

The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to make a submission re the enquiry into Wind Farms in Australia. At present the Wind Farm proposed across the road from our home has yet to be built. The proposal which has been given approval by the State Government of Victoria and the Surfcoast Shire is yet to be built so unfortunately at this stage I cannot comment from personal experience the noise levels we may incur. We only have overseas data from which we can only estimate to the levels of noise pollution we will experience. Our home will be 1000 metres from the nearest turbine which will be the approx height of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Because I cannot from first hand knowledge comment on the noise levels I will then comment on the experience for myself and my family for the establishment of this Wind Farm. To begin with the first we knew anything about a proposed Wind farm was when a couple of gentlemen called into our place while our daughter was at home and left some literature that they were proposing to build a wind Farm. I think they dropped in once after that again unannounced with only my daughter at home. We had no idea where or how close it was to be built at this stage. Next we have more Gentlemen arrive to say they are putting up Wind testing equipment also again while only my daughter was at home.

The next thing we hear is that there is to be a Public Meeting about the Wind Farm the next day but unfortunately we had prior commitments because of the late notice and could not attend, wouldn't you think that it would have been pertinent to at least personally have contacted the owner of the nearest dwelling that you were having a Public Meeting. At this stage though we didn't even think that it was viable and my Husband and myself still had not spoken to anyone personally so imagine our shock when next we get the proposal from the Council and if we have an objection we will have to submit it. We still had not spoken to anyone so when I explained this to the Council low and behold someone makes an appointment to come and see us, this Gentleman from a 3rd party, lead us up the Garden path either he himself doesn't know very much about Wind Farms or (which is more likely) he was trying to stop us from being objectors but in his opinion they are beautiful and we wouldn't have any noise issues perhaps the only problem we might have is some increased traffic going past due to people coming to look at the Turbines. The next complete farce was the montages they had made up showing the Wind Turbines the same size as the Electricity high Tension wire Towers when in actual fact these monsters are 4 times higher. If you ever look also at the noise levels they say we will experience it is always at 40 db which is exactly the same report that everyone gets it doesn't matter what the terrain and if you know anything about wind sheer you will know that this cannot be. Also another sneaky thing that was done was when the wind Monitoring device was installed it was set amongst shrubs in our yard and near our driveway and of course they go by the background noise and of course putting it somewhere, where there is lots of natural noise like trees rustling, birds chirping and cars coming and going it seems like you have a lot of natural background noise. Also it was done in spring unusually high levels of birds chirping, for only a few weeks and it was also at ground level when the Turbines will be 400mts in the air. As you can see this was not an accurate noise assessment.

But nobody will listen. We need accurate testing for everyone. Also another factor to consider is that because this is also a low frequency noise it is often only felt like the feeling you get when bass music is played very loud it is usually felt as a vibration in your chest. Also and I don't know if you know this or not but usually at night wind speed at above 10 mts above the ground is a lot stonger than during the day so that these turbines will make a lot of noise at night while we are trying to sleep. State and Local Governments plus Councils seem hell bent on building these things without proper consultation. Oh they will say that they do, but they do not.

I think the biggest disappointment to us was that when the submission went before the Council there was no compassion for our plight what so ever in fact one of the Councilor's had the gall to suggest that we would have to suffer for the greater good of the general population. Because this Wind Farm has yet to be built I don't know if we will have sleepless nights probably we will because the testing is so generalized, will we suffer from depreciation of our property? Because we do not have a farm we have only 7 acres of land adjacent to the property where the Wind Farm is to be built who knows.

At the present time there is no consideration for neighbouring homes let alone properties the general population does not care, it doesn't affect them so they just look on us as people trying to stop progress. Well I was probably one of these people until it affected me.

We need to have proper Guidelines for these Wind Farms with extensive testing for noise levels prior to them being erected. Not to take at face value what a Wind Company says will happen. Please protect us in the rural environment. We are few compared to City dwellers but does that make it any more right that Wind Companies, Governments and Local Councils run rough shod over us that our rights are non existent.

Our only fault in all this is that we chose to build our home in the Urban Fringe should this then mean that we have no rights. Please at least fix the problem from the beginning and then there should be no other problems once the Turbines are erected.

Yours truly,

Lee Watt