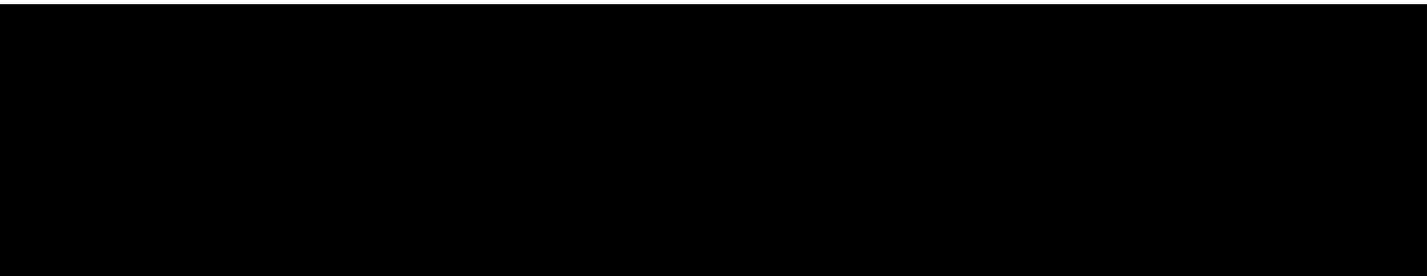


From: [REDACTED] <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Wednesday, 27 September 2023 4:58 PM
To: Community Engagement Review
Subject: Submission to the Community Engagement Review

I write to support development and delivery of new renewable energy projects and expansion of existing projects. But this should be done through transparent and participatory planning processes, and need not be done in sites that cause significant loss of biodiversity or cultural heritage values. We have ample cleared land to accommodate solar, wind and pumped hydro schemes. We should legislate to ensure that those projects focus on cleared land, rather than on cheaper bushland properties. There's not much point allowing renewable energy projects to 'save the world' if they destroy biodiversity values through land clearing and fragmentation. They're also compatible with pastoralism, so should be on pastoral lands where grazier or even cropping can gain royalties to supplement their agricultural incomes, which is additionally important in an increasingly unreliable climate. Proponents should be told very clearly that schemes that would involve significant bushland clearing will not be approved.

State Governments have increasingly weakened planning laws to allow them to bypass public participation, have reduced review from their own agencies, and avoid legal challenges. This approach is unsound and often undemocratic. It should not be allowed in any Cwlth supported renewable energy projects. These should require full review and full participation, including legal challenges. Good proposals will stand up to this scrutiny. Poor ones may not. Full engagement should cause proponents to provide more robust and less problematic proposals, which should in turn be more likely to be approved. Regulations should prevent vexatious challenges that are no merit-based but are instead ideologically driven or unsupported by evidence. In large part, the Courts already screen out bad cases, but under-resourcing of courts mean that this can take an excessive time for a decision to be made. The Cwlth could invest in the Courts to ensure that they can quickly review any case against a proposal to determine if it warrants a hearing, or if it is unsound and can be dismissed. I want to see renewable energy projects approved, not unreasonably delayed, but those needs should not compromise due process and the need for sensitive project design. This includes natural and cultural heritage considerations.

Yours sincerely,
[REDACTED]



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