



Weasel Solar Farm

Central Highlands, TAS

For Weasel Solar Farm Pty Ltd c/o Robert Luxmoore Pty Ltd

13 March 2025

cogency

Planning | Engagement | Strategy

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Cogency Australia Pty Ltd
 cogencyaustralia.com.au
office@cogencyaustralia.com.au

Document history

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We celebrate the physical and spiritual connections between Indigenous people and place expressed through the Birrarung Wilam (Common Ground) art Project on the banks of Melbourne's Yarra River.

Acknowledgement of Country

Cogency acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we meet, work and write, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation, and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and emerging.

Cogency also extends that respect and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Bothwell, the Big River Tribe, or Teen Toomie Mennenyer people. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and waterways. We also recognise the resilience, strength, and pride of the Big River Tribe and First Nations communities and acknowledge that Sovereignty was never ceded.

Executive Summary

Weasel Solar Farm Pty Ltd c/o Robert Luxmoore Pty Ltd (the Proponent) appointed Cogency Australia (Cogency) to prepare a Community & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and lead the engagement activities for the proposed development of the Weasel Solar Farm – a large-scale solar farm in Bothwell, located in the Central Highlands region of Tasmania referred to as the 'Project.'

The Proponent is committed to ensuring the community and stakeholders are proactively and meaningfully informed, consulted and involved in the planning and development of the Project, and that the benefits are genuinely felt by local people and businesses.

This Consultation Summary Report (Report) provides details of the engagement undertaken for the Weasel Solar Farm, from 2023 to 2025.

The three main phases of engagement throughout the lifecycle of the Project include:

- **Phase 1:** Early feasibility and lodgement (Completed)
- **Phase 2:** Post-Lodgement & Advertisement
- **Phase 3:** Approvals
- **Phase 4:** Construction, operation, and decommissioning.

During all phases of the Project, the appropriate stakeholders have and will be effectively informed, consulted, and involved in the process based on the objectives, principles, best practices, and guidelines for community engagement outlined in the Project's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

By actively listening to stakeholders and addressing their concerns, the Proponent has aimed to enhance the benefits derived from the Weasel Solar Farm and minimise the impacts on neighbours, the community, and the local environment.

Consultation with stakeholders and the Bothwell community has enabled the project team to adjust various elements of the Project's design and conduct additional technical studies to identify and resolve any issues raised.

The Engagement Action Plan continues to be periodically updated to reflect the progress of the Project, incorporate community input, and address any emerging needs and issues.

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CEC	Clean Energy Council
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EPBC	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation
IAP2	International Association for Public Participation
LGA	Local Government Area
kV	Kilovolt
MER	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
MW	Megawatt
NEM	National Energy Market (NEM)
O&M	Operations and Management
ReCFIT	Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania
REZ	Renewable Energy Zone
Strategy	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

1. Project Overview

1.1 Introduction

Cogency Australia Pty Ltd (Cogency), on behalf of Weasel Solar Farm Pty Ltd c/o Robert Luxmoore Pty Ltd (the Proponent), has prepared this Consultation Summary Report in relation to the proposed development of the Weasel Solar Farm – a large-scale solar farm north of Bothwell, located in the Central Highlands region of Tasmania, hereby referred to as the ‘Project’.

Community and stakeholder engagement is fundamental to delivering positive and effective outcomes for both renewable energy projects and the local community. Evidence from across Australia and internationally has shown that effective engagement increases the likelihood of establishing and maintaining renewable energy facilities that bring the most mutual benefit to all stakeholders. Proactive, meaningful, inclusive, and robust engagement practices can therefore be seen as an investment in two outcomes: the future success of the renewable energy industry and strong communities.

This Report aims to provide an overview of the stakeholder and community consultation that has occurred and will continue to occur in the planning and development of the Project. To date, the Proponent with the support of Cogency has sought to ensure that the community and stakeholders are **proactively and meaningfully informed, consulted and involved** throughout the Project’s lifecycle.

1.2 The Project

The Weasel Solar Farm is a significant new solar farm Project to be developed north of Bothwell, in the Central Highlands region of Tasmania. The Weasel Solar Farm is one component of the Proponent’s broader ‘Highlands Renewable Energy Hub’ that is seeking to generate and use renewable energy alongside agricultural and forestry processing to generate significant social and economic benefits for the local community and the state of Tasmania.

The Highlands Renewable Energy Hub seeks to deliver three distinct yet interconnected components - a solar farm, a wind farm, and a renewable energy business park (battery and industry), all of which have different development approval pathways. The focus of this Summary is the solar farm component.

The Project comprises of a solar farm with a capacity of up to 250MW and a battery energy storage system (BESS). The Project area covers approximately 435 ha for the solar panels and includes a two-hectare development area for the BESS, electricity switchyard infrastructure, transmission line connection into the existing 220kV transmission line, and associated infrastructure and works such as access tracks, benching, drainage and landscaping.

Once operational, the Weasel Solar Farm will provide critical energy generation for the National Electricity Market (NEM) grid. By generating energy from renewable energy sources, the proposed Project will contribute to existing and proposed renewable energy projects within Tasmania’s Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone (T3-REZ), while helping to strengthen energy supply and price stability for households across Tasmania and support Tasmania’s energy transition.

1.3 Site and Context

The site is located within the south-east of the Central Highlands Local Government Area (LGA) of Tasmania. The solar farm development area is located within the Weasel Plains, south-east of many of the great lakes that give the Central Highlands its unique natural character. Early design concepts show the solar farm development areas will be located approximately 5 km to the east of the rural locality of Hermitage, approximately 9 km to the north of Bothwell, and a 72 km north of Hobart.

