



NEW ENGLAND SOLAR FARM:

Community Reference Group Information Sheet

The Community Reference Group (CRG) is being established to gather ideas and to make informed recommendations about how the community benefit sharing program of the New England Solar Farm can best deliver lasting value in the local community.

The CRG is now open for local people to nominate. Between 12 and 15 nominees will be selected to represent important local organisations and stakeholder groups. Selection will be by a panel made up of a representative from UPC, the community and the independent facilitator. Participation in the CRG will be on a volunteer basis.

The CRG will meet three or four times over the next 3 months to generate ideas, review the broader community input and make recommendations to UPC about the form the community benefit sharing strategy should take. It will meet in Uralla on:

- Friday 7 September 6-8pm – a social gathering (optional)
- Tuesday 11 September 4-6.30pm – meeting followed by dinner
- Saturday 15 September 1-4pm – public community workshop (optional)
- Monday 17 September 5.30-7pm – meeting
- Thursday 27 September 5.30-7pm – meeting
- Wednesday 3 October 5.30-7pm – tentative meeting date

If you nominate, you will need to be available to attend all the above meeting times (except the first one, which is optional). We know this is a tight time frame and a big ask, but it also a fantastic opportunity to provide input into an important opportunity for the local community.

The CRG will have an independent facilitator.

Nominations close **Sunday 26 August 2018 at 12pm**. Nominate [here](#) or email info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au or call 1300 250 479 for a hard copy form.

What is the role of the Community Reference Group?

The Community Reference Group (CRG) will play an important role in providing a platform for community input and co-design associated with developing the community benefit sharing strategy. UPC are committed to collaborating with the CRG, enabling them to assess and evaluate benefit sharing activity options and to make recommendations to us about which activities should be implemented.



How will the Community Reference Group operate?

The community reference group (CRG) is being established because UPC recognise that local people know their community best and will be able to make informed decisions about how the community benefit sharing strategy can best deliver lasting value.

The CRG will be open for local people to nominate. It will be comprised of representatives from important local organisations and stakeholder groups. It will meet three times to generate ideas, review the broader community input and make recommendations to UPC about the form the community benefit sharing strategy should take.

The CRG will have an independent facilitator (the Community Power Agency), which UPC will pay for.

Decisions of the CRG will be made by a super majority (requiring 75% or more of the members present being in favour of a decision).

Quorum of the CRG will be half the appointed membership plus 2.

Decisions can be made at meetings (ideally) or over email.

How will decisions be made about the community benefit sharing strategy, including what and whom it benefits?

Local people and organisations will play a role in co-designing the community benefit sharing strategy.

A shortlist of desirable and appropriate benefit sharing options will be developed through a community engagement process. This process will involve opportunities for people to provide ideas into what benefit sharing options they would like to see, and to set the principles that should inform future decisions about how benefits are shared. UPC will take these as recommendations for making a final decision about the form the community benefit sharing will take.

The community engagement process on the shortlisting and assessment of the benefit sharing options will go from August until October 2018 and will involve one-on-one meetings, a community workshop and the establishment of a Community Reference Group – as well as spreading the word and enabling on-line input.

The purpose of this process is to gather a range of input from range of local stakeholders and to help select the community's preferred option/s for benefit sharing initiatives.

How do I nominate to be on the CRG?

Fill in and submit [this](#) web form, or contact info@newenglandsolarfarm.com.au or 1300 250 479 for a hard copy version of the form.



How are CRG members selected?

Selection will be by a panel made up of one representative each from UPC, the community and the independent facilitator. Successful candidates will require the support of all three panel members to be appointed. Candidates will be chosen to represent a range of interests and stakeholder groups from the local area.

If I get selected to be on the CRG, what would my role be?

You will need to be available to attend all the planned CRG meetings, on Tuesday 11 September 4-6.30pm (followed by dinner); Monday 17 September 5.30-7pm; Thursday 27 September 5.30-7pm; and Wednesday 3 October 5.30-7pm. There will also be an optional social event for all successful candidates on Friday 7 September 6-8pm. Ideally you will also attend the public community workshop on Saturday 15 September 1-4pm.

You will need to set aside additional time to read and consider any written materials provided to you. Required reading will not exceed 20 pages.

You will need to be committed to working constructively and collaboratively with the other CRG members, UPC and the facilitator, and remain open-minded and solutions-focused. You will seek to find common ground that will deliver the best outcomes for both the local community and for UPC. While representing the perspectives and interests of a certain stakeholder group, you will need to make decisions for the common good.

This is a voluntary position.

Will more people (other than those on the Community Reference Group) have a chance to have a say?

Yes. UPC is planning to host a community workshop that will be open to anyone from the nearby community to attend. Spaces will be limited, so this will likely involve an expression of interest process. UPC will also have other means for people to provide ideas and feedback, such as through an on-line form and at drop-in information sessions held in Uralla.

What is Community Power Agency's role?

Community Power Agency is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works with communities to support them to participate in and benefit from the renewable energy transition. They have been contracted by UPC to lead a community engagement process to develop recommendations for the community benefit sharing strategy that UPC will implement. Their role is to act as an intermediary (between UPC and local people), to identify the most useful, valuable and appropriate ways that the benefits from the solar farm can be shared with the local community. They will facilitate the CRG, set agendas and circulate minutes.