

OCTOBER 2026
COMMUNITY UPDATE

Moa Creek solar farm project

Sharing the proposed design and what we've learned

Since introducing the proposed Moa Creek Solar Farm in May 2026, we have continued technical investigations and engagement with mana whenua, neighbours, community members and other stakeholders.

Thank you to everyone who attended our community drop-in session in June or shared feedback and local knowledge with the project team. This input, together with the findings of technical assessments, has helped us better understand the site and informed the proposed design.

This update shares the proposed project layout, explains how feedback and technical studies have shaped the design, and outlines the next steps as we finalise the resource consent applications.

What we've heard

Through our conversations with mana whenua, neighbours and the wider community, we have heard that the key areas of interest include:

- How the solar farm will look and fit within the local landscape.
- Battery safety, fire risk and emergency response.
- Wetlands, waterways, native plants and wildlife.
- Continued farming beneath and around the solar panels.
- Noise, glint and glare, water use and construction effects.
- Opportunities for local businesses, workers and the wider community.

These matters have informed the technical assessments and proposed project design outlined in this update.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Location
Poolburn, Central Otago

Project area
Approx. 660 hectares

Solar capacity
Up to 300MWdc

Battery storage
Capacity and duration TBC

Grid connection
Existing 220 kV transmission line

Land use
Potential sheep grazing beneath and around the panels

Construction period
Approximately 28-34 months, subject to approvals

Consent applications
Expected to be lodged in Q4 2026/Q1 2027

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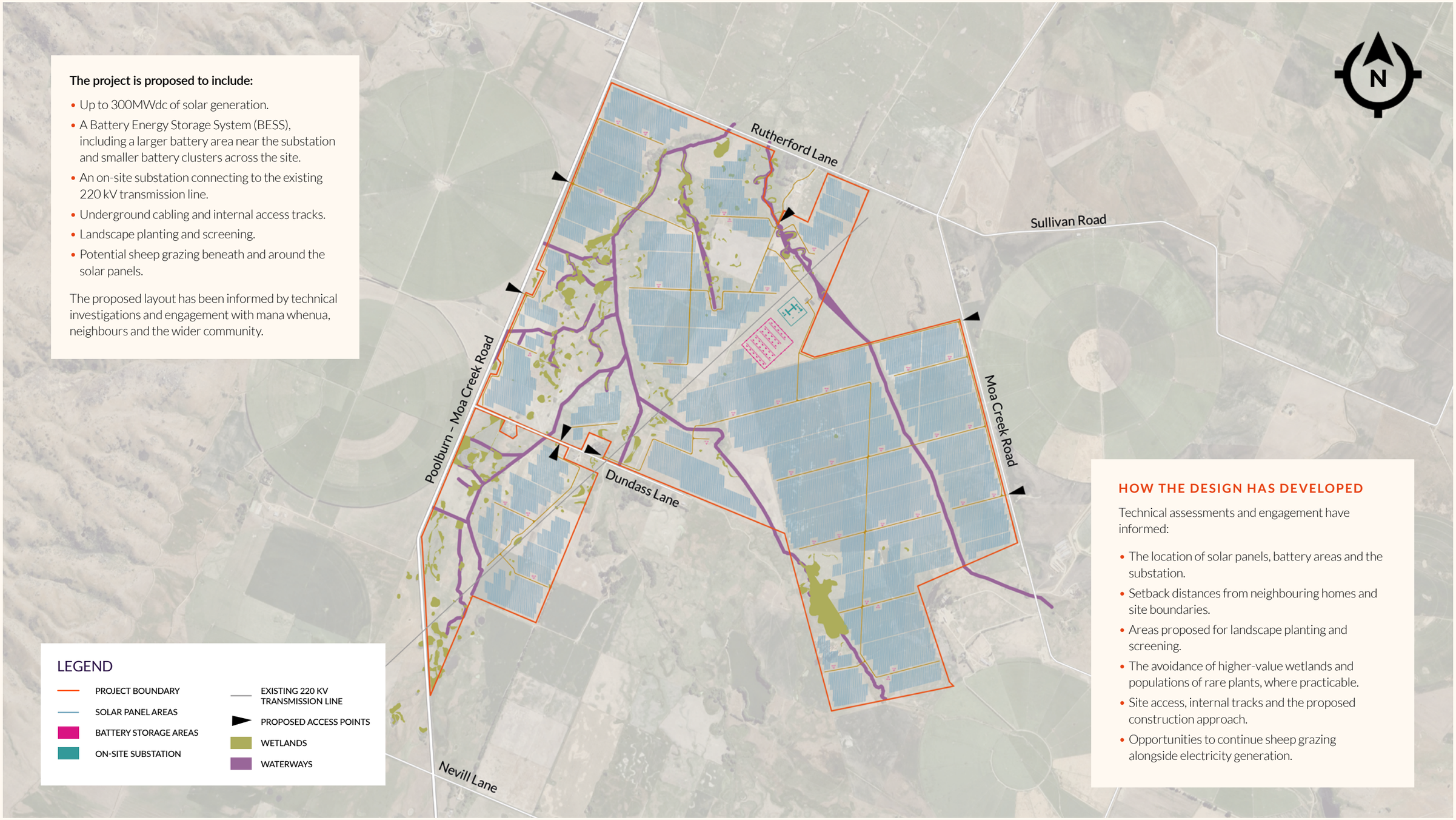
If you're interested in knowing more about the project or would like to speak with the team, please reach out to us on 0800 225 513 or email us at **moacreekproject@lightsourcebp.com**.

