



Bulli Creek Solar Farm

Community Engagement Plan

2013 to 2016 and onwards



TOOWOOMBA REGION

Rich traditions. Bold ambitions.



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(Preceding photo shows participating landowner Scott Glasser with view east across Project Site at “Minnaminane”)

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1. Brief History & Current Context

A plan to leverage existing community support

Since 2013 the Bulli Creek Solar Farm has enjoyed and sustained widespread community support within the local Toowoomba Regional Council jurisdiction, and especially in and around the nearest township of Millmerran.

In February and March 2015, following the grant of planning approval, the Project received widespread media attention locally, nationally and globally. For example, a Project profile article in The Guardian was shared over 26,250 times, and a social post by the Climate Council was shared over 11,450 times (see screenshots below). The Toowoomba Regional Council reported that it received “overwhelming” positive feedback from the local community on the announcement. See also Appendix A for a more complete list of media coverage.

Community perceptions of the Project site are enhanced by its unobtrusive location, being 35km distant from the nearest urban areas of Millmerran, with most of the project site already entirely screened by existing tree buffers along Gore Hwy.

GO TOOWOOMBA!
their Council has just approved plans to build the
BIGGEST SOLAR FARM IN AUSTRALIA*
** and maybe even the world!*

CLIMATECOUNCIL.ORG.AU | crowd-funded science information

SOURCE: [HTTP://RENEWECOMY.COM.AU/2015/COUNCIL-APPROVES-2GW-MEGA-SOLAR-PROJECT-PLAN-IN-QUEENSLAND-20827](http://reneweconomy.com.au/2015/council-approves-2gw-mega-solar-project-plan-in-queensland-20827)
 IMAGE BY FLICKR USER WINDWARTS ENERGIE GMBH UNDER CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

The Climate Council
 Page Liked · 11 February 2015 · 🌐

Wow - Toowoomba is set to become home to the biggest solar power plant in Australia, if not the world!

When finished it could produce 2 gigawatts of electricity, powering over a million homes.

Great news that's worth sharing!

Like Comment Share

13k Top comments ·

11,452 shares 609 comments

Ian Pirie It's great and about time, and tell the coal people to track off.
 Like · Reply · 👍 119 · 11 February 2015 at 18:21
 ↳ 8 Replies

Terry Hyde Gippsland Victoria some farmers have built a biomass power plant alternatives are out there better than CSG & Coal 😊
 Like · Reply · 👍 54 · 11 February 2015 at 19:46
 ↳ 4 Replies

Liz Carlsen So great for Toowoomba and the whole country! 😊 Best news I've heard in ages, Climate Council!!! We have so much sunshine up here and it makes sense to put it to good use for renewable energy!!
 Like · Reply · 👍 32 · 11 February 2015 at 19:01 · Edited

Write a comment...

Solar power

Under the sun: Australia's largest solar farm set to sprout in a Queensland field

A sea of glass panels may soon be sprawling across a paddock in Queensland's Darling Downs cranking out two gigawatts of energy - 100 times more than the largest solar farm in Australia today - and a former top flight barrister is the unusual shining light behind its development

Joshua Robertson
 @jrojournalo
 Monday 2 March 2015 10:14 AEDT

This article is 1 year old

Shares 26,255 Comments 542

📷 A 20MW solar farm constructed on land in California's central valley - the Bulli Creek solar farm would be 100 times as large as this installation. Photograph: Proehl Studios/Corbis

Screenshots of positive media coverage and widespread sharing of online articles and social media

This Community Engagement Plan (CEP) builds upon this existing good will, and provides a framework to regularly – and proactively – engage and consult with a wide spectrum of local entities and individuals, and to bring the community along with the Project’s journey.

2. Key Objectives

This CEP will focus on the following key objectives:

- A. Collaborative and proactive dialogue with neighbours in close vicinity to the Project site.
- B. Wider community engagement and interaction through regular public meetings and Q&A sessions at all stages of the Project at Millmerran's Community & Cultural Centre which has auditorium seating for up to 300 people.
- C. Education opportunities through site tours with local Schools, training and education bodies, as well as local indigenous groups.
- D. Interaction, engagement and involvement with a diverse spectrum of local stakeholders and interested entities.

3. Plan to achieve Objective A

Collaborative and proactive dialogue with neighbours in close vicinity to the Project site.

During 2014 (prior to the public notification period for the planning application), Solar Choice individually met and liaised with all neighbours in close vicinity to the Project site to listen to any issues they may have and in turn address such matters (if any) in a response paper for Council. These neighbours all belong to the Welsh family who own separate lots along Minnaminane's western boundary. The remainder of the project site is surrounded by either State Forest or by land owned by the participating landowners in the Project. Only Col Welsh and Jeff Welsh have homesteads on their properties, neither of which overlooks the Project site.

Property Owners in Vicinity	Relative location to Project Site
Col Welsh, lives on property	Western boundary of Minnaminane
Donna Welsh, lives in Toowoomba	Western boundary of Minnaminane (bush block only)
Glen & Helen Wallace (nee Welsh), live in Toowoomba	Western boundary of Minnaminane (bush block only)
Jeff Welsh, lives on property	Western boundary of Minnaminane

Following these proactive discussions, no objections were lodged against the project during the public notification period, however the Project recognises that these neighbours may potentially develop reservations that need to be proactively engaged in the lead up to construction, during construction and then for the long term life of the Bulli Creek Solar Farm.

