

# INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT NO. 2 SEBASTOPOL SOLAR FARM (SSD 9098)

June 2022

**Auditee:** Beon Energy Solutions (contractor) on behalf of Sebastopol Solar Farm (proponent)

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This Independent Environmental Audit report has been certified by Toby Hobbs, Principal Auditor (Exemplar Global) and Director of Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd.

Report Version	Date	Comments	Prepared by	Approved for issue by
Draft	23 May 2022	Draft for review	T. Hobbs S. Price	T. Hobbs
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## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a second Independent Environmental Audit (IEA) that was undertaken to assess the environmental performance and compliance status of the Sebastopol Solar Farm (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment [DPIE]: Application Number SSD 9098), herein referred to as the “Project”.

Two (2) IEA’s were required to be completed for the Project as per Schedule 4, Condition 7 of the Development Consent (Modification 1, July 2020), one (1) within 3 months of commencement of construction and one (1) within 3 months of commencement of operation. The IEA required within 3 months of commencement of construction was undertaken by Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd in April 2021 and titled “*Independent Environmental Audit, Sebastopol Solar Farm (SSD 9098)*”. This second IEA was undertaken within 3 months of commencement of operation and was conducted in accordance with the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020).

The scope of the audit was developed in consultation with DPIE, NSW Environment Protection Authority, Junee Shire Council and Temora Shire Council.

There were two (2) non-compliances identified with Development Consent conditions and the associated management plans and strategies reviewed during the audit program as noted below:

- **Non-compliance No. 1 (SSF-IEA-22-NC1):** Work as executed plans were not submitted to the Department prior to commencing operations. The plans were submitted to the Department on 14 March 2022, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22 February 2022; and
- **Non-compliance No. 2 (SSF-IEA-22-NC2):** Notification of commencement of operation was not submitted to the Department prior to commencing operations. Notification was provided to the Department on 08 March 2022, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22 February 2022.

Based on the outcomes of the audit program the following recommendations were made:

- **Recommendation No. 1 (SSF-IEA-22-R1):** In response to Non-compliance No. 1, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment should be notified of this non-compliance; and
- **Recommendation No. 2 (SSF-IEA-22-R2):** In response to Non-compliance No. 2, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment should be notified of this non-compliance.

In addition to the above noted recommendations, the following continual environmental management improvement opportunities were identified during the audit:

- Based on the Auditor’s observation of the vegetation buffer areas of the project site on 05 May 2022, it was considered that weed control should be undertaken in accordance with industry best practice to reduce the occurrence of invasive species such as Flaxleaf fleabane (*Conyza bonariensis*); and
- Given that operation of the Project has commenced, the Project website should be updated to indicate commencement of operation.

The close-out of the three (3) non-compliances identified in the first Independent Environmental Audit (March 2021) was completed in accordance with DP&E requirements.

The standard of environmental management evident during the completion of this audit was high. Final construction works and site operation were deemed to be generally consistent with Development Consent conditions and associated strategies, plans and programs.

Project personnel were familiar with their environmental compliance responsibilities and obligations.

The site appeared well managed at the time of the audit and required mitigation measures, including establishment of groundcover, planting of vegetation buffer zones, boundary fencing and protection of sensitive areas, were observed to be in place.

It is considered that the management strategies in place to mitigate potential construction impacts were generally appropriate and the impacts observed on site were consistent with those identified in the EIS.

There were no (0) complaints and no (0) reportable environmental incidents reported within the audit period.

In accordance with Section 4.3.2 of the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020), the proponent must submit their response to the audit findings to the Department in a separate document to this report. The proponent must respond to all audit findings, including recommendations and opportunities for improvement.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

This report presents the findings of a second Independent Environmental Audit (IEA) that was undertaken by Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd (Vantage) to assess the environmental performance and compliance status of the Sebastopol Solar Project (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment [DPIE] Application Number: SSD 9098), herein referred to as the “Project”. The IEA is a requirement of Schedule 4, Condition 7 of the Project’s Development Consent (Modification 1, July 2020).

The first IEA for the Project was completed by Vantage in April 2021 following commencement of construction. This second IEA was completed following commencement of operation.

The Project covers an area of approximately 248 hectares and is located 4 kilometres southeast of Sebastopol and 16 kilometres south of Temora. The site is located within the Temora Local Government Area and the southern boundary of the site borders the Junee Local Government Area. Road access to the site is via Eurolee Road, which is located within the Junee Local Government Area.

The solar farm has a capacity of 90 MW and connects to an existing 132 kV Essential Energy transmission line which runs west of the site.

Construction of the Project commenced on 14 January 2021 and operation commenced on 22 February 2022. The Project proponent is Sebastopol Solar Farm and the contractor responsible for construction of the Project is beon Energy Solutions (Beon). Sebastopol Solar Farm (proponent) procured the Project development rights from ib vogt GmbH Pty Ltd (the original Applicant for the Development Consent) in March 2020.

### 2.2 Audit Team

The Vantage audit team consisted of Toby Hobbs as Lead Auditor and Susannah Price as assistant Auditor. Endorsement of the audit team was provided by DPIE via the correspondence of 08 February 2022, a copy which is included within Appendix A of this report.

Toby Hobbs, MEnvMgmt, is an Exemplar Global-certified Lead Environmental Auditor and has undertaken significant auditor roles in the capacity of the independent Environmental Representative role on many major (\$500M+) infrastructure projects in southern Australia since 2005.

Susannah Price, MSc, is an Exemplar Global-certified Environmental Auditor and has worked in an auditor support role on many major (\$500M+) infrastructure projects in southern Australia since 2007.

### 2.3 Audit Objectives

The objective of the IEA was to obtain an independent and objective assessment of the environmental performance and compliance status of the Project in accordance with Schedule 4, Condition 7 of the Project’s Development Consent and the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020). The audit scope, discussed below in section 2.4, provides further detail of the audit objectives.

### 2.4 Audit Scope

The audit scope consisted of:

1. An assessment of compliance with:
  - a. Development Consent for SSD 9098 as modified (Mod 1, July 2020);
  - b. Post approval documents prepared to satisfy the conditions of consent, including an assessment of the implementation of the following plans during the operation phase such as:
    - i. Executed Plans of the Development;

- ii. Environmental Management Strategy;
  - iii. Heritage Management Plan;
  - iv. Traffic Management Plan;
  - v. Landscaping Plan;
  - vi. Biodiversity Management Plan;
  - vii. Emergency Response Plan; and
  - viii. Final Layout Plans.
2. An assessment of the environmental performance of the development, including an assessment of:
    - a. Actual impacts compared to predicted impacts documented in the Environmental Impact Statement and associated amendments;
    - b. The physical extent of the development in comparison with the approved boundary, and any potential off-site impacts;
    - c. Incidents, non-compliances and complaints that occurred or were made during the audit period;
    - d. The performance of the development having regard to agency policy and any particular environmental issues identified through consultation carried out when developing the scope of the audit; and
    - e. Any feedback received from the Department, and other agencies and stakeholders, including the community, on the environmental performance of the project during the audit period.
  3. The status of implementation of previous Independent Audit findings, recommendations and actions;
  4. A high-level assessment of whether Environmental Management Plans and Sub-plans are adequate; and
  5. Any other matters considered relevant by the auditor or the Department taking into account relevant regulatory requirements and legislation and knowledge of the development's past performance.

Further information regarding relevant matters raised by the Department are discussed within Section 3.6 of this report and have been addressed during completion of the IEA.

## **2.5 Audit Period**

This IEA covers the period from the date of the site visit for the first audit (26 March 2021) to the date of the site visit for this audit of 05 May 2022.

## **2.6 Audit Opening and Closing Meetings**

As part of the IEA program, Audit Opening and Audit Closing meetings were held as noted in Table 1, below.

**TABLE 1: Audit Meeting Attendance Register**

<b>Meeting Type/ Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Personnel Present</b>
Audit Opening Meeting 23 March 2022	Kirsten Lee (Beon - Compliance, Sustainability and Stakeholder Lead) Gregory Benvenuti (Beon – Senior Project Manager) Chris D’Aloia (Beon – Solar Service Manager) Bruce Harris (Beon – Site Manager) Johanny Noguera de Barrera (Beon – Asset Manager O&M) Toby Hobbs (Vantage Environmental Management – Lead Auditor) Susannah Price (Vantage Environmental Management – Auditor)
Audit Closing Meeting 23 May 2022	Kirsten Lee (Beon - Compliance, Sustainability and Stakeholder Lead) Bruce Harris (Beon – Site Manager) Johanny Noguera de Barrera (Beon – Asset Manager O&M) Toby Hobbs (Vantage Environmental Management – Lead Auditor)

### 3 AUDIT METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Selection and Endorsement of Audit Team

The Audit team was selected by the contractor (Beon) on 09 February 2022 and endorsed by DPIE via their correspondence of 08 February 2022, a copy of which is included within Appendix A of this report.

#### 3.2 Independent Audit scope development

Prior to the commencement of the audit, the scope was developed in accordance with Schedule 4, Condition 7 of the Project’s Development Consent and the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020). On 10 February 2022, Vantage issued the proposed audit scope to DPIE, Temora Shire Council, Junee Shire Council and NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for comment.

Feedback on the proposed audit scope was provided by DPIE’s Team Leader of Compliance on 14 February 2022 and listed within Section 3.6 of this report.

Correspondence was received from Temora Shire Council, Junee Shire Council and EPA personnel advising that they did not have any additional comments regarding the scope of the audit.

Copies of correspondence related to consultation undertaken as part of the audit scope are presented within Appendix B of this report.

#### 3.3 Compliance Evaluation

In order to evaluate Project compliance, the following process was followed:

- Desktop audit of the documents provided by the proponent;
- Collection of further information from the proponent as required, including a site inspection; and
- Assessment of documents and site conditions for compliance and reporting in this audit report.

### 3.4 Site Personnel Interviews

Interviews were held with the following site personnel on 05 May 2022 as part of the Project site visit for the audit:

- Kirsten Lee (Beon – Compliance, Sustainability and Stakeholder Lead); and
- Bruce Harris (Beon – Site Manager).

The site interviews provided the Auditor with an opportunity to obtain relevant evidence regarding the compliance status and environmental performance of the Project to support the desk-based audit review process. It is noted that site personnel interviewed were most willing to assist the Auditor and provided full and prompt disclosure with respect to the Auditor’s queries.

### 3.5 Site Inspection

A site inspection was undertaken by Toby Hobbs on 05 May 2022. The purpose of the site visit was to discuss the compliance status of the Project with relevant site personnel, view environmental management records, view the status of on-site environmental controls and observe general environmental performance.

The site visit also provided the Auditor with an opportunity to obtain appropriate evidence regarding the compliance status and environmental performance of the Project to support the desk-based audit review process. It is noted that all areas of the site were accessible to the Auditor at the time of the site visit.

### 3.6 Consultation

Consultation associated with completion of this audit involved issue of the proposed audit scope to DPIE, Temora Shire Council, Junee Shire Council and NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for comment. A request for feedback on the environmental performance of the project was also issued to the above-referenced stakeholders, the Biodiversity and Conservation Division of DP&E, Wagga Wagga Local Aboriginal Land Council and Young Local Aboriginal Land Council.

In addition, interviews, an audit opening meeting and an audit closing meeting were held with Project personnel including:

- Kirsten Lee (Beon – Compliance, Sustainability and Stakeholder Lead);
- Gregory Benvenuti (Beon – Senior Project Manager);
- Chris D’Aloia (Beon – Solar Service Manager);
- Bruce Harris (Beon – Site Manager); and
- Johanny Noguera de Barrera (Beon – Asset Manager).

Feedback on the proposed audit scope is discussed within Section 3.2 of this report.

Feedback regarding the audit scope was received by DPIE’s Team Leader of Compliance and listed within Table 2, below, along with a reference to where each item is discussed in this audit report.

**TABLE 2: Summary of DP&E audit scope comments and report reference**

<b>DP&amp;E comment</b>	<b>Section of this report discussing the comment</b>
Status of planting, management and monitoring of vegetation buffers (and implementation of the Landscaping Plan)	Section 4.6.4: Landscaping Plan Section 4.7: Environmental Performance Appendix C: Audit Table Appendix D: Site Inspection Photographs
Status of biodiversity management, monitoring and offsets	Section 4.7: Environmental Performance Appendix C: Audit Table

DP&E comment	Section of this report discussing the comment
Status of management and monitoring of heritage sites	Section 4.7: Environmental Performance Appendix C: Audit Table
Status of erosion and sediment control and management	Section 4.7: Environmental Performance Appendix C: Audit Table Appendix D: Site Inspection Photographs
Status of weed management and ground cover establishment	Section 4.7: Environmental Performance Appendix C: Audit Table Appendix D: Site Inspection Photographs
Status of Construction Certificates and Occupation Certificates	Appendix C: Audit Table
Status of Complaints register and handling	Section 4.8: Complaints

Temora Shire Council’s Director of Environmental Services reported that Council had only one dust complaint early in the Project, which was discussed in the first audit report. Council further commented that, from their perspective, the Project had run smoothly and they had only reached out to the Project team to discuss COVID compliance.

An Environmental Officer from Junee Shire Council reported that Council did not have any concerns with the scope of the audit. In addition, Council had not received any complaints since the last audit, nor did Council have any environmental performance concerns relating to the Project’s construction or operation.

EPA did not have any comment on the audit scope or the environmental performance of the Project.

No feedback regarding the environmental performance of the project was received from the Biodiversity and Conservation Division of DP&E, Wagga Wagga Local Aboriginal Land Council and Young Local Aboriginal Land Council by the time of issue of this audit report.

