

9 Feb 2011

Here is my submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee

Dear Sir/Madam

Please read and hear what we are saying as the previous enquiry didn't listen as their recommendations were for turbines not to be within 2 kms of homes, but as you can see I am further away than that and other neighbours who find the windfarm and the substation noise irritating and annoying and who have their health affected live further away than 2kms.

The social and economic impacts of rural wind farms, and in particular:

We live next to capital wind farm 2.4km down in the valley of the Hammons hill group of Turbines.

When we have visitors over it seems the main topic is now how loud the turbines are and the normal conversations do not take place as the wind farm is a source of curiosity to all who come here. Many say there is no way they could put up with the noise and they are glad they don't live here. Others of course love them and can put up with them for short periods of time.

We have people who just think they can come onto our land to see the turbines and others pull up out the front of our house and take photos of the turbines. Our privacy is gone and people don't care if they ruin our grass by driving on it when wet bogging it up in the rain. We have even come home to find strangers have driven on our property and gone up the back of our place just to have a closer look and this is not just our place but other neighbors have also had this problem. What happened to our privacy.

My son is not allowed to ride his horse on our property without being supervised as the horses don't like the noise the turbines make when they start up. Our son has to ride in confined areas when he is not supervised and this has really annoyed him as his freedom has been removed.

We can't use most of our property due to the turbines and this has impacted on our business and social life and home life

TV and radio have been effected. Yes the wind farm company put up a new aerial and put in set top boxes but we can't get our local TV stations and all ads and alerts come from Wollongong. Even tonight we were getting ads from Newcastle and Wollongong. I have requested this to be fixed but even though the technician can get a signal from Canberra I am still waiting for something to be done. I want the local news not news from hours away. This is something I have missed over the last year and if there is an alert for our area we won't know about it. We don't get mobile service and our satellite broadband does not always work so again we could miss out on vital alerts due to the wind farm

(a) Any adverse health effects for people living in close proximity to wind farms;
when lying down in bed My ears start to ache due to pressure from the turbines.

we are having headaches and families are falling apart as aggression and anger and sleep deprivation are overtaking all our lives.

there is unexplained heart and blood pressure problems that disappear when you leave the district but return when we come home again.

my son cant sleep and is tired all the time and even after a full nights sleep he is still tired as he tosses and turns all night but if he goes on holidays he goes back to the happy and contented child he was before the turbines came into our lives

I wake up every 2 hours to go to the toilet but when i sleep away from home I can sleep all night without going to the toilet.

I have pulsing in my head and earaches and headaches and nausea. when the wind is coming from the north west I am tired all the time as I cant get enough sleep which worries me when I have to drive my son somewhere as I quite often feel like I cant stay awake.

My son has asked me if his brain has a heart beat. by this he is trying to tell me he feels pulsing in his head as well.

I suffer from heart failure as I had had a heart attack many years ago but my heart never bothered me untill the turbines became operational and I had to go back onto heart medication within a few months of the windfarm starting up again. I have had panic attacks since the turbines started turning and always seemed to be stressed .

the turbines have effected my family life dramatically.as well as many people in our community

I and many neighbours are having problems with eyesight. I have had my eyes tested and the optomestrist has said my eyes are fine but here at home I have trouble reading as the words are blurred but when i go to town or leave the area of home I do not have any trouble reading. I dont know what is causing this problem but there is pressure in my eyes. again only since the turbines started turning.

Infrasound needs to be taken into account as it is infrasound I believe is causing most of my and my family and neighbours health issues.

please we are important and so are our children and we deserve the right to live a healthy happy life which is what we have prior to capital wind farm days.

we pay our taxes rates etc so we should be considered and the Turbines should be turned of at night when people are trying to sleep in certain wind directions. Surely peoples

health is far more important than a bit of profit for large companies. Our children are worth more than profit and they deserve the right to get a good nights sleep so they can concentrate on learning at school and lead a normal happy childhood without all the health effects from a windfarm.

my 11 year old son's life has changed. panadol is now the norm for him which is absolutely appalling considering he rarely got sick prior to capital wind farm.

maybe the directors need to be held accountable and responsible and if they were then I bet windfarms would not be considered near rural residential properties.

(b) Concerns over the excessive noise and vibrations emitted by wind farms, which are in close proximity to people's homes;

we get noise sometimes so loud we cant sleep and in certain wind directions it gets really bad that we can still hear it over the tv radio and fish tank. you learn to sleep sitting up to avoid the vibrations coming through the pillow

my son suffers now at school and his grades have dropped as he doesnt get enough undisturbed sleep. we even asked the windfarm to put our son and one parent up in occomodation in town for 5 nights a week so he could get a good nights sleep so he could go to school without being tired as he cant concentrate at school anymore and his grades are dropping , but of course no response. we even asked for help from steve whan but they cant even get any help for us.

Its a sad world when a child is deprived of sleep education and a happy innocent childhood because of so called progress. this is his future at stake and no one cares and this makes me angry as I cant protect my son as most parents want to. even this right has been removed from us and our son is deprived of the basic right to have an education as he is too tired to learn and he will suffer for the rest of his life as he wont have the grades he needs to get a decent job. even with tutoring at our expence he is still struggling as he now has anger issues due to sleep deprivation from the turbines.

