

A Walla Walla Neighbour's View.

We still have all the same concerns around loss of trees, impact on habitat, weed control, fire, flooding, dust, loss of agricultural land, (even if they do have sheep grazing under the panels they wont be using the land to its capacity) and the impact on Orange Grove Gardens business and the value of our home (which will overlook the Substation). But these are some specifics in relation to the proposed changes.

I suppose from our perspective the suggested modifications are a slap in the face. They made promises during this process, gained approval and are now seeking to go back on what was promised with no respect to us as neighbours just to meet their needs and to make their access more convenient/save them money.

Substation Height Change

During the initial consultation we objected consistently to the location of the substation. There are three transmission towers within the footprint of the proposed development. They could locate the substation next to any one of the other towers and it would have less of an impact on us. They advised us that following extensive drawings and planning and consultation it was deemed that it couldn't go anywhere else. They told us it cost them a significant amount of money to have the substation moved 50m on the plans. They told us it had to be precisely where it is due to "harmonic balance" within the grid. They told us they were "experts" in solar farm development and construction. They told us they had consulted extensively with TransGrid. In a conversation with TransGrid we were told that prior to construction of the substation they would have to consult with the neighbours and the community because that is who their customers are. They said they were tendering for the contract to install the substation and following the outcome of the tendering process if they were successful they would be in a position to review the location and consult with us. This has not happened. FRV and TransGrid both had access to these plans, they both apparently are experts in their fields this is a \$350 Million dollar project and no one noticed that the substation was 15 metres too short! This to me seems to be a case of we will make it look like it fits behind the tree's for now and we will change it later. I have contacted the Standards Australia to see if there has been any changes to the standards which would account for this "oversight" and will let you know when they respond. The images they use for the photo montages are warped and consist of a photo taken from our balcony looking down and then a photo from the far corner of our front yard. They have been stitched together (if you zoom in you can see the white post in the middle of the yard isn't matched up. They aren't true representations of the view and do not represent what the visual impact will be. In addition the plantings that they are supposed to complete prior to construction have not commenced. There has been no discussion or communication about this either.

Panel Height

When they moved the panels away from Orange Grove we specifically asked how they could take away 200,000 panels and not lose any capacity. They told us the technology had advanced and they were now able to produce the same amount of power from less panels. I had a discussion with Cliona about this and I said well if the technology has changes that much in 12 months imagine how advanced it may be in 2/3 years you wont need half the land. Why can't you wait. She said they had to do the best they could with the technology that was available to them now. I asked her if there was any other change in the panels she told me there was not everything else was the same they were just more efficient. They knew prior to planning approval that they were using different panels, they knew the specifications etc. and were approved based on the information they provided. If they have now found a cheaper or more convenient product to do the same job that's too bad. They made their plans and commitments and should be held to them. The increased height will also mean that again the plantings will not outgrow them for longer. This will have an impact on Orange Grove Views and the view of all neighbours including Mrs Hoy, Mr and Mrs Schulz and us as well as wind and heat effects. On their FAQ Page they state:

Q How high will the panels be?

A Panels will be installed on low-lying structures expected to be around 4m in height. When the panels are stowed horizontally, they will be approx. 2m in height.

This increase in panel size wont just affect height for 30-60 minutes a day as they suggest it will affect the overall height of every row of panels all day everyday and when in the stow position.

Temporary Transport Route Changes

If you look at the FAQ page they say:

FRV have made practical and positive changes to enhance the design to help mitigate neighbours' concerns where practicable. Updates to the design have included a review and relocation of site access points.

*They state: **Q How will the site be accessed?***

A The main site access is proposed from the north-eastern corner of the site from Benambra Road via the Olympic Highway. The access was changed to this location to protect the amenity of surrounding neighbours, with this main entrance now over 1.4 kilometres from the nearest dwelling. Two auxiliary access points are proposed to cross Schneiders Road. All access points will be manned along with appropriate safety signage.

So now that they have approval they want to change the access to place they moved it from to protect the amenity of surrounding neighbours. My question is why? Is it because it's inconvenient to FRV, TransGrid, Involved Landholders? If that's the case why should we be the ones that have to cop it on the chin. If it's because they can't construct the road due to wet soils, landholder crops or it will create the need for temporary fencing again why should we be the ones inconvenienced? They knew what they were building they knew what the transport route was so why are they trying to change it after approval. This is again something that I spoke directly to Cliona about and I asked because the Substation was going to be built by a third party would they be held to the same rules as everyone else or would they just do what ever they wanted and we would have to put up with it. She assured me that they would be expected to show the same "respect" and follow the same rules. She did say that once the Substation was constructed that TransGrid would access it via a gate opposite us but that would be when it was operational and would only be for maintenance/repair.

As far as communication goes so far we have had very poor experiences with the project team.

The first investigative works commenced and we did not hear from them until after I had contacted the department to ask what was going on. When they did contact us they chose to have someone print a letter telling us of the works, backdated to a couple of days prior and then taped to our front gate. (Despite having our email address, postal address and phone numbers). We only heard from them after Rob Beckett contacted them. 3/4 weeks later it was announced that he had left the department and joined their team.

Then we noticed people doing investigations along Benambra Road again no notification. I went down and spoke to the people doing the surveys. I asked what they were doing they said road side surveys. I ask who they worked for they said they couldn't say they were just asked to do the surveys. I asked if it was to do with Solar they said they didn't know. They were working all along the western end of Benambra Road by then which concerned me because it felt very much like when NGH had completed their initial surveys. I called council and spoke to Colin Cane to ask if he knew why they were doing surveys and specifically why they were surveying the western end when it was outside the scope of their approval and he said he hadn't heard anything from them and was not aware of any surveys being conducted at that time. I've been led to believe that FRV then contacted council later that week and advised that they were seeking to change their access. We then received notification 10/08/2021 that there would be roadside surveys conducted (this was almost 2 weeks after the surveys had been completed). Then on 21/09/2021 I again noticed works going on and had to chase them to find out what was happening. They advised that they deemed to works low impact so chose not to advise us. I have highlighted that as neighbours whether they think it's low/high impact doesn't matter if it creates anxiety and stress for us and others passing by. They have since agreed to notify us of works whether high or low but we will see how long it lasts.

Anyway I hope that gives you a couple of points that you can relate to and hope that we get enough submissions to hold this up and get the proposed changes rejected.

From FRV Renewables:-

[FRV Walla Walla Solar Farm | Modifications to Walla Walla Solar Farm](#)

There is more detailed, supporting information - including new visual impact and traffic studies on the NSW Major Projects Site. You can visit this site using the link below. While this information is more detailed, it is useful for understanding how

proposed changes have come about and what assessments have been done to ensure that any additional impacts to surrounding land uses or the environment can be mitigated or avoided.

[Walla Walla Solar Farm | Major Projects - Department of Planning and Environment \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)