

Referred to the IPC
2 October 2020



Planning,
Industry &
Environment

Planning and Assessment
Energy Assessments

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Prof Mary O'Kane
Chair
Independent Planning Commission

By email: mary.okane@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

Dear Prof O'Kane

Walla Walla Solar Farm (SSD 9874)

The Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the application for the Walla Walla Solar Farm (SSD 9874).

The application is referred to the Independent Planning Commission for determination, as Council objected to the proposal, and there were also more than 50 unique submissions objecting to the proposal.

FRV Services Australia Pty Ltd (FRV) proposes to develop a new State significant development solar farm located approximately 5 kilometres (km) north east of Walla Walla and 10 km south west of Culcairn, in the Greater Hume Shire local government area. It would have a generating capacity of approximately 300 megawatts (MW). The solar farm would connect to TransGrid's existing 330 kilovolt transmission line that transects the development site.

During the exhibition of the environmental impact statement (EIS), the Department received a total of 150 submissions from the community and special interest groups, in addition to advice from 12 government agencies. Of the public submissions, 85 objected to the project, of which 73 were unique submissions. Greater Hume Shire Council also objects to the project.

After reviewing the submissions, FRV decided to make a number of changes to the project to address issues raised in submissions, including:

- removing panels from the southeast corner of the site;
- setting back project infrastructure from waterways; and
- offering to enter into a voluntary planning agreement with Greater Hume Council to contribute towards community enhancement projects in the locality.

The Department has considered this information in detail during its assessment and supports the proposed amendments as they would significantly reduce the impacts of the project and address some of the key issues raised by the community in submissions.

In assessing the merits of the project, the Department has considered the environmental, social and economic impacts of the project, submissions on the EIS, relevant environmental planning instruments, the suitability of the site of the project, and the public interest, in accordance with the requirements of the EP&A Act.

During the assessment process the Department visited the site, and consulted with local residents, Council and relevant government agencies.

Based on this assessment, the Department considers that the project is approvable, subject to the recommended conditions of consent.

I have attached a copy of the Department's assessment report and other relevant documents for the Commission's consideration.

For further information or to arrange a briefing, please contact Nicole Brewer, Director - Energy Assessments, on 9274 6374 or nicole.brewer@planning.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Marcus Ray
Group Deputy Secretary
Planning and Assessment

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