

02/05/2017

Our Reference: -2500-PE-P11-LT-0001

Executive Director Resource Assessments and Business Systems
Department of Planning and Environment
PO Box 39

Sydney 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: SSD APPLICATION NUMBER SSD 67895 – GILGANDRA SOLAR

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Gilgandra Solar Project.

As a brief background to The Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail ('Inland Rail') Programme, the Australian Government has committed to building a nationally significant piece of transport infrastructure by constructing an inland railway between Melbourne and Brisbane, via regional Victoria, central-west New South Wales (NSW) and Toowoomba in Queensland (QLD).

The Inland Rail Programme will enhance Australia's existing rail network and serve the interstate freight market by delivering a road competitive service that will see freight delivered from Melbourne to Brisbane, in less than 24 hours with reliability, pricing and availability that is equal to or better than road. Inland Rail provides a step-change in freight productivity, while also catalysing a range of potential benefits from complementary investments in land use and supply chains that leverage the enhanced logistics capabilities of Inland Rail.

The Inland Rail Programme has evolved over several decades with many alternatives and options assessed to meet Australia's growing freight task. The current proposal was identified in the Inland Rail Programme Business Case 2015 and the Inland Rail Implementation Group's report to the Australian Government (August 2015).

The Inland Rail route, which is about 1700 kilometres long, would involve:

- Using the existing interstate rail line through Victoria and southern NSW
- Upgrading about 400 kilometres of existing track, mainly in NSW
- Providing about 600 kilometres of new track in northern NSW and South-east QLD.

Inland Rail has been divided into 13 projects, seven of which are located in New South Wales. For each of these projects we will seek to obtain an individual NSW planning approval (via the Department of Planning and Environment "State Significant Infrastructure" process), and be delivered with tie-in points on the existing railway network.

Inland Rail and Gilgandra Solar

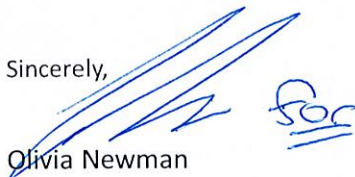
Reviewing the Gilgandra Solar EIS documentation, the proposed site for the Gilgandra Solar Farm is approximately 10km east of the current two proposed study areas for the Narromine to Narrabri project section of the Inland Rail Programme, where preliminary environmental assessments are currently being carried out

(refer to attached map). Whilst we are still in the early planning phase we do not have at this stage any concerns regarding potential cumulative impacts on the local region. However, we ask that the Gilgandra Solar Farm EIS acknowledge the proximity of the Narromine to Narrabri project section of the Inland Rail Programme in the cumulative impacts discussion in the EIS.

As part of our continued collaboration and coordinated planning development approach, during the next planning phases of this project we will make further contact with the Gilgandra Solar proponent – “Neon” to further update them on the Narromine to Narrabri project’s progress.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment and should you have any queries or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact our NSW/Victoria Environment Manager – Geoff Hudson on 0437 187 113

Sincerely,



Olivia Newman
Programme Delivery Manager NSW/VIC

ARTC-Inland Rail