



20 May 2019

Attn: Bradley James  
Senior Planning Officer  
Independent Planning Commission NSW  
Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street  
Sydney, NSW, 2000

### **Proposed development of Orange Grove Sun Farm, Gunnedah, NSW**

#### **Response to 3 May 2019 meeting between Orange Grove Sun Farm Pty Ltd and Independent Planning Commission**

Dear Brad

On behalf of Orange Grove Sun Farm Pty Ltd. (the applicant), I provide further clarification for two of the comments from the IPC briefing held 11:00 am on 03 May 2019 in relation to the Orange Grove Solar Farm, SSD reference 8882 (OGSF).

#### **Decommissioning**

OGSF is expected to have an operational period of approximately 30 years. However, during the lifecycle of the project, a range of factors could extend the operational life of the project; including operational performance and upgrades to PV and electrical infrastructure.

The construction period for the project is expected to be approximately nine months, with related onsite activities occurring within the proposed consent conditions being Monday to Friday from 7am to 6pm and Saturday from 8am to 1pm. Similarly, decommissioning activities would adhere to the stated hours under condition 13 of the recommended conditions of consent. The decommissioning process is expected to take less than the nine months required for construction.

Decommissioning will result in the previously installed infrastructure, both above and below the natural surface of the ground, being removed so that the land can continue to be used by the landowners in accordance to their previously accustomed agricultural practices.

The agreements that OGSF has with the project landowners contains obligations to decommission and restore the land. Likewise, the pre-development studies and site assessments carried out by OGSF and submitted under the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Response to Submissions (RTS) establish commitments to decommission the project and restore the land. These commitments were subsequently assessed and accepted by all relevant authorities under both the EIS and RTS process – including the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE), who formalized the commitment through the inclusion of associated conditions within the recommended Development Consent that was issued to IPC on 15 April 2019.



Condition 28 of Schedule 3 (*Decommissioning and Rehabilitation*) within the recommended Development Consent that was issued to IPC by DPE, contains the following wording around Decommissioning and Rehabilitation:

**Schedule 3: Condition 28 – Decommissioning and Rehabilitation**

*Within 18 months of the cessation of operations, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise, the Applicant must rehabilitate the site to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This rehabilitation must comply with the objectives in Table 2.*

*Table 2: Rehabilitation Objectives*

| <b>Feature</b>                   | <b>Objective</b>   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Site</i>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Safe, stable and non-polluting</i></li> <li>• <i>Minimise the visual impact of any above ground ancillary infrastructure agreed to be retained for an alternative use</i></li> </ul> |
| <i>Solar farm infrastructure</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To be decommissioned and removed, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise</i></li> </ul>   |
| <i>Land use</i>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Restore land capability to pre-existing use</i></li> </ul>   |
| <i>Community</i>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ensure public safety</i></li> </ul>  |

Further decommissioning requirements and how they will be enacted are also discussed in the following conditions:

- **Schedule 3: Environmental Conditions – General**
  - Condition 2(a): Over-Dimensional and Heavy Vehicle Restrictions
  - Condition 7(b)(c): Road Maintenance
  - Condition 13: Construction, Upgrading and Decommissioning Hours
  - Condition 14: Noise
  - Condition 23(a): Operating Conditions
- **Schedule 4: Environmental Management and Reporting**
  - Condition 2(a): Revisions of Strategies, Plans and Programs
  - Condition 6: Compliance Reporting

As discussed during the meeting with IPC on 03 May 2019, a possible amendment to the wording of Condition 28 of the DPE approved Development Consent, to wording similar to the following would be acceptable to the applicant:

*Within 3 years of commencement of operations, the Applicant must prepare a Decommissioning & Rehabilitation Plan for the development which shall be reviewed 2 years prior to the cessation of operations, to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This plan must:*

- (a) include detailed completion criteria for evaluating compliance with the rehabilitation objectives in Table 2 above;*
- (b) describe the measures that would be implemented to:*



- *decommission the development and rehabilitate the site in accordance with the rehabilitation objectives in Table 2 above and the associated completion criteria;*
- *minimise the waste generated by the decommissioning of the development in accordance with the obligations in condition 30 above; and*

