

Nestor Tsambos
c/- Major Projects website
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Advice on Draft SEARs for Brewongle Solar Farm SSD-64834490

Dear Nestor,

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 November 2023 and the opportunity to provide comment on NSW DPI Agriculture requirements for additions to the draft SEARs for this project.

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.

The project is justified as having nominal impact on agricultural production levels due to the proposed 'Agri-Solar' activity of grazing 1,000 head of merino sheep during the operation phase. We are aware of trials and encouraging examples of Agri-Solar, however the potential to carry out sheep grazing for the life of the project (if this is intended) requires significant planning and ongoing management.

While the example on page 61 of the Scoping Report shows crossbred (not merino) sheep, establishing a free-range sheep grazing enterprise within the solar farm raises questions about the proposed approach. Therefore, we suggest a detailed explanation of the proposed Agri Solar enterprise should be required as part of the SEARs, including such matters as:

- Proposed sheep handling infrastructure such as fencing, yards, and laneways under the solar array, watering/fodder, drainage and dust suppression arrangements, shelters, connectivity to other paddocks, camps and infrastructure such as woolshed, dip, chemical store, fodder store and yards etc.
- Sheep husbandry – explanation of the breed(s) (meat/wool) and breeding plan– sex and ages of sheep to be utilised: wethers/ewes/lambs etc), proposed welfare and animal health requirements such as integrated pest management.
- Pasture management – given the property has been used for cropping and the likelihood of weed invasion with introduction of pasture; details on the systems used to establish, manage and maintain pasture growth and weed management.

- Waste management: plans for the disposal of used water, spent fodder; dead animals/animal products, chemicals and contaminated matter etc.

Some specific other requirements for the SEARs include:

- A decommissioning management plan that outlines actions for returning the land capability to its pre-existing agricultural capacity. It is NSW DPI's position that underground infrastructure be removed to 500mm (preferably 1000mm) depth to enable recommencement of agricultural activities where the risk of soil disturbance and erosion is managed.
- Rehabilitation plans for all infrastructure during and post construction with appropriate groundcover management using locally native species to limit dust and other land use conflict issues.
- Biosecurity management issues during and post construction must be assessed in relation to potential agricultural impacts (pests, weeds, and emergency animal diseases such as Japanese Encephalitis and Foot and Mouth Disease) including a risk assessment outlining the likely plant, animal, and community risks.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0487 023 845 or by email at landuse.ag@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely



Nita Scott

Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Strategic Policy and Initiatives
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29 November 2023