

Lander.Robinson@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr. Robinson

Heritage NSW Review - Aboriginal Cultural Heritage - Major Projects - Forest Glen Solar Farm (SSD-9451258) - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - Dubbo Regional Council

Thank you for your referral on 30 November 2021, inviting comments from the Heritage NSW on the above SSD proposal with respect to Aboriginal cultural heritage (ACH).

Heritage NSW has reviewed Appendix G - *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR), for the Forest Glen Solar Farm, prepared for X-Elio Australia Pty Ltd (X-Elio), prepared by NGH Pty Ltd, July 2021*, with respect to Aboriginal cultural heritage as requested.

Heritage NSW understands that X-Elio Australia Pty Ltd (X-Elio) proposes the development of a commercial scale solar farm, approximately 16km west of Dubbo. Road upgrades and watercourse crossings may be required to facilitate the proposed development. The Forest Glen Solar Farm proposal site covers approximately 789 hectares (ha), with the proposed development footprint covering 444 ha. The proposed solar farm would comprise the installation of solar panels and associated infrastructure, that would produce up to 110 MW DC of renewable energy, that would be exported to the national electricity grid.

Heritage NSW notes that the consultation process with Aboriginal stakeholders resulted in two (2) Aboriginal groups registering their interest in the project, with a copy of the draft ACHAR report provided for comment. No comments were received on the report.

Heritage NSW notes that assessment of the archaeological context included a review of relevant information relating to the culturally sensitive landscapes within the proposal site, and a search of the Heritage NSW AHIMS database. No Aboriginal sites have previously been recorded within the proposal site. An archaeological field survey of the proposed Forest Glen Solar Farm was undertaken, and a total of approximately 1,186 km was walked across the proposal site. Heritage NSW notes that the ACHAR considered that the archaeological field survey of the development footprint was sufficient and effective survey coverage, noting that there were no Aboriginal objects or areas of cultural sensitivity identified. The ACHAR concludes that there were no Aboriginal objects or areas of potential archaeological deposits (PADs) were identified during the archaeological, therefore, there are no potential impacts as a result of the proposed works.

With respect to recommendations in relation to Aboriginal cultural heritage, the ACHAR concludes that the proposed works can proceed with caution, following the recommendations set out below.

1. Further archaeological assessment would be required if the proposal activity extends beyond the proposal site assessed in this report. This would include consultation with the registered Aboriginal parties and may involve further field survey.
2. No ground disturbing activities or removal of remnant vegetation is to occur outside the survey area.
3. During construction and ongoing use of the Forest Glen Solar Farm, the unexpected finds procedure in Appendix B of the ACHAR must be followed.
4. In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered during the construction of the Forest Glen Solar Farm, all work must cease in the immediate vicinity. Heritage NSW and the local police should be notified.

Based on the assessment provided in the ACHAR, Heritage NSW supports the recommendations and findings of the assessment, however, with respect to Recommendation 4 - Heritage NSW recommends that it be revised to the following:

4. In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered during the construction of the Forest Glen Solar Farm, **all works must cease**, and the **NSW Police must** be notified immediately. Notification of Heritage NSW must occur once the NSW Police have been informed.

Should you require any further information, please contact Nicole Y Davis, Manager - Assessments, Heritage NSW at Nicole.davis@environment.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Nicole Y Davis

Manager - Assessments

Heritage NSW

Department of Premier and Cabinet

10 January 2022