



Waste and Decommissioning Assessment

Blayney 4C & 7C Solar Farm & BESS

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Report Title:		Waste and Decommissioning Assessment Blayney 4C & 7C Solar Farm & BESS			
Rev	Date	Status	Author/s	Reviewed	Approved
1	06/01/2025	First issue	E.M.	J.J.	J.J.
2	11/02/2025	Second issue	E.M.	J.J.	J.J.
3	2/05/2025	Third issue	E.M.	J.J.	J.J.

A person or organisation choosing to use documents prepared by EDPR Australia accepts the following:

- a) Conclusions and figures presented in draft documents are subject to change. EDPR Australia accepts no responsibility for use outside of the original report.
- b) The document is only to be used for purposes explicitly agreed to by EDPR Australia.
- c) All responsibility and risks associated with the use of this report lie with the person or organisation who chooses to use it.

Unless otherwise specified, all intellectual property in this report remains the exclusive property of EDPR Australia Pty and may be used only to evaluate and implement the findings and recommendations in this report. Intellectual property includes but is not limited to designs, drawings, layouts, charts, data, formulas, technical information, recommendations, and other written content.

EDPR Australia Pty Ltd
ABN 38 633 420 309

Level 4, 54 Marcus Clarke Street
Canberra ACT 2601

GPO Box 1429
Canberra ACT 2601

Email: australia@edp.com
Website: www.edpr.com

ABOUT EDPR AUSTRALIA

EDPR Australia, formerly ITP Development, is a renewables developer focused on delivering clean energy to the Australian market. Based in Canberra with a regional office in Sydney, EDPR Australia has a growing portfolio of renewable developments across regional Australia, specialising in both large and town-scale solar farms and BESS projects designed to match current and future electricity demand.

Leveraging expertise from our focused team and specialist consultants, EDPR Australia holds extensive experiences in landholder engagement, planning approvals, systems design, financing, engineering, electrical connection approvals, and commissioning. We maintain relationships with multiple stakeholders to ensure projects are successfully delivered in accordance with their expectations.

EDPR Australia is part of EDP Renewables APAC group, which is headquartered in Singapore and has a pan-regional presence with approximately 1.3 GWp of committed solar capacity. EDP Renewables APAC is part of EDP Renewables (Euronext: EDPR), a global leader in the renewable energy sector with more than 15 GW installed capacity in 29 markets across Europe, North America, South America and Asia Pacific. EDP group is recognised as the world's most sustainable energy utility company with an ambition to be Net-Zero by 2040, under the new Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) Net-Zero Standard.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Alternating Current
EDPR	EDP Renewables
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
Ha	Hectare
LCA	Life Cycle Analysis
MW	Megawatt, unit of power (1 million Watts)
MWp	Megawatt-peak, unit of power at standard test conditions used to indicate PV system capacity
NSW	New South Wales
POEO	Protection of the Environment Operations (Act)
PV	Photovoltaic
WMP	Waste management plan

TABLES

Table 1 – Site information	6
Table 2 – Waste Register Example	14
Table 3 – Waste materials with disposal and management options	15
Table 4 – Blayney Waste Management Facility hours of operation	17

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Proposed 32.8ha solar farm site and surrounding farm area, with waste centre shown..	7
Figure 2 – Waste Management Hierarchy	12

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	8
3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT	9
3.1. Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997.....	9
3.2. Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014	9
3.3. Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001.....	10
3.4. EPA Waste Classification Guidelines	10
3.5. Blayney Local Environmental Plan 2012	10
3.6. State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021	11
4. WASTE MANAGEMENT AND MINIMISATION	12
4.1. Reduce.....	13
4.2. Resource Recovery (Reuse, Recycle, Recover).....	13
4.3. Dispose	13
4.4. Waste Management Plan	14
5. PROJECT WASTE	14
6. WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES.....	17
7. DECOMMISSIONING.....	18
7.1. Decommissioning Plan.....	18
7.1.1. Notification of stakeholders of proposed de-energisation	18
7.1.2. De-energisation of the solar farm and disconnection of assets	18
7.1.3. Removal of PV modules and associated infrastructure	19
7.1.4. Removal of electrical wiring	19
7.1.5. Rehabilitation of land	19
7.2. Site Management	20
7.2.1. Decommissioning personnel.....	20
7.2.2. Noise and dust impacts	20
8. LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS	21
9. SUMMARY	22
10. REFERENCES	23

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposed Blayney 4C & 7C Solar Farms and BESS (referred to as the Project) is located on Gregghamstown Road about 1.5km north of the Blayney township (see **Figure 1**). EDPR Australia (EDPR) is proposing to construct two 4.99 MW_{AC} solar facilities within the 32.8 ha site.

