



# Wollar Solar Farm Modification 3

---

Changes to vehicle movements and increase in panel height  
State Significant Development Modification Assessment  
(SSD 9274 MOD 3)

August 2022



Published by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment

[dpie.nsw.gov.au](http://dpie.nsw.gov.au)

Title: Wollar Solar Farm Modification 3

Subtitle: State Significant Development Modification

Cover image: Solar panels. Source: NSW Department of Planning and Environment Image Library

---

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning and Environment 2022. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the Department of Planning and Environment as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (August 2022) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning and Environment), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

# Executive Summary

Wollar Solar Development Pty Ltd (WSD) has approval to develop the Wollar Solar farm (the project), approximately 38km north east of Mudgee in the Central West and Orana region of NSW.

The modification application seeks to refine the number and type of vehicle movements required during construction, upgrading and decommissioning; provide alternative site access for the delivery of substation transformers; increase the number of construction workers and modify the solar panels specifications and layout, including an increase in panel height from 4 m to 5 m.

The Department exhibited the modification application from 6 July 2022 to 19 July 2022. Three public submissions were received, two in support, and one objection. Advice was received from Upper Hunter Shire Council, Mid-Western Regional Council and Transport for NSW, none of which objected to the modification.

The Department considers that the proposed modification improves constructability of the project and would not result in any significant impacts beyond those that were assessed and approved under the existing consent. Any residual environmental and amenity impacts associated with the proposed modification could be mitigated and managed through the revised conditions of consent. The project, as modified, would provide flow-on benefits to the local community, including an additional 80 construction jobs and a capital investment of \$431 million.

Consequently, it is in the public interest and should be approved.

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Proposed modification</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Statutory context</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Engagement</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Assessment</b> .....	<b>5</b>
	5.1 Traffic and transport .....	5
	5.2 Noise and vibration.....	5
	5.3 Other issues .....	5
<b>6</b>	<b>Evaluation</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Recommendation</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Determination</b> .....	<b>7</b>
	<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>8</b>
	Appendix A – Modification report.....	8
	Appendix B – Submissions and Agency advice .....	8
	Appendix C – Submissions Report .....	8
	Appendix D – Notice of modification.....	8
	Appendix E – Consolidated Consent.....	8
	Appendix F – Statutory considerations .....	8
	Appendix G – Summary of minor and administrative changes to conditions .....	9

# 1 Introduction

WSD received consent in February 2020 to develop the 290 MW Wollar Solar Farm, approximately 7 kilometres (km) south of Wollar within the Mid-Western Regional Council local government area. Construction of the project has already commenced.

The development consent was modified in 2020 to facilitate site access and subdivision.

## 2 Proposed modification

The modification application seeks to refine the number and type of construction vehicle movements with an increase in AV/B-double vehicles and proportionate reduction in medium/heavy rigid vehicle movements; amend the site access arrangements for two specific over-dimensional vehicles movements required to deliver the substation transformers, increase the number of construction workers from 320 to 400; and several changes to the specifications of the solar panels and arrays, including an increase in panel height from 4 m to 5 m.

