





# Social Impact Assessment Fulham Solar Farm

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

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).

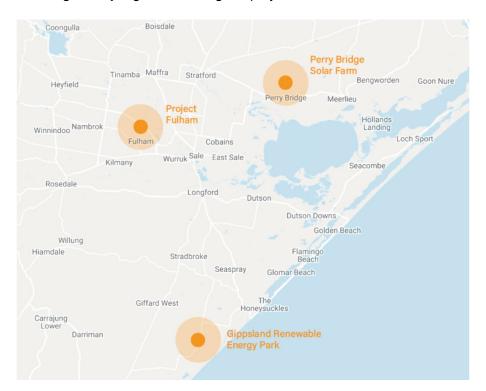
The Fulham Solar Farm (the sister project to the Perry Bridge Solar Farm) (www.perrybridgesolar.com.au) was conceived because of the desperate need for additional electricity supply and increased reliability within the region east of the Latrobe Valley.

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.

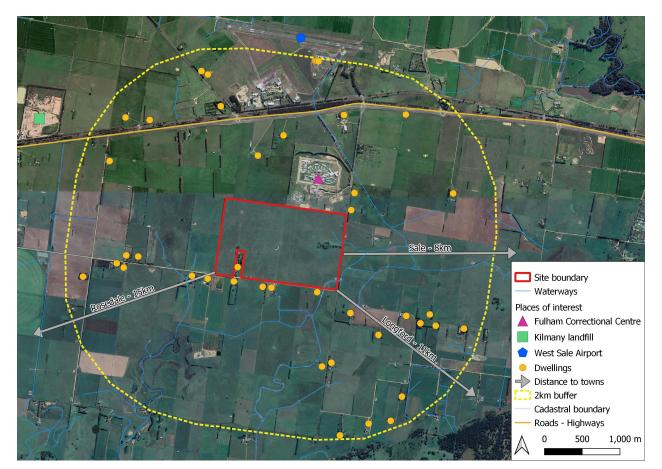
Wellington has a strong and diverse local economy boasting oil and gas production industries, manufacturing, government, defence, primary industries, forestry, construction and retail industries.

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.

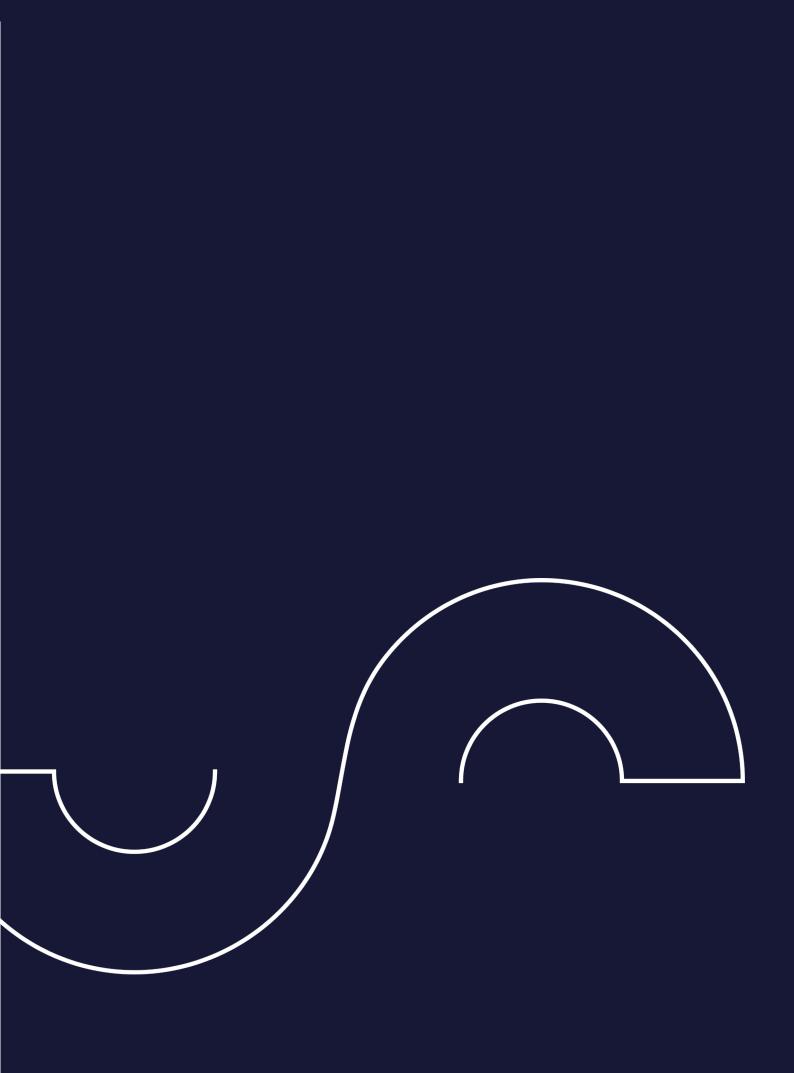
## Attachments

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

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#### Fulham Solar Farm Social Impact Evaluation

