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28/03/2025

Iwan Davies  
Director Energy Assessments  
Planning and Assessment  
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

**Goulburn River Solar Farm (SSD-33964533): Request for Planning Secretary approval for early access to site for limited commencement of construction works under Development Consent condition B7**

Dear Iwan,

**1. Background**

Goulburn River Solar Farm (SSD-3396533) received Development Consent under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* on 22 August 2024. Goulburn River Solar Farm (the Project) is a large-scale renewable energy project which is being developed by Lightsource Development Services Australia Pty Ltd (Lightsource bp) to generate solar renewable energy to supply New South Wales (NSW) with green electrons. The Project site is located at 2335 Wollara Road, within the Upper Hunter Local Government Area of NSW and approximately 28 kilometres southwest of the township of Merriwa.

Condition B7 of the Development Consent requires that road upgrades associated with the Project be completed prior to commencing construction.

Unless the Planning Secretary agrees otherwise, prior to commencing construction the Applicant must complete the road upgrades detailed in Appendix 4.

The Planning Secretary approved revised timing for some of these road upgrades (see Attachment A) under Condition B7 on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024. This approval allowed construction to commence without the road upgrades to Ringwood Road and Wollara Road being complete and provided flexibility for these local road upgrades to be delivered concurrently with construction of the Temporary Workers Accommodation Facility (TWA Facility) and the solar farm. Notwithstanding, these road upgrades commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025, following Upper Hunter Shire Council approval of works on council roads under section 138 of the *Roads Act 1993*.

The road upgrades to the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and Barnett Street are still required to be complete prior to commencing construction (Condition B7 & Appendix 4 of the Development Consent).

Commencement of these road upgrades has been delayed through a secondary approval process (works authorisation deed [WAD]) with Transport for NSW (TfNSW). Works were programmed to start on these upgrades in early January 2025. Resolving design refinements required by TfNSW has resulted in a minimum eight (8) week delay to this vital scope of work. The upgrades to the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and Barnett Street are now expected to commence in the week of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The upgrades to Barnett Street are due to largely be complete by the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2025 (inclusive of temporary line marking), with permanent line marking anticipated to be complete by 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025. The Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection road upgrades are expected to be complete within approximately 5 to 7 weeks.

The delay to commencement of the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and Barnett Street upgrades has created flow on impacts for critical Project milestones. As such, Lightsource bp is seeking agreement from the Planning Secretary under condition B7 to commence critical construction activities prior to completing the intersection and Barnett Street upgrades, in order to maintain the Project's planned energisation date.

We are requesting approval by the Planning Secretary to allow for limited early site access for critical construction activities to commence prior to the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and Barnett Street upgrades being complete.

## 2. Request

Lightsource bp are requesting the Planning Secretary's agreement under Condition B7 to vary the requirement that the road upgrades (Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and Barnett Street) be completed prior to commencing construction.

We are requesting early access to the solar farm site to undertake critical construction activities prior to the completion of these road upgrades. These critical activities proposed for the solar farm are '*construction*' as defined in the Project's development consent. The critical construction activities proposed are described in more detail in Table 1 below, and relate to:

- Establishing the switchyard pad (substation bench)
- Preparatory works for the temporary workers accommodation (TWA) facility.

This request would allow for the following traffic movements to/from the solar farm site, prior to completion of these road upgrades:

- Up to 10 heavy vehicle movements per day
- Up to 20 light vehicle movements per day.

The above vehicle movements assume that Lightsource bp have commenced the road upgrades at the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and that this area is under active traffic management, improving the intersection's safety.

In the instance that the road upgrades at the intersection are further delayed or there is any temporary pause on traffic management prior to intersection completion, vehicle movements to/from the solar farm site would be limited to:

- Up to 5 heavy vehicle movements per day
- Up to 10 light vehicle movements per day.

