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## APPENDIX F SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES (DTP, 2022) ASSESSMENT

The *Solar Energy Facilities – Design and Development Guideline* (DTP, October 2022) provides an overview of the policy, legislative and statutory planning arrangements for solar energy facility projects in Victoria. The following table provides an assessment against the guidelines, outlining how the considerations have been incorporated into the proposal’s design and planning process.

### IDENTIFYING SUITABLE LOCATIONS

Topic	Consideration	Response
<b>Ideal siting conditions</b>	<p>A solar energy facility should not lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the loss or interruption of supply to the immediate or broader electricity transmission network</li><li>the loss of vegetation, habitat or species of environmental importance</li><li>the loss of cultural heritage or landscape values of significance</li><li>the loss of productive state-significant agricultural land</li><li>increased exposure of the area to fire flood or other natural or environmental hazard</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The permit applicant will engage contractors to install the facility, consistent with the requirements of the electricity transmission network operators.</li><li>It is unavoidable that vegetation will be lost due to the nature of the installation. However, assessments have been undertaken to identify vegetation of significance and value that can be retained, and offsets will be provided for the vegetation lost. Importantly, in the first instance, the design has sought to avoid significant native vegetation as much as practical, and offsets will be commensurate with the net loss of biodiversity.</li><li>The subject area is not within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity. Should any suspected historic heritage be identified during works, work in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and a Heritage Advisor will be engaged to investigate the discovery.</li><li>The land is not considered versatile from an agricultural perspective, due to high concentrations of chlorine present in irrigations systems from neighbouring bores and poor soil structure. The land is considered as valuable for a grazing enterprise. As such, the panels have been designed to allow for the grazing of sheep on the land, which in turn reduces the risk for wildfire. Agricultural productivity is unlikely to significantly</li></ul>