Copies of correspondence related to consultation undertaken as part of the audit program are presented within Appendix B of this report.

### 3.7 Compliance Status Descriptors

The compliance status of each Development Consent condition in the Audit Table in Appendix A has been determined in accordance with the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020). The compliance status was recorded as one of the following:

- **Compliant** – The auditor has collected sufficient verifiable evidence to demonstrate that all elements of the requirement have been complied with within the scope of the audit;
- **Non-compliant** – The auditor has determined that one or more specific elements of the conditions or requirements have not been complied with within the scope of the audit; or
- **Not triggered** – A requirement has an activation or timing trigger that has not been met at the time when the audit is undertaken, therefore an assessment of compliance is not relevant.

## 4 AUDIT FINDINGS

### 4.1 Approvals and Documents Audited

The following approvals and documents were considered as part of this IEA:

- Development Consent for SSD 9098 as modified (Modification 1 – July 2020);
- Environmental Management Strategy;
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan;
- Traffic Management Plan;
- Landscaping Plan;
- Biodiversity Management Plan;
- Fire Management and Emergency Response Plan;
- Final Layout Plans;
- Soil and Water Management Plans; and
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

A Fire Safety Study, as discussed within Schedule 3, Condition 23 of the Development Consent, has not been prepared as a battery storage facility is not going to be constructed at the Project.

### 4.2 Compliance Performance

There are a total of 47 conditions within the Development Consent of the Project as modified (Modification 1, July 2020) and all 47 conditions were assessed for environmental compliance as part of this IEA. It is noted that one (1) condition (Schedule 4, Condition 6 – Compliance Reporting) was deleted and therefore not considered. 37 conditions were determined to be compliant, two (2) were determined to be non-compliant and seven (7) were not triggered as part of this IEA. Detailed audit outcomes are presented within Appendix C (Audit Table of Development Consent Conditions). In accordance with the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020) the audit table presents the following information:

- Development Consent condition (Approval ID);
- Development Consent requirements;
- Audit evidence collected;
- Audit findings and recommendations; and
- Compliance status.

### 4.3 Summary of Agency Notices, Orders, Penalty Notices or Prosecutions

As far as the auditor of this report is aware, no agency notices, order, penalty notices or prosecutions have been issued for the Project.

#### 4.4 Non-compliances

There were two (2) non-compliances identified with Development consent conditions and the associated management plans and strategies reviewed during the audit program as noted below:

- **Non-compliance No. 1 (SSF-IEA-22-NC1):** Work as executed plans were not submitted to the Department prior to commencing operations. The plans were submitted to the Department on 14 March 2022, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22 February 2022; and
- **Non-compliance No. 2 (SSF-IEA-22-NC2):** Notification of commencement of operation was not submitted to the Department **prior** to commencing operations. Notification was provided to the Department on 08 March 2022, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22 February 2022.

#### 4.5 Previous Audit Outcomes

Three (3) non-compliances and two (2) improvement opportunities were identified in the first IEA (site visit completed on 26 March 2021) and discussed in the Vantage report titled "*Independent Environmental Audit, Sebastopol Solar Farm (SSD 9098), Rev.1, 16 April 2021*". Details of the non-compliances and associated recommendations, improvement opportunities and actions to close out these issues are discussed below.

##### 4.5.1 Previous non-compliance No. 1

**Non-compliance No. 1 (SSF-IEA-21-NC1):** Not all Aboriginal heritage items identified in Table 1 of Appendix 4 (and referred to in Schedule 3, Condition 17) of the Development Consent could be identified and recovered at the time of salvage works on 14 and 15 December 2020 as additional site disturbance from non-Project related agricultural activities (crop sowing and harvesting) had occurred between the time the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (NGH Environmental, November 2018) was prepared, which listed the heritage items, and the commencement of salvage works. It was reported that the proponent was not in possession and/or control of the Project site at the time the cropping activities occurred. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the proponent should have raised an internal investigation and informed DPIE and other relevant stakeholders that some previously identified heritage items could not be relocated at the time of the salvage program.

**Recommendation No. 1 (SSF-IEA-21-R1):** In response to Non-compliance No. 1 the actions were recommended:

- a) Advise DPIE and relevant stakeholders of salvage outcomes; and
- b) Complete required heritage reporting and prepare Aboriginal Site Impact Recording Form (ASIRF), as necessary, for inclusion within the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) database.

In response to the above non-compliance, the following actions occurred:

- Beon (construction contractor) provided a letter to DPIE on 27 April 2021 to notify the Department that a draft version of the Cultural Heritage Salvage Report could be submitted as notification that some heritage items could not be relocated at the time of the salvage program. In addition, Beon noted a final version of the Salvage Report could be submitted (a few months later) following the reburial of the salvage artefacts. Beon also reported that NGH (the consultant responsible for the salvage program) had confirmed that impact site cards have been submitted to AHIMS for all the sites salvaged within the approved development footprint for the Sebastopol Solar Farm;
- DPIE responded to Sebastopol Solar Farm (proponent) on 04 May 2021 requesting an update to the above actions by 02 July 2021 and that NSW Heritage and other relevant stakeholders including Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are contacted to ensure they are satisfied with the reasons for the non-compliance and actions proposed;

- Beon provided an update to DPIE on 01 July 2021 to notify the Department of the reburial of the salvaged artefacts on 27 May 2021, noting the presence of a number of local RAP representatives, and provided evidence of notification of the non-compliance to Heritage NSW on 28 June 2021. This notification included a copy of the finalised Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Salvage Report prepared by NGH (Rev. Final, 28/06/21); and
- Heritage NSW responded to NGH on 07 July 2021 with the following information:
  - Heritage NSW is satisfied that attempts were made by NGH and the Aboriginal stakeholders to relocate isolated artefacts for salvage and relocation in accordance with Development Consent for SSD 9098. That some isolated stone artefacts could not be relocated is not uncommon due to the two and a half year time period from site recording on 8-11 May 2018 to salvage and relocation on 14-15 December 2020. Natural processes and erosion can alter the surface and cover previously identified artefacts or uncover new artefacts over time;
  - According to the AHIMS database, the status of sites (valid vs destroyed) is consistent with the conditions of consent (Schedule 3 Conditions 17-18 and Appendix 4 Table 1 and 2) and the information provided by NGH. The site ‘Sebastopol Solar Farm Salvage’ is registered on AHIMS as 50-3-0290; and
  - We note the Independent Audit Environmental findings that some isolated stone artefacts could not be relocated due to non-project related agricultural activities (crop sowing and harvesting) that occurred between assessment and salvage works. If this disturbance to sites occurred following recording and prior to SSD 9098 Development Consent being issued on 27 February 2019, we do not have record of an AHIP being issued and this may constitute harm under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. If the harm to these sites occurred following site recording and prior to 27 February 2019, we recommend it is reported to NSW Environment Line on 131 555 for investigation.

#### 4.5.2 Previous non-compliance No. 2

**Non-compliance No. 2 (SSF-IEA-21-NC2):** Section 5.1.2 of the Environmental management Strategy (EMS) was not implemented in accordance with Schedule 4, Condition 1 of the Development consent. Section 5.1.2 of the EMS stated: *“During construction Beon will ensure that sufficient water for firefighting (minimum 20,000 L water supply tank fitted with a 65 mm Storz fitting and a FRNSW compatible suction connection) is stored in water tanks located on site adjacent to the internal access road”*. It was confirmed that in excess of 20,000L of water that could be used for firefighting was held on site within water carts, however the proposed 20,000L tank would be installed to satisfy operational requirements as detailed in Schedule 3, Condition 25 of the Development Consent.

**Recommendation No. 2 (SSF-IEA-21-R2):** In response to Non-compliance No. 2, update EMS to confirm tank will be installed for operation, rather than construction, as per Development consent.

In response to the above non-compliance, the following actions occurred:

- Beon provided a letter to DPIE on 27 April 2021 to notify the Department that they had ordered and arranged for the 20,000 L water supply tank to be installed onsite in the coming weeks, as an alternative resolution to that provided in the recommendation. Beon deemed this a more time and cost-effective response to the non-compliance. They further noted that, despite the tank not being installed at the time of construction commencement, there was sufficient water available during vegetation clearing and continued to be for onsite dust suppression and other site activities;
- DPIE responded to Sebastopol Solar Farm (proponent) on 04 May 2021 requesting an update to the above actions by 02 July 2021;
- Beon provided an update to DPIE on 01 July 2021 to notify the Department that the tank was due to be delivered and installed during July 2021; and

- Beon provided an update to DPIE on 13 September 2021 to notify the Department that the tank was installed in August 2021.

#### 4.5.3 Previous non-compliance No. 3

**Non-compliance No.3 (SSF-IEA-21-NC3):** Section 7.5 of the EMS was not implemented in accordance with Schedule 4, Condition 1 of the Development Consent as no evidence of the publication of newspaper advertisements and posting of newsletters and project updates on a prominent community noticeboard in Temora and Junee was identified during the audit.

**Recommendation No. 3 (SSF-IEA-21-R3):** In response to Non-compliance No. 3, prepare and publish required notifications or amend EMS to document only those stakeholder and community and engagement initiatives that can be reasonably and practicably achieved.

In response to the above non-compliance, the following actions occurred:

- Beon provided a letter to DPIE on 27 April 2021 to notify the Department that they had prepared and published a notification in the local newspaper (Temora Express) on 09 April 2021. Additionally, the notification was also placed on the community noticeboard in Temora. Beon noted that, moving forward, they would review the stakeholder engagement initiatives and ensure that these were reasonably and practicably achieved.

It is noted that in DPIE's response to the audit findings of 04 May 2021, the Department commented that the above noted non-compliance matters had been assessed in accordance with the Department's Compliance Policy and that there would not be any further enforcement action at the time of their response.

#### 4.5.4 Previous Opportunities for Improvement

Based on the outcomes of the first IEA, the following continual environmental management improvement opportunities were identified:

- Table 5-1 and Section 5.4.2 of the EMS could be updated in regard to the Fire Safety Study to explain that it has not been prepared as battery storage is not being constructed on the Project; and
- Project phone contact information that is presented within the EMS and associated management plans to allow community to obtain project-related information should be reviewed to ensure the number is consistent in all relevant documentation.

In response to the above noted Opportunities for Improvement, the proponent's construction contractor, Beon confirmed that a review of the EMS had been conducted and that the information contained within the document was considered appropriate for the final stages of construction and transition to operation.

#### 4.6 EMP, Sub-plans and compliance documents

The Development Consent stipulates that specific post approval documents be prepared and submitted to the Department. As part of this audit, the following post approval documents have been assessed to determine if they have been developed and implemented in accordance with the conditions of consent and their content is adequate:

- Environmental Management Strategy;
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan;
- Traffic Management Plan;
- Landscaping Plan;
- Biodiversity Management Plan; and

- Fire Management and Emergency Response Plan (DP&E approval not required).

The adequacy of the documents was determined on the basis of whether there were any non-compliances resulting from the implementation of the document or whether there were any opportunities for improvement. A technical review of the documents was not undertaken as part of this audit.

#### **4.6.1 Environmental Management Strategy**

The Environmental Management Strategy was prepared by NGH Environmental and the most recent version viewed as part of this audit was Revision “Final V1.1” dated 22 December 2020. The EMS was approved by the Department on 23 December 2020, prior to commencement of construction.

The auditor considers the EMS has been generally developed in accordance with the conditions of consent and approvals and that the content is generally adequate. The EMS has not been updated since the first Independent Environmental Audit was undertaken (on 26 March 2021).

Further information regarding the EMS is discussed in the Audit Table in Appendix C.

#### **4.6.2 (Cultural) Heritage Management Plan**

The Heritage Management Plan (named Cultural Heritage Management Plan [CHMP]) was prepared by NGH Environmental and the most recent version viewed as part of this audit was Revision “Final 1.6” dated 16 September 2020. The CHMP was approved by DPIE on 17 September 2020, prior to commencement of construction. The CHMP has not been updated since the first Independent Environmental Audit was undertaken (on 26 March 2021).

The auditor considers the CHMP has been generally developed in accordance with the conditions of consent and approvals and that the content is generally adequate and being implemented on site. It is noted that the authors of the report were endorsed by the Secretary as heritage experts and that the CHMP was prepared in consultation with DPIE’s Biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) and Aboriginal Stakeholders.

Further information regarding the CHMP is discussed in the Audit Table in Appendix C.

#### **4.6.3 Traffic Management Plan**

The Traffic Management Plan (TMP) was prepared by NGH Environmental and the most recent version viewed as part of this audit was Revision “Final V2.0” dated 06 May 2021. The TMP was approved by DP&E on 24 May 2021.

The TMP has been updated since the first Independent Environmental Audit was undertaken (on 26 March 2021). The updated TMP incorporated the DPIE approval (on 30 April 2021) for additional over-dimensional vehicle movements and to include the relevant road authority requests associated with the approval.

Beon personnel reported that the additional over dimensional vehicle movements were required for the construction of the substation and confirmed that traffic controls and an Oversize and/or Overmass (OSOM) Mass or Dimension Exemption Permit was in place as per DPIE’s approval.

The auditor considers the TMP has been generally developed in accordance with the conditions of consent and approvals and that the content is generally adequate and being implemented on site. Further information regarding the TMP is discussed in the Independent Audit Table in Appendix C.

#### **4.6.4 Landscaping Plan**

The Landscaping Plan (LP) was prepared by NGH Environmental and the most recent version viewed as part of this audit was Revision Final V1.5 dated 15 June 2021. The LP was approved by DPIE on 15 June 2021.

The LP has been updated since the first Independent Environmental Audit was undertaken (on 26 March 2021) to include a revised species list for the vegetation screen.

