

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Griffith Solar Farm

Intersection Upgrade Modification (SSD 6604 - Mod 2)

1. BACKGROUND

Neoen Australia Pty Ltd (Neoen) has approval to construct and operate the Griffith Solar Farm, located approximately 7 kilometres (km) southeast of Griffith (see **Figure 1**).

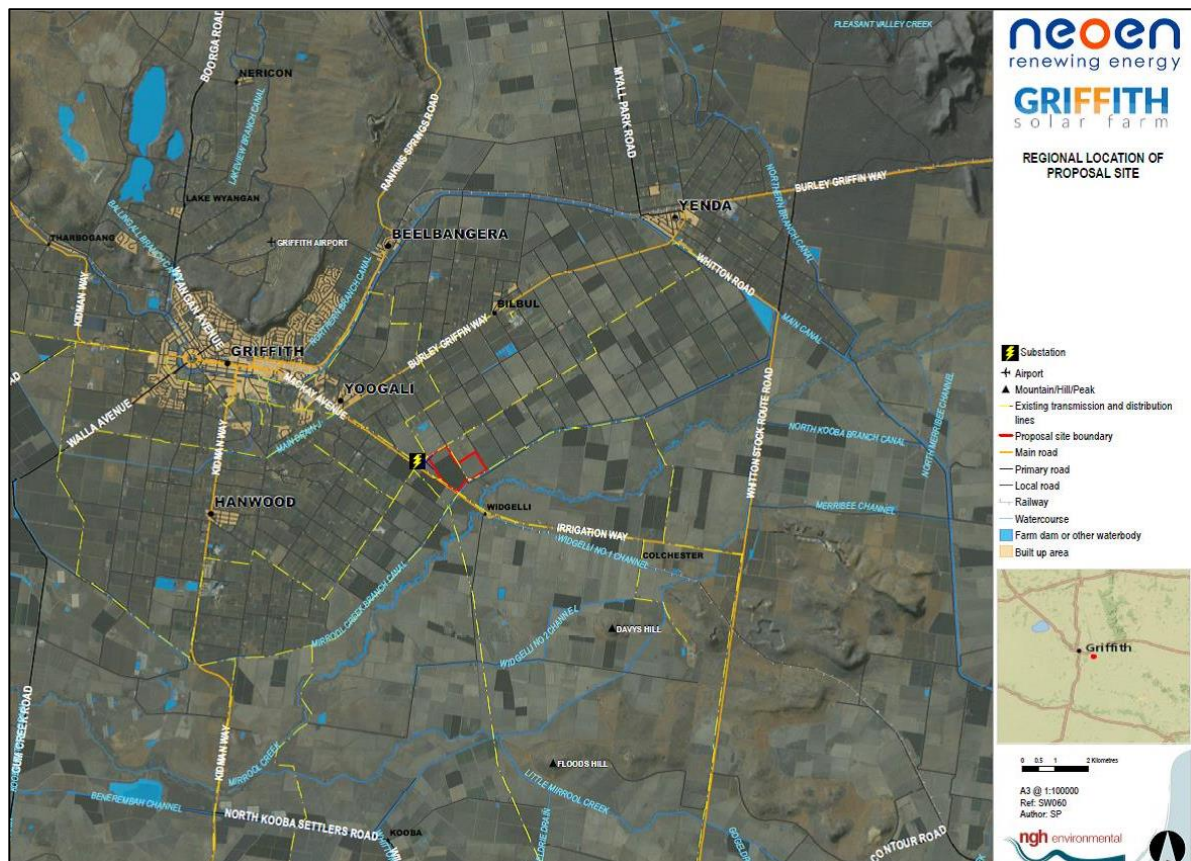


Figure 1: Project site location

On 14 June 2016, the Executive Director, Resource Assessments and Business Systems, as delegate of the Minister for Planning, granted approval for the Griffith Solar Farm (SSD 6604). The development consent allows for the construction, upgrading and decommissioning of a photovoltaic solar farm with an initial capacity of 60 megawatts.

On 25 October 2016, the development consent was modified to allow:

- a change in the project's access point from Poletta Road to Hamilton Road;
- the construction of an unsealed internal access road; and
- the construction of an access way between the eastern and western project lots.

The project site, which is located immediately southeast of the Riverina Solar Farm, is shown in **Figure 1**.

Neoen has yet to commence construction of the Griffith Solar Farm project.