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		<p>decrease as a consequence of the proposed development. The impacts to the agricultural amenity of the region are not significant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall, a range of factors have been identified that would likely make it difficult for a potential fire to build momentum to the severity required to be considered a significant threat. These factors include the lack of connectivity in the landscape due to aspects such as roads intersecting the land, periodic harvesting of crops and grazing animals reduces the potential to generate embers on days of severe bushfire weather as they reduce the amount of fuel available.</li> <li>▪ A hydrology report has been commissioned to model inundation and runoff, as well as the implications of the proposed filling of farm dams over both sites. The report concludes that flood depths generally show that flows are concentrated to existing waterways and defined overland flow paths within the region. The terrain is sufficient to limit the amount of sheet flow on site. Under each AEP scenario, flood depths are generally shallow in inundation areas and it is likely that the proposed tracks will remain passible in these conditions.</li> </ul>
	<p>Ideally a solar energy facility should be located:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ on land with topographical conditions that avoids the need for unnecessary or excessive earthworks or changes to the natural landscape</li> <li>▪ to avoid the loss of native vegetation and biodiversity and if losses cannot be avoided, they are minimised and can be offset</li> <li>▪ close to the electricity grid network to minimise the need for additional infrastructure and associated impacts</li> <li>▪ a sufficient distance from existing urban areas or designated urban growth areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The topography is appropriate and major earthworks are not proposed, with only the foundations for batteries and inverters, and minimal ground disturbance for overhead cables, access roads and fences. The panels do not create significant ground disturbance; these are supported on poles driven into the ground (or predrilled) which can be removed with ease when the facility comes to the end of its lifecycle and is decommissioned.</li> <li>▪ The site's location and layout has been carefully considered to avoid impacts to biodiversity by maximising avoidance of native vegetation removal. On balance the proposed site location and layout avoids major removal of native vegetation and minimises impacts to biodiversity through appropriate site selection, design and operation management. Offsets are commensurate with the net loss of biodiversity. Notably, land to the north of <b>Windy</b> has been avoided to ensure no loss to biodiversity within the area of ecological importance.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ where there can be adequate space between facilities within an area to avoid cumulative impacts of built form concentration</li> <li>▪ away from the floodplain of a major water course or wetland</li> <li>▪ where it has ready access to main roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The project will connect to the grid via the existing 220kV Elaine Terminal Station. <b>Windy</b> will connect to the <b>Peters</b> BESS via a new 33kV powerline. The location of the proposed development is close to the electricity grid to minimise additional infrastructure and impacts. A powerline has been proposed between the two sites to minimise ground disturbance and impact on vegetation.</li> <li>▪ The site is not located near any existing urban areas or designated urban growth areas. The southern-most point of Windy is at least 4.2 kilometres northwest of the Elaine township.</li> <li>▪ There are no existing solar facilities in this area. The site is located in close proximity to the Elaine Terminal Station, Elaine Wind Farm (part of the Lal Lal Wind Farm) as well as a BESS proposal currently lodged with DTP to the south of the site. The proposal will not result in a significant change to the existing landscape due to vegetation screening, landform as well as being co-located with existing, similar facilities.</li> <li>▪ There is one main overland flow path / waterway within both <b>Windy</b> and <b>Peters</b>. Both drainages are unnamed tributaries to Williamson Creek and discharge approximately 500 m north-west of the project site. Flood extent modelling and maximum depths indicate the likelihood that the proposed access tracks will remain passible under flooded conditions. In accordance with Clause 14.02-1S (Catchment planning and management), buffer zones have been implemented to protect natural drainage corridors to the satisfaction of the Authority. Notably, solar infrastructure has been set back from the 'ecological zone' to the north of <b>Windy</b> to allow for the retained landscape around the existing wetland.</li> <li>▪ The site will be accessed from Melbourne (Port Melbourne) via the following route: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Port Melbourne - Todd Road - West Gate Freeway - Princes Highway - Anakie Road - Lovely Banks Road - Steiglitz Road - Midland Highway</li> <li>– Horsehill Road - Site 1 primary access</li> <li>– Horsehill Road – Site 1 secondary access</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Murphys Road - Government Road (Unmade) - Site 2 primary access</li> <li>- Woolshed Road - Site 2 secondary access</li> </ul>
<b>Connecting to the electricity transmission network</b>	<p><i>Electricity transmission network connections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consideration must be paid to electricity transmission network connections and the potential for cumulative effects in an area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The project will connect to the grid via the 220kV Elaine Terminal Station.</li> <li>▪ The point of connection to the grid will comprise of a 220kV aboveground transmission cable from the <b>Peters</b> substation to the Elaine Terminal Substation. Electricity will then be provided to the grid from the Elaine Terminal Substation.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Managing cumulative effects in an area</i></p> <p>Too many facilities in an area can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ reduce the availability and/or productivity of strategic agricultural land, particularly in irrigation districts</li> <li>▪ result in landscape-scale visual impacts, due to an overconcentration of built form in an area</li> <li>▪ impact the area's biodiversity, habitat or wildlife, due to an overconcentration of built form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The land is not considered versatile from an agricultural perspective, as detailed above. The land is considered as valuable for a grazing enterprise. As such, the panels have been designed to allow for the grazing of sheep on the land. Agricultural productivity is unlikely to significantly decrease as a consequence of the proposed development and the impacts to the agricultural amenity of the region are not considered significant.</li> <li>▪ The site is within close proximity to two existing energy developments, and one proposed BESS development. As outlined in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, the landscape of the project setting has a generally high landscape absorptive capacity and is located within an 'envelope' of energy infrastructure ensuring the colocation of landscape modifying elements. Additionally, amelioration planting with site-specific species has been proposed in the Landscape Strategy to support the recommendations of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.</li> <li>▪ The site has been located and designed to minimise or avoid impact to surrounding sensitive uses and native vegetation. The planting palette has been carefully selected to accommodate existing ecologies around the site. There is a diverse selection that focuses on native species endemic to the area. The screen planting will differ according to location around the site, while still respecting the site's unique existing character and form.</li> </ul>
<b>Protecting environmental values</b>	<p><i>Crown land</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ideally, commercial infrastructure should not be located on, over, under, and should not affect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An overground powerline will be required to connect <b>Windy</b> and <b>Peters</b>. A 33kV powerline is proposed on overhead poles approximately 14 metres high. The poles will</li> </ul>

