

5.0 Visual Impact (contd.)



Photomontage 3A: View from the Mitchell Highway, looking towards the Study Site.



Photomontage 3B: Photomontage of the view of proposed solar farm from the Mitchell Highway.



Photomontage 3C: Photomontage of proposed solar farm with screen planting.

5.0 Visual Impact (contd.)

5.4 Visual Impacts

5.4.1 OVERVIEW OF VISUAL IMPACT

The nature and scale of the project will create a new landscape and visual environment. This part of the report will assess the source and magnitude of development effects on the existing landscape elements, character and quality in the context of the site and its environs.

Overall the proposed Nyngan Solar Farm would result in impacts on the existing surrounding environment in terms of landscape and scenic values. The visual impacts associated with the proposal will vary depending on the viewing location. The potential visual impacts associated with the proposed development are assessed below.

The Solar Panels are relatively low lying, at a height of approximately 2-3m above the existing ground level. As a result, the flat topography ensures the solar panels will be concealed by existing vegetation, buildings and the Nyngan flood levee.

The Solar Farm is arranged as an array of panels sited in an east-west direction, facing approximately north on an angle of 30 degrees. The highest visual effect is most likely to be seen from both the north and south where the most surface area would be visible. Visibility of the solar farm from the east and west would be significantly lower. The visual impact is likely to be at its highest throughout the construction phase.

The proposed Site of the Nyngan Solar Farm is concealed from most surrounding areas as a result of a combination of flat topography, dense existing vegetation and the levee wall surrounding Nyngan. The existing landscape features of Nyngan and its surrounds have been illustrated in Figure 9 on page 33 of this report.

Dense Mallee Scrubland vegetation surrounds the Site, completely blocking views from the west, north east and south east. The vegetation thins to the west of the Site and glimpse views of the proposed solar farm may occur along the Mitchell Highway. Views to the site would be fleeting due to the speed of travel along the highway and the distance from the proposed solar farm.

Views from Nyngan and associated residential development are obstructed by the height of the Levee Wall which surrounds the extent of the town. To the north of the site, a combination of the levee wall and dense vegetation impedes views to the proposed Solar Farm. An isolated homestead is located approximately 400m to the north east of the Site. The Site will be visible from this property, however existing vegetation on the boundary of the Site and foreground planting associated with the homestead will obstruct the views, and reduce the visual impact.

A review of the potential visibility from areas surrounding the Study Site is summarised in Section 5.4.3 of this section.

5.4.2 VIEWPOINT VISUAL IMPACT SUMMARY

Of the viewpoints assessed the solar farm would be visible from only three of these viewpoints NSF6, NSF7 and NSF09. Of these three viewpoints the highest visual impact occurs at viewpoint NSF7 and NSF09, being moderate. The visual impact of viewpoints NSF6 has been assessed as low.

A summary of these viewpoint assessments is included as Table 3 below.

VIEWPOINT	VISUAL SENSITIVITY	VISUAL EFFECT	VISUAL IMPACT
NSF01	-	-	-
NSF02	-	-	-
NSF03	-	-	-
NSF04	-	-	-
NSF05	-	-	-
NSF06	Low	Low	Low
NSF07	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
NSF08	-	-	-
NSF09	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

Notes:
1. The visual impact has not been assessed for viewpoints where the proposal would be screened from view.

Table 3: Summary of Viewpoints Visual Impact

5.0 Visual Impact (contd.)

5.4.3 REVIEW OF VISIBILITY FROM AREAS SURROUNDING THE STUDY SITE

Views to the Site from the north:

It is unlikely the Solar Farm will be visible from north of the Study Site. Views to the north of the site are largely limited by the change in topography associated with the town flood levee and dense Mallee Scrub vegetation.

A number of rural residential properties are located to the north of the Study Site. Viewpoints NSF2, NSF4 and NSF5 included in this report illustrate the existing visual buffering created by the flood levee and remnant vegetation.

To the north east of the Site, the Mallee Scrub is dense and screens views from the Mitchell Highway and Main Western Railway.

Views to the Site from the east:

To the east of the Study Site, the landscape consists of cleared paddocks and a sparse coverage of remnant vegetation. A homestead is located to the east of the Site, approximately 400m from the north eastern edge. The Site will be visible from the homestead however they will be impeded by a combination of the existing vegetation to the east of the Site and vegetation associated with the homestead. Viewpoint NSF09 was taken close to this homestead.

Views to the Site from the Mitchell Highway and Main Western Railway:

Travelling in a north west direction along the Mitchell Highway the Study Site is mostly screened from view by existing vegetation, however breaks in the vegetation will result in the visibility of the proposed development. Views of the Site will be visible from vehicles traveling in both directions. The speed at which cars travel along the highway and distance from the site means views will be fleeting.

The Main Western railway runs in alignment with the Mitchell Highway. Views from the railway to the proposed solar farm would be minimal when due to the speed of travel and vegetation on the eastern edge of the Site. The north western railway passenger service ceased after sections of the track were damaged in the 1990 flood.

Views to the Site from the south:

South of the Study Site, the landscape is a generally uninhabited expanse of paddocks with a sparse to moderate coverage of vegetation. A homestead sits on the perimeter of the Study Site, however they are associated with the Solar Farm development.

Views to the Site from the west and Tottenham Road:

Travelling in a northerly direction along Tottenham Road, the Study Site is located in a north easterly direction. Land to the east of Tottenham Road is typified by a moderate to dense coverage of Mallee Scrubland. The Study Site would be largely screened from this point due to the flat topography and coverage of vegetation.

Views from the west of the Bogan River are screened as a result of the dense riparian vegetation associated with the Bogan River system. In addition to the vegetation along the Bogan River, Mallee Scrub encloses the western perimeter of the Study Site.

The closest residence to the west of the Study Site is located approximately 1.8km to the south west. Viewpoint NSF1 is taken from Tottenham Road to the east of the residence and illustrates the effectiveness of existing vegetation in screening the site from view.