

THE PROJECT

The Point Pearce Community Solar and Battery Project is a community-led renewable energy initiative designed to reduce household electricity costs, strengthen local energy resilience, and create longer-term community benefit.

Through discussions initiated by the Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation (PPAC), local electricity retailer AGL agreed to fund and install rooftop solar and battery storage systems on homes in the Point Pearce community, subject to site and technical suitability.

The project will deliver solar power systems of 6–7 kilowatts, and battery storage of around 10kWh per household.

Based on a typical South Australian household profile, this is expected to support electricity **cost savings of approximately \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year for many households.**

"We need energy so we can live. People are going to live in houses and they need power. I'm really happy with it."

Narungga Elder Rex Angie

This project reflects PPAC's commitment to pursuing practical partnerships that reduce cost-of-living pressures, strengthen community resilience, and create longer-term opportunities for local participation and benefit.



THE COMMUNITY

Narungga people are the traditional custodians of the land and sea of the Yorke Peninsula, including Wardang Island.

Point Pearce is located on Narungga Country on the Yorke Peninsula.

Established in 1868 as an Aboriginal mission, Point Pearce initially brought together Narungga people and, over time, First Nations people from other Nations.

In 1972, ownership of the 5,777 hectares of mission land was transferred to the Point Pearce Community Council under the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act, formally recognising the community's enduring struggle to have its rights and interests in Country recognised.

Today, Point Pearce remains a vital community hub for Narungga people and for neighbouring Kurna, Nukunu and Ngadjuri people who grew up at Point Pearce and retain strong family and cultural connections to community.

The Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation stands proudly as a community-led organisation grounded in Narungga culture and guided by the aspirations of its people. PPAC plays a central role in advocating for community interests, building partnerships, supporting local services and infrastructure, and helping to deliver practical outcomes that strengthen community wellbeing, resilience and self-determination.

Point Pearce is also home to the Point Pearce Campus of Central Yorke School, reinforcing strong links between education, community and culture.

HOW DID THE SOLAR AND BATTERY PROJECT COME ABOUT?

In recent years, rising energy costs have been a growing concern for members of the Point Pearce community.

The Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation identified household energy affordability as an important issue affecting community members and began exploring options that could reduce power costs while also building longer-term energy resilience, awareness and community benefit.

In 2024, PPAC approached AGL to explore whether there may be an opportunity to work together, noting AGL's involvement in energy projects on Narungga Country, including the Wattle Point Wind Farm on the Yorke Peninsula and the Barn Hill Wind Farm and Battery Project in the Mid North.

As part of these early conversations, Board member Eddie Newchurch said to AGL, "let's have a yarn about solar."

From that starting point, PPAC and AGL connected directly to explore opportunities to support community-led energy outcomes aligned with community priorities. PPAC played a key role in bringing forward the community's concerns, aspirations and practical needs, and in ensuring that discussions remained grounded in local priorities.

Following these discussions, AGL agreed to work towards the supply and installation of rooftop solar and battery systems on homes across the Point Pearce community, subject to the necessary technical, property and delivery requirements.

PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Community engagement for the solar and battery project commenced in August 2024 and was grounded in early and ongoing conversations between AGL, the Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation and community members. The approach prioritised listening, transparency, practical problem-solving and partnership.

Key engagement activities included:

- **Direct engagement between AGL and PPAC to ensure alignment with community priorities and to explore collaboration opportunities to address cost-of-living pressures and energy affordability**
- **Community-level discussions about household energy needs, challenges and aspirations**
- **Clear communication about what the project could deliver, likely timeframes, and any practical limitations or conditions**
- **Collaboration between AGL, PPAC and relevant government stakeholders to support coordinated delivery**
- **Ongoing recognition that community support and trust are essential to successful implementation.**

PPAC played a central role in articulating community priorities, facilitating local engagement, and helping ensure that project planning and delivery remained responsive to community expectations and practical realities.

THE ROLE OF STATE GOVERNMENT

Given the interaction of the project with State-owned properties, the electricity network and renewable energy policy settings, the South Australian Department for Energy and Mining (DEM) supported the project through coordinating relevant stakeholders within and outside government, helping secure access to and support from the South Australian Housing Trust, and offering support in relation to the selection of residential battery systems.

This support reflected recognition that **the combination of rooftop solar and behind-the-meter battery storage can help reduce energy bills, improve the use of renewable energy within households, and assist in managing local network impacts** that can arise from solar exports.

The inclusion of battery storage also aligns with the South Australian Government's broader policy interest in expanding battery storage as part of the transition to a cleaner and more resilient energy system.

With multiple parties involved in negotiating and progressing the project, **a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was developed to provide a shared framework for the project.** The MoU helped establish a common understanding of project scope, roles and responsibilities, cost arrangements, expectations around community engagement, and the need to ensure systems are installed safely, to the required standards, and in a way that maximises benefit to households and the community.

