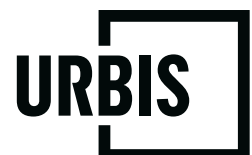




BARWON SOLAR FARM

Community and stakeholder
engagement outcomes report

Prepared for
ELGIN ENERGY
10 October 2022



URBIS STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT WERE:

Associate Director	Stephanie Potter
Consultant	Hayley Kardash
Project Code	P0031400
Report Number	Final

Urbis acknowledges the important contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make in creating a strong and vibrant Australian society.

We acknowledge, in each of our offices, the Traditional Owners on whose land we stand.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This community and stakeholder engagement outcomes report (report) has been prepared by Urbis Pty Ltd (Urbis) to support Elgin Energy. The report informs part of the planning permit approval for Barwon Solar Farm (the project) at 1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River, Victoria (the site).

The community and stakeholder engagement strategy was prepared in line with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's *Draft Solar Energy Facilities, Design and Development Guidelines* and the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum.

The activities outlined in the strategy sought to deliver an appropriate and relevant engagement process and provide opportunities for the community and stakeholders to learn about the proposal, understand the process and provide feedback which will inform part of the planning report submission, along with the site layout plan, elevations or specification sheets and all technical reports.

The approach to engagement outlined in Section 2 of this report was undertaken in line with feedback issued on 23 March 2022 from DELWP on the draft strategy. The strategy was updated in line with the recommendations DELWP provided.

1.1. PROJECT CONTEXT

Elgin Energy is seeking approval from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) to develop a solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) at a site located on Little River-Ripley Road, part of the Greater Geelong City Council area. The project will include ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) modules (panels), like those installed on rooftops around Australia.

The 735-hectare site at 1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River is around 34 kilometres north of Geelong City Centre and 11.5 kilometres north-west of Little River Town Centre. The site is made up of five properties currently used for agricultural activities, including sheep grazing. It is intended that sheep grazing will continue within the development footprint of the project once operational.

As 500 kV and 220 kV existing transmission lines pass through the site, the area is well suited to the export of renewable energy generation. Following engagement with communities and authorities, detailed plans for the site will be developed with respect to all physical and cultural considerations.

When complete, the proposed facility will include:

- Around 330MWp capacity of a solar photovoltaic (PV), which is the conversion of light into electricity using semiconducting materials
- A battery energy storage system (BESS) with an estimated with a 150-250MW (Megawatt) capacity.

1.2. SURROUNDING COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The community make-up round the proposed site at 1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River includes rural and low density residential, farmers and grazier properties. Little River specifically comprises low density homes and Little River Primary School. The suburb remains a station township surrounded by fields, the river and the You Yangs. The You Yangs Road reserve, just out of town, and the Little River reserve have barbecues and sporting fields.

Little River Primary School is the only local school, to which most farmers and graziers located on the surrounding properties send their children. The train located in Little River provides easy access to neighbouring towns including Lara, and Geelong and Melbourne.

2. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Community and stakeholder engagement throughout the development of the planning report was achieved through the implementation of the engagement strategy outlined in this section.

2.1. ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The engagement approach was adapted from the International Association of Public Participation’s (IAP2) Public Participation spectrum and aligns with the framework set out on the *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria Guidelines*.

The spectrum (Figure 1) describes goals for public participation and the corresponding promise to the public. For this strategy, the engagement objective aligns to the goal **of informing, consulting and involving** stakeholders and the community. This means our objective is obtain public feedback on the proposal.

Figure 1 IAP2 Public Participation spectrum

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

To achieve this objective, the engagement approach involved:

- Providing consistent, relevant, jargon-free and up to date information on the proposal, impacts, benefits, and the planning permit process through accessible, tailored open lines of communication.
- Providing methods for monitoring and opportunities for the community to give feedback to help inform the planning process.
- Responding appropriately and in a timely manner to concerns or questions raised by the community and stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- Facilitating information flow to the project team by establishing working relationships to ensure stakeholder and community views and local knowledge are appropriately incorporated into the design of the project.
- Managing expectations by closing the feedback loop through sharing how stakeholder and community views influenced the proposal.

2.2. STAKEHOLDERS

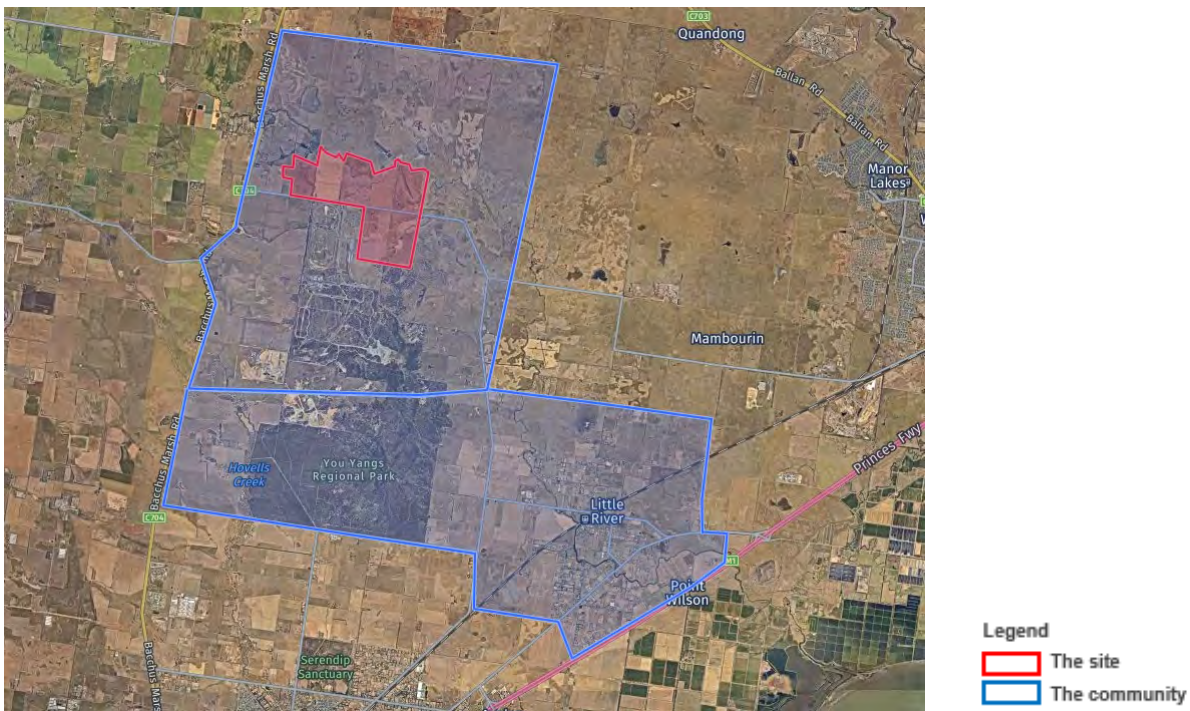
As outlined in the *Draft Solar Energy Facilities, Design and Development Guideline* and the *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria*, DELWP defines stakeholders as community, relevant agencies, landowners and land users and stakeholders involved in prospective resource developments.

DELWP defines the community as ‘all the people who live within, and identify with, the geographic area surrounding the proposed site of the renewable energy project,’ while landowners and land users are defined as ‘stakeholders and decision makers such as farmers and Traditional Owners.’ For this report, we have defined farmers to be people who identify with the geographic area surrounding the proposed site of the renewable energy project. Therefore, they are part of the community.

Figure 2 shows the site and surrounding geographic area. This includes those people who could see the solar farm from a distance or be impacted by glint and glare. It also includes those who may be impacted by an increase in noise and traffic in the area during construction.

While they are not in the immediate geographic area surrounding the proposed site, the residents, businesses, and community groups located in the Town of Little River (postcode: 3211) and Balliang (postcode: 3340) may identify with that area. Additionally, while they are unlikely to be impacted by the proposal, these stakeholders are likely to be interested in the features and potential benefits of the solar farm.

Figure 2 The site and surrounding community



These stakeholders for the project have been categorised by group, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 3 Stakeholder categorisation



Table 1 outlines the key stakeholders who have been consulted with throughout the engagement process. The stakeholder identification matrix is based on the principles of IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum as outlined in Section 2.

As part of the larger planning process, Elgin Energy and Urbis Planning were responsible for engagement with the relevant agencies, landowners and land users and stakeholders involved in prospective resource developments (such as owners of mining leases, petroleum production and exploration licences).

Urbis Engagement was responsible for engagement with the community. Engagement activities included letterbox drops, project specific website content, community and stakeholder briefings, information drop in sessions and enquiry management through the duration of the planning process.

The stakeholder matrix in Table 1 outlines the community stakeholders, engagement objective and forms of engagement.

