

9th February, 2011

To: The Senate Enquiry on Wind Farms

Senators,

We would like to make the following submission to the Enquiry on Wind Farms.

We have strong objections to seeing the wholesale installation of wind farms throughout country Australia for the following reasons:

- Wind farms do not save the vast amounts of greenhouse gases that are claimed as they require backup from base load facilities during times of low wind. They also through their manufacture, construction and provision of transmission lines, require large amounts of embodied energy. Most have only a 30 year life span at best and require additional inputs of large amounts of energy for their dismantling and decommissioning
- The damage to wildlife, in particular birds and bats, has largely been ignored or glossed over in environmental assessments but once constructed there is strong evidence in both Australia and overseas of continuing systematic bird and bat kills. This is evidenced everywhere in the world where birds of prey and waterfowl are particularly vulnerable. Starfish Hill in South Australia and Woolnorth in Tasmania have recorded bird kills which have been well in excess of estimates provided in environmental assessments. Thousands of birds are killed and are still being killed. In a large wind farm in Altamont, California to the point where of part of this industrial installation has been shut down in an attempt to save remnant populations of Golden Eagles and other affected bird species.
- Throughout countries which have gone down the path of constructing wind farms at great cost to the community and causing great environmental destruction, little savings in carbon-dioxide can be demonstrated and in countries such as Germany and Denmark the wind industry has been unsuccessful in closing down existing coalfields and gas fired plants which are needed as backup facilities.
- The cost to the communities where wind farms have been installed have been enormous. The landscape and natural values are massively diminished by the installation of these industrial factories.
- The social costs have been enormous whereby people's property values in the vicinity of these factories have been massively affected to the point where some properties have become uninhabitable and unsalable.
- The health effects from these wind farms has been emerging in many communities around the world for some considerable time and is now being documented by many independent sources but is denied by wind farm proponents. These health effects need to be considered as the weight of evidence is becoming very strong.

- The wind industry has attracted many shonky operators attracted by the very generous subsidies which have been applied in many countries around the world. There have been many instances of criminal organizations availing themselves of the subsidies on projects which have failed to deliver the promised energy and subsequent greenhouse gas savings. The legacy left for communities is much higher energy prices, decreased land values, degraded environments and should not be considered for any special treatment above other forms of power generation. Many other countries which have pursued wind power have done so at great expense to their economies and when power has been needed during times of adverse weather conditions these installations have failed to produce the stated outputs.

We urge the Senators to consider all information presented to it regarding objective data on energy output from wind farms including health effects, environmental effects, effect on landscape values and effects on wildlife and communities.

We ask that subsidies to the wind industry be discontinued and the proper planning processes be reinstated and local communities be given control of the processes.

Yours faithfully

Tom and Lin Butcher