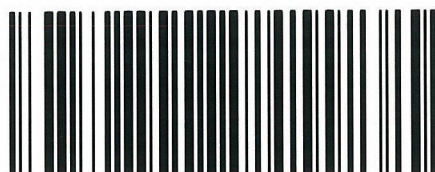


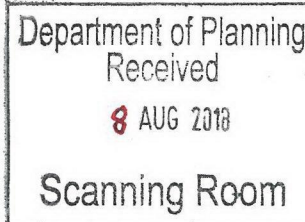
84 Darmody Place
SUTTON 2620
6 August 2018



PCU075368

Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
SYDNEY

Attention: Director- Resources and Energy Assessment



Springdale Solar Development - Sutton

My interest in what happens on the site of the proposed solar farm is substantial. Any property in the arc from north west to south west of any of my boundaries and within a radius of about 20 kilometres of my property impacts on my survival and welfare.

I have been a resident of the Sutton area for more than 30 years and have been a landholder in the region for more than 40 years. I have observed some of the significant changes which have taken place over that time. I have also observed with some dismay, other developments in our community and the way they have been handled.

For much of the last 70 years or so, I have been a committed believer in the importance of the agricultural sector everywhere in Australia. I come from an agricultural environment driven by a professional agriculturalist family background. The credibility of the view derived from my origins began to erode during the last quarter of last century. It became apparent to me that in many instances, the agricultural sector was doing little better than quarrying the limited fertility of the Australian landmass.

During the last 40 years of using agricultural land in the southern tablelands, the limitations of this region for agriculture have become very apparent. The soils are for the most part light and fragile, the winters are harsh and too long, the weather pattern is unreliable. The type of agricultural enterprise best suited to the region as a whole, is probably rangeland grazing. Our system of land ownership makes this form of land utilization unlikely. There are pockets of land along corridors such as Yass River where the result of millions of years without much human interference, has been a rich accumulation of soil deposits – there are not enough of them.

The reality of the region surrounding Sutton is that the limited amount of quality agricultural land is in agricultural terms unlikely to be economically viable, even in good weather conditions. The region is dominated by the ACT and relies to a large extent for its economic welfare on its proximity to the ACT. Land values in the area reflect the amenity value and have virtually nothing to do with the productive capacity of that land.

There are very few significant landholdings remaining in the area. Those which still exist are unlikely to escape development for lifestyle, residential or other more intensive use beyond the next generation of owners. Rising land values and as a result local government taxes and other operating costs, make the marginal agricultural returns available from land in this region even more marginal.

I am a long time supporter of the view that the best possible use of much of the land in this region is for lifestyle rural residential development. This type of use would ideally be based on block sizes which are environmentally sustainable in their own right and should be large enough to allow landowners to responsibly look after the natural resources and avoid abuse of the soils and fertility by overgrazing sheep, cattle, horses and the like. This has not been the case to date in some of the developments which have occurred in or proposed for the region. Lifestyle rural residential developments can avoid many of the normal problems of marginal agricultural enterprises which force the owners to try to make a financial return on uneconomic investments.

In recent times I have been confronted on numerous occasions by opposition to the proposed solar farm at Sutton. I do not support the views the opponents express. I consider many of the people who are opposing this development to be personal friends and therefore have chosen to stay out of the argument.

The situation is now approaching a point where a decision is likely to be made and the consequences of that decision need to be carefully considered. There are serious consequences irrespective of the outcome of the process. I consider the consequences of preventing the approval of this development to be significantly worse for the community and the environment as a whole than those which are likely to flow from its approval.

The latest message I have received opposing the solar farm raises numerous points which I believe to be highly contestable. I believe that some of the supporters of the anti solar farm group do actually have significant holdings of agricultural quality land in the region. I suspect that many opponents of the project have little direct involvement or a sustainable position in this issue beyond opposing the development based on their personal beliefs. Not all local land holders support the anti solar farm arguments or objectives.