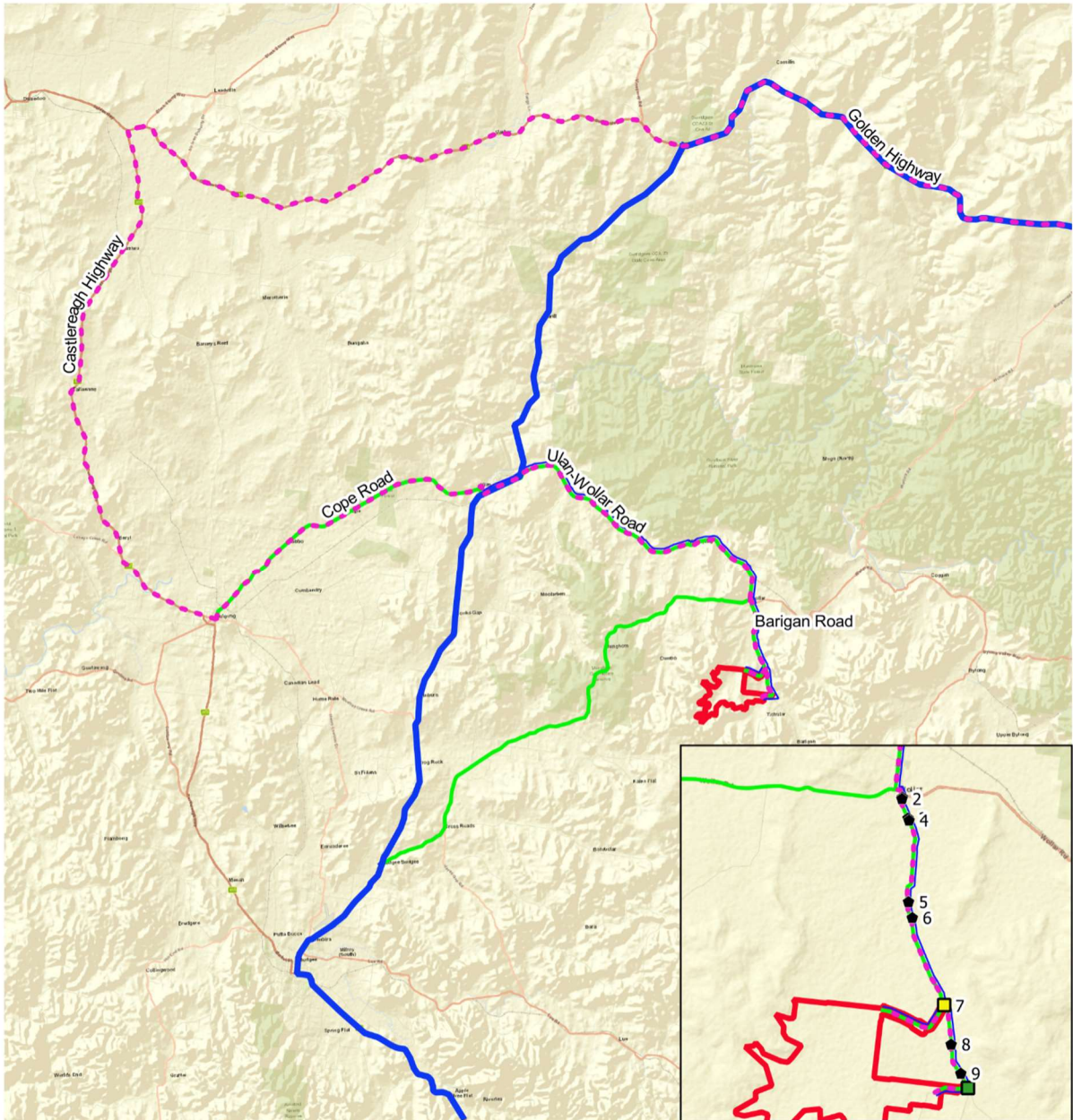
The proposed changes have arisen through the detailed design process and detailed construction planning. No changes to the general site layout or approved development footprint are proposed.

The modification is described in detail in the Modification Report (Appendix A). Key components and features of the modification are summarized in **Table 1** and shown on **Figure 1**.

**Table 1 | Key components of the modification**

Component	Approved	Proposed
<b>Definition of AV/B-double</b>	An articulated vehicle that has a combined Gross Vehicle Mass or Aggregate Trailer Mass of up to 42.5 tonnes	An articulated vehicle that has a combined Gross Vehicle Mass or Aggregate Trailer Mass of up to 62.5 tonnes
<b>Vehicle movements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 26 AV/B-double vehicle movements a day during construction, upgrading and decommissioning;</li><li>• 46 medium and/or heavy rigid vehicle movements a day during construction, upgrading and decommissioning;</li><li>• 5 over-dimensional vehicle movements during construction, upgrading and decommissioning; and</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Combined total of up to 72 medium and/or heavy rigid vehicle movements and AV/B-double movements a day during construction, upgrading and decommissioning, with a maximum of 36 AV/B-double vehicle movements</li><li>• 2 over-dimensional vehicle movements a day, with up to 60 over-dimensional vehicle movements in total, during construction, upgrading and decommissioning; and</li></ul>

