

Gentari Solar Australia

Renewable Energy



Clean Energy Council Best Practice Charter

2025 Report

Putting clean energy into action



Wellington township, NSW

Creating genuine conversations and opportunities

While all projects begin on a page, they are delivered in dynamic communities. Each regional township embodies individual goals and aspirations, social and cultural histories, and varying perspectives towards change. What appears as an opportunity to one community, may seem a challenge to another. As such, open and ongoing engagement remains at the centre of delivering all projects and is critical to the planning and environmental process.

Meaningful consultation – guided by place-based principles – ensures that projects deliver the best outcome for a region. By being accessible, inclusive and responsive, projects can better understand local needs and expectations and foster genuine partnerships, as well as regional capacity and economic vitality.

Australia is undergoing an unprecedented change in the way society views and uses electricity. The opportunities and challenges associated with the growth of variable renewable energy sources – such as solar, wind, battery energy storage, and pumped hydro – are highlighted in industry papers, including the Clean Energy Council's Leading Practice Principles for First Nations Communities and Clean Energy Australia 2025 Report. These changes emphasise our responsibility to work collaboratively, promote inclusion, and break down barriers – particularly for learning and underrepresented groups.

Gentari recently celebrated the groundbreaking at the Maryvale Solar and Energy Storage project – a milestone that was only possible through the perseverance, hard work, and collaboration of many people, businesses, government authorities, and community groups over the years. The project – which now moves into construction – combines the benefits of solar power and energy storage to create cheap, clean, dispatchable and firmed power for New South Wales.

The Maryvale project, and the broader Wellington and Dubbo community, figure significantly in this year's report. Importantly, the project shows how genuine conversations – which began in 2017 – can develop into innovative projects that deliver real partnerships, meaningful opportunities, and long-lasting benefits for communities.

As a proud member of the Clean Energy Council, Gentari Solar Australia remains committed to honouring Council's Best Practice Charter across our renewable energy projects, and to driving a clean energy transition that is collaborative, equitable, and purpose driven.

Andrew Barson

CEO

Gentari Solar Australia

About Gentari Solar Australia

Gentari Solar Australia is a leading owner and operator of utility-scale solar facilities and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) in Australia.

We develop, construct and operate utility scale solar photovoltaic (PV) facilities that utilise single axis tracking to maximise generation, assuring high quality investments and clean, sustainable power for the national electricity network.

With approximately 400MWp constructed and connected and a 550 MWp portfolio under our management, we are one of the leading players in the Australian renewable energy industry.



Our values and commitments

Genuine and meaningful engagement is integral to the successful planning and delivery of all major projects. Open, ongoing, and accessible consultation ensures that projects are developed with consideration to local and regional feedback.

Consultation should be reflective of the locality and community and delivered with consideration to the scale of the proposed project. Community engagement should recognise local challenges – such as access to telecommunications, housing, transport, and employment – and result in the implementation of communication tools that effectively meet the needs of stakeholders and promote further engagement with a project.

Gentari is committed to:

- engaging respectfully with the local and regional community, including First Nations people, communities, and businesses.
- being transparent and acting honestly and ethically in all our dealings with the community.
- providing timely, accessible, and inclusive information that meets the needs of diverse community members.
- fostering social and economic vitality by providing local employment and procurement opportunities.
- offering communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the development.



Finley Solar Farm, NSW

Our approach

Gentari Solar Australia remains committed to engagement in accordance with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum.

The IAP2 spectrum and core values helps organisations, decision makers and practitioners make better decisions, which reflect the interests and concerns of potentially affected people and entities. The IAP2 notes: "Public participation means to involve those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process. It promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the decision".

Our approach is guided by compassion, clarity, and consistency, and tailored in collaboration with the diverse stakeholders that make up any given community.





Maryvale Project Site, NSW

Maryvale Solar & Energy Storage Project

The Maryvale Solar & Energy Storage Project is a proposed renewable energy facility located within the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone, near the Wellington township.

The project will have the ability to export 172MW of green power into the electricity network thanks to an installed capacity of approximately 240MWp of photovoltaics "DC-coupled" with 409MWh of energy storage.