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	<p>public land and government roads, where it can be located on private land or where exception is provided for under legislation. The proponent must seek DELWP's approval if it requires access to public land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DELWP may require a proponent to undertake an environmental assessment, Native Title assessment and/or community consultation</li> </ul>	<p>require access land within the road reserve in some locations. Further information regarding the location of poles may be provided as a conditional requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The construction method for the line will be determined following confirmation from a geotechnical report. Drilling may be required depending on site conditions.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Flora and fauna</i></p> <p>An assessment is required of the proposal's potential impact to existing natural habitats. The appropriate approvals and consents will be required under the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (EPBC Act)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Environment Effects Act 1978</i></li> </ul> <p>Consideration should be made to Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037 strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proposed action is highly unlikely to have a significant impact on any matter of NES. As such, a referral to the Commonwealth Environment Minister is unlikely to be required regarding matters listed under the EPBC Act.</li> <li>▪ There are confirmed records of one species listed as Threatened under the FFG Act within the study area, Yarra Gum, and one protected flora species, Sifton Bush. However, all impacts to Yarra Gum occur within the areas of private land, and as such a permit under the FFG Act is not required. No impacts to Sifton Bush are anticipated, as this species was recorded along the road reserve, outside of the impact area.</li> <li>▪ This project does not trigger the need for an EES Referral.</li> <li>▪ Please refer to Section 6.4 and 7 of the Planning Report prepared by Urbis for an assessment of the proposal against potential impact to existing natural habitat of the surrounding area and triggers under the relevant Commonwealth and State Legislations.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Native vegetation and biodiversity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An assessment is required of the proposal's potential impact to existing native vegetation</li> <li>▪ Native vegetation requirements and offsets must be met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Please refer to Section 11.3 of the Planning Report as well as the Biodiversity Assessment for a detailed assessment regarding potential impact to existing native vegetation.</li> <li>▪ The proposal aligns with the 'avoid, minimise and offset' approach and achieves a high level of avoidance. Commensurate offsets for impacted native vegetation will be met.</li> </ul>

