



NAME REDACTED

OBJECT

Submission No: 189202

Organisation:		<p>Key issues: <i>Land use compatibility, Visual impacts, Biodiversity, Traffic, Heritage, Erosion and sediment control, Water, Noise, Waste, Dust, Hazards and risks, Community benefit, Cumulative impacts, Other issues</i></p>
Location:	<i>Location redacted</i>	
Submitter Type:	<i>an individual making a submission on my own behalf</i>	
Attachment:		

Submission date: 7/30/2024 9:39:24 PM

I am writing to place my formal objection to the Wallaroo Solar Farm project.

This submission is an objection to the Wallaroo Solar Farm Project. It is important to note this is not a statement against progressive measures to reduce impacts of climate change and the shift towards renewable energy. This submission aims to highlight that this project should not proceed due to inadequate community consultation and appropriate planning to ensure, meaning it will have significant negative impacts on the NSW and Canberra communities, particularly those located in close proximity to this project. This location is not appropriate for this project. Please see below a summary of my concerns for your consideration.

Negative associated health and wellbeing impacts on the surrounding community. Many in the community have highlighted the negative visual impacts of this project on the beautiful, serene, horticultural area of Wallaroo. Spending time in nature, has been strongly linked to improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Wallaroo being positioned so close to the ACT and neighbouring NSW towns means it is a population location for both residents and tourists to utilise. Which I would like to link this visual impact to what many in the area know to be one of the biggest assets of this area and what draws so many tourist to this area annually. The region offer breath taking natural landscapes that are frequently enjoyed by those walking, horse riding, and cycling, as well as those working on the land or visiting the many wonderful wineries and dinings spots. Many of these tourist locations are designed around the rural landscape made up of rolling hills, rivers, trees, and wild life with the incredible backdrop of the Brindabella Mountain Ranges. This project has the potential to significantly negatively effect the impact the appeal of this area which encourages many to slow down and reconnect with nature. The impact of this landscape will be completely transformed by the construction of this project and then the visual impact of the 700 football field equivalent of solar panels. The effects of nature on mental health can be highlighted here <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature> .

The construction and visual impacts of this area will negatively affect tourism in the area. In 2017 it was estimated that 2.1 million people visit the Canberra Tablelands region annually, contributing to \$400 million to the regions economy. The Wallaroo region is home to well renowned wineries, restaurants, accomodation, and wedding venues. Nick O'Leary winery estimated 22000 customers to his venue alone in the past year. This project poses significant impact on the revenue of local business and will have negative effects on tourism to the area.

There is strong evidence to support regular physical activity to support health and wellbeing outcomes. This project limits residents and tourists ability to safely exercise in the area affected by construction. This area is regional and does not have bike or walking paths, instead large numbers of people horse ride, walk, run and cycle along the narrow, poorly maintained roads travelling in and out for Wallaroo, heavy traffic for constitution will significantly reduce these forms of physical activity for the community. Again, highlight the benefits of nature, this physical activity being continued outdoors in nature, holds strong benefits for individuals and communities in the areaz



Inadequate community consultation and community awareness of this project. The broader Yass Valley and West Belconnen community groups have indicated limited knowledge of this project, particularly relating to the direct impacts on the communities in the surrounding region. It is paramount for large scale projects such as these to have thorough and robust consumer input. <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-work/working-with-communities>

Close proximity of this project to large residential dwellings, particularly in West Belconnen area, which is closer than the recommended 5Km buffer referred to within NSW land planning rules. Raising concerns about appropriate consideration for residents living in ACT suburbs.

Examples of other NSW solar projects and their proximity to residential land can be seen below, all of which follow the >5Km buffer :

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

Additionally, a solar farm being positioned this close to residents in both NSW and ACT, poses a significant bush fire risk to large residential dwellings. Canberra has a particularly high risk for bushfires, being geographically surrounded by bushland and with Canberra being in a valley, bushfires can lead to reduced air quality as smoke gets trapped over the city, as seen in the 2019 bushfire season.

Significant impact on the Wallaroo community including safety, tourism and natural landscape. The roads in the regional town of Wallaroo are regularly littered with potholes, particularly after heavy rainfall. Infrastructure in this area is designed for the small population of wallaroo and the tourism/hospitality venues in the area, meaning roads are narrow and some have 5T limits.

There is ample evidence that heavy vehicles, such as those needed to develop the Wallaroo Solar farm, will cause significant damage to these roads, having direct impacts on the safety of both residents and tourists in the area. Additionally, frequent truck traffic on the narrow roads of wallaroo, pose risk to traffic, cyclists, horse riders and children who catch school buses from the end of their drive ways on the main roads (including Wallaroo Road and Gooromon Ponds Road).

Gooromon Ponds Riding school, which is positioned directly above the proposed site, provides valued services to Pegasus Canberra. A non- for profit group that provides horse riding and equine based supports for those living with disability. It is particularly important to note the impacts of construction for this site on the accessibility of this service within Wallaroo for the disability community. Particularly those accessing Pegasus who live with sensory sensitivities (such as auditory) including those living with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The noise, dust, increased traffic to the area all significant contribute to sensory input of a naturally very low sensory environment. Quality and trusted disability services are under high demand, particularly those in regional and easily accessible areas such as the Wallaroo community. The negative impacts of development of this project on this population should be noted with high importance.

House prices: realestate experts have estimated approximately 20% reduction in house prices for houses in both NSW and ACT neighbouring areas. This is a significant financial impact to a large scale of residential dwellings, particularly of concern during a cost of living crisis. This will pose significant financial burden on residents and will have lasting, intergenerational impact. Financial stress is well documented to have broad



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*ranging negative effects on individuals, including increased psychological distress
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8806009/>.*

In summary, this is the wrong location for this project and the lack of community consultation and planning means this project has significant negative impact potential.

Thank you for considering my submission.
