APPENDIX C-1
Consultation Outcomes Report

ib vogt

Consultation outcomes report

Giddi BESS project

April 2026

Question today
Imagine tomorrow
Create for the future

Consultation outcomes report
Giddi BESS project

ib vogt

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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
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Victoria)
CFA	Country Fire Authority
MW	Megawatt
kV	Kilovolt

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

This Consultation outcomes report (the Report) has been prepared by WSP on behalf of ib vogt to support post-planning and environmental approval activities for the construction and operation of the Giddi Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the Project), proposed at 59 Rowells Road, Trafalgar East.

The Project requires approval under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Accordingly, ib vogt submitted a Planning Permit Application (PPA) to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on 18 December 2025. This Report and the engagement activities it documents, has been prepared following the submission of the PPA to complement the statutory approvals process.

The purpose of the post-application engagement was to ensure the local community and stakeholders are informed about the Project, to understand potential social impacts, and to gather feedback on community benefits and benefit-sharing opportunities to inform ongoing project development and management.

1.2 Proposal background

1.2.1 Project location and footprint

The Project is located within Trafalgar East in the Gippsland region, approximately 130 kilometres east of Melbourne. 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 Project will occupy approximately 18 hectares for the BESS compound and substation. The site is currently zoned Farming Zone under the Baw Baw Planning Scheme (refer to Figure 1.1).

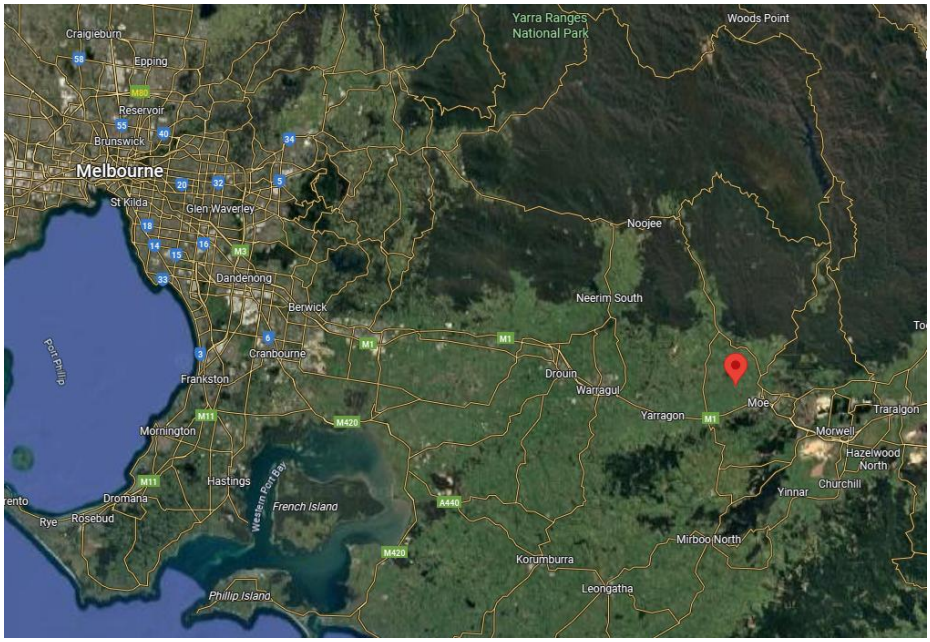

Figure 1.1 Project location as indicated by red arrow

1.2.2 Project scope and objectives

Giddi BESS 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. The Project 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 Project layout can be seen in Figure 1.2.

Infrastructure associated with the Giddi BESS Project includes:

- a 360MW BESS
- inverters and transformers
- rooms for control, operation and maintenance
- a switchyard
- a 220kV substation
- internal access roads
- perimeter boundary fencing.

1.2.3 Site selection

The site has been selected based on a collection of attributes that make it an ideal location for a BESS project, including:

- immediate access to existing high-capacity transmission infrastructure, removing the requirement for new transmission lines
- good separation from nearest neighbours, with the closest neighbour being approximately 1km away,
- the Project footprint is largely utilising heavily disturbed flat land currently hosting industrial scale sheds and associated agricultural infrastructure. Accordingly, there are minimal visual or environmental impacts from the Project.
- is located at the end of a cul de sac, meaning that there are very limited traffic volumes passing the site or with views over the site, along with mature roadside vegetation that provides visual screening.

1.3 Report structure

This Report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1**: Introduction and Project overview
- **Chapter 2:** Summary of the engagement strategy including engagement objectives and process
- **Chapter 3:** Summary of community engagement activities undertaken across the engagement period
- **Chapter 4:** Outcomes of the engagement process
- **Chapter 5**: Project response to key issues raised during the engagement
- **Chapter 6**: Conclusion and future engagement.

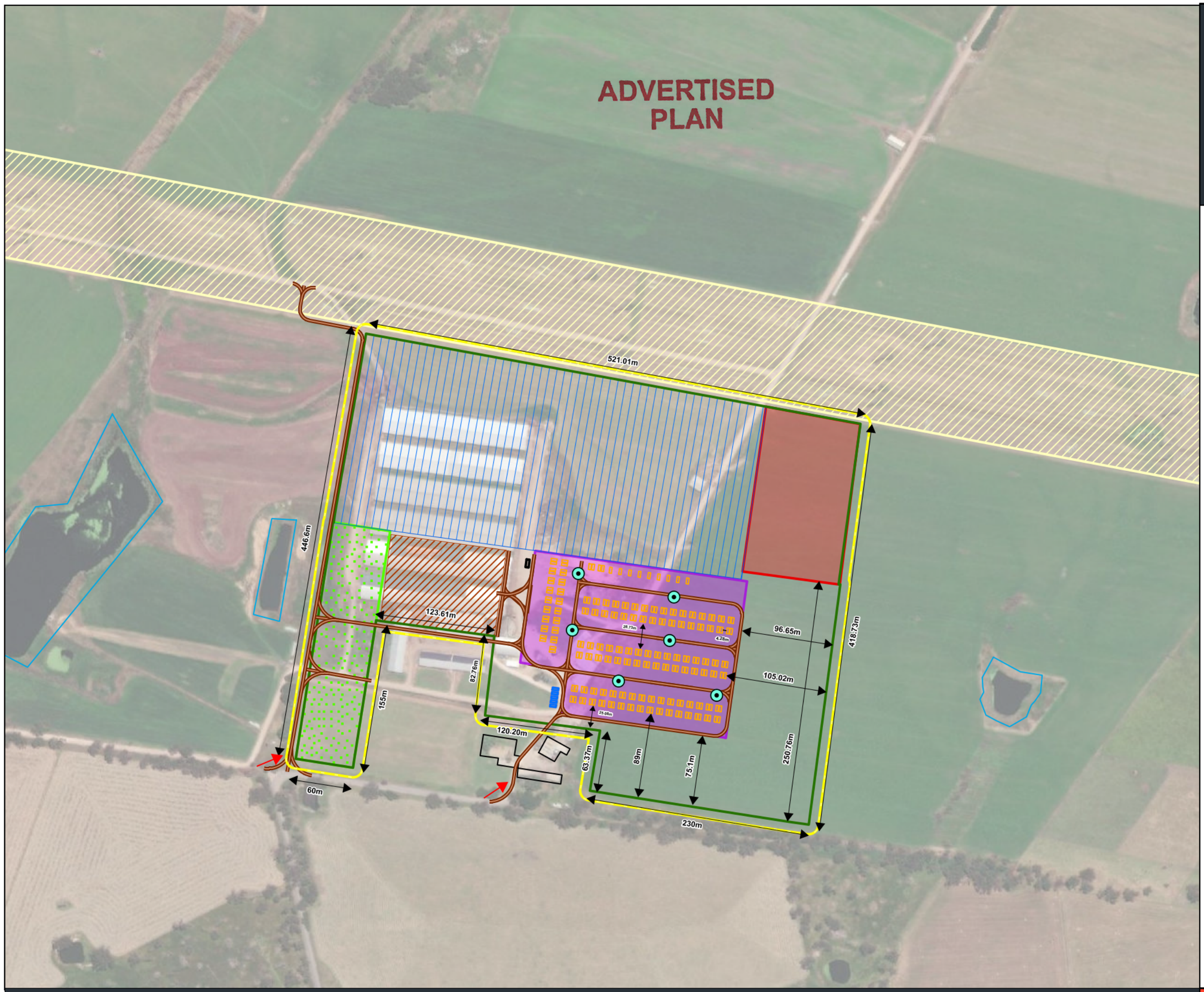

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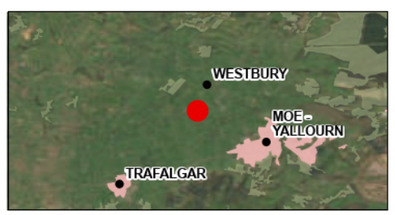
Figure 1.2

Giddi BESS Layout

Legend

- Fire Hydrants
- Watercourse
- Water Tanks
- PCS + Transformer
- Office Container
- Existing Buildings
- Access Road
- Main Access Gate
- Fire Break (10m)
- 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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Scale ratio correct when printed at A3

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GDA 2020

Data sources: DEWLP, World Imagery: Vantor
World Imagery: Earthstar Geographics

2 Community engagement strategy

2.1 Engagement commitments

A community engagement strategy was developed in consultation with ib vogt in line with the Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a) (the Guidelines).

The engagement approach sought to align with the Guidelines relating to the need for respectful, inclusive, and proportionate engagement with communities and key stakeholders, ensuring they have a voice throughout the energy transition.

2.2 Engagement purpose and objectives

Building on the Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a) framework, the objective of for the community engagement strategy were 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.

Refer to Appendix A for a checklist of the Project engagement activities against the Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* (DEECA, 2025a).

