

Appendix C Community Consultation Plan



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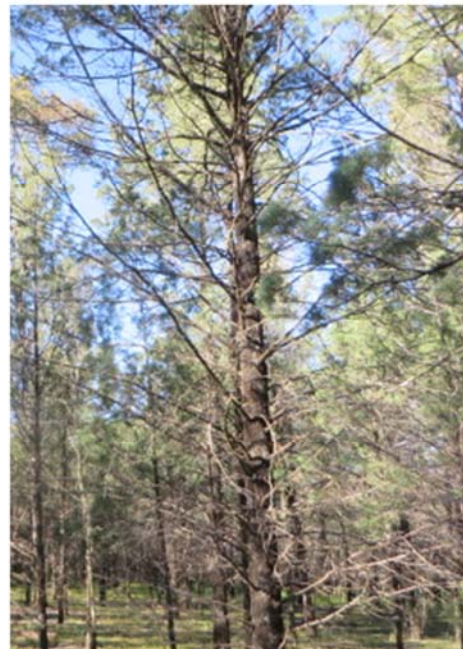
X-ELI⊕

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Forest Glen Solar Farm

September 2020

Project Number: 20-332



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ARENA	Australian Renewable Energy Agency
BCD	Biodiversity Conservation Division
CCS	Community Consultation Strategy
DP	Deposited Plan
DPIE	Department of Industry, Planning and Environment
DRG	Division of Resources and Geoscience
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
Ha	hectares
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
Km	kilometres
kV	kilovolts
LGA	Local Government Area
M	Metres
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt hours
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NRAR	Water and Natural Resources Access Regulator
NSW	New South Wales
RFS	Rural Fire Service
SEARs	Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements
SEIFA	Socio Economic Indexes for Areas
TfNSW	Transport for NSW

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PRINCIPLES

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

1. Facilitate deeper understanding of potential issues and decisions required for the project.
2. Enhance the quality of decisions made for the project.
3. Allow people to contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

Effective community consultation includes six important community engagement principles:

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

1.2. AIM OF THIS STRATEGY

This Community Consultation Strategy (CCS) has been developed for the Forest Glen Solar Farm as proposed by X-Elio.

The aim of the strategy is to:

1. Identify effective methods to inform the local community about the Forest Glen Solar Farm proposal.
2. Facilitate engagement with the local community. This includes allowing meaningful contributions from the community into the environmental assessment and project development.
3. Obtain social license to operate from the local community. This will allow for good long-term relationships with community stakeholders.

The strategy identifies:

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

Effective engagement requires an understanding of community stakeholders and prioritisation of potential impacts. It also relies on an understanding within the community of the project and specific issues of interest to them, for the community to contribute effectively. The focus of the consultation strategy will be on providing this understanding and engagement. This strategy does not cover

consultation with Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), which will be governed by the Aboriginal cultural heritage consultation requirements for proponents 2010, NSW Government, or government agencies.

1.3. STRUCTURE

The structure of this strategy includes:

Proposal overview	Section 2
Identification of community stakeholders for the project	Section 4
Issue management – specific issues that require consideration	Section 5
Project based activities – activities that will be undertaken to achieve the goals of this CCS	Section 6

1.4. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVISION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This CCS has been developed to coincide with the early planning and assessment stages of the Forest Glen Solar Farm proposal.

The ability to undertake community consultation is currently being impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the requirements of Federal, State and Territory governments that social (face to face) contact for non-essential activities and large gatherings is limited and that this may change, depending on local, regional and state outbreaks of the virus. This combined with the fact that community members are less likely to want face to face meetings, introduce challenges to undertaking community consultation. During recent discussion with the team leader of the energy assessments section of DPIE, it was acknowledged that the Department are seeing introduces challenges in relation to undertaking community consultation across NSW. The risk has recently increased, a result of recent outbreaks in Victoria, that have extended into NSW. This has been reflected in the consultation activities and strategies within this plan to ensure meaningful engagement is possible.

If the proposal is approved, consultation will also be required to continue throughout the assessment, construction and operational phases of the project. These phases will require a new or updated CCS in order to reflect any changes to consultation objectives but also, the increasing knowledge gained about the community. At this stage, only pre-approval project stages are addressed. However, should there be queries on project stages that have not been finalised or identified, the CCS would respond efficiently to these queries.

