

Submission Responses

Denman Road, Muswellbrook NSW

DA No. 2020/49 – Lot 400 DP 791860

Dated: 12 November 2020

Submission 1

List of Concerns	Response
situated on arable land and dev would contadict the LEP	We refer to 7.4 of the Statement of Environmental Effects <i>Soil and Land Capability</i> <i>Land capability classes aim to classify land according to its inherent ability and protection from erosion and other forms of land degradation. The classification of any land is based on biophysical features which determine the limitations and hazards of that land. The main hazards and limitations include: water erosion, wind erosion, soil structure decline, soil acidification, salinity, waterlogging, shallow soils, rockiness, and mass movement. The eight class system recognises four types of land uses with land capability decreasing from Class 1 to Class 8:</i> <i>Class 1 – 3: land suitable for cultivation</i> <i>Class 4 – 5: land suitable for grazing and restricted cultivation</i> <i>Class 6: land suitable for grazing</i> <i>Class 7 – 8: land not suitable for agricultural production</i> <i>The State Land Capability mapping indicates that the northern portion, approximately 12ha, of the site is classified as Class 3. The remaining area is Class 4. Better soil and cropping land is apparent to the north of Denman Road. The Site is not used for commercial cropping and the small portion of Class 3 land on the Solar Park Site will not affect the regional agricultural land capacity.</i>
in a very high depositional dust area from coal mining which would reduce efficiency outputs of solar panels by 50%	Cleaning of the solar panels for dust is part of the operation and maintenance requirements for the Solar Farm

	The establishment of the landscaped native vegetation screening and buffer zone (10m) around the solar farm will assist in mitigating the dust.
limitations in proposed screening as the site has no water for effective visual buffer if the dam as proposed is filled in.	Native vegetation shall be utilised for the screening and buffer zone that have low water requirements that are appropriate for the area. The native vegetation shall be maintained throughout the life of the project.
the site being agricultural forms part of the mining land buffer zone to limit an already conflicted land use issue in the immediate area.	We refer to 7.2 of the Statement of Environmental Effects <i>Site Constraints</i> <i>Review of the ePlanning Spatial Viewer revealed no Protection mapping affecting the Solar Park Site. Matters reviewed include: Acid Sulphate Soils, Airport Noise, Drinking Water Catchment, Groundwater Vulnerability, Mineral and Resource Land, Obstacle Limitation Surface, Riparian Lands and Watercourses, Salinity, Scenic Protection Land, Terrestrial Biodiversity, Wetlands, Environmentally Sensitive Land.</i> We refer to 3.4 of the Statement of Environmental Effects <i>Business and Industry</i> <i>As the Solar Generation Facility are located in the Buffer Area for the BHP Mt Arthur Coal Mine we have approached BHP to seek pre-lodgement feedback and/or support. To-date BHP has not offered any feedback but has advised that any views will be submitted in response to the public notification of the development application.</i>
benefits in supply seem over stated and on going employment is negligible	The benefits identified in the Executive Summary of Statement of Environmental Effects are the expected effects of the solar farm.
NSW Gov has just announced 3 renewable energy zones to prevent land use conflict in other areas of the state.	We refer to 14 of the Statement of Environmental Effects - Statutory and Planning Framework whereby all the relevant Planning Zone Objectives, Permissibility and all associated Commonwealth and NSW Legislation was reviewed and no conflict was identified with the development of a solar farm. Additionally, the NSW Government has declared the Hunter Valley will be a Renewable Energy Zone.
no supply guarantee to grid has been achieved is concerning as large solar dev. are facing similar hurdles as there is congestion in the market.	We refer to 3.4.1 of the Statement of Environmental Effects

	<i>The Solar Generation Facility will be connected to the Ausgrid Power Distribution Network in the onsite 66kv power easement corridor. The Proponent has had several meetings with Ausgrid to help plan the Solar Park network connection and generation capacity.</i> <i>The planning matters of interest to Ausgrid are:</i> <i>• The 66kv network connection</i> <i>• The physical location of the solar park infrastructure in relation to the existing distribution lines</i> <i>• Lateral crossings of the 66kv easement for access, electrical cabling and services</i> <i>There is a formal process for connection to the Power Network which requires approval by the Network Service Provider (Ausgrid) and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) in accordance with the National Electricity Rules (NER's). This process independent of, and will run concurrently with the Development Application.</i> Further Ausgrid, the network service provider, has advised there is sufficient capacity and network strength within the Muswellbrook area for the proposed solar farm.
the proponent is the developer ? unclear.	The Proponent is the Developer for the project.
possible negative effects on near residences in loss of further amenity and reduced property value interest...as not many people's first choice to live next door to a solar farm.	The Statement of Environmental Effects and supporting documents details the all the potential impacts and required assessments to ensure that there is minimal or no loss of amenity to residents. The location was determined due to the proximity to the existing coal mines to mitigate any loss of amenity. Observation in recently constructed Solar Farms in Queensland and NSW shows no negative effect on property value.

