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**SENATE SUBMISSION - Submission to Senate Inquiry into wind power**

I appreciate the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms as I am particularly concerned by the negative nature of the inquiry initiated by Senator Fielding.

I live in a small country town in north east Victoria that is increasingly subject to extreme weather events, from drought to the bushfires in 2009 through to the floods of 2010. Many members of our community are concerned with the intensity of weather events both here and around the world, and believe we should be doing far more to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Renewable energy options (and wind in particular) are an essential part of our response to climate change, and the Senate Committee should not propose provisions that would make the continuing development of this industry more difficult or onerous. There are already enough barriers in place compared to the support (and subsidies) that non-renewable energy currently enjoys.

Despite the fear-mongering stirred up by Senator Fielding, current research and scientific investigations indicate that there are no adverse health effects for people living in close proximity to wind farms and tests on modern wind turbines have shown that the levels of low frequency noise and infrasound are within accepted thresholds. Despite claims perpetuated by those with vested interests, wind farms are widely supported in the community.

As with many renewable sources of energy, wind represents a clean, safe source of power that will never run out. There is an urgent need for us to transition from non-renewable sources of energy, such as brown coal; making a clear commitment to renewable energy wind will ultimately help reduce our emissions, resulting in improved air and water quality, as well as improving the general health of our communities. The employment benefits are substantial and widely spread across regions, and provide considerable opportunities for individuals and communities where they are located, including the land owners who host turbines

I trust that this inquiry will not provide a platform for those with vested interests, or closed minds, to further fallacious anti-wind farm arguments and perpetuate false claims about wind that are undermining our right to a future based on clean energy. Rather, we need to focus on exploration of non-renewable energy sources that provide clean alternatives and importantly, reinforce a sense of hope for a sustainable future for our planet.

Yours faithfully,

Michelle Croker