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SSD 8803

Ms Rose-Anne Hawkeswood  
Senior Planning Officer  
Department of Planning & Environment  
[rose-anne.hawkeswood@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rose-anne.hawkeswood@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Rose-Anne

### **Jemalong Solar Farm Exhibition**

I refer to your email dated 23 November 2017 requesting that the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) provide comments on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Jemalong Solar Farm.

The proposal involves the construction and operation of a commercial scale 50 megawatt photovoltaic (PV) plant instead of a 30MW concentrating solar thermal (CST) power plant as originally proposed and assessed by OEH for this site. OEH understands that the concentrating solar thermal power plant is now being relocated to another location.

The EIS for the previously proposed 30MW CST power plant indicated that all remnant patches of woodland within the power plant site were to be avoided, and 1.83 hectares of native vegetation would be removed for the transmission line.

OEH notes that 0.84 hectares of native vegetation removal is now proposed at the site. OEH acknowledges and welcomes the reduction in impact with the proposed amendments to the transmission line route.

Appendix E of the EIS provides contradictory statements as to whether all remnant woodland patches within the solar array area have been avoided (page 47). As a result, OEH assumes that 0.21 ha of native vegetation will be cleared within the power plant area, and that the inability to avoid this clearing of remnant woodland is due to the new panel design footprint which has been arranged to avoid larger remnant woodland patches around the perimeter.

The EIS states that an offset will be established within two years of the commencement of construction. Given the small impact area and the commitment to either acquire or retire credits under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 or make payments into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund (BCF), OEH is of the view that acquittal of the credit requirement should be achieved in a shorter timeframe. OEH recommends that the Biodiversity Conservation Trust is contacted to discuss the most appropriate trigger (submission / application / payment) to be included in any associated consent condition relating to payment into the fund.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact David Geering on 02 6883 5335 or email [david.geering@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:david.geering@environment.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'P. Christie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**PETER CHRISTIE**  
**Director North West**  
**Regional Operations Division**

20 December 2017

Contact officer: DAVID GEERING  
6883 5335