

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCE COMMITTEE

RURAL WINDFARMS

David Sewell

Dear Senators,

I write to draw your attention to the impact a proposed wind farm has had on our local area.

Over the 60 years I have lived here as an active member of community organizations (school , hall, bowling club, church, tennis club, fire brigade, landcare) nothing has polarized the community like a proposal to build a wind farm some 10 kms. Nth. of Smeaton. When surveyed 96% of residents within a 5km. radius of the windfarm were opposed to the proposal but the proponents Windpower Pty.Ltd. pushed on with promises of a community fund and those not directly affected were basically bribed and it deteriorated into a them and us situation. At a public meeting I recorded our name as objectors to the proposal and asked the company to contact us, we have not heard from them. Even though the site was inappropriate they drew it out for 3.5 years allowing feelings to fester and sour making the possibility of reconciliation distant.

Overall, friendships have diminished, well being declined, residents referred for mental health plans, people threatened and loss of cohesion in the community. In discussion with residents in other areas where windfarms are proposed this appears to be a common thread.

I ask you to understand there are people directly affected by the imposition of these towers and suffer anguish, sleep deprivation along with loss of amenity and property devaluation. Do not be sucked in by the snake oil salesmen of the wind industry. For the record, when questioned at a public meeting at Ballan, a wind company executive declared he would not live in the area of wind turbines with his family.

Yours Sincerely,
David Sewell