

Submission on the Wollar Solar Farm

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Healthy planet, **healthy people.**

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Doctors for the Environment (DEA) is a non-profit national organisation of Australian doctors and medical students with the goal of working to maintain human health and wellbeing with respect to the environment.

DEA supports the proposed development of Wollar Solar Farm.

The public health impacts of climate change have been well established and documented by institutions such as the World Health Organization², the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change³, and the Australian Medical Association. Major health risks to Australia and New South Wales include the physical effect of heat stress, extreme weather events, change in infectious disease patterns, food supply insecurity and increasing mental health distress.

A major contributor to global climate change is greenhouse gas production by electricity generation, which represented 33.8% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions in the year to September 2018⁴.

Construction of the Wollar Solar Farm has been anticipated to generate up to 290MW of electricity at peak capacity. If replacing the equivalent amount of fossil-fuel generated electricity, this was reported by the applicant to avoid the emission of 515,564 metric tons of carbon dioxide annually.⁵

The transition to low-greenhouse gas emitting sources of electricity generation must take place as soon as possible to maximise the opportunity to maintain global temperature increase since the pre-industrial age below 1.5°C. Avoiding emission of greenhouse gas in electricity generation is good for health by reducing the rate of climate breakdown. Reduced coal fired generation elsewhere will also reduce the amount of particulate and other pollutant emission which has been demonstrated to have a significant negative health effect on the residents of New South Wales.⁶

It is important for the development of the vital renewable energy industry that appropriate developments proceed in order to build the skill base and employment opportunities for people working in the renewable energy

industry in order to improve and accelerate the rollout of these projects over the coming decade.

There are many potential benefits for the Wollar community when it comes to the developmental of the Wollar Solar Farm, including the potential for increased local employment or new residents related to employment opportunities.

Wollar Solar Farm is an important development to improve the greenhouse gas emission profile of this state. This project is strongly supported by DEA given it will reduce the health risks currently posed to New South Wales residents by coal fired electricity generation.

References

¹ <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9831>

² Climate Change and Human Health, World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/globalchange/en/>

³ Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty. <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15>

⁴ Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory: September 2018, Australia's National Greenhouse Accounts, Australian Government: Department of the Environment and Energy. <https://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/climate-science-data/greenhouse-gas-measurement/publications/quarterly-update-australias-national-greenhouse-gas-inventory-sept-2018>

⁵ Wollar Solar Project: Environmental Impact Statement <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/project/9831>

⁶ Ewald, Ben: The health burden of fine particle pollution from electricity generation in NSW <https://www.envirojustice.org.au/healthstudynsw/>