

Appendix C

Community Engagement Report

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Giddi BESS and Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm

Community Engagement Report

December 2025



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Giddi BESS and Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm Community Engagement Report




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WSP acknowledges that every project we work on takes place on First Peoples lands.
We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the first scientists and engineers and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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Abbreviations

BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
SIA	Social Impact Assessment
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Victoria)
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Victoria)
CFA	Country Fire Authority
LGA	Local Government Area
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
MW	Megawatt
kV	Kilovolt

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Executive summary

The Giddi Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm Community Engagement Report outlines a comprehensive, socially informed approach to stakeholder engagement for a renewable energy project in Trafalgar East, Victoria.

This report has been developed by WSP to support planning and environmental approvals by ensuring that engagement is evidence-based, inclusive, and tailored to the local context.

Key elements of this report include:

- **Project Overview:** The project comprises a 360 MW BESS (Stage 1) and an additional 200 MW BESS plus a 200 MW solar array (Stage 2), located on agricultural land near existing transmission infrastructure.
- **Strategic alignment:** High-level overview of regional and local strategic planning related to renewable energy developments within the Project area.
- **Social baseline:** The report provides a detailed demographic and socio-economic profile of Trafalgar East and surrounding communities.
- **Scoping of social impacts:** Potential positive and negative social impacts are identified, including effects on local traffic, accommodation, community cohesion, health and wellbeing, and economic opportunities.
- **Community engagement strategy:** The approach is structured around early, ongoing, and transparent engagement with Traditional Owners, landholders, local residents, and key stakeholders. Tools include newsletters, drop-in sessions, direct briefings, and a dedicated project website and contact channels for both Stage 1 and 2 of the project.
- **Community engagement outcomes:** Engagement activities implemented and key results. Feedback from local residents, landholders, and key stakeholders revealed a mix of support and concern, ranging from enthusiasm for local economic opportunities and benefit-sharing, to apprehensions about impacts on agriculture, landscape, and community character. The engagement process has surfaced valuable insights into local priorities, such as the need for clear information, ongoing dialogue, and tailored benefit-sharing initiatives.
- **Recommendations:** The report recommends formalising a Social Impact Assessment to identify and manage social risks, maintaining regular and transparent communication with all stakeholders, and developing a robust benefit-sharing framework in collaboration with local groups.

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1 Introduction

1.1 About this document

The Community engagement report for the Giddi Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm Project outlines a socially informed approach to guide communications and engagement activities. It includes a scoping of social impacts based on targeted engagement, secondary data research, and review of technical papers, as well as recommendations for managing these impacts and a high-level benefit-sharing framework.

The report supports the Project’s application for planning and environmental approvals by ensuring engagement is evidence-based, inclusive, and responsive to the local community context. Developed through the collection and analysis of relevant socio-economic data from the local area, the strategy informs a targeted and appropriate engagement approach that reflects the needs, values, and expectations of the community.

The initial engagement plan was prepared before the release of the Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a). The project team elected to update proposed engagement activities to as far as practical align with the Draft Guidelines. This guided the development of engagement activities, identification of social impacts, and the recommendations for the development of a benefit-sharing framework.

1.1.1 Structure of this document

The community engagement strategy is organised into the following sections:

Table 1.1 Structure of the engagement strategy

Section	Purpose
Part A: Introduction & context	
Section 1 – Introduction:	Provides an overview of the Project.
Section 2 – Strategic context:	Summarises key regional and local planning frameworks that inform Project development and engagement activities.
Part B: Social research	
Section 3 - Social baseline	Describes the local context, including demographic characteristics, community values and interests, and sentiment toward renewable energy projects.
Section 4 – Scoping of impacts:	Identifies potential positive and negative social impacts, drawing on Project characteristics, comparable social impact assessments (SIAs), engagement results and relevant technical studies.
Part C: Community engagement strategy	
Section 5 – Engagement strategy	<p>Outlines the overarching approach to community engagement, including its guiding principles and objectives.</p> <p>It incorporates a detailed stakeholder analysis, applying the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation to identify engagement needs and appropriate levels of involvement.</p> <p>Finally, it describes the community engagement activities and tools used to inform the development of this Report.</p>

Section	Purpose
Section 6 – Community engagement outcomes	Presents the outcomes of the community engagement activities for Stage 1 Giddi BESS of the Project, detailing the activities undertaken, stakeholders engaged, and key insights gathered through the engagement process.
Section 7 – Community engagement management plan	Presents a framework for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on engagement activities to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.
Section 8 – Recommendations	<p>Provides key recommendations to guide ongoing engagement for Stag 1 and 2 of the Project. It emphasises strategies to maintain transparent and inclusive communication with stakeholders, foster trust, and address emerging community concerns.</p> <p>In addition, it outlines the approach for developing a benefit-sharing framework that delivers meaningful social and economic outcomes for local communities, ensuring alignment with best practice standards and stakeholder expectations.</p>

1.1.2 Basis of this strategy

The Report has been developed based on the requirements established in:

- *The Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria: A guide for renewable energy developers* (DELWP, 2021),
- *The Draft Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a).
- *The Solar Energy Facilities: Design and Development Guideline* (DELWP, 2022).

Additionally, the *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* (DPHI, 2025a) (the SIA Guideline) was used for the development of social impacts scoping, which is considered leading social impact assessment practice in the Australian context.

1.2 Project description

ib vogt Development Australia Pty Ltd (ib vogt) is seeking to develop the Giddi Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm, collectively referred to as the Project. The Project is located in Trafalgar East, approximately 130 kilometres (km) east of Melbourne (see Figure 1.1), and spans two properties with a combined area of approximately 360 hectares.

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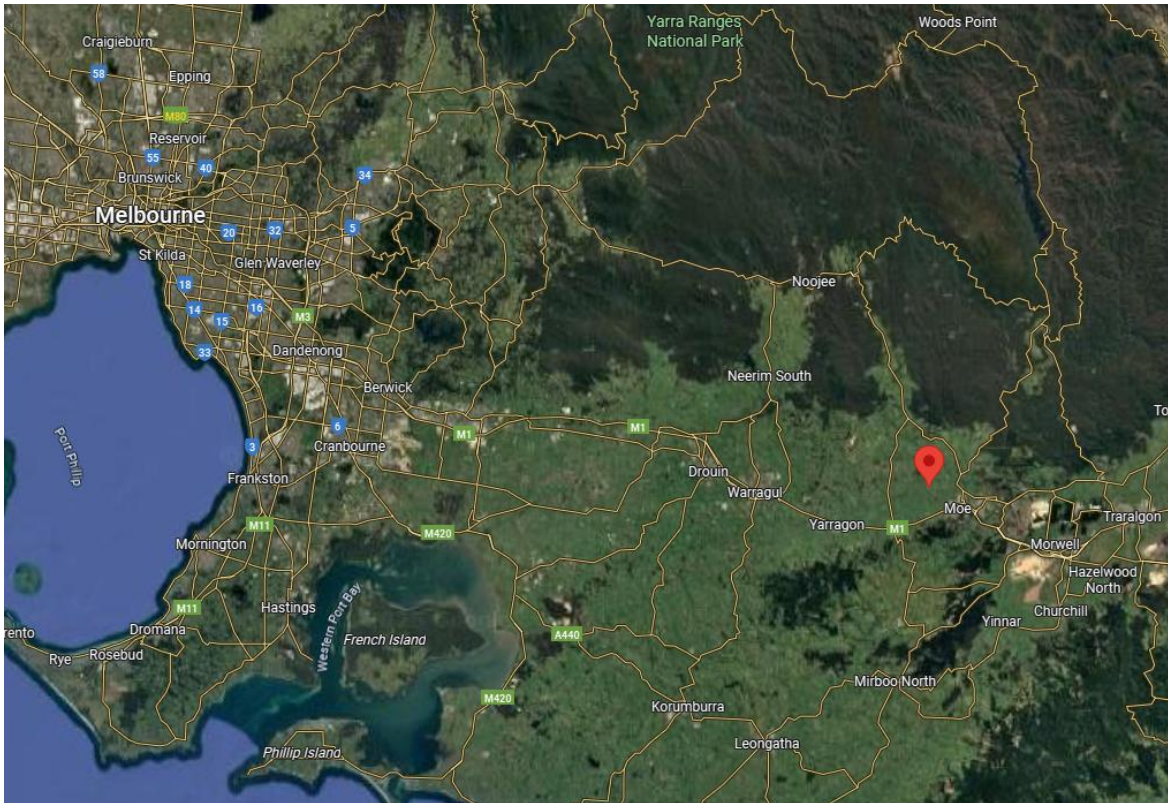


Figure 1.1 Project location as indicated by red arrow

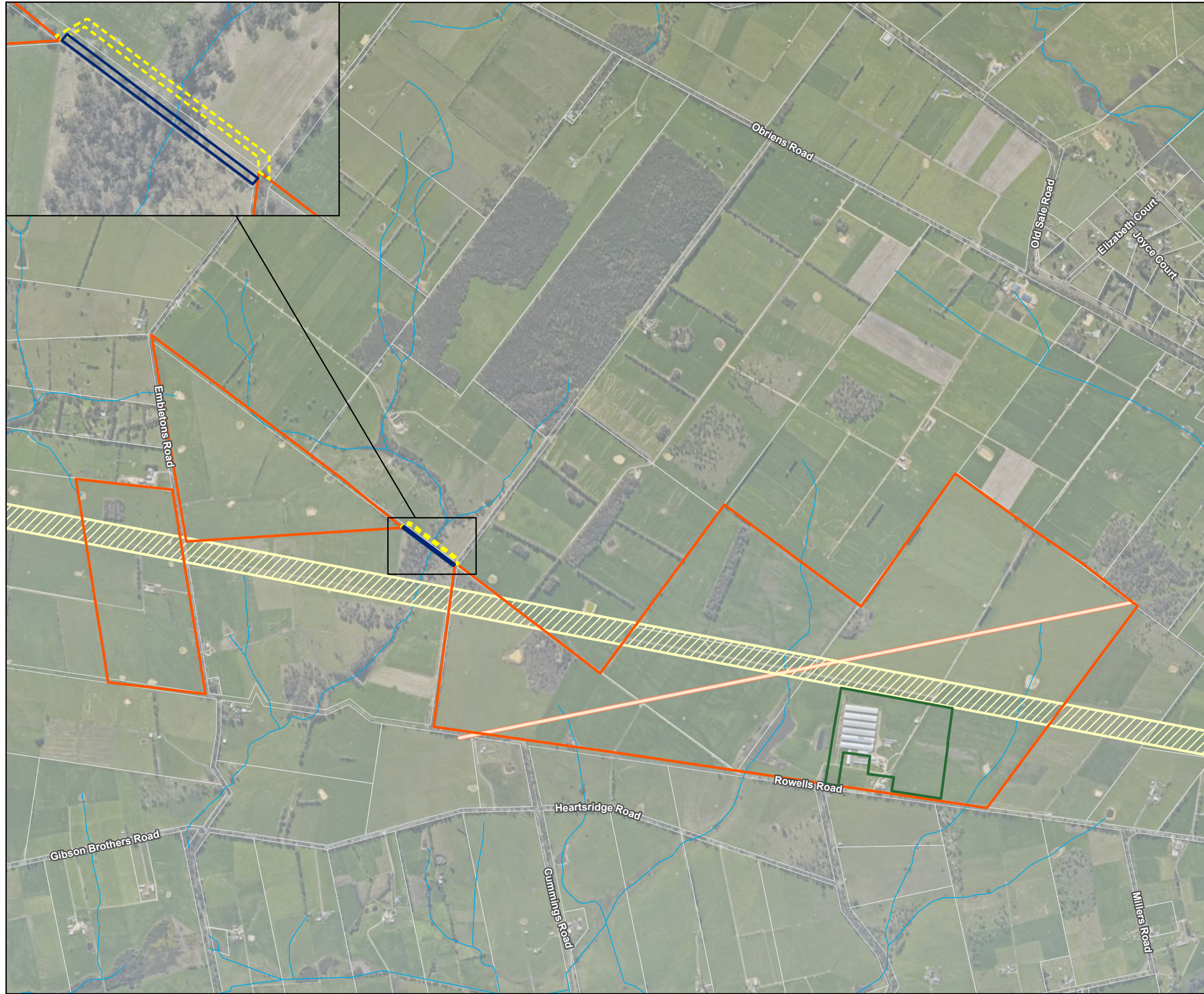
To meet grid connection requirements the Project will be delivered across two stages. See below Figure 1.2 for location of each Project stage.

