

# Appendix K

## Agricultural Assessment - Technical Note

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## Technical Note – Summary of Agricultural Assessment completed for the Giddi BESS Project

**Date:** 31 March 2026

RM Consulting Group Pty Ltd (RMCG) were engaged by WSP Australia Pty Limited (WSP) to prepare an Agricultural Assessment for the Giddi BESS Project (Stage 1) and the Trafalgar East Hybrid Solar Farm (Stage 2) as components of an overall staged development. The purpose of this Technical Note is to provide a summary of the Agricultural Assessment completed for the Giddi BESS Project.

### Introduction

The Giddi BESS is proposed to be located within the property located at 59 Rowells Road, Trafalgar East. The first stage installation proposal is for a 360 MW BESS, substation, and associated infrastructure.

The area proposed for the first stage, which is the Giddi BESS, will be approximately 18 hectares and is outlined in yellow, in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Site Layout

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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.

## Land Use

The proposed site for Giddi BESS (Stage 1) is currently being used as a goat dairy with approximately 4-5 employees. The land is leased from the owners by the goat dairy business owners. There are six open side sheds and machinery sheds. The goats do not graze the pasture, and all of their feed is brought in from other sources.

This particular intensive use of the land for the goat dairy is not common in the region and there are numerous other sites where this infrastructure could be moved to (with some relocation and reestablishment costs). This land would typically be used for cow dairy production, and this is the most relevant land-use on which to base the economic evaluation.

The surrounding property to the goat sheds, which is not part of the proposal for Stage 1, is used by the landowners as a dairy out block for raising replacement heifers and for growing silage and hay for dairy cattle.

## Land Capability Assessment

The proposed site meets the definition of high-quality productive land, as defined by DEECA, for the following reasons:

- The climate is suitable for agricultural activities
- The soils are not high quality, but are a moderate quality that is suitable for dairy and grazing
- The site infrastructure of sheds and laneways is suitable for sustained agricultural production.

The property has not been identified as being of strategic significance in any regional studies

## Property Analysis – Agricultural Impact Assessment

### 1.1 Economic Evaluation

The proposed site for Stage 1 would typically be used for dairy production, and this is the most relevant land-use on which to base the economic evaluation. The gross economic return from the property gives a measure of the property's economic value which can then be related to the size of the farm business. Based on the Gross Income per hectare of an average Gippsland farm in the Dairy Farm Monitor project, losing 18 ha from dairy production for Stage 1, would result in \$153,360 of agricultural value being lost to the region. Based on the typical stocking rate of an average Gippsland farm in the Dairy Farm Monitor project, the Rowells Road farm could be expected to carry over 3 dairy cows/ha given the access to irrigation water and typical levels of supplementary feeding. Therefore, the loss of 18ha for dairy production would amount to a reduction of 54 cows and \$257,224 of milk income per year, plus some livestock sales. Therefore, the gross income generated from the 18ha area when used as a typical dairy production farm would range from \$153,360 to \$257,224.

Generally, RMCG finds that a farm business with a single owner operator (that is, one full-time equivalent labour unit) requires in the order of \$500,000 gross income. The 18 ha site of the property is therefore determined as insufficient for an owner/operator operation on its own. The loss of income from taking the 18 ha area out of production from the overall 59 Rowells Road property (273ha) is not large enough to deem the rest of the property economically unsustainable.

### 1.2 Relative Value – Region and State

ABS data for 2020/21, shows the total agricultural value for the Rural Shire of Baw Baw as \$447,897,444. Therefore, the production from this property of \$257,224 represents approximately 0.057% of the Council's agricultural production, and approximately 0.0017% of the state's agricultural value of output. The economic output from the site is therefore considered to be economically insignificant at a regional and state level. However, if this change in land use is replicated on other farms, the cumulative impact on the local and regional agricultural output should be considered.

### 1.3 Assessment of Strategically Significant Agricultural Land

The Solar Energy Facilities – Design and Development Guideline to support the siting, design, and assessment of large-scale solar energy facilities and their utilities in Victoria outlines the Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) Clause 53.13 Renewable energy



facility on what should be considered by responsible authorities before deciding on an application. With regard to Stage 1, the considerations are to be met and so this site could be considered by the responsible authorities.

## Conclusion

At the local level, Baw Baw Shire has 89,885ha of agricultural land, most of which is used for livestock grazing (as occurs on this property), a loss of 18 ha as a result of the proposed BESS development represents 0.02% of the total agricultural land in the Baw Baw Shire.

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