

Our Ref: C22/376

Your Ref: SSD-13166280

20 June 2022

Kurtis Wathen
Department of Planning and Environment
kurtis.wathen@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Wathen,

**Public Exhibition of Environmental Impact Statement for Blind Creek Solar Farm,
Queanbeyan Palerang LGA (SSD-13166280)**

DPI Fisheries, a division of NSW Department of Primary Industries, provides the following comment on the publicly exhibited Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Blind Creek Solar Farm.

DPI Fisheries is responsible for ensuring that fish stocks are conserved and that there is no net loss of key fish habitats upon which they depend. To achieve this, DPI Fisheries ensures that developments comply with the requirements of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (FM Act) (namely the aquatic habitat protection and threatened species conservation provisions in Parts 7 and 7A of the Act, respectively), and the associated *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management (2013)*. In addition, DPI Fisheries is responsible for ensuring the sustainable management of commercial, recreational and Aboriginal cultural fishing, aquaculture, marine parks and aquatic reserves within NSW.

All Strahler System 3rd order and above waterways are considered to be key fish habitat. Within the site Bridge Ck, Butmaroo Ck and the larger wetland area near the lake is considered to be key fish habitat. Lake George, adjacent to the site is also key fish habitat.

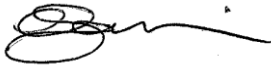
DPI Fisheries has reviewed the EIS for this proposal and considers that these works will have minimal impact on the aquatic environment, however some design changes to the proposed waterway crossings may be required to ensure maintenance of fish passage in these waterways. We commend the inclusion of riparian buffer zones widths in accordance with the *Guidelines for Riparian Corridors on Waterfront Land* (DPI Water, 2012).

To ensure that potential impacts on aquatic habitats are appropriately mitigated during both the construction and operation of the facility, it is important that the following mitigation measures are implemented:

1. The use of best practice erosion and sediment control mitigation measures in accordance with the Blue Book.
2. Protection of buffer zone widths in accordance with the *Guidelines for Riparian Corridors on Waterfront Land* (DPI Water, 2012).
3. Restoration of active erosion on the site. To reduce erosion and sedimentation impacts on adjacent key fish habitat.
4. That the waterway crossings incorporate best practice designs features to maintain fish passage in accordance with both the *Guidelines for Watercourse Crossings on Waterfront Land* (Office of Water) and DPI Fisheries *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Friendly Water Crossings* (2004) and *Why DO Fish Need to Cross the Road? Fish Passage Requirements for Waterway Crossings* (2004). Both of these guidelines state that box culverts are preferred over piped culverts. DPI Fisheries requests the opportunity to review detailed plans of the waterway crossings prior to construction. These plans will need to demonstrate that the culverts included in the crossing are embedded at least 150mm into the base of the waterway.

If you require any further information about this advice, please contact me on 4222 8342 or carla.ganassin@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carla", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carla Ganassin
Senior Fisheries Manager, Coastal Systems