

Goulburn River Solar Farm

COMMUNITY UPDATE - MARCH 2024



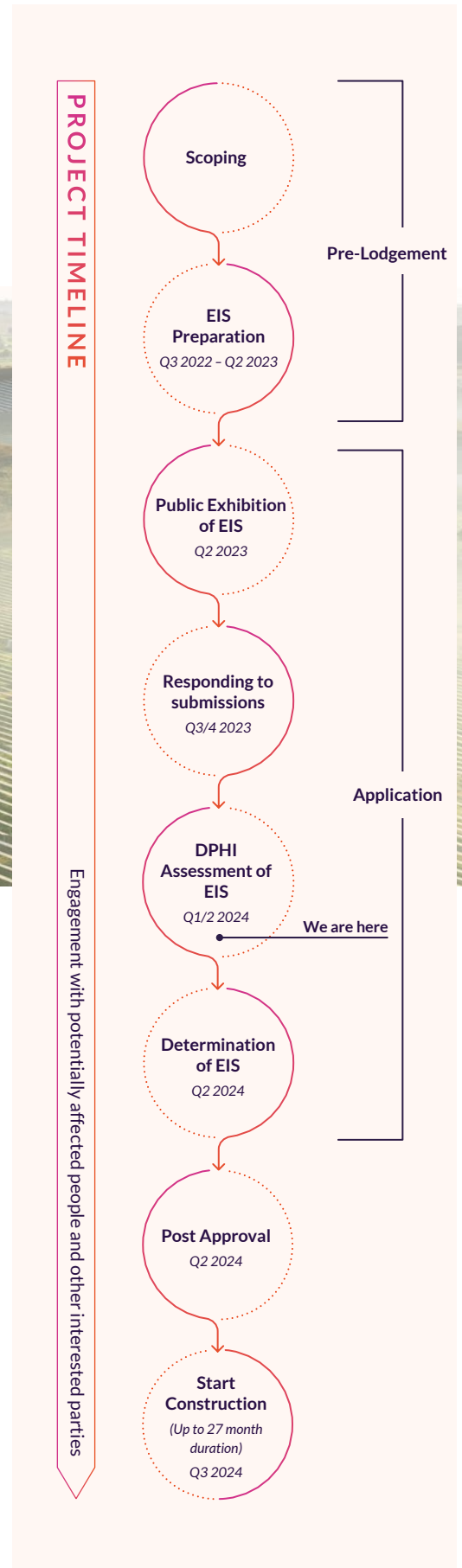
Images of solar farms have been taken at other Lightsource bp project sites and are provided here as examples.

Project update

The planning process for Goulburn River Solar Farm is still underway and we remain committed to keeping you informed and involved. In our last Project Update (January 2024) we provided information about the changes we have been making to the Goulburn River Solar Farm in response to feedback from the community and other stakeholders on the Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS; on public exhibition June/July 2023). The previous update can be downloaded from the project website in case you missed it.

Our continued engagement efforts are focused on ensuring that everyone who might be impacted by or is interested in the project has a voice. We believe that your insights and feedback are invaluable in guiding our project towards a future that benefits the entire community.

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform you about an additional amendment which has been proposed for the project and specifically relates to accommodation during construction.



Project accommodation and employment context

Project construction is proposed to commence by mid/late 2024 and to last approximately 24 months. A peak on-site workforce of 350 direct construction jobs is expected, with an average of around 250 direct jobs throughout the construction period. We anticipate needing an ongoing workforce of up to 10 operational staff over the next 40 years.

We understand that there are considerable housing, accommodation, employment and procurement constraints linked to the project’s remote location and the presence of multiple concurrent projects in the broader region.

It is likely that a large proportion of the peak construction workforce will come from outside of the local community. It is clear that any use of existing short-term and rental accommodation would need to be sensitive to the competing demand on facilities from the local tourism and rental market.



