



# WIND PACIFIC

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Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Sir / Madam

## **The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms**

Wind Pacific makes the following public submission for the Senate Community Affairs Committee into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms.

Wind Pacific supplies megaWatt (MW) size wind turbines from Ming Yang Wind Power. The company is one of the largest privately owned wind turbine manufacturer's in China and was listed on the New York Stock Exchange in October 2010.

There are also opportunities to supply 500 kiloWatt (kW) wind turbines manufactured in New Zealand by Windflow Technologies.

Typically the larger MW size wind turbines have steel towers which are 65-100 metres high compared to the 500 kW turbines which have 30 metre high towers. These details are stated here as it is important to understand that there are several different types of wind turbines and their application.

While we have seen proposals for relatively large wind farm developments above 30 MW's in Australia to date, there is a growing and widespread interest for the ownership of wind turbines by community groups that are fostering sustainable development of regional areas. This is driven by several factors including the desire to generate their own renewable energy and to offset greenhouse gas emissions.

Community projects will typically be smaller in size such as the Hepburn Community Wind Park that will have two x 2 MW wind turbines. It is owned by over 1400 members and will return profits to those members which are predominately living in regional Victoria.

We know of many other groups in New South Wales and Victoria that are very keen to copy this model of local community ownership and install their own wind turbines. The current planning permit application requirements are particularly onerous for proponents of small (and large) projects and the cost of the planning application process is a major inhibitor for small projects.

As a result, many household's purchase relatively expensive solar PV panels as they don't have the opportunity of investing in a local wind farm. The result is that many objectors to wind farms have not seen or experienced them at close proximity and do not understand how they can be integrated into the landscape and benefit the community financially.

We would encourage the Senate to take steps to investigate ways along with the States to allow rural communities to implement these locally owned wind farm projects with much easier planning processes.

In a similar way, it is expected that around 7- 8,000 MW of wind farm projects will be installed around Australia to meet the 20% renewable energy by 2020 target. Farmers who lease land for the turbines could expect to receive a total of around \$25 -30 million in payments per year. This is a significant "off-farm" income over the twenty year life of the project which does not rely on the price of wool or beef. It would also be expected that all of that income will be spent in the nearby rural town.

On balance, considering the many factors in relation to the social and economic impact of rural wind farms, there are significantly more benefits to be gained for the community from the installation of wind turbine generators.

Yours faithfully

Craig Eyes  
Director  
Wind Pacific