



# YASS SOLAR ENERGY PARK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT Q&A

Thank you to the local community for their participation and feedback during our initial consultation period with regard to the proposed Yass Solar Energy Park project. It has been great to receive valuable local feedback on the project at this early stage. The key topics discussed during our recent information sessions have been summarised below.

## LOCATION

### Why has this location been chosen?

The proposed site for the Yass Solar Energy Park is located approximately 2.6 kilometres south-west of the Yass township.

The site has been identified as a suitable location based on a number of factors including its good solar resources, land availability and support from landowners. The site is located predominantly on existing agricultural land and will not impact the productive capacity of the land. The project's close proximity to Transgrid's existing Yass substation directly adjacent to the site also makes the proposed location a favourable choice for renewable energy development.

While ENGIE has agreements with three landowners for a potential development site of up to 328 hectares, it is important to note that the size and location of the solar farm and other infrastructure is still being explored, taking into account environmental and engineering considerations, and feedback from surrounding residents.

### Will there be an impact to property values and insurance premiums as a result of the project?

As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase, an economic impact assessment will take place to assess the potential effect of the project on the local economy, including property values. The assessment will help ENGIE to understand any economic impacts and benefits of the project and inform decision-making processes.

## BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE (BESS)

### What battery technology is currently considered for the solar farm?

As we are in the early stages of planning the design of the project, further studies and assessments will be undertaken to help define the specifications and requirements for the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). While lithium-ion based technology is a leading solution in the industry, other emerging technologies could be considered, based on their suitability for the project.

## SECURITY

### What security and monitoring will be used at the solar farm?

Lighting and CCTV including low level night-time lighting, would be required for safety, maintenance, and security purposes and would likely be provided in key locations of the compound area and potentially at power conversion units around the solar farm and the BESS. Lighting outside of these key locations would only be switched on if maintenance activities are required at night.

Security fencing would be installed along the perimeter of the site. A vegetation screen would be provided if and where required. Separate fencing would also be provided around high voltage electrical equipment such as the project substation. The height of the fencing is not anticipated to be greater than three meters.

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### MANAGING IMPACTS

#### Will ENGIE offer neighbour agreements where visual impacts cannot be sufficiently mitigated?

ENGIE considers a range of benefit sharing programs as part of its project developments to help minimise potential impacts and maximise benefits to the community.

As a first step, ENGIE will seek to avoid, minimise and/or offset impacts of the project. This includes consideration of factors that could be incorporated into the design of the project and potential mitigation measures, such as vegetation screening to minimise visual impacts.

The design of the project and its benefit-sharing initiatives such as neighbour benefit programs, will take into account feedback from the local community and those living closest to the project.

#### Will there be noise from the project site once operational?

Solar panels themselves are completely silent, however, inverters, tracker motors and transformers on a solar farm can generate low levels of sound.

As a guide, noise specialists were engaged to undertake an assessment of the potential 'worst-case condition' noise emissions from a similar-sized solar farm in NSW, located in a rural farming area. Findings of the assessment conclude that once operational, predicted noise levels could be up to 42 dBA at 0.3 kilometres from site and will reduce as distance increases. At two kilometres, noise levels were predicted to be up to 26 dBA.

It is important to note that the above information is indicative only and results may vary for conditions at the Yass project.

As part of the EIS phase, a detailed noise and vibration impact assessment will be undertaken to assess the potential environmental noise emissions from the operation of the proposed Yass Solar Energy Park. This includes the potential for noise impacts from road traffic and operational infrastructure, and noise and vibration impacts from construction equipment and machinery.

Operational noise impacts will be assessed in accordance with the *NSW Noise Policy for Industry*.

### RISKS

#### Will environmental impact studies include a hazards analysis?

As part of the EIS, a Preliminary Hazard Analysis (PHA) will be prepared which will consider potential hazards for various project infrastructure elements associated with electrical, arc flash, fire, chemical (including release of hazardous materials), explosive gas, reaction, exposure to electric and magnetic fields. External factors such as unauthorised access, bushfire, lightning storm, rain and flood will also be considered.

The PHA will include a risk analysis of the potential consequence (severity of impact) and likelihood of a hazardous event. If an event is considered to present a high likelihood or significant consequence and is assigned a high risk rating, ENGIE will develop management strategies to help mitigate the risks associated with the event.

The assessment will aim to demonstrate that all infrastructure would be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with Australian standards and manufacturer's specifications, to minimise risks and provide the best possible asset protection.

In addition, hydrology studies will be conducted to understand the overall impact of water flow through the site and a water impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure that impacts such as excavation, road works and transport of machinery are adequately mitigated through avoidance, minimisation and management.

In consultation with the NSW Rural Fire Service, a Bushfire Risk Assessment will also be undertaken to assess potential hazards and risks associated with the project and in the event of a bushfire.

#### We get a lot of fog in that area. Will fog affect solar energy generation?

ENGIE has chosen to use a single axis tracking system for the solar farm, to track the sun from east to west. Even during heavy fog conditions, there will still be light available for the solar farm to operate. The best hours of energy generation for this system are from 7am to 5pm which means that, as foggy conditions typically occur in the early morning, there will be minimal impact to solar resources and generation as a result of early morning fog.

During the EIS phase, ENGIE will install a weather monitoring system at the project site to better understand the impacts of the various weather conditions and any potential impact on solar energy generation.

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### LAND ZONING

#### Could the project site be rezoned residential?

A preliminary analysis has been undertaken on the key sites identified within the Yass Valley Settlement Strategy for future rezoning. The project land does not impede on areas identified within the Strategy.