3 Community engagement activities

This section summarises the community engagement activities undertaken following the submission of the Planning Permit Application (PPA) for the Giddi BESS Project. It should be read in conjunction with the consultation outcomes report submitted as part of the PPA on 18 December 2025.

Community engagement activities supporting the PPA were undertaken between 5 November and 10 December 2025. The engagement activities documented in this Report form part of an ongoing and continuous engagement process, building on earlier consultation, responding to issues raised by the community following the submission of the PPA, and incorporating additional engagement activities undertaken post-submission.

The engagement activities included in this Report were implemented between 5 February 2026 and 25 March 2026. The engagement approach was designed to complement the statutory approvals process by providing:

- further information about the Project
- the opportunity for community members and other stakeholders to engage directly with the proponent and project team, ask questions and provide feedback about the project, social impacts and benefit sharing initiatives.

The post-application engagement focused on communicating additional detail regarding the Project and supporting informed participation by the local community and key stakeholders.

Engagement activities included:

- the distribution of a second project newsletter to neighbouring landholders
- a public online survey
- the delivery of a community information session in Trafalgar.

These activities were intended to ensure that potentially affected stakeholders had access to up-to-date information about the Project, understood its potential social impacts, and were able to provide feedback to inform ongoing project development and management. A summary of the engagement activities undertaken is provided below.

3.1 Community engagement activities post submission

3.1.1 Project newsletter

A second Project newsletter was prepared and distributed on Thursday 12 February 2026 to community members and local stakeholders. The newsletter was delivered across two key distribution areas:

- neighbouring landholders in Trafalgar East (refer to Figure 3.1 for distribution area)
- landholders within Trafalgar township and local businesses (refer to Figure 3.2 for distribution area).

The purpose of the newsletter was to provide updated information about the Giddi BES Project, including details of the planning permit application, an overview of the approval process, and anticipated timeframes. The newsletter also invited community members and other stakeholders to attend the community information session.

In addition, the newsletter included links to the Project website and the community survey, providing recipients with further opportunities to access information and submit feedback on the Project.

The newsletter is provided in Appendix B.

Figure 3.1 Newsletter distribution area Trafalgar East

Figure 3.2 Newsletter distribution area Trafalgar township

3.1.2 Email and phone for project enquiries

An email address and a dedicated 1800 telephone number were maintained as ongoing engagement channels during this engagement period and following the submission of Planning Permit Application (PPA) to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on 18 December 2025. These channels were established to enable local community members and landholders to submit enquiries, comments, and feedback on the Project at any time.

Details of these engagement channels were provided in the Project newsletter and published on the Project website. Table 6.1 summarises each engagement channel and its purpose.

Table 3.1 Communications channels

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

3.1.3 Community survey

A community online survey was developed to information about community concerns and community benefits of the Project. Through the different channels, community and key stakeholders were invited to complete the survey for input into this Report and to inform project planning. Users were able to complete the community survey anonymously.

The community survey was available from 5 February 2026 to 19 March 2026.

The online survey is provided in Appendix C.

3.1.4 Public notice about community information session

A public notice was published in the Warragul & Drouin Gazette on 10 February 2026 to invite the local community to the community information session to be held on 24 March 2026. The notice also included a link and QR code directing readers to the online community survey, providing an additional opportunity for feedback from those unable to attend the session in person.

Refer to Figure 3.3 for a screenshot of the public notice.

A copy of the public notice is provided in Appendix D.

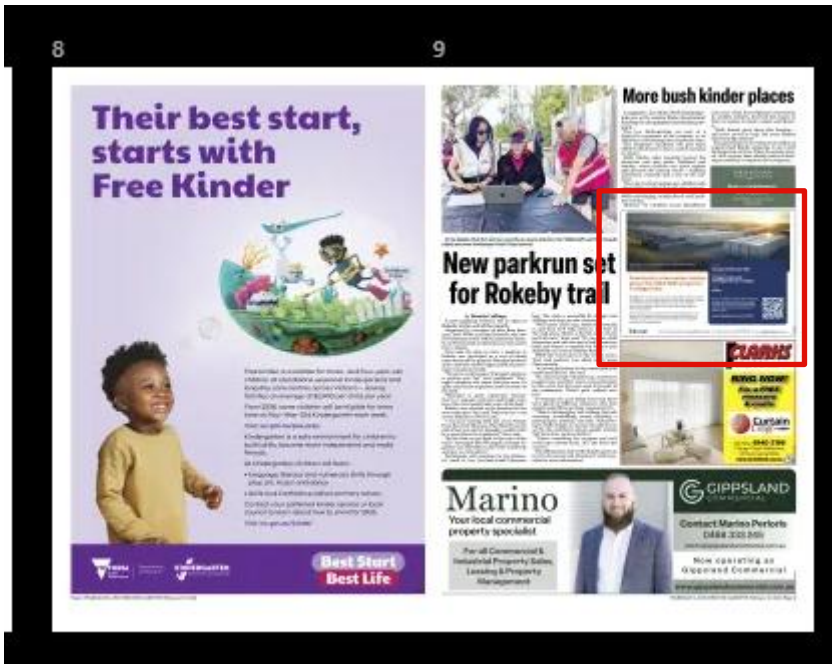

Figure 3.3 Giddi BESS ad in local newspaper (in red square)

3.1.5 *Community information session*

One community information session was held:

- **Venue:** Trafalgar Public Hall, located at 34 Contingent Street, Trafalgar,
- **Date:** Tuesday 24 February 2026
- **Time:** 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm.
- **Number of participants:** Approximately 70 people attended the session[1].

Five display boards were used to inform attendees about the Project design and key details, benefits of the use of BESS, safety considerations, and the outcomes of the technical environmental studies prepared to support the Planning Permit Application (PPA). In addition, an interactive display board was provided to invite feedback on potential social impacts, impact management measures, and community benefit opportunities.

ib vogt had three subject-matter specialists available to respond to community enquiries, including the Senior Development Manager for ib vogt. Two additional WSP professionals attended the session to support its facilitation and delivery, including providing explanations of the planning and approvals process.

Copies of the display boards used during the session are provided in Appendix E.

[1] The number of attendees is approximate, as some participants chose not to complete the attendance sheet.

Figure 3.4 Community information session

3.1.6 Thank you email

Following the community information session, a thank-you email was sent to all participants who provided their email details. In addition, an SMS message was issued to participants who provided just their phone number with the following message:

"*A list of questions and answers from the Giddi BESS Information Session is now available in the FAQ section of www.giddibess.com.au. Thank you for your attendance.*"

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document was prepared following the session, collating the most common questions raised by community members and providing responses from the Project team. This is publicly available on the Project website.

A copy of the thank-you email is provided in Appendix F, and the FAQ document is included in Appendix G.

3.1.7 Other key stakeholder engagement activities

Additional project communications during the engagement period are summarised in Table 3.2.

For community enquiries, the Project team's responses are also provided.

Table 3.2 Other key engagement activities

Stakeholder/Activity	Date	Key topics	Project team response
Community email 1	2/03/2026	— Potential noise impacts to neighbouring landholders of Project	— Project team provided relevant sections of Operational Noise Assessment for Giddi BESS Project. — The report concludes that forecast noise levels are well within the EPA requirements.
Renewable energy advocate call	2/03/2026	— Attended the session to learn why batteries attract opposition and appreciated the discussion with project representatives — identified a perceived gap between developers and the community	Not applicable.

		regarding BESS fire response arrangements — noted concern that CFA responders are volunteers and would benefit from site familiarisation and BESS-specific training — raised awareness that many CFA brigades are underfunded and queried whether community benefit funding could support CFA needs — observed limited community understanding of why batteries are needed and how the electricity network operates — suggested clearer, plain-English communication to improve community understanding	
Community email 2	4/03/2026	— Concern regarding proposed battery chemistry — reference to alternative lithium-polymer guidance — concern about misinformation influencing community perceptions — questioning the currency of lithium-ion technology — request for clarification on battery chemistry selection.	— Clarification that the Project proposes Lithium Iron Phosphate ($LiFePO_4$) battery chemistry, not lithium-ion as previously stated online — selection of CATL EnerC+ as a proven and safe utility-scale BESS technology — potential consideration of newer battery models subject to demonstrated safety and performance in Australia — explanation that thermal runaway, not combustion, is the primary fire risk consideration — lithium-polymer batteries are not recommended for utility-scale BESS due to shorter lifecycle and higher sensitivity — comprehensive, multi-layered fire detection, suppression, and containment systems proposed — compliance with recognised safety testing standards (including UL9540A) — additional operational safeguards, electrical isolation, emergency

			power, and environmental containment measures included.
Interview with WIN News Gippsland	9/03/2026	— Purpose of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) — rationale for site selection — project footprint and land use — fire safety and risk management — noise and operational impacts — community benefits and benefit-sharing initiatives — planning process and consultation timing — contribution to renewable energy and grid reliability.	Not applicable.
Trafalgar CFA	9/03/2026	— Contact with local CFA to explore potential benefit-sharing opportunities — CFA advice that project benefit funding is not required — CFA confirmation of adequate capacity to respond to a BESS incident — availability of neighbouring brigades to provide support to Project if required.	Not applicable.
Community email 3	16/03/2026	— Concern about future growth of his dairy operation. — They are located nearby the Project location.	— Project team provided information about the website and sent the survey link.
Interview with 3BBR community radio in Gippsland	23/03/2026	— Project description — BESS operation and its role in supporting a reliable energy system — Use of agricultural land for renewable energy projects — Noise and visual impacts — Community benefit-sharing initiatives	Not applicable.