Table 1 Stakeholder identification

Stakeholder	Engagement objective	Forms of engagement
Local Councils, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Greater Geelong Council 	Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal by providing balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the proposal’s impacts and benefits	Phone Direct emails
Relevant agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Country Fire Authority (CFA) Rural water corporations: Southern Rural Water Urban Water Corporation: Barwon Water Port Philip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority Melbourne Water 	Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal and understand how the proposal may impact each agencies’ service.	Phone Direct emails Virtual meetings

Stakeholder	Engagement objective	Forms of engagement
Landowners and land users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional Custodians ▪ RAP Groups 	Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal by providing balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the proposal's impacts and benefits.	Virtual Meetings Face to Face meetings Email
Community, landowners and land users, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing land occupiers ▪ Direct neighbours 	Involve: Working directly with near neighbours throughout the planning process to ensure all concerns and aspirations and continually understood and considered by Elgin Energy.	Face to face meetings Virtual meetings Community newsletter Direct emails Phone calls Community information drop in sessions
Broader community, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All the people who live within the Little River postcode area (postcode: 3211) ▪ All the people who live within the Balliang postcode area (postcode: 3340). 	Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal as they may be interested in visual impact, traffic associated with construction, environmental impacts.	Community newsletter Community information drop in sessions
Environmental groups / organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brisbane Rangers Landcare Group ▪ Little River Community Landcare group ▪ Mt Rothwell Interpretation Centre 	Consult: Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal.	Face to face meetings Direct emails Phone calls Community information drop in sessions
Businesses / organisations located in the Town of Little River, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little River Mechanics Institute Hall ▪ Charitable Society 	Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal as they may be interested in visual impact, traffic associated with construction, environmental impacts.	Direct email Community newsletter Community information drop in sessions

Stakeholder	Engagement objective	Forms of engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little River General Store (Ampol & Post Office) ▪ Rothwell Run ▪ XLB Group Pty 		
<p>Local schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little River Primary School 	<p>Consult: Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal.</p>	<p>Community newsletter</p> <p>Community information drop-in sessions</p>
<p>Community groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town of Little River – Facebook page ▪ Lions Club of Little River ▪ Little River Historical Society 	<p>Consult: Consult: Obtain feedback on the proposal.</p>	<p>Direct email</p> <p>Community newsletter</p> <p>Community information drop in sessions</p>

3. FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT

3.1. NEAR NEIGHBOUR BRIEFINGS

Elgin Energy consulted with the neighbours directly bordering the site via a series of phone calls and face to face meetings. Surrounding neighbours were consulted with extensively during the project's design, which will continue into the construction plan development if the project is approved. Consultation with near neighbours provided them an overview of the proposal (before plans being presented to the broader community) and offered the opportunity for a visual impact assessment to be conducted from their property.

Out of the eight direct neighbours consulted with four opted in for a face-to-face meeting and three requested a visual impact assessment.

3.2. COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER BRIEFINGS

On 21 April 2022, Elgin Energy attended the Brisbane Rangers Landcare Group meeting to present an overview of the proposal. Around 30 members of the Landcare Group attended the session and had the opportunity to speak directly with the project team, ask questions and project feedback.

The briefing was advertised two weeks ahead of the session in the April 2022 Anakie Advocate and via the Brisbane Rangers Landcare Group database.

A detailed overview of feedback received has been outlined in Section 4 of this report.

Figure 4 Anakie Advocate - project briefing promotion

April 2022 **Anakie Advocate** **page 9**

Large Scale Solar Coming to Anakie!
At the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group's next general meeting on April 21, we will be hearing from **Elgin Energy** (the largest privately owned solar developer in the UK) who are planning an initial 300MW solar farm over 1200 acres along Little Ripley Road in Balliang. The project will include ancillary battery storage. All are welcome to come and learn about this exciting project.

**Brisbane Ranges
Landcare
Thursday April 21
7:30pm Balliang Hall**

Hope to see you there.
More details: contact
President **Robert Hall** on **0401 404 899**.



3.3. COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

The community newsletter outlined key features of the project and invited feedback. It included details of the project email and phone number managed by Urbis Engagement to answer questions and collect feedback. The newsletter was also used to promote the community information drop-in sessions to the community.

It was distributed on Tuesday 19 April 2022 by letterbox drop to 755 homes and businesses located the postcode areas below:

- Little River (postcode: 3211)
- Balliang (postcode: 3340)

The community newsletter is included in Appendix A.

3.4. COMMUNITY INFORMATION DROP IN SESSIONS

Two, three-hour community information drop-in sessions were held at the Little River Mechanics Institute on the following dates:

- Wednesday, 25 May 2022 (2pm – 5pm)
- Thursday, 26 May 2022 (5pm – 8pm).

Around 25 members of the community attended one of the sessions.

The two sessions offered the opportunity for the community to drop in, speak directly to the project team, ask questions and provide feedback on the proposal. A detailed overview of questions and feedback received has been outlined in Section 4 of this report.

The following was available for the community to view and discuss at the session:

- 10 information boards (refer to Appendix B)
- Visual assessment (photo montages)
- Draft design and site maps
- Constraint maps (showing protected environmental elements)
- Feedback forms
- Community newsletter with contact details.

The sessions were advertised via:

- Community newsletter distributed to 755 homes and businesses in Balliang and Little River
- Brisbane Rangers Community Newsletter (refer to Appendix C)
- Anakie Community House - noticeboard
- Email to 13 community groups, businesses and residents who registered interest
- Lions Club of Little River – Facebook page
- Little River Historical Society – Facebook page

Copies of the information boards are in Appendix B.

Figure 5 Photographs of community information session



3.5. WEBSITE

The project website (<https://barwonsolarfarm.com.au/>) went live 25 March 2022 and provided information about the proposed development, the planning process and contact details for enquires.

3.6. ENGAGEMENT EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER

The community newsletter and website provided a dedicated phone number and email address managed by Urbis to enable people to provide feedback on the project and ask questions. Six enquiries have been received at the time of writing this report. Enquiries received via the engagement email address were in relation to information session details.

4. ISSUES RAISED

The following table outlines the issues raised by the community, the stakeholders, and the project response. Key themes that arose during the consultation period included:

- Enquiries regarding endangered wildlife around the site.
- Enquiries regarding traffic during construction, specifically:
 - It's impact on wildlife (potential roadkill)
 - Safety concerns (narrow road with lots of trucks)
 - Impact on traffic in the local area.
- Interest in the effectiveness of solar, and how its effectiveness increases overtime – i.e. when will it reach carbon neutral.
- Enquiries regarding how fire risk will be managed
- General interest about how solar farms are operated and maintained.
- Enquiries regarding localised impact, specifically:
 - Visual impact
 - Reflectivity
 - Noise generation
 - Light pollution.

Table 2 Issues raised and project response

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
Local Councils, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Greater Geelong Council 	Elgin Energy consulted with Council via phone / email on 20 June 2022 requesting to have a meeting to outline the	No feedback received from Council to date. As Council is not responsible authority, Council appreciated being informed but would have no comments on the proposed development	City of Greater Geelong will be the referral authority under S52 of the planning scheme.

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
	project. Geelong declined this invitation		Elgin Energy will continue to consult Council and offer the opportunity to comment / provide feedback on the proposed plans post lodgement.
Relevant agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) ▪ Country Fire Authority (CFA) ▪ Emergency Management Victoria Catchment and environmental protection ▪ Rural water corporations: Southern Rural Water ▪ Urban Water Corporation: Barwon Water 	<p>Elgin Energy held meetings with DELWP to discuss the project in June 2021, 21 January 2022, 23 January 2022 and via various emails and phone calls up to 12 September 2022.</p> <p>Letters/Emails were sent to CFA, and the CMAs in January and February 2022. Discussions also held with CFA in March 2022.</p>	<p>Key issues discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Native vegetation impacts ▪ Visual amenity ▪ Bushfire Hazard and compliance ▪ Impacts to bird species (mistaking panels for water sources) ▪ Requirement for engagement with City of Greater Geelong Council ▪ Setbacks from waterways 	<p>The project has been carefully designed to address all the issues raised and this is documented within the planning report and supporting technical documentation. Key features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoidance and minimisation of native vegetation impacts ▪ Visual analysis and screening of the site ▪ Setbacks from Little River, Sandy Creek and all second order streams ▪ Compliance with the Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities (2022) ▪ Explore potential for revegetation of up to 40ha of the site including habitat creation for bird species.

