

Objection to the Glenellen Solar Farm.

I OBJECT TO THE BUILDING OF THE GLENELLEN SOLAR FARM IN DRUMWOOD RD JINDERA.

This is the wrong position for a Solar Farm: The Community residents' physical and mental well-being must take precedence over the building of huge solar farm in a residential area.

A Personal View

We have lived within half a kilometre of the proposed Solar Farm for over 30 years. As such we are described in the EIS as a sensitive receiver. We like many before us and many after us, moved to experience the quieter lifestyle of rural living. We enjoy daily walks and have met many neighbours during these walks. There is a warm community feel in this area. As more people have moved to the country there are people/ children frequently walking and riding along the roads. Often of a morning when working in the garden and in the cool of the evening people will stop to have a chat. This will all stop during the installation of the solar farm with up to 100 B-doubles and 200 staff vehicles moving around the area daily. What then happens with the children who walk to and from the bus stop or ride their bikes to friend's houses? There are many young families with children who live locally.

People will have difficulty leaving their own drive- ways as this is an incredible amount of additional traffic. The local roads are narrow and there are a number of tight/ blind corners and several small hills. Cars moving at speed over the crest of these hills will pose a danger to local residents. It has to be considered that the local roads are not built to take such a heavy load of additional traffic.

Many residents within a short distance of the proposed solar farm have built extensive gardens. *The Potential of the heat island affect* associated with the Solar Farm will increase local temperatures by a possible additional 4 or 5 degrees Celsius. Last year the summer temperature peaked at 47 degrees Celsius in Jindera (in the shade). These peak temperatures plus the heat generated from the solar farm could mean temperatures in excess of 50 degrees Celsius. This will destroy most of the plant life in people's gardens. This would then impact the physical and mental well- being of the residents.

The site of the proposed solar farm is used by the locals to walk and enjoy the scenery. Presently for a large part of the year it is a vista of lush green pastures usually stocked with cattle. It is a beautiful area for the locals to enjoy.

How can this be compared with 500 000 solar panels, 5 metres off the ground surrounded by a 2.5 fence? The proponents claim they will provide plant screening but this will take many years to be of a height to hide this ugly blot on the landscape. The visual impact will have a detrimental effect on the community who enjoy the rural landscape.

During the construction phase the level of noise will definitely impact near neighbours.

Construction is going to be 6 days a week starting at 7 in the morning till late evening? How is this fair for the neighbours? Will there be compensation for anyone who suffers adverse physical or mental effects?

We have been advised by a valuer that the value of our property could decrease by up to 20% should the solar farm proceed. Will the NSW State Government recompense people who are adversely affected when they sell their home?

Additional objections are identified and elaborated in the following dot points.

- **The importance of the ownership of our energy supply remaining in Australian Hands.** The original owner of the proposed solar farm has sold on to another foreign entity (Trina Solar). The head office of Trina Solar is in China. Foreign ownership of Australian energy sources may place Australia in a vulnerable position should relationships with China deteriorate further. In view of the unstable relationship between Australia and China I would have thought it would be more important than ever to ensure that energy sources remain Australian owned.
- **Preservation of Agricultural Land:** Australia only has a certain amount of high quality agricultural land and we need to protect it. Many areas in Australia are no longer suited to farming due to effects of ongoing drought. The area surrounding Jindera (where the Glenellen solar farm is situated) is largely unaffected by drought and the farming land is still successfully producing agricultural crops and raising sheep and cattle.
- **Food Production:** Due to the ongoing drought and climate change, food prices are predicted to increase. We are importing more agricultural produce due to the prolonged drought. We are well positioned to grow all the food required but if we utilise productive farming land for other uses such as solar we will not be capable of growing the amount of produce required for our own needs. Australia last year imported wheat for the first time in 12 years after drought across the eastern states saw grain production fall. This Grain was imported from Canada. This raises biosecurity concerns among grain growers about the risk of bringing in a disease or new weed strains to Australia.
- **Suitability of the site:** There are many areas in Australia that are more suited to the installation of solar farms. Examples would be areas that are no longer suitable for farming due to drought and lack of consistent water sources. The State and Federal Governments need to have an overall plan which includes building the required infrastructure in communities that would benefit financially and socially from the installation of solar farms. The existence of a local sub -station is not sufficient reason to flood the area of Jindera with solar farms. (4 in total)
- **Change of ambience of Jindera surrounds:** Jindera is situated in a beautiful country setting. People move here to experience this lifestyle. A large proportion of the surrounding landscape will change from picturesque agricultural land to that with an industrial appearance. The ambience of the area is important to the mental well- being of the local residents. Property values will be affected and no compensation is offered to affected residents.
- **Heat transmission from the panels** will impact upon local climatic conditions and result in heat transmission out of the solar farm and into close neighbouring properties. People in neighbouring areas could suffer health issues and loss of vegetation and gardens.

