

The Commission is also seeking further information regarding the following matters:

### **Water**

1) Is the 100 ML of water proposed to be sourced from the Council standpipe potable or non-potable?

The MSF project is committed to responsibly sourcing water for all development stages and will be investigating the available options.

Following the detailed design phase, in line with DPHI's recommendation (assessment report), MSF will prepare a Water Management Plan in consultation with the Water Group and Council.

Following our preliminary investigations, Tamworth Regional Council's (TRC) metered standpipes and bulk water filling stations across the council area are a likely option to support the project needs. Though the metered standpipe option supplies potable water, TRC explicitly states that it should not be used for human consumption but for non-potable purposes only, e.g., civil construction activities.

### **Engagement**

2) Can you provide an overview of the engagement undertaken with the landowners within 2.5km of the Project site and with Goonoo Goonoo station?

A wide range of communication and engagement activities were undertaken. The engagement program sought to reach out across the Loomberah and Tamworth community while continuing the conversation and issue specific discussions with near neighbours.

The types of activities included:

- Letter drops and face-to-face Intro (residents within 5km) (March 2023)
  - Seeking an opportunity to meet the community members where possible,
  - Provide an update on the Project & information to find the Project Website,
  - Highlight opportunities to learn more,
  - Offer visual impact assessments,
  - Invite participation in the community feedback survey
  - Provide contact details for ease of future communications
  - Along with the letter drop in March, letters were sent via express post to near neighbours (April 2023)
  
- Public notices placed in the Northern Daily Leader ahead of the information sessions at the Tamworth West Diggers Club (April 2023)
  - To explain the Project and invite the community to attend the information sessions,
  - To encourage people to visit the Project website to read the Frequently Asked Questions, and
  - complete the feedback survey,
  - To encourage people to set up a meeting with the Project team.
  
- Drop-in information session in Tamworth (27 April 2023)
  
- Direct communications during the EIS engagement period (visits, letters, emails, phone calls)
  - Phone calls to support discussions around:
    - Providing project updates
    - following up to understand more about concerns,
    - coordinating social impact assessment-focused interviews
    - coordinating visual assessments,

- Addressing project related enquiries.
  - Property visits were arranged for face-to-face consultation to discuss concerns or other project related topics
  - The LVIA consultant visited a number of properties previously identified for the purpose of visual impact assessments.
  - Additional visual requests outside of the requirements were also addressed
  - On going Email correspondence with a number of nearby residents
  - Emails/Letters/Calls to provide Project updates to nearby residents (within 3km)
- Post-EIS Exhibition, the consultation has been continuing with the nearby neighbours (mainly within 3km) to provide additional Project updates by various means, including emails/letters/calls.
  - The Project information has been included on the dedicated Project website.

#### Goonoo Goonoo station

- Goonoo Goonoo Homestead and several associated dwellings/buildings (i.e. cafes and bed and breakfast enterprises) are located to the west of the Project within the 4km public receptor Study Area.
- Goonoo Goonoo Station was included in the consultation process:
  - Project information and updates dropped off as part of the consultation process in March 2023
  - Although no request was made by the Goonoo Goonoo station for visual assessment, the visual consultant conducted a detailed assessment from within the precinct (adjoining the existing restaurant) due to its importance as a key public receptor with a heritage listing
  - The results found that views from this point toward the Project were likely to result in a low potential visual impact and no further assessment or mitigation measures were required from the viewpoint
  - A number of letters and updates were sent to Goonoo Goonoo station

### **Local Employment**

#### 3) How will you maximise local employment for the project?

Since our submission we have further investigated this issue with our engineering and procurement team.

The development, design, construction and operations of renewable projects requires high level of technical knowledge and expertise to ensure quality of the work and safety of the personnel. TotalEnergies Renewables uses its best endeavours to maximise local employment on all its projects.

As part of these efforts, we will work with our Contractors as part of the Procurement phase to assess and identify:

- a. the availability of local resources by the type of skills required. This will be done by engaging with local skilled labour hire companies that can support the Project.
- b. the availability of local suppliers and indigenous businesses who can support the project, such as Plant and Machinery hire, vehicle hire, and work packages such as concrete batching, water sourcing, cleaning and rubbish removal, minor civil and electrical works, and fencing. This is likely done by engaging will local businesses and, where appropriate, with the Industry Capability Network (ICN).

We will include the following obligations in our contracts to ensure maximum benefits are achieved for the local communities we operate in. Our contractors and their subcontractors will be required to commit to:

- a. Equal Employment Opportunity – to employ local resources who have the necessary skills, tickets and licences required for various solar farm construction works.

b. Transparent recruitment process – to ensure that the available job opportunities are transparent and accessible to local residents. This will include advertising job openings on public platforms, job portals to give everyone including local residents the same opportunity.

4) Do you intend to develop a local employment and procurement strategy?

Yes, and it will be based on the strategies listed above.

5) What strategies have you used for other projects to maximise local employment and procurement and how have these worked? Have you set targets for local employment and have these been met?

TotalEnergies Renewables Australia currently has numerous projects in various stages of development and one project, 256MWp Kiamal Solar Farm in Victoria, under Operations. We believe in working with the local communities we operate in and maximising local employment through some of our strategies listed above (under Q3).

We were able to achieve good results at the Kiamal Solar Farm. We have engaged Beon Energy Solutions, a local Victoria based company, to perform parts of the Engineering, Procurement and Construction works on the project. Post-construction, we have engaged O&M Solar Pty Ltd and Pengelly Electrical Pty Ltd (for the Operations and Maintenance works), both of which are local companies employing local resources based out of Ouyen in Victoria and nearby areas, where the project is located. We believe in engaging local resources, especially during the O&M phase, as it benefits the project overall and allows the project to be part of the community for the long term.

### **Neighbour Benefit Fund**

6) How many landowners are subject to this fund?

The neighbour benefit fund is a voluntary and obligation-free offer to neighbours (identified receivers) within 3km of the Project.

The neighbour benefit offer considers two categories which include the following:

- Neighbouring residences up to 1km from the Project (currently 5)
- Neighbouring residences between 1 and 3km from the Project (currently 7)

7) What factors were considered in deciding which landowners you would approach and offer these benefits to?

Proximity to the project. This fund was proposed as a result of the social impact surveys and direct consultation with locals, aiming to deliver a direct benefit for the life of the Project to those neighbours who are in proximity to the Project.

The offer is a 'no strings attached' offer. It is not to address any impacts. All impacts have been assessed as low. The offer is still current should they wish to take it up.

## **Voluntary Planning Agreement**

8) How many landholders will benefit directly from the sealing of the road, post construction?

The traffic survey undertaken in February 2024 identified that an average of 47 vehicles/day are using the Middlebrook Road. This is assumed to be nearly all local traffic.

9) Is a contribution to Council proposed for the ongoing maintenance of Middlebrook Road?

The project, at its own expense, will repair and/or make good any development-related damage to Middlebrook Road in accordance with condition B8 of the Development Consent, and within 3 months post-construction.

The average number of project-related vehicles will be significantly less compared to the average daily traffic using the Middlebrook Road. The annual contributions to the council as part of the VPA are partly intended to be used for 'recurrent costs of infrastructure, services or facilities' as per the DPIE Large Scale Energy Guidelines (2022) which would include maintenance of Middlebrook Road. It is important to note that the Project will not be significantly utilizing the Middlebrook Road during the operational phase; estimated to be 4-5 vehicles per day.