

To the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources.

The Secretary of the Committee.

We wish to make a submission with regard to the committee's study into renewable energy sources. We will restrict our comments to Wind Energy and Solar Energy and the effect on a community of a proposal for a Wind Industrial site and associated infrastructure.

We live in a part of South Gippsland Victoria which is in close (5 kms) to the proposed Bald Hills Wind Farm and we have been actively involved in the processes that have been associated with the Victorian State Government's approval of this project. We have spent time in preparing submissions to enquiries, appearing before panels, assisting in finances to pay for a Barrister to represent our objections and spending a large amount of time in educating ourselves about renewable energy as well as the coal fired energy sources which provide the base load when renewable energy sources are not sufficient to meet demand. We have two wind farms in our area at Toora and Wonthaggi that have proved to be a "monumental" failure in meeting the generating output claimed by the wind industry or the life expectancy. The maintenance costs and in fact the complete replacement of some of the turbines have really made the projects a disaster. It would be an interesting exercise for the Committee to look at the cost and production figures of these two projects over their short life. The figures are not published because of "industry confidentiality". There is no doubt that these projects would not be viable financially if they were not so heavily subsidised by the taxpayer and given such huge privileges through State Government and Federal Governments. The question has to be asked, could the taxpayers time, money and effort be spent to gain a greater benefit? Of course the answer is a resounding 'Yes' if the money had been spent on Solar hot water services. Can I ask you when did you last service or replace your hot water service, mine have averaged 28 years. Toora and Wonthaggi wind farms have been continually serviced and some of the turbines have been replaced in under 5 years. The message is subsidise solar hot water services for best value for the dollar in the renewable energy field of incentives and of course the winners will not only be the Consumers and the Government but also the Planet Earth.

We would like to give the Committee an insight into the divisive effect a wind farm proposal can have on a community when the process is so biased towards a proponent. In the case of the Bald Hills Wind Farm project when submissions were called for the people who were being paid to have the towers on their property supported the project as did the proponent so there were five submissions for and some fifteen hundred against (including our local Shire). Then the state government went through the charade of a panel of enquiry which bought down a finding that supported the project. We have a situation now of a split community where neighbours who have got on so well pre wind farm now don't talk to each other and there is a real feeling in the community of disempowerment and disunity. The panel took absolutely no notice of the effects on the large wetland where the wind farm is proposed. The rows of turbines will be a barrier between Andersons Inlet, Shallow and Corner Inlets and Venus Bay on Bass Strait. Significant numbers of both migratory and local birds fly between these bodies of water. The process is flawed and the result is an insult to intelligent thinking.

We would like to conclude with the following: If anyone can convince us that the development of large scale wind farms will result in less coal being burnt then we will accept that our landscape, property values and lifestyle must be compromised for the sake of the future of our planet. Overseas, large scale wind projects are contributing little to the base load of power. We do not support wind energy now because we are the victims of a large scale con by wind farm developers and a token attempt to address global warming by Governments at all levels.

Joan and Rob Lilev