

**Submission
No 112**

SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW

Name: Mr Lachlan Mcphie

Date Received: 12 September 2019

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To whom it may concern,

I would like to make the following submission too the Inquiry into sustainability of energy supply and resources in NSW

Strategic sustainable long term planning is paramount with regards to energy production and we would ask for a moratorium on new renewable proposals until there is certainty of this planning and the processes. As our elected officials this is your job to dictate the terms on our behalf.

Firstly the stage must be set, the culture at the top sets the scene for what follows, with the Federal Government not having a STRATEGIC coherent well thought out planned policy on Energy, the result is that then the State Government lacks a strategic framework to follow and so on down the line, until you arrive at a community level where so called free market forces mean developers can have carte blanche as to where they site a renewable asset.

Without doubt the lack of foresight, inability to have a strategic sustainable plan that is not driven by ideological differences or wilful ignorance of what the populace requires is criminal. Energy from any source is one of the greatest advances of our civilisation yet we play around like children in a sandpit. Without electricity our world is like a house of cards, an illusion.

The opportunities for renewable energy are as vast as our nations landmass and we should pursue this opportunity for the benefit of the generations to come but it is imperative we stop this rampant randomised approach that is like applying a bandaid instead of a tourniquet. The incessant focus on stopping emissions is underwhelming, look at the lifestyle our wealth as a nation has created, we have 2 or more cars per family usually carrying a driver only, if we don't have air conditioning we cry out its too hot must be climate change, our lifestyle is an issue and if we don't want to give it up we need to change our attitude to emissions.

This lack of a strategic coherent basic plan is having deleterious effects on regional communities who have enough issues already on their doorsteps, lack of water security, rising health issues and rising unemployment, all of which threatens to tear the communities apart. I live on the Edge of Armidale NSW, a picturesque landscape of rolling agricultural land that is highly productive and the recipient of high rainfall which is necessary to grow food and fibre and provide water for life, the one thing we cannot do without. With the ill advised approach currently being undertaken toward siting renewable energy developments the Government has decided this region will be a hub for renewable energy, refer get submission what a grandiose ideal, Currently there are 7 solar industrial sized proposals being proposed with 15 kms of this community and right on the doorstep of those people who have invested in a rural lifestyle whilst working in town. I am one of at least 30-50 households that will be impacted by these poorly sited developments and this could have serious effects on our community and their assets. This seems absolutely incredible when we have such vast areas around us, eminently suitable to host these developments but no corporate greed gets in the way and we will build as close to infrastructure as possible. I refer here to comments made in the 2012 plan that the best solar resource is on the NorthWest slopes and plains not the tablelands, see attachment. When we investigated these proposals we find there are currently only guidelines to follow for how these proposals will be sited and established with no protection for the local community, not even a benefit in terms of lower power prices from power produced on our doorstep. There is also a question around the financial viability of the developers. There are no rules in this process which would provide certainty for both parties, we do live in a rule driven democratic society do we not.

Once again the common thread is that we must plan for these adjustments before we let market forces dictate to us, if we applied a holistic resource approach to this issue we would note that the desired goals would be to provide renewable energy generation that can be located where the resource is available, that then benefits all communities during construction and beyond. To then reach these goals we need to look at the management required to overcome the constraints that are in front of us. Such as infrastructure that is aged and not entirely fit for purpose, AEMO comment, to look forward as to what requirements for energy will be in the future so the infrastructure can be scaled accordingly, to have the lowest impact on communities by not siting them in urban, residential areas beside communities. Regional communities are resilient but

they are also forgotten in many ways, yet when they rise together as a community they can achieve remarkable outcomes.

We would suggest that the Government review the document NSW Government Submission on AEMO's integrated system plan, March 2018. On page 1 paragraph 4 it states that the strongest resource potential are located remote from the existing network and that transmission extensions to New Energy zones would help unlock new areas of NSW for energy development. This is great policy and the state should make these investments in more transmission capacity to access the remote resource, where developers could build truly large scale solar developments thus reducing the impact on rural communities. This idea has also been confirmed by the AEMO who have categorically stated that Grid capacity and need for better transmission are major constraint factors in the ability to develop renewables.

In this document it is stated that these Energy Zones are attractive due to reduced environmental, land-use and heritage constraints, this implies that regional areas are being targeted as second class.

Regarding trends in energy supply I noted a spate of recent articles in the AFR and others where the price of power is negative and this is having an effect on causing coal fired power to be loss making and solar plants don't get paid for production, these issues need addressing now in the planning process so we can get this right.

Watching the families who live in our area suffer from uncertainty is causing mental and emotional anguish and coupled with drought is just unfair. As for local communities there is very little ongoing benefit after the short construction period so the whole process is failing to deliver the economic benefits so desired in the North West New England 2036 plan.

Further these developments all seem to have a 30 year lifespan, this begs the question what will happen after 30 years, if we are building a strategic renewable grid we need to PLAN where these are placed and be prepared for the inevitable cost blowout as all the panels are replaced, this is inevitable as you cant build then after 30 years take it all down as we will be completely reliant on these plants for our power needs. This also suggests we need to know that whoever owns and operates these solar developments has the financial capacity to deliver in the future.

In summary, we call on the Government to place a short term moratorium on any further proposals until they can deliver a STRATEGIC SUSTAINABLE PROCESS that can enable sensible sympathetic planning to proceed. Simply make the Large scale guidelines law and incorporate community protection into that law so that these developments don't impact on wider communities.

I respectfully request that the inquiry members travel to Armidale to see for themselves the impacts these proposals are having before it is too late.

Regards

Lachlan Mcphie



Attachments included with submission:

NSW Government Submission on AEMO's Integrated System Plan, March 2018