2. PROPOSED MODIFICATION

Neoen is seeking to modify the development consent for the Griffith Solar Farm to change the road upgrade requirements for the Burley Griffin Way and Ross Road intersection. Specifically, Neoen proposes to construct a Basic Right Turn and Auxiliary Left Turn (Short) treatment, rather than a Basic Right Turn (Short) and Basic Left Turn treatment (see **Appendix A**).

The key difference would be the inclusion of a left turn shoulder lane from Burley Griffin Way onto Ross Road under the proposed modified scenario (see **Figure 2**).



Figure 2: Burley Griffin Way and Ross Road intersection

3. STATUTORY CONTEXT

The development was originally approved under Section 89E of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) and any modification to this consent must be made under Section 96 of the EP&A Act.

Based on its assessment, the Department is satisfied that the application can be characterised as a modification to the existing consent as the proposal would not alter the approved layout or disturbance area of the development, nor would it increase the environmental impacts of the development as approved.

The Minister for Planning is the approval authority for the application. However, under the Minister's delegation dated 16 February 2015, the Director, Resource Assessments may determine the proposed modification as Griffith City Council does not object to the proposal, Neoen has not made reportable political donations, and no public submissions were received on the proposal.

4. CONSULTATION

Given the minor nature of the application, the Department did not formally seek submissions on the proposal. The Department has received letters (see **Appendix B**) from both Griffith City Council (Council) and the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), endorsing the proposed modification.

5. ASSESSMENT

In assessing the merits of the proposal, the Department has considered:

- the modification application and supporting information;
- supporting documents provided from RMS and Council;
- the EIS and conditions of consent for the original project;
- relevant environmental planning instruments, policies and guidelines, and
- the requirements of the EP&A Act.

The development consent required Neoen to undertake detailed road network investigations to determine the most appropriate site access route, in consultation with the RMS, Council and the applicant of the adjacent Riverina Solar Farm.

Neoen completed these investigations, and the Department approved Neoen's request to access the site via Burley Griffin Way, Ross Road and Hamilton Road (rather than Irrigation Way and Hamilton Road), as the required level of safety could not be achieved at the Irrigation Way and Hamilton Road intersection.

As an additional outcome of these investigations, Neoen, the RMS and Council identified the need to modify the road upgrade requirements associated with the Burley Griffin Way and Ross Road intersection to ensure the safety and efficiency of the road network.

Project vehicles accessing the site from Burley Griffin Way would need to slow down prior to entering Ross Road. The Auxiliary Left Turn (Short) treatment option includes a shoulder lane to facilitate the safe left hand turn of project vehicles from Burley Griffin Way onto Ross Road.

The Department considers that the modification would improve road safety outcomes during the construction, operation, upgrading and decommissioning phases of the project.

The Department also notes that the existing conditions of consent require Neoen to prepare a detailed Traffic Management Plan (TMP) in consultation with RMS and Council. This will address post-approval traffic management issues, including minimising traffic safety issues and disruption to local users. With this measure in place, the Department is satisfied interactions between project traffic and public road users, as well as safe use of the intersection, would be managed effectively.

6. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

The Department has drafted a recommended Notice of Modification (see **Appendix C**), as well as a consolidated version of the development consent as modified (see **Appendix D**).

Recommended conditions involve modifying condition 6 (a) of Schedule 3 to reflect the treatment upgrade at the Burley Griffin Way and Ross Road intersection.

Neoen has accepted the proposed amended conditions.

7. CONCLUSION

The Department has assessed the modification application in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, having regard to the modification justification, comments from agencies, and documentation relating to the original project.

The Department considers that the proposed modification would increase traffic safety at the Burley Griffin Way and Ross Road intersection and reduce disruption to local road users.

Consequently, the Department is satisfied that the proposed modification is in the public interest and should be approved.

8. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the A/Director, Resource Assessments:

- **considers** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- **determines** that the modification falls within the scope of Section 96(1A) of the EP&A Act;
- **approves** the modification application under Section 96(1A) of the EP&A Act; and
- **signs** the Notice of Modification (**Appendix C**).



Tim Stuckey
Planning Officer
Resource Assessments

06/04/17



Clay Preshaw
A/Director
Resource Assessments

6/4/17

APPENDIX A:

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

APPENDIX B:

AGENCY COMMENTS

APPENDIX C:
NOTICE OF MODIFICATION

APPENDIX D:

CONSOLIDATED CONSENT
