6th December 2018

To Alana Jelfs,

At present we are conducting a Horticultural course at Gunnedah and one of our units is Environmental Sustainability. We are all for renewable energy, in the right location.

Gunnedah is network of connecting river systems and a number of neighbouring villages. It is a mixture of hills and flat country containing many different soils. These are some of the best primary production soils in the country.

Gunnedah and the surrounding villages are also steeped in Aboriginal History. It is The Place of White Stones meaning cortex was found here to make weapons and as barter with other tribes.

One of many significant cultural sites is Ydire (commonly known as Nobby’s Rock) which can be seen from Orange Grove Road where the proposed Gunnedah Solar Farm is to be located. This mountain area was used for making weapons by the warriors of the Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) Tribe. Disturbing this land below Ydire will disrupt the natural balance of flora and fauna surrounding this area as well as the indigenous population that hold the area sacred. It has been a main lookout for thousands of years and should be treated with the utmost respect.

Another one of the town’s major attractions is being the Koala Capital of World. This attracts a large number of tourists to the area who expect to see natural landscapes and untouched country.

Gunnedah is also known for flooding as there are many low lying plains that run along the Namoi River. The last time the river broke its banks was in 2012 so a significant flood is due.

Many farming properties are located on Orange Grove road who rely on the rich black soils for their incomes as well as taking care of the environment surrounding them.

The proposed area for the Gunnedah Solar Farm is located 12km east of the township on Orange Grove Road.

This project will impact the local area for the reasons we’ve listed above as well as the high traffic, noise, waste from construction (adding to landfill), fire hazard (this area can get to up to 50 degrees in Summer), visual such as glare and reflection, devaluing of neighbouring properties and the property market.

Building a project like this in a floodplain will change the direction of water when floods occur. This would create more cleanup which requires more funding from the state and local governments that could be used for a much needed levee bank around Gunnedah.

The location is in prime agricultural and cultural land which is prone to flooding so it is not an ideal place for this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Gunnedah Horticulture Certificate II Course and Julie Shields