

Subject: Submission re: SSD 8183 (Beryl Solar Farm, Gulgong)

Proponent: First Solar (Aust.) P/L

We acknowledge that, whilst the Proponent was not initially aware of the pending development on Lot 59 DP 755434 they have been aware of the situation since February 27th when we contacted them after first becoming aware of the proposed Solar Farm (SF) the day prior. This would have given Proponent sufficient time to include our situation in the reports and subsequent application as forwarded for assessment..

We also remind you of your rejection of our formal request for an extension of time of the submissions period and, pending further investigation and consideration, reserve the right to provide a further submission following the closure date of May 25th, 2017.

We consider that the documents lodged in support of the application are fundamentally flawed in their lack of adequate information and **object to the current proposal** on the following basis:

1. **Social Licence:** That the Proponent has failed to ensure that all relevant persons have been adequately notified as to the proposed development.

Rationale: A key point of the SEARS was to obtain a "Social Licence to Operate" from the local community. It has become obvious that the notification process has been inadequate. A number of affected residents have not received letters claimed to have been sent, others considered the "Dear Resident" addressed letter from a solar company to be junk advertising mail and were discarded, some were not able to attend a one off meeting organised on a week day and during work hours and none have been given the opportunity to participate in a "Community Consultative Forum" as other similar projects have established this to ensure that as many people as possible are fully informed.

2. **Visual Impacts:** That the Application fails to adequately identify and address the visual impact issues caused by the development, especially those specific to Lot 59 DP 755434 and the approved development contained thereon.

Rationale: The Visual Impact Report (VIR) describes the site area to be flat or gently undulating but does not compare the site contours in relation to the adjoining Lot 59, where, by falling to the west and rising to the east will exacerbate the negative visual effects from the approved house site. Please see accompanying photos and sketch showing the actual current view and sketch showing the potential effect. The VIR gives all affected dwellings a "moderate" rating as none listed are in an elevated position. As over 90% of the proposed SF infrastructure will be visible from Lot 59 this site must be considered to be a "Very High" visual impact rating. Whilst the proponent will "work with affected landowners" the screening proposed (sparsely planted with species selected to consider shading effects on the panels) will not mitigate the issue given the actual height difference between the SF infrastructure and the approved building site (on Lot 59) **See attachments 1 & 2**

It is also noted that no proposed screening has been included in the application (as depicted Figure 6.1 pg. 67) for the boundaries of several R5 zoned properties including Lot 59. Further that the application states that "where practicable" the infrastructure will be coloured eucalypt green, beige or brown. When asked the specific question as to the colour of the forty containers housing the inverters we were advised that they would actually be white.

3. **Audio Impacts:** That the Application fails to adequately identify and address the audio impact issues caused by the development especially those specific to Lot 59 DP 755434 and the approved development contained thereon.

Rationale: The Noise Assessment Report (NAR) uses a computer generated model of noise levels expected at various receiver points ten metres above ground. The approved development site on Lot 59 has not been included in the report as the Receiver Point R4 is actually on the adjoining Lot 321. The report does not appear to take into account the cumulative effect of operational noise particularly the tracking motors. A similar report for Moree SF shows a cumulative noise level for the 2,400 tracking motors (78dBA each) to be 112dBA . Using the same percentage based

calculations this would give a cumulative noise effect of the 3,600 Beryl SF tracking motors of 144dBA. The same cumulative effect needs to be included for the forty inverter infrastructures. The report also fails to identify the potential “amphitheatre effect” likely because of the actual site ground contours in relation to adjacent properties to the north.

Whilst the operational noise levels have been described as being a “low hum” the fact remains that the noise will be a constant. There are a number of substantiated reports which show that sustained exposure to low frequency noise *does have a significant affect on a persons ability to sleep and concentrate*. Again any mitigation measures included in the application will fail to address this issue.

4. **Property Values:** That the Application fails to adequately identify and address the affect on **residential** property value caused by the proposed development especially the affect on Lot 59 DP 755434 and the approved development contained thereon.

Rationale: Whilst it is mentioned that the proposed SF will have little or no affect on agricultural activities (we take it that crops and stock are unlikely to complain) the application does not address the actual issue of affects on adjoining **residential** properties. Zone 5 (Large Lot Residential) are specifically created (amongst other points) “To provide residential housing in a rural setting while preserving and minimising impacts on environmentally sensitive locations and scenic quality”

Without any information other than showing a LREA the current views and the subsequent extent of the proposed SF the comment was “that a vendor could potentially lose up to 40% in resale value given the limited marketability of **residential** properties adjoining/overlooking such infrastructure”.

5. **Subdivision & Size:** It is obvious that the proposed development is unnecessarily excessive in size and capacity given the stated need to acquire and rezone residential property to accommodate the proposal. (part Lot 20) which currently prohibits the proposed development. Only by the implementation of SSD legislation is the required subdivision allowed.

We object to the actual size of the proposed SF given the requirement to overrule Councils LEP (2012) by the forced rezoning of (part) Lot 20 to allow the project to accommodate the number of panels proposed. It is obvious from the size of a number of existing and proposed Solar Farms throughout the State that SF’s substantially smaller in size are considered to be financially viable. The project, as proposed, will completely dominate the rural landscape, the protection of which is fundamental to the objectives of both R5 (Large Lot Residential) and RU1 (Primary Production) zonings.

In Closing: We hereby formally request the Department to suspend the assessment process until such time **Point 1 (Social Licence)** is satisfactorily addressed. This will also give the Proponent further time in which to include the specific issues raised in relation to the adjoining Lot 59.

Attachments: 1. Current primary view from approved house site.
2. Sketch of visual impacts from approved house site.

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22/05/17