

FULHAM
SOLAR FARM



Spence
Consulting
Group

Social Impact Assessment

Fulham Solar Farm

Prepared for Fulham Solar Farm Pty Ltd on behalf of Fulham Farm Solar Trust

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Report Prepared By:	Cameron Spence, cameron@spence-consulting.com	

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Project Overview

Project background

The Fulham Solar Farm is a proposed solar farm of 80 megawatts (enough to power around 25,000 homes) with battery storage of up to 80 megawatts per hour to be located on 400 acres of farmland adjacent to the north west corner of the Hopkins Road and McLarens Road intersection, Fulham (within the Wellington Shire). The total project cost is estimated to be \$120m (excluding batteries).

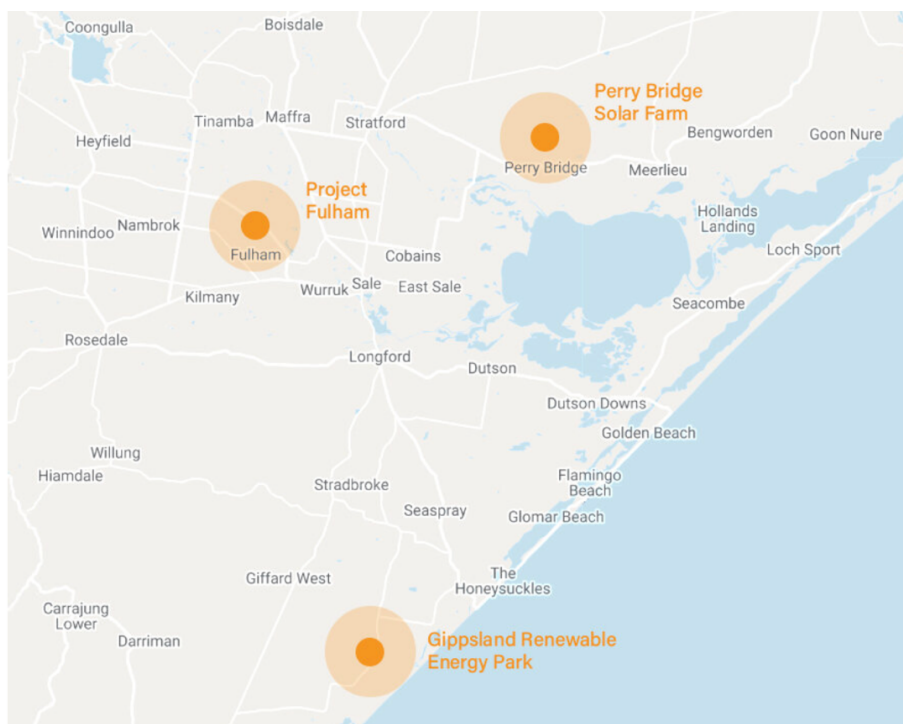
The Fulham Solar Farm (the sister project to the Perry Bridge Solar Farm) (www.perrybridgesolar.com.au) was conceived because of the desperate need for additional electricity supply and increased reliability within the region east of the Latrobe Valley.

The design of the project, subject to sign off by the design engineers, will be a single axis array system of around 160,000 bi-facial solar panels. Bi-facial modules as the name suggests produce solar power from both sides of the solar panel and can improve energy generation by up to 8%.

The battery storage is an essential part of the project as it assists in ensuring consistent energy supply to the electricity grid during times of low solar energy output.

The solar farm is proposed to be connected to the AusNet Services 66kV network with minimal costs required for additional infrastructure.

The Fulham Solar Farm project was originally developed as a joint venture between Solis Renewable Energy Pty Ltd (Solis RE), Marathon Electrical Pty Ltd and WK & MA Ferguson Pty Ltd, along with the Perry Bridge Solar Farm and the Gippsland Renewable Energy Park. Octopus Australia and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) purchased the rights to develop the project during 2021, with all parties working closely together to bring the projects to financial close.





Community profile

The Gippsland region stretches from Melbourne's eastern outskirts all the way to the state border with New South Wales in Victoria's far east. Gippsland comprises the Local Government Areas of Baw Baw, Latrobe, Wellington, East Gippsland, South Gippsland and Bass Coast.

It is a large and diverse region with many assets and industries. Over the past decade it has had periods of economic growth but some areas, particularly the Latrobe Valley (Baw Baw, Latrobe and Wellington Shires) have been left behind.

