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***Submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee
The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms***

To Whom It May Concern

I welcome the opportunity to put forward a submission to the Committee on the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms, expressing my support for initiatives to develop commercially viable sources of renewable energy.

Through 2 commercial entities in which I have a significant stake we are involved in several rural wind farm ventures in Australia. The motivation for these involvements are a combination of economic, social and environmental factors.

From an economic and commercial perspective, rural wind farms can be structured so as to provide an attractive investment proposition over the medium to long term, primarily based on the availability of industrially oriented grid feed in arrangements. One project that we are involved in, costing approximately \$13M in total, is expected to return an average of 11% of capital invested per annum in dividend payments over a 25 year period, which compares well against other investment classes on a financial return and commercial risk basis.

Environmentally, not only do rural wind farms reduce the overall environmental footprint associated with traditional energy generation technologies, but they can be designed to generate far more electricity than is consumed by the host local community. One project in which we have an interest has independently estimated that the rural wind farm's generation activity equates to a per dwelling service cost of <\$6,000; a cost point to which no other industrial scale renewable energy solution comes close.

Additionally, implemented under the right conditions, wind farms are a welcome addition to regional communities, generating local jobs, bringing direct infrastructure and associated investment, and if well designed, supporting other community initiatives. One project that we are involved with has created 3 direct

jobs in local communities and expended over \$2M directly into the local economy, as well as committing to a \$1M community initiative fund over a 25 year operating life.

As a stakeholder in rural wind farm ventures we know that there are issues of significant concern to local communities, potentially negative social and economic impacts of rural wind farms, if not implemented appropriately. It is common in regional communities and media to hear of reports of adverse health effects for people living in close proximity to wind farms; concerns over the excessive noise and vibrations emitted by wind farms, which are in close proximity to people's homes; and the impact of rural wind farms on property values, employment opportunities and farm income. However, we believe that all of these concerns can be allayed with a combination of continued scientific research into health impacts, monitoring of economic impacts in host local communities and appropriate Commonwealth, State and local government statutory and policy frameworks by which rural wind farms are approved and regulated.

Yours sincerely

Baden Hughes