



New South Wales Government
Independent Planning Commission

TRANSCRIPT OF MEETING

RE: DINAWAN SOLAR FARM (SSD-50725959)

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

PANEL: SUELLEN FITZGERALD (Chair)
SIMON SMITH

STAKEHOLDER: RAFE CHAMPION

LOCATION: ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

DATE: 10:00AM – 12:30PM
WEDNESDAY, 4th MARCH 2026

<THE MEETING COMMENCED

MS SUELLEN FITZGERALD: Oh, great.

5 **MR RAFE CHAMPION:** Yes.

MS FITZGERALD: Great. We've got you, Mr Champion. Can you hear us?

10 **MR CHAMPION:** I hear you.

MS FITZGERALD: Great. And we can hear you. Fantastic. Thank you for taking that call on that other line. Before we get started, I wanted to make a brief opening statement. I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you from Gadigal land, and I acknowledge the traditional owners from all of the lands from which we're virtually meeting today. I'd also like to pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

15 We're meeting today to discuss the state significant development application for the Dinawan Solar Farm. I'm Suellen Fitzgerald and I'm the Chair of the Panel. Joining me is my fellow commissioner, Simon Smith, and staff members from the office of the Independent Planning Commission here in the room this morning.

20 In the interests of openness and transparency, this meeting will be recorded, and a full transcript of today's meeting will be available on the Commission's website in the next couple of days.

25 So, Mr Champion, I'll give you a heads up at the final minute mark. In the meantime, over to you.

MR CHAMPION: Thank you. My objection is lodged against each and every wind, solar and battery project, not just this particular project on this particular site. Wind and solar have no place on the grid, where the paramount requirement is continuity and consistency, which wind and solar cannot provide.

30 One of the problems is wind droughts, that is periods where up to three days and nights, there's next to no wind across the southeastern Australia. The meteorologists fail to issue wind drought warnings and then the wind farmers and their government sponsors never check the continuity of the wind supply.

35 The wind supply industry must be the only enterprise that survives without caring about the reliability of the supply chain for the major input. Contrast that with dirt farmers who are acutely aware of the risks of rain droughts, and they pay close attention to rainfall figures over long periods of time.

40 So, without worrying about wind droughts and especially windless nights, around the western world trillions of assorted currencies have been spent on the transition program. And everywhere the results have been the same. Electricity is more expensive, it's less reliable, with blackouts looming in Britain, Germany, and Australia if we lose one more coal plant, and even parts of the United States.

On top of that, there is a catastrophic impact on forest and farmlands. Have a look at the blasted peaks in north Queensland, the wreckage on the black soil plains of New South Wales, and the wheatfields of the Mallee. Have a look at the picture of the children knee-deep in toxic swamps in the Congo mining materials for Teslas and consider the Uyghurs in China in forced labour camps. This is not a pretty sight. It is a great insult to the environmentalists of the world who have not yet found the guts or the integrity to come out and tell the truth about what is happening, ostensibly to save the planet.

The combination of wind droughts and a cost of grid-scale storage guarantees that there will be no transition at all. To be more concrete, think of wind, solar and batteries as the three legs of a stool. The stool is the transition program. Well, the wind leg fails every night, so it has to be propped up by wind and batteries. Wind droughts at night occur far too often and frustrate any hope through that transition, and especially when you take account of the cost of the battery storage that we hear so much about.

Just be clear that the cost of this storage is astronomical. Do the arithmetic. Just think about the amount of storage required to get through, say, 16 hours of a night when there's next to little or no sun available. So, throwing out some round numbers, 16 hours multiplied by 20 gigawatts of baseload power, that's 320 gigawatt-hours. So, pop it down a bit to allow for the contribution of hydro and a certain amount of wind, after all the wind's never flat across the whole of southeastern Australia all night, but still, think about the cost of 200 gigawatt-hours of battery storage. That's somewhere north of half a billion – that's a big B for billion – for every gigawatt-hour.

MS FITZGERALD: Mr Champion ...

MR CHAMPION: Yes.

MS FITZGERALD: You're just on the last minute.

MR CHAMPION: Oh, that's fine. I'm just about to round up. Thank you.

MS FITZGERALD: Great.

MR CHAMPION: So, as I'm saying, there's three legs of the stool still don't hold up because of the wind droughts, the nights, and the cost of the batteries. Because these nights can occur, there can be three in a row. In a worst-case scenario in June 2017, across the month were 10 windless nights staged throughout the month.

And while this is going on, you have to consider where spare power is going to come from to actually charge that amount of battery storage. Take the coal out of the grid, leave it to wind and solar, and where will there ever be enough spare wind and solar to charge 100 or 200 gigawatt-hours of battery storage?

So, I'll leave you with –

5 **MS FITZGERALD:** Thank you, Mr Champion. I appreciate you being on time there. If there's further things you wanted to add, you're welcome to make a written submission, we do read all written submissions, and you can make those via the portal on our website or via email. And the deadline for that is midnight on Sunday the 8th of March. So, we'll look forward to reading your submission, Mr Champion. Thank you for your time this morning.

10 **MR CHAMPION:** I wanted to keep it short, and thanks for the opportunity. Okay. Bye.

MS FITZGERALD: Thank you so much. Cheers.

>THE MEETING CONCLUDED