- **After the contract expires:** How will the local residents be assured that the area will not be damaged or left in a state of deterioration when the contract finishes? What will Greater Hume Shire look like in the future with huge acreage taken up by solar panels? At the moment it is a picturesque area but it will become an eyesore in the future. What reassurance does Greater Hume Council have that the new owners (Trina) will adhere to the original agreements such as removal of infrastructure after the contract is finished? We have been assured the land owner will be responsible if the company does not reinstate the land to its original condition. However in thirty years' time the original landowner may not be living on the affected property.
- **Tree Removal:** Many trees are to be removed for the construction of the solar plant. This is a significant loss of native habitat in the area. How is this allowed when local residents are not permitted to destroy any trees on their land without special permission from Council?
- **Ongoing Dust problem:** It will be difficult to maintain vegetation below the panels. This could create a significant source of dust for nearby residents. I understand the suggestion is to allow sheep to wander around and under the solar panels. I would question, in summer with the heat generated by the solar panels, that this would be an appropriate solution.
- **Weed management** under and around panels will require large, regular doses of chemical herbicides. This will be a possible health hazard for local residents. The compacting of the soil and the change in the microclimate under the panels will have a long-lasting effect on soil productivity.
- **Fencing and Screening:** There have been suggestions that the area will be screened by suitable vegetation but the details of this are not transparent. It takes many years for such planting to be effective. Will the residents be properly informed of what vegetation will be used and how long this will take to effectively block the unsightly view of solar panels?
- **Bushfire risk:** The bushfire emergencies last summer highlight the problems inherent in the installation of solar panels in rural/residential areas. It is difficult to fight a fire with the close placement of the solar panels.
- **Fires causing release of chemicals into the atmosphere and the neighbourhood.** What is the situation in the case of fires, regarding the release of chemicals into the atmosphere from the burning infrastructure (panels, batteries, etc.)? The air-quality in the event of a fire involving a solar farm would have a catastrophic effect on the health of nearby residents and the fire-fighting crews. In the case of asthma sufferers this could be fatal.
- **Insurance Cost Increase for Residents:** If a fire breaks out on neighbours' property and damages the solar plant how does the resident ensure their insurance policy will cover this? It is likely that insurance policies will increase for nearby residents.
- **Bird life/ Conservation of habitat and species:** Species diversity and habitat will be destroyed by the clearing of local trees and vegetation. Fencing of the perimeter will prevent native wildlife from moving freely through the area.

- **During Construction:** Local residents will be adversely affected by dust, noise and traffic movement. There will be a large number of trucks driving down local dirt roads during the construction. Will local councils be reimbursed for this and roads maintained/repared immediately damage occurs? During construction we have been informed that the noise level of installation is well over acceptable levels of noise pollution set down by the Environmental Protection Authority.

The above points highlight the reasons for my opposition to any solar farm in Drumwood Rd, Jindera or in close proximity to the township of Jindera. The Physical and Mental well-being of the residents **must** take priority.

We wish to make it clear that we are not opposed to Solar Farms in general. However.....

THIS SITE IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR A SOLAR FARM!