Jindera Solar farm

I would like to thank the Commissioner for allowing me the time to talk at this meeting

As a 5th generation farmer, I Martin Salzke own and have worked on our Family farm for 35 years, which was first purchased in 1897 by my great great grandfather, I now have my son working on the farm with me as well. It was chosen in this area for its good soils and reliable rainfall. This we see as prime agriculture land with limitations. The limitations are that some areas get too wet and many crops do not survive the areas with the wet conditions, this was experienced when we shifted our farming practice to a more 50% livestock and 50% cropping. We were basically going backwards financially as we could not get the yields because of the low-lying areas. This is the reason we primarily graze our land and produce fat lambs, wool and beef.

As 1 of two people in this solar farm close to the Jindera substation and as a person who is willing to investigate alternatives, my late father and I were quick to investigate the option of Solar Farming as a diversity to our farming business, it gives us the ability to continue grazing sheep under the solar panels, doing what we do best on our farm. I am looking at the solar panels to provide shade and shelter for the sheep, I believe it will also allow grass to stay greener longer throughout the year, as the ground will be cooler because of shading and any moisture early in the year will be retained and allow grass to start growing earlier in the season. The same I expect at the end of the season that the grass will stay greener longer in the year. We have been working closely with Green Switch Australia for the past 3 years.

With Solar farming at the end of the contract our land is fully returned to agriculture land. There are too many areas around towns which is good farming land now being subdivided into house blocks, they will never be returned to farmland.

The farming industry is a very large user of power, not just on farms but in companies making and producing products for farms.

I am keen on helping the country to help turn away from fossil fuels and help implement the option of renewably energy, which will help produce power for our quickly growing nation. We have already seen South Australia have power outages when there was not enough power produced. Now they are producing their own power through renewable energy.

Our 615-ha farm has established 17 ha of tree plantations corridors and blocks of trees since 1985 to help with carbon emission. More corridors are to be planted in 2021 and more in 2022

In closing I believe Solar farming will create many jobs initially, from manufacturing, transport, erection, fencing, landscaping, earthworks, hiring equipment, electricians and many more.

Thankyou again

Martin Salzke