

## **Lambruk Community Meeting Minutes**

**Project:** Lambruk Solar Farm Technical Assessments Presentation

**Date:** 28 October 2025

**Location:** Loomberah Hall

**Time:** 5:00pm – 6:30pm

**Attendees:** Approximately 50 participants, including community members and Venn Energy representatives

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### **1. Opening (Amanda)**

- The purpose of the meeting was to present and discuss findings from the technical assessments that will constitute part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Lambruk Solar Project.

### **3. EIS submission process (Daniel)**

- The EIS submission is scheduled to be provided to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in mid- to late-November.
- Following submission, DPHI will likely request additional information as part of their review process.
- The EIS will then be publicly exhibited online via the DPHI's major projects website, with community notification through newsletters and official channels.
- All technical assessments have been conducted strictly according to state planning and environmental guidelines.
- The Project Team noted their commitment to exceeding some guideline requirements, such as providing enhanced visual screening beyond the minimum.

### **4. Key issues – comments and questions**

- Information was provided as per the presentation on the key findings of the technical assessments. Noted below are the comments made on the subject areas.

#### ***Visual Impact***

- The visual assessment identified 1 property with a moderate impact, 14 with low impact, and 7 with no impact. However, community members disagreed with these findings and felt the impacts were underestimated.
- Multiple community members strongly expressed that the visual impact assessment photographs and photomontages do not accurately represent the views from properties.
- At least six community members indicated they believed visual evidence was misleading or falsified.
- Concerns were raised that some photos were taken from incorrect vantage points (e.g., from backyards rather than property boundaries), which they felt minimised perceived impacts.
- Concern that images showing vegetation screening at the 5-year mark does not reflect or correctly represent screening efficacy.
- Community members reported high stress levels due to visual intrusion fears, emphasising that visual impact includes daily activities such as driving routes and community gathering places (e.g., church).
- The community expressed distrust toward the government guidelines and consultant reports, believing the process lacks transparency and that some concerns are dismissed or not properly recorded.

*Response: The Project Team emphasised that the technical consultant had followed the visual impact guidelines, which advises photomontages need to be taken from the residence. The Project Team explained that any discrepancies or perceived inaccuracies should be raised in a formal submission during the public exhibition phase of the EIS.*

#### ***Vegetation and biodiversity***

- Community members questioned the extent and impact of vegetation loss.
- Concerns were expressed about the impact on local wildlife and whether ecosystems will be adversely affected.
- Community members requested evidence or examples demonstrating successful ecological outcomes from similar solar projects post-construction; scepticism remains on the Project's comment on the ecological outcomes.
- Concern raised about how fertiliser will be applied for weed control and its environmental impact (during operation).
- Concerns were raised about surface water runoff changes post-vegetation removal, including potential for increased erosion, sedimentation, or negative downstream effects.

*Response: The Project Team explained that biodiversity assessments are based on hectares of vegetation loss rather than individual tree counts, in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020. Detailed methodologies and species surveys will be included in the EIS and Appendices (Biodiversity Development Assessment Report).*

*The Project noted there would be comprehensive water management plans, including hydrology studies and overland flow controls, compliant with relevant standards and guidelines. Monitoring and mitigation strategies will be ongoing throughout project life.*

### **Grazing and Land Use**

- There was significant discussion about the integration of sheep grazing between and beneath solar panels. Community members questioned who will be responsible for the sheep, whether local farmers will be involved, and how animal welfare will be ensured.
- Liability and insurance concerns were raised related to sheep potentially damaging solar infrastructure and risks to sheep safety.

*Response: The Project Team confirmed that the project will be fully fenced and that grazing systems and panel heights are designed to accommodate livestock (sheep). Relevant management plans will address wildlife including kangaroo management.*

*The intention is for host landowners to maintain responsibility for grazing; where this is not feasible, contracted grazing arrangements may be explored. Any such arrangements will depend on insurance and safety requirements.*

*The Project Team agreed to provide relevant studies on the interaction between livestock and solar infrastructure from operational projects as follow-up information.*

### **Noise**

- Noise concerns focused on both construction activities and ongoing operations, particularly noise generated by Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), including fans and inverters operating continuously.
- Queries arose about lighting during night-time operation and whether it will contribute to disturbance;

*Response: The Project Team advised all noise levels are expected to remain below regulatory thresholds.*

*Construction noise will occur between 7am and 5pm on weekdays. Saturday work hours 8am to 1pm; no construction is proposed at night-time or on Sundays.*

*Detailed lighting plans will be available in the EIS.*

### **Hydrology**

- Community members expressed concern about the potential impact on local groundwater, especially for those relying on bore water for domestic or agricultural use.

