

[REDACTED] Stanhope Gardens NSW 2768

Please withhold my personal details

Culcairn Solar Farm SSD-10288

I have not made any reportable political donations in the last 2 years.

My son and his family own a rural property that adjoins the Culcairn Solar Farm. I have been visiting the Culcairn area for over 15 years.

I spent a large portion of my life as a farmer and rural contractor. I have worked on farms all around southern NSW. Whenever I visit the Culcairn area, I am amazed at the quality of the land and how productive the land is.

Over the last 2 years, practically all NSW has been severely affected by drought. Farms in the Culcairn area have still been producing grain and fodder. To take this hugely productive, reliable land and convert it to an industrial site is a waste of land. I understand the need for renewable energy, but it should be constructed on non-productive land. Productive agricultural land should be left to continue to produce food for our Country.

This proposal is surrounded by neighbours who will all be adversely affected and who are all protesting against this development. I have seen some of the marketing material from Neoen and I am disappointed at the lies. This development covers 3500 acres. Neoen are stating that only 16% of the land will be covered by panels. This may be mathematically accurate, however the remainder of the land is unusable for agriculture. This development is surrounded by 8 foot high chain mesh fence. Inside this fence, sections of the solar panels are also fenced off. You will be unable to farm this land. Pasture will be unable to be sowed and weeds will grow prolifically. Sheep will not eat weeds. The assertion that the land can still be farmed is factually incorrect. Whilst sheep may be able to graze, there will be no high protein feed and the sheep will not gain weight.

I am strongly concerned as to the effect to neighbouring properties. I have seen first-hand the mental stress and anguish that is caused to the neighbours and their families. There is so much uncertainty for neighbours. They are strongly concerned about decreased land values, health risks caused by damaged solar panels, the risk to health caused by fire impacting the site, the loss of beautiful agricultural views to an ugly industrial site and construction noise over 18 months. Neoen are spending close to 700 million dollars (\$700 000 000). They are offering next to nothing to neighbouring landholders to compensate them. I understand that they are planning on planting tree lines. I have strong concern that these tree lines will take decades to provide any relief to neighbours. By then, it will be too little too late.

I am not against solar power. I am not against renewable energy. I urge the Department of Planning to reject this solar development and ensure that this highly productive agricultural land remains the same and doesn't become an industrial site.

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