

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



Introduction:

HDB Town Planning and Design have been engaged by client Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd to prepare a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) for the proposed Allandale Solar Farm, located on Lot 201 DP 1099068 at 1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale.

The VIA supports the DA submission for the proposal. The purpose of the assessment is to provide a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the visibility and potential visual impacts of the proposal.

The Site:

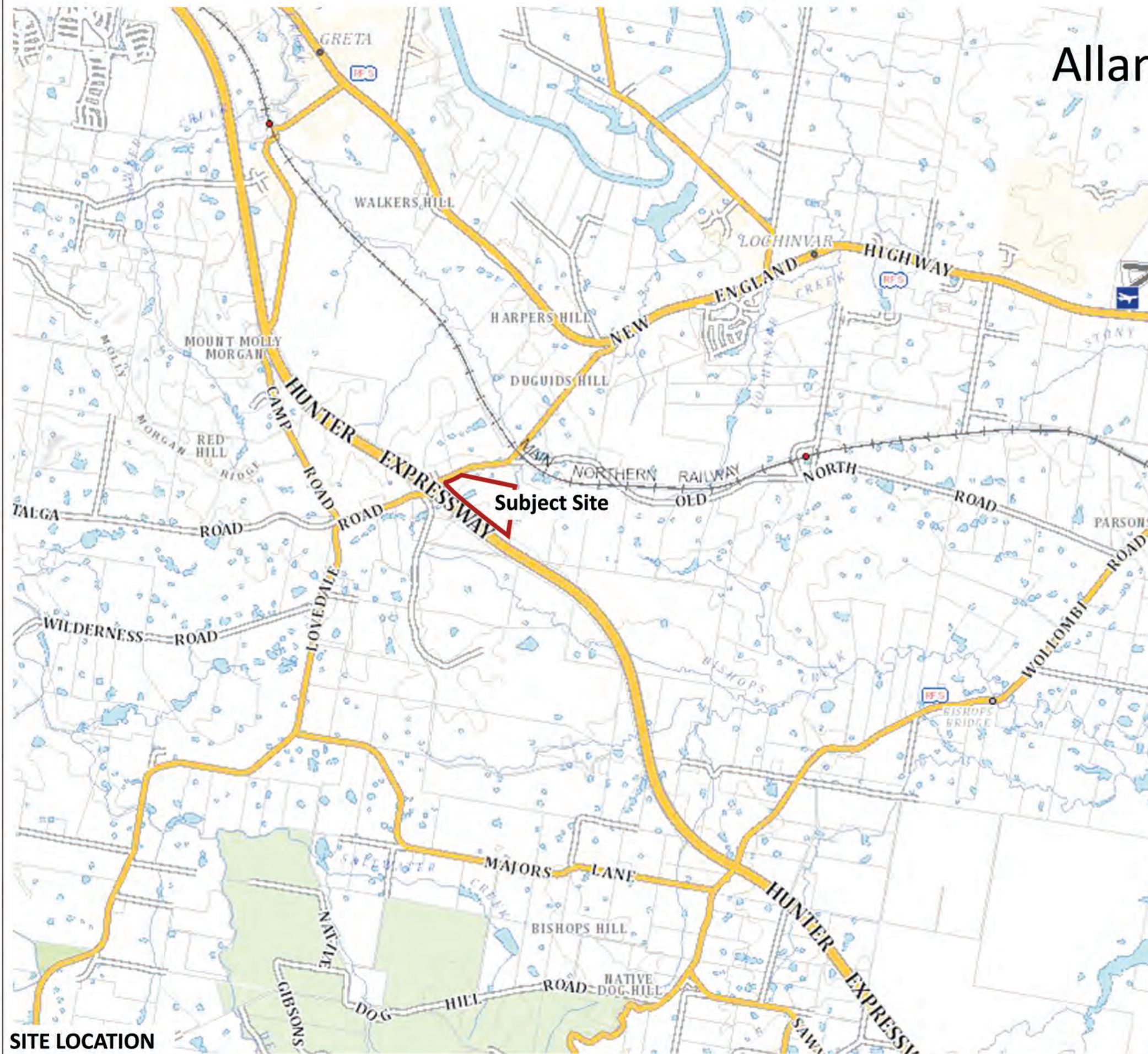
The subject site is a 33.35 ha irregular polygonal-shaped lot in the suburb of Allandale. The lot is located approximately 13km north of the CBD of Cessnock and about 50km west of Newcastle. The lot is bounded by Main Northern Railway to the north and Hunter Expressway running to the south-west of the site.

