

Committee members,

I'm disappointed that the Federal government is wasting time and money on this inquiry. Windfarms have been part of the rural environment in other parts of the world for decades. Anyone who genuinely wanted to research these topics could have spent the last twenty years reading up on some of the extensive collection of scientific research that has already been done.

All levels of Australian government have distinguished themselves by their failure to move the country to a low carbon economy over the past 50 years. While you may be excused a knowledge of the history of science, we should expect that our politicians are at least familiar with their predecessors.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson told congress: *"This generation has altered the composition of the atmosphere on a global scale,"* he said, *"through a steady increase in carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels."*

Twenty-three years later, the problem was becoming better defined and in 1988, Margaret Thatcher addressed the Royal Society and said *"Recently three changes in atmospheric chemistry have become familiar subjects of concern. The first is the increase in the greenhouse gases—carbon dioxide, methane, and chlorofluorocarbons—which has led some to fear that we are creating a global heat trap which could lead to climatic instability. We are told that a warming effect of 1°C per decade would greatly exceed the capacity of our natural habitat to cope. Such warming could cause accelerated melting of glacial ice and a consequent increase in the sea level of several feet over the next century. This was brought home to me at the Commonwealth Conference in Vancouver last year when the President of the Maldiv Islands reminded us that the highest part of the Maldives is only six feet above sea level. The population is 177,000. It is noteworthy that the five warmest years in a century of records have all been in the 1980s—though we may not have seen much evidence in Britain!"*

Another twenty-three years on, its 2011. Here is the Australian government, allowing huge amounts of coal to be ripped out of the country, with the inevitable damage to land and water resources, and the ensuing health dangers of coal-fired power station emissions. What do we find this committee doing ? Tilting at windmills.

Andy Simpson