New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: DINAWAN SOLAR FARM (SSD-50725959)

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

PANEL:	SUELLEN FITZGERALD (Chair) SIMON SMITH
OFFICE OF THE IPC:	TAHLIA HUTCHINSON GEOFF KWOK
STAKEHOLDER:	ANNETTE WHEATON (Riverina Farming First)
LOCATION:	COLEAMBALLY COMMUNITY HALL KINGFISHER AVENUE, COLEAMBALLY
DATE:	10:00AM – 11:00AM FRIDAY, 27th FEBRUARY 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MS SUELLEN FITZGERALD: Good morning, Mrs Wheaton. Before we begin, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we're meeting, the Wiradjuri, and I'd like to pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

We're meeting today to discuss the state significant development application for the Dinawan Solar Farm, that single development. I'm Suellen Fitzgerald, I'm the Panel Chair, and you've met my fellow commissioner, Simon Smith, and you've met staff members Tahlia Hutchinson and Geoff Kwok from the Independent Planning Commission.

In the interests of openness and transparency, we're recording this morning's meeting, and a full transcript of the meeting will be available on the Commission's website in a couple of days' time.

So, with those opening remarks, I'm opening it to you. I've got Tahlia as my timekeeper there and she'll start waving at me at the 9-minute mark.

MS ANNETTE WHEATON: Yes, that'll be fine.

MS FITZGERALD: … and I'll pass that on to you. But I should also say don't worry if there's anything you, that slips your mind this morning, there's further opportunity for a submission after this. Over to, Mrs Wheaton.

MS WHEATON: Okay. Good morning. I can hear you groaning from here, you've had so many submissions, and you know exactly what I'm going to say. You know, the destruction of the country and the rest of it. But I've got another point to make.

Has anyone every told you that wind turbines prevent dew in the mornings? Has anyone told you that? Yes, it's really kind of interesting. But anyway, I'll get back to that in a minute.

World population increase. Population as of 2025 is 8.23 million. Expected population 2050 is 9 million – 9.8 billion. Okay. That's nearly an increase of a third, isn't it? Australia's population, 2025, is 27.61 million; expected population 2050 is 38 million people. That's 24 harvests we've got to be able to provide for those people when they come in; it's not many. And with the available agricultural land being reduced by the so-called renewable industry, the new native vegetation laws and continual land taken up by government for national and state parks, I hope you're all prepared to pay higher prices for food – that is, if we have access to food as we have now. We might be on food restrictions.

I have read renewable energy professor Ivan Kennedy, wind turbines – this is really interesting. Turbines can increase evaporation levels and in turn increase the surface temperature by 0.5 degrees by stopping the dew point. So, the wind turbines actually make the soil hotter. And I thought we were trying to reduce the temperature of the earth.

The dew point is created by transpiration from the trees and other vegetation. If the moisture is taken out by evaporation, the trees and vegetation do not hold the same amount of moisture and make it extremely prone to bushfires because they haven't got the – they ignite a lot easier.

Have you ever got up early when the dew is still on the ring-lock fences and seen the thousands of spiders and spiderwebs hanging off them? The sight is magic. If you want to see this bit of natural magic, I suggest strongly that you go and have a look in case they put the wind turbines up.

[Unintelligible 00:04:45] Sorry.

MS FITZGERALD: That's okay.

MS WHEATON: These insects don't walk to dams to drink the moisture; they drink the moisture from the dew. And you may or may not be aware of our pollinators, our bees, particularly are under siege by varroa mite at the moment. And there are some insects that actually drink like that too; they don't just go into the dams and all that, they prefer surface water.

But how many insects and animals in the 30-k radius of this energy facility do you think will survive on the reduced moisture and not being allowed the moisture to get to the dew point? This, in anything I have been reading, is not considered. I got this from Ivan Kennedy and Ralph Champion, stating that it is a really serious issue.

We've got irrigation out and into these areas and that proves by adding moisture to this area, like this, becomes a food bowl for not only food security for our country but a valuable export income. Agriculture is renewable. Wind turbines aren't. Gross estimated income with the agriculture on the agricultural land that Dinawan is going to be on – this is from agriculture if it's a really good season, because you can grow babies in this country when it's wet – is approximately $30 million. I didn't do it because I haven't got their figures, but this is off an AI thing. And in a bad year, $13 million.

Okay. This land can be used if looked after forever, not 20 years and destroyed for centuries if wind turbines, BESS batteries and solar panels are allowed all over the property. You cite coal mines and gases being destructive, however, for some reason, you have blinkers on when it comes to this so-called renewable transition.

Decommissioning of a wind turbine. From what I have read, the wind turbine is cut off from the pylon anywhere from half a metre to a metre under the soil. The other 5 to 9 metres are rebar and concrete, the 2,500 tonnes of it, is left in the ground, along with all the other materials that was used to construct that pylon. And a half-a-metre or a metre hole is filled in with dirt. The same principle is applied to solar panels. They pull down to ground level, anything under the ground is apparently left there – all the wiring etc. Can you imagine ringing Dial to Dig in that area? They'll say, "Oh no, you

can't dig there because of all this wiring underneath it." We don't know whether it's still tied up, is it live, they say it is, but you know, accidents do happen.

