

Submission to the Australian Senate Inquiry into the Social and economic Effects of Windfarms.

When we came to live here 24 years ago to Taylor's Creek Road, it was to a place of wild beauty in the valley overlooking Lake George, surrounded by windswept hills; daily we exulted in the meeting of land, sky and water. Water birds of all kinds were present on the lake and the lakeshore wetlands. Dry seasons followed, the water in the lake dried up to reveal a lake bed which has been described as the largest unmodified grassland in the Southern Tablelands, containing a unique composition of plant species. Seasonal change again saw water in the lake, water birds returned in large numbers; a bird count undertaken as the lake was filling in August 2010, on the eastern lakeshore, listed among others, 2 000 Grey Teal, 30 Australasian Shoveler, 60 Chestnut Teal, 67 Black Swan, as well as Red-capped and Double-banded Plovers and Masked and Banded Lapwings.

Since the construction of about 30 turbines within our field of view, the beauty has been largely lost.

In 2006 Capital windfarm gained approval to install and operate 63 turbines on the hills around the eastern side of Lake George, during installation a further 4 turbines were approved and in mid 2009 began operation.

Although Capital complied with Environmental Impact requirements, I believe that those requirements are too narrow as they limit the areas to be included in surveys to those where building takes place, either roads and tracks or turbines and transmission lines and neglect to understand the importance of the surrounding area to birds in particular. Birds Australia state in their policy on windfarms, that "Windfarms should not have a significant impact on bird populations,... by causing high levels of mortality among species which might be killed in large numbers, such as migratory or flocking species.... windfarms should not be located near habitat where birds congregate or pass through in large numbers, such as wetlands."

Lake George is listed as a Nationally Important Wetland which is a refuge for water birds, particularly when other inland lakes contain little or no water.

At present a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles is nesting in the rocks close to the lakeshore.

If bird surveys and research on bird/windfarm interaction are being carried out by Capital windfarm, to my knowledge, their results have not been made public.

To the northwest of our home there are 17 turbines ranging from 2-about 4 kilometres from us, to the south there are another 10 or so, the prevailing winds are from the North West, in summer an evening Easterly often blows in the late afternoon and evening. When the wind blows from the NE the noise from the turbines can be heard inside and outside the house, constant and relentless, over the sound of wind in the trees. It is particularly loud at night when the constant sound is often accompanied by a whoomp or pulse, which can be felt as well as heard. We are often startled awake sometimes as many as 4-5 times a night with the noise sounding as though a truck is coming in, sleep loss of up to 3 hours a night is not uncommon. Since the existing turbines began operating in mid 2009 I have suffered frequent nosebleeds,

sometimes on a daily basis, and headaches as well as a feeling of fuzziness in the head and almost constant tiredness.

In the planning phase of the windfarm, consultation was minimal, consisting of one visit from the proponent, a public exhibition and a public meeting with Palerang Council. Once our opposition to the project became apparent, even with promises of further information from the company, none was forthcoming. After the turbines began operating, a noise monitoring device was set up in our front paddock for a number of weeks, to date we have received no information regarding the results, with one member of windfarm staff remarking "that he had been to our place and didn't believe the noise was a problem" I have found the attitude of most windfarm staff to be less than helpful and sometimes rude.

Palerang Council has no current LEP which seems to mean it cannot adequately address environmental issues regarding any development, and indeed its members seem to focus entirely on revenue raising. When the noise issue was brought to Council's attention, as the relevant body, the response was that it had no mechanism to deal with the problem and would refer to NSW Planning

I have no doubt that the value of our property has been seriously reduced due to the windfarm's presence. We have no wish to move from here, this property is special to us, comprising 19ha of natural temperate grassland protected by a voluntary conservation agreement with the NSW Government, but should it become necessary for health reasons I believe we would be seriously disadvantaged in a financial sense.

We would be happy for any members of the Senate Committee to visit our property to see for themselves our situation. We would also be happy to provide any further information that might be helpful.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this inquiry.