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Physical         Technology failure         local power supply         operations         Unlikely         Major         Medium         provider           Regular and ongoing communication impacts on local         Noise during construction impacts on local         Possible         Moderate         Medium         requirements.           Physical         Noise issues         neighbours         Concerns that the project could be detrimental to operations         Planning and operations         Unlikely         Moderate         Medium         for capacity consult operations           Physical         Lighting of the site         Lighting of the site has a negative impact on local         Planning and operations         Unlikely         Moderate         Medium         for capacity require minits           Physical         Clare from reflective surfaces         RAAF base         Planning and operations         Unlikely         Moderate         Medium         and who have identified mits           Physical         Glare from reflective surfaces         RAAF base         Planning and operations         Unlikely         Medium         and who have identified mits           Physical         Remediation of site and end of project life         redundant facility with no economic value         Decommissioning         Unlikely         Medium         consultation process.           Physical         Health and	Medium         provider.           Regular and ongoing communication with local neighbours during construction period. Construction process will be inline with planning requirements. Ongoing community consultation will be undertaken to capture and address any concerns. The site will only require minor lighting and screening will be in place to minimise any impact. Engagement undertaken with East Sale RAAF base and who have identified mitigation for potential risk. 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
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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 establisheet design will enhance the wat communicated as part of the 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         Panning and possible         Moderate         Medium         Communicated as part of the consultation with local commu- establishment of a Commun community           Social         few stakeholders benefiting or is it broader?         benefits         Possible         Minor         Low         Committee)	communicated to the community, no actual heat Medium
Will the solar farm detrimentally impact on the rain         Planning and operations         Moderate         Medium         design will enhance the wat communicated as part of the 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         Planning and poperations         Moderate         Medium         design will enhance the wat communicated as part of the Benefits sharing scheme to consultation with local commu- scholing and benefits           Social         few stakeholders benefiting or is it broader?         benefits         projects         Planning and benefits         community         com	The channelling established as part of the project
Physical         Natural environment         water capture on the property?         operations         Possible         Moderate         Medium         communicated as part of the Benefits flow to the community: are there only a Social         Pockets of the community feel disadvantaged by the project and do not have access to the projects         Planning and poerations         Rare         Minor         Low         Committee Committee           Social         few stakeholders benefiting or is it broader?         benefits         operations         Rare         Minor         Low         Committee	design will enhance the water capture. To be
Benefits flow to the community: are there only a benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project and do not have access to the projects Planning and few stakeholders benefiting or is it broader? benefits or is it broader? benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project and do not have access to the projects planning and benefits or is it broader? benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project and do not have access to the projects planning and benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project and do not have access to the projects planning and benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project and do not have access to the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project and the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the community feel disadvantaged by the project benefits flow to the pr	Medium communicated as part of the consultation process.
Benefits flow to the community: are there only a the project and do not have access to the projects Planning and Social few stakeholders benefiting or is it broader? benefiting to benefit be benefit	Benefits sharing scheme to be developed in
Social few stakeholders benefiting or is it broader? benefits operations Rare Minor Low Committee) Impacts on sites of significance to local Aboriginal The site had a detrimental impact on a significant Planning and No action required, cultural	consultation with local community (i.e.
Impacts on sites of significance to local Aboriginal The site had a detrimental impact on a significant Planning and No action required, cultural	
Social and Traditional Owner groups site to the local Aboriginal community operations Unlikely Moderate Medium Indicates not a significantis	No action required, cultural heritage review
	Medium indicates not a significant site
Lack of local knowledge and expertise to solve Required to bring-in non-local people to complete Planning and Local skillsets are available	Local skillsets are available in the region to
Social maintenance or operational issues the work. Operations Unlikely Moderate Medium maintain the facility.	
Land ownership is and will b	Land ownership is and will be maintained by local residents (35 year lease), which will be
	residents (35 year lease), which will be communicated to community. Preferred project
	ownership is Australian investors (with potential
Social Ownership of the land / project disconnection from the community Planning Possible Moderate Medium foreign investment).	Medium foreign investment).
Will the solar farm fulfill the aspirations of the An Aboriginal Engagement.	An Aboriginal Engagement and Participation Plan
	will be established with input from GLaWAC and the
	High local Aboriginal community
	High local Aboriginal community Ongoing engagement with GEO Group / Fulham
Fulham Correction Centre, such as increased ensure the project design in	High local Aboriginal community Ongoing engagement with GEO Group / Fulham Correctional Centre during project planning to ensure the project design incorporates and specific
Fulham Correction Centre, such as increased ensure the project design in	High local Aboriginal community 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





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