

**WESTERN PLAINS LANDSCAPE GUARDIANS
ASSOCIATION INC**

**SUBMISSION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE
ON INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES –
INQUIRY INTO DEVELOPING AUSTRALIA'S NON-FOSSIL FUEL ENERGY INDUSTRY**

We write to you on behalf of the Western Plains Landscape Guardians Association in regards to two main issues that we are deeply concerned with:

- developing Australia's non-fossil fuel energy industry
- the importance of setting up national Guidelines for landscape matters in relation to 'wind farms'

Our Association urges you, as Federal Minister of Environment to take whatever measures you can to assert control over the deployment of wind factories through the powers available through the Environment Protection Authority act.

It is inevitable that we seriously consider the future of Australia's energy production and the resources that it relies upon. We, as the public and you, as our representative have a social and moral obligation to consider the following submission and work towards our country using *efficient* renewable resources for our ever increasing energy production. The following points summerise what we believe to be a straight forward list of what makes a good renewable:

- An infinite resource
- The capacity to generate a significant quantity of power, independent of the back up of fossil fueled sources
- The potential cost of production is close to existing energy prices, costings that we can afford or are prepared to pay.
- A resource that can produce continuous and steady forms of energy that can be fully or largely used in the building of base load capacity to meet new demand, or to replace power stations that employ technologies or use fuels that emit large amounts of greenhouse gasses.
- Provide effective grid management and stability with the flexibility to be turned up or down or completely off, within a short period of time.
- Minimal effects on our landscape, wildlife and the live, livelihoods and assets of people nearby.

We are of the view that there are several renewable options within Australia that are currently being considered for the short to medium term usage. Those being; wave and tidal power, geothermal, hydropower, solar and wind power. Wave and tidal power remains untested and uncosted for commercial scale operations therefore would be a speculative resource to consider. They remain a potential resource to seriously contemplate once further analysis is conducted within Australian conditions. Geothermal is still in trial phases with private companies setting up test sites and analysing the energy productivity in the form of heat. Again, at present it is another speculative resource and one to consider in the *long term*. Hydro power has been proven, environmentally clean and production costings are known. It can also be turned up and down quickly and readily although its expansion potential is limited. Not to mention the Nations' current lack of water sources/availability. At present, there are two known and currently deployed renewable energy sources within Australia; solar and wind power. Solar power has been around for some time and its technology is being regularly updated and improved. Wind power is appealing until you proceed to research the concept as a whole and soon discover that in many ways, it is a practical disaster.

“Wind Problems”

Wind power appears ‘friendly’ but its characteristics are misunderstood and misrepresented by the Victorian State Government via the media, due to its aim to meet self-imposed MRET’s. Unfortunately, this wind power propaganda campaign has influenced the public and media to push half truths, deceptive marketing and misleading information.

The following points summerise the realities of wind power:

- Wind power is an expensive form of energy to produce.
- It is unreliable as we cannot control it’s source, therefore contributes a negligible amount to the building of base load
- Wind is inflexible and not appropriate for peak production periods.
- It can create major grid management difficulties
- It is a producer of energy but it consumes energy in order to operate
- Obscenely tall turbines destroy landscape significance and decrease property values.
- Dangerous to local flora and fauna as proven by research trials.
- Wind turbines can create serious health issues from the shadow, light flicker, vibrations, noise etc for those that live nearby.

- Due to its intermittent nature, wind power is a failure as a significant net reducer of greenhouse gasses.
- The proposal and/or construction of 'Wind farms' creates inevitable community conflict and division to an extreme level. Conflict is caused by limited (if any at all) community consultation and the tension created by proponents putting financial gain ahead of local consideration.

Even though the above points have been researched and proven, the State Government continues to promote wind power and propose sites in the most inappropriate locations. We, as a committee continue to run into 'dead ends' in our opposition to the Stockyard Hill wind farm proposal. This is due to the biased planning appeals process at state level and unfair guidelines currently in place. It seems logic to have in place guidelines that require community consultation first along with informing local councils of proposed wind turbine sites, prior to 'signing up' landholders for wind farms. -Common logic as well as fair rights for all the public. Unfortunately, this is not the case and many associations like ours have been established to fight for a right that should already be common place.

Rural communities have enjoyed living and working in an environment that has had minimal landscape changes since early settlement. The erection of turbines as tall as 140m on high ground is an insult to the community and our landscape. Wind power is of little or no value as a generator of readily useable power, is not a significant contributor to the reduction of greenhouse gasses, has been proven to cause destruction to flora and fauna, is detrimental to landscape, rural communities, people's health and asset values. We propose that the deployment of wind farms should be halted and postponed until further investigation is carried out on the above points and a better way of managing these issues is implemented.

Again, we urge you to use your position and the powers available through the Environment Protection Authority act to establish national Guidelines for landscape matters in relation to 'wind farms'.