

Submission
No 102

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
ZONES (REZ) ON RURAL AND REGIONAL
COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 30 January 2025

Partially
Confidential

Dear NSW Government,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback on the impact Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) is having on rural and regional communities in New South Wales. My particular concern is the Merriwa-Cassilis area - my home region.

We have a united body - Merriwa-Cassilis Alliance Incorporated (MCA) formed in February 2021 - a group of 110 local property owners who are directly affected, most likely to be affected by the proposed transmission lines and infrastructure of the Central-West Orana project.

Firstly, there is a total imbalance of power in the planning and development of these projects between Energy Co and private landowners due to the critical state of significant infrastructure legislation and the overriding threat of compulsory land acquisition.

It seems that Government has the right to just force landowners to accept the fact and result of their land being taken over - many of these properties have been owned by these families for generations - they still have to pay the rates and maintain the land - at their own expense while these projects - either solar panels or turbines are erected - then maintained by the authorities. This involves access, at will, which will affect the use of the land, virtually making it useless for either stock or cropping. To say nothing of inconvenience and danger of the vehicles/machinery close to housing and sheds etc. and the increased traffic on country roads. Our country roads are underfunded as it is. Funding for the construction of roads for the sites has been sought, but no thought has been given to the ongoing maintenance of these roads, Councils are underfunded as it is, so the alternative is to raise rates, which will come out of the landholders' pockets - the ones who have already been impacted by the loss of the land for production.

There are some landholders who have sold out, taken their compensation and moved on but the impact remains on their neighbours who are not compensated. Their land will be devalued.

It is said that the solar panels will have no impact on grazing - sheep and cattle will be able to graze with the panels -

No 1 Grass won't grow adequately under these panels

No 2 Pasture won't be able to be planted as that requires machinery which is necessary for planting

No 3 Best of British Luck to be able to muster stock from around these panels

Bio-Security and Weed Control - is a very big risk both with the construction and the maintenance of the panels or turbines.

Risk Factor - the turbine or part thereof falling - these are very big and heavy structures -

All this, and much more, in addition to the degradation of the landscape

It seems that the country areas have to bear the burden of supplying the energy to the city areas. If Solar is so effective in the country - why aren't all the houses in Sydney - city areas forced to have solar on their roofs - not only can they supply their own homes but feed into the grid for city usage rather than depending on the electricity needing to be fed through kilometers of lines from the country and disrupting our lively hood? A few turbines in the parks and recreational areas should be OK there as it is for the country.

Another aspect of this energy production - I have not seen anything about the disposal of the wind turbines or the solar panels when their lifespan is over. 10 years has been suggested as a maximum life. 10 years will come round very quickly.

There is so much that has not been considered - the whole structure has just been rushed through - power stations shut down, with no practical substitute, the population whipped in a frenzy about global warming, so where do they turn - to the part of the country that has less population and therefore having less power, and forcing them to give up their rights, their land and heritage to something that has not been properly planned.

Lets remember, the farming/grazing land is producing Australia's food.

Should we, a land having the ability and potential, to provide food, not only for Australia, but for much of the world, give this potential away because of lack of practical planning?

This is an opportunity for all Governments, whatever the party, to change their approach to energy production and security. We need a national approach following international best practice where communities are genuinely consulted in the planning and development and construction stages that is transparent and fair. The community must be able to trust our government will not sacrifice the collective long term interest by choosing options which appear to be the quickest, cheapest or easiest in the short term.