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24 September 2026

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Planning Officer
Development & Planning Department
Douglas Shire Council
Front Street
Mossman QLD 4873

Re: Development Application – Proposed Solar Installation

6868 Captain Cook Highway – Lot 32 on SP332240

Dear Sir/Madam,

We refer to the development application submitted by J & V Noli Pty Ltd relating to the proposed change of use and installation of solar infrastructure at the above property.

In May 2025 we previously expressed our concerns regarding the potential approval of this proposal. Having now reviewed the formal application documents we remain firmly opposed to the development for several reasons outlined below.

Existing Agricultural Use

The application suggests the proposal will support economic transition and provide sustainable opportunities following the closure of the sugar mill. However, the land in question has already demonstrated successful diversification away from sugar cane production through cattle grazing and alternative cropping activities.

This property remains productive agricultural land and should continue to be preserved for farming purposes rather than industrial-style infrastructure.

Limited Economic Benefit

The application claims the proposal will contribute to regional economic diversification and workforce sustainability. In practical terms, however, it is difficult to identify any meaningful employment or economic opportunities arising from the development.

Particularly concerning is the absence of:

- New long-term employment opportunities for displaced mill workers;
- Clear evidence of broader economic stimulus to the local community; or
- Demonstrated community benefit beyond the private interests of the applicant.

The proposal appears unlikely to provide any significant contribution toward addressing local job losses or strengthening the regional economy.

Concerns About Future Expansion

The application notes that the proposed solar array would occupy less than two hectares of the overall 88 hectare property. While presented as a modest footprint, approval of this initial stage may establish a precedent for further expansion over time.

There is understandable concern within the community that this could become the beginning of more extensive solar development across the property and potentially elsewhere within the Shire.

Impact on Landscape and Tourism

The site is positioned along the Captain Cook Highway, one of the region's most well-travelled tourism routes, and should not be marred by Solar Farm infrastructure.

Douglas Shire's appeal is closely tied to its natural beauty, rural landscape, and tourism identity. Industrial-style developments adjacent to this corridor risk undermining the visual character of the area and detracting from the visitor experience.

If approvals of this nature become more common, the cumulative impact on the region's landscape could be significant and inconsistent with the tourism values that support local communities.

Landscaping and Visual Screening

Although the application includes proposed landscaping intended to screen the installation from the highway, there is limited confidence within the community that such measures will be effectively maintained or enforced.

Previous developments along the highway, including the nearby barramundi farm, have experienced lengthy delays in achieving adequate visual screening despite planning conditions requiring this outcome.

Given the size and depth of the property, it is reasonable to question why any approved infrastructure could not be positioned substantially further back from the roadway to minimise visual impact.

Without appropriate setbacks and enforcement, the development risks becoming a highly visible and unattractive feature along a major tourist route.

Sheep Grazing Proposal

The application references the use of sheep grazing beneath solar panels as a land management strategy reportedly used elsewhere in Australia.

However, the suitability of sheep farming in the tropical climate of Far North Queensland is questionable. The region's heat and humidity are generally not conducive to sheep grazing and may raise legitimate concerns regarding animal welfare and practicality.

Conclusion

For the reasons outlined above, we strongly oppose approval of this application.

We do not believe the proposal delivers the level of public or community benefit claimed within the application material. In our view, the development represents an inappropriate use of productive rural land and poses unnecessary risks to the visual and environmental character of the region.

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