

Hi Javier,

I refer to your e-mail below and thank you for providing Council with the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed Tilbuster Solar Farm Project.

Following a review of the EIS and associated appendices by Council Officers, I would like to provide the following comments:

- Whilst the EIS appears to have considered some of the potential cumulative impacts associated with this particular proposal and some other SSD proposals within the locality, it does not appear to have considered a number of RSD developments recently determined by the Northern Regional Planning Panel as well as other SSD renewable projects such as Rangoon Wind Farm, Doughboy Wind farm, Winterbourne Wind Farm and the Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro proposal to name a few.
- The potential impacts of the proposed development on local biodiversity and in particular threatened species, is of some concern. Whilst it is noted that the proposal has been subject to refinement to avoid and minimise potential impacts where possible, it is further noted that the development will actually still have impacts on substantial areas of assumed habitat for Bluegrass and Pale-headed Snake and on actual habitat for Koala's and the Southern Myotis. Additionally, the EIS identifies that the proposed development will also impact on 86 hollow bearing trees which further erodes habitat potential for native species in the locality, and possibly considered as a key threatening process. As such, Council would like to see some discussion between DPIE, BCD and the Applicant around whether there is capacity to further refine the development envelope to further minimise and avoid the developments potential to adversely impact on these areas of habitat.
- If impacts on biodiversity are considered as unavoidable, Council recommends that any consent be conditioned for the submission of a detailed vegetation/ tree clearing plan to focus on measures to be implemented for the development such as pre clearing surveys, vegetation clearing and hollow bearing tree removal protocols and for the management of any displaced fauna. Any security fencing around the perimeter of the development envelope should include scratch barriers to ensure that any fencing containing barbed wire is clamber proof to prevent entanglement of fauna. Additionally, there is also potential concern of the use of barbed wire given, that it can also potentially entangle birds.
- Following discussions with Council's Waste Manager, there are considerable concerns regarding the potential waste generated from such developments and whether Council's landfill has the capacity to adequately cater for the disposal of waste materials given that the region is experiencing a substantial growth in renewable projects and other developments. In this regard, Council would like to see a focus on waste minimisation by separating recycling from general waste and disposing to the appropriate facility accordingly. As such, it is also recommended that consideration be given that any consent should require the submission of a waste management plan prior to the release of any CC outlining all waste management principles and practices relevant to the proposed development to meet the objectives to reduce waste and recover resources.
- Again given the significant number of renewable projects that have been approved, are currently being assessed or are in the scoping phase in the region, there has been some concerns raised at a local level regarding potential contamination of the land and adjoining water courses in the event of faulty, damaged and/or deteriorating panels, particularly following large storm events or other significant events such as bushfires. These matters should be addressed in an Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP).
- Given the focus on this region as a renewables hub, there is also some concern regarding the future decommissioning of these facilities should they ever become unviable during the

operational phase, end of lease or if the development/land is on sold or simply the applicant/developer goes into liquidation. As such, it is recommended that any decommissioning of the facility be not only the responsibility of the developer but also the land owner and that if the solar farm ceases or becomes inactive for more than 12 months then it is to be decommissioned and returned to agricultural use. Such measures would hopefully prevent such renewable projects from becoming idle and potentially becoming a blight on the landscape.

- There appears to be inconsistencies with the capital investment figures throughout EIS. Page 9 of the EIS estimates the CIV of the project as \$1 million, page 20 states \$152 million while Part 4.10 on page 37 states the CIV as \$174 million. A quantity surveyors report did not appear to be attached.
- In this regard, the proposed development would attract contributions under Council's s7.12 Contributions Plan and calculated at 1% of the estimated cost of construction including GST.
- Even though Council provided comment in response to the SEARs on 12 October 2018, these matters do not appear to have been addressed under Table 6-3 of Part 6.1.4 of the EIS.
- Please ensure that adequate consultation as been undertaken with the Armidale Local Aboriginal Land Council regarding Aboriginal Cultural Heritage matters.
- Further consideration needs to be given in regards to battery storage and panel location on the site given that part of the site has been identified as being potentially bushfire prone land.
- Traffic – the REF notes the need for the creation of a compliant intersection access to the NEH. If access is required via currently unformed road reserves or formed road reserves then consideration of upgrades to council road network must be considered to ARC engineering code requirements, suitable for the traffic loads during construction and operation. Pg. 20 of the EIS proposes access to the site via an “unnamed crown road” (refer to figure 1-4). However Parish maps and Council's GIS identifies this as a Public Road. Thus approval will be required from Council as the Roads authority for all construction and all required upgrade and maintenance works along this section of public road. Road design to be in accordance with Council's engineering code and works approved by Council as the roads authority.
- Council is concerned with the ability for heavy articulated vehicles being able to access the “public road” off the New England Highway due to the angle of the intersection. With reference to figures 8-14 and 8-15, the realignment of the intersection for heavy articulated vehicles access will most likely protrude into private land. How does the applicant propose to address this potential issue?
- An assessment of the impact of increased rainfall runoff from the site on down stream localities from the site must be considered.
- Council would like to discuss and explore a possible VPA with DPIE and the Applicant.

Regards

John Goodall

Coordinator Development