

Submission to the Senate inquiry on wind farms

There were some major incidents in my life that made me become, in principle pro wind-farms.

A few years ago I was standing on a plateau at the confluence of the Hunter, and Wybong Rivers. When I had visited this place some 15 years before, the air had been pristine, and the vista glorious. Now, my eyes smarted with coaldust, the galvanised wire in the fences rusted within 12 years. There was evidence of increased activity of feral pests, and weeds, as a result of the inability of the coal companies to manage the large areas of land under their control. The country-side on the journey from Sydney to Scone was marred by enormous open mines, pollution, and congestion.

There is much evidence that coal mining has altered the water table, exacerbating the effects of prolonged droughts. No matter how well the intention, reclamation works after the mines were shifted, were often extremely flawed.

Wind farms on the other hand, when redundant, can be dismantled, and leave minimum effect on the land they have been erected. Certainly there is impact on the visual environment, nothing compared to the chimneys, pits, railways, road congestion of coal. As to the human health impact of wind farms, I have a friend in Germany who lives surrounded by wind farms, she is unaware of any health impact on her community, and they have been there for many years. Native wild life habitat is decimated on a far greater area by mining too.

A few years ago, when wind power was first muted in this country I started to find out what other countries were doing. Contrary to much we have been told, Wind power is being used with increasing frequency throughout the world. The Chinese are now investing in it very heavily.

Black Saturday showed me how vulnerable Victoria was to most of its energy generation being supplied by such a small area, we only needed a fire to cut off Yallourn, and the whole state would be at a standstill. With wind power, and investment in the electricity grid, we can help ensure a greater diversity of power sources throughout the state.

I would love to be able to generate an income off my farm that was not dependant upon the vagaries of agricultural commodity prices. It would lead to a more reliable income stream that I could invest long term on my property to increase my agricultural efficiency, which also would lead to more employment, and investment in my local area. If many farmers had an added, more assured income, this would help local communities enormously. It would help even the peaks and troughs of the commodity cycle. I am not aware that any asset with a regular, assured income depreciates in capital value! Especially if the “factory” used to generate this income can be (id need be) dismantled with minimal effect.

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