

To: Director – Energy Assessments
Development Assessment
Department of Planning and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Name: Margaret Ann Ingall
Address: 8 Tebbutt Street, Quirindi 2343
Name of Project: Middlebrook Solar Farm
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 retiree and former farmer who regularly visits friends in the Marsden Park Road area.

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

Outside REZ

The land under consideration for this development holds significant value as high-quality farming land. I firmly believe that it is entirely unsuitable for a project of this nature, especially since it is outside the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ).

Healthcare

The employment of workers from outside Tamworth for the project's construction is a cause of great concern for me. This could put substantial strain on the already burdened health system, as highlighted in the Social Impact Assessment. Having sought medical care in Tamworth myself, I am aware of the difficulties in accessing care locally, and it would be terrible for all residents of the region if these problems were to worsen.

Other social impacts

I am worried about the effect construction and the change in the nature of the landscape will have on local families. The dust, noise, increased people movement, vehicles, and disturbances to their homes and livelihoods will undoubtedly lead to strain on relationships and wellbeing. I had understood that the introduction of Renewable Energy Zones was intended to provide certainty to landholders both within and outside the Zones. As I have noted above, this proposal is outside the New England REZ. A proposal of this nature has therefore been a shock to local landholders and caused substantial confusion and distress.

Personally, I enjoy travelling around the valley to visit friends and acquaintances, and I would be more reticent to do so given the noise, traffic and reduced view quality as a result of the development. I expect that other tourists and visitors will also be more hesitant, which will negatively affect the livelihoods and social networks of the inhabitants of the area.

Visual amenity

As someone who appreciates the picturesque beauty of the valley, with its grazing lands and rolling hills, I find it hard to accept that the solar panels and substation will be so visibly prominent from both the road and nearby residences. Such an industrial presence would be incongruent with the charming rural character that defines the area.

Traffic and roads

The increased vehicle movements on public roads and internal tracks will generate substantial dust, which would pose challenges for surrounding farmers. This dust could have adverse effects on livestock and human health alike. I am also concerned about the impact the dust will have on visibility for drivers.

Further, the project is bound to bring a considerable upswing in traffic on Marsden Park Road, Middlebrook Road, and the New England Highway. My concerns lie in the potential dangers posed by the increased movement of large vehicles, possible degradation of the roads, and hazards posed by large numbers of vehicles turning off and onto the New England Highway in the mornings and evenings. I regularly travel on the New England Highway, and it is the major road through the region, so it is crucial to both me and others that it remains safe and traffic flows freely.

Regards,
M. G. Ingall