

Planning (Social Impact and Community Benefit) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 477
Submitted by: Miriam Vale and Bororen Solar Farm Concerned Neighbours and Co
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

We are broadly supportive of the overall intent of the proposed changes to the Planning legislation, particularly the increased focus on assessing renewable energy projects—specifically solar and battery developments. However, we strongly recommend further consideration be given to the following key areas:

- The introduction of stronger and enforceable requirements for genuine and effective community engagement, both in the development of Social Impact Assessments and throughout the broader planning process.
- Ensuring that all solar farm developments are, at a minimum, assessed as Impact Assessable developments, to allow for greater transparency and public input.
- Implementing greater scrutiny of the broader environmental impacts associated with solar and battery farms, including the requirement to assess environmental effects beyond the immediate development site.
- Requiring that Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) directly address the needs of communities located in the immediate vicinity of the project, rather than focusing solely on the wider local government area.
- Including a requirement within CBAs for input from close neighbours and directly affected community members. While local governments may be well placed to coordinate negotiations, it is essential that the views and needs of those most directly impacted form the foundation of any agreement—particularly in large or geographically dispersed local government areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important legislative reform. We trust that these recommendations will help strengthen the planning framework and ensure more equitable and environmentally responsible outcomes for local communities.