- Questions were raised about the source of water needed for vegetation screening watering and ongoing landscaping, including how fertiliser and weed control chemicals will be applied safely.
- Concerns about water contamination risks from fire or chemical runoff were prominent.

*Response: The Project Team confirmed the preparation of comprehensive water quality management plans, fire emergency responses, and monitoring programs.*

### **Project Timeline, EIS, and Community Consultation**

- Concerns were raised about the community's ability to review and respond meaningfully to the EIS within the statutory minimum 28-day public comment period.
- Requests for the public exhibition period to be extended through to February were raised, citing the holiday period and the volume and complexity of the material.
- Community members expressed mistrust towards DPHI and the belief that submissions may not affect decision-making.
- Multiple requests to hold community consultation sessions outside normal business hours were made to accommodate residents who work full-time.

*Response: The Project Team explained that DPHI controls exhibition timing; however, they will request DPHI to schedule the exhibition of the EIS from February, as requested by the community.*

*The Project Team committed to being available after 5pm with ongoing phone and email access.*

### **Heritage and agricultural values**

- Community members enquired about heritage findings; The Project Team confirmed archaeological and historic artefacts identified during surveys have been avoided through the project design.
- There were detailed questions about agricultural land value assessments, frequency of updates, and potential impacts on landowners financially.

*Response: The Project Team emphasised the project's mitigation strategy includes maintaining grazing alongside solar operations and progressive rehabilitation during construction to minimise dust and soil disturbance.*

### **Other Questions and Concerns**

- Traffic management was noted as a major concern. Residents noted that local roads are not designed for heavy vehicles and expressed worry about school bus disruptions and peak hour congestion.

*Response: The Project Team outlined that detailed traffic management plans and limits on heavy vehicle movements during peak hours will be enforced, with regular communication to residents. It was noted that a webinar focused on traffic management was scheduled for Thursday 30 October 2025.*

- A question was asked about workforce

*Response: The Project Team noted the peak workforce during construction is estimated at approximately 350 workers. Accommodation will not be provided onsite. It was noted that workforce accommodation would be covered in the webinar that was scheduled for Thursday 30 October 2025*

- Questions were raised about public liability insurance for the \$900 million project and whether the Project will manage fire risk directly or depend on local emergency services and community insurance.

*Response: The Project Team responded that the project is covered by public liability insurance and that comprehensive fire mitigation measures would be in place, including on-site water tanks, BESS fire-suppression systems, and detailed emergency response plans while continuing to coordinate with local emergency services as required.*

- Clarifications were sought on operational staffing.

*Response: The Project Team confirmed approximately 10–15 staff will be onsite during operations during daytime working hours.*

- Questions about the project's commercial strategy, including whether assets are for sale, were addressed.

*Response: Venn Energy explained that exploring investment options is common in large projects and does not signify imminent sale.*

- Community requested transparency on grid connection status.

*Response: The Project Team confirmed solar connection capacity secured (approval 534A), and battery system connection is progressing (approval 539A).*

- The desire for a clear social impact assessment chapter in the EIS was voiced, to address community well-being comprehensively.

*Response: The Project Team advised that the Social Impact Assessment would be covered in the webinar on Thursday 30 October 2025 and would be included in the EIS.*

- Requests were made for inclusion of more project imagery showing solar panels with vegetation screening, to better visualise final outcomes.

*Response: More images will be provided in the Visual Assessment in the EIS.*

- Concerns about noise levels from 24/7 battery cooling systems compared to ambient noise were raised.

*Response: The Project Team noted a detailed noise comparison will be provided.*

#### **Meeting closure**

- The meeting was closed with thanks extended to the community members for their engagement and detailed input.
- Project representatives reiterated commitment to transparency, ongoing dialogue, and responsiveness to community concerns.
- Contact details and avenues for ongoing engagement are available on Lambruk Solar Project website.