

When the project developers, Wind Power first came to our area, we were assured by them and politicians that wind turbines did not make nuisance, loud noise. The flashing red lights were not mentioned at this stage either.

Although we were not going to benefit in any way, my wife and I felt that the project was beneficial for the community as a source of green energy and extra income for some of our neighbours.

To obtain a planning/building permit from the Shire, we had to situate our house one kilometre from the nearest turbines. Our home was completed in September 2008 when we moved in. The wind farm was turned on fully in June 2009. We have 29 turbines in close proximity.

Unfortunately, once the wind turbines were turned on, the nuisance noise and the annoyance of the red flashing lights and shadow flicker became obvious. The noise can be with us for days, especially when the wind is from the prevailing south and south west. We also suffer noise from the turbines located on the north and north-west. We live under the western flightpath and the turbines make more noise than the jet airplanes on occasion. The only difference is that the turbine noise does not pass; it is constant. The flashing red lights are visible for 270 degrees around our home and have destroyed our night sky and our pleasure in the night sky. Our windows are filled with these disco lights.

Our home was sited to enjoy the views and outdoor living. Unfortunately we had no idea that the noise and the red flashing lights would be as bad as they have been. We had to install air-conditioning so that we do not have to open the southern facing windows to cool the house down, to stop the noise. Although Mr Brett Thomas, CEO Acciona had stated in a Letter to the Editor (Ballarat Courier Sept 19. 2009) " So to suggest that residents are unable to open their windows in summer because of the noise is simply nonsense." He had written in response to a local resident's letter which he also called 'inaccurate and irresponsibly alarmist'. Our experience tells us that the local resident's concerns were justified.

I started to experience health problems from June 2009 onwards. These are: sleep deprivation, ear and sinus problems, headaches and nausea. Since October 2010 I have been monitoring my blood pressure twice daily under the supervision of Dr Sarah Laurie. When we travel away from this locality, my blood pressure comes down. Even if we just go to Ballarat for half a day the reading will be lower that night. This is even more so for longer absences. Lately, the three closest turbines have been turned off, and my wife and I have much lower blood pressure readings.

Another serious matter to arise is the level of conflict in the community which has led to my social isolation. I have lost a number of long held friendships and acquaintances with people that are proponents or supporters of the wind farm. I was a member of cricket, bowls and football clubs and sat on committees of these organisations. The problem is that these organisations are sponsored by the wind farm company and there is little room for dissenters. Since I have started to publicly question the effects of the wind farm on my health and well being, I have been vilified as envious and a hypochondriac . There have been threats to my wife and myself and damage to our property. In some people's minds we have no right to differing views. I avoid contact with these people as much as possible. Hence I do not buy the paper at the shop or participate in any community activities in Waubra.

Whilst some people in the community allow a difference of opinion, to compound into quite an aggressive division, other people, work to keep relationships normal. It is a small community and for some, neighbourly relations are important.

I have been to two public meetings where our local member of the Legislative Assembly has called us hypochondriacs, and said that we are envious and only trying to get compensation. Another member of parliament, Geoff Howard, who has a country property locally said that we should stop complaining and shut up. He has stated that he has lived in the area for 15 years and suffers no problems with the wind farm. Of course he failed to say that he has not lived permanently at this property since February 2009 (before the full operation of the wind farm) , and because of family and work rarely spends time there. Originally our local councillors did not take our concerns seriously. It would appear that for some of our councillors now, this has now changed.

We have not made a large number of complaints, although we could have, because our experience of Acciona representatives was both, not pleasant and futile. Other complaints we had made were not logged and totally ignored.

On the 16th December 2010 we received a letter from the Department of Planning and Community Development stating that there were issues of compliance with the relevant noise standard at dwellings near the wind farm. (Copy attached)

Under the conditions of the Planning Permit we believe *Pyrenees Wind Energy Developments* a company owned by Acciona should have undertaken sound testing at our house and made the results known to us, which they have not done, and most probably will not.

In a Pyrenees Shire Council Meeting, on 16th November 2010, an *Update on the Post-compliance Noise Monitoring For the Waubra Wind Farm*, was given. The report stated that noise monitoring at several properties indicated non-compliance with the NZ6808:1998. It also stated that there was no evidence to demonstrate that any noise testing had been undertaken at properties from where complaints had been registered, and that this was of concern because it was part of the Permit to do so.

And yet, in the Waubra WindFarm Newsletter Edition 13, December 2010 Acciona claims: "Acciona is in compliance with all regulations and requirements of the planning permits related to the Waubra Wind Farm." I cannot see how Acciona can claim that they are in compliance, when, at that very time the DPCD were stating that they were not, and please address. Unless Acciona/PWED, believed that operating in noise reduction mode whilst the issues were being addressed, is being compliant.

In the same article they talk about two properties being 'made available for purchase during the noise compliance monitoring period'. We know that the owners of those properties had been asking Acciona to purchase the properties for months and months . One of the properties was on the market since April 2009. Acciona decided to buy it in July 2010, after it had undertaken sound monitoring at the property in April 2010. I don't think that constitutes 'being made available at that time' more that it was convenient for Acciona to decide to purchase at that time.

Whatever way, it seems that Acciona is 'loose with the truth', as Brett Thomas CEO Acciona, has so frequently said about people critical and outspoken of the Waubra Wind Farm.

It seems to be a widely held assertion that wind farm proximity damages property values. Council valuations value the property at \$2770 per acre (\$6814 per hectare). In my opinion, and in observing the current trends in the sale of local acreage, I would struggle to obtain these prices under current conditions.

If there had been appropriate planning and monitoring guidelines from local, state and federal governments, much of what I have been through would have been unnecessary. Actually we need regulations not just guidelines that protect the rights of local residents - their right to a good night's sleep, the right to peace and well-being, to the financial security of their assets.

The most galling thing is that wind energy is incapable of providing base load power because of the intermittent nature of wind, and is at best a stop gap solution. I wonder why our lifestyles, taxes and well-being are being sacrificed to assuage the consciences of politicians and inner city greens.

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