

MEDIA RELEASE

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FGVL calls for common sense on solar location

Fruit Growers Victoria Ltd today called on Greater Shepparton Council to re-consider its approach to solar developments in key food producing areas.

These concerns follow council's call to hand planning decisions about five major solar developments to the Victorian Government, some of which are in prime fruit growing locations.

FGVL's Grower Services Manager, Michael Crisera said, "We're very concerned about the effect large solar farms might have on fruit production on neighboring agricultural production. Many of our growers are worried about an increase in reflective UV from solar panels affecting sensitive orchard environments in proximity to these developments."

"Council seems an enthusiastic supporter of the proposals, but has not produced adequate information for growers about the potential risk of these developments to nearby fruit production."

Mr Crisera urged planning authorities to make sure production risks are fully considered in the approval process.

"Solar energy is an important part of the nation's energy needs, but care should be taken that these developments aren't detrimental to agricultural industries."

"There are plenty of local areas where these developments would meet energy needs, and present no risk to agricultural businesses. We don't see why the best option is seen to be in the middle of orchards."

The proposed solar farms are located at Tatura East, Tallygaroopna, Lemnos, Congupna and Mooroopna.

FGVL encourages its members to contact council for more information about their assessment of risk to their production.

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