The auditor considers the LP has been generally developed in accordance with the conditions of consent and approvals and that the content is generally adequate and being implemented on site.

Further information regarding the LP is discussed in the Audit Table in Appendix C.

#### **4.6.5 Biodiversity Management Plan**

The Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) was prepared by NGH Environmental and the most recent version viewed as part of this audit was Revision "Final V1.0" dated 04 December 2020. The BMP was approved by DPIE on 21 December 2020, prior to commencement of construction.

The auditor considers the BMP has been developed in accordance with the conditions of consent and approvals and that the content is generally adequate and being implemented on site.

Further information regarding the BMP is discussed in the Audit Table in Appendix C.

#### **4.6.6 Fire Management and Emergency Response Plan**

The Fire Management and Emergency Response Plan (FMERP) was prepared by NGH Environmental and the most recent version viewed as part of this audit was Revision "Final V1.0" dated 24 August 2021. The FMERP does not require approval by DP&E.

The auditor considers the FMERP has been developed in general accordance with the conditions of consent and approvals and being implemented on site.

Further information regarding the FMERP is discussed in the Audit Table in Appendix C.

### **4.7 Environmental Performance**

Based on the review activities undertaken during the current audit program, it is considered that the mitigation measures detailed in the DP&E-approved Environmental Management Strategy, as well as other strategies, plans and programs required within the Development Consent were generally appropriate and effective in minimising impacts associated with construction and operation of the Project.

Following completion of the Auditor's interviews and site visit of 05 May 2022, it was deemed that a good range of appropriately implemented environmental controls were in place to assist in minimising the risk of significant environmental incidents and impacts associated with the Project.

The site appeared well managed at the time of the audit and required mitigation measures including establishment of groundcover, planting of vegetation buffer zones, boundary fencing and protection of sensitive areas were observed to be in place. Project personnel were familiar with their environmental compliance responsibilities and obligations and the standard of environmental management systems and associated record keeping was considered to be high.

### **4.8 Complaints**

As of 08 April 2022, it was reported that there had been no (0) complaints related to environmental management matters since the first Independent Environmental Audit (IEA) was undertaken (on 26 March 2021).

It is noted that the Project website (<http://sebastopolsolarfarm.com/>) contains information to encourage members of the community to share their thoughts, concerns or suggestions for the Project via an email enquiry form. In addition, the website contains a link to the required Complaints Register and the one (1) complaint identified in the first IEA is documented within the Register.

## 4.9 Incidents

Three (3) non-reportable environmental incidents occurred during the period from the first Independent Environmental Audit (IEA) on 26 March 2021 to 08 April 2022 and Incident Reports were viewed by the auditor. All incidents were categorised as “Minimal” level severity and involved hydraulic hose failures resulting in minor spills (1-2L) of hydraulic oil. Due to the minor nature of the incidents, notification to DP&E was not required in accordance with the definitions of “incident” and “material harm” within the Development Consent.

## 4.10 Actual versus Predicted Environmental Impacts

A detailed investigation of risks and potential impacts associated with the Project was undertaken in the Project EIS and the following environmental aspects were identified as key risks:

- Biodiversity (flora and fauna);
- Aboriginal cultural heritage;
- Visual impact;
- Land use and resources; and
- Noise impacts.

As part of this audit, specific potential impacts listed in the EIS within each of the environmental aspects were considered and comment provided on the actual impacts during construction and operation (see Table 3, below).

It is considered that the management strategies in place to mitigate potential construction and operational impacts were appropriate and the impacts observed on site were generally consistent with those identified in the EIS. Table 3, below, presents a summary of audit observations associated with the above-noted potential impacts.

**TABLE 3: Actual versus Predicted Environmental Impacts**

Predicted Potential Impacts (as documented in EIS)	Actual Impacts (as observed during audit)	Comments
<b>BIODIVERSITY</b>		
Habitat clearance for permanent and temporary construction facilities	Clearing was completed in accordance with approved designs and flora/fauna protection measures.	Environmental protection measures in place as per the DPIE-approved Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP). Preparations for vegetative screen plantings has commenced. Clearing minimised to greatest extent practicable.
Displacement (or injury or death) of resident fauna	Clearing conducted in accordance with BMP. One (1) fauna item recovered by ecologists and transferred to care of WIRES.	Environmental protection measures in place as per the DPIE-approved BMP. Two (2) ecologists present during tree clearing. Coarse woody debris retained.
Removal of habitat features, e.g. hollow-bearing trees	Clearing minimised as much as possible. Vegetation fencing and exclusion zones in place. Boundary fencing in place.	Cleared vegetation has been retained for future habitat enhancement (coarse woody debris).

Predicted Potential Impacts (as documented in EIS)	Actual Impacts (as observed during audit)	Comments
Shading and microclimate effects of solar infrastructure	Solar farm infrastructure in place in accordance with approved designs.	Permanent site disturbance has been minimised to the greatest extent practicable. Groundcover has been re-established to assist in mitigation and increased spacing of panel rows allows for greater sun exposure.
Existence of permanent solar infrastructure	Solar farm infrastructure in place in accordance with approved designs.	Following expiration of the design life of the Project, the site infrastructure will be decommissioned and site rehabilitated. Permanent site disturbance has been minimised to the greatest extent practicable.
<b>ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>		
Removal, breakage or displacement of artefacts during construction	Project Archaeologist completed salvage in December 2020. Not all previously identified heritage items within the construction footprint could be located due to disturbance from prior agricultural activities.	Heritage exclusion zone fencing and signage is in place for on-site items and boundary fencing is in place to protect off-site items. Salvaged items have been catalogued and are held with a cultural heritage consultant in Wagga Wagga. Return of Rights has been conducted with Registered Aboriginal Parties. Heritage reporting complete.  Environmental inspection documentation for heritage protection zones are in place.
<b>VISUAL IMPACT</b>		
Low to medium visual impact of solar farm and associated infrastructure by local receivers	The Project site is in a rural area and not visible from the closest major road (Goldfields Way). There is very limited exposure of the site to dwellings due to the broad-acre rural setting of the Project site.	Vegetation screen planting has been completed as part of the Project to minimise visual impacts, in accordance with the Landscaping Plan.
On site infrastructure finished in bright colours and/or reflective surfaces	Permanent buildings associated with operations are finished in a “bushland” colour palette and are set back from Eurolee Road to minimise visual impact.	Project designs incorporate a subdued colour palette for permanent infrastructure that is consistent with the surrounding rural setting. Non-reflective materials have been used where possible/practicable to minimise glare and reflections.
Construction night lighting providing nuisance to neighbours or hazardous to drivers	No significant permanent night lighting of the Project site occurs.	Project designs incorporate the use of lighting on an “as-needed” basis incorporating sensors and shielding of lights to minimise potential light-spill and glare issues.
<b>LAND USE IMPACTS</b>		
Agricultural activities on the land would cease in the areas	Portions of the land upon which the solar farm was observed to be operating	Livestock grazing noted to be occurring as the area below panels is accessible to livestock, has appropriate vegetative cover and also offers

Predicted Potential Impacts (as documented in EIS)	Actual Impacts (as observed during audit)	Comments
involved in access and construction	were in use for livestock grazing at the time of the audit. Environmental protection measures were noted to be in place to minimise potential impacts on adjoining agricultural land.	shade and shelter. Post-operational rehabilitation strategies have been considered. The site infrastructure is considered to be of a generally low impact nature and unlikely to result in significant land degradation once site decommissioning and rehabilitation is complete.
Disruption to local traffic during construction	No local traffic was observed on Eurolee Road at the time of the audit as the Project site is located within sparsely populated rural lands. Agreed improvements have been made to the intersection of Eurolee Road and Goldfields Way.	Construction traffic deemed to be managed in accordance with the DPIE-approved Traffic Management Plan. Heavy and over-dimensional vehicle movement registers were reviewed by the Auditor and volumes were confirmed to be compliant with Development Consent conditions. Car-pooling and mini buses were used during construction to reduce potential impacts associated with increased traffic during this phase.
Biosecurity risk, i.e. pests, diseases and weeds due to increase movement of vehicles on site	No significant pest infestations associated with construction and operation were observed. Some opportunities for additional weed control were noted.	Plant/equipment inductions are conducted that incorporate inspections for the presence of biosecurity risks. The site is monitored for the presence of weeds and evidence of weed control/management was observed. An opportunity for additional weed control within vegetation buffer zones was identified.
<b>NOISE IMPACTS</b>		
Construction and operation noise	No significant and/or un-predicted noise impacts were noted at the Project site during the Auditor's site visit of 05 May 2022.  No complaints related to noise have been received.	Periodic maintenance of plant and equipment was confirmed to have been conducted to ensure optimal operating performance.  Reduced speed limits in place to assist in limiting noise from moving plant/equipment.
Road traffic noise	Reduced speed limits noted to be in place within Project site to assist in minimising potential noise.  Heavy vehicle movement register confirmed that traffic volume was less than allowable maximums.	Traffic Management Plan requirements are being adhered to.  Over-dimensional and heavy vehicles restrictions are adhered to and monitoring conducted and documented within the vehicle register.  No traffic and noise related complaints received during the audit period.

#### **4.11 Site Inspections**

A site inspection was undertaken by the Lead Auditor, Toby Hobbs, on 05 May 2022. The site was noted to be in operation with no other works occurring as construction had been deemed complete. The weather on the day of the site visit was clear and approximately 16°C and the total rainfall received in the area (Temora Bureau of Meteorology monitoring station) in the preceding week had been approximately 15mm. It is noted that all areas of the site were accessible to the auditor at the time of the site visit.

Evidence for the audit collected during the site inspections is presented within the column titled “Evidence Collected” in the Audit Table (Appendix C). In addition, site inspection photographs are presented within Appendix D.

#### **4.12 Site Interviews**

As mentioned previously, interviews were held with the following senior Project personnel on 05 May 2022 as part of the site visits for the audit:

- Kirsten Lee (Beon - Compliance, Sustainability and Stakeholder Lead); and
- Bruce Harris (Beon – Site Manager).

Evidence for the audit collected during the site interviews is presented within the column titled “Evidence Collected” in the Independent Audit Table (Appendix C).

#### **4.13 Previous Annual Review or Compliance Report Recommendations**

There have not been any annual reviews or compliance reporting undertaken for this Project.

#### **4.14 Key Strengths**

The standard of environmental management evident during completion of the Independent Environmental Audit was high with several key strengths evident as noted below:

- Exclusion zones areas were well protected with good quality fencing and signage in place;
- Groundcover had been very well established across the site following completion of construction works;
- General housekeeping across the Project site was of a very high standard;
- It was apparent that there was a good rapport between the Project operations team and adjoining landowners;
- Site disturbance was minimised where possible to ensure groundcover remained in place to prevent potential erosion and/or sedimentation during construction;
- The standard of environmental management systems and associated record keeping was very good; and
- Project personnel were well resourced, suitably qualified, dedicated, and experienced.

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Non-compliances

There were two (2) non-compliances identified with Development consent conditions during the audit program as noted below:

- **Non-compliance No. 1 (SSF-IEA-22-NC1):** Work as executed plans were not submitted to the Department prior to commencing operations. The plans were submitted to the Department on 14 March 2022, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22 February 2022; and
- **Non-compliance No. 2 (SSF-IEA-22-NC2):** Notification of commencement of operation was not submitted to the Department **prior** to commencing operations. Notification was provided to the Department on 08 March 2022, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22 February 2022.

Based on the identified non-compliances identified during the audit program the following recommendations are made:

- **Recommendation No. 1 (SSF-IEA-22-R1):** In response to Non-compliance No. 1, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment should be notified of this non-compliance; and
- **Recommendation No. 2 (SSF-IEA-22-R2):** In response to Non-compliance No. 2, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment should be notified of this non-compliance.

In accordance with Section 4.3.2 of the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020), the proponent must submit their response to the audit findings to the Department in a separate document to this report. The proponent must respond to all audit findings, including recommendations and opportunities for improvement.

### 5.2 Opportunities for Improvement

In addition to the above noted recommendations, the following continual environmental management **improvement opportunities** were identified during the audit:

- Based on the Auditor's observation of the vegetation buffer areas of the project site on 05 May 2022, it was considered that weed control should be undertaken in accordance with industry best practice to reduce the occurrence of invasive species such as Flaxleaf fleabane (*Conyza bonariensis*); and
- Given that operation of the Project has commenced, the Project website should be updated to indicate commencement of operation.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd has conducted the second Independent Environmental Audit (IEA) to assess the environmental performance and compliance status of the Sebastopol Solar Project (NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Application Number SSD 9098). The IEA, which was completed within three (3) months of the commencement of operation of the Project, was a requirement of Schedule 4, Condition 7 of the Project's Development Consent (Modification 1, July 2020) and conducted and in accordance with the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020)

There were two (2) non-compliances identified with Development Consent conditions during the audit program. Recommendations to address the identified non-compliance matters have been presented by the Auditor. In addition, additional weed control for vegetation buffer areas and an update to the Project website were identified as continual environmental management improvement opportunities.

The standard of environmental management evident during the completion of the Audit was high. Final construction works and site operation was deemed to be generally consistent with Development consent conditions and associated strategies, plans and programs.

The close-out of three (3) non-compliance matters as reported in the first Independent Environmental Audit (March 2021) was completed in accordance with DP&E requirements.

Based on the documentation review and site visit completed during the audit program, it is considered that the management strategies in place to mitigate potential construction and operation impacts remain appropriate and the impacts observed on site were generally consistent with those identified in the EIS.

In accordance with Section 4.3.2 of the *Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements* (DPIE, 2020), the proponent must submit their response to the audit findings to the Department in a separate document to this report. The proponent must respond to all audit findings, including recommendations and opportunities for improvement.

