

**Submission
No 87**

SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW

Name: Ms Wendy Spencer

Date Received: 8 September 2019

Please accept this submission to the Inquiry into Energy Supply and Sustainability in NSW.

Thanks for the opportunity to submit to this inquiry.

I live in Walgett and Wagga Wagga and want the opportunities that renewable energy and diversification can bring.

I observe that the fossil fuel industry is propped up by public investment and policy support from the government, and would not be viable if this was not the case. Now is the time to switch to renewable energy policy leadership - in the name of sound economic management and in response to the Climate Emergency.

I request the Committee holds public hearing for this inquiry in Walgett and Wagga Wagga.

I'm concerned because mining and CSG is putting our water resources at risk. For example:

The Maules Creek coal mine has been buying up ground water and paying triple what local farmers can afford, making the situation even worse for families already facing enormous drought pressure.

Santos has already polluted water on a number of occasions as part of the Narrabri CSG project, and if approved, the 850 well production project would put the recharge zone for the Great Artesian Basin at risk and produce vast amounts of toxic salt waste.

I want clean and affordable renewable energy and job opportunities for our region that doesn't sacrifice our rural communities, groundwater and public health.

Walgett now depends on Great Artesian Basin for its water supply and I personally am investing much of my spare time finding support for Walgett Shire Council and the other responsible NSW agencies, to manage our water infrastructure. WE need to move quickly to preserve water which means we also need to invest in waste water recycling and other water efficiency measures. One of these measures will involve using the Namoi Alluvial Basin and other shallow alluvial basins around Walgett which must not be contaminated by short term mining industries, but preserved for the long term survival of communities and ecosystems they depend on. Our local food production and drinking water supplies will depend on this.

I would like to see regional diversification plans developed to support our communities to plan for new industries and build on existing strengths, mapping out a pathway to harness renewable energy opportunities for the long-term. For example I am learning in my work through a community-led partnership with UNSW that our community can develop new industries in Walgett. One activity / enterprise we are pursuing is local waste processing which we believe will yield promising benefits and jobs. But there are others I would like to opportunity to present on if your community offers a public hearing in Walgett.

Expert modelling of renewable potential in north-west NSW has found we could produce 622MW of electricity from solar power, exporting energy to the national electricity market and creating 500 permanent local jobs by 2030. A commercial solar farm is in the process of establishing just outside Walgett, and I am investigating non-profit community energy solar power initiatives as well.

That's the future I want for Walgett and Wagga Wagga - not more damaging coal mines and new gasfields that would put our water at risk and make things even worse for our communities who are already faced with the dire reality of severe drought and a changing climate.

Thank you

Wendy Spencer

--

Wendy Spencer

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]