

Rita Hatem
c/- Major Projects Portal

rita.hatem@planning.nsw.gov.au

Advice on EIS for Burroway Solar Farm, Narromine LGA (SSD-55968733)

Dear Rita,

I refer to your request of 9 October 2024 for advice on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Burroway Solar Farm at Narromine.

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

The EIS has been reviewed noting the strategic justification for the project is predicated on the 'low environmental values' of the site, limited community impact, and meeting site selection criteria of existing transmission lines.

The Department's advice is guided by s.4.15 (1) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), and in the context of renewable energy projects, the Objects of the EP&A Act in s.1.3(b).

The Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) (Appendix J) considers the project's 50-year removal of 495 ha of productive agricultural land as 'temporary', resulting in a 'negligible net loss' of agricultural productivity for Narromine LGA. However, the Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) (Appendix J) identifies the cessation of agriculture as having a *high risk* of potential land use conflict and provides mitigation measures including the implementation of agrisolar (sheep grazing) and appropriate decommissioning arrangements.

Agrisolar Implementation

Further detail is required to support the proposed agrisolar enterprise. This should be included in a Grazing Management Plan including (but not limited to):

- Sheep handling infrastructure such as fencing and laneways under the solar array, watering points, sheep yards, loading ramp, shearing shed, etc
- Pasture management – the establishment and maintenance of appropriate pasture given the likelihood of weed invasion following cropping and expected soil disturbance for the

construction and operational stages. Retention of at least 70% of ground cover is recommended.

Groundcover

- In the event agriculture or agrisolar is not undertaken, ground cover should be maintained at a minimum of 70% to prevent soil erosion.
- Detail on the measures and management practices to re-establish vegetation and grazing on the land during the operation of the project need to be provided.

Biosecurity

The *NSW Biosecurity Act 2015* was introduced to prevent, eliminate and minimise biosecurity risks, including adverse effects on the economy, environment or community. The proponent should develop a comprehensive Biosecurity Risk Management Plan for the project, including (but not limited to):

- The management of the risk of introduction, presence, or spread of plant pests or diseases, weeds and pest animals.
- Actions for plant, machinery and washdown areas to ensure they are free of weed seed/plant material.
- Arrangements for decontamination of vehicles entering the site, and onsite plant and equipment, if they have come into contact with food, organic or animal waste that have moved directly from an agricultural premises or facility (e.g. a dairy, feedlot).

The Biosecurity Risk Management Plan should consider all potential biosecurity risks and identify appropriate strategies to prevent, eliminate or minimise those risks. Please refer the proponents to the [Biosecurity Risk Management in Land Use Planning and Development Guide](#) for consideration.

Decommissioning

The Department requires:

- Dismantling and removing solar panels, structures and ancillary infrastructure (cables, inverters, fencing) from the site to a depth of 500mm and recycling, reusing or disposing materials and waste products, and returning the site to its pre-existing use and land and soil capability per the Land and Soil Capability Assessment Scheme (LSC) (Second Approximation) Class as identified in the AIA. It also involves disconnecting the development from the electricity network.
- 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.

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@dpird.nsw.gov.au.

Sincerely



Nita Scott
Agricultural Land Use Planning
Central West Orana Region

6 November 2024