

Meeting: Boree Solar Farm: Group Community Session – Questions and Answers

Date / Location: Wongarbon Hall

Attendees: 32 people

Q: What is the project size and lifetime?

A: The proposal is for a 250-megawatt (MW) Direct Current (DC) solar plant with a 200MW 4-hour Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Project life is proposed at 30 years if approved.

Q: What is the current planning status?

A: The next phase is the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A scoping report was submitted and the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) have been received.

Q: When will technical assessments and field surveys start?

A: Most assessments and field surveys are planned to begin in February 2026.

Q: How will landowners be notified if surveys or road works are required on their property?

A: If you are a direct neighbour of the project site and would like to receive SMS notifications from ELA consultants to notify you when future field survey work is being conducted within the proposed Boree Solar Farm Project Site, please send your mobile number to info@boreesolarproject.com.au

Q: What types of assessments will be included in the EIS?

A: The EIS will include traffic and transport (most suitable routes, load capacity, access), waste (generation and disposal), surface water and groundwater (water quality, water balance, flooding), biodiversity (terrestrial and aquatic), heritage studies (Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage), social, economic, bushfire, soils and agriculture, Electromagnetic Fields, landscape and visual, noise and vibration, hazards, and cumulative impacts, and other studies required by the SEARs.

Q: Are consultant assessments independently audited or verified?

A: There is a peer review process as part of the State Significant Development (SSD) / State Significant Development Application (SSDA) process. All assessments submitted with the EIS must be certified by a Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner, who verifies they meet best-practice standards and regulatory requirements.

Q: Will radiation / low frequency impacts be assessed and labelled as low frequency?

A: Yes. Low frequency radiation will be assessed within the Preliminary Hazards Assessment and Electromagnetic Fields Assessment.

Q: How will local roads be managed and who pays for maintenance?

A: Baseline road condition assessments will be prepared prior to construction to document existing conditions. Mitigation measures and contractor responsibilities will be implemented to ensure local road quality is maintained during construction, with the Applicant managing day-to-day local road conditions through the construction period. Further detail on ongoing management and any maintenance arrangements will be developed in consultation with Council and set out in a Traffic Management Plan and associated agreements.

Q: Why are multiple access gates/routes proposed rather than a single gate?

A: The Scoping Report identified four potential access routes at a high level to ensure a comprehensive assessment of options. The traffic and transport consultant will undertake a detailed assessment of gate numbers, configurations and traffic impacts during the traffic and transport study. That assessment will evaluate each potential route and identify the most suitable access arrangement, including whether access points can be consolidated to a single gate or if multiple gates are required.

Q: Some consultees say desktop studies used data from across Wellington and may not be accurate - will the EIS address this?

A: Yes. More detailed local field surveys will be undertaken during the EIS phase to ensure accuracy and compliance with guidelines. Cumulative impacts will also be considered.

Q: Has a social impact assessment been done and will workforce/housing be assessed?

A: The social impact assessment is not yet completed and will be done during the EIS. Workforce accommodation and related impacts (where people will live, transport, security and social issues) will be a key part of that assessment.

Q: What workforce numbers are assumed in the Scoping Report and what community concerns were raised?

A: The Scoping Report estimated up to 350 workers on site during construction. Community concerns included security, drug and alcohol, transport logistics, and monitoring worker behaviour. Contractor management and strict guidelines will be included and examined in the social impact assessment.

Q: How tall are the panels, and can height be reduced?

A: Panels are approximately 5.5 metres high at maximum tilt/inclination. Any change to height would be determined through technical design assessments.

Q: How are panels oriented, angled or east-west?

A: Panels will be on single-axis trackers that rotate east-to-west.

Q: How will the panels be mounted?

A: Piling is expected across much of the site; exact foundation type depends on ground conditions determined through geotechnical assessments.

Q: Will gullies and streams be filled? What about Category 1/2 waterways?

A: Whether gullies are filled depends on their function (e.g. flood, overflow). Category 1 and 2 streams may be spanned rather than filled. Water quality controls and trigger-based mitigation plans will be implemented if the project receives approval.

