

Headway on community 'eyesore'

Ashley Gardner 22 Jun 2017, 2 p.m.



COUNCIL SUPPORT: Gunnedah Shire Council's Director Planning and Environmental Services Andrew Johns at the former abattoir site.

A \$20 million solar farm to be built on Gunnedah's old abattoir site is one step closer with council passing a motion to waive waste disposal fees for about 30 tonnes of asbestos to be removed.

It's been 20 years since the abattoir was in operation, with 200 tonnes of asbestos contained in the derelict building cited as a "stumbling block" for any prospective developers of the site.

Council resolved to waive \$6600 in waste disposal fees for the next load of asbestos for the developers – Ironbark Energy.

Director Planning and Environmental Services Andrew Johns recommended to councillors to waive the fees, stating the proponents had been "very co-operative" in the asbestos disposal process.

"Council has been paid \$36,000 from already deposited waste. The proponent has spent hundreds and thousands of dollars in removing it and took it in large amounts instead of smaller loads making it easier for our facility and also provided plant to help us unload the asbestos," Mr Johns said.



BRIGHT IDEA: A site plan for Gunnedah's new \$20 million solar development to be located at the former abattoir site.

"The next move would be to get an occupational hygienist in to declare the building asbestos free. They are potentially looking at sub-dividing that block with the buildings off and on-selling to someone to redevelop. The main thing is the asbestos is dealt with."

Councillor Gae Swain moved the motion declaring the proposal was "almost classified as a community service".

"The benefit to our community is huge. It's been one of the things that has been a real stumbling block for anyone relocating. I think this is the first step in some worthwhile use of the site," Cr Swain said.

Ironbark Energy received approval from the Joint Regional Planning Panel in April 2016 to proceed with the project, which involves a 27-megawatt solar farm with 90,000 panels.

It will be divided into 24 industrial lots around the site's perimeter and a further 272, 100 kilowatt sub-lots that are available for purchase.

An Ironbark Energy spokesman confirmed to the *NVI* that the solar farm project is going ahead as planned.