Table 1 – Site information

Parameter	Description
Project name	Blayney 4C & 7C
Development Type	2 x 5MW Solar Farm + BESS (Tracker System)
Lot/DP(s)	Lot 74 / DP750390 (4C) Lot 83 / DP750390 (7C)
Street address	180 Gregghamstown Road, Blayney NSW 2799
Council	Blayney Shire Council
AC capacity	4.99 MW, per site
Land area (total parcel)	32.8 ha
Project area	16.4 ha (4C) – 15.6 ha after proposed subdivision 16.4 ha (7C) – 17.2 ha after proposed subdivision
Current land use	Cattle grazing

This report provides a waste assessment to support the Development Application for the project. It provides a:

- Desktop review of resource use, waste generation type and quantity expected and Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) during construction and operation.
- Desktop review of waste generation against the Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997, POEO (Waste) Regulation 2014 and Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001.
- Desktop review of waste disposal options (local approved waste disposal facility), during construction and operation.
- Desktop impact assessment against NSW policies and referenced industry standards for solar photovoltaic systems.
- Desktop management assessment with mitigation measure recommendations for construction and operation.

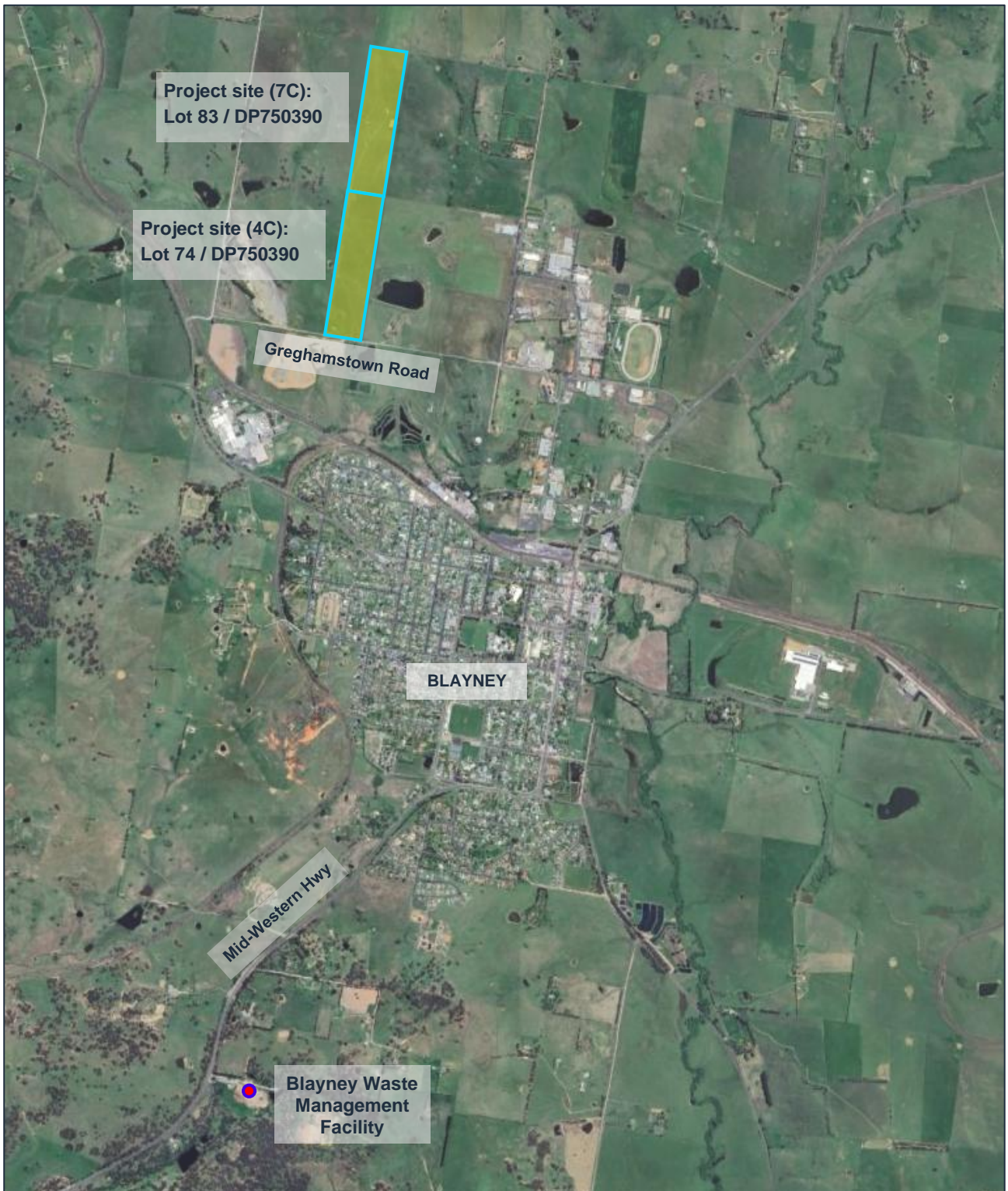


Figure 1 – Proposed 32.8 ha solar farm site and surrounding farm area, with waste centre shown.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

EDPR Australia is proposing to develop two 4.99 MW_{AC} Tracker System solar farms at 180 Greghamstown Road, Blayney, NSW. The property consists of two existing lots: Lot 74/DP750390, designated for the Blayney 4C solar farm site, and Lot 83/DP750390, designated for the Blayney 7C site. The current sizes of the lots are 16.4 hectares and 16.4 hectares, respectively, and a minor boundary adjustment is proposed to provide access to the northern solar farm site (Blayney 7C). The land has been utilised for cattle grazing.

There are to be approximately 10,300 solar modules per site, installed in rows that are around 120 metres long running east to west. The height of each module is approximately 2.0 m to 2.75 m and the mounting system is constructed on piles that are driven into the ground, typically within the depths of 1.5 m to 3.0 m. Each row of solar photovoltaic (PV) modules will rotate to track the sun across the sky from east to west each day.

Each solar farm will also consist of an inverter station, which incorporates two inverter units, the high/medium voltage switchgear and transformers. The inverter station is ground mounted and incorporated on a 12.19 m skid. Allowance is made for a 2.9-metre-high battery energy storage system (BESS) on a 12.1m skid alongside the inverter stations.