# Appendix A

## Planning Secretary Audit Team Agreement



Mr Javier Herrera  
Project Manager  
FRV  
Level 22  
6 O'Connell Street  
Sydney New South Wales 2000

08/02/2022

Dear Mr Herrera

**Sebastopol Solar - (SSD-9098)**  
**Independent Environmental Audit – Audit team approval request**

I refer to your request (SSD-9098-PA-23) submitted to the Department of Planning and Environment (the Department) on 3 February 2022 for the Secretary's approval of suitably qualified persons to undertake the Independent Environmental Audit (the Audit) in accordance with Schedule 4 Condition 7 of SSD 9098, as modified (the Consent), for Sebastopol Solar (the Project).

The Department has reviewed the nominations and information you have provided and is satisfied that these experts are suitably qualified and experienced. In accordance with Schedule 4 Condition 7 of the Consent and the Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements, the Secretary has agreed to the following persons from Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd (Vantage) to undertake the Audit and prepare the Audit Report:

- Mr Toby Hobbs Lead Auditor and
- Ms Susannah Price (assistant Auditor).

This is conditional on the two auditors being independent of the Project.

Please ensure this correspondence is appended to the Audit Report.

The Audit must be conducted in accordance with the condition of consent and prepared, undertaken and finalised in accordance with the Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements. Failure to meet these requirements will require revision and resubmission.

The Department reserves the right to request an alternate auditor or audit team for future audits.

Notwithstanding the agreement for the above listed audit team for this Project, each respective project approval or consent requires a request for the agreement to the auditor or audit team be submitted to the Department, for consideration of the Secretary. Each request is reviewed and depending on the complexity of future projects, the suitability of a proposed auditor or audit team will be considered.



Department of Planning and Environment

Should you wish to discuss the matter further, please contact me on 0429400261 or at [compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

Katrina O'Reilly  
Team Leader - Compliance  
Compliance  
As nominee of the Planning Secretary

# Appendix B

Consultation

**From:** [Katrina O'Reilly](#)  
**To:** [Toby Hobbs](#)  
**Subject:** Sebastopol Solar IEA consultation  
**Date:** Monday, 14 February 2022 1:57:28 PM

---

Good afternoon,

Thank you Toby for your email of the 10 February 2022, in relation to the IEA for Sebastopol Solar. The Department would like areas for focus to include planting, management and monitoring of vegetation buffers (and implementation of LMP), biodiversity, management, monitoring and offsets, management and monitoring of heritage sites, erosion and sediment control and management, weed management and ground cover establishment, appropriate certificates obtained such as CC and OC, complaints register and handling. The Department also suggests consultation to be also undertaken with EPA, Council, Local Aboriginal Lands Board and BCD.

Regards  
Katrina

**From:** [Mason Schembri](#)  
**To:** [Susannah Price](#)  
**Cc:** [Graham Macpherson](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed (Operation) Audit Scope - Sebastopol Solar Project  
**Date:** Friday, 11 February 2022 12:18:34 PM

---

Hi Susannah,

Junee has no concerns with the scope of the audit for the Sebastopol Solar Farm Project. We have received no complaints since the last audit in March 2021, and there has been no environmental performance concerns relating to the solar farm's construction or operation.

Please contact me if you require any more information.

Kind Regards,

**Mason Schembri**  
**Environmental Officer**  
**Junee Shire Council**

**Mobile:** 0404 501 074  
**Work:** +61 2 6924 8108  
**Email:** [mason.schembri@juneensw.gov.au](mailto:mason.schembri@juneensw.gov.au)



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**From:** [Jessica Creed](#)  
**To:** [Susannah Price](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed (Operation) Audit Scope - Sebastopol Solar Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, 15 February 2022 12:03:54 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)

---

Hi Susannah,

We have no comment on either the audit scope or on the environmental performance of the site.

Regards

**Jessica Creed**  
Regional Manager  
Regulatory Operations  
NSW Environment Protection Authority  
D: 02 6983 4931 M: 0409 831 040



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**From:** Susannah Price <[sprice@venv.com.au](mailto:sprice@venv.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 February 2022 2:33 PM  
**To:** EPA RSD Central West Mailbox <[central.west@epa.nsw.gov.au](mailto:central.west@epa.nsw.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Proposed (Operation) Audit Scope - Sebastopol Solar Project

Hi,

Our company, Vantage Environmental Management, is undertaking a second Independent Environmental Audit of the Sebastopol Solar Project, which has commenced operation.

The scope of our audit currently includes:

- An assessment of compliance with Development Consent for SSD 9098 as modified (Mod 1, July 2020) and post approval documents prepared to satisfy the conditions of consent
- An assessment of the environmental performance of the development, including an assessment of:
  - Actual impacts compared to predicted impacts documented in the Environmental Impact Statement and associated amendments
  - The physical extent of the development in comparison with the approved boundary, and any potential off-site impacts
  - Incidents, non-compliances and complaints that occurred or were made during the

- audit period
- The performance of the development having regard to agency policy and any particular environmental issues identified through consultation carried out when developing the scope of the audit
- Any feedback received from the Department, and other agencies and stakeholders, including the community, on the environmental performance of the project during the audit period
- The status of implementation of previous Independent Audit findings, recommendations and actions
- A high-level assessment of whether Environmental Management Plans and Sub-plans are adequate
- Any other matters considered relevant by the auditor or the Department taking into account relevant regulatory requirements and legislation and knowledge of the development's past performance.

As required by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE), we are seeking input from EPA as to whether you have any concerns regarding the following:

- The scope of the audit
- Any concerns with the environmental performance of the construction or operation of the Sebastopol Solar Farm project or have received any complaints since our last audit in March 2021.

Thanks in advance for your time.

Regards  
Susannah

**SUSANNAH PRICE**

Project Manager/Auditor

**Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd**

PO Box 378 Albury NSW 2640

T (02) 6021 8655 M 0421 871 433

[www.venv.com.au](http://www.venv.com.au)



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**From:** [Claire Golder](#)  
**To:** [Susannah Price](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed (Operation) Audit Scope - Sebastopol Solar Project  
**Date:** Monday, 14 February 2022 10:02:45 AM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
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[image004.png](#)  
[image005.png](#)  
[image007.png](#)  
[image008.png](#)  
[image009.png](#)  
[image010.png](#)

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Hi Susannah,

The advice I received from the Director of Environmental Services, who completed all the construction inspections during the project was:

Council only had one dust complaint early on in the project.

Council had to reach out to them about their COVID Compliance once, but overall the project went very smoothly from our perspective.

Regards,  
Claire



**Claire Golder**

Town Planner/Strategic Projects Officer  
Temora Shire Council

p: 02 6980 1108

a: 105 Loftus Street (PO Box 262) Temora NSW 2666

w: [www.temora.nsw.gov.au](http://www.temora.nsw.gov.au) e: [cgolder@temora.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cgolder@temora.nsw.gov.au)



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**From:** Susannah Price <[sprice@venv.com.au](mailto:sprice@venv.com.au)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 February 2022 2:20 PM  
**To:** Claire Golder <[cgolder@temora.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cgolder@temora.nsw.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Proposed (Operation) Audit Scope - Sebastopol Solar Project

Hi Claire,

Further to our correspondence from a year ago, we are now undertaking a second Independent Environmental Audit of the Sebastopol Solar Project, which has commenced operation.

The scope of our audit currently includes:

- An assessment of compliance with Development Consent for SSD 9098 as modified (Mod 1, July 2020) and post approval documents prepared to satisfy the conditions of consent
- An assessment of the environmental performance of the development, including an assessment of:
  - Actual impacts compared to predicted impacts documented in the Environmental Impact Statement and associated amendments
  - The physical extent of the development in comparison with the approved boundary, and any potential off-site impacts
  - Incidents, non-compliances and complaints that occurred or were made during the audit period
  - The performance of the development having regard to agency policy and any particular environmental issues identified through consultation carried out when developing the scope of the audit
  - Any feedback received from the Department, and other agencies and stakeholders, including the community, on the environmental performance of the project during the audit period
- The status of implementation of previous Independent Audit findings, recommendations and actions
- A high-level assessment of whether Environmental Management Plans and Sub-plans are adequate
- Any other matters considered relevant by the auditor or the Department taking into account relevant regulatory requirements and legislation and knowledge of the development's past performance.

We are seeking input from Council as to whether you have any concerns regarding the following:

- The scope of the audit
- Any concerns with the environmental performance of the construction or operation of the Sebastopol Solar Farm project or have received any complaints since our last audit in March 2021.

Again, thanks in advance for your time.

Regards  
Susannah

**SUSANNAH PRICE**

Project Manager/Auditor

**Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd**

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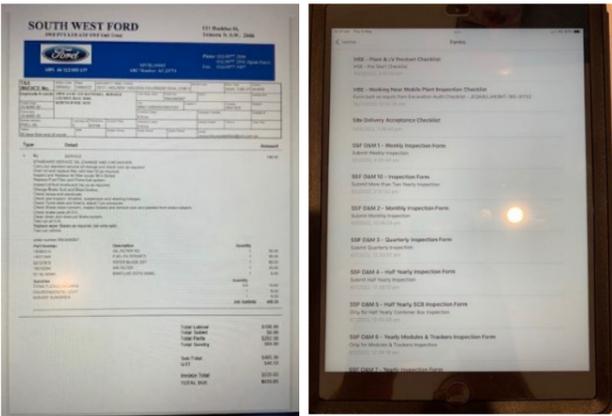
# Appendix C

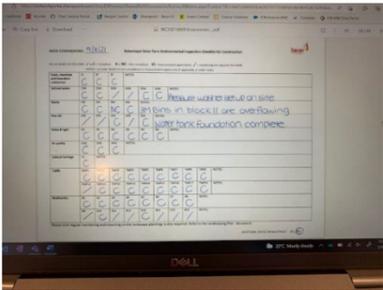
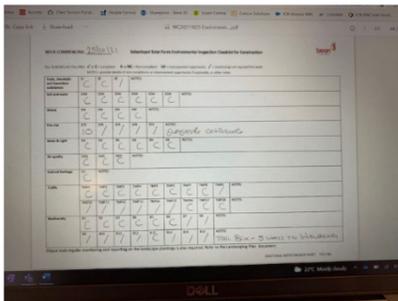
## Independent Audit Table

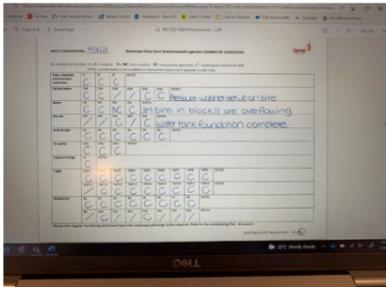
Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>SCHEDULE 2: ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS</b>				
<b>OBLIGATION TO MINIMISE HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 1	In meeting the specific environmental performance criteria established under this consent, the Applicant must implement all reasonable and feasible measures to prevent and/or minimise any material harm to the environment that may result from the construction, operation, upgrading or decommissioning of the development.	- All evidence collected and observations made during this audit (for construction and operational phase of development).	The environmental management and mitigation measures in place for construction of the Project were deemed to be generally suitable and consistent with Consent conditions.	Compliant
<b>TERMS OF CONSENT</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 2	The Applicant must carry out the development: (a) generally in accordance with the EIS; and (b) in accordance with the conditions of this consent.  <i>Note: The general layout of the development is shown in Appendix 1.</i>	The findings of this audit	The development is being carried out generally in accordance with the EIS and the conditions of this Development Consent. No significant adverse impacts associated with construction and operation were identified during the audit.	Compliant
Schedule 2 Condition 3	If there is any inconsistency between the above documents, the most recent document must prevail to the extent of the inconsistency. However, the conditions of this consent must prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.	N/A	There have been no reported inconsistencies between the plans and documentation referred to in this condition.	Not triggered
Schedule 2 Condition 4	The Applicant must comply with any requirement/s of the Secretary arising from the Department's assessment of: (a) any strategies, plans or correspondence that are submitted in accordance with this consent; (b) any reports, reviews or audits commissioned by the Department regarding compliance with this consent; and (c) the implementation of any actions or measures contained in these documents.	- All evidence collected and observations made during this audit	The proponent has complied with requests and requirements from the Secretary.	Compliant
<b>FINAL LAYOUT PLANS</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 5	Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must submit detailed plans of the final layout of the development to the Secretary, including details on the siting of solar panels and ancillary infrastructure.	- Sebastopol Solar Farm Site Equipment Layout plan (Rev. 1, 08/09/20)  - DPIE Post approval lodgement email receipt dated 12/01/21 confirming upload of Final Layout Plans  - Correspondence dated 19/02/21 from DPIE acknowledging submission of Final Layout Plans (Rev. 1, 08/09/20)	Detailed Final Layout Plans were first lodged with DP&E on 12/01/21 which included details on the location of the solar panels and ancillary infrastructure. The plans were lodged prior to commencement of construction on 14/01/21.  An update to the final layout of the development was submitted to the Department on 18/01/21 to include an additional dam on the eastern portion of the site.	Compliant
<b>UPGRADING OF SOLAR PANELS AND ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 6	Over time, the Applicant may upgrade the solar panels and ancillary infrastructure on site provided these upgrades remain within the approved development footprint of the site. Prior to carrying out any such upgrades, the Applicant must provide revised layout plans and project details of the development to the Secretary incorporating the proposed upgrades.	N/A	Not relevant as upgrade has not occurred	Not triggered