While the surrounding area is quite undulating, the areas selected for the solar farm development are relatively flat. The development areas for the solar farm are generally cleared of vegetation due to historical agricultural use, with large patches of vegetation within the wider property being avoided.

Highland Lakes Road (State Route A5) runs adjacent to the western extent of the site, with sightlines largely protected by existing vegetation and topography (a ridge runs parallel between the road and the solar development areas). The A5 connects from the A1 (National Highway 1, Tasmania's most important road connection - Hobart to Launceston) approximately 25 km south at Melton Mowbray and broadly runs north/north-west to Deloraine through the Central Highlands region (including via Bothwell and Miena). It connects to at Melton Mowbray, providing connections to Hobart.

The site sits within one of the three Tasmanian Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) as identified by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), the T3 – Central highlands REZ (T3-REZ). REZ's are areas with high-quality renewable energy resources where clusters of large-scale renewable projects can be developed. The Central Highlands region holds immense potential for the development of a variety of renewable energy projects and there are several renewable energy projects that are currently under development or in operation, including the operational Cattle Hill Wind Farm.

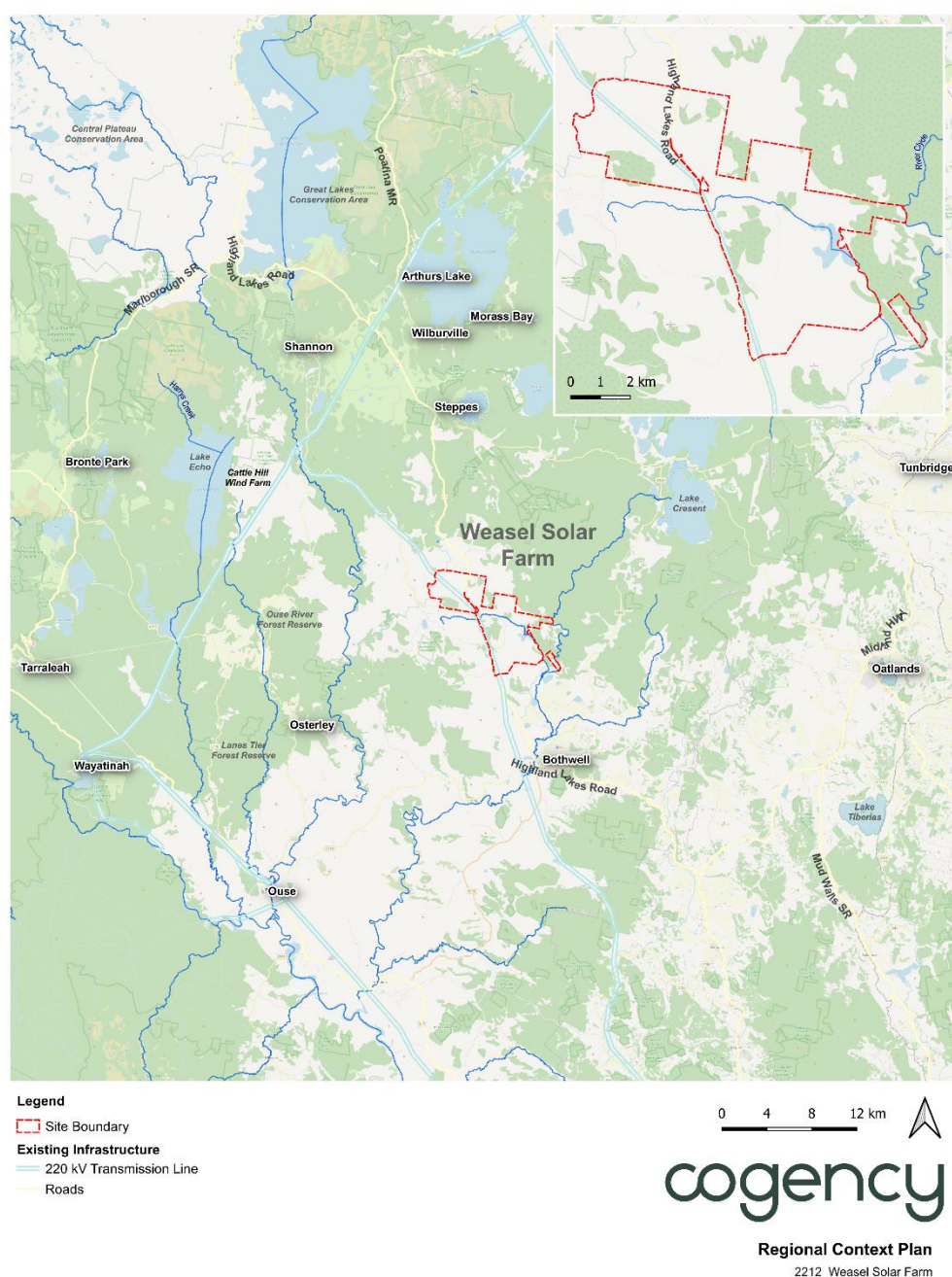


Figure 1 – Regional Context Map

2. Community Snapshot

2.1 Traditional Owners

Prior to European Settlement, the Central Highlands region was stewarded by the Big River Tribe, or Teen Toomie Mennenyer people. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) are the key stakeholders representing traditional owners in the region.

Within the Central Highlands Local Government Area, there are 154 people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, representing approximately 6.1% of the population (ABS, 2021).

Teen Toomie Mennenyer people have cared for and protected this land since the dreaming. Their connections to the land, animals, seas, and waterways were and continue to be a part of their being.