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port Philip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority 			
<p>Community, landowners and land users, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing land occupiers 	<p>Elgin Energy is in ongoing conversations with the exiting landowners of the site.</p> <p>Meetings and phone calls take place regularly as required.</p>	<p>No feedback from the existing landowners has been received to date.</p> <p>Conversations with existing landowners are in relation to site feasibility and leases.</p>	<p>Elgin Energy will continue to consult with all existing land occupiers and offer the opportunity to comment / provide feedback on the proposed plans.</p>
<p>Direct neighbours</p>	<p>Elgin Energy is in ongoing conversations with the neighbouring properties that border the site.</p> <p>There are a total of 10 direct neighbours Elgin Energy has had ongoing conversations with between January 2022 to September 2022.</p> <p>Elgin Energy has involved each via a series of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face to face meetings 	<p>Common feedback received from direct neighbours includes:</p> <p>Increased fire risk – a general level of concern about the proposed fire risk was noted in conversations with near neighbour. Specifically, there was concern the proposed solar farm will increase the likelihood of a fire in the area. The concern is particularly high given the area’s history of fire risk.</p>	<p>A fire risk assessment is being prepared as part of the Planning Report to ensure all risk and mitigation measures are considered. From the initial assessment, fire ignition as a result of the solar reflection is very unlikely. To mitigate risk further, fire breaks will border the site to limit the risk of spreading if a fire were to start.</p> <p>Since the Victorian big battery fire, mitigation requirements, including (but not limited to) water supply, fire breaks and battery separation have increased to limit this outcome/ likelihood.</p> <p>The CFA has recently released updated Design Guidelines for Renewable energy facilities</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virtual meetings ▪ Community newsletter ▪ Direct emails ▪ Phone calls ▪ Community information drop-in sessions. 	<p data-bbox="878 692 1453 1023">Proposed setbacks and impact on neighbouring animals – There was a level of concern from some near neighbours about the proposed setbacks. This specific concern was in relation to potential impact on neighbouring animals. It was noted that some animals are sensitive and will fear the solar panels in close proximity once installed. reaction could be fatal to a human close by.</p> <p data-bbox="878 1129 1453 1310">Impact on neighbouring views – A general topic raised by neighbours was the potential to minimise the visual impact of the proposal on their property. Of special importance is any view or heritage significance.</p>	<p data-bbox="1476 272 2047 373">(including battery energy storage systems) and the application for the project will be sent to the CFA for review against these guidelines.</p> <p data-bbox="1476 411 2047 480">The application for the project will be sent to the CFA for review against these guidelines.</p> <p data-bbox="1476 518 2047 651">There will be water tanks throughout the site. These tanks will be filled with water brought on site by truck and monitored during the operation of the project to ensure they are topped up.</p> <p data-bbox="1476 699 2047 911">Elgin Energy has considered the feedback in relation to setbacks. To mitigate impact on neighbouring animals as a result of the visual impact, Elgin Energy will consider suitable vegetation to create a screen that protects them from seeing the solar panels.</p> <p data-bbox="1476 949 2047 1086">Elgin Energy has also offered to conduct visual impact assessments from neighbouring properties to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are considered.</p> <p data-bbox="1476 1134 2047 1235">In response to visual impact, Elgin Energy has conducted a visual impact assessment on three properties directly surrounding the site.</p> <p data-bbox="1476 1273 2047 1374">Elgin Energy has revisited the design of the proposal to identify changes that could minimise impact on neighbours' views.</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
			<p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting the panels back from the property boundary where possible. ▪ Locating the substation and battery in an area that is less visible from specific aspects of the neighbouring properties.
		<p>Rural atmosphere – Neighbours note that would like to maintain a rural atmosphere for the property.</p>	<p>Once the design is finalised and the fencing needs along Mt Rothwell confirmed, Elgin Energy will complete further visual impact assessments and share with neighbours. These assessments will form the starting point for discussions about placement of the fence behind the vegetation where possible.</p> <p>Elgin Energy will also ensure there are no project signs 100 metres west of Mt Rothwell Road. The only exception would be any required road safety signs. If these are needed, Elgin will let relevant neighbours know.</p>
		<p>Construction access – Neighbours noted they would prefer no construction access and traffic on Mt Rothwell Road, they may be open to exploring the possibility if it means the road would be sealed and widened. They also noted the road was realigned and is now on the property title.</p>	<p>As the construction methodology is confirmed, Elgin Energy will discuss with relevant near neighbours about the timing and needs around using Mt Rothwell Road for construction access.</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
		<p>Hydrology – Waterflow to some neighbouring dams is essential for operations at the property. The proposal would need to carefully consider hydrology impacts. Additionally, some surrounding landowners have an in-principle agreement with the around their sewer discharge point. They would like this arrangement to continue.</p>	<p>Elgin Energy has confirmed location of water flows and other arrangements for inclusion in hydrology assessment. Refer to the Hydrology Assessment part of the Planning Report for detail.</p>
		<p>Operational management – Neighbours noted the need for effective weed management and feral animal control during operation of the project.</p>	<p>Elgin Energy will develop weed management and feral animal control measures as part of the Planning Report.</p>
		<p>Access to mains water – If the project were to need access to mains water for fire management, some neighbouring properties noted they would be interested in sharing this connection.</p>	<p>As the needs around onsite water storage are better known, Elgin Energy will let near neighbours know if this includes access to mains water (approximately 3kms away) and begin discussions around this design</p>
<p>Broader community, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All the people who live within the Little River postcode area (postcode: 3211) ▪ All the people who live within the Balliang 	<p>Elgin Energy consulted with the broader Little River community via letterbox drop to 755 residents and businesses in the local area.</p> <p>Elgin Energy also consulted with the broader community via the two,</p>	<p>Common feedback received from the surrounding community during the information drop-in sessions, including:</p> <p>Fire risk</p> <p>Enquiries regarding the potential fire risk the solar farm, specifically:</p>	<p>The Country Fire Authority (CFA) has recently released updated Design Guidelines for Renewable energy facilities (including battery energy storage systems) and the application for the project will be sent to the CFA for review against these guidelines.</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
<p>postcode area (postcode: 3340).</p>	<p>three-hour information drop-in sessions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wednesday, 25 May 2022 (2pm – 5pm) ▪ Thursday, 26 May 2022 (5pm – 8pm). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the likelihood of ignition from the solar panels 	<p>A Fire Risk Assessment is also being prepared as part of the Planning Report. From the initial assessment, fire ignition as a result of the solar reflection is very unlikely.</p> <p>To mitigate risk further, fire breaks will border the site to limit the risk of spreading if a fire were to start and water tanks for firefighting will be provided across the site.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the management measures proposed for battery related fire 	<p>Since the Victorian big battery fire, mitigation requirements, including (but not limited to) water supply, fire breaks and battery separation have increased to limit this outcome/ likelihood.</p> <p>If approved, the battery substation would be surrounded by appropriate fire breaks and with water easily accessible and designed to meet all relevant design requirements to ensure appropriate fire safety standards are met.</p> <p>The fire assessment report includes that the proposal overall will not result in an increased level of fire risk and would be mitigated to an acceptable level given the predominately low hazard vegetation extent (grassland) in the form of agricultural grazing / cropping land (external) together with established fire breaks (internally) around key solar infrastructure (BESS, PV panels,</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
			substation, electricity supply lines, water tanks, and other temporary onsite infrastructure).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ proposed water source for fire management. 	There will be water tanks throughout the site. These tanks will be filled with water brought on site by truck and monitored during the operation of the project to ensure they are topped up.
		<p>Setbacks and visual impact</p> <p>Enquiries regarding proposed setback in relation to visual impacts was a key topic raised during conversations. Specifically:</p>	The minimum requirement for setbacks from neighbouring properties is at least 15 metres. This is increased to 30m where the neighbouring property has a dwelling situated on it.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enquiry regarding the required setbacks and what will be included around the perimeter of the site. 	<p>While this is the minimum requirement, Elgin Energy is reviewing the proposed design to ensure all setbacks are appropriate and respect the local environment and neighbouring properties. This included identifying opportunities for further tree / native vegetation retention.</p> <p>At minimum, the proposal includes 5m landscape buffer and 10m firebreak. The eastern boundary will be greater by virtue of Mt Rothwell Road. The western boundary is between 15-20m.</p> <p>The proposed setbacks will include sufficient area vegetation, where deemed necessary, and fire breaks around the solar panels.</p>
		<p>General interest in solar farms</p>	Elgin Energy will continue to have conversations with the community about the benefits of

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
		<p>There are locals nearby who are transitioning to solar energy on their own property.</p> <p>There was also a general understanding among locals about the benefit of solar energy.</p>	<p>renewable energy, including providing advice to neighbours, when requested.</p>
		<p>Environmental impact / wildlife</p> <p>Enquiry regarding the proposed setbacks from Sandy Creek.</p>	<p>Elgin Energy has carefully considered the setbacks from Sandy Creek and is working with an environmental consultant, Biosis, to understand how the proposed design can be refined to minimise and mitigate impacts on the environment.</p>
		<p>Waterways</p> <p>Enquiry regarding the proposed setbacks from waterways.</p>	<p>The proposed design is setback by 50 metres from Little River and Sandy Creek. The proposal may be designed to cover mapped first and second order waterways that have been highly modified as a result of farming occurring over them but will ensure any ephemeral drainage function of these areas are not impacted.</p>
		<p>Environmental impact / wildlife</p> <p>Fencing risk to kangaroos – how will risk to kangaroos be managed due to fencing (around the site and Mt Rothwell) creating a funnel effect along the road?</p>	<p>Elgin Energy appointed Biosis to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment that has been submitted to DELWP as part of the Planning Report.</p> <p>The Assessment reviewed the impact fencing would have on kangaroos, which has been outlined in the Planning Report. As an overview, the security fence will be set 5m back from the road behind some landscaping which would</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
			<p>provide space on both sides of the road for the Kangaroos to move into when traffic is passing through.</p> <p><i>Refer to the Planning Report for more information.</i></p>
		<p>Service area</p> <p>Enquiry regarding what the proposed solar power energy route (energy flow direction) and service area will be once complete.</p>	<p>The solar energy will be fed into the grid and connected directly to the existing 220kv powerline.</p> <p>The power will service demand from Melbourne and Geelong. The power route will be determined by the area most in demand.</p>
		<p>Glint and glare</p> <p>Enquiry regarding the likely impact on air traffic flying to and from Avalon Airport.</p>	<p>A Glint and Glare Assessment is being prepared as part of the Planning Report.</p> <p>From early assessments, the impact of the reflection from the solar panels is very minimal as the panels are designed to absorb the solar rays rather than reflect them. Generally, the panels would have a significantly lower glint and glare effect than a dam / body of water or other forms of reflective surface such as corrugated iron buildings.</p> <p>Once the assessment is complete, any necessary mitigation measures – such as appropriate landscape screening – will be considered.</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
		<p>Project name</p> <p>The community has provided significant feedback on the proposed name of the solar farm.</p> <p>‘Ripely Solar Farm’ or ‘Mt Rothwell Solar Farm’ were proposed by the community as an option for a new name during the discussions.</p> <p><i>Ripely was suggested as it was the original name of the town where the site is located along Little River Ripley Road.</i></p>	<p>Elgin Energy is in the process of considering a new name for the solar farm based on this community feedback.</p> <p>Once elected, the new name will be tested and refined with the community and stakeholders.</p> <p>Note, that this has been deferred until post lodgement considering it was not a priority for the community.</p>
<p>Environmental groups / organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brisbane Rangers Landcare Group 	<p>Elgin Energy consulted with Brisbane Rangers Landcare Group at their monthly meeting on via email on 21 April 2022.</p> <p>30 members of the Landcare Group attended the session.</p>	<p>Feedback received from the Brisbane Rangers Landcare Group surrounding during the meeting, included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerns regarding endangered wildlife, with specific mention of Black Falcon birds and Grey Box Eucalyptus. <p>Concerns regarding traffic during construction, specifically:</p>	<p>Working closely with Biosis (ecologist), Elgin Energy has prepared a detailed site constraints assessment that identifies environmental constraints on the site.</p> <p>The proposed design carefully addresses the existing Black Falcon birds and Grey Box Eucalyptus to mitigate impacts. This includes ensuring adequate setbacks and preservation measures are in place.</p> <p>Refer to the Biodiversity Assessment (prepared by Biosis) for the detail.</p> <p>Elgin Energy has prepared a preliminary traffic impact assessment as part of the Planning</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's impact on wildlife (potential roadkill) ▪ Safety concerns (narrow road with lots of trucks) ▪ Impact on traffic in the local area. 	<p>Report. The assessment carefully considers construction's impact on the local environment.</p> <p>If approved, a detailed construction management plan will be prepared that outlines the specific mitigation measures in place to ensure the local environment, including wildlife and traffic impacts, are addressed.</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enquiries into how fire risk will be managed 	<p>The Country Fire Authority (CFA) has recently released updated Design Guidelines for Renewable energy facilities (including battery energy storage systems) and the application for the project will be sent to the CFA for review against these guidelines.</p> <p>A Fire Risk Assessment is also being prepared as part of the Planning Report. From the initial assessment, fire ignition as a result of the solar reflection is very unlikely.</p> <p>To mitigate risk further, fire breaks will border the site to limit the risk of spreading if a fire were to start and water tanks for firefighting will be provided across the site.</p> <p>Since the Victorian big battery fire, mitigation requirements, including (but not limited to) water supply, fire breaks and battery separation have increased to limit this outcome/ likelihood.</p> <p>If approved, the battery substation would be surrounded by appropriate fire breaks and with water easily accessible and designed to meet all relevant design requirements to ensure appropriate fire safety standards are met.</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
		<p>General interest in how solar farms are operated and maintained</p>	<p>If approved, the solar farm will be managed and maintained on a regular basis, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Panel maintenance ▪ Battery substation maintenance ▪ Water assessments ▪ Fire break maintenance. <p>Once operational, it is expected the solar farm will be maintained by around three staff members.</p>
		<p>Enquiries regarding localised impact, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual impact 	<p>The proposed setbacks will include sufficient area vegetation, and fire breaks around the solar panels. The vegetation has been proposed to mitigate the visual impacts on neighbouring properties.</p> <p>Elgin Energy is reviewing the proposed design to ensure all setbacks are appropriate and respect the local environment and neighbouring properties. This included identifying opportunities for further tree / native vegetation retention.</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflexivity 	<p>A Glint and Glare Assessment is being prepared as part of the Planning Report.</p> <p>From early assessments, the impact of the reflection from the solar panels is very minimal as the panels are designed to absorb the solar rays</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Noise generation 	<p>rather than reflect them. Generally, the panels would have a significantly lower glint and glare effect than a dam / body of water or other forms of reflective surface such as corrugated iron buildings.</p> <p>Once the assessment is complete, any necessary mitigation measures – such as appropriate landscape screening – will be considered.</p> <p>A ‘noise and vibration assessment’ is being prepared as part of the Planning Report. The assessment will detail all potential noise risk generated as a result of the proposal.</p> <p>From preliminary research, noise risk and impact because of the solar farm is deemed very low.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little River Community Landcare Group 	<p>Elgin Energy consulted with Little River Community Landcare Group via email on 10 May 2022.</p> <p>The email provided an overview of the proposal and an invitation to attend one of the information drop-in sessions.</p>	<p>Representatives attended the Little River Community Landcare Group information drop-in session #1 on 25 May 2022.</p>	<p>Elgin Energy will continue to have conversations with the Little River Community Landcare Group about the proposed Barwon Solar Farm.</p>

