



TANYA NICHOLS

OBJECT

Submission ID: 236813

Organisation: <i>N/A</i>	Key issues: <i>Land Use Compatibility/Conflict, Cumulative Impacts, Traffic, Visual Impacts</i>
Location: <i>New South Wales 2333</i>	
Attachment: <i>Attached overleaf</i>	

Submission date: 5/02/2025 14:41

SEE ATTACHED OBJECTION

5/2/24

Dear Commissioner

OBJECTION TO Muswellbrook Solar Farm SSD-46543209

We have previously written a submission in OBJECTION to the Muswellbrook Solar Farm on 18/9/23.

We recently received an email from you regarding the public meeting coming up on the 12 February 2025. In this email you provided a link to the Muswellbrook Shire Councils' meeting with the Commission's Panel on the 17 January 2025.

We have read this transcript and would like to add some further points to our original objection and to add to some clarification of points that the Council representatives were asked, but did not fully answer.

Clarification

Council was asked

MR MENZIES: Okay. I think we're getting pretty close to the end of our sets of questions. I was – I started my reading for this matter with the Council's submission, and it was a really good scene setter, so thank you for that. Because it made me attentive to a spectrum of things in my other readings. One of the things that you suggested in there that the applicant hasn't taken up is that even though visual impacts are low or moderate, they should still consider being willing to put up vegetation screening, offer vegetation screening for community. Could you just elaborate on that one a little, and once again, a sense of the feedback that you're getting from the community about this proposal. Is the community very exercised by it? We of course had the submissions, but they come in early. Various things that you've done may have changed the tenor of 5 discussion in the community.

In response to this we believe that the community is still very very upset about the proposal. We know that our views have not changed regarding the location of the Solar Farm in such a close and very visual location to our estate. We are a part of a "Community Facebook Chat " that consistently updates each other on aspects of the proposal as they come forward. The community sense has not dulled by anything that the proponent or Council has come up with. In fact, it has probably upset us more that the proponent and Council suggest that the visual impact of this Solar Farm will be low or moderate, and the proponent is reluctant to screen it.

So, to answer the question.... No!!..... community sense has not dulled.

Another suggestion that we read from the meeting is regarding monetary compensation via a community funding scheme to landholders in our estate.

MS POPE: said.....

And likewise, when we spoke about benefits for the immediate residents who will be close to the solar farm, they initially suggested they would give them cheap power. But our thought is that that has an unintended consequence of encouraging people to use more power, and long term, in addition to reducing CO2 emissions, we need to actually not use as much power as a community. 40 So, our suggestion was we give the residents a rebate on their land rates, and the proponent said, well that was a really option as well, particularly as on the rate notice it can say, "Rebate because you're living close to a solar farm."

Now if the proponent were to be believed and there was no concern about living next to a solar farm, as suggested, then why is there a need to offer such compensation for living next door to one.

We are very concerned about the devaluation of our properties from the close proximity to this Solar farm. In our original objection letter, we spoke about the magnificence of our estate being a prestigious area and a tightly held community. An idyllic location that is sought after with properties rarely changing hands. Residents of this area take pride in their homes and therefore have established Woodland Ridge as a premium location to live and raise their families.

The idea of having a notification ON OUR RATES NOTICE that we are receiving a **Rebate because you're living close to a solar farm**" will only add to everyone's anxiety of our properties devaluing.

In Muswellbrook, there is little to no other location for rural residential estates such as Woodland Ridge, making it that bit more unique and sort after. However, Muswellbrook is surrounded by land that is either affected by mining or power stations or a buffer zone to this type of industry. The land that is proposed for the Solar Farm is one of these buffer zones. We bought our land knowing this land would be a buffer zone to industry and we were all happy with this. To now find out that our buffer zone is to be taken away from us

and that industry is encroaching towards residential land, that is hard to come by, is very upsetting.

We implore that the Commissioner takes into consideration what we will be losing if this proposal is to be approved.

The crux of this matter is that, there is plenty of land to the south of Muswellbrook towards the power stations, that is already a buffer zone, with no residential land around it, no conflict of interest and no one to complain. The infrastructure is already there, meaning less set up costs, less impact on the local community.

The impact on the small local roads around the proposed Solar Farm has been expressed by Muswellbrook Shire Councils Mayor, Jeff Drayton, in this meeting.

MR DRAYTON:

The cumulative impact of the consumption of the local road assets by multiple projects is difficult to manage. So, road safety for local road users is also important. These are not very popular roads – when I say “popular”, they’re not very well-used roads. These are the roads, in this case, and certainly though, it’ll increase the traffic dramatically. So Council, we do not consider that the Department of Planning staff have fully understand this or incorporated the conditions into the Conditions of Consent that address our concerns about the roads. So, Council staff will address this further, but obviously as it’s quite a complex issue, we’ll also provide the commissioners with a written submission elaborating on these road requests. So, it’s in relation, in this case, with the cumulative impacts of that road use.

If the proposed Solar Farm was in another location closer to the now closed Liddell power station, these local community roads would not be impacted. The power stations have already built the road infrastructure to handle large construction vehicles as well as the many staff movements required in the major construction phase. The cost of upgrading roads to provide safety to the community must be taken into account .

A recent precedence was set by the Land and Environment court by rejecting the Burrundulla solar project at Mudgee.

The land and Environment Court knocked the application back on the grounds of its impact on “scenic quality.” A judge in the NSW Land and Environment Court agreed it was too

close to homes, and it would fundamentally change the landscape character on the road into Mudgee. The excessive scale of the proposed solar farm, located on a site that is within a low-lying, visually sensitive rural landscape, adjoining the main entrance corridor to Mudgee, demonstrates that the development as proposed is not suitable for the site. This is just common sense.

This is very similar to the Muswellbrook Solar Farm, as it will be seen from the new bypass that will direct ALL traffic, between 11,000 and 20,000 vehicles per day, past the proposal on low lying visually sensitive land and too close to existing homes. We can only hope that this precedent can help you see the plight of us as stakeholders in this fight.

On your proposed site visit, ahead of the public meeting to assess the physical attributes of the site and its surroundings, we can only hope that you consider our view from Woodland Ridge Estate and that of the proposed entrance to our town. Muswellbrook Council is working so hard on beautifying our town and with the recent announcement of \$100 million of investment, they are doing a great job. They commended themselves on the Regional Entertainment Centre, \$23 million, the Muswellbrook town centre upgrades, \$13 million and the Olympic Park redevelopment, \$8.15 million. All of this investment and the gateway to our town will be left looking like the entrance to an industrial zone. We are sure they can do better, and we urge you to also.

We understand that the Government is behind in its renewable targets, however a rash decision to place this eyesore on the Muscle Creek flats next to the entrance to our beautiful town and our premium residential estate, instead of the nearby Liddell industrial area would be a disaster that would scar the landscape and be a horrible legacy for years to come.

In summary we wish to reiterate our OBJECTION to the Muswellbrook Solar Farm in its current location. Please look at alternative, much more suitable sites.

Thank you

Tanya & Guy Nichols

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