I have put in many complaints when I believe the noise is over 35db but we have been called liars and told their data doesnt match our complaints. If I check the energy output charge and compare it to our complaints it clearly shows my complaints are sent in when the energy production is high and I cant find this information out before I submit my complaint as the data is not available at the time we are disturbed by noise. I hear it a lot but I dont complaint unless I believe it is over 35db or unless the vibrations are so bad we feel them though our pillow more than hear the noise.

I have been fair in our complaints but are treated like a trouble maker and a liar. Its not hard to know when the noise will be there as the weather forecast gets it right most of the time as far as wind directions go. winter is the worst as the noise has no where to go once

the inversion layer comes into play. easterlies are fantastic it blows the noise away.

It is quite simple really as part of the windfarms conditions are if they go over 35db then the turbines are supposed to be turned off when they breach their conditions. Its simple turn them off at night so we can get a full nights sleep when the winds are bad and the noise is excessive.

(c) The impact of rural wind farms on property values, employment opportunities and farm income;

from local knowledgeable properties take a lot longer to sell near this windfarm and as a close neighbour found they had to reduce the price to sell. basically the price drops in order to sell but if you wanted market value your place would become unsellable.

I can only comment on our situation and that is it takes twice as long to do your chores when you are so tired and suffering headaches most of the time. When the noise is bad you try to escape it so again the chores dont get done properly and when you are driving anywhere due to the sleep deprivation you worry about falling to sleep while driving.

refer to copy of inquiry into rural wind farms

(d) The interface between Commonwealth, state and local planning laws as they pertain to wind farms; and

when the windfarms go against the local environmental plan of the local council windfarms should not be approved without input from the locals and councillors but the way it stands now the wind farms are approved by people in sydney who have no idea what the area is like and we are forgotten or ignored for the greater good of the country.

noise guidelines are the south australian guidelines and dont take into account the weather and local conditions ie nocturnal inversion layer and the lay of the land.

in the city the police can stop noise after a complaint but we cant even get the council to stop the noise as they havent the resources to do testing and are relying on dept of planning for advise and noise monitoring results. Noise that is nuisance can be stopped for everyone but neighbours of windfarms. we are forgotten and our life is hell.. noise monitoring is not done correctly and is only done on decibels and the infrasound is not even tested. this is appalling and I know we all suffer out our way but who cares if we are being effected we are the minority and so therefore are ignored.

The conditions of approval says sector management will be implemented where noise is found to be a problem but this does not happen as compliance does not have the resources or staff to implement it properly and rely on doctored noise monitoring results which are made to comply to conditions.

this we know as for eg 69db recorded at our place some how is made to come in under 35db so they can comply.

monitoring is not supervised as even Vipac who did the testing was asked what the noise

was one night and they said freeway traffic. well they soon learnt the noise was wind turbine noise. testing was also carried out for noise and this was done in the early hours of the morning but they didnt test when the wind directions were west or north west when the noise was at its worst they tested in windy weather and easterly winds or in the rain, Of course they are going to comply.

one week I asked for the results as I knew there was something wrong when they collected the data and I was told the fuse blew and another time no data was collected as we had too much rain and the data was ruined.

testing should be done in the clear not behind a row of trees so all that could be picked up was wind and not the noise.

again data is corrupt or voodoo magic done to make them comply.

on approval capital wind farm was given permission to remove 3 yellow box but even when we complained that over 70 trees were removed to make a road there was no penalty for this. we even provided the photos to prove this point. if we cut down a yellow box tree we would be fined about \$4000 so where does the fault lie when this happens and who investigates and checks on these environmental vandals. not the people who approve the projects it is just left up to the locals who get very annoyed when big companies breach their conditions as they know they wont get caught and if they do nothing will happen to them. all our rights and paths that we could have used like the dept of environment had their powers removed so they couldnt take any legal action when these breeches were carried out. this we know as the dept of environment was willing to take legal action but when they were ready to do this they found out that they no longer had any control and all control was now in the hands of the dept of planning who do not have the resources to take any action against these big companies.

when a decision is to be made I believe the site should be inspected by the people who are making the decision and the local councils and locals should be consulted and the whole area and the neighbours should be taken into account not the way it is at the moment.

