

We, Luke and Rebecca O'Connell, would like to put forward some of our concerns regarding the proposed Beryl Solar Farm.

On the 2nd of May we had a meeting with First Solar's Senior Manager, Tom Best. Many of our concerns we addressed during this brief meeting. During this meeting Tom Best informed us that the Solar Farm would produce a constant noise of 78dB from sun up to sun down, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. Our land will be devalued and our lifestyles will be compromised due to the constant intrusive and annoying noise and also by the visual impacts created by the proposed Beryl Solar Farm.

As you would be aware, the location we are talking about is reasonably flat land. Noise travels exceptionally well here as there is very minimal background noise in the area, one of the main reasons we enjoy living here. The constant intrusive and annoying noise created by the Beryl Solar Farm will no doubt devalue our land as well as impact on ours and our young children's lives, as we will live less than 1km from the proposed site. Tom Best tried to assure us that our sleep will not be impacted by the noise but, as we pointed out to him, most of the main income earners in the area (include ourselves) are miners who work shift work so noise created during daylight hours are just as intrusive. The peacefulness of the area is another reason we chose this location to live and not in town as we wanted somewhere quite knowing that Luke would need to be able to sleep through the day.

The land on which the Solar Farm is proposed, according to NSW Planning and Development website, has a double zoning of R5 Large lot Residential and RU1 Primary Producer, with surrounding and neighbouring lots zoned R5 Large lot Residential. Mid-Western Regional Council's zone objectives for these zones clearly states

- To provide residential housing in a rural setting while preserving and minimising impacts on environmentally sensitive locations and scenic quality.
- To minimise conflict between land uses within this zone and within adjoining zones.
- To maintain visual amenity and landscape quality of Mid-Western region by preserving the area's open rural landscape and environmental and cultural heritage values.
- To minimise the fragmentation and alienation of resource lands.

We don't believe any of these zoning objectives will be upheld if the proposed Beryl Solar Farm is approved for this location. State Government should not be allowed to contravene local governments zoning objectives.

Other concerns we have are facts that, according to Tom Best, no local Aboriginal Lands Council participated in a cultural study of the site. Tom Best, told us that only a Wellington Indigenous group participated. When we asked who conducted the environmental flora and fauna studies he was unable to provide us with that information at the time.

Also there are errors in the areas temperature on First Solar's Site Development Plan. It states that the Project Climatic Conditions Extreme Max (50 year) Temp is 43.1 °C. This is completely false as I have photos to prove that this January temperatures reached up to 50 °C. The Site Development Plan also shows that the sites Annual Cooling Design Temp is 34.7 °C. This is an average summer night's temperature for the area, does that mean the cooling system will run all day and all night?

We believe the land will be change dramatically especially with the requirement to put in internal roads with in the Solar Farm. This, un doubtedly, will affect the water runoff and how will this affect the local water ways considering the close location of the proposed farm to the Cudgegong River?

Another major concern of ours is the effect of the increased traffic during construction and the location of the proposed entrance of the solar farm. We have been informed that there will be approximately 180 contractors plus trucks and other heavy vehicles required to travel on Beryl Rd, a road my family must travel on each day. This road is on a school bus route and one which my children often use. Beryl road is only a 2 lane road, any extra traffic especially heavy vehicle traffic would cause a severe increase in the likelihood of an accident. This increase of traffic on Beryl Rd will also produce a further noise and pollution disturbance on my family's lifestyle.

One other major concern of ours is what would the approval of the Solar Farm mean to Essential Energy, who own the Beryl Sub-station? Would there be any future upgrades to the Sub-station? There is already an annoying noise created from the existing sub-station that can be heard from our home. I know this sub-station is much quieter than the proposed solar farm so I know there will be an impact created if you allow this project to go ahead.

The location of the proposed Beryl Solar Farm is less than 5km from the centre of Gulgong, a historical town that featured on the original 10 dollar note. No other solar farm in Australia has been approved so close to a residential town.

When we asked Tom Best about the impact the farm could have on our land value he told us there was not enough data to compare it to. Well I took it upon myself to contact real estate agents in the Royalla area, where Royalla Solar Farm is only 23km from Canberra. I asked if there had been an impact on the land value around the solar farm and I was told that yes there had been a negative effect.

We are asking that you reconsider the location of the proposed Solar Farm. What about the land State Government bought for the failed Cobbora Mine? Would this not be a more suitable site as it would not affect as many people?

We believe the land value and the value of our and our young children's lifestyle will be dramatically and negatively impacted if the Beryl Solar Farm is allowed to go ahead.

Yours sincerely
Luke and Rebecca O'Connell