Stakeholder	How this group was consulted	Issues and feedback discussed	Project response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mt Rothwell Interpretation Centre 	<p>Elgin Energy had a one-on-one virtual meeting with the owner of Mt Rothwell on 3 May 2022.</p>	<p>Feedback captured in this meeting included:</p> <p>Risk on endangered species that exist in Mt Rothwell Interpretation Centre as a result proposal.</p> <p>Risk of endangered birds mistaking solar panels as a water source.</p>	<p>Elgin Energy is in close conversations with Mt Rothwell Interpretation Centre to understand impacts of the proposed solar farm on the existing endangered species around the site.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have been outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment, prepared by Biosis.</p>

5. FUTURE COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Elgin Energy welcomes feedback on the proposal. Elgin Energy will continue to keep stakeholders and the community informed of the project approval process and, if approved, pre-construction, construction and operation phases by:

- Continuing to engage with the community about the project, its impacts, and the approval process
- Providing information through a letterbox drop on how the community's views have been addressed
- Enabling the community to seek clarification about the project through the two-way communication channels.

5.1. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT – FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

The following approach to future engagement has been prepared as an indicative approach (open to refinement as the plans progress). It has been prepared in line with *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria Guidelines*, which states 'this plan should cover the entire project lifecycle.'

Stakeholder	Engagement objective and timing / phase	Proposed methods of engagement
Local Councils, specifically: City of Greater Geelong Council	Consult Local Council's will be consulted at each phase of the planning pathway.	Via DELWP Phone Direct emails Face to face meetings
Relevant agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning ▪ Country Fire Authority (CFA) ▪ Environment Protection Authority ▪ Department of Transport ▪ Emergency Management Victoria Catchment and environmental protection ▪ Rural water corporations: Southern Rural Water ▪ Urban Water Corporation: Barwon Water ▪ Port Philip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority 	Consult While early conversations with relevant agencies are underway, Elgin Energy will be seeking formal feedback on the proposed design post lodgement.	Via DELWP Phone Direct emails Face to face meetings

Stakeholder	Engagement objective and timing / phase	Proposed methods of engagement
<p>Landowners and land users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional Custodians ▪ RAP Groups 	<p>Consult</p> <p>A Cultural Heritage Management Plan is being prepared for the project in consultation with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation. This is an ongoing process that will continue into the operation of the project via discussions for the Traditional owners to utilise the undeveloped part of the site near Sandy Creek for heritage interpretation and activities.</p>	<p>Face to face meetings</p> <p>Virtual meetings</p> <p>Direct emails</p> <p>Phone calls</p>
<p>Community, landowners and land users, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing land occupiers ▪ Direct neighbours 	<p>Involve</p> <p>Near neighbours will be informed at each phase of the planning process including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lodgement ▪ Exhibition ▪ Determination ▪ Construction phases. <p>As part of this consultation, Elgin Energy will inform near neighbours about how feedback has been addressed in the Planning Report.</p>	<p>Face to face meetings</p> <p>Virtual meetings</p> <p>Direct emails</p> <p>Phone calls</p> <p>Community newsletter</p> <p>Project website updates</p> <p>Engagement phone line</p> <p>Engagement email address</p>
<p>Broader community, specifically:</p> <p>All the people who live within the Little River postcode area (postcode: 3211)</p> <p>All the people who live within the Balliang postcode area (postcode: 3340).</p>	<p>Consult</p> <p>Elgin Energy will update the community via a community newsletter (letterbox drop) to all homes and businesses in Little River and Balliang. The newsletter will provide information on how the community's views have been addressed.</p>	<p>Community newsletter</p> <p>Project website updates</p> <p>Engagement phone line</p> <p>Engagement email address</p>
<p>Environmental groups / organisations:</p> <p>Brisbane Rangers Landcare Group</p>	<p>Consult</p> <p>Elgin Energy will update local environmental groups /</p>	<p>Face to face meetings</p> <p>Direct emails</p>

Stakeholder	Engagement objective and timing / phase	Proposed methods of engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little River Community Landcare group ▪ Mt Rothwell Interpretation Centre 	organisations post-lodgement. The update will provide information on how the community's views have been addressed.	Phone calls
<p>Businesses / organisations located in the Town of Little River, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little River Mechanics Institute Hall ▪ Charitable Society ▪ Little River General Store (Ampol & Post Office) ▪ Rothwell Run ▪ XLB Group Pty 	<p>Consult</p> <p>Elgin Energy will update local businesses and organisations in the town of Little River post-lodgement. The update will provide information on how the community's views have been addressed.</p>	<p>Community newsletter</p> <p>Project website updates</p> <p>Engagement phone line</p> <p>Engagement email address</p>
<p>Local schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Little River Primary School 	<p>Consult</p> <p>Elgin Energy will update Little River Primary School post-lodgement. The update will provide information on how the community's views have been addressed.</p>	<p>Community newsletter</p> <p>Project website updates</p> <p>Engagement phone line</p> <p>Engagement email address</p>
<p>Community groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town of Little River – Facebook page ▪ Lions Club of Little River ▪ Little River Historical Society 	<p>Consult</p> <p>Elgin Energy will update community groups post-lodgement. The update will provide information on how the community's views have been addressed.</p>	<p>Community newsletter</p> <p>Project website updates</p> <p>Engagement phone line</p> <p>Engagement email address</p>

5.2. COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (CCC)

Depending on the level of stakeholder interest and feedback in throughout the approval and pre-construction phases, Elgin Energy will consider the establishment of community-based forums (such as a Community Consultative Committee) to enable deeper focus on key environmental management issues for the project.

If required, a Community Consultative Committee (CCC) could be established in accordance with DELWP's recommendations.

The CCC would be an effective forum for discussion between the proponent, representatives of the community and other stakeholders including the Council during the project's construction management phases (including from pre-construction, construction and operation. The CCC could comprises an

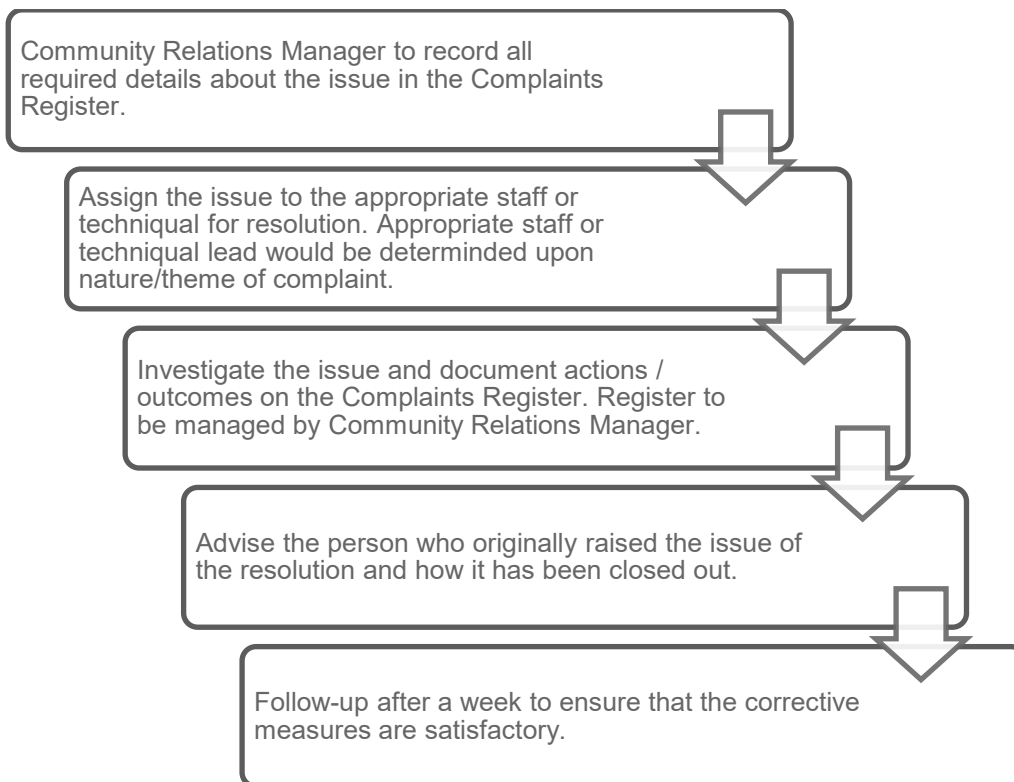
independent chair, up to relevant community representatives, a representative from Council and representatives from the Elgin Energy.

