

17. Consultation Plan

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**ADVERTISED
PLAN**



WIMMERA PLAINS ENERGY FACILITY

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

MAY 2020

PREPARED FOR BAYWA R.E

Prepared for
BayWa r.e.

Version	Author	Date	Description of changes
1	Fi Cotter	300519	First Draft
2	Fi Cotter	200420	Updated version for planning lodgement
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1 OVERVIEW

This Consultation and Engagement Plan is prepared for BayWa r.e in relation to the proposed Wimmera Plains Energy Facility (Project). It was originally prepared in late 2018 and has been updated to reflect changes in the Project.

The proposed Wimmera Plains Energy Facility is bounded by Kalkee East Rd and Mokepilly Rd to the north, Dogwood Road, Dooen-North Rd and Kelly Rd to the west, Ladlows Road and Johns Rd to the south and Jung Wheat Road and Jung North Rd to the east. The facility will consist of approximately 54 turbines with a total capacity of around 302 megawatts. It will connect into the 220 kV electrical network which traverses the site. More details about the Project will be made available throughout the development of the Project.

BayWa r.e is a German headquartered renewable energy developer. BayWa r.e have received approval for a two turbine wind farm in the same location in 2018, and a hybrid facility in May 2019.

This report outlines the purpose and approach to community engagement activities over the lifetime of the Project, from now through to the completion of any construction of the facility.

2 ABOUT BAYWA R.E.

BayWa r.e. is a German headquartered renewable energy developer that has installed over 2,000 MW in renewable energy generation capacity and has 5,000 MW under operations management globally.

Founded in 1923, BayWa r.e AG is a trading and services company that operates in the agricultural, energy and construction sectors. In 2017, BayWa r.e AG had over €16.1 billion in revenues and 17,550 employees globally. The company is listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange (DAX) with a market capitalisation of €1.0 billion.

BayWa r.e. Projects Australia Pty Ltd began operations in Australia in 2017 through the acquisition of Future Energy Pty Ltd and its pipeline of wind farm projects. Future Energy was established in 2004 to develop, construct, own and operate renewable energy projects throughout Australia.

BayWa r.e. has various projects under active development in Australia which include six wind and five solar projects as well as a hybrid project with capacities ranging from 7.2 MW to 300 MW.

Two of BayWa r.e. wind projects and one solar project are currently under construction, namely the Ferguson Wind Farm, Diapur Wind Farm and Yatpool Solar Farm. Projects that are currently under development and received planning permits include Jung Renewable Energy Facility, a hybrid project comprising wind, solar and battery storage, Bendigo Solar Farm and Ouyen Solar Farm. For more information concerning these projects visit www.fergusonwindfarm.com.au , www.diapurwindfarm.com.au, www.bendigolarfarm.com.au, www.jungrenewableenergyfacility.com.au.

BayWa r.e. also owns currently operating Karadoc Solar Farm in north western Victoria and Hughenden Solar Farm in Queensland.

For more information about BayWa r.e. and specific projects please visit our website at www.baywa-re.com.au/en/wind-solar, call them on +61 3 9429 5629, or email us at info@baywa-re.com.au.

3 BACKGROUND

There is a level of community awareness about BayWa r.e and the Project in the region as community engagement activities has been undertaken in the area since early 2018 related to other two approved projects developed by BayWa r.e.:

- Jung Wind Farm – two wind turbines
- Jung Renewable Energy Facility – solar and battery linked to the Jung Wind Farm.

Community engagement for the Wimmera Plains Energy Facility Project commenced in March 2019 with letters being delivered to surrounding dwelling owners out to 5km, which includes all residents of the township of Jung. The letter outlined a description of the Project, and the various benefits available to the local community, including the Community Benefit fund. A Community Drop in Session was then held in the Jung Town hall on the 16th March 2019. Further neighbour visits were conducted in April 2019. A further update letter drop-off was undertaken over the 3th and 4th of September 2019 with another on the 19th and 20th November 2019.

The overwhelming feedback from the community to date has been positive regarding the Project.

4 ABOUT THIS PROJECT

4.1 SITE AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed site envelope of the proposed Wimmera Plains Energy Facility is bounded by Kalkee East Rd and Mokepilly Rd to the north, Dogwood Road, Dooen-North Rd and Kelly Rd to the west, Ladlows Road and Johns Rd to the south and Jung Wheat Road and Jung North Rd to the east.

