

Ellena Tsanidis
Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure
C/o Major Projects Portal

Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements–Aquila Wind Farm SSD-67667971

Dear Ellena Tsanidis

Thank you for your correspondence of 15 February 2024 and the opportunity to provide input to the draft Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) for the Aquila Wind Farm development.

NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Agriculture collaborates with our stakeholders to protect and enhance the productive and sustainable use and resilience of agricultural resources and the environment.

NSW DPI Agriculture has reviewed the scoping report and the draft Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) in relation to the above proposal. I note that the proposed development is for a 300MW wind farm comprising the construction, operation and decommissioning of up to 48 turbines with a maximum height of 250 m (to blade tip); a battery energy storage system up to 100 MW / 200 MWh and ancillary infrastructure.

I note and support the commitments in the Scoping report to undertake a land use conflict risk assessment (LUCRA) and a cumulative impact assessment. I also note and support the draft SEARs requirements for:

- an assessment of the potential impacts of the development on existing land uses on the site and adjacent land, including agricultural land and the preparation of a soil survey.
- an assessment of the compatibility of the development with existing land uses, during construction, operation and after decommissioning, including assessment of impact on agricultural resources and agricultural production on the site and region.

To ensure the potential impacts of the proposed development on the agricultural production of subject land and surrounding land can be appropriately assessed, NSW DPI Agriculture requests that the following matters also be included in the SEARs for the Aquila Wind Farm Project:

- Detail the proposed strategies to manage impacts on any agricultural aerial spraying in the area.

- Detail the strategies for potential land sharing or co-location of agricultural production with the project.
- A biosecurity risk assessment and management plan for pests, weeds, and disease should be prepared to detail the likely plant, animal, and community risks the proposed development may pose to agricultural land uses in the locality. The relevant weed or pest animals for a region are addressed in the regional plans or strategies issued by NSW Local Lands Services. The risk assessment should include details of how the proposal will deal with identified biosecurity risks as well as contingency plans for any failures. It should also include monitoring and mitigation measures for weed and pest management.
- A Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Management Plan should be prepared which describes the final land use and landform and details how to return the land back to agricultural production at the end of the life of the facility. The plan should detail an expected timeline for the decommissioning and rehabilitation program.

Industry guidelines and resource information (**Attachment A**) should also be provided to the proponent for their consideration when preparing the Environmental Impact Statement.

Should you require clarification on any of the information contained in this response, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0429 864 501 or by email at landuse.ag@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Sincerely



Paul Garnett
Agricultural Land Use Planning Officer
Ag Strategic Initiatives
Central West Orana Region

20 February 2024

Encl: Attachment A: Industry guidelines and resource information

Attachment A: Industry guidelines and resource information

Wind Farms

Title	Website link
Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment Guide	https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/lup/development-assessment2/lucra
Infrastructure Proposals on Rural Land	https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/lup/development-assessment2/infrastructure-proposals
The land and soil capability assessment scheme: second approximation 2012 (OEH)	https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/land-and-soil-capability-assessment-scheme
Australian Soil and Land Survey Handbook (CSIRO)	https://ebooks.publish.csiro.au/content/australian-soil-and-land-survey-field-handbook
Guidelines for Surveying Soil and Land Resources (CSIRO)	https://ebooks.publish.csiro.au/content/guidelines-surveying-soil-and-land-resources
Biosecurity Risk Management in Land Use Planning and Development	https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1271241/managing-biosecurity-risks-in-land-use-planning-and-development-guide.pdf