

Gransolar Development Australia

First Nations Engagement & Community Plan

V2.0 – July 2025



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Virtus Heritage has reviewed this document as experts in archaeology and cultural heritage management. Our review assessed the document against legal, ethical, and professional standards within our field. This review does not constitute cultural endorsement or replace consultation with First Nations representatives.

Reviewed by Noel King Jnr (Widjabul-Wiabal Man) on 2 July 2025. This contribution reflects the views and cultural knowledge of Noel King Jnr, shared in support of broader engagement and policy development. It is not intended to speak for other First Nations, language groups, or Traditional Owners.

We acknowledge and respect that other Nations hold cultural authority in relation to their own Country and may have different perspectives. We encourage consideration of engagement with the appropriate Traditional Owners in each relevant project area, to ensure local voices and cultural protocols are recognised and respected.

Acknowledgement of Country

Gransolar Development Australia offers our acknowledgement and deepest respect to the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and their ancient and enduring connection to land, water and community.

We pay our sincere respects to the Jagera and the Turrbal People, as the Traditional Custodians of Meanjin (Brisbane), where our office is located. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, as we work together with communities to secure a safe energy future across the country.

Gransolar Development Australia commits to fostering a culture of learning from, and working with, First Nations peoples in the spirit of reconciliation and access to justice.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Gransolar Group

In Australia, Gransolar Group recognises the importance of meaningful engagement with First Nations peoples in the renewable energy sector and is committed to informing all relevant parties during various stages of the projects. This engagement seeks to address historical imbalances and create opportunities for First Nations communities to participate in and benefit from the country's clean energy transition.

Australia's commitment to reconciliation includes efforts to ensure First Nations Australians have equitable access to economic opportunities. In the context of renewable energy, this means fostering an environment where First Nations peoples can actively participate in and benefit from the growing clean energy industry. This approach aligns with broader national goals of promoting social equity and sustainable development.

Gransolar Group is committed to aligning its practices with government policies that promote First Nations participation in the renewable energy sector, including the First Nations Clean Energy Strategy 2024-2030 (Commonwealth of Australia 2024).

Gransolar Group is a proud signatory of the United Nations Global Compact, demonstrating its commitment to integrating the Compact's principles into its core business practices. The company actively incorporates these principles into its policies and operational strategies, ensuring alignment with global sustainability goals.

By adhering to the UN Global Compact, Gransolar Group is committed to:

- Respect First Nations rights in our operations and supply chains.
- Conduct due diligence to identify and address potential impacts on First Nations communities.
- Engage in meaningful consultation with First Nations peoples.
- Contribute to the economic and social development of First Nations communities where we operate.

1.2 Gransolar Development Australia

Gransolar Development Australia (GDA), a subsidiary of Gransolar Group, is a leading development platform for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), solar photovoltaic (PV) and hybrid projects in Australia. Since 2017, the team has successfully developed and delivered Ready-to-Build projects across South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, and more recently in Queensland (Figure 1), focusing on opportunities within the National Electricity Market (NEM).



FIGURE 1. MAP OF GDA PROJECTS DELIVERED AND UNDER DEVELOPMENT.

1.3 The Development Lifecycle

Renewable energy project development can be broadly summarised into the following categories:

1. **Identification and acquisition** of the project site / land
2. **Planning and approvals** process to meet relevant Local, State and Federal Government requirements
3. **Interconnection** works that take place in coordination with the local Network Service Provider and Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) to meet State and National Electricity Market regulations
4. **Commercialisation** of the project through funding by the Developer or by a third-party investor(s)
5. **Construction** of the project

Following project construction, a project is energised and operated throughout its lifespan, usually after which time the project is decommissioned, its infrastructure is removed, and the site returned as close as possible to pre-construction conditions.

To date, GDA have been involved in stages 1 to 4 of our project's development lifecycles, and this document reflects that involvement.

2 First Nations Rights

Legally, the 1967 Referendum gave Indigenous Australians Human Rights recognition for the first time under common law and in doing so, rightfully changed the Australian Constitution. GDA respectfully acknowledges these rights, along with the capabilities, wisdom and proud cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

2.1 Significant Dates

Many dates throughout each year are significant to First Nations peoples, both historically and culturally. GDA offers respect and acknowledgement to First Nations peoples, especially on such dates.

[Appendix A](#) provides a list of commonly observed significant dates for First Nations peoples in Australia, some of which include National Sorry Day (26 May), National Reconciliation Week (May – June) and NAIDOC Week (July).

