

7th February 2011.

Senate Community Affairs Committee,

Re: The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

I am 50 years of age and have resided in Portland for the past 31 years. During that time I have seen the development locally of wind farms at Codrington, Yambuk, Cape Nelson and Cape Bridgewater.

When the planned development for wind farms in the Portland area was first raised I was initially a little concerned about the aesthetic effect of having such structures dotted along our coastline. My concerns were quickly dispelled as the first wind farm at Codrington was completed and I formed my own opinion that the towers were not really an "eye sore" and actually quite graceful in appearance.

Since that time my own son has trained locally as an electrician and he is currently employed within the wind industry in the construction phase of the towers. He has also performed maintenance on some of the existing local wind farms and therefore has spent a significant amount of time in very close proximity to the towers (without any adverse health effects). As a result of his employment in this area I now have a much greater understanding of the employment and other economic value of this industry, particularly in the Portland area. There is no doubt that the wind industry is a significant positive contributor to the employment level at Portland.

I regularly run on a section of the "Great South West Walk" at Cape Nelson and also regularly use the beach at Cape Bridgewater. Both of these locations are now homes to wind towers and in my opinion they do not adversely affect the aesthetic beauty of both of these locations. In fact, I believe that the natural beauty of these locations complement the environmental benefits that the wind towers and other renewable energy schemes hope to achieve.

Yours Sincerely,

Robert J. Meek