1.5. RELEVANT GUIDELINES

This CCS has been prepared considering the following guidelines and references:

- *Community and Stakeholder Engagement Guideline 2017*, NSW Department of Industry, Planning and Environment.

- *Community Guide to EIA 2017*. NSW Department of Industry, Planning and Environment.
- *Community Consultative Committee Guideline 2019*, NSW Department of Industry, Planning and Environment.
- *Beyond Public Meetings: Connecting community engagement with decision making*, Twyford Consulting 2007.

2. PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

2.1. FOREST GLEN SOLAR FARM PROPOSAL

The Forest Glen Solar Farm proposal is located in NSW at Lot 1 DP1198911 on Minore Road, Minore, located within the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area (LGA).

Site access is off Minore Road, approximately 1.9km east of the site. The existing access track is unsealed and intersects Minore Road and the Main Western Railway easement which are outside of the project's lease arrangement. The nearest major road is the Newell Highway and is located 12.4km east of the proposal site.

Under the *Dubbo Local Environmental Plan 2011*, the proposal site is located on land zoned as RU1 Primary Production. About two thirds of the proposal site has been extensively cleared of woody vegetation and has been modified by farming practices. The majority of the subject land is used for grazing and cropping.

The proposed Forest Glen Solar Farm is a photovoltaic (PV) solar facility that would generate up to 110 MW of electricity to the national grid. The proposal site is a maximum of about 790ha with the leased area up to 350ha. The area of solar farm infrastructure anticipated to occupy approximately 250ha (development footprint). This would include solar arrays, electrical infrastructure including inverters, transformers and connection hub, internal gravel roads and carparking, and a control centre/small office.

The suburb of Narromine is located approximately 6.7km west of the proposal site and the nearest major regional centre is Dubbo, which is located approximately 16km east of the proposal site.

A total of 18 residences are located within 1km of the proposal site, excluding the 1 dwelling within the proposal site. There are 40 residences in the range of 1km to 2 km from the proposal site.

2.2. CONSTRUCTION

It is anticipated that the proposed solar farm would include development of the following infrastructure:

- Single axis tracking solar panels
- Inverters
- Transformers
- Internal access tracks
- Watercourse crossings for internal access tracks, where required
- Car parking
- Site office
- Water storage

The Forest Glen Solar Farm would be expected to operate for a minimum of 25 years. After the initial operating period, the Forest Glen Solar Farm would either be decommissioned, removing all above ground infrastructure and returning the proposal site to its existing land capability, or repowered subject to landowner and planning consents.