I have decided that the best way to deal with the most recent submissions is by commenting on each aspect as it has been set out in the Sutton Solar Action Groups latest document.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The absence of Sutton from a NSW government's list of renewable energy zones or suitability criteria is about as relevant as disregarding new innovations because they do not appear on a government department's list of innovations. Government has yet to establish any long term credibility for forward planning.

The decision by a local government agency to oppose new wind farm developments is similarly irrelevant to the private sector development of a solar farming enterprise.

BIODIVERSITY

I lack the knowledge to comment on biodiversity from other than my own observations. Since arriving in the Sutton area over 30 years ago I have seen the number of mature native trees continue to decline. I have also seen Governments and the community at large continue to ignore important biodiversity resources.

Credible experts such as Helmut Rehwinkel have identified a very important and almost pristine grassy box woodland reserve right in the middle of Sutton village. During this century, the land has been fenced off and used as a grazing paddock for horses. The actual control of the land has been treated almost as if it is a state secret. I don't believe that there is genuine government or community wide support for any more than the idea of biodiversity.

On my own properties I have seen the regeneration of some native flora and a huge increase in the number of some native fauna such as kangaroos and birds. Birdlife within a one kilometre radius of my home has increased from none in 1986 to a few sparrows by 1990 to a host of parrots of various types, some native birds of prey and numerous other native birds. The number of reptiles and other native animals, in addition to kangaroos, has also increased.

I do not believe that any of the increase in the presence of native species is in any way linked to the development of the artificial reserve at Mulligan's Flat in recent years. That reserve, the removal of non native predators - especially cats - from it and the introduction of native species, irrespective of their recent history in the region, has been a spectacular success for the environment. It is pointless to look at that success and pretend that it can in some way be incidentally reproduced across the board in an environment dominated by human habitation on the scale of the ACT.

There is possibly a biodiversity case to be made for approving the solar farm on the largest possible scale in the hope that at some stage it might be converted to another Mulligan's Flat type reserve. Fencing out introduced species from a large solar farm holding may be one of the best ways to preserve a flight corridor and provide a protected habitat for the native species which are able to avoid the non native predators present in the region.

LAND

Aboriginal issues

This region has been occupied by European settlers for about 200 years. The best of the food production areas available to the native inhabitants have most likely also been the best areas for European style agricultural pursuits. The relatively recent invasion by European settlement has not obliterated all of the evidence of previous occupiers of the land. Many significant unidentified indigenous locations undoubtedly exist and are likely to remain lost until someone accidentally discovers them. It is far from proven that the most recent aboriginal groups to occupy the region are any more the original human inhabitants than European settlers. Some significant European heritage of the last couple of hundred years has almost certainly also been lost.

There is virtually no residual indigenous population. The imposition of the British system of population management pretty well ensured that indigenous inhabitants were removed from the region and as much as possible had their true origins erased. Those current local residents who can

rightly claim aboriginality do not necessarily have any direct link to the pre European occupiers of this region.

The whole question of original settlement is one which is tainted by the dear of discussion of just how much connection original settlers of the Australian continent have to particular regions. At the time Neville Bonner was appointed to the Australian Senate, some aboriginal spokespeople of the time made the point that he was not really an aboriginal - he was only a half caste. One of the roles of Commonwealth officers working in remote areas within my living memory was to protect mixed race children from other members of the indigenous population. The politics of any subsequent change of view is arguably questionable.

For those of us who do not support the racial definition of people, that position adopted by indigenous spokespeople in relation to Neville Bonner was offensive. It is one thing to be proud or think otherwise about one's genetic origin but having some of that genetic material in the veins does not necessarily make one a person of that ethnic group. My own Celtic ancestry and whatever else is in the mix is significant to me but it doesn't make me any more of a Celt than that part of Neville Bonner's ancestry which was aboriginal made him an aboriginal to full blood aboriginals.

It is not reasonable to raise the argument of unknown remnants of the racial occupants as a basis for rejecting a particular development proposal.

Negative Impact on Soil Functioning

I am bewildered by the claim that the establishment of a large scale solar farm will have a negative impact on soil functioning and the surrounding environment. If this argument is to be run it is beholden on those putting it forward to substantiate the claim.

