

Sent: Wednesday, 13 June 2007 10:23 PM
To: Committee, ISR (REPS)
Subject: Submission to The House of Representatives re Renewable Energy 13.06.07

Submission No: 30

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13.06.2007
The House of Representatives Standing
Committee on Industry and Resources
Department of the House of Representatives
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By Email: ir.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Sirs,

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

I understand your Standing Committee is investigating the merits of renewable energy in Australia and finalising the *National Code for Wind Farms – A Discussion Paper* (May 2006).

I would like to respectfully bring to your attention some relevant points.

Why are we blindly following the European model of putting wind farms everywhere, when it is obvious that it is not only an extremely damaging industry, which will blight our most beautiful landscape, ridges and hilltops, but also an extremely unreliable form of energy.

It seems a terrible waste of government money and a terrible waste of good land for no significant gain. This land may, in the future, be desperately needed to grow more food, or trees. Particularly trees, which help against global warming. When you no longer know just where all those concrete blocks on your land are, how will you plant trees there.

Not only is wind energy extremely intermittent, but one loses so much of the power in all the overhead wires that transport it. Considering that the turbines need power to start up, are turned off in slight winds, are turned off in very strong winds, are turned off on hot days, and can catch alight and have burning debris scattered for miles on days of total fire ban, it leaves one dumbfounded as to why we are still following this non-productive trend.

Do we stupidly have to allow these overseas companies to 'rape' our land, for an energy source that is so dangerous in our hot summers, and so very useless in a heat wave, when everyone turns on their air-conditioning.

The recent revolutionary solar technology coming out of South Africa and being produced not only in South Africa, but also produced by German companies, makes all this rush to cover good land with slabs of concrete which can never be removed particularly nonsensical. Rio Tinto and other companies are looking at building clean coal-fired power stations, which will make the turbines look even more pointless.

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It is a very sobering thought that the wind companies' track record as to removing even just the steel structures is not good. Just look at Altamont Pass in California. Governments are encouraging this attitude of 'make a quick buck and get out' by the generous tax breaks they offer, and by the subsidies for renewable energy. If we are going to subsidise renewable energy, let it at least be something more efficient like solar, which does not have to be turned off on hot days, let alone on very windy days.

Government bodies are making a lot of fuss recently about all their energy efficient buildings and water recycling. Not one of the buildings I have read about in the newspapers has mentioned putting on solar panels on government buildings. Considering how much power is needed by all those well heated and air-conditioned offices, it is absurd and hypocritical to talk about renewable energy, and not even use solar panels to power the government's own wasteful ways.

There are very many other forms of renewable energy being explored at the moment, from huge solar pillars in Mildura to geo-thermal explorations in South Australia and in Victoria. It is ridiculous to sell out our agricultural land to companies that sneak around and completely devastate the landowners in the country when the turbines look like becoming dinosaurs before long.

We need to take a better look at more non-intrusive solar energy – at the new alloy solar panels, at the new 'sliver' solar panels that can be built into walls and windows.

We also need to reduce our enormous wastage of power, particularly in large companies and large institutions. There are many other more intelligent ways of reducing greenhouse gases. Reducing wastage is vital.

Growing trees has also been shown to be vital. A lot of our global warming is due to the removal of trees. Rather than cover our ridges and hills with concrete slabs, we should be once again, encouraging landowners to plant more trees.

Increase the subsidies for solar, increase the subsidies for planting trees through landcare, as before, be more stringent in the terrible energy waste in buildings, and take an intelligent approach to renewable energy. Electricity from the wind is too unreliable, and too dangerous in Australia.

When the people of Australia begin to realise how invasive, noisy and permanently industrial, wind turbines really are, when they realise that all the empty promises of the wind energy companies about the turbines being quiet were indeed just empty promises, when more and more wind farms blight the once beautiful, peaceful rural settings, when property values near them plummet, there will be a huge backlash of anger at the fact that the government has allowed these greedy companies 'full slather' all over our land.

It is time to stop this sell-out. It is time to reassess. Our country deserves better than this blindless, mindless devastation.

Respectfully yours,