

OUT20/10772

7 September 2020

Mr Lander Robinson
Major Projects Website
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

Dear Mr Robinson

Yarren Hut Solar Farm (SSD-10415) (Bogan Shire)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the above proposal as per the major projects referral dated 12 August 2020.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) Agriculture is committed to the protection and growth of agricultural industries, and the land and resources upon which these industries depend. Important issues are the potential impact on limited agricultural resources and the ability to rehabilitate the land to enable continued agricultural investment.

This proposal has described a range of impacts on land zoned primary production, and the assessment does adequately deal with the issues associated with agricultural land and land use impacts. The following are areas where the information will assist with confirming the agricultural issues are fully addressed:

- The soil survey for the site provides a sound basis to the land condition for construction and for a baseline to information requirements for both the operating and closure outcomes.
- Sheep grazing to manage vegetation growth is being undertaken during the solar farm's operation is noted. A 70% groundcover is being maintained (page 191, SO2) as part of the Groundcover Management Plan that will ensure optimal conditions to ensure infiltration, and less erosion and surface water movement or structural damage. There are various references that can explain this including the Central West Local Land Services website (<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/our-regions/central-west/articles-and-publications/crop-production/maintaining-groundcover-for-water-infiltration>)

This outlines the reasons why and also a simple way the level of groundcover can be monitored by the solar farm operator.

The Meat and Livestock website also provides some guidance for perennial pasture management (<https://www.mla.com.au/research-and-development/Environment-sustainability/Sustainable-grazing-a-producer-resource/productive-persistent-and-profitable-pastures/improved-perennial-pastures/>).

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A pest and weed management plan is identified as part of the construction and operation phases of the development. This would ideally also have a link to the groundcover management of the site. It would be useful to consult with the Central West Local Land Services and the landholders in the immediate area to work in with this plan and the adjacent lands.

- A Rehabilitation and Decommissioning Management Plan will be developed. That includes details of the return to agriculture on final closure. This is where the baseline soil assessment as noted above will assist in returning land to a similar capability and production capacity. It provides measurable outcomes to help achieve pre- development soil and landscape conditions.
- The development notes that underground cabling would range between 0.3m to 1.5m deep. On closure all above and below ground infrastructure will be removed which is advantageous especially if this area is to be potentially cropped.

Should you require clarification on the information contained in this response, please contact myself on phone 68811250.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mary Kovac'.

Mary Kovac
Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit