

I would like to object to the proposed Solar development in Walla Walla.

My objection is based on a number of things such as changes to ground water and how it might affect our farm neighboring the development, the impact of the exclusion fence around the solar development increasing the kangaroo burden on our and Dorothy Hoys property, and the loss of agricultural production in our very productive dryland area.

As the flawed Murray Darling Basin Plan is now proving with the lower production of rice due to zero water allocations for 2 years running, there are reports we will not be able to buy Australian grown rice in the supermarkets as soon as the new year, even though water was flowing by the farmers front gate, restricted to the farmers in the name of environmental flows, I see the solar movement having a similar impact on food and fiber production. Where do we draw the line? Do we just put solar on productive land and expect less productive land pick up the slack in production? I see that the same as expecting dryland cropping to produce the rice without the water, it is simply impossible.

During this debate many have talked about how “unproductive” some of the land earmarked for solar is. Some of the land may not be as highly productive as some other country in the Greater Hume Shire but it is still 10 times more productive than some areas an hour to the west. Like I said during my talk to the IPC, the “lesser” productive land can be made very productive, as the landowner confirmed during his talk, he feels he is being disadvantaged for putting the time in to make his land productive, an admission his land is productive. Bega Plains is some of the best country in the district, a district that has land sales greater than \$5200 an acre, a price many would be willing to pay for the land earmarked for solar. My point being, rather than taking the easy option to put solar where the lines are, sacrificing highly productive, sought after land, ask these foreign owned companies to build the infrastructure (transmission lines) to take our country forward and build where there are not as many affected neighbors and the land not as productive, when I asked Bison and FRV representative why that is not an option, their response is simply it will be more expensive than building where the lines are, indicating their sole purpose is to make money not to save the environment. Our business, our happiness, our home and more importantly our mental health should not have to suffer for their bottom line.

It has been no secret that FRV have not been accommodating in listening to neighbors concerns and have not given sufficient data and reasoning to plans when asked questions. Blatantly ignoring our issues and ideas to change the plans so we can co-exist telling us “we will take our chances with the planning department” and then have the nerve to say they have been working with us to find a solution. When talking to other neighbors affected by one of the other three proposed solar developments in our direct area, it is clear that all solar companies seem as arrogant as each other, someone being told “its going to happen if you like it or not so you may as well get on board and get something out of it or end up with nothing”. The decision makers at the IPC have an opportunity here to pull all solar companies into line and make them accountable for the way they treat/bully affected neighbors not only here but country/state wide. There has never been a solar application knocked back, so if this was to be the first it would get all companies attention and hopefully the next wave of affected parties will be listened to and treated better than we have. With Orange Grove Gardens, the production value of the land, division of the community and all the other reasons people have given during this process, I feel this is your best bet to make the solar companies socially accountable by knocking the first solar development back at Walla Walla.