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Giddi BESS and Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar

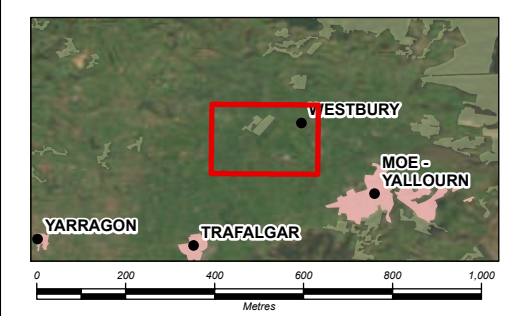
Figure 1.2
Site Layout



Legend

- Watercourse
- Existing Gas Pipeline
- Transmission Corridor Option 1
- Transmission Corridor Option 2
- Giddi BESS
- Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar
- Existing 220kV Power Line Easement
- Cadastre

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Giddi BESS (Stage 1), includes the installation of a 360-megawatt (MW) BESS, a substation, and a 220 kilovolt (kV) connection to the existing AusNet transmission line (Rowville to Yallourn) that traverses the Site. This stage will be located on the property at 59 Rowells Road, Trafalgar East, which is currently used for growing commercial feed for cattle and sheep, and includes a goat dairy. The Stage 1 layout can be seen in Figure 1.3.

Infrastructure associated with the Giddi BESS (Stage 1) includes:

- A 360MW BESS
- Inverters and transformers
- Rooms for control, operation and maintenance
- A switchyard
- A 220kV substation
- Internal access roads
- Perimeter boundary fencing

The Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm (Stage 2) includes the installation of an additional 200 MW BESS and a 200 MW solar power generation array configured with a single 200MW point of connection. This stage is located across the remainder of the Rowells Road property and the adjacent property at 363 Embletons Road which is currently used for grazing beef cattle. The Stage 2 layout can be seen in Figure 1.4.

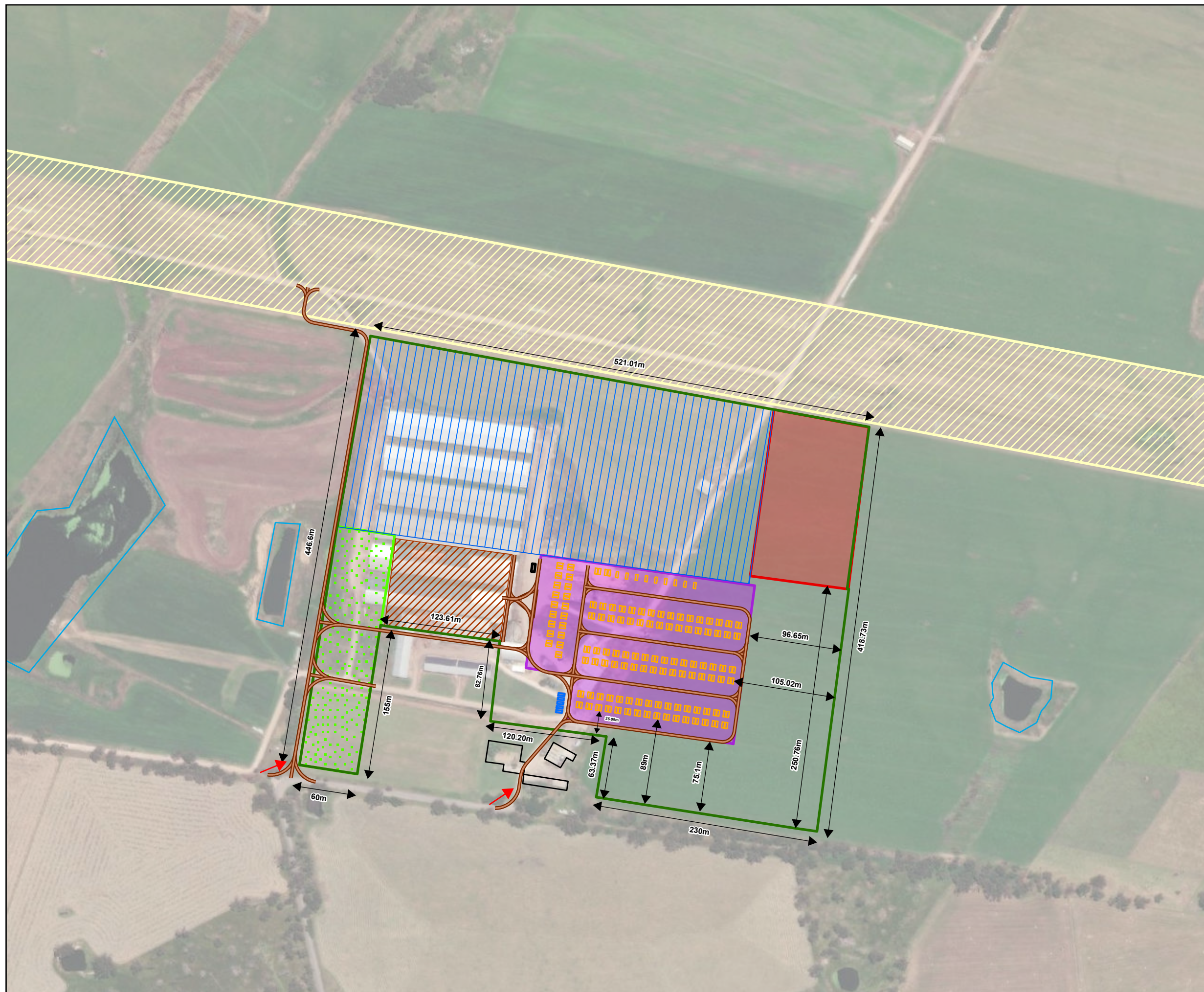
Infrastructure associated with the Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm (Stage 2) includes:

- A 200MW BESS
- A 200MW solar array
- Inverters and transformers
- Rooms for control, operation and maintenance
- A switchyard
- A 220kV substation
- Internal access roads
- Perimeter boundary fencing

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A small transmission easement will be required to connect the two properties. It is proposed that this connection utilise an existing council road easement between the sites or adjacent private land.

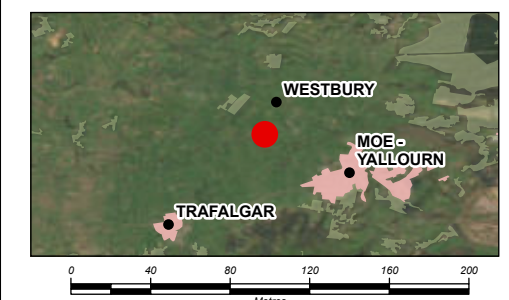
Figure 1.3
Giddi BESS Layout



Legend

- Watercourse
- Water Tanks
- PCS + Transformer
- Office Container
- Existing Buildings
- Access Road
- Main Access Gate
- Giddi BESS Study Area
- TNSP Switchyard
- Giddi BESS Substation
- Existing 220kV Power Line Easement
- Giddi BESS Construction Laydown Area
- 60m Easement
- Giddi BESS

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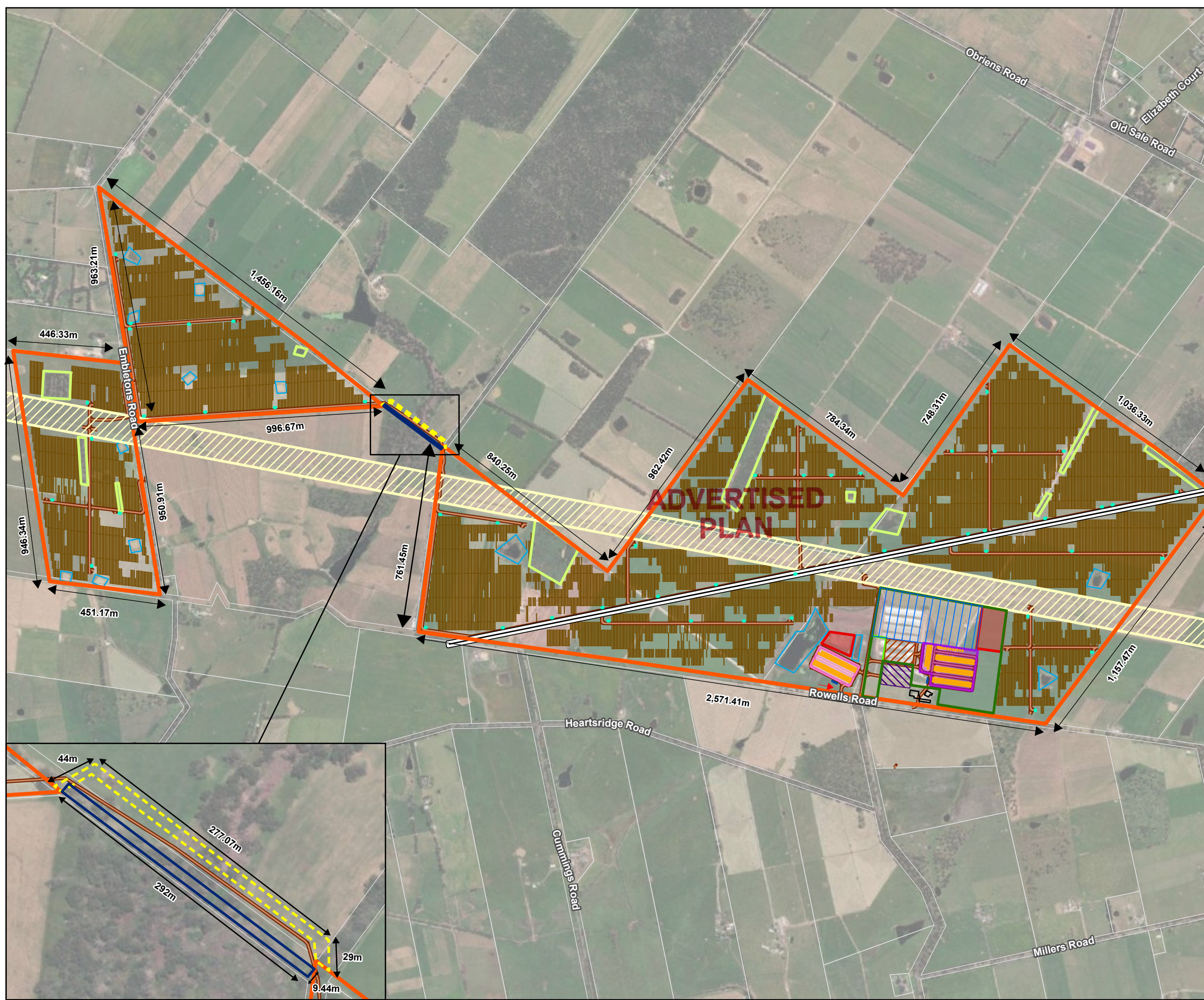
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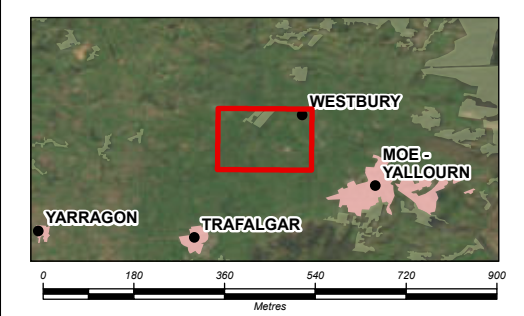


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Trafalgar East BESS and Solar
Figure 1.4
Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Layout



Legend

- PCS + Transformer
- Watercourses
- Water Tank
- Array
- Existing Structure
- Environmental Protection Zones
- Existing Pipeline Easement
- Transformer Station
- Access Road
- Main Access Gate
- Transmission Corridor Option 1
- Transmission Corridor Option 2
- Giddi BESS Planning Boundary
- Giddi BESS
- Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar
- Trafalgar Hybrid Solar BESS
- Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Planning Boundary
- 60m Easement
- Existing 220kV Power Line Easement
- Giddi Substation
- TNSP Switchyard
- Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Substation
- Cadastre



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2 Strategic context

This section provides a high-level overview of regional and local strategic planning related to renewable energy developments within the Project area. They have informed the analysis and development of the community engagement strategy and Social Impact Assessment for the Project.

2.1 Regional strategic planning

2.1.1 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan

The *2025 Victorian Transmission Plan (VTP)* (DEECA, 2025b), developed by VicGrid, outlines the forward-looking strategy for shaping Victoria's energy future. It presents a long-term vision for establishing renewable energy zones (REZs) and building the transmission infrastructure required to support the transition from coal-based power generation to clean, renewable energy. A key feature of the plan is its early and deliberate integration of environmental, cultural, and community values into the planning process. This approach ensures infrastructure is delivered in appropriate locations, at the right time, and with meaningful engagement from communities and Traditional Owners.

The VTP is designed to meet the growing energy demands of emerging industries such as data centres, electric vehicles, and advanced manufacturing, while supporting Victoria's renewable energy targets. Scenario-based modelling is used to explore various future energy landscapes, helping to avoid both overbuilding and underinvestment. This strategic planning is essential for maintaining energy affordability, reliability, and public confidence in the transition to a cleaner energy system.

The Project is aligned with the VTP's strategic goal by contributing to the broader transition to renewable energy. The project site was specifically selected for its immediate access to high-voltage transmission lines, eliminating the need for new transmission infrastructure.

