

Goulburn River Solar Farm

Community Information Sheet No.3

MAY 2023

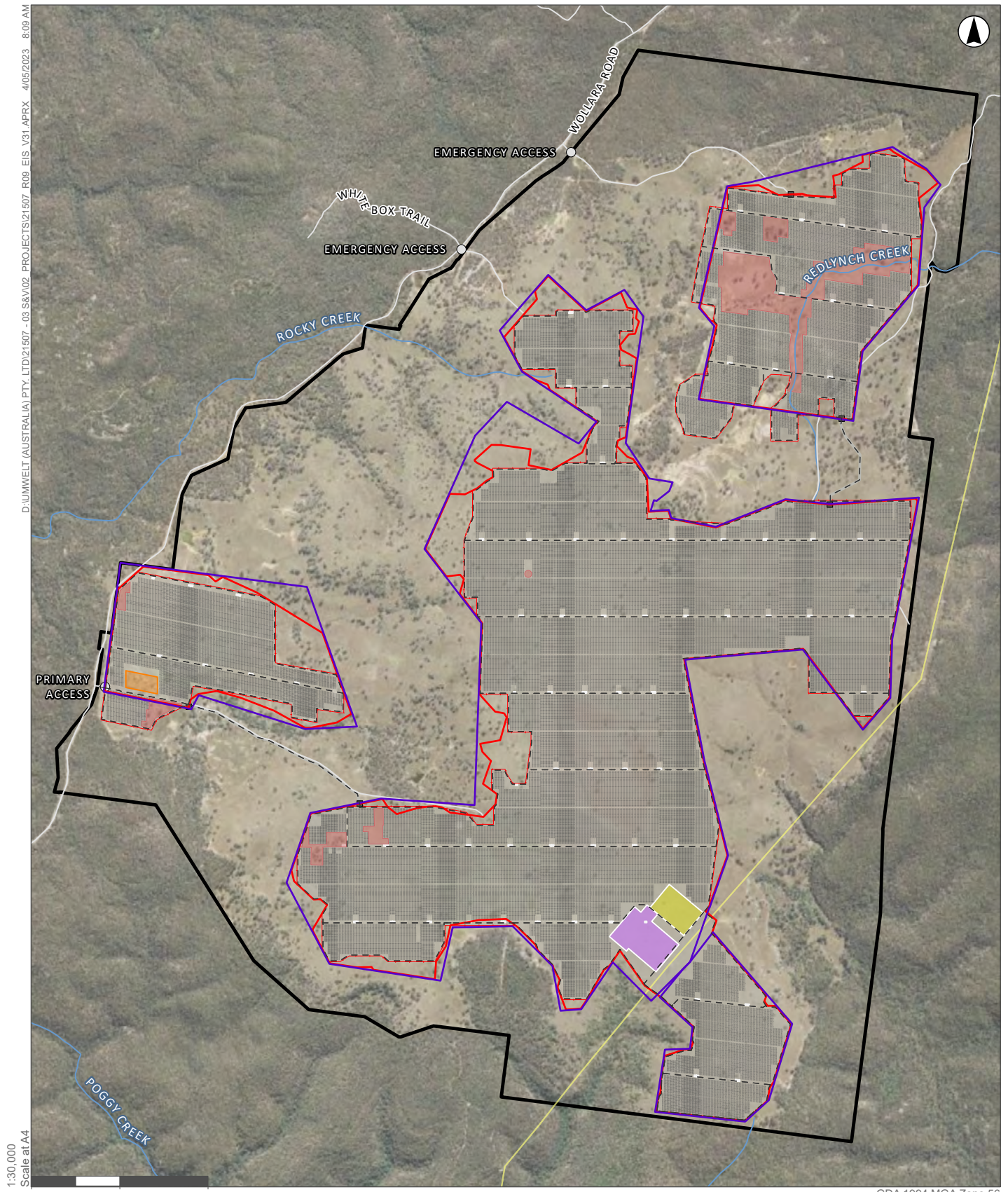


Project update

As the Goulburn River Solar Farm (the Project) planning process continues, it's important to us that the local community is fully informed of the Project updates and have the opportunity to provide feedback. In the past year Lightsource bp and Umwelt engaged with a range of community members and stakeholders in proximity to, or who may have an interest in, the Project, which includes nearby residents, local businesses and service providers, community groups and government agencies.

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide an update on the status of the Project. Further details are provided for the topics that have been frequently mentioned during engagement with the local community, including a summary of key outcomes from the technical studies which have been updated since the December 2022 information session.

