



Your ref: SSD-95743959

Our ref: DOC25/849908

Rachael Helsham
Environmental Assessment Officer
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure – NSW Planning Group
Via Major Projects Portal: PAE-95798708

Dear Rachael

Subject: Request for Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements – Strontian Solar Farm & BESS (SSD 95743959)

Thank you for your email dated 3 October 2025 seeking advice from the Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group (CPHR) of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water about the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project.

CPHR has reviewed the information supplied. The relevant documents reviewed are:

- Strontian Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System Scoping Report Rev 4. WolfPeak, September 2025 (Scoping Report).
- Strontian Solar Farm & BESS Scoping Report – Preliminary Biodiversity Assessment Rev 2, WolfPeak, September 2025 (PBA).

We provide SEARs for the proposed development in **Attachment A**. Guidance material is listed in **Attachment B**.

CPHR recommends that the EIS appropriately address the following:

1. Biodiversity
2. Flood Risk Management

The EIS should fully describe the proposal, the existing environment, and impacts of the development that may impact on flooding and biodiversity. It is important that all conclusions are supported by adequate data. The assessment must include all ancillary infrastructure associated with the project such as roads, water and power supplies, security and boundary fencing, and Rural Fire Service requirements for asset protection.

Biodiversity

The Scoping Report indicates that remnant vegetation will be largely retained but the layout of the development means numerous paddock trees would be removed. The threatened species habitat value of these trees will need to be determined as part of the EIS process, along with an assessment of indirect impacts to the retained native vegetation occurring within or around the edges of the proposal site. The Streamlined assessment module for scattered trees in Appendix B of the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) may be used for the part of the proposal site that contains scattered trees if they meet the definition in B.1.

The proposal site abuts Buckingbong State Forest, which has numerous records for threatened flora. Mitigation measures will include an appropriate buffer between the development footprint and remaining native vegetation.

All areas with native plant species must be assigned to a plant community type (PCT) and assessed according to the BAM. This includes derived native grassland and areas without a tree canopy. Photo 7 in the PBA shows a drainage depression with native wetland species but a wetland PCT is not included in the list of PCTs occurring on the proposal site (Table 2). Justification for PCT selection must be included in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR).

Minimum requirements for the biodiversity assessment are listed in Appendix K of the BAM. Minimum spatial data requirements for the BDAR submission are listed in Appendix D (Table 7) of the BAM Stage 2 Operational Manual. The Accredited Assessor preparing the BDAR should follow the BDAR template.

We note Appendix A of the PBA lists species that are proposed to be excluded from targeted survey effort. Exclusion of candidate (species credit) species from the assessment must be in accordance with BAM section 5.2.

Given the proportion of land that has already been cleared in the surrounding region, the proponents must set out how impacts to biodiversity will be avoided and minimised. The cumulative impact of electricity generation in the surrounding region should be assessed through application of the Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects.

The EIS should identify any relevant Matters of National Environmental Significance, and whether the proposal has been referred to the Australian Government or whether it is already determined to be a controlled action under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Flood Risk Management

The project site is unlikely to be affected by mainstream flooding from the Murrumbidgee River but would likely be subject to major overland flow flooding due to local intense rainfall events. These flows would likely activate the ephemeral flow paths that traverse the site and create flood risks within and downstream of the site.

As such, it is important that the hydrology of the site be investigated to aid in the site design and the placement of infrastructure to minimise flood risks.

The EIS should address the attached requirements for flood risk management and conduct quantitative flood modelling to appropriately locate infrastructure and assess impacts, including on waterway crossings for site access.

If you have any questions about this advice, please contact Miranda Kerr, Senior Biodiversity Conservation Officer, via planning.southwest@environment.nsw.gov.au or 02 6022 0607.

Yours sincerely



Paula D'Santos
15 October 2025

**Acting Director, South West
Regional Delivery
Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group
NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water**

ATTACHMENT A – Recommended Environmental Assessment Requirements for Strontian Solar Farm & BESS (SSD 95743959)

ATTACHMENT B – Guidance material

Attachment A Recommended Environmental Assessment Requirements for Strontian Solar Farm (SSD 95743959)

Sources of guidance material for terms in [blue](#) are in Attachment B

Biodiversity
1. Biodiversity impacts related to the proposed development are to be assessed in accordance with Section 7.9 of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 using the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM) 2020 and documented in a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR). The BDAR must include information in the form detailed in the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (s6.12), Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017 (s6.8) and the BAM, unless it is determined that the proposed development is not likely to have any significant impact on biodiversity values.
2. The BDAR must document the application of the avoid, minimise and offset framework including assessing all direct, indirect, uncertain and prescribed impacts in accordance with the BAM.
3. The BDAR must include details of the measures proposed to address the offset obligation as follows; a. The total number and classes of biodiversity credits required to be retired for the development/project; b. The number and classes of like-for-like biodiversity credits proposed to be retired; c. The number and classes of biodiversity credits proposed to be retired in accordance with the variation rules; d. Any proposal to fund a biodiversity conservation action; e. Any proposal to make a payment to the Biodiversity Conservation Fund. If seeking approval to use the variation rules, the BDAR must contain details of the reasonable steps that have been taken to obtain requisite like-for-like biodiversity credits.
4. The BDAR must be submitted with all digital spatial data associated with the survey and assessment as per Appendix K of the BAM.
5. The BDAR must be prepared by a person accredited in accordance with the Accreditation Scheme for the Application of the Biodiversity Assessment Method Order 2017 under s6.10 of the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>.
Flood Risk Management
6. The EIS must map the following features relevant to flooding as described in the Flood Risk Management Manual: the policy and manual for flood liable land (NSW Government 2023) including: a. Flood prone land. b. Flood planning area, the area below the flood planning level. c. Hydraulic categorisation (floodways and flood storage areas). d. Flood hazard.
7. The EIS must describe flood assessment and modelling undertaken in determining the design flood levels for events, including a minimum of the 5% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP), 1% AEP flood levels and the probable maximum flood, or an equivalent extreme event.

