



Nature Conservation Council

The voice for nature in NSW

NSW Department of Planning & Environment
Level 22, 320 Pitt St
Sydney, 2000

29 August 2018

Submitted via <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au>

NCC Submission in support of Springdale Solar Farm

Dear Madam/Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the recent application of ReNew Estate to build a solar farm near Sutton, NSW, as part of your assessment of the solar farm development.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW (**NCC**) is the peak environment organisation for New South Wales, representing over 150 member societies across the state. Together we are committed to protecting and conserving the wildlife, landscapes and natural resources of NSW.

It is our position that this proposed solar farm would deliver a net-positive impact on nature and for the citizens of New South Wales and as such we support planning approval for this project with conditions.

Increased investment in renewable energy projects such as solar farms is an essential step towards a low-carbon future. This project will significantly add to the installed renewable energy capacity in NSW.

Climate change is already having significant impacts to nature and these will only get worse unless projects such as the Springdale solar farm are rapidly deployed. Climate change is already harming the residents of New South Wales for example through a longer bushfire season, more intense heatwaves, more intense droughts in the South of the state, and impacts on infrastructure. Renewable energy projects such as the Springdale solar farm are crucial to avoiding dangerous climate change. We ask that your assessment of this project considers the broader benefits of avoiding climate change by proceeding with this project.

We would like to highlight some of the benefits that the Springdale Solar farm would offer to the people of NSW:

- The Springdale Solar Farm would produce around 200 GWh of renewable energy each year, enough to power 35,000 homes;

- By reducing fossil fuel generation it would reduce airborne pollutants, including over 120,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year, as well as SO₂, NO_x and PM 2.5 pollution;
- It would reduce reliance on coal fired power plants – diversifying the state’s energy mix and promoting renewable energy production;
- Construction would result in up to 200 jobs and a further 5 full time jobs during operation;
- It would contribute to our efforts to avoid dangerous global warming, which is threatening human and ecosystem health.
- Sheep grazing will occur on the site, between the rows of panels, continuing the agricultural productivity of the land, in addition to the clean energy production.

We recognise that there will be some disturbance to habitat of the Golden Sun Moth (GSM). We would like to highlight the importance of identifying appropriate offset GSM habitat and protecting it in perpetuity to minimise impact on this critically endangered species.

We would like to express concern regarding the clearing of paddock trees including 14 hollow-bearing paddock trees (Biodiversity Development Assessment Report, EIS Appendix B, p28). Paddock trees play a vital ecosystem role and support threatened species.

The majority of hollow bearing and stag trees are located in the south east corner of the proposed site (EIS Appendix B, figure 6). We suggest that this area is excluded from the development site and conserved.

We also strongly advise that the hollow bearing tree that is known Superb Parrot habitat is not removed as part of the development and is instead conserved. Nest boxes are unlikely to provide the appropriate habitat in comparison to the hollow bearing tree that is known Superb Parrot habitat. If the hollow bearing tree that is known Superb Parrot habitat is to be removed, we advise that this occurs outside of breeding season; and if chicks/eggs are found, that the removal of the tree is postponed until the eggs have hatched and the chicks have reached independent maturity.

If you would like any further information regarding our submission, please don’t hesitate to contact Brad Smith in our office on (02) 9516 1488 or at bsmith@nature.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Smolski,
CEO