

Sapphire Solar Farm Submission.

We started the year with 25 solar farm applications in the NSW planning system, totalling 4340 MW of capacity. All were issued in 2017. To this we add two new 2018 applications, Mulwala (140 MW) and Avonlie (200 MW) and subtract the recently approved Finley solar farm (170) MW.

All the rest will be approved this year (assuming minimal developer competence) as that is what DPE does, and quickly.

For example, in 2017, in-lieu fees were issued for the Finley solar farm on July 5, 2017 and approval was granted on January 29, 2018, an elapsed time of less than 7 months, one of which was the exhibition period where it attracted no public submissions. Another rural community beaten into submission by an existing wind farm approval.

In support of the Finley approval, DPE wrote:

“It is estimated that an additional 5,400 MW of new renewable energy capacity will need to be built by 2020 to achieve the Renewable Energy Target”

So the National target could conceivably be oversubscribed by these yet to be approved NSW solar farms and the approved NSW solar backlog, and that is without considering NSW wind farms, both approved but unbuilt, or in the approval pipeline.

DPE has told us a number of times that it sees nothing untoward about this situation and its impact on NSW grid security and electricity prices, so we won't raise it again.

The Sapphire solar farm will include 100 MWh of battery storage, ostensibly to:

“allow the dispatch of scheduled and reliable renewable energy generated power to the National Electricity Market”

Whilst that intention is a potential bi-product, the real aim is to charge the battery up with cheap power and to sell it into the NEM at peak prices. At the extremes, 100 MWh of electricity bought at zero and sold at \$14,000 per MWh means the electricity consumer will be charged \$1.4 million, one way or another. These price extremes are not unlikely as recently shown in SA, with its big Tesla battery taking advantage of the situation. That could happen multiple times per year, or daily at a lower profitability level.

Battery storage is the latest scam to be inflicted on NSW electricity consumers.

In a number of places in the Sapphire EIS, the developer talks about charging the battery from the Sapphire solar farm (SSF) or the Sapphire wind farm (SWF)

However, in one section of the EIS, proof reading failed. From Page 15:

“The connection configuration considered within this EIS accommodates for both scenarios, which will allow the battery-based storage facility within SSF to be available to charge from SSF, SWF **and/or the NEM**, and to discharge all its stored electricity to the NEM.” (my bolding)

So this developer is innocently telling us that they plan to charge the battery with cheap reliable coal fired power from the grid (most likely overnight when power is cheaper and renewable energy is less or un-available from the Sapphire wind and solar farms), ready for discharge at tomorrow's peak prices.

What is worse though is that the developer is seemingly going to charge the battery up with cheap, reliable coal fired power and discharge it into the grid as renewables (how can you tell the difference?)

What is potentially even worse is that this coal fired power could be eligible for Renewable Energy Certificates, which of course we consumers will also have to pay for through our electricity bills (how can you tell the difference?)

Say it isn't so Mr Harwin or Mr Frydenberg.