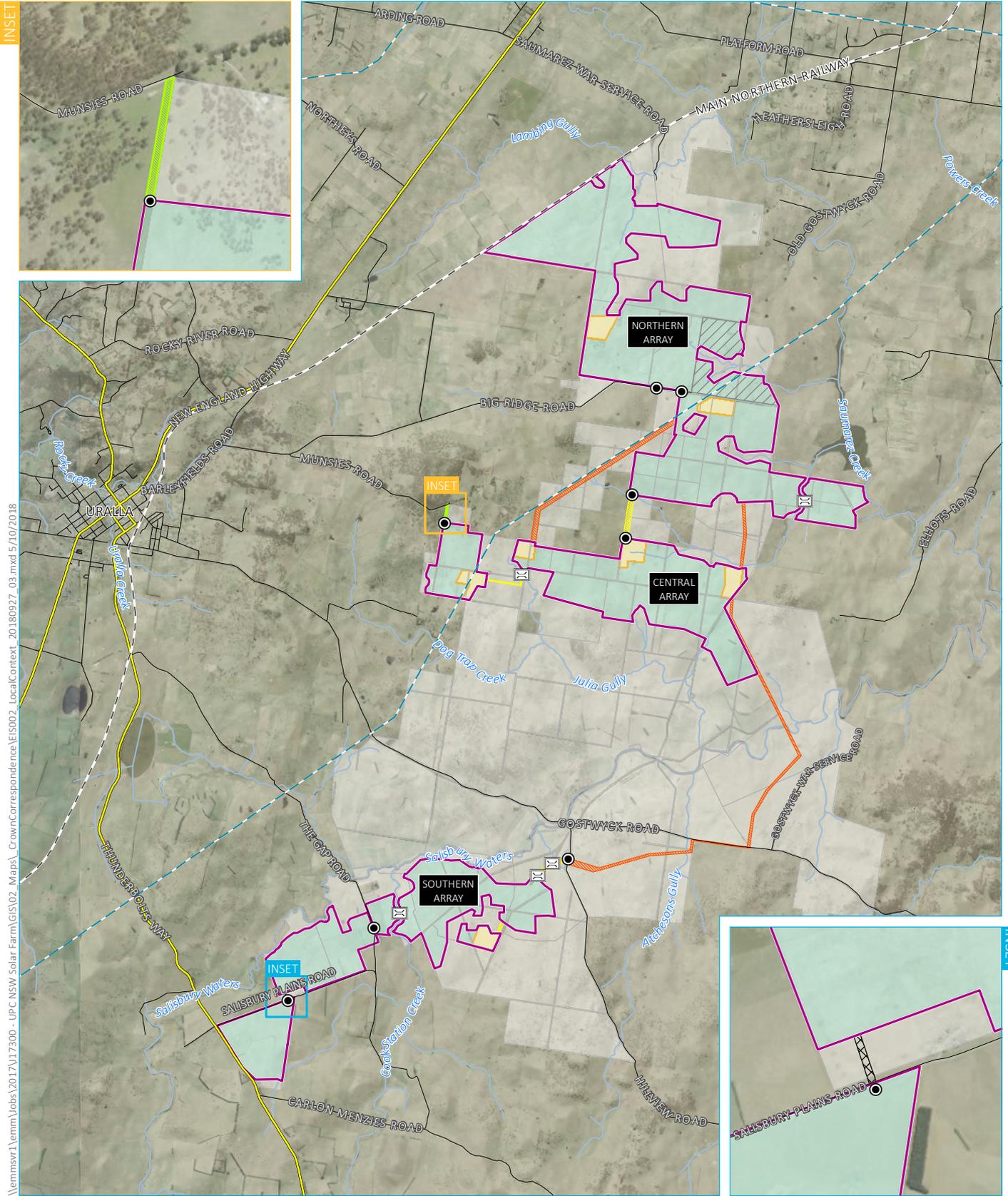
KEY

- Development footprint
- Project boundary
- Other SSD solar development
- Airport
- Rail line
- Main road
- Local road
- Watercourse/drainage line
- Waterbody
- Local government area
- NPWS reserve
- State forest

Regional setting

New England Solar Farm
Figure 1

\\emmsvr1\EMM\Jobs\2017\117300 - UPC NSW Solar Farm\GIS\02_Maps\CrownCorrCorrespondence\EI5001_Regional_Location_20180917_02.mxd 5/10/2018



Source: EMM (2018); DFSI (2017); UPC (2018)

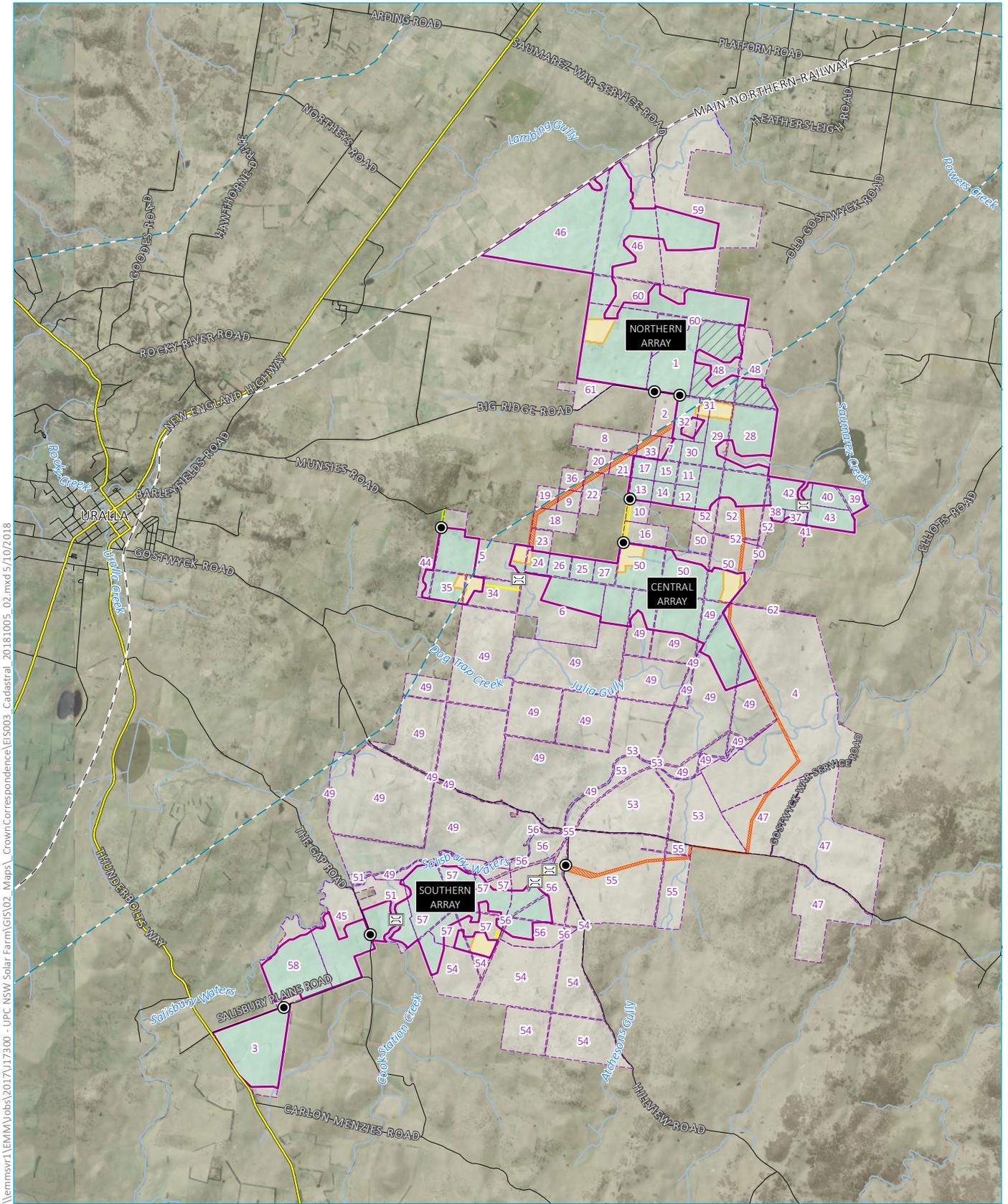
KEY

- 330 kV transmission line
- Rail line
- Main road
- Local road
- Watercourse/drainage line
- Project boundary
- Development footprint
- Solar array
- Potential ETL easement
- Potential site access corridor
- Potential site access/ETL easement
- Potential substation/BESS footprint
- Potential underground cabling
- Potential creek crossing
- Proposed primary site access point
- Potential site for construction accommodation village

Location of the New England Solar Farm

New England Solar Farm
Figure 2





\\emmsvr1\EMM\obs\2017\17300 - UPC NSW Solar Farm\GIS\02_Maps\CrownCorres\pondence\EI5003_Cadastral_20181005_02.mxd 5/10/2018

Source: EMM (2018); DFSI (2017); UPC (2018)

KEY

- 330 kV transmission line
- Rail line
- Main road
- Local road
- Watercourse/drainage line
- Project boundary
- Development footprint
- Solar array
- Potential ETL easement
- Potential site access corridor
- Potential site access/ETL easement
- Potential substation/BESS footprint
- Potential underground cabling
- Potential creek crossing
- Proposed primary site access point
- Potential site for construction accommodation village

Cadastral details

New England Solar Farm
Figure 3



1.2 Project overview

The project involves the development, construction and operation of a solar PV electricity generation facility and BESS, which consists of PV modules, batteries, inverters, transformers and associated infrastructure.

The development footprint provided on Figure 2 incorporates the land required for:

- the three solar array areas;
- up to three internal solar array substations and a single grid substation;
- associated BESS(s);
- operations and maintenance (O&M) infrastructure, including:
 - O&M buildings (namely meeting facilities, a temperature-controlled spare parts storage facility, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) facilities, a workshop and associated infrastructure); and
 - car parking facilities;
- connection infrastructure between the three array areas (including electricity transmission lines (ETLs) and underground cabling); and
- a new internal road network to enable access from surrounding local roads to the three array areas during construction and operations.

In addition, security fencing and creek crossings (should they be required) will be placed within the project boundary.

The project will have a targeted 'sent out' electricity generating capacity of up to 800 MW (AC) and up to 200 MW (AC) two-hour energy storage. The final number of PV modules within the three array areas will be dependent on detailed design, availability and commercial considerations at the time of construction.

Electricity generated by the project will be injected into the grid via a new cut-in to TransGrid's 330 kV transmission line that traverses the northern and central array areas (refer Figure 2).

The infrastructure associated with the project will cover an area within the development footprint (Figure 2). During the preparation of the EIS, the development footprint within the project boundary has been refined on the basis of environmental constraints identification, stakeholder engagement, community consultation and design of project infrastructure with the objective of developing an efficient project that avoids and minimises environmental impacts.

2 Approval pathway

The project is a State Significant Development (SSD) under the State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011 (SRD SEPP).

The NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation (EP&A Regulation) provide the framework for environmental planning and assessment in NSW. Part 4 of the EP&A Act relates to the development assessment, Part 4, Division 4.1 relates to the assessment of development deemed to be significant to the State (SSD).

Section 4.36 (2) of the EP&A Act states that a:

...State environmental planning policy may declare any development, or any class or description of development, to be State significant development.

Under Section 4.38 of the EP&A Act, the NSW Minister for Planning is the consent authority for SSD. However, pursuant to Section 2.4 of the EP&A Act, the Minister may delegate the consent authority function to the Independent Planning Commission (IPC), the Secretary or to any other public authority.

An EIS is a requirement of the approval process and is currently under preparation by EMM. The EIS will be lodged with DPE in November 2018 and will address the SEARs that were issued on 8 May 2018.

A copy of the project's SEARs is available at:

<https://majorprojects.accelo.com/public/17fddb1f68fe1c57ababa42970605d27/2.%20New%20England%20Solar%20-%20Secretary's%20Environmental%20Assessment%20Requirements.pdf>

The EIS will be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 30 days by DPE and submissions will be sought from local and State government agencies and the community. Any submissions received by DPE will be reviewed and forwarded to UPC to consider and respond to (via a response to submissions (RTS) report).

Following receipt of the RTS report, DPE will prepare its assessment report considering this EIS, all submissions received during the exhibition process and the RTS report. This report will be forwarded to the consent authority for consideration before determining the development application (DA).

3 Ground disturbance activities

The need for heavy civil works such as grading/levelling and compaction will be minimised, as the flattest land areas within the three array areas which are already mostly cleared of vegetation have been selected. Civil works will be required to prepare the three array areas by installing fencing, internal access tracks, and minor earth works.

Some heavier earth moving will likely be required for certain project infrastructure (eg substation and BESSs) in those instances where a level pad is necessary. In addition, grading around lower order streams and drainage channels within the three array areas may also be required in order to manage erosion during construction.

As part of site establishment works, management measures will be introduced to mitigate potential impacts on the environment and receptors within close proximity of the development footprint (refer to Section 4.3 of this document). Where required, additional or improved drainage channels, sediment control ponds and dust control measures will be implemented. Further, laydown areas and waste handling, fuel and chemical storage areas will be strategically placed to minimise potential environmental impacts during the construction stage of the project.

The following activities proposed as part of the project have the potential for ground disturbance within the development footprint:

- installation of the PV modules (ie driving or screwing piles into the ground, possibly including pre-drilling but only if required);
- trenching for underground cabling;
- clearing for internal access tracks and PCU placement;
- the construction of up to three solar array substations and BESSs, the locations of which will be confirmed during the detailed design stage of the project;
- the construction of a grid substation and BESS, the location of which will be confirmed during the detailed design stage of the project;
- installation of supporting infrastructure (eg O&M buildings, parking areas and landscaping);
- the construction of a temporary construction accommodation village (if required);
- installation of overhead transmission lines (anticipated to be supported by single concrete, wood or steel pole structures) along the proposed ETL options; and
- installation of new internal roads to enable access to the three array areas from the surrounding road network.

Outside of the development footprint, ground disturbance activities will be limited to the installation of security fencing (typically along existing property fence lines) and a number of creek crossings should they be required. Security fencing will be restricted to land within the project boundary and will avoid identified sites. The exact location of creek crossings will be determined during detailed design.

4 Land impact assessment overview

4.1 Existing environment

4.1.1 Zoning

The development footprint is zoned RU1 Primary Production under the Uralla LEP.

It is noted that the Uralla LEP permits development with consent for the purpose of electricity generation in the RU1 Primary Production zoned land.

The project will alter the current land use of the development footprint, being agriculture, to electricity generation by solar energy. The project will also impact the availability of land for other primary production. However, it will also allow for and encourage diversity in the area's land use, and will provide economic stimulus and support to rural communities.

4.1.2 Geology, soils and land capability

i Geology

The development footprint is within the New England Tableland Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia (IBRA) bioregion, and encompasses parts of the MacIntyre, Clarence, Gwydir, Macleay, Namoi and Manning River catchments (OEH 2016a). The majority of the development footprint is within the Armidale Plateau subregion at an elevation of approximately 1,100 m. Locally, the development footprint is characterised by gently undulating plains with long gentle slopes intersected by drainage lines and depressions.

The surface geology of the development footprint is characterised by sedimentary rocks of Carboniferous and Permian age (OEH 2016b). Much of the bedrock is now overlain by Tertiary basalt flows rarely exceeding 100 m in thickness that lie on river gravels and sands or on lake sediments. In certain areas basalt has eroded and exposed the underlying sedimentation layer. These tend to occur along drainage lines. The geology of the development footprint generally contains fine-grained Permo-Carboniferous sedimentary rocks, granites and Tertiary basalt flows.

ii Soils

Due to the size and location of the development footprint and the area's underlying geology and topography, there are a variety of soil orders represented across the landscape. As part of the soil erosion assessment currently being finalised for inclusion in the EIS, a survey was completed to examine the soil and landform properties of the development footprint and inform erosion potential. This included taking main representative soil samples for further laboratory analysis. The main soil types representative of the development footprint are Vertosols, Dermosols, Tenosols and texture contrast soils.

The laboratory results identified that the soils ranged from slightly acidic to neutral across the development footprint, with a trend of slight acidity in the surface progressing to neutral in the subsoils. Soil salinity was very low across the development footprint. Three sites were identified as having sodic subsoils. On the basis of these parameters, it is considered that there is a low to moderate risk of dispersion based on soil type if the soil is significantly disturbed or overworked during construction, especially if works occur during or immediately following rain events.

The central array area's Tensol soil type displays a higher subsoil erodibility compared to the southern and northern array areas. This is where existing sheet and gully erosion was observed where the subsoil had been exposed. The Vertosol soils are generally stable while the Dermosol and Sodosol surface soils have moderate erodibility K factors when exposed.

There are no known occurrences of acid sulphate soils within the development footprint.

iii Land and soil capability

Land and soil capability is the inherent physical capacity of the land to sustain a range of land uses and management practices in the long term without degradation to soil, land, air and water resources (OEH 2012). The land and soil capability class gives an indication of the land management practices that can be applied to a parcel of land without causing degradation to the land and soil. Failure to manage land in accordance with its capability risks degradation of resources, leading to a decline in natural ecosystem values, agricultural productivity and infrastructure functionality. As land capability decreases, the management of hazards requires an increase in knowledge, expertise and investment.

Land and soil capability within the development footprint ranges from Class 3 (moderate limitations) through to Class 6 (very severe limitations). Class 6 occurs in isolated patches generally associated with areas of higher elevation within the development footprint. The analysis undertaken as part of the soil erosion assessment cannot be used to conclusively verify the inherent fertility or land capability within the development footprint; however, the soil survey and analysis results generally align with the existing broad scale mapping.

4.1.3 Contaminated land

A search of the EPA's contaminated land public record of notice and list of sites notified to the EPA under Section 60 of the NSW *Contaminated Land Management Act 1997* (CLM Act) did not return any information on reported contamination or any regulatory notices issued for the land within the project boundary (EPA 2018).

A search of the contaminated land record of notices revealed one site within the Uralla Shire LGA that has been issued notices. Each of these notices applied to a parcel of land approximately 22 km south-west of the development footprint for the southern array area.

Clause 7 of SEPP 55 requires that a consent authority take into consideration whether the land is contaminated. The contaminated land planning guidelines, *Managing Land Contamination Planning Guidelines: SEPP 55 – Remediation of Land* (Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1998), identify activities with the potential to cause contamination. These guidelines list 'agricultural' horticultural activities' as activities which can potentially cause contamination. Agricultural activities have occurred on and in the vicinity of the development footprint. However, construction of the project will require limited site preparation and civil works. Subsequently, the level of surface disturbance will be minimal.

4.1.4 Agricultural land

The project is within the Uralla Shire LGA, which covers an area of 3,215 km² in inner north-east NSW. The Uralla Shire LGA is one of twelve LGAs in the New England North West region of NSW, which is one of Australia's most productive agricultural areas, with a significant share of the State's beef, cotton, sorghum and tomato production (NSW Government 2017). Cattle and sheep grazing for wool, breeding stock and meat dominate agricultural activities within the project boundary and its immediate surrounds.

Parts of the development footprint are mapped as biophysical strategic agricultural land (BSAL) as defined by the Strategic Agricultural Land Map – New England North West regional mapping presented in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007 (the Mining SEPP). A total of 2.8 million ha of BSAL has been identified and mapped at a regional scale across NSW and includes land capable of sustaining high levels of productivity (NSW Government 2012).

The development footprint presented on Figure 2 encompasses an area of approximately 2,787 ha, which includes 1,418 ha within the northern array area, 625 ha within the central array area and 653 ha within the southern array area. Of the land within the three array areas, approximately 670 ha are mapped as BSAL. This represents approximately 0.02% of the total land area mapped as BSAL within NSW.

The majority of the development footprint has been modified by historical land use practices and past disturbances associated with land clearing, cropping and livestock grazing. The properties within the project boundary are currently primarily used for sheep grazing for production of wool and lambs, with some cattle grazing for beef production.

4.1.5 Crown land

There is a small parcel of Crown land adjacent to the southern array area (Lot 214 of DP 755836).

In addition, it is understood that a number of Crown roads exist within the project boundary. The cadastral details presented in Table 1 and Figure 3 have been provided to allow for the appropriate identification of Crown roads within the project boundary.

4.2 Impact assessment

4.2.1 Overview

As mentioned in Section 3, the need for heavy civil works such as grading/levelling and compaction will be minimised. The flattest land areas within the three array areas are already mostly cleared of vegetations, and have been selected to minimise impacts to land within the development footprint.

Direct disturbance of the land during site establishment will primarily be limited to:

- the establishment of a temporary construction site compound in a fenced-off area within the development footprint including a site office, containers for storage, parking areas and temporary laydown areas;
- construction of access tracks and installation of boundary fencing;
- site survey to confirm infrastructure positioning and placement; and
- geotechnical investigations to confirm the ground condition.

Upon completion of the site establishment and pre-construction activities described above, construction activities will include:

- drive piles;
- install mounting structures and tracker tubes;
- secure PV modules to tracker tubes;
- installation of medium voltage (underground) and high voltage (above ground) cables;
- installation of PCUs;
- complete substation augmentation;
- establishment of the BESS compound; and
- test and commission project infrastructure.

The installation of PV modules may affect the flow of runoff within the development footprint, which could result in soil erosion if not appropriately managed. The project will also result in an increase in vehicle movements to and from the three array areas during construction. Subsequently, the project may result in increased levels of soil erosion.

4.2.2 Geology, soils and land capability

As noted above, the project may result in increased levels of soil erosion. The susceptibility of soils to erosive forces is dependent on their inherent properties, namely texture, structure and dispersibility (Charman 1978).

The soil erosion assessment found soil erodibility to be low to moderate across the development footprint. Management for erosion potential as well as rehabilitation will be incorporated as part of the standard management practices during construction and operations.

4.2.3 Agricultural production

The project will reduce the total area of land under agricultural production in the Uralla Shire LGA and more generally within the New England North West region through the establishment of the solar arrays and associated infrastructure. However, the loss of agricultural land represents a very small fraction of the agricultural output of both the Uralla Shire LGA and the New England North West region. Further discussion of the project's potential impacts on land use and agriculture will be provided in the EIS.

Overall, it is considered that the project will result in a negligible reduction in the overall productivity of the Uralla Shire LGA and New England North West region. Further, UPC is currently in discussions with a number of the project landholders to enable sheep grazing to resume on portions of the three array areas following the completion of the construction of the project. In addition, at the end of the project's operational life, project infrastructure will be decommissioned and the development footprint can be returned to its pre-existing condition suitable for agricultural land use.

In addition, the use of single-axis tracking solar PV module technology would mean there would be approximately 5-8 m in between the rows of modules, which could be used for grazing sheep during the operations phase of the project. The project layout (ie splitting the project infrastructure across three distinct array areas) means that there will still be considerable land around the development footprint that will continue to be used for agriculture by project landholders and neighbouring agricultural operations.

4.2.4 Crown land

The project will not impact the small parcel of Crown land adjacent to the southern array area (Lot 214 of DP 755836).

Impacts to Crown roads within the development footprint will be limited to the ground disturbance activities described in Section 4.2.1. Impacts to Crown roads outside of the development footprint but within the project boundary will be limited to installation of security fencing and creek crossings (should they be required).

4.3 Management and mitigation

4.3.1 Construction

It is likely that an environmental management plan (EMP) will be prepared to address land management within the development footprint and will detail measures to minimise impacts to agricultural land with reference to the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI's) publication, *Infrastructure proposals on rural land* (Kovac and Briggs 2013).

To address the potential impacts of the project on rural land, measures that may be implemented during construction, include:

- a site access protocol may be developed that lists the relevant landholder's contact details and includes measures to minimise adverse impacts, such as driving carefully to minimise disturbance to livestock, crops and pastures;
- the timing of construction and the location/design of temporary access routes will be positioned to minimise impacts on neighbouring agricultural operations, where practicable;
- access tracks in areas adjacent to the three array areas may remain accessible to the landholders to avoid impacts to the operation and sustainability of neighbouring agricultural activities; and

- soil resources will be managed to ensure the future viability of the land within the development footprint for agricultural production.

An erosion and sediment control plan in accordance with *Managing Urban Stormwater: Soil & Construction* (Landcom 2004) may also be prepared. The plan could include measures such as:

- installing erosion and sediment controls (if required) prior to and during construction;
- regularly inspecting erosion and sediment controls, particularly following large rainfall/wind events;
- minimising tracking of sediment from vehicles, plant and equipment on surrounding road network; and
- minimising the total area of disturbance from excavation and compaction, where practicable.

The EMP may also include weed management protocols, such as measures for the identification, management and ongoing monitoring of weeds within the development footprint.

The EMP would also likely include a spill response plan which would be implemented during construction and throughout the project's operations to avoid potential for contamination.

4.3.2 Operations

During the project's operations, a number of land management and mitigation measures may be implemented to reduce the potential impact of the project on:

- land and soil capability within the development footprint, including land mapped as BSAL;
- neighbouring agricultural operations;
- regional biosecurity;
- erosion; and
- surface water runoff.

In consultation with the project landholders, land management will include consideration of the viability of sheep grazing or machine vegetation management as a means of vegetation maintenance throughout the life of the project. Sheep are considered an appropriate means of managing grassland between and underneath PV modules with research suggesting that overall production levels can be maintained at levels sustained on open grassland under similar conditions (BRE 2014).

To mitigate impacts to biosecurity, vehicle movements would likely be restricted to the formed access tracks. In addition, if implemented, sheep grazing within the development footprint would help maintain weed levels while maintaining a multi-purpose land use throughout the life of the project.

The area of impervious ground surface within the three array areas will not increase significantly; therefore, there is not expected to be an increase in runoff generated from within the three array areas.

4.3.3 Decommissioning

Once the project reaches the end of its investment and operational life, the project infrastructure will be decommissioned and the development footprint returned to its pre-existing land use, namely suitable for grazing of sheep and cattle, or another land use as agreed by the project owner and the landholder at that time.