Okay. All the wiring. What can't be recycled is put into landfill, which most of it can't be, and that's more land that's destroyed. With this method, please consider the very real threat of erosion. You're filling a hole with dirt that's on the solar thing-o, you're going to get – yes, it's not going to work. You can't reuse the pylons to replace the spent turbine with a new turbine, so you have to dig another 2,500 tonnes of soil out with a radius metre – their plate is around 50 metres radius, and build another complete turbine and pylon, fill the base with another 2,500 tonnes of concrete and rebar, and dismantle and repeat.

These pylons – I wonder what the future archaeologists would make of all these pylons stuck on this productive country. I don't think they would be praising this as an achievement. I would think they would be shaking their heads and say, "What the hell were they thinking?"

Here's the new Fire Regulations because of the solar panel at Boree burnt, Boree Solar burnt, we've got new official guidelines, so you better read those.

MS FITZGERALD: Mm-hm.

MS WHEATON: Okay. I find it really interesting that soil testing isn't done every 12 months under solar panels because the leaching effect of everything. And apparently silver is one of the biggest components that leaches out of solar panels – who would have thought? Silver is the next most toxic chemical/metal to mercury. So, you've got that coming out onto your paddock. Who's going to clean up all this mess? You know, you've got – okay, you've got the brains of putting all this stuff out, you haven't thought where it's going, how to get rid of it, what actual damage it's done to the communities and to the actual land.

And in this area in particular, there's a lot of endangered species, but I don't know whether you've been made aware of. There's all sorts of things. These will be very detrimental to them. Look, the Claypan Daisy, that will be affected by the drying out of the atmosphere with the wind turbines turning. There's frogs, there's superb parrots. Look at this little orchid. That's going to be affected. You mightn't think they're anything but out here, you know, you see something pretty in a paddock and you go, "Oh God, isn't it amazing." Pink Donkey Orchids – have you seen any of these? Well, you know what I'm talking about, don't you?

Okay. And we want them, don't we?

MR SIMON SMITH: Yes, we do.

MS WHEATON: We want to keep them.

MS FITZGERALD: Yes.

MS WHEATON: But if you're going to do this, you're going to kill most of them. And I'm particularly worried about the bees, because they're endangered at the moment with the varroa virus.

Also, I was going to go onto – oh dear, I can't see it – the asbestos factor. There's a court case on, it's been going forever, I can't even think of the name of it now … I'll have to do that again. I've got too much rubbish and I left half of it at home.

MS FITZGERALD: You can leave that with us afterwards, if you wish, Mrs Wheaton.

MS WHEATON: Yes, I will. This is from – that's Ivan Kennedy's thing-o from Tanawa, whatever it was, he put that in and I read it and I thought you lot have got to read it and really appreciate it.

MS FITZGERALD: Mm-hm.

MS WHEATON: And that's [unintelligible 00:13:46] by me, but I'm just saying, you know, he said I could have it. You can have that too.

MS FITZGERALD: Mrs Wheaton, with the last minute or two, I assume we're, yes, is there anything further you specifically want us to be aware of in relation to the solar farm? Is there anything, any further points you wanted to make?

MS WHEATON: No. Just the destruction of the, you know, the poison toxicity of it all.

MS FITZGERALD: Mm-hm.

MS WHEATON: And the fact that you're not going to check it all the time to see whether there is leaching. It probably should be done every six months. And with the one at Dubbo, what's happening with that, you know, who's cleaning that one up? It was smashed to bits and, you know, I thought the company's just walked away and left it.

MS FITZGERALD: Mm.

MS WHEATON: So, you know, how often is that going to happen?

MS FITZGERALD: Okay.

MS WHEATON: Because there's no bond to clean it up.

MS FITZGERALD: Right. A decommissioning bond.

MS WHEATON: Yes.

MS FITZGERALD: Anything further before I read the closing statement, that you wanted to – and you can make a further submission, as I've said.

MS WHEATON: I think when they decommission, they should totally decommission, not say, "Oh look, we'll just leave 2,500 tonnes of concrete and rebar in and all the electric wiring." And what I was reading is they think, oh well, it'll disturb the soil. They've already done it, and they should take that cement out – they can use it for something else. Having it stuck in the ground is just a waste of commodity, isn't it?

MS FITZGERALD: Mm-hm.

MS WHEATON: It's just ridiculous. And all that wiring, you know, when it comes to the surface, which it will because erosion and think of the damage that'll do.

MS FITZGERALD: Okay. Simon, have you got questions for Mrs Wheaton?

MR SMITH: No.

MS FITZGERALD: I don't think I do either on the things you covered. So, I'll make my closing statement then for the tape. Thank you for participating in the process. If you'd like to add to your submission today, you're welcome to make a written one, thank you, and as I said previously, the deadline for that is midnight on Sunday the 8th of March.

So, thank you again, Mrs Wheaton …

MS WHEATON: That's all right.

MS FITZGERALD: … for coming in to be a part of this important part of the process.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED