

Croydon Solar Farm

Community Benefits Workshop Report Back

September 2026



Croydon Solar Farm: Community Benefits Workshop

The ACENERGY team hosted a Community Benefits Workshop at the Lotus Creek Homestead on Tuesday, 1 September 2026. Thank you to everyone who joined us and took the time to share their local knowledge, feedback and ideas.

When our team was last in the region in March, we heard that road safety, access to local services and ensuring project benefits remain within the local community were important priorities. We returned in September to continue that conversation, with a particular focus on the Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) being developed with Isaac Regional Council (IRC).

The workshop brought together community members, key stakeholders and representatives from IRC. Several participants are actively involved in local organisations and community groups, bringing valuable insight into local needs, priorities and opportunities.

At the workshop, we:

- Discussed ideas for how the Project could deliver lasting benefits and support local investment opportunities
- Identified community priorities to be considered through the CBA
- Heard further feedback about the Project design and how potential impacts should be managed.

No funding allocations were decided at the workshop. Instead, the session was designed to gather feedback and inform ongoing discussions. This report summarises what we heard, how the Project team is responding, and the priorities that will be carried forward for consideration.

What stood out

A consistent theme throughout the workshop was the importance of delivering long-term, practical benefits that are shaped by local knowledge and respond to community needs. Participants also highlighted emergency access, road safety and construction traffic as key considerations, reinforcing the importance of addressing these matters through the Project's design, management plans, and ongoing engagement.

What we heard

Community feedback

This section summarises the feedback and concerns raised during the workshop about the Project design and management of potential impacts.

Some matters raised relate to Project impacts that must be managed through design, approval conditions and management plans. Community benefit funding is separate and is intended to deliver additional community outcomes, rather than measures the Project is already required to provide.

<i>What we heard</i>	<i>How we are responding</i>
<p>Emergency access and road safety</p> <p>We heard strong concerns about the currently proposed emergency site access off Marlborough-Sarina Road. These concerns included poor sight lines, nearby property access, school bus movements and the risk that an emergency-only access could become routinely used by workers.</p> <p>There was also concern that upgrading the access could encourage its use as a general entry point, particularly given its proximity to the Lotus Creek Homestead. Workshop participants strongly preferred a southern emergency access option.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the concerns raised about the proposed emergency access. We have undertaken a full Traffic Impact Assessment, including a Road Safety Assessment, which considered sight distances and found the proposed access meets the relevant Austroads standards. A Fire Safety Study is also underway in accordance with relevant fire authority requirements. This work will help inform and refine the detailed design, with community feedback considered alongside advice from the relevant authorities. Any final arrangement will need to meet planning and emergency management standards and provide safe, practical access to the site during an emergency.</p>
<p>Roads, bridges and construction traffic</p> <p>The condition and capacity of Lotus Creek Road and Marlborough-Sarina Road, local intersections and bridges such as Lotus Creek Bridge remain key concerns. Community members were particularly concerned about heavy vehicles taking unsuitable routes, becoming stuck during wet weather, blocking local roads, property access or school bus routes, and increasing safety risks for local road users.</p> <p>There was a strong expectation that construction traffic would be carefully managed and that drivers and contractors would understand local road conditions</p>	<p>We have undertaken a full Traffic Impact Assessment, including a Road Safety Assessment that addresses all risks identified. This included a detailed assessment in line with the Guide to Traffic Impact Assessment (Department of Transport and Main Roads). This assessment considered expected traffic volumes, proposed site access, Lotus Creek Bridge, oversize and overmass vehicle movements, sight distances and relevant intersections. The findings, together with community feedback, will inform the Project design and the development of measures to mitigate the impacts.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of maintaining safe access for residents, school buses, agricultural traffic and other local road users. As the Project design progresses, we will continue to consider opportunities to minimise construction traffic impacts, improve road safety and ensure contractors understand local road conditions and constraints.</p>
<p>Biosecurity, flooding and resilience</p> <p>Pest, weed and biosecurity management were identified as important priorities, particularly during construction when contractors, vehicles and equipment will be moving through the area. Participants also raised the need for better flood information, particularly around Connors Bridge. Automated height monitoring was preferred over standard flood indicators.</p>	<p>Pest, weed and biosecurity management will form part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This plan will be submitted to Council for review and approval before construction starts. During the development stage, we are also undertaking a flood assessment along with a Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP), including sedimentation and erosion control measures.</p> <p>Separately, participants identified pest management, biosecurity initiatives and improved flood monitoring as potential areas for consideration through the CBA process with IRC.</p>
<p>Community updates</p> <p>Community members asked for timely notice of major vehicle movements and other higher-impact construction activities. There was also a preference for regular project updates and clear communication channels throughout construction.</p>	<p>We will explore options for providing advance notice of vehicle movements and other significant construction activities. Potential communication channels may include SMS notifications, community updates, the Project website and social media channels.</p>