Existing grasses already change the soil functioning as does any tree or other plant establishment, grazing livestock or crops. If anyone actually knows what the original soil functioning in the area was prior to European occupation, it would be an interesting comparison to make between what it was and what it has been over the last say 50 years.

Water issues

I cannot imagine how the placement of the solar panels will in any way alter the amount of rain which actually falls on the area to be included in the solar farm.

To the extent that the site may be subject to inundation, that is probably an issue for the developers of the solar farm to deal with. If they do so by living with nature then nothing changes. If they divert water they have an obligation to do so responsibly.

My expectation is that in many cases, neighbouring property owners would welcome diversion of surface water onto their lands, if that was to be part of a solution.

I cannot understand how the establishment of the solar farm by itself will in any way alter the Yass Valley Catchment. If it does I would certainly support the imposition of obligations on the developers for ensuring that no environmental damage occurs and that no neighbouring properties suffer a detriment from the impact.

Fog

I have yet to see anyone who can identify with absolute certainty the future incidence of fog. If Canberra Airport can operate, now as an international airport, without the installation of available technology to assist aircraft landings in fog conditions, I am confident that the solar farm will be able to operate in such conditions also.

If the solar farm is vulnerable to capacity risk in fog situations that surely is a factor which the operators would need to deal with.

Weeds

The introduction of weeds is a real concern to anyone involved in growing anything. We already have in this region a vast array of wonderful species ranging from humanity itself, the most damaging of the known weed species, to our own special serrated tussock, Patterson's curse, African love grass, St John's wort and thistles. To these we can add introduced species such as phalaris, most of the clovers, wild oats, the pasture grasses we like to have and probably all cereal grass species, introduced tree species such as radiata pine and anything including native plants which are not native to the area.

It is difficult to see how a weed problem any worse than that in the surrounding area, is going to develop on the site of a solar farm.

Drought conditions

Drought is a natural event in this region. Expectation of drought is the prudent expectation. Drought has been much more obvious in this century than at the end of last century. I cannot see that drought will have much impact on a solar farm or that a solar farm will have much impact on a drought.

I would expect that the shading of the soil and the absence of livestock grazing what vegetation exists, would result in a lesser environmental impact on the soil inside the perimeter of a solar farm during drought periods.

VISUAL

I do not have to look at this thing. I have some sympathy for those who might have to, if they find it offensive. I find it offensive to look at the wind farms confronting me as I drive through our region and the electricity transmission towers which obstruct the landscape on most of my properties. I make the observation that no-one who has to look at a wind farm every day seems to have ever had any right determined for them to a clean horizon.

Neighbours of rural developments have increasingly adopted a view that they have some right to an unchanging landscape which extends beyond the boundaries of their own land. There does not seem to be any sustained opposition to landowners planting tree windbreaks on their own properties using whatever tree species they like, even when these plantings will eventually impact on the existing visible horizons enjoyed by neighbours. It is difficult to carry a reasonable argument that one set of landowners has a right to do just about whatever they want on their land but the neighbours must in some way be prevented from enjoying the same flexibility with their land.

Some residents of Sutton village found the prospect of looking at Mr Brinkmeyer's proposed development of several hundred housing blocks to the west of Sutton village offensive. Within reason what a property owner does with their own land is none of anyone else's business. The right to change the visual impact of one's own property is arguably one which should be almost inalienable. Anyone opposing the style, colour or other aspects of developments on someone else's land should accept the right of that other property owner to oppose the sight of the other person's developments. This reciprocal obligation is seldom discussed. This applied to arguments against the Brinkmeyer proposal. The other impacts of that proposal on the local environment and amenity of the region were a different issue and perhaps justified the rejection of the proposal.

When it comes to developments on land, it is perhaps reasonable to argue that constructions which rise above the horizon impact on others and therefore give them a right to have some say. Those who might argue that they will never be able to screen out developments which do not even rise above the visible horizon should perhaps consider the fact that they have been able to enjoy the amenity of someone else's landscape at no cost to themselves for as long as they have had it. That does not create a right to continue enjoying the same view of someone else's property in perpetuity.