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<b>Protecting cultural heritage</b>	<p>Aboriginal cultural heritage values are protected by Victoria's <i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006</i> and <i>Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A proponent must consider potential impacts and the views of relevant Aboriginal people before lodging a planning application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ecology and Heritage Partners were engaged to identify any known cultural heritage values at a desktop level that may be present within the study area, including Aboriginal and historical heritage sites, and to provide advice regarding the requirement for further assessment. The preliminary advice regarding cultural heritage obligations for the Elaine Solar Farm proposal indicated the study area is not within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and therefore further cultural heritage studies are not required for the proposed works.</li> </ul>
<b>Avoiding loss of high-value agricultural land</b>	<p><i>Strategically important agricultural land</i></p> <p>Solar farms should not undermine important agricultural land. Strategies to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the impact on the loss of the site if it has high quality soils, particularly soils that are niche to a type of crop or other agricultural activity</li> <li>▪ the potential loss of reliable, accessible water (such as irrigated areas) and its impact at a local or regional scale</li> <li>▪ the impact of fragmentation and a change of land use to non-agriculture activity on local and regional productivity and output</li> <li>▪ the impact of a change of land use on recent and/or current efforts to modernise and reform agricultural activity in the area</li> <li>▪ whether the land has specifically been set aside or defined for agricultural use and development in a planning scheme or other strategic document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As outlined in the Agricultural Assessment, the soils that are present on site are not highly regarded due to their poor structure and poor drainage. Conditions would continue to worsen with intensive cultivation and tillage practices as a result of cropping. Therefore, intensively cropping the land is not considered sustainable without significant modifying practices.</li> <li>▪ The average annual rainfall for the site is considered moderate. While the property utilises groundwater from a bore (which may have the potential to be used as irrigation), data regarding water salinity from neighbouring bores indicates this water is not suitable for irrigation due to high concentrations of chlorine present. This is not considered suitable for horticultural crops, particularly those of high value. As such, the site is not considered versatile from an agricultural perspective.</li> <li>▪ Rainfall is moderately high and variable with a pronounced dry season each year. There is no specific farm or public infrastructure which makes the land inherently productive or special from an agricultural perspective. The land is not located within an irrigation district.</li> <li>▪ There are no perceived detrimental impacts of the development of the solar energy facility to the surrounding farm businesses. Agricultural productivity at the site is unlikely to significantly decrease as a consequence of the development. The impacts to the agricultural amenity of the region are not significant. Loss of productivity can be mitigated by sheep grazing beneath solar panels.</li> <li>▪ The proposed change of primary land use to solar energy production will mean that some of the carrying capacity of the land will be lost in favour of the alternative primary</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ whether the change in land use is to the detriment of a government’s previous or existing investment and support for the site or the area</li> <li>▪ whether the proposed solar energy facility can co-locate with other agricultural activity, to help diversify farm’ income without reducing productivity</li> </ul>	<p>use for energy production. Although, the grazing of sheep on the land will retain some of the current level of agricultural productivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The land has no special protection for agricultural values outside of the schedule to the Farming Zone (FZ).</li> <li>▪ There is no specific government investment relevant to the agricultural use of this property or this area.</li> <li>▪ It is proposed that the solar farm design will enable the grazing of sheep under the panels, thus mitigating some of the potential loss of agricultural production. Laydown areas have been proposed on each site to assist in the handling of sheep on and off the site, as requested by the landowner.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimising impacts on landscape values</b></p>	<p>Consideration must be made to the visual impacts of the solar energy facility in relation to the surrounding landscape. The visual impact of a solar energy facility relates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the sensitivity of the landscape and its ability to absorb change</li> <li>▪ the size, height, scale, spacing, colour and surface reflectivity of the facility’s components</li> <li>▪ the number of solar energy facilities located close to each other another within the same landscape</li> <li>▪ the excessive removal, or planting of inappropriate species of vegetation</li> <li>▪ the location and scale of other ancillary uses, buildings and works including transmission lines, battery storage units and associated access roads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As mentioned above, while the proposal results in a significant change to the landscape character from the existing setting, the low profile of the site will ensure that from ground-based viewing locations, only localised changes to character will result.</li> <li>▪ The most visible changes to the landscape character of the existing setting will result in views from one residence and two locations along the Midland Highway. However, following amelioration, comprising of the establishment of locally indigenous screening vegetation along the project boundaries, the development will be generally obscured from view and the landscape character will appear similar to the remainder of the regional agricultural landscape and other bands of vegetation that occur through the landscape of the region.</li> <li>▪ The landscape setting has a generally high landscape absorptive capacity and is located within an ‘envelope’ of energy infrastructure which results in a colocation of landscape modifying elements. Additionally, the topography does not allow for significant overlooking and the existing vegetation in the areas surrounding the project provides visual screening prior to amelioration.</li> <li>▪ The project is assessed as having either a low level of visual impact, or not being visible from surrounding sensitive viewpoints, primarily due to the limited number of sensitive viewpoints and the relative lack of visibility resulting from existing vegetation throughout</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the proximity to environmentally sensitive areas such as public land, water courses and low-lying areas.</li> </ul>	<p>the landscape and the screening effects of rising topography. The residual visual impact will typically reduce to very low after the establishment of amelioration measures.</p>
<p><b>Natural Hazard Management</b></p>	<p><i>Bushfire Management</i></p> <p>Proponents should consult the relevant fire management authority early in the site selection and design process, to ensure a facility avoids unnecessary bushfire risk exposure and has fire management planning in place to manage risk.</p> <p>Within rural and regional areas, a proponent should consult the CFA’s Guidelines for renewable energy installations for information about bushfire risk management and other risk management matters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A preliminary Bushfire Risk Assessment has been prepared by Ecology &amp; Heritage Partners and is located at Appendix L. The report includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A bushfire hazard site assessment in accordance with Australian Standard 3959:2018.</li> <li>– A bushfire hazard landscape assessment.</li> <li>– A preliminary assessment of the concept plan and bushfire mitigation/management measures against the Guidelines (CFA 2023) and Clause 13.02-1S.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Recommendations and mitigations recommended in the preliminary assessment have been incorporated into the project and the proposed design layout.</li> </ul>

