



Department of Industry

OUT18/13129

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Dear Ms Bandaruk

Wellington North Solar Farm (SSD 8895) EIS Exhibition

I refer to your email of 14 August 2018 to the Department of Industry (DoI) in respect to the above matter. Comment has been sought from relevant branches of Lands & Water and Department of Primary Industries. Any further referrals to Department of Industry can be sent by email to landuse.enquiries@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

The department provides the following recommendations for consideration in assessment of the proposal.

Water Resources

Pre-approval

- The proponent should provide confirmation that a source of water has been secured for the construction and operation requirements of the proposed development.
- The proponent should maintain a 40 m buffer from the identified 4th order watercourse within the proposed development site per the 'Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land' (NRAR 2018).
- The proponent should construct proposed road crossings over 1st and 2nd order streams in accordance with the Guidelines for Watercourse Crossings in Waterfront Land (Department of Industry).
- If groundwater is confirmed as a source, it is recommended the proponent assess the impacts of extracting the required amount of water from the on-site bores.

Further comments regarding the above recommendations are provided in Attachment A.

Post-approval

- The proponent should prepare a Soil and Water Management Plan and Erosion and Sediment Control Plan in consultation with DoI – Lands and Water.

Agriculture

- Both the value of the agricultural land and the current agricultural productivity of the site should be assessed.
- For example, as a baseline data set, crop yields and stocking rates over a minimum of the last 3 years could be used.

This would assist in providing agricultural indicators to guide the return and/or rehabilitation of land back to agricultural production. As such, rehabilitation protocols and outcomes should be developed in a preliminary decommissioning management plan that includes agriculture as a final land use. Further comments are provided in Attachment A.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "alexking".

Alex King
Director Cabinet & Legislation Services
Lands and Water – Strategy and Policy
12 September 2018

**Wellington North Solar Farm (SSD 8895)
EIS Exhibition**

Water Resources

- The proponent has indicated that potential sources of water during construction of the proposed development are groundwater and/or a local council water station. Groundwater would be sourced from on-site bores, though the proponent has yet to obtain a water access licence. In addition, the proponent has indicated that no groundwater will be extracted.
- A number of mapped watercourses exist on site, including a mapped 4th order watercourse that crosses from the north to the south western corner of the development. The proponent has identified this watercourse as a 3rd order stream and has stated that they will maintain a 30 m buffer. This is not consistent with the Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land (Natural Resources Access Regulator) for a 4th order watercourse.
- It is noted that the proponent proposes to construct internal access roads over identified 1st and 2nd order watercourses in accordance with the Guidelines for Watercourse Crossings in Waterfront Land (Department of Industry).
- The proponent has identified that a number of low to moderate potential Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs) may exist on site, and that these will not be affected by changes to groundwater levels as no groundwater is to be intercepted or extracted. Potential GDEs will be directly impacted through vegetation removal.

Agricultural Resources

- A baseline data set for current agricultural productivity should form part of the criteria for land rehabilitation outcomes to be achieved especially for agricultural purposes. Other criteria to be considered includes physical aspects (depth of topsoil, drainage), as well as chemical aspects (pH, cation exchange capacity, other fertility aspects) that form would be part of the decommissioning and rehabilitation plan.

Other decommissioning and rehabilitation factors to consider are:

- All infrastructure (both above and below ground) being removed at the decommissioning stage. This is not clearly stated in the assessment.
- Any stockpiled soil is managed to ensure its long term viability through active management ie storage and vegetative protocols, along with appropriate nutrient and weed management.
- The appropriate pasture species for revegetation and production purposes being assessed by local agronomic experts, and monitored for their persistence as part of the operational aspects of the solar farm's operation.