



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
SELECT COMMITTEE ON WIND TURBINES
SUBMISSION

From: Mrs Jenny Holmes

Select Committee on Wind Turbines

SUBMISSION

Preamble:

I am a Great Western (Vic) landholder. The Northern Grampians Shire Council has before it a second planning permit application for a 63 turbine industrial wind farm. This planning permit application replaces one for a 67 turbine construction placed on public display on or about 7th October, 2014, some three months earlier. By all accounts, a prime reason for submitting the second PPA is due to the proponents noting Objections to the first!

It makes one wonder what was the logic that determined the need for the Northern Grampians Shire Council to accept a second Planning Permit Application of the magnitude of this one from Bulgana Wind Farm Pty. Ltd over the Christmas/New Year holiday period. Knowing full well Council offices would be closed until January 5th, 2015, it is, in my opinion, unreasonable treatment of persons wishing to access information in order to meet the response deadline which was 19th January, 2015. I find that somewhat odd. If this is an example of the strategy of Wind Farm proponents after viewing objections to the first Planning Permit Application, then the industry is deceitful, indeed underhand and it's no wonder reasonable people view the industry with such suspicion and disdain.

With the election of the Andrews Labor State Government in Victoria, the number of turbines are likely increase as Mr. Andrews downgrades the current residence buffer zone legislation from two kilometres to one kilometre, as he publicly stated prior to the election. (see Herald Sun, Thursday, November 13th, 2014 - Heading "Daniel Andrews' wind farm plan").

I will be visually affected by this industrial wind farm. I will be affected by low frequency noise from this industrial wind farm and fully expect devaluation of my property because of the presence of this industrial wind farm. Also, the proponent clearly stated my communications, particularly television reception could be compromised. Mitigation measures apparently exist, but who will have to pay for restoring one's signal? The homeowner?

I have a number of concerns regarding wind farms. I believe they are a costly (in a number of ways) inefficient and unreliable method of power generation. They are heavily subsidised which forces up the cost of electricity to consumers. Wind farms, no matter how many thousands of them are scattered around the country, will never ever meet base load electricity needs. In fact their electricity grid input is at best, around 4% based on 2013 figures from the Clean Energy Council's website.

Wind farms are consuming vast areas of farm land and it seems that the physical and financial burden of removing the turbines and associated structures could well be left to the landowner, once the wind farm has ceased operation. I believe this to be an appalling state of affairs that may not have been explained to hosts by the proponents. Matters could be made worse if the original proponent on-sells the wind farm.

- **the effect on household power prices, particularly households which receive no benefit from rooftop solar panels, and the merits of consumer subsidies for operators;**

I do not believe industrial wind farms should be subsidised by the taxpayer. I believe the current REC scheme (Renewable Energy Certificates) can be – and are probably being rorted. I also believe some investigation into the Large-scale Generation Certificates (LGCs) is needed. I also support the removal of the RET altogether.

- **how effective the Clean Energy Regulator is in performing its legislative responsibilities and whether there is a need to broaden those responsibilities;**

The Clean Energy Regulator began its rather dubious functions on or about 2nd April, 2012. Again, another tax dollar hoover initiative by Green activists who at that stage, held the balance of power in the Federal Government. I do not believe the Clean Energy Regulator's responsibilities should be broadened whatsoever. It is my opinion it should cease to exist.

It distresses me no end that the previous Federal Government wasted – and the current Federal Government continues to waste billions of taxpayer dollars on inefficient, illogical and impractical “green” schemes which have seriously compromised our economy, businesses and industry particularly considering the “science” regarding CAGW is far from settled and is unlikely to be for some considerable time until the rent-seeker charlatans, not only in Australia but globally, are exposed fully for what they really are. False prophet religionists. I speak of empirical scientific evidence vs the trendy political science version of “science”..

- **the role and capacity of the National Health and Medical Research Council in providing guidance to state and territory authorities;**

The evidence into health problems is growing every day. I believe the National Health and Medical Research Council has allowed itself to be hoodwinked by the wind industry as well as the Green activist lobby groups whose dishonesty is legendary, particularly with regard to deliberate distortion of the true science regarding climate change as opposed to the political science being peddled by the UN (see IPCC) and assorted green activist lobby groups.

The National Health and Medical Research Council was presented with a golden opportunity recently to actually be seen to be doing something constructive with the release of acoustician Steven Cooper's Report into low-frequency noise created by wind farms. The Report released on 20th January, 2015 studied health affects experienced at Pacific Hydro's Cape Bridgewater wind farm.