The lot is mostly vacant with an existing dwelling to its northwest and some scattered vegetation to the northeast. There is an existing water dam on the site.

Existing Visual Environment:

The site sits on the RU2 - Rural Landscape zoned lot within the Cessnock LGA.

The surrounding landscape character is dominant with large vacant land with low-lying grass and scattered medium-height trees. Most of the vegetation resides to the east of the lot.



SITE LOCATION

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A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment					FILE REF 21/038	REVISION A	CLIENT Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd	
REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENT		FILE PATH:		SCALE N/A	DRAWING NUMBER 21/038	PLAN NAME 1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale		

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



The Proposal:

The proposal seeks to develop a 5MW AC Solar Farm and battery on Lot 201 DP 1099068 at 1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale.

The proposed development will consist of following elements:

- Solar Panels and PEG Array Structure
- String Inverters
- Switchgear and Transformer
- Non-habitable Storage Shed
- Vehicle Access Road
- Security Fence
- Ausgrid point of attachment
- Vegetation for Visual Screening

Vegetation (remnant grass) will only be removed within the designated array area and access track. Existing vegetation along boundary fences will be incorporated into the design.



PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT



PROPOSED STRING INVERTERS

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Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



Study Method:

The potential Visual Impact of the proposal is measured based on the relationship between Visual Effect and Visual Sensitivity.

Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is a measure of how critically a change to the existing landscape is viewed by people from different areas. The assessment is based on the number of people affected, land use, and the distance of the viewer from the proposal.

Visual Effect

Visual effect is the interaction between a proposal and the existing visual environment. It is often expressed as the level of visual contrast of the proposal against its setting or background in which it is viewed.

Low Level: occurs when a proposal blends in with its existing viewed landscape due to a high level of integration of one or several of the following: form, shape, pattern, line, texture or colour. It can also result from the use of effective screening often using a combination of landform and landscaping.

Moderate Level: occurs where a proposal is visible and contrasts with its viewed landscape however, there has been some degree of integration.

High Level: when a proposal has a high visual contrast to the surrounding landscape with little or no natural screening or integration created by vegetation or topography.



VIEW POINT ASSESSMENT LOCATION

VISUAL IMPACT RATING		VISUAL EFFECT		
		HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
VISUAL SENSITIVITY	HIGH	High Impact	High Impact	Moderate Impact
	MODERATE	High Impact	Moderate Impact	Low Impact
	LOW	Moderate Impact	Low Impact	Low Impact

VISUAL IMPACT RATING TABLE

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A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment				SCALE N/A	DRAWING NUMBER 21/038	PLAN NAME 1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale

North West Elevation

☀ 146°SE (T) • -32.722734, 151.408017 ±4 m ▲ 123 m

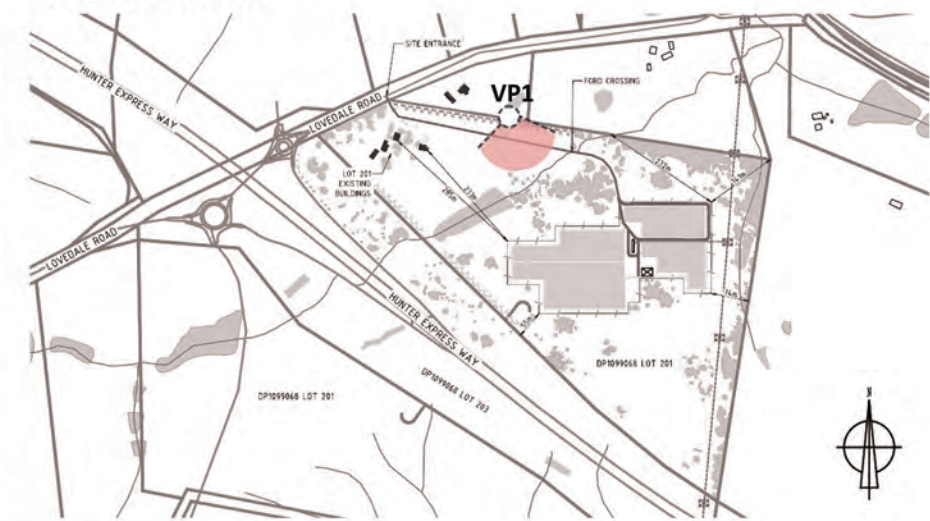


INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



View Point 1:



Description

The photograph is taken from the northern boundary of the site in front of the neighbouring property, as shown in the Figure above.

Potential Visual Impact

From this location, the proposed solar farm would be screened partially screened from the existing vegetation. The western extent of the solar farm may be visible from the properties, as they are located about 320m from the site. It is considered the visual sensitivity of the view point is **moderate**, as well as the visual effect of the proposal. Therefore, resulting in a **moderate** visual impact rating from this viewpoint.

To reduce this potential impact, vegetation screening is proposed on the northern boundary of the site to further obstruct the view from the neighbouring properties.

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment
REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENT
		FILE PATH:

North West Elevation

☉ 161°SE (T) • -32.722919, 151.4091 ±3 m ▲ 120 m

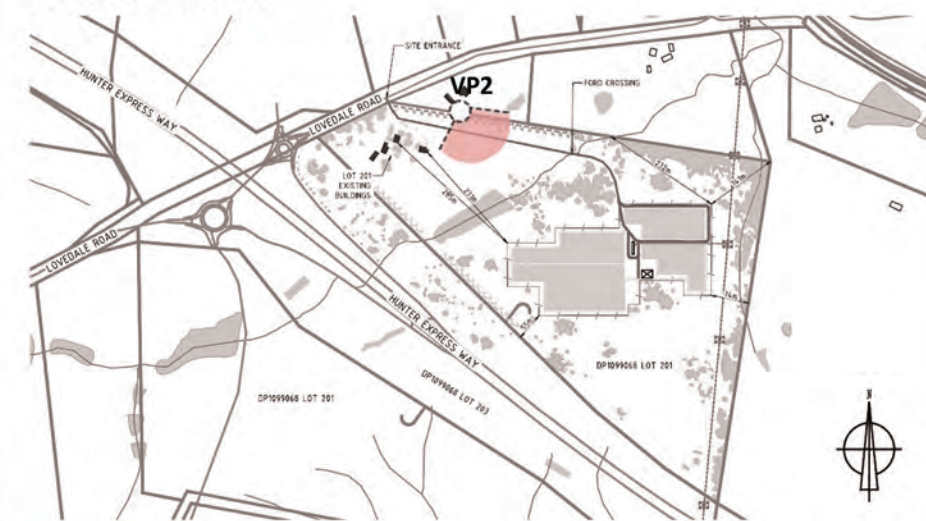
Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM



View Point 2:



Description

The view point is located on the northern boundary of the site in front of the farm area of neighbouring property, as shown in the Figure above.

Potential Visual Impact

The proposed solar farm would be mostly screened from the existing vegetation when viewed from the selected view point. It is considered the visual sensitivity of the development would be **moderate**, but, visual effect of the view point is **low** because of the low visibility and maximum screening of the development.

The resulting overall visual impact would have a **low** visual impact rating.

