

Meeting minutes

Fulham Solar Farm and Battery – Community Reference Group (CRG) #2

Date	Time	Attendees	Apologies
12 May 2026	11-1230	Tricia Pacifico (TP) Michelle Dowsett (MD) Alfred Chown (AC) Kirsten Power (KP) Andrea Anastasi GRS Rose Ai'nuu GRS	Harry Hooke (HH)

Agenda Items

- Welcome and introductions
- Project update, key highlights and upcoming activities
- Discussion points:
 - o Wellington Community vision 2041
 - o Utilising existing community sentiment (5-6 target priorities)
 - o Potentially looking on endowment funds
- AOB

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting opened and attendees acknowledged.

2. Project Update

- GRS provided the CRG with the construction updates on site.
- Key milestone noted:
 - o 29 September – BESS deliveries scheduled

3. Community Benefit Framework Discussion

Local Engagement Feedback

- Reference made to Wellington 2040 strategy.
- Community described as highly engaged but lacking clear outcomes from other energy projects in the region.
- Concerns raised regarding:
 - o Lack of clarity on what will be funded
 - o Perception of engagement being ongoing without delivery
 - o Risk of engagement being seen as “vote catching”

Localisation of FSF Benefits

- Strong support for:
 - o Reducing funding radius from 50km to ~30km

- Prioritising ~20km radius in early years
- Priority communities identified:
 - Kilmany, Wurruk, Fulham
- Emphasis on concentrating impact locally rather than broadly across Gippsland

Local Employment and Economic Opportunities

- Importance of local commitment to Operations & Maintenance (O&M) highlighted.
- Positive acknowledgement:
 - 147 local contractors engaged
 - Local services utilised

Community Priorities and Needs

Key challenges identified:

- Transport
- Accommodation
- Digital connectivity

Potential opportunities:

- Community bus via neighbourhood house
- WiFi connectivity upgrades for local halls

Local Partnerships and programs

Local Organisations

- Key delivery partners identified:
 - Wurruk Neighbourhood House
 - Food distribution
 - Youth programs (e.g. day activities for teenagers)
 - Kilmany Hall – community engagement and activities
 - Business & Tourism Association – potential for business planning support

Education and Workforce Pathways

- Interest in:
 - Localised, means-tested scholarships
 - Ensuring local students benefit and remain in region
- Reference to:
 - GippsDairy program (Committee for Gippsland)
- Action identified:
 - Obtain data on program participants and outcomes

Community Investment Approach

- Preference expressed for:
 - Long-term commitment (10–20 years)
 - Structured investment models (e.g. endowment fund)
- Comparison made to ESSO funding approach
- Strong interest in:

- Upskilling and capability building
- Supporting organisations to become financially sustainable

Key questions raised:

- What training is required?
- What resources do organisations need?
- How can programs generate revenue?
- How to support groups with limited capacity to participate?
- **Engagement approach**
 - Small, localised engagement sessions
 - Example: Pop-up session at Kilmany Hall (2–3 hours)

4. Actions

Action	Owner
Provide data on local contractors and services engaged	GRS/OA
Share modelling for endowment fund	Michelle
Explore long-term support for hall WiFi connectivity	Project team
Investigate community transport solutions (e.g. bus via neighbourhood)	Project team
Plan pop-up engagement sessions – TBC next year	OA/GRS
Review localised scholarship approach (means-tested)	Project team
Obtain data on GippsDairy program outcomes	Project team
Investigate long-term (10–20 year) investment framework	Project team

5. Next Steps

- Clarify and communicate funding priorities and criteria
- Progress local-first benefit framework
- Deliver early, visible community outcomes
- Strengthen partnerships with local organisations and delivery partners