New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

NAME REDACTED **OBJECT** Submission No: 189452

Organisation:		Key issues:	*Visual impacts,Biodiversity,Water,Waste,Dust,Hazards and risks,Other issues*
Location:	*Location redacted*		
Submitter Type:	*an individual making a submission on my own behalf*		
Attachment:	*Visual Impact.docx*		

Submission date: 7/30/2024 9:14:10 PM

see attached file.

Visual Impact

The proposed solar farm near my property will significantly alter the natural landscape, which is currently characterized by open spaces and natural beauty. The installation of solar panels and associated infrastructure will disrupt the visual harmony of the area, creating an industrial appearance that is inconsistent with the rural and residential character of the community. This change could negatively affect property values and diminish the aesthetic enjoyment of the area for residents and visitors alike.

Potential Chemical Hazards

Solar panels and their associated components can pose environmental risks even if properly managed. There is a concern about the potential for chemical leakage from the panels, which contain materials like cadmium, lead, and other hazardous substances. If these chemicals were to leak, they could contaminate the soil and water, posing a risk to local wildlife and human health.

Impact on Local and Migratory Birds

The most critical issue is the impact the proposed solar farm would have on local and migratory birds that depend on West Belconnen Pond (Dunlop Pond). This area is one of the main bird biodiversity hotspots of Canberra, with over 179 species (+13 other taxa) reported in eBird, a citizen science project and online database of bird observations. The complete list of birds, along with their year-wise observation patterns, is available on eBird and highlights the importance of this habitat for both resident and migratory birds (Table 1; also Bar Charts - eBird). The following points highlight these concerns:

1. **Habitat Disruption**: The construction of a solar farm involves significant land disturbance, which can destroy or fragment habitats that birds rely on for nesting, feeding, and shelter. This is particularly concerning for species that are already under pressure from habitat loss and climate change.
2. **Collision Risks**: Birds often mistake reflective solar panels for water bodies, leading to collisions that can cause injury or death. This phenomenon, known as the “lake effect,” is well-documented and poses a significant threat to bird populations.
3. **Noise and Human Activity**: The increased noise and human activity associated with the construction and maintenance of the solar farm can disturb bird populations, leading to stress and displacement. Migratory birds, in particular, are sensitive to changes in their environment and may avoid the area entirely, disrupting their migration patterns.

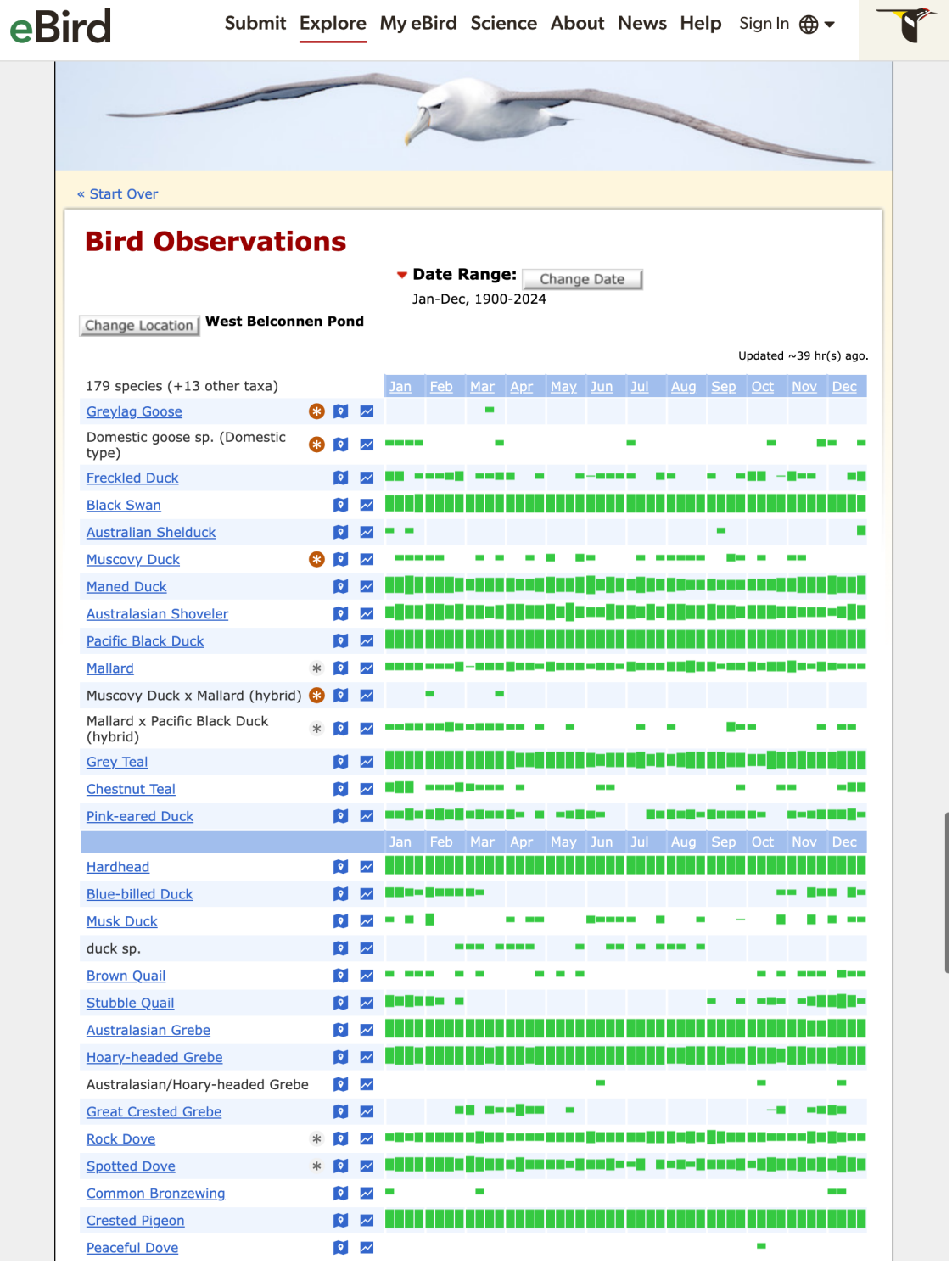
4. **Impact on Food Sources**: The installation of a solar farm can alter the local ecosystem, affecting the availability of food sources for birds. Changes in vegetation and the presence of infrastructure can reduce insect populations and other food sources that birds depend on.

