

Bomen Solar Farm



BOMEN SOLAR FARM UPDATE

Newsletter

June 2021

Welcome to the June 2021 edition of the Bomen Solar Farm newsletter. This newsletter aims to keep you informed on recent activities, project updates and community initiatives.

FULLY OPERATIONAL

Construction of the Bomen Solar Farm was completed in mid-2020 and since then over 193,000 MWh of electricity has been generated (as at the end of May), more than enough to power all households in Wagga Wagga during the same period! The clean energy produced has also saved over 156,000 metric tonnes of CO² emissions⁽¹⁾.

Construction was completed on budget and within the expected timeframe, despite the challenges created by COVID-19. This was due to the hard work and dedication by all involved, including Beon Energy Solutions (Bomen Solar Farm's lead contractor) and the team of employees and subcontractors engaged to deliver the project.

Construction of the solar farm created many jobs in the community, with locals comprising 78% of the 157 employees in the mechanical team. Additionally, positive steps were taken to engage members of groups typically under-represented in the industry, including First Nations people (39 employees) and women (11 employees). Beon has been recognised for its consistent efforts in employment initiatives, having been shortlisted multiple times for community engagement awards for a range of innovative programs, including its "Women in Solar" pilot program which was run at Bomen Solar Farm.

This local and inclusive approach is demonstrative of the priority that Bomen Solar Farm has consistently placed on contributing meaningfully to the Wagga Wagga community.

1. CO₂-e displaced is calculated using the National Greenhouse Accounts Factors.

ESTABLISHMENT OF \$1M COMMUNITY FUND TO BE SPENT OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS

Bomen Solar Farm will continue to support the local community via a variety of initiatives. In conjunction with Westpac (who purchases around thirty percent of the electricity generated by the solar farm), Bomen Solar Farm has set up a \$1 million Community Fund, with the funds to be deployed over the next decade to programmes that will deliver a diverse range of benefits within the community - assisting school students, promoting biodiversity and greening, contributing to the local fire brigade, and assisting with the living expenses of those living with a disability. Some of the initiatives are set out below:

Mount Austin High School - \$500,000 over ten years



The most significant funding initiative from the Community Fund is the establishment of a long-term partnership with Mount Austin High School in Wagga Wagga, with funding of \$500,000 being granted to support two important programs at the school over a ten-year period.

The 'Transition Program' and the 'Girls @ the Centre' program, both run from the school, support students' engagement with school.

The Girls @ the Centre program will receive \$25,000 each year for 10 years. This program provides a supportive environment for girls to address barriers to school attendance and to engage with their studies. The program was developed four years ago by Mount Austin High School, in partnership with The Smith Family, and has demonstrated success in delivering real rewards within the student community and beyond.

The Transition Program will also receive \$25,000 each year for 10 years, matched by funding from the School. This program, which will support 52 students this year, was developed by Mount Austin High School to give year 12 students the skills and tools needed to successfully transition from school into the next stage of their lives with meaning and purpose.



Wagga Wagga City Council - \$350,000 over ten years

Bomen Solar Farm has finalised a \$350,000, multi-year funding agreement with Wagga Wagga City Council to promote biodiversity and revegetation in the local area.

The funding has two components: \$250,000 towards a Council-led planting program that will see revegetation of 58 hectares of local land with around 51,000 plants, all endemic species (including eucalypts and acacias). The area to be planted includes a significant parcel of land off East Bomen Road which has been donated by Council to the program.

In addition, \$100,000 has been granted to support a community-led planting program in the Eunony Valley. For this initiative, applications for funding will be called for, then assessed against selection criteria by a Grants Panel comprising members of the local community, Council and Bomen Solar Farm. It is intended that the projects to be supported with this funding will be selected before the end of the year.

Save The Date: Wagga Wagga City Council is holding its annual tree planting day on Sunday 1 August to coincide with National Tree Day - Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event. Everyone is welcome to attend and representatives from Bomen Solar Farm will be there with sleeves rolled up ready to get their hands dirty for the cause. Look out for Council's publicity on the event - we hope to see you there!