The project will generate enough energy to power approximately 82,000 homes per annum and prevent close to 615,000 tonnes of CO₂ from entering the atmosphere.

The project's Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will generate power at max capacity for close to 2 ½ hours outside of daylight hours, helping reduce peak power prices.

Construction of the project commenced in late July 2025 and will bring direct and indirect community benefits. This includes up to 360 jobs during the peak of construction, as well as the establishment of a Community Benefit Fund.

Commercial operations are anticipated to commence in 2027.

Accessible engagement

In late 2024, Gentari held a community information session at the Four Cat's Coffee in Wellington (see right). The session provided community members the opportunity to meet the team and stay up to date.

Approximately 60 people dropped-in to learn more about the Maryvale project, provide feedback, and ask questions. Discussions included the growth of renewable energy; project scope, timeline, and employment and business opportunities; fire management; and proposed vehicle movements.



Inclusive engagement

Inclusive engagement involves taking the time to understand how communities prefer to communicate. This might include drop-in sessions, websites, phone or SMS, email, newspaper advertisements, letterbox drops, or face-to-face meetings.

On the Maryvale project, the team have ensured all communication is accessible and up to date. This has included developing a suite of relevant factsheets, maintaining a project website, establishing a stakeholder database and feedback channel, hosting industry and information sessions, meeting with community groups and government authorities, and advertising in local and regional newspapers.



Listening to communities

Genuine engagement involves allowing enough time to consult early, broadly and accessibly. Best practice engagement involves listening and learning, and requires flexibility and a commitment to fostering place-based decision making.

The NSW Government's 'First Nations Guidelines for the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap' notes that engagement with local Aboriginal communities involves showing respect and demonstrating commitment to working genuinely with the local Aboriginal communities; and acknowledging and allowing space for consideration of the commitments and priorities of local Aboriginal communities.

As part of the Maryvale project, Gentari was tasked with establishing an Aboriginal Reference Group. This initiative formed part of the Social Licence Commitments associated with the project's Long-Term Service Agreement (LTESA).

Ongoing consultation with the First Nations community highlighted the community's preference to utilise the established Wellington Aboriginal Action Panel (WAAP) as the project's Aboriginal Reference Group.

As a result, Gentari proposed that in lieu of establishing a new reference group, allotted funding could be redirected to employment, training and education initiatives that foster opportunities for local First Nations businesses and peoples. These initiatives would be determined by the WAAP in collaboration with Gentari.

This community-led preference was subsequently put forward to the NSW Government who saw merit in the consultation undertaken and modified the requirements of the LTESA. The alternative initiatives will be designed and delivered in the coming year with close consultation with the First Nations community.



Embracing the sun and wind

The Maryvale project team were proud to attend the 2024 Summit Trade Show in the Hunter Valley, hosted by the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce (see above).

Our team formed part of the 'Panyal Ngatan Wipi Corridor' – which means 'sun and wind' in Wonnarua – and took the opportunity to talk with Aboriginal entrepreneurs, business owners and enterprising community groups.

The delivery of renewable energy projects creates opportunities to foster social and economic vitality across regional communities. This includes breaking down barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises and incorporating the diverse experience of Aboriginal businesses.



Forging connections

Gentari has worked hard to create awareness of the Maryvale project and to connect regional businesses with project opportunities.

This has included working with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development by presenting at Central West Orana Business Briefing sessions, and supporting Gather and Grow Dubbo, hosted by the NSW Treasury, which aims at fostering the growth of Aboriginal businesses.

The team has also presented to Dubbo Regional Council staff and councillors, met with Dubbo and Wellington Local Aboriginal Councils, the Wellington Aboriginal Action Panel, and the NSW Indigenous Chamber of Commerce.

Envisioning a bright future

In late 2024, Gentari joined over 40 exhibitors from a cross-section of vocational, apprenticeship and traineeship providers at the inaugural Regional Development Australia Orana Youth Forum 2024 in Dubbo. On the day, school students were able to meet with education institutions, traineeship organisations, as well as renewable energy developers and learn more about career pathways and future job opportunities.