During construction, there is expected to be approximately 50 personnel on site working from 7 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday. It is anticipated there will be up to around 40 light vehicle trips per day, with a maximum of around 30 light vehicles on site at any one time. The construction stage is expected to take approximately 4 months. Once operational, the sites will be unmanned, and maintenance is expected to be carried out quarterly by a crew of 2 – 3 people.

Solar panels and related infrastructure will be decommissioned and removed upon cessation of operations. This is likely to occur within two years of the end of the project. The site can then be returned to the pre-development land use or as agreed to.

3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Waste management is an integral part of the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of a project. There are several Acts and guidelines that relate to the assessment of waste and ongoing management during project operation.

3.1. Protection of the Environment Operations (POEO) Act 1997

The POEO Act aims to protect, restore and enhance the quality of the environment in NSW, while still having regard to ecologically sustainable development.

With relevance to waste management, the Act aims to reduce risks to human health and to prevent degradation of the environment by promoting pollution prevention, reductions in the use of exhaustible materials and the re-use, recovery or recycling of materials. The Act contains the requirements for the management of waste and also the offences that relate to pollution. Section 148 requires that any pollution incidents or those that threaten material harm to the environment must be notified to the relevant authority (e.g. NSW Environment Protection Authority).

Section 143 of the POEO Act requires waste to be transported to a place that can lawfully accept it. It is an offence under Section 115 to negligently dispose of waste that may cause harm to the environment, which includes unlawful transport or the deposit of waste to a place that cannot be used as a suitable waste facility.

The waste classification definitions are also provided in the Act, and more information is provided in the EPA Waste Classification Guidelines (EPA, 2014) (Section 3.4).

Wastes that may be generated as part of construction and demolition activities, including 'building and demolition waste' as defined in the Act, includes unsegregated material that results from the demolition, erection, construction, refurbishment or alteration of buildings. Materials such as bricks, concrete, paper, plastics, glass and metal, and timber are included in this category.

3.2. Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014

The POEO Waste Regulation aims to protect human health and the environment and provides the framework for the waste industry in NSW, including the details of the licencing, reforms and the waste levy system.

The POEO Waste Regulation prescribes the wastes (hazardous waste, restricted solid waste etc) which are automatically deemed to be land pollution and posits that a person is guilty of an offence if such waste is illegally dumped.