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## BEST PRACTICE FOR PROPONENTS

Topic	Consideration	Response
Engaging the community	<p><i>Early community consultation is important</i></p> <p>Community engagement should start well before a planning permit application is lodged with the responsible authority, to understand the community's views and to address any concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The permit applicant has undertaken extensive consultation with stakeholders including community groups, residents, and government. Refer to Section 5 of the Planning Report as well as the Engagement and Outcomes Report at Appendix P for further details regarding community engagement undertaken.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Engaging Traditional Owners</i></p> <p>Proponents are encouraged to consider engaging with traditional Owner groups at the inception stage of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The preliminary advice prepared by EHP regarding cultural heritage obligations for the Elaine Solar Farm proposal indicated the study area is not within an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and therefore further cultural heritage studies are not required for the proposed works.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Developing well-planned consultation</i></p> <p>Community engagement and benefit-sharing are fundamental to generating community support and delivering positive and effective outcomes for solar energy facility projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urbis has prepared a Community and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and has undertaken engagement in line with this strategy.</li> <li>The Strategy was prepared to align with DTP's <i>Solar Energy Facilities, Design and Development Guidelines</i> and the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. The approach also aligns with the framework set out in the <i>Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development in Victoria Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>Please refer to <b>Appendix P</b> for further details regarding community engagement undertaken.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Ongoing engagement</i></p> <p>Once a solar energy facility is built, it becomes an ongoing feature of the local community. After construction, the facility operator should shift its engagement focus to maintaining positive,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elgin Energy welcomes feedback on the proposal.</li> <li>Elgin Energy will continue to keep direct neighbours, stakeholders and the community informed of the project approval process and pre-construction, construction and operation phases by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to engage with the community about the project, its impacts, and the approval process.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<p>mutually beneficial relationships with the community.</p> <p>When planning the decommissioning process, the community should be engaged with any plan to rehabilitate the land, or to refurbish and upgrade the facility to extend its operating life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Providing information through a letterbox drop on how the community’s views have been addressed.</li> <li>– Enabling the community to seek clarification about the project through the two-way communication channels.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Design stage</b></p>	<p><i>Siting facility components</i></p> <p>A proponent should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 30m minimum setback</li> <li>▪ increasing the minimum setback to an appropriate distance to manage bushfire hazard areas</li> <li>▪ 6m separation distance</li> <li>▪ locating inverters away from neighbouring property boundaries</li> <li>▪ grouping ancillary infrastructure in a single location accessible from a main road</li> <li>▪ providing appropriate landscaping to screen any buildings or solar components from view from a neighbouring sensitive use, main road or other highly visible public vantage point.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The solar facility has been carefully designed to respond to the site’s context, opportunities and constraints and DTP’s <i>Solar Energy Facilities Design and Development Guidelines</i>.</li> <li>▪ A minimum setback of 30 metres from any part of a component that makes up a solar pod or zone, or other building or structure, measured from the neighbouring property boundary is recommended within the guidelines.</li> </ul> <p>Providing a blanket 30 metres setback around all perimeters of the site is not appropriate and does not account for various topographical features, the nature of adjacent uses and the surrounding landownership, of which a large part the landowner holds. It is considered that the proposed setbacks are appropriate for the following reasons:</p> <p><b>Windy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The northern boundary will accommodate extensive, high density screening to reduce the visual impact from VP9. A minimum setback of 38 metres is proposed from the northern site boundary to the land at 68 Horsehill Road, Elaine. Whilst the switch room comes within 30 metres of the northern boundary, this is facing land owned by the same owner as the development site. The panels are also set back up to 120-170 metres along this boundary to retain an existing ecological zone.</li> <li>– High density shrub planting is proposed to the east to supplement the existing vegetation along the boundary. This panels are set back a minimum of 28 metres from the eastern boundary. This setback is considered appropriate, as outlined in Section 9.1 (Farming Zone) of the Planning Report.</li> <li>– Low density shrub planting is proposed along the southern and western boundaries to infill gaps in the existing mature tree lining along these interfaces. Solar infrastructure is set back 23-25m and 27m respectively from these boundaries. This is considered</li> </ul>