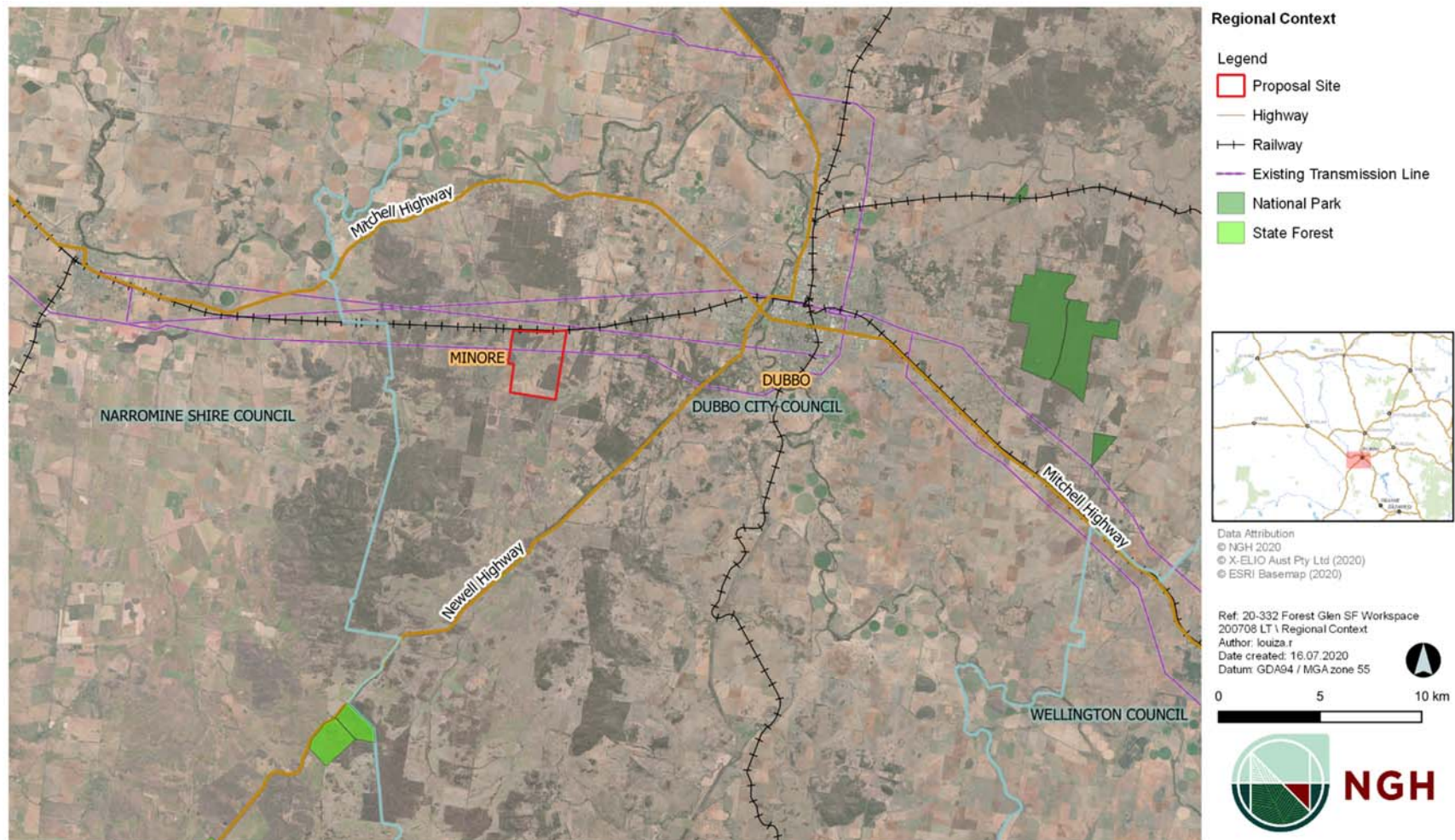


Figure 2-1 Site location

2.3. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE PROPOSAL

Generally, solar energy development in Australia has enjoyed community support. The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) commissioned community research regarding attitudes to renewable energy and found that 89% of people support the use of renewable energy in the form of solar farms in NSW. Furthermore, 78% of respondents supported having a solar farm within 1-2 km of where they lived. Among the reasons for this were benefits to the environment and local economy. A significant amount (83%) of respondents believed that NSW should produce more of its energy from renewables over the following 5 years (OEH, 2015)

In research carried out by Ipsos for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA, n.d.) 48% of respondents agreed that the local economy is positively impacted by large scale solar facilities and 68% agreed that establishing more large scale solar facilities would reduce Australia's carbon emissions. Making funding available for large scale solar facilities was viewed as a priority over non-renewable energy by 60% of respondents.

However, as more proposals become concentrated in suitable regions and particularly Renewable Energy Zones (those with good irradiance, electricity connections, generally flat and away from dense population centres), concern over local character loss and local agricultural impacts can be seen to emerge. The outcomes of the ARENA research resulted in five key themes that are important in establishing a social license to operate (SLO) including reliability and efficiency, visual impacts environmental impacts, economic and employment impacts and health impacts.

An initial fatal flaws analysis for the proposal outlined the following as being the most significant issues:

- Biodiversity
- Sensitive receivers (visual, noise and dust)
- Traffic and transport
- Aboriginal heritage
- Water and hydrology

Consultation will focus on these key issues.

3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Understanding the makeup and values of a community is essential to finding effective ways to reach the community. It is also important to understand ways the project may impact the community. This may not be limited to the construction and operational stages of a project but may also include the pre-lodgment assessment phase, as the project is being shaped. This section provides a broad overview of the community demographics in the Dubbo Regional LGA, the local township of Minore, Narromine and Dubbo. Dubbo, which was declared a city in 1966, is a vibrant regional centre, known as the 'city of smiles', with a range of sporting, environmental and historical attractions and experiences enjoyed by both locals and visitors. The region is known for wheat and wool production and its regional growth, investment and opportunity are supported by quality infrastructure and diverse industry. Overall, the standard of living in the Dubbo region is relatively high, accompanied by relatively low unemployment rates.

