



**AMANDA CLARK**

**OBJECT**

Submission No: 189466

Organisation:	Gooromon Park Horse Riding Centre	Key issues: Land use compatibility, Noise, Dust, Hazards and risks, Other issues
Location:	New South Wales 2618	
Submitter Type:	a representative of a community group, non-government organisation, business or industry group	
Attachment:		

Submission date: 7/30/2024 10:00:09 PM

*Submission from Gooromon Park*

*Business Manager of Amanda Clark, we strongly disagree with the proposed Wallaroo Solar for the following reasons:*

*Provisions of rules and regulations that apply to the land to which the proposed development relates*

*As the business manager of Gooromon Park I question whether the project properly complied with and undertook the required consultation process in accordance with planning laws.*

*The Gooromon park riding centre has been in operation for 25 years. We have 14 employees, with between 280-300 clients a week, we are home to 20 riding school horses, 8 performance horses competing at Australian national level and 8 full time Agistment holders horses, we are annually visited by over 14,000 clients a year. The business resides on 214 Gooromon Ponds Rd less than 2km from the proposed development, at no time have we received letters, emails or visits notifying us of exhibitions or information relating to the proposed development from either the proponent or the NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment.*

*We partner with Equestrian Australia, the Australian horse riding centres, the local ACT Dressage association and Pegasus Riding for disabled ACT. We are highly regarded in the horse industry, over the years producing many great horse riders who have even represented Australia. I believe we are one of the best riding centres in Australia, we certainly teach the most amount of students in the ACT and NSW region.*

*We operate Monday to Thursday 8am to 8pm and Saturdays 8am - 5pm, recently we have been collaborating with Pegasus riding for the disabled (RDA) to transition their high functioning autistic students to our centre, the head of RDA came out, vetted the centre and was happy that it was a quiet space with safe horses for their students, as such we have transition the students during our quieter time during school hours 1pm to 4pm as equine therapy is part of many of these students therapy plans. As a business we are concerned about the negative impacts to our business and clients.*

*To date, the property owners of [REDACTED], the land our business Gooromon Park Riding Centre leases have been involved in one conversation with the project lead over 2 years ago, his conversation had mud maps, and aerial plans that didn't clearly outline the plan, they were in their words offered some free energy to accept the deal - which they did not accept. Until a public notice issued a fortnight ago they felt this hadn't even reached planning stage as no one had received any further communication from council, NSW government or the NSW planning authority.*

*As the business manager of Gooromon Park I have not received letters, emails or visits notifying of exhibitions or information relating to the proposed development from either the proponent or the NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment.*



*I had heard of the face to face meeting through other residents and made my best efforts to be there. I searched the Wallaroo Solar Farm website. However, the information provided there was vague, generic and often difficult to understand. For example:*

â€¢ *It was unclear whether the traffic data that was displayed for the area represented the time period before, during or after the construction process.*

â€¢ *Some map photos displayed captions over the top of the Dunlop houses, making it difficult to determine how close the development was located to us and other houses.*

â€¢ *The undulating topography of the area was not correct*

â€¢ *Photos representing the visual impacts that would be incurred by the community were not representative of the perspectives of all surrounding residents,*

*At the community meeting we were told by Ben Cranston that the use of Gooromon Ponds Rd was the chosen route, this is not mentioned in the website information and we believe we haven't been able to fully understand the impacts to our business due to lack of consultation.*

*The suitability of the site for the development*

*The site is an unprecedented distance from residential areas and local farm lands. The site's close proximity to Canberra and the lack of any buffer zone between the surrounding suburbs of Dunlop, Flynn and Macgregor raises concerns about resident's safety. Other solar projects have located themselves well away from existing towns, whereas this one sits on the suburban perimeter of our nations capital.*

- a. *Springdale solar farm is 8 km from the town of Sutton*
- b. *Gunning solar farm is 12km southwest of Gunning*
- c. *Blind Creek solar farm is 8km northwest of Bungendore*
- d. *Goonumbla Solar Farm is 10km west of the town of Parkes*
- e. *Wyalong Solar Farm is 7.5 km northeast of West Wyalong*
- f. *Williamsdale solar farm is 20 km south of Canberra*

*There does not appear to be any other solar farms within Australia located this close to suburban homes contained within another state or territory's jurisdiction. If the proposed solar farm at Wallaroo proceeds, it will likely set a precedent for future solar farm locations close to densely populated urban areas.*

*I strongly object to the proposed solar farm site due to its high fire risk, posing a significant threat to Canberra suburbs. The prevailing westerly winds make it prone to bushfires, which could spread rapidly and uncontrollably. This concern is deeply personal for Canberrans, who still remember the devastating 2003 Canberra firestorm that resulted in four fatalities, hundreds of injuries, and 510 destroyed properties.*

