

11 August 2023

Elisha Dunn  
Environmental Assessment Officer  
NSW Department of Planning and Environment

**Re: E220305 - Dinawan Solar Farm - Amendment to project description (SSD-50725959)**

Dear Elisha,

This letter has been prepared to seek inclusion of a temporary worker accommodation facility proposed as part of the Dinawan Solar Farm (SSD-50725959). To support inclusion of this infrastructure, the following information is provided:

- an overview of the temporary worker accommodation facility, including:
  - a description of the proposed facility and the nominated footprint for this temporary infrastructure (including a map showing the indicative location on which the proposed facility will be constructed)
  - a justification for the inclusion of this temporary infrastructure
  - the proposed assessment approach for the environmental impact statement (EIS)
- recommended changes to the project summary description in the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs).

## 1 Background

Spark Renewables Pty Limited (Spark Renewables) proposes to develop the Dinawan Solar Farm, a large-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) generation facility and battery energy storage system (BESS), supported by associated infrastructure (the project). The project will be located about halfway between the towns of Coleambally and Jerilderie and lies within the Murrumbidgee local government area (LGA) in New South Wales (NSW).

The project is State significant development (SSD) pursuant to Schedule 1 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021. Accordingly, approval for the project is required under Part 4 of the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The scoping report for the project was submitted to NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) on 9 November 2022. The project includes, as described in summary in the SEARs:

- the construction, operation and decommissioning of a solar PV energy generating facility with an estimated capacity of 1,000 MW
- associated infrastructure, including grid connection and battery storage of up to 300 MW.

In Section 3.3.1 of the scoping report, it was noted that accommodation for the project's non-local construction workforce would be through the use of available rental, motel and other accommodation in surrounding townships and regional centres (including Coleambally, Griffith, Deniliquin, Narrandera, Jerilderie and Darlington Point).

Since this time, Spark Renewables has continued discussions with the local community, Murrumbidgee Shire Council, Edward River Council and other stakeholders (including Transgrid and SecureEnergy Joint Venture) on the optimal approach for the construction of the project and Dinawan Wind Farm, including accommodating the non-local construction workforce.

The nomination of the land surrounding the project as part of the South West Renewable Energy Zone (REZ), as well as its proximity to Project EnergyConnect's Dinawan Substation, has contributed to a large number of renewable energy generation projects being proposed within close proximity to Dinawan Solar Farm. Consequently, there is significant potential for cumulative demands on accommodation within the region (subject to the approval timeframes, staging of construction and workforce requirements for the proposed projects). Spark Renewables has identified the need for a flexible approach to workforce accommodation.

## 2 Workforce accommodation strategy

The proposed workforce accommodation strategy will likely include a combination of:

- reusing the Project EnergyConnect Dinawan Accommodation Camp (approved as part of SSI-9172452) located adjacent to the Dinawan Solar Farm development footprint
- construction of a temporary worker accommodation facility within the development footprint
- use of available off-site accommodation within the local community.

These options are described below.

### 2.1 Reuse of Project EnergyConnect Dinawan Accommodation Camp

Project EnergyConnect is currently under construction and will include the construction and operation of Dinawan Accommodation Camp (400 bed capacity) adjacent to the development footprint. Reusing this camp to accommodate the project's construction workforce is Spark Renewables' first priority and has already been the subject of discussions with Transgrid and SecureEnergy Joint Venture. There is uncertainty around the construction timeframe for Project EnergyConnect and how this will coincide with Dinawan Solar Farm. Therefore, while this option presents an opportunity for workforce accommodation, other options are being considered to accommodate the project's non-local workforce in the event that this option does not meet all of the project's accommodation requirements.

### 2.2 Temporary worker accommodation facility

If Project EnergyConnect's Dinawan Accommodation Camp is not able to accommodate Dinawan Solar Farm's construction workforce, an on-site temporary worker accommodation facility (up to 400 bed capacity) will likely be required. Approval will be sought to build this facility to accommodate the project's peak construction workforce (i.e. up to 400 workers). A description of the proposed facility and indicative location is provided in Section 3. Spark Renewables is seeking to include this additional infrastructure in the development application.

## 2.3 Off-site accommodation

Off-site accommodation options exist in surrounding townships and regional centres (including Coleambally, Griffith, Deniliquin, Narrandera, Jerilderie and Darlington Point). Based on discussions with Murrumbidgee Shire Council, Edward River Council and the local community, existing accommodation capacity is limited, and there is unlikely to be adequate accommodation for the entire project workforce during peak construction. There may be some potential for short-term accommodation providers to benefit from certain construction activities that require short-term accommodation.