You can also keep informed through the project's website at **lightsourcebp.com/nz/project/moa-creek-solar**.

The proposed Moa Creek Solar Farm

The proposed Moa Creek Solar Farm is being developed by a joint venture between Lightsource bp and Contact Energy on approximately 660 hectares of agricultural land at Poolburn.

Indicative proposed project layout - October 2026. The layout will form part of the resource consent applications and may be refined through the consenting and detailed design processes.



The project is proposed to include:

- Up to 300MWdc of solar generation.
- A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), including a larger battery area near the substation and smaller battery clusters across the site.
- An on-site substation connecting to the existing 220 kV transmission line.
- Underground cabling and internal access tracks.
- Landscape planting and screening.
- Potential sheep grazing beneath and around the solar panels.

The proposed layout has been informed by technical investigations and engagement with mana whenua, neighbours and the wider community.

HOW THE DESIGN HAS DEVELOPED

Technical assessments and engagement have informed:

- The location of solar panels, battery areas and the substation.
- Setback distances from neighbouring homes and site boundaries.
- Areas proposed for landscape planting and screening.
- The avoidance of higher-value wetlands and populations of rare plants, where practicable.
- Site access, internal tracks and the proposed construction approach.
- Opportunities to continue sheep grazing alongside electricity generation.



Local business and employment opportunities

Local businesses, contractors and workers have expressed interest in opportunities associated with the project. It was valuable to meet local contractors and skilled tradespeople at our June community event and learn more about the capability and experience available in the area.

The project is expected to create opportunities for local businesses, contractors and workers during construction and potentially during operation. Further information about the goods, services and skills required will be shared as the project progresses and procurement arrangements are developed.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

Businesses, contractors and workers can register their interest so the project team can share information as opportunities become available.

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Registering your interest does not guarantee employment or the award of work.

To find out more about us, please visit our website:

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Community investment

Community investment programmes can take a range of forms, including direct funding grants and contestable community funds. We are still exploring the most appropriate approach for the proposed Moa Creek solar farm.

Feedback from neighbouring properties and the wider community will help us understand local priorities and identify opportunities to deliver meaningful, long-term benefits.



What we've heard and how we're responding

In August 2026, we shared the key topics raised by neighbours and community members and explained the investigations underway. Since then, technical assessments and further engagement have helped us better understand the site, identify potential effects and refine the proposed design. The table below summarises what we've heard, what the work undertaken to date has found, and how the proposed project responds. Some matters are not finalised and will continue to be developed through the resource consent and detailed design processes. We have indicated where this is the case and will provide a further update shortly.

