



Glenrose Valley

Tom & Susan Reakes

January 20, 2011

Community Affairs References Committee
Dept. of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra.

Devon North Wind Turbines

I understand that on October 27, 2010 Sen. Steven Fielding moved a successful senate motion for an inquiry to be made into the impact of wind turbines on rural property owners. I welcome this initiative and hope that it may bring some justice for those of us who will be very negatively impacted by this project here in Devon North, Victoria. I also hope it will help others who in future face the awful spectre of these gigantic structures.

The plan is for seven turbines of 126m in height to be placed on a small hill about a kilometre above our property. The closest turbine will be a bit over 600m away. At no time, did Synergy consult with the residents closest to the site, other than a letter asking for permission to place sound testing equipment.

I, along with just about all other residents within a 2km radius of the site, fought this proposal, first, on a local government level then through VCAT. The Wellington Shire found in our favour. Synergy (the proponent) took the matter to VCAT, where it was found in their favour with a four year window in which to erect the towers. The four years expires at the end of 2011... we live in hope!

My main objections are threefold:

1. Concern for my wife's wellbeing. She has a diagnosed medical condition of atypical migraine. The sorts of things that can produce these debilitating attacks are the very things for which turbines are notorious - flicker and monotone sound. According to expert reports our property will be greatly affected by both. This, along with our GP's opinion (this is in writing), was submitted to the VCAT commissioners.
2. Property value. A local property valuer, _____ has reasonably concluded that values could be impacted by as much as 40%. I fear that 40% may well apply in our case due to the proximity of the site. My wife and I, now close to retirement, live in a modest home on 3/4acre valued at about \$300,000. At a 40% loss, it is hard to

imagine where one might buy another property for \$180,000! As we get older this likelihood of having to move into town becomes more real, and should my wife's health be affected by the turbines then moving will be a necessity. I find it difficult to see any justice in this outcome. The VCAT commissioners appeared quite unmoved by this and why wouldn't they? Their job, it would seem, is to interpret government guidelines, such as they are and not seek to administer justice or fairness.

3. Amenity. A visit to our beautiful valley would soon convince anyone of its loveliness, serenity and virtual isolation. People have bought and built on Bolger's Road for one collective reason - it's beautiful amenity, it's gorgeous outlook and the peace and quiet it offers. It is a, largely, residential strip of small holdings (ours is just 3/4 acre) and farmlets. Overwhelmingly, most of them are not the source of primary income, just peoples' homes. Many of them farther up the road have commanding views of the coastline and Wilson's Promontory and right in their line of vision seven great turbines will be placed. Again, the VCAT commissioners answer to this was lacking in any fairness - plant trees (at Synergy's expense, of course!!). People are far less inclined to plant large trees close to homes after the horror of Black Saturday. Besides, trees take a long time to grow and they too will obscure the natural views.

I thank you for taking the time to read and consider my submission and hope that this and others will go a long way to getting some proper and fair guidelines put in place. The residents around this Devon North proposal spent over \$40,000 fighting this action in VCAT and we all feel that we really did not get a genuine hearing based on fairness and natural justice. We are not opposed to wind turbines, in the right locations they have meaningful application but it must be done with fairness and equity.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Reakes.