The other aspect of amenity related to the view is that if the solar farm does not go ahead, responsible allocation of the land resource may force the owner into some other form of more intensive and profitable use. Even converting the land from agricultural grazing to say horse agistment is likely to have a dramatic impact on both the visual aspects and the traffic, dust and noise impacts of such a development. In my view, these are at least as intrusive as a static solar farm.

Tourism

This particular part of the region is not noted for tourism. The only tourism I am aware of along the dirt tracks surrounding the proposed development was that which I engaged in in recent times with a group of foreign visitors. They enjoyed both the landscape itself and the developments which have taken place on it. Without the roads which are unnatural developments they would not have been able to access the vistas they enjoyed. The residences dotted throughout the landscape were a drawback to the otherwise natural environment. There was no suggestion from the visitors that the landholders should not have been permitted to build houses to live in or fences to hold their livestock within their boundaries.

I think the solar development is more likely to generate tourism than to prevent or detract from it and the bigger the solar development is the more attractive it is likely to be for that type of tourism. The fact that the development is bigger than the suburb of Bonner seems to be quite irrelevant. The development is also larger than the Sydney Cricket ground or all of my property holdings in the Sutton area but smaller than the ACT itself – so what?

Glare and Glint

The claim that it cannot be guaranteed that there will be no glare or glint from the panels is not sensible. Glare and glint happen off clouds, dams, roads, houses and even paddocks so how could it not occur off a field of solar panels. Of course there will be glint and glare. No sensible person

would seek to guarantee that it would not occur. However, unlike some of the other sources of glare, all of the reflection and glare from solar panels can in fact be determined scientifically.

Perhaps the main difference between solar panels on a commercial solar farm and other glare generators, is that the panels are designed to catch the maximum amount of sunlight. There may be some reflected light back in the direction from which the sun is coming. Deflection of light is likely to sub-optimize the performance of solar panels. It is not in the interests of a commercial operator to allow this to happen.

Perhaps it is more reasonable to expect from those claiming to be impacted by such factors, that they identify the circumstances under which these problems arise so that the developer can look into how a problem might reasonably be overcome.

TRANSPORT ROUTE

It is a fact that the transportation of people and goods in this region is changing. In the period I have lived at Sutton the road traffic caused by people travelling to and from work, school or other activities in this immediate vicinity has changed dramatically. Roads which carried a few hundred cars per day now carry well over 1,000. The development of the rural residential nature of the region has resulted in significant numbers of trucks carrying building materials being added to the light loading of trucks carrying wool, fodder and livestock in years gone by. During this period, we have enjoyed improved road infrastructure which has resulted from the increased value to the community of use of the roads in this region.

The short term increase in traffic resulting from the development of a solar farm is unlikely to be as great as the permanent increases arising from other changes in our region or even alternative higher value uses of the specific site proposed for the solar development.

Heavy vehicle movements

We have experienced in Sutton, very significant road transport impacts in the past. When the Federal Highway upgrade was done the road traffic with heavy combination gravel trucks in particular was a serious safety concern for those of us whose families and children had to travel along Sutton Road to get to school or elsewhere. It lasted over a period of several years. In more recent times we have seen significant numbers of logging trucks travelling through this region. The reality is that no-one has been killed over that significant period of time as a result of heavy vehicle movements associated with important local development projects.

The nearest anyone in my family came to a serious problem arose from a cowboy livestock truck operator from outside of district, who would have been on the road anyway as a result of existing agricultural practices.

Heavy vehicle routes

The concerns about the routes available are quite legitimate. It is ridiculous that Sutton Public School has an exit gate onto a road such as Sutton Road. A higher fence and removal of the gate onto Sutton Road might eliminate both the risk to the children and the need for the 40 KPH road restriction on that section of road.