2.1.2 Gippsland 2035 Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan

The *Gippsland 2035 Latrobe Valley and Gippsland Transition Plan* (Latrobe Valley Authority, 2023) provides a roadmap for transitioning the region toward a net-zero economy. Central to the plan is the development of Gippsland as a REZ, including Australia's first declared offshore wind zone. With over \$54 billion in proposed renewable energy projects, the plan highlights the need for a skilled workforce, projecting nearly 13,000 new workers by 2025. It emphasises aligning education and training systems with future industry needs, particularly in clean energy, health, and advanced manufacturing.

The plan also focuses on supporting workers transitioning from traditional industries such as coal and forestry, ensuring access to reskilling opportunities, employment pathways, and wellbeing support.

2.1.3 Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria: A guide for renewable energy developers

The *Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria* (DELWP, 2021) guide provides comprehensive recommendations for renewable energy developers to earn and maintain a social licence to operate (SLO) through meaningful community engagement and benefit sharing. The guide also outlines strategies for engaging with diverse stakeholder, including Traditional Owners, local councils, and community energy groups, and emphasises the importance of tailoring benefit sharing programs to local needs.

The guide has informed the development of this Strategy, incorporating a high-level overview of the community and social context, stakeholder analysis, scoping of potential social impacts, communication and engagement tools, stakeholder engagement planning, and an engagement management plan.

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A benefit-sharing program has not been included as part of this Strategy; however, it is recommended that a standalone social value and economic benefits program is developed for the project.

2.1.4 *Draft Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects*

The *Draft Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a) outline the Victorian Government's minimum expectations for how developers of renewable energy and transmission infrastructure should engage with communities, Traditional Owners, and landholders. These guidelines aim to ensure inclusive, respectful, and beneficial participation in the energy transition. They cover engagement strategies, creation of social and economic benefits, documentation requirements, and compliance mechanisms under the new Victorian Access Regime. The guidelines emphasise early and ongoing engagement, culturally safe practices, transparent negotiations, and tailored initiatives that support local development.

The draft guidelines have informed the development and implementation of this strategy, incorporating engagement activities within communities surrounding the Project, local government, landholders and Traditional Owners. Recommendations for a benefit-sharing framework are discussed in Section 8.

2.1.5 *Solar Energy Facilities: Design and Development Guideline*

The *Solar Energy Facilities Design and Development Guideline* (DELWP, 2022) provides a framework for planning, designing, and developing large-scale solar energy facilities. It outlines best practices for site selection, environmental protection, cultural heritage considerations, agricultural land use, and community engagement. The guideline is intended to support proponents, responsible authorities, and stakeholders in navigating the planning permit process under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

The guide outlines best practices for community engagement and benefit sharing, encouraging early and ongoing consultation with local communities and Traditional Owners to build trust and ensure transparency. Proponents should create tailored engagement plans that span the full project lifecycle and clearly communicate impacts, timelines, and opportunities.

The Strategy draws on the guideline to develop a tailored engagement plan focused on the pre-approval phase. It includes identified opportunities and risks for engagement, along with an implementation and management plan. The Strategy focuses on the early stages of project development, and its anticipated it will be updated throughout the project lifecycle.

2.2 Local strategic planning

The following local policies and plans from Baw Baw Shire Council are considered relevant to the development of this Project.

2.2.1 *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022-2030*

The *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2022–2030* is Baw Baw Shire Council's (2022) guiding document for environmental management over eight years. It aligns with the Council Plan 2021–2025, the Community Vision, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy is built around four strategic goals:

- Goal 1: Reduce energy use and emissions – through carbon reduction plans, energy efficiency projects, and waste management improvements.
- Goal 2: Create sustainable and resilient communities – by integrating environmentally sustainable design (ESD) into urban planning and preparing for climate change impacts.
- Goal 3: Protect the natural environment – by managing and enhancing biodiversity, vegetation, and ecosystems across council-owned assets.

- Goal 4: Shift towards a circular economy – by improving waste diversion, promoting recycled content, and supporting community education on resource recovery.

The Project aligns with the strategy’s overarching goals by contributing to emissions reduction and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy. Its focus on renewable energy generation complements the Council’s vision for sustainability and resilience, particularly in relation to Goals 1 and 2.

2.2.2 *Economic Development Visitor Economy Strategy 2022-2025*

The Baw Baw Shire *Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategy 2022-2025* (2022) presents a comprehensive plan to support one of Victoria’s fastest-growing regions through targeted economic growth, infrastructure development, and community resilience. With a projected population increase from 54,884 to 80,000 by 2041, the strategy focuses on leadership, business attraction, workforce development, and tourism.

Key industries include agriculture, construction, and manufacturing, which together account for nearly half of the Shire’s economic output. The strategy promotes collaboration with local, state, and federal partners and includes initiatives such as the Better Business Program, regional advocacy, and investment incentives to stimulate job creation, innovation, and sustainable development.

Renewable energy is identified as a priority sector within the Investment Incentive Scheme, which aims to attract businesses that contribute significant economic value to the region. The strategy supports tailored incentives for renewable energy ventures, including financial benefits, planning assistance, and marketing support. While not the central focus, renewable energy is integrated into broader sustainability goals, such as promoting eco-tourism, supporting electric vehicle infrastructure, and encouraging sustainable land use.

The Project aligns with this strategy by contributing to the diversification and resilience of the local economy. It supports the Shire’s ambition to attract high-value investment in emerging sectors and complements broader sustainability initiatives.

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3 Social baseline

This section provides a social baseline to characterise the community and social context surrounding the Project. It provides a high-level demographic and socio-economic profile of both regional and local communities surrounding the Project area. Additionally, it explores community values and interests and summarises prevailing community sentiment toward renewable energy developments in the region.

The baseline was developed through a desktop review of publicly available sources, including reports and documents from Baw Baw Shire Council and Latrobe City Council, the Gippsland's Views 2024 report (informed decisions, 2024), and The Next Economy report on energy transition in the Latrobe Valley (2023). Demographic data from the 2021 ABS Census was also analysed.

This baseline has informed the identification of social impacts and help shape community engagement activities and tools that align with the Project's goals in Sections 1, 4 and 5.

The baseline has been developed using desktop research only.

3.1 Social context overview

The Project sits within the suburb of Trafalgar East within the Gippsland region. Trafalgar East is a small rural locality in the Baw Baw Shire, with a population of approximately 401 residents as of the 2021 Census. The area is characterised by its quiet, close-knit community, low population density, and strong connection to the natural environment. Agriculture, particularly cattle farming, is the primary industry, reflecting the area's rural character and economic reliance on farming activities.

The Gunaikurnai people are the traditional custodians of the Gippsland region. However, there are currently no recognised Native Title claims or determinations over the Project site.

The Project is proposed to be developed across land owned by two primary landholders:

- Landholder 1 (215 acres), located at 363 Embletons Road, Trafalgar East. The property has one residential property (currently rented) and it is used for grazing beef cattle. In addition, landholder 1 has signed an option for a separate battery development on adjacent land to the west of the proposed Project site.
- Landholder 2 (670 acres), located at 59 Rowells Road, Trafalgar East. The property is primarily used to grow commercial feed for cattle and sheep. The livestock at the property are dairy goats housed in large sheds under a lease arrangement with a third party, which is due to expire in two years. The goats do not graze the land or consume the feed grown on-site, as all crops are harvested and transported to external customers. Occasionally, the property also accommodates beef cattle under short-term agistment arrangements.

Both properties are traversed by a major 110-metre-wide easement for a double 220kV transmission line and associated access road.

Two sites of recreational value are located nearby the Project site:

- Yarragon Bushland Reserve: A natural reserve situated approximately 700 metres south of the eastern boundary of the Project site.
- Trafalgar Golf Club: Located around 600 metres east of the eastern boundary of the Project site, this facility includes a golf course and a function room with seating for up to 100 people, along with bar and kitchen amenities.

The population and service centres closest to the proposed Project site include Trafalgar, Yarragon, and Warragul within the Baw Baw Shire, as well as Moe, Newborough and Morwell which fall under the Latrobe City Council. Trafalgar and Yarragon are smaller townships that primarily function as local service centres, offering essential amenities to surrounding rural communities. In contrast, Warragul, Moe, Newborough and Morwell are larger regional centres with

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more diverse populations and a broader range of services, including healthcare, education, retail, and employment opportunities.

Warragul, Moe, Newborough and Morwell offer a broad range of services, including multiple supermarkets, food outlets, restaurants, bakeries, and a variety of private and public service providers. Trafalgar and Yarragon also provide food and health services, though on a smaller scale, catering primarily to their local communities.

In terms of short-term accommodation, options in Trafalgar and Yarragon are limited. Moe and Newborough offer slightly more variety, while Warragul and Morwell stand out as the main population centre, with a more diverse and extensive range of short-term accommodation options.

In terms of network connectivity, all population centres and the Project site have access to 5G coverage through Optus. However, Telstra 5G coverage is only available in the main population centres and is currently not available in Trafalgar or at the Project site.

Table 3.1 provides estimated driving distances and travel times from the Project site to various population centres

Table 3.1 Approximate distance of local population centres to Project site

Local population centre	Approximate distance from Project site	Approximate travel time by car to Project site
Trafalgar	10 km	10 minutes
Yarragon	16.1 km	15 minutes
Warragul	29.3 km	23 minutes
Moe	15 km	13 minutes
Newborough	13.1 km	15 minutes
Morwell	28.3 km	26 minutes

There are five future renewable energy projects within 25 km from the Project:

- Shady Creek Solar Farm (approved not operational).
- Latrobe Valley BESS (under construction).
- Bennetts Creek BESS (approved but not operational).
- Wooreen BESS (approved but not operational).
- Tramway Road BESS (planning permit application under consideration).

3.2 Residents and community receptors

A receptor refers to any location where people may live, work, or gather, such as homes, businesses, or community facilities, that could be affected by a proposed project.

For Stage 1 of the Project, there are four receptors located within 1 km of the proposed site. These receptors are marked as R1, R2, R21 and R24 in the map below. For Stage 2, there are 24 receptors located within 1 km of the project area. These are all receptors presented in the layout below (refer to Figure 3.1).

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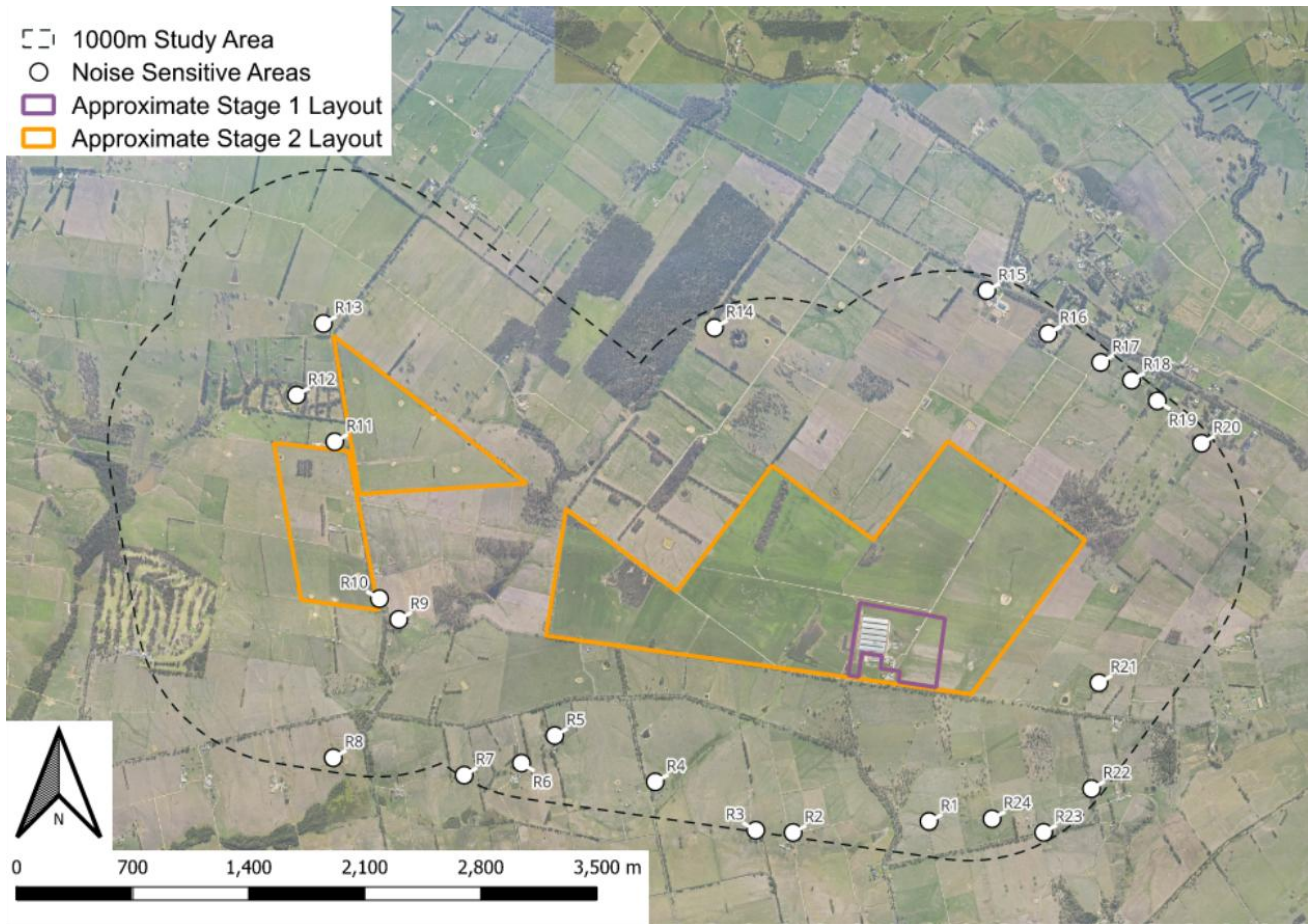


Figure 3.1 Map of Project receptors located within 1 km

3.3 Demographic overview

3.3.1 Local communities

3.3.1.1 Trafalgar East suburb

Trafalgar East is a small rural locality with a population of 401 and a median age of 47, indicating an older population compared to the broader Baw Baw Shire (42 years old). No Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population within the suburb has been identified.

