

Rita Hatem
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer
Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
C/o Major Projects Portal

Molong BESS – SSD-80471210 – EIS – DPIRD Agriculture and Biosecurity Advice

Dear Ms Hatem

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Molong Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).

NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Agriculture and Biosecurity (the Department) collaborates with our stakeholders to protect and enhance the productive and sustainable use and resilience of agricultural resources and the environment. We have reviewed the provided documents within that expertise and remit.

The Department's advice is guided by section 4.15(1) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act), which requires a consent authority to evaluate a project's potential environmental, social, and economic impacts, as well as the public interest. Sections 1.3(a) and (i) of the EP&A Act emphasise facilitating ecologically sustainable development in land use decision-making and promoting responsible resource management that benefits present and future generations.

It is noted that the BESS area and access road comprise approximately 5.6 ha of land, verified as land and soil capability (LSC) Classes 3 and 4. While this footprint is relatively small, LSC Class 3 land is a valuable and limited resource of which the long-term agricultural capability should be preserved, and the EIS makes commitments to this effect. It is recommended that an explicit objective of returning the site to its 'pre-development agricultural productivity potential' be established as part of decommissioning efforts, and that all decommissioned infrastructure be removed to a minimum depth of 500mm to facilitate future agricultural use.

There appears to be minimal consideration in the Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) of potential impacts and risks associated with the proposed transmission infrastructure. While it is recognised that these can generally be well managed in agricultural landscapes, detail on management requirements and easement inclusions should be

provided to ensure that disturbance to agricultural activities is minimised and biosecurity outcomes established elsewhere are achieved.

It is suggested that a Biosecurity Management Plan is prepared in accordance with the Department's *Managing Biosecurity Risks in Land Use Planning and Development Guide 2020* to manage potential biosecurity breaches onto and from the site.

We reiterate that any required subdivision should not result in additional dwelling eligibilities to limit potential land use conflict and other impacts from unplanned rural residential development in the future.

Aside from the above comments, it appears that impacts to agriculture can be satisfactorily managed provided that mitigation measures described in the EIS and referenced specialist reports are fully implemented.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please do not hesitate to contact us by email at landuse.ag@dpird.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Milo Kelly', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Milo Kelly
Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Agriculture and Biosecurity | Agricultural Land Use Planning
Central West Orana Region

18 December 2025