



Gannawarra Solar Farm

Community Engagement Plan

2013 to 2016 and onwards



Views across site (above and below)

Kerang Community Centre AGM, July 2014



Table of Contents

1. Brief History & Current Context
2. Key Objectives of Community Engagement Plan
3. Plan to achieve Objective A
4. Plan to achieve Objective B
5. Plan to achieve Objective C
6. Plan to achieve Objective D
7. Conclusion
Appendix A – Community Engagement Endorsement letter from Gannawarra Shire Council

1. Brief History & Current Context

A plan to leverage existing community support

Since 2013 the Gannawarra Solar Farm has enjoyed and sustained widespread community support within the local shire jurisdiction, predominantly in and around the Kerang township.

This support extends further afield across the wider Mallee Region of Northern Victoria including larger towns such as Swan Hill, as well as to the south through the Project's positive engagement of local community entities such as the Bendigo Sustainability Group.

It's testament to this positive local context that - after proactively conducting personal meetings with those adjoining neighbours who raised matters of concern - the Project then received no appeals during the relevant planning approval process. Community perceptions of the Project site are enhanced by its unobtrusive location, being conveniently screened from passing motorists by an existing 25m wide buffer of well-established trees along the site's frontage to municipal Lalbert-Kerang Rd.

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.

Gannawarra Solar Farm Pty Ltd benefits from a depth of experience in successful community consultation within its consortium, both through the founder of Edify Energy (who led the financing and construction of over 20 utility solar farms across the UK between 2011 to 2015) as well as Bouygues extensive experience as one of the world’s largest infrastructure firms.

Additionally, Solar Choice’s impartial residential model has productively served many hundreds of residents in and around Kerang, Swan Hill, Bendigo and the wider Mallee region with informative Quote Comparisons for residential solar and battery storage options since 2008, and is a well-respected name in these communities.

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 Kerang Memorial Hall.
- 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 the 2013 public notification period for the planning application, Solar Choice arranged and attended individual meetings at the homes of six neighbours in close vicinity to the Project site to listen to their various concerns, and to address them in a response paper provided to Council.

Following these proactive meetings, no appeals were lodged against the project during the relevant period following the successful granting of the Planning Permit, however the Project recognises that these neighbours no doubt still hold ongoing reservations that need to be engaged in the lead up to construction, during construction and then for the long term life of the Gannawarra Solar Farm.

Under this CEP, the Project will continue this direct, personal and collaborative dialogue with all of these six groups of neighbouring landowners, plus any others in close vicinity to the project who may raise similar matters of concern in future, 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;

- iii. Incorporate feedback from neighbouring landowners where appropriate into the Environmental Management Plan, Landscape Management Plan and/or Fire Management Plan for the Project.

The original 2013 concerns of each these six neighbouring property owners that will need to be continually addressed under this CEP are set out in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1: table of original concerns from neighbouring landowners

Name	Proximity	Vermin	Noxious Weeds	Native Wetland Birdlife	Inverter Noise/low frequency humming	Decrease in Surrounding Property Value	Construction Noise	Impact on rural Aesthetics	Fire Hazard	Windblown dust and sprays affecting solar farm	Local Security	Road Safety for trucks etc during construction	Risks to Local Power Supply	School Site Sign
Geoff & Fiona Kendell	Direct Neighbour	X	X										X	X
Ken and Marge Charleson	Direct Neighbour to North and West	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Jeff and Barb Gitsham	northern neighbour	X	X	X	X				X			X		
Gavan and Bernadine Robinson	Eastern neighbour											X		
K O'Brien	Western neighbour	X	X		X	X		X						
Colin Gitsham	Northern neighbour	X	X		X	X		X	X			X		

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 Kerang Memorial Hall.

Feedback from the Kerang Rotary Club and also Gannawarra Shire Council is that Monday nights are the optimal evening in the week for the community to attend public Q&A sessions on the Project.

