

From:
To: [Committee, EC \(SEN\); Madigan, John \(Private\)](#)
Subject: Excessive Noise From Windfarms Bill
Date: Friday, 2 November 2012 9:36:23 AM

To the Clerk of the Senate,

My name is Tony Walker and I live in South Australia. For 16 months I have been involved as the Chairperson in a community action group fighting to prevent a windfarm being built in our district. Whilst I am aware that the current legislation is rather more the province of those for whom turbines have already become a dominant feature in their lives, the past months have forced me to re-evaluate a number of assumptions that I held prior to the announcement of the proposed development nearby.

I was under the assumption that noise and health issues were the province of relevant government authorities who would act to ensure that any development would not adversely affect us as citizens. Sadly, I now know that this is not the case. Since June 2011 I have spent hundreds of hours talking to, listening to, reading about, and corresponding with, real, normal people for whom a real, normal life is no longer possible. These are people to whom wind farm developers have deliberately lied about the impacts on their lives. These are people who committed no crime, deserved no punishment, yet whose lives have been completely devastated by a wind farm development nearby. I have listened to their explanations of the impact on their lives, knowing that their experience will become our experience if the proposed development near us goes ahead.

I was under the assumption that the previous Senate Committee of Enquiry might actually cause a rethink about the siting of industrial wind turbines near people and their homes and farms. I actually was naive enough to believe that there was some ethical underpinning of decision making by governments in order to allow an orderly and reasoned interchange of thoughts, ideas and concerns between authorities and the affected populace. I have witnessed a cynical, hypocritical process that pays scant lip service to what is referred to as 'community consultation', and refuses to accept what has become a vast reservoir of evidence that wind turbines cause physical, social and mental harm to communities when they are sited too close.

I have been a Labor / Green voter all my life, I have championed the cause of the environment for decades, and I can look at enduring legislative changes to which I contributed a lot of energy. I know that renewable energy is a goal to which we must aspire and I have some ideas of my own about achieving a different energy outcome in Australia.

However, to persist with a technology that is clearly documented to cause enormous harm to the communities, to the environment, and yet delivers no verifiable carbon savings for the planet is bizarre, even criminal.

The Bill proposed by Senators Madigan and Xenophon is not perfect, but at least it seeks to ensure that a technology that cannot deliver on carbon savings will at least be prevented from destroying peoples lives. I support it, not as a panacea, but as a small step away from a situation, that, if allowed to continue, will simply turn people off the whole idea of renewable energy as a desirable outcome in the public policy arena. The proposed Bill must be supported if renewable energy is to remain a defensible plank of policy, irrespective of the party or political persuasion concerned. If no action is taken on this matter, the inevitable outcome will be a backlash that will mean the end of public support for renewable energy policy. That will be a tragedy to add to the disastrous social tragedy unfolding across Australia.

Tony Walker