Submission 2

List of Concerns	Response
While I do not object to the solar park I do have concerns the 10 metre green zone would be inadequate near my house, I would like to see at least a 20 metre wide green zone from the Denman road boundary up past the substation yard, there also does not seem to be enough trees in the plan for the solar development judging by the photo supplied of a similar development, one solution would be for the solar development to plant two rows of trees closely spaced for approx. 300 metres on my side of the boundary fence as well, any temporary sheep fencing, establishing and maintenance cost to be borne by the solar farm.	We have undertaken to do detailed Landscape Drawings by Landscape Architects to ensure that the 10m buffer zone is thoroughly designed to ensure adequate visual screening. The detailed Landscape Drawings will be part of the Development Approval submission.
I appreciate the hours of work timeframe supplied when the project is in construction, another must be given for the hours between sunset and sunrise when the project is up and running, would I be correct in thinking there would be zero noise in these hours, this should be a condition set by council as I have a "special needs child" that reacts to certain noise, the ausgrid power line has three power poles on the solar farm block but for some reason the sub-yard has been designed so it is on my boundary (north boundary), it would be reasonable to expect an acoustic sound barrier as a condition perhaps masonry or other selective material as to dampen noise especially on the two sides of the sub-yard facing my house.	We confirm that the Solar Farm will be primarily be operational during day light hours, however, the project may operate at night time from time to time due to the installation and use of Battery Energy Storage System. The Solar Farm is a passive operation and the noise is limited to operation of small electric motors that pivot the solar panels (these will only operate during daylight hours) and small fans within the inverters and batteries (which may operate occasionally at night). There are no noises from the equipment that would be loud or abrupt nature. The 66kV Substation on the Northern Boundary has minimal noise emissions. The electric motors to pivot the solar panels and small fans within the inverters and batteries are located away from the property boundaries. Please refer to the Appendix C Denman Road Concept Plans. Finally, vegetation allowed for as part of the Detailed landscape plan will act as noise suppression.

Another consideration worth mentioning would be to have any acoustic wall, the battery storage containers and any other structure that is noticeable painted a colour to blend into the surrounding landscape.	The battery containers, structures and substation should not be visible after the establishment of the visual screen landscaping. Typically, the electrical plant is coloured in light colours to minimise heat absorption.
While i believe the project has the potential to showcase the best in solar of this scale and for the owners to take pride in their development I do have some doubts on how they will get trees in the green zone up to a point of establishment, after the last few years of below average rainfall, hot dry summers and with the lack of water, maybe a tree count or checkable register would be needed for regular upkeep as to maintain or replace any trees as needed, the success of this project would be largely based on this green zone to soften the impact.	Native vegetation shall be utilised for the screening and buffer zone that have low water requirements that are appropriate for the area. An Operation and Maintenance Contractor will be engaged for the project and the native vegetation screen shall be maintained throughout the life of the project.

Submission 3

List of Concerns	Response
The grounds for my objections are that the property owners in the Roxburgh area have not been made aware of the proposal formally as part of the DA process. The properties to the southern end of Roxburgh Road due to their elevation will have a view of the solar park, and this has not been identified in section 8.3 of the environmental statement.	The Muswellbrook Council undertook a formal notification process pursuant to the Muswellbrook Shire Development Control Plan. We further undertook a consultation process as detailed in 3 Statement of Environmental Effects. Unfortunately, due to COVID restriction we have been unable to attend the area and engage further with the community eg presentations and Q&A. The visual impact assessment for residences was performed for those properties within 1.5km of the Solar Farm (Reference being 8.3 of the Statement of Environmental Effects) as this is considered a reasonable distance for the purposes of an assessment. As to the residence outside of this area we refer to 8.3.1 of the Statement of Environmental Effects.

	<i>The majority of the residential dwellings being partially screened or filtered by either topography, vegetation or both, and where the Solar Generation Facility may be visible, dwellings are at a such a distance that the Solar Generation Facility would not be a dominant feature in views. Over time, the proposed landscape screening will reduce the visibility of the solar array, further reducing the visual impact of the Solar Generation Facility.</i> <i>Views from the surrounding road network will be limited by Landscape Screening. The local area does not hold high visual landscape values, particularly from a tourism perspective, and as such the visual impact to the local road network will be negligible.</i>
Properties in this area are already impacted by being included in either Mangoola or Bengalla's mitigation areas due to noise levels and would now have their properties further downgraded in price value due to having their views impacted by a solar farm on the opposing hill.	We refer to 8.3.1 of the Statement of Environmental Effects <i>The majority of the residential dwellings being partially screened or filtered by either topography, vegetation or both, and where the Solar Generation Facility may be visible, dwellings are at a such a distance that the Solar Generation Facility would not be a dominant feature in views. Over time, the proposed landscape screening will reduce the visibility of the solar array, further reducing the visual impact of the Solar Generation Facility.</i> <i>Views from the surrounding road network will be limited by Landscape Screening. The local area does not hold high visual landscape values, particularly from a tourism perspective, and as such the visual impact to the local road network will be negligible.</i> The Visual Impact would have a negligible effect on the property values within the area. Observation in recently constructed Solar Farms in Queensland and NSW shows no negative effect on property value.
I would like to object on the basis of visual impact. Currently we look straight across the Hunter river to Pukara (directly on the opposite riverbank to our property) to the hills where the solar farm is proposed. It is aesthetically pleasing and happens to be the view from our living room in	See refer to our responses directly above.

