

ADVERTISED PLAN



ANAKIE SOLAR FARM

COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

REPORT



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Anakie solar farm is being developed by BNRG Leeson (BRNGL), a Melbourne based renewable energy partnership which has successfully developed multiple solar farms in Victoria and elsewhere in Australia.

A number of locations were considered for the solar farm. The current site at 1435-1475 Ballan Road Anakie was chosen because there are not many houses nearby, the land is agricultural so risks to flora and fauna values are low, and there is capacity for a straightforward connection to the 22kV grid.

BNRGL developed a community engagement plan with two main aims:

- Providing for our team to listen to, understand and provide information for our stakeholders.
- Delivering information that helps build support for the growth of renewable energy activities in Victoria.

2 STAKEHOLDERS

The Anakie solar farm proposal has two main stakeholder groups:

- Approvals and review bodies, including the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP); City of Greater Geelong; Powercor; Department of Transport (roads); emergency service providers.
- Community: potentially affected or interested community members and groups, including adjacent landowners, tenants and businesses, environment groups and representative Aboriginal groups.

3 CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

Prior to lodging the planning permit application BNRGL and its consultants completed a variety of consultation and engagement activities.

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Approvals and review authorities

Consultation activities and outcomes with approvals and review authorities are included in the Planning Report.

Community

Activities	Stakeholder	Reason for activity	Desired outcome
Emailed plans, phone calls March/June 2022	Wadawarrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation	Presentation of project proposal so we could understand any potential areas of sensitivity on Country	No potential areas of sensitivity identified; or suitably management plan able to be developed. Outcome A meeting was held on 26/7/22, where the proponent attended the RAP office in Geelong to introduce and describe the project, and to learn about the local area and it's traditional attributes and uses. No concerns were raised about the project.

Activities	Stakeholder	Reason for activity	Desired outcome
Door knock w/b 16 May 2022	Neighbouring landowners (within 2 kilometres)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the proposal, proximity to the dwelling and suggested screening, potential impact on farm business. • Answer questions and provide information about the project. • Understand likely activities and understand how they may be affected during construction. • Discuss any specific issues raised. • Gather local knowledge about climate, environment and business operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm BNRGL's intent to be a good neighbour. • Develop relationship so stakeholders feel they can come directly to BNRGL with any questions or suggestions. • Arrange meetings if further discussion is required. <p>Outcome – see Section 4, below.</p>
Fact sheets* Provided online and at information session	Community	<p>Provide plain English information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fast Facts: what are we building, timeline, employment, benefits for Victoria and the region. 2. What is a solar farm? why are farms designed and built the way they are? 3. Solar panels and glare: how the panels move, how glare is managed, some misconceptions explained. 4. Protecting the environment: flora and fauna, sustainable farming, eventual decommissioning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is better informed about the planning process and the project.
Print and associated online advertising (two regional newspapers) w/b 16 May 2022	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise drop-in session. • Provide contact details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness beyond immediate neighbours & maximise attendance at drop-in session. <p>Note: we are aware of the Anakie Advocate, a local newsletter published once a month, but its timing was not in line with our drop-in session date.</p>
Flyers at general store w/b 9 May	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise drop-in session. • Provide contact details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness beyond immediate neighbours.
Drop in session 25 May 2022	Neighbouring landowners Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details of project, answer specific questions, gather local knowledge. 	<p>Community regards the project favourably and is comfortable their questions will be answered.</p> <p>Outcome – see Section 4, below.</p>
Community engagement report (when planning process is complete.)	Council Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback what we've heard during consultation, and how it has informed the proposal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunity for further feedback. • Builds trust about the process.

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* Fact Sheets and key messages are included in Appendix A.

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4 WHAT WE HEARD

Based on previous experience, we expect most feedback would be about the areas shown in the table below, often with some specific local matters.

Planning documents, fact sheets and other information were provided at meetings, the drop-in session and on our website. In conversation, community members were advised of the timeframes and extent of the proposed project, and some of the questions that are frequently asked about similar projects.

Potential issue or opportunity	Feedback from Anakie community
Potential employment opportunities	Interest in the number and types of jobs likely to be available.
Landscaping and visual impact	After viewing the aerial photos and plans, satisfied there would be no unacceptable impact.
Ecology and habitat	Not raised.
Potential for glare	Not raised.
Traffic impact & any damage to roads during construction	Interest in the potential extent of interruption along the main road during construction. Generally satisfied this would be minimal.
Construction impacts: noise, dust, access	As above.
Operational issues: noise, security, lighting, land management	Not raised.
Impact on farming in the region	Not raised.

Level of involvement

The drop-in session was held from 4pm to 7pm on a Wednesday evening at the Anakie Neighbourhood House. The manager there provided information about the session to visitors and other community organisations prior to the day, flyers were left at the general store and the session was advertised in two regional newspapers. Two people attended the session, and around six others who were at the venue for other reasons attended and had questions and feedback

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As a result, our main consultation was with the neighbours adjoining the proposed site. We hope there will be more interest during the formal planning approval phase.

In the meantime, direct contact details for a senior representative are provided on our website and have been left with the neighbouring properties.

5 ONGOING CONSULTATION

BNRGL is committed to continuing consultation as the project develops. The consultation plan will be revised in response to any feedback we receive; directly from the community or as a result of planning permit conditions.

Further fact sheets may be produced in response to specific areas of interest as the project progresses.

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APPENDIX A: FACT SHEETS & KEY MESSAGES

KEY MESSAGES

Overarching messages

- BNRGL is an Australian company working with local farmers and businesspeople to develop Victoria's renewable energy industry.
- Solar farms are an ideal use of underutilised agricultural areas of land in regional Victoria.
- Solar farms have a minimal environmental impact, especially given the exceptional benefits they provide.
- The project will have a positive impact on the Victorian State Renewable Energy Target.

Project specific messages

- BNRGL is leasing the land for the farm. It has not purchased any property.
- The solar farm has been carefully planned to use land that is less productive. It is intended that grazing will be carried out on the site, and farming will continue on the property.
- We estimate the project will generate 12,000MWh in the first year, the equivalent to supplying over 1,500 households with renewable electricity.
- The project will create a positive social impact with local employment and improved electricity supply.
- The farm has a design life of 60 years. If after that time it does not continue, the land can easily return to agricultural use.

FACT SHEETS

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