Spark Renewables will continue to consult with local accommodation providers to identify any opportunities to work with these businesses where there is capacity to do so.

# 3 Proposed temporary worker accommodation facility

## 3.1 Description of the activity

A temporary worker accommodation facility for non-local construction employees (where skills cannot be sourced locally) may be established as part of the early stages of the project's construction. The facility will accommodate up to 400 workers. A significant proportion of the project's non-local construction workers may be required to reside at the facility.

An indicative footprint for the temporary worker accommodation facility is provided on Figure 1. The nominated footprint for the facility is approximately 8.9 hectares (ha) and includes land required for both the facility and a construction compound. The nominated footprint is currently primarily used for sheep and cattle grazing and is zoned RU1 Primary Production under the Jerilderie Local Environmental Plan 2012. The nominated footprint is accessible from Kidman Way (Figure 1).

The nominated footprint for the temporary worker accommodation facility has been selected based on its:

- proximity to existing services
- proximity to sensitive receptors (with consideration of matters such as compliance with noise criteria, traffic, transport and accessibility impacts, dust and light spill)
- accessibility from Kidman Way (Figure 1)
- proximity to key construction activities.

To build the temporary worker accommodation facility, topsoil will be stripped where necessary, hardstand, walkways and carparks constructed. Where possible, local businesses will be engaged to supply goods and services to the facility, typically consisting of laundry, cleaning and catering.

The facility is expected to be dismantled and its footprint rehabilitated once the project is constructed.

The exact location of the facility within the nominated footprint will be determined during the detailed design stage of the project; however, the footprint provided is sufficient to accommodate infrastructure necessary to support up to 400 workers (including carparking).

## 3.2 Justification for the activity

Based on a review of DPE's Major Projects register and consultation with both Murrumbidgee Shire Council and Edward River Council, there are a number of other projects that are currently being assessed within close proximity of the townships of Coleambally and Jerilderie and the project, including:

- Dinawan Wind Farm
- Yanco Delta Wind Farm
- Argoon Wind Farm
- Bullawah Wind Farm
- Victoria to NSW Interconnector (VNI) West.

An influx of workers requiring accommodation to facilitate the construction of these projects at the same time could place pressure on local short-term accommodation and other services within the townships of Coleambally and Jerilderie, as well other townships and regional centres (including Griffith, Deniliquin, Narrandera and Darlington Point), which may have adverse flow-on effects. For example, construction workers may restrict the availability of supply of short-term accommodation to other users during peak periods such as school holidays, the region's major festivals and annual events and periods of high demand for agricultural operations (e.g. cotton harvest).

If the project were to rely on short-term accommodation and occupy available rooms at any given time, there would likely be a negative impact on local tourism and agricultural operations throughout the project's construction period.

During consultation activities that Spark Renewables have undertaken with local stakeholders (including Coleambally Chamber of Commerce and Coleambally Lions Club), it was noted that suitable accommodation is limited and already in short supply. In response to this, Spark Renewables have developed the workforce accommodation strategy in order to manage impacts on accommodation service providers and existing industries.

### 3.3 Assessment approach

Identification of the indicative location for the temporary worker accommodation facility has considered constraints and issues informed by field survey and assessment undertaken to date as part of preparation of the EIS.

Particular emphasis during project planning will continue to be given to enhancing the project's social and economic benefits. Spark Renewables has been engaging with local people, businesses and others to identify opportunities for local business participation and community enhancement. Local firms including trades such as electricians, plumbers and carpenters and cleaning and catering services are likely to be used to service the temporary worker accommodation facility, where available. The direct benefits of these initiatives to the local community will be described in the EIS and other opportunities for maximising local benefits explored.

Potential impacts associated with the temporary worker accommodation facility will be considered within the EIS and relevant technical assessments, including the traffic and transport, economic, social, water resources (including water demand and wastewater management), bushfire, waste management and visual impact assessments.