Design and environmental assessments

Technical Area	What we've heard	What we've learned	How the proposed project responds / next steps
Landscape and visual effects	People told us that how the project will look and fit within the local landscape is important. There was interest in planting suited to local conditions, including feedback that only certain species establish successfully and that local native plants tend to remain low-growing. Community members also expressed interest in opportunities to work with local groups, including the Ida Valley Catchment Group and Tiaki Maniototo Nursery.	A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has considered the character of the surrounding landscape and how the project may be experienced from nearby properties and public locations. The assessment found that effects on the surrounding Significant Amenity Landscapes and Outstanding Natural Landscapes will be avoided. Visual effects from public locations are expected to be greatest close to the site and from Susann's Lookout, where they are assessed as low to moderate. Visual effects for nearby properties are generally expected to be low. The project's effects on the surrounding rural landscape are expected to reduce as proposed planting establishes and matures. This planting will also help reduce visual effects for nearby properties over time.	The assessment has informed the proposed location and layout of infrastructure, and the approach to planting and screening. The proposed design includes: • Clusters of trees along the site boundary to reflect existing vegetation patterns • Screening planting near neighbouring homes • Larger areas of native planting around the substation and battery storage areas • A minimum 50-metre setback from the site boundary to solar panels at directly adjacent residential dwellings and a minimum 15-metre setback elsewhere • Rural-style deer fencing around the site's perimeter The planting approach is intended to provide screening, reflect the existing landscape and help the solar farm integrate with its surroundings as planting establishes and matures. We will also be engaging directly with the Ida Valley Catchment Group and the Tiaki Maniototo Nursery to better understand opportunities to collaborate.
Glint and glare	People asked whether reflected light from the solar panels could affect nearby homes and other locations. In August, we committed to sharing the specialist assessment findings and recommendations.	A specialist assessment considered the potential for reflected sunlight from the solar panels to cause glare for neighbours, road users and aircraft using surrounding airstrips. It found no high-hazard glare. Some locations may experience low to moderate glare at certain times of the day and year. For road users, any glare is expected to be intermittent and limited to particular sections of roads closest to the solar arrays. It is not expected to result in adverse effects. The assessment used conservative modelling that does not account for screening from existing vegetation, terrain, buildings or other structures. This means actual glare experienced at ground level is expected to be lower than the modelling indicates.	Solar panels are designed to absorb as much sunlight as possible, using specialised glass and coatings to reduce reflection. These features minimise reflection, though some glare can still occur at certain times. Based on the assessment, no additional glare-specific mitigation measures are considered necessary. However, a clear process for reporting, investigating and responding to any glare complaints will be established. Proposed landscape planting will also provide additional screening of the solar panels from surrounding roads and properties as it establishes and matures, further reducing the potential for glare over time.
Noise and vibration	People asked about noise from solar farm and battery infrastructure, including inverters, transformers and construction activity. Our August update advised that detailed noise modelling was underway and that the project would be designed to meet applicable noise limits.	Detailed noise modelling has been undertaken to understand potential construction and operational noise, in the context of the rural environment, and inform mitigation measures and the location and design of infrastructure.	The findings from these studies have informed the location and design of infrastructure on the site. The substation and centralised BESS are located towards the middle of the site. Decentralised groups of inverters and BESS will be located at least 350m from neighbouring dwellings, and solar panels (with tracker motors) will be at least 50m from neighbouring dwellings. These setbacks from sensitive receptors will ensure that the operations of the solar farm align with required noise limits. Construction noise and vibration is predicted to comply with the relevant national standards. It will be managed via careful planning through the development and implementation of a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan. This will include consideration of scheduling of works to avoid particularly sensitive times for affected receivers where practicable, the use of noise barriers or enclosures, and other relevant mitigation measures. Residents will be notified before high-noise or vibration activities begin near dwellings. The Construction Management Plan will also set out procedures to ensure any complaints are addressed promptly.
Ecology, wetlands and biodiversity	People raised questions about how the project could affect wetlands, waterways, drainage, native plants, wildlife and the surrounding environment.	An Ecological Impact Assessment was prepared following field surveys of lizards, birds, rare plants and wetlands. The assessment found relatively low numbers of native lizards and birds, including tussock skink, South Island pied oystercatcher and New Zealand pipit. It also identified regionally threatened plant species and a large, connected wetland system. Some wetlands, particularly the sedgelands, are more natural and less modified than others and provide important habitat for wildlife. The area also includes temporary, or ephemeral, wetlands - a rare and threatened type of ecosystem in New Zealand.	The project layout has been designed to avoid, where practicable, areas with larger populations of rare plants and higher-value wetlands. Areas to be protected will be clearly identified and demarcated before construction begins. Where vegetation clearance is required, monitoring for native lizards and nesting native birds will be undertaken, with appropriate measures put in place if they are found. Where suitable, seed collection, plant salvage and redistribution of regionally threatened plant species will also be undertaken to help protect and enhance areas of higher ecological value.
Waterways and surface water	People asked about water availability and how much water the project would require, particularly given existing demands on local water resources and the experience of dry conditions in the Poolburn area.	A solar farm does not require ongoing irrigation to generate electricity, and operational water use is expected to be very low. Solar panels do not need frequent cleaning, so there is no ongoing requirement for large volumes of water during the project's operation. Most water use is expected during construction, for activities such as dust suppression, and while landscaping and planting become established.	Water requirements will be considered alongside existing water allocation and use, local conditions, and groundwater and surface-water resources. This work will help determine how water required during construction and planting establishment can be responsibly managed without adding to existing pressure on local water resources. Any required water use will be subject to relevant approvals and requirements.
Farming and land use	People asked how the land beneath the solar panels could continue to be used, including whether irrigation would be required for farming activities.	The approach to managing grass and other vegetation beneath and around the solar panels is still being developed. Sheep grazing is one option being considered, where practical and appropriate.	The project team will confirm the grazing and vegetation management approach as the design develops. This may include sheep grazing where practical, supported by local or specialist land management services where required.