3.1. DUBBO REGIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

The proposal site is located within the Dubbo Regional LGA, which covers an area of 7,536 km² in the Central West region of NSW about 300km north-west of Sydney. The Dubbo Regional LGA is bound by the Narromine LGA to the west, Cabonne LGA to the south, Mid-Western Regional LGA to the east and the Gilgandra LGA to the north.

The Dubbo Regional LGA (originally named Western Plains Regional LGA) was formed in 2016 after the amalgamation of the Dubbo Council and Wellington Council.

The 2016 Census indicates that Western Plains Regional LGA had a population of 50,077, with a larger proportion of female residents making up 50.9% of the population. The median age was 37 and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders make up 15.5% of the population.

There were 23,525 people employed in the Western Plains Regional LGA labour force in 2016, 61.9% of which were employed full time. The highest percentage of workers (17.5%) were employed as professionals, followed by technicians and trade workers who made up 14.3% of the workforce (ABS, 2016). Other major occupations included clerical and administrative workers, managers and community and personal service workers. Major industries of employment included hospitals, primary education, other social assistance services, takeaway food services and supermarket and grocery stores.

Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a suite of indices created by the ABS. The Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) summarises data about economic and social conditions of people and households in an area. Ranking of NSW suburb's and LGA's are used in this report with 1 being most disadvantaged (1st decile) to 2643 being most advantaged (10th decile). The SEIFA score for the Western Plains LGA was 967 in 2016 (ABS, 2016). These indices of wellbeing indicate that the Western Plains Regional LGA have a relatively high standard of living without many social or economic disadvantages (ABS, 2016).

The Dubbo region is located in the central west of NSW and brought approximately 1,393,000 visitors annually during the year ending December 2019, to experience various events and attractions. The most visited sites include the Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Wellington Caves Lake Burrendong, Macquarie River and Mount Arthur Reserve. The area also holds rich cultural heritage, including the Old Dubbo Gaol and National Trust Dundullimal Homestead and Aboriginal heritage including art at the Western Plains Cultural Centre and tours at First Lesson Cultural Tours.

3.2. MINORE

The proposal site is located in NSW within the locality of Minore. In 2016, the locality accommodated 153 people with a median age of 47 years along with a dominance in male residents at 54.3% (ABS, 2016).

Within the locality 80 people were employed, either full time or part time as of 2016 with 65% full-time and 26.2% part-time. 3% of the population stated they were away from work, while 5% were unemployed.

The highest percentage of workers (23.8%) were employed as technicians and trades workers while 20% were managers (ABS, 2016). Other major occupations were professionals, clerical and administrative workers, and sales workers.

Major industries in 2016 were equally split between sheep farming, meat processing, house construction, landscape construction services and cafes and restaurants.

The SEIFA score for the Minore State Suburb was 1,023 in 2016 (ABS, 2016). These indices of wellbeing indicate that the locality of Minore has a relatively high standard of living without many social or economic disadvantages (ABS 2016).

Significant features include the old railway station at Minore Village, which was closed to passengers in 1975 and Minore Falls Reserve on the Macquarie River, popular for fishing, camping, and boating.

3.3. NARROMINE

Narromine is located approximately 6.7km west of the proposal site. The 2016 census stated that the locality accommodates 4,689 people with a median age of 41 years along with a dominance in female residents at 51.1% (ABS, 2016).

Within the locality 2,017 people were employed, either full time or part time as of 2016 with 59.3% full-time and 27.4% part-time. 5.5% of the population stated they were away from work, while 7.8% were unemployed.

The highest percentage of workers (19.4%) were employed as managers while 14.5% were technicians and trades workers (ABS, 2016). Other major occupations were professionals, community and personal service workers and labourers.

Major industries in Narromine include primary education, hospitals, local government administration and grain-sheep or grain beef cattle farming.

The SEIFA score for the Narromine State Suburb was 929 in 2016 (ABS, 2016). These indices of wellbeing indicate that the locality of Narromine has a relatively high standard of living without many social or economic disadvantages (ABS 2016).

Narromine is described as a family focused town with a strong sense of community spirit. The growing mineral resource industry, extractive agriculture sector and aviation drives opportunities for investment and employment in the area.