Under this CEP, the Project will continue this direct, personal and collaborative dialogue with all five of these neighbouring landowners, plus any others who may come to live in close vicinity to the project, through the following three key methods:

- i. Direct and personal provision of clear information about the Project's progress by phone, email and/or where possible in additional individual meetings at the homes of these nearby landowners;
- ii. Actively listen to the concerns of neighbouring landowners, and subsequent follow up by email to the landowners confirming that their concern has been noted and registered; and
- iii. Incorporate feedback from neighbouring landowners where appropriate into the Environmental Management Plan, Landscape Management Plan and/or Bushfire Management Plan for the Project.

This CEP recognises that following common concerns of graziers within close vicinity to solar farm sites may need to be collaboratively addressed with the above landowners through ongoing direct contact. See Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: table of common concerns from neighbouring landowners to a solar farm

<i>Common solar farming concerns from neighbouring cattle graziers</i>
Impact on rural aesthetics
Decrease in surrounding property value
Road safety for trucks etc during construction
Construction noise
Windblown dust and sprays from surrounding farms affecting yield of solar farm, potential liability issues
Control of pests, weeds, vermin
Perceptions of aggregated inverter noise/low frequency humming

4. Plan to achieve Objective B

Wider community engagement and interaction through regular public meetings and Q&A sessions at all stages of the Project at Millmerran's Community & Cultural Centre.

Feedback from Millmerran community groups is that Tuesday nights are the optimal evening in the week for the community to attend public Q&A sessions on the Project.

Accordingly, the Project will make advance bookings at the Millmerran Community & Culture Centre at Walpole St, Millmerran once the Project has line of sight on construction commencing, indicatively as follows:

Date	Project Stage	Activity	Status
November 2016	Clarity on timing to Financial Close <i>(yet to be settled)</i>	Community meeting	Yet to book
? 2017	Construction	Community meeting	Yet to book
? 2017	Construction	Community meeting	Yet to book
? 2017	Construction well advanced, nearing conclusion of Stage 1	Community meeting	Yet to book

Notification to the public of these meetings will be delivered at least a fortnight in advance through the following avenues:

- Public advertisements in the regional Toowoomba Chronicle newspaper of the upcoming Q&A session;
- Dissemination by Millmerran Commerce & Progress Inc to their business chamber mailing list;
- Email notification by the Project to all of the local stakeholders in our database.

Meeting room/venue at Millmerran Community & Cultural Centre



The meetings will also be notified on the Project's Community Engagement Website that includes an impressive video fly-over simulation for (<https://vimeo.com/72615534>), Community Feedback Form and newsletter subscription. See <http://www.solarchoice.net.au/blog/Bulli-Creek-solar-farm-community-engagement>

These meetings will be open to all members of the public to attend as an open forum through which to learn about the Project's progress, and to have their free say. It's anticipated that these meetings will also allow a conduit to engagement of subcontractors, or other job opportunities either directly or indirectly engaged in the project.

The meetings will be convened and chaired by Solar Choice.

A list of names and email contacts of all attendees who wish to register will be taken, and minutes of each meeting disseminated to them within seven calendar days.

Any specific matters that the community would like addressed by the Project can then be tabled to the Directors of Bulli Creek Solar Farm Pty Ltd, and subsequent resolution of any action relayed to the list of attendees.



Screen shot from video fly-over simulation on Vimeo

5. Plan to achieve Objective C

Education opportunities through site tours with local Schools, training and education bodies, as well as local indigenous groups.

The Project has already proactively notified a range of Schools and other education and training entities in the local region of the educational and clean energy future benefits that the Bulli Creek Solar Farm will bring to the region as one of Queensland's largest proposed photovoltaic generators.

Post construction, and where safe during construction at the discretion of the EPC, the project will conduct site tours for students and interested participants from local indigenous groups.

These entities include:

Millmerrra State School

St Joseph's Catholic School

Fairholme College, Toowoomba

Toowoomba Boys Grammar

Pittsworth State High School

Pittsworth State School

St Stephen's Catholic Primary School

Goondiwindi State High School

6. Plan to achieve Objective D

Interaction, engagement and involvement with a diverse spectrum of local stakeholders and interested entities.

The Project has already, and will continually, reach out to a widespread mix of local stakeholders and local peak bodies to keep them informed and engaged on the progress of the Bulli Creek Solar Farm.

