

Nestor Tsambos
c/- Major Projects website
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Advice on Draft SEARs for Lambruk Solar Farm and BESS, SSD- 67436209 (Tamworth Regional Council)

Dear Nestor,

Thank you for your correspondence of 7 February 2024 and the opportunity to provide comment on NSW DPI Agriculture requirements for additions to the draft SEARs provided 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.

Most of the subject project site is classed as Land and Soil Capability Class 4, with some Class 5 land. There is also approximately 11ha of Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) on the Goonoo Goonoo Creek flats to the west of the 1,528ha site. The project site has relatively high agricultural productivity potential due to land capability and suitability.

The draft SEARs have been reviewed for their consideration of agricultural lands, production and operations. The draft SEARs refer to the Large Scale Solar Energy Guideline, which in turn guide site verification and agricultural assessment given the LSC Class 4 land and small amount of BSAL on the site. The issue of land use conflict with existing and future surrounding land uses is mentioned several times in the draft SEARs however do not require the preparation of a **Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA)**, which is committed in the Scoping Report and which we recommend is prepared.

Other additional requirements along with the LUCRA include:

- A decommissioning management plan that outlines actions for returning the land capability to its pre-existing agricultural capability. It is NSW DPI's position that underground infrastructure be removed to 500mm depth to enable recommencement of agricultural activities where risk of soil disturbance and erosion is managed.
- The EIS should detail justification for site selection of productive agricultural land and likely removal from agriculture for the life of the 30-year project, particularly where the site is not in the New England REZ.

- Related to the above, a detailed explanation on the sheep grazing opportunities as mentioned in the Scoping Report addressing matters as:
 - Proposed livestock handling infrastructure such as fencing, yards, laneways under the solar array, water points/fodder, drainage and dust suppression arrangements, shelters, 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, proposed welfare, and animal health requirements such as integrated pest management.
 - Pasture management – if the subject site has been used for cropping and the likelihood of weed invasion; 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.
- Rehabilitation plans for all infrastructure and sites during and post construction with appropriate groundcover management using locally native species to limit dust and potential land use conflict issues. As noted, the use of sheep grazing for ground cover management should be fully explained and explored in the EIS.
- Biosecurity management issues during and post construction must be assessed in relation to potential agricultural impacts (pests, weeds, and emergency animal diseases) 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 Planner
New England and North West Region

12 February 2024