In his second report to the Minister for Energy, the former Electricity Infrastructure Jobs Advocate's stated: "The saying 'you can't be what you can't see' describes the current situation with regards to renewable energy careers...There is little understanding in the community, especially amongst school students, of the great career opportunities that the transition to renewables will provide."

In delivering the Maryvale project, Gentari remains committed to building strong partnerships with the community – including students, learning workers, and apprentices – and to utilising the skill and experience found in the Central West.



Celebrating a regional milestone

Gentari Solar Australia was proud to sponsor this year's Wellington Show. Celebrating its 149th year, the Wellington Show highlighted the abundance of skill, spirit, and enthusiasm within this vibrant community.

The Show provided a good opportunity for the team to meet with the community, talk all things renewable energy, and have a little bit of fun. Team members from both Gentari and PCL Construction's Solar Division were on hand to talk about the Maryvale project, business and employment opportunities, as well as construction milestones and movements.

We look forward to celebrating the Show's 150th milestone next year!



Supporting better outcomes for Aboriginal people

The NSW Government's First Nations Guidelines stipulate the importance of place-based engagement consisting of meaningful, collaborative, and inclusive practices that support positive long-term outcomes. The guidelines note the need to "drive success in Aboriginal-owned organisations and businesses; to build capacity for people and businesses and to create better outcomes for Aboriginal people right across NSW".

Gentari is committed to taking a place-based approach to all communication and engagement activities. This means engaging early and openly with Aboriginal peoples, communities, and businesses; developing a shared understanding of the local and regional context; understanding community needs and expectations; and fostering local decision-making and empowerment.

The Maryvale project's Community and First Nations Engagement Plan takes guidance from the NSW Government's First Nations

Guidelines: Central-West Orana (2023) which were co-designed with the Central-West Orana Aboriginal Working Group and reflect the aspirations of the local communities.

The NSW Government notes that the goals and aspirations of the Working Group include "protecting, strengthening and developing community outcomes. In addition, communities recognise the importance of taking up new opportunities when they present and using them to adapt and develop the ability to shape their own lives and livelihoods, leading to improved economic and social outcomes".

As part of the project, Gentari have liaised with the Working Group, Dubbo and Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Councils, and the Wellington Aboriginal Action Panel. The team have also attended and supported local and regional Aboriginal business events, including the Supply Nation Indigenous Business Trade Fair Dubbo (pictured above).

Fostering genuine relationships

In 2017, Gentari Solar Australia (then Wirsol) signed a Community Benefit Agreement with the Wangan and Jagalingou people as part of the Clermont Solar Project. The Agreement included the provision of six scholarships focused on electrical, engineering, and environmental fields.

However, despite the collective best intentions, the scholarships did not eventuate. In 2025, Gentari met with the Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (WJ Corp) to discuss the Agreement, and specifically, how best to reinstate the support in a way that reflected the community's current aspirations.

WJ Corp, which had been established in 2009, now included 150 members and was focused on fostering cultural, social, and economic capacity for the Wangan and Jagalingou people. Representatives from WJ Corp noted that recent Native Title matters had proven to be destabilising for the community.

WJ Corp shared that Returning to Country was a key focus for the community, particularly among Elders. They noted that most of the Wangan and Jagalingou people had been historically forcibly displaced, and that fostering cultural connections, sharing knowledge with the youth, and creating social and economic opportunities were key priorities.

After discussions with their community, WJ Corp subsequently put forward a new approach. They requested that the proposed funds be reallocated to supporting NAIDOC Celebrations in Clermont (over 3 years) and Wangan and Jagalingou Youth Training in Caring for Country. In their words, "We are confident that this change will deliver greater impact for our community and align more closely with the goals of reconciliation, cultural empowerment, and community-led development".

Our engagement with the Wangan and Jagalingou people represents Gentari's commitment to maintaining long-term relationships and fostering community-led decision making.



NAIDOC celebration, Clermont, QLD



Connecting to opportunities

Key to delivering the Maryvale project is creating fulfilling learning and employment opportunities. In August 2025, Gentari Solar Australia and PCL Construction's Solar Division held a job fair in Wellington and Dubbo, NSW (see above). The sessions were also attended by project subcontractors Stralis Energy, All Energy Australia, and United Civil.

