

This is my submission with respect to the inadequate engagement by developers of solar "farms" with families/landowners who will be severely and permanently impacted by the developers' proposals. The comments below are based on my personal experience.

LightsourceBP (BP) is proposing a 400MW Industrial solar "farm" on the Gundry Plains **less than 10 kms from Goulburn NSW.**

It will impact 65 families directly i.e. next door to or across the road from the proposed solar "farm" and another 30 families indirectly. BP has acknowledged these numbers in their scoping report.

If built today it would be largest solar facility in the State and the second largest in Australia.

The site will be covered by **740,740, 5m high**, photovoltaic panels, stretching across a **708ha (7 sq km – 1650 acres) site** which extends for 7km across the entire breadth of the beautiful, historic Gundry Plains on the outskirts of Goulburn.

We live next door to the 1650 acres of land over which BP has an option to build the solar "farm". **The boundary is 150m from our bedroom.** The land is not flat. It is hilly rising to 713m.

BP has deliberately understated or obfuscated the likely adverse impact on neighbours and impacted landholders, the community opposition and broader stakeholder opposition to the project by deliberately ignoring important known facts and material and deliberately failing to undertake the necessary research before choosing the site.

This includes:

1. Failure to explore alternatives to the proposed site, especially having regard to the inappropriateness of the site and its proximity to the city of Goulburn (less than 10kms).
2. Failure to acknowledge the disproportionate size of the project site relative to local landholdings. Aligned to this there are the severe adverse impacts on landholder lifestyle amenity, views, property values and the consequential effect on the mental health of residents. To this end BP utilised misleading maps which falsely conveyed that the site is in the middle of a vast agricultural area. At no point does the scoping report engage with the more accurate Stop Gundry Solar Farm map which has been in the public domain for months. (see website [savegundryplains.au](http://savegundryplains.au))
3. Failure to acknowledge Goulburn Mulwaree Council's 2021 submission to the State Government seeking to be included as a regional city for the purposes of the Large Scale Solar Energy Guideline. In the submission Council identified significant planning issues that would arise if large scale renewables were developed in proximity to the city. Those planning issues have been ignored by BP and its consultant Umwelt despite having direct relevance to the project.
4. Failure to acknowledge the strength of the broader community and stakeholder opposition to the proposed development because of its locality, including from those who are, in principle, in favour of renewables developments in the region – e.g. members of the Council and the Goulburn Chamber of Commerce.
5. Failure to adequately acknowledge in particular the ongoing very serious mental health impacts on the worst impacted Gundry residents including suicide and constant extreme anxiety due to the substantial loss of property value (30 to 50% which has been substantiated by one sale), the permanent environmental destruction that BP has acknowledged publicly will occur and the future uncertainty. One family has had its property on the market twice since the announcement and has been told by two prospective buyers that they would have made an offer but for the solar "farm" .

The BP scoping report also contains false or misleading information:

1. BP claims that Gundry has a 'good' solar resource when in an Australian context it patently does not. This has resulted in BP not addressing the fact that the project will be highly inefficient and therefore an unconvincing development from a 'whole of society' view point. The Bureau of Meteorology statistics show that Goulburn has an average of 88.5 clear days a year. The area has heavy frosts, fog and snow on a regular basis and summer fogs.

2. BP and Umwelt falsely suggest that adverse impacts on property values are negligible and/or akin to low impact experienced by some wind farm developments. One of the impacted landowners who sold his farm lost 36% i.e. \$900,000. His family's decision to sell was brought about by the unpleasantness of the owner of the solar land, the behaviour of some of the supporters of the solar facility and the abuse of his child whilst waiting for the school bus by a woman who was screaming at her and asking why her parents were opposed to the solar facility. The family was facing a 219 degree view of the panels on the 713m hills in front of them and the 7.4 acres sub-station which is planned to be built in the middle of 9 families.

Another landowner has been told that he will lose 30% to 50% off the value of his property if the "farm" proceeds.

The claim that the financial impact is negligible is also a preposterous claim given:

- a. Globally, studies regarding wind farm impact on property values vary wildly and unsurprisingly depend on the location of the wind farm;
- b. Wind farms (and solar farms for that matter) are not typically built in tightly held small rural block areas very close to regional cities such as this one, but usually in more remote places including high peaks and ridges and other more remote places where the land is utilised and accordingly valued for agricultural use only;
- c. There are no large scale solar impact studies in Australia because they are a new phenomenon. But we note there is no development of this scale built or proposed so close to a large regional city and on a site which is many times the size of the much smaller landholdings that surround it;
- d. Umwelt has used studies conducted in Rhode Island, Massachusetts as an indicator of low impact. This is disingenuous when the largest solar installation at that overseas location is a mere 21MW, a fraction the size of the 400MW LSBP proposal. Again, this comparison demonstrates the lack of consideration by BP of the scale of the development.