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GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

- Legend**
- Gate
 - Access Points
 - Electricity Transmission Line
 - - - Proposed Access Tracks
 - Watercourse
 - Roads and Tracks
 - Security Fence
 - Project Area
 - Exclusion Zones - Environmentally Sensitive Areas
 - Battery Energy Storage System
 - Substation
 - Inverters
 - Compound Area
 - Solar Panel Footprint
 - Development Footprint - Design Revision A
 - Development Footprint - Design Revision B
 - Development Footprint - Design Refinement C

FIGURE 2.4
Design Refinements

Project boundary

Following feedback from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) further studies have been undertaken over the past few months. These assessments have informed some refinements and updates to the Project including a change to the Project's overall Development Footprint.

The Development Footprint has been reduced a further ~10% to 799.5 ha from 882 ha to further minimise biodiversity impacts. This is following a previous reduction from 1,249 ha to 882 ha.

Figure 2.4 shows the updated Development Footprint and illustrates how this has changed over the development of the Project. Areas previously within the Development Footprint and Exclusion Zones will now be completely avoided to reduce impacts.



Photomontage of Project site (without proposed landscape screening) as viewed from Wollara Road in the vicinity of the primary access point, looking east towards the construction compound.

Road upgrades

Road upgrades are proposed to facilitate safe movement of vehicles to the Project and minimise environmental and social impacts. The proposed upgrades have been developed in conjunction with Upper Hunter Shire Council and include:

- Realignment of the Bow River crossing on Ringwood Road and installation of a new culvert structure.
- Widening and repaving of 1.8km of Ringwood Road between Bow River and Killoe Creek.
- Installation of a raised culvert structure across Killoe Creek on Ringwood Road to reduce approach angles.

These road upgrades will be completed prior to the commencement of construction of the solar farm.

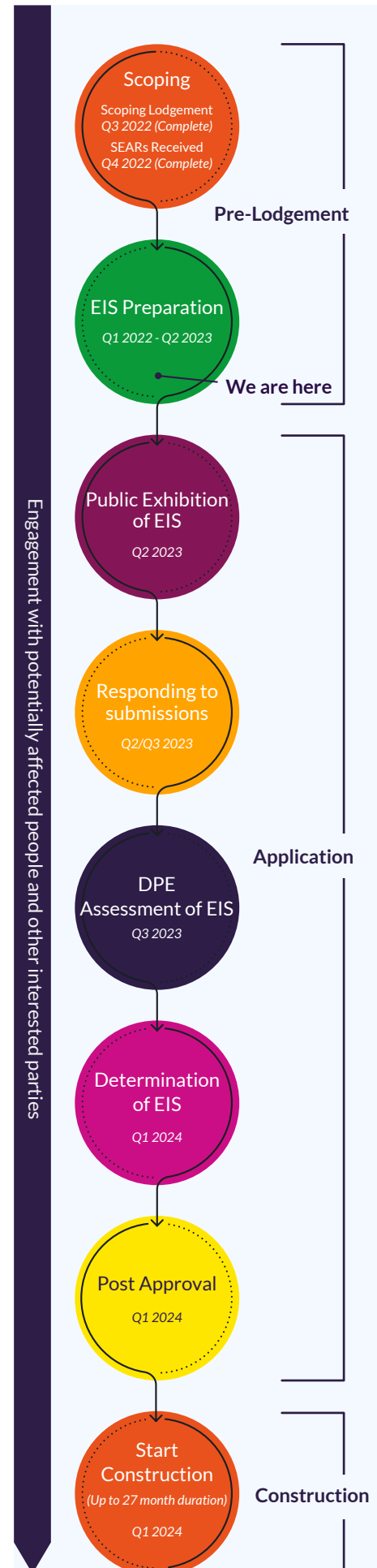
Voluntary Planning Agreement and community benefits

Engagement with Upper Hunter Shire Council has continued to facilitate a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) and Community Shared Benefit Strategy. The final terms of the Voluntary Planning Agreement are still being negotiated, however, it would involve:

- Funding for the sealing of unsealed portions of Wollara Road up to the Goulburn River National Park boundary.
- An increased annual contribution to a Road Maintenance Fund of \$100,000 per year for the operational life of the Project to cover the ongoing maintenance needs of local roads located within 30 km of the Project site, with preference given to Ringwood Road and Wollara Road.
- An annual investment into a Community Enhancement Fund of \$90,000 per year for the operational life of the Project.

The Road Maintenance Fund would be applied towards the maintenance of roads in the Local Government Area, with preference given to Ringwood Road and Wollara Road, in the vicinity of the Project.

