

Samantha Oyston
Environmental Assessment Officer
Dept Planning Housing & Infrastructure
C/o Major Projects Portal

RE: Forbes Solar Farm – SSD-72383210 – Draft SEARs – DPIRD Agriculture & Biosecurity Advice

Dear Ms Oyston

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft SEARs for the above proposal.

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

NSW DPIRD notes that the project is to be located 11.6kms North of Forbes, on RU1 Primary Production zoned land (270ha) and on land and soil capability (LSC) classes 3 and 4 land. The project is not on Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL) but is located on Draft State Significant Agricultural Land (approximately 36%).

The draft SEARs have been reviewed for their consideration of agricultural lands, production and operation. While the draft SEARs generally cover agricultural land use planning some specific requirements are outlined below:

- The Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) should include potential conflicts with land owners of the site itself, as well as neighbours, and should be based on direct consultation where possible. It should take note of sensitive agricultural activities such as cropping and livestock breeding, and ways to minimise impacts to these activities should be considered in the final design and management of the project.
- 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.
- There should specific justification for any proposed worker accommodation site. The proponent should be aware that the development of extra dwellings on RU1 Primary Production zoned lands remote from towns or villages has the potential to create land use conflicts.

- A Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Management strategy should be prepared which describes the final land use and landform and details how to return the land its **pre-development agricultural productivity potential** at the end of the life of the facility or any component. The plan should detail an expected timeline for the decommissioning and rehabilitation program. Rehabilitation plans at all infrastructure sites during and post construction should detail appropriate groundcover management using locally native or otherwise suitable species to limit dust and other land use conflict issues. The plan should include the removal of underground infrastructure within 600mm of the surface.

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

Sincerely,



Helen Squires
Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Soils and Water | Agricultural Land Use Planning
Central West Orana Region

4 July 2024

Encl: Attachment A: Industry guidelines and resource information

Attachment A: Industry guidelines and resource information

Solar Farms

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