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I do declare that I have not made any political donations in the past five years.

I object to the proposed development of the large scale Solar Plant at Walla Walla SSD 9874

Objections to this proposed transition of good productive farm land to an industrial energy production facility are as follows:

1. Loss of good productive land to implement a 300MW large scale solar project consisting of 900,000 solar panels, highlighting the importance of protecting the Agricultural Industry. This facility should be placed on land that is more suitable i.e. arid lands, less rainfall, less conflict for rural communities, visual aspect, devaluation of other landowners properties and less harm to an already established business i.e. Orange Grove which is a farming enterprise and function centre, a most popular and needed function centre in this area.
2. The close proximity of this solar facility to the township of Walla Walla, approximately 4.3km south-west of the proposal and has a population of 836 persons (ABS 2016) this would be a concern, the large area being targeted has the potential to be a dust bowl and a fire risk, residents would be impacted.
3. Risk of bush fire, as recent past history has shown the Walla Walla and Gerogery Bushfire (17 December 2009, more than 17000 acres of farmland was burnt) and still is proving to be a challenging hardship for those effected.
4. The unknown Public Liability insurance increase for neighbouring landowners is a major concern.
5. Largely due to untested data on Australian solar farms regarding the heat island effect and microclimate, this is especially a concern with neighbours of this solar plant and being so close to the township.
6. I have grave concerns that almost all of these developments are foreign owned, ultimately financial gain or cheaper energy prices to the consumer is not going to happen in our country.
7. The removal of 13.83 hectares of native vegetation which does includes mature natives trees is extensive given the amount of fauna and flora in this area. The small tube stock of native plants being planted for screening would prove inadequate, on other approved developments this has shown to be challenging with lack of water and maintenance.
8. Concerns during construction
 - 1 Dust will be a major concern especially as top soil will be removed for the internal roads, building the sub- station placing of the solar panels etc.
 - 2 Noise derived from driving the steel support posts.
 - 3 Increase traffic movements through Walla Walla and other communities onto unsealed roads etc.
 - 4 Dividing communities-sadly this has caused angst within all communities of our Greater Hume Shire Council even though the residents who are objecting are very clear that they are not against renewable energy enterprises. It has a detrimental effect, friendships being eroded throughout GHS many have been lifetime friends and some family related.

- 5 The hardship of farmers and residents to fully equip themselves of the factual details of the Walla Walla EIS whilst carrying out farming duties at one of the busiest times of year i.e. carting and shedding hay, harvesting etc.

Closing comment

I am very concerned about the continued loss of agriculture productivity across Australia, especially in areas such as the four proposed Solar Plant Developments within the Greater Hume Shire. This area has proven to be a successful area for cropping, raising livestock etc. especially during this widespread terrible drought. Whilst I believe in renewable energy (we have solar panels installed) we need to have developments of this scale planned in the right location. To protect the Agriculture Industry as our future capabilities of supplying food and fibre will prove just as important for the overall economy of Australia as the importance of the implementation of Renewable Energy projects.

Thank you for your time

Philip Hanel