The Community Enhancement Fund would be administered by a Section 355 Committee under the *Local Government Act 1993*. A prerequisite for any initiatives and programs seeking funding would be that it is delivered within 30 km of the Project site, ensuring the benefits flow to the community closest to the Project.



The following study outcomes from the technical studies have been most frequently mentioned during engagement with the local community.

Biodiversity

Key outcomes

- Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland has been identified within the Project Area and impact has been minimised on these ecological communities within the Development Footprint.
- Threatened species habitat have been identified within the Project Area including the Regent Honeyeater (mapped important habitat), Large-eared Pied Bat (foraging habitat), Eastern Cave Bat (foraging habitat) and Barking Owl (breeding habitat and present on site) and the impact has been minimised on these habitats within the Development Footprint.

Key mitigation/enhancement strategies

- Maximise use of 'Category 1 - Exempt Land'.
- Minimise impact to areas of suitable habitat for threatened species.
- Undertake pre-clearance surveys prior to commencing construction.
- Develop a biodiversity offset strategy.

Aboriginal heritage

Key outcomes

- One previously recorded artefact site has been identified within the Project Area, but is located outside the Development Footprint as listed on the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS).
- Field survey undertaken as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) identified 11 previously unidentified sites consisting of a grinding groove site, four artefact scatters and six isolated finds. Of these, seven sites are within the Development Footprint and will be impacted, including three small artefact scatters and four isolated finds. Seven potential culturally significant trees were also identified.

Key mitigation/enhancement strategies

- Preparation of an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan in consultation with the Registered Aboriginal Parties.
- Salvage of seven Aboriginal sites within the Development Footprint, consisting of four isolated finds and three artefacts' scatters.
- Retention of four of the seven trees which have been identified as having potential cultural significance.

Bushfire

Key outcomes

- Project Area has been identified as bushfire prone land by NSW Rural Fire Service. The Project site is identified as Category 2 vegetation, which has generally lower bushfire risk. The Project site, however, is surrounded by the Goulburn River National Park identified as Category 1 vegetation, characterised by areas of forest with high fuel loads.

Key mitigation/enhancement strategies

- Implementation of asset protection zones around the perimeter of the Project.
- Establishment of a primary access point and two emergency access points.
- Perimeter access roads for navigation during emergencies.
- Dedicated water supply for bushfire protection.

Economic

Key outcomes

- Average of approximately 250 jobs and a peak of 350 jobs during construction
- Up to 10 jobs during operation.
- Total economic benefit of more than \$250 million into the region.

Key mitigation/enhancement strategies

- Development of accommodation, procurement, and employment strategy.
- Commitment of 35% of labour sourced locally, where possible.
- Development of Community Shared Benefit Strategy, including a Voluntary Planning Agreement with Upper Hunter Shire Council.

Historic heritage

Key outcomes

- No listed historic heritage items on commonwealth or state registers identified within the Project Area.
- Three historical residences identified within the Project Area – Slab Hut (O'Brien Homestead), 1900 house and Post War House (currently occupied), which have potential historical value.

Key mitigation/enhancement strategies

- Avoid impact to the Slab Hut (O'Brien Homestead) with a 20m exclusion zone.

Traffic/transport

Construction traffic statistics

- Light Vehicles – 60 two-way trips per day.
- Shuttle buses – 15 two-way trips per day.
- Heavy vehicles (19m semi-trailers) – 55 two-way trips per day.
- 6-12 oversized loads during construction with no more than 2 on any day.

Key outcomes

- Proposed road upgrades to be implemented where required.
- Increased noise generated by additional heavy vehicle traffic.

Key mitigation/enhancement strategies

- Development of construction traffic management plan.
- Repairs and upgrades to parts of Ringwood Road, including the installation of new culverts at the Bow River and Killoe Creek crossing and widening and repaving the 1.8km between the crossings.
- Additional warning signs.
- Use of shuttle bus and car-pooling during construction.

Social

Key outcomes

- Road safety considerations due to current state of the road.
- Wild dog management in the area.
- Concerns for the rapid change to the area, and capacity of services, due to construction workforce.

Key mitigation/enhancement strategies

- Repairs and upgrades to parts of Ringwood Road, as listed above.
- Lightsource bp to support the Merriwa Wild Dog Association.
- Voluntary Planning Agreement with Upper Hunter Shire Council to fund road maintenance.
- Ongoing community engagement undertaken by Lightsource bp.
- Installation of a shared telecommunications tower on the Project site.