3.4. DUBBO

Dubbo is the closest major regional centre and is located approximately 16km east of the proposal site. The 2016 census states that the locality accommodated 38,943 people with a median age of 36 years along with a dominance in female residents at 51.9% (ABS, 2016).

Within the locality 19,154 people were employed, either full time or part time as of 2016 with 62.7% full-time and 26.8% part-time. 4.9% of the population stated they were away from work, while 5.5% were unemployed.

The highest percentage of workers (18.2%) were employed as professionals while 20% were technicians and trades workers (ABS, 2016). Other major occupations were clerical and administrative workers, managers and sales workers.

Major industries in Dubbo include hospitals, primary education, other social assistance services, takeaway food services and state government administration.

The SEIFA score for the Dubbo State Suburb was 978 in 2016 (ABS, 2016). These indices of wellbeing indicate that the locality of Dubbo has a relatively high standard of living without many social or economic disadvantages (ABS 2016).

4. STAKEHOLDER GROUPS AND CONSULTATION STRATEGIES

It is important to identify key stakeholder groups and relevant characteristics of each of the groups so that engagement strategies can be tailored in order to best suit them. Different levels of engagement will be appropriate for different groups, depending on the potential interest or impacts on the groups.

Where impacts are minor, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) consultation spectrum suggests approaches such as 'Inform' and 'Consult'; and where impacts are greater, approaches such as 'Involve', 'Collaborate' and 'Empower'.

Proposed strategies are set out below for each stakeholder group. Levels of engagement may change, depending on issues identified during the consultation process.

Table 4-1 Stakeholder group consultation strategies

Stakeholder group	Defining characteristics	Consultation strategies
1. Adjacent neighbours	<p>Neighbours on land adjacent to the proposal site boundaries, with a potential to experience impacts (noise, air quality, etc) as a result of the construction and operation of the proposal.</p> <p>1 property is located within the proposal site and will be directly affected as a result of the proposal.</p>	<p>Inform, consult, involve, collaborate</p> <p>Consultation will be undertaken as part of the project's development. If properties are affected by impacts, these will be assessed in accordance with statutory requirements.</p> <p>Initial consultation with this group will involve a virtual or face to face meeting¹. If a meeting does not occur, a newsletter should be provided, or a phone call conducted to ensure the opportunity for adjacent neighbours to give direct feedback is provided.</p>
2. Near neighbours and residents	<p>Impacts for this group would be less than adjacent properties but properties along the access routes would be impacted during construction.</p> <p>There are 18 residences within 1km of the proposal site and 40 residences between 1 - 2km. Aerial imagery and desktop analysis indicate a very limited number of uninvolvement residences are likely to have view of solar farm infrastructure or be subject to visual impacts during construction</p>	<p>Inform, consult, involve</p> <p>Understanding the values and potential impacts to this group is highly important. It will assist the assessment process and development of appropriate mitigation strategies. It will also assist in gaining social license from the local community to operate.</p> <p>Initial consultation with this group will involve distribution of a newsletter. Upon request, the opportunity for virtual or face-to-face consultation and an opportunity to give direct feedback will be provided for residents within 1km of the proposal site.</p> <p>All consultation will be documented.</p>

¹ All face to face meetings would be conducted in accordance with a Covid-19 Management Plan.

Stakeholder group	Defining characteristics	Consultation strategies
3. Small Local Businesses	<p>Local businesses in Dubbo may be impacted by the influx of workers during construction.</p> <p>This development may be of particular interest to business owners in the area. Opportunities and potential impacts will need to be considered.</p> <p>Dubbo Chamber of Commerce and Industry represents the interests of the Dubbo business community and aims to maximise the returns for business in Dubbo and will be key in understanding local values.</p>	<p>Inform and consult</p> <p>Understanding the values and potential impacts to this group is highly important. It will assist the assessment process and development of appropriate mitigation strategies and in gaining social license to operate from the local community.</p> <p>The opportunity for virtual or face to face consultation and an opportunity to give direct feedback will be provided upon request.</p> <p>Potential opportunity to distribute project information and understand community sentiment. Dubbo Chamber of Commerce and Industry should have access to the latest project information (such as by newsletter and website).</p> <p>All consultation will be documented.</p>
4. Special interest groups	<p>There may be benefit in contacting special interest groups, to ensure that any special areas of interest will be addressed in the assessment of the project. Local information can be important for the assessment stage.</p> <p>Some that have been identified specific to this proposal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dubbo Environment Group • Central West Environment Council • Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation Society • Wambalang Environmental Education Centre 	<p>Inform</p> <p>These groups will be specifically contacted.</p> <p>Specific information or assessment may be required to understand and mitigate impacts for these groups.</p> <p>These stakeholders will have access to the latest project information (such as by newsletter and website).</p> <p>An avenue to provide feedback or ask questions will be provided.</p> <p>Dubbo Regional Council should be contacted to recommend any specialist interest groups not listed here that should be informed.</p>