For more information visit the Wagga Wagga City Council website: <https://wagga.nsw.gov.au>

Support for the Eunony Bushfire Brigade - \$50,000

The Bomen Solar Farm acknowledges the enormous contribution that local volunteer fire services make to the community. In support of this, we have committed \$50,000 to the Eunony Bushfire Brigade, a brigade within the Riverina Zone of the NSW Rural Fire Service, under a funding agreement with Bomen Solar Farm. \$25,000 of this amount went towards an extension to the Brigade's fire shed to accommodate an additional vehicle. The balance will be granted in \$5,000 parcels each year for five years from 2022 and will cover operational expenses incurred by the Brigade.



Photo: Spark Renewables team members visit the Eunony Bushfire Brigade (supplied)

Solar support for Abbeyfield Koorungal - \$10,000

Bomen Solar Farm granted \$10,000 to Abbeyfield Australia to support the installation of solar panels at Abbeyfield's Koorungal facility. The facility consists of six units providing secure and affordable housing for residents living with an intellectual disability, giving them the opportunity to live independently.

Since installation, the six solar systems have generated more electricity than is consumed by the residences during the day. Earnings from excess daytime solar generation helps pay for night-time electricity use. Climate Rescue of Wagga (CROW) played a key coordination role for Abbeyfield Koorungal to deliver the project. *"This is a great initiative, that has received strong support from Spark Renewables, Westpac and CORENA, and will have long standing benefits for a deserving local facility"*, CROW Chair William Adlong said. Spark Renewables embraced the partnership with Abbeyfield Koorungal to showcase the benefit that solar power can bring to the community.



Photo: Abbeyfield's Koorungal facility (supplied)

Bomen Solar Farm hosts its first school tour

Bomen Solar Farm recently hosted a group of 38 year 10 students from three local high schools as part of a Careers Exploration Day organised by the Association of Independent Schools. This tour was an opportunity to showcase the solar farm, giving students an understanding of how it generates electricity and of the variety of roles that exist in the renewable energy industry to deliver and support a solar farm through all stages of development - from inception through to the delivery of an operational project. Bomen Solar Farm values the opportunity to share knowledge with interested members of the community and plans to make the site available for further tours in the months ahead.



Photo: Bomen Solar Farm school tour (Supplied)

SHEEP TRIAL ON BOMEN HAS COMMENCED

Sheep trial brings the baa to Bomen

Bomen Solar Farm has committed to explore opportunities to use the solar farm land for agricultural purposes, so that the land can bring benefit in generating renewable energy while also supporting other land uses.



A sheep grazing trial with a local livestock owner began in February 2021. This trial aims to support sustainable sheep grazing on site in the longer term. The trial began with 70 sheep and is progressing well.

In conducting this trial, Bomen Solar Farm hopes to replicate the success experienced at other solar farms in NSW where sheep grazing has created a win-win. The land is used to generate renewable energy as well as for agriculture, and the sheep grazing assists the solar farm with its ground cover management.



Photos: Sheep running on site (Supplied)

GLARE STUDY FINALISED

Bomen Solar Farm engaged SLR Consulting to conduct a study to assess potential reflective glare and glint arising from the solar PV panels within the solar farm. The study has helped identify operational modes that have the potential to cause reflections at neighbouring dwellings at different times of the day and year. The results are being used to optimise the solar farm tracking system and manage power outages and maintenance procedures to ensure that any potential glare is avoided as far as possible. We appreciate the feedback from neighbours and their engagement in working with us on this matter. A comprehensive report with the conclusions of the study can be found on the Bomen Solar Farm website, at www.bomensolarfarm.com.au Please feel free to contact us using the details below if you would like to discuss the report in more detail.

About:

Bomen Solar Farm is a 120MW_{DC} solar farm project. The Farm is located on approximately 250 hectares of land zoned for industrial use, 10kms northeast of Wagga Wagga. Completed in mid-2020, the Farm generates enough electricity annually to power the equivalent of 36,000 homes. Bomen Solar Farm provides power to Westpac and Flow Power under power purchase agreements. Westpac's 10-year power purchase agreement enables it to achieve 45% of its commitment to transition to 100% renewables by 2025 and forms the basis for the partnership between Bomen Solar Farm and Westpac to deliver the community fund. Bomen Solar Farm is owned by Spark Renewables, which is part of the ASX100 Spark Infrastructure Group. Further information is available at www.sparkinfrastructure.com. The site is operated by Beon Energy Solutions and the asset is managed by RES Australia.

Contact us:

For more information, or to provide any feedback, please visit the project website www.bomensolarfarm.com.au | email info@bomensolarfarm.com.au