4 Community engagement outcomes

This chapter provides an overview of the outcomes from community engagement activities undertaken between 5 February 2026 and 25 March 2026

4.1 Summary of outcomes

4.1.1 Overview of engagement delivery and responses

Engagement method	Response overview
Project website	435 page views, 174 unique visitors, and 250 site sessions (over a period of six months)
Community information session	70 community members
Community survey	92 responses received (61 completed responses, and 31 partial responses)
Thank you email and SMS	52 people reached

4.1.2 Survey participation profile

A total of 92 individuals participated in the survey, comprising 61 completed responses and 31 partial responses. Most respondents reside in the local area, with 19% identifying as neighbouring landholders to the proposed Project, 28.6% living in Trafalgar East or Westbury, 16.7% living in Moe or Trafalgar, and 35.7% selecting other locations (refer to Figure 4.1). Overall, 10.7% of respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The survey attracted responses across a broad range of age groups, from 18 years or younger through to 71–80 years. The majority of respondents (71.2%) were aged between 41 and 70 years, with the 61–70 age bracket most strongly represented, accounting for 29.7% of respondents (refer to Figure 4.2).

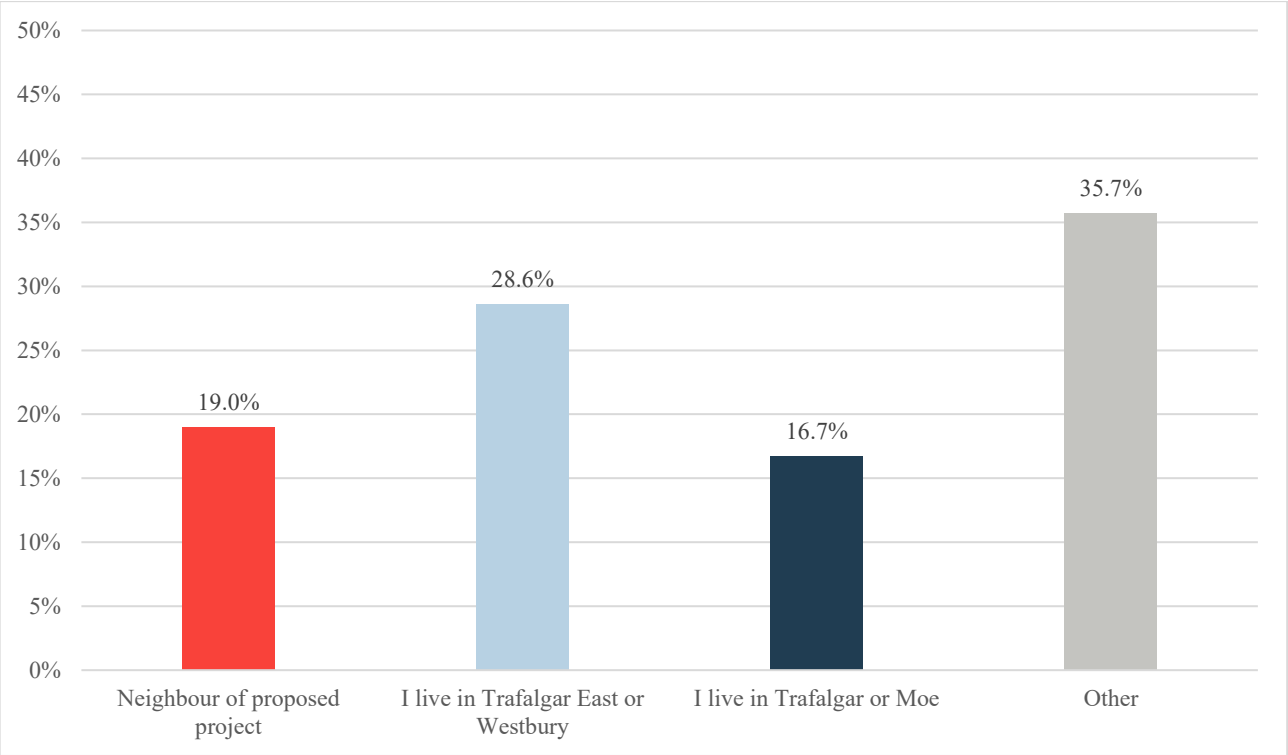

Figure 4.1 'Which of the following best describes yourself?'. 84 responses

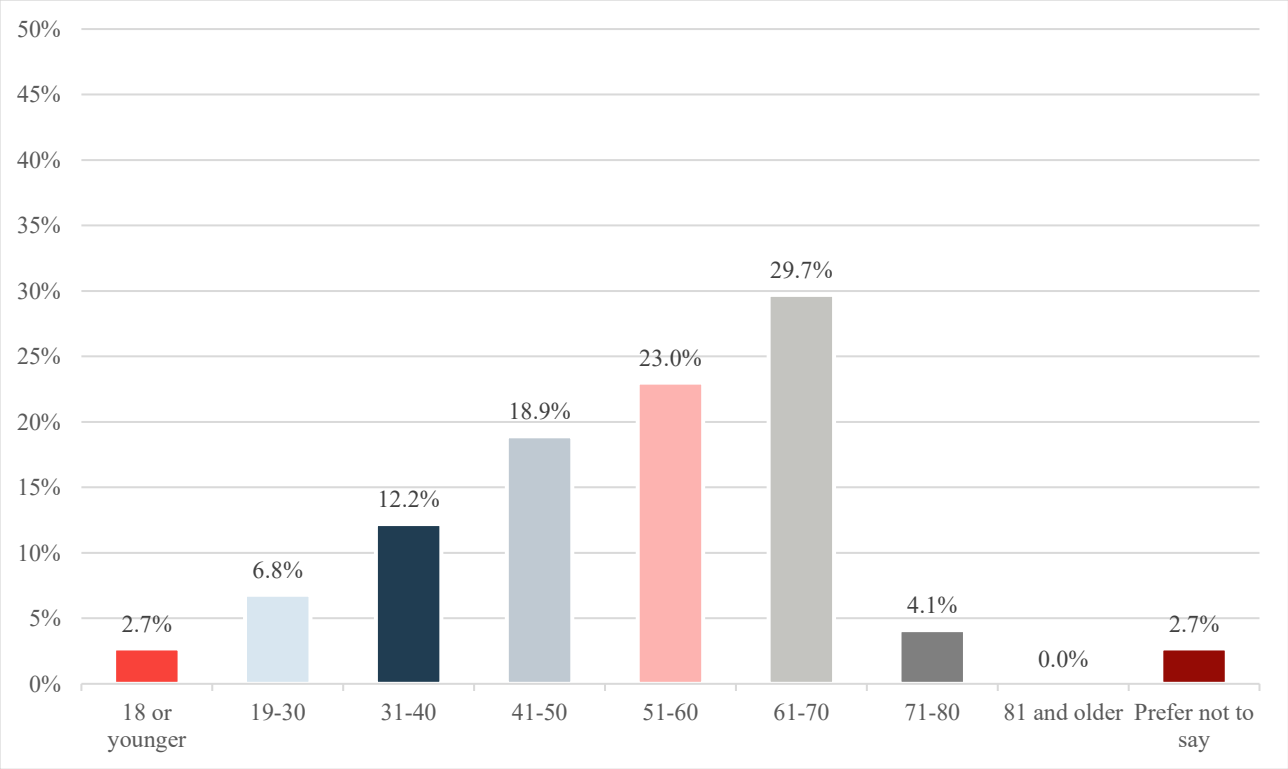

Figure 4.2 'What is your age?'. 74 responses

4.2 Community feedback

4.2.1 Summary of key themes

The feedback received through the community survey and community information session revealed several recurring themes, each reflecting the priorities, concerns, and aspirations of local stakeholders. Table 4.1 provides a summary of these themes and their frequency with which they were raised. Section 0 explores each theme in further detail.

Table 4.1 Summary of key themes raised through consultation

Agriculture and land use

Raised 50+ times

Way of life

Raised 104+ times

Fire risk and safety

Raised 80+ times

Feedback about engagement process

Raised 9+ times

Social and energy benefits

Raised 6+ times

4.2.1.1 Potential negative impacts

The survey asked respondents to select potential negative impacts of the project that they are most concerned about from a provided list. Responses are shown in the graph below.

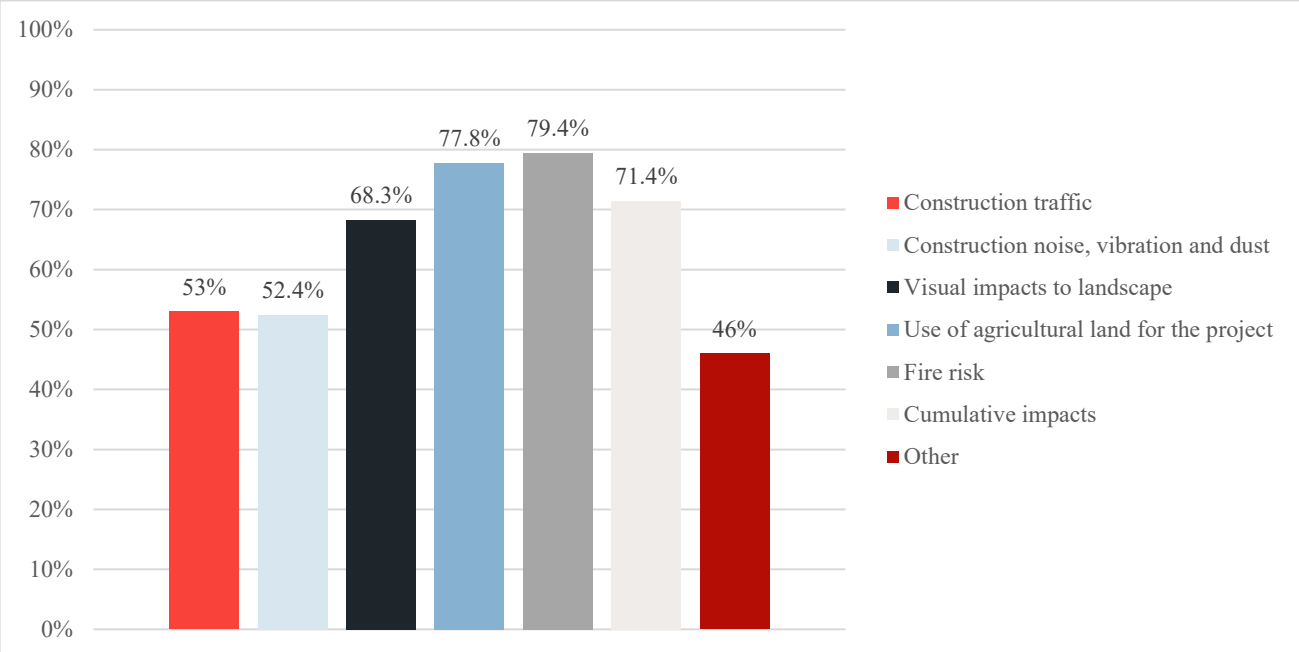

Figure 4.3 Responses to 'Which of the following potential negative impacts are you most concerned about? (Select all that apply)'. 63 responses