*My primary concern is the increased fire risk, exacerbated by the site's limited access points "only one road in and one road out. The expected 90 movement vehicles per day, as mentioned by Ben Cranston at the community meeting, will severely hinder evacuation efforts during a fire. This is eerily reminiscent of the catastrophic Black Saturday events in Melbourne, 2009. The potential consequences for our clients, residents, and livestock in the area are dire. I urge careful reconsideration of the site's location to ensure public safety*

*The likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality:*

*Social - Safety*



*As a business we have concerns about the impact to traffic safety on Wallaroo and Southwell roads and the busy intersection of Wallaroo Rd and the Barton Hwy from any increases to traffic, for our clients and employees. These narrow single lane roads are regularly used by bike riders, horse riders and runners. The disruption to our clients, employees and residents whilst the road will be used to construct the solar farm will be a significant impact and could lead to a potential loss of income by clients deciding it is easier to head to other riding schools in the ACT without these disruptions.*

*The heightened risk of danger imposed by heavy vehicles to road users, particularly those riding horses -who are flight animals, easily spooked by loud noises, are significant. For our business this could mean we have an increase in liability, as horses are flight animals the noise and disruption to their peaceful environment can increase our risk of falls and therefore potential liability to our business, this year our business has had emergency services divert us to Goulburn to get an ambulance to our property, this is over 150km away and we were told that as we do not reside in the ACT we can not get emergency service to our property from the ACT which would be within 20km away. This could potentially be fatal if one of our clients were to fall off from a loud noise that came about from construction, who would be held liable in this case, I believe as a business everyday we take precautions to ensure our clients are in the safest environment and that the outside elements would be at fault.*

*The heightened risk of danger imposed by heavy vehicles to these road users, particularly those riding horses or towing horses in vehicles -who are flight animals, easily spooked by loud noises, are significant.*

*As a note â€œ*

- The junction of Wallaroo road to the Barton Highway is a known dangerous spot, with five serious accidents having occurred in the last two years. Adding large 20 Tonne trucks to the mix would greatly exacerbate the situation.*
- The bridge on Wallaroo road was constructed for residential use, not industrial use as has been proposed.*
- Gooromon Pond road is limited to 5 Tonne trucks; itâ€™s a 3 metre wide, 3.3 km long road with 40 farm driveways: itâ€™s not suitable for the proposed industrial use. We would have grave concerns about safety.*

*Social - Our clients wellbeing*

*As a business, we have been collaborating with Pegasus Riding for the Disabled (RDA) to transition their high-functioning autistic students to our centre. This partnership allows Pegasus to accommodate students with more complex needs, while our centre provides a quiet and safe environment for equine therapy, an essential part of many students' therapy plans. However, we are concerned about the potential negative impacts of the solar farm construction on our business and clients. The noise pollution generated by the construction process will be disturbing to our clients, many of whom experience sensory processing difficulties due to autism. Loud or unexpected noises can be overwhelming or even painful for these individuals.*

*We are worried that the solar farm will compromise the quiet and relaxing atmosphere our clients rely on, jeopardizing our working relationship with Riding for Disabled and ultimately affecting our business income. If the environment is not conducive to transitioning clients, Pegasus may be limited in its ability to assist more vulnerable clients in the wider ACT community.*

*To mitigate these concerns, we recommend implementing a setback distance requirement for solar farm installations, ensuring a safe distance from sensitive populations like our clients. Typically, solar farms are placed at least 5km away from residential areas. By prioritizing public health and safety, particularly for vulnerable groups like children with autism, we can ensure that solar energy projects are developed responsibly.*



*Social - Our horses wellbeing*

*The proposed solar farm poses potential risks to the wellbeing of horses in the area, particularly those at Gooromon Park Riding Centre. The noise disturbances can alter horse behaviour, leading to changes in social dynamics, feeding patterns, and overall wellbeing. As the site is unusually close to local farmlands, with many residents owning and riding horses, it is crucial to consider the potential impacts on these animals. However, we have not been consulted, and no studies have been conducted to assess the effects on horse wellbeing. As the business manager of Gooromon Park Riding Centre, I am concerned about the lack of consideration for the potential impacts on our horses. We urge the solar farm developers to conduct thorough research and consult with local stakeholders to ensure the wellbeing of our animals is protected.*

*The questions we have left unanswered are the following:*

*Have you done a risk and impact assessment for local businesses who will be affected?*

*Have you consulted with ACT tourism or NSW tourism to risk assess the area?*

*What is your strategy to minimise dust to residential areas?*

*Have you completed an impact assessment on local waterways?*

*What is the proposed construction methodology for the solar farm, e.g. will blasting be involved?*

*Will the westerly winds create harmony or noise effects to the local area?*

*If these impact assessments have been completed, can they be made available to public on your website.*

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