

SOUTH FREMANTLE SOLAR FARM FACT SHEET

July 2019

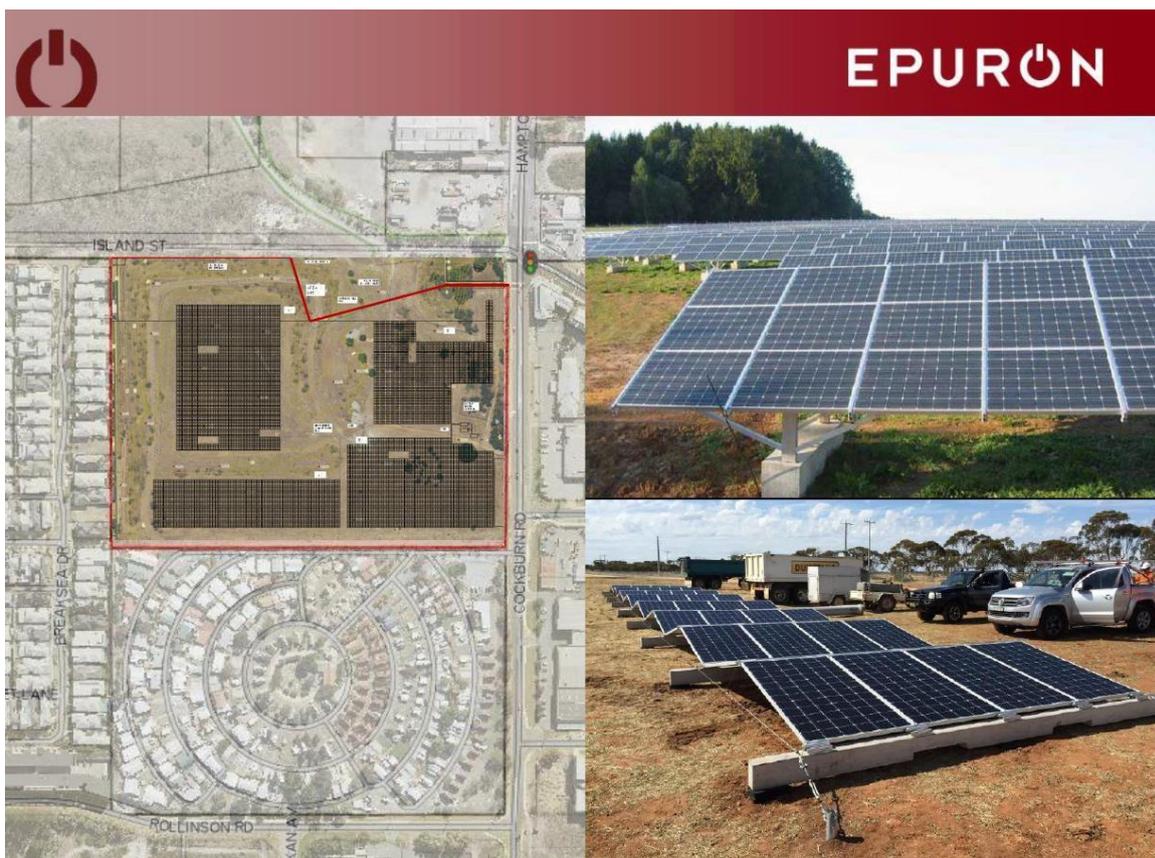


South Fremantle landfill site – contaminated site background

- The former South Fremantle landfill site was operated as a waste disposal site between approximately 1930 and 1991.
- The City is well aware of the contaminated nature of the site and the type of contaminants present. This information is available publicly on the Department of Environment Regulation (DWER) contaminated site register. A copy of the DWER Basic Site report is available on the My Say Freo website.
- It is currently classified as '*contamination – remediation required*' by DWER.
- The definition of "remediation" in the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* is broad, and includes measures to manage contamination such as restricting access or use of the site, as well as active "clean-up" measures such as treating, removing or engineering means of containing contamination.
- The DWER does not expect the City of Fremantle to carry out active clean-up (for example, excavating and removing waste from the landfill).
- Excavating the site could be hazardous to health and the City has no intention of excavating the site. Rather - use of the site is restricted to its current use, with most areas fenced to restrict access. Further assessment and management is required for any change of use or access.
- Solid capping is not appropriate for this site as it may cause a build-up of landfill gases which would otherwise dissipate naturally over time with porous capping such as sand.
- In accordance with the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003* DWER requires the landowner (the City) to create a site management plan to outline long term management measures, including measures for managing asbestos and landfill gas.
- The current site management plan is known as the 2013 Interim Site Management (ISM) Plan. This prioritised monitoring of landfill gas. A copy of this report is available on the My Say Freo website.
- The latest risk assessment, documented in the Mandatory Auditors Report (MAR) concluded that landfill gas was unlikely to pose a risk to off-site receptors while the site is in its current, undeveloped, land use. A copy of this report is available on the My Say Freo website.
- Further groundwater monitoring is required and the City is currently assessing proposals for progressing this.
- Compliance with the ISM and 2017 MAR will be required by the City *regardless* of if the Solar Farm progresses or not. The City does not hand over responsibility. Site management requirements for the solar farm will be *in addition* to these requirements.

