



February 10, 2011

Ms. Naomi Bleeser
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

Dear Naomi,

The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

The Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc.) (WAFarmers) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs' Inquiry into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms.

As background, WAFarmers is the State's largest and most influential rural lobby and service organisation. WAFarmers represents approximately 4,000 Western Australian farmers from a range of primary industries including grain growers, meat and wool producers, dairy farmers, pastoralists, horticulturalists, commercial egg producers and beekeepers. Collectively our members are major contributors to the \$5.5 billion gross value of production that agriculture in its various forms contributes annually to Western Australia's economy. Additionally, through differing forms of land tenure, our members own, control and capably manage many millions of hectares of the State's land mass and as such are responsible for maintaining the productive capacity and environmental well being of that land.

In preparing this submission, WAFarmers has consulted widely with its members, and has received significant levels of feedback from members living in communities with wind farms.

Western Australia has a number of wind turbines at locations near Albany, Esperance, Cervantes and Walkaway (near Geraldton). WAFarmers believes that these developments provide a much needed renewable energy supply, provide local employment during their construction and operational phases and provide an injection of money into rural areas, bring in supplementary income for those landholders which host the turbines.

WAFarmers notes that many submissions to this inquiry comment on the potential 'negative impacts' of wind farms including in areas of noise, visual aesthetics, an impact on native animals, shadowing (or shadow flicker) and electronic interference.

In response to these, WAFarmers notes the current drafting of the National Wind Farm Development Guidelines. WAFarmers believes that these guidelines present an appropriate

governance framework, and if used in combination with sensible government planning policy can address these concerns, and work to minimize any possible negative impacts in the future operations of wind farms.

WAFarmers again thanks you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry, and we request an opportunity to address the Inquiry, should you hold public hearings. To arrange that or to further discuss the issues raised in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact WAFarmers Director of Policy

Yours sincerely

Mike Norton
President