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Attn: Mr Rob Beckett

Planning and Assessment

Dept. of Planning, Industry & Environment

Walla Walla Solar Farm

SSD 9874

I, Ray Jacob, do declare that the only political donations I have made in the past 5 years, have been to the Christian Democratic Party, not more than \$2,000.-

I was born on a farm near Walla Walla and lived there all my life till 7 years ago, when I moved to Walla Walla, and my two sons now run the farm. I still go out to the farm most days. We have grain, cattle & sheep & also run a contract harvesting business. In my nearly 70 years of life, I have never known a development to cause so much division, as the four proposed Solar Farms in our Greater Hume Council area. All of them are on prime agricultural land, which is the reason for so much discord. It's very upsetting to see people not talking to each other, who have been on properties for generations.

Focusing on the Walla Solar proposal the prime

land is used for canola, wheat, sheep & cattle. The EIS says that the IAL (Important Agricultural Land) from the draft plan can't be considered. Many farmers & agricultural workers & our Council, sent submissions in to prove that our land is Important Agricultural Land. The result from the Department of Primary Industries hasn't been released yet. Our Council were recently advised that this land will be mapped as I. A. L. under the Riverina ^{MURRAY} Draft I. A. L. Mapping project. In the E.I.S., it says that "The proposal would diversify employment opportunities, reducing reliance on the agriculture sector (vulnerable to climate & market fluctuations) in Walla Walla & Culcairn" P. 124. Walla Walla has shown that in times of drought, like now, we are still able to grow crops successfully & have cattle & sheep. We are in the 2% of NSW not in drought. Our rainfall is reliable, too. So many people who see other areas, are amazed at our productive area. Our fertile land needs to be preserved and used for its purpose... FARMING! The farm supports local businesses & keeps employment local. We are very proud of the longstanding businesses in Walla, relying on agriculture. We don't want to diversify employment with proposed solar farms. The employment of 250 people at peak 8-12mths is short-term. The 21 operational staff for 30yrs. with 16 living locally. Walla doesn't need this. The

proposed Solar Farm will take away from agriculture production, so that extra employment won't make much difference. I would rather expand on what we already have. Our area is needed to help feed others in drought. We don't want a food shortage, and have to import.

I am concerned that a proposed Solar Farm takes up prime land for 30 years. The only agricultural activity is sheep grazing, "during the operational phase, when 85% of development site's sheep grazing capacity would continue..." p. 159 Also on p. 291, it says


'Live grass cover would be maintained at or above 70% at all times to protect soils, landscape function & water quality. Any grazing stock would be removed from the site when cover falls below this level.'

The proposed solar farm limits land use so much. If it's not there, I am free to choose the best type of agriculture & stock use, to fit in with the season get good production & flow on to the agriculture sector & our community.

Decreased land values is a major worry. Land where the Walla Solar Farm is proposed is of a very high value. One involved property tried to sell the beautiful homestead on his property, but it had to be taken off the market, because as soon as interested buyers found out about the proposed

solar panels on the farm, they weren't interested. This shows clearly that ^{large} solar decreases land value. I feel so much for all nearby property owners, who have had their property, some for generations & to have uncertainty about their future is grossly unfair. In the EIS it says on p. 91 'Desktop investigations indicate that property prices of adjacent ^{productive agricultural land} ^{impacted by} the proposal. ^{would not be adversely impacted} ^{SOWRONG!} I have never known a project to effect people in so many ways... their livelihoods, their future, their well-being, very stressful over such a long period of time.

In closing, I hope you can see that the proposed Walla Solar Farm is in the wrong location. To be in a more marginal area, with less people & more sun would be best. Even Sussan Ley made that comment recently in our local 'Border Mail.'

Yours sincerely

RAY JACOB