The community representatives would be those people and or groups impacted by the project and who are in a position to represent the community, contribute to discussions during meetings and disseminate information from meetings to the broader community. The chairperson and DELWP would oversee the selection process.

5.3. COMPLAINT'S RESOLUTION AND MEDIATION OF DISPUTES

As part of the future engagement approach and keeping the community informed, this report provides a procedure for issues resolution and the mediation of disputes throughout all phases of the project, from planning to construction. This mechanism in Figure 6 allows for the identification and implementation of corrective measures in response to issues raised by the community, to minimise the likelihood of recurrence. All complaints will be recorded in a Complaints Register that will be maintained to close the loop on all communications.

Figure 6 Complaints and resolutions process



DISCLAIMER

This report is dated 10 October 2022 and incorporates information and events up to that date only and excludes any information arising, or event occurring, after that date which may affect the validity of Urbis Pty Ltd (**Urbis**) opinion in this report. Urbis prepared this report on the instructions, and for the benefit only, of Elgin Energy (**Instructing Party**) for the purpose of Community and stakeholder engagement outcomes report (**Purpose**) and not for any other purpose or use. To the extent permitted by applicable law, Urbis expressly disclaims all liability, whether direct or indirect, to the Instructing Party which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose other than the Purpose, and to any other person which relies or purports to rely on this report for any purpose whatsoever (including the Purpose).

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

BARWON SOLAR FARM

URBIS

Elgin Energy is preparing a proposal to develop a solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) at a site on Little River-Ripley Road, part of the Greater Geelong City Council area. The project will include ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) modules (panels), like those installed on rooftops around Australia.

A Planning Report is being prepared seeking approval through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). The Planning Report will assess impacts on the local environment, which will be submitted to DELWP as part of the assessment.

The 735-hectare site at 1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River, Victoria is around 34 kilometres north of

Geelong City Centre and 11.5 kilometres north-west of Little River Town Centre. The site is made up of several properties currently used for agricultural activities, including, sheep grazing. It is intended that sheep grazing will continue within the development footprint of the project once operational.

When complete, the proposed facility will include:



Approximately 300MWp capacity of a solar photovoltaic (PV), which is the conversion of light into electricity using semiconducting materials.



A battery energy storage system (BESS) with an estimated 150-250 MW capacity.

KEY BENEFITS OF BARWON SOLAR FARM:



Community benefit sharing initiatives and opportunities for both local and regional businesses to support during construction and operation



Creation of around 150 jobs during construction and around 3 during operation



Contributing to the Victorian Government renewable energy targets



Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and generate enough clean electricity to power around 98,000 homes (around 727,920,00 MWh/year)

CARING FOR THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Elgin Energy is engaging with the community, authorities, and environmental groups to ensure plans carefully consider all physical and cultural elements of the site and its surroundings.

Working in line with the Victorian Government's Solar Energy Facilities – Design and Development Guideline, Elgin Energy has been working for the past 18 months on site analysis and selection.

The site was selected carefully based on its land suitability for solar (flat and clear land with minimal environmental constraints) and its ability to connect with the grid. It was also identified as having excellent solar irradiance (amount of direct sun per square metre) to support a project.

We are also working with the Wadawurrang Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan to mitigate any impacts of the development on tangible and non tangible cultural heritage elements of the site.

MANAGING IMPACTS IN THE COMMUNITY – DURING CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION

Elgin Energy is committed to minimising the impact on the community, including surrounding landowners and land users, including neighbouring farmers and residents.

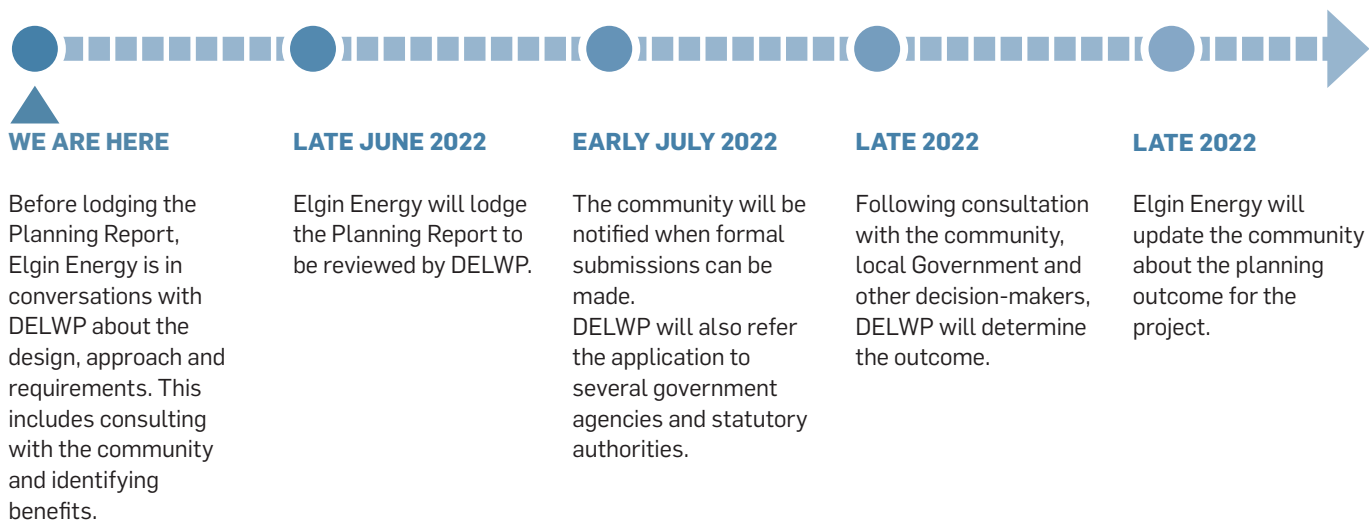
As part of this, we are preparing a number of specialist reports that will assess visual impact, glint and glare, landscaping, acoustics, biodiversity, community feedback, traffic and transport, cultural heritage, hydrology, agriculture and fire risk in the area.

These assessments will measure community impact. The glint and glare report will determine the sunlight's reflection from the solar panels and the visual impact report will assess what the facility will look like in the area. Following these assessments, Elgin Energy will implement suitable measures to mitigate community impact.

During construction, care will be taken to restrict and limit noise and traffic impacts. Other safety measures include safety barriers and maintaining a clean worksite.



PLANNING PATHWAY



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Community engagement and benefit-sharing are essential parts of the project. Elgin Energy is preparing a program that aims to contribute value to the local area in Little River. As part of this, Elgin Energy is committed to keeping the community informed at each stage of the project from planning to construction.

We are capturing feedback and recommendations from the community to explore benefit-sharing opportunities. This could include identifying services to benefit the broader community.

Elgin Energy has commissioned Urbis Engagement to collect your feedback and recommendations and provide further information about the Barwon Solar Farm proposal.

You can reach the team on:

- (02) 7202 1239
- engagement@urbis.com.au
- <http://barwonsolarfarm.flywheelsites.com/>

COMMUNITY INFORMATION BRIEFING SESSIONS



Join us at one of our upcoming community information sessions to learn more about the project, ask questions, and provide feedback.

SESSION OPTIONS - REGISTER NOW

- Wednesday, 25 May 2022 (2pm – 5pm)
- Thursday, 26 May 2022 (5pm – 8pm)

To register your interest or arrange a separate time to meet with the project team, please email engagement@urbis.com.au



APPENDIX B

INFORMATION BOARDS

WELCOME



Proposed Barwon Solar Farm

1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River



The solar farm will include ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) modules (panels), like those installed on rooftops around Australia.

What's being proposed?

Elgin Energy is proposing to deliver a solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS).

Where are we now?

We are seeking approval for the proposal through the planning process. This involves preparing a Planning Report and supporting technical studies to submit to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

The Planning Report will detail the proposal, assess impacts on the local environment and suggest mitigation measures. DELWP will assess and consider approval of the proposal.

What is this session about?

We'd like you to learn more about the proposal by:



Exploring
the boards



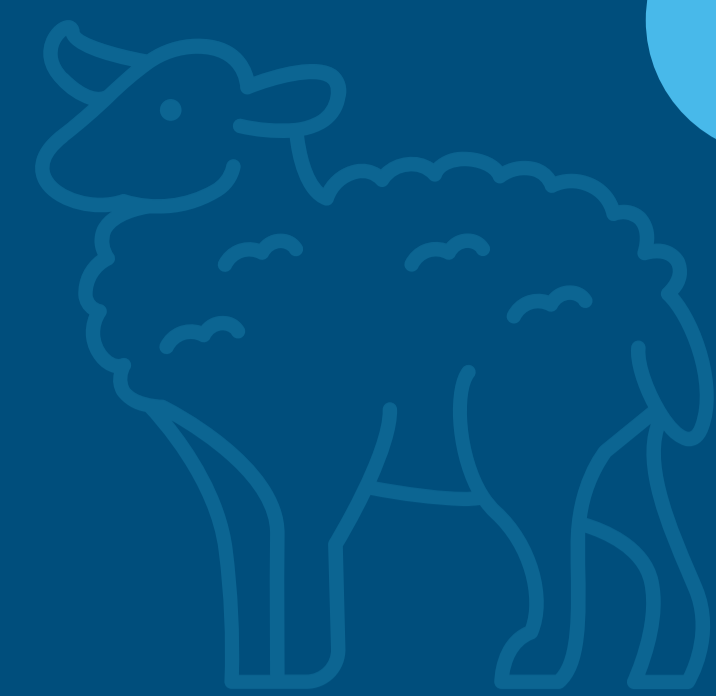
Asking
questions
of the
project team



Signing up
for updates

We encourage you to share thoughts and ideas on the proposed Barwon Solar Farm. Elgin Energy will consider all feedback and concerns as part of the planning process.