In 2024, the project was awarded a Long-Term Energy Service Agreement (LTESA) by the NSW Government. As part of the Agreement, the project's workforce is required to include learning workers (20%), apprentices (2%), people from underrepresented groups (20%), and First Nations peoples (2%). The job fair provided job seekers with access to key project staff, serving to promote local opportunities and also to create greater awareness of the renewable energy industry.



Powering young minds

Gentari Solar Australia has partnered with TAFE NSW to develop a microskills course focused on the large scale solar sector. The two-hour course is also being designed in collaboration with ACEN and Iberdrola, demonstrating our commitment to working collaboratively to raise awareness of opportunities within the renewable energy field.

TAFE NSW microskills courses are delivered online and on-demand, giving students maximum results in the minimum time. The course combines a mixture of video testimonials from staff (see left) and coursework.

Once completed, the course will be offered across NSW. Gentari will also look to offer the course at the TAFE Wellington Campus, in partnership with hands-on experience from PCL.

Working with local and regional businesses

Gentari Solar Australia is committed to working closely with the community to deliver the best outcomes for the region. This includes connecting local and regional businesses with construction and supply works.

In June 2025, Gentari held an industry briefing session in Wellington, NSW. The event - which was attended by over 80 people - provided local and regional businesses the chance to learn more about the project and connect with key team members.

"The recent growth in the renewable energy industry has highlighted the skill and capacity within the region", said Patricio Munoz (Stakeholder Engagement Manager, Gentari).

"We are committed to engaging broadly with businesses, industry groups, and government authorities to highlight opportunities and create genuine partnerships".

Gentari Solar Australia, alongside our construction partner PCL Construction, are working with the Industry Capability Network (ICN) to highlight key project opportunities.

ICN is supported by the NSW Government to assist urban and regional communities to increase economic prosperity. Established in 1985, ICN helps increase economic activity and jobs for the business community by linking local and regional businesses to project opportunities.

As part of this partnership, Gentari and ICN established a project portal page, which included 25 diverse work packages, such as general labour hire, water supply and delivery, fencing, security, transport, and slashing and weed spraying. Local and regional businesses were subsequently encouraged to register their interest to work on the project.





Celebrating milestones and a spirited culture

On 14th August 2025, Gentari marked the groundbreaking of the Maryvale project, a key milestone in delivering reliable, low-carbon energy for NSW.

"The Maryvale project represents our commitment to accelerating Australia's energy transition with reliable, dispatchable renewable energy," said Claire Elkin, Head of Gentari Australia. "As one of the first large-scale DC-coupled solar and storage projects in the country it embodies our ambition to deliver clean energy solutions at scale while supporting grid resilience."

On the morning of the ceremony, senior members of Gentari and PCL gathered in Wellington to participate in a cultural appreciation session led by Kerryann Stanley – a Wiradjuri woman, Aboriginal educator, and member of the Wellington community.

The session aimed at deepening participants' understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures, perspectives, and protocols. It also served to promote respectful and inclusive practices when working with Aboriginal people, and their lands, skies, and waterways.

On the day, Ray Peckham delivered a Welcome to Country, paving the way for the formal commencement of construction (see below).

Through ongoing engagement, Gentari aims to foster inclusive participation and build long-term partnerships based on trust and openness.



Team spotlight – Nathan Mandelson, Gentari

Can you tell us a little about yourself and your role at Gentari Solar Australia?

At Gentari, we have a diverse and regionally dispersed team. I support our workers across Australia, which involves verifying the effectiveness of safety controls in place and ensuring all team members work safely in the presence of hazards.

As Health, Safety and Environment Manager, I also review critical risks through risks assessments and mitigation measures, address compliance and regulation aspects, provide training and education, and ensure comprehensive incident response, investigation and emergency preparedness.

What role does Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) play in the renewable energy sector?

Our role is to ensure team members thrive in their working environments. This includes providing guidance and support on many things, including mental health and wellbeing, as well as psychosocial safety.

In the renewable energy sector, we also consider industry specific challenges, such as remote and isolated work, high voltage equipment, exposure, and weather events.

Building trust and transparency with our workers, industry partners and the community helps us drive safer outcomes in our working locations.

