

# Richmond Valley Solar Farm



A photograph of the project area

## Information sessions

Local information sessions for the Richmond Valley Solar Farm were held in early September at Ellangowan Community Hall and the Casino Community & Cultural Centre. The sessions gave local residents and community members an opportunity to learn more about the proposal and discuss it with members of the project team. The sessions were well attended and included an update presentation followed by questions and discussion.

Ark Energy sincerely thanks everyone who took the time to attend. We appreciate the valuable local insights that were shared and the feedback we received.

## What we heard

Following are key topics of interest raised by session attendees:

- Bushfire – including management of on-site vegetation, potential for changes to fire risk and the microclimate, and emergency procedures.
- Flooding and severe weather - and how impacts of these would be managed.
- Visual impacts - including what the solar farm would look like from surrounding areas and whether the panels would reflect glint or glare from the sun.
- Property values – and whether these would be affected by the project.
- Project benefits – and how these might be shared with the wider community.
- Health – including chemical elements in solar panels and battery components and whether there were any associated contamination hazards.
- Ecology – including biodiversity and wildlife in the project area and how potential impacts would be managed.
- Roads and transport – including the potential impact on local roads, traffic management and safety, and required road upgrades.
- Project lifespan and decommissioning – including the decommissioning process and how solar panel components will be replaced or recycled.
- Participation in the process - and how feedback from community members will be incorporated into the project's design.

The project is at an early stage so answers to some of these questions are not yet known but by engaging early with the local community Ark Energy can better understand local concerns and priorities, and factor these into the project's design.

More information on these topics will be shared with the community as soon as it is available, and many will be assessed in detail by technical specialists as part of the project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

## Location



## Invitation: Social Impact Assessment Survey

Umwelt Environmental Consultants are undertaking a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the Richmond Valley Solar Farm.

Local community members are invited to contribute to this assessment by completing an SIA survey. An online survey page is open for submissions. To access the page please scan the QR code below on your device or visit: [www.research.net/r/RichmondValleySolarFarm](http://www.research.net/r/RichmondValleySolarFarm)

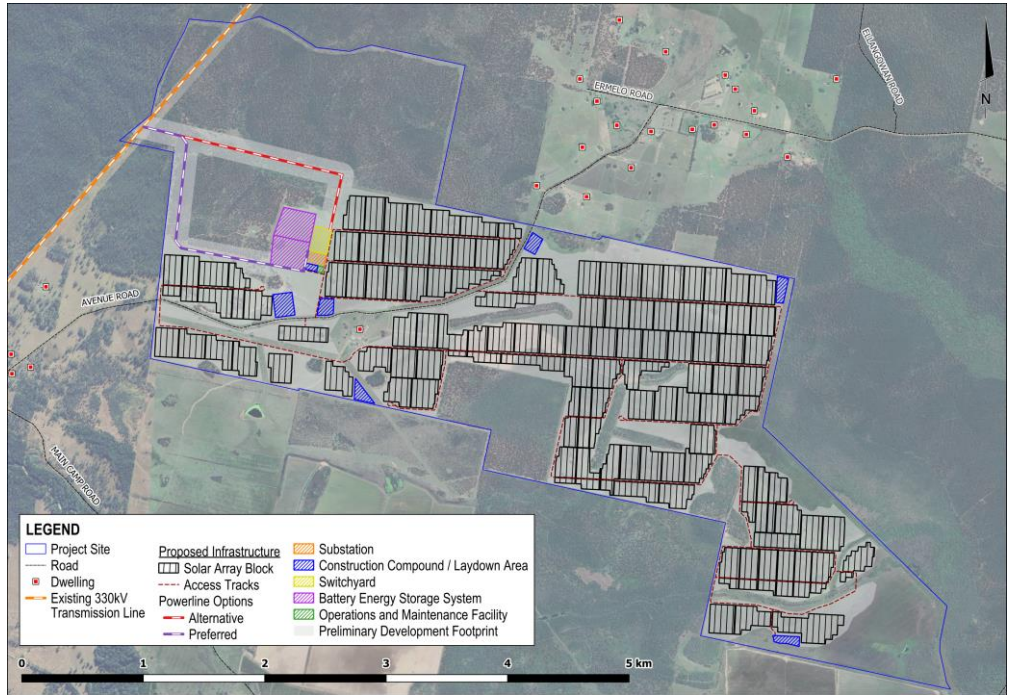
The online survey is open until **31 October**.



## Planning & assessment

Utility-scale solar farms in NSW are considered State Significant Development and assessed by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

## Richmond Valley Solar Farm initial concept design



The map above shows the initial concept design for the Richmond Valley Solar Farm including options for the powerline connection, and the potential location of construction compounds, battery storage system and solar panel arrays.

This map, along with photomontages showing what this design would look like from example public viewpoints, and project information materials were shared at the recent community information sessions in Ellangowan and Casino. These materials are now available online from the 'Community information sessions' report under the 'News' tab on the project website: [richmondvalleysolar.com.au](http://richmondvalleysolar.com.au)

### Next steps

More information on matters raised by community members at recent information sessions will be prepared with regards to this particular project and shared as soon as possible through newsletters and future information sessions. When the next information sessions are confirmed details will be notified through a project newsletter and on the project website.

In the meantime, work for the various technical assessments required is underway. A number of detailed and comprehensive technical reports are required for the EIS. The EIS requirements are outlined in the project's Planning Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) issued by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE).

Some of the specialist studies for the EIS that will address matters raised by community members include the Preliminary Hazards Analysis, Social Impact Assessment, Water Resources Impact Assessment, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Biodiversity Development Assessment Report, and Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment.

As the assessment work is completed and more information about the site becomes available, the project's design may be refined accordingly. At this stage the project team estimates that the proposal could be finalised and the EIS ready to lodge with the Department of Planning and Environment during Q2 2024.

### More information

Tel - 1800 731 296

Email - [info@richmondvalleysolar.com.au](mailto:info@richmondvalleysolar.com.au)

Register for updates - [arkenergy.com.au/mailling-list-details](http://arkenergy.com.au/mailling-list-details)

Website - [richmondvalleysolar.com.au](http://richmondvalleysolar.com.au) or scan QR code right



1

Site selection and preliminary investigations



2

Initial concept and consultation



3

Scoping Report submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE)



4

Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) issued by DPE



5

Studies, assessments, design

WE ARE HERE

6

Referral to the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) for review under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

7

Determination on EPBC Act referral by DCCEEW

8

Design completed, finalising EIS for lodgment

9

Development application (DA) and EIS lodged with DPE

10

DA and EIS on exhibition for public comment

11

Responses to submissions and requests for additional information (if required)

12

Assessment by DPE

13

DPE assessment report and recommendation

14

Determination by DCCEEW