

# PROJECT MEMORANDUM



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<b>Topic:</b>	Request for Additional Information (S92) Response – Effects on Canterbury Foothills & Mount Oxford		
<b>Date:</b>	21/02/2025		
<b>Attention:</b>	Tracey Morse – NZ Clean Energy		
<b>From:</b>	Dave Mansergh - MGLA		

## Introduction

Darfield Solar and Energy Storage Ltd is proposing to develop a ground-mounted agrivoltaic development approximately 1.5km northwest of Darfield within a block of land bounded by West Coast Road (State Highway (SH) 73) to the southwest, Homebush Road to the south, Loes Road to the east, Auchenflower Road to the north and the Fonterra Darfield dairy factory site to the west/ northwest.

## S92 Request

Nova Group Ltd was engaged by the Selwyn District Council (SDC) to peer review the landscape and visual assessment prepared for the application.

As part of an s92 request for additional information, the peer reviewer has requested the following:

5. *Please provide a brief assessment / summary and subsequent ratings from the recreational areas in the Canterbury foothills, including the views from Mount Oxford (etc) (noting that the Fonterra dairy factory is clearly visible from these locations). Being that these are highly memorable, frequented and distinct recreational areas in the Selwyn District, please note the overall visual effects, particularly of the effects of the glint and glare, when viewing down from these locations.*

This memorandum addresses the above request only.

## Response

The following response is a desktop analysis of the potential effects of the proposed solar farm on the elevated recreational areas within the Canterbury foothills, including Mount Oxford. While the assessor has visited several of the conservation areas in the Canterbury foothills, including Mount Oxford, Mount Hutt and the Kowahi/Torless Tussocklands Park in the past and is highly familiar with the landscape, a specific site visit to this location was not undertaken for this project.

The following figure shows the relationship between these areas and the application site.