The area presents fewer children and a slightly higher proportion of older residents when compared to Baw Baw Shire. Children aged 0–14 make up 15.7% of the population, lower than Baw Baw’s 18.9%. In contrast, residents aged 65 and over account for 21.2%, slightly above the Shire average of 19.9%.

Housing in Trafalgar East is predominantly owner-occupied, with 45.1% of homes fully owned and 44.8% under mortgage, both higher than Baw Baw Shire. Only 10.1% of dwellings in Trafalgar East are rented, compared to 20.1% in Baw Baw Shire. The average household size is slightly larger in Trafalgar East (2.7) than in Baw Baw Shire (2.5), and nearly all homes in both areas are separate houses.

Educational attainment in Trafalgar East is slightly lower than Baw Baw Shire, with 15.6% of residents holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 18.4% in Baw Baw Shire. However, vocational qualifications are strong in both areas, with 24.4% in Trafalgar East and 23.1% in Baw Baw Shore holding a Certificate III or IV.

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Labour force participation in Trafalgar East is higher (61.3%) than the Shire average (56.3%), and the unemployment rate is lower (3.6% vs. 4.4%). Full-time employment is slightly more common in Trafalgar East (56.3%) than in Baw Baw (54.5%), with similar levels of part-time work.

The most common occupations include managers (10.6%), technicians and trade workers (18.8%), community and personal service workers (12.9%), and labourers (12.5%). Key industries of employment are dairy cattle farming (6.7%), primary education (5.8%), and beef cattle farming (5.4%). These rates indicate a community that is connected to agricultural production, particularly livestock farming, which plays a central role in both the local economy and social identity. The prominence of cattle farming suggests a reliance on land-based livelihoods, with many residents engaged in hands-on, seasonal, and family-run agricultural operations.

Notably, Trafalgar East has a median weekly family income of \$2,250, which is significantly higher than Baw Baw's \$1,894, suggesting relatively strong economic conditions among households in the locality.

3.3.1.2 Local population centres

Trafalgar, Yarragon, and Warragul are all distinct population centres within the Baw Baw Shire LGA. Warragul stands out as the largest, with 19,134 residents. Across these centres, there are 306 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, representing approximately 1.2% of the total population.

In the neighbouring Latrobe City LGA, the towns of Moe–Newborough and Morwell have populations of 15,758 and 14,068 respectively, both notably smaller than Warragul. These centres are home to 902 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, representing 3% of the total population.

These population centres are characterised by:

- High rates of dwelling occupancy across all towns: Yarragon leads with 94.4%, followed closely by Warragul at 93.9%, Trafalgar at 92.8%, Moe-Newborough at 90.45% and Morwell at 90%.
- Relatively high rates of home ownership: Yarragon records the highest rate of home ownership at 79.6%, above the Shire average of 77.8%. Moe-Newborough and Morwell show both lower ownership rates (64.7% and 61.7%, respectively), suggesting a more mobile or economically diverse population.
- High rental occupancy in Moe-Newborough (31.3%) and Morwell (34.1%), reflecting its role within the local area as a regional centre with broader housing options and a more transient population

Educational attainment varies across the towns:

- Yarragon leads in vocational qualifications, with 21.7% of residents holding a Certificate III, highlighting its strong focus on trade and technical skills.
- Warragul shows the highest academic achievement, with 20.2% of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

When observing industries of employment and most common occupations:

- Health care and social assistance ranks as the leading industry in all population centres, ranging from 17% in Moe-Newborough to 15.1% in Trafalgar.
- Construction consistently appears as the second most common industry, ranging from 11.6% in Trafalgar to 13.7% in Yarragon, with Moe-Newborough at 10%.
- Warragul shows the highest proportion of professionals (21.9%). This is well above Trafalgar (17.9%) and Yarragon (15.5%).
- Yarragon records the highest rate of technicians and trade workers at 16.6%, followed by Trafalgar at 15.3% and Morwell at 15.1%.
- Moe-Newborough presents a different occupational profile, with technicians and trade workers leading at 18%, followed by community and personal service workers at 15.8%, and labourers at 13.9%. Morwell also shows a high percentage of labourers at 16.7%.

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Refer to Appendix A-1 for a breakdown of demographic data by population centre, including key figures for Baw Baw Shire and Latrobe City LGAs.

3.3.2 *Regional communities*

3.3.2.1 Baw Baw Shire

Baw Baw Shire is one of Victoria's fastest-growing local government areas, with a current population of 54,941. According to population forecasts, the Shire is expected to grow significantly, reaching approximately 93,737 residents by 2046 (informed decisions, 2025).

There are 724 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people within the Baw Baw Shire, representing approximately 1.3% of the total population.

The region has a median age of 42 years, slightly older than the Victorian average of 38, reflecting a significant proportion of retirees and older adults. Children aged 0–14 years make up 18.9% of the population, while those aged 65 and over account for 19.9%, indicating a balanced but ageing demographic profile.

Baw Baw Shire contained 24,485 private dwellings, with an average household size of 2.5 people, slightly above the Victorian average of 2.6. Most residents live in separate houses (94.5%), reflecting the Shire's rural and semi-rural character, compared to 72.2% across Victoria. In terms of housing tenure, home ownership is notably high with 76.5% (including fully owned and with a mortgage) and rental properties make up 20.1% of dwellings.

Educational attainment in Baw Baw Shire shows a strong presence of vocational qualifications, with 23.1% of residents holding a Certificate III or IV. However, only 18.4% have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, which is notably lower than the Victorian average of 29.2%. This suggests a workforce that is skilled in trades and technical fields, but with lower representation in tertiary-educated professions.

Employment participation in the Shire is relatively strong, with 56.3% of the population engaged in the labour force. The unemployment rate sits at 4.4%, which is below the state average of 5.4%, indicating a stable local economy. Among those employed, 54.5% work full-time and 34.6% part-time, with a small proportion (6.2%) temporarily away from work.

The most common occupations in Baw Baw Shire include technicians and trades workers (17.1%), professionals (16.4%), and labourers (13.2%), reflecting the region's strong ties to practical and industrial sectors. Key industries of employment are health care and social assistance (14.1%), construction (12.2%), manufacturing (10.6%), and retail trade (9.6%), with education and training also playing a significant role at 8.6%.

The median weekly family income in Baw Baw Shire is \$1,894, which is slightly above the regional Victorian average. This figure reflects moderate economic stability and a relatively healthy standard of living for families in the area.

3.3.2.2 Latrobe City

Latrobe City is a key regional centre in eastern Victoria, with a population of 75,211. The area has a median age of 41 years, slightly above the Victorian average of 38, indicating a mature population with a significant proportion of older adults. Children aged 0–14 years make up 17.9% of the population, while those aged 65 and over account for 19.4%, reflecting a balanced but ageing demographic profile similar to other regional areas.

Latrobe City is home to 1,659 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, nearly double the number recorded in Baw Baw Shire. This represents approximately 2.2% of the total population.

The LGA contains 33,593 private dwellings, with an average household size of 2.4 people, slightly below the Victorian average of 2.6. Most residents live in separate houses (89.3%), which is higher than the state average of 72.2%, consistent with Latrobe's suburban and semi-rural character. In terms of housing tenure, 66.1% of residents own their houses (including fully owned and with a mortgage) and 28.3% of dwellings are rented.

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Educational attainment in Latrobe City is lower than the state average (29.2%), with only 13.9% of residents holding a bachelor’s degree or higher. However, 23.4% hold a Certificate III or IV, reflecting a workforce with strong vocational and technical skills. Labour force participation stands at 52.9%, with an unemployment rate of 6.9%, which is higher than the Victorian average of 5.4%, suggesting some economic challenges in the region.

The most common occupations include technicians and trades workers (16.6%), labourers (14.4%), and professionals (14.2%), highlighting the region’s industrial and service-based employment profile. Key industries of employment are health care and social assistance (17.2%), manufacturing (11.6%), retail trade (10.3%), and construction (8.4%).

The median weekly family income in Latrobe City is \$1,544, which is below both the Victorian average and that of neighbouring Baw Baw Shire (\$1,894). This reflects a more modest economic profile, with pockets of socio-economic disadvantage alongside areas of industrial strength and community resilience.

3.4 Community values and interests

Community values and interests refer to the shared priorities, aspirations, and characteristics that influence how communities respond to change.

Table 3.2 outlines the community visions from *Baw Baw Shire Community Vision (2021)* and the *Council Plan 2025-2029 (2025)* from Latrobe City Council. Both councils emphasise inclusive, healthy, and connected communities, with a strong focus on wellbeing and the natural environment. This indicates a regional alignment in prioritising liveability and social resilience.

Baw Baw Shire places great emphasis on sustainability and the balance between built and natural environments. Latrobe City highlights economic development, innovation, and investment attraction, reflecting its urban profile and growth priorities.

Table 3.2 Community vision within Baw Baw Shire Council and Latrobe City Council

	Baw Baw Shire Council	Latrobe City Council
Community vision	<p>Baw Baw Shire's Community Vision aspires to create a sustainable, healthy, and thriving region by 2041, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Sustainable towns and villages that balance natural and built environments, protect nature, and foster liveable landscapes. — Healthy communities that are inclusive, safe, and supportive, promoting wellbeing and belonging. — Thriving communities that are diverse and resilient, valuing heritage, supporting local initiatives, and investing in the future. 	<p>Latrobe City Community Vision by 2036 focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — A vibrant, thriving, healthy, connected, and welcoming regional community where everyone feels safe, included, and involved. — Local businesses prosper, generating diverse job opportunities, fostering a highly skilled workforce, and attracting significant investment. — Latrobe City becomes a hub of growth, learning, opportunity, and innovation. — The region boasts stunning natural surroundings and offers outstanding creative, educational, recreational, and cultural experiences.

The *Gippsland’s Views 2024* report (informed decisions, 2024) further highlights what residents value in their communities. In Baw Baw Shire, key attributes include feeling safe, access to health services, and the natural

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environment. Latrobe City residents also prioritise safety and health services, with additional emphasis on affordable and decent housing.

While detailed information was not available for all local population centres, council master planning documents for Warragul and Trafalgar offer insights into community values relevant to future developments.

The community values within are focused on Warragul (Baw Baw Shire Council, 2011):

- Respect for rural origins and heritage assets: the community values Warragul's historical character and rural identity and wants future development to preserve these elements.
- Compact and vibrant town centre: residents support a town centre that balances business and residential activity, while remaining walkable and accessible.

The community values for Trafalgar are (Baw Baw Shire Council, 2025):

- Character and sense of community: Warragul residents value the town's rural character and strong sense of community. There is a clear appreciation for its small-town feel, scenic landscapes, and overall liveability, which contribute to a shared identity and pride in place.
- Landscape and environment: the natural environment is highly valued, particularly views to the Strzelecki Ranges and the preservation of local features such as creek corridors, Uralla Reserve, and roadside vegetation.

3.5 Community sentiment toward renewable energy projects

Over the past year, opposition to renewable energy projects has increased among farming communities across Victoria. Several advocacy groups have raised concerns, arguing that the Victorian Government's push for renewable energy, particularly wind farm developments, threatens agricultural livelihoods and land security (Verley & Pavlich, 2025; Verley, 2025). These concerns were brought into the national spotlight during a protest against Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Ballarat in August 2024, reflecting the depth of resistance among affected landholders (SBS News, 2025).

