



The future happens here

1 February 2021

Dominic Crinnion
Energy Assessments
Planning & Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment

Via email: Dominic.Crinnion@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Crinnion,

**Re: Walla Walla Solar Farm – Modification 1 (SSD 9874 – Mod 1)
Response to RFI dated 28.1.2022**

FRV writes with reference to your letter dated 27 January 2022, requesting further information concerning the letter provided by Moir Landscaping, dated 21 January 2022.

FRV understands that DPIE is seeking clarity from FRV on how FRV intends to meet the specific recommendations provided by Moir in its letter.

Whilst FRV considers that this information is more appropriately addressed within the Landscaping Plan, FRV can confirm the following in response to the specific points raised by Moir, regarding recommendations for the establishment and management of the Vegetation Buffer within the site:

Recommendation 1

Species selected are endemic to the region and will reflect local conditions (ie. soil types, climate), water availability and soil types.

FRV is discussing the procurement of tubestock from the local nursery, which grows native species endemic to the area from local seed, well suited to local soil types and climate. The local nursery is very familiar with the project as FRV has been engaging with them throughout the various stages of project development.

The species have been selected in consultation with both the nursery and Holbrook Landcare. Holbrook Landcare undertook a review of the site conditions in providing advice on appropriate species, and have developed comprehensive guidance on revegetation in the Southwest Slopes Area.

Recommendation 2

Species have been selected to exhibit fast growth rates.

Species have been selected on their 'fast' to 'very fast' growth rates in local conditions, as identified by Holbrook Landcare. This includes pioneer species, such as Silver Wattle, which exhibit very fast early growth.

Recommendation 3

Sufficient density of planting is provided to ensure adequate coverage.

We will adopt the density of planting that is prescribed by Holbrook Landcare.

It should also be noted that the vegetation buffer will be over 50 m in width, when installed in the vicinity of nearby receivers, with a minimum of 10 rows of vegetation.

Recommendation 4

Mix of species to ensure longevity and success and tie in with the existing landscape character.

The species have been selected based upon their inclusion in local PCTs. A mix of shrubs, medium and large trees have been selected, to ensure screening at both the understory and canopy.

Recommendation 5

Planting will be undertaken at (or prior to) the commencement of the construction phase of the Project.

As previously outlined, it is intended for the vegetation buffer to be planted in July, however TransGrid is seeking to commence construction in Q2 2022.

Whilst it is technically feasible for FRV to install the vegetation buffer before construction, this would produce a less ideal outcome for screening for the community.



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Proceeding with planting any sooner than July will substantially increase the mortality rate of tubestock and, as such, would not be consistent with the intent of condition 11 for the following reasons:

- a combination of high winter rainfall and low temperatures are ideal to allow tubestock to set root without significant risk of heat or water stress.
- Allowing additional time for the nursery to produce healthy tubestock will improve the success rate of freshly planted vegetation within the buffer.
- Planting sooner than July would not provide sufficient time for FRV to successfully prepare the soil, and would inhibit growth rates.

The above advice is endorsed by Holbrook Landcare.

Whilst FRV would replace any unsuccessful plantings, this would result in delays to the growth of the plants within the vegetation buffer by several months to a year.

The evidence we have provided demonstrates that allowing an extension of approximately 3 months will provide better mid-long term outcomes for the community. We have also provided evidence from Moir Landscaping, confirming that planting the vegetation buffer 3 months after construction commences would produce a negligible impact on the height of vegetation within the buffer at 3 years following operation.

Recommendation 6

Planting is to be undertaken by a qualified landscape contractor using correct planting practices, soil testing and remediation prior to undertaking planting.

FRV is committed to ensuring that a suitably qualified person installs the vegetation buffer in accordance with correct practices.

Recommendation 7

Following planting, appropriate protections will be used to exclude livestock and pest species from the landscape plantings.

The Landscaping Plan will address how pests and livestock will be managed and excluded from the vegetation buffer whilst it is established.

The project cannot proceed until FRV receives the Secretary's approval for the Landscaping Plan.

Recommendation 8

Maintenance and management period will be in place to ensure successful establishment.

The Landscaping Plan is required to include:

- A program to monitor and report the effectiveness of management measures
- Details of who would be responsible for monitoring, reviewing and implementing the Landscaping Plan.

The project cannot proceed until FRV receives the Secretary's approval for the Landscaping Plan.

Recommendation 9

Replacement of any vegetation loss during establishment period.

FRV will replace lost vegetation. This commitment will be detailed in the Landscaping Plan.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on 0450 307 838 or via email at Rob.Beckett@frv.com with any questions or concerns.

Yours Sincerely,

Rob Beckett

Project Developer