



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday November 10, 2020**

### **Community projects supported by inaugural Uralla Grants program**

Fourteen projects supporting the local Uralla community have today been awarded funding as part of the first round of the New England Solar Farm's Uralla Grants program.

The successful grant recipients were today joined by representatives from the New England Solar Farm and the Uralla Grants Community Reference Group (CRG) to help celebrate the first round of funding awarded under the program.

The projects provide support for health and sporting services, local indigenous and non-indigenous historical awareness, environmental education, and community events.

Members of the CRG helped design the Uralla Grants program and oversee the grant selection process. The grant program is part of the Community Benefit Sharing Initiative, which was conceived during the planning process for the New England Solar Farm.

Community Reference Group Member Sandra Eady said the fourteen projects would share \$50,000 under the first funding round.

"There was a very good cross section of applications to choose from, which was encouraging given that the Uralla Grants program was a new concept for the community," Ms Eady said.

"We were able to choose a diverse range of projects to support that provide benefits across a wide cross section of the local community.

"On behalf of the Community Reference Group, I would like to thank all the applicants for their very high-quality proposals."

The Uralla Grants program is funded by the New England Solar Farm and battery project which is being developed by UPC\AC Renewables Australia. Construction of the Stage one 400MW solar farm is expected to begin early next year.

New England Solar Farm Project Director Tim Greenaway said Uralla Grants was part of a program designed to help share the benefits of the solar farm with the wider community.

"The New England Solar Farm will create up to 700 jobs during peak construction, provide extra income for landholders and help provide opportunities for local businesses and suppliers," Mr Greenaway said.



“Our Community Program, including Uralla Grants, will help the wider community also benefit from the solar farm and battery project.

“I would like to thank the members of our Community Reference Group for their hard work and congratulate the successful applicants for their outstanding submissions.”

A second \$50,000 round of the Uralla Grants program will be open for applications in the second half of next year.

For more information go to [www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au/urallagrants](http://www.newenglandsolarfarm.com.au/urallagrants). Or visit the Uralla Grants Facebook Page @UrallaGrants.

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## **About the New England Solar Farm**

The New England Solar Farm is being developed by experienced renewable energy developer UPC\AC Renewables Australia. It is a joint venture between the UPC Renewables Group and AC Energy (a subsidiary of the Ayala Corporation).

It will be built across two solar fields about six kilometers east of Uralla. Based on the target capacity of both stages of 720MW, the solar farm will produce around 1,800,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of clean electricity each year – enough to power about 250,000 NSW homes.

The project includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) capable of dispatching energy to the grid at times of high energy demand.

The solar farm and BESS will be constructed in stages, starting with a 400MW stage one solar farm and a 50MWh battery, which has received grant funding from the NSW Government's Emerging Energy Program.

The solar and battery project will be Australia's largest hybrid solar and battery energy storage facility. There is the potential to expand the Battery Project up to a maximum size of 400MWh.

The project received development consent from the NSW Independent Planning Commission in March 2020. The grid connection agreement with Transgrid and the New England Solar Farm was signed in June 2020.

Design work on the transmission substation to be constructed as part of the approved development will begin soon, allowing the project to connect to the existing 330kV line that crosses the solar farm site.

Work is underway on the design of the access road upgrades, with the upgrades being needed prior to commencement of construction of the solar farm.

The first 400MW (AC) stage and the 33/330 kilovolt (kV) substation will be installed by Elecnor on the northern section of the site.