

Submission for the Springdale Solar Farm

To the Office of the Independent Planning
Commission, NSW.

Thank-you for taking the time to seriously consider our submissions.

Our lives have literally been 'on hold' since September, 2017.

This 'proposal' has 'stood in front' of everything we do and plan, overshadowing the privilege of living on our inherited land.

Sincerely,

Sue Hardwicke. (R5)

HANDS

My mother taught me about hands and what you might see
so I would gaze upon someone to try and find the key.

I know what Mum meant when your heart could be torn
by merely glimpsing a soul's hands, hardened and worn.

A story can be told by the leathery lines and callouses
certainly that person was never raised in the palaces.

Sun-scorched and cracked, each crevice speaks pain
toiling continuously without obvious gain.

Gigantic and strong, the gnarled grip tells its tale
grasping the hand of his mate down the trail.

But now new hands appear on the scene
and, with obvious uncertainty the farmer's not keen.

These hands have never felt the earth
or grappled with legs to help give birth.

No grit lies permanently in these hand's roughened channels
these hands are soft and delicate and type in 'solar panels'.

Hands gnarled by strain and toil
find their life blood in the land, the soil.

Hands as dry and cracked as the drought
point heavenward for an answer, "what's this all about?"

Yet still, behind the scenes the manicured fingers clatter on the keyboard
producing notes that have the farmer flawed.

Smooth as silk, elegant and slim
they seem absolutely oblivious to everything.

Their hands have not held an intricate miracle at birth
or battled the elements for all they were worth.

Those delicate hands could simply never know
the battle and hardships it takes to make things grow.

And they never want to touch that roughened hand of need
simply because their smooth touch is mastered by greed.

After viewing the IPC meeting electronically, I realised how apt my poem on 'Hands' actually was. It was blatantly obvious that the RES group in their 'high rise' offices overlooking other 'high rise' offices could and never would understand the struggles, the hardships, nor the mateship of life on 'the land'.

How offensive it has been to witness the DPIE and the RES group and, before that, Renew, trivializing our lives and our land that has been the reward of incredibly hard work beginning hundreds of years before our time ...

OUR HERITAGE

Dreamer – yes, I've always been a dreamer. I remember writing a story when I was quite young and I still recall the opening lines – 'The trip out to the farm was good ...' I had unravelled one of my dreams over the pages of that scrap paper and now I eagerly knelt beside my father as I shared my story, my dream with him. "The trip out to the farm was good ..." I waited expectantly, desperately waiting for his approval for my writing skills at such an early age. He placed the story down and nodded thoughtfully and a smile spread across his face as he quietly mouthed out the words... "Dreams do come true, you know ..."

And the rest is history I guess because I had detailed my dreams in that story and then years later I remember standing on our hill and sucking in the cold, fresh air. My whole being was exhilarated and words spilled out of my mouth in praise. I was so thankful for all this, for this place, for my husband, my family, my home, my animals – this is what I had seen and longed for in my childhood years – the freedom, the horses, of being able to run wild and free, to scan the landscape for as far as I could see with nothing hindering or marring its beauty. But it all began way, way before my prophetic dream that had been miraculously unravelled.

When I met Andy we were just kids, discovering life together and sharing our dreams. He introduced me to my childhood story where everything had been detailed way back then ...WOW... We wanted to be different, we were different – give us land, soil, water, plants, sunshine and space and we were in our element. And, as I got to know this amazing man, I also grew to love his family. His grandmother, Ruby, a stalwart soul – a pioneer of this land. She was extraordinary, sharing stories of her life here on 'Spring Flat' and the tough years of raising her daughter, Faye, on her own. I loved those stories – trying desperately to imagine what life would have been like way back then. But no, I could never fathom the hardships of their day.

Often, as we would wander onto the site of the 'old house', Andy would reminisce. His days spent on the farm as a young boy with his brother, Tom, and his grandfather and his grandmother, Ruby, were times that were indelibly etched upon his heart. They were good times for them and this land was their inheritance, a heritage. Oh, how I tried to picture what life on this land must have been like for them ... an indescribably tough life but one fought for a purpose, it would one day be the home of generations to come and now Andy and myself were enjoying the fruits of their hard labour.

Our three children had the privilege of growing up on this land where adventure and excitement were always a part of their free time. It was limitless, just like our outlook – amazing expanses of possibility, where breathtaking beauty would often halt you in your steps as you could do nothing but feast your eyes upon God's favour. The fruitful years of blessing brought us such delight, as our

offspring, the 6th generation, had the opportunity of spending childhood hours discovering hidden miracles in the great outdoors. We have been SO BLESSED!!

Now, in our retirement, we still love this land and we will love what it gives to us and what we can give back to it. We have nine grandchildren. Eight boys and one girl. Who would have thought that my pencilled out childhood dream would have brought so much fruitfulness? But who can put a limit on what God can do with one dream in a child's heart?

I keep dreaming – still. I will never stop.

I see our three wonderful children and their beautiful partners, along with all of our nine grandchildren living out here one day – all being able to enjoy what we had the privilege of enjoying and being able to benefit from what we have put into this land.

I want our children to be able to walk into the 'old house-yard' and recount those stories to their children and to see them staring off into the distant paddocks, just as we did, way back then, and hearing them utter, "this is where it all began ..."

How criminal to have the footsteps of our early pioneer ancestors dating way back to the 1800's, who fought, toiled and strived to make this land 'work' erased permanently from what has become amazing and productive grazing land. What an absolute travesty!!

Has mankind's heart become SO hardened by materialism that they would be blinded to the flourishing pastures that simply 'boast of bounty'?

May progress never have the opportunity of stealing our dreams, of shattering our hopes or marring our vision for the future...

The time has now come after many years of expectant and excited waiting for our boys to be in the position to build on our land. Joe's location is near Tintinhull Road. Sam's selected 'site' would have a total north-facing view of the whole 'proposed' site. His intent obviously was to maximise the use of the sun for heating, power etc.

He would not desire to move further downhill into the valley as the fog lies thick and heavy on many a winter's day – not clearing often until the middle of the day – also the risk of flooding is another real factor. The proposed 'site' is commonly shrouded in a blanket of thick fog in the cooler months. We have many photos to support this.

Our lives have been 'on hold' since September, 2017. We have been greatly distressed by the severe lack of understanding from the developers. How can so many folk who have lived, toiled and understood the elements, the pain, the exhaustion, the heartache, and the joys of this country be suddenly 'swept under the carpet' almost as if we do not exist?

Our neighbours, now in their '80's have devoted their lives to propagating, planting, and relentlessly toiling to 'build' their dream where they can now boast an exquisite and rare selection of exotic conifers and other trees sourced from all over the world.

Their home is their fortress, their haven, their pride and joy. Their garden is a feast for the eyes – an indescribable legacy of all their hard years of work.

To put at risk everything that they have worked for, would be an absolute crime. The effect of temperature increase and other factors that the panels can produce could seriously affect their

trees. They are certainly also very concerned about all the 'extra activity' that this development would create.

I am so deeply saddened – beyond words – that man's heart can become SO calloused that they cease to notice, let alone, value, what others hold dear.

To destroy lives and claim it is for the 'good of the planet' is totally beyond all comprehension.

PLEASE MAY WE BE VALUED ENOUGH THAT OUR VOICE WILL BE HEARD ...

Thanking you,

SUE HARDWICKE