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18 October 2023

Objection – Amendment to Birriwa Solar Plant SSD-29508870

CWO REZist Inc. objects to the proposed amendment to Birriwa Solar.

This project, which has only just provided a response to submissions, has already identified the increased traffic on the roads during construction of their project as of major impact and their mitigation option is to build an accommodation camp for workers.

There are a number of factors which are of concern to our members:

- The amendment is not specific enough – the proponent states it will be for 500 workers, but then also want approval to increase it to double the capacity for future projects by the developer. This is unacceptable, leaving the proponent too much leeway for increasing the size without sufficient oversight by DPE.
- The duration of the life of the camp is unknown. Rather than being purely for the duration of construction of Birriwa Solar Plant (if approved), the camp could be there for many more years of continued use for other projects proposed by the proponent in the district. This therefore becomes not a short term facility, but potentially long-term.
- The site is situated too close to non associated residences who currently enjoy a peaceful life and rural amenity, to having what will be a “satellite town” on their doorstep.
- The site is proposed to cover 25ha and is within 3.5km of the proposed 1200 worker camp by Energy Co. The cumulative effects on traffic/roads, landscape character and visual amenity will be too great for the local residents and will ultimately affect their enjoyment of their homes. Being nearby to such a facility is also highly likely to negatively affect property values.
- The current population of Dunedoo (under 1000 people) will be overwhelmed by 2 workers camps totalling between 1700 and 2200 persons (dependent on the ultimate size of this proposal).
- It is expected to operate 24/7 and with multiple facilities onsite for the benefit of the workers, will negatively impact neighbours with noise and light.
- The camp is expected to use 125,000 litres of water per day and there is the suggestion that this amount of water would be trucked in if Council supplies are not available. This will increase traffic congestion and road damage from additional heavy vehicles.
- There is no definite solution for the removal of waste – both general waste and sewage from the site. We have been informed that waste stations at both Mudgee and Gulgong cannot accept any further waste and that Warrumbungle Shire is likely not in a position to handle additional waste from proponents/projects.
- The safety of neighbouring properties is of concern with a large non-local workforce in the area. Neighbours are concerned about potential theft and for their personal safety.

- With increased use of the site, buildings, infrastructure and people, the fire risk will increase, which could be a danger to surrounding land. Whilst a 50,000 litre tank is required for firefighting, we would like to know WHO will be responsible for fighting fires on the site. The proponent and DPE should be reminded that the RFS is made up of local volunteers who will likely be neighbours and nearby residents. The RFS is there to fight bushfires to protect farmland and people's homes, not to fight fires in an accommodation facility. We would like the proponent to confirm that they will have professional firefighters on site and have a reasonable percentage of workers trained in firefighting skills so that any fire will not fall to the responsibility of the RFS and volunteer firefighters.

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