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Mr Norm Maher, OAM  
275 Boxwood Park Road  
BUNGOWANNAH NSW 2640

29 November 2020

Director – Energy Assessments, Planning and Assessment,  
Industry and Environment,  
Locked Bag 5022  
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

**Re: Objection to proposed Glenellen Solar Farm (SSD – 95508)**

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a local farmer I am writing to strongly object to the construction of the proposed Glenellen Solar Farm for the following reasons:

- 1. Fragmentation and loss of highly productive farming land** – Australia is continuing to experience a loss of highly productive land at an alarming rate despite predictions that our population could reach 35 million by 2050. There is a real chance that Australia could become a net importer of food if our farmers are not able to meet the competing needs of both increased domestic consumption and ongoing export orders.

Australia **lost 5.9 million hectares** of agricultural land during the period 2001 to 2009 according to the ABS, 2010a. While the majority of loss was due to urban expansion it is implausible that we would continue to allow a further loss of highly productive farming land to a solar farm simply due to its proximity to a nearby electricity substation and connecting transmission lines.

The loss of agricultural farm land was widely reported in 2012 including an article in the Sydney Morning Herald titled “Agricultural land diminishing, statistics show”.  
<https://www.smh.com.au/national/agricultural-land-diminishing-statistics-show-20120525-1za05.html> refers.

In the case of the proposed Glenellen Solar Farm, it will lock up some 700 hectares of highly productive farming land for at least 30 years. This land is located in a relatively reliable rainfall area (compared to most) and currently produces:

- High value oil seed and cereal crops (Canola, Wheat etc.),
- Prime sheep & cattle;
- Fine wool and fat lambs;
- Certified seed production; and
- Abundant hay and silage fodder which is critical to meeting Australia’s needs both now and into the future.

This matter was noted by representatives from the Department of Planning when they held a meeting at the Jindera Community Centre in 2019. At the meeting, the

Departmental Chairman commented that the representatives were surprised by the level of cropping in the district at a time when much of NSW was in drought.

2. **Significant change in land use and impact on adjoining properties** – The change in land-use from farming to industrial is not insignificant. Many neighbours (including my elderly mother-in-law) purchased small acreage properties for the tranquil lifestyle that farming affords only to find that they could soon be surrounded by hectares of solar panels which are inconsistent with a farming landscape. This possibility is causing genuine concern and anxiety for adjoining landholders.
3. **Devaluation of property values** – The proposed Glenellen Solar Farm will adversely impact on the property values of a significant number of adjoining landholders for which they are not entitled to compensation.
4. **Removal of farm trees and loss of animal habitat** - I am genuinely concerned with the proposed removal of hundreds of century old farm trees from the proposed site. These trees have been protected and retained by our ancestors since the area was first farmed in the late 1800's. These trees provide key habitat for a range of birds and marsupials. These old trees should be retained for the valuable biodiversity which they provide.

In closing, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS and I would ask that the IPC and Minister to not approve the application given it will:

- remove significant areas of highly productive farmland from production for up to 30 years;
- visually impact on neighbouring residential amenity;
- result in a significant devaluation of property values; and
- removal of century old farm trees and associated loss of animal habitat.

Further to the above, we are firmly of a view that the proposed Glenellen Solar Farm should not be allowed to take highly productive farmland out of production as the decision to locate it on the proposed land is simply based on a business opportunity by the proponent due to the proximity of a nearby substation and transmission lines.

I declare that I have not donated to any political party in the past two (2) years.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on 0418218630 or [n\\_maher@bigpond.net.au](mailto:n_maher@bigpond.net.au) should you have questions in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Norm Maher, OAM