Safety, infrastructure, construction and project lifecycle

Technical Area	What we've heard	What we've learned	How the proposed project responds / next steps
Battery safety and hazardous substances	People wanted more information about battery systems, including fire safety, monitoring, management and potential effects on the surrounding environment.	Technical work has considered potential battery and hazardous-substance risks. While battery systems can present potential risks, the risk of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) failure or fire is considered extremely low.	The BESS includes a larger battery cluster next to the substation and smaller clusters behind inverter stations around the site. Multiple layers of safety controls will be used, including: • Continuous monitoring: Internal monitoring and warning systems will be designed to identify temperature or chemical anomalies early, allowing units to be remotely shut down before an issue develops. • International safety standards: Battery units will be designed to meet applicable international safety standards, including requirements for fire-propagation testing. • Separation between units: The spatial layout will be designed to limit the potential for fire to spread beyond an individual unit. • Emergency response: Emergency Response Plans will be developed with emergency response teams so that site-specific risks, responsibilities and response procedures are understood. Together, these measures are designed to identify potential issues early, prevent incidents where possible and minimise the potential for an incident to affect surrounding areas.
Construction activity, traffic and site access	People asked how construction traffic, noise, dust and other disruption would be managed, including potential effects on local roads and infrastructure.	Subject to approvals, construction is expected to take approximately 28-34 months. Assessments have considered construction and operational traffic, existing traffic volumes, crash analysis, major traffic route identification and a rules assessment against the Central Otago District Plan. The assessments indicate that the surrounding road network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the project. The detailed construction methodology, including the timing, routing and volume of construction traffic, is still being developed and will be confirmed as the project progresses. Potential construction effects such as noise, dust and vibration have also been considered through the relevant technical assessments, with management measures to be incorporated into the project's construction planning.	Construction Traffic and Construction Management Plans will be developed before construction begins. These will set out how construction traffic and site access will be managed safely and efficiently, and how potential effects such as vibration, dust and disruption will be managed. They will also establish how neighbours and the wider community will be kept informed and how any concerns or complaints will be responded to. Specific management measures will be confirmed as the construction approach is finalised. More detailed information about the construction programme and management measures will be shared with the community before work begins.
Workforce accommodation and local infrastructure	People raised concerns about existing pressure on local infrastructure and how accommodation needs associated with the construction workforce would be managed.	The project team is assessing the expected construction workforce and accommodation availability across the wider Central Otago area. This work considers seasonal demand, other known development activities, and potential effects on local communities and accommodation supply.	We will be engaging with local stakeholders as part of this work to better understand the constraints and opportunities. Findings will inform the principles and approach to workforce accommodation. Detailed planning and implementation measures will be developed by the appointed construction contractor before construction begins.
Grid connection	People asked how the project would connect to the electricity system, whether transmission upgrades would be required, and where the electricity would be used.	The project is proposed to connect to the National Grid through a new on-site substation. Transpower has confirmed there is sufficient grid capacity to accommodate the project, so no upgrades to existing transmission lines or new transmission lines are required.	The on-site substation and grid-connection infrastructure will form part of the proposed project. Electricity generated by Moa Creek would enter the National Grid and be used across New Zealand where it is needed. Transpower considers cumulative demand on grid capacity across all generation sources.
Other solar proposals and cumulative effects	People wanted to understand how Moa Creek relates to other proposed solar developments in the valley and what their combined effects might be.	Each proposed project is assessed individually through the relevant consenting and regulatory processes, including consideration of cumulative effects where relevant.	We will continue to provide clear information about the Moa Creek proposal and how it relates to other proposed projects in the area. Relevant cumulative effects will be considered through the consenting process.
Night-time appearance and lighting	People asked how the solar farm would look at night.	Operational lighting would generally be limited to buildings and access points.	Lighting will be designed to minimise light spill onto neighbouring properties and the surrounding environment. Motion sensors will be used where possible to reduce continuous lighting.
End of life, decommissioning and recycling	People asked how project infrastructure would be removed or recycled and how the land would be restored at the end of the project's life.	The project is not seeking consent for a fixed operating period. Its operating life would depend on factors including land arrangements and the energy market at the time. Solar panels typically have an expected lifespan of approximately 35–40 years, after which the project would assess whether to replace the panels and continue operating or decommission the site.	If the project is decommissioned, its infrastructure would be removed and the land restored to its previous use. Solar panels, steel, cabling and other components would be recycled where possible, using the best-practice options available at the time. A detailed Decommissioning Plan would be prepared before decommissioning, covering the safe removal, recycling and disposal of project infrastructure.
Local electricity network and electricity prices	People asked whether the project would connect to the local electricity network, affect local electricity prices or provide direct benefits to nearby communities.	Electricity generated by Moa Creek would enter the National Grid rather than being supplied directly to nearby customers. Individual generation projects cannot directly set local electricity prices, although renewable generation contributes to a more resilient national electricity system and can help support stable electricity prices over time.	The project team is continuing to explore how Moa Creek could create meaningful benefits for neighbours and the wider community. Further information will be shared as the proposed community and neighbour benefit arrangements are developed.