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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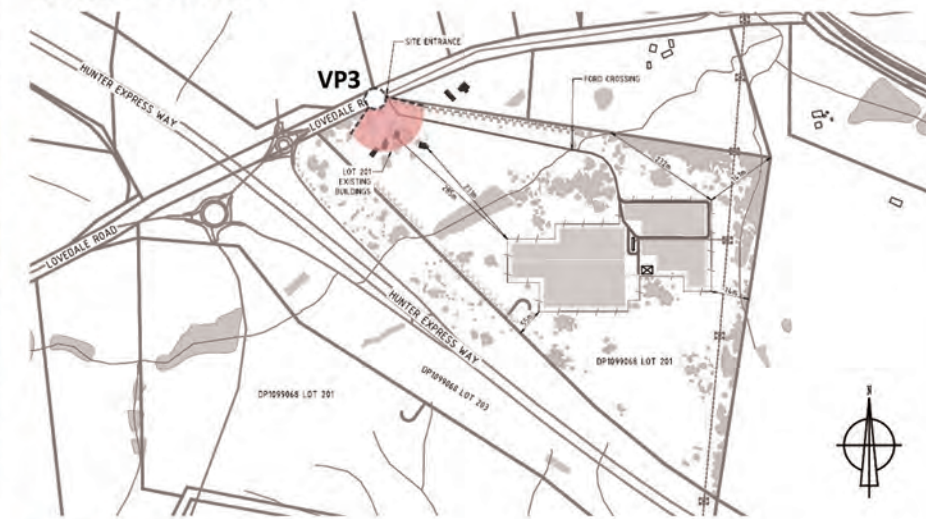
North West Elevation

☉ 132°SE (T) • -32.722467, 151.406617 ±8 m ▲ 134 m

Proposed Solar Farm

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW

View Point 3:



Description

The photograph is taken from Lovedale Road, adjacent to the existing entry gate.

Potential Visual Impact

The view is generally screened from existing vegetation. It is likely that part of the north-west elevation would be visible from the viewpoint. The viewpoint is about 450m from the proposed solar farm.

It is considered the overall visual impact of the of the development from this viewpoint would be **low**.

INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM

Lovedale Road
28 Dec 2021, 12:10:39

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	
VISUAL EFFECT						
Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	
OVERALL IMPACT						
	High		Moderate		Low	

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REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENT	FILE PATH:
A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment	

North West Elevation

☉ 126°SE (T) • -32.723806, 151.404768 ±4 m ▲ 142 m

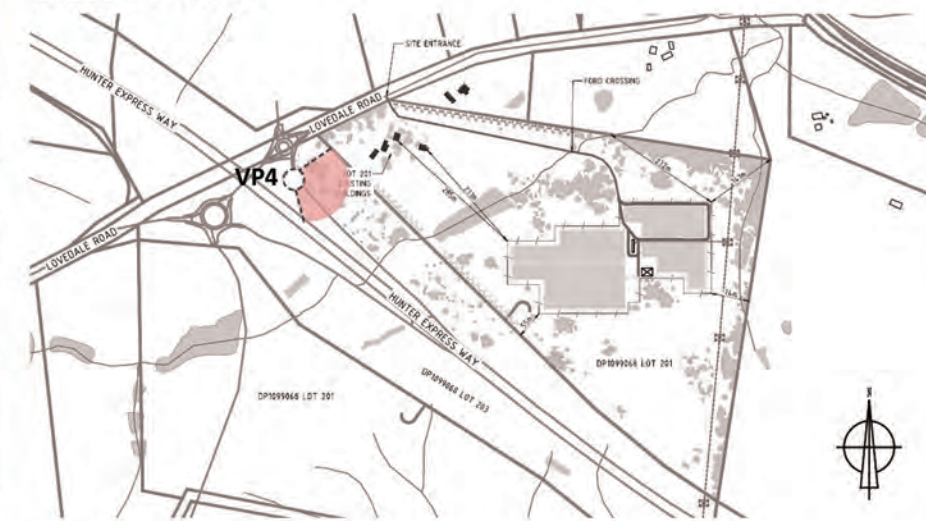
Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM



View Point 4:



Description

The view point is at the entry to the Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp, as shown in above Figure.

Potential Visual Impact

It is likely that part of the western elevation of the solar farm would be visible from the Expressway Ramp. The view is mostly screened by existing vegetation with view point at about 450m from the closest point of the proposed structure.

The visual sensitivity would be **moderate** from the selected view point, with **low** visual effect.

Therefore, it is considered the overall visual impact of the of the development from this viewpoint would be **low**.

