



Our ref: 19310.6

19 March 2021

Gunnedah Shire Council
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Attention: Ashleigh Stewart

Dear Ashleigh,

**RE: Response to Further Request for Additional Information – DA-2020/035 – 262 Hunts Road
Gunnedah NSW 2380**

Thank you for your letter dated 5 March 2021, which sought additional information regarding the proposed establishment of a solar farm (DA-2020/035) at 262 Hunts Road Gunnedah NSW 2380.

Please find below a response to these matters raised by Council, prepared by SLR Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (Formerly KDC Pty Ltd) on behalf of Providence Asset Group (PAG).

1 REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

1.1 Visual Impacts

During the meeting held between Providence Asset Group (the Applicant), SLR (Town Planner representing the Applicant) and Gunnedah Shire Council (Andrew Johns, Wade Hudson, Ashley Stewart) on 18 March 2021, the Applicant committed to providing additional guidance and confirmation on the proposed landscaping and vegetative screening barriers for the purposes of a conditioned consent.

The Applicant accepts a condition of consent to be applied outlining the requirement for landscaping to be established and maintained for the lifespan of the asset that adequately screens the site from external receivers. A detailed landscaping plan will be provided to Council prior to CC. The landscaping plan will consist of a mixture of hardy local native species of variable heights planted in staggered rows so as to provide an increased level of coverage. A 10 m buffer zone will be established between the lot boundary and the site security fence within which landscaping will be established and maintained. The buffer zone will also allow landholder and operational access around the full perimeter of the site.

The detailed landscaping and vegetation management plan will include requirements for maintenance including watering. In the event particular plantings do not survive, the vegetation management plan will outline the requirements for plant replacements with consideration given to the actual performance of the screening.

Finally, although Bushs Lane currently features large growth vegetation that provides a screening barrier for the development from southern viewpoints, the Applicant will also establish informal additional vegetation screening to complement existing vegetation along Bushs Lane. These plantings will be located within the 10 m buffer zone external to the site security fence.

2.1 Noise

The Applicant recognises the number of concerns and objections to the project related to potential noise impacts both during construction and operation. While the detailed Noise Assessment report established that operational noise is not expected to exceed the more stringent (lower) of the Intrusiveness Noise Level or the Amenity Noise Level as per the NSW EPA Noise Policy for Industry 2017, the Applicant acknowledges that the required construction activities are expected to exceed the guidelines of the EPA.

Due to the nature of the required construction activities, no viable solution is available to reduce the construction noise impacts below the EPA guidelines. It is noted while the construction of the solar farm is expected to occur over a period of approximately 6 months, piling activities, which represent the largest noise impacts, are expected to be of a significantly shorter duration. To provide greater context to enable Council's assessment of the project, a summary of the construction activities, duration and their expected noise implications is provided in Table 1.

Construction noise impacts are temporary and will be minimised through management procedures. It is noted the work has the potential to cause disruption to surrounding residential premises during the day therefore the following feasible and reasonable mitigation considerations outlined within the NSW EPA Guidelines will be used to manage these impacts. Mitigation measures like the following are likely to be implemented:

- Using alternative, quieter work methods to reduce the noise at the source;
- Scheduling the noisy work during recommended standard hours;
- Restricting work to defined hours and using respite periods, for example working during defined periods outside business hours and providing respite to residents, subject to negotiation (for example periods of 'quiet' or no work and respite offers, such as movie tickets);
- Temporary relocation of residents to allow a concentrated period of noisy works.

Confirmation of specific measures can be provided prior to the release of a construction certificate.

In addition to the available mitigation strategies outlined in the project specific Noise Assessment report and reiterated in the Statement of Environmental Effects, construction hoarding is proposed to be established between the designated loading/unloading areas and the receivers of greatest impact, given the higher volume of work traffic in this area.

Table 1 – Indicative breakdown of construction activities and relative noise impact

Item	Activity	Indicative duration	Noise impact
Site clearing and civil works	Use of mechanical digger to dress any required project layout areas, prepare hardstand areas, foundations and access roads. Minimal site dressing is expected to be required. Pouring of concrete foundations for inverter, transformer and switchgear	Approximately 10 days.	Low – noise levels will be mainly diesel engine noise from a tracked digger, similar to a tractor working the land. Installation of access roads may require some rolling, as per normal early stage road construction.
Site deliveries	Deliveries from heavy goods vehicles.	Early construction stages, to be undertaken in accordance with the approved Traffic Management Plan	Moderate – noise levels will be mainly diesel engine noise from trucks, forklifts etc. as well as some mechanical noise from setting down equipment in the site compound.
Piling	Mechanical ramming of steel piles into the ground. Expected to be	22 days at a very conservative rate of 100 piles/day installed.	High - Piling noise is reasonable significant and on calm days with little to no wind, a

	approximately 2,200 piles overall.		repetitive metallic “tinking” noise will be heard outside the boundaries of the site while piling works are ongoing.
Trenching	Mechanical digging of trenches for underground cable runs.	~5 days. Trenching requirements of a 6MW solar farm are insignificant and with pre-planning it is expected that these would undertaken in a short time.	Low – noise levels will be mainly diesel engine noise from a tracked digger, similar to a tractor working the land.
Mechanical installation	Distribution of equipment (trackers, modules, electrical equipment) throughout the site. Manual mechanical installation of equipment.	30 days	Low – mainly vehicle movements around site, as well as construction workers conversing and minor mechanical noise as components are placed / bolted in place.
Electrical installation	Distribution of equipment (switchboards, inverter and transformer station, cabling).	30 days	Negligible – mainly vehicle movements around site, with 1-2 large crane movements to install inverter, transformer and switchgear stations, as well as construction workers conversing.
Commissioning	Electrical testing works. Energising the solar farm.	15 days	Negligible – Commissioning will be undertaken by a small number of highly skilled staff. Some

2 CONCLUSION

The proposed establishment of a Solar PV Farm at 262 Hunts Road, Gunnedah will provide a desirable rural compatible use desired by the Gunnedah community. It will support the region assisting to meet the energy needs of the Gunnedah region in a cost effective and environmentally friendly way.

We trust that the information provided is sufficient, however, if any clarification is needed or you require further information, please contact our office.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Pettitt
Town Planner
SLR Consulting