Component	Approved	Proposed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>length of any vehicles (excluding over-dimensional vehicles) used for the development does not exceed 19 metres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>length of any vehicles (excluding over-dimensional vehicles) used for the development does not exceed 26 metres</li> </ul>
<b>Site Access Routes for AV/B Double vehicles</b>	<p>All over-dimensional and AV/B Double vehicles associated with the development must travel to and from the site via:</p> <p>(a) Golden Highway, Ulan Road, Ulan-Wollar Road, Barigan Street, Maitland Street, Wollar Road and Barigan Road; and/or</p> <p>(b) Castlereagh Highway, Ulan Road, Ulan-Wollar Road, Barigan Street, Maitland Street, Wollar Road and Barigan Road;</p>	<p>As approved, except for the two over-dimensional vehicles which are restricted from using the approved route due to load rating, which would use:</p> <p>Golden Highway, Castlereagh Highway, Old Mill Road, Rouse Street, Station Street, Cope Road, Robinson Street, MacKay Street, Main Street, Ulan Road, Ulan-Wollar Road, Barigan Street, Maitland Street, Wollar Road and Barigan Road or any other route approved via a permit granted by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (NSW).</p>
<b>Number of construction workers required</b>	320	400
<b>Number of panels</b>	Approx. 922,432	Approx. 800,000
<b>Row spacing of solar array</b>	Approx. 6 m	Approx. 7.5 m
<b>Height of solar array</b>	3-4 m	5 m
<b>Height of lowest point of solar array above ground</b>	1.5 m	0.5 m
<b>Solar Panel dimensions</b>	Approx. 2 m x 1 m	Approx. 2.3 m x 1.2 m
<b>Use of PCUs or distributed inverters</b>	Power Conversion Units (PCUs) or distributed inverters	Distributed inverters



**Site Access**

**Legend**

- ▭ Proposal Site
- ◻ Access points
- ◻ Northern Access Point
- ◻ Southern Access Point
- ◆ Swept path locations
- AV / B-double Access Route
- - Transformer haulage route
- Shuttle Buses / MRV + HRV Access Route

Data Attribution  
 © NGH 2022  
 © Wollar Solar Development 2022  
 © ESRI & QGIS 2022  
 Ref: 20-907 Wollar Solar Farm 220617 \ Site Access  
 Author: kyle.m  
 Date created: 12.08.2022  
 Datum: GDA94 / MGA zone 56



**NGH**

**Figure 1 | Revised Site Access Routes**

### 3 Statutory context

The project is permissible development and the Department considers that the application is substantially the same development as originally approved, noting the development footprint would not change, and the environmental impacts of the modification would be minimal. Consequently, the Department considers that the proposed modification is within the scope of section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act.

The Minister for Planning is the consent authority for the application under section 4.5 (a) of the EP&A Act. However, under the Minister’s delegation to determine SSD modifications, signed 9 March 2022, the Director, Energy Assessments, may determine the application as the Council did not object to the proposal, the applicant did not make any political donations and there were less than 15 public objections.

The Department has considered the matters that must be considered in determining a modification application in accordance with section 4.55(3) of the EP&A Act.

### 4 Engagement

The Department exhibited the application for 14 days from 6 July 2022 to 19 July 2022 and advertised the exhibition in the Mudgee Guardian.

During the exhibition period, the Department received three public submissions, two in support and one objection. The submissions in support were from residents within the region who commented that the modification would support the creation of local jobs and reduce the construction timeframe. The objection was from outside of the project region and did not provide substantial reasons for their objection.

Advice provided by Mid-Western Regional Council and Transport for NSW is summarised in Error! Reference source not found.. Upper-Hunter Shire Council was also contacted and had no comment on the modification. The applicant submitted a Submission Report (Appendix C) providing a response to issues raised.