Stakeholder group	Defining characteristics	Consultation strategies
5. Broader community	<p>It is important to ensure a clear and consistent message is delivered to the broader community.</p> <p>There may be opportunities and impacts to the broader community that are important to understand during the assessment of the project.</p> <p>Accommodation and services for project construction staff and other economic matters may be of interest.</p>	<p>Inform</p> <p>Newsletters, advertisements, website information used to relay information about the project.</p> <p>A contact will be provided to this group, for further information / provision of feedback.</p>

5. ISSUE MANAGEMENT

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

Table 5-1 Risks and strategies

Issue	Risks	Strategies
The project may define / overwhelm the locality / localities of Minore and Narromine.	<p>This may polarise the community.</p> <p>They may not feel that the project reflects their values.</p> <p>The scale of the project may overwhelm the existing local character.</p>	<p>Early and easily accessible distribution of information about the project and its specific justification and benefits, particularly material about the role of solar energy in the country's energy mix, the technology and its impacts. Example photos will be provided for visualisation to assist the understanding of the proposal and actual versus perceived impacts, where required.</p> <p>Seek direct input into how the project may reflect the community's 'personality' and values. How the benefits of the project may be spread to the local community.</p> <p>Clear communication of key environmental impacts and mitigation strategies of the project.</p> <p>Offer direct contact with the project manager.</p>
Spread of misinformation / feel left out of engagement	<p>Rural residences can be difficult to contact and word of mouth travels very fast in small communities.</p> <p>Feel left out, disengaged, misinformed.</p>	<p>Early direct communication to local community – adjacent landowners first, near neighbours second, then the wider community.</p> <p>Multiple means to identify all relevant residences undertaken – mapping, Council, engagement with other members of the community. It can be difficult to locate all residences and contact all landowners.</p>

Issue	Risks	Strategies
Lack of support for the project	<p>Lack of interest, leading to low levels of public support.</p> <p>Community could be against the project due to unaddressed concerns.</p>	<p>Early and easily accessible distribution of information including but not limited to the project's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification and benefits as well as community benefits. • Environmental and social impacts and mitigation strategies; and • Community relationship strategies. <p>Create a clear and trusted communication channel exclusively for the community to provide comments.</p> <p>Make participation easy and effective so that everyone within the community is heard and their comments taken into consideration.</p> <p>Ensure all concerns are addressed and distributed; and informed when these are available for the community.</p> <p>Be creative – seek support for renewable energy by demonstrating how benefits can be contributed to the local and community level, including with special interest groups and local businesses.</p>
The approvals process can be long and complex.	<p>Perception that the process is too difficult to become involved in.</p> <p>Suspicion that input will not be valued.</p> <p>Overly technical information provided, use of jargon.</p>	<p>Clearly illustrate approvals process.</p> <p>Clearly define opportunities for community input including what is required and when it is required.</p> <p>Communicate back, identifying where input has been used.</p> <p>Reinforce this at each relevant stage for community input – pre lodgement, during public exhibition etc.</p> <p>Key achievements will be identified early and celebrated.</p>

