Frequently Asked Questions

How long will it take to build the project?

If approved and financed, construction of the Giddi BESS and associated infrastructure will take around 12 months.

How big will it be?

Once completed, the Giddi BESS and associated infrastructure will cover up to approximately 20 hectares of land. The battery cubicles will be approximately 4 m tall. The overall size of each battery cabinet is about the size of a standard oversized shipping container.

Where will it be located and why?

The Giddi BESS will be located in Trafalgar East, approximately 4 km northwest of the Moe Racecourse.

The site has no matters of State or Commonwealth environmental significance present and is suitable topography with high flood immunity. We are actively avoiding impacting native vegetation and water courses.

What technology is being used for the project?

The Giddi BESS will utilise Lithium-Ion batteries and associated equipment from leading manufacturers. These manufacturers are selected through a separate competitive tender process. A more advanced technology may be installed as innovation comes to market. It is also expected to see more advanced batteries replace the current batteries as they reach the end of their service life.

The facility will be an orderly arrangement of battery cabinets, inverters and control systems, including cabling. The battery packs are enclosed in custom designed, dust and waterproof ‘cabinets’ made of steel. The cabinet colour will be white, or light coloured to assist with heat management and each cabinet has its own internal thermal management system. Each cabinet will look similar to a standard oversized shipping container.

What is the lifecycle of the battery

The intended lifespan of the Giddi BESS is 25-30 years. One year prior to decommissioning, ib vogt (or the current operator) must submit to the Council for endorsement, a Rehabilitation Exit Plan prepared by field experts. This plan will demonstrate how the site will be restored, identify future land uses, and outline an activity plan for remediation and monitoring

How does it work?

The Giddi BESS will store energy in times of high production and release energy in times of high demand, similar to how a battery on a home solar system.

Will there be any lighting on site?

There will be minimal lighting on site at night, and as such, minimal impact on the surrounding landholders or the landscape.

What are the benefits of battery energy storage?

In making the transition from fossil fuels to renewables, the ability to store and dispatch energy will play a key role. Battery Energy Storage Systems support renewable generation projects by smoothing out generation peaks and troughs. This will also assist in the lowering of tariffs during high peak demand periods.

Battery Energy Storage Systems do not produce emissions; instead, they enhance and support the nation’s renewable energy integration into the market, contributing to the Australian Government’s net zero targets.

Is a community benefit associated with the project?

Yes. The project will make an annual financial contribution to a dedicated community benefit fund. We are currently working with local community groups to identify new initiatives that deliver long-term benefits.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we need battery energy storage systems (BESS)and how are they improving the reliability of the energy system?

Our coal plants are reaching end of life and need to be replaced quickly. Solar and BESS are one of the fastest generation technologies to be deployed. Bloomberg have reported that the price of BESS systems declined by 40% in 2024 and a further 30% in 2025.

BESS work by absorbing and releasing electricity when needed, storing excess low cost solar and wind energy when production is high and demand is low. That stored energy is then used during busy periods to help keep the power system stable. The adoption of BESS technology allows renewable generation to be fully utilised and reduces the number of energy facilities that would otherwise be required to be built.

Batteries also improve reliability because they can respond faster than any other energy source, stepping in within milliseconds to prevent shortfalls and reduce the chance of blackouts.

They also help make power more affordable. In Victoria, over the last 12 months, coal has been about 5 times more expensive than solar, and gas about 17 times more expensive. By storing cheap renewable energy during the day and using it later, batteries reduce the need to switch on expensive gas plants during peak demand. This helps keep power bills lower for everyone.

In short, we need batteries because they:

- store excess renewable energy for when it's needed
- keep the grid stable and reduce the chance of outages
- act quickly to prevent energy shortfalls
- help lower electricity costs by reducing reliance on expensive fuels
- support the transition to cleaner energy.

Why is this project being built here if the energy will mainly go to Melbourne?

The electricity grid is shared, and the best places to build battery projects are where they can support the whole system, not just the closest town. Here's what that means in practice:

- The grid works as one big network: Electricity doesn't stay local, it flows through the Victorian grid wherever it's needed. Even if energy is used in Melbourne, the benefits of stable and reliable power are shared across the whole state.
- Giddi BESS project location is ideal: This site was chosen because it is close to existing transmission lines, meaning the project can connect efficiently to the grid without building long new power corridors. Locating batteries near major transmission infrastructure helps keep costs and environmental impacts down.
- It helps integrate more renewable energy: Victoria is adding large amounts of solar and wind in regional areas. Batteries can store excess renewable energy and release it when demand is high, supporting the entire grid, including regional and metropolitan areas.
- It improves reliability for everyone: Batteries respond in milliseconds, helping to stabilise the grid and reduce the chance of outages across the state. This improves reliability both locally and for places like Melbourne.

Frequently Asked Questions

We've heard concerns about whether a buffer zone is needed around the battery installation to prevent possible health issues for cattle in the project area. Can you clarify this?

There are no special buffer zones required under current guidelines specifically for animal health. We are also unable to identify any authoritative technical or regulatory bodies that have raised any concerns in this regard. During our community consultation livestock health concerns have been raised for two separate issues as follows:

The risk of chemical leaching from the battery containers.

Lithium-ion phosphate batteries are completely sealed systems with multiple containment layers. The perception is the risk increases if there is a fire. They are housed in steel enclosures with internal spill containment systems to contain any chemicals if there is a fire. Even if the internal containment system overflows, there is an external membrane and a containment pond to capture any liquids. Any liquid captured by these containment systems would be pumped into truck tankers and transported offsite in an appropriate disposal facility.

The potential impact of additional EMF.