**Table 2 | Summary of agency advice**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Issues</b>
<b>Transport for NSW</b>	Did not object to the proposed modification provided that relevant plans (Haulage Plan, Traffic Management Plan (TMP) and Accommodation and Employment Strategy) are updated to Council’s satisfaction and over-size/over-mass vehicle (OSOM) movements are subject to special permit approvals via the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.
<b>Mid-Western Regional Council</b>	Did not object to the proposed modification subject to recommended conditions of consent relating to haulage routes, vehicle access requirements, public infrastructure, utility services and certification. Council did however raise concern regarding the project’s accommodation and employment strategy, but noted that this was the subject of ongoing engagement between Council and WSD under the existing consent requirements.



## 5 Assessment

### 5.1 Traffic and transport

The modification seeks to amend the proportion (but not the total number) of medium and heavy vehicle movements per day in accordance with the updated definition of AV/B-double endorsed by TfNSW and the Department. The access route for these vehicles has been previously assessed as suitable and the conclusions of the original Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) regarding traffic volumes remain valid. The modification seeks approval for an alternative access route for two over-dimensional vehicles movements, which are restricted from using the approved route due to load rating. These movements are subject to a permit being obtained from National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, and TfNSW have raised no issues with the alternative route. Mid-Western Regional Council are supportive of the proposed route, subject to a series of recommended conditions. The Department considers that the issues raised by Council are addressed through the existing requirements of the development consent. No changes to operation traffic numbers are proposed. Accordingly, the Department considers the modified traffic and transport arrangements acceptable.

### 5.2 Noise and vibration

The proposed modification would result in a minor exceedance of 2 dB on local roads as a result of the increase in heavy vehicle movements. This exceedance will only be experienced where residents are within 25 m of the road alignment, affecting up to 20 dwellings within the Wollar township. In accordance with the NSW Road Noise Policy, 2 dB is considered barely perceptible to the average person and is therefore considered a negligible impact. The proposed OSOM movements would not result in any noise exceedances.

### 5.3 Other issues

Other potential impacts of the proposed modification are considered in **Table 3**. The Department has also included administrative updates to the consent as described in Appendix G.

**Table 3 | Other issues**

Visual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are 18 receivers located within 7 km of the development and the closest non-associated receiver is 2.8 km from the site.</li><li>• Updated modelling reveals that the proposed 1 m increase in panel height results in a negligible difference in visibility of the project, and the visual impacts would remain low to negligible for non-associated receivers as originally assessed.</li><li>• No respondents raised any concerns with relation to visual impacts during the EIS or modification exhibition periods.</li></ul>

### Historic heritage

---

- The new OSOM route passes within 10 m of four locally listed heritage items. The road is sealed and well trafficked at these locations and the use of this route is therefore unlikely to result in any direct or indirect (dust or vibration) impacts on these heritage items.
- Council has not raised any concerns regarding heritage impacts as a result of the modification.

### Construction workforce

---

- Mid-Western Regional Council initially raised some concern regarding the accommodation and employment strategy. However, additional accommodation for the workforce would be managed via the Stage 3 Accommodation and Employment Strategy as required under the approved development consent, and this would be developed in consultation with Council and would require final approval by the Department.
- The increased workforce would not result in additional impacts to the road network as the additional staff would be transported under the existing shuttle bus arrangements.

## 6 Evaluation

The Department has assessed the modification application, public submissions and advice received from relevant government agencies. The Department has also considered the objectives and relevant considerations under sections 4.55 (3) and 4.15 of the EP&A Act.

The Department considers that the proposed modification would not change the benefits of the approved project, and would facilitate more efficient access arrangements to the site and generate additional employment. The modification would not conflict with surrounding land uses and would not result in any significant impacts beyond those that were assessed and approved under the existing consent. Any risks would be appropriately managed by existing and modified conditions.

The Department has drafted a Notice of Modification (see **Appendix D**) and consolidated version of the development consent (see **Appendix E**). The applicant has reviewed the conditions and no objections have been raised. The Department is satisfied that the proposed modification is in the public interest and should be approved subject to these conditions.

