

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

Name of Project: Middlebrook Solar Farm
Application No: SSD-10455

I declare I have made no reportable political donations in the last two years.

I acknowledge and accept the Department's disclaimer and declaration.

OBJECTION

I object to the proposed Middlebrook Solar Farm due to the inappropriate location and disproportionate negative impacts on the local area.

I am a farmer, grazier, wool classer, farm contractor and landscaper based in the Quirindi and Wallabadah districts. I have worked on properties near and on the proposed Middlebrook Solar Farm.

As a wool classer I am concerned at the amount of dust that will be created from the traffic movements and construction in the region of concern. Dust settling in the wool, results reduction in wool yield which is a direct determinant for the wool price for wool growers and hence financial loss. I often see dust haze cover many kilometres in that district from just one vehicle movement. An additional 48 km of internal will exacerbate the problem. More pronounced in a dry periods, as we currently experiencing and predicted for the foreseeable future.

I am concerned at road safety of Middlebrook Road and Marsden Park Road. These roads are already hazardous due to the gravel surface including blind corners on tight bends, potholes, causeways (subject to flooding), areas of limited advanced vision and single lane bridges with load limits. A large increase in traffic will be increases the danger of travelling this road to myself and other road uses, in the context of the road requires vehicles to move well over to the left in order to pass each other. As well as, I'm concerned with the subsequent heightened risk of damage to my vehicle ; stone damage to windscreen, headlights , paints and my engine exposed to the raised dust from the extra traffic. These roads have been cited before as unsuitable for heavy loads and long vehicles. Heavy vehicles will be reluctant to move hard to their left due the crown of the dirt road causing the truck to unstably lean. There's a soak area on the crest of Middlebrook Road , in the centre of the road that will become traffic hazard with increased traffic.

I'm concerned reduced chemical uptake about the when contract for spraying of weeds. Due a large increase in dust settling on the leaf of weeds as a result of post digging, roads and onsite tracks in the locality.

The increased demand for goods and services it will generate in Tamworth and more widely will place strain on supplies to my business, increase my costs and cause delays. This proposal will reduce the amount of business that I conduct in the Loomberah area.

As a landscaper, I am concerned that the proposal does not address the difficulties of properly screening such a large development from view. It will take a lot of mature native trees and shrubs, in layered planting, to reduce the visual impact from the road, and the developer should do that for the sake of both road users and nearby properties. Being closely settled, makes the location less than ideal for such a proposal.

There was extreme concern, that Tamworth region barely had sufficient water during the last drought (2019). Let alone for the purposes of dust suppression. Similarly if underground is sourced; that will put additional pressure on surrounding bores that experienced reduced flow or even failed during the drought. Due to the nature of the soil that develops into fine dust; will require dust removal across the 750 000 panels in order to maintain efficiency. A significant amount of water would be required.

In the event of a electrical initiated fire from the solar farm ; I have serious concerns regards fire fighting access due to the terrain and fitness of the road for such an emergency.

The solar farm would be located under the descent and ascent path of aircraft entering Tamworth airspace from Sydney/ Newcastle direction. The potential glare and distraction to small aircraft relying on visual for safe navigation poses a real risk. Investigation into any potential electromagnetic interference upon aircraft needs to be cleared.

Due to the undulating terrain, casting shadows and limiting sunlight availability. The location is not the most efficient placement of a solar farm. Similarly, incompatible with surrounding land use and not within the land use zoning for that area.

The solar farm would be located within the White box woodland (Box-Gum Woodland) , which is classed as “critically endangered” as per the Australian Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 . I envisage requiring further removal of White Box trees for the development which contravenes the Act.

The solar farm is likely to have a significant effect on the micro climate of the locality and subsequently upon the local properties. Interference and disruption on low level wind.

The rain catchment capacity of the panels themselves is likely to concentrate runoff and result in erosion issues (due to the nature of the soil).