

28/01/2011

To;
The Department of Senate
Wind Farm Enquiries

The proposed wind farm at Stony Gap, Robertstown and Waterloo South Australia goes against the guide lines of the EPBC Act Statement 2.3. The area is listed as a critically endangered ecological community under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The wind farm companies have not given enough consideration for landscape quality, visual impact, conservation, environmental tourism and natural heritage. Communities are being miss informed over noise issues and property owners contracts not explained clearly enough and being misleading.

Jim Dunstan

To: Department of the Senate

I am writing to inform you of my concerns regarding the proposed expansion of wind farms into the Tothill Range and surrounding hills. These are areas of high conservation significance and their importance in this regard appears to be overlooked or disregarded in the current push to establish wind farms in this region of South Australia. Whilst wind-generated power has significant benefits for our environment, the siting of wind farms should not jeopardize other environmental values.

At present the Tothill Range is being surrounded on three sides by wind turbines. The area of which I write runs North/ South and is located South of Burra in the Webb's Gap area. The Tothill range over the last twenty years has been progressively purchased by a company called Bushland Conservation Pty Ltd, that now has approximately 1,500 acres (or 11 km) of the range fenced off, managed for biodiversity conservation and under Heritage Agreement. There are also other private land owners (including my family) with areas fenced, some in the Tothill Range area plus more land between the Point Pass and Tothill range area, shut off for the same purpose as the land owned by Bushland Conservation.

Having turbines on three sides of the Tothill Range is going to defeat our collective efforts to protect the biodiversity of the whole area. The land to the East and West of the Tothill's is of major importance to bird life, for example the hundreds of old Blue gums with hollows and the Peppermint Box grassy woodland areas. The Peppermint Box in the Tothill Range has very few hollows because it was cut for timber in early times; hollow nesting birds and animals from adjacent areas rely on the conserved areas in the Tothill Ranges for breeding and shelter. Birds such as Little and Peregrine Falcons, Nankeen Kestrels and Wedge Tail Eagles use the Point Pass, Robertstown, Tothill and Waterloo hills to gain lift on updrafting air while hunting. The area of available safe hunting habitat has already been made smaller by the Waterloo turbines. If turbines were to go on the Point Pass, Robertstown and Stony Gap hills this will further reduce or destroy their available habitat.

Many other species of bird have seasonal movements into this area from the East and West when the Peppermint Box and Correa are flowering and similarly would be put at risk with such a high level of wind turbines in the area, as would the large numbers of birds that move in from the Eastern pastoral zone during dry years to use these areas as drought refuge habitat.

In wet years when the lagoons in the area fill with water there are thousands of water birds that move into this area using the Julia Creek, Brady Creek and Tothill Creek. In particular Apoinga Lagoon and Porters Lagoon (adjacent to the proposed Stony Hills windfarm) are listed as Wetlands of Significance in SA and support many species of feeding and breeding waterfowl including those of high conservation significance such as the Freckled Duck and the Australian Shelduck.

The Point Pass, Robertstown and Stony Gap hills area are a major link to the Burra Creek area and to the Mallee country connecting to the Tothill Range. Having turbines all through this area will affect the biodiversity of the Tothill Range and surrounding areas. The Point Pass hills which run in a North/ South direction are approximately one to two kilometres wide, and having old Blue gum, Peppermint Box, Acacias, Sheoaks and native grasses on them. These hills are steep and grazing country only, there is no broad acre chemical spraying carried out in these areas. There is land between the Point

Pass, Robertstown and Tothill Range which have areas grazed only and not sprayed with chemicals making it a great area for biodiversity. Within this area are large pockets of remanet Blue gum, some areas not being grazed for over thirty five years, making it of major importance for local and migrating bird life. This area also experiences foggy weather each winter and can stay foggy for days increasing the possibility of birds being harmed through striking turbines. The wind farm companies admit turbines kill birds and independent surveys have shown Waterfowl, Bats and nocturnal birds are being killed by turbines.

Roaring 40's the wind farm company involved with Waterloo, Stony Gap and Robertstown first said there would be a single line of turbines and now they're saying maybe two rows or even clusters, we won't know until they submit their application to the Goyder Council where there is only a ten day period to object to the project. Going on other wind farm projects in the Mid North, once these companies are in the area and their turbines are up they then expand the area that they build turbines on and/ or increase the number within that area.

