

Nestor Tsambos  
Team Leader  
Energy Assessments  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Dear Nestor,

**RE: Muswellbrook Solar Farm – Response to Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) Request for Information**

OX2 understands that DPHI has received a Request for Information from the Independent Planning Commission (Commission) relating to site contamination risk at the Muswellbrook Solar Farm (the Project).

The environmental and historical context of the project area has been well established in the EIS and technical assessments provided in the EIS appendices, including the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (Appendix D), the Land Use, Soils and Erosion Assessment (Appendix H), Agricultural Impact Assessment, (Appendix I), Water Resources Assessment (Appendix J), Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment (Appendix E), and Historic Heritage Assessment (Appendix O).

The project area and surrounds have a history of mining and agricultural use. The southern portion of the project area is open paddocks with areas of native vegetation. This area has historically, and is currently used, for livestock grazing. The eastern part of the northern portion of the project area is located above an area where there has been historical underground mining, however this was at depths of greater than 150m. Cattle were previously grazed in the northern portion of the project area. Much of the northern portion of the project area is now even aged regrowth and horses are agisted in a portion of this area. The internal 33kV powerline runs adjacent to the open cut pit.

No areas of contamination have been identified during the extensive site investigations that have been undertaken as part of the EIS technical assessments.

Three of the technical assessments (Land Use, Soils and Erosion Assessment, Agricultural Impact Assessment and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment) involved soil sampling or, in the case of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment, test excavation. While the purpose of these assessments was not to assess contamination risk, no evidence of contamination was identified during these assessments. Soil sampling and test pit information including photographs are provided in the appendices of the technical assessment reports.

Mitigation measures have been included in the EIS to manage potential contamination if it is identified during construction works:

- LS11: If potentially contaminated soil is identified, ensure the soil is segregated and is managed in accordance with applicable guidelines.
- HR6: An unexpected finds protocol will be developed for managing contamination encountered during construction. This will include the development and implementation of an Asbestos Management Plan to manage asbestos and asbestos containing material if it is encountered during construction. This will include handling and disposal procedures in



accordance with NSW EPA guidelines, Australian Standards, and relevant industry codes of practice.

An unexpected finds protocol will be developed for construction, operation and decommissioning. It will include procedures to identify potentially contaminated land, such as:

- the observation of discolouration or staining of soils
- visible signs of plant stress, presence of drums or other waste material
- stockpiles, fill material or odours.

If a potential source of contamination is identified, work within the affected area will cease until an assessment is completed to advise the need for further investigation or remediation.

Yours Sincerely,

**Carla Evans**  
Senior Development Manager

OX2, Level 4, 65 Dover St  
Cremorne, Victoria  
Email: [REDACTED]  
[www.ox2.com.au](http://www.ox2.com.au)