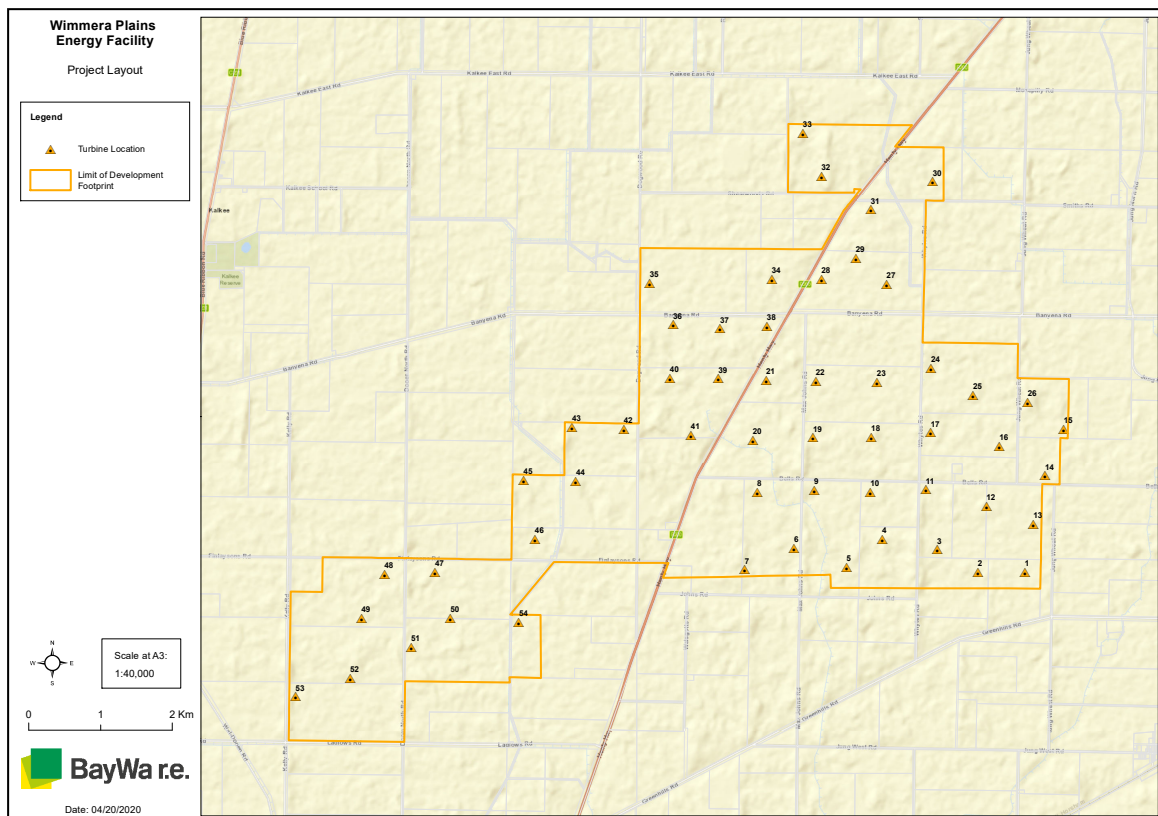


FIGURE -1 PROJECT LAYOUT

If approved, the Project will consist of approximately 54 turbines with a total capacity of around 302 megawatts. It will connect into the 220 kV electrical network which traverses the site. The turbines themselves will be up to 247 m in height and together they will produce enough green power for about 258,000 homes, making their greenhouse benefit equivalent to planting over 2,250,000 trees.

The energy and greenhouse benefits of the Project are shown in the table below.

Energy output per year (estimated)	1,485,000 MWh
Greenhouse gas abatement per year	1,485,000 Tones CO ₂
Equivalent number of households supplied	~258,000
Equivalent number of cars taken off the road	~338,000
Equivalent number of trees planted	~2,250,000

This site was chosen for the following reasons:

- It receives undisturbed wind flow with strong, consistent wind speeds;
- There are large setbacks to nearby dwellings;
- The existing land use is agricultural and therefore there will be minimal effects on flora and fauna;
- It is in close proximity to the electrical grid; and
- It offers easy access.

Additionally, the majority of cables associated with the energy facility will be located underground although there will be a single overhead line connecting two substations within the Project.