Following completion of the intersection road upgrades to the satisfaction of the relevant road authority, full construction would commence, and vehicle movements would then be governed by consent Condition B1. It is anticipated that early access to site will only be required for approximately two (2) months (until the intersection is complete).

Please note that these vehicle limits requested are additional to the vehicle movements which are associated with the road upgrade works.

### 3. Justification

Whilst approval for the maximum allowable vehicle movements would be an ideal outcome, the scale of our requested early access to site has considered the following factors:

- **Safety of the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection.** We appreciate that the purpose of Condition B7 was to enable the intersection to be improved prior to use by construction traffic. In response, we are proposing substantially reduced traffic numbers from those allowed for under the development consent (55 heavy vehicle movements per day) to only a maximum of 10 heavy vehicle movements to the solar farm site per day. The intersection will be under traffic management to allow the 10 heavy vehicle movements to occur safely.
- **Minimising disruption to local road users.** As above, vehicle movements will be limited to a maximum number and subject to traffic management. All traffic related to the early access construction activities will operate in accordance with the Project's approved Traffic Management Plan, including a minimum of 15 minutes between each heavy vehicle movement. The intent will be to bring heavy vehicles such as bulldozers and graders to site early, where they will remain for the duration of early works.
- **A paucity of accommodation in the region.** Accommodation for workers involved in the early access critical construction activities would be in accordance with the Project's Accommodation and Employment Strategy. Rostering will account for longer expected travel times, with workers anticipated to be staying as far away as Muswellbrook to avoid over-burdening accommodation providers in the Merriwa region.

The critical construction activities which are the subject of this request relate to:

1. **Establishing the switchyard pad (substation bench).** This represents the most substantial earthworks required for the Project and is anticipated to take multiple months. It is a priority to progress this task as soon as possible. The switchyard pad is required to be complete by June 2025 to enable handover to Transgrid, who are constructing the substation which is essential for Project energisation. Any delay beyond this date will delay the overall Project in six-monthly increments, due to the seasonal nature of performing the cut-over (commissioning the new substation). Excavated spoil from the switchyard pad will be used to fill and level the TWA facility base.
2. **Preparatory works for the TWA facility.** Rapid establishment of the TWA is crucial for construction. Any works which can be completed on this facility will reduce the length of time for reliance on local accommodation providers and limit the Project’s impact on the community.

#### 4. Detailed Critical Construction Activities

The scope of critical construction activities associated with our request to access site prior to the completion of the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and Barnett Street upgrades is detailed in Table 1. The approximate location of these activities is shown in Attachment B.

*Table 1 Description of critical construction activities requiring early site access*

Activity	Brief Scope	Justification for early site access
Wollara Road site entrance	The upgrade to the development site access on Wollara Road including clearing, kerb construction, resurfacing and gate installation	To provide a suitable Project access for the substation scope
Main haul road	Construction of the main internal haul road, from the site entrance to the switchyard pad, including clearing, grubbing and roadworks	To facilitate access to the Project substation location
TWA facility	Early works for the TWA facility, including clearing, grubbing and pad construction	To mitigate impacts to the community as soon as possible by maintaining dates for the establishment of the Project TWA
Compound area - early civil works	The early civil scope for the main compound area. including borrow pit establishment, swale and drainage construction	To facilitate the construction of the Project substation bench
Switchyard pad construction	The construction of the switchyard pad including clearing and grubbing, bulk earthworks and drainage	To construct the base of the substation bench to commence the critical substation scope
Security establishment	The establishment of a security cabin for the ongoing Project security of the site	To ensure the Project is adequately secured throughout the construction phase
Water tanks	Installation of the Project water tanks for potable water and firefighting purposes	Critical to the commencement of works on site

Activity	Brief Scope	Justification for early site access
Site workshop and hardstand	Installation of the Project workshop, including hardstand	Base of operations for site work to carry out pre-start meetings and act as the Project depot

All relevant conditions precedent for construction commencement would be met prior to the commencement of the early access critical construction activities (i.e., satisfaction of conditions relating to management plans, biodiversity credit retirement, etc).