Participants who selected 'Other (please specify)' raised the following themes summarised below:

- **General dissatisfaction with the Project:** Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the Project overall rather than directly addressing the survey question. They expressed the view that any potential benefits were outweighed by the perceived costs and impacts of the Project on the local community.
- **Pollution and safety:** Five respondents raised concerns related to pollution and safety, particularly potential contamination of soil and water from project waste.
- **Lifestyle and amenity**: Several respondents expressed concerns about potential impacts on day-to-day living. These included noise (three respondents), lighting impacts (one respondent), visual or aesthetic impacts (one respondent), and potential mental health effects (one respondent).
- **Agriculture and land use:** Concerns were raised regarding the loss of agricultural land. Respondents also questioned site security and the existence of contingency or action plans if the Project does not operate as intended.

4.2.1.2 Potential positive impacts

Two survey questions asked participants to identify potential benefits of the Project. A large proportion of respondents selected the 'Other' option and provided additional written comments. Figures summarising the responses to these questions, along with a selection of comments provided under the 'Other' category, are presented below.

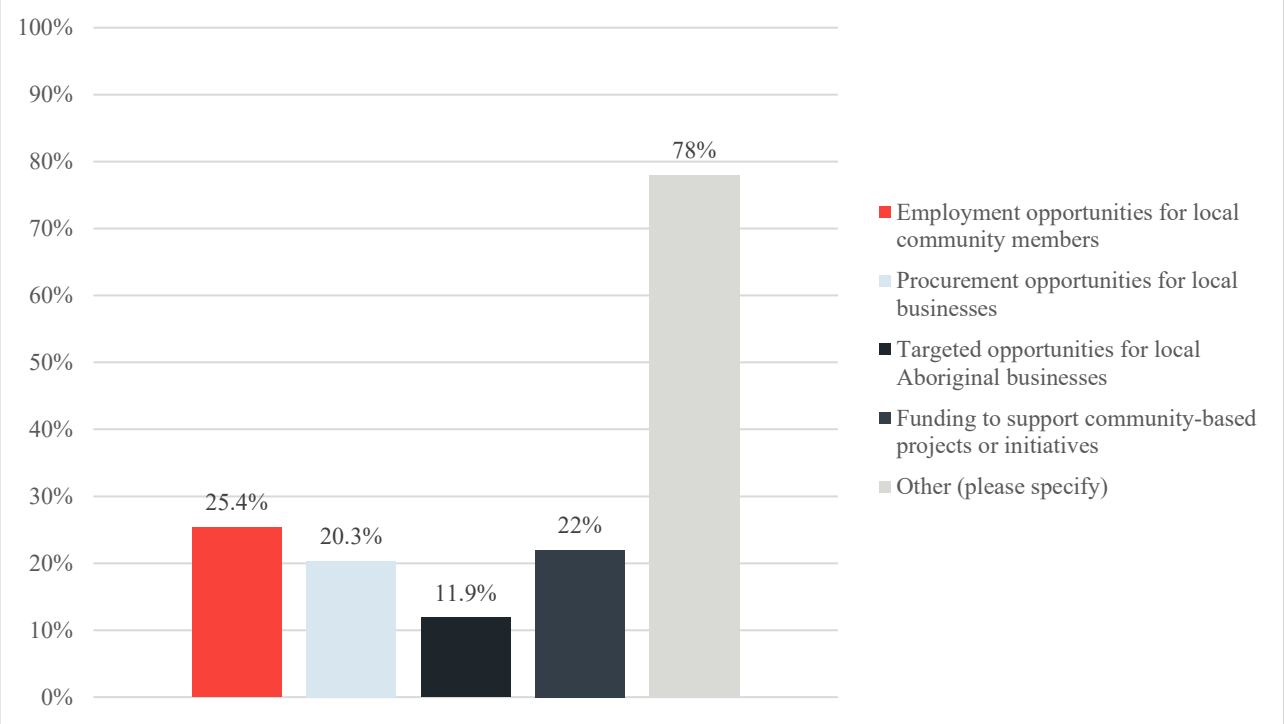

Figure 4.4 Responses to 'Which of the following potential benefits are you most interested in? (Select all that apply) '. 59 responses

Participants who selected 'Other (please specify)' generally expressed dissatisfaction with the Project. However, a small number of respondents identified additional potential benefits, which are summarised under the themes below:

- Energy-related benefits: Three respondents noted that the Project could support grid stability, enable additional renewable energy capacity, and contribute to broader energy system reliability.
- Social benefits: Two respondents identified potential benefits related to increased patronage of the Moe Racecourse and opportunities for local employment.

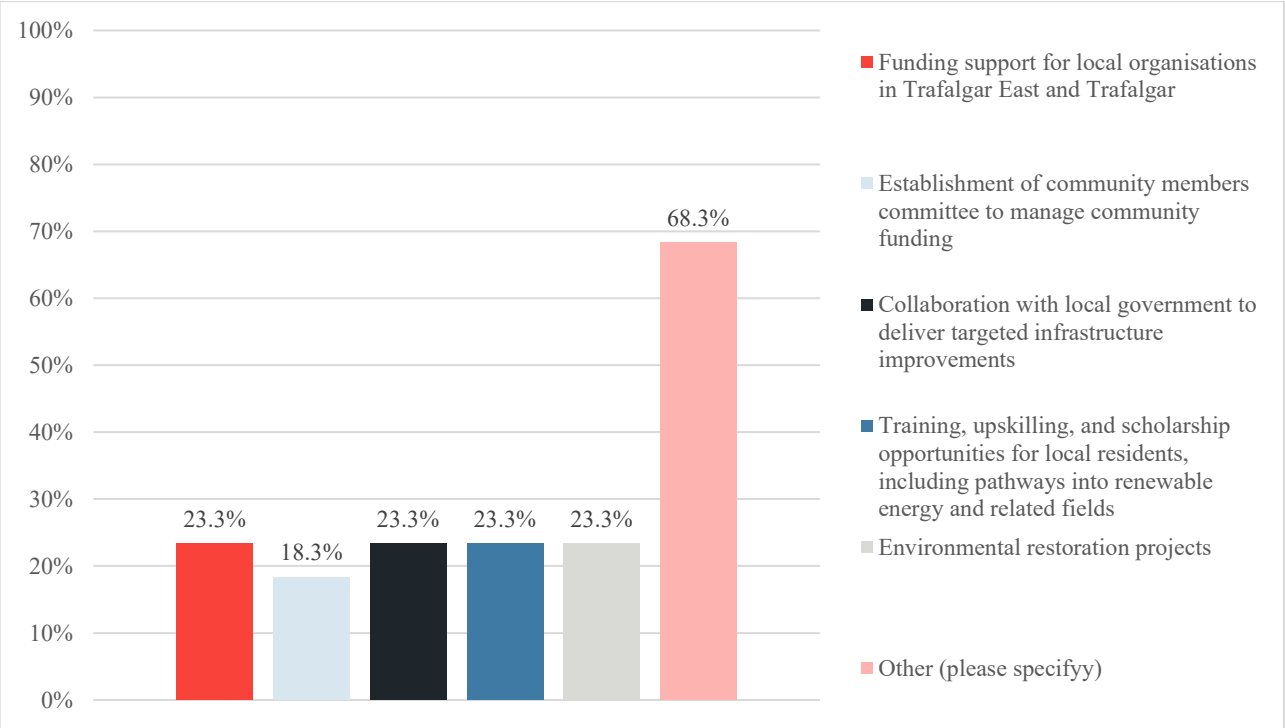

Figure 4.5 Responses to 'Which types of community benefit initiatives would you like to see included as part of the project? (Select all that apply)'. 60 responses

Participants who selected 'Other (please specify)' primarily expressed general dissatisfaction with the Project, with some suggesting that it be relocated to an alternative site to avoid impacts on farmland.

Among respondents who provided additional suggestions relating to potential benefits or mitigation measures, the following key themes were identified:

- Fire prevention: Four respondents raised the potential for increased fire risk associated with the Project. Requests were made for improved fire-response capacity, with fire trucks specifically suggested for the Westbury, Trafalgar, and Willow Grove areas.
- Other suggestions:
  - Trafalgar and District Financial Services was identified as a local social enterprise that could reinvest benefits back into the community.
  - A request was made to include Moe within community benefit initiatives.
  - Suggestions were raised to restore or support community committees to facilitate local upskilling opportunities.

4.2.2 Analysis of community responses by key theme

The following analysis explores each theme in detail, highlighting perspectives for and against the Project. The analysis considers concerns regarding potential impacts, as well as suggestions relating to benefits and management measures.

Data was captured through an online survey, and one in-person community engagement sessions.

4.2.2.1 Way of life

Changes or impacts to community way of life emerged as the most frequently raised issue, with more than 104 references recorded across all feedback channels.

Survey responses

Survey results indicate that 53% of respondents expressed concern about construction traffic, 52.4% about construction-related noise, vibration and dust, and 68.3% about potential visual impacts on the landscape. More broadly, participants raised concerns about how the Project could affect their overall way of life and quality of life in the area. Noise, visual change and lighting were the most prominent issues, collectively receiving 97 mentions. Mental health and wellbeing also emerged as a theme, with seven respondents referencing potential impacts.

Community information session

Overall, community members noted that the Project could alter their existing lifestyle, which is closely tied to a local economy based on cattle farming and a way of life characterised by distance from urban centres. Respondents emphasised their appreciation for the area's connection to nature, low noise levels, and limited traffic and movement.

Neighbouring landholders to the Project cited potential noise generated by the battery system and the associated impacts on wellbeing as a consideration. Additional items raised were the use of lighting during night-time operations, which was perceived as potentially affecting visual amenity and the quiet, rural character of the surrounding land.

4.2.2.2 Agriculture and land use

Survey responses

Survey results indicate that 77.8% of respondents expressed concern about the use of agricultural land for the Project. This is closely linked to respondents' appreciation of their rural lifestyle and cattle-farming activities. Comments relating to agriculture and land use, including suggestions for alternative locations, received 50 mentions. Many respondents considered the current site unsuitable due to its agricultural use and suggested that the Project be located in an existing industrial or non-agricultural area instead.

In relation to this, five respondents raised the potential devaluation of surrounding properties. One respondent suggested that the project could lead to increased value of energy and insurance premiums.

Community information session

Potential impacts on agriculture and land use emerged as a key theme during the community information session. Community members expressed opposition to the use of agricultural land for renewable energy projects, noting their view that this is an inappropriate use of land in a region recognised for its agricultural productivity and role in food production. Participants emphasised the area's long-standing agricultural culture, highlighting the importance of generational farming and strong cultural and social ties to the land.

Community members who own cattle also noted potential impacts on livestock health associated with batteries and other renewable energy projects. Questions were raised regarding the risk of chemical leaching from battery containers and the potential effects of electromagnetic fields (EMF) linked to project infrastructure.

Some participants suggested that the continued development of renewable energy projects in the area could limit future opportunities for neighbouring landholders to expand their cattle-farming operations if required.

These considerations were closely linked to suggestions that projects of this nature should be located in alternative areas, such as closer to urban or industrial zones. Participants perceived an imbalance between local impacts and broader benefits, noting that benefits were seen to accrue primarily to metropolitan areas, particularly Melbourne.

Some of the impacts on land use were identified as a potential devaluation of the neighbouring properties to the Project.

4.2.2.3 Fire risk and safety

Survey responses

Fire risk was identified as the most significant potential impact, with 79.4% of survey respondents expressing concern. These concerns were heightened by the Project's proximity to areas designated as bushfire-risk areas. Approximately fourteen respondents raised battery fires, thermal runaway events, gas buildup within battery containers, and the potential

release of toxic smoke and gases as considerations. Many also questioned the ability of local emergency services, particularly volunteer CFA brigades, to respond effectively, citing limitations to training, resourcing, and equipment. other considerations raised include evacuation requirements, legal liability in the event of an incident, and the potential for fires to spread beyond the site, resulting in property damage, environmental harm, and risks to human health and safety.

Two respondents also raised environmental contamination, particularly the perceived risk of toxic chemicals affecting soil and water. Thirteen respondents specifically referenced contamination risks, including potential impacts from battery chemicals and transformer oils, as well as the long-term management of hazardous waste at the end of the battery system's operational life.

Community information session

Increased bushfire risk was also identified as a key theme during the community information session. Community members discussed the potential for bushfire incidents associated with a malfunction of the battery system, as well as the capacity of the local Country Fire Authority (CFA) to respond effectively, noting reliance on volunteers and perceived limitations in resources.

In discussions with the Trafalgar CFA, representatives advised that they are equipped and prepared to respond to potential bushfire emergencies. CFA representatives also provided feedback on the proposed site safety measures, confirming their satisfaction with site access arrangements and the availability of on-site water supply, hydrants and backup systems to manage bushfire risk.

In response to the feedback received, the Planning Assessment Report has been updated to provide further information about the battery monitoring systems and multiple layers of fire mitigation controls available.

4.2.2.4 Feedback about engagement process

Survey responses

When asked how the Project's engagement process could be improved, respondents provided the following recommendations:

- Engagement timing (4 respondents): Engagement activities were held at times considered unsuitable for farmers, such as during milking hours, and in some cases too close to the survey closing date.
- More engagement (3 respondents): Respondents felt that additional engagement activities would help reach a broader range of community members and improve participation.
- Different engagement approaches (9 respondents): Respondents expressed a preference for face-to-face general meetings rather than drop-in sessions. Some also suggested tailoring engagement approaches to better understand and address opposition, including focusing on perceived benefits and engaging more directly with concerns.
- Transparency (7 respondents): Respondents raised concerns about a lack of transparency, indicating that community feedback was not fully considered. Specific issues included limited clarity around the government's role in decision-making and requests for public access to all planning applications and associated processes.

Community information session

During the community information session, participants expressed mixed views regarding the engagement process.

Some attendees expressed appreciation that the proponent had organised a community information session, noting that it provided accessible project information and opportunities to ask questions and receive clear and transparent responses. Explanations provided by the ib vogt project team were generally considered clear and helpful in addressing questions raised during the session.

Other participants were more critical of the engagement approach, indicating that they had not been aware of the community information session in advance. These respondents expressed a preference for a broader, more formal "town

hall" style format, which they felt would provide greater visibility and enable wider participation from the local community.

4.2.2.5 Social and energy benefits

Survey responses

When asked about potential benefits of the Project, 25.4% of respondents expressed interest in employment opportunities for local community members, while 22% identified funding to support community-based projects or initiatives as a priority.

When respondents were asked to identify specific initiatives of interest, all options attracted a similar level of support (23.3% of respondent). These included:

- Funding support for local organisations in Trafalgar East and Trafalgar (e.g., community programs, wellbeing services, neighbourhood centres).
- Environmental restoration projects.
- Collaboration with local government to deliver targeted infrastructure improvements (e.g., amenities, safety upgrades, community facilities).
- Training, upskilling, and scholarship opportunities for local residents, including pathways into renewable energy and related fields.

Community information session

During the community information session, some community members expressed support for the development of the Project and other renewable energy initiatives. Participants acknowledged the planned closure of the Yallourn Power Station in 2028 and recognised the need to secure alternative energy sources for the region. In this context, renewable energy was identified by some community members as a positive solution that could support the energy transition while contributing to environmental protection.

In addition, when asked about potential community benefits and initiatives to consider, community members identified a range of local organisations and projects that could be supported. These included the Westbury CFA, the Westbury Community Hub, the Trafalgar Public Hall, and the Trafalgar East Hall. Broader suggestions also included support for community energy projects and infrastructure that strengthens community resilience.

5 Project response

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the key issues raised during the engagement period and details the project team's responses in relation to the proposal design and management measures.

Table 5.1 Key issues and project response

Key issues	Project response
Consider amenity impacts during construction and operation to neighbouring landholders and its effects in their way of life.	Amenity impacts have been considered through technical assessments during the development of the Planning Permit Application submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on 18 December 2025; and through site design. An operational Noise Impact Assessment modelled worst-case scenarios and confirmed compliance with EPA Victoria rural noise limits for nearby residences. Noise is primarily associated with cooling fans and will remain within acceptable limits. Visual impacts are mitigated by the site's location at the end of a cul-de-sac, existing vegetation, and the option to provide additional landscaping where requested. Lighting will be kept to the minimum required for safety, using sensors to limit night-time illumination. Construction impacts such as traffic, dust, and road use will be managed through standard construction controls to minimise disruption to nearby landholders. Following the community information session, one neighbouring landholder raised concerns regarding potential noise and visual impacts. The ib vogt project team subsequently contacted the landholder and provided the results of the Noise Impact Assessment specific to their property, which confirmed that predicted noise levels comply with EPA requirements and are not expected to be audible. The project team also discussed potential landscaping options to mitigate visual impacts; however, the landholder indicated they did not wish to pursue these options.
Location of the Project and impact on agricultural land.	The Giddi BESS compound will occupy less than 10 hectares within a site that is already heavily disturbed and contains existing industrial scale sheds and infrastructure. The location was selected due to its proximity to existing transmission infrastructure, which avoids the need for new transmission corridors and reduces broader environmental impacts. As the electricity grid operates as a shared system, the benefits of the Project are distributed across the state, including regional areas. With respect to livestock health, no specific buffer zones are required under current guidelines for animal health. However, in response to community concerns, the following technical considerations are noted: — Chemical containment: Battery systems are sealed and designed with multiple containment layers. Battery units are housed within steel enclosures that include internal spill containment to capture any liquids in the unlikely event of a fire. Should internal containment capacity be exceeded, an external membrane and containment pond are provided to prevent off-site migration. Any captured liquids would be removed by licensed contractors and disposed of at an approved facility. — Electromagnetic fields (EMF): Batteries themselves do not generate significant EMF, as energy is stored rather than transmitted. EMF is associated with