WHERE WOULD THE SOLAR FARM BE?

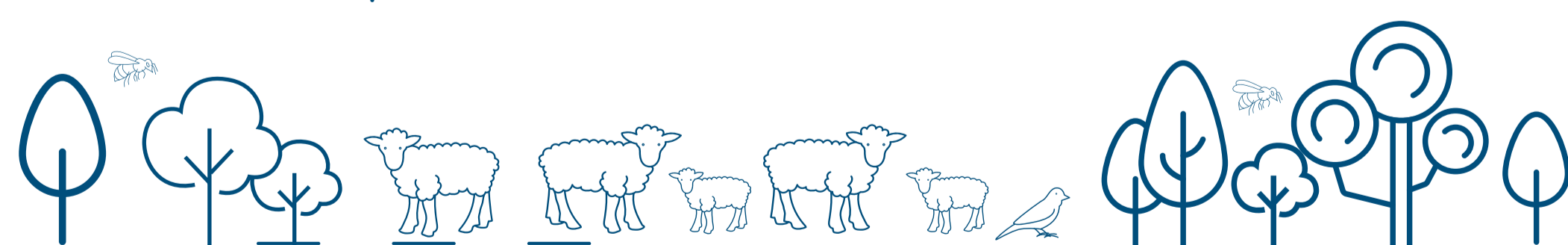
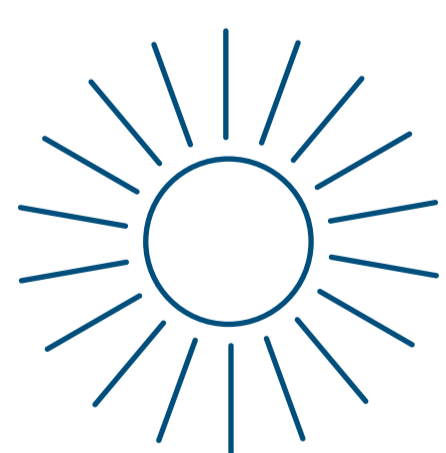


Proposed Barwon Solar Farm

1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River



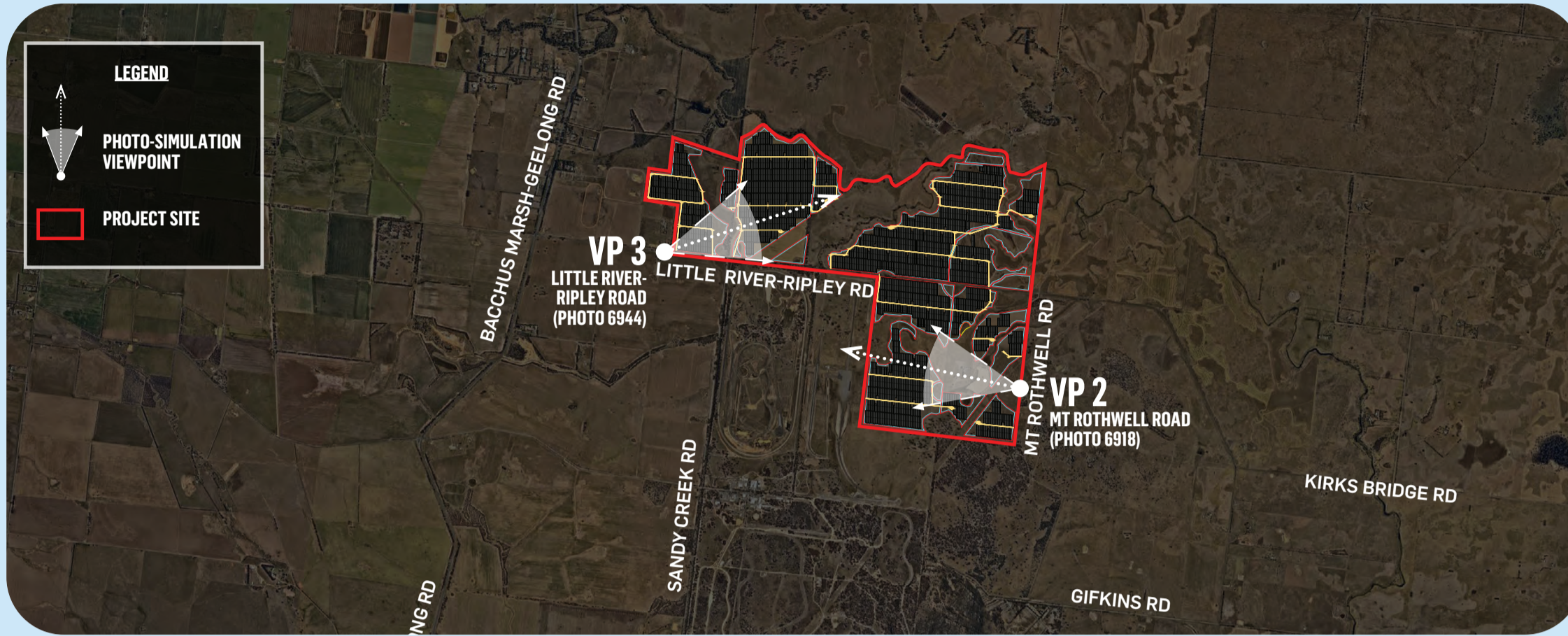
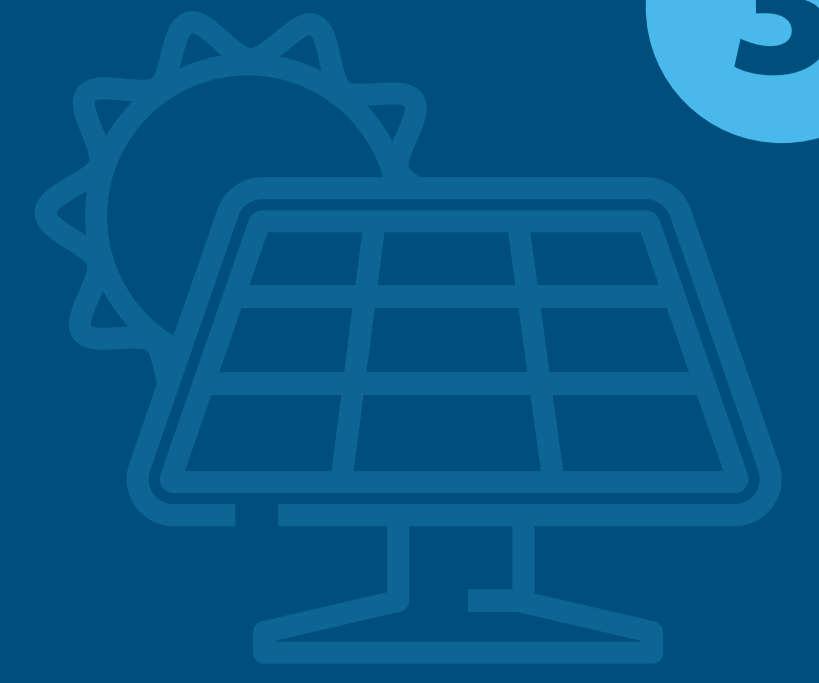
Barwon Solar Farm site photos



Sheep grazing will continue on site (including within the development footprint) once operational.



WHAT WOULD THE SOLAR FARM LOOK LIKE?



View location map



VP 2: Looking WNW at the proposed solar farm from Mt Rothwell Road



VP 2: Looking WNW at the proposed solar farm from Mt Rothwell Road with vegetation growth after 5 years



VP 3: Looking ENE at the proposed solar farm from Little River-Ripley Road



VP 3: Looking ENE WNW at the proposed solar farm from Little River-Ripley Road with vegetation growth after 5 years

*Photos are indicative only and subject to change.



HOW DOES A SOLAR FARM WORK?

Solar panels use photovoltaic (PV) technology to generate electrical power from daylight. The panels generate a direct current that is transformed via inverters into alternating current, which is suitable for connection to the electricity network.

Why Solar?

Solar is the fastest growing, and easiest to install, renewable energy globally. Solar farms produce no emissions, are visually unobtrusive and have limited impact on their local environment.

Key benefits include:



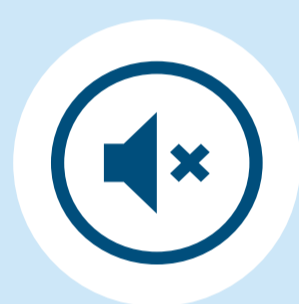
Fast to install compared to other energy plants.



Creates clean, renewable energy that will support the health of future generations.



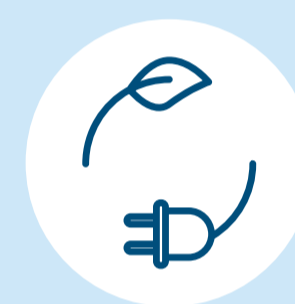
Zero pollution or emissions.



Clean, quiet, and visually unobtrusive.



Ability to maintain sheep grazing once operational.



Supports national energy independence.

Connecting with the grid:

Solar farms connect to a specific point on the electrical grid (the vast network of wires connecting every power generation plant to every home and business that consumes power). That point is called the “point of interconnection,” or POI.

