

Notice of decision

Section 2.22 and clause 20 of Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

Application type	State significant development
Application number	SSD 8872
Project name	Sandigo Solar
Applicant	ESCO Pacific Pty Ltd
Consent Authority	Minister for Planning

Decision

The Acting/Executive Director under delegation from the Minister for Planning has, under s.4.38 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act) granted consent to the development application subject to the recommended conditions.

A copy of the Department of Planning & Environment's Assessment Report, development consent and conditions are available [here](#).

Date of decision

27 July 2018

Reasons for decision

The following matters were taken into consideration in making this decision:

- the relevant matters listed in section 4.15 of the Act and the additional matters listed in the statutory context section of the Department's Assessment Report;
- the prescribed matters under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*;
- the objects of the Act;
- the considerations under sections 7.14(2) and 7.16(3) of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW);
- all information submitted with the development application during the assessment and information considered in the Department's Assessment Report;
- the findings and recommendations in the Department's Assessment Report; and
- the views of the community about the project (see Attachment 1).

The findings and recommendations set out in the Department's Assessment Report were accepted and adopted as the reasons for making this decision.

The key reasons for granting consent to the development application are as follows:

- the project would provide a range of benefits for the region and the State as a whole, including:
 - contributing to a more diverse local industry;
 - generating a total capital investment of approximately \$120 million;
 - creating up to 150 construction jobs;
 - generating enough electricity to power up to 37,000 homes, saving up to 210,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year; and,
 - assisting in transitioning the electricity sector from coal and gas fired power stations to renewable energy;
- the project is permissible with development consent under *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007*, and is consistent with relevant NSW Government policies;
- the impacts on the community and the environment can be appropriately minimised, managed or offset to an acceptable level, subject to the recommended conditions of consent;
- the issues raised by the community during consultation and in submissions have been considered and adequately addressed through the conditions of consent (see Attachment 1); and
- weighing all relevant considerations, the project is in the public interest.

Attachment 1 – Consideration of Community Views

The Department exhibited the Environmental Impact Statement for the project from 9 March 2018 until 8 April 2018 (30 days) and received one public submission in objection to the project, from a resident living within 1.4 kilometres of the project site.

The Department visited the site and consulted with the member of the public that lodged the objection.

The key issues raised by the objector and considered in the Department's Assessment Report and by the decision maker include impacts to agricultural land, traffic and transport, and risks associated with the energy storage facility.

Other issues are addressed in detail in the Department's Assessment Report.

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Consideration</i>
<p><i>Agricultural land</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of cropping land in land zoned RU1 Primary Production 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has consulted with Narrandera Shire Council and the Department of Industry – Crown Lands and Water, and considers that the project would not significantly reduce the overall agricultural productivity of the region and that the site could be returned to agricultural uses in the future. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining the productivity of the agricultural land during the construction and operation of the project and reinstating the agricultural capability of the land following the decommissioning of the project.
<p><i>Traffic and transport</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased traffic Damage to the road network 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has consulted with Narrandera Shire Council and RMS on the proposed transport routes, and has agreed on road upgrades and maintenance requirements for the local and classified road network. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy vehicle restrictions, road upgrades, maintenance requirements and implementation of a detailed Traffic Management Plan.
<p><i>Hazards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project includes an on-site energy storage facility, comprising up to 240 lithium-ion battery units containing 16,000 lithium-ion battery cells 	<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A hazard assessment was undertaken in accordance with <i>SEPP No. 33 – Hazardous and Offensive Development</i> which considered and proposed specific control measures to minimise the risks from handling, storage and operation of the batteries. The Department has carefully assessed the proposed energy storage facility in consultation with its internal hazard unit and relevant government agencies, and considers that the risk associated with the facility would be minimal. <p><i>Conditions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of a Fire Safety Study for the development, in consultation with Fire and Rescue NSW, and implementation of any recommended mitigation measures.