The Gippsland region presents a more complex and balanced perspective. The *Gippsland's Views 2024 report* (informed decisions, 2024), based on a survey of 1,800 residents, found that many community members recognise the environmental benefits of renewable energy, such as cleaner air and healthier ecosystems. However, concerns remain about the impact of infrastructure on wildlife, the visual landscape, and the recyclability of materials. Economically, the community is divided. Some residents see opportunities in job creation and the transition away from fossil fuels, while others are concerned about potential job losses and rising energy costs.

Survey data also suggests that residents of Baw Baw Shire hold a slightly more positive outlook on the energy transition compared to the broader Gippsland region. According to the *Gippsland's Views 2024 report* (2024), 44% of Baw Baw Shire respondents believe their local area will benefit somewhat from the energy transition, compared to 42% in Gippsland. Similarly, 47% of Baw Baw Shire residents believe the broader Gippsland region will benefit somewhat, compared to 44% of Gippsland-wide respondents (refer to **Error! Reference source not found.**).

No publicly available information has been identified regarding levels of support or opposition to renewable energy projects specifically within Trafalgar or Trafalgar East. Likewise, no negative media coverage or formal objections have been recorded in these areas to date.

However, there is local interest in sustainability through community-led initiatives such as the *Baw Baw Sustainability Network*, a Facebook-based group with approximately 2,400 followers. The network actively promotes environmental awareness, renewable energy adoption, and sustainable practices at the local level, suggesting a degree of grassroots support for the energy transition within the broader Baw Baw community.

During door-knocking engagement activities, some neighbouring landholders expressed disagreement with climate change approaches and renewable energy projects. They emphasised a preference for maintaining the land's agricultural character and continuing cattle farming. Additionally, they voiced concerns that project impacts would fall on them while the benefits would primarily flow to urban areas.

In Latrobe City, support for renewable energy is shaped by the region’s experience with coal mine closures. Many residents and community leaders have expressed cultural tension around the energy transition, with coal historically viewed as the region’s most valuable asset. While there is cautious optimism about the potential benefits of renewable energy, including decarbonisation and job creation, local leaders have emphasised the need for these benefits to be equitably distributed. This is particularly important in addressing longstanding socio-economic disadvantages across the region (The Next Economy, 2021).

Survey data from the *Gippsland’s Views 2024 report (2024)* indicates lower levels of support for renewable energy within Latrobe City compared to Baw Baw Shire. Only 38% of Latrobe City respondents believe their local area will benefit somewhat from the energy transition, compared to 42% in Gippsland. Similarly, 41% of Latrobe City residents believe the broader Gippsland region will benefit somewhat, compared to 44% of Gippsland-wide respondents (refer to Figure 3.3).

No specific public information has been found regarding support or opposition to renewable energy projects in Moe or Newborough.

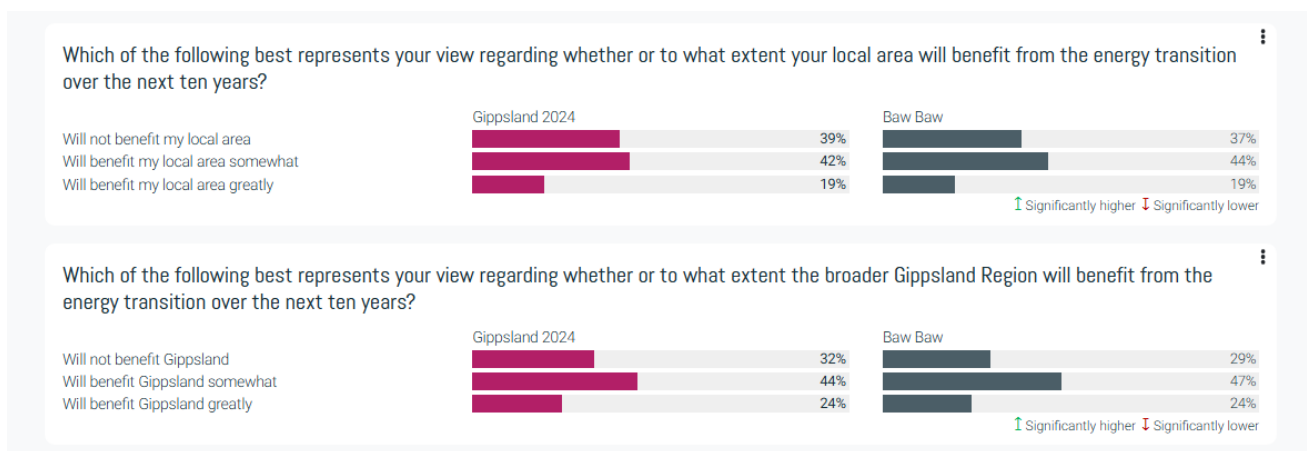


Figure 3.2 Comparison of renewable energy survey responses – Gippsland region versus Baw Baw Shire LGA (*Gippsland’s Views 2024 report, informed decisions, 2024*)

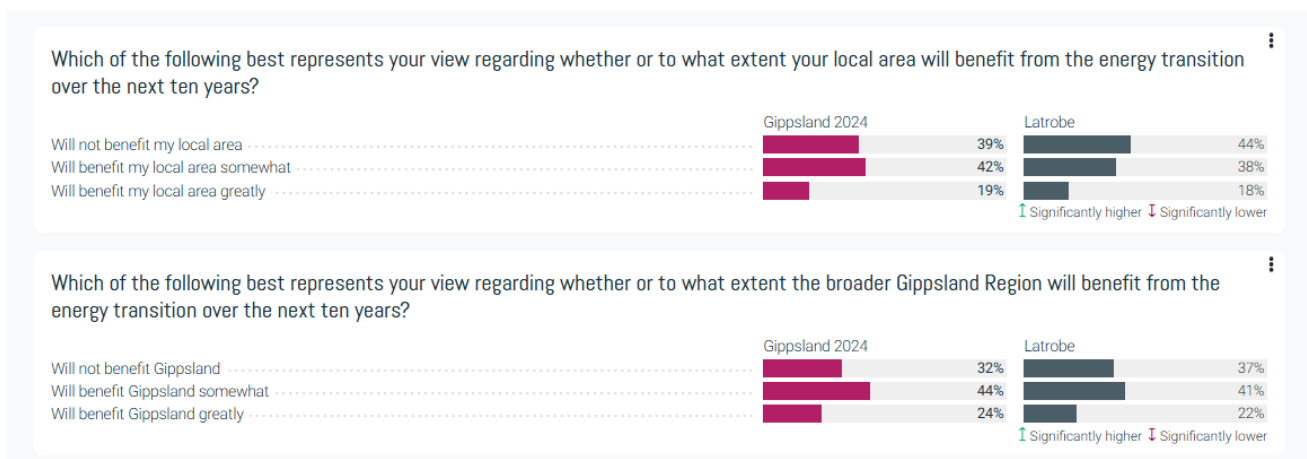


Figure 3.3 Comparison of renewable energy survey responses – Gippsland region versus Latrobe LGA (*Gippsland’s Views 2024 report, informed decisions, 2024*)

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4 Scoping of social impacts

This section identifies the potential impacts and benefits of the Project. Table 4.1 identifies scoped social impacts (positive or negative) for Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the Project.

The methodology for the scoping of impacts is a modify approach to the SIA Scoping Worksheet (DPHI, 2025b), part of the NSW SIA Guidelines (DPHI, 2025a). The scoping of likely social impacts was informed by:

- Understanding of the project and its strategic context.
- Review of other similar project SIAs within Victoria and NSW:
 - Fulham Solar Farm SIA (Spence Consulting, 2021)
 - Goorambat East Solar Farm SIA (GHD, 2021)
 - Tchelery Wind Farm SIA (WSP, 2025)
- Preliminary results of other technical papers

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Table 4.1 Scoping of social impacts

Category	Project activity	Social impact	Type of impact	Stakeholders potentially impacted	Project phase	Project stages	
						Stage 1	Stage 2
Way of life	Construction traffic and haulage of materials using heavy vehicles from Port of Melbourne to Project site.	Potential delays, longer journey times and reduced sense of safety for users of local roads, Waterloo Road and Princess Highway due to increase of construction traffic.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). — Users of Princess Highway, Waterloo Road and local roads (Embletons Rd, Heartsridge Rd, Rowells Rd, Obriens Rd, Gibson Brothers Rd, Gibson Rd, Willow Grove Rd, Miller Rd, N Canal Rd). — Local businesses: Willow Grove Farms, Wade Deer and Venison Farm, P&G Anderson Electrical Services, Lima Electrical & Solar, Kadnook Kennels and Country Retreat - Westmeade Lodge. — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Construction	✓	✓
Way of life	Influx of non-resident population during the Project's construction phase. The Project will have an estimated peak workforce of 135 FTE staff during construction.	Impact on the community's sense of safety in Trafalgar East, particularly among residents and local businesses, due to increased non-resident population and potential for anti-social behaviour.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). — Local businesses: Willow Grove Farms, Wade Deer and Venison Farm, P&G Anderson Electrical Services, Lima Electrical & Solar, Kadnook Kennels and Country Retreat - Westmeade Lodge. — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Construction	✓	✓

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Category	Project activity	Social impact	Type of impact	Stakeholders potentially impacted	Project phase	Project stages	
						Stage 1	Stage 2
Community	Distribution of impacts and benefits related to the Project within the community.	<p>Changes to community cohesion as a result of unequal distribution of impacts and benefits related to this Project and other renewable energy developments within the local area.</p> <p>Local income-generation from engagements with the Project may lead to social disparities between community subgroups if certain community cohorts and demographics are excluded from employment and procurement planning or if benefits are not distributed proportionately.</p> <p>This impact may be exacerbated by cumulative impacts of the Project with other nearby developments.</p>	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Pre-construction Construction	✓	✓
Accessibility	Increased usage of internet and mobile phone network from temporary workforce.	Potential temporary disruption to telecommunications in the vicinity of the Project site due to increased temporary workforce.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Construction	✓	✓
Accessibility	Increased demand for local services due to temporary workforce presence.	Impacted capacity of health and food services (supermarkets, bakeries, and others) to meet increased demand caused by the Project's workforce.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local businesses within Trafalgar, Yarragon, Warragul, Moe, Newborough and Morwell. 	Construction	✓	✓
Accessibility	Use of local short-term accommodation	Reduced availability of short-term accommodation for local communities	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Short-term accommodation within Warragul, Moe, Newborough and Morwell. 	Construction	✓	✓

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Category	Project activity	Social impact	Type of impact	Stakeholders potentially impacted	Project phase	Project stages	
						Stage 1	Stage 2
	Warragul, Moe, Newborough and Morwell.	and businesses in Moe, Newborough, Warragul, and Trafalgar due to increased demand from temporary workforce. Cumulative impact on availability of short-term accommodation for the local communities and businesses Warragul, Moe, Newborough and Morwell due to increased demand for workforce from other renewable energy developments.					
Culture	Construction and operation of a renewable energy Project.	Stress and anxiety in neighbouring landholders associated with changes to cultural identity caused by the repurposing of productive agricultural land for renewable energy development instead of traditional cattle farming.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). 	Construction Operation	✓	✓
Culture	Construction activities involving excavation, heavy vehicle traffic, and land clearing operations.	Potential impact on cultural and historical values in the region due to disturbance of unknown Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage items.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation. 	Construction	✓	✓
Health and wellbeing	Construction activities during a period of 19 months including movement of vehicles and materials, vegetation clearing, excavation.	Residents near the construction site may experience annoyance, sleep disruption and or stress due to noise, vibration and changes to air quality.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Residents near the construction site may experience annoyance, sleep disruption and or stress due to noise, vibration and changes to air quality. 	Construction	✓	✓
Health and wellbeing	Operational noise from 360MW BESS, 200MW BESS, substation	Residents near Project site may be concerned about noise levels causing annoyance, sleep disruption and or stress	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Operation	✓	✓

Category	Project activity	Social impact	Type of impact	Stakeholders potentially impacted	Project phase	Project stages	
						Stage 1	Stage 2
	equipment, inverters and transformers.	due to operational noise from the operation of 360MW BESS, 200MW BESS, substation equipment, inverters and transformers.					
Health and wellbeing	Bushfire risk from transmission easement lines, solar array, two BESS and substation.	Stress and anxiety among nearby landholders and residents may arise due to the potential bushfire risk associated with Project infrastructure.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Operation	✓	✓
Surroundings	Construction of two BESS, solar array and 220 kV connection.	People's sense of place, along with aesthetic and environmental values, may be affected by changes to the landscape, vegetation, and visual character of the area related to Project infrastructure.	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents within Trafalgar East. — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Construction Operation	✓	✓
Livelihoods	Procurement of local goods and services by Project during construction.	Increased spending at some local businesses positively contributing to local economy, temporarily increasing income for business owners during the period of construction.	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local businesses within Warragul, Moe, Newborough and Morwell. 	Construction	✓	✓
Livelihoods	Project workforce requirements.	<p>Increase in employment opportunities (both short- and long-term) through the construction and operation phases of the Project.</p> <p>Cumulative economic stimulus and employment opportunities due to</p>	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Baw Baw Shire and Latrobe City workforce. 	Construction Operation	✓	✓