3.3. Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 aims to encourage the efficient use of resources and to reduce environmental harm. Waste management for the project must be conducted in accordance with the Act. The projects' waste management program needs to consider the hierarchy outlined in the Act:

- i. Avoidance of unnecessary resource consumption;
- ii. Resource recovery (including reuse, reprocessing, recycling and energy recovery); and
- iii. Disposal.

EDPR has an obligation to minimise material harm to the environment as a result of the construction, operation and decommissioning of the project. Details of the project waste management and minimisation can be found in Section 6.

3.4. EPA Waste Classification Guidelines

The EPA Waste Classification Guidelines (EPA, 2014) comprise four parts:

1. Part 1: Classifying waste;
2. Part 2: Immobilisation of waste;
3. Part 3: Waste containing radioactive material; and
4. Part 4: Acid sulphate soils.

Part 1 of the guidelines provide details on each of the classes of waste that are defined in clause 49 of Schedule 1 of the (POEO Act):

- Special waste;
- Liquid waste;
- Hazardous waste;
- Restricted solid waste;
- General solid waste (putrescible); and
- General solid waste (non-putrescible).

Classification of the projects' waste is discussed in more detail in Section 4.

3.5. Blayney Local Environmental Plan 2012

The Blayney Local Environmental Plan 2012 aims to make local environmental planning provisions for land in the Blayney Shire Council in accordance with the relevant standard environmental planning instrument. The Plan does not provide specific management requirements for waste as it relates mostly to urban planning and conflicting land use management. The Plan provides the types of developments that are prohibited and permitted within the local area. Additionally, some types of development are also regulated by specific state environmental planning policies.

3.6. State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021

Division 4 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021 relates to 'Electricity generating works or solar energy systems'. This policy relates to the approval process for solar energy systems, and there are no specific details required for waste management. The policy generally states that for infrastructure projects waste materials must be sorted and must be disposed of at a waste or resource management facility.

4. WASTE MANAGEMENT AND MINIMISATION

Waste management and minimisation for the project should be in accordance with the POEO Act.

The waste management hierarchy is an internationally and nationally accepted guide for waste management practices with the objective of achieving optimal waste management outcomes. This hierarchy promotes waste avoidance and reduction, and encourages resource recovery and efficiency practises. This hierarchy, which ranks the preferred order of practices from most to least preferred, is shown in **Figure 2** and described below:

- AVOID or REDUCE unnecessary resource consumption and waste generation.
- RE-USE waste resources without further manufacturing.
- RECYCLE waste resources to make the same or different products.
- RECOVER waste resources, including the recovery of energy.
- TREAT waste before disposal, including reducing the hazardous nature of waste.
- DISPOSE of waste only if no viable alternative.

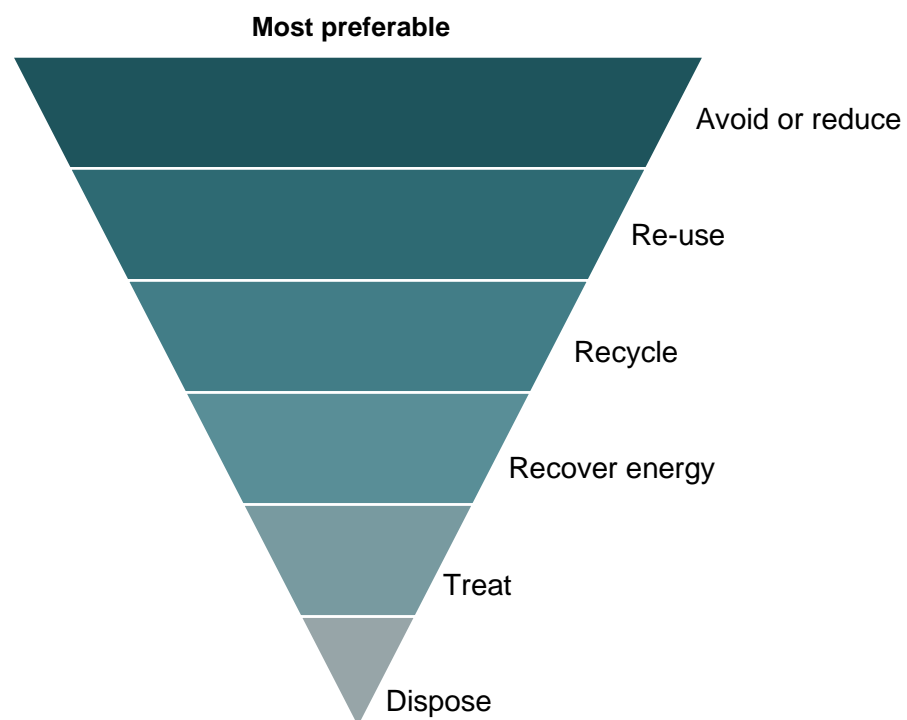


Figure 2 – Waste Management Hierarchy

4.1. Reduce

The project should aim to reduce waste where possible when purchasing goods for construction and during the operation phases. Inductions and staff education should include waste management and recycling procedures, particularly for the construction phase.

