

To: Director – Energy Assessments Name: Guy Fisher
Development Assessment Address:
Department of Planning and Environment Name of Project: Middlebrook Solar
Locked Bag 5022 Farm
Parramatta NSW 2124 Application No: SSD-10455

I do not require my details to be withheld.
I declare I have made no reportable political donations
in the last two years.
I acknowledge and accept the Department's disclaimer
and declaration.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTION

I am a farmer in the North West region who regularly
visits friends in the Middlebrook Road/Marsden Park
Road area.

I object to the proposed Middlebrook Solar Farm
development for the below reasons.

• Location

The proposed location is unacceptable for industrial
development such as a solar farm. It is outside the New
England Renewable Energy Zone. It is also high-quality
land for primary production. The landholdings around
the area are fairly small (reflecting their high
productivity), which means that a development of this
scale will affect a large number of landholders. Further,
the road infrastructure in the area is inadequate to
support the increased traffic volumes expected during
construction.

• Visual amenity

An industrial development of the proposed nature would
detract from the rural character of the valley. The EIS
makes it clear that the solar panels will be very
prominent from many houses. It will also be an eyesore
for passing travellers. In addition to the solar panels
themselves, I am very interested in the visual impact of
the substation, internal tracks and carpark, but struggled
to find adequate details of those in the EIS or Visual
Impact Assessment.

• Impact on landholders

My family have been farmers for generations. As a
result, I understand the importance of having a desirable

rural character and safe environment for our children and grandchildren to grow up in and return home to. My children do not want to live in or expose their children to industrial areas, dust, noise and traffic.

For similar reasons I expect that a development of this type will significantly reduce land values for neighbouring and nearby properties. I personally would not want to purchase a farm near a solar farm development. Most farmers' assets are entirely tied up in their farms. This loss of value will cause substantial distress, both mental and financial, to nearby landholders and their families.

Farming is a lifestyle – farmers tend to live, work and relax on their properties. Thus the impact on them of the construction and loss of rural character will be far more substantial than would be the case for a solely residential or commercial landholder. There is no escape from a nearby solar farm when your property is your home, place of work and recreational outlet. I am worried about the impact of proposed solar farm development on friends in the area who will not only be affected by the disruption of construction, increased traffic, dust from vehicle movements and digging, but will have to see the cause of that disruption at all hours of the day, long before and after the workers on the site have gone home.

To the extent that the project does draw from a local workforce, I am concerned it will push up the cost of obtaining contract labour, making it harder to find labourers, tradespeople and agricultural workers. This will increase the cost of production in the region, reducing our competitiveness in the wider market and making it still more difficult for local farmers.

• **New England Highway**

As a resident of the region, I often use the highway and am concerned that the extra traffic during construction of the project will cause delays and increase hazards.

Inconveniencing passing traffic by lowering speed limits is not a suitable solution. It is only reasonable to expect that the developer should pay for substantial upgrades to the highway to account for the additional heavy vehicles on the road and the amount of extra traffic turning into and out of Middlebrook Road.

