

Notice of Decision

Section 2.22 and clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

Application type	State Significant Development
Application number and project name	SSD 41020244 Richmond Valley Solar Farm
Applicant	Richmond Valley Solar & BESS Pty Ltd
Consent Authority	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Decision

On 15 October 2025, the Executive Director, Energy, Resources and Industry Assessments, granted consent to the development application for the Richmond Valley Solar Farm subject to conditions, under delegation from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and section 4.38 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act).

A copy of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's (the Department) Assessment Report and Development Consent is available [here](#).

Date of Decision

15 October 2025

Reasons for Decision

The following matters were taken into consideration in making this decision:

- the relevant matters listed in section 4.15 of the Act and the additional matters listed in the statutory context section of the Department's Assessment Report;
- the prescribed matters under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*;
- the objects of the Act;
- the considerations under s 7.14(2) and 7.16(3) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW);
- all information submitted to the Department during the assessment of the development application and any additional information considered in the Department's Assessment Report;
- the findings and recommendations in the Department's Assessment Report;
- advice from relevant NSW Government Agencies and Richmond Valley Council; and
- The views of the community about the project (see **Attachment 1**).

The findings and recommendations set out in the Department's Assessment Report were accepted and adopted as the reasons for making this decision.

The key reasons for granting the development application are as follows:

- the project would provide a range of benefits for the region and the State as a whole, including:
 - providing 435 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy which would be stored in 475 MW / 3,148 MW-hour (MWh) battery storage to be dispatched during peak demand, supporting grid stability and energy security;
 - contributing to a more diverse local economy;
 - creating up to 327 construction jobs and 15 operational jobs;
 - a capital investment of approximately \$1.2 billion;
- the project is permissible with consent, and is consistent with NSW Government policies including the *NSW Electricity Strategy (2019)*, *NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020 – 2030*;
- the impacts on the community and the environment can be appropriately minimised and managed to an acceptable level, in accordance with applicable NSW Government policies and standards;
- none of the NSW Government agencies nor Council object to the project;
- the issues raised during consultation have been considered and adequately addressed through the recommended conditions of consent;
- weighing all relevant considerations, the project is in the public interest, subject to strict conditions of consent.

Attachment 1 – Consideration of Community Views

The Department exhibited the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project from 25 July 2024 to 21 August 2024 and received 48 submissions, 44 objecting to the project, two comments and two submissions supporting the project.

The key issues raised by the community are summarised in the below table:

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Consideration</i>
<i>Biodiversity</i>	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project has the potential to impact biodiversity during construction of the solar farm through the clearing of native vegetation. The site is predominantly comprised of paddocks that have historically been cleared and modified for agricultural activities. However, fragmented patches of both remnant and regrowth native woody vegetation occur throughout the site. • A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) was prepared for the project in accordance with the Biodiversity Conservation 2016 (BC Act) and Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM), with a revised BDAR prepared in response to issues raised by CPHR. • CPHR indicated the revised BDAR adequately assesses the biodiversity impacts associated with the project. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offset the loss of biodiversity on the site through the retirement of biodiversity credits. • Prepare and implement a biodiversity management plan in consultation with CPHR.
<i>Traffic and Transport</i>	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the project involves delivery of plant, equipment and materials, including movement of heavy vehicles requiring escort, which, primarily during construction, has the potential to impact on the local and regional road network. • Three public submissions received during the EIS exhibition periods raised concerns about potential traffic impacts on local roads during the construction period. • In response to submissions and advice received from TfNSW, the Applicant prepared a Submissions Report and Amendment Reports, including an Addendum Transport Impact Assessment. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake relevant road upgrades prior to commencement of construction • Restrict the number of vehicles during construction, upgrading and decommissioning • Prepare and implement a Traffic Management Plan in consultation with TfNSW and Council
<i>Visual Impact</i>	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns relating the visual impacts of the project were raised in eleven public submissions received during the exhibition period, including by community members with specific concerns regarding views from their residences. • To assess the potential visual impacts of the project, the Applicant prepared a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in accordance with the Solar Guideline and accompanying Technical Supplement – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (the Technical Supplement). In addition, the Department visited the site and nearby locations to assess visual impacts in August 2025. • Subject to the recommended conditions, the Department is satisfied that the project would not result in significant visual impacts. The site selection and project design are consistent with the Solar Guideline, and the assessment indicates that impacts to nearby receivers are low to very low. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the resting angle of solar panels in accordance with the Glint and Glare assessment • Intermittent planting to soften visual impacts for road users on Avenue Road • Minimise the off-site visual impacts of the development • Minimise the off-site lighting impacts of the development