The whole region has been subject to more structural change than the regional average in Victoria. For example, employment has fluctuated in East Gippsland in agriculture, forestry and fishing with spikes in construction related to large-scale gas projects. South Gippsland and Bass Coast have also experienced significant change with increases in residential construction work due to high levels of population growth.

Gippsland as a whole has a slightly older population than the Victorian State average (median age 45 versus 37). Proportionately the region has almost double the State average Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, with the population significantly younger than the overall Gippsland average. Gippsland has a higher than State average proportion of people working in trades and as labourers and a significantly lower percentage employed in the professional fields. Limited public transport is widely recognised as a barrier for people getting to education and employment.

Gunaikurnai people are the traditional owners of Gippsland. There are approximately 3,000 Gunaikurnai people, and their territory ranges from the coastal and inland areas to the southern slopes of the Victorian Alps. The Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) represents the Traditional Owners in the region.

The Latrobe Valley region, where the Fulham Solar Farm is located, has faced significant adversity over many years. The region has experienced continual job losses since the 1980s, with the gradual decline of both the power and timber industries, significant contributors to employment and the economy. The Latrobe Valley towns of Moe and Morwell are among the most disadvantaged localities in regional Victoria both ranking low on the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) which measures multiple indicators of disadvantage. Gippsland as a whole has a higher than State average unemployment.

In recent years structural change has commenced in the Gippsland economy, with the region transitioning from legacy industries including coal and timber to emerging opportunities including renewable energy and construction. The State Government in particular has invested heavily in the region, with more than \$1 billion of major construction and infrastructure projects across Gippsland underway or soon to commence, including the Gippsland Rail Upgrade, Wonthaggi Hospital redevelopment and duplication of the Princes Highway.

Renewable Energy Projects planned for construction in the region include the Star of the South Offshore Wind Farm, Delburn Wind Farm, Australian Paper Energy from Waste facility and a range of proposed solar projects.

The Fulham Solar Farm sits within Wellington Shire, approximately 240km East of Melbourne.

Wellington Shire is the third largest municipality in Victoria, covering an area of 10,924 square.

Wellington is home to more than 42,000 people spread across more than 30 different communities ranging in size from a few thousand to more than 13,000 in the regional centre, Sale. Approximately 1.3% of the population identity as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

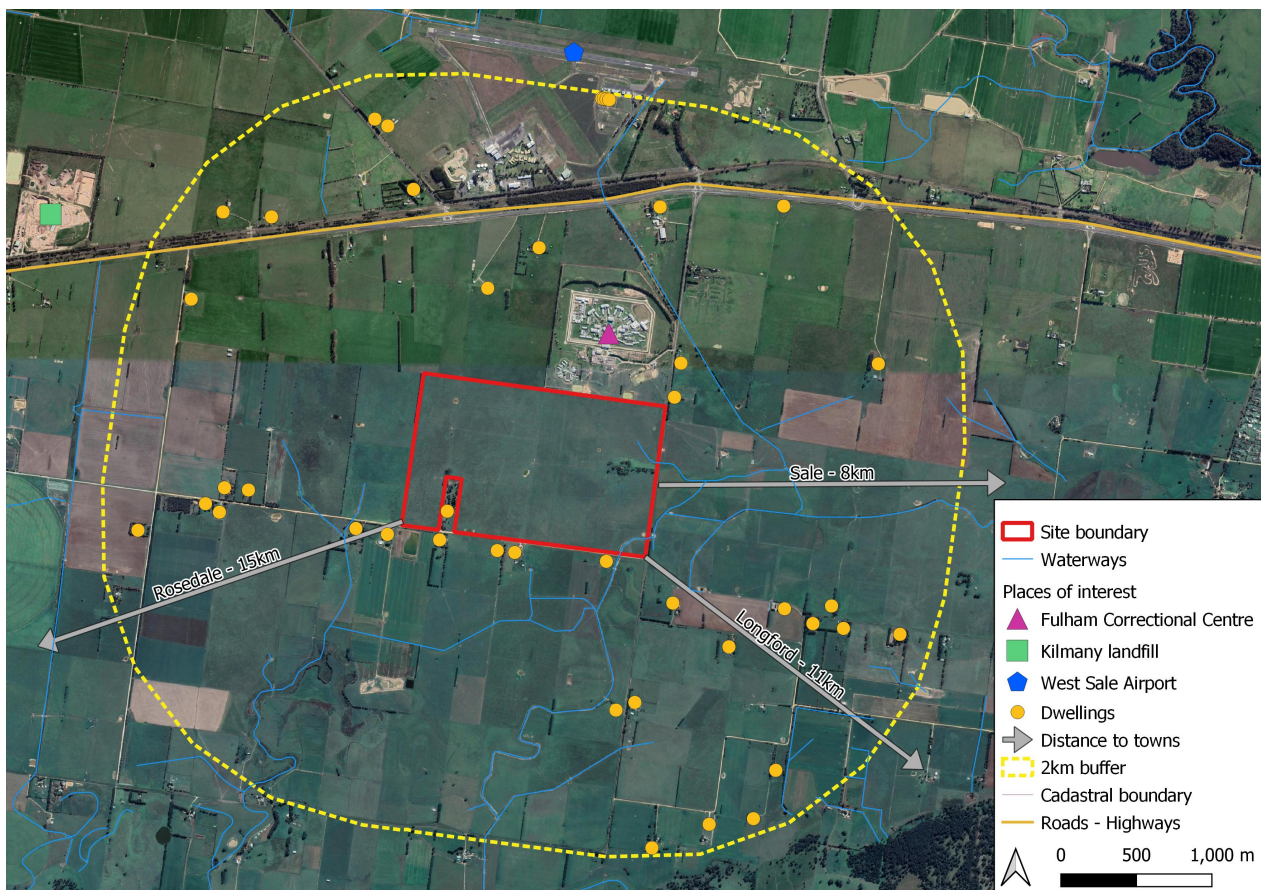
Wellington has a strong and diverse local economy boasting oil and gas production industries, manufacturing, government, defence, primary industries, forestry, construction and retail industries.