2.2 Regional Context

The Proposal is located within the Central Highlands Council area. The LGA covers more than 8,000 square kilometres and makes a significant and increasing contribution to the economic wealth of Tasmania.

Known for its great lakes and scenic mountainous areas, the region is popular for tourism and recreation. The region boasts multiple thriving industries including agriculture (diverse crop and livestock production), horticulture, forestry, power generation and trout fishing. The key communities in the region of the Weasel Solar Farm are Bothwell, Osterley, Victoria Valley and Ouse. These towns and villages are relatively small and distinct rural communities. Central Highlands' major transport services are the Midland Highway and Highland Lakes Road.

2.3 Community Overview

The community with the closest relationship to the development of the Weasel Solar Farm is Bothwell. Other communities of Osterley, Victoria Valley and Ouse are further and less connected. Based on the site's geography, engagement will be tailored to the primary service town of Bothwell.

Bothwell has a population of approximately 499 residents (ABS, 2021). Bothwell sits on the river Clyde and is surrounded by rich rural land, primarily used for agriculture and is known as the southern gateway to the central highlands of Tasmania, and the gateway to some of the best trout fishing in Australia near Arthurs Lake and the Great Lake. First established by settlers of Scottish descent in 1824, the Scottish influence can still be seen in Bothwell today. Bothwell received its name from Governor George Arthur after the town in Scotland similarly located on the River Clyde. It is one of the most historically significant towns in Tasmania, with a total of 60 buildings and locations of historic interest.

The median age of Bothwell is higher than the national average and there is a higher percentage of couples without children which is indicative of an aging population. The top industries of employment are sheep / sheep-beef cattle farming and local government administration.

2.4 Stakeholder Identification

To engage appropriately and effectively with the local community and stakeholders, an important first step was to identify the full list of community and stakeholder groups who may be affected by and/or have an interest in the Project, as outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – Stakeholder identification analysis for Weasel Solar Farm

Group	Sub-section	Description
Near Neighbours	Nearest (<2km)	Excluding the dwellings located within the involved Dungrove and Cluny properties, there are two non-involved dwellings located approximately 600m-1km to the southwest of the Development Area.
	Near (<5km)	10 more non-involved dwellings have been identified up to 5 kilometres north-west from the boundary of the Development Area for the solar farm.
Bothwell Community		Township of Bothwell is 9km south of the Development Area with approximately 500 residents.
Local Businesses	Near (<5km)	Businesses up to 5 kilometres from the site boundary.
	Far (>5km)	Businesses greater than 5 kilometres from the site boundary, within the local area.
Traditional Owners		Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) Aboriginal Land Council Tasmania Heritage Council – Tasmanian Heritage Register Parrdarrama Pungenna Aboriginal Corporation Southeast Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (SETAC) Weetapooona Karadi Aboriginal Corporation
Central Highland community		Communities beyond the immediate area, within the wider Central Highlands regional area
Print Media	Local	Local publications such as the Derwent Valley Gazette and The Highland Digest.
	State	Tasmanian publications such as The Advocate, The Examiner, The Mercury, and Tasmanian Country.
	National	National publications such as the Australian Financial Review, and The Australian.
Other Media	Local	Local TV and Radio, including 7LTN Tasman Community FM
	State	State TV and Radio, including ABC Hobart, 7News Tasmania, 9News Tasmania, Triple M Hobart, Print Radio Tasmania.
	National	National TV and Radio, including ABC National, 7News, 9News, Sky News, SBS.
Social media	Local	Local community Facebook groups i.e. Bothwell Community Forum
Federal Government	Relevant Ministers	Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Hon Chris Bowen MP. Minster for Environment and Water, Hon Tanya Plibersek MP. Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, The Hon. Catherine King MP Minister for Industry and Science, Mr. Ed Husic MP Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Senator the Hon. Murray Watt
	Federal member for Lyons	Brian Mitchell (Labor) Senators: Liberal - Wendy Askew, Claire Chandler, Richard Colbeck, Jonathon Duniam Jacqui Lambie Network - Jacqui Lambie, Tammy Tyrell ALP - Catryna Bilyk, Anne Urquhart, Carol Brown, Helen Polley Greens - Peter Whish - Wilson
	Dept Officers	Staff in government agencies such as: ReCFIT, EPA, DoSG
	Federal Agencies	Department of Climate Change, Energy, Water and the Environment (DCCEEW) Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA)

State Government	Relevant Ministers	Minister for Planning, Minister for Skills and Training, Felix Ellis Minister for Parks and Environment, Minister for Energy and Renewables, Nick Duigan
	Local members	Legislative Council – Craig Farrell, Member for Derwent (Labor) House of Assembly: Guy Barnett (Liberal) Jen Butler (Labor) John Tucker (Liberal) Mark Shelton (Liberal) Rebecca White (Labor)
	State Agencies	Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (RECFIT) Skills Tasmania (Energising Tasmania) Advisory Board on Skills Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmanian Planning Commission
Local Government	Relevant Councillors	Mayor - Loueen Triffitt Deputy Mayor - Jim Allwright Councillors - Tony Bailey, Robert Cassidy, Anthony Archer, John Hall, Julie Honner, Yvonne Miller and David Meacheam
	Relevant Authorities	Central Highlands Council General Manager - Stephen Mackey
Emergency Services		SES and Tasmania Fire services Bothwell Fire station (Volunteer), Bothwell – West Bothwell Fire Station
Water Authority		Tas Water
NGOs / Not for Profits		Farmers for Climate Action <i>E.g. Landcare, skills training organisations</i>
Transport Agencies		Tasmanian Department of State Growth – Transport Tasmania
Utilities / Grid Providers		TasNetworks - Tasmania's main grid operator and transmission line developer

3. Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

3.1 Engagement Objectives

The Proponent acknowledges that active and early engagement with the community and other relevant stakeholders is crucial to the planning process. The exchange of knowledge and information helps foster a greater understanding of and support for the Project and further helps improve the design and development outcomes.

