



**SENATOR THE HON MATT CANAVAN
LEADER OF THE NATIONALS
SHADOW MINISTER FOR TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM
SENATOR FOR QUEENSLAND**

**JAMIE CHAFFEY MP
SHADOW ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND TERRITORIES
SHADOW ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR RESOURCES
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PARKES**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Central West region hurting in REZ race to Net Zero

As the Bush Summit unfolds in Dubbo this week, Central West residents have gathered to remind the Federal Labor Government that it is the regions who are paying the unliveable cost of Net Zero.

Leader of the Nationals, Senator the Hon Matt Canavan, and Federal Member for Parkes Jamie Chaffey MP met with residents of the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone today.

“Today, we met with people who are having their homes, families and livelihoods impacted by Labor’s rush to net zero at any cost,” Senator Canavan said.

“Labor’s net zero agenda is driving the reckless renewables rollout across areas such as the Central West in NSW, with no regard for prime agricultural land and the rights of farmers and the community.

“That’s why the Coalition has announced at this week’s Bush Summit in Dubbo, we will move to introduce a Bill to end Labor’s Net Zero obsession that is making Australians poorer and stop taxpayer money being used to help investment funds buy up Australian farmland and turned into so-called carbon-offset projects.

“Over 90 per cent of Australia's emissions reductions to date have come from converting 7 million hectares of productive farmland to forest. The Coalition will end this madness.”

New documents obtained by the Opposition under Freedom of Information laws from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation have revealed the Central West Orana REZ project is estimated to produce more than 600,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent during construction.

Mr Chaffey said regional people, including the people of the electorate of Parkes, were the ones who paid the true cost of net zero with vast changes to the landscape, to agricultural land, to traffic movements and to the fabric of their communities.

“These projects are causing massive disruption and enormous stress to farming operations, businesses and families. We are here today to stand with the people who are being impacted by the rush to net zero,” Mr Chaffey said.

Quotes from community members:

Mary Noglik, regenerative grazier, Hat Creek, Geurie NSW:

"On the tiny map provided, we discovered the site is on three of our four boundaries. We've had to scramble for more information, turn our lives upside down, and forgo daily practices just to meet their deadlines."

Pete Reardon, landholder, Beldara, Geurie NSW:

"Can you imagine opening a letter and seeing your entire property boxed in by potentially tens of thousands of solar panels, surrounded by 10-foot fences, razor wire, security cameras and floodlights?"

Renee Harrison, NSW:

“I attended the Boree Solar Project briefing session as a support person for an affected landholder. During that meeting, I witnessed a visibly distressed resident seeking answers about a development that could surround his home on three sides. Rather than receiving empathy or meaningful engagement, he was subjected to the remark: 'I don't like the way you look at me, and what you do with your mouth when you speak.' In my opinion, that interaction epitomises the consultation failures.”

Karen Mayers, Stop Hampton Park Group:

“The Hampton Park industrial facility including battery and substation is proposed on the entrance to our beautiful residential estate less than 5km from the outskirts of a thriving and growing regional centre of Dubbo. The land is sandwiched between two housing estates Firgrove and Bencubbin Estate. The 31 residents in Bencubbin Estate were particularly impacted by close proximity and an elevated outlook over the project, with the closest home only 60 meters from the boundary.

“We have been completely ignored with regards to the concerns around safety. Our residential estate has one road in and out and if Bencubbin Drive is blocked, the 8ft jail-like fencing will not permit escape of residents to the Mitchell highway for in excess of 2 km. The security fencing required for these facilities means 31 homes will be isolated with difficulty getting emergency services in or out. That is a frightening prospect for us in the event of extreme conditions and a fire starting either in the facility or outside the project if escape is not possible. We have tried to be constructive however our suggestions are ‘not commercially viable’. They are putting profits ahead of our families’ safety.

“The rural amenity we cherish and bought into is being ripped away, and the stress this is placing on our community shouldn't be underestimated.”

Media contact: Marie Low (Jamie Chaffey’s office) | 0491 940 108 | marie.low@aph.gov.au