Solar farm operation:

The solar panels will sit around five metres from the ground. A single-axis tracker moves panels on one axis of movement, usually aligned with north and south. Panels rotate from east to west and track the sun as it rises and sets. This increases the efficiency of the system without having to install more solar panels.



The process of a solar farm



Photovoltaic technology has been in use for over fifty years, with most of us familiar with the solar powered calculator.

HOW WOULD WE MANAGE IMPACTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

Elgin Energy is talking to the community now to ensure plans consider all physical, environmental and cultural features of the site and its surroundings.

This includes looking at how the proposed design:



Carefully considers the wildlife and endangered species in the area, including trees and tree hollows used by wildlife.



Provides more opportunities to create new habitats for native species, particularly birds.



Seeks to avoid and minimise impacts on native species of trees and vegetation.



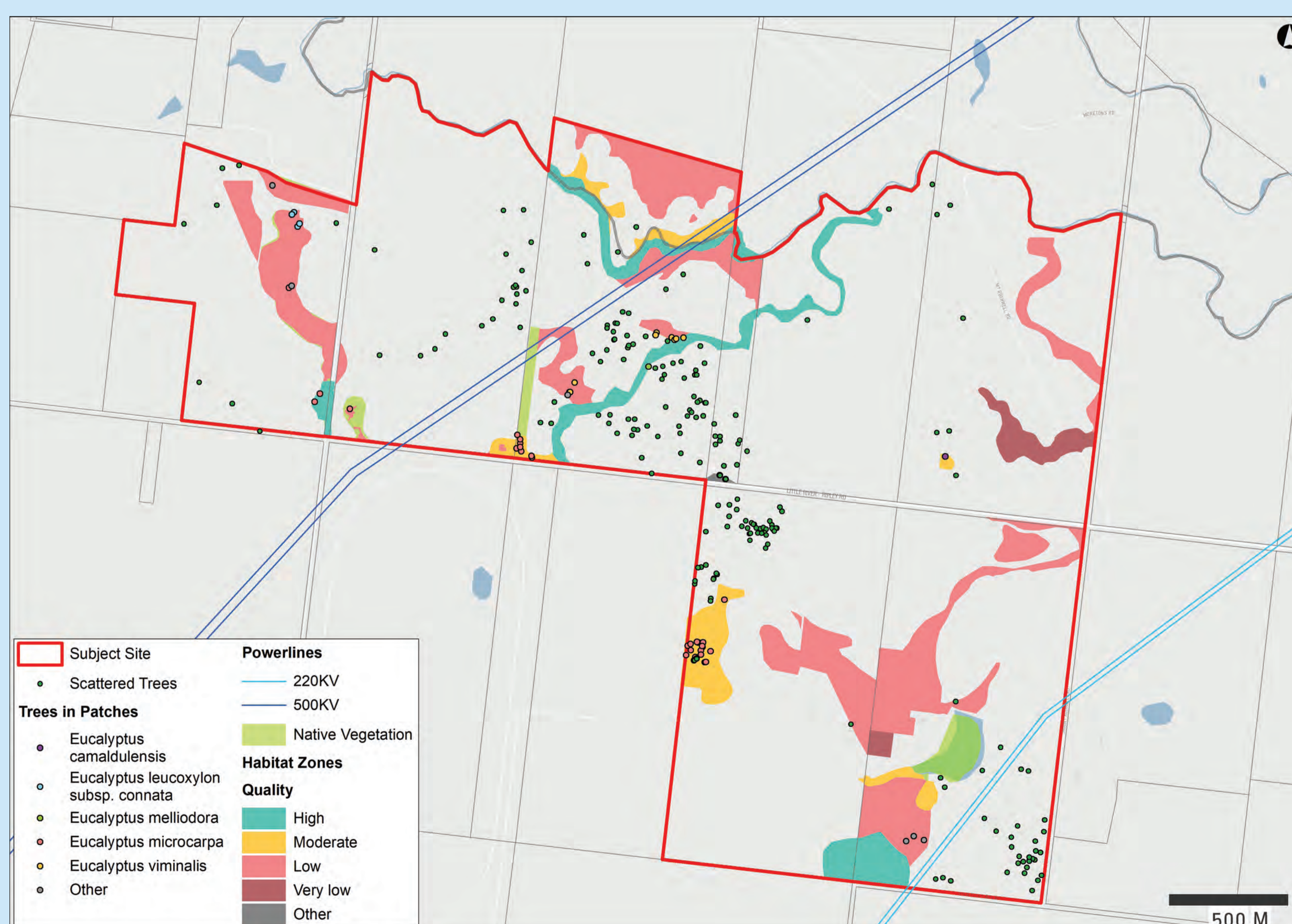
Includes appropriate setbacks from Little River and Sandy Creek to prevent impacts on biodiversity and cultural heritage.



Manages the spread of weeds and non-native fauna across the site.

Elgin Energy is also working closely with Wadawurrang Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

The plan will identify measures to mitigate impacts to tangible and nontangible cultural heritage elements we know are located close by to the site.



HOW WOULD WE MANAGE IMPACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

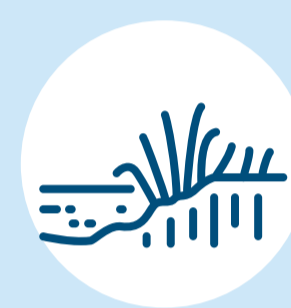
Around 150 jobs will be created during construction (with considerably more during peak). The construction is expected to take around 18 months to complete.

If approved, a detailed construction environmental management plan (the plan) will be created to ensure care is taken to restrict and limit all impacts due to construction over this 18 month period.

The management plan will specifically address:



Wildlife protection during construction and operation.



Landscaping opportunities, including planting and maintenance schedule.



How compliance with the cultural heritage management plan will be achieved.



Impacts from noise during construction and operation and how this will be managed.



Risk and emergency plan for bush fires.

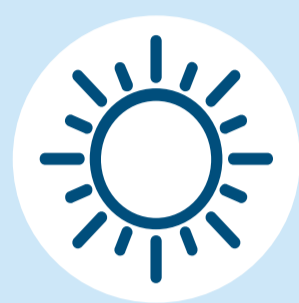


Vegetation protection and upkeep.



HOW WOULD WE MANAGE IMPACTS DURING OPERATION

Elgin Energy is assessing impacts on the area as a result of the proposed solar farm. These assessments will measure the following:



The sunlight's reflection from the solar panels.



Impact on the environment and local biodiversity.



Potential impact of the proposed activity on Aboriginal cultural heritage.



What the facility will look like in the area.



Changes to the surrounding road network.



Fire risk in the area.

These assessments will measure community impact and advise on how Elgin Energy will implement suitable mitigation measures.

Traffic and access during operation

All access to and from the site will be via Little River-Ripley Road.



Around two/three entryways will be located to the north on Little River-Ripley Road

One entry way will be located to the south on Little River-Ripley Road



Rows of panels with trackers

WHO IS ELGIN ENERGY?

Elgin Energy is a leading utility scale, solar and storage developer. Elgin have delivered 21 solar projects, totaling 230MW since 2009.

We have 5GW of development across three key markets of UK, Australia and Ireland. Elgin Energy is committed to multiple projects in Australia, supported by its headquarters in Dublin, Ireland.



Elgin Energy believes in a zero-carbon future and is working towards that goal.

In Australia:

Elgin Energy focuses on markets where there are strong opportunities for long-term growth.

Opportunities in the Australian market include:



Increasing political support

NSW is implementing the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap to 2030. Victoria has a 40% renewable target by 2025. Both states aim to halve emissions by 2030.



High solar irradiation

Australia has the highest average solar irradiation of any continent.



Coal retirement

NSW and VIC are predominantly powered by an ageing fleet of coal power stations that need to be replaced over the next 20 years by cheaper and cleaner technology.



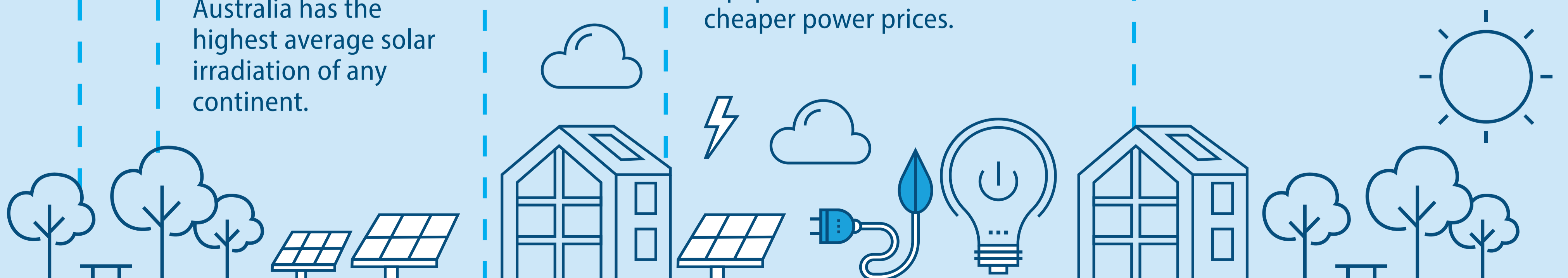
Technology costs

Solar PV and battery technology prices continue to reduce dramatically. Reduction in equipment costs results in cheaper power prices.

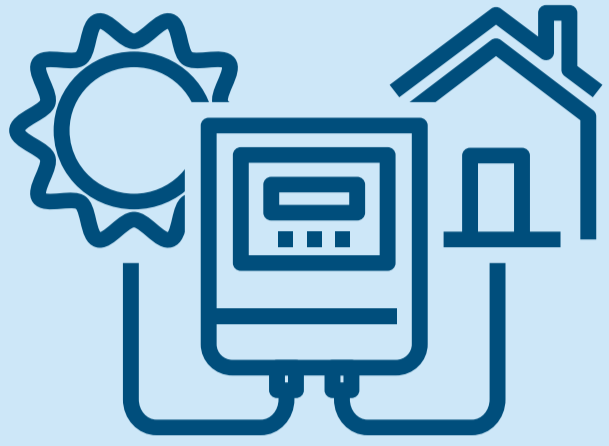


Corporate and government uptake

There is commitment to purchasing renewable energy for the long-term through power purchase agreements (PPA). Examples include Facebook, Google, Telstra, Mars, Unilever, Carlton United Breweries, University of Queensland and State Government Departments and Council alliances.

