

Our ref: SSD 28088034

Professor Mary O’Kane AC
Chair
Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW
Suite 15.02, Level 15
135 King Street
Sydney NSW 2000

22 March 2024

Subject: Referral for Determination

Dear Professor O’Kane

The Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the Dubbo Firing Power Station (SSD 28088034) (the project) and is referring the application to the Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) for determination as the applicant (Dubbo Firing Nominees Pty Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Squadron Energy) has disclosed a reportable political donation.

The project involves the construction and operation of a power station, a hydrogen generation plant, and ancillary infrastructure including a gas storage pipeline in an industrial precinct of Dubbo in the Dubbo local government area.

The power station would supply up to 64 megawatts of electricity to the grid when the supply of electricity from other sources is insufficient to meet demand (estimated to be around 1,000 hours per year). It would initially operate on natural gas (methane) or natural gas blended with up to 25% hydrogen. However, it would be capable of operating on higher concentrations of hydrogen and/or biofuels with some relatively minor modifications to the infrastructure, when/if this becomes economically viable.

During the exhibition of the environmental impact statement (EIS), the Department received 12 community submissions. Five of these submissions raised concerns about solar farms and/or battery projects but did not comment on the project. The remaining submissions all objected to the project on the grounds of concerns about fire, the need for more affordable and reliable energy, or the climate change impacts associated with burning gas.

Dubbo Regional Council (Council) also made a submission requesting the applicant enter into a voluntary planning agreement, and raising concerns about the availability of accommodation and road and traffic impacts. The applicant has subsequently made an offer to Council for a voluntary planning agreement that includes contributions of \$1,425,000.

Department of Planning and Environment



In assessing the project, the Department has considered the environmental, social and economic impacts of the project, the submissions and agency advice, the responses to submissions and advice, the relevant environmental planning instruments, the suitability of the site and the public interest, in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

I have attached a copy of the Department's assessment report and recommended conditions of consent for the Commission's consideration.

If you have any questions or wish to arrange a briefing, please contact me on [REDACTED] or by email at stephen.odonoghue@planning.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,



Steve O'Donoghue
Director Resource Assessments