

Jane Lenehan's post

Braidwood Rate Payers and Locals.

Jane Lenehan · roopetSsnd53095u0uttl4gf4cm1tau6a 5h6t61Jf35 6en1161i: 0t1l3 ·

The argument that solar farms increase agricultural productivity shows little understanding of real-world farming. The property where the solar farm is proposed carries around 50 to 80 sheep. Even if we (generously) assume a 20% improvement in the condition of those sheep (as a result of living under solar panels part of the time) that gain is but a grain of sand on the beach.

Farmers know environmental husbandry involves a lot more than solar power. Most farmers and hobby farmers already use solar power on their farms for a variety of uses. But solar power is only one factor in a multi-faceted mix. Currently our Ballalaba farm which abuts the solar site, for example, has agreements with BCT (the State Government's Biodiversity Conservation Trust) to preserve hundreds of acres of native pastures, another with Parks and Wildlife (we are a Wildlife refuge) and have run several projects (ranging from erosion control to tree planting of wildlife corridors) with LLS (Local Land Services). Over 30 years we have planted over 10,000 trees, fenced the Shoalhaven to stop stock pollution, spent a six figure sum in attempts to control African Love Grass (a curse introduced by another well intentioned government programme that set out to solve a problem but ended up causing a bigger one).

The proponents of this solar farm are happy to ignore, and perhaps write off, that work and investment in the environment. Many neighbours around this site feel the same way. Where the proposed solar farm is sited is an irrelevance to its supporters, they just want it in a place where they can't see it.

The people of Ballalaba/Bendoura etc are mere collateral damage in their eyes. 'Yes, it's unfortunate' (they say) 'but that's just bad luck, the luck of the draw, it has to be built somewhere'. That sort of indifference from members of one's community is painful to experience.

What's even worse is EDPR picked a really bad site that would serve the whole district poorly. Wallaces Gap is a sub-optimal site that is likely to fail to deliver to promise while imposing unnecessary risks on many. It's a dud.

Why should the people of Braidwood, Majors Creek, Long Flat, Bendoura and Ballalaba be saddled with a second-best solution? Let's not settle for anything but the best for what (eventually) will, hopefully, become a part community owned asset.