4.2. Resource Recovery (Reuse, Recycle, Recover)

If vegetation clearance is required during construction activities, the cleared vegetation should be re-used for mulch and soil erosion control where possible.

The site will be decommissioned at the end of the 35-year life of the solar products. Decommissioning should consider recycling where possible. Recycling of solar PV modules is becoming more common in Australia (Energy Matters, 2012 and RenewEconomy, 2016).

There are companies who specialise in providing a drop off location or collection of modules. The decommissioned PV panels are then reclaimed and recycled into other products (Reclaim PV Recycling, 2018). The general steps in the recycling process done by specialist companies are:

- Remove aluminium frames, junction boxes and cables;
- Remove glue, recover glass, aluminium, solar cells and contacts;
- Separate out glass (crushed into small pieces) and other products for re-use in other new products; and
- Remove other materials for use in new models or other products.

4.3. Dispose

If no viable alternative exists, the waste product is required to be disposed of at a suitable waste facility. The waste should be separated during construction into different bins or skips for different waste streams (separate reusable and recyclable from non-reusable and non-recyclable waste).

The waste should be classified on site according to the EPA Waste Classification Guidelines and then stored and handled on site in accordance with its classification. All waste should be removed as soon as practicable and then sent to an appropriately licenced facility for disposal.

Waste should be classified and logged in a register and then tracked to ensure it reaches its destination offsite. The tracking process should include classification, a description of the waste, volume of the waste, date the waste is transported from site and the destination. An example of a waste tracking register is shown in **Table 2**.

If transported by a third party, the details of the company transporting the waste should also be recorded. The EPA provides an online waste tracking system for hazardous waste. This should be used if disposal of hazardous waste is required (EPA, 2018).

Table 2 – Waste Register Example

Date	Description of Waste	Classification	Volume	Tracking	Transport Details	Destination
1 Dec 2023	Cardboard	General solid waste (non-putrescible)	1 tonne		Example transport company	Recycled at waste disposal location

4.4. Waste Management Plan

Prior to operation of the project, a Waste Management Plan (WMP) should be developed. This will build on what is proposed in this report and provide detailed procedures regarding management, minimisation, recycling, record keeping and tracking and disposal of waste.

The WMP should contain:

- Strategies to reduce waste during all project phases;
- Recycling, re-use and recovery strategies and opportunities;
- Classification of all waste streams;
- Tracking register and details;
- Recycling management onsite;
- Responsibilities for recycling, re-use and disposal; and
- Reporting and notification procedures if a waste incident occurs where there is a threat to the material harm of the environment.

5. PROJECT WASTE

Waste will primarily be generated during the construction phase of the project, and at the decommissioning phase (after cessation of operation). Construction waste is likely to predominantly consist of waste from packaging (such as wooden pallets, cardboard), and green waste. The project is not expected to generate putrescible waste. The waste types associated with the project are likely to be classified as general solid waste (non-putrescible) class under the POEO Act.

The operating phase will generate minimal waste streams predominantly associated with landscape maintenance and repair or replacement of equipment.

Table 3 provides the details of the waste generation types and quantities expected during construction, operation and decommissioning. Section 6 provides further details on the disposal and management options for the waste material. These quantities are estimates based on other solar projects and the actual waste may vary depending on the project design and packaging options from the PV suppliers.

Table 3 – Waste materials with disposal and management options

Waste	Source	Estimated Quantity – TBD by Contractor (<i>per site</i>)	Bin/Container	Disposal and Management
Commissioning				
Cardboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar panel cardboard packaging 	30 m ³	Cardboard only recycling skip bin (3)	Laydown area to set up skip bins for transfer to waste contractor's off-site facilities and/or the waste management facilities identified in section 6 below.
Wooden pallets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar panel shipment Solar tracker mounting shipment 	97 m ³	Landfill skip bin (15)	Transfer to waste contractor's facilities and/or the waste management facilities identified in section 6 below.
Plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic pipe offcuts/scrap Solar panel plastic wrapping Drums used to temporarily store diesel fuel and water Electric cable reels 	Minimal		Transfer to waste contractor's facilities and/or the management facilities identified in section 6 below.
Scrap metal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electric cable waste 	Minimal		Transfer to waste contractor's facilities or engaging a scrap metal merchant

Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excess concrete waste from inverter and battery foundations and piling works 	Minimal		Specialised concrete recycling for repurposing into recycled products
Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used lubricating oils and filters Unused or spent chemicals 	Minimal	-	Fluids recycled where possible, or transfer to waste contractor's facilities
Operation				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste as a result of maintenance or replacement of equipment 	Minimal	-	Taken offsite to appropriate recycling/disposal
Decommissioning				
PV panels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glass for panels Silicon for wafers Supporting poles and mounts 	10,300 panels 260 tonnes glass 38 tonnes silicon for wafers	-	Laydown area to set up skip bins for transfer to waste contractor's off-site facilities or to appropriate recycling facility
Scrap metal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical cable waste 	860 tonnes scrap metal	Landfill skip bins	Transfer to waste contractor's facilities
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inverters and batteries 	240 m ³	Landfill skip bins	Transfer to waste contractor's facilities
Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundations of the inverter, transformer and battery 	19 m ³	Concrete recycling bin	Specialised concrete recycling for repurposing into recycled products
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing and storage containers 	40-ft container (2)	-	Removed from site and reused where possible

6. WASTE DISPOSAL FACILITIES

The Head contractor is responsible for engaging a commercial waste contractor for waste management during construction and decommissioning. The commercial waste contractor will sort the waste generated into skip bins categorised by general waste, recyclables, and scrap material. The commercial operator will also transport these skip bins to their own waste depots for distribution and transfer within their own private networks. This is the preferred method of waste management to avoid straining local waste facilities.

The Head contractor may also choose to utilise the local council's waste disposal facility where suitable in compliance with the facility's restrictions and terms of use. The closest waste depot is the Blayney Waste Management Facility located at 4165 Mid-Western Highway, approximately an 8-minute drive (5 km) from the project site as shown in **Figure 1**. The facility is open 7 days a week, excluding public holidays. The facility hours of operation vary according to the day, as shown in **Table 4** below.

Table 4 – Blayney Waste Management Facility hours of operation

Day	Hours of Operation
Monday to Friday	9am – 5pm
Saturday & Sunday	9am – 12pm 2pm – 5pm

The Blayney Waste Management Facility accepts recycling and green waste disposal, free of charge for ratepayers. This includes clean fill and separated scrap metals, as well as common household recycling such as cans, glass bottles, cardboard and paper.

Non-recyclable waste items are also accepted, with charges applying. This includes mixed waste for landfill, timber waste, concrete and commercial waste. Commercial waste is charged either per tonne or per cubic metre, with prices of \$202/tonne, or \$281/m³. Commercial construction and demolition waste is charged at \$76/m³.

The Blayney Waste Management Facility does not specify any maximum quantity limits on waste disposals. However, in case the facility will not accept the required quantities, the Bathurst Waste Management Centre, located a 40-minute drive (45km) from the project, is suggested as an alternative disposal facility.

Regardless of whether specialised waste and recycling contractors are engaged to assist in waste disposal or independently undertaken, the waste produced by the project will be categorised on site and recycled or disposed of in accordance with the POEO Act and as outlined in this assessment report.

7. DECOMMISSIONING

The Blayney 4C & 7C solar farm is intended to be operational for approximately 35 years, at which point the solar farm will be decommissioned and the site returned to the original state. At the end of operational life, or in the unlikely event that the Blayney solar farm is required to be decommissioned prior to the completion of the 35-year lifespan, the decommissioning process will be as outlined in **Section 7.1** below.

7.1. Decommissioning Plan

The decommissioning process for the Blayney solar farm will be undertaken all at once and will involve the following stages of decommissioning:

1. Notification of stakeholders of proposed de-energisation
2. De-energisation of the solar farm and disconnection of assets
3. Removal of PV modules and associated infrastructure
4. Removal of electrical wiring
5. Rehabilitation of land

Relevant equipment will be brought to site to facilitate decommissioning, including amenities for site crew for the duration of the works. This equipment may include mobile cranes, excavators, skid steers, loaders, rollers/compactors, pile drivers, telehandlers, skip bins, water carts, temporary shipping containers for storage, site office and site ablution blocks.

7.1.1. Notification of stakeholders of proposed de-energisation

EDPR will contact Essential Energy, the state-owned enterprise responsible for operating the distribution network 12 months prior to the commencement of decommissioning.

