

OUT25/14815

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

Hampton Park Solar Farm and BESS –SSD- 97547209 (Dubbo Regional Council) DPIRD
Agriculture and Biosecurity Advice

Dear Ms Jackel

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft SEARs for the above proposal. We have reviewed the Scoping Report provided, *Hampton Park Solar and Energy and Storage System*, NGH dated October 2025.

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.

The proposed 180MW Solar Farm and 800MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will be established on the 232ha project site north of Wongarbon and 11 km south of Dubbo on land zoned RU1 Primary Production. The project site is entirely mapped as Land and Soil Capability Class 3 land, draft State Significant Agricultural Land and has 14.8ha of Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL). A 142kV transmission line traverses the project site. It is noted that:

- Recent imagery (Nearmap, 2 November 2025) shows the site has been fully cropped this season, indicating a highly productive agricultural enterprise currently in operation.
- The Scoping Report refers to ongoing agricultural production, ground cover management and ‘regenerative’ agriculture via ‘retain [ing] grazing enterprises’ on the Project site during operation, however there is no detail provided, and
- It is unclear how the project layout will avoid the 14.8ha of BSAL.

The project site and wider locality supports highly productive agriculture including extensive livestock grazing and cropping which contribute to the Dubbo Regional LGA’s Total Gross Value of Agricultural Production (\$198.77 million in 2020-21).

Any risks to agricultural production on the site and surrounding land due to the project include issues of biosecurity breach, poor groundcover management, soil erosion and land use conflict. The

requirement for a Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment (LUCRA) and agricultural land assessment including soil survey as set out in the draft SEARs is supported.

The following is provided for inclusion in the issued SEARs:

- 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. The preparation of a Biosecurity Management Plan as part of the EIS is recommended as part of the Construction and Operations Environmental Management Plans (C/OMPs). Please refer to DPI's Biosecurity Risk Management in Land Use Planning and Development Guide¹.
- We recommend a Groundcover Management Plan be prepared as part of the C/OMPs to detail the grazing and biosecurity approaches to the site including pasture establishment and management and weed and pest control measures specific to the livestock as suggested in the Scoping Report. Further:
 - Groundcover should be maintained at a minimum of 70% to prevent soil erosion. The Groundcover Management Plan should detail the actions and management practices to re-establish pastures and grazing on the land post construction and during operation.
 - Conversely, if the site will not be used for agricultural purposes, it is reiterated that a minimum of 70% groundcover is maintained to prevent soil erosion via actions described in the groundcover management plan.
- To enable continuation of agricultural activities at the end of the project life, the site should be **decommissioned** to a minimum depth of 500mm. This will enable the land to return to full production including cropping if required.
- Any subdivision of the site is not to result in additional dwelling eligibilities.

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



Nita Scott

Agriculture & Biosecurity | Agricultural Land Use Planning
Central West Region

10 November 2025

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