Should the National Health and Medical Research Council refuse to accept Mr. Cooper's Report, then clearly, they are not prepared to act in the best interests of the Australian community and I believe a Government enquiry into this body must then be undertaken.

I do not believe the NHMRC should have any involvement at all in further studies into wind farm health issues either conducted by Mr. Cooper or any other qualified person. Perhaps, Ms. Ley, the Federal Health Minister and Senator Nash would be more appropriate persons to source qualified experts, independent of the wind industry and appoint them to undertake the necessary work. The NHMRC, judging by previous support of the wind industry, apparently, invalidates their further involvement.

- **the implementation of planning processes in relation to wind farms, including the level of information available to prospective wind farm hosts;**

With regard to local government, and planning matters, I think local councils have no idea what they are letting themselves into. I think the proponents play on their lack of knowledge and sell them a story about job opportunities, prospective tourism etc. and the councils fall for it. The danger is most of these councils are fighting to keep their towns alive and are swayed by the slick-talking wind farm spin doctors. Councils lack the expertise to read between the lines and they certainly lack the scientific and technical expertise to proficiently evaluate a wind farm proposal. They think they hear the sound of cash registers and grant permits without appreciating the grief they are causing their ratepayers unfortunate enough to live within 10 kilometres of the site.

I believe the wind farm industry is quite skilled in deception and dishonesty when it comes to 'paying off' hosts. Many hosts, in my opinion, have little or no understanding of what they are signing up to. Most tend to possess little or no information as to the consequences, health wise; the ultimate disruption to their amenities and quiet enjoyment until it is far too late. They may think they are securing their farming businesses, but are unaware of the ramification of living within an industrial wind farm and ultimately, relocation becomes their only option.

I believe there is a necessity for a federal government information brochure to be produced that the wind industry must provide to potential hosts prior to signing of a contract.

In addition, many hosts become responsible for tearing friendships apart, in some cases longstanding friendships between neighbours and of course, communities suffer accordingly. This is disgraceful.

- **the adequacy of monitoring and compliance governance of wind farms;**

As far as I am aware, there is no official monitoring body for wind farms. If there is one, then I have not heard of it..

In NSW, the Gullen Range wind farm is a case in point and I doubt this particular company is alone. Consideration should probably be given to establishing a national compliance body (that is not stacked with Greens) and independent of the wind industry, whose role would be to monitor, regulate and heavily fine wind farm companies when breaches occur. This body should have the power to close down a wind farm that continues to breach regulations. Wind Farm assets to be forfeited and no provision for appeal or compensation.

There needs to be credible and accurate monitoring of wildlife kills and records kept. The wind industry cannot be trusted in this regard. Maintaining national records will provide scientists and biologists with clear indications as to the affect the wind industry is having on biodiversity and sustainable level of genetics in any given area where wind farms are present.

- **the application and integrity of national wind farm guidelines;**

If this pathetically inefficient, impractical and grossly expensive industry is to continue in this country (because Australia is always years behind what is occurring elsewhere and in this case, I cite European trends toward decommissioning wind turbines) then it is imperative strict national wind farm guidelines are established. This would at least ensure the Daniel Andrews' of this world will not be able to bludgeon property owners into suffering the inconvenience of industrial wind farms outside their back doors!

- **the effect that wind towers have on fauna and aerial operations around turbines, including fire fighting and crop management;**

It is well established wind turbines take a huge toll on avian and bat species annually. With bats, it's hard to assess actual kills because of the fatal affects of barotrauma and the likelihood the bats do not necessarily die on location. Bats are natural pest control agents and in the interests of agriculture's desire to use less chemical agents, bats should be encouraged across farm land – not indiscriminately slaughtered.

I noted an article in *The Australian* on 22/9/2014 titled "Wind farm takes toll on birds of prey" that detailed the 'known' slaughter of birds at the McArthur industrial wind farm in Western Victoria.

Because the wind industry is so poorly regulated and monitored, kill data (generally supplied by the wind industry itself, it seems) will, by nature, be inaccurate and incomplete. Wind turbines in this country will, unfortunately, rapidly assume the role of alpha predator.

Wind turbines appear to be increasing in overall height thus obviously creating no-fly zones for emergency aircraft such as medical evacuation and fire-fighters. Such an inconvenience will eventually be responsible for claiming lives.