Proposal for a solar farm

- The City has been investigating environmental, land use and management options for the site since 1985.
- In consultation with the community, two land use plans were prepared as part of a feasibility study in 2003-2004, but neither plan was financially viable.
- Due to the level of contamination on the site and the expected cost of remediation it is unlikely any development of the site will be viable for the short to medium term. The DWER does not expect the City to carry out active clean-up such as excavating.
- As the City is required to restrict access to the site it is unsuitable for use as public open space.
- In 2013 the Council resolved to investigate the possibility of developing a solar farm on the site and to call for expressions of interest from parties willing to explore the idea and potentially develop of such a facility.
- The rationale for developing a solar farm on the site was based on the premise that the panel structures could effectively sit on top of existing material and therefore cause minimum disturbance to the site.
- The objectives of the South Fremantle Solar Farm projects are to:
 - Represent a highly visible statement of the City's support for renewable energy as a means of reducing carbon emissions.
 - Make productive use of a site that is currently unviable for more conventional urban development.
- As the result of the 2014 Expression of Interest process, and following the withdrawal of first preferred proponent First Solar, in 2015 the City engaged Epuron Projects in an exclusive working agreement to explore the solar farm idea.
- As per DWER requirements, further assessment and management is required before any change of land use can be approved.



Planning and environmental approvals

- In January 2018 Epuron submitted to the City a Development Application (DA), seeking approval to develop a solar farm on the site.
- The application was widely advertised for a period of 42 days and included the following:
 - Three sign notices being placed on the perimeter of the development site, including plans.
 - Letter to owners and occupiers (both within the City of Fremantle and the City of Cockburn) adjoining and adjacent to the site.
 - Advertising of the application occurred on the City's website and My Say Freo, on social media and through media release (<https://www.fremantle.wa.gov.au/solarfarm>).
 - Two newspaper notices were published (23 February and 3 March 2018).
 - The Community reference group were informed of the proposal.
 - A community information session was held on 1 March.
- Planning approval for the solar farm was granted by the City in April 2018.
- Planning approval *does not* give Epuron the ability to immediately go ahead with development. There are a number of conditions which must be satisfied prior to development commencing. A copy of the conditions and the steps taken to meet these conditions is available on the My Say Freo website.
- Conditions set by the City and the DWER require preparation of a Site Management Plan (SMP) and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which must be reviewed by the independent accredited Contaminated Sites Auditor and documented in the Mandatory Auditor's Report (MAR). Senversa was engaged as auditor as it has extensive experience and understanding of this site.
- Epuron engaged GHD, a consultancy with long involvement in the landfill's management, to prepare the SMP/CEMP. The purpose of the SMP is to inform the design of the solar farm in such a way as to avoid, mitigate and manage negative impacts and risks on surrounding residents. Risks assessed include risks associated with existing contamination as well as risks associated with the construction and operation of the solar farm. The SMP/CEMP can be downloaded from My Say Freo.
- The MAR recommends the site is suitable for the proposed use as a Solar Farm providing the SMP/CEMP is adhered to. DWER, the Department of Health and the City of Fremantle have now accepted this advice. The MAR and DWER and DOH advice can be downloaded from the My Say Freo website.
- Under the final design and SMP, the bund will not be touched. No excavation is intended. Where minor disturbance of the site is contemplated, the SMP requires these areas to be visually assessed and samples taken for chemical analysis. A Sampling and Analysis Quality Plan can be found in the SMP.
- Based on the DWER's advice, the City is now in the process of clearing its development conditions. A copy of the conditions and the steps taken, or to be taken, to meet these conditions is available on the My Say Freo website.
- As the site sits on the local government border, the City of Fremantle has been liaising with the City of Cockburn to ensure it is satisfied all conditions will be met.
- An updated set of FAQ is available on the My Say Freo website. The FAQ includes a summary of key elements of the SMP particularly with respect to dust management. The FAQ also includes a guide as to where to find other information in the documents.

Where to from here

- Based on the DWER's advice, the City is now in the process of clearing its development conditions. The City is not going to let development proceed unless it is satisfied it is safe to do so.
- The City and Epuron will shortly be arranging a community information session to help explain and answer any questions on the site management requirements. Please register on the My Say Freo website to ensure you are informed of dates. Dates will also be advertised online and in the local newspaper.
- Details of the lease are now being negotiated in accordance with the terms in the Business Plan approved in September 2018. The DWER must approve the lease.
- Assuming construction contracts are let in late 2019, activity will commence on site in the first half of 2020. Completion will be in the second half of 2020.
- It is important to note that construction contracts will include detailed design and ordering of equipment, and it will be a number of months after contracts are let before there is activity on-site.
- During construction and operation, the Auditor will ensure Epuron and its contractors comply with all conditions.
- With or without a solar farm, the City will continue monitoring and management activities in accordance with its obligations as a landowner under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*.
- Anyone seeking more information on the project including environmental and planning aspects can do so via the My Say Freo website.

