

Cooba Solar Project

Community Reference Group Meeting #3

Minutes

Date: 11 August 2026
Time: 5:30pm
Location: Colbinabbin Country Hotel

Guest	Kahlia Reid – Campaspe Shire Council
Community Members	Belinda West Brian Spencer Carl Brown Dean Wallace Hugh Jones Ian Rathjen Jenny Weaver Tait Hamilton
Venn Energy	Ian Courtney – Senior Project Developer 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 Tim & Shannon Hill.

3.	Business arising from the minutes Action: Cooba Project team to continue to engage with Bendigo Bank Foundation
4.	Adjourned business 4a. Cooba Solar Project Term of Reference: • Discussion focused on the opportunity for the Community Reference Group (CRG) to take a more active role as a conduit between the Project team and the broader community. This could include helping to communicate community views, concerns and priorities to the Project team, while also supporting the flow of accurate and timely Project information back to the community. A stronger role for the CRG would help ensure local perspectives are considered as the Project progresses and provide an additional avenue for ongoing, two-way engagement. • The CRG’s primary role would continue to be the development and implementation of the Community Benefit Fund. This could include helping to identify local priorities, providing input into funding objectives and assessment criteria, and advising on the types of initiatives that would deliver meaningful and lasting benefits to the community. Further discussion will be required to determine the appropriate level of CRG involvement and to ensure its role complements, rather than replaces, broader community consultation and appropriate governance arrangements for the Fund. Action: A revised draft Terms of Reference will be reissued for February 2027 meeting
5.	General business 5a. Project update: A significant milestone has recently been reached, with the Cooba Solar Project securing full grid connection approval for both the solar farm and Battery Energy Storage System in May 2026.

Achieving full connection approval provides greater certainty for the project's progression toward construction and demonstrates continued momentum as the project moves through its development phase. The final stage to sign the connection agreement is expected to be completed in the next quarter.

Campaspe Shire Council

- Kahlia Reid spoke about the importance of Council having a clear understanding of the activities and priorities of the CRG. This would enable Council to provide guidance to the Project's Community Benefit Fund, and vice versa, helping to maximise community benefits and avoid duplication of funding or initiatives. It will be important for Council to understand what information or involvement the CGR wants from Council.

Action: Kahlia to discuss and assess who from Council may be attending future CRG meetings

CRG members numbers

A request had been received for additional members from a neighbouring locality to join the CRG. The general consensus of the meeting was that the current membership numbers and representation across the wider local area are appropriate at this stage.

It was agreed that prospective new members would be encouraged to express their interest in joining the CRG in the future as CRG launch approaches, and as future membership is rotated, providing opportunities for broader community participation over time.

Action: Project Team to advise the prospective new members from the neighbouring locality of the CRG's discussion and encourage them to apply for membership in the future as positions become available through the membership rotation process.

6.

Community feedback / areas of interest from members of CRG

It was reported that participation in the Community Benefit Fund (CBF) Community Survey has been low, with only four responses received to date.

CRG members suggested a number of additional promotional and marketing activities to increase awareness of the survey and to generally encourage greater community participation.

	Action: Cooba Solar Project Team to assess and develop additional opportunities to promote the survey and encourage greater community participation.
7.	Next meeting date and location Tuesday 9 February 2027, at Colbinabbin Hotel 5:30pm
8.	Meeting closed at 7:00pm