

Wattle Creek Energy Hub

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER #1
FEBRUARY 2023

The Proposal: Wattle Creek Energy Hub

The Wattle Creek Energy Hub is a hybrid renewable energy facility proposed on the 'Arthursleigh' property owned by University of Sydney, located approximately 12km north-east of Marulan in the NSW Southern Tablelands region, situated in the Upper Lachlan Shire.

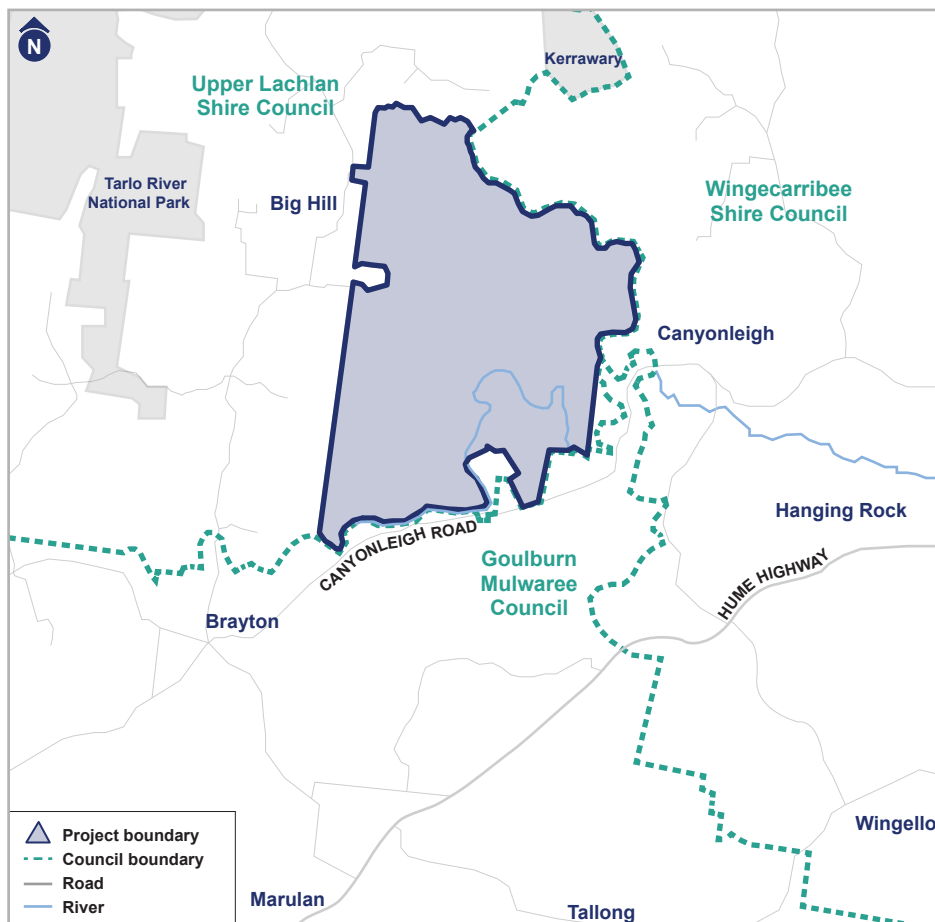
The Energy Hub is proposed to include a wind farm, solar farm and a Battery Energy Storage Facility (BESS).

The project is being developed by Spark Renewables, a leading developer and long-term owner and operator of renewable energy assets.

If it proceeds, the project could also support university research and education through a new, onsite, test-bed facility, a research fund and other initiatives.

We are keen to hear from community members and interested stakeholders and will be holding an initial community drop-in session from **2pm to 7pm** on **Thursday, 9th March 2023** at the Marulan War Memorial Hall, 80 George Street, Marulan.

Community members will be able to talk to the Spark Renewables team, learn more about the proposal, and provide initial feedback. Please see the last page of this newsletter for further information.



Key facts



Project status

Initial community and stakeholder engagement, with the Scoping Report as the next step.



Capacity

- Generation: up to 500 megawatts
- Battery storage: 500 megawatt hours



Annual power

Equivalent to 170,000 houses powered annually.*
Offsetting up to 950,000 tonnes CO₂ annually. **



Grid connection

The project would connect to the National Electricity Market via a connection to the existing Marulan substation.



Community benefits

Establishment of a community benefit sharing program and neighbour benefit fund to support the local community.