3 Principles of First Nations Engagement

3.1 Background

The First Nations Clean Energy Network comprises a network of First Nations peoples, community organisations, land councils, unions, academics, industry groups, technical advisors, legal experts, renewables companies and others, working in partnership to ensure that First Nations communities share in the benefits of the renewable energy transition.

The First Nations Clean Energy Network's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Best Practice Principles for Clean Energy Projects* (the Principles) underpin GDA's approach to engagement with First Nations peoples:

1. Engage respectfully
2. Prioritise clear, accessible and accurate information
3. Ensure cultural heritage is preserved and protected
4. Protect Country and environment
5. Be a good neighbour
6. Ensure economic benefits are shared
7. Provide social benefits for community
8. Embed land stewardship

9. Ensure cultural competency
10. Implement, monitor and report back

The Principles clearly define and guide proponents like GDA on the minimum effort and consideration that should be given to First Nations engagement within the renewable energy sector. In partnership with the First Nations Clean Energy Network and First Nations peoples, KPMG and the Clean Energy Council have published the *Leading Practice Principles: First Nations and Renewable Energy Projects*, a comprehensive guide to realisation of the 10 Principles that has provided GDA with further guidance and nuance to our approach to First Nations engagement.

4 Engagement Strategy

Table 1 provides a high-level summary of where each of the Principles is used by GDA's Development Team, while sections 4.1 to 4.5 detail how GDA has adopted and endorsed the Principles in our approach to First Nations engagement throughout through our five key strategies:

1. Pay respect to First Nations rights and culture
2. Engage early and often
3. Be transparent and accountable
4. Make decisions collaboratively
5. Seek mutual benefit

	Site Identification & Acquisition	Planning & Approvals	Commercialisation
The Principles			
Engage Respectfully	☒	☒	
Prioritise clear, accessible and accurate information	☒	☒	
Ensure cultural heritage is preserved and protected	☒	☒	
Protect Country and environment	☒	☒	
Be a good neighbour	☒	☒	☒
Ensure economic benefits are shared		☒	☒
Provide social benefits for community		☒	
Embed land stewardship		☒	☒
Ensure cultural competency	☒	☒	☒
Implement, monitor and report back	☒	☒	☒

TABLE 1. THE PRINCIPLES OF FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT AND THEIR USE BY GDA.

4.1 Pay Respect to First Nations Rights and Culture

In 2024 we developed GDA's tailored Acknowledgement of Country for documentation:

Gransolar Development Australia offers our acknowledgement and deepest respect to the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and their ancient and enduring connection to land, water and community.

We pay our sincere respects to the Jagera and the Turrbal Peoples, as the Traditional Custodians of Meanjin (Brisbane), where our office is located. We pay our respect to their Elders; past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia, as we work together with communities to secure a safe energy future across the country.

Gransolar Development Australia commits to fostering a culture of learning from, and working with, First Nations peoples in the spirit of reconciliation and access to justice

Through the text of these Acknowledgements and our actions in our projects, we seek to demonstrate the respect our team holds for First Nations peoples and their culture.

Some of the ways we establish this respect include:

- following all Local, State and Federal First Nations engagement and consultation requirements;
- Ensuring the participation of as many Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) as safety and feasibility considerations allows during Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (ACHA) site walkovers in New South Wales (NSW) attending ACHA site walkovers in-person to meet RAPs and participate in the survey for culturally significant sites and artefacts; and,
- including First Nations interests in the negotiations of our local government Voluntary Planning Agreements, such that community funding paid by GDA directly benefits First Nations peoples.
- Engaging a First Nations representative local to the project area to give a Welcome to Country / Smoking Ceremony prior to project breaking ground

4.2 Engage Early and Often

GDA engages with all project stakeholders as early and often as the project allows, however we recognise the particular importance of this strategy for First Nations peoples and organisations, as the Traditional Custodians of the Land have a right to be consulted throughout the development lifecycle.

During site identification and acquisition, we obtain stakeholder mapping to identify First Nations interests in each project's land or region, and preliminary Due Diligence (DD) assessments of potential project sites to determine if the area does or could

contain any culturally significant artefacts or places. These DD assessments inform our engagement strategy and where appropriate, lead us to begin engagements prior to the Planning and Approvals process.

