

5 February 2011

RE "The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms" Inquiry

I would like to express my strong support for the continual development of wind farms in Australia.

Living in Portland Victoria, a region with existing wind farms and more being developed, my family and I have had first hand experience of living near wind farms.

We can see turbines from our house, and we drive, bike-ride, and walk past them regularly. We also picnic with our friends within 1-2km of one particular turbine. In all cases noise, vibration, etc has never been a problem; and I agree with reports that have found that wind farms are quieter than ocean waves and traffic noise.

I take pride in living near so much renewable energy generation, and have chosen my energy retailer based on the fact that their "green energy" supply source is literally the turbines I can see from home. This is also a powerful way to demonstrate to my children the tangible reality of a future powered by clean renewable energy, rather than by high CO2 emitting brown coal power stations.

Many of my friends work for companies that provide services to the erection and maintenance of wind farms, and I strongly feel our local employment and economy benefits greatly. For example it was widely known in the region that Keppel Prince Engineering almost had to lay off 150 workers when problems with the Australian Government's RET legislation almost stopped the MacArthur wind farm; and now that the problem has been corrected approximately 100 extra jobs have been created. 250 jobs to a town of 10,000 like Portland is a very significant number.

As well as this, many workers I know in the wind industry are proud to work on projects that are literally making a difference in the world's efforts to mitigate dangerous climate change.

I am also involved in the Portland Sustainability Group, and can say that wind industry companies Pacific Hydro and Keppel Prince Engineering support the work we do to help inspire and educate our community to live more environmentally sustainable.

In a poll taken in October 2010 at the Portland Bonney Upwelling Festival; over 85% of respondents agreed that renewable energy should be given MORE support from the Australian Government.

It is my strong view is that:

- The World needs wind farms (alongside energy from solar, wave/tide, geothermal, and biomass) to help mitigate the worst impacts of Anthropogenic Climate Change.
- Australia needs wind farms to help meet our 20% Renewable Energy Target, and further than that to help shift our energy generation away from fossil fuels
- Regional centres like Portland need wind farms to diversify and strengthen employment opportunities

Yours Sincerely,
Peter Reefman