

Wednesday February 9th 2011

SUBMISSION TO SENATE COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY ON WIND POWER

I wish to make known that I was born and raised and have lived almost all of my life in country Victoria and support the development of wind and solar power sources and the eventual elimination of large, centralized coal fired power stations .

Bullarto is 650 metres above sea level on the crest of the Great Dividing Range in central Victoria and I purchased this property in 1971 because I was attracted to the natural beauty of the wet rain forest here and the ready supply of regular rainfall , in those days said to average 48 inches or something like 1350 mm.s of rain each year.

In the last twenty years I have unfortunately seen many local creeks and gullies and river tributaries dry up and despite the unexpected heavy rain of the last few months the run off has not been re established in any way like I remember for my first few years here.

I am alarmed by the degradation of in particular the Loddon River which rises only 3 or 4 kilometres from my property and which the Flume creek which runs through my property eventually feeds. When I was a schoolboy in the nineteen fifties this river ran drinkable water almost its entire length. For most of the last twenty years it is largely nutrient contaminated , infested with Blue Green Algae or liable to carry enteric diseases such as Gardia. It appears to me that population pressure and poor controls over poor agricultural practices, constitute man made damage to this , and most other streams in Northern Victoria.

I consider wind power as one of the very sensible alternatives or new directions that we need to be taking here in Victoria North of the Great Divide to try to stop the further destruction of what was once a beautiful and quite productive area.

I have been alarmed that in this area there has been a very well organised and very well funded group trying to incite opposition to wind power generation despite the continuous use of wind powered water pumps for almost one hundred and fifty years. It appears to me that in this area opposition to wind power as a source of electricity has been continually fought by the very same people who fought continuously to have the Post Master General's department divided and sold : the State Electricity Commission, which served this area very well , "privatized", who fought vigorously against gun control, who supported Pauline Hanson and the One Nation Party with fanatical zeal, who spent millions of dollars fighting against the development of a toxic waste dump in one of the worst areas of farming land in a continent of poor quality agricultural land, and who fought against cuts to irrigation even though toxic "black water" has been around since at least 1956 and who spent millions of dollars in the fight against Goulburn River water being piped to Melbourne.

The use of the term "Landscape Guardians' to describe people who so obviously favour continued uncontrolled debilitation and devastation of what was , when my father was a boy, lovely country with fresh clean water and sweet soil.

I have taken some interest in the Wind power generators at Chalicum Hills near Ararat and those in the Waubra area and can see no sensible reason why anybody would want to oppose the further development of this quiet and non polluting form of power generation. Perhaps expanded use of Hydro power generation would be good but I don't think that we have sufficient water resources to facilitate any further increase in this form of generation. Coal fired power stations as at present in use in the Latrobe Valley seem to me to epitomize all that

was bad about nineteenth century industrialism and very much a horse and buggy alternative to modern science and technology.

I have noticed that most of the arguments against these wind powered generators seem very short lived , Before the windmills were put in place at Ararat we were told that the noise of the propellers would make it almost impossible for people to hear themselves talking on the street in Ararat, and that the amount of power generated would be insufficient to even supply power to the hamlet of Ampitheatre, and these were said to be scientifically based reports. In fact the windmills cannot even be heard from a distance of more than a few metres from the base of the towers and the power produced is apparently more than enough to supply the whole of Ararat most of the time.

In this area many of the most vocal critics seem to be people who for one reason or another are close to suggested “Wind Farm Areas” but not quite close enough to receive financial compensation. Many make few bones about wishing to establish a protocol for receiving financial compensation if they can see a windmill from their property.

Many also seem alarmed that there properties , even in the most god forsaken areas like Smeaton or Redesdale will be worth less to sell if a wind farm is established nearby when I am sure this cannot be supported with any actual evidence , or at least any more evidence than was available when the Chalicum Hills ,”Propellers “ were said to be a threat to verbal communication on the streets of Ararat.

I can only ask that the Senate give some consideration to the vast bulk of ordinary country people who although they have spent the best years of their life and often all of their life in country Victoria are not involved in any active opposition to progress and in fact will happily support the development of anything that will make the place a bit more like it was when we had good rains and clean water, and anything that will help us to hand the land on to our grandchildren in better condition than it has been for the last twenty years .

Thanking you Don Harvey