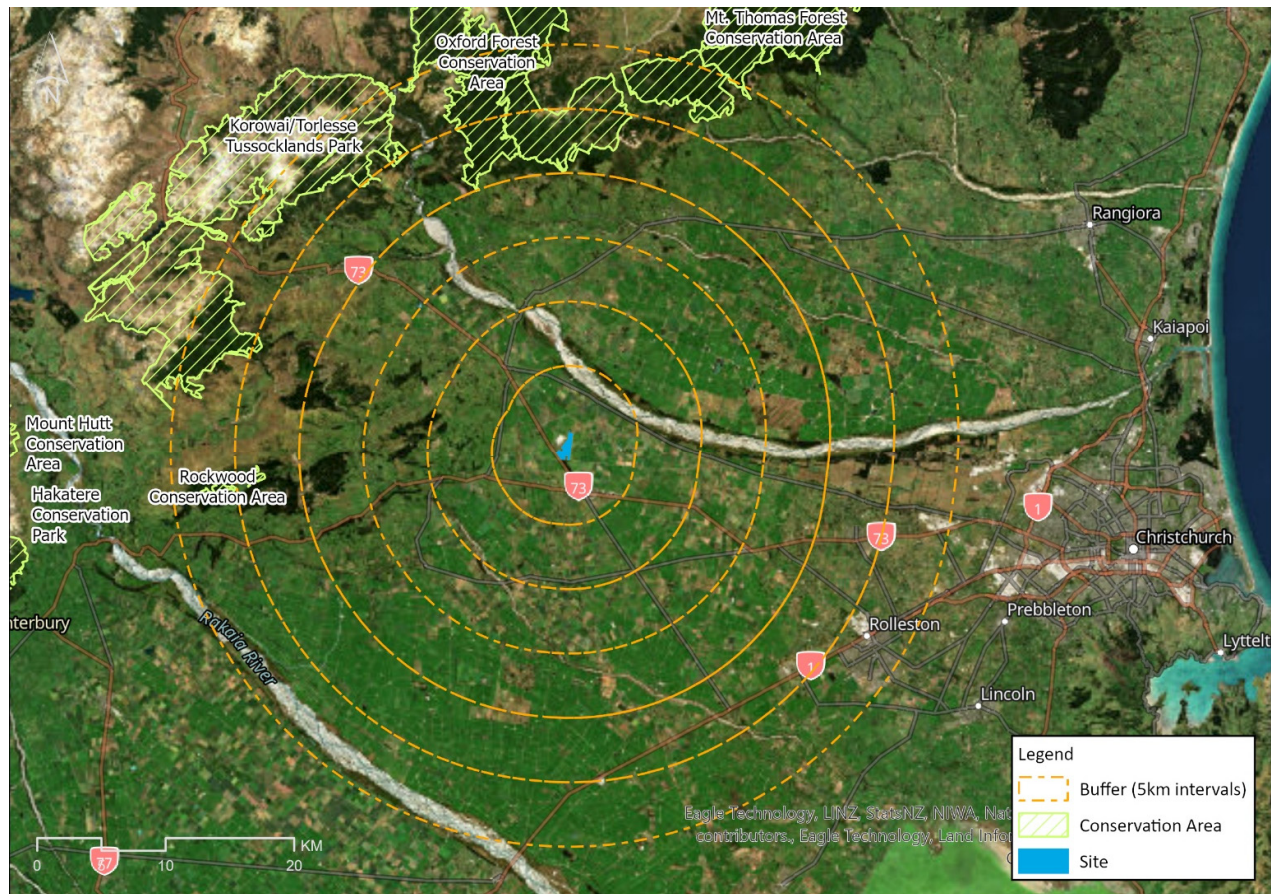


Figure 1 Relationship between the application site and surrounding publicly accessible conservation areas

The conservation estate in the Canterbury foothills provides the public with access to many high-elevation vantage points, valued for their scenic and recreational qualities. These areas are frequently visited by trampers, day walkers and other visitors. From the more elevated locations, including Mount Oxford, panoramic views across a large area of the Canterbury Plains and Banks Peninsular are afforded. These views encompass agricultural land, towns (including Darfield), and natural features such as riverbeds and patches of native vegetation.

From Mount Oxford, on clear days, the view extends to the coastline, including Christchurch and the Pacific Ocean. The plains appear as a mix of cultivated fields and open landscapes, with variations in colour depending on seasonal changes. The Southern Alps form a distinct western boundary, providing a contrasting backdrop to the low-lying terrain of the plains.

Built structures, including industrial sites such as the Fonterra dairy factory, are visible from many viewpoints due to the lack of significant obstructions in the landscape. However, given the considerable distance, these structures appear small in scale and do not dominate the overall view. The presence of industrial or developed areas within the plains does not significantly alter the broad visual character of the landscape when observed from these high-elevation locations.

This can be seen in the following image:





Figure 2 View towards the application site from Munt Oxford. The Fonterra factory is visible in the middle of the image.

From Mount Oxford, the Fonterra factory is experienced as a large, white, multi-story industrial building that stands prominently within the surrounding rural landscape. Its significant height and bright exterior make it a distinct visual element that contrasts sharply with the natural and agricultural surroundings. In contrast, a solar farm will be a low-profile development that sits close to the ground, with dark, anti-reflective surfaces designed to absorb sunlight and dissipate glare.

The darker tones and horizontal nature of a solar farm allow it to blend more seamlessly into the landscape, particularly when viewed from elevated positions such as the Canterbury foothills.

Given the considerable distance between the solar farm and key vantage points (refer to figure 1), any glare produced is expected to be minimal. Consequently, while visually discernible, the proposed solar farm is unlikely to have a notable effect on the broader landscape character or existing visual amenity when viewed from these locations.

While attention may be drawn towards the site by the Fonterra Factory, subsequently drawing attention to the adjacent solar farm, the solar farm itself is not expected to form a significant focal attraction due to the mosaic appearance of the surrounding landscape.

From these locations, effect levels are likely to be **very low** or fall below the effect threshold (negligible) due to separation distance and intervening landscape features.

The considerable viewing distances and existing landscape features are expected to effectively mitigate any potential visual intrusion.

Overall, while the subject site may be discernible from certain recreational vantage points, the potential for adverse effects on landscape character or visual amenity remains **very low** (separately and cumulatively when viewed in conjunction with the Fonterra factor).