

## EOI6246 SOLAR AND BATTERY SYSTEM SPECIALISTS PANEL REFRESH

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Report Author: Executive Officer Climate  
Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Sustainable Futures  
Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

The item has been included in the public agenda to facilitate openness and transparency in Council's decision making. Confidential attachments have been included with the report which contain commercially sensitive information that is not to be disclosed whilst the meeting is open to the public.

### SUMMARY

This report summarises the evaluation process and seeks Council approval for the refresh of a Panel of pre-qualified Solar and Battery System Specialists, to facilitate efficient delivery of solar and battery system projects.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That***

- 1. Council appoints the following additional seven suppliers to the existing EOI6246 Solar and Battery Systems Specialist Panel:***
  - (a) Casone Electrical Pty Ltd***
  - (b) Ecologiq Pty Ltd T/as Eqrenawable***
  - (c) Manter Service Group Pty Ltd as The Trustee for Manter Service Group Unit Trust***
  - (d) Programmed Facility Management Pty Ltd***
  - (e) RACV Solar Pty Ltd***
  - (f) Total Electrics and Air Conditioning Pty Ltd T/as Total Solar Solutions Australia***
  - (g) UB Energy Pty Ltd***

- 2. *The Manager Resilient Environment continues to be delegated authority to extend the contract term in line with the existing Panel terms, with a potential maximum contract period of six (6) years expiring March 2027.***
- 3. *The confidential attachments to this report remain confidential indefinitely as they relate to matters specified under section 3(1)(g)(i), (g)(ii) of the Local Government Act 2020.***

## **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Council Meeting 23 March 2021 - Council awarded contract EOI6246 to eight (8) suppliers for an initial term of four (4) years with an option to extend the contract term by two (2) periods of one (1) year each, a potential maximum contract period of six (6) years. The agreed recommendation included a clause stating that *“the panel may be refreshed periodically throughout the contract, to include new suppliers, technologies and innovative solutions.”*

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Purpose and Background***

Yarra Ranges Council has approximately 1,600kW of solar and 1,000kW of battery storage capacity across 74 sites. Solar and battery systems are becoming more critical for improving the resilience of Council's facilities in the event of power outages. Access to a Panel of experienced suppliers ensures smooth project delivery, value for money, and the development of ongoing relationships to support strong project outcomes.

The EOI6246 Solar and Battery System Specialists Panel was established in March 2021 (Attachment 2), with eight suppliers appointed for an initial four-year term. Due to limited capacity and high demand for services, only three suppliers are currently actively quoting, limiting Council's ability to expedite solar and battery projects and reducing potential value for money.

The current contract (EOI16246) is within its first extension period to March 2026, however, a refresh is required to include new suppliers. As a result, officers have sought expressions of interest (EOI) submissions for a Panel of pre-qualified Solar and Battery System specialists.

An advertisement calling for expressions of interest was placed in the Age newspaper on Saturday 18 January 2025. Tenders closed on Wednesday 12 February 2025 with fourteen (14) submissions received.

To allow for new technologies and innovative solutions, Council continues to reserve the right to invite and evaluate tender submissions to include further suppliers to the panel throughout the life of the contract.

A summary of the evaluation process is included as a Confidential Attachment (Attachment 1).

### ***Options considered***

#### **1. Continuing Panel with existing suppliers**

This option is not recommended due to the limited number of actively quoting suppliers on the panel.

#### **2. Refreshing Panel to add additional suppliers**

This option is preferred as it will reinvigorate the Panel, enhance quoting responsiveness, and improve Council's ability to progress works efficiently and cost-effectively. Adding the recommended seven suppliers will increase the total active Panel members to 10.

The expression of interest process is a two-step approach. In this instance, the EOI was conducted to form a panel of pre-qualified suppliers, enabling officers to undertake a competitive Request for Quotation (RFQ) process for each project to ensure the best value. Quotes will be sought from at least three panel suppliers for each project and will be evaluated on more specific criteria, which will include at minimum 30 percent weighting related to cost. This ensures compliance with the Procurement Policy.

### ***Recommended option and justification***

The recommended option is to appoint an additional seven suppliers listed to the EOI6246 Solar and Battery System Specialists Panel:

- Casone Electrical Pty Ltd
- Ecologiq Pty Ltd T/as Eqrenawable
- Manter Service Group Pty Ltd as The Trustee for Manter Service Group Unit Trust
- Programmed Facility Management Pty Ltd
- RACV Solar Pty Ltd
- Total Electrics and Air Conditioning Pty Ltd T/as Total Solar Solutions Australia
- UB Energy Pty Ltd.

This is in addition to the three existing suppliers listed on the current panel who have confirmed their interest in continuing:

- Flow Power

- Energy Wired Pty Ltd; and
- Spiden Electrical Services Pty Ltd.

This will bring the total number of suppliers on the panel to 10.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

There are no direct financial impacts associated with this Panel, however utilising this Panel for these works will reduce the time taken in evaluating and appointing suppliers, whilst still achieving best value. The streamlining of the procurement process will also make it easier for suppliers to respond, thus resulting in a more engaged and competitive supplier market.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

This report contributes to the following strategic objective in the Council Plan:

- Protected and Enhanced Natural Environment.

Key relevant Council strategies include:

- Liveable Climate Plan 2020-2030
- Environment Strategy 2015-2025
- Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

This item directly responds to Council's climate change obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

Economic sustainability was considered through the inclusion of weightings for suppliers based within the Yarra Ranges, promoting opportunities for local businesses.

### ***Social Implications***

Social sustainability was considered throughout the evaluation process. Installation of solar and battery systems can support Council's emergency response by enabling designated buildings to remain open to the community during times of extended power outages.

### ***Environmental Implications***

The refresh of this Panel supports environmental sustainability in the Yarra Ranges by increasing uptake of solar and battery technologies, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, lowering emissions and improving energy resilience in the event of power outages.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Not applicable.

### **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Collaboration between the Major Projects, Property and Facilities Management, Procurement and Climate teams through the Tender Evaluation Panel enabled the needs and considerations of a variety of internal stakeholders to be considered when completing the evaluation process.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The use of the Panel will ensure that contractors are fully compliant with legislation and Council's contractual requirements, and that their ongoing compliance will be monitored throughout the operation of the Panel. This will ensure that Council meets its legislative and legal obligations and mitigates its risks relating to procurement and occupational health and safety compliance.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

### **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Tender Evaluation Panel Assessment (Confidential)
2. EO16246 Solar and Battery System Specialists Panel - March 2021