

Senate Inquiry : The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

This Senate Inquiry is a timely opportunity for us to express our concerns about the Woakwine Wind Farm in the south east of South Australia proposed by infigen. We live in the vicinity of the township of Rendelsham, South Australia, a rural farming area with rolling hills and flats which is in close proximity to the Woakwine Wind farm in the Wattle Range Council area.

We have serious concerns about the implications the wind farm development may have on our health, lifestyle, land values and the potential divisiveness within the community of which we are part.

We are aware of increasing information being made available about health impacts on people in the vicinity of wind turbines. The report Wind Turbines and Health- A Rapid Review of the Evidence (July 2010) put forward by the National Health and Medical Research Council was inconclusive about many aspects which impact on the physical and emotional wellbeing of individuals. There are significant studies in place at present in various countries which are alerting medical and scientific experts that there is a basis for concern and the need for further research. In particular there is evidence of rising blood pressure, sleep disturbance, headaches and nausea.

The ambience of the rural landscape is destroyed by these industrial developments. Having visited wind farms in a variety of locations we are concerned about the impact the wind turbines present. The noise produced is very annoying and persistent and the visual impact is detrimental to the landscape.

There is increasing evidence that land values of properties are negatively impacted by their proximity to wind turbines. This is supported in correspondence by a licensed Real Estate Agent with thirty years experience (National Sales manager, Elders Rural Services Australia Ltd) that land in the vicinity of wind farms can be devalued in excess of 30% and up to 50%.

We have concerns and questions as to why wind farm companies offer landholders money in return for them signing confidentiality agreements ('Good Neighbour' Agreements) to allow turbines which are to be located close to their residence though not sited on their land. Is This in order to silence any further complaints and why?

Until authorities can guarantee the safety of people who live, work or attend schools in the vicinity of wind farms, future developments and approvals need to be put on hold. We consider that the health impacts, devaluation of land and the destruction of the quiet, rural aspect will have significant negative effects on the community.

Governments, planning authorities, local councils and the proponents of wind farms have a duty of care and a moral responsibility to have conclusive, honest research and evidence on which to make such far reaching decisions when approving wind farms and

determining the site of turbines and other infrastructure within the proximity of residences, schools and work places.

The ongoing safety and wellbeing of people, wildlife and the environment is paramount.

We commend Senator Fielding for his insight.

Yours faithfully