Batteries themselves do not create any material EMF as the energy is stored. There is EMF emitted from the associated Inverters, Transformers and High Voltage Transmission lines when that energy is being sent into the grid. There have been numerous studies confirming EMF does not have any health impacts on cattle. This includes a study conducted for cattle underneath a 765 kV transmission line, which has higher EMF than the existing 220kV line that the project is connecting to. Noting that cattle have been grazed under the transmission lines in Victoria for decades without health impacts.

[1] A Study of farm animals near 765kV transmission lines. (1980). The Bovine Practitioner, 1980(15), 51-62. https://doi.org/10.21423/bovine-vol1980no15p51-62

Is it possible to raise livestock within the project site, such as calves?

The land being used for the BESS compound and substation are not suitable for livestock and will be secured by security fencing. This area is less than 10 hectares.

For the remainder of the property Ib vogt is committed to exploring this opportunity further and with farmers who are interested in grazing livestock. We welcome feedback and aim to work collaboratively to ensure the arrangement supports both farming and renewable energy operations.

The project is located in a Farming Zone; will the project result in a change to the land zoning?

The Baw Baw Planning Scheme establishes Planning Zones within the Shire. The proposed project is located in the Farming Zone. Each Planning Zone has three types of land uses.

'Section 1 – Permit not required'

'Section 2 – Permit required'

'Section 3 – Prohibited'

Under the Baw Baw Planning Scheme, the use and development of Farming land for a BESS is defined as a 'utility installation'.

A utility installation is allowable with a 'Section 2 – Permit required'. This triggers the requirement for a Planning Permit to be obtained to facilitate the proposed development of the project.

Further information can be found in the relevant section of the Baw Baw Planning Scheme, **here**.

Frequently Asked Questions

What measures are you taking to avoid visual impacts to nearby landholders? Is it going to have a lot of lights?

The project site is located at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac, and the surrounding native vegetation already provides strong natural screening. This makes it difficult to actually see the existing sheds at the proposed BESS location. If nearby landholders would like additional screening, we can incorporate further landscaping, such as planting trees and shrubs, to help reduce views of the site from neighbouring properties and public roads.

In terms of lighting, we are keeping it to the minimum required to support safe worker movement on the site at night. This means that sensors can be used to minimise the amount of lighting. Full site lighting would only be required on an occasional basis, helping to protect the amenity of nearby residents.

How are you planning to avoid noise impacts to nearby landholders and other impacts to biodiversity within the project area?

How are you planning to avoid noise impacts to nearby landholders and other impacts to biodiversity within the project area?

An operational Noise Impact Assessment has been completed to understand and manage any potential noise from the project. The assessment modelled a worst-case operating scenario and confirmed that noise levels will remain well below the EPA Victoria rural requirements for nearby residences.

The BESS site is heavily disturbed from previous uses, and it largely dominated by the 4 hectares of large sheds and associated infrastructure. It does not contain any native flora or fauna that will be impacted.

Are you planning to deliver any community-benefit initiatives within Trafalgar East?

We plan to establish a Community Benefits Fund that will provide an annual contribution once the project is up and running. We've already begun speaking with local community groups to help identify the types of initiatives and organisations that could benefit from this support.

Our intention is for the fund to be managed by an independent committee made up of community members. This committee would consult with the wider community, review applications and decide how funds are allocated each year.

Some of the ideas we've put forward for consideration include:

- upgrades to the Trafalgar Community Hall
- training and scholarship opportunities for Indigenous youth
- support for the local BetterMentall charity
- local environmental restoration and conservation projects.

We want to hear from the community about what matters most, so please share your ideas and feedback through the survey or by contacting us directly.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the fire risks of a battery and how are you planning to manage that?

We've designed the project to minimise both the chance of a fire starting and the impact if one ever did occur. The site layout avoids areas with very high bushfire risk, dense vegetation and nearby homes. This helps reduce the likelihood of a bushfire reaching the site or a fire spreading from it.

Although the risk is very low, we take fire safety extremely seriously. The BESS has multiple layers of protection:

- continuous monitoring: Each battery container is monitored 24/7 for temperature, smoke, and gas levels
- early detection: If anything unusual is detected, alarms are triggered immediately to notify the onsite operator
- automatic safety responses: The system can isolate individual cells or even shut down an entire container to prevent an issue escalating
- fire suppression: Automatic fire-suppression or cooling systems activate if needed.

If a fire were to occur inside a container, the CFA would be notified straight away.

A detailed Fire Risk Assessment has been prepared as part of the planning application. We will also implement a site-specific Fire Management Plan and Emergency Management Plan, which outline prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery measures. These plans will be reviewed by the CFA.

Additional protection measures built into the project include:

- each battery container has its own internal bund to safely hold water, suppression foam, and any runoff.
- An external retention basin with an impermeable membrane can be isolated to prevent contaminated water escaping.
- a cleared firebreak around the site to reduce risk of spread of fire both externally coming into the property, or internal fire spreading outside.
- at least 40,000 litres of onsite water storage and fire hydrants every 60 metres for CFA use during an emergency. Plus a large bore fed dam on site for additional water.

Is it true that the land prices of neighbouring properties will go down if the project is approved and built?

Independent studies and fact-checked reports consistently reject the idea that renewable or battery projects cause property devaluation.

According to the Clean Energy Council (2025), international research shows that any negative effects on nearby property values tend to be small, short-lived, and limited to properties within around 1–2 kilometres of a project. These impacts generally peak during the construction period and recover quickly. Australian data reflects the same trend, with local government areas in New South Wales and Victoria that host major renewable projects recording strong median property price growth of 35–51% over five years.

Please visit this link to read the complete fact-sheet: Renewable energy property prices and insurance: Fact sheet | Clean Energy Council