(e) Any other relevant matters.

life is hell here but we cant afford to leave as we would be up for taxes, capital gains etc as we have a business and as we dont earn enough we cant afford to sell and refinance to set up the infrastructure required to start again somewhere else. we dont want to leave our friends family etc. we once had a lovely life and a happy family but now all that has been ruined because of the turbine's

when we have a catastrophic weather warning why are the turbines allowed to turn knowing that they can catch on fire and possibly cause a major fire. There have been several fires in south australia without mentioning all the fires we have heard about overseas.

we cant use slashers grinders etc and many people cant even work in severe fire risk but the turbines keep turning even though there is a good chance they could ignite at any time and as we live close to the turbines and if a fire was to start there is no way the fire trucks could get to us before we were burnt out.

where is our protection and who is responsible if a fire starts the wind farm company or the land owner who has these turbines on their land. I know I would like the answer to that question as I need assurance that in case of a fire I am covered if the fire is caused by someone else's neglect. this is not an act of god if a turbine causes a fire and as such I wouldnt be covered by my fire insurance so what happens to us. where is our protection. shouldnt i have to be supplied something to show me i will be protected in case a fire happens and to whom I would have to contact in case of a turbine fire.

copy of my letter to Inquiry into rural wind farms

Inquiry into rural wind farms

TERMS OF REFERENCE

That General Purpose Standing Committee No 5 inquire into and report on the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of rural wind farms, and in particular:

Dear Sir/Madam

I wasn't going to submit this to your inquiry as we the rural residential community are not taken into account when a wind farm is proposed. when we were asked to comment on this wind farm application we did so.

We all put in our submissions but then you get the people for the development who will not be impacted upon put there submissions in and they outweigh the people who will be impacted on so the wind farm goes ahead.

we suffer not them and even when we asked our questions the response was we would not be impacted upon.

We have invited anyone who wants to hear the noise to come out but as the noise is more evident at night they don't want to come

the nocturnal inversion layer is possibly the reason for the night time impact and this can be viewed on <http://www.springrange.org.au/taranoise.pdf> this shows why the SA noise guidelines should not be used when windfarms are situated in the canberra/southern tablelands as the noise will be underestimated.

We have a very low background noise out here at night so the impact to us re noise is far more then someone living in a city or suburb.

1. The role of utility-scale wind generation in:
 - a. reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated by electricity production
 - b. producing off peak and base load power
2. Locating rural wind farms to optimize wind resource use and minimize residential and environmental impacts

I live on an adjoining property to the Capital Wind Farm and my house is 2.4km away from the nearest turbine.

All the issues we raised in our objections and which was dismissed by Planning and The wind Farm Proponents dismissed has proven to be correct.

We have had our lives and business turned upside down with out of hours construction noise . their response is, I am sorry we didn't think you would hear it, but again the same thing happens repeatedly. I even ended up in hospital with a suspected broken neck one week and the next jumped on by a colt at 7.10a. due to the sudden noise coming from the wind farm in out of approved construction hours after they assured us there would be no noise before 8.00am on the Saturday. We didn't sue we just complained.

there is no conditions imposed on the commissioning phase as like the construction and operating phase so we are left in limbo coping this noise while they chase their tales trying to work out the problem, solution turn them off when the noise is being heard. it only takes a few minutes. but this is to simple for them to grasp.

Now Commissioning has started we cant get a nights sleep with the constant humming and wishing of the turbines. It is in your face and at times when you lay down it comes through the pillow. At times we cant sit in our kitchen to eat our meals due to the turbine noise. There answer is to supply tube stock to landscape. We have 60 year old pine trees and can still hear the noise even though their noise modeling said we wouldn't. Nights are the worst and it is really affecting us as we are tired all the time.

We had noise testing done and the environment representative came to visit and I believe he didn't think he would hear any noise, but he did hear it and confirmed what we have complained about and been putting up with..

Still no action to stop the noise after 4 weeks.

Double glazing trees sound proofing were all suggested but as we work outside on our 30 acre property we cant escape inside the house to escape the noise. we have to work or just give up our life's work and go on the dole. we are self supporting hard working and we would like to be treated with respect and to have this noise stopped. yes they will have to turn them off to fulfill this request but we didn't ask for it and we don't want it.

3. The impact of rural wind farms on property values

Values suggestive. Who would want to buy a county place when you couldn't use the outside due to turbine noise. You might as well stay in the city and live inside you home. It is impossible to say whether property values will decrease due to the fact, no one would buy out here due to the noise. so really you have property values versus unsellable properties.

4. Mechanisms for encouraging local ownership and control of wind technology

5. The potential role of energy generated by rural wind farms in relation to the Australian Government's proposed Renewable Energy Target

6. Any other relevant matter.

Basically people are for wind farms. It is just the siting of these wind farms that are the problem.

Noise modules are done by companies and when there is a noise problem who tests for it, the same people who did the modeling in the first place. the company doing the testing at our places couldn't even recognize the turbine noise even though they could hear it themselves.

even if they did know that the noise is coming from the turbines why are they going

to admit it when it would leave them open to being sued by the wind farm for loss of income/expenses because they got it wrong.
Local knowledge knew this would happen and they were told years ago this problem would arise but they didn't listen to us.
Noise testing should be done by another company that did not have anything to do with the initial modeling and if this was put into place the modeling would be done more accurately so as to avoid problems further down the track.
There is no accountability. .
We have made many complaints but most of them go unanswered. we are just the little people and our quality of life doesn't matter as long as the targets are achieved is what do they care about.
We cant even operate 50% of our business as we cant use most of our property due to the risks involved either by construction, turbine noise or distraction from the movement of the blades.
maybe common sense will prevail one day and the impacts will be considered for rural neighboring residences of wind farms.

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