

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	SSD 8643
Project name	Sapphire Solar
Applicant	Sapphire Solar Farm Pty Ltd
Consent Authority	Minister for Planning

Decision

The Acting Executive Director under delegation from the Minister for Planning has, under section 4.38 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act) granted consent to the development application subject to the recommended conditions.

A copy of the Department of Planning & Environment's Assessment Report, development consent and conditions are available [here](#).

Date of decision

16 August 2018

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 2000*;
- the objects of the Act;
- all information submitted with the development application during the assessment and information considered in the Department's Assessment Report;
- the findings and recommendations in the Department's Assessment Report; 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 consent to the development application are as follows:

- the project would provide a range of benefits for the region and the State as a whole, including:
 - contributing to a more diverse local industry;
 - generating a total capital investment of approximately \$280 million;
 - creating up to 200 construction jobs;
 - generating enough electricity to power up to 66,000 homes, saving up to 380,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year; and,
 - assisting in transitioning the electricity sector from coal and gas fired power stations to renewable energy;
- the project is permissible with development consent under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*, and is consistent with relevant NSW Government policies;
- the impacts on the community and the environment can be appropriately minimised, managed or offset to an acceptable level, subject to the recommended conditions of consent;
- the issues raised by the community during consultation and in submissions have been considered and adequately addressed through the conditions of consent (see Attachment 1); and
- weighing all relevant considerations, the project is in the public interest.

Attachment 1 – Consideration of Community Views

The Department exhibited the Environmental Impact Statement for the project from 29 January 2018 until 28 February 2018 (30 days) and received one public submission in objection to the project, from a resident residing outside of the project locality.

The Department visited the site on 11 August 2017.

The key issues raised by the objector and considered in the Department's Assessment Report and by the decision maker include concerns about the battery storage component of the project and energy security.

Other issues are addressed in detail in the Department's Assessment Report.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Consideration</i>
<i>Energy Security</i> Impact on energy security in NSW, resulting in increased energy prices	<i>Assessment</i> - The Department acknowledges and understands the broad concerns raised in this submission, however any evaluation of these issues must have regard to the broader strategic context. - NSW forms part of the National Electricity Market (NEM), which is governed by a robust statutory framework at both the Commonwealth and State level which covers the regulation of electricity generation, distribution and pricing. There is strong policy support at both the Commonwealth and State level for the increased development of renewable energy projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with any electricity generation, while ensuring Australia's energy systems remain affordable, reliable, sustainable and secure. - In the Department's view, the likelihood of the project having an adverse impact on energy security or electricity prices in NSW is extremely low, given that it would only add 180 MW of capacity to the NEM, which at this stage has a total generation capacity of over 397,000 MWh annually. - Further, any incremental or cumulative impacts associated with the potential intermittency of renewable energy projects could be mitigated through the operation of the NEM. <i>Conditions</i> - No specific conditions required.