To the Commissioners Andrew Hutton and Zada Lipman

**CULCAIRN SOLAR FARM PROJECT BY NEOEN, SSD 10288**

In 2020 NEOEN approached members of the Culcairn Community Development Committee to meet and explain the possible ‘Community Benefit Fund’ as part of the proposed development of the Culcairn Solar Farm should the project be approved. We realise that a ‘Community Benefit Fund’ is part of all of NEOEN’s approved renewable projects and so far NEOEN is the only company involved in the 4 proposed solar projects in our Shire to present this fund as part of their project proposal. All those present at the meeting were very excited about the possibility of this sort of funding being available to our community.

The concept of the ‘Community Benefit Fund’ has now been finalised with input from the Council, and the Chairman and myself of the Culcairn Community Development Committee who have been involved in this discussion with NEOEN are very pleased to see that this ‘Community Benefit Fund’ will come into fruition if the project receives approval. From the way that NEOEN have explained recently, the funds would be held specifically earmarked for Culcairn and projects within the Culcairn area and be administered by a group with representation of the Greater Hume Shire, NEOEN and community members, such as from the Culcairn Community Development Committee for projects.

This is a fantastic opportunity for the Culcairn community to have access to money for projects that have missed out on funding previously. There are many possibilities that have been mentioned, a town masterplan, silo art, sponsorships for local High School students to further study etc, the ‘bucket list’ is quite long. Also the ability to have funds to put towards other grant applications would increase the likelihood of Culcairn being able to realise much larger projects which are out of our reach at the moment.

As part of the Culcairn Community Development Committee, we are keen to see these funds solely used in Culcairn. We can see that the commitment of NEOEN and our committee to work together, with the Greater Hume Shire means this project can positively benefit as many people as possible in the Culcairn area with not just business opportunities and employment, but the funding of community enhancing projects around Culcairn.

Respectfully,

Ken Scheuner, Chairman

Kirsty Wilksch, Secretary

Culcairn Community Development Committee.

17th February 2021