During decommissioning, all above ground facilities will be removed from the development footprint.

Any underground cabling below 500 mm will remain in-situ following project decommissioning. Only deep-rooting trees, such as those associated with horticultural practices, would be likely to disturb the electrical conduit trenches and their respective cabling (Burges et al. 2008). However, based on the historical uses of the land, horticultural practices involving deep-rooting trees are unlikely to be a viable future land use; as such, it is unlikely that cables, if left in situ, would impinge on any future agricultural production within the development footprint.

The access tracks within the development footprint may be retained if requested by the landholders at the time of decommissioning.

A project decommissioning plan will likely be prepared following the completion of project construction and commissioning and will feature rehabilitation objectives and strategies for returning the development footprint to agricultural production.

5 Closing

I trust this information provides enough detail for you to consider the project's potential to impact the Crown roads within the development footprint and the project boundary, more generally.

If you could please provide further advice regarding the next steps required to commence the process of closing the identified Crown roads that would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



David Richards
Environmental Scientist
02 4907 4803 / 0405 593 675
drichards@emmconsulting.com.au

David Richards

From: Warren Martin [warren.martin@crowland.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Thursday, 11 October 2018 3:46 PM
To: David Richards
Subject: Re: FW: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Interactions with Crown roads
Attachments: image002.jpg; Purchasing-Crown-roads-fact-sheet.pdf; Crown road map 1a.jpg; Crown road map 1b.jpg; Roads-Crown-road-purchase-application-form.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi David

As discussed, attached are two maps (north and south) that show the Crown roads that overlap with the area of the New England Solar Farm. The roads shown in blue line have already been applied for closing and are well advanced, so no further action required for these. The roads shown in red line currently have no application for closing. Therefore these are the roads that should have an application for closing - whether you wish to apply for closing just on the green zone if this is where development activities are to occur, or whether you wish to apply for road closing over the pink zone as well will depend on whether you propose to undertake development activities in this zone.

Closing of roads needs to be submitted by the owner of the property they are enclosed within - whether you prepare the application on behalf of the owners and they sign and submit, or whether the landowners undertake the submission themselves will be up to your arrangements with the land owners.

Attached is a copy of the application form and an information sheet on road closings. An application per property should be submitted. When submitting, I suggest noting on the form that you request priority processing given it is for the development of a solar farm (priority processing will be considered once development applications and EIS, etc have been approved). The roads group will examine each road as part of the process.

Further information on road closings can be found at <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/lands/access/roads> . If you wish to discuss the process you can contact the roads group by calling 1300 886 235 (option 2) or roads.newcastle@crowland.nsw.gov.au and they can talk you through it.

Road closing applications do take some time to complete, so once the applications have been submitted and approvals allowing the solar farm to commence are in place, we can look at a licence to commence works on Crown roads as an interim measure until the road closing process is complete

Happy to discuss further as you need things.

Regards
Warren

Warren Martin | Natural Resource Management Project Officer
NSW Department of Industry | Crown Lands and Water Division
Block K TAFE New England Campus
116 Allingham Street (between Beardy and Rusden Streets)
PO Box 1138 | Armidale NSW 2350
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E: warren.martin@crowland.nsw.gov.au
W: www.crowland.nsw.gov.au
Please Note: Our office opening hours are by appointment only

On Thu, 11 Oct 2018 at 15:12, David Richards <drichards@emmconsulting.com.au> wrote:

Hi Warren,

Just confirming receipt of the email below with the requested GIS layers?

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

T 02 4907 4803 M 0405 593 675 F 02 4907 4899

Suite 6, Level 1, 146 Hunter Street, Newcastle NSW 2300

PO Box 506, Newcastle NSW 2300

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From: David Richards
Sent: Friday, 5 October 2018 6:23 PM
To: 'Warren Martin'
Cc: Claire Burnes
Subject: RE: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Interactions with Crown roads

Hi Warren,

Claire's details are provided below:

Claire Burnes | Associate - Environmental Assessment and Management

T 02 4907 4804 | **M** 0477 717 272

Please also find attached SHP file data that correlates with the project boundary and development footprint layers in the figures provided.

I look forward to hearing from you next week.

Have a great weekend!

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

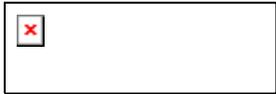
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From: Warren Martin [<mailto:warren.martin@crowland.nsw.gov.au>]
Sent: Friday, 5 October 2018 4:17 PM
To: David Richards
Cc: Claire Burnes
Subject: Re: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Interactions with Crown roads

Hello David

Thanks for the email. I had a phone message from Claire but the message on my end cut out before I could get all the phone number, so if you could let me know Claire's number I can keep it here for when needed.

I can look at the planning area and identify the Crown roads involved, and then check each one in terms of ensuring it is a Crown road or Council road (sometimes there are unformed Council road in an area), as well as whether any road closing are already in progress, etc.

Based on this I can advise you on the best course of action - usually this will be to have the landholder apply to close the roads involved (either done by the landholder or by the developer on behalf of the landholder). Once closed they become freehold and management of these would then be the same as surrounding properties. This can take some time, so we are able to issue a licence as an interim measure until the road closing is completed. I can also have a look at the waterways involved.

If you have a shape file (for Arc map) for the extent of the planning/development area as in your attachment that would be handy for me to ensure I have captured all the Crown roads?

Regards

Warren

Warren Martin | Natural Resource Management Project Officer

NSW Department of Industry | Crown Lands and Water Division

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W: www.crownland.nsw.gov.au

Please Note: Our office opening hours are by appointment only

On Fri, 5 Oct 2018 at 16:00, David Richards <drichards@emmconsulting.com.au> wrote:

Hi Warren,

I am writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) along with associated infrastructure, that is proposed approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla, which lies approximately 19 km south of Armidale in the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA).

As noted in discussions with my colleague, Claire Burnes, on 28 September 2018, there are a number of Crown roads within the project boundary.

This was also noted in the NSW Department of Industry's (DoI's) submission to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to inform the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the project (document reference OUT 18/6476 / dated 3 May 2018).

The purpose of the attached document is to provide further information about how the project may impact these roads, as well as any Crown watercourses that traverse the landscape within the project boundary (namely Salisbury Waters).

If you could please provide further advice regarding the next steps required to commence the process of closing the identified Crown roads that would be greatly appreciated.

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

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PO Box 506, Newcastle NSW 2300

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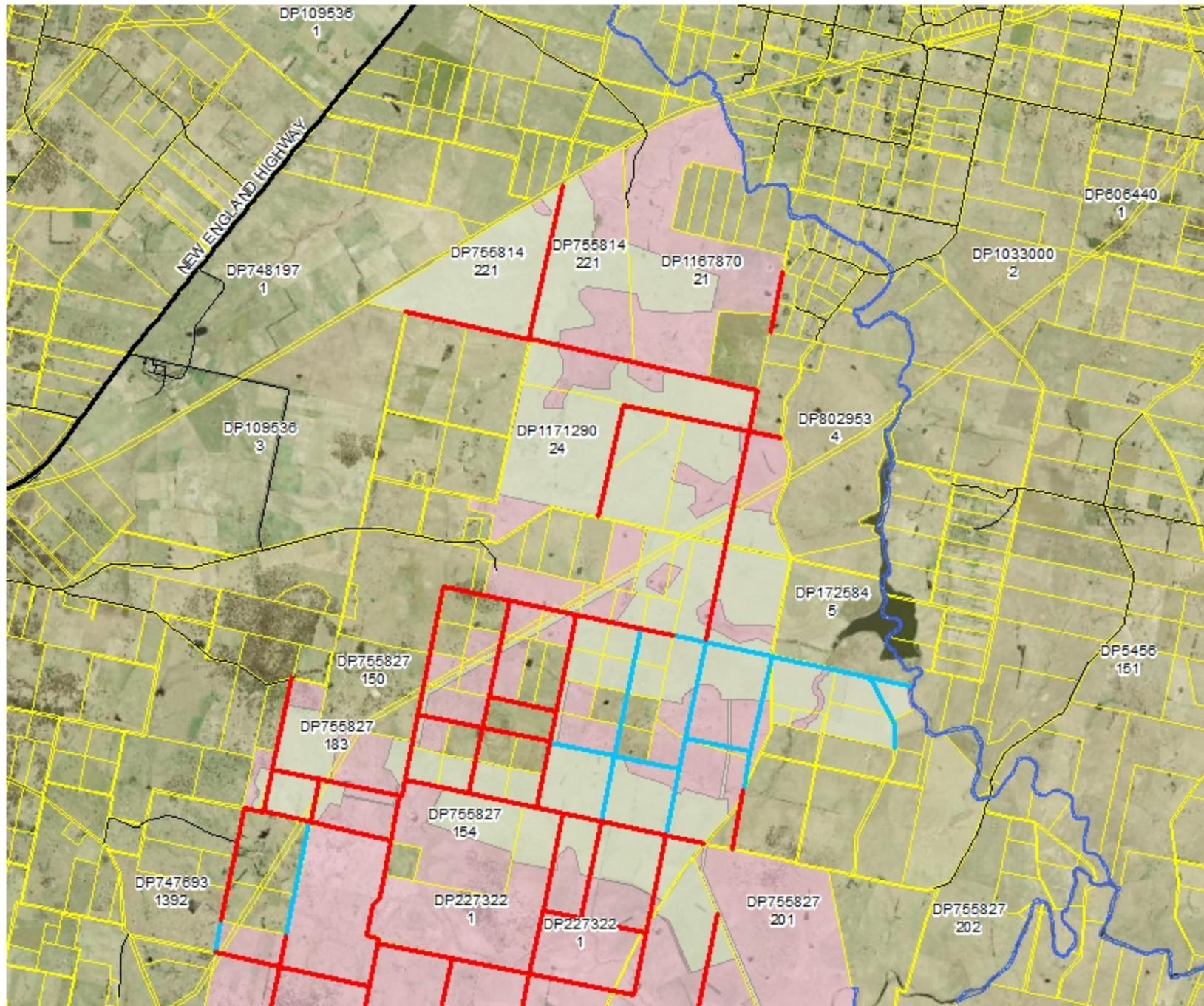
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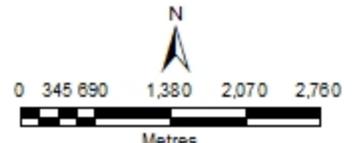
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Crown roads within New England Solar Farm



Legend

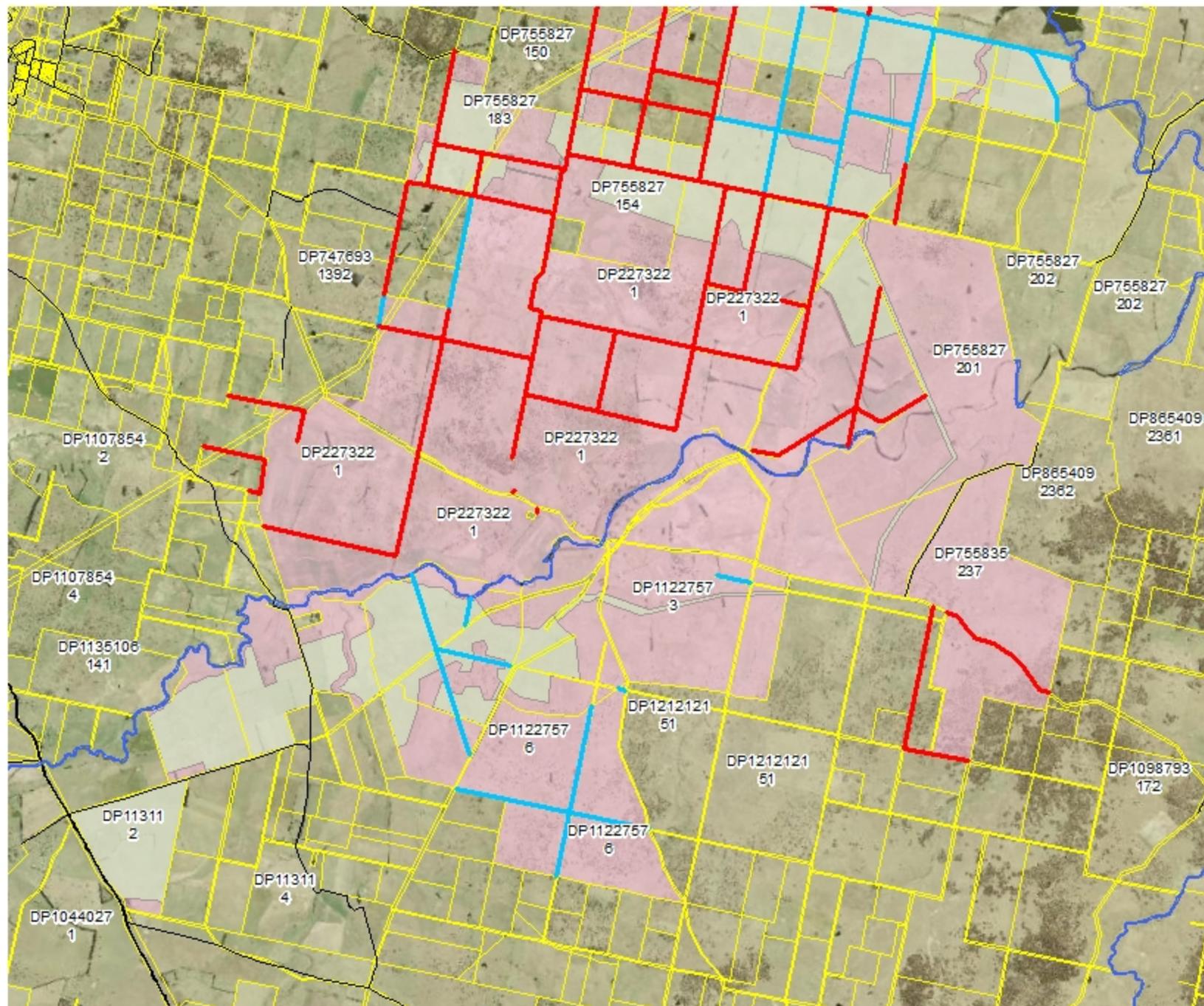
- Crown road
- Road closure
- Crown waterway
- Primary road
- Local road
- Site boundary
- Involved lots
- Lot



Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic (LPI NSW)
 Datum: GD AS4
 Prepared By: Lands & Water, Armidale



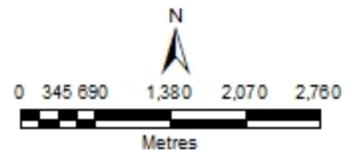
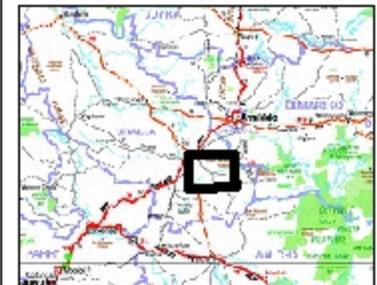
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Crown roads within New England Solar Farm

Legend

- Crown road
- Road closure
- ▨ Crown waterway
- Arterial Road
- Local road
- ▭ Site boundary
- ▭ Involved lots
- ▭ Lot



Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic (LPI NSW)
Datum: GDA84

Prepared By: Lands & Water, Armidale



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26 February 2018

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Lilian Parker
Manager – Agricultural Land Use Planning
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Re: | New England Solar Farm - Preliminary project description

Dear Lilian,

UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) is the owner and developer of the New England Solar Farm (the project), a significant grid-connected solar farm proposed near the township of Uralla, which lies approximately 19 kilometres (km) south of Armidale. The project investigation area has favourable conditions for a solar photovoltaic (PV) power generation project, having high solar irradiance and elevation of more than 1,000 m above sea level, as well as, suitable access to the existing electricity transmission network. The project investigation area lies within the Uralla local government area (LGA).

The project will have a targeted nominal electricity generating capacity in the order of 800 MW (AC), which will be subject to further assessment of environmental constraints and detailed project design.

The development footprint for the project will encompass a total area of approximately 2,400 hectares (ha) within the project investigation area. The required land area is driven primarily by the need for a project that achieves economies of scale in terms of the grid connection costs and being able to achieve a competitively priced cost for the electricity generated by the project over time.

Based on current indicative designs, the project will involve the development of three separate arrays of PV modules and inverters, referred to herein as the northern, central and southern PV arrays. The power generated by the PV modules will be reticulated via a medium voltage (MV) underground cable network at each of the PV arrays, and then stepped up to high voltage (HV) at a new dedicated substation at each of the PV arrays. Power will be transported via a new overhead transmission line (OH/L) from each PV array to a proposed new grid-interfacing substation (central substation). At the central substation, the voltage will be stepped up again using transformers prior to injection into the grid via the existing 330 kV TransGrid electricity transmission line, which runs through the project investigation area.

In addition, it is anticipated that a battery energy storage system (BESS) will be developed as part of the project and a number of new internal roads will be constructed from the surrounding road network to enable access to the three PV arrays during both construction and operations. One or more operations and maintenance buildings and associated infrastructure will also be required as part of the project.

The design and location of project infrastructure within the development footprint will be refined on the basis of detailed grid connection studies, stakeholder engagement, environmental constraints identification, engineering assessment and financing considerations.

The development footprint is zoned RU1 Primary Production under the Uralla Local Environmental Plan 2012 (Uralla LEP). The majority of the development footprint has been modified by historical land use practices and past disturbances associated with land clearing, cropping and livestock grazing and is

currently used for livestock grazing. The land in between the three proposed PV arrays will continue to be used as agricultural land and will not be impacted by the project.

Parts of the development footprint are mapped as biophysical strategic agricultural land (BSAL) as defined by the Strategic Agricultural Land Map – New England North West regional mapping presented in State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007 (the Mining SEPP). UPC is currently in discussions with a number of the landholders to enable sheep grazing to resume on portions of the three proposed PV arrays following the completion of construction.

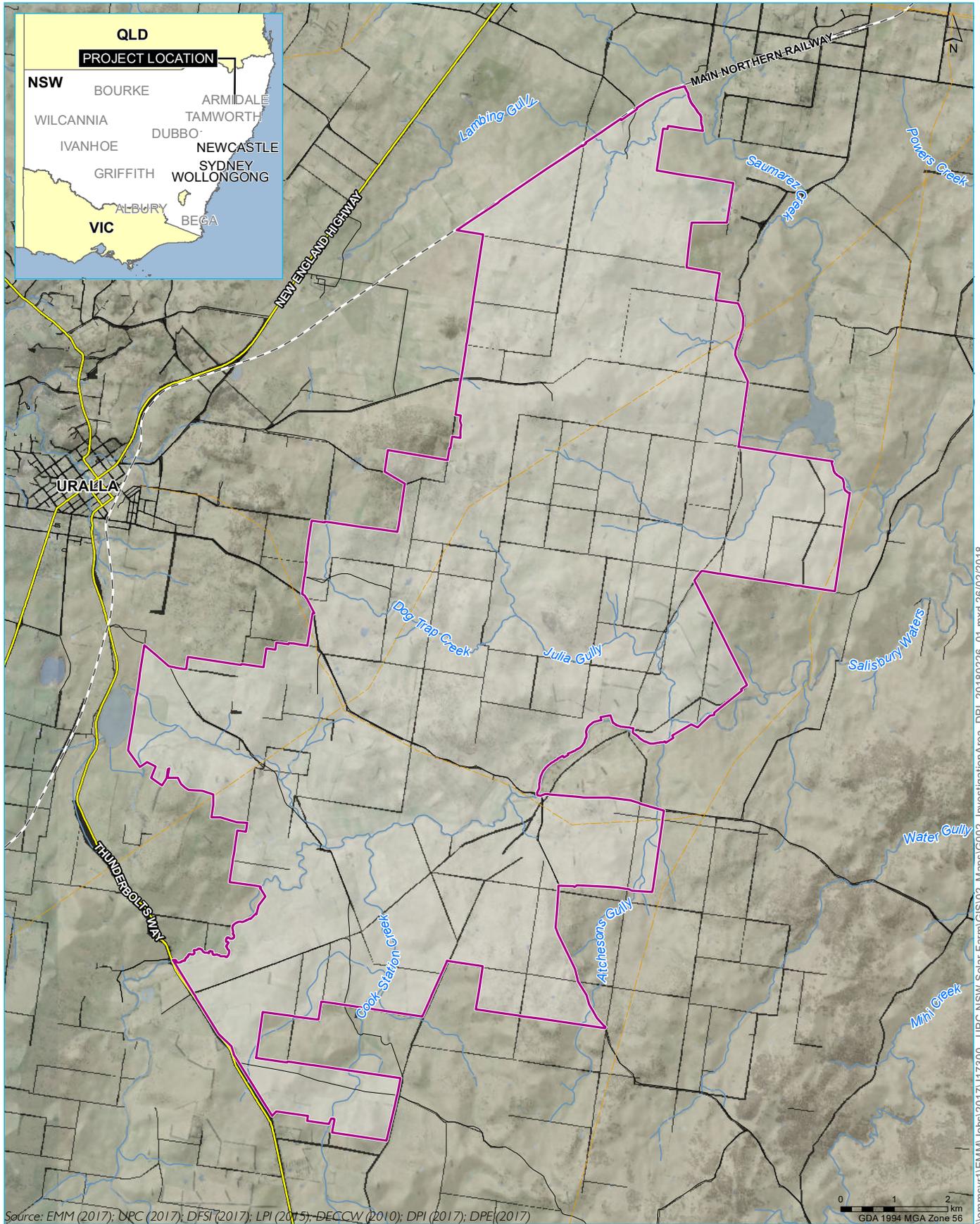
A figure illustrating the extent of the project investigation area with the Uralla Shire LGA is attached.

We look forward to speaking with you on Wednesday morning to discuss the project further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D Richards".

David Richards
Environmental Scientist
drichards@emmconsulting.com.au



Source: EMM (2017); UPC (2017); DFSI (2017); LPI (2015); DECCW (2010); DPI (2017); DPE (2017)

KEY

- Project investigation area
- Electricity transmission line

Project investigation area

UPC New England Solar Farm



28 February 2018

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Re: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Pre-lodgement inception meeting

Dear Lilian,

Thank you for meeting with Killian and I this morning to discuss the New England Solar Farm (the project). As discussed, UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) is the owner and developer of the project, a significant grid-connected solar farm proposed approximately 6 km east of the township of Uralla within the Uralla local government area (LGA). Outlined below is a summary of the key points and outcomes of today's discussion for future reference and consideration in preparation of the EIS for the project.

i [Overview of the proposed project, existing land use and site selection process](#)

The project investigation area was the subject of a planning and environmental constraints analysis, which identified the key risks and constraints to the project based on preliminary considerations of the project design, the planning and assessment framework, and the environment both within and surrounding the project investigation area. The outcomes of the constraints assessment are currently under consideration in selection of the development footprint for the project, which will encompass a total area of up to approximately 2,400 ha, depending on the final project size in terms of megawatt (MW) generating capacity. The final size, design and specific location of project infrastructure within the development footprint will be refined on the basis of detailed grid connection studies, stakeholder engagement, environmental constraints identification, engineering assessment and financing considerations.

As discussed, the majority of the development footprint has been modified by historical land use practices and past disturbances associated with land clearing, cropping and livestock grazing and is currently used for livestock grazing (primarily sheep grazing for production of wool, breeding stock and meat).

The site selection process has been driven by:

- ideal combination of elevation of greater than 1,000 metres above sea level (MASL) and solar radiation of approximately 1830 kWh/m²/year, which results in favourable energy yield;
- land that has been modified by past disturbances associated with clearing and livestock grazing resulting in minimal potential impacts on biodiversity and Aboriginal heritage;
- strong interest from a mix of larger-scale and smaller-scale farmers from across the community, with high potential for continuation of sheep grazing activities during operations; and
- location close to TransGrid's 330 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, which passes through the project investigation area, providing direct access to the electricity transmission network.

Based on preliminary designs, the project is likely to be developed across three separate arrays of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels; a northern, central and southern array; incorporating connecting infrastructure between each of the three arrays, and a centralised grid-interface substation that will enable connection to the existing TransGrid 330 kV electricity network. The land in between the three proposed PV arrays will continue to be used as agricultural land and will not be impacted by the project.

The project will result in a change to the current land use within the development footprint, being agriculture, to electricity generation. However, as noted during this morning's meeting, the majority of landholders within the project investigation area will continue with farming activities during the operations stage of the project as the land area to be occupied with project infrastructure only accounts for a portion of their landholdings. UPC is also currently in discussions with a number of the landholders to enable sheep grazing to resume on portions of the land occupied by the project following the completion of construction.

ii Project design and construction

The area within the development footprint on which project infrastructure will be installed requires minimal site preparation and civil works (ie grading/levelling and compaction). Where possible, the project infrastructure layout will work with the topography and undulation in the landscape to minimise surface disturbance requirements. Detailed geotechnical investigations will be undertaken prior to the commencement of construction in order to gain a thorough understanding of the soil types, resistivity and water holding properties of soils and any risks associated with shallow rocks or highly reactive (eg black) soils. These investigations are typically not undertaken as part of an environmental impact statement (EIS) as they would entail very high costs, which for a project of this size, would be in the order of several million dollars.

Based on preliminary designs, the dominant project infrastructure, namely the PV solar panels, will be constructed in a single axis tracking configuration, which will allow the PV solar panels to rotate from east to west during the day tracking the sun's movement. The rows of PV solar panels will be aligned in a north-south direction and spaced out approximately 5–8 m apart. The PV solar panels will be supported on mounting frames along horizontal tracker tubes that are supported on top of vertical driven or screwed piles. Only in extreme circumstances would pre-drilling and/or concreting of the foundations be contemplated (ie only where the geotechnical conditions encountered during construction do not allow for the preferred solution of driving or screwing piles).

