

21 August 2023

Jai Reid
Principal Planner
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Jai

RE: BENDEMEER SOLAR FARM - SUBMISSION OF SUPPORT

Onward Consulting Pty Ltd is an environment and planning consultancy, with its Head Office in Armidale and other offices in Newcastle and Brisbane.

We undertake commissions for large scale developments such as renewable energy, mining and linear infrastructure. Our core services include:

- environmental impact assessment.
- construction and operational environmental compliance support.
- communications for project stakeholders (e.g. Government agencies, local community).
- water licencing and compliance;
- biodiversity offset applications and ongoing management;
- environmental risk assessment and due diligence;
- environmental auditing services; and
- rehabilitation and closure.

Over the last five years we have grown from one to 16 people and are continuing to expand. Seven of our employees are based in the Armidale office, four of which have moved from another location outside of the New England region to work with us. This growth would not have been possible without the recent interest of renewable energy developments in the region, including the Bendemeer Solar Farm.

Our services are essential to large scale developments, requiring experienced and local knowledge to ensure key issues for the local community are addressed and the benefits of the developments stay within the local region.

We have been advised by many clients that our local presence provides a better level of service than similar (and larger) firms in the cities because we have a better understanding of the issues of importance to the local community. We believe that our local presence results in a genuine interest in the lives of people that are involved and surround the projects we work on.



Armidale (Head Office)
187 Kirkwood Street
Armidale NSW 2350



0437 645 419



Newcastle
Suite 2, Level 1,
28 Donald Street
Hamilton NSW 2303



0419 920 415



Brisbane
Suite 11A, Level 11,
39 Sherwood Road
Toowong QLD 4066



0418 780 097



PO Box 1606,
Armidale NSW 2350



admin@onward.net.au
www.onward.net.au

We also use locally based partners, including our legal, IT and communications, office supplies and maintenance, clothing, hire vehicles, field equipment, trades, photography and signage.

Other businesses in the New England region would have also experienced similar benefits from renewable energy project proposals and construction activity. This incremental growth in existing businesses, and the development of new businesses will have long term flow on effects in the local Bendemeer community and the broader New England region.

Having undertaken dozens of environmental impact assessments, we would consider the Bendemeer Solar Farm has minor and manageable environmental impacts, with potential for significant benefits to the local Bendemeer community, including the Community Benefit Fund (~\$50,000/yr), and new employment and business opportunities.

Yours faithfully.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Vile".

Mark Vile
Director