The Proponent is committed to delivering best practice engagement, with the overarching objective of ensuring that the identified community and stakeholder groups are proactively and meaningfully informed, consulted and involved and that the benefits of the Project are genuinely felt by the local community.

The communication and stakeholder engagement objectives are:

- Deliver an inclusive and robust engagement process that informs, consults, or involves stakeholders (as appropriate) throughout the Project's lifecycle.
- Engage early and proactively during the preliminary planning and pre-application phases to improve the Project.
- Develop relationships with targeted stakeholders by raising early awareness and actively engaging with these groups.
- Develop a thorough understanding of the local aspirations and concerns which relate to the Project and work with them to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Ensure stakeholders understand how to access information about the Project, provide feedback, stay informed and lodge complaints.
- Promote the Project's benefits by establishing clear and consistent messaging to manage misinformation.
- Encourage stakeholder and community input into the key aspects of the Project and the community benefit-sharing initiatives.
- Increase support for the Project from the local community and other key stakeholders.
- Establish a comprehensive database of stakeholders for the life of the Project and an up-to-date record providing evidence of all engagement activities undertaken throughout the process.
- To meet government planning expectations.

The objectives above are being met through the implementation of the Weasel Solar Farm Engagement Strategy and Engagement Action Plan, and guided by the Project's engagement principles.

3.2 Engagement Principles



Mutual Benefit and Respect

Deliver shared outcomes of mutual benefit in an equitable way for the local host community, landowners, and developer. Provide a space for genuine dialogue for respectful discussions that identify mutually agreeable solutions.



Authenticity

Have a strong, authentic, and local presence in the community by providing dedicated staff who are reliably and readily available as the community's trusted 'translator' of technical knowledge, to explain information to the community and stakeholders in a simple yet effective way to address



Transparency, Trust, and Accountability

Provide diverse and ongoing opportunities for engagement throughout the Project's lifecycle. Monitor and evaluate the community engagement, benefit sharing and social impact management programs to identify areas for improvement and/or modification.



Fairness

Ensure that consultation is two-way and that opportunities exist for local community members and other stakeholders to participate, with access to balanced information, and having their ideas justly considered, responded to, and incorporated where possible.



Ongoing Engagement

Listen and respond to community needs and concerns in a comprehensive and timely manner. Maintain a record of the key issues raised and/or complaints received to date and how they were resolved.



Responsiveness

Listen and respond to community needs and concerns in a comprehensive and timely manner. Maintain a record of the key issues raised and/or complaints received to date and how they were resolved.



Social Feasibility

Understand, minimise, and offset the risk of negative social impacts across the Project's lifecycle by taking into consideration the many social factors through the use of appropriate social analysis tools and integrating them, alongside the technical and economic factors, into the Project.



Inclusiveness

Identify a wide range of different stakeholders across the local and regional communities and ensure that the channels and methods of engagement are tailored to the needs of each stakeholder group so that they are engaged with appropriately and effectively.



Relationship Building

Build genuine local relationships, networks and links to key local leaders or organisations. Allow key stakeholders to become advocates and create feedback loops. Help the local community to identify positively with the Project and integrate it into their sense of community and place.

3.3 Community Benefit Sharing

As a landowner and active member of the local community, the Proponent has engaged in early consultations with fellow community members to explore opportunities for a potential community investment program. The Proponent is committed to ensuring that the Project's success directly contributes to the long-term prosperity and well-being of the local community.

For each project within the Energy Hub, the proponent is considering different options. For the Weasel Solar Farm, the project team is currently investigating the potential of providing funding to the local Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) while maintaining flexibility to consider alternatives. The Weasel Solar Farm Project will support the local fire brigade by allocating a portion of its revenue to fund essential equipment, training, and facilities. This community benefits sharing initiative ensures enhanced emergency response capabilities, promoting safety and resilience within the local community.

3.3.1 Local Employment Benefits

The Proponent is committed to sustainably contributing to local employment and training while ensuring high labour standards. During the construction of the Weasel Solar Farm, employment opportunities naturally peak at these times, and the approach is to maximise local direct employment and training opportunities.

The Proponent will seek to prioritise hiring from within the local community to support regional economic development and growth. In addition, once approved, the Proponent will implement a local procurement business register, to engage and support local and regional businesses to source materials for the Project locally.

The project team is also exploring frameworks for investment in local indigenous businesses that are currently successful in other Australian states.

4. Consultation Phases

An Engagement Action Plan for the Project was developed to encompass engagement activities for the entire Project lifecycle. The Plan was specifically tailored to the local and regional context of Bothwell, and its surrounds, to ensure the approach was relevant and effective. Each engagement stage was designed to facilitate information sharing and provide opportunities for diverse stakeholder participation to influence the design of the concept plan.

Three engagement stages were identified, with the primary objective being **to ensure early, proactive, and meaningful engagement** with key stakeholders and the local community.

The Engagement Action Plan was structured to give ample time for interested parties to be informed and involved before the Development Application (DA) is lodged, and with additional opportunities during the DA assessment.

4.1 Early feasibility and lodgement

This phase comprised engaging with authorities to help with preliminary investigations and to garner support for and input to the Project at local, regional, and state levels.