An underground medium voltage (MV) cable reticulation network will also be required to transport the electricity within each of the three arrays. Underground cables will be buried at a depth of approximately 600 millimetres and will be designed and fitted in accordance with relevant Australian industry standards. During decommissioning, underground cables may be left *in situ* to avoid unnecessary ground disturbance. All other above ground and in-ground infrastructure is likely to be removed.

iii Decommissioning and rehabilitation

At the end of the project's operational life, project infrastructure will be decommissioned and the land within the development footprint will be returned to its pre-existing agricultural land use. The specific activities that are to be undertaken as part of the decommissioning and rehabilitation plan will include removal of the solar farm infrastructure, restoration of pastures and re-installation of certain farming infrastructure (eg bores, dams, etc). These specific activities will be subject to further consultation with the individual landholders.

iv Key outcomes

Based on the outcomes of this morning's discussions with representatives from the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), the EIS for the project will include:

- a description of the agricultural productivity practices currently undertaken within the development footprint;
- a qualitative assessment of the impact of the project on the agricultural productivity practices within the development footprint and on existing land uses on adjacent land;
- a commitment to perform a detailed soil assessment as part of geotechnical works performed during the detailed design stage of the project (ie following receipt of development consent but prior to the commencement of construction);
- a commitment to prepare an erosion and sediment control plan, which would be implemented and monitored during the life of the project to minimise impacts;
- a commitment to manage soil resources within the development footprint to ensure the viability of the site for future agricultural production; and
- a commitment to prepare a site decommissioning plan during the operations stage of the project that will include rehabilitation objectives and strategies for returning the development footprint to pre-development condition.

The site decommissioning plan referenced above would include a soil sampling plan to validate the health of the soil resource within the development footprint to inform restoration objectives to restore the land to its former land and soil capability classification (if required).

I trust that the information in this letter provides you with an accurate summary of this morning's meeting. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



David Richards
Environmental Scientist
drichards@emmconsulting.com.au

David Richards

From: David Richards
Sent: Wednesday, 7 March 2018 5:40 PM
To: 'Andrew Scott'
Cc: Lilian Parker; Killian Wentrup; Mary Kovac
Subject: RE: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - This morning's meeting

Hi Andy,

Thanks for your response and for coming out on-site with Killian and I yesterday.

We will be sure to continue to liaise with you and the team as the project progresses through the assessment process.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you'd like to discuss the project further.

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

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From: Andrew Scott [mailto:andrew.scott@dpi.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 7 March 2018 2:40 PM
To: David Richards
Cc: Lilian Parker; Killian Wentrup; Mary Kovac
Subject: Re: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - This morning's meeting

Hi David, I have reviewed and discussed the meeting notes with Lilian and we are happy that they captured the main conversation points...
To note, these main points will not supersede formal SEARs requirements or the final development proposal we would expect to receive however, they are advanced advice on what will most likely be the main issues that will be requested to be addressed during the assessment process.
Thank you to yourself and Killian for the site visit and overview yesterday.
Regards,
Andy

Andrew Scott | Resource Management Northwest (Barwon) Region
| [NSW Department of Primary Industries](#) | [NSW Agriculture](#)
Tamworth Agricultural Institute |
4 Marsden Park Road | Calala | NSW 2340
T: 02 6763 1142 | **M:** 0427 245 313 |
E: andrew.scott@industry.nsw.gov.au
W: www.industry.nsw.gov.au | www.dpi.nsw.gov.au

"Plan- Resource -Grow"

Building thriving, sustainable Agriculture for tomorrow's communities

Primary Industries land use planning information and guidelines are available at:
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/resources/lup>

On 28 February 2018 at 21:25, David Richards <drichards@emmconsulting.com.au> wrote:

Hi Lilian,

Thanks very much for meeting with Killian and I this morning to discuss the New England Solar Farm. We really appreciate the feedback provided by you, Andy and Mary. Outlined in the attached letter is a summary of the key points and outcomes of today's discussion for your consideration.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you'd like to discuss this further.

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist - Environmental Assessment & Management

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18 May 2018

John Perkins
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Re: State Significant Development Application –New England Solar Farm (SSD 9255)
Your ref: NTH 18/00058

Dear John,

We are writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla.

Originating from the United States, UPC is a leading renewable energy development company that has been operating internationally since the 1990s and in Australia since 2016. To date, UPC has developed more than 3,500 megawatts (MW) of operating wind and solar projects in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. UPC is focused on supplying renewable energy at the lowest possible price in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

The proposal is State Significant Development (SSD) under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. UPC will be supported by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the application for this proposal.

We acknowledge your response to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) dated 26 April 2018 providing details of assessment requirements for this proposal as part of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). The matters raised within your response were primarily in relation to traffic and transport. We have reviewed this response and the SEARs and their attachments and will give consideration to the matters raised during the preparation of the EIS for this proposal. We have attached a copy of the SEARs for this proposal for your reference.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your office in Grafton to discuss this proposal. Should you have any questions or if you would like to meet for a more detailed briefing, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
tim.kirk@upcrenewables.com
0403 857 079
David Richards
Environmental Scientist
drichards@emmconsulting.com.au
0405 593 675

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Kirk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
UPC Renewables Australia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Richards". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

David Richards
Environmental Scientist
EMM Consulting

David Richards

From: David Richards
Sent: Sunday, 18 November 2018 10:49 PM
To: David Richards
Subject: FW: New England Highway
Attachments: Armidale to Uralla Map V3.pdf

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

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From: STEVENS Peter [<mailto:peter.stevens@rms.nsw.gov.au>]

Sent: Wednesday, 19 September 2018 4:29 PM

To: David Richards

Cc: SMITH Liz A; BLACK Andrew L; SIROL Monica A

Subject: New England Highway

Good afternoon David,

I have attached a copy of the project map for the section of the New England Highway between Uralla and Armidale.

I confirm that the photo that you included in your earlier email showed the road surface near the Barley Fields junction after the final seal had been applied but the line marking had not been reinstated.

The traffic survey work undertaken by RMS as part of the new England Highway safety works programme clearly shows that the present traffic flow is left turn into Barley Fields Road (from the Armidale approach) and right turn from the side road towards Armidale. On this basis the current RMS proposal is to upgrade the junction by constructing a left turn lane on the highway. This is shown on the attached map.

I understand that the solar generation proposal that you are assisting with is currently in the early stages and it may not be possible for the developer to commit funding to any required upgrade work for road infrastructure.

Clearly the most cost effective path would be to upgrade the junction to suit your clients proposed development as part of the RMS planned work.

I am happy to work with you to achieve the best outcome. I understand that you have recently spoken with Liz on this issue.

Peter Stevens

Business Partner

Network & Safety Northern | Regional & Freight

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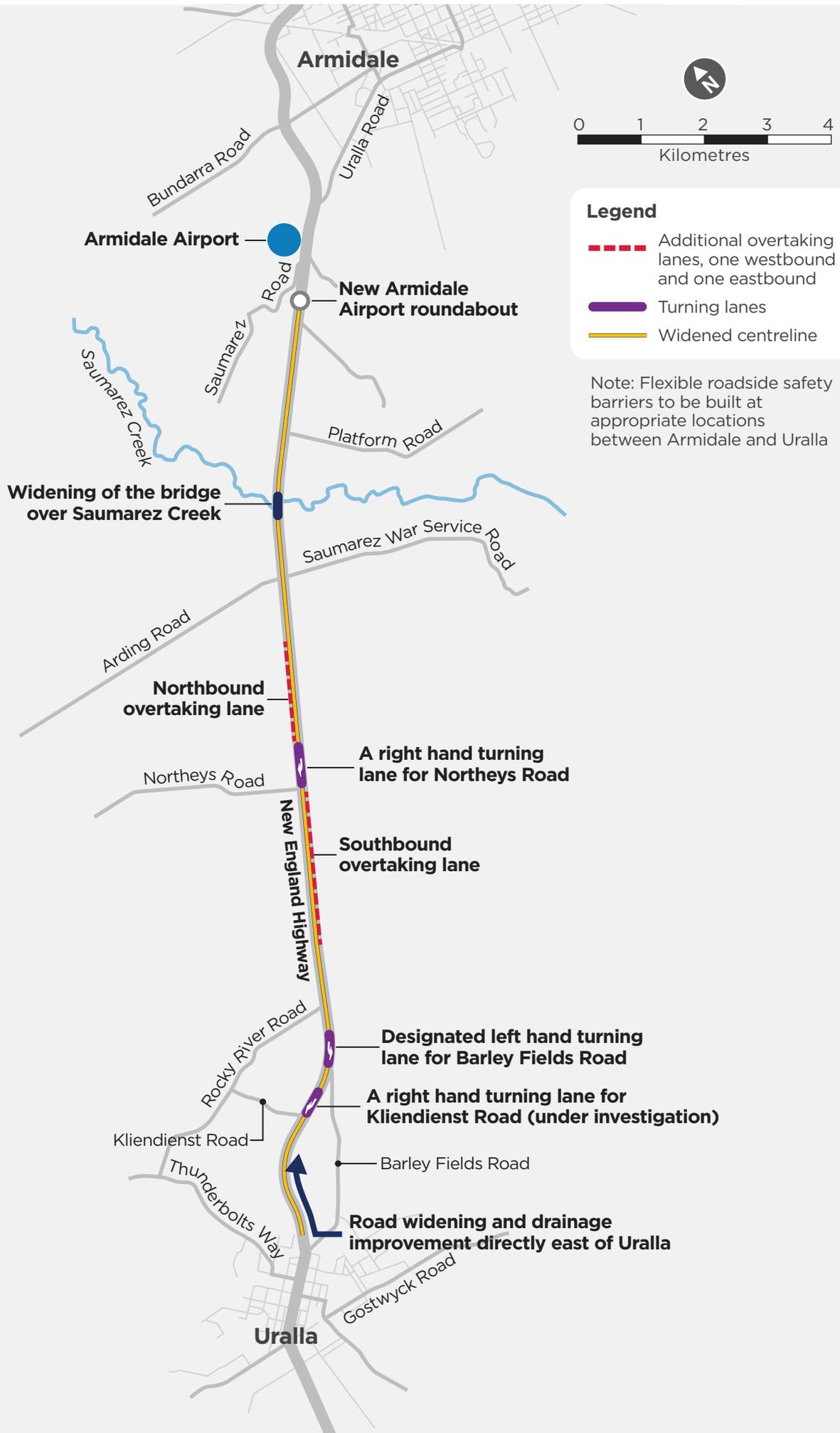
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David Richards

From: David Richards
Sent: Sunday, 18 November 2018 10:47 PM
To: David Richards
Subject: FW: New England Highway -- Proposed Solar Farm

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

[David Richards](#) | [Environmental Scientist](#)

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From: STEVENS Peter [<mailto:peter.stevens@rms.nsw.gov.au>]

Sent: Wednesday, 3 October 2018 2:38 PM

To: David Richards

Cc: SMITH Liz A; PERKINS John G; BLACK Andrew L; BUNNEMEYER Alban R; VICKERY Christopher J; LOH Chris

Subject: New England Highway -- Proposed Solar Farm

David,

Thanks for participating in the teleconference yesterday along with the other team members.

The meeting assisted in clarifying your time line and the possible steps going forward.

As agreed during the meeting RMS now proposes to continue with the safety upgrade works along this section of the New England Highway including the construction of a left turn lane to Barley Field Road. This decision is based on the traffic data available under the present land use.

If the solar farm is to progress to the implementation phase then changed traffic arrangements will require a review of the layout at Barley Fields Road junction. It seems likely that any demand for right turn from the highway would require a right turn lane because the current layout has an overtaking lane at this location.

RMS will ensure that the currently planned upgrade work will be suitable for conversion to a CH(R) layout without significant construction work but will most probably require reseal to obliterate line marking and the installation of revised line making.

Peter Stevens

Business Partner

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18 May 2018

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Re: State Significant Development Application –New England Solar Farm (SSD 9255)

Dear Matthew,

We are writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla.

Originating from the United States, UPC is a leading renewable energy development company that has been operating internationally since the 1990s and in Australia since 2016. To date, UPC has developed more than 3,500 megawatts (MW) of operating wind and solar projects in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. UPC is focused on supplying renewable energy at the lowest possible price in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

The proposal is State Significant Development (SSD) under the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. UPC will be supported by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the application for this proposal.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) provided details of assessment requirements for this proposal as part of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) on 8 May 2018. We have attached a copy of the SEARs for your reference.

As part of the SEARs, UPC is required to assess the likely visual impacts of the proposal (including any glare, reflectivity and night lighting), including impacts to air traffic.

We are seeking input from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) on the potential impacts of the proposal on air traffic, including impacts associated with air traffic using the Armidale Airport, approximately 5.4 km north of the site.

The preliminary environmental assessment for the proposal is available at the link below.

<https://majorprojects.accelo.com/public/95e09d7b44bf19664ed93650e23bbcf4/1.%20New%20England%20Solar%20-%20Preliminary%20Environmental%20Assessment.pdf>

Should you have any questions or if you would like to discuss this proposal further, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
tim.kirk@upcrenewables.com
0403 857 079
David Richards
Environmental Scientist
d Richards@emmconsulting.com.au
0405 593 675

Yours sincerely



Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
UPC Renewables Australia



David Richards
Environmental Scientist
EMM Consulting

David Richards

From: Windebank, Matthew [Matthew.Windebank@casa.gov.au]
Sent: Friday, 25 May 2018 10:09 AM
To: David Richards
Cc: Tim Kirk
Subject: RE: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Potential impacts to air traffic [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

UNCLASSIFIED

Hi David,

CASA has reviewed the preliminary environmental assessment for the New England Solar Farm and can advise that the proposal is distant from any aerodromes or known landing areas and as such does not consider any potential glare to be a hazard to air navigation. CASA does not require a glare analysis for this proposal.