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment		
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21/038	A	Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd
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N/A	21/038	1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale

West Elevation

☀ 108°E (T) • -32.724185, 151.405094 ±3 m ▲ 131 m

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW

Proposed Solar Farm

Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp

28 Dec 2021, 12:03:03

INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

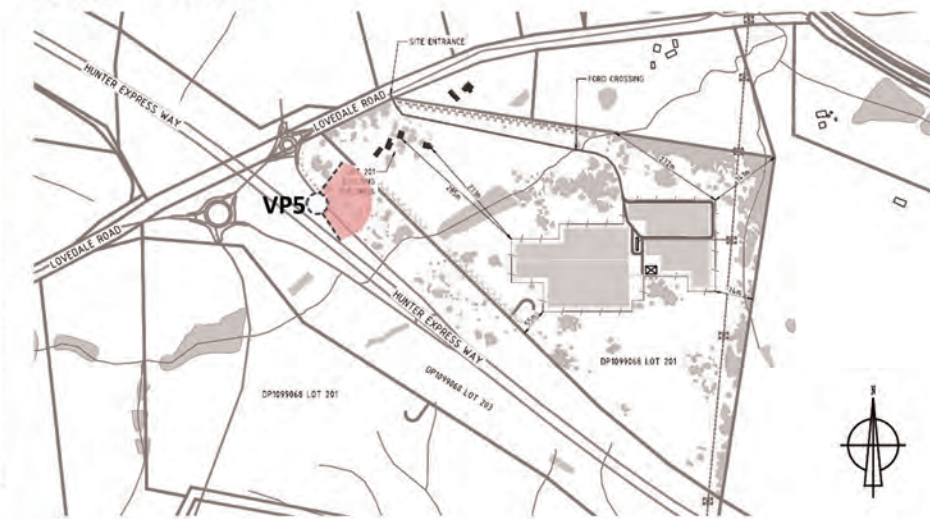
VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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View Point 5:



Description

The photo is captured from the the Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp, as shown in above Figure.

Potential Visual Impact

It is considered most of the proposed development is screened by existing vegetation from the view point. The visual sensitivity as well as visual effect from the selected view point is **low**. Hence, the potential visual impact of the development would also be **low**.

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REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENT	FILE PATH:
A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment	

West Elevation

☉ 85°E (T) • -32.724636, 151.405575 ±3 m ▲ 129 m

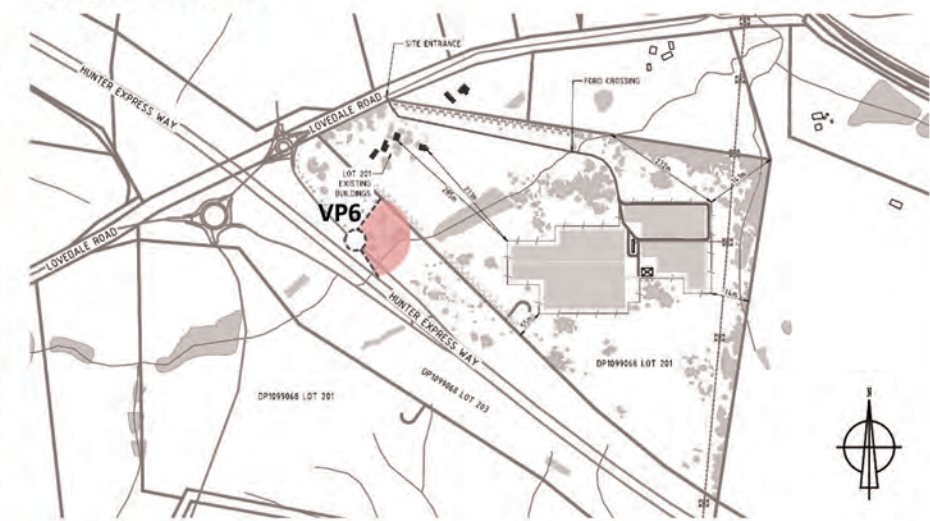


INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



View Point 6:



Description

The view point is on the Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp, as depicted in above Figure.

Potential Visual Impact

The potential visual impact of the development would be **low**.

Considering the minimal visibility of the proposed solar farm, as it sits amidst the existing vegetation and is at favourable distance from the highway, the visual effect and visual sensitivity is **low** from the selected view point. Moreover, additional landscaping is proposed to the south-western lot boundary to enhance the existing screening.