How does this work differ for projects in construction and operation?

Be it a construction project or operational site, meaningful and pragmatic safety leadership, paired with audit and assurance activities, provides critical snap shots on how safety systems are working. Giving workers the right information and training helps guide them to make safe and considered decisions.

What are your interests outside of work?

I love the water. I was lucky to grow up near the beach and have encouraged my children to surf, snorkel, and swim.

As a family, we also love camping, and my wife is an avid skier, so we try to throw that in the holiday mix as well.





Sharing the benefits with the community

Benefit sharing involves working collaboratively with communities to establish productive long-term relationships that foster vitality in the region.

As part of the Maryvale project, we will provide:

- a major financial contribution to Dubbo Regional Council to deliver public-housing initiatives in the Dubbo LGA.
- a major financial contribution to Dubbo Regional Council to undertake significant road upgrades in the local Maryvale area.

- approximately \$150,000 per year to a local Community Benefit Fund focused on projects that provide benefits to the community.
- an ongoing financial contribution of \$100,000 per year towards local and regional business aimed at building local supply chain capabilities associated with delivering future renewable energy initiatives

Along with these contributions, the project will also provide social and economic opportunities associated with ongoing construction works and future operations.



Agrisolar in practice

Increasingly, it is more common to see sheep grazing among solar arrays. The growth of agrisolar – or solar grazing – demonstrates the possibilities of blending traditional agricultural practices with modern renewable energy initiatives.

Gentari Solar Australia currently have approximately 9,000 head of sheep across all their solar facilities.

The PV panels and fencing offer sheep shade and protection and promote better animal health. By grazing, the sheep reduce the need for chemical applications, mowing and slashing – which form an integral part of fire management practices.

Team spotlight – Damian Taylor, Gentari

Can you tell us a little about yourself and your role at Gentari Solar Australia?

My role at Gentari stems from my background in agriculture, which includes over 40 years' experience in the farming sector – owning and operating dairy farms, broad acreage cropping farms, as well as sheep and intensive beef feedlots.

As Vegetation Management Supervisor, I oversee the vegetation across all our project sites.

I guide, lead, and mentor others on best practices involving the landscape and environment, including recommending the equipment that best suits the location, monitoring weather patterns, and ensuring our sites are clear and safe to work and operate.

What do you see as the benefits of integrating agricultural activities with utility-scale solar projects?

The grazing of sheep is an integral part of our operations – bringing a balance between agriculture and renewable energy initiatives.

There are lots of benefits from grazing sheep under solar panels arrays. Firstly, they create shade and do a great job keeping the sheep out of the elements of the weather. We have seen resounding results with weight gain, volume and quality of wool, and higher conception rates.

What are your interests outside of work?

My other passions that keep me busy are breeding and breaking horses and assisting in the running of a 3,500 beef feedlot in southern NSW.



Doing renewables right



The Clean Energy Council Best Practice Charter for Renewable Energy Projects is a voluntary set of commitments for Clean Energy Council members.

It outlines the standards that signatories will uphold in the development of current and new clean energy projects.

The Charter includes:

1. We will engage respectfully with the local community, including Traditional Owners of the land, to seek their views and input before submitting a development application and finalising the design of the project.
2. We will provide timely information and be accessible and responsive in addressing the local community's feedback and concerns throughout the life of the project.
3. We will be sensitive to areas of high biodiversity, cultural and landscape value in the design and operation of projects.
4. We will minimise the impacts on highly productive agricultural land and explore opportunities to integrate agricultural production.



5. We will consult the community on the potential visual, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project, and on the mitigation options.
6. We will support the local economy by providing local employment and procurement opportunities.
7. We will offer communities the opportunity to share in the benefits of the project, and consult them on the options available, including the relevant governance arrangements.
8. We commit to using the project to support educational and tourism opportunities where appropriate.
9. We will demonstrate responsible land stewardship over the life of the project and welcome opportunities to enhance the ecological, cultural and/or agricultural value of the land.
10. During the life of the project, we will recycle waste materials where feasible and commit to responsible decommissioning or refurbishment/repowering of the site at the end of the project's life.

