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7 June 2022

Department of Planning and Environment

Via Major Projects Portal

Attention: Kurtis Wathen

Significant Development - Blind Creek Solar Farm (SSD-13166280)

Dear Mr Wathen

I am writing to you in reply to your invitation to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to provide comment on the above State Significant Development application currently on exhibition and received by the EPA on 3 June 2022.

As advised by the EPA in its letter on the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) dated the 26 August 2021, solar farms are not classified as a scheduled activity under Schedule 1 of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (POEO Act). In that regard, the EPA does not have a regulatory role in relation to the Project. Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council will be the appropriate regulatory authority for all POEO Act related matters during the construction and operation of the Project.

Please note that the EPA has advised the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) that it will no longer respond to routine referrals of certain types of planning matters. These include educational establishments, hospitals, medical centres, health research facilities and solar farms. This decision was made to ensure that the EPA is focussing more resources on providing advice on other complex projects. The DPE was advised of this in a letter from the EPA to DPE's Tim Kirby, Director Case Management, dated 21 January 2022. The EPA should only be contacted about these types of developments if DPE believes that EPA technical expertise on a specific issue is needed or land contamination is identified that triggers a duty to notify the EPA under the *Contaminated Land Management Act* (1997).

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please contact Paul Wearne on 4224 4100 or email environmentprotection.planning@epa.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

MITCHELL BENNETT
Unit Head - Statutory Planning