*(c) include a program to monitor and report on the implementation of these measures against the detailed completion criteria.*

*The Applicant must decommission and rehabilitate the site in accordance with the approved Decommissioning & Rehabilitation Plan.*

### **Biodiversity and Development Site Positioning**

We refer to the two maps attached to this letter:

- EIS - Figure 1 from the Biosis portion of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report
- OGSF – Property Map

The Development Site of OGSF was assessed by two separate specialist ecology assessment groups; Biosis Pty Ltd and EMM Consulting Pty Ltd. Initially, the assessments were carried out under the BDAR methodology and were subsequently updated with BAM (OEH 2017) calculations. The results of the combined assessments identified ecological constraints in the far southern portions of the project land area which supports grassy woodlands (Community Type PCT 101) and on the lots directly to the east of the Development Footprint, north of Orange Grove Road, on lots 27//DP754928 and 2//DP1068520 which supports native grassland and mature trees as a result of low levels of agricultural use including grazing and cropping.

The Development Footprint was selected to avoid impacts on the significant biodiversity features described above and resulted in a project design that only impacts upon native vegetation of low quality, resulting in a vegetation integrity score of below 15.

In response to the submissions received from agencies, stakeholders and the community, OGSF amended the proposed project configuration and submitted the Revised Development Footprint as part of the applicant's Response to Submissions (RTS). In comparison to the Development Footprint submitted in the initial EIS, the Revised Development Footprint results in the following:

- a reduction of land required for the development infrastructure area by approximately 5ha,
- a reduction in the total number of trees that would be required to be cleared by approximately 18,
- the removal of all infrastructure from the first order water course north of Orange Grove Road. The amended Biodiversity Assessment Report (BDAR) submitted in the



RTS confirms that the vegetation integrity score for the Revised Development Footprint is below 15, and

- an increase in separation distance between the project infrastructure and nearest residences or the Namoi Pistol Club.

Both the Development Site that was submitted within the EIS and the Revised Development Site that was submitted within the applicant's RTS, took measures to avoid and minimise impacts to vegetation, resulting in avoidance of all significant biodiversity values, and minimisation of impacts on other areas of native vegetation. In addition, the Revised Development Footprint increased the separation distance between the project infrastructure boundary and nearest residences.

