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**Subject: Objection to proposed Sandy Creek Solar Farm**

Application Number

SSD-41287735

Assessment Type

State Significant Development

Development Type

Electricity Generation – Solar

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you to strongly object to the Sandy Creek Solar Farm.

Being part of Australia's agricultural industry is so much more than a lifestyle. Being a farmer and bringing up a family in such an industry is dedicating your life to the gift of the land, its rainfall and committing (during countless natural disasters) to the future of the ever-increasing important agricultural industry. We do it for Australians, being a farmer is a selfless act, we are not easily replaced. I want this opportunity for my two boys. This solar development is taking away agricultural land, families and the economic benefits for our small and large communities, this is why I strongly object to this development.

When we started our family, I found support in raising the children from our playground. This is where I met another young family, who, like mine are committed to Australia's agricultural industry. The family friendship brought each of us support while raising children through natural disasters alongside contributing to our farming operations. These oversized industrial developments are forcing families to move from our community. The agricultural industry needs the support from families and communities.

I raise the following concerns -

## **Public Liability Insurance**

The matter of Public Liability Insurance continues to be unanswered. This has not been addressed in any EIS documentation to date or answered by any developer. Seasonal crop stubble burning can be part of standard agricultural practice. Therefore, this matter needs to be resolved.

## **Housing**

Large rural properties are being tied up in the planning process for these projects. Housing on these properties once provided a form of affordable rental housing for communities, this is no longer. This has flow on effects to reduced population in the rural areas for local RFS volunteers, informal surveillance and populating school bus runs, just to name a few. Housing in the town of Dunedoo is very limited and cannot handle an influx of workers, when they choose not to stay in the accommodation camps.

## **Inappropriate scale of projects**

The Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) is the catalyst for projects that are of such an enormous scale, they do provide income for the landowners (that doesn't account for lost agricultural income), however due to their significant scale, including minimal setbacks from boundaries, they create unacceptable impacts on neighbouring properties. This is creating friction between members of the communities and families.

## **Uniqueness of the region**

Our district is unique to NSW with the combination of soil profiles and generous annual rainfall supportive of sustainable mixed farming operations located in close proximity to markets. It is these mixed agricultural farming operations that are and will continue to be financially sustainable into the future.

### **Lack of medical services**

I currently have a sick child requiring a doctors appointment, I can't get an appointment for at least four weeks in the surrounding towns, I am wondering if I make the three hour round trip to sit in Dubbo base emergency to see a doctor? This project and its construction workforce will place additional demand on our medical services. This again highlights the inappropriate scale of the solar development, our region can't support it.

## **Loss of agricultural land**

Since the proposed and subsequent declaration of the REZ I have seen the removal of agricultural land from production and the significant reduction in productivity of agricultural land, due to either the construction of electricity generating developments

or land (many hundreds of hectares) subject of state significant development applications going through the planning process, with landowners not investing into the lands agricultural capability. The resulting supply chain impacts are being felt daily.

I have not seen any documentation that determines or even discusses the economic loss directly attributed to the elimination or reduced productivity of agricultural land to our communities. Removing agricultural land and reducing the productivity of agricultural land has economic impacts to the following industries –

- Spraying contractors (fertilizer application/weed control)
- Stock carriers
- Commercial stock yards
- Stock and station agents
- Shearers
- Sowing contractors
- Fencing contractors
- Agricultural supply business
- Mechanical service and repair
- Farm employment

#### **Methodology for site selection**

There has been no methodology for site selection for the development. The subject site has not been chosen due soil type or rainfall being inappropriate for agricultural. The development has not been located or designed to maintain the primary agricultural purpose of the land.

This and other projects have consumed much of my time for the past three years and has brought me to tears on many occasions. I sit up late drafting these submissions and wonder when it will end, what will be the size of the REZ at the next declaration and how many more projects will it facilitate?

This project should not proceed.

Kind Regards,

S Armstrong