

Brad James | Senior Planning Officer

Independent Planning Commission NSW

Level 3, 201 Elizabeth Street

Sydney NSW 2000

18 February 2020

Re: Proposed Solar Farm Development by UPC Renewables @ Uralla NSW.

My name is Glenn Bryant, and I am a resident of the Uralla Shire, living on a small (38 hectare) rural holding within the junction of Big Ridge Road and Munsies Road, Uralla. I have owned the land for 28 years, residing here since 1995 following completion of a home on the property.

I wish to lodge my objection to the proposed solar farm development, which has to date been substantially realigned and adjusted in response to public complaints and objections.

I have recently learned that Big Ridge Road is proposed as the SOLE public entry/exit road to the solar farm development. Having attended the public meeting with the Independent Planning Commission in Uralla on Tuesday 11 February, I was surprised to learn that the major beneficiaries of the solar farm if approved, will be just 10 local farming families.

Furthermore, apart from Killian Wentrup on behalf of the proponent, just one other speaker, Mr O'Connor briefly indicated support for the project. Two speakers, Mr Stiller(?) and Ms Zirkler both with long term involvement and commitment to local Land Care Groups and issues, spoke in cautionary terms with regards the need for appropriate consideration to the preservation and protection of the flora and fauna, near and within the proposed development. I could not agree more with their comments, particularly as some bird species mentioned in Mr Stiller's presentation were tagged as rare.

It was indeed unfortunate that proposed speakers David and Amanda Adams were unable to make their presentation. Hopefully they will put forward their presentation in writing prior to Thursday's deadline for submissions to the commission. They are near neighbours of mine, our properties joining at my back boundary.

The remaining speaker, Mr Tom Newsome is a firm objector to the solar farm proposal, for his stated reasons and concerns, many of which I share.

Security – Big Ridge Road runs along my northern boundary, with the closest point to my house yard at just 170 metres away. I have 2 near neighbours, who reside even closer to Big Ridge Road. One of these neighbours (Reddons) only became aware at Tuesday's meeting that Big Ridge Road was now to be the sole public road access to the proposed UPC Solar Farm, whilst the other nearby neighbours (Hanlons) are away in Scotland for 3 months. I have informed them via email of the latest developments with the proposed solar farm.

Currently and for all my time living here, Big Ridge Road runs to a virtual dead end, some 5 kms on past my place and serves as a thoroughfare to approx. 7 local and known farming families.

Needless to say, traffic volumes to date have not posed a problem with noise, nor has there been any security concerns.

During the construction stage of some 3 years, vehicular, people and machinery traffic is set for a dramatic increase. Compensation for disturbance of the peace, inconvenience and disruption to lifestyle should be considered as a condition of any approval for households in close proximity to Big Ridge Road. It is proposed to widen Big Ridge Road out to 7.2 m, extending from Barleyfields Road for a distance of approx. 8kms towards the northern end/entry to the development. This will not come without destruction of and disturbance to local flora and fauna in some areas.

I will not see any solar panels from my property, so I do not share that concern with Mr Newsome.

What we do have in common though is the almost certain detrimental effect on property values, in my case for at least the construction stage, but in his case, much longer.

I intend obtaining a current market appraisal on my property so as to demonstrate a case for compensation should I sell within the construction stage, i.e. the next 3 years. Currently 65 years of age and retiring in the next 6 months I have contemplated sale or subdivision of the property since I became aware of the proposed solar farm development.

Subdivision would permit the building of another residence near the back boundary of the property, thereby residing further away from Big Ridge Road.

An informal approach to Council on the subdivision of my property into 2 or 3 lots was rejected, on the grounds that such proposal would not comply with the current LEP, yet my Rates Notice states my property is categorised as rural residential. How does the solar farm development comply with the current LEP?

Whilst I concede that there is a place for solar power generation in rural Australia, I think it should be confined to sparsely populated regions and poorer non productive soils. Semi - arid and desert type environs would be better situations for solar farms. I think local sentiment on the proposal has largely been untapped, as a similar proposal between Uralla and Armidale and within approximately 10 kms of the northern end of the proposed UPC development met with very strong community (Arding and Invergowrie area property holders) calls for rejection, to the point that it never reached an application stage.

Whilst I have no problem with the main beneficiaries, no one should be adversely affected, either monetarily or lifestyle wise, without appropriate compensation and I ask that this, along with the due care and protection of flora and fauna be included as non removeable conditions of any decision to approve the UPC solar farm development.

I would welcome a visit from a representative from your department to properly demonstrate the peace and lifestyle we currently enjoy.

Please don't allow us and our immediate neighbours to become just "collateral damage" in this proposed large-scale development.

Glenn Bryant

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