Issue	Risks	Strategies
Distrust in environmental assessment process.	Distrust of impact identification and mitigation strategies.	<p>Make participation easy and effective so that everyone within the community is heard and their comments taken into consideration.</p> <p>Provide a logical and/or evidence based plain English explanation on how impacts will be mitigated.</p> <p>Establish credentials of assessment team. Present these in the EIS and in newsletters etc.</p>
Representative	<p>Risk of biased consultation, serving only the 'squeaky wheel'.</p> <p>Sections of the community may be "overpowered" and may be marginalised.</p>	<p>Ensure community consultation representative possess appropriate training and understands the execution of public forums. This strategy is aimed to provide the community with a polite and outstanding social skills person representing the proposal.</p> <p>Ensure community is engaged in a polite and "at same level" manner; and in a forum that minimises risk of groups mismanagement or debate being side tracked.</p> <p>Follow up with smaller groups where required.</p> <p>Use established social (and media) channels in distribution of materials, i.e. company website, newsletter, local newspaper or notice board, direct messaging, sport clubs.</p>
Unified message	Differing messages may create confusion and mistrust.	<p>Create a clear and trusted communication channel exclusively for the community to provide comments.</p> <p>Prepare concise, detailed and direct messages in plain English that are clearly set out for use rather than reinventing it for each consultation activity.</p>
Unequal distribution of benefits	Residents close to the development are likely to feel more strongly.	Identification of stakeholder groups should reflect differences in perceived impacts.

Issue	Risks	Strategies
Covid-19 Pandemic	Risks of reduced meaningful engagement due to less opportunity for face – to – face meetings and restrictions on large gatherings.	<p>Ensure an opportunity for virtual meetings or phone calls are provided for those who would participate in a face to face meeting under normal circumstances.</p> <p>Provide additional newsletters, newspaper advertisements and project website updates to ensure meaningful consultation.</p> <p>In the event that a face to face meeting is requested, or a public forum is held, these would be conducted in accordance with a Covid-19 Management Plan.</p>

6. PROJECT BASED ACTIVITIES

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

- Decision to proceed with early investigations and proposal development.
- Undertaking of community/stakeholder consultation in accordance with Table 6-1.
- Preparation and lodgement of request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEAR's) to Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE).
- Receipt of SEARs from DPIE which will form part of the EIS format and content requirements.
- Undertaking of community/stakeholder consultation.
- Preparation of EIS and development application.
- Lodgement of development application accompany with the EIS.
- EIS on public exhibition and response to submissions.
- Assessment from DPIE.

Further stages will apply pending project approval.

During this progression, key achievements should be celebrated, and used as an opportunity to keep the community on board. Key achievements can include:

1. Announce project – visit and notify near residents first, follow up with consistent information.
2. Early studies update – meet the community face to face.
3. If necessary, undertake a public forum to explain avenues for community input, including post lodgement of the EIS.
4. Approval – celebrate in a way that involves the community.

Table 6-1 Proposed engagement activities.

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement targets	Format
Decision to proceed with early investigations, proposal development, and receipt of SEARs				
Adjacent landowners	Misinformation / left out of engagement Lack of support for project	Inform, consult, involve, collaborate	Early distribution of information about solar energy generation development generally. Early distribution of information about the proposal and its justification and benefits. Seek direct input to include in assessment approach and development of proposal.	Virtual or face to face meetings with the Project Manager. Provide a newsletter prior to lodgement of the Scoping Report, and upon receiving SEARs. The newsletter should include an overview of the project, graphic showing stages of the process and a contact number, email and website for giving feedback and following up supplementary information. Encourage ongoing direct contact with Project Manager during project development.

Community Consultation Strategy
Forest Glen Solar Farm

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement targets	Format
Near neighbours, Minore local community	Misinformation / left out of engagement May define locality Lack of support Unequal perception of impacts	Inform and consult Involve those receivers or are likely to have a view of the solar infrastructure.	Early distribution of information about solar energy generation development generally. Early distribution of information about the project and its justification and benefits. General feeling toward solar development.	Request to meet virtually or face to face with the Project Manager. Provide a newsletter prior to lodgement of the Scoping Report. The newsletter should include an overview of the project graphic showing stages of the process and a contact number, email and website for giving feedback and following up supplementary information. Touch base at milestones to seek feedback.