Temporary workforce accommodation facility

One of the improvements made to the project in recent months has been a detailed assessment and review of employment and accommodation options for the proposed workforce. The details of this assessment are described in the *Goulburn River Solar Farm Accommodation and Employment Strategy*. This document can be viewed on the NSW Major Projects Portal and forms part of our Amendment Report, which is currently under assessment by the State Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

As we have worked through feedback on the *Goulburn River Solar Farm Accommodation and Employment Strategy* from Upper Hunter Shire Council and DPHI, a new preferred solution has emerged. The Strategy recommended the use of a custom-built workforce accommodation facility to house the non-resident workforce. We have taken this concept further and are now looking to locate such a facility within our project site.

On-site accommodation that utilises temporary or demountable accommodation is a growing trend on renewable energy projects in order to minimise any impacts on local communities during construction.

To ensure that the implications of an onsite temporary workforce accommodation facility (TWA) are considered and assessed, we are currently undertaking targeted consultation and preparing a new amendment report for assessment by DPHI and other regulatory agencies.



What will a temporary workforce accommodation facility look like?

The TWA would consist of approximately 400 beds. It would consist of prefabricated modular accommodation units, recreational facilities and supported buildings, linked by covered walkways.

On-site facilities would include a gym, kitchen, dining room, food store, recreation rooms, first aid, laundry and a wet mess, with limitations on use. The camp would be self-sufficient, with onsite power generation, potable water storage, water treatment facilities and food storage and preparation facilities.

The TWA would be located close to the main site access on Wollara Road, with the exact location to be confirmed through detailed design. The picture below shows an example of a TWA, similar to that proposed for Goulburn River Solar Farm.



Will there be any additional impacts?

We are planning to contain the TWA entirely within the same Development Footprint that was assessed in the Amendment Report (December 2023). That means that the impact area would not change. Once the solar farm is largely built the TWA will be dismantled and the remaining solar panels would then be built upon the resulting area, using a much smaller workforce able to be accommodated in existing off-site facilities.

All proposed walkways, covers, awnings, pipes and cables are modular, above ground and removed from site at the end of the hire ready for re-use on the next project. There would be no buried services left behind, and no concrete pathways, footings, awnings or other elements sent to landfill.

Access to the site would use the same traffic route identified in the Amendment Report (and the January 2024 community newsletter). Vehicle movements to the site will be lower on average than than the currently assessed project. During the peak construction months, the TWA would avoid 40% of the private vehicle movements and 60% of the shuttle bus movements which have been assessed. All traffic mitigation and management measures proposed to date would still proceed, despite the reduction in project-related traffic movements as a result of the TWA.

We are currently assessing potential impacts on elements such as biodiversity, heritage, the National Park, water, bushfire and visual. Given that the TWA will be entirely within the previously assessed impact area, any additional consequences are expected to be minimal.

There would be additional social benefits from providing the on-site TWA. The Merriwa community will be under less pressure to house the workforce, whilst still benefiting from the project. Economic benefits would include the creation of additional hospitality and services jobs to run the TWA and contracts with local suppliers (e.g. for groceries).

Stay informed and get in touch

We are running two informal drop-in sessions and invite you to stop by. We are happy to talk through any questions you may have, or to take your suggestions on-board.

Drop in session (option 1):

Tuesday 9th April 2024
4pm to 7pm

Drop in session (option 2):

Wednesday 10th April 2024
7am to 10am

Location:

Merriwa CWA (159 Bettington St, Merriwa)



Tell us what you think

As well as the drop-in sessions, we also have a survey for you to provide your feedback on the Goulburn River Solar Farm TWA. Please scan the QR code or follow the below link to access this survey.

Please also feel free to reach out to us using the contact details below to get more insights into the project, or if you'd like to schedule a meeting with our project team. Your engagement is valuable to us, and we're always ready to answer any questions and listen to your feedback.



<https://www.research.net/r/GRSFTWA2024>



Contact us

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