Q: What happens to existing dams on properties where panels are installed?

A: This requires further technical assessment. The current expectation is that dams will be retained where feasible.

Q: Are the environmental assessments independently verified?

A: Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner will review and sign off on all technical assessment reports and the EIS. If documents are challenged, signatories risk losing accreditation.

Q: How is decommissioning guaranteed, especially if the development is sold?

A: The Project owner is obligated to fully decommission the project at the end of its lifecycle and return the land to its original condition. To provide further assurance of our commitment to this obligation, we have put in place a decommissioning regime based on leading best practices across our industry.

This includes a decommissioning fund that will be funded by the project during its operational life, according to the results of a third-party independent assessment of the expected decommissioning costs at the time. The fund will be accessible by the host landowner to decommission the project if for any reason the project owner fails to perform any of its duties for decommissioning of the project.

The decommissioning regime does not release the project owner from its obligations to decommission the project at the end of its life. Rather it provides further assurance that the project owner fulfills this obligation, and moreover it provides peace of mind to the host landowner and the

surrounding community that they will never bear the cost of decommissioning the project at the end of its lifecycle.

Q: When do decommissioning contributions start?

A: Contributions are expected to begin around year 25 (the final five years of the 30-year project life). The Decommissioning Management Plan sets checks and timing and will be initially established and periodically revised.

Q: What happens to panels at end-of-life?

A: Approximately 90% of panels can be recycled. Recycling options will follow best practice and regulatory requirements as the industry evolves.

Q: How will Aboriginal heritage be assessed?

A: The process will follow NSW Government guidelines for Aboriginal heritage. A full statutory process will determine stakeholders, consultation and protections.

Q: Will there be a substation and where will it be located?

A: Substation design/location is not finalised. Design will be developed over the next 12 months, incorporating community feedback and assessments. Location requires negotiation and coordination with Essential Energy.

Q: Is the substation owned/managed by the Project?

A: Ownership and management will be negotiated with Essential Energy; this is part of a longer technical and commercial process.

Q: Can the Project guarantee that landowners won't be impacted (e.g., water levels)?

A: The modelling uses conservative/worst-case scenarios to inform design and mitigation, but absolute guarantees cannot be given, taking into account other environmental and social unknowns which could also create impacts.

Q: Will removing vegetation increase surface runoff and flood risk?

A: Surface runoff effects will be modelled and assessed. Water quality and runoff mitigation measures will be implemented as required.

Q: What development applications does (or will) Venn Energy have with Dubbo Regional Council (DRC)?

A: The Boree Solar Farm is the only Venn Energy project in the Dubbo Regional Council area.

Q: What contribution will the Project make to DRC, for example, for road maintenance?

A: Contributions (financial or in-kind) for local road upgrades and maintenance are determined by the road impact assessments and negotiated agreements with DRC. Typical outcomes include upgrade works, rehabilitation obligations, and/or financial contributions to maintain affected roads.

Q: Are EIS reports audited by an independent third party, or does the public just rely on consultants engaged by the Project?

A: The EIS is prepared by consultants engaged by the Project but subject to statutory processes including peer review, review by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and opportunities for public exhibition and agency review. All studies will follow quality assurance requirements, including each technical sub-consultant and the EIS author.

Q: Can the community request an independent third-party review of the EIS?

A: Members of the public can submit requests or objections during the public exhibition period. Formal requests for third-party reviews are typically assessed by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure or relevant consent authority; community groups can commission independent reviews at their own expense.

Q: Does DRC approve road use and access?

A: Local road use and access require consultation and approval from Dubbo Regional Council for local roads, and from state authorities for heavy vehicle routes and state roads. The EIS will identify required approvals and the approvals path.

Q: Why isn't a cumulative impact study conducted as part of the EIS?

A: The EIS will include cumulative impact assessment. The EIS stage is where cumulative impacts (other developments, combined environmental effects) are thoroughly assessed. The assessment scope will be detailed in the EIS methodology.