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>WORK AS EXECUTED PLANS</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 7	Prior to commencing operations, or following the upgrades of any solar panels or ancillary infrastructure, the Applicant must submit work as executed plans of the development to the Department.	- DP&E Post Approval submission receipt of work as executed plans of 14/03/22	<p>Work as executed plans were submitted to the Department, however, the date of submission (14/03/22) was after commencement of operation (22/02/22).</p> <p><b>Non-compliance No. 1 (SSF-IEA-22-NC1):</b> Work as executed plans were not submitted to the Department <b>prior</b> to commencing operations. The plans were submitted to the Department on 14/03/22, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22/02/22.</p> <p><b>Recommendation No. 1 (SSF-IEA-22-R1):</b> In response to Non-compliance No. 1, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment should be notified of this non-compliance.</p>	Non-compliant
<b>NOTIFICATION OF DEPARTMENT</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 8	<p>Prior to commencing the construction, operation, upgrading or decommissioning of the development or the cessation of operations, the Applicant must notify the Department in writing of the date of commencement, or cessation, of the relevant phase.</p> <p>If any of these phases of the development are to be staged, then the Applicant must notify the Department in writing prior to the commencement of the relevant stage, and clearly identify the development that would be carried out during the relevant stage.</p>	- Correspondence (letter) dated 08/03/22 from proponent providing date of commencement of operation as 22/02/22	<p>The proponent notified the Department of commencement of operation on 08/03/22, however, the date of submission was after commencement of operation (22/02/22).</p> <p>The proponent does not intend to stage any of the phases of development.</p> <p><b>Non-compliance No. 2 (SSF-IEA-22-NC2):</b> Notification of commencement of operation was not submitted to the Department <b>prior</b> to commencing operation. Notification was provided to the Department on 08/03/22, which is after the date of commencement of operation of 22/02/22.</p> <p><b>Recommendation No. 2 (SSF-IEA-22-R2):</b> In response to Non-compliance No. 2, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment should be notified of this non-compliance.</p>	Non-compliant
<b>STRUCTURAL ADEQUACY</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 9	<p>The Applicant must ensure that all new buildings and structures, and any alterations or additions to existing buildings and structures, are constructed in accordance with the relevant requirements of the <i>Building Code of Australia</i>.</p> <p><i>Notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Under Part 6 of the EP&amp;A Act, the Applicant is required to obtain construction and occupation certificates for the proposed building works.</li> <li>- Part 8 of the EP&amp;A Regulation sets out the requirements for the certification of the development.</li> </ul>	<p>- Temora Shire Council (TSC) Final Occupation Certificate No. DA 1-5-9098/2019 for security fence/gates, Platforms A, B &amp; C, Invertor Station, Switching Station Control Building, Collector Station, Transformer Bund and Ancillary Structures, Office &amp; Maintenance Shed (dated 19/11/21)</p> <p>- TSC Construction Certificate No.: 4-9098/2019 for Switching Station Control Building, Collector Station, Rain Water Tank, Switching Station Fencing, Transformer Bund and Ancillary Support Structures (dated 27/01/21)</p> <p>- TSC Construction Certificate No.: 5-9098/2019 for Office and Maintenance Shed (dated 05/07/21)</p>	The proponent has obtained a Final Occupation Certificate for security fence/gates, Platforms A, B & C, Invertor Station, Switching Station Control Building, Collector Station, Transformer Bund and Ancillary Structures, Office & Maintenance Shed.	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
		- NSW Government Fair Trading Certificate of Compliance for Plumbing and Drainage Work dated 11/11/21		
<b>DEMOLITION</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 10	The Applicant must ensure that all demolition work on site is carried out in accordance with <i>Australian Standard AS 2601-2001: The Demolition of Structures</i> , or its latest version.	N/A	The proponent is not undertaking any demolition work as part of this development.	Not triggered
<b>PROTECTION OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 11	Unless the Applicant and the applicable authority agree otherwise, the Applicant must: (a) repair, or pay the full costs associated with repairing, any public infrastructure that is damaged by the development; and (b) relocate, or pay the full costs associated with relocating, any public infrastructure that needs to be relocated as a result of the development.  This condition does not apply to the upgrade and maintenance of the road network, which is expressly provided for in the conditions of this consent.	N/A	The project has not damaged or relocated any public infrastructure such as transmission lines.	Not triggered
<b>OPERATION OF PLANT AND EQUIPMENT</b>				
Schedule 2 Condition 12	The Applicant must ensure that all plant and equipment used on site, or in connection with the development, is: (a) maintained in a proper and efficient condition; and (b) operated in a proper and efficient manner.	- Vehicle register/inspections/maintenance records viewed on site. Project team uses an electronic checklist that is used for initial induction of vehicles/equipment to ensure they are suitable for on-site use. A daily pre-start checklist is also completed. TMP Section 8.3 "road inspections" are documented in the weekly environmental inspection checklist.  A "Plant Register" is maintained on site that includes details of last and next service, etc.  Routine maintenance and check system in place for key solar farm plant/equipment in accordance with manufacturers specifications as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily and Weekly checks</li> <li>• Monthly and Quarterly Inspections</li> <li>• Annual maintenance / service records</li> </ul>	Completed register/inspections/maintenance records held on site. All relevant information presented within the registers. Information was current to date of audit site visit.  Two (2) light vehicles are the only mobile plant in use as part of operation of the project. Appropriate maintenance/service records are maintained along with fuel and registration records, etc.	Compliant

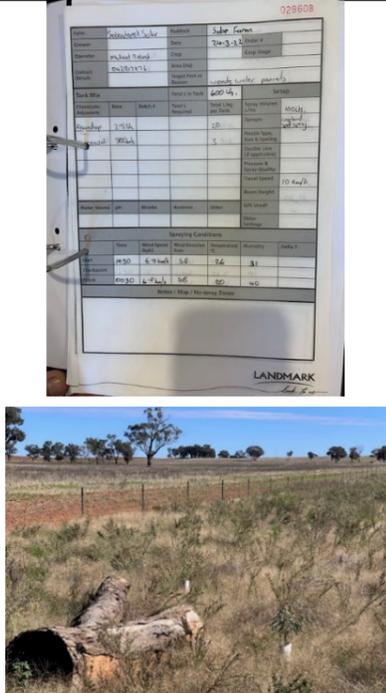
Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
				
<b>SCHEDULE 3: ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS - GENERAL</b>				
<b>TRANSPORT</b>				
<b>Over-Dimensional and Heavy Vehicle Restrictions</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 1	<p>The Applicant must ensure that the:</p> <p>(a) development does not generate more than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>66 heavy vehicle movements a day during construction, upgrading or decommissioning;</li> <li>4 [updated to 12] over-dimensional vehicle movement during construction, upgrading or decommissioning; and</li> <li>2 heavy vehicle movements a day during operations; on the public road network;</li> </ul> <p>(b) length of any vehicles (excluding over-dimensional vehicles) used for the development does not exceed 26 metres, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, May 2021 (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) prepared by NGH Environmental, updated with DPIE-approved allowance for additional over-dimensional vehicles</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Traffic Management Plan (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) dated 24/05/21</li> <li>- Correspondence (letter) from DP&amp;E approving requested increase in number of over-dimensional vehicle movements during construction, upgrading or decommissioning, dated 30/04/21</li> <li>- NHVR Oversize and/or Overmass (OSOM) Mass or Dimension Exemption Permit No. 441308V2 for period of 11/03/21 to 19/05/21</li> <li>- Heavy vehicle and OD register (excel spreadsheet)</li> <li>- Environmental Inspection Checklists and heavy (HV) and over-dimensional (OD) vehicle tracking register viewed on site</li> <li>- Weekly checklists viewed from:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>09/08/21</li> <li>25/10/21</li> <li>18/10/21</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Heavy vehicle movements were appropriately tracked and consistent with Development Consent conditions.</p> <p>It was confirmed there had been no more than 2 heavy vehicle movements per day since the commencement of operation.</p> <p>Additional over OD movements were associated with the sub-station which occurred during construction in the second quarter of 2021. It was reported that traffic control and relevant OD permits were in place for the deliveries.</p>	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
				
Schedule 3 Condition 2	The Applicant must keep accurate records of the number of over-dimensional and heavy vehicles entering or leaving the site each day.	<p>- Traffic Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, May 2021 (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) prepared by NGH Environmental, updated with DPIE-approved additional over-dimensional vehicles</p> <p>- DPIE approval letter of Traffic Management Plan (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) dated 24/05/21</p> <p>- Environmental Inspection Checklists and heavy (HV) and over-dimensional (OD) vehicle tracking register viewed on site</p> <p>- Weekly checklists viewed from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 09/08/21</li> <li>• 25/10/21</li> <li>• 18/10/21</li> </ul> 	Heavy vehicle movements were appropriately tracked and consistent with Development Consent conditions.	Compliant
<b>Designated Over-Dimensional and Heavy Vehicle Access Route</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 3	<p>All over-dimensional and heavy vehicles associated with the development must travel to and from the site via Goldfields Way and Eurolee Road and use the approved existing site access point on Eurolee Road, as identified in the figure in Appendix 3.</p> <p><i>Note: The Applicant is required to obtain relevant permits under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (NSW) for the use of over-dimensional vehicles on the road network.</i></p>	<p>- Traffic Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, May 2021 (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) prepared by NGH Environmental, updated with DPIE-approved additional over-dimensional vehicles</p> <p>- DPIE approval letter of Traffic Management Plan (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) dated 24/05/21</p> <p>- Environmental Inspection Checklists include relevant information from final period of construction and operation</p>	Vehicle movements were appropriately tracked and consistent with Development Consent conditions.	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
		Weekly checklists viewed from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 09/08/21</li> <li>• 25/10/21</li> <li>• 18/10/21</li> </ul> 		
<b>Road Upgrades and Site Access</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 4	Prior to the commencing construction, the Applicant must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) upgrade and seal Eurolee Road for a minimum of 380 m from its intersection with Goldfields Way (as identified in the figure in Appendix 3);</li> <li>(b) upgrade the intersection of the Goldfields Way and Eurolee Road, including providing a Basic Right Turn (BAR) and Basic Left Turn (BAL) intersection treatment generally in accordance with the figure in Appendix 5; and</li> <li>(c) upgrade the site access point off Eurolee Road with a Rural Property Access type treatment to cater for the largest vehicle accessing the site.</li> </ul> These upgrades must comply with the Austroads Guide to Road Design (as amended by TfNSW supplements), and be carried out to the satisfaction of the relevant roads authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Correspondence (letter) from Junee Shire Council, the relevant roads authority for Eurolee Road, dated 06/01/21, confirming that Council had inspected the construction stage of the Eurolee Road upgrade and deemed it constructed to acceptable standards.</li> <li>- Correspondence (email) from Transport for NSW, the relevant roads authority for Goldfields Way, dated 01/04/21 stating that the upgrade works appear to be completed in accordance with this condition.</li> </ul>	Road upgrade and site access works were carried out prior to commencement of construction and to the satisfaction of the relevant roads authority.	Compliant
<b>Operating Conditions</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 7	The Applicant must ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the internal roads are constructed as all-weather roads;</li> <li>(b) there is sufficient parking on site for all vehicles, and no parking occurs on the public road network in the vicinity of the site;</li> <li>(c) the capacity of the existing roadside drainage network is not reduced;</li> <li>(d) all vehicles are loaded and unloaded on site, and enter and leave the site in a forward direction; and</li> <li>(e) development-related vehicles leaving the site are in a clean condition to minimise dirt being tracked onto the sealed public road network.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, May 2021 (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) prepared by NGH Environmental, updated with DPIE-approved additional over-dimensional vehicles</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Traffic Management Plan (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) dated 24/05/21</li> <li>- Environmental Inspection Checklists</li> </ul> 	Relevant environmental protection measures have been implemented as part of the construction and operation phase.  During the Auditor's site visit of 05/05/22, access tracks were noted to be of all-weather construction, sufficient on-site parking was available, no parking on the adjoining public road network was occurring, drainage impacts and mud-tracking/drag-out was not observed	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>Traffic Management Plan</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 6	<p>Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare a Traffic Management Plan for the development in consultation with TfNSW and Council, and to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This plan must include:</p> <p>(a) details of the transport route to be used for all development-related traffic;</p> <p>(b) a protocol for undertaking independent dilapidation surveys to assess the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• existing condition of Goldfields Way and Eurolee Road on the transport route prior to construction, upgrading or decommissioning activities; and</li> <li>• condition of Goldfields Way and Eurolee Road on the transport route following construction, upgrading or decommissioning activities;</li> </ul> <p>(c) a protocol for the repair of Goldfields Way and Eurolee Road if dilapidation surveys identify that the road/s have been damaged during construction, upgrading or decommissioning works;</p> <p>(d) details of the road upgrade and site access works required by conditions 3 and 4 of Schedule 3 of this consent;</p> <p>(e) details of the measures that would be implemented to minimise traffic impacts during construction, upgrading or decommissioning works, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• temporary traffic controls, including detours and signage;</li> <li>• notifying the local community about project-related traffic impacts;</li> <li>• procedures for receiving and addressing complaints from the community about development-related traffic;</li> <li>• minimising potential for conflict with the Travelling Stock Route, school buses and other motorists, as far as practicable;</li> <li>• details of the employee shuttle bus service and measures to encourage employee use of this service;</li> <li>• scheduling of haulage vehicle movements to minimise convoy length or platoons;</li> <li>• responding to local climate conditions that may affect road safety such as fog, dust, wet weather;</li> <li>• responding to any emergency repair or maintenance requirements; and</li> <li>• a traffic management system for managing over-dimensional vehicles; and</li> </ul> <p>(f) a driver's code of conduct that addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• travelling speeds;</li> <li>• driver fatigue;</li> <li>• procedures to ensure that drivers adhere to the designated transport route/s; and</li> <li>• procedures to ensure that drivers implement safe driving practices.</li> </ul> <p>Following the Secretary's approval, the Applicant must implement the Traffic Management Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, May 2021 (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) prepared by NGH Environmental, updated with DPIE-approved additional over-dimensional vehicles</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Traffic Management Plan (Rev. Final V2.0, 06/05/21) dated 24/05/21</li> <li>- Post-Construction Dilapidation Report, Intersection of Eurolee Rd Goldfields Way, Temora NSW (09/12/21) prepared by Allspec</li> <li>- Environmental Inspection Checklists</li> <li>- Vehicle tracking registers</li> <li>- Training records</li> <li>- Site Induction (V2, 27/10/21)</li> </ul>	<p>The Traffic Management Plan (TMP) was prepared prior to the commencement of construction.</p> <p>DPIE stated that they had carefully reviewed the TMP and were satisfied that the plan met the requirements of this conditions 1 to 6 of Schedule 3.</p> <p>The TMP was developed in consultation with TfNSW and Council as discussed in Section 3 of the TMP.</p> <p>During the Auditor's site visit and interviews of 05/05/22, evidence of implementation of the TMP was confirmed including records of traffic movement, posting of speed limits, parking restrictions, etc.</p> <p>A post-construction dilapidation report prepared on 09/12/21 did not identify any road damage during construction of the project. In particular, the report noted that the road seal was in good condition with no evident signs of corrugation, pot holing or moisture depressions.</p>	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>LANDSCAPING</b>				
<b>Vegetation Buffer</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 7	The Applicant must establish and maintain a mature vegetation buffer (landscape screening) at the locations outlined in the figure in Appendix 1 to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This vegetation buffer must: (a) be planted prior to commencing operations; (b) be comprised of species that are endemic to the area; (c) within 3 years of commencing construction, effectively screen views of the solar panels and ancillary infrastructure on-site from surrounding residences; and (d) be properly maintained with appropriate weed management.	- Landscaping Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm SSD 9098, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) prepared by NGH Environmental  - DPIE approval letter of Landscaping Plan (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) dated 15/06/21  - Biodiversity Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.0, 04/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental  - DPIE approval letter of Biodiversity Management Plan (Rev. Final V1.0, 04/12/20) dated 21/12/20  - The designated buffer zone was viewed by the Auditor during site visit of 05/05/22 and plantings were noted to be healthy and becoming established  - Periodic weed control is occurring at the site and records of inspections and management actions were observed by the Auditor  	Plantings within the vegetation buffer areas were noted to be healthy although some weed species, primarily Flaxleaf fleabane ( <i>Conyza bonariensis</i> ), were observed. The buffer zones were appropriately fenced.  Based on the Auditor's observation of the vegetation buffer areas of the Project site, the following continual environmental management <b>improvement opportunity</b> was identified during the audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weed control should be undertaken in accordance with industry best practice to reduce the occurrence of invasive species such as Flaxleaf fleabane (<i>Conyza bonariensis</i>)</li> </ul>	Compliant
<b>Landscaping Plan</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 8	Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare a detailed Landscaping Plan for the development in consultation with Council, to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This plan must include: (a) a description of measures that would be implemented to ensure that the vegetated buffer achieves the objectives of condition 7 (a) – (d) of this consent; (b) include a program to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these measures; and (c) include details of who would be responsible for monitoring, reviewing and implementing the plan, and timeframes for the completion of actions.  Following the Secretary's approval, the Applicant must implement the Landscaping Plan.	- Landscaping Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm SSD 9098, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) prepared by NGH Environmental  - DPIE approval letter of Landscaping Plan (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) dated 15/06/21  - Monthly monitoring reports from landscape contractor (HLM)  - Landmark weed monitoring report of 24/03/22  - Site observation on 05/05/22 confirmed site vegetation buffer has been planted	The Landscaping Plan (LP) was prepared prior to the commencement of construction and has been implemented. Monthly monitoring by an independent contractor, HLM, is being conducted.	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
				
