

We wish to lodge an objection to both the Wattle Creek Solar Farm (SSD-63344210) and the Wattle Creek Battery Energy Storage System (SSD -63345458). We are of the opinion that the Marulan district appears to be a magnet for a multitude of State Significant Developments which have had a detrimental effect on the landscape, infrastructure and lifestyle of the region. We are concerned that more industries will see Marulan as a trouble-free location for large-scale developments and the reasons for our concerns are based on the following:

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Currently there are five (5) operational hard rock quarries in the Marulan region, i.e. Marulan South Limestone Quarry; Boral Peppertree Quarry; Holcim Lynwood Quarry; Gunlake Quarries; Multiquip Quarry; and one inactive quarry, Holcim Johnniefields; all of which have already had a significant impact on the region. In addition to this, there are three (3) State Significant Applications for more quarries either currently under assessment with the DPHI, (Global Quarries - 65146459) or preparing their EIS (Cleary Bros- SSD-77991709; WSC Quarry - SSD-82633224). As well as these operations, there are two further modifications from Gunlake Quarries currently under assessment with the DPHI, one of which is for increased truck movements.

Within the Marulan region, these major developments have cumulatively contributed to the degradation of thousands of hectares of what was once prime agricultural land. Additionally, clearing of land for these developments has led to loss of endangered and critically endangered species of flora as well as loss of habitat for native fauna which will never be recovered, despite conditions placed on them when consent is given.

TRAFFIC

The Hume Highway is approx 840kms long from Sydney to Melbourne with approximately 37,000 vehicles using it daily. Towns along the highway have been gradually bypassed with the intention to take the large volume of traffic out of these small regional towns. The Marulan Bypass was built and officially opened on 27 November 1986. For a time, the town experienced some relief from traffic, particularly heavy haulage vehicles however this is no longer the case as passing traffic is being drawn back into the town through industry that is not in keeping with a village-like character. Such as:

1. FUEL STATIONS

Before the by-pass, fuel stations were located along the main street of Marulan. These ceased operations once the BP Northbound and BP Southbound were constructed and operated directly off the Hume Highway. After that came Truckstop 31 which, although enjoying a southern end of town location, could still be considered off the highway and a supplier of fuel for northbound traffic. Unfortunately, since then, a further fuel station was approved and operates on the northern end of town which can supply southbound highway traffic but also attracts vehicles, particularly heavy haulage vehicles, to access it through Marulan's main street. This will also be the case when the soon to be operational Caltex Station opens in the much the same location.

2. FAST FOOD

Marulan has the unfortunate reputation of being accessible to several fast-food outlets such as Hungry Jacks, KFC, Subway and other restaurant-style businesses that cater mainly for passing traffic and truckers. Although necessary to break long journeys, these outlets also tend to place a drain on the town's resources such as water and sewerage, as well as cause

significant damage to the town's roads which are unable to sustain the demands made on them.

The Wattle Creek developments haulage route during the construction phase which, in part, is the same as Gunlake Quarries', will cause further adverse impacts such as traffic, carbon emissions, noise and dust and will add to the degradation of the road's pavement, not to mention the adverse social impact that even two or three years of construction can have on residents. The haulage route past Gunlake Quarries is unlikely to be able to sustain the amount of heavy haulage involved during construction and, in our opinion, will no doubt fall into the same state of disrepair.

SOLAR FARMS

We are supportive of renewable energy and have raised no objections to their applications in the past, such as the Marulan Solar Farm (SSD-13137914) however, in this instance, we believe the pros outweigh the cons. Our objections are not aligned with so-called '*Not in my backyard*' protesters, but more to the fact that there comes a time when enough is enough. The 'Wattle Creek' developments, although located in close proximity to the Transgrid transmission lines, do not justify the impacts that will be generated nor substantiate the need for another solar farm in the region. The positive outcomes, such as jobs creation and reduced emissions, are in the short-term, but the negative impacts are long term, particularly as once the construction ends, so do the jobs.

ARTHURSLEIGH BEQUEST

Finally, we do not believe that a private developer, such as Spark Renewables, fits the University of Sydney's cohort of Robinson Fellows.

According to the University's website, '*Funding for the 2023 Robinson Fellowships comes through the Holt Bequest. Eric TW Holt was a World War II veteran and successful grazier who died in 1971, leaving his Marulan property, Arthursleigh, to the University along with a financial bequest.*'

Additionally, the University of Sydney farms, including Arthursleigh, are described as follows:

'The University farms are essential in supporting the teaching and research activities of the School of Veterinary Science, the School of Life and Environmental Sciences (SoLES) and the Sydney Institute of Agriculture.

Arthursleigh (7900 ha) is located near Goulburn. The property was bequeathed to the University in July 1979 from the estate of the late Eric Thomas Wallis Holt, AFC. The farm is operated commercially, and used for teaching and research in pasture agronomy and animal science. It is a valuable teaching resource for the University as it allows access to wildlife areas and provides an ideal venue for field trips.' (References - Locations and Facilities. University of Sydney)

Although Arthursleigh operates commercially, it is an agricultural facility with a primary focus on wool and cattle production. On that conclusion and given the information provided within this submission we believe the Wattle Creek applications should be refused.