## 4 Revised project summary

Spark Renewables proposes the following amendment to the project as described in the SEARs:

*Dinawan Solar Farm which includes:*

- *the construction, operation and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) energy generating facility with an estimated capacity of 1,000 MW; ~~and~~*
- *associated infrastructure, including grid connection and battery storage of up to 300 MW; and*
- *a temporary worker accommodation facility and associated ancillary infrastructure (should it be required).*

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you'd like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely

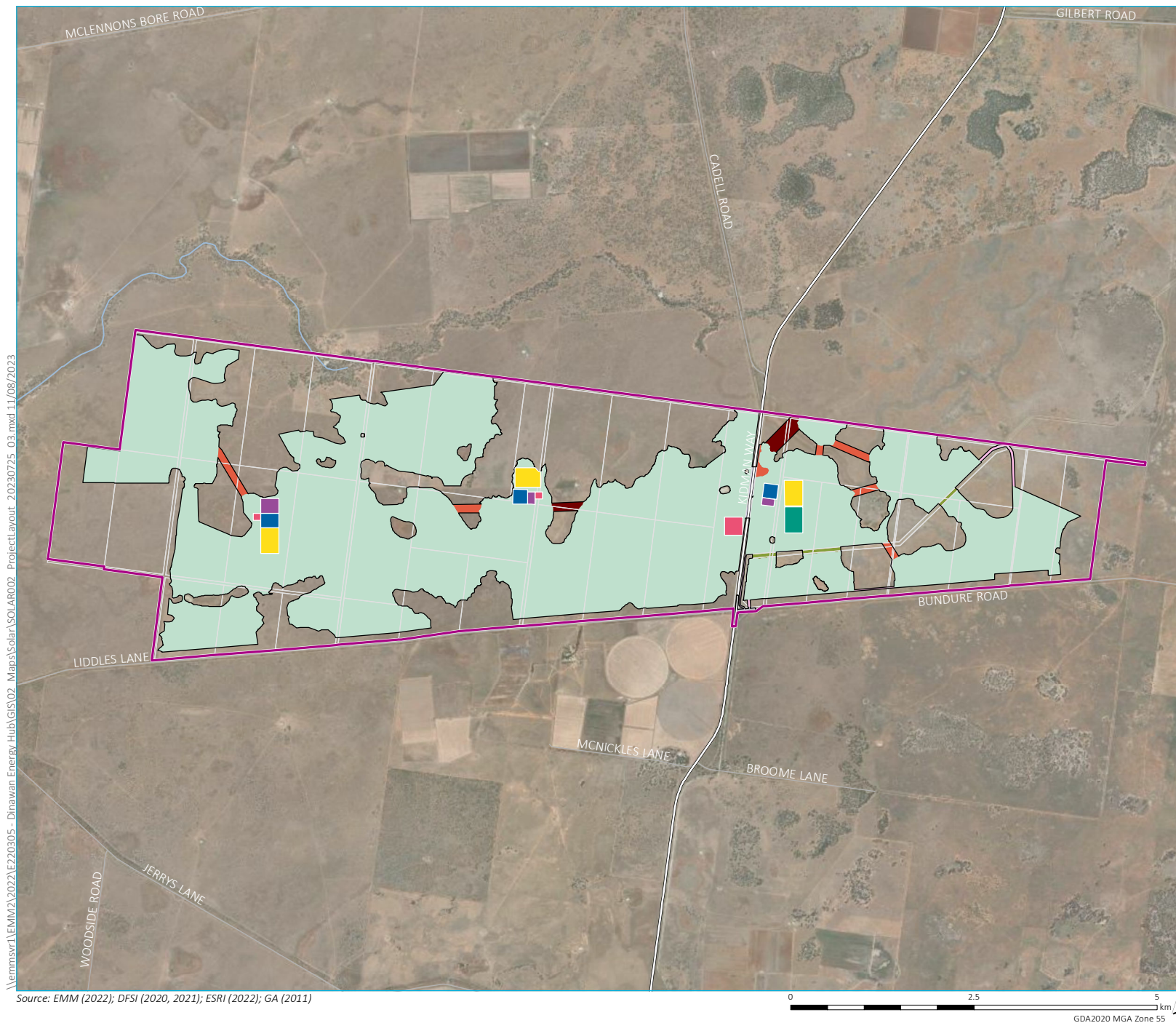


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- KEY**
- Project area
  - Development footprint
  - Project element
    - Solar array
    - Electrical cabling
    - Electrical cabling / site access
    - Public road upgrades
    - Public road upgrades / electrical cabling
    - Restricted development area (irrigation)
    - Site access
    - BESS
    - Substation
    - Switchyard
    - Construction compound
    - Construction compound and accommodation facility
  - Existing environment
    - Watercourse (third order and higher)
    - Major road
    - Minor road
    - Cadastral boundaries

Project layout

Dinawan Solar Farm  
Figure 1