



ANNETTE PIPER

OBJECT

Submission No: 179636

Organisation:		Key issues: Land use compatibility, Visual impact, Traffic and transport, Social impacts, Other issues
Location: New South Wales 2843		
Submitter Type: I am a member of the community with a view about the proposed development		
Attachment:		

Submission date: 6/14/2024 10:47:20 AM

*I watched the IPC community meeting for Birriwa Solar and was very disappointed with ACEN's response opportunity at the end of the day.*

*After literally hours of universally opposed community and members of the public speaking about their concerns regarding the project, the cumulative effects of multiple projects and more, both the Department of Planning and ACEN were given the opportunity of rebuttal/response/providing more information etc.*

*The Department of Planning answered some of the questions that had been raised by the meeting. Yet ACEN used their time to repeat the same platitudes that had clearly been debunked by the presentations throughout the day. This disrespect for the community/public, in such a clear and pointed way, demonstrates exactly how ACEN disregards community sentiment, has not meaningfully engaged with the community during the planning phases of the project and is why they have little to no social licence in the district. They appear to be one of the "cowboy outfits" that the previous federal Wind Commissioner, [REDACTED] described.*

*The ACEN office in Coolah shut earlier this year. It was hardly ever open but now it appears completely unmanned apart from a weekly meeting held for ACEN staff behind closed doors. At the beginning of the year, an ACEN staff member was instrumental in getting an Australian Post contractor in Coolah fired for not being polite (the contractor is personally negatively impacted by local renewable projects and was filling in for another contractor (his friend) that had suicided a few days prior). This action by ACEN has created much bad feeling in the Coolah community towards them.*

*In Dunedoo, ACEN confirmed removal of multiple mature trees if the Birriwa Solar installation is approved. A well respected landowner who had planted and nurtured these trees was understandably angry. The ACEN employee called the police on the landowner accusing the elderly landowner of threats. The community is now tangibly angry with ACEN's actions in this matter and looks very unfavourably at the employees and the company.*

*In Gulgong, ACEN is currently constructing the Stubbo Solar installation. Residents feel overwhelmed by the town's roads being filled with vehicles and high-vis dressed workers travelling to and from the Stubbo site, at the beginning and end of the workdays, for months on end. The lack of consideration by ACEN regarding the increased traffic has created community annoyance and a general resistance to ACEN.*

*These examples show that ACEN is NOT respected in the community and DO NOT HAVE social licence, regardless of what they espouse. Throwing money at a few community organisations is NOT SOCIAL LICENCE.*

*I was in Gulgong in the last week and took the opportunity to ask various residents (none of whom were known to me) about how they felt about the solar projects in the area. Every person I spoke to was opposed to the proliferation of industrial solar into the district. The reasons were:*

1. *Covering productive farmland with solar panels reducing agricultural production,*



2. *The negative visual aspect of what was previously "pretty" rural land with "ugly" solar panels, turning their predominately rural views into what is increasingly becoming industrial.*
3. *The change in the community/town with a large increase in unknown people in town treating it with disrespect (i.e. no care taken) and increased construction worker traffic.*
4. *A heavy-handed approach to community sponsorship which had reduced community camaraderie and was contributing to a breakdown in community spirit eg. the community working together to fundraise for a cause was reducing as handouts from developers became more available " whilst initially seen as a boon, this was now being seen as a negative social impact.*
5. *Excessive signage by developers around town and events promoting their small contributions, giving the feeling of being a "company" town.*

*Gulgong's experience is likely to be repeated in Dunedoo and other towns within the CWO REZ. Approving this project will result in tearing the very fabric of our community. Are you, members of the IPC, willing to be responsible for this?*

*I request that the approval for Birriwa Solar be denied based on inadequate community consultation and lack of social licence in the district.*

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