	inverters, transformers, and high-voltage transmission infrastructure during power export to the grid. Numerous studies have found no evidence of adverse health impacts on cattle from EMF exposure, including research undertaken beneath 765 kV transmission lines, which generate higher EMF levels than the existing 220 kV line to which the Project will connect. Livestock have grazed beneath transmission lines in Victoria for decades without documented health impacts. Finally, in relation to concerns about potential devaluation of neighbouring properties, independent studies and fact-checked reports consistently indicate that renewable energy and battery projects do not result in long-term property value decline. Research done by the Clean Energy Council (2025) shows that any negative effects tend to be small, short-lived, and generally limited to properties within approximately one to two kilometres of a project. These impacts typically peak during construction and recover over time. Australian data reflects a similar trend, with local government areas hosting renewable energy projects recording strong median property price growth over recent years.
Fire risk management and safety controls.	Fire risk has been addressed through a detailed Fire Risk Assessment, which identified the bushfire risk as low to moderate. The Project incorporates multiple layers of fire safety, including continuous monitoring for temperature, smoke, and gas, early detection systems, automatic isolation and shutdown of affected battery units, and internal fire suppression or cooling systems. Each battery container includes internal bunding, with additional site-wide containment through a lined retention basin to prevent contaminated runoff entering surrounding land. At least 40,000 litres of on-site water storage and fire hydrants at 60-metre intervals will be provided for CFA use. A site-specific Fire Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan will be implemented and reviewed by the CFA. These measures are designed to minimise fire risk and ensure effective emergency response.
Develop a constant and transparent engagement process with local community.	ib vogt has committed to ongoing, transparent engagement throughout the planning process. Engagement activities have included a community information session, distribution of project newsletters, a project website, an online survey, and dedicated contact channels, including an email address and a 1800 telephone number. While some community members expressed a preference for a “town hall” -style meeting to discuss the Project, the Project team explained that a drop-in session was selected as the most appropriate engagement approach. This format allows community members to ask questions directly, avoids a small number of individuals dominating discussion time, and provides an extended period during which attendees can visit the venue at their convenience. ib vogt has also committed to notifying the community when the planning application and supporting technical reports are publicly exhibited, providing opportunities for formal submissions to the Department of Transport and Planning. Following the community information session, a thank-you email was issued to participants who provided contact details, and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (refer to Appendix G) document responding to community concerns was published on the Project website.
Deliver benefits for local communities while supporting	The Project supports broader energy system outcomes by improving grid stability, enabling the integration of renewable energy, and contributing to a reliable electricity

broader energy system outcomes.	supply as coal-fired generation retires, including the planned closure of Yallourn Power Station in 2028. In addition, ib vogt proposes to establish a Community Benefits Fund providing annual contributions once operational. The fund is intended to be managed by an independent committee of community members and support locally identified priorities such as: — Upgrades to the Trafalgar Community Hall and Trafalgar East Hall. — Training and scholarship opportunities for Indigenous youth. — Support for the local BetterMental charity. — Local environmental restoration and conservation projects. Following the community information session, and in response to feedback received from community members, support for the Westbury CFA and the Westbury Community Hub will also be considered.

6 Conclusion

This Consultation Outcomes Report summarises the community engagement activities undertaken for the Giddi Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project between 5 February 2026 and 25 March 2026, following the submission of the Planning Permit Application to the Department of Transport and Planning on the 18 December 2025.

Community engagement for the Project commenced earlier, with activities undertaken between 5 November and 10 December 2025. These earlier activities were documented in the Community Engagement Report submitted as part of the PPA. Accordingly, this Report documents post-submission engagement and forms part of a continuous and iterative engagement process, building on earlier consultation and responding to issues raised by the community following the submission of the PPA, as well as through additional engagement activities undertaken during this period.

Engagement activities documented in this Report included the distribution of a second project newsletter, an online public survey, a community information session, and the establishment of ongoing communication channels through the Project website, a dedicated email address, and a 1800 telephone number. These activities were undertaken to inform the community about the Project, identify potential social impacts, and gather feedback on impact management measures and community benefit opportunities.

The engagement process identified several key themes reflecting community priorities and concerns. These included potential impacts on way of life, agriculture and land use, fire risk and safety, and perceptions of the engagement process itself. Community feedback was most strongly associated with the use of agricultural land, potential changes to rural amenity, and fire risk in a high bushfire-prone area. At the same time some participants expressed support for renewable energy development, recognising the role of battery storage in supporting energy reliability and the broader energy transition, particularly in the context of the planned closure of the Yallourn Power Station in 2028.

Feedback received through consultation has informed the Project response, including refinements to impact management measures, commitments to ongoing engagement, and consideration of community benefit initiatives. Ib vogt has committed to maintaining transparent communication with the local community as the Project progresses, including during the public exhibition of the planning application and any subsequent stages of assessment. Ongoing engagement will continue to play an important role in addressing community concerns, refining mitigation measures where appropriate, and ensuring that community feedback informs project decision-making throughout the planning and delivery of the Giddi BESS Project.

This Report is provided by WSP Australia Pty Limited (*WSP*) for ib vogt Development Australia Pty Ltd (*Client*) in response to specific instructions from the Client and in accordance with WSP's proposal dated 6 June 2025 and agreement with the Client dated 7 August 2025 (*Agreement*).

PERMITTED PURPOSE

This Report is provided by WSP for the purpose described in the Agreement and no responsibility is accepted by WSP for the use of the Report in whole or in part, for any other purpose (*Permitted Purpose*).

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revenue, loss of opportunity to earn profit, loss of production, loss of contract, increased operational costs, loss of business opportunity, site depredation costs, business interruption or economic loss) of any kind whatsoever, suffered on incurred by a third party.

Appendix A

Community Engagement and Social Value Checklist

A1 Community engagement and social value checklist

The minimum expectations outlined in the Draft *Community Engagement and Social Value Guidelines for Renewable Energy and Transmission Projects* 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 are outlined in Table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1 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.	— 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.	— Community and stakeholder input to refine social impact scoping. — Development of community benefit framework.
— Provide diverse, regular and ongoing engagement opportunities.	— 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.	— 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.	— Clearly defined engagement material from the project outset, including: — 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.	— Informed by social analysis.
— Respond to community concerns about environmental hazards, particularly fire risks, flooding and biosecurity.	— Incorporate summaries of technical studies into engagement materials and fact sheets. — Dedicated FAQs.
— Establish processes for enquiries, complaints management and dispute resolution.	— 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.
— Ensure that communities know how their contributions have been used to influence outcomes.	— Quarterly project update newsletters to registered participants.

Appendix B

Newsletter 2

NEWSLETTER 2 FEBRUARY 2026

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

GIDDI BESS

ADVERTISED PLAN

ib vogt is proposing to develop the Giddi Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project across an 18-hectare site at 59 Rowells Road, Trafalgar East, which is currently hosting industrial scale sheds and associated infrastructure for a goat dairy, and some feed growing.

What's involved?

The proposed Giddi BESS project would include:

- Battery Energy Storage System: A 360MW 4-hour BESS
- substation and associated switchyard: Connecting into an existing 220kV Rowville to Yallourn transmission line that runs through the property, so no additional transmission lines would be required
- some prefabricated style buildings for control, operation and maintenance of the BESS
- water storage tanks.

A second stage, including a solar hybrid facility may occur, 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.

The site has been selected based on:

- adjacent access to high capacity transmission infrastructure
- good separation from neighbours (around 1 km)
- minimal visual or environmental impact due to sitting on previously disturbed industrial land
- no native vegetation removal is required
- cul-de-sac location with low traffic and native vegetation providing visual screening.

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

ADVERTISED PLAN

ib vogt

The project requires approval under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Accordingly, ib vogt submitted a Planning Permit Application (PPA) to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on 18 December 2025.

The application process includes undertaking of environmental assessments, including:

- ecology
- landscape and visual impacts
- contamination and hazards
- fire risk
- flood and hydrology
- geotechnical
- historic heritage
- Aboriginal cultural heritage
- noise and vibration
- traffic

The PPA is currently in the preliminary stages of assessment by the department, and will be referred to Baw Baw Shire Council and Country Fire Authority for comment.

What does the planning permit application process look like?

Community information session

ib vogt will be hosting a community information session to meet our team and share details about the Giddi BESS project. We will have different project information and maps that will allow you to have a personal discussion about the project with our technical specialists.

This means that you can attend at any time during open hours, giving you the opportunity to ask the project team questions, express any concerns, and contribute ideas for the proposed community sharing program.

Date: Tuesday 24 February 2026
Location: Trafalgar Public Hall, 34 Contingent Street, Trafalgar
Time: 4-7pm

If you'd like to share your views, please complete the online survey via the QR code or the link until the **8 of March 2026**.

survey.zohopublic.com.au/zs/CYj3S6

Community benefits

The project will make an annual financial payment to a community benefit fund. We are working with a number of community groups to identify new initiatives that we may be able to support that would provide long-term benefits to the community. We would like to hear your ideas.

To know more

Please go to the project website **www.giddibess.com.au**, or

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 information about 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**

Appendix C

Online survey

Community engagement survey

The proposed Giddi BESS project would include:

— a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of 360MW

— a substation and associated switchyard connecting into an existing 220kV Rowville to Yallourn transmission line that runs through the property, so no additional transmission lines would be required

— some prefabricated style buildings for control, operation and maintenance of the BESS

— water storage tanks.

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

A second stage, including a solar hybrid facility may occur, 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.

The site has been selected based on:

— adjacent access to high capacity transmission infrastructure

— good separation from neighbours (around 1 km)

— minimal visual or environmental impact due to siting on previously disturbed industrial land

— no native vegetation removal is required

— cul-de-sac location with low traffic and native vegetation providing visual screening.

We are seeking feedback through this survey to understand local community concerns about the project, and ideas for community benefit initiatives.

All responses are anonymous and confidential; no personal details will be published or linked to your answers.

Participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

The survey will be open for feedback between 6 February and 6 March 2026.

See image below for location of the project:

About you

Which of the following best describes yourself? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] I'm a neighbour of the proposed project.
- [ ] I live in Trafalgar East or Westbury.
- [ ] I live in Trafalgar or Moe.
- [ ] Other (please specify suburb of residence).

What is your age?

- ( ) 18 or younger
- ( ) 19-30
- ( ) 31-40
- ( ) 41-50
- ( ) 51-60
- ( ) 61-70
- ( ) 71-80
- ( ) 81 or older
- ( ) Prefer not to say

Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Prefer not to say

Community benefits

We expect this project to deliver benefits to the local area.