What we heard

Community priorities identified for the CBA

The workshop identified a range of priorities to help inform the development of the Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) with Isaac Regional Council (IRC). Based on the Project's current proposed capacity and IRC's policy, the Project is expected to contribute **more than \$20 million** in community benefits over its operating life, with annual contributions adjusted to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The priorities below reflect local knowledge, experience, and ideas shared during the workshop. While no funding decisions have been made, these priorities will help inform ongoing discussions with IRC as the CBA is developed.

1. Annual community grants

There was a strong preference for establishing a locally focused community grants program:

- A locally focused grants program, with annual funding of around \$100,000 to \$200,000
- Funding certainty over the life of the Project.
- The ability to retain unspent funds for larger community priorities and future projects.
- Local representation and involvement in funding decisions.
- Coordination with other renewable energy projects where practical, to reduce demands on the limited pool of local volunteers already involved in funding committees and community organisations.

2. Community and education facilities

Participants identified a range of opportunities to support Clarke Creek State School and broader outcomes in the area. Potential priorities included:

- Water tanks or improved water infrastructure.
- Covered walkways.
- Improvements to the school pool and drop-off area.
- Resurfacing shared sporting and community-use areas.
- Scholarships and education funding.
- A possible satellite presence of the Country Universities Centre (CUC) at Clarke Creek Hall.

3. Health and emergency services

Improving access to health and emergency services was identified as an important priority. Ideas raised included:

- A local health pod or visiting health service, similar to the St Lawrence model.
- Visiting dental services for children and families.
- Heart health programs.
- Improved aviation access for emergency services, including investigation of a sealed or registered airstrip.
- Support for CQ Rescue and CapRescue.

Participants also noted that support for rescue helicopter services during construction may be more appropriately delivered through Project sponsorship or impact mitigation measures, rather than the CBA.

4. Roads and community resilience

Participants highlighted the importance of resilience local infrastructure and access. Ideas raised included:

- Contributions toward road, intersection and bridge improvements that provide broader community benefit, including to Lotus Creek Road.
- Automated flood-height monitoring, particularly around Connors Bridge, to provide more reliable information during flood events.
- Clear information about how road and infrastructure contributions are allocated and spent.

Any support for road infrastructure through the CBA would need to remain separate from measures required to manage the Project's own traffic and road impacts.

5. Local groups and lasting community assets

Participants highlighted the value of supporting local community organisations, such as the Pony Club, that play an important role in community life. There was also a strong preference for investment in practical and long-lasting community assets, such as community sheds, sporting facilities and shared spaces, rather than short-term equipment that may need to be replaced after only a few years. Participants emphasized that investment should deliver lasting value.

What happens next

We heard a wide range of valuable feedback and ideas during the workshop, and this input will continue to inform both the Project and the development of the Community Benefit Agreement (CBA).

We are committed to ongoing, transparent engagement as the Project progresses. Feedback received to date is helping shape Project design, impact management measures, and discussions with Isaac Regional Council (IRC) about how the Project can deliver lasting community benefits.

Over the coming months, we will:

- Finalise the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) and supporting technical studies.
- Continue refining the Project design, informed by technical assessments, approval requirements and community feedback.
- Continue consultation with specialist consultants and the relevant authorities to ensure all emergency access requirements are fully addressed.
- Work with IRC to consider the priorities identified through community engagement and progress development of the CBA.
- Continue engaging with neighbours, landholders, community members and key stakeholders.
- Keep the community informed as the Project and CBA discussions progress.

Stay connected

Thank you again to everyone who took part in the workshop and contributed their feedback and ideas.

If we have missed anything, or if you have additional comments, we would like to hear from you. Community input remains an important part of the Project as planning continues.

Please contact the Project team if you have any questions, feedback, or concerns.



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