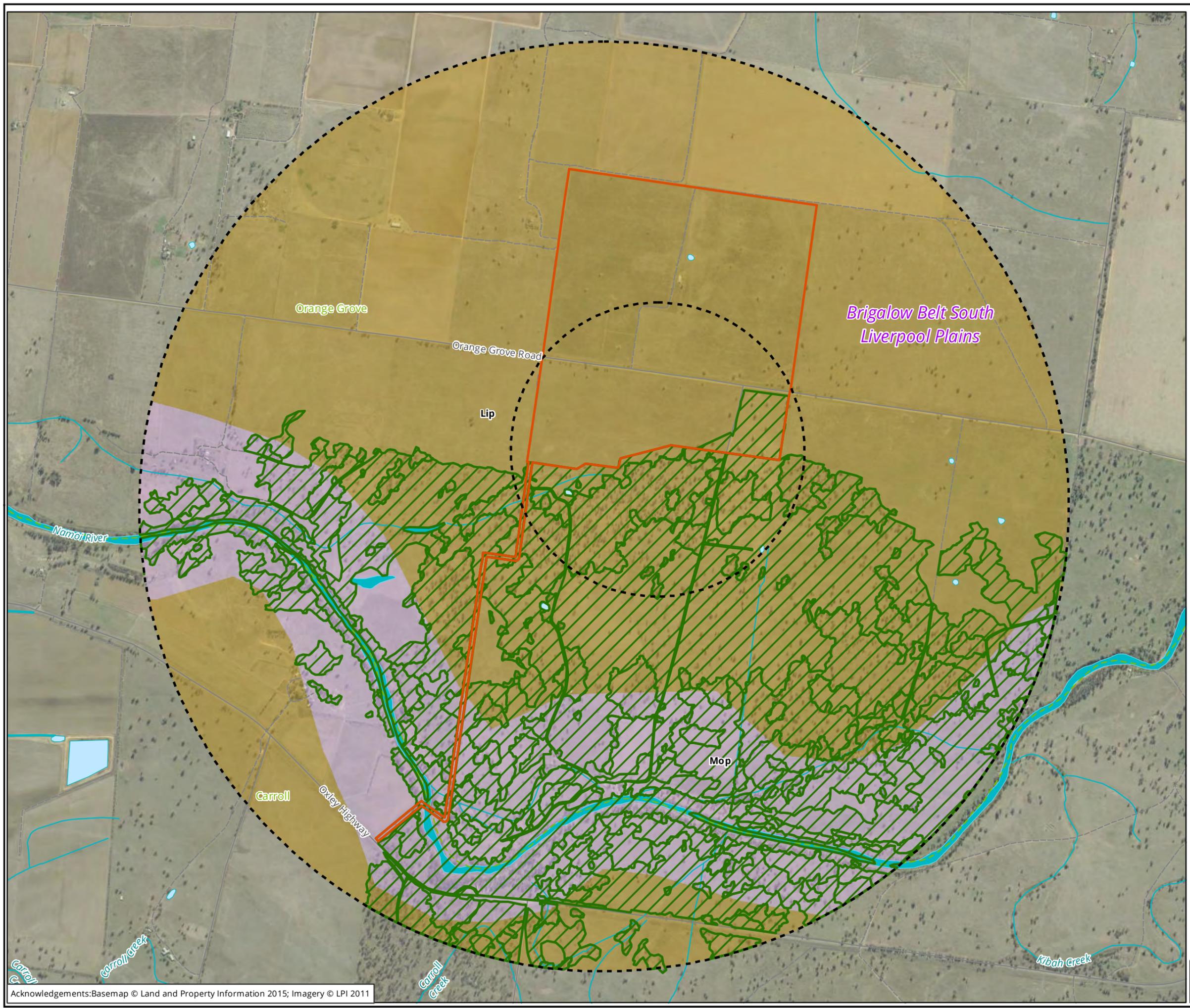
Please let me know if you require any further clarity on these topics.

Best regards

Jason Gibson  
Senior Development Manager  
OVERLAND Sun Farming Pty. Ltd.

Attachments:

1. Environmental Impact Statement, submitted [May 2018] - Figure 1 from the Biosis portion of the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report.
2. Orange Grove Sun Farm – Property map



**Legend**

- Study area
- Assessment circles
- IBRA Sub-region
- Native vegetation extent

**Mitchell landscape v3**

- Lip, Liverpool Alluvial Plains
- Mop, Mooki - Namoi Channels and Floodplains

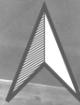
**Figure 1: Location map - Gunnedah Solar Farm**

0 160 320 480 640 800  
 Metres  
 Scale: 1:19,000 @ A3  
 Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56



Biosis Pty Ltd  
 Ballarat, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne,  
 Newcastle, Sydney, Wangaratta & Wollongong

Matter: 24475  
 Date: 24 May 2017,  
 Checked by: ABM, Drawn by: LH, Last edited by: ngarvey  
 Location: P:\24400s\24475\mapping\24475\_F1\_Location