These local stakeholder groups and bodies include:

Organisation Name	Contact Person	Contact Details	Notes
Millmerran Commerce & Progress Inc	Maria Oliver, President	0408 933 159	Runs the local chamber of business
Millmerran Motel	Clint McKay	07 4695 1155	Well connected for local accommodation needs of construction workers
Millmerran Focus on Feathers	Wendy Moline, Convenor	0439 493 582 www.facebook.com/MillmerranFocusonFeathers2015	Approached Solar Choice for local sponsorship
Toowoomba Regional Council	Mayor Paul Antonio	c/o TRC	Formerly Mayor of Millmerran Shire Council prior to amalgamation
Millmerran Power Station	Intergen, John Rogers, Community Liaison	0407 119 728	
Doug Hall Poultry	Libby Munro, PIC	0439 3188 121	Prominent Millmerran business and major employer for region

7. Conclusion

This CEP recognises the key significance of engaging the local Millmerran and wider Darling Downs/Toowoomba regional community, and – in doing so - focusses on four clear and specific objectives.

The CEP sets out a framework for proactive collaboration and dialogue at both an individualised level for immediate neighbours, plus also a strategy for wider community involvement, interaction, participation and education.

The CEP is very much a living document, and can and will be adapted as the Project moves closer to financial close then through construction to its O&M phase.

Appendix A – Media Coverage of Bulli Creek Solar Farm

Website/Magazine	Article URL
RenewEconomy	http://reneweconomy.com.au/2015/council-approves-2gw-mega-solar-project-plan-in-queensland-20827
Climate Action Programme	http://www.climateactionprogramme.org/news/1bn_solar_farm_to_be_australias_largest
Climate / Business Spectator	http://www.businessspectator.com.au/news/2015/2/11/solar-energy/renewable-target-can-absolutely-be-reached
Climate / Business Spectator	http://www.businessspectator.com.au/news/2015/2/10/solar-energy/solar-choices-toowomba-pv-farm-approved
ABC Sth Qld	http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2015/02/12/4178689.htm?site=southqld
ABC Rural	http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-12/queensland-to-house-australias-largest-solar-farm/6089286#.VNxObj8HnLk.twitter
ABC Rural	http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-12/queensland-to-house-australias-largest-solar-farm-angus-gemmell/6089334
ABC Brisbane	http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2015/02/australias-biggest-solar-panel-farm-in-south-east-queensland.html
The Chronicle	http://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/clean-energy-project-sparks-global-interest/2542363/
The Chronicle	http://www.thechronicle.com.au/news/solar-farm-gets-approval-tick/2539277/#.VNqRXmCWyU0.twitter
SMH	http://www.smh.com.au/queensland/mega-1-billion-darling-downs-solar-farm-approved-20150211-13c39r.html
News.com.au	http://www.news.com.au/national/breaking-news/qld-solar-farm-dependent-on-energy-target/story-e6firk9-1227219141802?from=public_atom
The Manufacturer	http://www.themanufacturer.com/articles/1bn-worlds-largest-solar-farm-qld-ret-confirmed/
EVwind.es (reve)	http://www.evwind.es/2015/02/13/plan-for-australias-largest-solar-power-2000-mw-approved/50473
AA Energy News Terminal	http://aaenergyterminal.com/newsSub.php?newsid=4527523
Post online media (poandpo.com)	http://www.poandpo.com/politics/plan-for-australias-largest-1-billion-solar-farm-approved-14-2-2015/
GoToProperty.com.au	http://gotoproperty.com.au/2015/02/12/solar-in-queensland/
The Australian	http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/latest/renewable-target-can-absolutely-be-reached/story-e6frg90f-1227216012769
The Australian	http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/qld-solar-farm-dependent-on-energy-target/story-fn3dxiwe-1227219141802
Recharge News	http://www.rechargenews.com/solar/1391100/solar-deals-and-company-news
Make It Cheaper	http://www.makeitcheaper.com.au/news/electricity/what-can-qld-businesses-learn-from-the-bulli-creek-solar-farm
The Australian	http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/latest/renewable-target-can-absolutely-be-reached/story-e6frg90f-1227216012769

The Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/02/under-the-sun-australias-largest-solar-farm-set-to-sprout-in-a-queensland-field>

Daily Mail

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2976871/Australias-largest-solar-farm-set-shine-brain-former-barrister-gave-gown-wig-save-environment.html>

ABC Brisbane morning radio

http://blogs.abc.net.au/queensland/2015/03/australias-largest-solar-farm.html?site=brisbane&program=612_morning

Modern Farmer

<http://modernfarmer.com/2015/03/what-could-be-the-worlds-biggest-solar-farm-approved-in-australia/>

Business Spectator

<http://www.businessspectator.com.au/news/2015/5/21/solar-energy/solar-farm-move-forward-ret-compromise>

Courier-Mail

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/business/renewable-energy-target-compromise-good-enough-for-solar-choice/story-fnihsp3-1227360688452>

My Sunshine Coast

<http://mysunshinecoast.com.au/news/news-display/queensland-keen-to-capitalise-on-a-solar-future,38434>

Australian Manufacturing

<http://www.australianmanufacturing.com.au/28687/queensland-to-target-solar-energy-future>

Recharge News

<http://www.rechargenews.com/solar/1400719/analysis-energy-retailers-key-after-australia-ret-deal>

Nikkei Asia Review

<http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/Economy/Cross-party-deal-has-renewables-back-on-investment-radar>

Architecture & Design .com.au

<http://www.architectureanddesign.com.au/news/1-billion-qld-solar-power-farm-produces-enough-ene>