The Transgrid Yass Substation and network of transmission lines has been identified as a limitation to settlement growth to the west and south-west of Yass. Development of this land utilising the existing infrastructure enables use of this land and economic benefits to the local and regional markets.

### DECOMMISSIONING

#### Will the site be rehabilitated and the parts recycled at the end of project life?

Decommissioning is the responsibility of the solar farm owner. The Project will be required to remove all components of the solar farm as part of the Government's approval conditions and landowner agreements. As part of standard approval conditions, a decommissioning plan will be required to be submitted to the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) for approval before construction can commence.

As solar PV panels and counterparts come to their end of life, there is an industry-wide demand for PV recycling capacity. ENGIE has a dedicated Research and Innovation (R&I) division to help identify, explore, experiment and deploy solutions that will make the energy transition possible and apply them to our industrial facilities or those of our customers and partners. Based in Belgium, ENGIE's R&I team are working on recycling technologies and opportunities for the reuse of decommissioned materials. ENGIE is also looking to consolidate its research and practices to align with Australian vendors and agencies and meet local industry standards and capabilities.

As the peak body for the clean energy industry in Australia, the Clean Energy Council (CEC) is currently working with the industry to explore end-of-life and disposal processes for both the solar PV industry and the wind industry in Australia. The CEC has established a Manufacturing and Product Life Cycle Working Group to discuss issues and explore barriers to the reuse and repair of solar PV panels, and help guide the direction of the CEC.

The ENGIE AMEA Sustainability Report conveys and discloses all aspects of our business on environment, sustainability and governance requirements. You can view and download the latest report at: [engie.com.au/home/about-engie/our-values](https://engie.com.au/home/about-engie/our-values).

### TRANSPORT

#### What access roads will be used during construction?

Investigations into the suitable access route for construction would be undertaken in consultation with Yass Valley Council and Transport for NSW. It is anticipated that materials would primarily arrive via the most effective route and be transported to site by heavy vehicles up to B-double in size, however some oversize overmass vehicles may also be required.

The project would primarily be accessed from:

- the south via Wee Jasper Road > Green Street > Grand Junction Road > Comur Street > Yass Valley Way > Hume Highway
- the north via Perry Street > Grand Junction Road > Comur Street > Yass Valley Way > Hume Highway.

The project would also require an internal access track network connecting the solar arrays and associated infrastructure. The access tracks would be established for construction and maintained for use during operation.

### MODERN SLAVERY

#### Will the solar panels come from ethical sources?

ENGIE ANZ is subject to the reporting requirements of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth) and reporting entities within the Group are required to address the risks of modern slavery practices in their global operations and supply chains and actions to assess and address those risks, including their effectiveness.

At ENGIE, the respect for others is one of the four principles embedded in our **Ethics Charter**. We are committed to respecting internationally recognised human rights wherever we operate, or our activities impact, around the world. This commitment is about doing business responsibly and sustainably.

ENGIE's approach to understanding the risks of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains is driven by the following indicators:

- the country or geographical location from which our goods and services are procured;
- the categories of goods and services we procure;
- the sectors or industries from which we procure our goods or services; and
- the businesses or entities from whom we procure our goods or services.

In 2021 we published our first modern slavery statement under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) (Act). This statement and more information is available at: [engie.com.au/modern-slavery](https://engie.com.au/modern-slavery).

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### SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

#### How will social impacts be measured?

An initial Social Impact Scoping Report has been included in the project scoping report, which demonstrates an understanding of the project's social locality, considers the characteristic of the communities, identifies potential social impacts for different groups and the level of assessment required, and outlines project refinements or approaches to date in response to likely social impacts.

A comprehensive Social Impact Assessment (SIA) will be undertaken as part of the EIS and will include:

- a detailed update of the social profile to ensure that any further baseline data relevant to the impacts identified is obtained
- further validation of the area of social influence and identification of affected communities and vulnerable groups
- collection of primary research data through participatory engagement methodologies to understand the perceptions of the identified stakeholders within the social locality and those indirectly affected by the project
- a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of social impacts against existing baseline conditions.

The findings of the SIA will be presented as part of the EIS and will include further engagement with Council, businesses and the community regarding impacts related to community benefits, accommodation and services.

ENGIE will use a range of methodologies, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and continue to engage with key stakeholders to gain valuable insights on the project's social impact. The methods used to understand social risks, measure social impact and design of mitigation measures, will be explored as part of the EIS phase and integrated into our engagement activities for the life of the project. The SIA will help inform programs and legacies that enhance positive social outcomes for the Yass community.

### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

#### How will the project benefit the Yass community?

ENGIE considers a range of benefit-sharing programs as part of its project development in order to deliver significant benefits to the broader community. The Project will provide a range of direct and indirect economic benefits including local employment and contractor opportunities, with increased spending and activity in the local economy.

ENGIE intends to work with local businesses where possible to stimulate the local economy and supply chains. We are firmly committed to creating jobs for local people and engaging with Indigenous and local suppliers.

As the proposal progresses and in consultation with the community, additional opportunities will be developed such as grants and sponsorship programs that provide benefits to the local community.

If successful, we would be committed to launching special offers and campaigns for local residents in co-operation with our retail business Simply Energy, which we aim to provide upon operation of Yass Solar Energy Park.

### EXPECTED PLANNING TIMELINE



Community feedback is as an important part of this development and will continue to inform the design of the project during the approvals phase and throughout the life of the project. ENGIE will continue to provide opportunities for feedback and welcomes all those who have an interest in the project to reach out to the team at:

 **1800 845 067**  
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[engie.com.au/yass](https://engie.com.au/yass)