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	<p><i>Landscape screening</i></p> <p>A proponent should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ use vegetation species that are indigenous to the area or region</li> <li>▪ locate vegetation along the perimeter of a site, within proposed setbacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Landscape Strategy has been prepared by Urbis to support the amelioration recommendations of the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment prepared by Peter Haack Consulting.</li> <li>▪ The most effective way to ameliorate views from high sensitivity viewpoints is to establish screen planting around the perimeter of the Project where vegetation is lacking. The planting palette has been carefully selected to accommodate existing ecologies around the site. The screen planting will differ according to location around the site, while</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ensure vegetation will be of sufficient height, width and foliage density at maturity to screen relevant solar components and the associated built form from view</li> <li>▪ plant vegetation early in the construction stage</li> <li>▪ plant vegetation in accordance with any fire management plan arrangements, to avoid increased bushfire risk exposure.</li> </ul>	<p>still respecting the site's unique existing character and form. The plant species have been drawn from a number of EVC's and Council plant lists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– EVC 55- Victorian Volcanic Plains – Plains woodlands or forests</li> <li>– EVC 132 – Victorian Volcanic Plain – Plains grassland and chenopod shrublands</li> <li>– EVC 22 – Central Victorian Uplands – Grassy Dry Forests</li> <li>– EVC 128 – Central Victorian Uplands – Grassy Forest</li> <li>– EVC 175 - Central Victorian Uplands – Grassy woodland</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Landscape screening is proposed along the perimeters of the site within the proposed setbacks.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Glint and glare management</i></p> <p>A proponent should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ site and design solar components and associated buildings and infrastructure to ameliorate glint and glare impacts to within acceptable levels</li> <li>▪ use anti-reflective solar panel coatings and non-reflective frames and avoid using reflective materials and paints on buildings and infrastructure</li> <li>▪ adjust the orientation of panels relative to glare risks such as oncoming traffic coming down a road from an elevated area</li> <li>▪ locate landscape screening of a sufficient height, width and foliage density at maturity to reduce glint and glare impacts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Glint &amp; Glare Assessment prepared by Urbis identifies that there are no glare impacts expected for the Project for all assessed receptors within 1km of the Project. This is including Midland Highway from either project side when then resting angle of PVs are configured at between 5°-60°. This range falls within the typical resting angle range for solar farms of around 45-60 degrees.</li> <li>▪ Risk of glare and glint for road users and surrounding residences around the project will be further reduced by proposed perimeter buffer landscaping which, once established, will ensure that surfaces of the panels are not visible, screening any reflections that would have occurred across the terrain. There will be no glare impacts expected during the establishment phase for the amelioration planting.</li> <li>▪ Risk to air traffic is considered minimal primarily due to the distance to the nearest aviation facility at Lethbridge Airport (22km south).</li> <li>▪ The panels will 'track' the sun in an east to west plane to maximise solar exposure and remain mostly perpendicular to the sun, therefore reducing impact for glint and glare.</li> <li>▪ The glass surfaced PV panels are coated to maximise daylight absorption, and thus minimise glare potential.</li> </ul>