As required under Condition C7 of the Development Consent, Lightsource bp would provide notification to the Department prior to commencing the early access critical construction activities.

## 5. Consultation

TfNSW recommended that the Project development consent include a condition for road upgrades at the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection to be completed prior to commencing construction. This request was included in TfNSW response to the Project’s Amendment Report 2 (TWA Facility), dated 9 May 2024.

Lightsource bp met with representatives from the Department and TfNSW on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and discussed the opportunity to commence critical construction activities on site prior to the road upgrades being complete, including limited vehicle movements. We provided a summary of our request to TfNSW on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025. TfNSW confirmed on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025 that they support the proposed use of the intersection for the commencement of the Project’s critical construction activities prior to commencing the intersection upgrades and during the construction of the road upgrades, subject to the following:

*Vehicle movements associated with early access to site for critical construction activities should be conducted in accordance with:*

- *The Project Traffic Management Plan (dated December 2024)*
- *The terms of the Works Authorisation Deed (for road upgrades on the Golden Highway)*
- *The following additional mitigation measures:*
  - *There is a 15min gap between heavy vehicle movements*
  - *Records are provided to TfNSW for any incidents or near misses that may occur at the intersection of Ringwood Road/Golden Highway (only applicable for the duration of the usage of the intersection by the Goulburn River Solar Farm for the interim period prior to commencing construction of road upgrades at Ringwood Road/Golden Highway intersection).*
  - *The operation of the Temporary Worker Accommodation is not supported during this period.*

- *No OSOM or high-risk OSOM are to occur during this period.*
- *The commencement of the construction of the critical works are discussed with the relevant council and any other impacted parties.*
- *The daily traffic volumes for interim period prior to commencing intersection upgrades are to adhere to a maximum daily vehicle trip of 5 HV/10LV with no more than 1 HV/ 5LV trips during the AM/PM peak hour.*
- *The daily traffic volumes for the period of use of the Ringwood Road/Golden Highway intersection while the road upgrades are under construction and TGS is in place will be restricted to a maximum daily vehicle trips of 10 HV/20 LV.*

We provided a summary of our request to Upper Hunter Shire Council on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Council confirmed on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025 that they support the commencement of the Project's critical construction activities prior to completing the intersection upgrades, subject to implementation of the recommendations put forward by TfNSW.

## 6. Summary

Lightsource bp are requesting early access to the solar farm site under Condition B7 of Development Consent SSD 33964533, in order to undertake the following critical construction activities prior to the completion of the Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection and Barnett Street road upgrades:


- Establishing the switchyard pad (substation bench)
- Preparatory works for the TWA facility.

This request would require the following maximum traffic movements to/from the solar farm site, prior to completion of road upgrades:

- Up to 10 heavy vehicle movements per day
- Up to 20 light vehicle movements per day.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like to discuss any of the items presented in this request.

Sincerely,



Beth Kramer  
Principal Environmental Planner, Lightsource bp  
0428 379 894

Cc: Glenn Tilley (Senior Project Manager)