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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21/038	A	Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd
SCALE	DRAWING NUMBER	PLAN NAME
N/A	21/038	1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale

West Elevation

☉ 84°E (T) • -32.725031, 151.40604 ±3 m ▲ 126 m



INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

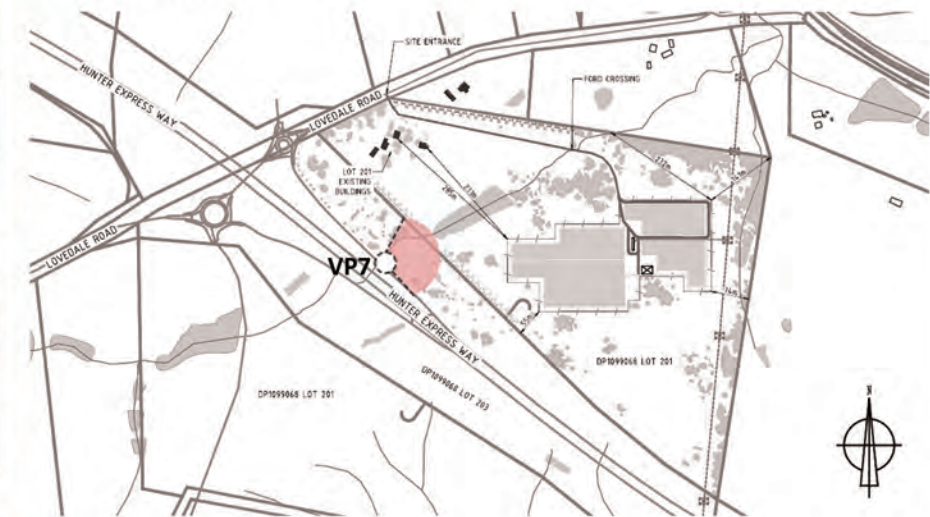
OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



View Point 7:



Description

The photo is taken from the above marked location on the Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp.

Potential Visual Impact

From this view point, the proposed solar farm would be highly screened by existing vegetation. Moreover, additional proposed vegetation to the south-western boundary would further hindered the visibility of the development. Therefore, it is considered the potential visual impact of the development would be very **low**, when viewed from this point from the Expressway.

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West Elevation

☀ 84°E (T) • -32.725522, 151.406621 ±3 m ▲ 124 m

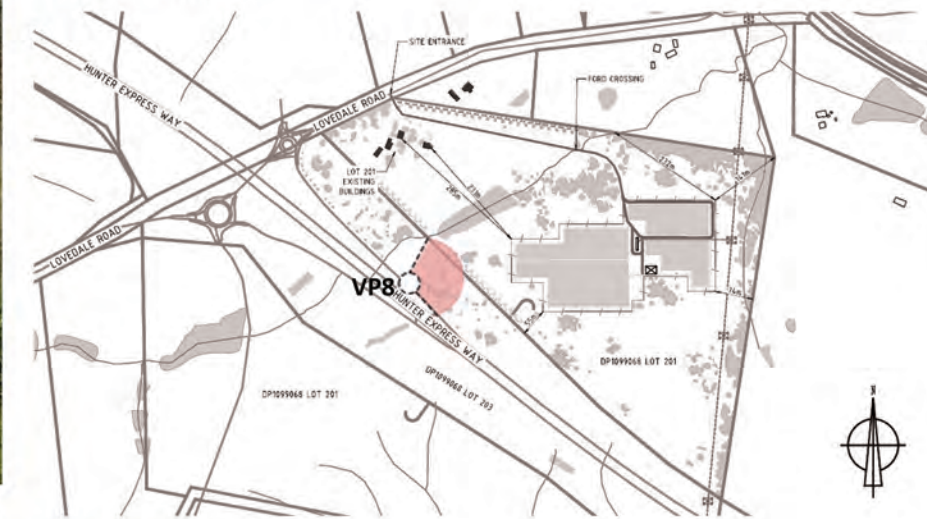


INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



View Point 8:



Description

This viewpoint is located near the intersection of Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp and the Freeway, as shown in above Figure.