which we took advantage of the view by having large windows installed during our renovations. Due to our higher elevation I believe our view will be compromised with a solar farm on the opposing hill.	
It is also an unknown whether the above properties will get the glare/ reflection from these solar panels as they track the sun due to our elevation.	We refer to 8.3.1 of the Statement of Environmental Effects Glare and Light <i>Sometimes communities have concerns that there may be an issue of glint and glare surrounding the reflectivity of the proposed PV solar panels. The Poly-Crystalline Solar Panels proposed for the installation are designed to absorb the sun's energy and directly convert it to electricity. The PV modules being used in the installation for the Denman Solar Park will absorb approximately 82- 90%+ of the light received and have been designed using anti-reflective coatings which significantly reduces the reflectivity. Constructed of dark-coloured materials and covered with anti-reflective coatings, today's typical solar panels may reflect as little as 2 percent of incoming sunlight.</i> <i>Around the world, solar power plants are even located next to airports where glare would be of paramount concern, and evidence thus far suggests that glare has not been a problem for airport personnel.</i> <i>Our investigations have shown that there are no residential properties from which the completed facility will be visible from above. And due to proposed buffer vegetation, the nearest residence is completely screened from the Solar Park site. This will ensure that the visual impact of the completed installation is considered negligible.</i>
As we are already above the height of the olive trees I do not believe any vegetation screening at the site will help our cause.	We refer to our responses above.
I would suggest that the expected output of the solar farm would also not be as efficient as stated due to the amount of dust sediment which would constantly be on the panels due to the airborne dust from the surrounding mines ,in particularly Mount Arthur.	Cleaning of the solar panels for dust is part of the operation and maintenance requirements for the Solar Farm The establishment of the landscaped native vegetation screening and buffer zone (10m) around the solar farm will assist in mitigating the dust.

I would also object that there would appear to be No formal compensation/ consultation process for affected property owners should this project be approved in its current state and it does impact their properties and lifestyles and property values. I would suggest that in line with mining project approvals if a property is impacted due to a visual impact/ operational impacts/ property depreciation that the company needs to liaison with the affected property owner to an agreed outcome. Some conditions should be applied in this respect.	The Muswellbrook Council undertook a formal notification process pursuant to the Muswellbrook Shire Development Control Plan. We further undertook a consultation process as detailed in 3 of the Statement of Environmental Effects. Unfortunately, due to COVID restriction we have been unable to attend the area and engage further with the community eg presentations and Q&A. We cannot make a comment about mining project approvals and compensation of residents affects as we are not a mining company.
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Submission 4

List of Concerns	Response
Same as Submission 1	See above

Submission 5

List of Concerns	Response
The grounds of my objection are in regard to 8.3 of the Statement of Environmental Effects. At point 8.3.2. it states, "Mitigation measures Following installation and full maturity of the Landscape Screening, the Solar Generation Facility will not be visible from the local road network, or residential dwellings in the farming areas surrounding the Site. The visual impact to residential dwellings has been assessed as negligible to low." You have stated that the visual impact to residential dwellings has been assessed as negligible to low, yet our three dwellings across the Hunter River on Roxburgh Road are at such an elevated height we are able to view the area of the proposed Solar Park. We fear that this will make it aesthetically unpleasant to look at and may impact the value of our property.	We refer to 8.3.1 of the Statement of Environmental Effects <i>The majority of the residential dwellings being partially screened or filtered by either topography, vegetation or both, and where the Solar Generation Facility may be visible, dwellings are at a such a distance that the Solar Generation Facility would not be a dominant feature in views. Over time, the proposed landscape screening will reduce the visibility of the solar array, further reducing the visual impact of the Solar Generation Facility.</i> <i>Views from the surrounding road network will be limited by Landscape Screening. The local area does not hold high visual landscape values, particularly from a tourism perspective, and as such the visual impact to the local road network will be negligible.</i>

	The Visual Impact would have a negligible effect on the property values within the area. Observation in recently constructed Solar Farms in Queensland and NSW shows no negative effect on property value.
Due to not being within the 1.5km radius of the site we have had no correspondence regarding the Solar Park. We feel that even though we are not within the radius we will be impacted and therefore should have received correspondence regarding this Project. We are not opposed to Solar Power and would appreciate some consultation to further our understanding.	The Muswellbrook Council undertook a formal notification process pursuant to the Muswellbrook Shire Development Control Plan. We further undertook a consultation process as detailed in 3 of the Statement of Environmental Effects. Unfortunately, due to COVID restriction we have been unable to attend the area and engage further with the community eg presentations and Q&A. Once the COVID restrictions between QLD and NSW are lifted we will continue with our community consultation process.