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	<p><i>Designing security measures</i></p> <p>Security measures should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ prevent light spill to nearby sensitive land uses and vegetated areas</li> <li>▪ use external lighting of a lux and colour output that provides safe levels of illumination while avoiding impacts on neighbouring habitat</li> <li>▪ be designed to consider the impact on the movement of wildlife within the area</li> <li>▪ be set back an appropriate distance from a property boundary and use landscaping or vegetation to screen security fencing and lighting</li> <li>▪ provide appropriately located emergency access points as required by the relevant emergency management authority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Screening is proposed to reduce glare impacts, as outlined above.</li> <li>▪ Within the Category A2 environmental lighting zone (low district lighting area) the Project does not result in an increased lighting impact due to there being no requirement for operational lighting. Therefore, the lighting impacts are considered low.</li> <li>▪ Some components may have external security lights. However, these are only used for urgent maintenance works during hours of darkness and are not permanently illuminated.</li> <li>▪ Access points and roads are located throughout each site for emergency vehicle access.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Traffic impacts</i></p> <p>A traffic impact assessment (TIA) must be prepared as part of a planning permit application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Please refer to Appendix O for the Traffic and Transport Assessment prepared in support of the application.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Noise</i></p> <p>Noise attenuation measures could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ensuring any components operate to relevant standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Noise Impact Assessment that describes noise attenuation measures will be issued shortly following submission.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ acoustic housing or baffles at the noise source</li> <li>▪ conducting maintenance and other operational activity during the daytime</li> <li>▪ using landscaping or locating noisier components centrally within a site.</li> </ul>	
	<p><i>Earthworks and dust management</i></p> <p>A proponent should minimise changes to the topography of the site caused by grading or other ground works, to avoid significant changes to the overland flow of water and visual impacts on the landscape. It should determine appropriate dust suppression measures for the construction and operation stages of the facility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further details regarding earthworks and dust management will be provided within a Construction Management Plan, which is appropriate as a condition of permit to be prepared before construction begins.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Natural hazard risk management – bushfire</i></p> <p>The MFB, CFA and DTP are the relevant fire management authorities in Victoria. A solar energy facility built within the BMO or BPA must maintain site vegetation to appropriate management levels. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ maintaining grass at below 100mm in height during a declared fire danger period</li> <li>▪ establishing fire breaks around the perimeter of the facility</li> <li>▪ providing adequate onsite water supply and firefighting equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ During the design stage, designs specifications relating to solar energy facilities and battery energy storage systems have been implemented to ensure the risk to bushfire and grassfire is reduced.</li> <li>▪ Fire breaks have been proposed surrounding both sites, adequate water supply has been provided, and site access requirements have been met.</li> <li>▪ Please refer to the Preliminary Bushfire Risk Assessment at <b>Appendix L</b> for further detail outlining the mitigation strategies to reduce the potential impact of bushfire to the site and surrounding areas.</li> </ul>

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Topic	Consideration	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ meeting site access management requirements.</li> </ul> <p><i>Other matters</i></p> <p>The following requirements should inform the design of the solar farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fire authority must be consulted if dispensation is sought for a building over 500sqm (under Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012</li> <li>▪ Design and layout should provide for 50m setback from high voltage power line, and 5-10m setback from a substation</li> <li>▪ 30m separation distance between physical structure and site boundary should be provided to mitigate against heat island effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No buildings are proposed over 500sqm; therefore this consideration is not applicable.</li> <li>▪ Panel infrastructure is set back at least 10 metres from the proposed substation on <b>Peters</b>. The panels on <b>Peters</b> are also suitably setback from the existing 220kV electricity transmission line to the east. The location of the BESS is setback 50m from the existing transmission line. This has been designed to accommodate the advantageous position to connect to the grid via the Elaine Terminal Station. Therefore, the location of the development in context to the existing transmission line is considered appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Boundary setbacks have been proposed to accommodate a range of factors as listed above. It is noted that a minimum setback of 30m has generally been proposed on interfaces where possible. Conversely, setbacks of greater than 30m are also proposed, balancing the impacts of the reduced setbacks elsewhere. Screening is also proposed along these boundaries.</li> <li>▪ We acknowledge the Guidelines state that heat island occurs where the ambient temperatures around built form are higher than those of surrounding vegetated areas, particularly at night. However, there is insufficient evidence to show that a temperature increase would occur due to heat dispersal from solar this energy facility; and that it would impact surrounding land uses or vegetation. For the above reasons, the proposed setbacks are considered appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>Construction and operation stage</b>	<p>The following documents will be required through permit conditions:</p> <p><i>Environment management plan</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This will be prepared before construction commences and would be expected to be conditioned onto any planning permit granted for the development.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Risk and emergency management planning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A fire and emergency plan will be prepared before construction commences and would be expected to be conditioned onto any planning permit granted for the development.</li> </ul>

