

Mr Jai Reid
Principal Planner
Department of Planning and Environment
Energy Assessments
Via the Major Projects Portal

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Upper Hunter Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (SSD-61707209)

Dear Mr Reid

Thank you for your correspondence of 28 August 2023 and the opportunity to provide input to the preparation of the draft Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the Upper Hunter BESS.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Agriculture collaborates and partners with our stakeholders to protect and enhance the productive and sustainable use and resilience of agricultural resources and the environment.

DPI Agriculture has reviewed the scoping report for the proposed development. I understand that the project site is within the Hunter Central-Coast Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) and is zoned E4 General Industrial. I also note the site has no draft State Significant Agricultural Land (SSAL) mapped, and nearby RU1 Primary Production land is outside the project site boundary.

DPI Agriculture supports the commitment to undertake a Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) to address issues related to the current and surrounding land uses.

I note the scoping report has conducted an initial identification of the soil landscapes via the eSpade database and a commitment to conduct a soil survey, also required by the draft SEARs. DPI Agriculture supports the confirmation of the land and soil capability (LSC) considering the nearby identified Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL), Critical Industry Cluster (Equine) and draft SSAL.

DPI Agriculture requests that the Rehabilitation and Decommissioning/Closure Management Plan should include, but not be limited to, describing the potential design criteria of the final land use and landform, and the removal of any underground cables, along with the expected timeline for the rehabilitation program.

Industry guidelines and resource information (Attachment A) should be provided to the proponent for their consideration when preparing the Environmental Impact Statement.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0491 852 265 or by email at landuse.ag@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely



Helen Willis
Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Ag Strategic Initiatives
Hunter Region

7 September 2023

Encl: Attachment A: Industry guidelines and resource information

Attachment A – Industry guidelines and resource information

Title	Website link
Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment Guide	https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/lup/development-assessment2/lucra
Infrastructure Proposals on Rural Land	https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/lup/development-assessment2/infrastructure-proposals
The land and soil capability assessment scheme: second approximation 2012 (OEH)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/land-and-soil-capability-assessment-scheme
Australian Soil and Land Survey Handbook (CSIRO)	https://ebooks.publish.csiro.au/content/australian-soil-and-land-survey-field-handbook
Guidelines for Surveying Soil and Land Resources (CSIRO)	https://ebooks.publish.csiro.au/content/guidelines-surveying-soil-and-land-resources
Biosecurity Risk Management in Land Use Planning and Development	https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1271241/managing-biosecurity-risks-in-land-use-planning-and-development-guide.pdf