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## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER #2

# Maules Creek Solar Farm

### About the project

FRV is developing a 120 MW solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS) in Maules Creek, to supply clean, renewable energy to the people of New South Wales.

If approved, the project will:

- produce enough energy to power up to **40,000 homes**
- avoid up to **160,000 tonnes** of CO<sup>2</sup> each year
- **create 150 jobs** during construction, and 5 ongoing, full-time jobs when operational
- directly contribute at least **\$1.45 million to the local community**, over the life of the project.



The location of the Maules Creek Solar Farm



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## Benefit Sharing Program

FRV is developing a Benefit Sharing Program in consultation with near neighbours and the wider community to ensure the project's benefits are shared locally.

Investment funding will be allocated to organisations that can demonstrate needs and benefits in areas such as occupational training, local infrastructure development and sponsorships. The funding will include a large up-front contribution in the first year of operation and annualised payments over the 25 year life of the project.

We would love to hear from Maules Creek residents about ways that the Benefit Sharing Program could have the most impact. Please contact us at [maulescreek@frv.com](mailto:maulescreek@frv.com) if you would like to discuss initiatives that could benefit the local community.

## Maules Creek Community Consultative Committee

The Maules Creek Community Consultative Committee (CCC) recently held its first meeting on 29 August, with independent chairperson, Margaret Harvie, appointed to facilitate.

FRV established the CCC to provide another opportunity for the local community to share their views on the project and receive the latest updates. The meeting helped us develop a deeper understanding of the concerns important to the project's neighbours.

To view the CCC presentation and meeting minutes, or find out more about the project, please email [maulescreek@frv.com](mailto:maulescreek@frv.com) or visit [www.maulescreeksolarfarm.com](http://www.maulescreeksolarfarm.com).

## Listening to community

We've listened to feedback from the Maules Creek community, and are making changes to the solar farm, where possible, based on community feedback.

| What we heard                                                                                                                            | What we did                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Local members of the community expressed concern about the visual impact of the solar farm on neighbours.                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We reduced the maximum size of the solar panels from 5.5 metres in height to approximately 3 metres in height.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                              |
| Neighbours asked to increase vegetation screens along Glencoe Road, to provide additional screening of the solar farm.                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have committed to planting additional native vegetation along the project's complete border with Glencoe Road, to screen views of the solar farm.</li></ul>                                                                                                                        |
| Some Maules Creek residents were concerned about the number of heavy vehicles using local roads during the 15-month construction period. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We reduced the peak traffic numbers from 80 to 45 heavy vehicles per day, as part of a detailed review of the construction schedule.</li><li>• This would only apply during the peak construction period of approximately 3 months, and would be much lower at other times.</li></ul> |
| Neighbours expressed concern about the proximity of the solar farm to their land.                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have redesigned the project so that solar panels will be placed at least 30 metres from adjacent landowners.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                             |

what  
we  
heard



## Project update

The project's technical studies have substantially progressed since our last newsletter, as summarised below.

### Biodiversity

FRV has designed the project to largely avoid impacts on biodiversity.

Most native vegetation within the project site will be retained. Any unavoidable impacts to native vegetation, such as clearing for road upgrades, will be offset in accordance NSW requirements. The project will also undertake additional planting of native vegetation, to screen views of the project and to improve connectivity.

### Cultural heritage

A thorough site investigation was undertaken in partnership with archaeologists and Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), helping us gain a deeper understanding of the area's Cultural Heritage.

Whilst consultation with RAPs is ongoing, the site investigation concluded that the project would not impact any artefacts and landscapes of scientific or cultural significance.

### Landscape and visual amenity

We recognise that some members of the community have indicated that the project's potential are a primary concern for them.

The project's EIS will include a comprehensive visual assessment by a Landscape Architect, including detailed computer visualisations from public viewpoints and the nearest neighbours. This assessment is currently being prepared.

The vast majority of neighbours within 4 km of the project won't see the project from their homes, with the nearest occupied home being over 1.2 km from the nearest solar panel.

It will not be possible to see the solar farm from most public roads and viewpoints, with the exception of Glencoe Road. FRV is developing a landscaping plan in consultation with the community and landscape architects, with the aim of planting vegetation that will screen views of the solar farm.

FRV will also soon meet with near neighbours to discuss the findings of the visual assessment. For more information, please contact the project team.

### Noise and vibration

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

We've commenced noise modelling studies, however it is unlikely the solar farm will be audible to neighbours when operational.

### Hydrology and flooding

Flood studies are underway. This assessment is undertaken to ensure that the project won't negatively impact stormwater flows or increase the risk of flooding off-site.

Aside from digging and back-filling trenches for some cables, the solar farm would not involve substantial earthworks or cut and fill, meaning any changes to stormwater flows are unlikely.

### Soils and agriculture

A study looking at the agricultural productivity of the area is underway. This includes an analysis of the soils and history of the site.

The site is currently used for grazing livestock, and it is planned that sheep grazing would take place once the solar farm is operational. This means that the site will continue to contribute to agricultural production in the region whilst also generating clean, renewable energy.

### Fire and Risk Assessment

We take safety very seriously, and some of the numerous safety measures that we have committed to include:

- allowing a setback distance of infrastructure of 30 metres from all neighbours
- a cleared, asset protection zone around the entire project
- designing the project and the battery in accordance with best practice industry standards.
- storage tanks on site for fire-fighting purposes.

While solar farms are inherently safe, FRV will complete a comprehensive risk assessment as part of its EIS.



## Site suitability

Renewable energy projects and, in particular, solar farms require specific conditions in order for a site to be suitable for a project to go ahead. FRV considers that Maules Creek is an ideal location for a solar farm because:



The area has abundant sunlight and excellent solar irradiation.



The land has previously been largely cleared and heavily disturbed, minimising impacts on biodiversity.



The land is largely flat, reducing visual impacts, and allowing for cost-effective construction.



The site avoids the best quality farming land in the region, and would continue to allow grazing sheep.



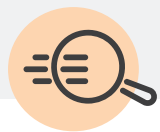
The site is adjacent to the national electricity grid, reducing the need for extensive new overhead lines.



The electrical network has capacity to host the project at this location.

## Project timeline

FRV is currently preparing its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and we aim to submit a Development Application (DA) in late 2024. We will continue to consult with the community throughout this process, and will keep you informed about further opportunities to have your say about the project.



### FEASIBILITY

- Community and neighbour engagement
- Map site constraints



### PLANNING

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

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### CONSULTATION

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



### ASSESSMENT

- Continue to engage
- Consider options for local employment



### OPERATION

- Generate clean, renewable energy, powering a sustainable Australia



### CONSTRUCTION

- Local employment and procurement
- Appoint neighbour liaison officer to keep the community well informed



### PRE-CONSTRUCTION

- Planting vegetation buffers
- Preparing environmental management plans



### CONNECTION

- Comprehensive planning with Transgrid to connect to the national energy grid



## 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



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