

Beth Noël
Senior Environmental Consultant (Ecology)
NGH Pty Ltd
By email ngh@nghconsulting.com.au

31/07/2020

Dear Ms Noël

**Wollar Solar Farm (SSD 9254)
Biodiversity Offsets**

I refer to your request dated 25 June 2020 seeking the Planning Secretary's approval to vary the timing of the retirement of biodiversity credits beyond the commencement of the development under condition 13 of Schedule 3 of the development consent for the Wollar Solar Farm (SSD 9254) and attached Biodiversity Offset Strategy.

The Department has carefully reviewed your request for additional time to meet the offset obligation under the development consent in order to:

- maximise the use of residual areas within the property boundary to secure all ecosystem credits in a Stewardship Agreement under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*; and
- negotiate a trade via the credit market or pay into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund for the remaining species credits.

The Department notes that:

- you have undertaken desktop investigations and you believe that ecosystem credits could be generated by the stewardship agreement to meet NSW and Commonwealth offset obligations;
- you have prepared a detailed time frame incorporating seasonal and project objectives to meet all offset obligations by the end of December 2021; and
- retiring credits before construction begins on the project will drive the need to secure credits via the Biodiversity Conservation Fund, which is less desirable than creating a stewardship agreement over residual areas of the project site.

The Department is satisfied with the proposed approach to your offset obligations on the condition that you strictly adhere to your proposed timetable.

Accordingly, the Planning Secretary approves the commencement of development prior to the retirement of biodiversity credits required under condition 13 of Schedule 3 of the development consent, subject to the following conditions:

- provide a status report to the Department on the outcome of your field work and a preliminary analysis of the stewardship agreement by 31 December 2020;
- apply for a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement and upload all relevant supporting documents to the Biodiversity Offsets and Agreement Management System by 30 April 2021; and
- retire any residual credits negotiated through the market and/or pay residual obligations to the Biodiversity Conservation Fund by 31 December 2021.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact May Patterson on 02 8275 1190.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'NB', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nicole Brewer
Director
Energy Assessments
As nominee of the Planning Secretary