Q: What is the agrisolar strategy?

A: The Project aims to explore agrisolar opportunities where feasible; with specific measures developed during design in consultation with landholders and local stakeholders.

Q: Why is the substation located on the best BSAL land and can it be moved?

A: The substation location is not finalised; site selection balances electrical connection efficiency, geotechnical suitability, and land use impacts.

Q: Has lightning risk been considered?

A: Lightning risk and mitigation (e.g., grounding, surge protection, lightning protection systems) are standard elements of electrical design and will be considered in detailed technical assessments during the EIS.

Q: Who maintains vegetative screening so it doesn't die?

A: Vegetative screening establishment and ongoing maintenance responsibilities will be defined in contract/management plans. Typically, the developer manages the establishment and maintenance for an agreed defect/liability period; long-term maintenance responsibilities are negotiable with landholders or managed via agreements.

Q: Where will the Project source water in drought conditions for cleaning 600,000 panels and dust suppression?

A: Water source options (surface water, bores, recycled water, or dry-cleaning techniques) will be assessed; water usage will be minimised by using efficient cleaning methods. Any new bores or significant water take would require approvals.

Q: Who cleans the solar panels?

A: Panel cleaning is typically contracted by the asset owner/operator. During operations, specialist contractors will perform cleaning and dust suppression per environmental approvals and water-use plans.

Q: Can meeting times be adjusted to better accommodate residents who work during the day?

A: The Project seeks to schedule consultations for broad participation; however scheduling constraints can prevent ideal timing. Feedback will be taken on meeting times and additional session options (e.g., evening sessions, recorded briefings, or one-on-one meetings) can be arranged.

Q: Can the Project guarantee that 8.5-metre panels won't be installed?

A: Current design anticipates 5.5 m panel height. Any proposal for substantially taller panels would be subject to further design assessment, consultation, and approvals.

Q: Will vegetative screening be installed between arrays?

A: Vegetative screening placement (perimeter and internal buffers) will be determined through visual impact and biodiversity assessments. Planting between arrays can be considered where it supports biodiversity, visual screening and operational requirements.

Q: Will sheep be at risk of injury from moving solar mechanisms?

A: Risks to livestock are considered in site design and fencing specification. Tracker movement is typically above ground level and fencing designs can limit livestock access to moving parts; where grazing is permitted, mitigation measures are implemented.

Q: Can wildlife corridors be incorporated into the project design?

A: Potential wildlife corridors will be investigated during the design iteration process as technical assessments are undertaken.

Q: How high will the perimeter fence be and will it include barbed wire?

A: Perimeter fence height and design are subject to security, safety and regulatory requirements and will be specified during detailed design. Barbed wire will be avoided where feasible.

Q: Will fencing surround only the infrastructure or the entire site?

A: Fencing extent will balance operational security and landholder access needs.

Q: Will existing internal infrastructure (fences, shearing sheds, etc.) be removed?

A: Removal of internal infrastructure is subject to design and landholder agreements. Where feasible, existing infrastructure may be retained or relocated; specific outcomes will be negotiated with affected landholders.

Q: Will the Project harvest surface water or sink new bores?

A: Water sourcing options (surface water, bores, recycled water, or dry-cleaning techniques) will be assessed; water usage will be minimised by using efficient cleaning methods. Any new bores or significant water take would require approvals.

Q: What recourse exists if neighbours' stock or domestic water is affected?

A: The EIS and management plans will set out monitoring, mitigation and complaint/response mechanisms.

Q: If vegetative screening deteriorates during the Project, which authority should be notified – the EPA or another relevant agency?

A: Complaints registered and hotline will be set up if the Project receives approval for the construction and operational phases of the Project. In addition, relevant Management Plans to be prepared will outline the complaints and resolution process.

Q: How many BESS (Battery Energy Storage Systems) will there be on site?

A: The current proposal specifies 200 MW of BESS capacity. The number of individual BESS units (containers/cells) depends on the selected system configuration; this will be confirmed during detailed design.