4.2 PLANNING APPLICATION

The planning application for the Wimmera Plains Energy Facility is now to be lodged with the Minister for Planning following the thorough consultation program that has been undertaken and the site has been fully assessed for environmental impacts. This report accompanies the planning application. Further community engagement will be undertaken during and after the planning application process as outlined in this document.

The application will be assessed against the *Policy and Planning Guidelines for the Development of Wind Energy Facilities in Victoria* which set standards and limits covering the following:

- Community amenity;
- Sound compliance;
- Landscape impact;
- Shadow flicker;
- Impacts to flora and fauna;
- Impacts to aviation
- Impacts to cultural heritage; and
- Electromagnetic interference.

At the appropriate time, we anticipate that all of the planning documents relating to the Project will be made available for public viewing via the DELWP and Project website. During COVID-19 DELWP are not requiring hard copies of documents to be supplied at Council offices. Alternative arrangements can be made if a person given notice cannot access documents online.

4.3 PROJECT TIMELINE

The indicative timeline for the Project is as follows:

Q1 2019 – Consultation Commences

Q1 - Q3 2019 – Specialised technical assessments undertaken

Q2 2020 – Planning application lodged

Q2 – Q3 2020 - Planning application assessed by DELWP

Q4 2020 – If approved, Permit issued followed by secondary consent reports preparation (eg road surveys, Native Vegetation Management Plans, Bat and Avifauna Management Plans)

Q2 2021 - Secondary consents package lodged with DELWP

Q3 2021 to Q3 2022 – Contract negotiations / Connection agreements / Offtake contracts

Q1 – Q3 2023 – Construction

Q4 2023 – Q1 2024 – Energisation

5 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

5.1 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- identify stakeholders;
- characterise the stakeholder groups in terms of their interests, concerns and consultation needs and potential to provide local knowledge;
- describe the consultation methods to be used and outline a schedule of consultation activities; and
- outline how inputs from stakeholders will be recorded, considered and/or addressed through various stages of the Project.

5.2 ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

A considered and thorough communication and engagement process will be a critical element of the Project's success. This section summarises how the Project team will communicate and engage with key stakeholders, continue to build brand identity for BayWa r.e, establish trust, and develop effective communication tools and tactics to support the successful implementation of the Project.

Our communication and engagement activities will be underpinned by the engagement levels defined by the 2004 International Association of Public Participation: informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering.

Guiding principles:

- Move from informing to listening
- Increasing level of trust in relationships
- Decisions based on collective needs, not individual needs
- People genuinely feel a part of the process and own the solution

5.3 OBJECTIVES

Business objectives: (what BayWa r.e is aiming to achieve)

- Secure community and stakeholder support for the Project (including planning and environmental approvals as required.)
- Successful construction and operation of the large-scale wind farm
- Ongoing successful partnership between Project partners including funders
- Ongoing positive relationship with surrounding neighbours and key stakeholders such as Horsham Rural City Council.

Communication objectives:

- Raise community and stakeholder awareness about the Project and its benefits and opportunities presented by the shift to a renewable energy future.
- Offer community members and stakeholders a genuine opportunity to discuss the Project and any potential issues and benefits of the Project and submit any concerns formally.
- Communication strategies align objectives of key stakeholders:
 - The community consultation requirements of the DELWP and Horsham Rural City Council
 - The requirements of the landholders
 - The broader State and Federal Government energy policy and strategy statements as relevant to the Project
- There is consistent, relevant and regular communication between partners – internal and external.
- Project participants understand and support the Project.
- Project stakeholders and the public have access to the information they need to support development of a successful Project.
- Community and stakeholders provided with adequate information.
- Support for the Project is maintained throughout the Project life cycle.
- The engagement is flexible and responsive to the outcomes throughout the engagement process.

5.4 STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or other organisations or entities that have a ‘stake’ in a decision, issue or situation relating to the Project.

Not all stakeholder groups are homogenous and within each stakeholder group there will be varying levels of interest, impact, needs, concerns, wants, relationships and influence.

- Involved landowners – those who have Project infrastructure on their land with landowner agreements in place.
- Neighbouring landowners – Neighbours within the 5km of the wind farm.
- Jung Township – Includes people within the Jung township
- Broader Community – people who may own land in the area but not reside there
- Council– Horsham Rural City Council is the relevant Shire Council.

