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Australia's largest solar farm is set to be built in the Somerset region.

**BUSINESS**

## Australia's largest solar farm to be built in Somerset

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AUSTRALIA'S largest solar farm is set to be built in the Somerset region after the local council yesterday approved the project.

The Somerset Regional Council has conditionally approved the 1500 megawatt farm to be constructed over two stages on a 2055 hectare site east of Harlin on the D'Aguiar Highway, north of Esk.

Somerset Mayor Graeme Lehmann said the solar farm, once completed, would be Australia's largest.

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"This was a complex development application put together by Ethos Urban planning consultants, who have been involved in other large infrastructure projects throughout Australia, on behalf of Sunshine Energy Australia Pty Ltd," Cr Lehmann said.

"This application has been referred to various government departments and agencies for their input and Council approved the development in line with our planning scheme which allows for such developments in rural areas."

Cr Lehmann said the facility would be staffed seven days a week with up to 60 permanent staff and during construction had the potential to create up to 200 jobs.

He said the council had taken into account concerns raised by submitters during the public consultation phase and had addressed these concerns, where possible, by implementing conditions on the development application to offset these.

"For example, where residents were concerned about the solar farm being seen from the D'Aguilar Highway, we've requested that trees be planted along the fence line," he said.

"We've also increased offsets and stipulated that solar panels cannot be installed within 100 metres of a neighbouring property.

"We have also requested that a year after construction and operation that developers review the impact of glare and if there is an impact on neighbouring properties that additional trees be planted or the tinting of windows is to occur.

"Further, council has conditioned the development application so that no solar panels can be installed in the flood plain."

Cr Lehmann said it was important for residents to remember that these types of proposals provided an opportunity to capitalise on an emerging market for renewable energy sources.

It is anticipated that construction of the solar farm will start mid-2019 and will take up to three years to complete. It will be completed over two stages.

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