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Topic	Consideration	Response
	<i>Site access and traffic management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A traffic impact assessment has been prepared to outline access arrangements and impacts; however, a construction traffic management plan will be prepared before the construction stage commences and would be expected to be conditioned onto any planning permit granted for the development.</li> </ul>
	<i>Construction noise and dust management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A construction management plan will be prepared before the construction stage commences and would be expected to be conditioned onto any planning permit granted for the development.</li> </ul>
<b>Decommissioning</b>	<p>A proponent should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>who will be responsible for decommissioning the facility</li> <li>at what stage the responsible authority will be advised the facility will be decommissioned</li> <li>the processes, plans and procedures for removing all built form and for restoring the land to its pre-developed or natural state</li> <li>where the panels and other equipment will be disposed and if they can be recycled</li> <li>the timeline for the decommissioning work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The permit applicant will operate the facility throughout its operational lifecycle and will be responsible for removing equipment and returning the site to its previous condition if the facility ceases to operate. A condition of consent outlining this would be expected to be placed onto any planning permit granted for the development.</li> </ul>

## APPLYING FOR A PLANNING PERMIT

Topic	Consideration	Response
	<i>Site and context analysis</i>	A Site Plan is provided at <b>Appendix B</b> .



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Topic	Consideration	Response
<b>Application requirements</b>	The site and context analysis is intended to show the current lie of the land and the immediate surrounds of the proposed solar energy facility.	Please refer to Section 2 of the Planning Report for details regarding the subject site and surrounds, as well as the existing site conditions. This section includes aerial maps and photographs identifying the site location, surrounds, and regional context.
	<p><i>Design response</i></p> <p>The purpose of the design response is to outline the proposed use and development of land relative to the site and its immediate location.</p>	<p>The solar facility has been carefully designed to respond to the site's context, opportunities and constraints and DTP's <i>Solar Energy Facilities Design and Development Guideline October 2022</i>. The design layout considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grid connection</li> <li>▪ Amenity impacts               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Landscape and visual impact to neighbouring properties</li> <li>– Noise impacts. A Noise Impact Assessment that describes noise impacts will be issued shortly following submission.</li> <li>– Cumulative impacts</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Environmental considerations               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Potential loss of agricultural land</li> <li>– Biodiversity and ecological values</li> <li>– Native vegetation</li> <li>– Bushfire mitigation</li> <li>– Waterways, hydrology and flooding mitigation</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Efficiency and economic viability of the solar facility</li> </ul>
<b>Decision guidelines</b>	<i>Clause 65 Decision Guidelines</i>	Refer to Section 11.4 of the Planning Report for further details regarding the Clause 65 Decision Guidelines.
	<i>Clause 53.13 Renewable Energy Facility</i>	Please refer to Appendix I for an assessment against the Application Requirements and Decision Guidelines under Clause 53.13.

Topic	Consideration	Response
<b>Administration and enforcement</b>	<p><i>Planning permit conditions</i></p> <p>Plans that may be required as a condition of a permit include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Development plan - The responsible authority may require amendments to be made to the development plan documentation provided as part of the application</li> <li>▪ Landscape Plan</li> <li>▪ Traffic management plan (TMP)</li> <li>▪ Environmental management plan (EMP)</li> <li>▪ Fire and emergency management plan</li> <li>▪ Complaint investigation and response plan</li> </ul>	<p>Development plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The applicant will review any requests to change the development and will implement these if possible and if there are benefits to the community and environment.</li> <li>▪ Landscape Plan – Provided (refer to Appendix C)</li> <li>▪ Traffic management plan (TMP) – This will be prepared before the construction stage commences.</li> <li>▪ Environmental management plan (EMP) – This will be prepared before the construction stage commences.</li> <li>▪ Fire and emergency management plan – This will be prepared before the construction stage commences.</li> <li>▪ Complaint investigation and response plan – If required by a condition of consent, this will be prepared before the construction stage commences.</li> </ul>

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