Regards

Matthew Windebank

Aerodrome Engineer
Air Navigation, Airspace & Aerodromes Branch
CASA \ Aviation Group
GPO BOX 2005 CANBERRA ACT 2601

T - 02 6217 1183

F - 02 6217 1500



From: David Richards <drichards@emmconsulting.com.au>
Sent: Monday, 21 May 2018 4:22 PM
To: Windebank, Matthew <Matthew.Windebank@casa.gov.au>
Cc: Tim Kirk <tim.kirk@upcrenewables.com>
Subject: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Potential impacts to air traffic

Hi Matthew,

I am writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area, approximately 6 km east of the township of Uralla.

The preliminary environmental assessment submitted for this proposal can be viewed here:

<https://majorprojects.accelo.com/public/95e09d7b44bf19664ed93650e23bbcf4/1.%20New%20England%20Solar%20-%20Preliminary%20Environmental%20Assessment.pdf>

Please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance if you have any questions about the proposal. Tim's details are included in the attached letter. A copy of the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements are also attached for your review.

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

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David Richards

From: Cressida Gilmore [cressida.gilmore@planning.nsw.gov.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 May 2018 10:53 AM
To: David Richards
Cc: DRG GSNSW Landuse Minerals Mailbox
Subject: RE: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Consultation with GSNSW

Hi David,
Thanks for your time, and Tim's as well, we found the meeting very useful too. Thanks also for a copy of the minutes you've drafted, they cover all of the discussion points really well, no edits required from our end. We look forward to hearing more about progress on the solar farm as information becomes available.
Kind regards,
Cressida

Cressida Gilmore | Manager - Land Use | Land Use & Titles Advice
Geological Survey of NSW | Division of Resources and Geoscience (DRG)
516 High Street Maitland NSW 2320 | PO Box 344 Hunter Region Mail Centre NSW 2310
T: 02 4063 6627 | M: 0428 660 754
E: cressida.gilmore@planning.nsw.gov.au

Please note that my email address and office phone number have changed
Email: cressida.gilmore@planning.nsw.gov.au **T: 02 4063 6627**

From: David Richards [mailto:drichards@emmconsulting.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 25 May 2018 8:33 AM
To: Cressida Gilmore <cressida.gilmore@industry.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Consultation with GSNSW

Hi Cressida,

Thanks very much to you, Paul and Malcolm for meeting with Tim and I yesterday afternoon to discuss the New England Solar Farm.

Please refer below for a copy of the meeting notes I took during our discussions.

Please let me know if there are any important items from our discussions that haven't been captured below.

Attendees:

Tim Kirk (UPC)

David Richards (EMM)

Paul Dale, Malcolm Drummond and Cressida Gilmore (GSNSW)

Content:

- David and Tim provided an introduction to the project and UPC's experience in large-scale renewable energy projects.
- It was noted that the project area presented in the Preliminary Environmental Assessment is currently the subject of a detailed environmental assessment. Project infrastructure will not encompass this area in its entirety. The placement of project infrastructure will be informed by the outcomes of a number of different technical assessments, as well as engineering and detailed design considerations.
- GSNSW provided an overview of their role as stewards for the resources of NSW and their interest in compatibility or incompatibility of proposed developments within areas of potential mineral significance.
- The area identified as 'an area of higher mineral significance' in GSNSW's submission to DPE dated 3 May 2018 (herein referred to as 'the submission') has been identified based on an educated assessment and a recently commissioned prospective analysis, both of which incorporated desktop analysis and fieldwork across a large part of the New England region of NSW.
- The area identified in the submission is a subset of a greater area of interest to the north-west and may contain intrusion-related gold.
- GSNSW noted that the point of today's discussion was to communicate that there is high potential for a mineral to occur within the area identified within the submission based on both their investigations to date and knowledge of the presence of alluvial gold in this area.
- It was noted that the project's potential impacts on the area identified in the submission would be temporary and would not sterilise any potential resource beneath the surface.
- Based on its current status, there is no obligation for UPC to avoid the area identified within the submission under Clause 13 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum and Extractive Industries) 2007 (refer [here](#)).
- Noting the above, GSNSW highlighted that a good outcome from their perspective would be to avoid the area identified within the submission given the knowledge of the potential mineral resource.
- Tim and David noted that, at this stage, UPC are not in a position to be able to commit to avoidance of the area identified in the submission; however, this will be a point of consideration during the refinement of the placement of project infrastructure.
- GSNSW noted the main area of interest extends to the north-west of the area identified within the submission with potential for the mineral decreasing in a general south-east direction. It was noted that the priority area of avoidance would be the parcel of land that extends west towards Dangar's Lagoon.
- GSNSW encouraged UPC to engage with them early on as part of due diligence on any future projects.

Actions:

- Provide GSNSW with an update on the refined project boundary and position of project infrastructure closer to the submission of the EIS and supporting technical assessments.

Many thanks and kind regards,

David

David Richards | Environmental Scientist

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Memorandum



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18 September 2018

To Terence Seymour
Matt Clarkson
From David Richards (EMM) and Tim Kirk (UPC)
Subject J17300 - New England Solar Farm - Matters for discussion with Uralla Shire Council

Dear Terry and Matt,

Please refer below for a copy of the information we have prepared ahead of tomorrow morning's teleconference to discuss the New England Solar Farm.

1 Traffic impact assessment

1.1 Potential impacts on the local road network

The primary site access points will be from The Gap Road, Salisbury Plains Road, Hillview Road, Munsies Road and Big Ridge Road, with emergency access points from Saumarez War Service Road and Elliots Road (refer KMZ provided with covering email).

Based on existing baseline traffic volumes, the majority of the local road network that will be used to access the three array areas (including Munsies Road, Hillview Road, Salisbury Plains Road, Gostwyck Road and Big Ridge Road) does not comply with recommended design standards in terms of width and/or seal (Austrroads 2010).

Table 1 below provides a summary of the future daily traffic volumes as a result of the project's average construction traffic.

Table 2 below provides a summary of the future daily traffic volumes as a result of the project's peak construction traffic.

The project-related traffic volumes provided in Table 1 and Table 2 are for indicative purposes only and may be subject to change prior to the finalisation of the traffic impact assessment (TIA) and environmental impact statement (EIS).

Table 1 Future daily traffic assessment for project's average construction traffic

Project related traffic route	Projected baseline daily traffic volume (year 2018)	Baseline Austroads rural daily traffic volume standard	Meets baseline design standard	Average daily traffic from the project	Future total daily traffic	Percent traffic increase	Future Austroads rural daily traffic volume standard
New England Highway (north of Uralla)	6,557	> 3,000 daily vehicles	Yes	96	6,653	+1.46%	> 3,000 daily vehicles
Bridge Street (Uralla)	8,659	> 3,000 daily vehicles	Yes	239	8,898	+2.76%	> 3,000 daily vehicles
New England Highway (south of Uralla)	3,985	> 3,000 daily vehicles	Yes	88	4,073	+2.21%	> 3,000 daily vehicles
Barleyfields Road (north of Big Ridge Road)	645	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles	No	90	735	+13.95%	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles
Barleyfields Road (south of Big Ridge Road)	740	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles	No	144	884	+19.46%	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles
Big Ridge Road (east of Barleyfields Road)	175	150 – 500 daily vehicles	No	234	409	+133.71%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Big Ridge Road (east of Munsies Road)	115	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	195	310	+169.57%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Munsies Road (east of Big Ridge Road)	25	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	39	64	+156%	1 – 150 daily vehicles
Gostwyck Road (near McCrossin Street)	218	150 – 500 daily vehicles	No	65	283	+29.82%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Gostwyck Road (west of Hillview Road)	115	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	65	180	+56.21%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Hillview Road (south of Gostwyck Road)	55	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	65	120	+118.18%	1 – 150 daily vehicles
Thunderbolts Way (north of Salisbury Plains Road)	880	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles	Yes	130	1,010	+14.77%	1,000 – 3,000 daily vehicles
Salisbury Plains Road (east of Thunderbolts Way)	25	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	130	155	+520%	150 – 500 daily vehicles

Table 2 Future daily traffic assessment for project's peak construction traffic

Project related traffic route	Projected baseline daily traffic volume (year 2018)	Baseline Austroads rural daily traffic volume standard	Meets design standard (baseline only)	Average daily traffic from the project	Future total daily traffic	Percent traffic increase	Future Austroads rural daily traffic volume standard
New England Highway (north of Uralla)	6,557	> 3,000 daily vehicles	Yes	168	6,725	+2.56%	> 3,000 daily vehicles
Bridge Street (Uralla)	8,659	> 3,000 daily vehicles	Yes	440	9,099	+5.08%	> 3,000 daily vehicles
New England Highway (south of Uralla)	3,985	> 3,000 daily vehicles	Yes	140	4,125	+3.51%	> 3,000 daily vehicles
Barleyfields Road (north of Big Ridge Road)	645	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles	No	144	789	+22.33%	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles
Barleyfields Road (south of Big Ridge Road)	740	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles	No	288	1,028	+38.92%	1,000 – 3,000 daily vehicles
Big Ridge Road (east of Barleyfields Road)	175	150 – 500 daily vehicles	No	432	607	+246.86%	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles
Big Ridge Road (east of Munsies Road)	115	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	360	475	+313.04%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Munsies Road (east of Big Ridge Road)	25	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	72	97	+288%	1 – 150 daily vehicles
Gostwyck Road (near McCrossin Street)	218	150 – 500 daily vehicles	No	120	338	+55.05%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Gostwyck Road (west of Hillview Road)	115	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	120	235	+104.35%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Hillview Road (south of Gostwyck Road)	55	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	120	175	+218.18%	150 – 500 daily vehicles
Thunderbolts Way (north of Salisbury Plains Road)	880	500 – 1,000 daily vehicles	Yes	240	1,120	+27.27%	1,000 – 3,000 daily vehicles
Salisbury Plains Road (east of Thunderbolts Way)	25	1 – 150 daily vehicles	No	240	265	+960%	150 – 500 daily vehicles

The addition of project-related traffic will increase the number of vehicle movements on Big Ridge Road, Munsies Road, Hillview Road and Salisbury Plains Road during construction and operation. While these increases are proportionally significant on baseline traffic volumes during construction, this impact will be temporary and only apply for the project's construction period, which may be up to 36 months. UPC is currently considering a staged approach to construction. Traffic volumes will decrease significantly following the completion of construction.

UPC propose to implement a road maintenance program during construction, which would be prepared in consultation with Council as part of the preparation of the project's construction traffic management plan (CTMP) prior to commencement of construction. The program may include items such as:

- regrading of the road surface to repair potholes and road corrugations (at three monthly intervals); and/or
- a commitment by UPC to restore the road surfaces to their pre-construction condition at the completion of the project's construction.

A dilapidation assessment and report by a suitably qualified and independent civil or structural engineer may also be prepared for the proposed heavy vehicle route between the three array areas and the New England Highway.

1.2 Heavy vehicle routes

Proposed heavy vehicle routes include:

- northern and central arrays – UPC propose to use the New England Highway on to Barleyfields Road, and then on to Big Ridge Road and/or Munsies Road (refer KMZ attached to covering email);
- southern array – UPC propose the use of the following heavy vehicle routes for the southern array area (ie Hillview Road and Salisbury Plains Road site access points) to minimise disruption through the centre of Uralla (where possible):
 - For normal trucks and semi-trailers:
 - Coming from the north along the New England Highway, turn left on to Hill Street and right onto Duke Street to avoid the town centre; or
 - Coming from the south along the New England Highway, turn right on to Salisbury Street and then right onto Duke Street.
 - For oversize vehicles:
 - Coming from the north along the New England Highway, turn left on to Salisbury Street (Note: The turning corner is too sharp at Hill Street);
 - Coming from the south along the New England Highway, turn right on to Rowan Avenue and then left or right on to Duke Street to avoid multiple turning movements in close proximity of the town centre).

An assessment of the suitability of the proposed heavy vehicle routes (including existing intersection configurations) to accommodate the relevant design vehicles will be completed by UPC and any required road and/or intersection upgrades/modifications will be identified in the CTMP to be prepared prior to commencement of construction.

2 Cumulative impacts with the Uralla Solar Farm

The EIS will include consideration of the Uralla Solar Farm. The key assessments that will include consideration of this neighbouring project are:

- traffic impact assessment – primarily due to the combined impacts on the regional road network (namely the New England Highway);
- visual impact assessment – primarily due to the potential for cumulative visual impacts (primarily motorists on the New England Highway, Saumarez War Service Road and Arding Road); and
- social impact assessment – primarily due to the potential for increased demand on local short-term accommodation, health services, local businesses and the similar nature of the workforce requirements (in terms of targeted labour force demographics).

