Dear Sir/Madam,

**DRAFT Solar Energy Facilities - Design and Development Guidelines**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the DRAFT Solar Energy Facilities – *Design and Development Guidelines*.

The Environment Protection Authority was established in 1971 under the Environment Protection Act 1970 (EP Act). The EP Act establishes the powers, duties and functions of EPA which include recommending State Environment Protection Policies (SEPPs) and Industrial Waste Management Policies (WMPs), issuing works approvals, licenses, permits, pollution abatement notices and implementing National Environment Protection Measures (NEPMs).

As an environmental regulator, EPA strives to protect the environment and human health by preventing and reducing harm from pollution and waste and recognises the importance of land use planning in achieving the broader purpose of the EP Act.

It is in the context of our vision and goals to prevent harm and equip community and business that EPA has drafted this submission.

EPA understands that the DRAFT Solar Energy Facilities – *Design and Development Guidelines* seek to help outline the assessment and development process for large-scale solar energy facilities in Victoria, and that the document was informed by a review of guidelines and best practice standards applied interstate and internationally. In the practical sense, the guidelines include an outline of requirements for planning and assessing new solar energy facility proposals that is designed for use by councils and developers.

EPA supports the development of such guidelines and more broadly the form of energy generation supported by solar energy facilities.
EPA notes that at Section 5.2.2 - *Design Response*, the guidelines include reference to the need for the written report to include details as to whether a works approval or licence is required from EPA Victoria.

Solar Farms are not a scheduled activity in accordance with the Environment Protection (Scheduled Premises) Regulations 2017, and accordingly do not require works approval and/or licencing by EPA. Given this, EPA requests the draft guidelines be amended clearly state that there is no requirement for a works approval under the current regulations.

**EPA consents to** its submission being published and/or quoted in the DELWP response to consultation, and **welcomes further engagement with DELWP to assist the finalisation of the Guidelines, if necessary.**

For any queries in relation to EPA’s comments, please contact

Yours sincerely

Major Projects and Planning
EPA Victoria