

# Community Update

## Muswellbrook Solar Farm

A Development Application was submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in August 2023. The application was exhibited on the Major Projects website for 28 days and 61 submissions were received from the public.

A Response to Submissions report prepared by the proponent, ESCO (a joint venture between OX2 and Idemtisu) and additional information requested by referral authorities, is now available on the Major Projects website.

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/muswellbrook-solar-farm>

## The Next Steps

Due to the number of submissions received, the application will now be decided by the Independent Planning Commission (IPC). Details on the IPC can be found at

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/>

Once a proposed development is assessed by the DPHI and provided to the Commission for decision, the Chair of the Commission will appoint a panel, typically comprised of between one and three Commissioners, that will:

- hold targeted meetings with the developer, DPHI, the local council, and others,
- hold a public meeting where appropriate, or a public hearing if directed by the Minister,
- take and consider written public submissions on the proposed development,
- make a determination based on legislation and policy to either refuse or approve the development,
- publish a Statement of Reasons explaining the reasons for the decision.

OX2 will distribute a newsletter to neighbouring properties once the panel has been appointed and further information is available regarding a public meeting or hearing. [If you wish to receive this communication via email, please contact us with your details.](#)

## Acknowledgement

The project is located within the Traditional lands of the Wonnarua people. We wish to acknowledge them as traditional custodians of the land and pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people past and present. We acknowledge their continuous connection to Country.

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### Contact Us:

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## Community Benefits

OX2 are working closely with Muswellbrook Shire Council to deliver a **Community Benefit Program** for Muswellbrook and near neighbours to the project. An annual fund will be delivered via Council through community grant programs, training and scholarships and a neighbour benefit contribution.

The General Terms of a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) were approved by Muswellbrook Shire Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024. These include:

1. A monetary contribution of 'the greater of \$850/MWac or as per finalised 'Benefit Sharing Guideline' installed, paid annually, and adjusted for consumer price index';
2. Annual instalments spent in the following ratios:
  - a. 10% Specialist staff contribution;
  - b. 45% Muswellbrook Shire Community Benefit Fund contribution; and
  - c. 45% Neighbour benefits contribution (administered via Council).
3. Council is supportive of assisting with the 'deliver local benefits' as rate rebates to the properties nominated by the Proponent.

Full details can be found on the Muswellbrook Shire Council website, Council meeting minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> May: <https://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/MINUTES-Extra-Ordinary-Meeting-14-May-2024.pdf>

## Local Economic Development

OX2 aim to maximise investment in the regional economy through the engagement of local businesses. We work towards utilising local contractors wherever possible throughout the construction and operation of the project.

We would welcome contact from local businesses and service providers to register their interest in the project to grow our current database. Businesses and the local community will be advised once the solar farm receives approval, and how to find out more about potential business opportunities.



## Community Consultation

OX2 wish to continue an open dialogue with the community as the project progresses and welcome the opportunity to discuss the project further with near neighbours. If you would like to meet with a member of the team, please reach out to Helen Kennedy on 0403 920 098 or at [helen.kennedy@ox2.com](mailto:helen.kennedy@ox2.com).

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To receive future Community Updates via email, please send your email address to:

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