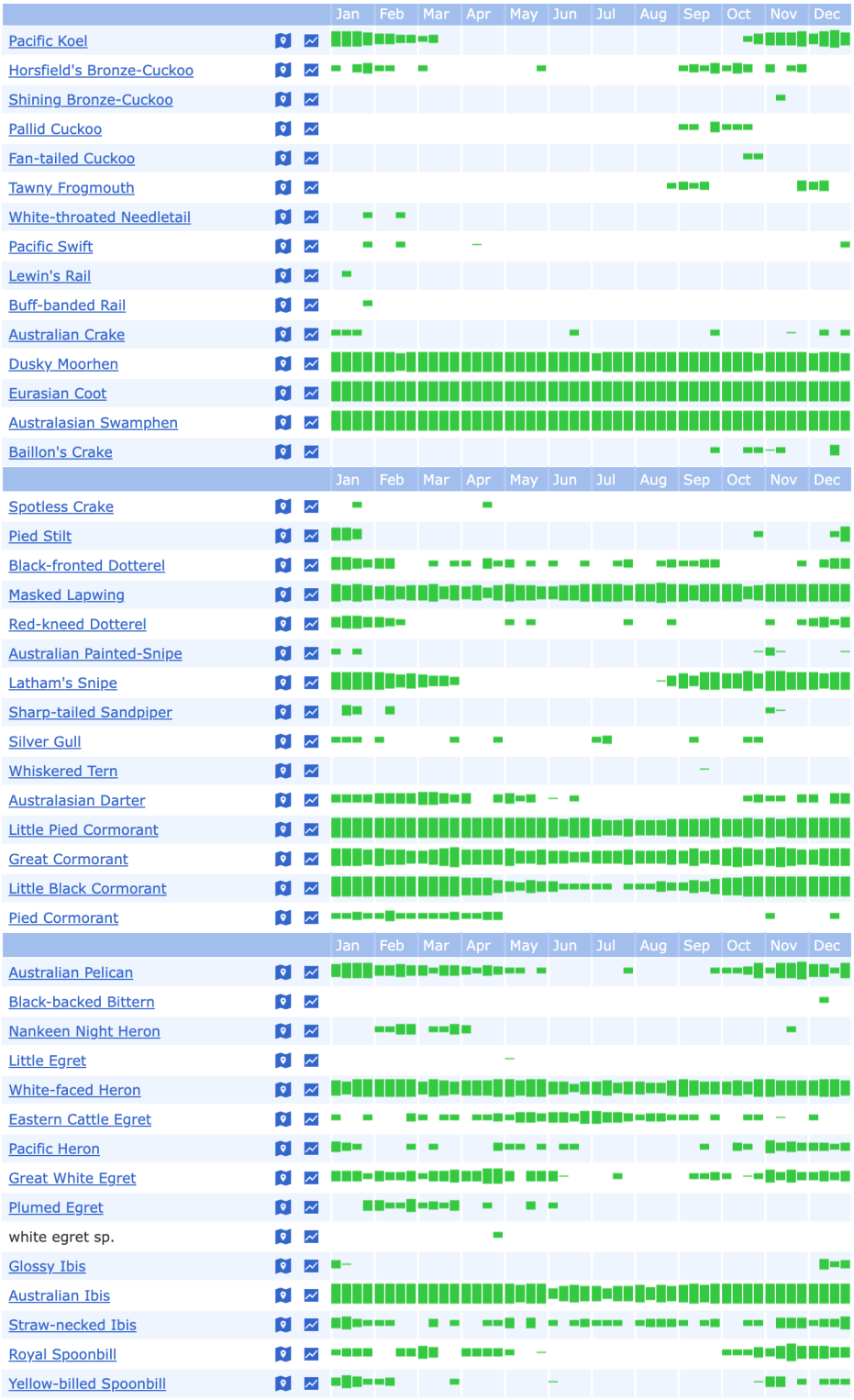
West Belconnen Pond serves as a critical refuge for birds, especially during dry and drought years when other water sources are scarce. The presence of such a rich and diverse bird population underscores the ecological significance of this area. The disruption caused by a solar farm would greatly impact all of this, potentially leading to a decline in bird biodiversity and negatively affecting the overall health of the ecosystem.