Blayney Shire Council will be notified and any necessary permits or approvals required for decommissioning will be sought from the Council or issuing authority. Any measures stipulated in these approvals will be implemented prior to works commencing on site.

EDPR does not foresee any issues arising from stakeholder notification of decommissioning.

7.1.2. De-energisation of the solar farm and disconnection of assets

Essential Energy crew or subcontractors will be brought to site to disconnect the service mains from the point of connection and ensure full isolation of the site from the grid.

All aspects of the solar system will be turned off for safety prior to commencement of work on the site in accordance with the shutdown procedure stipulated in the system operation manuals. All generation assets will be disconnected and isolated.

The inverter, transformer and battery skids will be removed from the site via a crane onto a semi-trailer for e-waste dismantling, recycling, scrapping and safe disposal at the waste disposal facility identified in **Section 6**. If possible, the transformer can be reconditioned and refurbished for additional service life at another site.

The concrete foundations of the inverter, transformer and battery will be excavated, and the concrete recycled.

7.1.3. Removal of PV modules and associated infrastructure

At the end of their life, the PV modules will be removed from site and transported on semi-trailers to a dedicated solar panel recycling facility. Lotus Energy have opened Australia's first PV recycling facility operating in South Australia, with the ability to recycle 100% of end-of-life solar modules, batteries and associated materials, including the inverter, cables and mounting structures (RenewEconomy, 2021). A number of other PV recycling plants are under development or have since been completed in Australia. The panel recycling technology will be monitored over the lifespan of the project and the specific plant used for recycling the panels for this project will be determined prior to decommissioning works commencing.

In the unlikely case there are no dedicated solar panel recycling facilities operating in 35 years, the panels can be broken down by removing the aluminium frame for recycling and the glass casing can be broken down to granular form for reuse.

The PV module tracker structure will be disassembled. The steel piles will be excavated from the ground and recycled at a scrap metal facility. Other site infrastructure, including the security fence surrounding the solar farm and concrete on site will be removed and re-used or taken to a waste facility to be recycled where possible.

7.1.4. Removal of electrical wiring

Underground cabling and earthing networks will be excavated and recycled. Other cable materials, including cable covers, will be put into skip bins and taken to landfill. Any trenches excavated during this process will be refilled and levelled.

7.1.5. Rehabilitation of land

Any disruptions to the site created during the decommissioning process will be filled and/or levelled as required, such as the locations where piles were removed.

Gravel surfaces and accessways that were established as part of the development will be removed and the ground remediated unless a request is made by the landholder for them to remain for future use.

The site will be revegetated for grazing and rotational cropping, as per the original use of the site in consultation with the landholder. It is intended that established landscaping, including trees planted

during the construction, will remain on-site. After 35 years, the trees planted during construction will likely be large, hence if the removal of trees is requested by the landholder, a permit may be required.

The construction and decommissioning works do not result in significant damage to the land or grading. The success of the rehabilitation work will be measured by whether the land is restored to its pre-works state, suitable for grazing, rotational cropping, and meets the landholder's satisfaction.

7.2. Site Management

7.2.1. Decommissioning personnel

The decommissioning process is expected to take 6 – 12 months. During this period, there is expected to be 15 personnel on site working from 7 am – 4pm Monday to Friday.

The NSW Government's VisitNSW website lists potential accommodation for incoming personnel to Blayney and the immediate surrounding areas. The website identifies 13 places of accommodation, comprising of 1 motel, 1 hotel, 1 tourist park and 8 lodges/cottages. In addition to these establishments, there is also unregulated accommodation available on Airbnb and Stayz.

7.2.2. Noise and dust impacts

Decommissioning does not involve significant excavation or earthworks. Therefore, the level of noise and dust impacts during the decommissioning stage are expected to be less significant than the construction phase. However, the operation of decommissioning equipment such as mobile cranes, loads, and rollers will generate some noise, which may impact surrounding areas. Appropriate noise mitigation strategies will need to be implemented such as limiting activities outside of scheduled work hours to those generating low noise emissions or installing noise barriers. The removal of PV modules and breakdown of concrete foundations for the inverter and battery platforms also generates noise as well as demolition dust. Control measures such as water or dust suppressants can be considered to minimise the spread of dust during demolition activities.

8. LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS

A Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), also called a Life Cycle Assessment, is an approach that considers all aspects of a project's resource use. It is an environmental accounting and management approach that considers all the aspects of resource use and environmental releases associated with a system from cradle to grave. The LCA assessment considers raw materials, material processing, manufacturing, operational/use phase and decommissioning while also providing an estimate of energy and emissions based on the total life of the project (Wu et al, 2017).