8. The EIS must model the effect of the proposed development (including fill) on the flood behaviour under the following scenarios: a. Current flood behaviour for a range of design events as identified in 7 above. This includes the 0.5% and 0.2% AEP year flood events as proxies for assessing sensitivity to an increase in rainfall intensity of flood producing rainfall events due to climate change.
9. Modelling in the EIS must consider and document: a. Existing council flood studies in the area and examine consistency to the flood behaviour documented in these studies. b. The impact on existing flood behaviour for a full range of flood events including up to the probable maximum flood. c. Impacts of the development on flood behaviour resulting in detrimental changes in potential flood affection of other developments or land. This may include redirection of flow, flow velocities, flood levels, hazards and hydraulic categories. d. The flood risks on project infrastructure with particular emphasis on sensitive assets and access roads used for site evacuation. e. Relevant provisions of the Flood Risk Management Manual: the policy and manual for flood liable land (2023).
10. The EIS must assess the impacts of the proposed development on flood behaviour, including: a. Whether there will be detrimental increases in the potential flood affection of other properties, assets and infrastructure. b. Consistency with Council Floodplain Risk Management Plans. c. Consistency with any Rural Floodplain Management Plans. d. Compatibility with the flood hazard of the land. e. Compatibility with the hydraulic functions of flow conveyance in floodways and storage in flood storage areas of the land. f. Whether there will be adverse effect to beneficial inundation of the floodplain environment, on, adjacent to or downstream of the site. g. Whether there will be direct or indirect increase in erosion, siltation, destruction of riparian vegetation or a reduction in the stability of river banks or watercourses. h. Any impacts the development may have upon existing community emergency management arrangements for flooding. These matters are to be discussed with the SES and Council. i. Whether the proposal incorporates specific measures to manage risk to life from flood. These matters are to be discussed with the SES and Council. j. Emergency management, evacuation and access, and contingency measures for the development considering the full range of flood risk (based upon the probable maximum flood or an equivalent extreme flood event). These matters are to be discussed with and have the support of Council and the SES. k. Any impacts the development may have on the social and economic costs to the community as consequence of flooding.

Attachment B Guidance material

Title	Web address
<u>Relevant Legislation</u>	
<i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>	www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2016/63/full
<i>Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>	www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/epabca1999588/
<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>	https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1979-203
<u>Biodiversity</u>	
Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 (DPIE 2020)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/accredited-assessors/biodiversity-assessment-method-2020
Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 Operational Manual – Stage 1 (DPE 2022)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/biodiversity-assessment-manual-2020-operational-manual-stage-1
Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 Operational Manual – Stage 2 (DPE 2023)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/biodiversity-assessment-method-operational-manual-stage-2
BDAR Template (DPE 2022)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/guidance-for-the-biodiversity-development-assessment-report-template
Biodiversity Offset Scheme guides, tools and databases	https://www2.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/biodiversity-offsets-scheme/maps-systems-and-resources/guides-tools-and-databases
Biodiversity Values Map	www.lmbc.nsw.gov.au/Maps/index.html?viewer=BVMap https://datasets.seed.nsw.gov.au/dataset/biodiversity-values-map
Guidance to assist a decision maker to determine a serious and irreversible impact (DPIE 2019)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Biodiversity/guidance-decision-makers-determine-serious-irreversible-impact-190511.pdf
Ancillary rules: biodiversity conservation actions	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/ancillary-rules-biodiversity-conservation-actions
Ancillary rules: reasonable steps to seek like-for-like biodiversity credits for the purpose of applying the variation rules	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/ancillary-rules-reasonable-steps-to-seek-like-for-like-biodiversity-credits
DPE Threatened Species Profiles	www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/
BioNet Atlas	www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifeatlas/about.htm

Title	Web address
BioNet Vegetation Classification – see NSW Plant Community Type (PCT) classification link for PCT database login page.	http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research/Visclassification.htm
NSW SEED Data Portal (access to online spatial data)	https://www.seed.nsw.gov.au/
Fisheries NSW policies and guidelines	https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/publications/pubs/fish-habitat-conservation
<u>Flood Risk Management</u>	
Flood Risk Management Manual: the policy and manual for flood liable land (2023)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/floodplains/flood-plain-manual
Australian Rainfall and Runoff: A Guide to Flood Estimation	http://arr.ga.gov.au/
Flood Impact and Risk Assessment, Flood Risk Management Guideline LU01	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/flood-impact-and-risk-assessment