Conclusion

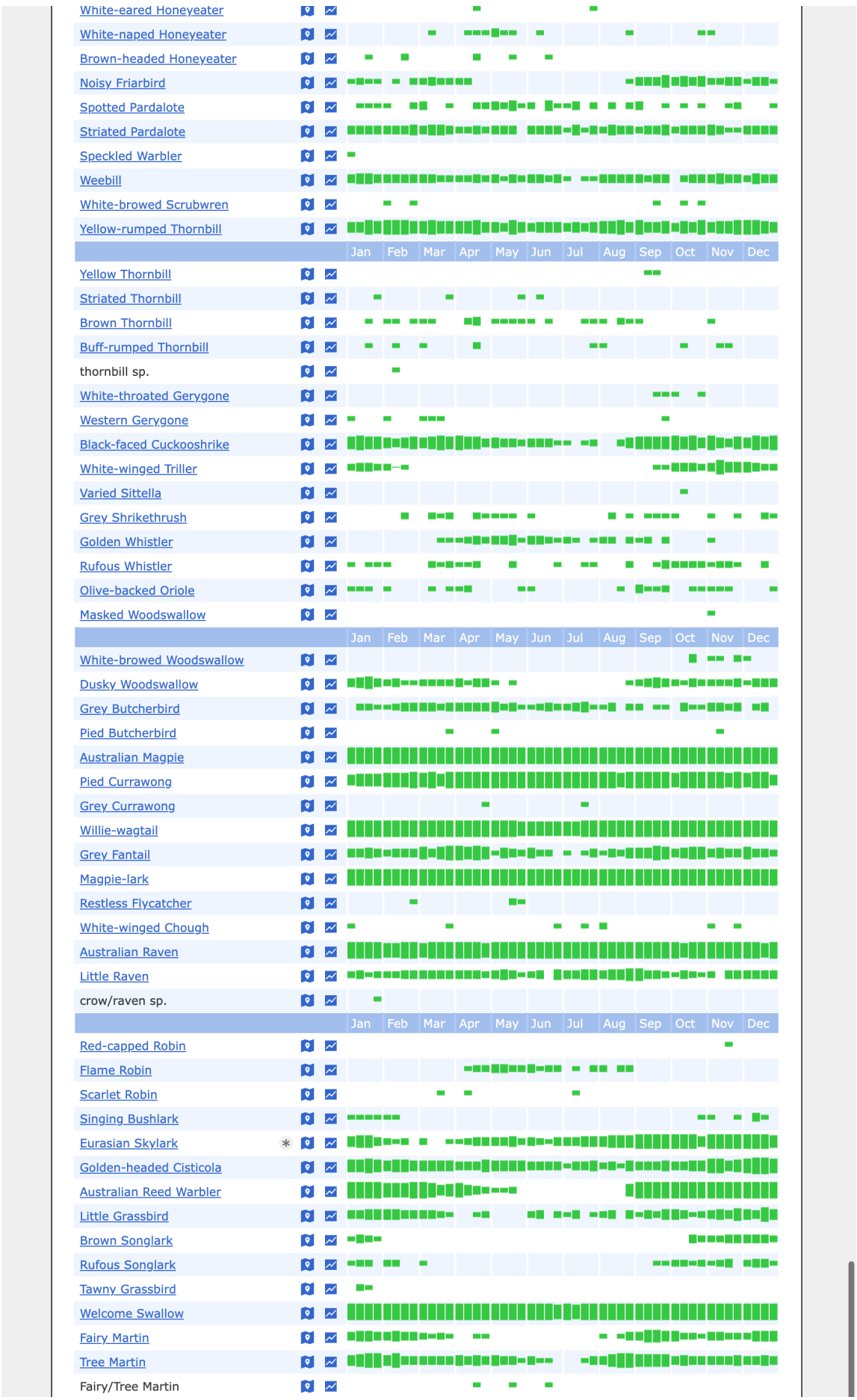
While renewable energy projects are essential for combating climate change, it is crucial to balance these efforts with the preservation of local ecosystems and wildlife. The proposed solar farm near West Belconnen Pond poses significant risks to the visual landscape, potential chemical hazards, and, most importantly, the local and migratory bird populations that rely on this area. I urge the relevant authorities to reconsider the location of this project and explore alternative sites that do not pose such severe environmental and ecological risks.

