

## **SUBJECT:** Tallawang Solar Farm and Barneys Reef Wind Farm

Following our consultation with community members and facilitation of the community information sessions, please find below responses to some additional questions that have been raised during our consultation program to date. We hope that these will be helpful as we continue to progress the Tallawang Solar Farm and Barneys Reef Wind Farm Projects.

### Engagement

#### **Q. What are RES' plans to speak to us directly about our issues as nearby residents?**

A. RES and Umwelt are planning to contact nearby residents to both projects in September and October 2021 to have a one-on-one phone meeting about the projects (all residences within ~5km of the wind farm and all adjacent property owners to the solar farm). These meetings have been slightly delayed due to the current lockdown as we intended to have them face-to-face

Other community groups, stakeholders, local businesses, and service providers have been consulted and met with over the past months and we will continue to meet with those interested in learning more about the project or those who wish to provide feedback.

### Community Benefits

#### **Q. When will we receive information on Community Funding and who gets what?**

A. RES is still in the very early stages of developing a framework for community benefit for the projects, as it requires a lot of preparation work. The Social Impact Assessment currently being prepared aims to capture the community's interests and views on how benefits may be shared with the community and to obtain community input on key community needs and aspirations.

#### **Q. How has feedback from the community influenced RES' plans for community benefits?**

A. Initial feedback from the local community has been an important driver in considering two separate benefit programs for both projects - one that provides funding to the broader community, and one that benefits near neighbours of the projects specifically.

We plan to have introductory conversations with nearby residents on the Neighbour Shared Benefit Scheme (NBS) in September and October 2021, with the aim of finalising the details of a broader community fund by the end of the year.

#### **Q. How do the community funds relate to the VPA, and will there be a VPA for this project?**

A. A Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) is intended to be used to formalize community contributions for both projects. RES will work to ensure that feedback from communities will be considered in the formation of a VPA, in consultation with local councils.

#### **Q. How are people going to benefit from these projects if not living directly next door?**

A. RES has a strong track record in Australia of supporting local host communities through the development of community fund programs. For the life of the projects, community funds for the Tallawang and Barneys Reef projects will contribute to local initiatives and organisations and assist in providing benefits to the local community.

#### **Q. How are people affected by both projects treated differently under the Shared Benefit Scheme?**

A. Eligibility for the Neighbour Shared Benefit Scheme (NBS) would be assessed on a number of criteria. A neighbour may qualify for the benefit scheme to varying degrees based on an open and fair assessment of their individual circumstances.

**Q. Will RES discount our electricity bills as part of the Shared Benefit Scheme?**

- A. The community benefit models being considered do not subsidise electricity bills, but rather seek to provide direct and indirect benefits to community members relative to their association with the proposed projects.

## Social Amenity

**Q. How will RES address our concerns around noise?**

- A. Impact assessments are currently being undertaken to determine the level of localised noise anticipated during the construction and operations of the two projects. Construction noise may be caused by machinery for earthworks, including reversing sensors on vehicles, drilling and onsite concrete batching plants. Consultation with landholders and the local community will be undertaken to minimise noise disturbance throughout the construction period and will consider further mitigation strategies such as work only being undertaken during standard working hours.
- A. *Regarding the Barneys Reef Wind Farm* - the noise assessment requirement for SSD wind farm projects is 35 dB(A) or a limit of prevailing background noise of 5 dB(A) (DPIE Wind Energy Guideline for State Significant Wind Energy Development, 2016). RES will undertake a 6-week background noise monitoring program as a baseline to assess the level of aerodynamic and mechanical noise created by the rotation of wind turbines for the Project.

**Q. What is RES going to do about the increase in local traffic?**

- A. The traffic impact assessment for both projects is currently underway and will consider all local roads and current usage. A traffic management plan, including designated transport routes for over-sized vehicles, would be prepared as part of the development consent. All oversized deliveries will likely come from Newcastle. Local users such as school bus routes would also be considered in the construction management plan as it is developed, following project determination.

## Livelihoods

**Q. Will the value of my property decrease because I live near the projects?**

- A. Studies have shown that there is no clear correlation between the presence of renewable energy projects and property values. We understand that there are some concerns around this issue, and we are working with those concerned to better understand their particular circumstances.

**Q. Where will materials required for the projects be sourced from?**

- A. Where possible, supplies and labour will be sourced from the local area or regionally, however the larger equipment components such as the turbines or solar panels will be imported from overseas manufacturers, as is the case with most renewable energy projects in Australia. The lithium-ion battery is likely to be sourced internationally as well.

**Q. What opportunities are there for local job seekers, suppliers, service providers and businesses to get involved in the projects?**

- A. The construction phase of both projects would have a variety of requirements such as trades, fencing, earthworks, electrical positions etc. We encourage individuals and local businesses to register their interest with RES. Further details around local procurement will be provided in the next phase of the project.

## Surroundings

**Q. Where will the projects source and access water?**

- A. The projects' water source is still to be confirmed; however, we expect that water will be purchased commercially and trucked in based on the project's needs.

**Q. Why aren't solar farms like this being developed in western NSW where land is not used for agriculture and the population is sparse?**

A. Energy projects require transmission infrastructure nearby to connect to the grid, which is typically not present in more remote areas. The State Government has identified the Central West Orana region as a suitable region to prioritise renewable energy development as a long-term replacement for existing sources of generation.

## Cumulative Impacts

**Q. How is RES working with other developers across the region?**

A. RES understands that there are a lot of projects in motion, particularly in the Central West Orana region, given that the renewable energy industry is experiencing a lot of growth. We are working with Council, industry and other key stakeholders across the region to coordinate efforts and address common issues where we can. Some of these include local procurement and employment planning, shared benefit schemes, workforce accommodation and housing strategies and neighbouring landholder consultation.

**Q. How do the RES and Vena projects relate?**

A. We understand that people living near the proposed Tallawang Solar Farm have previously heard about the Vena project. The Vena project is a separate and neighbouring project to the RES projects. RES is engaging with Vena and other developers in the area to understand the potential cumulative impacts and benefits of proposed renewable projects and other projects in the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. RES looks forward to working with other developers in the industry to maximise benefits to the local community.