NSW



*Based on household consumption of 7,229 kWh/year (AER 2020)

**National Greenhouse Accounts Factors (DCCEEW, 2021)



Why this site?

The proposed site is strategically located to take advantage of local wind conditions, the local solar resource and its location relative to the existing electricity transmission network with a proposed connection to the Marulan Substation.

About the site

The farm is owned by the University of Sydney after being bequeathed in 1979.

The farm is operated commercially and is used for a range of research initiatives including agricultural science, pasture agronomy and unmanned aerial vehicle applications. Agricultural land use will continue with the operation of the project, with sheep grazing within the wind and solar farm areas.

What are the community benefits?

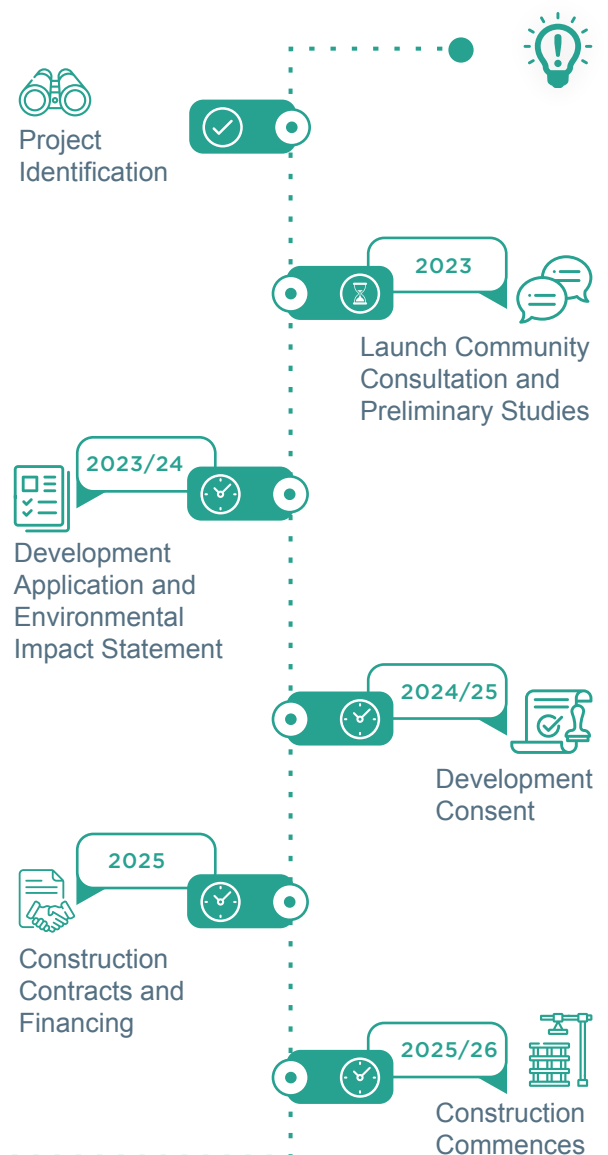
The local community will be able to benefit from a range of opportunities connected with the proposal if progressed, including a community fund and a neighbour benefit fund. Spark Renewables is looking to work with local stakeholders to co-design a program that meets the unique needs of the wider community, and delivers long-lasting social, economic and environmental benefits for decades to come.

We are keen to hear any ideas from community members as the benefit scheme is developed. If you wish to have a chat or organise a time to meet, please contact us via email at info@wattlecreekenergyhub.com or call **1300 271 419**.

Committed to reconciliation

Spark Renewables is putting in place a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan and is committed to creating lasting, positive change for Aboriginal communities. We acknowledge that setting a benchmark as part of First Nations participation plans for each of our projects will be an important step to achieve economic empowerment of First Nations people.

Indicative development timeline



What approvals are required?

The proposal would be considered a State Significant Development and would require development consent under the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* (EP&A Act).

Three Development Applications (DAs) are proposed to be submitted, one for each component of the proposed project (wind, solar and BESS), which would be accompanied by detailed Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). These would include comprehensive assessments identifying the potential impacts of the Project and how to best manage these impacts.

A detailed Social Impact Assessment (SIA) would also be prepared for each component of the project as part of the EISs. The SIAs would include a comprehensive community engagement program and would be prepared following the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's (DPE) *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State Significant Projects* (2021).