BP consistently lied from the very beginning in their advertising and pamphlet drops and in their meetings with us when they said that 400 jobs would be created for Goulburn. They later admitted in their scoping report that they would aim for a maximum of 83 Goulburn employees over the two year construction period.

In summary BP has demonstrated through its Scoping Report that it has its head in the sand regarding the very many reasons why this entirely 'grid led' proposal has no other redeeming feature to support it. Indeed there are many reasons why the location is patently the wrong site for such a development but BP will not even consider that this may be the case. We wrote to Frederick Baudry, the head of BP in Australia but he did not even acknowledge the letter. We wrote to Adam Pegg, the Managing Director for LightsourceBp in the ANZ region, and were told that he was too busy to come out to see the impact the proposal was having and would have permanently on the impacted landowners.

When the BP representatives first visited us they were junior employees who could not tell us how much of the land would be covered, the size of the panels or how many panels. After they had met with almost all the impacted landowners they told one of the landowners that they could not understand why the landowners were so upset. This shows a complete lack of the ability to put themselves in our shoes and a complete lack of knowledge of the impact that 740,740 5m high panels, a 7.4 acre sub-station, a 3 acre battery and 164, 40 foot long inverters throughout the Gundry Plains will have on the environment, its animals and flora and the neighbouring families who love and look after their farms and properties and the flora and fauna on them.

Other comments.

We personally will be looking up at or down on the next door solar panels from 9 out of our 12 paddocks. They will run along 4 kilometres of our boundary.

Our enjoyment of our land is threatened by a substantial loss of value as a consequence of the proposed solar facility. This farm is our superannuation.

BP has not discussed compensation with us at all. They said that they had not budgeted for compensation. Areas that require compensation are

**Compensation for the depreciation of our property values.** One family lost 36% on the sale of their farm and another landowner has been told by a valuer that he will lose between 30 to 60%. This is over \$900,000 for most of the landowners in close proximity to the solar facility. None of us can afford to lose that amount of money.

**Dirt and filth during construction and after construction.** We all have tank water and the dirt and muck that will blow off BP's construction site will land on our roofs and then will be washed into our water tanks. The water in the tanks is our only drinking, bathing and washing supply. The filters in the tanks cost \$200 each and during construction will have to be renewed every month. With the land devoid of pasture cover after the construction the filters will have to be renewed every four months. The tanks will have to be vacuumed annually to ensure the water is potable. Goulburn experiences very strong winds on a regular basis.

We require compensation for the need to hire cleaners to keep our houses clean and free of the dirt that will be created.

**Compensation for noise during construction –** We will all have to put up with the constant machinery and pile driving noise during construction, in our case 150m from our bedroom. This will undoubtedly be from 7am to 6pm each day including Saturday. The noise decibels are very high.

**Compensation for noise from the running of the facility.** The inverters, battery and sub-station will make constant noise. This area is so quiet all you can hear are the birds. BP failed to put a noise monitor on our boundary which is one of the quietest boundaries.

**Compensation for the mental anguish that we have and will continue to suffer if the solar "farm" is built.** BP has driven two families away from the Gundry Plains and has made the lives of the rest of us angry, uncertain, frustrated and completely unable to plan for the future. A number of us have their properties as their superannuation and will lose a significant amount of money if the "farm" goes ahead. We have suggested that BP buys out the families who want to sell and if, as they have told us, there will be no depreciation in the value of our properties, BP will not lose when it sells them if the "farm" goes ahead.

We will have to cope with:

Watching our beautiful Plains being stripped of vegetation, cut into, bulldozed and being turned into an industrial site.

Some of us will never escape from the monstrous 7.4 acre sub-station that BP proposes to build in the middle of nine of our homes. One of their very intelligent employees suggested that a high fence be built around the sub-station.

Dealing with animals and birds injured or killed by the bulldozers and excavators.

Instead of looking at green, ever changing landscape we will not be able to get away from the static metal and glass industrial complex reflecting into our houses and destroying the beauty of the Plains.

Living with the very real and terrifying threat of fire that will not be able to be controlled if it burns onto the solar "farm" or starts on it. One of the main roads bordering the "farm" is a dead end with dense bush at one end in which 40 families live. It is also a dirt road. It will be very difficult to escape.

Not being able to escape from the constant noise of the industrial complex.

The whole process on behalf of BP has been amateurish and unprofessional. They are never able to answer our questions e.g where will the panels be built and whether Uyghur slave labour will be used.

The points made above are genuine and factual.

The Commissioner is requested to come to our farm to see what is going to be done to us and 64 other families by a foreign company that could not care less.

Ann Moore

