

# **Birriwa Solar Project**

*weighing up the impacts & opportunities*

## **IPC Public Meeting**

**Birriwa, Dunedoo, Gulgong & Districts**

**Sally Edwards -** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]





**“The greatest asset of any community is simply people who care”**

- Paul Born

**130 public objections, 0 in support, 4 comments  
- EIS & Amendment Report**

**The quantity of objections for a project in a rural area is evidence of just how many people care about the Birriwa, Dunedoo and Gulgong district and communities**



**A total of 405HA of native vegetation is to be cleared (\*\* Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney spans 30HA)**

**2 candidate fauna species identified inc the Koala**

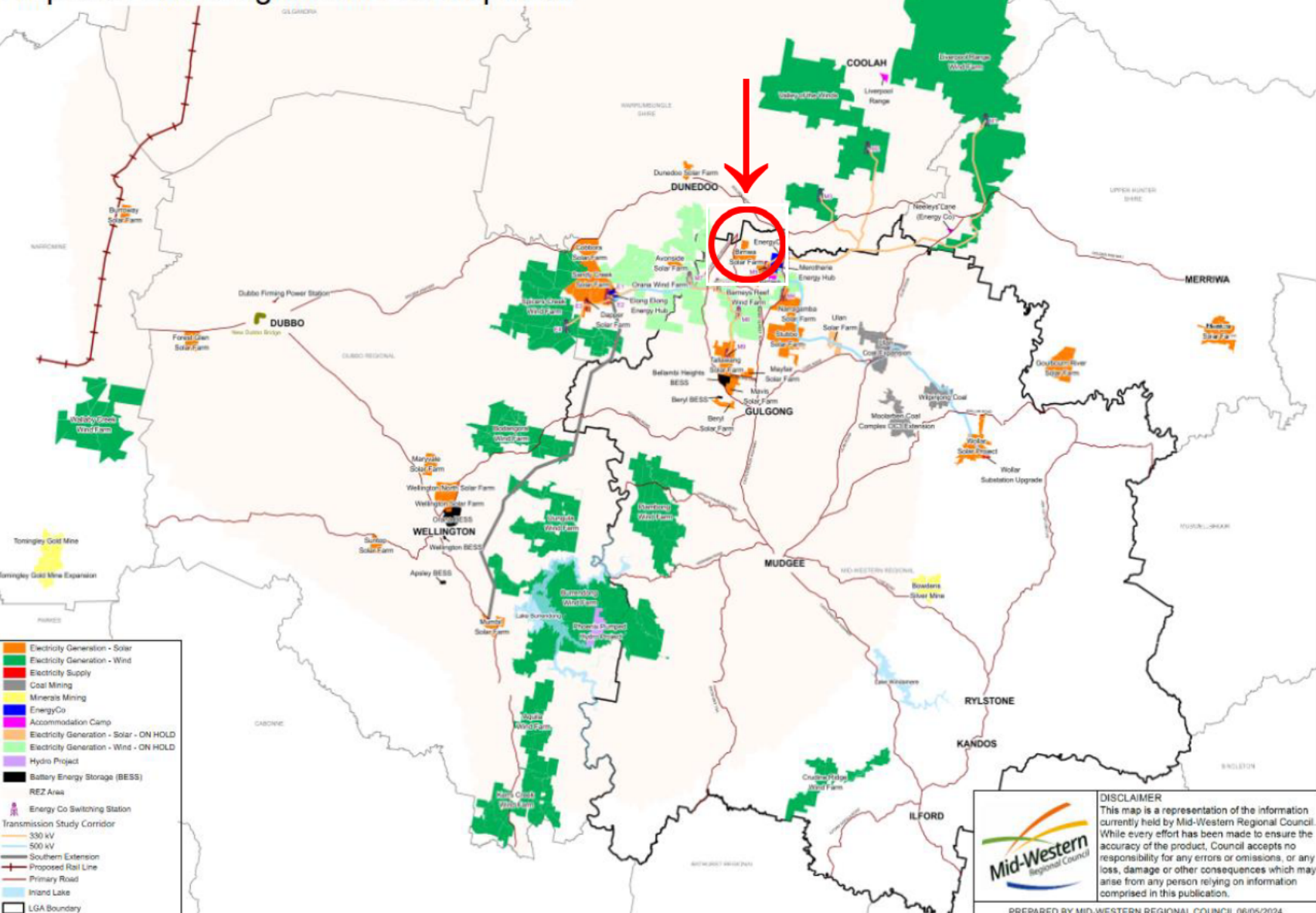
**1197HA of potential loss to Agricultural production in the Central West**