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Category	Project activity	Social impact	Type of impact	Stakeholders potentially impacted	Project phase	Project stages	
						Stage 1	Stage 2
		multiple renewable energy projects within the Project area.					
Livelihoods	Project construction activities.	Disruption to Trafalgar Golf Club operations, including potential changes in business activity, club membership retention, and customer engagement, as a result of Project construction activities.	Negative	— Trafalgar Golf Club.	Construction Operation	✓	✓
Livelihoods	Project construction activities.	Economic uplift of Trafalgar Gold Club due to an anticipated increase in visits by Project workers, seeking recreational opportunities as well as food and beverage services.	Positive	— Trafalgar Golf Club.	Construction Operation	✓	✓
Livelihoods	Community benefit sharing programs associated with the Project. Community benefits initiatives: Stage 1 – Giddi BESS: — Payments of \$150 per megawatt. — Per annum energy rebate payments for landholders within 1 km from Project site.	Improved socio-economic conditions in the local area through community benefit-sharing program.	Positive	— Communities within 1 km from Project site in Trafalgar East.	Construction Operation	✓	✓

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Category	Project activity	Social impact	Type of impact	Stakeholders potentially impacted	Project phase	Project stages	
						Stage 1	Stage 2
	<p>Stage 2 – Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — An estimated payment range of \$500–\$850 per megawatt is currently under consideration. — Per annum energy rebate payments for landholders within 1 km from Project site. 						
Livelihoods	<p>Targeted benefits for Aboriginal peoples, organisations and businesses:</p> <p>Provision of Indigenous training scholarships.</p> <p>Engagement of Aboriginal-owned businesses through targeted civil works contracts.</p>	<p>Improved access to economic participation for Aboriginal peoples, organisations, and businesses through targeted Project benefits.</p>	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation. — Aboriginal peoples within the Baw Baw and Latrobe City LGAs. — Aboriginal businesses within Baw Baw and Latrobe City LGAs. 	<p>Pre-construction</p> <p>Construction</p>	✓	✓

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5 Community engagement strategy

This section outlines the Community Engagement Strategy that informed the delivery of engagement activities for Stage 1 (Giddi BESS) of the Project and will guide engagement activities for Stage 2. It sets out the objectives and approach in alignment with the *Draft Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines* (DEECA, 2025a), includes a stakeholder analysis, and details the planned community engagement activities.

5.1 Objectives

The Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a) emphasises the importance of ensuring that communities and key local stakeholders have a meaningful voice throughout the energy transition. This goal is supported through two core approaches:



Engaging Traditional Owners, local communities, and landholders in **meaningful dialogue** to help shape the development of renewable energy and transmission projects.



Creating **social and economic value** by investing in communities, Traditional Owners, and landholders. Project developers are encouraged to deliver a program of initiatives that support local development and shared benefits.

Building on this framework, the objective of this community engagement strategy is to:

- Foster positive and meaningful relationships with communities and stakeholders through inclusive engagement.
 - Support community understanding and preparedness for the potential benefits and impacts of the Project.
 - Facilitate consultation and feedback on the management of social impacts and the design of benefit-sharing initiatives and programs.
 - Promote that communities know how their contributions have been used to influence outcomes.
-

5.2 Approach

The minimum expectations outlined in the Guidelines reflect the Victorian Government’s commitment to meaningful engagement. The requirements outlined in the Guidelines, and the Project’s proposed approach to engagement to meet these requirements is outlined in Table 5.1 below:

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Table 5.1 Project response to the Guideline's engagement requirements

Requirements	Proposed project response
— Engage early in the planning process, before the submission of planning permit applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Brief the approving regulator (s). — Brief Council. — Direct briefings with adjacent neighbours. — Direct briefings with landholders within 1km of the site. — Establishment of project website. — Project fact sheet.
— Integrate community feedback, concerns and interests into project development and plans for creating social value and economic benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Community and stakeholder input to refine social impact scoping (refer Section 4) — Development of community benefit framework.
— Provide diverse, regular and ongoing engagement opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project website. — Drop-in sessions to support the development application process. — Dedicated email and telephone number. — Recommended ib vogt Senior Development Manager be dedicated point of contact to support long term relationships. — Direct briefings with adjacent and nearby landowners and key stakeholders on request.
— Establish a regional presence with locally accessible engagement staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Not recommended at this stage — Recommended ib vogt Senior Development Manager be dedicated point of contact to support long term relationships. — Set up project communication channels with clear KPIs on response times, phone line answered by a dedicated team member to provide as close to locally accessible staff as possible. — Prioritise frequent trips to meet with community members as required.
— Provide transparent information about the project's negotiables and non-negotiables, as well as the role of consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Clearly defined engagement material from the project outset, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project website text — Frequently asked questions — Consistent responses to queries — Considered project information text and engagement questions at public-facing events.
— Tailor engagement for local context, priorities and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Informed by social analysis – refer to Section 3
— Respond to community concerns about environmental hazards, particularly fire risks, flooding and biosecurity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Incorporate summaries of technical studies into engagement materials and fact sheets. — Dedicated FAQs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Establish processes for enquiries, complaints management and dispute resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Enquiries and complaints management policy to be developed. This should apply to all contractors and subcontractors. — Dedicated email and telephone line. — KPIs on response time. — Mediation strategy. — Consultation register. — Dedicated community officer. — Construction stage communications strategy to be developed and implemented.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ensure that communities know how their contributions have been used to influence outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Quarterly project update newsletters to registered participants.

5.3 Stakeholder analysis

A stakeholder analysis was developed to inform the Community Engagement Strategy, focusing on individuals and groups with an interest in or likely to be directly affected by the Project. The approach to stakeholder engagement was guided by the Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a), which recommends using the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation as a framework for stakeholder analysis. This tool helps identify suitable engagement strategies by assessing each stakeholder group's level of influence and interest.

Stakeholders have been categorised into four groups according to their relative influence and interest in the Project. For each group, a tailored engagement and/or communication strategy is recommended (refer to Appendix A-2 for a detailed methodology).

This stakeholder analysis, together with the baseline data collected, has informed the development of the Project's community engagement approach.

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5.3.1 Overarching analysis

Figure 5.1 provides a visual representation of the mapped stakeholders by level of interest and influence.

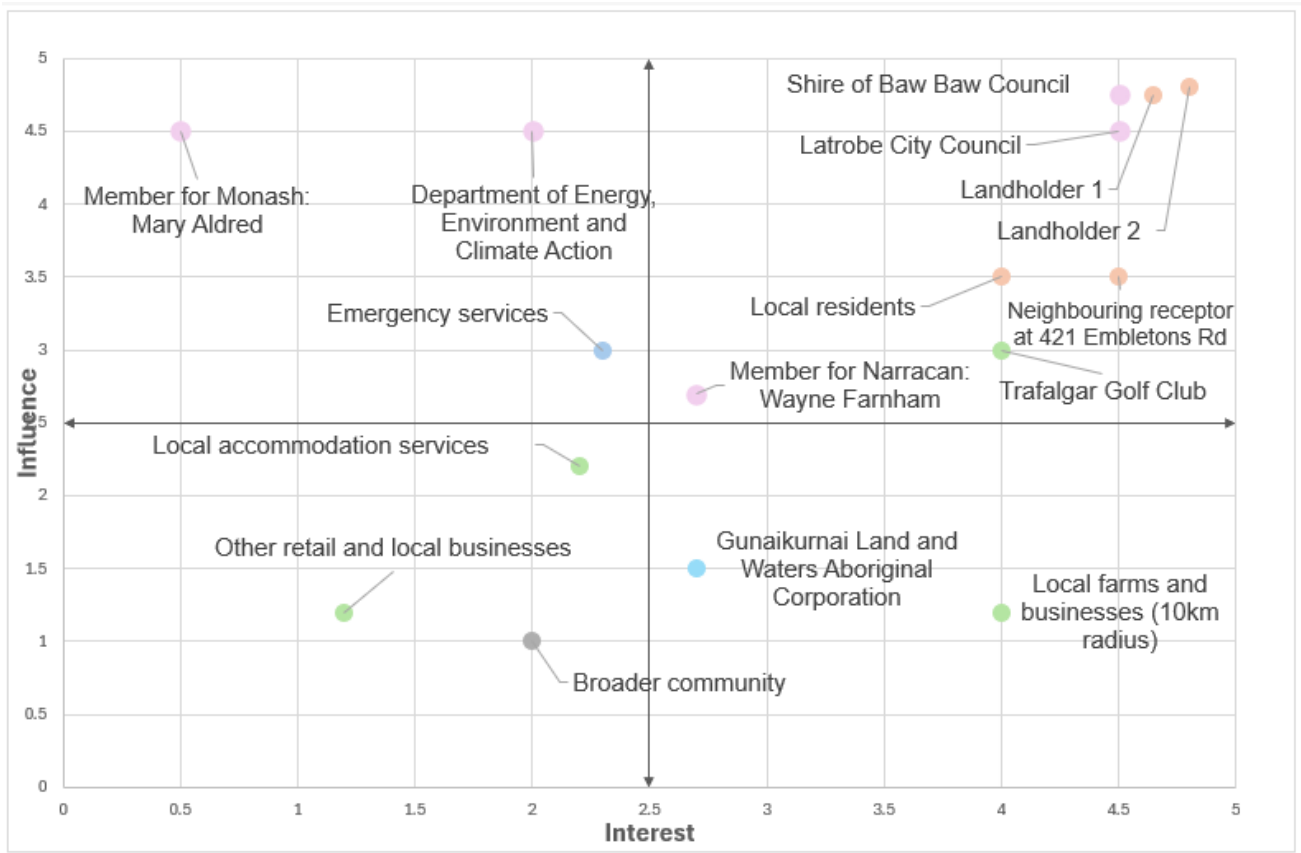


Figure 5.1 Stakeholder analysis map

The detailed analysis supporting this is outlined in Table 5.2.

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5.3.2 Detailed analysis

Table 5.2 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Interest/ influence	IAP2 engagement level	Interests of issues
Australian Government, agencies and authorities	Federal elected members: — Member for Monash: Mary Aldred	Low interest High influence	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope and benefits including contribution to local economy — Implications for local agricultural economy and landholders — Potential impacts and benefits to community wellbeing — Burden on local services during construction
State government, agencies and authorities	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Medium-interest High influence	Inform/Involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Compliance with state planning frameworks and guidelines for stakeholder engagement — Potential community impacts and local benefits related to the Project — Management measures for social impacts related to the Project — Cumulative impacts with other future renewable energy projects within the region
	State elected representatives: — Member for Narracan: Wayne Farnham	Medium interest Medium influence	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Community sentiment toward the Project — Potential community impacts and local benefits related to the Project — Local procurement and employment

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Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Interest/ influence	IAP2 engagement level	Interests of issues
Local government, agencies and authorities	Local elected members Shire of Baw Baw: — Mayor: Danny Goss — Councillors: Brendan Kinwill, Adam Sheehan, Kate Wilson (East Ward) — CEO: John Bennie Local elected members Latrobe City: — Mayor: Cr Dale Harriman (Loy Yang Ward) — Councillors: Adele Pugsley (Moe Ward), Tracie Lund (Morwell River Ward) — CEO: Steven Piasente	High interest High influence	Involve/ Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Alignment with local strategic renewable energy planning — Community engagement strategy — Potential social impacts during construction (including implications for workforce, short-term accommodation and local services) — Safe traffic management during construction and operation — Community benefit contributions — Management measures for social impacts related to the Project — Cumulative impacts with other future renewable energy projects within the region

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Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Interest/ influence	IAP2 engagement level	Interests of issues
Aboriginal organisations	Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	Medium interest Low influence	Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Potential impacts related to Aboriginal cultural heritage and values — Community benefit contributions — Opportunities for targeted employment and procurement — Management measures for social impacts related to the Project

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Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Interest/ influence	IAP2 engagement level	Interests of issues
Landholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Landholder 1 (363 Embletons Road, Trafalgar East. — Landholder 2 (59 Rowells Road, Trafalgar East). — Neighbouring receptor at 421 Embletons Rd (potentially hosting internal transmission line). 	High interest High influence	Involve/ Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Land acquisition and potential mixed use within solar array — Potential permanent impacts due to design including changes to property value and outlook, and temporary impacts during construction including noise, dust, vibration, etc. — Safe traffic management/ local access restraints — Management measures for social impacts related to the Project
Local residents (within 1 km from Project site)	Residents living at or off Embletons Road, Heartsridge Road, Rowells Road, Obriens Road, and Willow Grove Road.	High interest Medium influence	Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Potential permanent impacts due to design including changes to property value and outlook, and temporary impacts during construction including noise, dust, vibration etc — Safe traffic management/ local access restraints — Opportunities to engage and provide feedback — Community benefit contributions — Management measures for social impacts related to the Project
Trafalgar Golf Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Board of Directors and Executive Management 	High interest Medium influence	Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Amenity impacts related to noise, dust and vibration — Continuity of operations during construction, including member access, traffic safety and experience — Safe traffic management during construction and operation