During the Planning and Approvals phase engagement continues or commences in line with regulatory requirements and best practice guidelines, such as the *Leading Practice Principles: First Nations and Renewable Energy Projects*. GDA demonstrates commitment to this engagement by maintaining open communication with interested First Nations peoples and organisations. While this often occurs initially through a heritage consultant, direct communication is encouraged and supported to facilitate relationship growth.

Once all relevant approvals are obtained and the proposed project moves into Commercialisation phase, GDA continues to engage often by way of direct communication to interested parties and project website updates. During this time, clear communication occurs with potential investors about the steps taken to preserve First Nations cultural heritage throughout the earlier stages of development.

4.3 Be Transparent and Accountable

Gransolar Group and GDA management empower our team members and project managers to be transparent and accountable in all interactions, as we strive to be a good corporate citizen and neighbour. For First Nations engagement, this means being open and honest about each project and its potential and scale of impacts on community and environment.

We understand the importance of First Nations peoples' connection to Land, sky, and community, and recognise that our developments may have both tangible and intangible effects. The Burra Charter, a document from Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites, provides a best-practice framework for those who provide advice, make decisions about, or undertake works to places of cultural significance, including owners, managers, and custodians.

For example, while a development may not physically impact culturally significant artefacts, clearing vegetation could affect fauna or their habitat, altering the intangible connectivity of the Country to which First Nations peoples have a sacred connection. We are transparent about such impacts and accountable for minimizing and offsetting them as part of our development planning. This may include rehabilitation planting, offsetting, and/or installing nest boxes for disturbed fauna.

4.4 Make Decisions Collaboratively

Collaborative decision-making requires effective engagement and consultation, and an openness to genuinely listen to and incorporate feedback from First Nations peoples

and organisations. The GDA team work with First Nations communities and recognise their role as a key stakeholder in the development process, through actions such as:

- ensuring project disturbance footprints are clearly illustrated and communicated, such that interested parties are fully informed of the nature of each project's potential for environmental impacts
- consulting with RAPs on site survey requirements and adapting to changes. This was recently demonstrated on a NSW project where RAPs were directly engaged to give feedback on project layout changes and their potential for impacts on the environment prior to approaching the consenting authority

4.5 Seek Mutual Benefit

By nature, GDA projects have a net benefit to communities and the environment by contributing to the renewable energy transition, reducing Australia's reliance on harmful fossil fuel extraction and processing.

GDA is committed to fostering meaningful and long-term engagement with First Nations communities, ensuring that our projects deliver shared benefits. We recognise that mutual benefit goes beyond financial contributions – it involves creating genuine partnerships, supporting First Nations peoples, and directing investment into community-led initiatives.

As part of this commitment, we actively create opportunities for First Nations engagement, such as:

- **Engagement:** provision of engagement opportunities through early stages of the development lifecycle (e.g. contracting unlimited RAPs for site walkovers and document review)
- **Procurement and Partnerships:** working with First Nations suppliers and service providers.
- **Community Investment:** directing funds paid by GDA in Voluntary Planning Agreements to First Nations initiatives and organisations
- **Development of Indigenous Participation Plan:** working with Gransolar Group in Australia on development and incorporation of an Indigenous Participation Plan

To strengthen these efforts, Gransolar Australia team members collaborate closely with the Gransolar Group's **Community Engagement Officer**, who has specialised training and experience in Indigenous affairs and engagement. This ensures that engagement is not just a contractual arrangement but part of a broader commitment to supporting First Nations participation to identify opportunities for involvement during the relevant stages of the development lifecycle.

5 Monitoring and Reporting

To ensure the effectiveness and value of our First Nations Engagement and Community Plan and maintain transparency, we have introduced a simple monitoring and reporting framework. This system will track our progress, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate GDA's commitment to meaningful First Nations engagement.

To monitor our progress, GDA team members conduct stage-gate reviews between each phase of the development lifecycle. At this point we reflect and measure on our First Nations engagement and participation in each project against our five key strategies for engagement.

A simple reporting system tracks the effectiveness of this plan and its use by GDA team members through:

- quarterly reporting to and review of actions by Gransolar Group's Community Engagement Officer
- annual Executive reviews whereby the Executive team reviews progress and addresses any shortfalls

6 Conclusion

This Plan is designed to create enduring positive impacts, including effective First Nations engagement, empowerment of First Nations peoples, and preservation of First Nations cultural heritage. We acknowledge that this plan is a living document, subject to continuous improvement through feedback and adaptation.