## 7 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Director, Energy Assessments, as delegate of the Minister for Planning:

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- **determines** that the application Wollar Solar Farm Modification 3 (SSD 9254 MOD 3) falls within the scope of section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act;
- **accepts and adopts** all of the findings and recommendations in this report as the reasons for making the decision to approve the modification;
- **modify** the consent (SSD 9254), and
- **signs** the attached approval of the modification (**Appendix D**).

Recommended by:



19/8/2022

**Julia Green**  
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer  
Energy Assessments

Recommended by:



19/8/2022

**Karl Okorn**  
Team Leader  
Energy Assessments

## 8 Determination

The recommendation is **Adopted** / ~~Not adopted~~ by:



23/8/2022

**Nicole Brewer**  
Director  
Energy Assessments

as delegate of the Minister for Planning

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Modification report

## Appendix B – Submissions and Agency advice

## Appendix C – Submissions Report

## Appendix D – Notice of modification

## Appendix E – Consolidated Consent

Appendices A to E available at:

<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/wollar-solar-farm-mod-3>

## Appendix F – Statutory considerations

Under section 4.55(3) of the EP&A Act, the consent authority must consider the matters referred to in section 4.15(1) of relevance to the development. **Table 4** identifies the matters for consideration under section 4.15 of the EP&A Act that apply to the proposed modification. The table represents a summary for which additional information and consideration is provided in other sections of this report, as referenced in the table.

**Table 4 | Assessment of Section 4.15(1)**

Section 4.15(1) Matters for consideration	The Department's assessment
(a)(i) any environmental planning instrument	The modified proposal complies with the relevant legislation as addressed in Section 3.
(a)(ii) any proposed instrument	
(a)(iii) any development control plan	
(a)(iiia) any planning agreement	Not applicable
(a)(iv) the regulations	The application satisfactorily meets the relevant requirements of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021</i> , including the procedures relating to modification applications (Part 5), the requirements for notification (Part 5, Division 2) and fees (Part 13) (refer to <b>Section 3</b> ).
(b) the likely impacts of that development including environmental impacts on both the	The Department considers the proposed changes to be minor and would not result in significant

<b>Section 4.15(1) Matters for consideration</b>	<b>The Department's assessment</b>
natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality.	adverse environmental impacts (refer to Section 5).
(c) the suitability of the site for the development	The site is suitable for the development as addressed in <b>Sections 3</b> and <b>5</b> .
(d) any submissions	The Department has considered the submissions received. Refer to <b>Sections 4</b> and <b>5</b> .
(e) the public interest	The Department considers the modified proposal to be in the public interest as it would provide flow-on benefits to the local community, including up to 400 construction jobs and a capital investment of \$431 million.

### **Appendix G – Summary of minor and administrative changes to conditions**

<b>Condition Number</b>	<b>Minor and Administrative Changes</b>	<b>Reason for Change</b>
Definitions	Update new titles for the Department (Department of Planning and Environment) and it's agency head (Planning Secretary)	To reflect current departmental and Ministerial titles and responsibilities
Definitions	Update the definition of EIS in the consent	To include the modification report and submissions report provided to the Department in the assessment of the modification application
Definitions	Update the definition of AV/B Double	To reflect updated definition as has been agreed to from discussions with Transport for NSW
Throughout	Replace all references to 'Secretary' with 'Planning Secretary'	To reflect current departmental titles
Schedule 3, Condition 1(a)	Update the quantities of vehicle movements	To reflect those proposed as part of the modification application
Schedule 3, Condition 1(b)	Replace '19 metres' with '26 metres'	To reflect the length as per the updated definition
Schedule 3, Condition 3(b)	Insert route associated with the proposed OSOM route	To enable use of this route

Condition Number	Minor and Administrative Changes	Reason for Change
Schedule 4, Condition 9(a)	Replace '2018' with '2020'	To reflect the updated Independent Audit Post Approval requirements
Schedule 4, Condition 10	Insert 'to the satisfaction of the Planning Secretary'	To reflect updated expectation of the Department
Appendix 3	Replace with updated figure	To reflect the additional site access route proposed as part of the modification.