

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 9254
Project name	Wollar Solar Farm
Applicant	Wollar Solar Development Pty Ltd
Consent Authority	Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Decision

On 24 February 2020, the Executive Director granted consent to the development application for the Wollar 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, Industry and Environment's Assessment Report and development consent are available [here](#).

Date of decision

24 February 2020

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;
- 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 information considered in the Department's Assessment Report; and
- the findings and recommendations in the Department's Assessment Report.

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;
 - a capital investment of approximately \$431 million;
 - creating up to 320 construction jobs;
 - generating enough electricity to power around 108,000 homes, saving over 614,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year;
 - storage of energy for dispatch to the National Energy Market with the 30MW/30MWh battery storage facility; 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*;
- the project 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;
- Council is supportive of the project and all submissions received from the general public and special interest groups were supportive of the project; and
- weighing all relevant considerations, the project is in the public interest.

Appendix 1 – Community Views

Issue	Consideration
<p><u>Energy Context</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project provides a source of renewable energy and displaces carbon dioxide emissions 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has considered the energy context for the project and notes that the project would be located in close proximity to the Central West Energy Zone and would have access to the electrical grid. With a capacity of 290MW, the project would generate enough electricity to power over 108,000 homes and is therefore consistent with both the Commonwealth's <i>Renewable Energy Target</i> and NSW's <i>Renewable Energy Action Plan</i>. <p><i>Conditions/ Response</i></p> <p>No conditions are required in relation to this matter.</p>
<p><u>Land use Compatibility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project would have no land use conflict resulting from this project to the area 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is consistent with strategic land use and Council LEP. The development would not fragment or alienate resource lands in the LGA, as the land could be easily returned to agriculture land following decommissioning as the inherent agricultural capability of the land would not be affected in the long term. <p><i>Conditions/ Response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No conditions are required in relation to this matter.
<p><u>Visual and Amenity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project would have no visual or amenity issues 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department considers the visual impact of the project on the surrounding residences and road users to be minimal. <p><i>Conditions/ Response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant is required to ensure that off-site visual impacts of the development, including the potential for any glare or reflection are minimised and external lighting is minimised and complies with the relevant Australian Standards.
<p><u>Economic</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project would provide local employment opportunities to the Wollar district 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 320 workers would be required during the construction period and WSD has committed to source workers from the local community where possible. The Department is satisfied that there is sufficient accommodation in nearby towns, such as Mudgee and Gulgong. <p><i>Conditions/ Response</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant is required to prepare an Accommodation and Employment Strategy for the project in consultation with Council, with consideration of the cumulative impacts associated with other State significant development projects in the area.