By prioritising and valuing meaningful First Nations engagement, we not only enhance the success and sustainability of our projects but also contribute to the broader goals of reconciliation and self-determination for First Nations peoples.

Allocating funds to develop community driven projects we aim to maintain relationships with First Nations communities beyond project timelines and contributing to a positive social, economic, and environmental outcome while respecting and supporting First Nations rights and culture.

7 References

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Appendix A

Commonly Observed Significant Dates for First Nations Peoples

Date	Observation	Significance
26 January	Invasion / Survival Day	Celebrated by some Australians as 'Australia Day', January 26 is a day of mourning and reflection for First Nations peoples, representing the invasion of the First Nations lands by European colonialists. January 26 also represents the anniversary of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, erected by First Nations activists in 1972 as a hub for land rights activism and advocacy for First Nations Sovereignty.
13 February	National Apology Day	On 13 February 2008, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made the historic Acknowledgement and official apology to First Nations peoples and Stolen Generations.
Third Thursday of March	National Close the Gap Day	Started by First Nations and leading health and advocacy organisations in 2008, National Close the Gap Day represents a campaign advocating for health equity between First Nations and non-indigenous peoples.
21 March	Harmony Day	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Harmony Day) celebrates the cultural diversity of Australia and the importance of respect, inclusiveness and sense of belonging for everyone.
25 April	ANZAC Day	The National Day of Remembrance for members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) is observed and acknowledged by many First Nations peoples for the sacrifice of those First Nations peoples who have fought and died for Australia, many of which who concealed their ethnicity to enlist in the services during World War I.
26 May	National Sorry Day	National Sorry Day is observed to remember the mistreatment of the Stolen Generations and their families, whilst acknowledging their strength, resilience and the continuing healing process of these peoples.
27 May	The 1967 Referendum	On 27 May 1967, the majority of eligible Australians voted 'Yes' in a national referendum to amend clauses of the Australian Constitution, signifying a historic step in constitutional acknowledgement and respect for First Nations peoples.
May - June	National Reconciliation Week	Reconciliation week serves as time for people to reflect on reconciliation in Australia, noting that the word 'reconciliation' can be problematic as it suggests the 'restoration of friendly' relations. Reconciliation week is an important time for non-indigenous Australians to take responsibility for building better relationships with

		First Nations peoples and recognising First Nations peoples as the sovereign and First Peoples of Australia.
3 June	Mabo Day	On 3 June 1992, the High Court ruled that <i>terra nullius</i> should never have been applied to Australia in the historic Mabo decision. This paved the way for the Native Title Act (1993)
1 July	Coming of the Light	Recognises the day that London Missionary Society first arrived in the Torres Strait in 1871 and adoption of Christianity across the islands.
July	National NAIDOC Week	Themed each year, NAIDOC week celebrates First Nations Peoples excellence, culture, stories and resilience.
9 July	Anniversary of the Aboriginal Flag being flown	The Aboriginal flag was designed by Luritja and Wambaya man Harold Thomas. On 9 July 1971 the flag was first flown in Victoria Square, Adelaide.
4 August	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day	The 4 th of August was historically used to celebrate the birthdays of First Nations children who were stolen from their families with their birthdays unknown. Now, 4 August is a day dedicated to celebration First Nations youth.
9 August	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples	On August 9 in 1982 the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group of Indigenous Populations was held. This date was later recognised by the UN General Assembly, acknowledging the over 476 million Indigenous peoples living in 90 countries world-wide.
7 September	Indigenous Literacy Day	Presented by the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, this day is an opportunity to promote, celebrate and advocate for First Nations language and stories.
25 September	Anniversary of Cathy Freeman Winning Gold at the Olympics	Cathy Freeman, a Kuku Yalanji and Burri Gubba woman, is one of Australia's most well-known and celebrated Olympic Athletes, winning the gold medal in the 400m at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. Cathy was the first Aboriginal person to be an Olympic Athletics gold medallist.
26 October	Anniversary of the Uluru Handback	On 26 October 1985, the title for Uluru-Kata Tjuta was handed back to the Anangu people by the Governor-General. Uluru is central to the Anangu people's law and Dreaming stories.
10 December	Human Rights Day	The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 1948. The UDHR states that every human being is entitled to, "regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." This day is important for First Nations Australians as Indigenous people often face systemic racism and deep-rooted discrimination.