



## **\$636-MILLION SOLAR PROJECT RECEIVES CONDITIONAL IPC APPROVAL**

25 March 2021

The state's Independent Planning Commission has today conditionally approved a new large-scale solar farm for the NSW Riverina Region.

The \$636-million Culcairn Solar Farm, 4km southwest of Culcairn, would contribute 350 megawatts of energy to the National Electricity Market. It will also include a battery facility with a capacity of 100MW / 200MWh which will enable the Project to store solar energy for dispatch to the grid outside daylight hours or during times of peak demand.

The Department of Planning, Industry & Environment finalised its whole-of-government assessment of the Project in January this year. The state significant development application came to the Commission for determination because the Department received objections from Greater Hume Council and more than 50 members of the public.

Commissioners Andrew Hutton (Panel Chair) and Professor Zada Lipman were appointed to determine the application. They met with Neoen Australia Pty Ltd (the Applicant), Department and Greater Hume Council and inspected the site and surrounding areas.

An electronic Public Meeting was held earlier this month to listen to the community's views, which focused on land-use compatibility; loss of agricultural land; biodiversity and environmental impacts; amenity impacts; impacts on neighbouring properties; bushfire risk; 'heat island' effect; land values; traffic impacts; economic impacts; and the need for and benefits of renewable energy projects as part of a response to climate change.

The Project is expected to generate 350 full-time jobs during construction and seven full-time operational positions.

After carefully considering all the evidence, the Commission has today (Thursday 25 March 2021) determined to approve the proposed solar farm, subject to conditions, "which have been designed to:

- prevent, minimise and/or offset adverse environmental impacts;
- set standards and performance measures for acceptable environmental performance;
- outline how the land can will be returned to its current use following decommissioning and rehabilitation of the site;
- require regular monitoring and reporting; and
- provide for the ongoing environmental management of the development."

It takes to \$2.329 billion the capital investment value of large-scale renewable energy projects greenlighted by the Commission since March last year, including the:

- \$120-million [Springdale Solar Farm](#) near Sutton, in the Southern Tablelands
- \$168-million [Jindera Solar Farm](#), in the Riverina
- \$238-million [Bonshaw Solar Farm](#) near Inverell, in the state's north
- \$399-million [Walla Walla Solar Farm](#), in the Riverina, and
- \$768-million [New England Solar Farm](#) at Uralla.

The Commission's Statement of Reasons for Decision is available here:

<https://www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au/projects/2021/01/culcairn-solar-farm-ssd-10288>

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