

Cooba Solar Project

Community Reference Group Meeting #3

Minutes

Date: 10 February 2026
Time: 5:30pm
Location: Colbinabbin Country Hotel

Attendees

Guest	Joshua Pell – Bendigo Bank, Community Enterprise Foundation
Community Members	Belinda West Brian Spencer Carl Brown Dean Wallace Hugh Jones Ian Rathjen Jacki Brown (proxy for Jenny Weaver)
Venn Energy	Bree Williams – Community and Stakeholder Engagement Manager Geoff Stoker-Lavelle – Managing Director

Agenda

	Item
1.	Chair's welcome and opening remarks, introductions Meeting opened. Welcome to Community Reference Group members and Project representatives.
2.	Apologies/ attendance It was mentioned that Tait Hamilton was away and unable to attend this meeting. Jenny Weaver had sent communications to the organizer prior, advising that she was unable to attend, however she was sending a representative in her place. Tim Hill was also absent.
3.	Declaration of pecuniary or other interests All members of Community Reference Group must sign a declaration of pecuniary

	<p>and non-pecuniary interests before they join the committee and keep this declaration up to date while they are members on the group.</p> <p>Note: members in attendance all returned a signed copy prior to end of meeting.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Presentation from Bendigo Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed discussion was with Joshua Pell presenting on the role of Bendigo Bank and governance structure – including conditions. • A handout was supplied to each member, with a chance for members to ask questions about how the funds will be set up and administered. This included questions about how applications for funding will be made, reviewed and approved between applicants, Bendigo Bank and the CRG. • Bendigo Bank went on to explain how the Community Enterprise Foundation will support the Community Reference Group for the Cooba Solar Fund to ensure priority projects and community investment programs both short and long term from across the community are funded through this structure. • It was agreed by the group that some kind of administrative governance structure was required. <p>Action: Venn Energy will continue to work with Bendigo Bank for the administration and governance set up of the fund.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Business arising from the minutes</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Adjourned business</p> <p>6a. A draft purpose of the Cooba Solar Project CBF-CRG was presented to the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish good working relationships and promote information sharing and transparency on the project’s Community Benefit Sharing Fund between

	<p>local community, local councils and stakeholder groups (such as environment, residents, business/ commerce associations).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the Cooba Solar Project Team to keep the community informed about the Community Benefit Fund for the Cooba Solar Project, seek community views and respond to matters raised by the community. • Allow community members to seek information from the Cooba Solar Project Team and provide feedback to assist with the delivery of balanced social, environmental, educational and economic outcomes for the Community Benefit Fund. • To perform an advisory and consultative role in the formation and establishment of the CRG and Community Benefit Fund and subsequent allocation of funding. <p>Action: A draft Terms of Reference was issued in November for feedback / to be agreed by the group members.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>General business</p> <p>7a. Governance and the role of Campaspe Shire Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of ensuring Council was presented with an opportunity to present a non-decision-making representative at future CRG meetings was reiterated as in previous meeting. Concerns were acknowledged that Council will want to ensure they do not have any legacy costs associated with CRG funding or projects. It was established that an invitation should be extended to Council to “involve them from the start” for the purpose of sharing information. <p>Action: Invite representative of Council to next meeting.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Community feedback / areas of interest from members of CRG</p> <p>It was reported that feedback from Community Survey for the CBF has been low, with only 1 response provided so far. The project team will continue to seek feedback for the CRG through project newsletters.</p>

9.	Next meeting date and location Tuesday 11 August 2026, location and time TBA. An invitation will be extended to a representative of Council to attend either virtually or in person.
10.	Meeting closed at 7:00pm

Other notes or information:

1. If members are unable to attend, it is not necessary to send a non-member in place.
We will issue all records to members following the meeting.