COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER #1

Maules Creek Solar Farm

Welcome to our first Community Newsletter which includes updates on the project's activity in the next few months.

What's the project?

FRV Services Australia (FRV) is proposing to build and operate a solar farm up to 120 MW and battery energy storage system (BESS) up to 150 MW to produce a critical new source of clean energy for New South Wales.

FRV plans to connect this solar farm to the existing 132 kV Narrabri to Tamworth overhead transmission line, which is owned and operated by service provider, TransGrid. This powerline crosses through the Maules Creek Solar Farm site.

The Maules Creek Solar Farm will be capable of supplying renewable energy for approximately 40,000 homes by 2027.

The location of the Maules Creek Solar Farm

The future happens here

Community drop-in-sessions this month

The Maules Creek Solar Farm will be running community drop-in-sessions this month where you can:

- Find out more about the project from the project team
- Discuss the project's technical studies
- Pick up printed project information
- Have your say about the project

TUESDAY 28 MAY NARRABRI

Where: The Community Kiosk (Community Caravan), 104 Maitland Street, Narrabri
When: 3 – 6pm

WEDNESDAY 29 MAY BOGGABRI AND MAULES CREEK

Where: Outside Hassab's Fashon, 159 Merton Street, Boggabri
When: 12 – 2pm

Where: Maules Creek Hall, 2249 Harparary Road, Maules Creek
When: 5 – 7pm

Please send an rsvp of your attendance at the Maules Creek Hall drop-in-session to maulescreek@frv.com

Who is FRV?

FRV Services Australia (FRV) is a highly experienced and capable solar farm developer. FRV has developed 1.6 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy projects globally. We have 11 projects operational and under construction across Australia and New Zealand. We have many more projects within the development pipeline that are not yet ready to build.

What stage is the project at?

The Maules Creek Solar Farm is considered a State Significant Development (SSD). As an SSD, the solar farm will be subject to an assessment by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI). The Project will also need to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The aim of the EIS is to ensure that all relevant environmental, social and economic impacts of the project are identified and assessed and to recommend mitigation measures to avoid and minimise any negative impacts.

Community feedback is a vital part of this process and we will continue to let you know how you can have your say. Later we will let you know how your views have been considered as part of the EIS and how it may shape the project, where possible.

The project's Development Application and EIS will be submitted by September 2024.

Technical studies proceeding

FRV Services Australia is undertaking a program of technical and environmental studies led by experts which will feed into the project's EIS, and includes ongoing consultation with affected stakeholders and the broader community.

What happens next?

EIS gets exhibited

Once we finalise the technical assessments, a DA is submitted to DPHI and, if accepted, the EIS will be publicly exhibited for 28 days. This allows the community and people with an interest in the project the opportunity to better understand the project and make a submission.

FRV will proactively promote the EIS process to ensure good public visibility of this process and opportunities to provide formal feedback.

A decision is made

The Minister, or their delegate, evaluates the merits of the project, considering the economic, environmental, and social impacts, the issues raised by the community, and the principles of an ecologically sustainable development.

After determining the project, the Minister will publish a notice setting out the decision and how community views were considered in making the decision.

FEASIBILITY

- Community and neighbour engagement
- Map site constraints

PLANNING

- Access local knowledge to inform better outcomes
- Complete studies and surveys

APPROVALS

- Exhibit Development Application
- Seek public feedback
- Adjust plans to reflect feedback

PRE-CONSTRUCTION

- Continue to engage
- Consider options for local employment

What are the project benefits?

Construction workforce

At the peak of construction, FRV estimates the project will employ about 150 people and employment opportunities will range from skilled to manual labour.

Utilising qualified local contractors is always a key element for FRV when developing a project. FRV is keen to work with local service and product suppliers to stimulate the local economy. We strongly encourage local individuals to put forward their interest in employment either for labouring or as a supplier via our website.

Operational jobs

We estimate that the solar farm would directly employ 4 to 5 full time employees on a permanent basis. This is in addition to the maintenance contracts that would be required for tasks such as panel cleaning, fence repair, road grading, etc. FRV would rely on local contractors or service providers for these tasks.

Community Benefits

As owners and operators of the solar farm, FRV would be a part of the local community, with the solar farm planned to operate for at least 30 years.

FRV is speaking with Council and members of the community about a Benefit Sharing Scheme, which would see FRV make up-front and ongoing payments which are to be spent on local projects.

It is likely that at least part of those funds would be administered by Council under a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA).

Other benefits may include potential road or intersection upgrades, potential contributions to community projects and the delivery of clean, zero emissions electricity to meet the region's energy needs.

Building a safe and reliable project through technical studies

Led by industry experts, FRV is undertaking technical and environmental studies which will inform the EIS. These include:

Biodiversity

Biodiversity studies have recently concluded after 15 months of detailed assessment. During this time, ecologists have been examining in detail the potential impacts of the project on flora and fauna.

The biodiversity survey has covered over 400 hectares, and FRV has shaped the project to avoid impacts on native vegetation as much as possible. The potential impacts to biodiversity, and commitments on how impacts will be managed, will be fully documented in the EIS.

Cultural heritage

The Aboriginal heritage survey has been completed in collaboration with the Traditional Owners, the Gomeroi. A site walk-over occurred over several days with Registered Aboriginal Parties. Following the assessment, it was determined that the project is unlikely to impact any cultural sites or cultural heritage values.

Landscape and visual amenity

This detailed assessment will consider how the project will look from properties and vantage points surrounding the site, including glint and glare. The assessment will include any measures and commitments on how visual impacts will be reduced as far as possible.

Noise and Vibration

Solar Farms do not generate significant noise, but FRV recognises that construction of a large project can be disruptive to local residents, particularly in a rural area.

FRV is conducting a detailed noise assessment to demonstrate that the project will comply with relevant noise standards, both during construction and operation.

Traffic and Transport

This study will analyse the impact to local roads during the construction period and when the site is operational. Traffic volumes, noise, safety, the need for road upgrades and whether vegetation needs to cleared will all be considered.

Hydrology

A hydrology assessment will be completed to fully understand any interactions the project may have with stormwater and flooding regimes.

This assessment may shape the project, both to protect solar farm infrastructure, and to reduce any adverse impacts on neighbouring properties, as we understand that water resources are important to agricultural businesses in the area.

Soils and agriculture

Grazing of sheep may continue within the solar farm once it is operational. The project will not be constructed on highly productive or irrigated land. However, a study assessing the potential impacts on agricultural land and local agricultural industries will be completed.

Hazards

While solar farms are inherently safe, FRV will fund a study looking at how hazards such as bushfires can be mitigated, and how the battery storage component of the project will have all the necessary systems in place to prevent safety issues occurring.

Social and Economic Impacts

The project will conduct a Social Impact Assessment to identify, predict and evaluate social impacts arising from the project and propose responses to the predicted impacts.

We're here to help

If you would like to discuss the project, or any queries you have please get in touch with us via the details below.

maulescreek@frv.com

maulescreeksolarfarm.com

frv

The future happens here