**130 public objections**

**22 non-associated residences within 2km**



# Proposed State Significant Development



**“The Commission Panels appointed to determine each project must consider each development application separately.”**

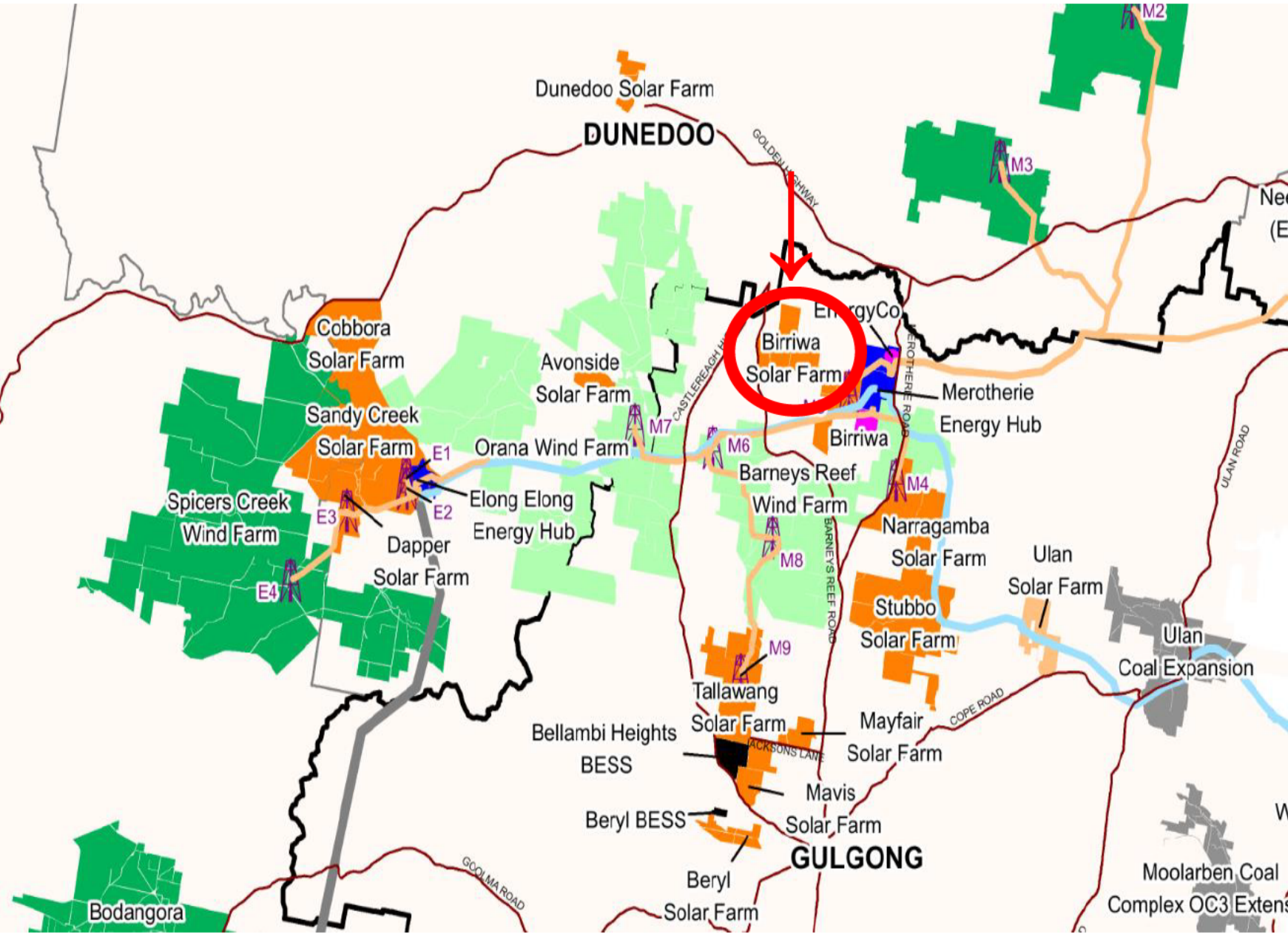
**Mid-Western Regional Council**

**DISCLAIMER**  
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PREPARED BY MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL 06/05/2024

Source: IPC Website





**Project land size  
and use:**

**Site area** 1535HA

**Current uses:**  
Sheep & Cattle  
grazing and low  
intensity, dryland  
cropping





**How many  
homes would this  
loss to  
agricultural  
production have  
fed and clothed?**

**Birriwa site - Sheep &  
Cattle grazing and low  
intensity, dryland cropping**



limitations) and Class 7 (extremely severe limitations). The project would not significantly reduce the overall agricultural productivity of the region and the site could be returned to agricultural uses in the future. The Department notes that ACEN intends to continue grazing concurrently with the operation of the solar farm.