<b>Land Management</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 9	Following any construction or upgrading on the site, the Applicant must: (a) restore the ground cover of the site as soon as practicable; (b) maintain the ground cover with appropriate perennial species; and (c) manage weeds within this ground cover.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Landscaping Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm SSD 9098, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Landscaping Plan (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) dated 15/06/21</li> <li>- Biodiversity Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.0, 04/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Biodiversity Management Plan (Rev. Final V1.0, 04/12/20) dated 21/12/20</li> <li>- Monthly landscape implementation monitoring reports</li> <li>- Weed monitoring reports</li> </ul> <p>Groundcover Management Plan (Appendix E) of the BMP has been implemented with good surficial cover noted. Cover is sufficient to allow livestock grazing</p>	<p>Good outcomes evident across site and evidence of monitoring provided during audit.</p> <p>Weed control has been occurring across the broader area of the site although additional weed control is suggested within the vegetation buffer zones.</p>	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status														
																		
<b>BIODIVERSITY</b>																		
<b>Biodiversity Offsets</b>																		
Schedule 3 Condition 10	<p>Within two years of commencing construction under this consent, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise, the Applicant must retire biodiversity credits of a number and class specified in Table 1 and Table 2 below to the satisfaction of BCD.</p> <p>The retirement of these credits must be carried out in accordance with the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme and can be achieved by:</p> <p>(a) acquiring or retiring 'biodiversity credits' within the meaning of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016;</p> <p>(b) making payments into an offset fund that has been developed by the NSW Government; or</p> <p>(c) providing supplementary measures.</p> <p><i>Table 1: Ecosystem Credit Requirements</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 1520 1199 1822"> <thead> <tr> <th>Vegetation Community</th> <th>PCT ID</th> <th>Credits Required</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White Cypress Pine woodland on sandy loams in CentralNSW wheatbelt</td> <td>70</td> <td>1</td> <td rowspan="3">29.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White Box – White Cypress – Western Grey Box shrub/grass/forb woodland in the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion</td> <td>267</td> <td>25.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White Box grassy woodland in the upper slopes sub-region of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion</td> <td>266</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Vegetation Community	PCT ID	Credits Required	Total	White Cypress Pine woodland on sandy loams in CentralNSW wheatbelt	70	1	29.75	White Box – White Cypress – Western Grey Box shrub/grass/forb woodland in the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion	267	25.75	White Box grassy woodland in the upper slopes sub-region of the NSW South Western Slopes Bioregion	266	3	<p>- Biodiversity Conservation Trust (NSW Government) Statement confirming payment into the Biodiversity Conservation Fund on 30/06/21</p>	<p>Biodiversity credits were retired by making payments into an offset fund developed by the NSW Government, as per option (b) of this condition.</p> <p>The total credits (number and class) were equivalent to those specified with Tables 1 and 2 of this condition and were retired with payment made on 30/06/21, which was within two years of commencement of construction as specified in this condition.</p>	Compliant
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	<p><i>Table 2: Species Credit Requirements</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 352 1202 638"> <thead> <tr> <th>Species Credit Species</th> <th>Credits Required</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Austrostipa metatoris</td> <td>3</td> <td rowspan="6">48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pine Donkey Orchid (Diuris tricolor)</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Small Purple-pea (Swainsona recta)</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Silky Swainson-pea (Swainsona sericea)</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Superb Parrot (Polytelis swainsonii)</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Species Credit Species	Credits Required	Total	Austrostipa metatoris	3	48	Pine Donkey Orchid (Diuris tricolor)	11	Small Purple-pea (Swainsona recta)	14	Silky Swainson-pea (Swainsona sericea)	14	Superb Parrot (Polytelis swainsonii)	6			
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Superb Parrot (Polytelis swainsonii)	6																	
<b>Biodiversity Management Plan</b>																		
Schedule 3 Condition 11	<p>Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare a Biodiversity Management Plan for the development in consultation with BCD, and to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This plan must:</p> <p>(a) include a description of the measures that would be implemented for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>managing the remnant vegetation and fauna habitat on site;</li> <li>minimising clearing and avoiding unnecessary disturbance of vegetation that is associated with the construction and operation of the development;</li> <li>minimising the impacts to fauna on site and implementing fauna management protocols;</li> <li>avoiding the removal of hollow-bearing trees during spring to avoid the main breeding period for hollow-dependent fauna;</li> <li>rehabilitating and revegetating temporary disturbance areas with species that are endemic to the area;</li> <li>protecting vegetation and fauna habitat outside the approved disturbance areas;</li> <li>maximising the salvage of vegetative and soil resources within the approved disturbance area for beneficial reuse in the enhancement or the rehabilitation of the site; and</li> <li>controlling weeds and feral pests; and</li> </ul> <p>(b) include details of who would be responsible for monitoring, reviewing and implementing the plan, and timeframes for completion of actions.</p> <p>Following the Secretary's approval, the Applicant must implement the Biodiversity Management Plan.</p> <p><i>Note: If the biodiversity credits are retired via a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement, then the Biodiversity Management Plan does not need to include any of the matters that are covered under the Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement.</i></p>	<p>- Biodiversity Management Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.0, 04/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</p> <p>- DPIE approval letter of Biodiversity Management Plan (Rev. Final V1.0, 04/12/20) dated 21/12/20</p> <p>Vegetative and soil resources have been retained including placement of cleared timber within exclusion and buffer zones for habitat enhancement</p> <p>- Environmental Inspection Checklists and monitoring records include relevant content to demonstrate the BMP is being implemented</p> 	<p>The Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) was prepared prior to the commencement of construction.</p> <p>A pre-clearing survey was undertaken by ecologists from NGH in accordance with the BMP. Clearing of habitat trees was undertaken on 27-28/01/21 and supervised by NGH ecologists. The clearing of habitat trees was not undertaken during spring in accordance with this condition.</p> <p>The salvage of vegetative and soil resources was maximised including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Top-soil stripped and stockpiled for reuse</li> <li>Cleared vegetation retained for future reuse in habitat enhancement</li> </ul> <p>Site induction contains information regarding flora and fauna management.</p> <p>Inspection and monitoring records contain relevant biodiversity management content.</p> <p><b>Commendation:</b> The project site appears to have been very well rehabilitated post-construction with good groundcover present and enhanced drainage and stabilisation measures implemented.</p>	Compliant														
<b>AMENITY</b>																		

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>Construction, Upgrading and Decommissioning Hours</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 12	<p>Unless the Secretary agrees otherwise, the Applicant may only undertake construction, upgrading or decommissioning activities on site between:</p> <p>(a) 7 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday;                      (b) 8 am to 1 pm Saturdays; and                      (c) at no time on Sundays and NSW public holidays.</p> <p>The following construction, upgrading or decommissioning activities may be undertaken outside these hours without the approval of the Secretary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>activities that are inaudible at non-associated receivers;</li> <li>the delivery of materials as requested by the NSW Police Force or other authorities for safety reasons; or</li> <li>emergency work to avoid the loss of life, property and/or material harm to the environment.</li> </ul>	<p>- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</p> <p>- DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20</p> <p>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&amp;M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21)</p> <p>- Site Induction (V2, 27/10/21)</p> <p>- Interviews with site personnel</p>	<p>This condition does not specifically refer to the “operation” phase, however, the Auditor confirmed site personnel were aware of permitted work hours and these are listed within Section 1.2.3 of the EMS and Section 1.5 of the WHSEMP-O&amp;M.</p> <p>Approved construction hours were presented within the site induction.</p>	Compliant
<b>Noise</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 13	The Applicant must minimise the noise generated by any construction, upgrading or decommissioning activities on site in accordance with the best practice requirements outlined in the <i>Interim Construction Noise Guideline</i> (DECC, 2009), or its latest version.	N/A	This condition not relevant to operation phase	Not triggered
<b>Dust</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 14	The Applicant must minimise the dust generated by the development.	<p>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&amp;M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21)</p> <p>- Environmental Inspection Checklists</p>	<p>Dust (and air quality) management and mitigation measures are discussed in Section 13.9 of the WHSEMP-O&amp;M.</p> <p>Site works deemed to be consistent with relevant Environmental Management Strategy mitigation measures. No significant dust emission noted during site visit of 05/05/22 and groundcover is well established.</p>	Compliant
<b>Visual</b>				



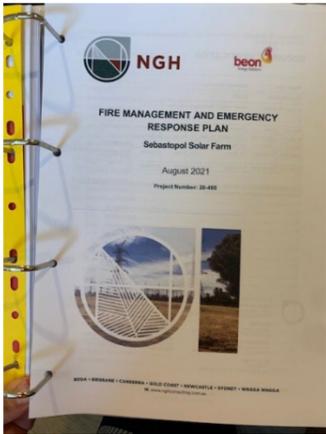
Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
Schedule 3 Condition 15	The Applicant must: (a) minimise the off-site visual impacts of the development, including the potential for any glare or reflection; (b) ensure the visual appearance of all ancillary infrastructure (including paint colours) blends in as far as possible with the surrounding landscape; and (c) not mount any advertising signs or logos on site, except where this is required for identification or safety purposes.	- Landscaping Plan, Sebastopol Solar Farm SSD 9098, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) prepared by NGH Environmental - DPIE approval letter of Landscaping Plan (Rev. Final V1.5, 15/06/21) dated 15/06/21 - Site visit and interviews of 05/05/22 	A range of appropriate measures have been incorporated into the project design including use of “bushland” colours in site buildings, minimisation of signage, use of matt (rather than gloss) finishes to minimise the potential for glare and/or reflection.	Compliant
<b>Lighting</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 16	The Applicant must: (a) minimise the off-site lighting impacts of the development; and (b) ensure that any external lighting associated with the development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is installed as low intensity lighting (except where required for safety or emergency purposes);</li> <li>• does not shine above the horizontal; and</li> <li>• complies with <i>Australian Standard AS4282 (INT) 1997 – Control of Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting</i>, or its latest version.</li> </ul>	- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental - DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20 - Site visit and interviews of 05/05/22 	Minimal lighting is used on site and includes down-lights on sensors to minimise potential off-site impacts. There are no floodlights (or similar) that automatically turn on at night. Lighting is only used on an “as-necessary” basis.	Compliant
<b>HERITAGE</b>				
Protection of Heritage Items				