A Community & Stakeholder Engagement Strategy was developed at this stage to help establish key engagement and approval objectives for the initial stages of the Project. Within this document, the Engagement Action Plan was established, outlining the key phases and activities for the Project.

This phase also comprised engagement with adjacent landholders and nearby neighbours. Despite the limited number of dwellings within 5km of the Site, near-neighbour engagement has been a critical component of the Project to help increase understanding of the proposal and utilise their local knowledge to inform the design of the Project.

This phase also focused on ensuring that all stakeholders remained well-informed about the progress of the Project. Periodic updates were provided to key stakeholders, including nearby neighbours and landholders, as well as stakeholders at the local and State Government level to maintain transparency and encourage ongoing engagement. These updates covered critical milestones, project developments, and any changes that may affect the community.

During this phase, specialist consultants were engaged to conduct comprehensive technical assessments, addressing environmental, social, and logistical considerations of the Proposal. These assessments inform and support the DA.

Later in this phase, the Project was introduced to the broader local community, assisting them in understanding the issues, listening to their concerns and addressing those through final design iterations.

A public community drop-in session was held at the Bothwell Town Hall in order to provide an opportunity to build early understanding about the solar farm proposal.

4.2 Post-lodgement and advertisement

This phase aims to keep all stakeholders informed of the Project after the DA is lodged with the Council for assessment. The project team will continue to involve the community and stakeholders in the planning and decision-making process, and further consultation will be conducted to ensure the Project is widely understood by the community and stakeholders.

Feedback on the Development Application will be sought via:

- Verbally at the first community drop-in session (to be held in October), meeting or telephone
- Written feedback via email, letter or formal submission
- Project update newsletter
- Feedback forms (hard copies received at the community sessions or e-forms online).

5. Consultation Activities

An Engagement Action Plan was developed to cover the entire Project lifecycle. The implementation of the Engagement Action Plan has provided channels of information sharing and opportunities for a wide range of stakeholders to influence the development of the concept plan.

The three main phases of engagement throughout the lifecycle of the Project include:

- **Phase 1:** Early feasibility and lodgement (completed: Q4 2023 – Q1 2025)
- **Phase 2:** Post-lodgement and advertisement (current: Q1 2025 – ongoing)
- **Phase 3:** Approvals
- **Phase 4:** Construction, operation, and decommissioning.

During all phases of the Project, the Proponent is committed to informing, consulting, and involving the appropriate stakeholders through an effective engagement process based on the objectives and principles of community engagement best practices and guidelines.

Throughout all stages to date, the Proponent and project team have ensured that clear information was communicated regarding the Project, its potential impacts, and the mitigation measures proposed to manage them. By actively listening to stakeholders and addressing their concerns, the proponent has aimed to enhance the benefits and minimise the impacts on neighbours, the community, and the local environment. This has involved making design changes to various elements of the Project and conducting additional technical studies to identify and resolve any issues raised. The Engagement Action Plan continues to be periodically updated to reflect the progress of the Project, incorporate community input, and address any emerging engagement needs and issues.

5.1 Early feasibility and lodgement

Engagement for the feasibility stage was undertaken from the end of 2023 and the end of 2024, leading up to lodgement in Q1 2025. This phase of engagement was critical to garnering support in the early stages of the Project, identifying potential opportunities and constraints and receiving initial feedback.

The key objectives of this phase were to engage with local and State authorities to seek initial feedback and garner support during the Project's early stages. During this phase, Cogency prepared a Community Engagement and Stakeholder Strategy tailored to Bothwell's local and regional context. The local stakeholders and community groups were identified, along with the appropriate engagement activities to be undertaken as part of the Engagement Action Plan.

Given the limited number of sensitive receptors within 5km of the Project, adjacent nearby landholders and neighbours are crucial to the success of Weasel Solar Farm. Community engagement has initially been targeted towards near-neighbour engagement to help increase understanding of the proposal and utilise their local knowledge to inform the design of the Project.

Table 2 – Early Feasibility Engagement Overview

Stakeholders Engaged	Communication and consultation undertaken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State Government – Energy Minister ▪ Central Highlands Council ▪ ReCFIT ▪ Adjacent neighbours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Face-to-face meetings ▪ Online meetings ▪ Formal briefings/presentations

Initial stakeholder briefings

The initial briefings with key state and local stakeholders sought to provide an overview of the Project and discuss potential opportunities and constraints at a high level. The meetings provided insights into the

current state of the renewable energy transition in Tasmania, along with the requirements and approval process of an application for a large-scale solar farm. Stakeholders were generally supportive of the Project.

Near neighbours

Within 5 km of the proposed development area, there are a limited number of non-involved dwellings (i.e., dwellings not owned by landowners of the Weasel Solar Farm). Early engagement efforts were prioritised with immediate neighbours to ensure clear communication and transparency from the outset. These discussions primarily focused on providing an overview of the Project, including key components such as the location of solar panels, the BESS and the general layout of the site. Neighbours were also informed about the anticipated Project timeline and the various stages of the planning approvals process.

In addition to outlining the technical aspects of the solar farm, the conversations addressed the broader benefits the Project will bring to the local community, such as contributions to renewable energy goals, potential job creation during construction, and long-term economic opportunities. Any potential amenity impacts, such as visual changes, noise during construction, and traffic management, were also discussed to ensure neighbours had a full understanding of how the Project might affect their surroundings.