3 Waste management

Stephanie McCaffrey (Manager – Waste, Water and Sewer Services) requested sufficient and detailed consideration regarding reduction, management, reuse, recycling and disposal of waste material generated during construction.

As part of the EIS, appropriate waste management facilities within the Uralla, Tamworth and Armidale LGAs will be identified and anticipated timing for delivery of wastes to these facilities will also be flagged. However, the level of detail requested from Council will not be available until completion of the detailed design process for the project.

It is therefore proposed that UPC commit to preparation of a detailed waste management plan prior to commencement of construction in consultation with Uralla Shire Council and DPE.

The plan would include consideration of the following:

- measures to reduce the types and volumes of waste generated during construction;
- measures to maximise reuse and recycling and reduce the volume of waste generated by the project and subsequently disposed of at licensed waste management facilities;
- a breakdown of anticipated waste streams and volumes;
- evidence of consultation with licensed waste management facilities to confirm the capacity of these facilities and their availability to manage the project's waste;
- on-site waste management measures in line with relevant guidelines; and
- commitments around disposal of project assets at the completion of operations.

4 Temporary construction accommodation village

Based on the outcomes of preliminary investigations into estimated project workforce numbers and local accommodation availability, UPC recently requested a revision to the project description within the SEARs to include a construction accommodation village for non-local construction employees.

A construction accommodation village for non-local construction employees may be established as part of the early stages of the project's construction. If constructed, the construction accommodation village would accommodate a significant proportion of the project's non-local construction workforce. If constructed, the construction accommodation village may help mitigate the potential impact on tourist accommodation in the surrounding area and reduce potential impacts on the local road network.

The construction accommodation village will be on part of Lot 2 of DP 174053 in the northern array area. To build the construction accommodation village, topsoil will be stripped where necessary, hardstand constructed and walkways and car parks constructed.

Where plausible, local businesses will be engaged to supply goods and services to the construction accommodation village, typically consisting of laundry, cleaning and catering.

The construction accommodation village is expected to be dismantled and its footprint rehabilitated once the project is built and it moves into the operational phase.

5 Construction hours

Construction activities are proposed from 6am–6pm Monday to Sunday. Utilising everyday in the week will ensure the construction program is significantly shortened, thereby reducing the project’s potential impacts to the local community and local infrastructure. Furthermore, given that a construction accommodation village may be required to house a large percentage of the project’s non-local construction workforce, utilising the mobilised workforce as efficiently as possible will help the project to remain economically competitive.

Exceptions to these hours may be required on limited occasions. Uralla Shire Council and surrounding landholders will be notified of any exceptions.

6 Electricity transmission line between the southern and central array areas

The indicative alignment of the overhead electricity transmission line (ETL) to connect the southern array area to the central array area extends over approximately 9.5 km and covers land owned by two of the project landholders, as well as the southern road easement of a 1 km section of Gostwyck Road.

The alignment of the overhead transmission lines and design, height and style of the structures required to support them will be determined during the detailed design stage of the project. The easement required for the overhead transmission lines will be dependent on the type of structure selected. The distance between each structure will also be dependent on the type of structure selected. Where possible, structures will avoid identified constraints on the land parcels between the two array areas. Complete clearance of vegetation within the proposed easement may be required. The indicative alignment has been surveyed as part of the preparation of the biodiversity assessment and Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment.

A KMZ attached to the covering email contains the indicative alignment currently being considered by UPC.

18 May 2018

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Environment Protection Authority
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Re: State Significant Development Application –New England Solar Farm (SSD 9255)
Your ref: EF 13/5596; DOC 18/245800

Dear Rebecca,

We are writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla.

Originating from the United States, UPC is a leading renewable energy development company that has been operating internationally since the 1990s and in Australia since 2016. To date, UPC has developed more than 3,500 megawatts (MW) of operating wind and solar projects in North America, Europe, Africa and Asia. UPC is focused on supplying renewable energy at the lowest possible price in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

The proposal is State Significant Development (SSD) under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. UPC will be supported by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the application for this proposal.

We acknowledge your response to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) dated 23 April 2018 noting that the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has reviewed the draft Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and has no further considerations to include about this proposal. We have reviewed the SEARs and their attachments and will give consideration to the matters raised during the preparation of the EIS for this proposal. We have attached a copy of the SEARs for this proposal for your reference.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your office in Armidale to discuss this proposal. Should you have any questions or if you would like to meet for a more detailed briefing, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
tim.kirk@upcrenewables.com
0403 857 079
David Richards
Environmental Scientist
drichards@emmconsulting.com.au
0405 593 675

Yours sincerely

Handwritten signature of Tim Kirk in black ink.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
UPC Renewables Australia

Handwritten signature of David Richards in black ink.

David Richards
Environmental Scientist
EMM Consulting



18 May 2018

Brent Todd
Junior Engineer – Third Party Compliance
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Re: State Significant Development Application –New England Solar Farm (SSD 9255)

Dear Brent,

We are writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla.

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The proposal is State Significant Development (SSD) under the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. UPC will be supported by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the application for this proposal.

We acknowledge your response to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) providing details of assessment requirements for this proposal as part of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). The matters raised within your response were primarily in relation to traffic and potential impacts on level crossings along the Main Northern Railway. We have reviewed this response and the SEARs and their attachments and will give consideration to the matters raised during the preparation of the EIS for this proposal. We have attached a copy of the SEARs for this proposal for your reference.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your office in Mayfield to discuss this proposal. Should you have any questions or if you would like to meet for a more detailed briefing, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance.

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Project Development Manager
tim.kirk@upcrenewables.com
0403 857 079
David Richards
Environmental Scientist
d Richards@emmconsulting.com.au
0405 593 675

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Kirk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline that loops back under the first name.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
UPC Renewables Australia

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Richards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline that loops back under the first name.

David Richards
Environmental Scientist
EMM Consulting



18 May 2018

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Re: State Significant Development Application –New England Solar Farm (SSD 9255)
Your ref: BFS 18/1047 (8000003329); D 18/29347

Dear Graeme,

We are writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla.

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The proposal is State Significant Development (SSD) under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. UPC will be supported by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the application for this proposal.

We acknowledge your response to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) dated 3 May 2018 providing details of assessment requirements for this proposal as part of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). The matters raised within your response were primarily in relation to risk control measures to assist with the management an emergency incident within the project area. We have reviewed this response and the SEARs and their attachments and will give consideration to the matters raised during the preparation of the EIS for this proposal. We have attached a copy of the SEARs for this proposal for your reference.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your office in Greenacre to discuss this proposal. Should you have any questions or if you would like to meet for a more detailed briefing, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance.

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Project Development Manager
tim.kirk@upcrenewables.com
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David Richards
Environmental Scientist
d Richards@emmconsulting.com.au
0405 593 675

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Kirk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping underline that loops back under the first name.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
UPC Renewables Australia

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Richards". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a prominent 'D' and 'R'.

David Richards
Environmental Scientist
EMM Consulting



18 May 2018

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Team Leader, Development Assessment and Planning
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Re: State Significant Development Application –New England Solar Farm (SSD 9255)
Your ref: D 18/5303; DA 18042312770 AB

Dear Alan,

We are writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla.

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The proposal is State Significant Development (SSD) under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. UPC will be supported by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the application for this proposal.

We acknowledge your response to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) dated 3 May 2018 providing details of assessment requirements for this proposal as part of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). The matters raised within your response were primarily in relation to the management of grass fires impacting on, and structural fires emanating from, project infrastructure. We have reviewed this response and the SEARs and their attachments and will give consideration to the matters raised during the preparation of the EIS for this proposal. We have attached a copy of the SEARs for this proposal for your reference.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your office in Coffs Harbour to discuss this proposal. Should you have any questions or if you would like to meet for a more detailed briefing, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance.

Tim Kirk
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tim.kirk@upcrenewables.com
0403 857 079
David Richards
Environmental Scientist
drichards@emmconsulting.com.au
0405 593 675

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Kirk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
UPC Renewables Australia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Richards". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

David Richards
Environmental Scientist
EMM Consulting



18 May 2018

John Ringland
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Re: State Significant Development Application –New England Solar Farm (SSD 9255)

Dear John,

We are writing to you on behalf of UPC Renewables Australia Pty Ltd (UPC) in relation to the New England Solar Farm, a significant grid-connected solar farm along with associated infrastructure proposed by UPC. The proposal will be developed on a site within the Uralla Shire local government area (LGA), approximately 6 kilometres (km) east of the township of Uralla.

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The proposal is State Significant Development (SSD) under the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. UPC will be supported by EMM Consulting Pty Limited (EMM) in the preparation of the environmental impact statement (EIS) to support the application for this proposal.

We acknowledge your response to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) noting that SafeWork NSW has reviewed the draft Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) and has no further considerations to include about this proposal. We have reviewed the SEARs and their attachments and will give consideration to the matters raised during the preparation of the EIS for this proposal. We have attached a copy of the SEARs for this proposal for your reference.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your office in Tamworth to discuss this proposal. Should you have any questions or if you would like to meet for a more detailed briefing, please do not hesitate to contact Tim Kirk at UPC in the first instance.

Tim Kirk
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0403 857 079
David Richards
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drichards@emmconsulting.com.au
0405 593 675

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Kirk', with a large, sweeping underline.

Tim Kirk
Project Development Manager
UPC Renewables Australia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Richards', written in a cursive style.

David Richards
Environmental Scientist
EMM Consulting

Copies of media coverage

MAY 11 2018 - 10:08AM

Sunhill Dairy Goats farm Uralla concerned it will be hit hard by a potential New England Solar Farm development



Madeline Link



GOT THEIR GOAT: Sunhill Dairy Farm owners Corinne and Richard Annetts are unhappy about the solar farm proposed for Uralla. Photo: Madeline Link

A WHOPPING 2,400 hectare solar farm threatens the future of Sunhill Dairy Goats farm in Uralla.

Owners Corinne and Richard Annetts have run the property for 13 years, and found out just five weeks ago that the tourism destination could be surrounded by solar panels.

“We are devastated, it’s mentally very challenging at the moment and it’s affecting our whole family,” Mrs Annetts said.

“There will be some impact, whether tourists are going to want to come out to the little goat farm in the middle of the solar farm, we just don’t know.”

The solar farm is proposed by UPC Renewables, and will be spread across three solar fields.

Uralla was chosen for its elevation, the TransGrid transmission line that already passes through the site and its flat, unconstrained land.

New England Solar Farm project lead Killian Wentrup said the current focus is consulting the community.

“We’re conducting a range of environmental and technical studies ahead of submitting a development application to the NSW Government later this year,” he said.

“UPC is working closely with residents who have the potential to be negatively impacted by the solar farm.

“We focus first on understanding the specific concerns that an individual, family or local business may have, as these vary. Working together we can then define the mitigation that is most appropriate for the stakeholders’ specific circumstances.”

The proposed solar fields surround three sides of Sunhill Dairy, and the lay of the land makes it unlikely it can be screened with trees.

Mr Annetts said the couple aren’t against renewable energy, they just wish there was an opportunity to create a bigger exclusion zone around their humble goat farm.

“As far as being a tourist destination we don’t know what the impact will be at this stage,” he said.

“We’ve been told the construction could take up to two years.”

UPC Renewables developers met with stakeholders on Thursday to discuss the project and its impacts.

And, construction could start as early as January 2019.

Mrs Annetts said she knows the solar farm will have a positive impact on the town, but wants to retain the view she first fell in love with at Uralla.

“We’ve got solar panels on our house, we’re certainly about self sufficiency,” she said.

“But it’s that construction phase that’s going to be the big one, and afterwards we just have to live with the fact that there’s going to be solar panels in our daily sight.”



Solar surge across the region

PRIME7 News North West

June 4, 2018, 4:12PM



More and more people are turning to renewable energy sources with a surge in solar system installations across the New England North West.

AUGUST 7 2018 - 9:30AM

Proposed New England Solar Farm plan community meeting

Meg Francis

Local News



A community meeting for a proposed Uralla-based solar farm will be held next week.

The 700 megawatt solar farm, which could power 250,000 homes, has been put forward by renewable energy developer UPC Renewables Australia.

Read more:

- [Armidale police investigating following attempted carjacking, assault](#)
- [Armidale's Yazidi refugees hold memorial service for fourth anniversary of Sinjar massacre](#)
- [Local finalists in UNE Schools Art Prize](#)

Under the plan, New England Solar Farm will be made up of three separate solar fields, comprising more than two million solar panels, across a 2400 hectare site.

UPC Renewables solar development head Killian Wentrup said the New England Solar Farm would be a asset to the community.

“The solar farm will provide a valuable source of income for the local farming community, helping to drought proof the local economy,” he said.

“It will provide a source of income for local contractors and generate employment during construction and a number of long term jobs.”

It is estimated the project will provide around 500 jobs during construction and up to 15 ongoing jobs.

The public meeting will be held on August 15 from 6pm at the Alternate Root Cafe, and is open to all community members.

“I’m confident the project and the community will be able to co-exist in a very harmonious way,” Mr Wentrup said.