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
Schedule 3 Condition 17	<p>The Applicant must ensure that the development avoids (as far as practicable) any direct or indirect impacts on the Aboriginal heritage items identified in Table 1 of Appendix 4.</p> <p>If impacts on these items cannot be avoided, the Applicant must salvage and relocate the item/s that would be impacted to a suitable alternative location on site, in accordance with the <i>Code of Practice for Archaeological Investigation of Aboriginal Objects in NSW</i> (DECCW, 2010), or its latest version.</p> <p><i>Note: The location of the Aboriginal heritage items referred to in this condition are shown in the figure in Appendix 4.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), Sebastopol Solar Farm, September 2020 (Rev. Final V1.6, 16/09/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Rev. Final V1.6, 16/09/20) dated 17/09/20</li> <li>- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Salvage Report, Sebastopol Solar Farm, June 2021 (Rev. Final, 28/06/21) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- Site Induction (V2, 27/10/21)</li> <li>- Environmental Inspection Checklists</li> <li>- Site visit of 05/05/22</li> </ul> 	<p>Appropriate exclusion zone signage fencing observed during site visit of 05/05/22, including at the reburial site.</p> <p>Heritage mitigation measures were noted to have been assessed and recorded within Weekly Environmental Inspection checklists.</p> <p>As identified in the first audit, not all Aboriginal heritage items identified in Table 1 of Appendix 4 (and referred to in Schedule 3, Condition 17) of the Development Consent could be identified and recovered at the time of salvage works on 14 and 15 December 2020. As per advice to DP&amp;E, the salvaged items were relocated to the on-site and protected re-burial area. New site cards were completed to record their new location on the AHIMS database.</p>	Compliant
Schedule 3 Condition 18	<p>The Applicant must ensure the development does not cause any direct or indirect impacts on the Aboriginal heritage items identified in Table 2 of Appendix 4 or located outside the approved development footprint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), Sebastopol Solar Farm, September 2020 (Rev. Final V1.6, 16/09/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Rev. Final V1.6, 16/09/20) dated 17/09/20</li> <li>- Exclusion zone fencing and signage</li> <li>- Boundary fencing</li> <li>- Inspection checklists</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exclusion zone fencing and signage for heritage items within the construction footprint is in place</li> <li>- Boundary fencing installed to protect off-site items</li> <li>- In accordance with the CHMP the original development design was modified to exclude impacts to possible modified trees within the project area.</li> <li>- Weekly environmental inspections were conducted during construction to confirm heritage exclusion zones were in place and during operation there are weekly exclusion zone checks conducted that incorporate monitoring of heritage zones.</li> </ul>	Compliant
Heritage Management Plan				

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
Schedule 3 Condition 19	<p>Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare a Heritage Management Plan for the development to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This plan must:</p> <p>(a) be prepared by suitably qualified and experienced persons whose appointment has been endorsed by the Secretary;</p> <p>(b) be prepared in consultation with BCD and Aboriginal Stakeholders;</p> <p>(c) include a description of the measures that would be implemented for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>protecting the Aboriginal heritage items identified in Table 2 in Appendix 4 or outside the approved development footprint, including fencing off the Aboriginal heritage items prior to commencing construction and/or pre-construction minor works;</li> <li>salvaging and relocating the Aboriginal heritage items located within the approved development footprint, as identified in Table 1 in Appendix 4, if impacts to them cannot be avoided;</li> <li>a contingency plan and reporting procedure if:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>previously unidentified heritage items are found; or</li> <li>Aboriginal skeletal material is discovered;</li> </ul> </li> <li>ensuring workers on site receive suitable heritage inductions prior to carrying out any development on site, and that records are kept of these inductions; and</li> <li>ongoing consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders during the implementation of the plan;</li> </ul> <p>(d) include a program to monitor and report on the effectiveness of these measures and any heritage impacts of the project.</p> <p>Following the Secretary's approval, the Applicant must implement the Heritage Management Plan.</p>	<p>- Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP), Sebastopol Solar Farm, September 2020 (Rev. Final V1.6, 16/09/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</p> <p>- DPIE approval letter of Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Rev. Final V1.6, 16/09/20) dated 17/09/20</p> <p>- Site Induction (V2, 27/10/21)</p>	<p>The CHMP was prepared prior to the commencement of construction and implemented during construction.</p> <p>DPIE stated that they had carefully reviewed the CHMP and were satisfied that it was consistent with the conditions of consent.</p> <p>As identified in the first audit, not all Aboriginal heritage items identified in Table 1 of Appendix 4 (and referred to in Schedule 3, Condition 17) of the Development Consent could be identified and recovered at the time of salvage works on 14 and 15 December 2020. As per advice to DP&amp;E, the salvaged items were relocated to the on-site and protected re-burial area. New site cards were completed to record their new location on the AHIMS database.</p>	Compliant
<b>SOIL &amp; WATER</b>				
<b>Water Supply</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 20	<p>The Applicant must ensure that it has sufficient water for all stages of the development, and if necessary, adjust the scale of the development to match its available water supply.</p> <p><i>Note: Under the Water Act 1912 and/or the Water Management Act 2000, the Applicant is required to obtain the necessary water licences for the development.</i></p>	<p>- During construction trucks were supplied with water from the Goldenfields Water's standpipe in Temora. No water licence was required to use the standpipe.</p> <p>- Potable water is supplied to site for operation.</p>	Sufficient water is available for the site and no change to the scale of supply is currently deemed necessary.	Compliant
<b>Water Pollution</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 21	<p>The Applicant must ensure that the development does not cause any water pollution, as defined under Section 120 of the POEO Act.</p>	<p>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&amp;M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21)</p> <p>- Soil and Water Management Plan Drawings (Rev B, 13/01/21)</p>	Erosion/sedimentation controls observed were deemed to be generally consistent with Soil and Water Management Plan commitments and it was noted that further enhancement to site controls has been made to ensure that potential for water pollution was minimised.	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
		- Environmental Inspection Checklists  - On-site environmental controls were viewed during the site visit of 05/05/22  		
<b>Operating Conditions</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 22	The Applicant must: (a) minimise any soil erosion associated with the construction, upgrading or decommissioning of the development in accordance with the relevant requirements in the <i>Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction</i> (Landcom, 2004) manual, or its latest version; and (b) ensure all works (including watercourse crossings) are undertaken in accordance with the following, unless DPIE Water agrees otherwise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land</i> (2012), or its latest version; and</li> <li>• <i>Why Do Fish Need to Cross the Road? Fish Passage Requirements for Waterway Crossings</i> (2004), or its latest version.</li> </ul>	- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental  - DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20  - Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21)  - Soil and Water Management Plan Drawings (Rev B, 13/01/21)  - Environmental inspection checklists (weekly) for both construction and operation  - Site visit of 05/05/22	DPIE-approved EMS has been developed with reference to relevant guidelines and requirements.  Erosion/sedimentation controls observed were deemed to be generally consistent with Soil and Water Management Plan commitments and it was noted that further enhancement to site controls has been made to minimise the potential for erosive soil loss.	Compliant
<b>HAZARDS</b>				
<b>Fire Safety Study</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 23	Prior to commencing construction of the battery storage facility, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise, the Applicant must prepare a Fire Safety Study of the development, in consultation with Fire and Rescue NSW, and to the satisfaction of the Secretary. The study must: (a) be consistent with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department's Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No. 2 'Fire Safety Study' guideline; and</li> <li>• NSW Government's Best Practice Guidelines for Contaminated Water Retention and Treatment Systems; and</li> </ul> (b) describe the final design of the battery storage facility.	N/A	The proponent have stated that battery storage is not part of the scope of this Project.	Not triggered

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
	Following the Secretary's approval, the Applicant must implement the measures described in the FireSafety Study.			
<b>Storage and Handling of Dangerous Materials</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 24	<p>The Applicant must store and handle all chemicals, fuels and oils used on-site in accordance with:</p> <p>(a) the requirements of all relevant Australian Standards; and</p> <p>(b) the NSW EPA's <i>Storing and Handling of Liquids: Environmental Protection – Participants Handbook</i> if the chemicals are liquids.</p> <p>In the event of an inconsistency between the requirements listed from (a) to (b) above, the most stringent requirement must prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20</li> <li>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&amp;M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21)</li> <li>- Environmental Inspection Checklists</li> <li>- Interviews and site visit of 05/05/22</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="1314 1157 1730 1465" style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p>Review of spill prevention and clean-up measures documented in weekly Environmental Inspection Checklists.</p> <p>Well stocked spill kits were present at key locations across project site.</p> <p>Bunded storage containers present for flammable and combustible liquids.</p> <p>Safety Data Sheets held on-site.</p>	Compliant
<b>Operating Conditions</b>				

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
Schedule 3 Condition 25	<p>The Applicant must:</p> <p>(a) minimise the fire risks of the development;</p> <p>(b) ensure that the development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>includes at least a 10 metre defendable space around the perimeter of the solar array area and battery storage facility that permits unobstructed vehicle access;</li> <li>manages the defendable space and solar array areas as an Asset Protection Zone;</li> <li>complies with the relevant asset protection requirements in the RFS's <i>Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006 (or equivalent)</i> and <i>Standards for Asset Protection Zones</i>;</li> <li>is suitably equipped to respond to any fires on site including provision of a 20,000 litre water supply tank fitted with a 65mm Storz fitting located adjacent to the internal access road;</li> </ul> <p>(c) assist the RFS and emergency services as much as practicable if there is a fire in the vicinity of the site; and</p> <p>(d) notify the relevant local emergency management committee following construction of the development, and prior to commencing operations.</p>	<p>- Site visit and interviews of 05/05/22</p> <p>- Content of Emergency Response Plan</p> <p>- Incorporation of fire prevent measures during construction and operation of the Project</p> 	<p>The proponent confirmed suitable buffer zones and firefighting measures were in place. The 20,000L water tank fitted with Storz type valve was observed.</p>	Compliant
<b>Emergency Response Plan</b>				
Schedule 3 Condition 26	<p>Prior to commissioning development, the Applicant must develop and implement a comprehensive Emergency Plan and detailed emergency procedures for the development, to the satisfaction of Fire and Rescue NSW and the RFS. The Applicant must keep two copies of the plan on-site in a prominent position adjacent to the site entry points at all times. The plan must:</p> <p>(a) be consistent with the Department of Planning's <i>Hazardous Industry Planning Advisory Paper No. 1, 'Emergency Planning'</i>;</p> <p>(b) identify the fire risks and controls of the development; and</p> <p>(c) include procedures that would be implemented if there is a fire on-site or in the vicinity of the site.</p>	<p>- Fire Management and Emergency Response Plan (FMERP), Sebastopol Solar Farm, August 2021 (Rev. Final V1.0, 24/08/21) prepared by NGH Environmental</p> <p>- 1 copy is held within the site office and 1 copy is held with the emergency documents cabinet associated with the main electrical switchboard outside main office entrance.</p> 	<p>The FMERP was prepared prior to commissioning development, i.e. prior to commencement of operation on 22/02/22.</p> <p>The auditor considers the FMERP has been developed in general accordance with the conditions of consent and approvals and being implemented on site.</p> <p>Evidence of consultation with Fire and Rescue NSW and RFS is provided within Appendix G of the FMERP.</p>	Compliant
<b>WASTE</b>				

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status										
Schedule 3 Condition 27	The Applicant must: (a) minimise the waste generated by the development; (b) classify all waste generated on site in accordance with the EPA's <i>Waste Classification Guidelines 2014</i> (or its latest version); (c) store and handle all waste on site in accordance with its classification; (d) not receive or dispose of any waste on site; and (e) remove all waste from the site as soon as practicable, and ensure it is sent to an appropriately licensed waste facility for disposal.	- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental - DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20 - Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21) - Waste registers - Environmental Inspection Checklists - Site visits and interviews	Evidence of appropriate waste management, including a high standard of segregation, sorting and storage, was noted during the site visit. Housekeeping was of a very high standard across the entire project site and wastes are appropriately segregated and contained. Waste registers are maintained by on-site personnel.	Compliant										
<b>DECOMMISSIONING AND REHABILITATION</b>														
Schedule 3 Condition 28	Within 18 months of the cessation of operations, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise, the Applicant must rehabilitate the site to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This rehabilitation must comply with the objectives in Table 3.  <i>Table 3: Rehabilitation Objectives</i> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 1621 1202 1915"> <thead> <tr> <th>Feature</th> <th>Objective</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Project site</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe, stable and non-polluting</li> <li>Minimise the visual impact of any above ground ancillary infrastructure agreed to be retained for an alternative use</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Solar farm infrastructure</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be decommissioned and removed, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Land use</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore land capability to pre-existing use</li> </ul> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure public safety</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Feature	Objective	Project site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe, stable and non-polluting</li> <li>Minimise the visual impact of any above ground ancillary infrastructure agreed to be retained for an alternative use</li> </ul>	Solar farm infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be decommissioned and removed, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise</li> </ul>	Land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restore land capability to pre-existing use</li> </ul>	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure public safety</li> </ul>	N/A	This condition is relevant to a period after cessation of operations and is therefore not relevant to this audit.	Not triggered
Feature	Objective													
Project site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe, stable and non-polluting</li> <li>Minimise the visual impact of any above ground ancillary infrastructure agreed to be retained for an alternative use</li> </ul>													
Solar farm infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be decommissioned and removed, unless the Secretary agrees otherwise</li> </ul>													
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Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure public safety</li> </ul>													