Table 1. Local and migratory birds that would be adversely effected by the proposed solar farm.




Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Pacific Koel
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo
Pallid Cuckoo
Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Tawny Frogmouth
White-throated Needletail
Pacific Swift
Lewin's Rail
Buff-banded Rail
Australian Crake
Dusky Moorhen
Eurasian Coot
Australasian Swamphen
Baillon's Crake
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Spotless Crake
Pied Stilt
Black-fronted Dotterel
Masked Lapwing
Red-kneed Dotterel
Australian Painted-Snipe
Latham's Snipe
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Silver Gull
Whiskered Tern
Australasian Darter
Little Pied Cormorant
Great Cormorant
Little Black Cormorant
Pied Cormorant
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Australian Pelican
Black-backed Bittern
Nankeen Night Heron
Little Egret
White-faced Heron
Eastern Cattle Egret
Pacific Heron
Great White Egret
Plumed Egret
white egret sp.
Glossy Ibis
Australian Ibis
Straw-necked Ibis
Royal Spoonbill
Yellow-billed Spoonbill


Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Black-shouldered Kite
Little Eagle
Wedge-tailed Eagle
Swamp Harrier
Spotted Harrier
Brown Goshawk
Collared Sparrowhawk
Brown Goshawk/Collared Sparrowhawk
Whistling Kite
Barn Owl
Southern Boobook
Laughing Kookaburra
Sacred Kingfisher
Rainbow Bee-eater
Dollarbird
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Nankeen Kestrel
Australian Hobby
Brown Falcon
Black Falcon
Peregrine Falcon
diurnal raptor sp.
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo
Cockatiel
Gang-gang Cockatoo
Galah
Little Corella
Long-billed Corella
corella sp.
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Superb Parrot
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Australian King-Parrot
Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella
Red-rumped Parrot
Musk Lorikeet
Rainbow Lorikeet
Satin Bowerbird
White-throated Treecreeper
Superb Fairywren
Eastern Spinebill
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Noisy Miner
Red Wattlebird
Singing Honeyeater
White-plumed Honeyeater
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Fuscous Honeyeater
White-fronted Chat
Black Honeyeater
Crescent Honeyeater
New Holland Honeyeater
White-eared Honeyeater
White-naped Honeyeater
Brown-headed Honeyeater
Noisy Friarbird
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
Speckled Warbler
Weebill
White-browed Scrubwren


White-eared Honeyeater
White-naped Honeyeater
Brown-headed Honeyeater
Noisy Friarbird
Spotted Pardalote
Striated Pardalote
Speckled Warbler
Weebill
White-browed Scrubwren
Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Yellow Thornbill
Striated Thornbill
Brown Thornbill
Buff-rumped Thornbill
thornbill sp.
White-throated Gerygone
Western Gerygone
Black-faced Cuckooshrike
White-winged Triller
Varied Sittella
Grey Shrikethrush
Golden Whistler
Rufous Whistler
Olive-backed Oriole
Masked Woodswallow
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
White-browed Woodswallow
Dusky Woodswallow
Grey Butcherbird
Pied Butcherbird
Australian Magpie
Pied Currawong
Grey Currawong
Willie-wagtail
Grey Fantail
Magpie-lark
Restless Flycatcher
White-winged Chough
Australian Raven
Little Raven
crow/raven sp.
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
Red-capped Robin
Flame Robin
Scarlet Robin
Singing Bushlark
Eurasian Skylark
Golden-headed Cisticola
Australian Reed Warbler
Little Grassbird
Brown Songlark
Rufous Songlark
Tawny Grassbird
Welcome Swallow
Fairy Martin
Tree Martin
Fairy/Tree Martin

Latham’s snipe at Dunlop pond.