“We care about how our project fits into the community. We want to ensure that it will be the best it can be – not just as a solar farm but for the community.

“We want people to come along and ask questions because we want people to value this project.”

The proposal has received concerns from surrounding landholders but Mr Wentrup said being a “good neighbour” was pivotal for the renewable energy organisation.

“We want to be a good neighbour and a long term member of the Uralla community,” he said.

“This means taking the time to listen to the what people think about the proposal and work with the community to refine our plans wherever possible.

“We’ve taken a number of measure to ensure these farming activities can continue in this area.”

The development application is expected to be lodged by the end of this year, and if successful, construction will begin in mid-2019.

Solar farm community funding for Uralla reference group ideas

Steve Green



(l-r) From the Community Power Agency Jarrah Hicks, landowner Peter Munsie, Community Reference Group member Tom O'Connor, UPC Renewables head of solar development Killian Wentrup and Richard and Asher Munsie.

An eight member Community Reference Group of local Uralla residents and business owners has delivered a list of projects and local initiatives for funding by UPC Renewables Australia, as part of the New England Solar Farm project located about six kilometres east of Uralla.

UPC will support community projects through its Community Benefit Sharing Initiative by providing funding of \$250 for every megawatt of power generating capacity installed at the farm, or about \$150,000 and \$200,000 a year across the 25-year working life of the farm.

The reference group was established in August this year and independently chaired by the Community Power Agency, a not-for-profit specialist in working with local communities and renewable energy projects.

UPC Renewables head of solar development Killian Wentrup said the company would to be involved in the ownership and operation of the project for the long-term, and had engaged with the community for the last nine-months.

He said the sharing initiative was based on the principle that the Uralla community should also benefit from hosting solar developments.

"It is important to us that the New England Solar Farm contributes to the local economy and becomes a valued long-term part of the Uralla community," Mr Wentrup said.

“That’s why we asked the community to help us design this initiative and a list of potential projects that could be supported by the solar farm, once it is approved and goes ahead.”

ALSO READ:

- [Proposed solar farm for New England community meeting](#)
- [Uralla Shire Council looking at a big rate rise](#)

The group recommended projects such as a no interest loan scheme for energy efficiency measures, funding for education scholarships and schools as well as a community grants program.

“It’s been a valuable exercise for us to work so closely with local residents, businesses and the council on this initiative. We hope there continues to be strong community involvement with the next phase of the initiative,” Mr Wentrup said.

“I thank every member of the reference group for their time and effort to guide us and help make our proposal the best it can be.”

He said each project would need to undergo a feasibility assessment before receiving funding.

The Development Application for the New England Solar Farm is expected to be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in November, and if approved, the 600-800MW project is expected to produce enough renewable electricity to power more than 250,000 typical NSW homes.



LANDHOLDERS WELCOME NEW ENGLAND SOLAR PROPOSAL

Amelia Bernasconi October 18, 2018 North West News
Comments Off on LANDHOLDERS WELCOME NEW ENGLAND SOLAR PROPOSAL

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Landholders are welcoming the proposal of a [New England Solar Farm](#) on the outskirts of Uralla.

The project is now in the late stages of planning, before it goes to the state government for approval.



Solar farm for Uralla

PRIME7 News North West

October 18, 2018, 5:49PM



Uralla is at the heart of a proposed solar farm on the outskirts of town.

Letters of support

31 October 2018

Dear Iwan Davies

NSW Department of Planning and Environment

I am writing in support of UPC Renewable's New England Solar Farm proposal, and particularly the leadership they are taking as part of this development to consult with and provide benefits to the local community.

Community Power Agency are an independent not-for-profit organisation established to support communities to engage in and benefit from the transition to renewable energy. We were engaged by UPC to assist them in developing a Community Benefit Sharing Initiative. You will see our report of this process and its recommendations in the Development Application.

Although we have a vested interest in this project, I am writing to offer my knowledge of sector standards in relation to community engagement and benefit sharing. Based on my previous extensive research and experience in this field (see my bio and publications below), I feel it is important to recognise UPC's leadership in this space and contribution to diversifying the ways that large scale solar developments are interfacing positively with local communities.

As a relatively new sector in Australia, large-scale solar development as yet lack clear standards regarding how the benefits of a development are shared with the local community. To my knowledge, UPC's proposal to contribute \$250 per installed MW (AC) per year is generous, and certainly above and beyond current industry standards.

Further, and possibly more importantly, UPC have demonstrated their willingness to be guided by the community in decisions about how these funds should be distributed to deliver lasting local value. UPC have been extremely open and attentive in their approach to developing the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative and have taken on board all the recommendations developed by the independent community reference group. I have been impressed with the manner in which they have taken on board community feedback and been transparent in how they report back on their decisions to the community.

In my time working with the local Uralla community to develop the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative recommendations, I encountered an overwhelmingly positive and constructive attitude towards the project and UPC's proposal to share the benefits with the local community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like further information on the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative or the community process undertaken to develop it.

Kind regards,

Dr. Jarra Hicks

Founding Director, Community Power Agency

jarra@cpagency.org.au | 0401 952 805

Bio

Jarra is a founding director of the Community Power Agency, a leading organisation supporting communities to establish renewable energy projects. With 10 years experience in the community energy in both Australia and overseas, Jarra's knowledge spans business models, community engagement, facilitation, policy development and partnership building. Jarra has a unique blend of practitioner and researcher experience and throughout her career has lead projects on the ground as well as working at sector and policy levels. She has worked as a project manager on the ground, as well as working with governments, peak bodies, academics, NGOs and the corporate sector. Jarra has recently completed a PhD at the University of New South Wales. Her thesis analyses the outcomes and impacts from community owned wind energy projects in small regional communities.

Jarra is an experienced researcher and accomplished author of a number of journal articles, guides and book chapters. From 2014 to 2016 Jarra acted as an advisor to the ACT government in the design and delivery of the Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing component of their Renewable Energy Auctions. In 2017 Jarra co-authored the Victorian Government's *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide for Applicants to the Victorian Renewable Energy Target Auction*.

Publications

Hicks, J., & Ison, N. (2018). An exploration of the boundaries of 'community' in community renewable energy projects: Navigating between motivations and context. In *Energy Policy Journal*, Vol. 113.

Hicks, J., Lane, T., Wood, E., & Hall, N. (2017). *Enhancing Positive Social Outcomes from Wind Farm Development: Evaluating community engagement and benefit-sharing in Australia*. Melbourne: Clean Energy Council.

Lane, T., & Hicks, J. (2017). *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development*. Melbourne: Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Mey, F. & Hicks, J., (2016). Community Renewable Energy in Australia: Exploring its character & emergence as a social movement in the context of climate action. *People, Place and Policy*, (under review).

Lane, T., Hicks, J., et al (2015). Guide to Community-owned Renewable Energy for Victorians. Victorian Government.

J Hicks & T Lane (2014) *Best Practice Community Engagement in Wind Energy*, Commissioned by the ACT Government.

J Hicks, N Ison, J Gilding & F Mey (2013) *Community-Owned Renewable Energy: How-to Guide* Commissioned by the NSW Government.



Z-NET Uralla Incorporated (INC1700359)

ABN: 31 527 375 768

10 East Street, Uralla NSW 2358

Email: convenor@zneturalla.org.au Phone: 0428 199 044

31 October 2018

Attention: Mr Iwan Davies, NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Re: UPC Renewables Australia New England Solar Farm Project

Dear Iwan,

I am writing on behalf of Z-NET Uralla, a community-based organisation with the goal to assist our community to transition to 100% renewable energy.

Two of our members contributed to the Community Reference Group to provide UPC Renewables with recommendations on how funds allocated to a Community Benefit Sharing Initiative could be invested.

Z-NET Uralla would like to commend UPC on the manner in which this community consultation was undertaken. While implementation will be the real test of effectiveness, the process undertaken was consultative, extensive - given the tight timeframe, and the recommendations have been well received.

We are conscious that there are members of our community who are concerned about a significant industrial development being constructed in a rural setting. We encourage UPC to continue engaging with concerned parties to explore ways in which the impact of the development can be minimised for neighbouring land holders.

The impact the construction phase will have on a small regional Shire is yet to be realised. We also encourage UPC to monitor potential negative impacts and engage proactively with the community to find solutions.

Should the development go ahead, Z-NET Uralla offers support and input to shaping the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative and working with UPC to address community issues as they arise.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sandra Eady'.

Dr Sandra Eady

President Z-NET Uralla



1 November 2018

Iwan Davies

NSW Department of Planning and Environment

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM

I am writing to provide a Letter of Support for New England Solar Farm, particularly for the Development Application being submitted for this project by the proponent, UPC Renewables.

Farming the Sun is one of Australia's largest community solar energy initiatives. More than fifty organisations have been part of the collaboration, which is coordinated by rural sustainability charity, [Starfish Initiatives](#). Together, this initiative has achieved 2.4MW of new solar power, including the multi-award-winning Lismore Community Solarfarms.

Farming the Sun was engaged to provide strategic input into the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative (CBSI). To our knowledge, this is the first time that a utility-scale solar farm developer has incorporated such a rigorous benefit sharing process of community research, engagement and planning. We commend UPC Renewables for taking this initiative. We also commend the Community Power Agency for the quality of their work in leading this part of the project.

Farming the Sun is confident that the CBSI will bring significant benefits to the community of interest for this project. The community priorities identified are in our view reflect some of the most important opportunities and challenges. Further, the quantum of funds to be allocated is significant and potentially ten times the size of Uralla Shire Council's annual grant program.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional information or wish to discuss our Letter of Support further in any way.

Sincerely yours

Adam Blakester

Project Director

adam@farmingthesun.net

02 6775 2501 | 0419 808 900



★ HIGHLAND LIVING ★

**Highland Living
68 Bridge Street
Uralla NSW 2358
0419 411957**

November 1, 2018

To: Iwan Davies
NSW Department of Planning and Environment

Dear Mr Davies,

I am writing to you as a committed and dedicated member of the Uralla region.

I own a business on the main street of Uralla called Highland Living. My partner and I own three commercial sites on the main street, and two that are not on the main street. Collectively our two families own 8 homes in the shire, so we have a vested interest in its future growth.

I am also a founding member of the Uralla Shire Business Chamber.

Uralla has been growing as a vibrant and unique little town, with many people moving here because of its many attractive attributes (just like I did). I, like most people here, are counting on its continued growth.

As a member of this community I support and back any type of project that will help the growth of Uralla. For that reason, I have researched the proposed Solar Farm and the impacts it will have on Uralla in depth. I have attended all the presentations and information sessions.

I was most excited to hear of the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative. I was also enthusiastic to be a part of its implementation into the community by being on an independent committee of local

business owners, councillors and community members. Our job was to put forward a start-up proposal to UPC on how we think this initiative could be best spread across our shire in an inclusive and productive way, and we came away with great results.

I have been impressed by UPC's undertaking of the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative, and the implementation to date of the way it will be processed. By employing the consultation of the Community Power Agency, we were able to be professionally guided through the process to arrive at the best outcome. An outcome that means the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative will flow through the region in the most effective way.

So, I am writing this letter to you to put up my hand as a show of support for the New England Solar Farm being approved and becoming a part of the growth and development of the broader shire.

I am confident the solar farm will bring prosperity to the region by boosting the economy and tourism to the region, creating jobs, and ofcourse by the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative: grant funds, revolving loans, and a well needed newsletter.

Thank you for your time, and if you would like any further discussion I am happy to oblige.

Best regards,
Sonia Repin

Woodstock
439 Eastern Ave,
Kentucky 2354

Iwan Davies,
NSW Dept of Planning and Enviroment.

Dear Sir,

I am writing this in support of the Solar Farm that UPC are planning to build near Uralla NSW. UPC have made a big effort to consult the community in general and those people directly affected by the development and have made significant changes to their original plan to accommodate those affected. They have also committed \$250 per installed MW/year for 25 years under the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative (CBSI).

I was a member of the Community Reference Group created to decide how to deal with this potential windfall. I am on the committee of the Kentucky Hall, opened in 1940 as a Memorial Hall, which is situated in a small village about 15 km south of Uralla. It is one of the focal points of the village and is used by the Kentucky Primary School for their Hall as well as for playgroup, dances and numerous other functions by the locals. It is also one of the few Halls that is still owned by the community, not the Shire or Lands Dept., which puts us at a disadvantage when sourcing insurance and maintenance funding. The committee works hard to raise the funds to keep it going but now its age is catching up with it and we need to do significant repairs. Being able to source funding through the CBSI will have a huge impact on what we can achieve.

This is only one example of what the CBSI can do for the Community in general. A Newsletter is desperately needed to disseminate local information and help to bring cohesiveness between the town and the outlying villages and farms and no-interest loans for installing energy and water saving measures is a no-brainer, having both a significant financial and environmental impact.

UPC did their homework well resulting in community support often lacking in these situations. They worked hard to develop a relationship with the community and in doing so earned our respect and appreciation for the financial injection of this magnitude. It will have a significant and long term impact.

Yours Faithfully,

Beatrice Bashford.