While I have discussed my views with Environment Departments within our area, and found many staff fully agree with my concerns, but I have found many Government funded environment agencies or groups do not seem to be able to voice their concerns publically because of the push for wind farm development in these areas. These departments are aware that the area is listed as Critically Endangered Peppermint Box grassy woodlands under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC). Meanwhile some of these departments and staff are promoting the area and community and private landholder conservation action, listing fauna and flora of conservation significance for instance the Common Brushtail Possum (rare in SA), Diamond Firetail, Brown Tree Creeper, White Winged Chough (rare in SA) and Brown Toadlet (rare in SA) all of these species are surviving in the Tothill Range area.

Two years ago three schools in the area; Eudunda Area, Robertstown Primary and St John's Lutheran conducted a survey on the Diamond Firetail, it was run by the Agricultural students from Eudunda Area School. They found small colonies of Diamond Firetails on the West and East sides of the Tothill Range and also birds were sighted in the Point Pass Hills and the hills to the East of Robertstown and Point Pass. This is an area of environmental importance it has numerous endangered species within it. The E.P.B.C has listed the area as containing critically endangered Peppermint Box grassy woodlands. The proposed Robertstown/ Stony Gap proposed wind farm goes against all efforts to preserve and improve the fauna, flora and biodiversity of this area.

The road along the Point Pass/ Robertstown hills called Scenic Rd is used as one of the Eudunda and Robertstown tourist drives. The tourist groups in the towns over the past years have been promoting this road and the area in the tourist brochures. The area has great views out to the East and West, Burra Creek, Mallee country and North to Burra area. The Point Pass hills and surrounding area are part of our heritage and they are connected to Colin Thiele's original home and were the inspiration for some of his books. The natural and built heritage of the area is used by the heritage and tourism committee of Eudunda to promote this area.

The Heysen Trail runs along the Tothill Range heading North to Burra, while the Maswon bike trail also runs through this area. Thousands of hikers and bike riders walk or ride along these trails each year to enjoy the area's fauna and flora and the great views. Having turbines on three sides of this walking trail is going to have an impact on the visual beauty of the landscape.

The country mentioned in this letter, where the proposed wind farms are to be; Stony Gap, Robertstown and Waterloo plus surrounding areas- should be kept wind farm free so the conservation carried out by private conservation groups, government agencies and farming communities can continue. The plant community in this area which is listed as a critically endangered is required to be protected under National Legislation. It should be preserved for its biodiversity, fauna and flora making it true refuge in an otherwise cleared landscape and a future record for environment and heritage in our community.

From

Inspiration Point Wind Farm Awareness group.

Jim Dunstan

These documents have been sent to the following:

- Minister for the environment, heritage and arts
Hon Peter Garrett
- Minister for climate change, energy efficiency and water
Hon Penny Wong
- Minister for environment and conservation
Hon Jay Weatherill MP
- Minister for sustainability and climate
Hon Mike Rann MP
- Environment protection authority S.A.
- Planning S.A.
Hon Paul Holloway
- Birds S.A.
Jeremy Robertson
- Nature conservation society
Helen Vonow
- State liberal leader
Isobel Redmond
- Birds Australia national office
- Birds Australia Gluepot reserve
- Friends of Heysen trail
- Regional council of Goyder
- Northern and Yorke N.R.M.
- Department for environment and heritage Burra
- State member for Stuart
Dan Van Holst Pellekaan
- Federal member for Grey
Rowan Ramsey
- Bushland conservation PtyLtd.

If you would like to respond to this letter could you forward your concerns to the appropriate government and council bodies.

From J.C. Faint

Hon Mike Rann MP

Mr Peter Rother

Mr David Ridgway MLC

Mr Nick Champion Federal Labour MP

Dr Duncan McFeiridge MP

Hon Michelle Lensink MLC

Mr Robert Brokenshire

Mark Parnell MLC

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Mike Xenophon

Senator Steve Fielding

Hon Nicola Roxon MP

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Shadow Minister for Planning

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Shadow Minister for Health

Shadow Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change

Family First Party

The Greens

Federal Member for Grey

Independent Senator for South Australia

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