From a PPAC perspective, the MoU has also been important in ensuring that community interests, local leadership and practical implementation considerations are recognised within a multi-party project environment.

Arrangements relating to the future ownership, transfer, maintenance and support of the systems are to be managed in accordance with the agreed roles and responsibilities of the parties, including consideration of PPAC's capacity, local support pathways, training needs, warranties and any further support arrangements.

PROJECT DELIVERY

As part of the delivery process, housing inspections were undertaken in late 2025 to assess the suitability of properties for rooftop solar and battery installations and to ensure that systems could be safely and effectively deployed.

Subject to final technical requirements and installation scheduling, the project is expected to be completed by June 2026.

HOUSEHOLD COSTS AND SAVINGS

AGL is removing the up-front capital cost barrier for households by fully funding the solar and battery systems, with the indicative value of each installation being in the order of approximately \$15,000 per household.

Once systems are installed and operational, **households are expected to receive direct benefits of reduced grid electricity use and lower power bills, with indicative savings in the order of approximately \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year for many households.**

These savings are significant in the context of current cost-of-living pressures and have the potential to provide immediate and practical relief for households, while also improving household energy security.

For PPAC, the project is not only about lowering power bills. It is also about helping households gain greater control over their energy use, supporting more equitable access to the benefits of renewable energy, and demonstrating how practical infrastructure investment can improve everyday community wellbeing.

BUILDING ENERGY LITERACY

Recognising that long-term benefits extend beyond the installation of infrastructure alone, the project also includes a strong focus on energy literacy.

Community members will be supported to better understand:

- **How energy is used within households**
- **How solar and battery systems work**
- **Ways to reduce energy consumption and further reduce energy bills**
- **How changes in when and how energy is used can complement the benefits of solar battery technology.**

By building knowledge alongside infrastructure, the Point Pearce Community Solar and Battery Project aims to support households to make informed decisions about energy use and to strengthen confidence in managing household energy costs over time.

From a PPAC perspective, this aspect of the project is especially important because it contributes to practical community capability, not just one-off infrastructure delivery.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND PARTICIPATION

In addition to direct household savings, the project has the potential to support broader community development outcomes.

AGL is exploring opportunities to work with PPAC to identify pathways for local community members to participate in future maintenance, monitoring and related support roles, with training and capability development to be considered where appropriate.

These opportunities align with broader community aspirations around local employment, skills development and participation in the clean energy transition.

AGL is also looking to partner with the primary school to support a student-led, problem-based learning project linked to the installation of solar and battery systems across the community.

At the request of Central Yorke School, and in collaboration with the South Australian Department for Education, AGL will work with teachers to present a practical challenge for students: exploring how Point Pearce households can use their new solar and battery systems to reduce power bills as much as possible.

PPAC will support this engagement by helping facilitate AGL visits to the school in Term 2, 2026 to introduce the project, check in with students during the term, and return at the end of term to hear student presentations, timed to align with broader community engagement during installation works.

For PPAC, the project is an example of how community-led partnerships can do more than deliver infrastructure. They can also build local participation, support learning, strengthen community capability and create a stronger platform for future infrastructure, service and economic development initiatives.

OUTCOMES AND KEY LEARNINGS

The Point Pearce Community Solar and Battery Project demonstrates the value of community-led, partnership-based approaches to delivering affordable, reliable clean energy solutions.

Key learnings include:

- **Strong early engagement and trust-based relationships are essential**
- **Projects achieve better outcomes when community priorities shape both design and delivery from the outset**
- **Working through the recognised local Aboriginal community organisation is critical to ensuring that projects remain grounded in community needs, expectations and aspirations**
- **Energy literacy and user understanding are as important as infrastructure investment**
- **Renewable energy initiatives can deliver broader social, educational and economic benefits when aligned with community aspirations**
- **Coordinated facilitation by government, including the role played by DEM, is valuable in bringing multiple stakeholders together and supporting delivery**
- **Clear agreements, including the MoU, are critical in defining roles, responsibilities and practical arrangements across complex, multi-party projects**
- **The combined support of DEM and AGL has been central to making the project financially achievable and practical to deliver.**

The project provides a positive example of how utilities, government and First Nations community organisations can work together in ways that respect local leadership and produce tangible household and community benefit.

It also offers useful lessons for similar initiatives in other First Nations communities, while recognising that successful replication depends on trust, tailored engagement, clear governance and genuine respect for local leadership.

CONCLUSION

The Point Pearce Community Solar and Battery Project shows how community-driven renewable energy partnerships can help reduce household energy costs, respond to cost-of-living pressures, and build stronger foundations for long-term community resilience.

Grounded in respect for community leadership and the rights, interests and aspirations of community members, the project represents a meaningful step toward more equitable participation in the clean energy transition.

For PPAC, the project is also significant because it demonstrates the value of practical, well-structured partnerships that respond to community need, support local capacity, and contribute to a stronger and more self-determined future for Point Pearce



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