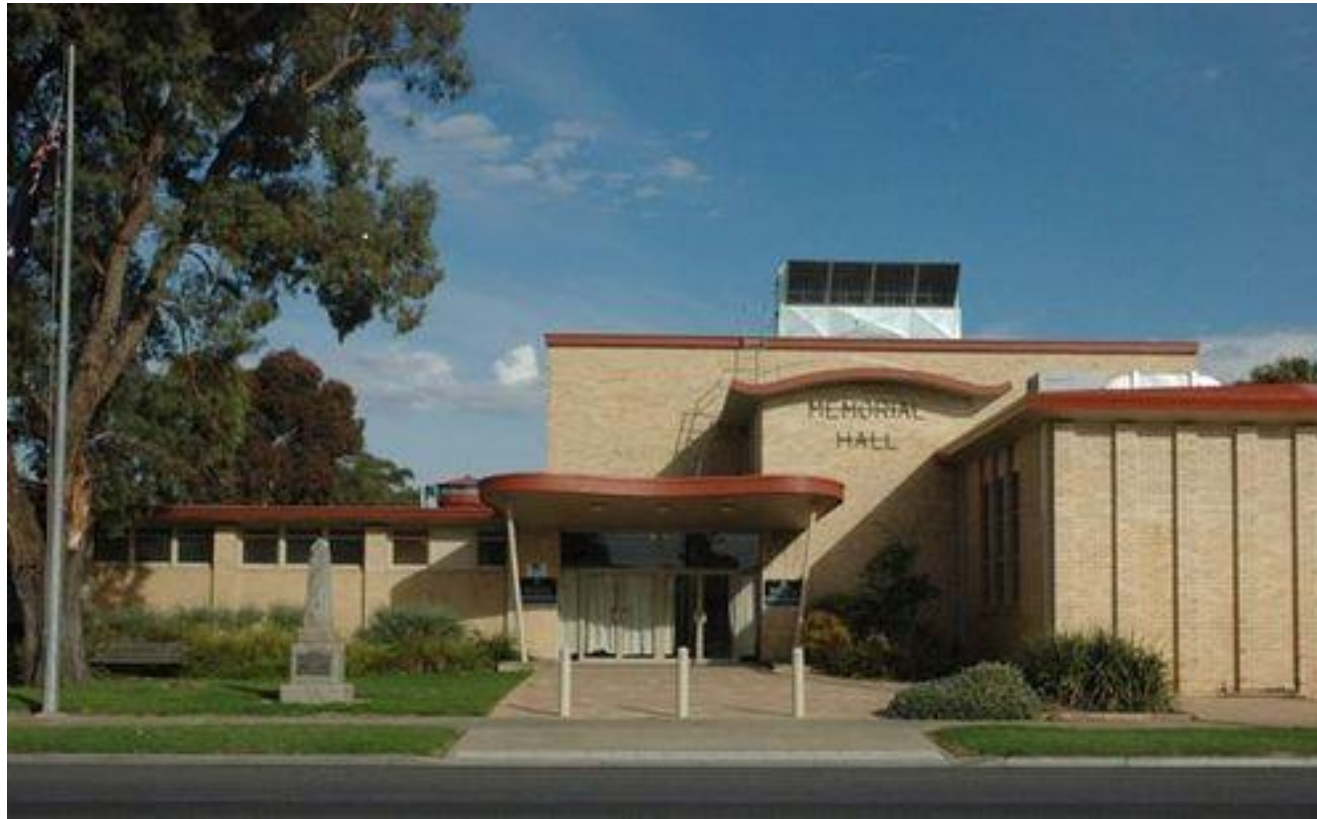
Accordingly, the Project has made advance bookings at the Kerang Memorial Hall, Wellington St, for the following dates:

Date	Project Stage	Activity	Status
19 September 2016	Clarity on timing to Financial Close (pending Offer to Negotiate an ARENA Funding Agreement)	Community meeting at Kerang Memorial Hall	Booked
16 January 2017	Construction	Community meeting at Kerang Memorial Hall	Booked
13 March 2017	Construction	Community meeting at Kerang Memorial Hall	Booked
17 July 2017	Construction well advanced, nearing conclusion of Stage 1	Community meeting at Kerang Memorial Hall	Booked

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

- Public advertisements in the local newspaper, The Gannawarra Times, of the upcoming Q&A session;
- Dissemination by Gannawarra Shire Council on their website and/or mailing list;
- Email notification by the Project on to all of the local stakeholders in our database.

Kerang Memorial Hall, Wellington St



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/70079634>), Community Feedback Form and newsletter subscription.

See <http://www.solarchoice.net.au/blog/gannawarra-solar-farm-community-forum>

These meetings will be open to all members of the public to attend as an open forum though 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 a representative of the Project.

A list of names and email contacts of all attendees who wish to register will be taken, and minutes of each meeting disseminate 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 Gannawarra Solar Farm Pty Ltd, and subsequent resolution of any action relayed to the list of attendees.

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 Gannawarra Solar Farm will bring to the region as Victoria's largest proposed photovoltaic generator.

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

These entities include:

Mallee District Aboriginal Services

Kerang Technical High School

Kerang Christian College

Kerang Primary School

St Joseph's Primary 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 Gananwarra Solar Farm.

These local stakeholder groups and bodies include:

Organisation Name	Contact Person	Contact Details	Notes
Kerang Progress Association	Kelvin Burt	oohlala8@bigpond.net.au	
Bendigo Sustainability Group	Keith Reynard	keithreynard@gmail.com 0428 581 198	Keith is also Energy Projects Office for City of Greater Bendigo
Rotary Club Kerang	Jenny Kelly	Kellysmj7@bigpond.com 0400 571 266	Rotary meet on a Thursday evening 6.30 to 8pm. Jenny is a former Mayor

Kerang Landcare	Angela Hird	aahird@westnet.com.au	Angela Hird is community orientated and the link may be to assist with some landscaping on site or to use them as a reference for environmental issues
Kerang Business Council	Oscar Aertssen – councillor and business person	oscar.aertssen@gsc.vic.gov.au	
Irrigated Cropping Group	Rob Fisher	agresults@dragnet.com.au	Rob has already advised the project on wheat cropping matters, and is across recent progress in 2016
Kerang Football Club	Rob Fisher	agresults@dragnet.com.au	

7. Conclusion

This CEP recognises the key significance of engaging the local Gannawarra and wider regional community, and – in doing so - focusses on four very 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

Gannawarra Shire Council endorsement of Community Engagement Plan

by Roger Griffiths, Manager Economic Development

2 June 2016

Gannawarra Solar Farm commits to community consultation

Edify Energy & Solar Choice have plans in place to construct an initial ~60MW (DC) stage towards an ultimate ~300MW solar farm 12kms west of Kerang on the Lalbert-Kerang Road. Planning permits were issued in October 2013 and the company has been hard at work preparing for construction in 2017.

Gannawarra Solar Farm Pty Ltd has been shortlisted through the ARENA funding program and has commenced an intensive community consultation plan aimed at collaborating with local schools, local business groups, local service clubs and even the Bendigo Sustainability group. This broad range of community partnerships will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn more about renewable energy and will provide a chance for the community to develop a strong relationship with the solar farm.

The project's developers are excited by the enthusiasm that exists within the community firstly for the project and secondly for the environmental benefits the solar farm will provide. Kerang has a great range of built infrastructure to support large scale solar as well as great solar resources.

The relationships that Gannawarra Shire Council has with the local schools will provide the students with first-hand knowledge of how the solar farms operate and this will hopefully spur students on to careers in the renewable energy sectors. The students of today will play a key role in the future of Australia's energy resources and we are only too happy to share our industry knowledge.

The project is shovel ready with construction expected to commence in early 2017 providing around 220 jobs over a 14 month period, providing a huge economic boost and kick-starting the renewable energy sector for north west Victoria

Gannawarra mayor Cr Lorraine Learmonth said the solar projects planned for the Gannawarra Shire will be a significant boost to the local economy at a time when the fall out from the dairy pricing has eroded a lot of business confidence in rural Victoria.