Which of the following potential benefits are you most interested in? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Employment opportunities for local community members.
- [ ] Procurement opportunities for local businesses.
- [ ] Targeted opportunities for local Aboriginal businesses.
- [ ] Funding to support community-based projects or initiatives .
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

Which types of community benefit initiatives would you like to see included as part of the project? (Select all that apply)

- [ ] Funding support for local organisations in Trafalgar East and Trafalgar (e.g., community programs, wellbeing services, neighbourhood centres).
- [ ] Environmental restoration projects.
- [ ] Establishment of a committee of community members to manage community funding.
- [ ] Collaboration with local government to deliver targeted infrastructure improvements (e.g., amenities, safety upgrades, community facilities).
- [ ] Training, upskilling, and scholarship opportunities for local residents, including pathways into renewable energy and related fields.
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

Community concerns

We understand the community may have concerns about the project and would like to understand which ones are your main worries.

Which of the following potential negative impacts are you most concerned about? (Select all that apply).

- [ ] Construction traffic.
- [ ] Construction noise, vibration or dust.
- [ ] Visual impacts to landscape.
- [ ] Use of agricultural land for the project.
- [ ] Fire risks.
- [ ] Cumulative impacts from multiple renewable energy projects.
- [ ] Other (Please specify)

Do you have other comments about potential impacts from the proposed project?

Access to information and providing feedback

Do you have any other suggestions to improve engagement activities related to this project?

Would you like to stay up to date about the project?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

First Name

Last Name

Phone number:

Email:

Community information session

ib vogt will host a community drop-in session to provide information, answer questions and collect feedback on the project.

Date: Tuesday 24 February 2026

Location: Trafalgar Public Hall, 34 Contingent Street, Trafalgar

Time: 4-7pm

To know more

Visit the project website: www.giddibess.com.au (https://www.giddibess.com.au/)

Project team phone: 1800 739 274

Email: giddibess@ibvogt.com

Appendix D

Public notice

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

Community information session about the Giddi BESS project in Trafalgar East

ib vogt will be hosting a community information session to meet our team and share details about the Giddi BESS project. We will have different project information and maps that will allow you to have a personal discussion about the project with our technical specialists.

This means that you can attend at any time during open hours, giving you the opportunity to ask the project team questions, express any concerns, and contribute ideas for the proposed community sharing program.

DATE
Tuesday 24 February 2026

LOCATION
Trafalgar Public Hall,
34 Contingent Street,
Trafalgar

TIME
4-7pm

If you're unable to attend the community session, you can also share your views through our online survey using the QR code or the link below, available until 8 March 2026.

survey.zohopublic.com.au/zs/CYj3S6

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Visit the project website: **www.giddibess.com.au** | Project team phone **1800 739 274** | Email: **giddibess@ibvogt.com**

Appendix E

Community information boards

E1 Community information session boards

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

About the Giddi BESS Project

- The proposed Giddi Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project is located in Trafalgar East in Baw Baw Shire, approximately 7km north-east of Trafalgar and 4km north-west of Moe.
- A Planning Permit Application was submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning on 18 December 2025. It included an environmental assessment and a summary of earlier community engagement.
- The BESS is being developed to support the electricity grid by providing more reliable, on demand energy as coalfired generators are retired and renewable energy increases.
- A second stage, including a solar hybrid facility may occur, which would have its own consultation and approval process.

The Giddi BESS will include:

- Up to 360MW installed capacity
- 4 hour storage capacity
- A substation and associated switchyard
- Grid connection to existing 220kV Rowville to Yallourn transmission line

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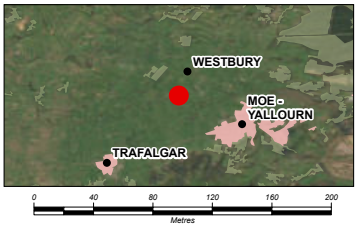
www.giddibess.com.au

Project location for reference: **59 Rowells Rd, Trafalgar East VIC 3824, Australia**

LEGEND

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



Giddi BESS Project

Why was this site selected?

- adjacent access to high capacity transmission infrastructure
- good separation from neighbours (around 1 km)
- minimal visual or environmental impact due to sitting on previously disturbed flat land hosting industrial scale sheds and associated infrastructure
- no native vegetation removal is required
- cul-de-sac location with low traffic and native vegetation providing visual screening.

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Technical Studies

The application process included the following environmental assessments:

- Ecology
- Geotechnical
- Landscape and visual impacts
- Historic heritage
- Contamination and hazards
- Aboriginal cultural heritge
- Fire risk
- Noise and vibration
- Flood and hydrology
- Traffic

Agriculture

- The impact on productive agricultural land has been assessed, and concluded that discontinuation of agricultural uses on the site will have limited impact at a regional scale.

Biodiversity

- The site is highly modified from the current goat dairy use with no native vegetation clearance required.

Fire risk

- A Bushfire and Fire Safety Assessment has been undertaken to inform the facilities design, which includes required fire fighting infrastructure in accordance with CFA Guidelines.

Flood and hydrology

- Parts of the site may experience shallow flooding (under 600mm) in a major flood event.
- The proposed design will include flood-mitigation measures such as including raised ground levels and detailed drainage planning.

Technical Studies

Heritage – Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

- The site is not in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity.
- **ib vogt** have engaged a Heritage Advisor to prepare a voluntary Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation. The CHMP is expected to be finalised in mid-2026.

Heritage – Historic Heritage

- No heritage sites or archaeological items post contact were found.

Noise and vibration

- Noise levels are forecast to meet Environment Protection Authority (EPA) limits at all times.
- Management measure: Noise reduction features (e.g., inverter controls) will be used where needed.

Traffic

- Peak construction will generate ~88 vehicle movements/day, manageable within the existing road network.
- Once operational, the BESS will require minimal weekly vehicle movements, resulting in limited traffic impact.

Tell us what matters to you

SOCIAL IMPACTS	MANAGING IMPACTS	COMMUNITY BENEFITS
Social impacts - What changes (positive and negative) do you think the Giddi BESS might bring to your community?	How could these impacts be reduced or managed?	The Project will create a Community Benefits Fund that will receive annual contributions for as long as the project is operating. Are there ideas for benefits you think we should consider? Who do you think should participate in the Community Benefits Fund committee?

Landscape and visual impacts

- A visual and landscape impact assessment was developed to identify potential impacts on landscape values and views.
- The assessment included a visibility analysis from public and private viewpoints nearby the Project area.
- Visual and landscape impacts have been assessed to be low as the site benefits from existing vegetation screening and co-location with existing transmission infrastructure.

Current view within the site - view north-east from Heartsridge Rd

Photomontage of Giddi BESS - view north-east from Heartsridge Rd

BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS:
Benefits and safety essentials

What are Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and how do they work?

- Batteries are an energy-storage technology that absorb and release electricity when needed.
- They store excess solar and wind energy when production is high and prices are low.
- That stored energy is then used during busy periods to help keep the power system stable.
- Batteries can respond faster than any other energy source, helping prevent shortfalls and improving reliability.

Why are batteries important?

- Solar is the lowest cost source of electricity, but it isn't available at night.
- Batteries allow us to store cheap renewable energy during the day and use it later when we need it most.
- This reduces reliance on expensive fossil fuels during peak demand.

What safety measures are in place?

BESS units typically include multiple layers of safety:

- 24/7 monitoring and alarms to detect heat, smoke or gas
- Advanced detection systems, including temperature, smoke and gas sensors
- Fire suppression systems, such as aerosol units and water spray
- Automatic shut off capability to isolate equipment safely
- High capacity cooling fans to prevent overheating

The project has a Fire Risk Management Plan, Asset Protection Zones and will maintain access roads to support fire services, in accordance with CFA Requirements.

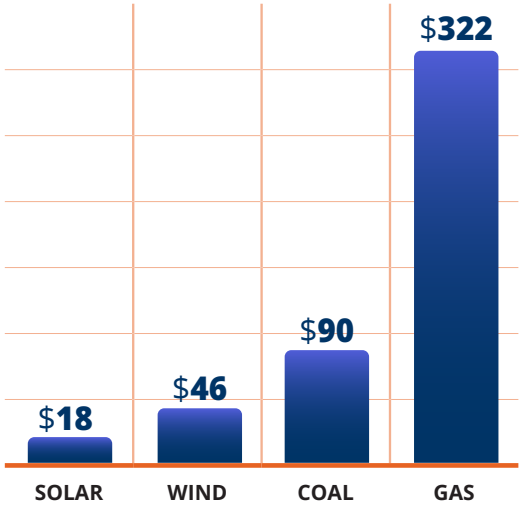
DID YOU KNOW?

In Victoria over the last 12 months:

- Coal has been around 5× more expensive than solar
- Gas has been around 17× more expensive than solar

By using more batteries, we rely less on high cost gas during peak periods, helping keep power prices down for everyone.

Victorian average wholesale electricity price ($ / MWh over last 12 months)



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E2 Community feedback – Consultation board

Table E.1 presents the community feedback collected during the community information session. Participants were invited to record their feedback on a board organised using the headings shown in the first row of the table.

Table E.1 Community feedback consultation board

Social Impacts: What changes (positive and negative) do you think Giddi BESS might bring to your community?	Managing Impacts: How could these impacts be reduced or managed?	Community Benefits: The project will create a Community Benefits Fund that will receive annual contributions for as long as the project is operating. Are there ideas for benefits you think we should consider? Who do you think should participate in the Community Benefits Fund Committee?
No positives	Build it elsewhere, not in Trafalgar	Westbury CFA
Wrong Place	Build it on old Yallourn site, 100s of acres	Westbury Community Hub
Needs to go further east. Old sec sites, e.g., Morwell (look at the industrial site)	Build it 10 times bigger	Trafalgar Public Hall
No good for us locals good for city Melbourne only	Upgrade roads in impact areas!	Trafalgar East Hall
It is not green – using coal to run it	Don't build it!	Community energy projects
We need to store energy for peak time use!		Community resilience infrastructure
How will batteries be recycled?		
Will devalue land – not good		
Who is the sheep farmer??		
Neighbourhood benefit program by distance		
Move the project to industrial land		

Appendix F

Thank you email

Giddi BESS FAQ's

TD

Terry Daly <Terry.Daly@ibvogt.com>
To Giddi BESS

This sender Terry.Daly@ibvogt.com is from outside your organization.