The nearest major towns to the Fulham Solar Farm are:

- » Sale (E) 12km (population ~14,000)
- » Longford (SE) 16km (population ~1,500)
- » Maffra (N) 22km (population ~4,500)
- » Rosedale (W) 20km (population ~1,600)

Community Map

Refer to below for a detailed community map, indicating the nearest neighbouring properties to the proposed solar farm and distance to nearby towns.



Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or other organisations or entities that have a 'stake' in a decision, issue or situation relating to the project. Not all stakeholder groups are homogenous and



within each stakeholder group there will be varying levels of interest, impact, needs, concerns, wants, relationships and influence.

Key stakeholders for the project include:

- » The local community - residents, Traditional Owners (GLaWAC), neighbours, businesses, leaseholders, local politicians;
- » Government agencies - Local and State including Wellington Shire Council, DELWP, RDV, Latrobe Valley Authority
- » Other - Media, community-based organisations, road users, tourism and emergency services, RAAF, West Sale Airport, etc.

A full list of stakeholders and analysis of their likely area of interest in the project is included in Attachment 2, Stakeholder Mapping Database.

Social Impact Evaluation

A Social Impact Evaluation has been prepared to identify the key potential social impacts for the project and to evaluate and where necessary implement mitigations.

Refer to the Attachment 1 for the Social Impact Evaluation for the Fulham Solar Farm.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 Social Impact Evaluation
- Attachment 2 Stakeholder Mapping Database

