



Community newsletter #1

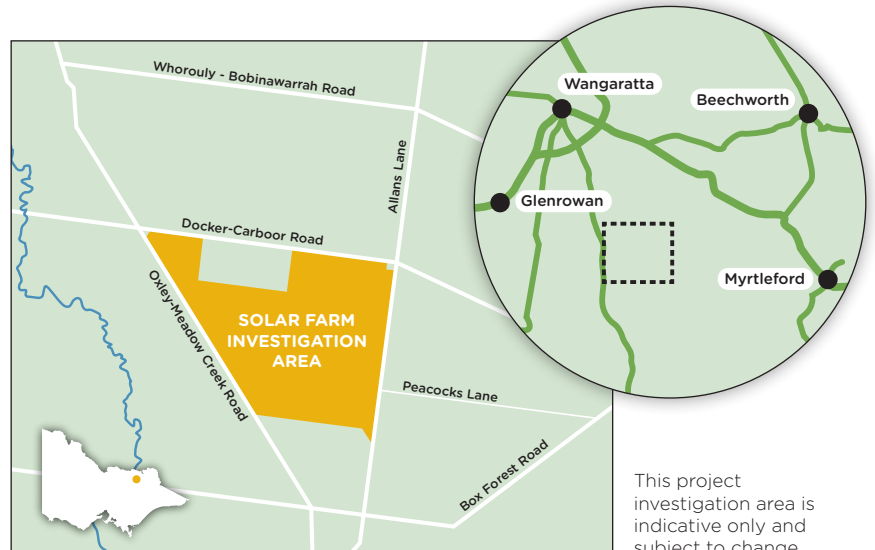
February 2023

This is the first newsletter for the Meadow Creek Solar Farm, a proposed solar energy facility located around 27 kilometres south-east of Wangaratta and East of Moyhu. New solar projects like this significant project are vital to ensure more of our energy comes from renewable sources to reduce the damaging impacts of climate change.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Meadow Creek Solar Farm is currently in the early stages of planning. The project is being developed by a local farming family, and renewable energy specialists DNV.

Feedback from local residents and the community will be used to shape final plans for the solar farm. We've been speaking with project neighbours and key stakeholders and will ramp up consultation in 2023 to give community members opportunity to review concept plans and provide their feedback.



PROJECT TIMELINE

WE ARE HERE



HOW TO BE INVOLVED



In the coming months, we'll share more information about the proposal and concept design. To share your feedback on the proposal or speak to someone from the project team you can contact us at info@meadowcreeksolarfarm.com.au or visit our website for more information about the proposal.

WHAT IS PROPOSED?

If approved, the solar farm would be built on a 566-hectare site that is currently used for grazing and could produce up to 330 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy – enough to power around 110,000 homes. The project will also include a 250MW, 2-hour AC battery on the site to store excess energy for dispatch to customers when demand for power is high.

The solar farm would connect to the existing high voltage transmission system via a new powerline – expected to be around 2 kilometres long. We're currently exploring options for this transmission line.

The final footprint of the solar farm, its installed capacity and design will be determined following detailed technical and environment assessments.

We're looking at how we could maintain the site as an 'agrisolar' facility – meaning farming activities such as sheep grazing, will be able to continue once solar panels and infrastructure are installed.

We need to do some more work to understand local ground conditions and how this could be managed, and could involve rotating grazing around the site during different seasons and weather conditions.

We're encouraged by existing solar farm operations in the North East that are now successfully hosting both solar and agriculture, and we see this only becoming more common in the industry.

WHY HERE?

North East Victoria receives abundant sunlight making the region ideal for large scale solar energy. The proposed site is closely located to a nearby high voltage transmission line and would mean less new transmission infrastructure would need to be built.



We've completed significant work to understand available grid capacity and potential network constraints in the region and ensure the project can connect to the grid.

DELIVERING BENEFITS TO THE REGION



The Meadow Creek Solar Farm is committed to delivering benefits to the region. We're looking at opportunities to share the benefits of the project through a community benefit fund. Let us know what kind of local projects or community initiatives you'd like to see supported.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

Independent specialists have been engaged to prepare technical and environmental reports to inform the planning and design of the project. These assessments cover a range of topics including potential impacts to:

- Flora and fauna, native vegetation, and waterways
- Agricultural land use
- Surface water
- Landscape and visual amenity of the immediate region
- Traffic and transport impacts on local roads
- Cultural Heritage

We'll also complete an economic impact assessment, to map the regional investment, jobs and community benefits the solar farm will provide. A noise and vibration assessment will be prepared to investigate potential impacts and mitigation measures associated with the construction and operations of the project.

Once the project has completed detailed technical assessments, sought feedback and a design has been finalised, a Planning Application will be prepared and submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning, formerly Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, to assess the planning permit application on behalf of the Minister for Planning.

The Planning Application will be publicly exhibited, and provide community a formal opportunity to have their say on the proposal.