No plans for road improvements

As far as I am aware there are numerous plans in place to upgrade local roads. Whether these are sufficient is something which others need to determine. The heavy vehicle movements involved in the numerous domestic type developments on and around Tallagandra Lane, Mulligans Flat Road and Sutton Road in recent years are likely to substantially exceed the amount of traffic to be created by the development of the solar farm. In each case these increases were temporary in respect of the specific development project. Such projects keep arising in proportion to the population of the area. In the case of a solar farm heavy vehicle movements will diminish dramatically on completion of the installation. The ongoing number of vehicle movements can be expected to be very stable and with automation probably diminishing.

Danger for cyclists

I tire of the lobbying by people associated with the interests of cyclists. Cyclists, are for the most part sensible and responsible people who appreciate the privileges they enjoy. The self centred rat bag element, despite the fact that they pay absolutely nothing towards their use of the road for their pleasure, bring other cyclists into disrepute.

Some cyclists will ride at the extreme right hand side of 2 and 3 metre wide cycling lanes where they are provided and will make incursions into traffic lanes when overtaking fellow cyclists or when they wish to have a bit of a chat. Others will allow traffic to build up behind them on narrow roads while they peddle their way up hills at walking pace or less.

Travelling at as little as a few kilometres per hour on roads even zoned as low as 80 kph creates significant dangers for all road users including cyclists.

The best way to deal with concerns for cyclist safety is for cyclists to take their safety into their own hands if or when they become traffic obstructions for other road users. This option is within their own control. The most appropriate solution is for all road users including cyclists to be compelled to have and demonstrate a knowledge and recognition of responsibility for the shared use of road resources.

No alternative routes

I would have thought that the newly and soon to be further upgraded Mulligans Flat Road from both ends would have been a logical preferred route for most heavy traffic. I expect that heavy vehicle operators would be capable of working this out without someone holding their hand for them.

FIRE HAZARD

Uncontrolled fire is my greatest enemy. I do know what it means. During the period of my ownership of these properties, uncontrolled fire has passed through my property twice and threatened it on several other occasions. Fire is great for heating the house during the winter and I would not like to be without it for that purpose. Pretty useful for a BBQ also, but that is about the limit of it here.

I am acutely aware of the impact of fire in this region. The uncontrolled Sutton fire in January 2017 brought this unwelcome visitor to my home. The closest the actual fire came to my home was less than 10 metres. The fire was eventually stopped on my property. The measures I took to protect my property should have helped in allowing the huge resources thrown at this fire to stop it before it left my property. In an ideal situation they would have stopped it coming onto my property. In its path through my property the fire destroyed in excess of \$200,000 of my assets and caused damage to a considerable amount of other assets. The fire in its travels to get to my assets and home, consumed hundreds of metres of mowed paddocks and even ignored 20 metre wide bare earth fire breaks, which I had created.

In the type of fast moving grass fire usually experienced in this region the fire moves so quickly over a 300 hectare site, that there is barely sufficient time to pump out a 20,000 litre tank. Fire fighting helicopters dropped hundreds of thousands of litres of water on my property trying to extinguish the fire. They managed to stop the fire, but it took another week to actually extinguish the last of it. Over 140,000 litres of potable water stored on my property for the purpose was used in putting the fire out on my property and nearby. Very little of this water was used while the fire was running and nor could it have been used in the time available while the fire was running.

The most logical solution for the owner of any infrastructure, including a solar farm, is for the owner to take as many precautions as are possible to protect their asset against fire. What the asset owner does is never going to prevent the actions of others from impacting on the owner's property. Each year I devote a considerable amount of resources and personal energy to defending my interests against this enemy. It wasn't enough in 2017 and it would never have been possible for me to do enough. In the case of the proposed solar farm, it is most likely that if fire is a problem, the infrastructure will be impacted by a fire started on someone else's property. It is unlikely that it will be started by the solar farm operators or their equipment.

The other nearby major fire event during early 2017 was the Carwoola fire. My understanding is that it was started by contractors working on one of the many rural residential properties in the area. That is a much more likely fire ignition scenario than a malfunctioning solar farm.

My personal choice is to have valuable managed infrastructure projects such as a solar farm, located wherever possible to the west of my property and within 20 kilometres of my western boundary. This choice ranks well above largely unattended open grazing land and housing developments which are the next most likely applications for that land.