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>SCHEDULE 4 - ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING</b>				
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT</b>				
<b>Environmental Management Strategy</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 1	<p>Prior to commencing construction, the Applicant must prepare an Environmental Management Strategy for the development to the satisfaction of the Secretary. This strategy must:</p> <p>(a) provide the strategic framework for environmental management of the development;</p> <p>(b) identify the statutory approvals that apply to the development;</p> <p>(c) describe the role, responsibility, authority and accountability of all key personnel involved in the environmental management of the development;</p> <p>(d) describe the procedures that would be implemented to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>keep the local community and relevant agencies informed about the operation and environmental performance of the development;</li> <li>receive, handle, respond to, and record complaints;</li> <li>resolve any disputes that may arise;</li> <li>respond to any non-compliance;</li> <li>respond to emergencies; and</li> </ul> <p>(e) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>references to any plans approved under the conditions of this consent; and</li> <li>a clear plan depicting all the monitoring to be carried out in relation to the development.</li> </ul> <p>Following the Secretary's approval, the Applicant must implement the Environmental Management Strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20</li> <li>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Complaint Documentation Register (obtained 24/03/21)</li> <li>- Environmental Inspection Checklists</li> <li>- Site visit and interviews</li> <li>- Project website and community notifications</li> </ul>	<p>A copy of the approved Environmental Management Strategy (EMS) was held within the site office. Site personnel were familiar with the content of the strategy and evidence of implementation was observed during the interviews and site visit.</p> <p>A number of completed Environmental Inspection Checklists were reviewed by the Auditor and all were noted to be correctly filled-out and contained information that was directly relevant to, and consistent with, the EMS.</p>	Compliant
<b>Revision of Strategies and Plans</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 2	<p>The Applicant must:</p> <p>(a) update the strategies, plans or programs required under this consent to the satisfaction of the Secretary prior to carrying out any upgrading or decommissioning activities on site; and</p> <p>(b) review and, if necessary, revise the strategies, plans or programs required under this consent to the satisfaction of the Secretary within 1 month of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>submission of an incident report under condition 4 of Schedule 4;</li> <li>submission of an audit report under condition 7 of Schedule 4; or</li> <li>any modification to the conditions of this consent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20</li> <li>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Complaint Documentation Register (obtained 05/05/22)</li> <li>- Environmental Inspection Checklists</li> <li>- Site visit and interviews</li> <li>- Project website and community notifications</li> </ul>	<p>No updates were deemed necessary to strategies, plans or programs required under the consent following completion of the current audit program</p>	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>Updating and Staging of Strategies, Plans or Programs</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 3	<p>With the approval of the Secretary, the Applicant may submit any strategy, plan or program required by this consent on a progressive basis.</p> <p>To ensure the strategies, plans or programs under the conditions of this consent are updated on a regular basis, the Applicant may at any time submit revised strategies, plans or programs to the Secretary for approval.</p> <p>With the agreement of the Secretary, the Applicant may prepare any revised strategy, plan or program without undertaking consultation with all the parties referred to under the relevant condition of this consent.</p> <p><i>Notes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While any strategy, plan or program may be submitted on a progressive basis, the Applicant must ensure that all development being carried out on site is covered by suitable strategies, plans or programs at all times.</li> <li>• If the submission of any strategy, plan or program is to be staged, then the relevant strategy, plan or program must clearly describe the specific stage to which the strategy, plan or program applies, the relationship of this stage to any future stages, and the trigger for updating the strategy, plan or program.</li> </ul>	N/A	No strategies, plans or program are currently required by this consent on a progressive basis.	Compliant
<b>COMPLIANCE</b>				
<b>Incident Notification</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 4	The Department must be notified in writing to <a href="mailto:compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au">compliance@planning.nsw.gov.au</a> immediately after the Applicant becomes aware of an incident. The notification must identify the development (including the development application number and the name of the development if it has one), and set out the location and nature of the incident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20</li> <li>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&amp;M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21)</li> <li>- Incident reporting and management records</li> </ul>	It was reported by the proponent and their contractor that there had been three (3) non-reportable environmental incidents since the first IEA was undertaken in March 2021. Each of the three incidents related to spills of minor quantities (1-2L) of hydraulic oil from construction plant/equipment. It was deemed that the incidents were not reportable to DP&E in accordance with the definitions of "incident" and "material harm" within the Development Consent.	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
<b>Non-Compliance Notification</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 5	The Department must be notified in writing via the Major Projects website portal within 7 days after the Applicant becomes aware of any non-compliance with the conditions of this consent. The notification must identify the development and the application number for it, set out the condition of consent that the development is non-compliant with, the way in which it does not comply and the reasons for the noncompliance (if known) and what actions have been done, or will be, undertaken to address the noncompliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental Management Strategy (EMS), Sebastopol Solar Farm, December 2020 (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) prepared by NGH Environmental</li> <li>- DPIE approval letter of Environmental Management Strategy (Rev. Final V1.1, 22/12/20) dated 23/12/20</li> <li>- Sebastopol Solar Farm Work Health Safety And Environment Management Plan for Operation and Maintenance (WHSEMP-O&amp;M) prepared by beon (Rev. 1.0, 14/12/21)</li> <li>- Incident reporting and management records</li> <li>- Responses to previous non-compliance matters following completion of the first audit in March 2021.</li> </ul>	<p>It was reported by the proponent and their contractor that there have not been any new non-compliance matters identified since completion of the first audit in March 2021.</p> <p>The previously identified non-compliance matters identified during the first audit of March 2021 were addressed by the proponent’s construction contractor in correspondence to DP&amp;E dated 27/04/21.</p>	Compliant
<b>Compliance Reporting</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 6	<i>(deleted)</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>INDEPENDENT ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 7	<p>The Applicant must commission and pay the full cost of Independent Environmental Audits of the development. The audits must:</p> <p>(a) be prepared in accordance with the <i>Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements</i> (DPIE, 2020);</p> <p>(b) be led and conducted by a suitably qualified, experienced and independent team of experts whose appointment has been endorsed by the Secretary;</p> <p>(c) be prepared, unless otherwise agreed with the Secretary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. within 3 months of commencing construction;</li> <li>ii. within 3 months of commencement of operations; and</li> <li>iii. as directed by the Secretary;</li> </ul> <p>(d) be carried out in consultation with the relevant agencies;</p> <p>(e) assess whether the development complies with the relevant requirements in this consent, and any strategy, plan or program required under this consent; and</p> <p>(f) recommend appropriate measures or actions to improve the environmental performance of the development and any strategy, plan or program required under this consent; unless the Secretary agrees otherwise.</p> <p>Within 3 months of commencing an Independent Environmental Audit, or unless otherwise agreed by the Secretary, a copy of the audit report must be submitted to the Secretary, and any other NSW agency that requests it, together with a response to any recommendations contained in the audit report, and a timetable for the implementation of the recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This Independent Environmental Audit (IEA) report</li> <li>- DP&amp;E Approval of Audit Team (08/02/22)</li> </ul>	<p>The IEA site visit was conducted within three (3) months of commencing operations.</p> <p>The Audit Team was endorsed via the DP&amp;E correspondence of 08/02/22.</p> <p>The Audit has been conducted in accordance with relevant DP&amp;E Post Approval Requirements.</p>	Compliant

Approval (ID)	Requirement	Evidence collected	Independent Audit Findings and Recommendations	Compliance Status
	The recommendations of the Independent Environmental Audit must be implemented to the satisfaction of the Secretary, confirmed in writing.			
<b>ACCESS TO INFORMATION</b>				
Schedule 4 Condition 8	The Applicant must: (a) make the following information publicly available on its website as relevant to the stage of the development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the EIS;</li> <li>• the final layout plans for the development;</li> <li>• current statutory approvals for the development;</li> <li>• approved strategies, plans or programs required under the conditions of this consent;</li> <li>• the proposed staging plans for the development if the construction, operation or decommissioning of the development is to be staged;</li> <li>• how complaints about the development can be made;</li> <li>• a complaints register;</li> <li>• compliance reports;</li> <li>• any independent environmental audit, and the Applicant’s response to the recommendations in any audit; and</li> <li>• any other matter required by the Secretary; and</li> </ul> (b) keep this information up to date.	Project website: <a href="http://sebastopolsolarfarm.com/">http://sebastopolsolarfarm.com/</a> (viewed 27/04/22)	Relevant documents, as noted below, have been made publicly available via the Project website (and links to the Department’s Major Projects website) when viewed on 27/04/22: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIS (via Major Project website)</li> <li>• Final layout plans for the development</li> <li>• Conditions of Consent (Mod 1, July 2020)</li> <li>• Biodiversity Management Plan</li> <li>• Landscaping Plan</li> <li>• Traffic Management Plan</li> <li>• Environmental Management Strategy</li> <li>• Cultural Heritage Management Plan</li> <li>• “Contact Us” tab to lodge complaint via email</li> <li>• Link to Complaints Register (1 complaint listed)</li> <li>• Independent Environmental Audit report (April 2021) and Applicant’s response</li> </ul> It is noted that the most recent version of the plans was present on the website.  Given that operation of the project has commenced, the following continual environmental management <b>improvement opportunity</b> was identified during the audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the project website to indicate commencement of operation.</li> </ul>	Compliant

# Appendix D

Site Inspection Photographs (05 May 2022)



**Plate 1:** View of the southern portion of the operational Sebastopol Solar Farm. Panels associated with the farm are visible in this plate along with adjoining agricultural lands.



**Plate 2:** View of solar panels associated with the Project site showing good groundcover and grazing livestock. It was positive to note the opportunity for on-going agricultural use of the site.



**Plate 3:** View of the planted vegetation buffer zone on the southern portion of the site. Retained vegetation associated with clearing was deployed in this area for habit enhancement. While screen plantings appeared healthy, additional weed control within buffer zones was raised as an opportunity for improvement.



**Plate 4:** View of sensitive area protection signage and fencing installed in accordance with Development Consent Schedule 3, Condition 18. Monitoring and maintenance of these zones was being conducted on a regular basis as part of site operations.



**Plate 5:** View of site infrastructure showing bushland colour palette for buildings. To reduce potential glare and light-spill issues, non-reflective construction materials were utilised and lighting is used on an as-needed basis, rather than being automatically activated at night.



**Plate 6:** View of the 20,000L on-site firefighting water tank fitted with a 65mm Storz type valve in accordance Development Consent Schedule 3, Condition 25(b).



**Plate 7:** View of secured and banded storage for Dangerous Goods within the site Office/Maintenance Building. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and appropriately stocked spill kits were also present.



**Plate 8:** View of the stabilised drainage channel adjacent to the internal access road. This structure was designed and constructed to ensure unimpeded passage of water through the site and reduce the potential for erosion and/or sedimentation impacts.

# Appendix E

## Independent Audit Declaration Form

## INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT DECLARATION FORM

(Template from DPIE Independent Audit Post Approval Requirements, May 2020).

<b>Project Name</b>	Sebastopol Solar
<b>Consent Number</b>	SSD 9098
<b>Description of Project</b>	Solar farm
<b>Project Address</b>	off Eurolee Road, Erin Vale
<b>Proponent</b>	Sebastopol Solar Farm
<b>Title of Audit</b>	Independent Audit Report No. 2: Sebastopol Solar Farm SSD 9098 (June 2022)
<b>Date</b>	03 June 2022

I declare that I have undertaken the Independent Audit and prepared the contents of the attached Independent Audit Report and to the best of my knowledge:

- i. the audit has been undertaken in accordance with relevant condition(s) of consent and the Independent Audit Compliance Requirements (Department 2019);
- ii. the findings of the audit are reported truthfully, accurately and completely;
- iii. I have exercised due diligence and professional judgement in conducting the audit;
- iv. I have acted professionally, objectively and in an unbiased manner;
- v. I am not related to any proponent, owner or operator of the project neither as an employer, business partner, employee, or by sharing a common employer, having a contractual arrangement outside the audit, or by relationship as spouse, partner, sibling, parent, or child;
- vi. I do not have any pecuniary interest in the audited project, including where there is a reasonable likelihood or expectation of financial gain or loss to me or spouse, partner, sibling, parent, or child;
- vii. neither I nor my employer have provided consultancy services for the audited project that were subject to this audit except as otherwise declared to the Department prior to the audit; and
- viii. I have not accepted, nor intend to accept any inducement, commission, gift or any other benefit (apart from payment for auditing services) from any proponent, owner or operator of the project, their employees or any interested party. I have not knowingly allowed, nor intend to allow my colleagues to do so.

Notes:

- a) *Under section 10.6 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 a person must not include false or misleading information (or provide information for inclusion in) in a report of monitoring data or an audit report produced to the Minister in connection with an audit if the person knows that the information is false or misleading in a material respect. The proponent of an approved project must not fail to include information in (or provide information for inclusion in) a report of monitoring data or an audit report produced to the Minister in connection with an audit if the person knows that the information is materially relevant to the monitoring or audit. The maximum penalty is, in the case of a corporation, \$1 million and for an individual, \$250,000; and*
- b) *The Crimes Act 1900 contains other offences relating to false and misleading information: section 307B (giving false or misleading information – maximum penalty 2 years imprisonment or 200 penalty units, or both).*

<b>Name of Auditor</b>	Toby Hobbs
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Qualification</b>	MEnvMgmt, Principal Auditor (Exemplar Global)
<b>Company</b>	Vantage Environmental Management Pty Ltd
<b>Company Address</b>	PO Box 378, Albury NSW 2640