# Attachment A – Revised timing of road upgrades required by Condition B7<sup>1</sup>

Road / Intersection	Location	Upgrade Requirements	Timing
Golden Highway/Ringwood Road intersection	Figure 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of a new 325 m acceleration / merge lane for the left turn from Ringwood Road onto Golden Highway for westbound vehicles.</li> <li>Extension of the existing Golden Highway westbound and Ringwood Road left-in deceleration lane taper to 30 m.</li> <li>Relocate the safety barrier to ensure complaint BAR treatment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to commencing construction.</li> </ul>
Barnett Street	Figure 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sealing of the first 30m of Barnett St from the intersection with Golden Highway.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to commencing construction.</li> </ul>
Ringwood Road	Figure 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening and resealing of a 1.8 km section of Ringwood Road between Bow River and Killoe Creek.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within six months of commencing construction.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade/replace culverts at Bow River and Killoe Creek as required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prior to use of Ringwood Road by Heavy Vehicles Requiring Escort.</li> </ul>
Ringwood Road	Figure 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realignment, widening and sealing of an additional 1.6 km section of Ringwood Road between Killoe Creek and Binks Road.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within six months of commencing construction</li> </ul>
Wollara Road	Figure 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realignment, widening and sealing of a 4.7 km unpaved section of Wollara Road between the Goulburn River National Park boundary and 1621 Wollar Road.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within six months of commencing construction (with the exception of upgrades to the 1.2 km section of Wollara Road within State Forest land which must be completed prior to commissioning).</li> </ul>







