

2
MINUTE
READ

Winton Solar Farm COMMUNITY UPDATE

EDITION 2 / APRIL 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter! It has been a busy few months with crews completing the installation of electrical infrastructure and starting the process of testing and commissioning. This hard work has paid off, with the Winton Solar Farm generating clean energy for the first time in early February.

CONSTRUCTION HIGHLIGHTS

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and a wetter than usual year, construction is now complete. At peak activity, over 200 personnel were onsite, with many of these workers living in the area. Site crew members were also involved via local businesses – including Watters Electrical, Delatite Steel, ACLE, James Civil and Sandy Creek Trees. Even small suppliers played a key role supplying meals, accommodation, fuel, fencing, and wildlife handling.

WINTON A NEW CLEAN ENERGY GENERATION HUB

On February 9, Winton Solar Farm started sending clean, renewable energy to the grid. While output is at low levels through this early commencement phase, ‘first generation’ is a key milestone for the project. Energy output will progressively increase as the project progresses through ‘hold point’ tests post full registration with the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO). When complete, the solar farm will generate 85 megawatts, enough clean power for 52,000 homes.



Vegetation buffer trees show strong growth since planting 5 months ago.

ACTIVE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Last year, we awarded \$35,000 in community grants to six organisations. As a result several exciting new community projects are now underway. Benalla Woodworkers Association and Men’s Shed has purchased two new dust filters drastically reducing the amount of dust in their workshop. Waminda House in Benalla is working on a new community garden that will feature water-wise wicking beds provided by a North-East manufacturer. These are just two examples of projects Winton Solar Farm has been proud to support; well done to all the winners of our Community Grant Program!



New dust filters have dramatically improved conditions at the Benalla Woodworkers’ Association.

Winton Solar Farm

COMMUNITY UPDATE

RESOURCE RECOVERY

Waste materials such as cardboard, wooden pallets, scrap metal and general waste are a by-product of constructing a solar farm. Fortunately, much of this material can be recycled.

Over the past two months, an estimated 85 tonnes of materials have been sent out for recycling by local specialists, including D&R Henderson, Wangaratta Recycling, Future Recycling in Shepparton, and Thomo's in Wangaratta.

A small number of damaged solar panels will also be recycled by EcoCycle in Derrimut. This is an emerging industry and one that will grow as the industry looks to conserve the valuable and finite resources used to manufacture solar panels and reduce waste sent to landfill.



Cable drums like these have been recycled via local businesses.

Frequently asked questions

When will the solar farm be operational?

Commissioning activities are underway to ensure the solar farm operates as intended. This work is done alongside relevant authorities, including the Network Service Provider (NSP) and energy market operator, AEMO. A final completion date for Winton Solar Farm depends somewhat on their requirements, however it is anticipated the project will be fully operational later this year.

Will there be operations roles for local workers?

Ongoing roles have been advertised locally. To date, four roles have been filled by workers from Violet Town, Glenrowan and surrounds. From time to time, Winton Solar Farm will also require contracted services – like grass slashing, cleaning and electrical maintenance. Local suppliers will be sought to fill these contracts as part of our commitment to invest directly in the economy.

Where does the solar farm connect to the grid?

A new, purpose-built substation has been constructed within the site. This connects directly to the existing Glenrowan Terminal Station. Winton Solar Farm will export up to 210,000 MWh of clean energy to customers across the National Electricity Market (NEM) including Victoria via this connection point.

STAFF PROFILE

Isabella Lindsay – Business Trainee

Isabella Lindsay has been working at the Winton Solar Farm during construction and will stay on with the permanent site team as it transitions into Operations. Bella will be the project's new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition Operator, responsible for monitoring the solar farm's performance to confirm operating conditions and to detect any potential faults or malfunctions.

At the same time, Bella will continue with her studies Certificate IV in Business studies at GO TAFE, a course she hopes will see her take on additional administration and management tasks in the future.

"I have enjoyed watching the land transform from bare paddocks to impressive solar farm infrastructure throughout construction," Bella says.

"I was lucky enough to be offered a position with the Operations team. I can't wait to watch the panels rotate with the sun and see how much energy this generates to power our homes and businesses locally. We are lucky to have such a proactive Council and such widespread community support for solar projects like the Winton Solar Farm".



CONTACT US

Detailed project information is available on the Winton Solar Farm website www.wintonsolarfarm.com
Alternatively email us infoaustralia@frv.com or phone 0418 142 173