

Submission No:88.....

Subject: submission to Committee, inquiry into non fossil fuel energy industry in Australia

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry and Resources.

Inquiry into the development of non fossil fuel energy industry in Australia.

Dear Committee Members.

To say that the proposal of a large wind farm in the area around Dollar in South Gippsland Victoria has turned our lives upside down would be an understatement.

During 2002 we learnt that there was a proposal for a wind farm in our area, at the time there was no great trumpeting of this proposal, it was more like the hint of an odor on a breeze. I remember that at the time I thought oh well there will probably be three or four

turbines way back in the hills that nobody would notice. In December 2002 it was advertised that there was to be a public meeting held by the Dumbalk Progress Association to learn more about this proposed wind farm, members of a group called

Prom Coast Guardians attended this meeting, they had a map that showed exactly where the wind farm was to be located, to my dismay it joined our dairy farm where we lived and worked.

As time went by we learnt of the huge size of this wind farm and the impact it would have on our property and lives. Our farm was mainly on the flats with the hills rising up towards our boundary. The visual impact of the turbines over our farm and the whole area would be immense, especially, on an individual basis, on our farm because of the nature of how it lied in relation to the wind farm. Later we learnt from the developer (Meridian Energy, now AGL) that there was to be a turbine 987 metres from our home, two others 1200 metres. These and many others would be seen from inside our home. This close proximity of turbines to our home also meant that along with the visual impact we would be subjected to considerable noise pollution.

We learnt that our neighbors had signed secret deals with the developers at least twelve months before we new anything about the wind farm. Apparently they signed confidentiality agreements with the developers, no doubt because they (the developers) did not want we the neighbors to influence their decision to host turbines. I still feel nothing but contempt for our neighbors who sat at their kitchen tables with an agent for the developers, a calculator and a biro and sold away their neighbors for the promised riches that would follow. Comments from them such as, " we have done this for commercial reasons ", or " you are only envious that we are getting the money and not you " only intensifies my contempt for them. They would have been aware of the impacts on their neighbors. This has damaged our community greatly.

If it were to proceed, the Dollar wind farm would have turbines one kilometer or less from forty four homes, and out to two and a half kilometers from a turbine there are one hundred and twenty six homes. There may well be a good wind resource, and a power grid at hand

yet one would think that any reasonable person would have noticed that the large number of homes in close proximity would have eliminated this as a site for a large industrial wind farm. This leads me to mention The Policy and Planning Guidelines For Wind Energy

Facilities in Victoria, This set of rules is the reason why we are still fighting what is an inappropriate site for a wind farm. These Guidelines make it possible to construct a WEF pretty well anywhere in Victoria except in a National Park. There are no recommended setbacks from peoples homes and properties, there is scant regard for landscape and they employ a noise standard that will not protect neighbors from the noise created by wind turbines. I will leave it to others to debate the merits or otherwise of wind energy as a way of abating green house gases. What I would like to say is that there needs to be a change in how and where, if we are to have them, wind farms are developed. They should not be placed anywhere near peoples homes and properties, if that means that they are located offshore then so be it. Unfortunately what happened to us is still today happening to many other families, it is totally unfair and abhorrent.

On the 2nd of May 2005 we sold our farm and moved. It has not been an easy or good time for us, especially for me, as I have missed our farm greatly. This should never of happened.

Yours Sincerely
Steve Collins.

28/06/2007