The Project may also require approval under the federal *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

What is a Scoping Report?

A Scoping Report is the first step in the development application process. A Scoping Report provides an outline of the proposed project and identifies important issues that will require further technical studies, assessment and consultation, and is a formal request to the DPE to issue Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs). Separate Scoping Reports will be developed for each of the three technology components of the Project.

Who is developing the EISs and SIAs?

Spark Renewables has commissioned Umwelt Environmental and Social Consultants to undertake a series of preliminary environmental and technical assessments and to prepare the three Scoping Reports. Umwelt will be consulting with the community alongside Spark Renewables and Spectrum Communications to inform the preparation of the EISs and SIAs.

What is proposed

Wind

Up to 34 wind turbine generators typically spaced 500-1000 meters apart and connected via underground cables. Modern wind turbines have a tower (hub) height up to 180 metres and blade length up to 100 metres.

Solar

Photovoltaic (PV) panels mounted on single axis trackers that slowly rotate and follow the sun from east to west each day.

Battery

A containerised BESS built within the wind and solar farm enabling electricity to be stored and then exported as needed.

Studies

 Noise and vibration	 Flooding and hydrology
 Social impact assessment	 Soils
 Visual amenity	 Bushfire
 Shadow flicker	 Waste
 Biodiversity	 Aviation
 Aboriginal heritage	 Electromagnetic interference
 European heritage	 Land use
 Traffic and access	 Cumulative impacts
 Contamination	

Planning process

The NSW Government has a legislated planning process in eight stages to ensure that a project is suitable for the community, economy, and environment, and therefore whether it should be granted a development approval.



Community consultation

The proposed Wattle Creek Energy Hub project is in the early stages of development and will undergo rigorous planning and assessment. As part of this, we will undertake extensive community consultation and encourage all stakeholders and community members to get involved in this process. This will occur prior to formal development applications being submitted to planning authorities.



Sign up to our newsletters at the project website
www.wattlecreekenergyhub.com



Come along to our drop-in information session at the **Marulan War Memorial Hall**



Need more information? Ask us about having a one-on-one meeting or phone call

Construction & operations



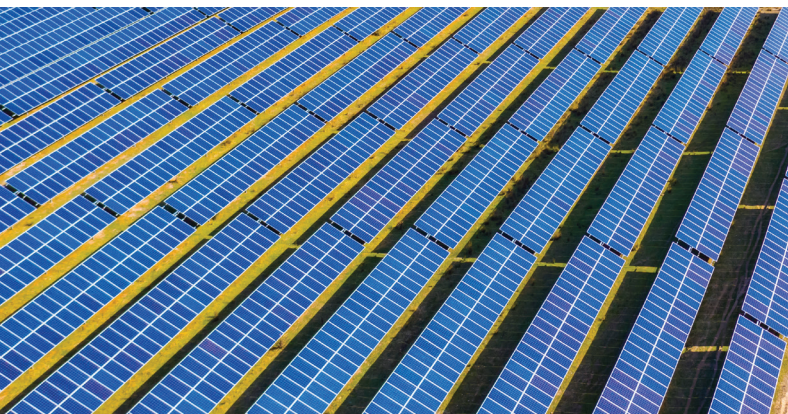
Traditional Owners:

Focus on engaging First Nations people and businesses to support the project construction and operation



Local sourcing:

Committed to engaging with local workers and suppliers of goods and services wherever possible and will set targets to measure our achievements



At Spark Renewables, we care about the land we build on and are committed to supporting the surrounding local communities. We have a track record of delivering diverse benefits, including providing training and employment opportunities and prioritising local procurement of goods and services.

Drop-in session



You are welcome to drop in to our first information session at any time to meet the Spark Renewables team, ask questions and learn about the proposed Wattle Creek Energy Hub. We are hosting a face-to-face session at:

Marulan War Memorial Hall
80 George Street, Marulan, NSW, 2579

Thursday, 9th March 2023

2pm-7pm

Contact



Call us at **1300 271 419**



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Email
info@wattlecreekenergyhub.com



Sign up to community newsletters on our website at
www.wattlecreekenergyhub.com

Spark Renewables is a member of the Clean Energy Council (CEC) and a signatory to the CEC's Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Developments.



Scan here or go to our website to complete a brief survey and give us your feedback



www.surveymonkey.com/r/Wattle-Creek-Energy-Hub-SIA