



# Solar Systems

North-West Victorian Solar Energy Facility

Consultation Strategy

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## **1. Overview**

Solar Systems is committed to undertaking a genuine and thorough consultation process.

This document outlines the objectives, framework and strategy for Solar Systems' Consultation for the development of the large scale solar power project in north-west Victoria (The "Vic Project"). The document also summarizes the main events planned for the consultation period / process.

The Consultation Strategy has been, and will continue to be developed, through the co-operation of the community and stakeholders; and as required additional consultation will be considered with respect to delivery of the project.

### **1.1 Consultation Objectives**

The objectives of consultation are to:

- Implement an education campaign to raise awareness and understanding among the local community and other stakeholders of the project and its benefits,
- Offer community members and stakeholders a genuine opportunity to discuss and provide input into the project, and to
- Achieve community and stakeholder engagement and support for a successful and efficient planning process.

### **1.2 Key Messages**

Solar Systems' always aims to provide clear, open and honest communication. It is important that consistent communication is used across different communication channels to avoid confusion. Key messages need to be carefully developed and tailored to meet the needs of audience groups such as communities and other stakeholders. Key messages will address themes such as:

- Company,
- Technology, and
- The Project.

Solar Systems' approach to communications is to provide two-way communication wherever possible to encourage input.

## **2. Community Consultation**

The community consultation framework to be taken by Solar Systems in conjunction with the planning approval process is detailed on the following page.

The implementation of this framework will follow a process that allows community members and groups to gain an understanding of the project and the benefits it will bring to the region. It will also allow the community to provide input into avenues where they can be involved. For example, the development of a community project to use land owned but not required by Solar Systems for the projects infrastructure. .

The consultation process aims to engage with individuals and groups to deliver consistent information regarding the project and its benefits and to create an opportunity for open and constructive dialogue regarding project specifics.

**2.1 Table 1. Community Engagement Framework**

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Schedule of Activities</b>	<b>Materials</b>
Aug-Oct 2008	One on one neighbour consultation	Information Kits
	Meetings with government agencies / departments, local government and local politicians	Information Kits
November 2008	Community Notice advertised in local press	Advertisement
	Community Notice posted on bulletin boards (eg. Australia Post, Library, Council Office, Shops)	Community Notice
	Information Centre Open/Meeting and interaction with community members	Face-to-face advice, information kits, Photo Montage, Models
	Meetings with Aboriginal Groups	Information Kits
	Briefings with Special Interest Groups, Industry Advisory Groups,	Information Kits
	Meetings with Emergency Services and Transport Services	Information Kits
	Meetings with Job and Network Training Providers	Information Kits
	Meetings with local business people	Information Kits
	Follow up meetings with community members	Face-to-face follow up discussion
	Community static display manned by Solar Systems personnel for nearest major town located in the vicinity to the project site	Information Kits
	Neighbour consultation	Verbal information
	Community Notice advertised in local press	Advertisement
	Community Forums – as needed	Materials would be developed as needed
Early Dec 2008	Follow up meetings with neighbours	Face-to-face follow up discussion
	Follow up meetings with all groups and individuals liaised with in November	Face-to-face follow up discussion
Mid Dec 2008	Follow up planning meetings with government agencies	Face-to-face follow up discussion
	Submission of Planning Documents	Completed planning submission
March 2008	Planning Approval	
March 2008	Media announcement	Media Kit

In addition to the above activities, website and media updates will be provided as needed.

### **3. Targeted Stakeholder Consultation**

Solar Systems plans to engage stakeholders through a process that actively informs and seeks input. The stakeholders will also guide appropriate aspects of project development, achieving the best outcome for the environment and all relevant parties.

The project is one of State significance for Victoria. Accordingly, Solar Systems has been working with all levels of the State Government of Victoria to provide briefings and updates on the project and the particulars of the proposal.

Solar Systems is committed to consulting with all sectors of the community in order to gain their support for this landmark project. A stakeholder database of over 100 groups and individuals has been compiled and will be used as a basis for consultation.

Key stakeholders identified include, but are not limited to:

- The local community (residents and businesses);
- The local Councils
- Progress/Planning Associations;
- Local Indigenous representatives;
- Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD);
- Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE);
- Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD);
- The Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA);
- VICRoads; and
- Powercor (the local electricity distributor).

### **4. Consultation Outcomes**

The outcomes from the community consultation process will be compiled into a “Consultation Outcomes Report” that will form part of the overall planning submission to the Minister for Planning. The full spectrum of views and issues discussed during the community consultation process together with the negotiated outcomes, actions and solutions will be captured in this report.

Widespread community support for the project by involving and seeking input from the community is the desired outcome of the process. Where appropriate letters of support from community groups, individuals and from the shire council will provide evidence of local confidence in the project and help facilitate State Government approval for the project.

### **5. Conclusion**

The consultation process will be a deliberate and focussed effort to inform and stimulate discussion and feedback on the project in an attempt to obtain a high level of awareness and support for the project and its benefits.

Consultation efforts commenced in earnest at a State Government and Departmental level during early 2008 and have guided the planning and consultation strategy to date. This dialogue has been open, constructive and collaborative, resulting in a high level of State Government support for the project and the process for delivery of planning and environmental approvals. We look forward to continuing to work co-operatively with the State Government of Victoria and community stakeholders.