<sup>1</sup> As agreed with DPHI 10th October 2024

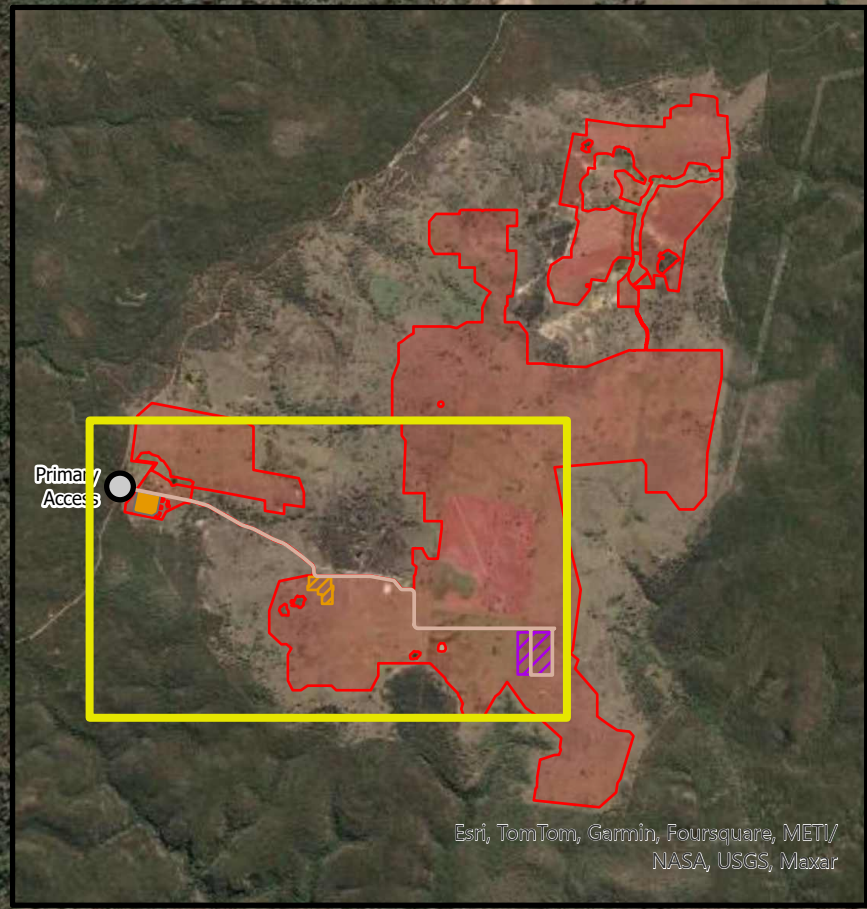
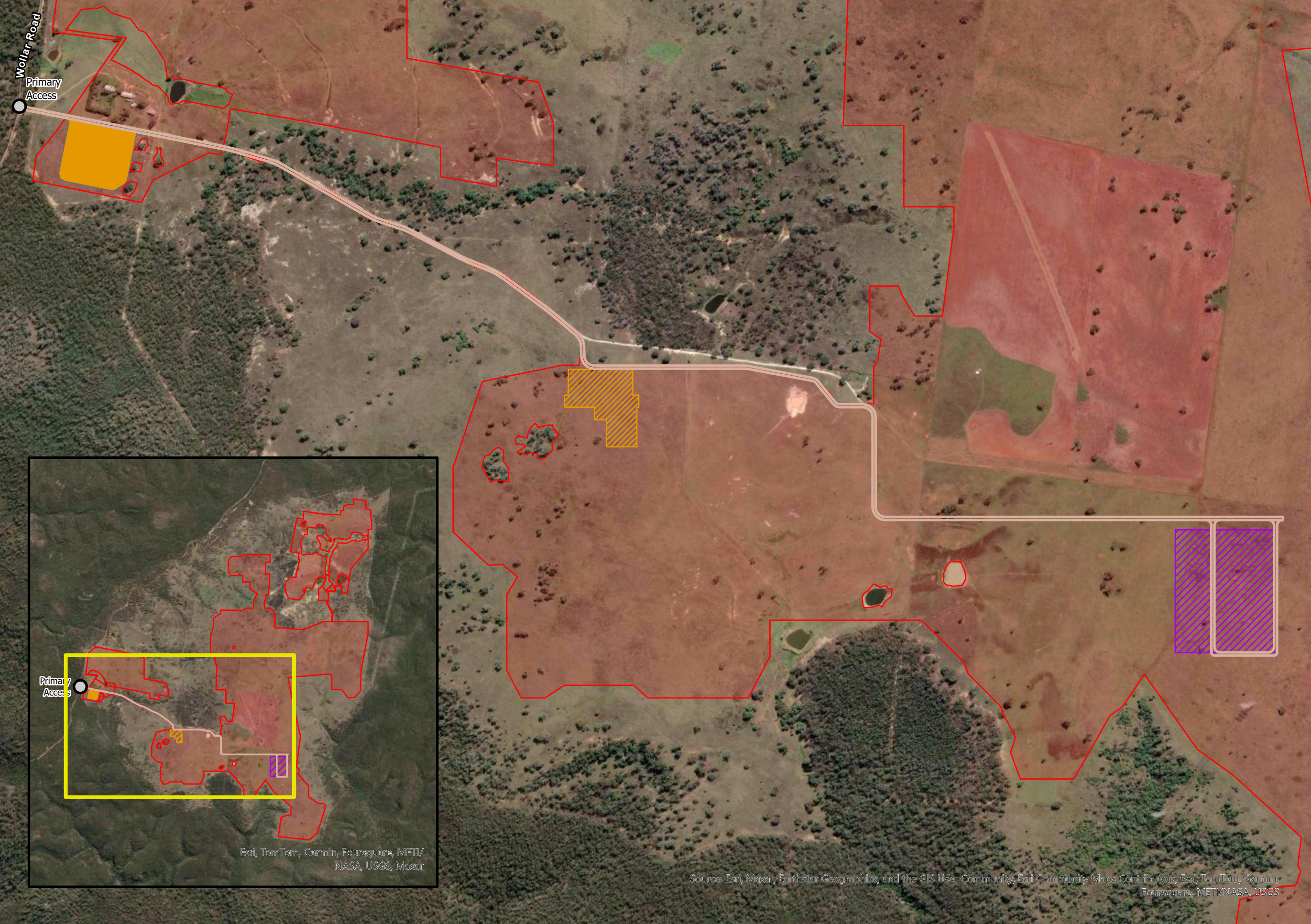
# Attachment B – Indicative location of early access works

# Goulburn River Solar Farm

Goulburn River Solar Farm  
NSW, Australia  
Date: March 14, 2025

## Legend

-  Site entrance
-  Main Haul Road
-  Accommodation camp, security, water tanks and site workshop
-  Compound Area
-  Switchyard pad
-  Development Footprint



Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/  
NASA, USGS, Maxar

Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Foursquare, METI/NASA, USGS

