

Submission to [agcommissioner@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:agcommissioner@dpi.nsw.gov.au) Agricultural Land Use Planning Policy

I have searched The Land newspapers from December/January/February for a notice calling for submissions to the Survey for State Significant Agricultural Land due February 28, 2021. No notice was found.

Following the notice of Transgrid public consultations locally this week Dunedoo/ Leadville/ Gulgong/ Cassilis/Merriwa, I looked up my file for the 2012 Strategic Land Use document of Upper Hunter and did an Internet search for a similar plan for the Central West.

This search turned up Options for a NSW Agricultural Land Use Planning Strategy by Agriculture Commissioner – an Opinion article on Agricultural Commissioner Daryl Quinlivan is on page 18 of The Land January 14, 2021. In this article there is no mention of the NSW Agricultural Land Use Planning Strategy, nor the Survey.

I found this an extraordinary oversight – perhaps the Notice was to be placed near the article and was overlooked in the holiday season period when often key staff are on vacation.

Whatever the reason for the non-advertising in a key rural newspaper of such an important step to protecting NSW Agricultural Land, I find it a disappointing, and reprehensible, oversight.

My two local Shires have no knowledge of the Survey, yet Shires are mentioned on just about every page of the Options Paper. It has not come to the attention of my two local Members of Parliament who would have put it in local papers and their news sheets if they were cognisant of the Survey.

Following the tumultuous meetings with Transgrid this week, I have alerted some of my contacts to the Survey.

When I attempted to complete the Survey, I found that the questions were somewhat confusing and found it hard to make the comments relevant to the way the questions were directed. Near the end, after a hard struggle to align the Options Paper with the Survey, I pressed the Back button to check the previous question – and all my comments back to Question 1 were wiped out. I was horrified that I virtually had to start again after already spending over an hour on the Survey.

When I tried to rewrite the comments, the space was reduced – I could not rewrite what I had previously written.

When I made a complaint on DPI Webpage, I was emailed with a case number. Your reference number is 00079015. One of our team members will be in contact within 5 business days.

We are committed to resolving complaints quickly however if your matter is urgent, please call us.

I rang DPI Dubbo – an automatic service directed me to Administrative assistant with a mobile number that is not connected.

As the Survey closes in one business day on a Sunday, the 5 business days is inappropriate, and no phone number was given for an urgent response. I fear that there will be few responses to the Survey – even the people I personally asked to respond will be hard pressed to comply this weekend and certainly there will be no Council submissions.

State Significant Infrastructure projects do not even rate a courtesy call to local councils – the projects are just pushed through by State Planning.

***Transgrid is working with the NSW Government to plan new transmission infrastructure for Renewable energy Zone REZ in Central-West Orana region.***

The Liverpool Plains Wind Farm has been mooted since at least 2014 and has progressed to approval status. Transgrid did not “know” about it until a fortnight ago when Warrumbungle Shire Council told them about it. This is the nearest project, the nearest to being built renewable energy project to the current proposed line that Transgrid is doing Landowner Consultations with Cassilis community.

In colloquial terms – Go figure!

The man conducting the consultations said that the lines had to be on prime agricultural land rather than the current transmission line corridor through State Forests because of the proximity to the SOLAR generators.

There is one proposed Solar Farm at Dunedoo near the transmission line study corridor. This man appeared not to want to discuss windfarms though there is another proposal in planning near Leadville.

The Transgrid spokesman denied that there was any conspiracy plan to take over prime agricultural land near the corridor for solar farms once the land is devalued from the constraints of 80metre exclusion area that there will be on these properties. The visual amenity effect is immense on the value of a property and the electrical interference for farming and domestic electronic instruments/apparatuses is untenable.

The fire risk seems of considerable concern – hence putting the lines through State Forest would involve considerable fire control measures – much better to give landholders that responsibility, rather than the State.

**The Central-West Orana region was chosen for the pilot because it benefits from relatively low transmission build costs due to its proximity to the existing backbone transmission network, a strong mix of energy resources and significant investor interest. Website.**

While the Sydney Basin, Hawkesbury, Campbelltown ‘Cowpastures’ – new airport- and Hunter Valley food producing regions have been lost to agricultural production, the nearest food producing region to coastal developed growth population centres is the Central West.

The continual push to destroy prime agricultural land in the name of development is a short sighted and dangerous practice.

It is not only the land, but also the water – the reliable rainfall areas are nearest the coastline in the whole of Australia.

The emotional program to protect koala habitat is insignificant when compared to protecting farmland but cute and cuddly will always trump rolling pastures and fields of grain in the short sightedness of poorly informed city audiences. The ‘feel good’ heavily subsidised Renewable Energy push has big International players peddling the agenda to the public.

Against this we have handfuls of farmers, spread thinly on the ground, marginalised in the electoral representation due to a numbers-based formula. We are poorly informed – reference the decline of country media outlets in paper and electronic form.

When an issue of such importance as the Agricultural Land Use Planning Strategy is put up for public comment, it is not advertised, it is not communicated through our Local Members and Local Government – in fact, it is, one would be tempted to say, deliberately concealed.

The Transgrid presentation at Cassilis was a complete debacle and a disgrace. The landholders were mailed a diagrammatic map and the website has a satellite map with no property markings. The map that Transgrid had on display at meeting showing property lines – not names - was not available as a handout. The study zone boundaries were in such a pale colour that they were barely visible.

Transgrid and State Energy Corporation personnel were not across their brief – or was this also deliberate?

## **The Options Paper states that the NSW Government has no policy on the definition of State Significant Agricultural Land.**

The paper also has an option for councils to get agreement from DPI before DA approval is given on SSAL. DPI is very good at issuing fishing licences, giving weed advice or helping drought affected farmers, but during the last three decades it has been emasculated to such an extent that one cannot even make a phone call successfully to a main centre like Dubbo office. See above.

## **There is no simple accessible and impartial mechanism for farmers to resolve land use conflict regarding their operations.**

## **The planning framework does not reflect the needs of agriculture.**

I maintain that the Government does not reflect the needs for food security, safety and supply.

The final word on Options Paper page 25

Amend regulation on public submissions.

The NSW Government could amend the planning regulation to better guide councils on how to consider submissions.

Submitted 27 February, 2021

Carol Richard

Cooinda

Cassilis 2329

0263774555