Potential Visual Impact

From this view point, most of the west elevation of the proposed solar farm would be screened by the existing vegetation as well as the proposed vegetation, indicating **low** visual effect and sensitivity. Therefore, the potential visual impact of the development would also be **low**.

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	
VISUAL EFFECT						
Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	
OVERALL IMPACT						
	High		Moderate		Low	

A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment		
REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENT	FILE PATH:	

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PO Box 40 Maitland NSW 2320
1st Floor, 44 Church Street
Maitland NSW 2320
T: 02 4933 6682
F: 02 4933 6683
www.hdb.com.au

DRAWN BY	DATE	PROJECT NAME
AG	11/02/2022	Solar Farm
FILE REF	REVISION	CLIENT
21/038	A	Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd
SCALE	DRAWING NUMBER	PLAN NAME
N/A	21/038	1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale

West Elevation

☉ 222°SW (T) ☉ 32°43'29"S, 151°24'19"E ±13ft ▲ 368ft

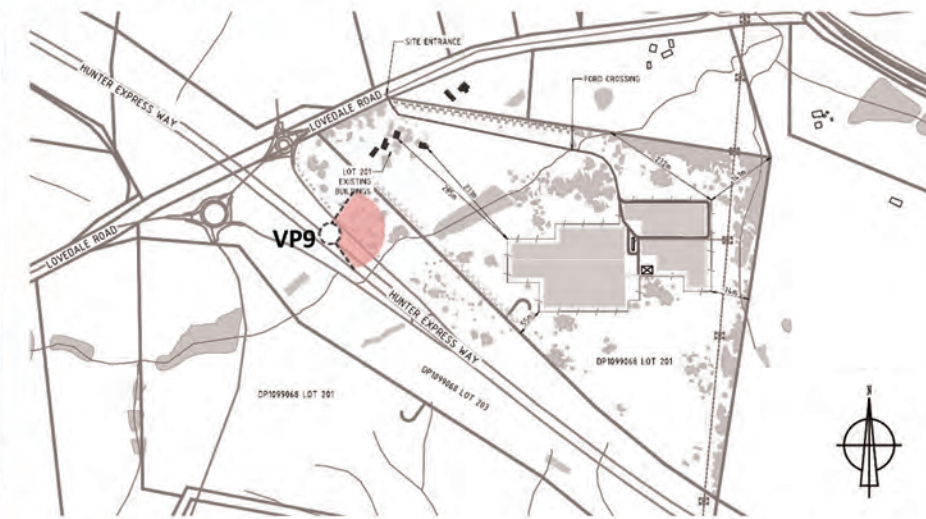
Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM



View Point 9:



Description

This viewpoint is located on the Hunter Expressway, as shown in above Figure.

Potential Visual Impact

It is likely the proposal would be screened by vegetation in the foreground from this location. There is unlikely to be any noticeable change to the existing visual landscape from this location.

The visual sensitivity from the view point is very **low** because of the increased distance with **no** visual effect, therefore, altogether resulting in **nil** visual impact.

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment		
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F: 02 4933 6683
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DRAWN BY AG	DATE 11/02/2022	PROJECT NAME Solar Farm
FILE REF 21/038	REVISION A	CLIENT Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd
SCALE N/A	DRAWING NUMBER 21/038	PLAN NAME 1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale

West Elevation

☉ 222°SW (T) ☉ 32°43'31"S, 151°24'21"E ±13ft ▲ 344ft

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



INDICATIVE EXTENT OF SOLAR FARM

POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT MATRIX

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

Land Use	High		Moderate		Low	
Distance	High		Moderate		Low	

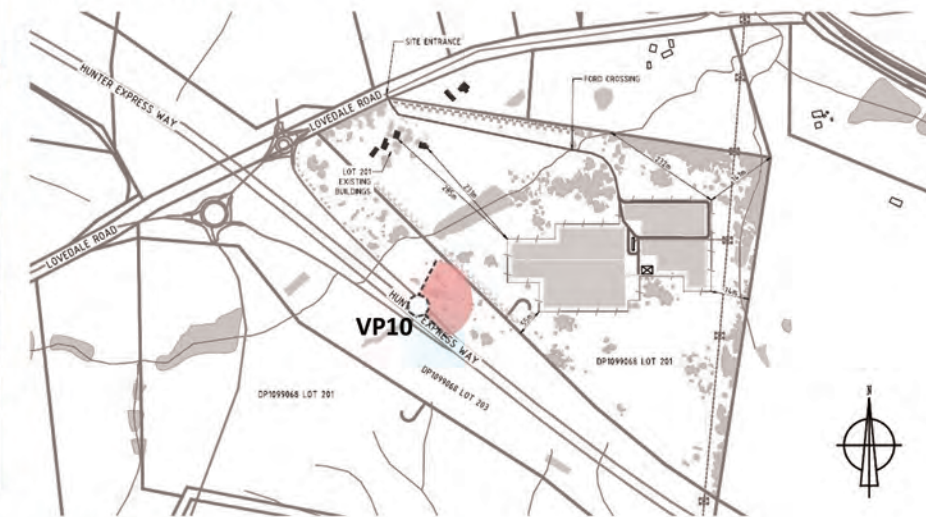
VISUAL EFFECT

Size and Bulk	High		Moderate		Low	
Colour/Reflection	High		Moderate		Low	
Visibility	High		Moderate		Low	

OVERALL IMPACT

	High		Moderate		Low	
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View Point 10:



Description

This viewpoint is located near the intersection of Hunter Expressway Ramp and Expressway, as shown in above Figure.

Potential Visual Impact

It is considered the proposed development would have **no** potential visual impact.

The proposed Solar Farm is scarcely visible from the selected viewpoint because of the existing vegetation verge and topography of the area. Moreover, it is located at a long distance away, with **no** visual effect.

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DRAWN BY AG	DATE 11/02/2022	PROJECT NAME Solar Farm
FILE REF 21/038	REVISION A	CLIENT Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd
SCALE N/A	DRAWING NUMBER 21/038	PLAN NAME 1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale

Allandale Solar Farm, 5MW



Conclusion:

The objective of the VIA is not to determine whether the proposal is visible or not, but to determine how the proposal will impact existing visual amenity and the existing landscape character of the surrounding area. If there is a potential for a negative impact on these factors it must then be investigated if and how this impact can be mitigated to the extent that the impact is reduced to an acceptable level.

The existing landscape character is predominantly rural with vacant land and few dwelling houses with associated farms on large lots.

Although the planned area of the proposed development is large, locations from which the proposal would be visible are minimal. Views from surrounding residences are likely to be limited due to the existing and proposed screen planting. Due to the viewing distance from publicly accessible roads/Hunter Expressway, the solar farm is likely to appear as a small development in the overall landscape. There will be no removal of existing vegetation and will be incorporated into the design, reducing the potential visual impacts. Moreover, additional vegetation is proposed to the north and south-west of the lot boundary.

Therefore, it is considered the proposed development could be undertaken whilst maintaining the core landscape character of the area and having a very **low** visual impact on the surrounding landscape.

OVERALL POTENTIAL VISUAL IMPACT

VIEW POINTS	LOCATION	VISUAL SENSITIVITY	VISUAL EFFECT	VISUAL IMPACT
VP 1	Neighbouring Property	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
VP 2	Neighbouring Property	Moderate	Low	Low
VP 3	Lovedale Road	Moderate	Low	Low
VP 4	Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp	Moderate	Low	Low
VP 5	Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp	Low	Low	Low
VP 6	Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp	Low	Low	Low
VP 7	Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp	Low	Low	Low
VP 8	Hunter Expressway Entrance Ramp	Low	Low	Low
VP 9	Hunter Expressway	Low	Nil	Nil
VP 10	Hunter Expressway	Low	Nil	Nil
Overall PVI		Low	Low	Low

Potential Visual Impact of the Proposed Solar Farm

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REVISION	DATE	AMENDMENT	FILE PATH:				FILE REF 21/038	REVISION A	CLIENT Allandale Blue Metal Pty Ltd
A	11/02/2022	Visual Impact Assessment					SCALE N/A	DRAWING NUMBER 21/038	PLAN NAME 1026 Lovedale Road, Allandale