Construction materials and energy used for solar panels includes purification of silicon, production of PV frames and cabling. The construction of each of these uses energy and creates waste products. Energy consumption and resource use is greatest in the production of the PV panels and silicon (Alsema et al, 2006). The Department of Industry, Resources and Energy NSW (2016) states that during plant operation, PV modules emit no pollution, produce no greenhouse gases and use no finite fossil-fuel resources.

Müller, et al (2005) reviewed the environmental impacts of recycling processes for crystalline silicon modules. The findings indicated that energy consumption during the recycling process of PV panels can be substantial. However, the recycling of solar components is overall worthwhile. This is mostly due to the potential reuse of recovered components in future projects.

For solar projects, the LCA considers the total energy input and annual energy output of the project. This is termed the 'Energy Payback Time'. The energy payback time varies depending on the project's design and geographic location. For solar projects, the general timeframe for energy payback is achieved in less than four years for projects with a 25 to 30-year operating period (Bhandari et al, 2015, Department of Industry, Resources and Energy NSW, 2016). Alsema et al (2006) found that PV panels had an energy payback of 1.5 – 2 years in southern Europe and 2.7 – 3.5 years for middle Europe. Due to the greater solar resource in Australia the energy payback for this project is expected to be at the lower end of these ranges.

The Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (2015) considered the ratio of energy produced by a solar PV compared to the energy used to create the module. It was determined that the PV panels would provide more than 10x the amount of energy used to make the system.

9. SUMMARY

The project will predominantly generate waste during the construction and decommissioning phases, rather than during operation. To comply with the NSW legislation and policies, waste will be recycled or re-used where possible and only disposed of if no alternative is available.

Cardboard, scrap metal and wood from the construction phase can be recycled. Plastics and general waste will require disposal at either the local waste facilities and/or alternative facilities. Technology for recycling of PV panels is advancing rapidly worldwide and while recycling options currently exist, they are likely to be more advanced and readily available at the time of decommissioning. Options for recycling of PV panels should be reviewed as the project progresses.

10. REFERENCES

- Alsema E.A, de Wild-Scholten M J and Fthenakis V.M (2006) *Environmental impacts of PV electricity generation – A critical comparison of energy supply options*. Presented at the 21st European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference, Dresden, Germany, 4-8 September 2006.
- Bhandari K P, Collier J, Ellingson R, Apul D (2015) *Energy payback time (EPBT) and energy return on energy invested (EROI) of solar photovoltaic systems: A systematic review and meta-analysis*, Volume 47, July 2015, Pages 133-141.
- Department of Industry, Resources and Energy NSW (2016) *Fact Sheet: Solar farms in NSW*.
- Energy Matters (2012) *Solar panel recycling will be a multi-billion dollar industry*. Available online <https://www.energymatters.com.au/renewable-news/em3001/>
- EPA (2014) *Waste Classification Guidelines. Part 1: Classifying waste*. NSW EPA, Sydney.
- EPA (accessed 2018) *Online Waste Tracking*. Available online <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/waste/tracking-transporting-hazardous-waste/online-waste-tracking>.
- Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems (ISE). (2015). *Photovoltaics Report*.
- Blayney Local Environmental Plan 2012. Accessed 07 January 2025 <https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/development/compliance/planning-strategies#blep>
- Müller, A., K. Wambach and E.A. Alsema, (2005) *Life Cycle Analysis of Solar Module Recycling Process, Proceedings of MRS Fall Meeting, Boston, MS, Nov-Dec 2005*
- Reclaim PV Recycling (accessed 2019) <http://reclaimpv.com/>
- Renew Economy (2016) *Solar panel recycler leads Australia in emerging industry*. Available online <https://reneweconomy.com.au/solar-panel-recycler-leads-australia-in-emerging-industry-99038/>
- RenewEconomy (2021) *Australia's First Solar Panel Recycling Plant Swings into action*. Available online <https://reneweconomy.com.au/australias-first-solar-panel-recycling-plant-swings-into-action/>
- Schleisner L. (2000) *Life cycle assessment of a wind farm and related externalities*. Renewable Energy 20 279-288.
- Wu P, Ma X, Ji J, Ma Y (2017) *Review on Life Cycle Assessment of Energy Payback of Solar Photovoltaic Systems and a Case Study*, Energy Procedia Volume 105, May 2017, Pages 68-74.