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Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
C/o Major Projects Portal

Rothbury BESS – SSD-85939708– DPIRD Agriculture and Biosecurity Advice

Dear Mr Ashe

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

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

It is noted the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will be constructed on land zoned RU2 Rural Landscape, with Land and Soil Capability (LSC) Class of 3 and moderately high soil fertility. Surrounding land use zones and land uses include agriculture, conservation, tourism and large lot residential development as well as electricity infrastructure. Notwithstanding, the LSC and soil fertility classifications of the site are indicative of the high agriculture potential of the site.

We support the requirement for a Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) and assessment of agricultural land including soil survey as set out in the draft SEARs. The following comments are provided for inclusions to the draft SEARs:

- Biosecurity management issues during and post construction are 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. The preparation of a **Biosecurity Management Plan** as part of the EIS is recommended as part of the Construction and Operations Environmental Management Plans. Please refer to DPI's [Biosecurity Risk Management in Land Use Planning and Development Guide](https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1271241/managing-biosecurity-risks-in-land-use-planning-and-development-guide.pdf)¹.
- To enable continuation of agricultural activities at the end of the project life, it is our position that the site be decommissioned to a minimum depth of 500mm.

¹ https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1271241/managing-biosecurity-risks-in-land-use-planning-and-development-guide.pdf

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

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nita Scott', enclosed within a light blue rectangular border.

Nita Scott
Agriculture & Biosecurity
Hunter Region

23 June 2025