Community Consultation Strategy
Forest Glen Solar Farm

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement targets	Format
Local small business owners	Misinformation / left out of engagement Lack of support for project	Inform and consult	Build relationship with these owners and staff as they may assist to 'get the word out'. Discuss specific impacts and opportunities.	Virtual or face to face meeting / direct contact with the Project Manager. Provide a newsletter to the Dubbo Chamber of Commerce and Industry prior to lodgement of the Scoping Report. The newsletter should include an overview of the project graphic showing stages of the process and a contact number, email and website for giving feedback and following up supplementary information. Encourage ongoing direct contact with Project Manager.
Broader community	Distrust in environmental assessment process. The approvals process can be complex.	Inform	Make information on the project team and assessment team available.	Provide a newsletter prior to lodgement of the Scoping Report. Include an overview of the project graphic showing stages of the process and a contact number, email and website for giving feedback and following up supplementary information in the newsletter.
Detailed assessment and proposal development				

Community Consultation Strategy
Forest Glen Solar Farm

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement targets	Format
Adjacent landowners	Lack of support	Inform, consult, involve, collaborate	Discuss and understand specific impacts on these receivers. Feed information into the final assessment to ensure all their issues have been identified and addressed by the project.	Virtual or face to face meeting with Project Manager / Phone call. If a meeting does not occur, provide a newsletter or conduct a phone call to ensure the opportunity for adjacent neighbours to give direct feedback is provided. Include a project update including the intention to lodge the EIS for public exhibition in the newsletter. Update the project website with the project update.
Near neighbours	May define locality Lack of support	Inform, consult, involve, collaborate	Identify ways the community can participate in the project and seek input on these, but not limited to: Adopt a tree (one for project, one for landowner?) Signage / logo for Solar project Support other renewable or energy saving programs within the community or Council offices.	Touch base at milestones to seek feedback. Provide a newsletter or conduct a phone call to ensure the opportunity for adjacent neighbours to give direct feedback is provided. Include a project update including the intention to lodge the EIS for public exhibition in the newsletter.

Community Consultation Strategy
Forest Glen Solar Farm

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement targets	Format
Minore local community	<p>Distrust in environmental assessment process.</p> <p>Unequal perception of impacts</p> <p>Risk of biased consultation, serving only the 'squeaky wheel'.</p>	Inform and consult	<p>Update community on detailed project environmental assessment process including its impacts and mitigation strategies.</p> <p>Seek input – any additional concerns, that have not been heard or included in the assessment.</p> <p>Meet assessment specialists.</p> <p>Feed information into the final assessment to ensure all community issues have been identified and addressed by the project, differentiating between stakeholder groups.</p>	<p>Public forum information day held by Proponent and Environmental Consultant. Where relevant, specialists may also be involved for key issues such as visual and noise impacts.</p> <p>(provide links to relevant information, provision of feedback forms - also now on website).</p> <p>If a public forum is not possible, provide the opportunity for a virtual forum (such as Zoom) to present information and provide the community with an opportunity for two way dialogue.</p>
Broader community	Representative	Inform and consult	<p>Outline ways they can continue to have input into project</p> <p>Seek broad feedback on how the community view solar energy projects generally and this project specifically.</p>	Media release, link to website (including feedback form).
EIS on public exhibition, submissions reporting				
Adjacent landowners	Relationship with landowners and community	Inform, consult, involve, collaborate	Update on project status.	Phone call update and email.
Near neighbours	Relationship with community	Inform and consult	<p>Update on project status.</p> <p>Outline ways they can continue to have input into project.</p>	Phone call update and email.

Stakeholder group	Issue	Consultation objective	Community engagement targets	Format
Minore local community	Relationship with community	Inform and consult	Update on project status. Outline ways they can continue to have input into project.	Newsletter update.
Broader community	The approvals process can be long and complex.	Inform	Update on project status. Outline ways they can continue to have input into project.	Media release.
Approval determination				
Adjacent landowners	Relationship with landowners and community	Inform, consult, involve, collaborate	Update on project status.	Phone call update and email.
Near neighbours including those within the Minore and Narromine	Relationship with community	Inform	Update on project status. Thank the community for their involvement.	Phone call update and email.
Broader community	Relationship with community	Inform	Update on project status. Thank the community for their involvement.	Media release.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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

- Appoint and maintain a consultation manager for the project to implement activities and review this strategy regularly.
- Keep an accurate record of all feedback from consultation activities and all correspondence with the community.
- Monitor regularly and respond promptly to email and phone queries.
- Monitor if the activities are reaching a diverse and representative section of the community. Subject to the monitoring results, consider if new activities need to be implemented.
- Ensure that all project related information and updates have been shared with:
 - the team developing the detailed project description.
 - assessment staff.
 - other project's Community representatives.
 - the team managing information channels including, social media, website, hotline, etc.