To maintain open lines of communication and build positive relationships, the project team will continue to provide regular updates to nearby residents throughout the life of the Project. This will include sharing key milestones, upcoming construction activities, and any changes in the Project's design or timeline. Neighbour feedback will remain an important part of this engagement process, allowing concerns to be addressed promptly and ensuring that community perspectives are considered as the Project progresses.

The pre-application engagement commenced in early to mid-2024. This phase aimed at reintroducing the Project with more technical information, providing periodic updates to the key process stakeholders previously engaged and continuing discussions with neighbouring properties.

Where needed, the Project was introduced to new stakeholders and any other interested parties. This approach was designed to ensure that any questions or concerns regarding the refined design of the Project could be considered with ample time before the lodgement of the Development Application.

Table 3 – Pre-lodgement Engagement Overview

Stakeholders engaged		Activities undertaken	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ EPA▪ Central Highlands Council▪ State Government – State Premier and Energy Minister▪ Traditional owners▪ Federal members for Lyons - Senator Askew		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Face-to-face meetings▪ Online meetings▪ Formal briefings/presentations▪ Letter of introduction▪ Phone calls	
Summary of Design Engagement Activities			
Date	Stakeholder	Activity	Consultation notes
April 2024	EPA	Online Briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Introduced project, providing an overview of the proposal, construction impacts etc.▪ Determine appropriate approval pathways – preparation of proposal will be based on NOI guidelines
May 2024	Central Highlands Council	Face-to-face meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Held at Council office in Bothwell▪ Overall positive and supportive reaction to project and broader Highlands Renewable Energy Hub▪ Discussed boundary misalignment of Weasel Plains and determined steps to investigate further▪ General questions regarding environmental, hydrology, and fire risks and potential impacts▪ Discussed jobs and economic benefits to Bothwell and the broader community▪ Discussed opportunities to add value to the local economy

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mixed views on how solar would be received by the community, but noted that the site is appropriate for the distance and lack of visibility
May 2024	State Government	Face-to-face meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting with the Premier and newly appointed Energy Minister ▪ Briefing to discuss updates to Highlands Renewable Energy Hub and introduce concept to new energy Minister
July 2024	Central Highlands Councillor briefing	Face-to-face meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Briefing presentation introducing the project and seeking feedback ▪ Appreciative of community focus so far ▪ Discussed the current condition of Highland Lakes Road and the need for upgrades ▪ Potential for a benefit-sharing option for CFA ▪ Concerns about previous RE projects were discussed
July 2024	Near neighbour meeting	Face-to-face meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present plans and introduce projects, seek feedback. ▪ Discussed distance from solar arrays ▪ Not concerned about the concept of the project and generally supportive of renewables in general
September 2024	Federal Member for Lyons	Online meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Briefing to discuss the Highlands Renewable Energy Hub and introduce concept of Weasel Solar Farm.
October 2025	Community information session	Face-to-face session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A public session hosted at the Bothwell Town Hall ▪ Provided detailed information boards and team members available to answer questions

Stakeholder briefings

Pre-lodgement briefings consisted of face-to-face and online meetings with key process stakeholders including the EPA, Central Highlands Council and Councillors, and key State Government bodies. These Project briefings sought to introduce the Project and the Proponent to new stakeholders to provide opportunities for initial feedback and input. Timely Project updates were also provided to stakeholders already familiar with the Project, whereby project designs and community benefit-sharing opportunities and initiatives were discussed.

These discussions found stakeholders to be supportive of the Project and they generously provided insights from past energy Projects in the Central Highlands region. These meetings provided further insights that helped to understand the key opportunities and issues that could arise for the Project and how to manage these considerably. Important feedback was also provided on how best to support the community through a Community Benefit Fund.

Discussions with EPA

The online briefing with the EPA marked the initial stage in determining that the Weasel Solar Farm proposal would not require referral to the EPA Board for assessment under Section 24(1) of the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994* (EMPC Act). The briefing introduced the Project and provided an initial overview of potential environmental and social impacts.

Following the meeting, the EPA requested additional information to help determine the appropriate approval pathways. In response, a proposal letter was submitted, including a Project summary and key supporting documentation, such as the Ecological Assessment for the Weasel Solar Farm.

Subsequently, the EPA acknowledged via formal correspondence that the proposal is unlikely to result in significant environmental or social impacts, and therefore would not require referral to the EPA Board.

Traditional Owners

An introductory email was sent by Aboriginal Heritage Consultancy Services on 7 July 2024 introducing the Project and asking for comments on the findings of the field study to the following organisations:

- Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC)
- Parrdarrama Pungenna Aboriginal Corporation
- Southeast Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation (SETAC)
- Weetapoonna
- Karadi Aboriginal Corporation

No responses were received.

Community drop-in session

As part of the post-lodgement engagement, the Proponent hosted a community drop-in session for the project to engage with local residents, landholders, and other community members. The session provided an informal and open setting where attendees could drop by at their convenience to learn more about the Project, ask questions, and share their thoughts. The primary aim of the session was to ensure that the community feel informed and involved in the planning and development of the solar farm. In the lead up to the session, the website was published to make information about the Project publicly available.

Visual displays and take-home materials, including maps, diagrams, and project timelines, were used to help attendees understand the scale and scope of the Project. Team members were there to explain the technical aspects and answer any questions. Throughout the session, attendees were encouraged to leave feedback and share any concerns they might have. This feedback was used to inform future project planning and community engagement efforts.

A closing the loop email was sent to invited stakeholders and attendees in December 2024.

5.2 Post-lodgement and advertisement

This phase of engagement commences following the lodgement of the DA. While the Project is undergoing assessment for statutory approval, the Proponent and the project team will continue to engage the local community, neighbouring residents and other key stakeholders.

