

## NOTICE ABOUT DECISION - STATEMENT OF REASONS

*The following information is provided in accordance with Section 63(5) of the Planning Act 2016*

The development application for:

Proposed Development:	Material Change of Use to establish a Renewable Energy Facility (200MW Solar Farm)
Application No:	030.2018. 241.001 <span style="float: right;">File Refs: A21026, 21027, A21029 &amp; LG7.6.1</span>
Street Address:	509 and 649 Geary's Road and Kerwick's Road, Hookswood
Real Property Description:	Lot 19 on BWR293 including Easement D on SP243360, Easement A on SP168213 and Easement CG on SP265425, Lot 20 on BWR293 including Easement C on SP243360 and Easement CF on SP265224, Lot 76 on BWR164 including Easement CH on SP265426 and Lot 75 on BWR294

On 14 August 2018, the above development application was approved in full, with conditions.

### 1. Reasons for the Decision

The reasons for this decision are:

- The development is for a Renewable Energy Facility which is a consistent use within the Rural Zone of the Western Downs Planning Scheme 2017.
- The development has a demonstrated relationship within the Rural Zone, as the development is of a scale that is unable to be accommodated in urban zones.
- The development is located within a remote rural locality and is appropriately separated from sensitive land uses on adjoining rural properties which will be buffered by existing vegetation and topography of the subject site and adjoining properties.
- The development complies with the built form and design requirements applicable to the Rural Zone.
- The proposed Solar Farm will not prejudice the productive capacity of existing or future rural land. The soil composition is not suitable to support agricultural activity other than grazing.
- Once the development is decommissioned, the applicant will be required to remediate the land at which time it will be able to be used for rural activities.

### 2. Assessment Benchmarks

The following are the benchmarks applying to this development:

Benchmarks Applying to the Development	Benchmark Reference
Amended State Planning Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water Quality Objectives</li> </ul>
Western Downs Planning Scheme 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rural Zone Code</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure Services Code</li> <li>▪ Transport, Access and Parking Code</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure Overlay Code</li> <li>▪ Natural Resources Overlay Code</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure Overlay Code;</li> <li>▪ Bushfire Hazard Overlay Code</li> <li>▪ Biodiversity Overlay Code</li> </ul>

### 3. Compliance with Benchmarks

The development was assessed against all of the assessment benchmarks listed above and complies with all of these with the exception listed below:

Benchmark Reference	Reasons for Approval Despite Non-compliance with Benchmark
<b>Natural Resources Overlay Code</b>	
<p><b>Where for a Material Change of Use in the Rural Zone</b></p> <p><b>AO6.1</b></p> <p>Development (inclusive of the development footprint) is not located on land identified as ALC Class A and Class B Land on the Agricultural Land overlay maps (OM-008) unless identified in Table 8.2.7.2.</p>	<p>The applicant engaged a qualified Agronomist to analyse the soil composition of the site (including the areas identified as Class A Agricultural Land) to determine whether the site was suitable for cropping.</p> <p>The Agronomist's report provides the following conclusion with respect to the soil profile of the property:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"The soil assessed at both depths across the property would indicate that it has significant restrictions to arable and pasture production. Inputs to rectify the restrictions would be both extremely costly and ongoing due to the innate makeup of the soil. Even if they were applied, it would be doubtful if they would ever be economically justified over the short-term definitely, but even the long-term by a sufficient improvement in crop/pasture yield."</i></p> <p>The Agronomist provided further clarification with respect to the report indicating that the soil profile was consistent with Class C Agricultural Land which is pasture land that is suitable only for improved or native pastures due to limitations which preclude continuous cultivation for crop production.</p> <p>Therefore, the site is considered unsuitable for broadacre cropping activities. Upon decommissioning the Solar Farm, the land could be returned to an agricultural use of cattle grazing.</p>

