FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. What are the technical specifications of the community battery? Physical size and aesthetic, storage capability?

Each emPowering SA community battery will be a 700 kilowatt / 1828 kilowatt-hour battery comprising of:

- an approximately 11.5 metre by 7.2 metre fence, with concrete slab below, with which all the community battery equipment will sit; and
- a separate approximately 3.0 metre by 3.5 metre concrete slab/culvert on which an SA Power Networks high voltage/low voltage transformer will sit, as part of connecting the battery to the grid.

The equipment on the larger concrete slab will be three (3) battery cabinets, one (1) battery connection panel, seven (7) power conversion systems, and one (1) switchboard.

This larger slab will be surrounded by a fence, which the emPowering SA project team intends to design in conjunction with each Council to ensure it meets Council, community, and project expectations regarding visual amenity, security, and maintenance.

All equipment is rated for external conditions, meaning there is no need for roofing or shade structures.

2. What is the ownership model of the battery, and who is responsible for any ongoing maintenance of the battery?

All emPowering SA community batteries will be owned by the Government of South Australia and operated by energy retailer AGL as part of a virtual power plant (VPP).

AGL is responsible for all ongoing maintenance of the community battery equipment. This will include annual maintenance in line with manufacturer's recommendations, and remote monitoring at all times.

SA Power Networks is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the high voltage/low voltage transformer.

3. How does the battery work?

The emPowering SA batteries store excess energy from the grid when renewable energy is abundant.

They then make that energy available at night, during periods of high demand, or when the grid needs support.

By operating in this way and orchestrated together as part of a virtual power plant, the emPowering SA fleet will provide benefits to South Australia at significant scale. It will mean cheaper electricity for more than 10,000 households, and increased stability and resilience to South Australia's grid.

By powering communities with low-cost renewable energy stored in these batteries, we can deliver cheaper electricity to those who can't access renewable energy technologies of their own and will benefit most.

4. Who in the community can access the benefit, and how?

emPowering SA will deliver direct benefits to more than 10,000 South Australian government nominated households facing cost of living pressure, through a retail electricity rate 26 percent below the Default Market Offer (DMO, the default price for electricity).

On current figures, a typical household benefitting from emPowering SA could save up to $608 off their annual electricity bill (based on the annual saving estimate for a new residential customer when compared to the 2026-2027 DMO with an annual energy consumption of 4000 kilowatt-hours per year).

Every household benefiting from emPowering SA will be in a home that cannot support its own solar panels or a battery. This ensures these South Australians are not locked out from accessing renewable energy technologies and the benefits it can provide.

SA Housing Trust tenants can register their interest to benefit from emPowering SA by completing the form on www.empowering.sa.gov.au/join. The government is currently prioritising access for SA Housing Trust tenants in council areas where a battery is already installed and is operational. These council areas are currently the City of Marion, Campbelltown City Council, Port Pirie Regional Council and City of Playford.

However new community batteries will be joining our fleet regularly, so we recommend registering your interest now. We will contact you as soon as places become available.

5. **How many estimated households will it benefit?**

emPowering SA will deliver direct benefits to more than 10,000 South Australian households.

6. **What is the estimated annual savings per customer?**

On current figures, a typical household benefitting from emPowering SA could save up to $608 off their annual electricity bill (based on the annual saving estimate for a new residential customer when compared to the 2026-2027 DMO with an annual energy consumption of 4000 kilowatt-hours per year).

7. Data attached to other community batteries estimate a $1.9million direct value to the community over the expected 15-year life of the asset – is it a similar estimate for this battery?

It is expected that around $60 million of value will be provided directly to nominated low-income households over the operational life of emPowering SA.

8. **Has grant funding been secured through ARENA for this project?**

emPowering SA is jointly funded by the Government of South Australia, energy retailer AGL, and the Australian Government's Community Batteries for Household Solar program.

9. What are the timeframes for the project and when is a decision required by Council?

Each emPowering SA battery is expected to take approximately 12 to 18 months from approval to commencing operation. As a total fleet, emPowering SA will be delivered in a staged approach across 2026 and 2027.

9. Concerns have been raised regarding the fire risk and associated impacts – what are the safety features of the battery, and are there any mitigation measures in place in the event a fire occurs?

The energy storage technology of the batteries is certified to the most stringent safety standards for energy storage.

This includes lithium cell and battery safety standards IEC 62619:2022 and IEC 63056:2020, and grid connection, installation, and inverter standards AS/NZS 5139, AS/NZS 4777.2, AS 3000, and AS 3008.

In the unlikely event it is required, the battery cabinets also contain fire detection and an automatically activated fire suppression system.

11. Is there any land contamination issues due the battery being installed on the land?

There are no known contamination risks. Whilst community batteries are a relatively new concept, the technology and operating models behind them are already widely used across Australia in use cases from household batteries through to grid-scale installations, with no known environmental issues.

12. It was mentioned that a new SA Power network transformer would need to be installed on the land to support the battery infrastructure. Can you provide more details of this?

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- a separate approximately 3.0 metre by 3.5 metre concrete slab/culvert on which an SA Power Networks high voltage/low voltage transformer will sit, as part of connecting the battery to the grid.

13. What ongoing site management measures will be in place to ensure the battery is maintained to appropriate standards? Who will be responsible for this, and how often will physical inspections or maintenance visits occur?

AGL is responsible for all ongoing maintenance of the community battery equipment. This will include annual maintenance in line with manufacturer's recommendations, and remote monitoring at all times.
SA Power Networks is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the high voltage.

14. Given the site currently permits public access, what security measures (e.g. fencing, monitoring, signage) are proposed to prevent unauthorised access and ensure safety compliance?

This battery equipment will be surrounded by a fence, which the emPowering SA project team intends to design in conjunction with each Council to ensure it meets Council, community, and project expectations regarding visual amenity, security, and maintenance.

15. Have any long-term safety studies or environmental assessments been conducted in relation to community batteries of this type, particularly in relation to potential emissions, noise, or electromagnetic impacts?

Whilst community batteries are a relatively new concept, the technology and operating models behind them are already widely used across Australia in use cases from household batteries through to grid-scale installations, with no known environmental issues.