

Harden Shire Council



4 March 2011

Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Sir/Madam

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF RURAL WIND FARMS

Council has on a number of occasions received feedback from the local community in relation to the construction of wind farms within the Shire. These concerns are as follows:

- visual impact of the turbines on the rural vista and scenic skyline for which many rural areas are prized;
- inability to fly aircraft low enough for weed and feral animal control. The areas in which the turbines are located are often inaccessible by land and pest control must be undertaken from the air. Turbines disrupt the ability to control pests by aerial means and thereby allow the problem to spread to nearby properties. The owners of the properties then suffer a dual economic loss through not receiving funds for the location of the turbines, but also in the extra effort required to control the spread of pests.
- the failure of applicants to adequately communicate with both local Councils and the community. The applications are not assessed by the Local Council and therefore the local community feels that they have had the chance to have their concerns adequately considered.
- local development is subject to development contributions under the provisions of Section 94 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 which has been subject to public scrutiny and comment. The contribution levy is known beforehand and the infrastructure on which the levy will be spent is also known. Proposals considered by the Minister are not subject to the same levies, and when levies are imposed it is often without input from the local Council or community as to what the levy should be spent on or the amount of the levy.

These concerns are raised by Council on behalf of the local community and submitted for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Langman
DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

