



AIR NAVIGATION, AIRSPACE AND AERODROMES BRANCH

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MAISON DIEU SOLAR FARM (SSD-48160216) CASA COMMENTS

CASA has briefly reviewed the EIS, including the Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment, for the proposed Maison Dieu Solar Farm.

The Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment advises: *1.4 hours per year of glare risk on the western approach to the Warkworth Airstrip from Panel Array 1. The SGHAT analysis identified 1.4 hours of glare risk across the solar farm for Flight Path 2, which is the approach to the runway from the west. The glare effect would occur for a few minutes on sunset (sic) (should be sunrise) around April and September.*

At this stage, there are no specific Australian standards that apply to solar panels near aerodromes. CASA does not have any “reflectivity standards” with specific regard to solar installations.

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is relatively advanced in terms of solar farm glare evaluation. The FAA advises: *“in most cases, the glint and glare from solar energy systems to pilots on final approach is similar to glint and glare pilots routinely experience from water bodies, glass facade buildings, parking lots, and similar features. However, FAA has continued to receive reports of potential glint and glare from on-airport solar energy systems on personnel working in ATCT cabs. Therefore, FAA has determined the scope of agency policy should be focused on the impact of on-airport solar energy systems to federally-obligated towered airports, specifically the airport's ATCT cab.”*

The glare for pilots approaching Warkworth Airstrip is not considered to be hazardous due to the following:

- FAA advice above – there is no ATCT cab. Also, the glare if any will be ‘green’ (low potential for temporary after image) glare. FAA is focussed on ‘yellow’ (potential for temporary after image) glare, of which there will be none.
- The glare lasts for a very limited time (especially compared to numerous other solar farms a lot closer to much busier airports).
- The sun could be yet to shine at its full intensity and there could be cloud around the horizon and smog.
- There could be trees and infrastructure and terrain breaking up the sunrise.
- The high number of conservative limitations and assumptions behind the analysis.
- Pilots will be focussed straight ahead on the landing zone.

- According to NASF Guideline E “The potential for risk from building glare is further attenuated by the use of sunglasses which pilots normally wear in bright daylight.”
- The possible glare occurs a long way out (2.5 – 3 km).

If there are new transmission lines proposed near airstrips, agricultural spraying areas or other low flying areas; the landowners or aviation operators should be consulted regarding the requirement for markers on the power lines.

CASA has no objections to the proposed Maison Dieu Solar Farm.

Yours sincerely

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