The Proponent, with the support of Cogency, **remains committed to proactive, and meaningful engagement** with the local community and stakeholders, which has started from the preliminary concept design phase.

Table 4 – Post Lodgement Engagement Overview

Stakeholders to engage	Activities to undertake
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bothwell community ▪ Central Highlands Council ▪ Premier of Tasmania ▪ TasNetworks ▪ Neighbouring property owners ▪ ReCFIT ▪ Skills Tasmania ▪ EPA ▪ Aboriginal community groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Published project website ▪ Advertised drop-in session in <i>The Highland Digest</i> ▪ Community drop-in session in Bothwell ▪ Closing the loop emails sent to drop-in session attendees ▪ Meetings (as requested) from the interested or concerned local community and stakeholder groups

Stakeholder briefings

The project team is committed to maintaining ongoing communication with key stakeholders throughout the post-lodgement period of the Weasel Solar Farm. During this time, the team will re-engage with key stakeholders, including state government, regulatory agencies, and community representatives, offering dedicated meetings to provide detailed project updates.

These meetings will cover any changes to the Project's design, the status of planning approvals, and upcoming construction timelines, ensuring that stakeholders remain well-informed and involved in the Project's progression. These briefings will also be a good opportunity to personally welcome neighbours to the community drop-in session.

Neighbours

The project team will re-engage with each neighbour throughout the post-lodgement period to offer meetings to discuss project updates and mitigate any concerns. These meetings will serve as an opportunity to offer clarity on any changes in the project's timeline, layout, or construction schedule, ensuring that neighbours are fully informed about the next steps. The project team will aim to address any potential concerns related to amenity impacts, such as construction noise, increased traffic, or visual changes to the landscape.

Community

In mid-2025, the project team will attend and present about the Project at the Bothwell District High School Careers Expo day. The Project will likely feature alongside the Cellars Hill Wind Farm proposal, providing local youth with information about future employment pathways in renewable energy.

The website will continue to be updated as project-related news arises.

5.3 Approvals

This phase of engagement will commence in 2025, following the lodgement of the DA. While the Project is undergoing assessment, further information about the engagement undertaken at this time will be included in a future version of this Consultation Summary Report.

The project team plans to host additional drop-in sessions and community engagement activities as the project progresses, ensuring that the community remains informed and involved.

6. Conclusion and Next Steps

The Weasel Solar Farm presents an opportunity to increase renewable energy generation in Tasmania, thereby strengthening energy and price stability for Tasmanian households and supporting the state's net-zero transition.

From the outset of planning and development, the Proponent, Weasel Solar Farm Pty Ltd c/o Robert Luxmoore Pty Ltd, has been dedicated to fostering and sustaining respectful relationships with the local community, businesses, all levels of government, Traditional Owners of the land, and other stakeholders. This has been made evident through the proponent's commitment to preliminary and ongoing engagement with key stakeholders (such as nearby neighbours, Central Highlands Council and Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre).

As demonstrated within this report, the Proponent has remained committed to proactive and meaningful engagement at every critical stage of the Project. This approach has helped facilitate open and honest dialogue with key stakeholders and the broader community.

While aiming to minimise the potential impacts of the Project, the Proponent has also strived to maximise the benefits for the local community. Through the comprehensive engagement process, the Proponent has developed a deep understanding of the key opportunities and challenges associated with the Project, and how to manage these thoughtfully. These insights have also helped to identify initiatives related to the creation of a Community Benefit Fund which will continue to evolve as the Project progresses through its approval stages.

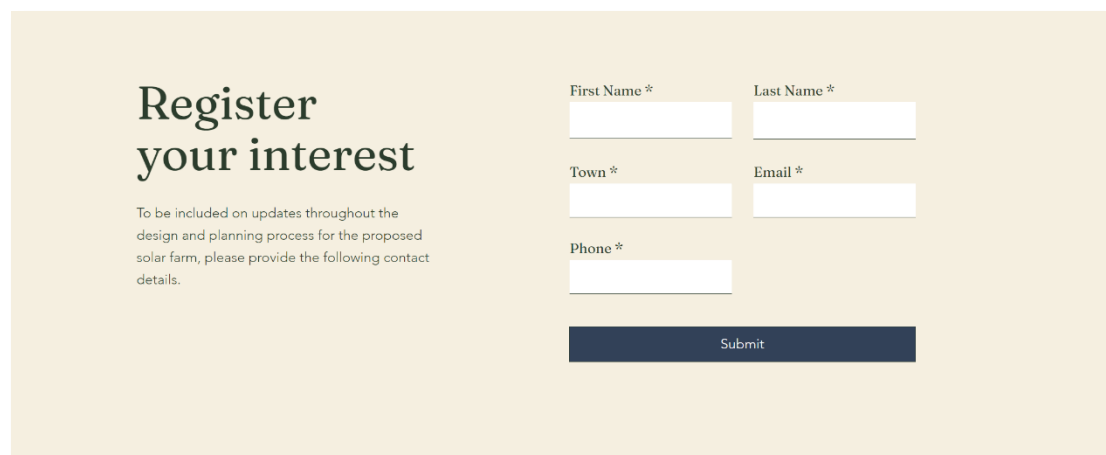
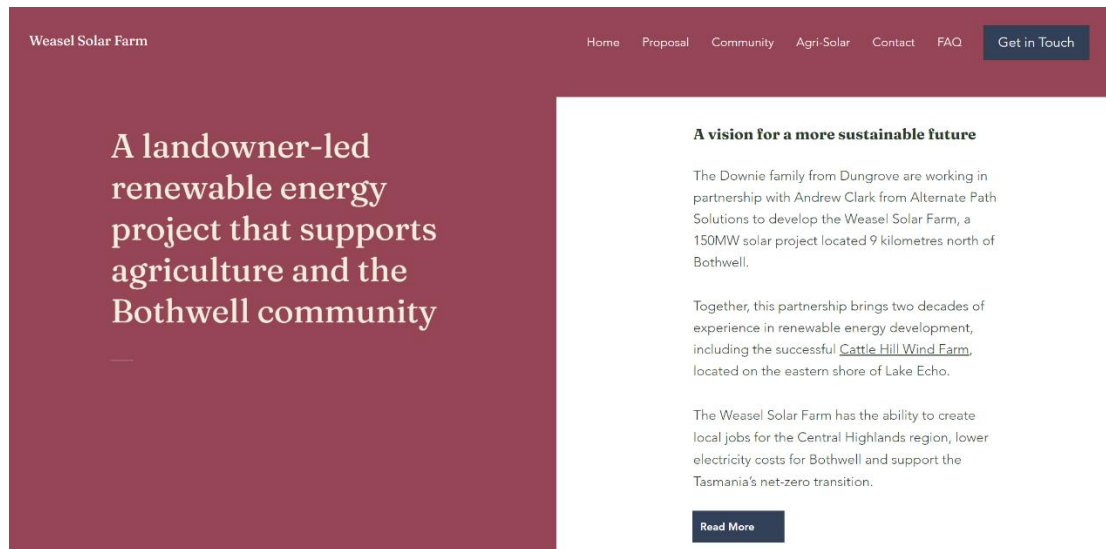
Looking ahead, the Proponent, with the support of Cogency, remains committed to fostering strong relationships with key stakeholders and the local Bothwell community. The Proponent plans to maintain open lines of communication by actively engaging with local community members through a Community Drop-In Session and establishing the local Community Benefit Fund.