Local experience suggests that in emergencies such as fires, commercial operators do in fact provide considerable and valuable support to the efforts of those who do fight the fires – irrespective of their financial stake in the event. Like most of the rest of the community, these operators do not necessarily own rural property, or if they do don't have dedicated staff available to fight fires on their properties. There is nothing to suggest that a solar farm operator would be any less supportive of the locality than other commercial operators have shown themselves to be.

The increased fire risk resulting from the solar farm development and implications that this particular land occupant should be obligated to maintain resources not maintained by others in the community, have not been demonstrated.

SOCIO ECONOMIC

Economic benefit to NSW/Yass Valley Region

Any argument about economic benefit is difficult to assess objectively. The history of the region suggests that most developments deliver an economic benefit. Even subdivisions of agricultural land which still generate substantial emotional argument, deliver benefits to the communities in which they occur, often by replacing non productive, unprofitable, undercapitalized or poorly managed agricultural resources with higher density rural residential developments consuming locally sourced goods and services. When this type of development is on the doorstep of something such as the ACT the benefits are spread widely and difficult to quantify.

Section 457 visa issues

What happened in Queensland with imported labour might happen in NSW and more particularly Sutton. If it happens it occurs because the Commonwealth Government allows it to happen. It is unreasonable to attempt to stop a development because of what the Commonwealth government might fail to do or might allow to happen.

Local tourism for wineries and the like

Traffic density and noise will continue to increase in this region irrespective of a solar farm development. Without the solar farm the increase might occur more rapidly. Alternative uses of the land concerned for agistment of horses or the like could easily result in a significant increase in movements of horse floats and fodder transport vehicles in addition to the normal vehicle traffic of the owners of those animals travelling to inspect their animals.

The local tourism market for wineries appears to operate mostly on weekends and public holidays. When it does, it occasionally interferes with my progress if I am using the same routes. Like most other people, I can and should get used to the occasional interference. The procession of cyclists, learner drivers and horse floats on our local roads, mainly on weekends, is just another impediment to vehicular progress. There is no reason why such activities should be prohibited because they occasionally inconvenience or slow down the progress of other road users.

It is to be expected that most solar farm related traffic will diminish when the facility is operational. The same cannot be said for tourists wandering about looking for wineries. The timing of the solar farm traffic activity suggests that establishment of a solar farm is unlikely to have any significant impact on winery operations.

If any claim of detriment to wineries or other businesses, arising from the development of the solar farm is to be considered, it is surely the responsibility of those who claim that they will be impacted, to put forward sustainable arguments in support of their case. Such arguments should be considered in the light of the incidental benefits arising from any increase in passing trade.

Potential health and wellbeing issues

This proposed development and the representations related to it, is certainly already having an impact on local residents. Making the development go away will no longer fix the problem. I am already uncomfortable with the amount of anxiety which has been built up about this proposal. It

far exceeds that which I felt or saw associated with the Brinkmeyer Sutton village subdivision some years ago.

Unlike high voltage electricity transmission lines where it appears that there are actual risks and where such corridors pass through residential areas, the solar farm development is located in a rural environment in which it is separated from most residential buildings by substantial buffer zones.

No actual health impacts associated with the development of a solar farm, beyond personal preference driven anxiety have been identified. In the absence of any evidence that there are negative health implications from living next to a solar farm it is reasonable to answer that there are none known.

If the solar farm does not go ahead, it is unreasonable to expect the landowner to sit back and accept the returns basic agriculture can generate from this land. The obvious hope is that the property owner will do nothing and continue to operate the land as has been done for more than a century. It is not reasonable to expect a property owner to sub optimize their situation to satisfy the whims of others. Opponents could of course seek to lease the land at a comparable price to that being offered by the solar farm development and then continue to use the land for the next 30 years or so for business as usual.