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Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Interest/ influence	IAP2 engagement level	Interests of issues
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Potential business impacts including business/club membership disruptions and loss/gain of customers — Opportunities to engage and provide feedback — Community benefit contributions — Management measures for social impacts related to the Project
Local farms and businesses (within 10 km from Project site)	Local businesses proximate to project area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Willow Grove Farms — Wade Deer and Venison Farm — P&G Anderson Electrical Services — Lima Electrical & Solar — Kadnook Kennels — Country Retreat- Westmeade Lodge 	High interest Low influence	Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Potential permanent impacts due to design including changes to property value, outlook, shade and temporary impacts during construction including noise, dust, vibration etc. — Construction and operational (temporary and permanent) impacts — Logistical impacts for agriculture businesses — Business continuity and customer access — Project scope and local benefits including commercial opportunities due to increased population — Safe traffic management/ customer access restraints including parking for customers and loading for suppliers — Communication and opportunities to provide feedback during consultation and construction — Mitigation measures
Broader community	Broader community and residents of Trafalgar, Moe, Newborough, Yarragon, Warragul and Morwell.	Low interest Low influence	Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Community engagement strategy — Potential social impacts during construction (including implications for workforce, short-term accommodation and local services)
	Other retail and local businesses in Trafalgar, Moe, Newborough,	Low interest	Inform	

Stakeholder group	Stakeholder	Interest/ influence	IAP2 engagement level	Interests of issues
	Yarragon, Warragul and Morwell.	Low influence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Safe traffic management during construction and operation — Employment and procurement opportunities for local residents and businesses — Community benefit contributions — Management measures for social impacts related to the Project
Accommodation services	Short-term accommodation businesses within Moe, Warragul and Morwell.	Medium interest Low influence	Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Project scope, milestones and timeframes — Opportunity for accommodation of workforce related to Project — Management measures, specifically related to a workforce management plan (safety, behaviour in local community, driving, etc.)
Emergency services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — NSW Police (Trafalgar Police Station) — Trafalgar CFA Fire Station — Firewatch Warragul/Dandenong — Trafalgar Primary Care — Ambulance Victoria Moe Branch 	Medium interest Medium influence	Inform/Consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Safe traffic management / local access restraints and emergency access constraints — Coordination on emergency response during construction — Evacuation procedure (construction and operation)

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5.4 Community engagement activities

5.4.1 Engagement tools

The communication and engagement tools detailed in Table 5.1 are recommended to be used throughout the Project, including pre-construction, construction, operation and decommissioning phases of both stages of the Project.

Most of these activities were implemented as part of the pre-approval process for Stage 1 Giddi BESS (refer to 6 for engagement outcomes). The community drop-in session will be implemented after submission.

Engagement activities for Stage 2 of the Project will be delivered as a separate process to maintain transparency with stakeholders and community members.

A key initial step in delivering this Community engagement strategy is the designation of the development manager as the direct community engagement line for the Project. This professional will lead the on-the ground long term relationship with the community and stakeholders through project planning, approvals and into construction and operation. They will serve as the primary point of contact for stakeholders and be responsible for building meaningful relationships with community members and key stakeholders.

The Strategy and engagement activities could be continually monitored and modified to ensure they achieve their desired purpose. Refer to Section 7 for the community engagement management plan.

Table 5.1 Communication and engagement tools

Tool	Purpose	Key stakeholders	Phase of development
Communication tools			
Project website	<p>The Project could establish a dedicated website to serve as the primary source of communication and information for key stakeholders and community members.</p> <p>The website's purpose is to provide timely updates on the Project, including progress, key milestones, and upcoming engagement opportunities. Content could be tailored to the audience, easy to understand, and regularly updated to reflect the current phase of the Project or emerging issues.</p> <p>To support transparency and build understanding, the website could also feature a section with frequently asked questions (FAQs), key project messages, and detailed information on the Project's scope, timeline, and opportunities for community involvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Residents within Trafalgar East. — Broader community and residents of Trafalgar, Moe, Newborough, Yarragon, Warragul and Morwell. 	Pre-submission Project application

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Tool	Purpose	Key stakeholders	Phase of development
Project newsletters	<p>Regular newsletters could be developed and distributed to key stakeholders and community members to provide clear updates on the Project’s scope, progress, key milestones, and upcoming engagement opportunities.</p> <p>The first newsletter could be shared in print during the initial community drop-in session to ensure accessibility. Subsequent editions could be delivered digitally via email or online platforms to maintain consistent communication and keep stakeholders informed throughout the Project lifecycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Residents within Trafalgar East. — Broader community and residents of Trafalgar, Moe, Newborough, Yarragon, Warragul and Morwell. 	Pre-submission Project application
Engagement tools			
Notification and project briefing	<p>Formal notifications could be provided to key agencies and stakeholder groups identified in Section 5.3 including Federal and State Government departments, regulatory authorities, local councils, neighbouring landholders, local businesses, and emergency services.</p> <p>Where requested, tailored project briefings could be offered to ensure these stakeholders have a clear understanding of the Project’s scope, key milestones, and opportunities for engagement. These briefings support transparency, build trust, and help align stakeholder expectations throughout the Project lifecycle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action. — Local elected members Shire of Baw Baw and Latrobe City. — Member for Monash: Mary Aldred. — Member for Narracan: Wayne Farnham. — Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation. 	— Pre-submission Project application
Door knock to nearby landholders within Trafalgar East	<p>Targeted doorknocking could be carried out with neighbouring landholders located near the Project site in Trafalgar East.</p> <p>The purpose of this activity is to share essential information about the Project’s scope, timeline, and engagement opportunities in a personal and accessible way. Newsletters can be distributed during these interactions to ensure stakeholders receive clear, transparent, and consistent updates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Local residents/landholders within Trafalgar East (within 1 km from Project site). — Trafalgar Golf Club. 	Pre-submission Project application

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Tool	Purpose	Key stakeholders	Phase of development
Community drop-in sessions	<p>Community drop-in sessions could be held to raise awareness of the Project and gather initial feedback on the management of social impacts and potential benefit-sharing initiatives.</p> <p>During the pre-construction phase, it is recommended to conduct two drop-in sessions for each stage of the Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Session 1: Introduce the Project and consult with community members on potential social impacts, proposed management measures, and ideas for benefit-sharing initiatives. This session is recommended to take place in Trafalgar township or Moe, supported by five information boards to present key project details and collect community input. — Session 2: Present the outcomes and insights gathered from Session 1 and seek further feedback from stakeholders and community members. This session will reuse the original five boards and introduce five additional boards to share preliminary engagement results and gather further input. <p>Refer to Appendix A-3 for an example of a drop-in session display board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Broader community and residents of Trafalgar East, Trafalgar, Moe, Newborough, Yarragon, Warragul and Morwell. — Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation. 	During the application assessment period.
Complaints management process, inclusive of project email	<p>A dedicated project email could be established and managed by the community engagement specialist to support transparent and responsive communication with the community.</p> <p>All enquiries could be acknowledged and responded to within one week, using plain and accessible language. All interactions must be recorded and tracked to ensure accountability, monitor emerging issues, and inform ongoing engagement efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Residents within Trafalgar East. — Broader community and residents of Trafalgar, Moe, Newborough, Yarragon, Warragul and Morwell. 	Pre-submission Project application and during application assessment period.

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6 Community engagement outcomes

This chapter details the community engagement activities carried out for Stage 1 of the Giddi BESS Project, along with their outcomes, during the period from 5 November to 10 December 2025.

6.1 Overview of engagement activities

6.1.1 *Newsletter distribution and door knocking*

A project newsletter was prepared to inform the community about ib vogt as a company, the key features of Stage 1 of the Project – Giddi BESS, details of community engagement activities, information about an upcoming community drop-in session, and the next steps for the project.

The newsletter also provided communication channels, including the project website, dedicated email address, and phone number (refer to Appendix A-4 for the newsletter).

The project newsletter referenced both Stage 1 and Stage 2 works to maintain transparency; however, its primary focus was on Stage 1, with only limited details provided about Stage 2.

The newsletter was distributed between the 5 and 6 of November 2025 to 27 properties in the area shown in Figure 6.1. As part of this process, the project team spoke directly with five neighbouring landholders to the Project site.

During these door-knocking activities, neighbouring landholders were:

- Informed about the two stages of the Project and the main features of the Giddi BESS
- Introduced to the Development Manager and ib vogt as a company
- Given the opportunity to ask specific questions, which were answered by the Development Manager
- Invited to provide feedback on potential impacts and benefit-sharing programs or initiatives

If residents were not at their properties during door-knocking, a ‘Sorry we missed you’ card was left along with the project newsletter to ensure they were informed about the Project and upcoming engagement opportunities (refer to Appendix A-4 for the card).

A summary of feedback from neighbouring landholders is as follows:

- Views on the Project were mixed. Some landholders expressed general support, while others opposed the project due to scepticism about climate change and renewable energy, rather than project specific concerns.
- A key concern raised was the potential increase in traffic and its impact on road safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists using local roads. Landholders emphasised their desire to maintain the area's quiet and peaceful character.
- Some landholders were concerned about using highly productive land for renewable energy, suggesting that the land would be better suited for cattle farming, which is the area's traditional economic activity. They also commented that renewable energy projects could be located in major cities rather than rural areas, since the energy generated would ultimately supply urban centres.
- Main questions focused on the operation of the battery system, how and where energy would be stored and distributed, and overall Project details.
- One landholder who manages sheep agreed that the land could still support small-scale farming alongside the Project.

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Figure 6.1 Distribution area of newsletter and door knocking

6.1.2 Email and phone for project enquiries

An email and an 1800 number were established to receive enquiries and comments from local communities and landholders. This was included in the newsletter and in the Project website. See Table 6.1 for details of each engagement channel:

Table 6.1 Communications channels

Email	giddibess@ibvogt.com
Website	www.giddibess.com.au
1800 line	1800 739 274

A register has been established to record all community contacts and enquiries received via the dedicated project email and 1800 number. Up to 10 December 2025, the Project team received two calls and one email following distribution of the newsletter. The key issues raised were as follows:

- Project details and date of the community information session. The project team provided information and indicated that the session will likely be held after Christmas, with all community members to be notified in advance.
- Insurance liability: One landholder expressed concern regarding potential impacts on public liability insurance should his cattle escape and cause damage to the project infrastructure. The project team advised that this scenario is uncommon but recommended the landholder confirm with their insurance broker. The Development Manager committed to exploring potential solutions if this issue arises.

- Development scope: It was clarified that the current Development Application (DA) pertains solely to the BESS. The hybrid component will be addressed separately and is expected to have a longer lead time. The Development Manager expressed that both Stages were informed to community to ensure transparency.
- Livestock compatibility: One landholder queried the compatibility of cattle with solar farms. The Development Manager confirmed that grazing will be limited to sheep due to operational requirements.
- Fencing arrangements: Concerns were raised regarding cattle breaching the project site and causing damage. The Development Manager confirmed that robust security fencing, exceeding standard farm fencing specifications, will be installed to mitigate this risk.
- Site staffing and monitoring: One landholder asked whether personnel would be present on-site at all times. The project team explained that monitoring will be managed through a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, with personnel available either on-site or in a nearby town to respond promptly to alarms, such as overheating of BESS cells.
- Community benefit sharing: One landholder expressed interest in benefit-sharing arrangements for the Trafalgar East Community Hall and will consult with the committee before providing recommendations for potential improvements.
- Approval authority: One landholder requested clarification on the relevant approval authority for the project. It was confirmed that the approval authority is the Minister of Planning of Victoria.

Additionally, the Project Development Manager was interviewed by the Warragul Gazette on 13 November. The discussion covered key topics, including:

- Site selection: Direct access to transmission lines, minimal impact on neighbours and visual amenity, and use of heavily modified land with limited environmental impact.
- Project stage: Preparing planning submission for December along with associated technical reports for DTP, and continuing engagement with key stakeholders such as Baw Baw Council and the Department of Transport and Planning.
- Community response: Mixed feedback, with concerns about fire risk (low probability, strong safety measures), transport (minor increase during construction), and modest loss of grazing land.
- Community benefits: Intend to establish an annual community fund managed by a local committee; consultation on benefit-sharing has commenced with community groups. Proposed initiatives include upgrades to Trafalgar and Trafalgar East community halls, training scholarships for Indigenous youth, funding to support the local BetterMental charity group, and environmental restoration projects.
- Information session: Planned following the release of the planning submission for public exhibition, likely in late January to avoid the Christmas period.