- **the energy and emission input and output equations from whole-of-life operation of wind turbines; and**

According to the Clean Energy Council's website, in 2013 the 68 odd wind farms scattered across the eastern states only managed to generate 4% of Australia's electricity requirements for the year. I very much doubt there would be much of a change in 2014. Subsequently, this mere fact illustrates why the wind industry is so inefficient, unreliable and must be permanently propped up by more reliable and cheaper energy generators – exactly like the ones we rely on today!

The grossly subsidised wind industry must be seen for what it is. A con., rather similar to a Ponzi scheme.

- any related matter

Electromagnetic & Communications Interference:

Wind farms can affect television signal quality. Also, according to the planning permit application I currently have to hand, NBN can also suffer interference. The proponent brushes off the issue of compromised television signals stating mitigation measures may be available to affected homeowners, but does not seem to care much about offering advice as to who exactly will be paying for implementation of any such mitigation measures. The homeowner, one can only assume.

The Assessment Process:

The wind industry seem to select sympathetic Assessors and who can blame them. Proponents want their projects loved and passed into the system and onto communities by local authorities. There is little evidence of serious examination or questioning of the Assessments. However, there seems to be some evidence of incompetence as being an acceptable form of practice. (See: <http://stopthesethings.com/2013/01/24/the-tainted-work-of-brett-lane-and-associates/>)

Brett Lane & Associates were selected by Bulgana Wind Farm Pty. Ltd. to undertake a Flora & Fauna Assessment. I found that particular Assessment to be lacking in credibility; inaccurate and incomplete. Brett Lane & Associates even admit their Assessment is incomplete, yet they are quite prepared to submit such an Assessment to accompany a Planning Permit Application. This, I feel, is dishonest and misleading. Most local councils would have little expertise in evaluating an Assessment like this. It's simply wrong that this is allowed to occur.

In Victoria, I understand some Flora & Fauna Assessments for wind farms seem not to be challenged by Victoria's environmental departments in some instances. One has to raise an eyebrow when errors and inconsistencies seem to be clearly evident.

Assessments should really be peer reviewed before a permit is granted and moreover, should a proposal end up before a Planning Tribunal such as VCAT.

Visual Impact Assessments:

In Victoria, certain townships fall within an Urban Growth Zone and therefore are protected by a 5 kilometre buffer with regard to construction of a wind factory. A township such as Great Western (Vic) with 600 odd residents is not so lucky.

The wind industry seems to prefer reference to "studies" that may be 19 years old in an attempt to woo responsible authorities into thinking most people love the sight of wind farms! They don't – and there is plenty of current evidence to back that statement up.

Noise:

Noise guidelines and standards to reflect Australian conditions must be established as a matter of urgency. The Wind Industry in Australia should not be reliant upon NZ standards as the benchmark.

More research into noise, low-frequency noise and vibration must be undertaken and in my view, all proposals for new wind farm factories should be held in abeyance until such time as the results of these reports are in the public domain.

Low Frequency Noise

In Victoria, it seems there is no general requirement to measure low-frequency noise generated by wind farms. The escape clause seems to be 'oh – it can all be measured after the wind farm is operational'! Clearly, this is an attempt to close the stable door after the horse has well and truly bolted. It is wrong on a number of levels. This is the mentality of those who don't really give much of a toss about the affects on the lives of people residing within or nearby wind farms – let alone those wind farms on an industrial scale.

The larger the turbine, the higher potential for low-frequency noise generation. Bulgana Wind Farm proposes turbines of approximately 200 metres in height.

Wind farms, particularly on an industrial scale are:

1. An unreliable and inefficient blight on rural landscapes
2. They devalue assets
3. They are known to be a health hazard
4. They disrupt the lifestyles and in some cases the livelihoods of residents burdened with them
5. They devastate the environment, impact seriously on wildlife and can impact soil structure and stability during construction thus causing erosion and degradation
6. They destroy neighbourhoods and affect communities
7. They contribute to deteriorating welfare of those directly and in some cases, indirectly exposed to turbines
8. Their proponents can lead local governments into a false sense of security
9. They provide very little temporary local employment or benefits to communities
10. They are propped up by the taxpayer via subsidies and increased electricity bills

11 Their input into the national electricity grid is only about 4% and that hardly warrants their existence

In short, industrial wind farms should never have been considered as part of Australia's electricity-generating industry.

Should the heavily subsidised (they can't survive without subsidies) wind industry still be encouraged to establish industrial farms all over the countryside, then they must be made to stand on their own without gouging the taxpayer. They must also be very firmly regulated and monitored.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Holmes
GREAT WESTERN Vic

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