



Western Downs Solar Farm, Darling Downs

We were engaged by Reel Planning to coordinate ecological assessment and approvals for the proposed 250MW Western Downs Solar Farm (and associated infrastructure). The \$500m project was located at Hopeland, south of Chinchilla.

CLIENT

WESTERN DOWNS SOLAR
PROJECT PTY LTD
& TILT RENEWABLES
AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

LOCATION

HOPELAND
(WESTERN DOWNS
REGIONAL COUNCIL)
QLD

Statutory Context

The project site was in the Brigalow Belt bioregion, and supported a range of potential MNES/MSES, including: Commonwealth-listed Threatened Ecological Communities (Brigalow), Endangered and Least Concern Regulated Vegetation, and threatened flora and fauna.

The proposed development required consideration of the Commonwealth EPBC Act; State Development Assessment Provisions (Modules 5 and 8); and ecological aspects of the former Chinchilla Planning Scheme.

Challenges and Solutions

We prepared a detailed PMAV to properly define the location of Threatened Ecological Communities, Regulated Vegetation and habitat of significance. In course, this significantly reduced vegetation and habitat constraint from that indicated by the State's Regulated Vegetation Management Map.

Our amended mapping allowed the client to design a more efficient panel array (reducing costs) and established an easier pathway for compliance with legislation at all three levels of government. Our data was also used by Powerlink to position connecting powerlines and assess compliance with relevant legislation.

Following approval of the PMAV we prepared ecological assessment reports: outlining project impacts; advising on the need for referral under the EPBC Act; and demonstrating compliance with State and Council legislation.

Outcome

We demonstrated that the project did not require further assessment and approval under the EPBC Act, and that all other State and Council environmental planning requirements could be satisfied. The project has moved on to the detailed design stage, and we continue to provide on-going advice to the client, planning consultant and Powerlink in regard to this and others in the region.



28 South Environmental

info@28south.com.au