

27<sup>th</sup> November 2019

NSW Department, Planning Industry & Environment

Dear Sir or Madam:

### **Support for Walla Walla Solar Farm**

As a young boy growing up in Gunnedah I had heard and read Dorothea Mackellar's poem 'My Country' many times to the point the first verse is burnt in my memory, 'I love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains, of ragged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains.' Ever since Dorothea penned this poem, and well before, it is clear weather has always had a significant impact on the Australian economy and the livelihoods of all us, regionally and urban based.

As an adult living in the Walla Walla area who works in manufacturing and is heavily involved in the sourcing of raw materials, I could not be more supportive of the Walla Walla Solar Farm proposal. There is no doubt droughts and floods impact the yields and prices I pay, but it is the volatility in the transport costs (oil/fuel) and the processing costs (power) that have become more volatile and unpredictable. Its these added costs that get passed right through the supply chain that we all wear and feel in the hip pocket. However, the impact doesn't stop just there, as at the super market shelf we are now competing more and more with imports.

Making the news recently was that a can of private label (home brand) corn kernels imported from overseas were cheaper than local product. We have also seen this year Dow Chemicals near Melbourne and Nestle's Tongala plant close as they become less competitive citing energy cost and overseas imports. While much closer to home, Norkse Skog announced they will close their Albury plant citing 'manufacturing is struggling in general and we seem to feel a lot of that through energy costs coming into play, the very high cost of electricity and gas'. How can local manufacturing compete when our input cost is so much higher and the ripple effect on these lost jobs in these communities will be felt right through all the community, from the publican to the local pool and the schools themselves.

I have yet to see how anyone can justify how fossil fuel energy production has helped our economy in recent years. I hear people claim it will impact the 'food bowl' but again by not doing it and relying on fossil fuel we will just see more extremities weather related events and input costs and yields become more variable that will impact all of us in the longer run. From my experience this is the new norm, and a trend we don't want to become our friend. Renewable is about helping provide more supply to benefit all of us. it is also clearly about making a long-term commitment to a sustainable, greener planet that will benefits, customers of quality Aussie produced goods and the communities that produce them.

Walla Walla and its community has a very strong rich pioneering history. It's this pioneering history that will see this project not just succeed but how to succeed in a collaborative way that provides mutual benefits for all involved. This includes those in the 'food bowl' and for the industries, schools, services and wider community and even our natural attractions. Walla Walla is home to the nationally significant wetland, Gum Swamp. This river red gum swamp woodland is home to many native flora and fauna and hugely popular for bush walking, bird watching and in short puts Walla Walla. As a community doing our part to show the benefits of our adopting renewable energy has a much bigger impact on all of us if we choose to ignore it and lose the opportunity to not proceed. If industries were to close in Walla Walla, like those mentioned above, the loss of the wetland may not matter as the people that live here would have left to find jobs elsewhere. Walla Walla will then be just a historical footnote for what could have been.

The timing is now for Walla Walla to pioneer the long-term mutual benefits that renewable energy will bring. Now is the time to capitalize on the opportunities offered by renewable power and to drive positive change in the environment and for the economy. Investing in solar power is a sound business decision considering fluctuating energy costs in Australia and will allow farming and manufacturing to be competitive against global competitors. By adding renewables capacity, we can shift the local market away from fossil fuels and start bringing down the country's high emissions and fluctuating cost both economically and environmentally.

Australia is a sunburnt country so let's embrace solar and harness a source that we know best and support the development of the Walla Walla Solar Farm.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.

Yours sincerely,



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