Following the interview, three articles referencing the Project were published. One focused on negative sentiment toward renewable energy projects in the local area, and two outlined community consultation processes and benefit-sharing arrangements for community groups.

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6.1.3 Project briefings for key stakeholders

Key stakeholder briefings have been conducted through face-to-face meetings and phone conversations between June and November 2025. Details of each meeting, including the stakeholders involved and the main topics discussed, are provided below.

Table 6.2 Key stakeholders briefings details

Stakeholder	Date	Key topics raised
Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation	26 June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Benefit-sharing preferences: Discussion focused on specific benefits for Aboriginal communities, with a request for suggestions on priority areas for implementation. — Examples of potential benefits: The project team suggested some examples such as training opportunities for youth, particularly in qualifications that would enable them to work on renewable infrastructure projects. — Project naming: The name ‘Giddi’ (meaning swan) was proposed for the Stage 1 BESS and subsequently adopted by the project team. The interviewee noted that swans are often seen in the property’s main dam, making the name culturally and contextually appropriate.
Baw Baw Council representatives	5 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Land use and location: Community members and landholders have concerns about competing demands between productive farmland and renewable energy projects within Victoria’s food bowl catchment. — Local economic benefits: There is potential for the project workforce to use short-term accommodation, creating opportunities to support local businesses. Based on the anticipated workforce size, significant pressure on nearby towns such as Warragul, Trafalgar, and Moe is not expected. — Benefit-sharing preferences: Strong preference for long-term, legacy initiatives that deliver lasting community value. Suggested examples include Indigenous scholarship programs, environmental restoration projects, and upgrades to community facilities. — Safety considerations: Communities and landholders perceived a risk of bushfire associated with the BESS. It is suggested to engaged with the Trafalgar CFA. — Environmental concerns: Concerns about potential water contamination and its impact on cattle farming. — Landscape and visual impact: Landholders and farmers particularly concern about the visual impact of solar farms on the landscape. — Noise impact: Noise from the project may also be a source of concern for neighbouring landholders.
BetterMentall – Mental health support group	6 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Benefit-sharing interest: Interest in potential benefit-sharing programs or initiatives to support their organisation.
Trafalgar Country Fire Authority (CFA)	6 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Trafalgar CFA is generally supportive of the project. — Raised concerns about emergency access for fire trucks; confirmed that the two access points identified by the Development Manager were considered sufficient.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Queried water sources on-site, noting a possible pond within the project area that could be utilised. The Development Manager has advised that access to the main dam on the property is acceptable. — Expressed interest in benefit-sharing initiatives for the Fire Brigade and mentioned potential support for repairs to the Trafalgar Public Hall. Suggest engaging directly with the Trafalgar Public Hall Committee.
Trafalgar East Community Hall	11 and 27 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Specific questions about scale of the project and details about Stage 2. — Interest in community benefit programs and initiatives. — The Trafalgar East Community Hall representative requested an on-site meeting to further discuss community benefit initiatives. The meeting will be scheduled after completing internal consultation with their organisation.

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7 Engagement management plan

This section provides an engagement management plan for monitoring and assessing engagement activities performance, including the use of key performance indicators and regular reporting. This enables the project team to track the effectiveness of engagement activities, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate accountability. Continuous monitoring ensures that engagement remains responsive to community needs and that benefit-sharing initiatives deliver meaningful impact over time.

Table 7.1 Engagement management plan

Tool	Monitoring indicator	Key performance indicator target	Frequency of monitoring	Reporting
Project website and newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — # of updates published — Community reach (# of people engaged) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Monthly updates on website/social media — Distribute at least one project newsletter every quarter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Quarterly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Community engagement outcomes report
Door knock to landholders within Trafalgar East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — # of landholders visited — Feedback collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 100% of neighbouring landholders contacted (within 1 km radius from Project site) — Feedback documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per Project milestone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Community engagement outcomes report — Engagement log
Notifications and project briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — # of notifications delivered — # of briefings delivered (per stakeholder requests) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — All identified stakeholders notified — 100% briefing delivered (per stakeholder request) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per Project milestone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Community engagement outcomes report
Community drop-in sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — # of attendees — Feedback and input collected — Satisfaction survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Minimum of 2 sessions per stage — Feedback incorporated into planning (impacts and/or benefit sharing initiatives) — Satisfaction score survey >75% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per project stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Community engagement outcomes report
Complaints management process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — # of enquiries and complaints responded — Response time — Themes and trends in complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 100% of enquiries responded to within one week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Community engagement outcomes report — Engagement log

8 Recommendations

This section provides a series of recommendations designed to strengthen engagement outcomes, improve the management of social impacts, and inform the development of a benefit-sharing framework.

These recommendations are based on social research and engagement activities that helped identify community characteristics, concerns, and expectations, as well as understand the local context in relation to potential social impacts. This understanding ensures that engagement activities remain aligned with community realities and priorities.

Key Recommendations:

- Develop a Social Impact Assessment (SIA): Undertake a formal SIA to clearly identify social impacts, mitigation strategies, and management measures. This will enhance community acceptance and align with transparency objectives outlined in the Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a).
- Maintain ongoing communication: Keep communities informed once the project has been submitted for development approval, providing regular updates through newsletter, website and emails (when available) on progress and next steps to build trust and maintain transparency.
- Define a benefit-sharing framework:
 - Local area initiatives (Trafalgar East): Continue engagement with the Trafalgar East Community Hall committee to collaborate on legacy projects for the community. This group could also play a key role in establishing governance for managing community funding linked to benefit-sharing programs or initiatives.
 - Township initiatives (Trafalgar): Identify benefit-sharing opportunities within the township and coordinate with the Shire of Baw Baw Council on governance, implementation, and related activities to ensure effective delivery and accountability.

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APPENDIX A-1

Demographic profile data

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Table 8.1 Demographic profile data – local population centres

Local population centre	Population	Occupied dwelling		Dwelling type		Highest education attainment (highest percentage)		Top 3 main industries of employment			Top 3 main occupations		
		Number	%	Owned	Rented								
Baw Baw Shire	57,626	21,441	91.8%	77.8%	18.7%	Certificate level III	17.8%	Health care and social assistance 14.7%	Construction 12.7%	Education and training 9.7%	Professionals 17.6%	Technicians and trade workers 15.9%	Managers 14.1%
Trafalgar	3,839	1,474	92.8%	74.8%	22.2%	Certificate level III	18.5%	Health care and social assistance 15.1%	Construction 11.6%	Education and training 10.4%	Professionals 17.9%	Technicians and trade workers 15.3%	Clerical and administrative workers 12.9%
Yarragon	1,387	568	94.4%	79.6%	16.3%	Certificate level III	21.7%	Health care and social assistance 16.8%	Construction 13.7%	Retail 10.3%	Technicians and trade workers 16.6%	Community and personal service workers 16.3%	Professionals 15.5%
Warragul	19,134	7,264	93.9%	74.3%	22.9%	Bachelor's degree level and above	20.2%	Health care and social assistance 16.7%	Construction 12.3%	Education and training 11.8%	Professionals 21.9%	Technicians and trade workers 14.1%	Community and personal service workers 13%
Latrobe City	77,318	30,610	91.2%	71.1%	25.4%	Certificate level III	18.4%	Health care and social assistance 17%	Retail trade 10.2%	Construction 9.9%	Technicians and trade workers 16.7%	Professionals 16.1%	Clerical and administrative workers 13.6%
Moe - Newborough	15,758	6,756	90.5%	64.7%	31.1%	Certificate level III	19%	Health care and social assistance	Retail trade 10.8%	Construction 10%	Technicians and trade workers	Community and personal service workers	Labourers 13.9%

								17%			18%	15.8%	
Morwell	14,068	5,712	90%	61.7%	34.1%	Certificate level III	16.5%	Health care and social assistance 16.6%	Retail trade 12%	Accommodation and food services 8.3%	Labourers 15.7%	Technicians and trade workers 15.1%	Community and personal service workers 14.9%

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APPENDIX A-2

Stakeholder analysis methodology

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IAP2 Framework

The engagement approach is informed by the Engagement Institute’s (formerly the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)) Framework and the stakeholder analysis in Section 5. The suitability of each IAP2 level has been considered per stakeholder group as part of the engagement methodology. It is recognised that the level of engagement required per stakeholder group is dynamic and may change as the project progresses.

Table 8.2 IAP2 engagement spectrum

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public / stakeholders in each aspect of the decisions making process including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision making in the hands of stakeholders/the public.

Source: Federation of International Association for Public Participation, 2024

Analysing each stakeholder’s level of influence and interest they have throughout the project will assist in determining the level of engagement effort required. There are four categories of stakeholders (determined by their influence/interest) and a recommended engagement and/or communication strategy, detailed in Table 8.3

Table 8.3 Stakeholder categories

Stakeholder category	Level of influence/interest	Recommended engagement	IAP2 approach
Key Player	High influence High interest	Recommend a value proposition strategy for the key players which involves direct relationship development.	Collaborate Involve
Keep Satisfied	Medium/high influence Medium/high interest	Recommend a strategy for direct and ongoing communication from the Project but not to seek feedback unless required.	Inform Consult
Keep Informed	Low/medium influence High/medium interest	Recommend a keep informed strategy.	Inform
Minimal Effort	Low influence Low interest	Recommend project updates.	Inform

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APPENDIX A-3

Community drop-in session example board

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Social impacts refer to the potential positive or negative effects a project may have on a community's values, daily life, safety, sense of place, access to services, health and wellbeing, and economic or livelihood opportunities.

Social impacts

What changes or social impacts do you think the Trafalgar East BESS and Solar Farm Project might bring to your community?

Management measures

How could these impacts be mitigated or managed?

Benefit-sharing initiatives

In what ways would you like to see the Project deliver lasting benefits to the community? Are there any opportunities you see for legacy initiatives that could create long-term value?

Figure 8.1 Drop-in session example board

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APPENDIX A-4 Newsletter and ‘Sorry we missed you’ card



This image is an artist's impression of a typical BESS facility. Design and scale may vary.

GIDDI BESS

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Introduction

ib vogt is proposing to develop a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) across a 20 Hectare site on agricultural land in Trafalgar East, Victoria. The site was identified due to its closeness to the existing transmission line, the large sections of level land, and heavily modified pasture.

We are being careful to minimise environmental impacts, including avoiding remnant native vegetation and water courses.

What's involved?

The proposed project would include:

- Battery Energy Storage System:
A 360MW 4-hour BESS.
- Substation and associated switchyard:
Connecting into an existing 230kV transmission line that runs through the property, so no additional transmission lines would be required.
- Some prefabricated style buildings for on site operations and spares for the ongoing maintenance of the BESS

- Water storage tanks
- A second stage, including a hybrid solar facility is planned, but will have a separate consultation and approvals process.

The BESS is being established to support the electricity grid and provide more on-demand dispatchable energy as the nearby coal fired generators reach end-of-life, and renewable energy sources take their place. You can find out more in the frequently asked questions section of our website.



Location

The BESS is located in Trafalgar East, just under 4km north west of Moe Race course.

Working with the community

We are currently working with:

- Landowners who have host properties
- Nearby local landowners
- Community members
- First Nations stakeholders in the Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Baw Baw Shire Council

We are planning to hold our first drop-in community information session in Moe in late 2025 / early 2026.

We encourage all interested community members to attend the information sessions and share their feedback.

Next steps

The project is currently preparing a planning permit application for the proposal, including an environmental assessment. This comprehensive series of studies is nearing completion and is planned to be submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning as the responsible authority for this type of application. Consultation is also planned with Baw Baw Shire Council. We will be holding community information sessions over this time, as well as keeping our website up to date as the project progresses.

We will be holding more community information sessions over this time as well as setting up a web page to keep you updated.

To know more

Visit the project website: www.giddibess.com.au

Contact the project team on **1800 739 274** or email giddibess@ibvogt.com to be added to our subscriber list and receive updates on the project and upcoming events, like the community information session.

About ib vogt

ib vogt is a German company headquartered in Berlin that specialises in developing renewable energy projects. We have been active in Europe since 2002 and in Australia since 2016. We employ approximately 1000 people in 33 countries having built over 4.3 GW of solar farms to date, and another 8.4GW in various stages of development. In Australia, we have completed the development of 7 solar farms in NSW and Victoria.

For more information, please see our website:

<http://www.ibvogt.asia>



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SORRY WE MISSED YOU

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Dear resident,

We visited your property today to discuss the Giddi BESS project located in Trafalgar East, just under 4km north west of Moe Race course.

Date:

Contact:

Phone number:

Email: giddibess@ibvogt.com

For more information, please refer to the enclosed newsletter or visit our website on www.giddibess.com.au

About Us

WSP is one of the world's leading engineering professional services consulting firms, bringing together approximately 65,000+ talented people around the globe. We are technical experts who design and provide strategic advice on sustainable solutions and engineer Future Ready™ projects that will help societies grow for lifetimes to come. wsp.com

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