This continued engagement highlights the Proponent's dedication to maintaining respectful relationships, ensuring that the community's voices are heard, and their needs are addressed throughout the Project's lifecycle.

Appendices

Appendix A	Weasel Solar Farm website
Appendix B	Community drop-in session advertisement
Appendix C	Community drop-in session photographs
Appendix D	Attendee closing the loop email

Appendix A Weasel Solar Farm website



Appendix B Community drop-in session advertisement



YOU'RE INVITED

COMMUNITY DROP-IN INFORMATION SESSION

WEASEL SOLAR FARM PROPOSAL

The Weasel Solar Farm is a landowner-led renewable energy project with the ability to create local jobs for the Central Highlands region and support Tasmania's net-zero transition. The electricity generated will be used to produce green fuel, fertiliser and building materials for local use.


Come along to talk to the team and learn more about the project.


Date: Thursday 31 October


Time: 4:00pm-7:00pm

Venue: Bothwell Town Hall

CONTACT US

 www.weaselsolarfarm.com.au

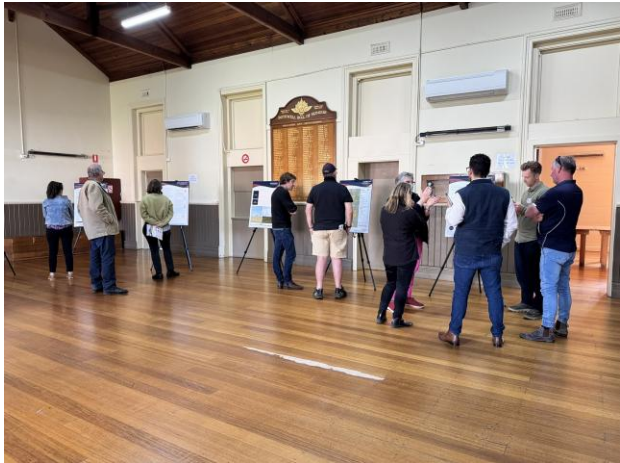
 0452 593 428

 consultation@cogencyaustralia.com.au

cogency



Appendix C Community drop-in session photographs



Appendix D Attendee closing the loop email



Weasel Solar Farm

Thank you for joining us at our recent Community Drop-In Session for the Weasel Solar Farm. We greatly appreciate your time, interest, and feedback at this stage of the project. We will be considering your feedback as we move through the coming stages of the planning process.

We will keep you informed as the project progresses and seek further feedback to ensure that you remain involved and that the local community benefits from economic opportunities generated by the project.

In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional information about the project. You can contact us at 0452 593 428 or via email at consultation@coagencyaustralia.com.au

Further updates and resources will also be available on our website at <https://www.weasel-solarfarm.com.au/>

Thank you once again for your engagement with the Weasel Solar Farm project.

Best regards,

Camilla Hamilton

Head of Engagement & Associate Director

[Coagency](#)

P +61 452 593 428

E consultation@coagencyaustralia.com.au

W <https://www.weasel-solarfarm.com.au/>

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT



Planning | Engagement | Strategy

Cogency provides planning, environmental assessment and stakeholder engagement services for the renewable energy, property, clean tech, and circular economy sectors.

Our collaborative teams bring a uniquely nuanced understanding of planning processes and the technical aspects of renewable energy property, infrastructure, and circular economy projects, which helps to build a strong rapport and trust with local community members and stakeholders.

Unlike many in-house engagement and planning teams that are managed separately, our planners work in collaboration with our engagement practitioners to ensure that stakeholder and community consultation is at the heart of the planning process and a critical tool for delivering positive outcomes for our clients.

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