

8 February, 2011

Department of the Senate
Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Re: The Inquiry into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

Dear Sir / Madam,

Keppel Prince Engineering Pty Ltd is a facility based in Portland Victoria and has been involved in building wind farms since 2000. During this period of time we have built many wind farms throughout Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and have exported parts into New Zealand and Portugal. We have invested around \$12 million dollars in expanding our Portland facility to cater for the manufacturing and the erection of towers. We currently have approximately 150 employees dedicated to wind farm activity, down from the 240 people that were working for us in 2008. This industry has the capacity to employ regional people it just needs encouragement and opportunity.

Keppel Prince performs work also for Portland Aluminium as well as general fabrication and supply of engineering services to the Western District of Victoria. Over all we employ a total of 450 local people, the second largest business in Portland. Keppel Prince is an extremely important business in the township of Portland and the surrounding district. The town's confidence and economy rides on the back of our level of activity and ability to employ. We are strong corporate citizens with ability to provide job opportunities for the locals within this rural community. We definitely see the wind farm industry as a long term provider of stable employment in this region.

As the General Manager of Keppel Prince Engineering, I have been extremely active in supporting the wind industry within Australia. I have been involved with the Clean Energy Council in meetings with state and federal politicians. On many occasions politicians have toured our premises and held discussions regarding the benefit and impact that jobs associated with wind farms can bring to a small rural community. I have also been directly involved in community groups supporting wind farms located in our region. These groups realise and understand the benefits, and wish to expel the myths associated with noise, vibration and the negative environmental accusations written and shown in the media with regard to wind farms.

On occasion we have taken groups and individuals directly to operating wind farm sites within the Portland region. The beauty for our region is that there are the sites where they can touch, feel and listen to an actual operating wind tower allowing them to make up their own mind surrounding the myths that have been produced through the media. In excess of 90% of the people in the Portland region and community have shown their support for wind farms.

Keppel Prince Engineering is deeply committed to the renewal energy industry and as an employer we are very much aware of how extremely important it is to our community. This industry has allowed us to expand our facilities and grow our workforce. Without it our company would be very much depleted and probably only working or doing maintenance work within Alcoa. As a metal fabricator of the large size we are, there is little consistent work, certainly in Western Victoria but even throughout the state and the nation, it is possible we would not exist. As an individual as well an employer i well and truly support the positive impact of wind farms in rural areas.

Yours faithfully,
KEPPEL PRINCE ENGINEERING PTY LTD
(...)



**Quality
Endorsed
Company**

ISO 9001:2000
Lic 10608

Standards Australia

STEPHEN GARNER,
GENERAL MANAGER