The Department considers the project would not result in unacceptable impacts on the capacity, efficiency or safety of the road network. Potential traffic impacts would be largely restricted to the 28-month construction period and would be suitably managed through road upgrades, restricting vehicles to approved routes, road maintenance and the implementation of a Traffic Management Plan.

The Department considers the project would not result in any significant impacts on the local community or the environment, and any residual impacts can be managed through the implementation of the recommended

143. Subject to the recommended conditions, the Department is satisfied that the project would not result in significant visual impacts. The site selection and project design is consistent with the Department's Large-Scale Solar Energy Guideline, particularly in avoiding sites with high visibility such as those on prominent or high ground positions, or sites which are located in a valley with elevated nearby residences with views toward the site.

The site is located in a sparsely populated rural area. There are 22 non-associated residences within 2 km of the development footprint. The solar arrays are relatively low-lying structures and expansive views across the area are limited by topography and established vegetation. While the introduction of the project would represent a change to the local rural landscape, ACEN has demonstrated that the visual impacts of the proposed development are low for all residential receivers, per the Department's *Large Scale Solar Energy Guideline*. Furthermore, the Department considers that ACEN's proposed mitigation measures, including screen planting,

The project would also provide flow-on benefits to the local community, including up to 500 construction jobs at its peak, 20 operational jobs and contributions to local councils of 1.5% of the project's capital expenditure through a voluntary planning agreement. There would be broader benefits to the State through an injection of \$1 billion in capital investment into the NSW economy.

# Quantifying Impact terminology

## Perspective



## Answer

1	
(a)	In accordance with the Minister's statutory obligations under section 20(e) of the <i>Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020</i> , the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) draft declaration was exhibited on the former Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's website for public consultation for 28 days from 17 September 2021 to 15 October 2021.
(b)	Six submissions were received from stakeholders during the draft consultation period. All submissions were in support of the exhibited draft (three from renewable energy developers, two from public authorities, and one from an organisation).  No submissions were received from members of the general public, and no objections were received from any stakeholders.

(c)	Submissions were provided on the grounds that they would be confidential. Submissions will not be published.
(d)	Consistent with the Minister for Energy's statutory obligations under section 19(4)(b)(iii) of the <i>Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020</i> , the declaration was made in consideration of the views of the local community in the REZ. This included through landowner meetings, direct engagement with local councils, mailouts, and establishment of a Central-West Orana REZ Regional Reference Group with local community representatives. The proposed scale and scope of the Central-West Orana REZ identified in the declaration had been publicly available since the NSW Government's submission on AEMO's Integrated System Plan in March 2018.

(e)	The former Department of Planning, Industry and Environment advised the Minister at the time that the declaration could be made consistent with statutory obligations under the <i>Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020</i> , including that views of the local community in the REZ had been considered and that the draft had been published for 28 days on the Department's website.
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BUDGET ESTIMATES 2023-24

## Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage Portfolios

Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment

Answers to Supplementary Questions

Hearing: 7 March 2024





## 5.2 Land use compatibility

### 5.2.1 Provisions of the LEP

72. The site is located on land within the RU1 Primary Production zone under the Mid-Western LEP and land zoned RU1 Primary Production and SP2 Infrastructure (Classified Road) within the Warrumbungle LEP.
73. As discussed in section 3.3, a solar farm is a permissible land use with consent in land zoned RU1 under the Mid-Western LEP.
74. While a solar farm is permitted with consent in the RU1 and SP2 zones under the Transport and Infrastructure SEPP, the Department notes a solar farm would otherwise be a prohibited land use in the RU1 zone under a strict reading of the Warrumbungle LEP. However, based on a broader reading of the Warrumbungle LEP, and consideration of the objectives of the RU1 zone and other strategic documents for the region, the Department considers that there is no clear intention to prevent the development of a solar farm on the subject land.

“the department notes a solar farm would otherwise be a **prohibited land use in the RU1 zone** under a strict reading of the Warrumbungle LEP.”



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