FAQ Giddi information session.pdf
304 KB

Good afternoon

Thank you for attending the Giddi BESS Community Information Session last week.

A number of questions were written by community members on the "Tell us what matters to you" board. We have provided a response to each of these questions in the attached "FAQ Giddi information session" document

Alternatively, you can access a more complete list of Frequently Asked Questions at the following link.

www.giddibess.com.au/_files/ugd/fef3e1_85b8b8d0c8164895b43cd3d685af20de.pdf

Regards
Giddi BESS Team

Kind regards,

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Appendix G

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need battery energy storage systems (BESS)and how are they improving the reliability of the energy system?

Our coal plants are reaching end of life and need to be replaced quickly. Solar and BESS are one of the fastest generation technologies to be deployed. Bloomberg have reported that the price of BESS systems declined by 40% in 2024 and a further 30% in 2025.

BESS work by absorbing and releasing electricity when needed, storing excess low cost solar and wind energy when production is high and demand is low. That stored energy is then used during busy periods to help keep the power system stable. The adoption of BESS technology allows renewable generation to be fully utilised and reduces the number of energy facilities that would otherwise be required to be built.

Batteries also improve reliability because they can respond faster than any other energy source, stepping in within milliseconds to prevent shortfalls and reduce the chance of blackouts.

They also help make power more affordable. In Victoria, over the last 12 months, coal has been about 5 times more expensive than solar, and gas about 17 times more expensive. By storing cheap renewable energy during the day and using it later, batteries reduce the need to switch on expensive gas plants during peak demand. This helps keep power bills lower for everyone.

In short, we need batteries because they:

- store excess renewable energy for when it's needed
- keep the grid stable and reduce the chance of outages
- act quickly to prevent energy shortfalls
- help lower electricity costs by reducing reliance on expensive fuels
- support the transition to cleaner energy.

Why is this project being built here if the energy will mainly go to Melbourne?

The electricity grid is shared, and the best places to build battery projects are where they can support the whole system, not just the closest town. Here's what that means in practice:

- The grid works as one big network: Electricity doesn't stay local, it flows through the Victorian grid wherever it's needed. Even if energy is used in Melbourne, the benefits of stable and reliable power are shared across the whole state.
- Giddi BESS project location is ideal: This site was chosen because it is close to existing transmission lines, meaning the project can connect efficiently to the grid without building long new power corridors. Locating batteries near major transmission infrastructure helps keep costs and environmental impacts down.
- It helps integrate more renewable energy: Victoria is adding large amounts of solar and wind in regional areas. Batteries can store excess renewable energy and release it when demand is high, supporting the entire grid, including regional and metropolitan areas.
- It improves reliability for everyone: Batteries respond in milliseconds, helping to stabilise the grid and reduce the chance of outages across the state. This improves reliability both locally and for places like Melbourne.

Frequently Asked Questions

ib vogt

We've heard concerns about whether a buffer zone is needed around the battery installation to prevent possible health issues for cattle in the project area. Can you clarify this?

There are no special buffer zones required under current guidelines specifically for animal health. We are also unable to identify any authoritative technical or regulatory bodies that have raised any concerns in this regard. During our community consultation livestock health concerns have been raised for two separate issues as follows:

The risk of chemical leaching from the battery containers.

Lithium-ion phosphate batteries are completely sealed systems with multiple containment layers. The perception is the risk increases if there is a fire. They are housed in steel enclosures with internal spill containment systems to contain any chemicals if there is a fire. Even if the internal containment system overflows, there is an external membrane and a containment pond to capture any liquids. Any liquid captured by these containment systems would be pumped into truck tankers and transported offsite in an appropriate disposal facility.

The potential impact of additional EMF.

Batteries themselves do not create any material EMF as the energy is stored. There is EMF emitted from the associated Inverters, Transformers and High Voltage Transmission lines when that energy is being sent into the grid. There have been numerous studies confirming EMF does not have any health impacts on cattle. This includes a study conducted for cattle underneath a 765 kV transmission line, which has higher EMF than the existing 220kV line that the project is connecting to. Noting that cattle have been grazed under the transmission lines in Victoria for decades without health impacts.

[1] A Study of farm animals near 765kV transmission lines. (1980). The Bovine Practitioner, 1980(15), 51-62. https://doi.org/10.21423/bovine-vol1980no15p51-62

Is it possible to raise livestock within the project site, such as calves?

The land being used for the BESS compound and substation are not suitable for livestock and will be secured by security fencing. This area is less than 10 hectares.

For the remainder of the property Ib vogt is committed to exploring this opportunity further and with farmers who are interested in grazing livestock. We welcome feedback and aim to work collaboratively to ensure the arrangement supports both farming and renewable energy operations.

The project is located in a Farming Zone; will the project result in a change to the land zoning?

The Baw Baw Planning Scheme establishes Planning Zones within the Shire. The proposed project is located in the Farming Zone. Each Planning Zone has three types of land uses.

'Section 1 – Permit not required'

'Section 2 – Permit required'

'Section 3 – Prohibited'

Under the Baw Baw Planning Scheme, the use and development of Farming land for a BESS is defined as a 'utility installation'.

A utility installation is allowable with a 'Section 2 – Permit required'. This triggers the requirement for a Planning Permit to be obtained to facilitate the proposed development of the project.

Further information can be found in the relevant section of the Baw Baw Planning Scheme, **here**.

Frequently Asked Questions

ib vogt

What measures are you taking to avoid visual impacts to nearby landholders? Is it going to have a lot of lights?

The project site is located at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac, and the surrounding native vegetation already provides strong natural screening. This makes it difficult to actually see the existing sheds at the proposed BESS location. If nearby landholders would like additional screening, we can incorporate further landscaping, such as planting trees and shrubs, to help reduce views of the site from neighbouring properties and public roads.

In terms of lighting, we are keeping it to the minimum required to support safe worker movement on the site at night. This means that sensors can be used to minimise the amount of lighting. Full site lighting would only be required on an occasional basis, helping to protect the amenity of nearby residents.

How are you planning to avoid noise impacts to nearby landholders and other impacts to biodiversity within the project area?

How are you planning to avoid noise impacts to nearby landholders and other impacts to biodiversity within the project area?

An operational Noise Impact Assessment has been completed to understand and manage any potential noise from the project. The assessment modelled a worst-case operating scenario and confirmed that noise levels will remain well below the EPA Victoria rural requirements for nearby residences.

The BESS site is heavily disturbed from previous uses, and it largely dominated by the 4 hectares of large sheds and associated infrastructure. It does not contain any native flora or fauna that will be impacted.

Are you planning to deliver any community-benefit initiatives within Trafalgar East?

We plan to establish a Community Benefits Fund that will provide an annual contribution once the project is up and running. We've already begun speaking with local community groups to help identify the types of initiatives and organisations that could benefit from this support.

Our intention is for the fund to be managed by an independent committee made up of community members. This committee would consult with the wider community, review applications and decide how funds are allocated each year.

Some of the ideas we've put forward for consideration include:

- upgrades to the Trafalgar Community Hall
- training and scholarship opportunities for Indigenous youth
- support for the local BetterMentall charity
- local environmental restoration and conservation projects.

We want to hear from the community about what matters most, so please share your ideas and feedback through the survey or by contacting us directly.

Frequently Asked Questions

ib vogt

What are the fire risks of a battery and how are you planning to manage that?

We've designed the project to minimise both the chance of a fire starting and the impact if one ever did occur. The site layout avoids areas with very high bushfire risk, dense vegetation and nearby homes. This helps reduce the likelihood of a bushfire reaching the site or a fire spreading from it.

Although the risk is very low, we take fire safety extremely seriously. The BESS has multiple layers of protection:

- continuous monitoring: Each battery container is monitored 24/7 for temperature, smoke, and gas levels
- early detection: If anything unusual is detected, alarms are triggered immediately to notify the onsite operator
- automatic safety responses: The system can isolate individual cells or even shut down an entire container to prevent an issue escalating
- fire suppression: Automatic fire-suppression or cooling systems activate if needed.

If a fire were to occur inside a container, the CFA would be notified straight away.

A detailed Fire Risk Assessment has been prepared as part of the planning application. We will also implement a site-specific Fire Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan, which outline prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery measures. These plans will be reviewed by the CFA.

Additional protection measures built into the project include:

- each battery container has its own internal bund to safely hold water, suppression foam, and any runoff.
- An external retention basin with an impermeable membrane can be isolated to prevent contaminated water escaping.
- a cleared firebreak around the site to reduce risk of spread of fire both externally coming into the property, or internal fire spreading outside.
- at least 40,000 litres of onsite water storage and fire hydrants every 60 metres for CFA use during an emergency. Plus a large bore fed dam on site for additional water.

Is it true that the land prices of neighbouring properties will go down if the project is approved and built?

Independent studies and fact-checked reports consistently reject the idea that renewable or battery projects cause property devaluation.

According to the Clean Energy Council (2025), international research shows that any negative effects on nearby property values tend to be small, short-lived, and limited to properties within around 1–2 kilometres of a project. These impacts generally peak during the construction period and recover quickly. Australian data reflects the same trend, with local government areas in New South Wales and Victoria that host major renewable projects recording strong median property price growth of 35–51% over five years.

Please visit this link to read the complete fact-sheet: Renewable energy property prices and insurance: Fact sheet | Clean Energy Council

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