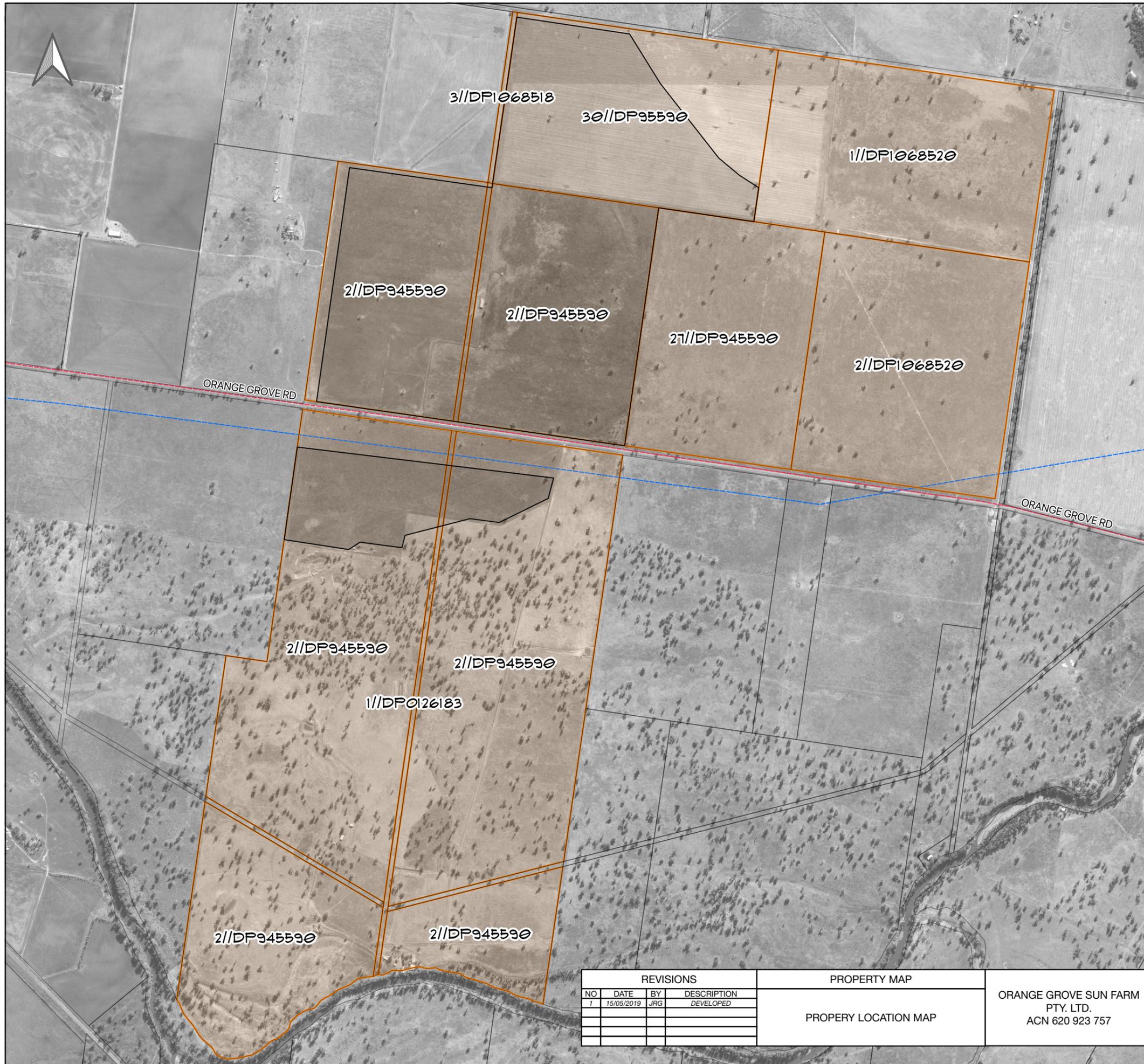
### LEGEND

#### PROPERTIES AND FEATURES

- OGSF REVISED DEVELOPMENT SITE
- OGSF PROJECT SITE

#### ROADS AND TRANSMISSION

- TRANSGRID 132KV
- ORANGE GROVE RD



3//DP1068518      30//DP95590      1//DP1068520

2//DP945590      2//DP945590      27//DP945590      2//DP1068520

ORANGE GROVE RD

ORANGE GROVE RD

2//DP945590      2//DP945590

1//DP0126183

2//DP945590      2//DP945590

| REVISIONS |            |     |             |
|-----------|------------|-----|-------------|
| NO        | DATE       | BY  | DESCRIPTION |
| 1         | 15/05/2019 | JRG | DEVELOPED   |
|           |            |     |             |
|           |            |     |             |
|           |            |     |             |

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| PROPERTY MAP          |
| PROPERTY LOCATION MAP |

ORANGE GROVE SUN FARM  
PTY. LTD.  
ACN 620 923 757

