

Dear Senate inquiry,  
Re: Rural Wind farms

As a rural investor in a community owned rural wind farm near Hepburn in Victoria I'd like you to consider the following points in your inquiry:

1. The need for clean renewable energy as opposed to polluting non-renewable energy is incredibly strong. I presume you are well aware of the scientific consensus about the impact of the climate change/global warming. The Garnaut report warned us all of the dire economic and social consequences of inaction on this matter.

2. Wind energy is currently one of (if not the) cheapest source of clean renewable energy per Kw/h. As a society we would be reckless to not develop such a promising source of power.

3. A small but vocal group of people have argued that wind turbines cause adverse health effects on some people living close to turbines, however:

Our very own National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has recently concluded that "there is currently no published scientific evidence to positively link wind turbines with adverse health effects." This concurs with people I know living near turbines who report no ill effects. Of course these people don't lobby senate inquiries so hopefully you take the steps to hear their side of the story.

The small anti wind turbine lobby group claim that the adverse health effects are caused by low frequency noise emanating from the turbines but research by Adelaide consultancy Sonus has recently shown that low frequency noise levels at the beach and in metropolitan areas are often higher than near wind turbines. In the many other countries such as Denmark where there are more people living near wind turbines there is now a general consensus that claims about adverse health effects are bogus. While I feel sympathy for people experiencing health problems I would suggest that their health problems are not being caused by wind turbines. Thus this is not a reason to discourage developing this resource.

We should remember that during the Industrial revolution there was widespread fears about the ill effects of railways and other such resources that we now take for granted as part of our man made environment.

In the Hepburn community wind project local people have invested their own savings to establish a community owned wind farm to be erected in their own neighbourhood. This strongly indicates that rural people who are well informed are not opposed to rural wind farms.

4. The construction, erection and maintenance of wind turbines has a number of positive economic 'spin offs'. Farmers get a 'drought proof' income from leasing their land to the power companies. People are employed to not only construct but also erect and maintain the turbines. The yet to be erected two turbine Hepburn wind project has already created three direct jobs and already spent more than \$2million dollars in this regional area. The nearby Waubra wind farm employs over 30 people to run and maintain it. This wind farm like all the others has contributed large amounts of money to local communities and the regional economy.

5. The planning approval and environmental controls on developing wind farms in Australia are already amongst the strictest in the world. To make these controls even stricter will likely result in a flow of investment away from this source of clean energy at a time that our society needs to be encouraging investment in this resource.

6. Please remember this well known Kenyan proverb: **"the earth was not given to us by our fathers, it is lent to us by our children."**

Thankyou for your time,  
Michael Weadon