Fulham Solar Farm Social Impact Evaluation

Aspect	Key Issue	Potential Risk	Duration	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Recommendation
Economic	Logistics and concerns associated with influx of workers during the construction period	Lack of accommodation and amenities for project workers could impact upon the local community	Operations	Rare	Moderate	Low	Workforce required (20ppl) is manageable within the local community with a key objective of employing local people and using local contractors wherever possible.
Economic	Perception of how the project will impact local energy prices	Community concerns around increased energy prices	Operations	Rare	Moderate	Low	The project is not expected to have any negative consequence on energy prices. The ongoing benefits of the project to price and network infrastructure to be communicated with local community.
Economic	Community expectations around local job creation	Community has a heightened expectation around local job creation through the project	Planning and operations	Possible	Moderate	Medium	During construction the intention is to maximise the utilisation of local businesses and people. Planned job creation will be communicated as part of the community consultation process, including any specialist skills which may not be available in the region. Look for opportunities to upskill local community in partnership with local training providers.
Economic	Reduction in productivity from land	The establishment of the facility will have a negative impact on the agricultural output of the site	Planning and operations	Almost Certain	Minor	High	The site has low agricultural productivity value and will likely continue to be used for grazing of sheep. Agricultural Land Value Assessment to be completed and published as part of consultation process.
Physical	Is the project in an appropriate location	The community does not support the location of the project	Planning	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Ensure thorough and ongoing consultation and communication with the local community around the location of the project.
Physical	Is the project in an appropriate location	The site is not conducive to energy production and connection to the network	Operations	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Detailed feasibility undertaken and ongoing engagement with AusNet regarding connection to the grid. No additional action required.
Physical	Visual amenity of the generator facility (including fencing and lighting)	The community does not accept that the facility fits in with the natural environment of the region	Planning and operations	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Planning requirements will dictate majority of visual requirements. Screening (vegetation) will be incorporated as part of the design.
Physical	Impacts on the site ecosystem: flora and fauna (short and long term)	Loss of significant native flora and fauna	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Design to minimise the impact on native flora and fauna inline with recommendations from the planning process. The site has minimal vegetation.
Physical	Traffic concerns	Truck movements during construction impact on local road usage	Construction	Likely	Moderate	High	Traffic management plan will be developed and approved by Wellington Shire and VicRoads. Project impacts to be communicated with the community.
Physical	Traffic concerns	Traffic impacted (increased) by vehicle movements in the operation of the facility	Construction and operations	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Traffic management plan approved by council and VicRoads, no significant impact expected as traffic will be minimal.
Physical	Fire hazard concerns	Establishment of the site could create a new fire hazard for the community	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Bushfire management plan completed as part of the planning process. Project to be reviewed and approved by CFA, with mitigation identified and implemented. Outputs to be communicated with the community.
Physical	Technology failure	Battery failure could cause a fire hazard	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Addressed in item above.
Physical	Technology failure	Technology failure could create vulnerability in local power supply	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Major	Medium	AusNet will manage these risks as the local energy provider.
Physical	Noise issues	Noise during construction impacts on local neighbours	Construction	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Regular and ongoing communication with local neighbours during construction period. Construction process will be inline with planning requirements.
Physical	Health and safety issues	Concerns that the project could be detrimental to the health of local neighbours	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Ongoing community consultation will be undertaken to capture and address any concerns.
Physical	Lighting of the site	Lighting of the site has a negative impact on local amenity	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	The site will only require minor lighting and screening will be in place to minimise any impact.
Physical	Glare from reflective surfaces	Risk of glare causing aircraft crash from Sale RAAF base	Planning and operations	Rare	Major	Medium	Engagement undertaken with East Sale RAAF base and who have identified mitigation for potential risk.
Physical	Remediation of site and end of project life	The project leaves the local community with a redundant facility with no economic value	Decommissioning	Unlikely	Major	Medium	The lease agreement requires the land to be returned to its previous usage. The project owner will be required to remediate the land. Process to be communicated to local community during consultation process.
Physical	Health and safety issues	Heat generated from the solar panels could have a negative impact on the natural environment	Planning and operations	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Detailed heat analysis will be publicly communicated to the community, no actual heat impact.
Physical	Natural environment	Will the solar farm detrimentally impact on the rain water capture on the property?	Planning and operations	Possible	Moderate	Medium	The channelling established as part of the project design will enhance the water capture. To be communicated as part of the consultation process.
Social	Benefits flow to the community: are there only a few stakeholders benefiting or is it broader?	Pockets of the community feel disadvantaged by the project and do not have access to the projects benefits	Planning and operations	Rare	Minor	Low	Benefits sharing scheme to be developed in consultation with local community (i.e. establishment of a Community Benefits Sharing Committee)
Social	Impacts on sites of significance to local Aboriginal and Traditional Owner groups	The site had a detrimental impact on a significant site to the local Aboriginal community	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	No action required, cultural heritage review indicates not a significant site.
Social	Lack of local knowledge and expertise to solve maintenance or operational issues	Required to bring-in non-local people to complete the work.	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	Local skillsets are available in the region to maintain the facility.
Social	Ownership of the land / project	Potential concerns around foreign ownership of the land and/or project resulting in a disconnection from the community	Planning	Possible	Moderate	Medium	Land ownership is and will be maintained by local residents (35 year lease), which will be communicated to community. Preferred project ownership is Australian investors (with potential foreign investment).
Social	Aboriginal self-determination	Will the solar farm fulfill the aspirations of the Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal community	Planning and operations	Likely	Moderate	High	An Aboriginal Engagement and Participation Plan will be established with input from GLaWAC and the local Aboriginal community.
Social	Impacts on the Fulham Correctional Centre	The project presents additional risks with the Fulham Correction Centre, such as increased ability to deliver contraband and increased risk of escape	Planning and operations	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Ongoing engagement with GEO Group / Fulham Correctional Centre during project planning to ensure the project design incorporates and specific requirements of the Correctional Centre (e.g. site security)





Cameron Spence

Director

cameron@spence-consulting.com

0422 005 552

Rob Spence

Director

rob@spence-consulting.com

0418 132 573

spence-consulting.com