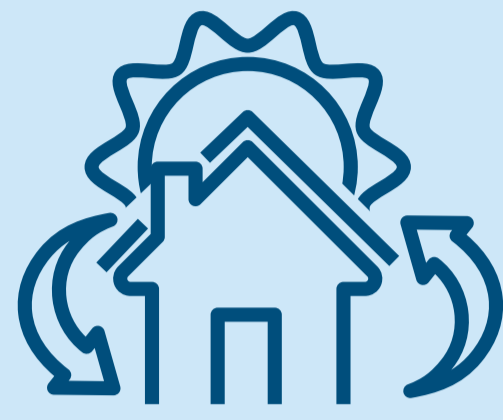


WHAT IS THE PLANNING PATHWAY?



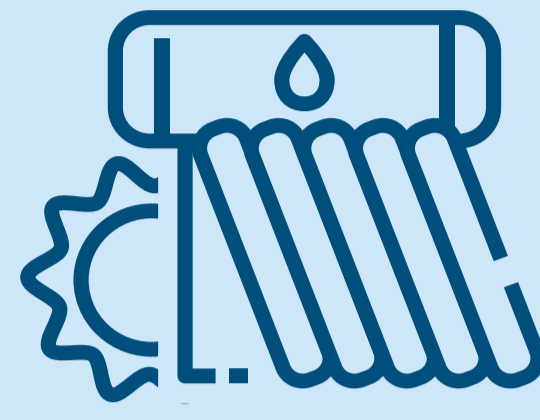
We are here

Before lodging the Planning Report, Elgin Energy is in conversations with DELWP about the design, approach and requirements. This includes consulting with the community and identifying benefits.



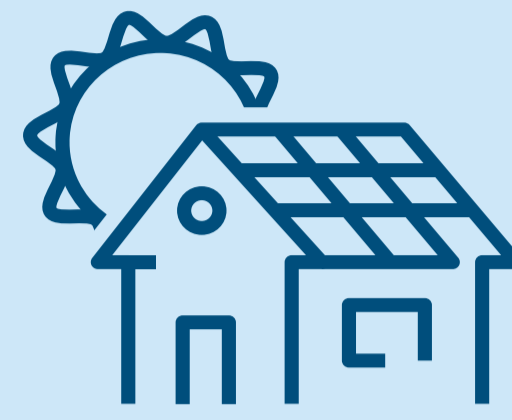
Q3 2022

Elgin Energy will lodge the Planning Report to be reviewed by DELWP.



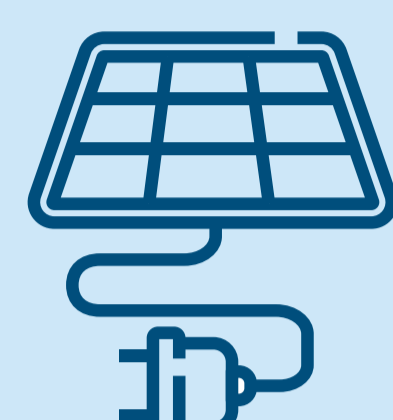
Q3 2022

The community will be notified when formal submissions can be made. DELWP will also refer the application to several government agencies and statutory authorities.



Q4 2022

Following consultation with the community, local Government and other decision-makers, DELWP will determine the outcome.



Q4 2022

Elgin Energy will update the community about the planning outcome for the project.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Community benefit sharing

Community benefit-sharing is an essential part of the project. Elgin Energy is preparing a program that aims to contribute value to the local area in Little River. To help us capture community feedback and identify gaps in any resources in the community, we have prepared a community survey.



We are capturing feedback and recommendations from the community to explore benefit-sharing opportunities.

Elgin Energy will keep the community informed at each stage of the project from planning to construction.

We are currently capturing feedback and recommendations from the community, which will inform the engagement report that will be submitted to DELWP as part of the Planning Report.

If you have any specific questions, please find a member of the team here today who will be happy to help you.



Scan the QR code for the survey

Phone: 1800 244 863

Website: www.barwonsolarfarm.com.au

Email: engagement@urbis.com.au

APPENDIX C

BRISBANE RANGERS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

April members meeting – Balliang Solar Installation

At the Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group April meeting, we heard from **Elgin Energy** (the largest privately owned solar developer in the UK) who are planning an initial 300MW solar farm over 1200 acres along Little Ripley Road in Balliang. Elgin energy is a utility scale solar and storage developer with around 45 staff. Elgin energy delivered 21 solar projects totalling 230MW since 2009, committed to multiple projects in Australia, supported by headquarters in Dublin.



The following information about the proposal was provided by Elgin Energy to the group on the night.

Elgin Energy focuses on markets where there are strong fundamentals and opportunities for long-term growth. The Australian fundamentals include:

- High Solar radiation – Australia has the highest solar radiation of any continent.
- Coal retirement – NSW and VIC are predominantly powered by an ageing fleet of coal power stations that need to be replaced over the next 20 years by cheaper and cleaner technology.
- Increasing political support – NSW is implementing the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap to 2030. Victoria has a 40% renewable target by 2025. Both states aim to halve emissions by 2030
- Corporate and government uptake – large corporations and governments are committing to purchasing renewable energy for the long-term through power purchase agreements (PPA). Examples include Facebook, Google, Telstra, Mars, Unilever, Carlton United Breweries, University of Queensland and State Government Departments and Council alliances.
- Technology costs – Solar PV and battery technology prices continue to reduce dramatically. Reduction in equipment costs results in cheaper power prices

The proposal

Elgin Energy is proposing a solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS). If approved, the facility will include:

- 300MWp (approx.) capacity of a solar photovoltaic (PV) (the conversion of light into electricity) using single axis tracking solar technology
- A battery energy storage system (BESS) with around 150-250 MW capacity.
- Footprint of approximately 480Ha.

The site

Located at 1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River, Victoria

- Total site area 735 hectares
- Currently used for agriculture, including sheep grazing and cropping
- In Greater Geelong City Council area
- 34km north of Geelong City Centre
- 11.5km north-west of Little River Town Centre.



Project benefits

Employment opportunities for both local and regional businesses during construction and operation. Creation of around 150 jobs during construction (with considerably more during peak) and approx. 3 during operation. Contributing to the Victorian Government renewable energy targets. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and generate enough clean electricity to power around 98,000 homes.

Other benefits of a solar farm

Fast to install compared to other energy plants Clean, quiet, and visually unobtrusive Zero pollution or emissions Creates clean, renewable energy that will support the health of future generations. Supports national energy independence Ability maintain sheep grazing once operational.



It will include ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) modules (panels), like those installed on rooftops around Australia.

Caring for the environment

Elgin are talking to the community now to ensure plans consider all physical/environmental and cultural features of the site and its surroundings.

- The site is suitable for solar (it's generally flat and contains considerable area of clear land).
- It can connect with the grid.
- It has excellent direct sun light (solar irradiance) to support the proposal.
- Careful assessment and surveys of the environmental sensitives of the site form part of the site layout and planning application preparation process.

Cultural significance

Elgin are working closely with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan. The plan will identify measures to mitigate impacts to tangible and nontangible cultural heritage elements of the site.



Wadawurrung
Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation

Managing community impacts

Elgin are committed to minimising the impact on the community. During construction, care will be taken to restrict and limit noise and traffic impacts. Other safety measures include safety barriers and maintaining a clean worksite. During operation, as part of the proposal, we are assessing impacts on the area as a result of the solar farm. These assessments will measure community impact, and include the measurement of:

- the sunlight's reflection from the solar panels
- what the facility will look like in the area.

Traffic and access

All access to and from the site will be via Little River-Ripley Road.

- Two – three entry ways will be located to the north on Little River-Ripley Road
- One entry way will be located to the south on Little River-Ripley Road



Community sharing initiatives

Elgin Energy are creating a benefit-sharing program to support the contribution to the local area of Little River. To help Elgin Energy capture community feedback and identify gaps in any resources in the community, they have prepared a community survey. Elgin is in the process of publishing the benefit sharing website and anticipate it will go live shortly. Once published, scan the QR code to the right for the survey.



Elgin Energy are also interested in initiating an additional phase of their project, if suitable properties can be identified.

For more information, attend the community information session times and venues listed below and see the Elgin Energy info page attached along with this newsletter.

Proposed Barwon Solar Farm – community information drop-in sessions

Join us at Little River Mechanics Institute Hall (8 Rothwell Rd, Little River) for a community information drop-in session to learn more about the proposal, ask questions, and provide feedback to the project team.

There is no formal presentation, so visit at a time that suits you.

Session options – feel free to drop in between any of the times:

- Wednesday, 25 May 2022 (2pm – 5pm)
- Thursday, 26 May 2022 (5pm – 8pm).

What it's about: Elgin Energy is proposing to deliver a solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) at 1145-1215 Little River-Ripley Road, Little River. This involves preparing a Planning Report to submit to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

Elgin Energy is committed to keeping the community informed at each stage of the project from planning to construction. If you have any questions about the proposal, please email engagement@urbis.com.au

Nesting box Workshop

Our Landcare group hosted a nesting box workshop on Saturday 19th of March at the Balliang Hall. All participants listened eagerly to the talk and demonstration by Miles Geldard, and then selected a nesting box of choice to construct,



and take home to install. Miles Geldard has been making habitat boxes for native wildlife for

nearly 20 years. Miles lives amongst the box ironbark forests in Castlemaine, Victoria. It's generally understood that species decline is primarily driven by habitat loss. Installation of a nest box immediately helps our native fauna by giving them somewhere to live. Miles' Wildlife Nestboxes are designed from peer reviewed ecological research and extensive field trials. They are built to last and constructed from quality local sustainable materials. Also included, a revolutionary 'bee treatment' that prevents