The next most likely use for the land proposed for the solar farm and that around it, is for a different development. The obvious one is rural residential but others such as agistment of horses do not even require council approval. These would almost certainly provide a better return to the land owner. The impact of the number of new homes and their occupants or agisters, on an area of 850 acres or more, needs to be factored into the socio economic impact considerations for the area. It does not appear to have been given any serious consideration.

I personally am much more concerned that the establishment of new dwellings and the influx of a new group of residents and their service providers will have a substantial impact on the local environment. Many of these people and their service providers have little or no knowledge or understanding of the environment into which they are going to move.

The permanent future traffic loadings as well as the immediate impacts of this alternative are of much greater concern to myself than the establishment of a solar farm and its ongoing operation for the next 30 years or so.

We have disturbing recent evidence of the consequences of ignorance by rural residential contractors in local areas.

If a fire is accidentally started by residents or their contractors on a residential development on the site rejected for the solar farm, I live in the most likely danger zone arising from such a fire. The emergency services response time is too long for any serious outbreak of fire at the site of the solar farm to be controlled before it impacts on my property.

The potential health implications of living near a solar farm are little compared to the risk factors which are guaranteed to arise if the same resource is used for residential development. These ones are known not hypothetical. By comparison a professionally developed and run solar farm is an attractive option.

SITE REMEDIATION

The site remediation cost is not something about which the community needs to be concerned or has any right to have a say. In the case of private land, the landowner has a huge vested interest in ensuring that the future value of the land is not destroyed. The cost of remediation is something which the landholder can address in any contract with the developers. It isn't anyone else's business unless it can be demonstrated that there is likely to be a future cost impact on the community.

To the community using this as an argument against the development, I would reply as did an accountant to my mother many years ago when she asked about how to keep taxation records – MYOB.

LAND VALUES

Land valuation is for those who do not already realize it, the basis for a wealth tax. Costs are imposed on the owners of the land irrespective of the value of services provided but based on what someone has determined the value of the owner's land asset to be. It is based exclusively on a hypothetically guessed value for a piece of land, usually but not always, in a condition in which it no longer exists.

I have argued that the existence of an identified corridor for the very fast train through two of my land holdings and within both sight and sound of my residence have an impact on land value. The registered valuers who considered the argument disagreed. If the prospect of a very fast train through the middle of the property has no valuation impact, I fail to see how a static solar farm will have any negative impact.

The concept in the minds of many residential landholders is that the land value will always go up and that they will be able to realize a capital gain, which is usually untaxed, when the property is sold. This has for many become a truth.

It is a fact that most properties are sold at market prices. The price paid reflects the prices of what other similar assets are available not some government generated idea of land value. The proximity to a static development such as a solar farm might actually make property more attractive to some purchasers.

Lifestyle

If lifestyle were the only issue there would not be as much competition for properties in this region. Proximity to job opportunities, the services and other benefits of the ACT, access to Sydney the snow and the coast and the price of properties in Canberra are the major driving force for values in the Sutton area, not the lifestyle. There are many regions where the climate is more amenable and the scenery at least as pleasant but where the prices of comparable properties are significantly lower than in the Sutton region.

Houses for sale

For each seller wanting to escape a solar farm, there are likely to be many others who would choose a solar farm for a neighbour in preference to other lifestyle landowners. The listing of a house for sale is of limited relevance to the possible establishment of a solar farm. Others who may wish to


escape such a neighbor may find themselves beneficiaries of an enhanced market created by those who would prefer a static largely unoccupied neighbour for the next 30 years.

Summary

I consider the concerns expressed about the development of the Solar Farm at Sutton, its size, impacts on the region and location of it, to be largely irrelevant and unsubstantiated but in any case matters which are subordinate to the alternative possibilities if the solar farm is not developed.

No evidence relating to the alternative impacts which are likely to occur if the solar farm does not go ahead or to assessing the impacts on the local environment and lifestyle which are going to occur irrespective of the solar farm proposal, has been submitted by the opponents. Such considerations are a proper part of the mix in considering the proposal.

The development of the solar farm is unlikely to be the cause of all of the problems proposed by its opponents.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Nock', written in a cursive style.

Lawrie Nock