6 COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

6.1 ACTION PLAN

Prior to developing this Community Engagement Plan, the Project team has sought the support of the current landowners of the land, as well the surrounding properties out to 3.6km, including the Jung township. In addition, the Project team has consulted Horsham Council to inform them about the proposed Project.

	Action /Community	Timing	Tools	Responsibility
1	1:1 Conversations with immediately adjoining landholders and broader community.	Underway. Commenced March 2019. June 2019.	Proposed Layout Plan. FAQ Sheet 1.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
2	Project update to adjoining landholders.	June 2019.	Project Flyer/FAQ Sheet 2.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
3	Briefing of Key Councillors and Council Staff.	June 2019.	Development Plans. Presentation.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
4	Project update pre lodgement of planning application to adjoining landowners and broader community.	October 2019.	FAQ Sheet 3. Notice in the paper.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.

TABLE -1 PAST CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

The planning application for the facility is now being lodged with DELWP. The table below - Future Actions outlines future consultation activities.

	Action /Community	Timing	Tools	Responsibility
5	Follow up conversations with landholders.	Immediately following notification of the planning application.	Formal notification from DELWP.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
6	Upload Project summary to websites.	On lodgement of the Planning application with DELWP.	Plans and Project summary.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
7	State Government Briefings.	To be agreed.	Presentations.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
8	Community Drop in Session	During formal public notification period.	Posters. FAQ Sheet 4.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
8	Local Businesses.	At community and stakeholder event to be held after any permit issued.	Presentations and Progress Summaries, notice in newspaper and other media channels.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.

	Action /Community	Timing	Tools	Responsibility
10	Update to all key stakeholders following community meeting.	Immediately following community meeting neighbours notice.	Progress report and email.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
11	Media releases.		As required.	BayWa r.e. and representatives.
12	Ground break and Opening Ceremony.			BayWa r.e. and representatives.
13	During construction.			BayWa r.e. and representatives.
14	Formal Opening.			BayWa r.e. and representatives.

TABLE 2 FUTURE CONSULTATION ACTIONS

6.2 KEY MESSAGES

There are key messages for the Project, as follows:

- The Wimmera Plains Energy Facility will bring a range of benefits for the local and surrounding communities.
- If approved, the wind farm will consist of approximately 54 turbines with a total capacity of around 302 megawatts. It will connect into the 220 kV electrical network which traverses the site. The turbines themselves will be up to 247 m in height.
- The Project will produce enough green power for about 258,000 homes, making their greenhouse benefit equivalent to planting over 2,250,000 trees.
- A planning application for the Project has been lodged with DELWP in May 2020.
- As part of the development, the Project team will initiate a community reference group made up of local community members who will guide the distribution of the proposal annual Community Fund which is the equivalent of \$1000 per turbine (approx. \$54,000 per annum).
- After construction is complete the **Proximity Grade 1** benefit will be established. This benefit applies to every owner of a habitable dwelling within 2km of any wind turbine and will consist of a payment equivalent to \$1500 per annum per turbine within 2km of the dwelling.
- After construction is complete the **Proximity Grade 2** benefit will be implemented. This benefit will include all dwellings within 3.6km of a wind turbine and will consist of a rooftop solar panel system of 5kW provided by BayWa r.e.

7 STAKEHOLDER CONTACT MANAGEMENT

7.1 STAKEHOLDER CONTACT MANAGEMENT

A stakeholder database and register has been established to record and track details of all stakeholder and community contact (including enquiries, complaints, meetings, events and question arising from community consultation.)

The Register will continue to be utilised to capture community members contact details, the nature of the contact, how the contact was received, any matters raised, and any actions required, as well as Project team responses, follow-up and close out.

7.2 ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

The timely and effective management of queries and complaints is a critical component to the successful delivery of the Wimmera Plains Energy Facility. Complaints will be investigated, and an appropriate response provided as soon as is practicably possible within 3 working days of receiving the complaint.

8 REVIEW

This plan will be regularly monitored, and any revisions or updates will be undertaken quarterly or at major Project milestones. This strategy will ensure a culture of continuous improvement, and that any lessons learned are incorporated.

Ongoing evaluation is part of the planning and management of community engagement activities and outlined in engagement execution plans that sit under the plan.

Monitoring and evaluation will include:

- Feedback forms for participants of stakeholder engagement activities such as community consultation sessions and workshops.
- Regular review of complaints and enquiries received to identify emerging issues and enquiry trends.
- Media monitoring to maintain a current understanding of community concerns.