

1st February 2011

**Department of the Senate
Community Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600**

RE: Inquiry into the social and economic impact of rural wind farms.

I am a resident of Portland in western Victoria, an area of the state that hosts a number of operating wind farms, with further developments proposed. I grew up in the area and it is where my partner and I have chosen to raise our family. We are blessed in the south west with an amazing array of renewable resources – wind, wave, geothermal and sun - and I am proud to live in what I feel is the renewable energy hub of the state.

I myself am employed directly by a renewable energy company and have had the opportunity to view first-hand the enormous benefits the wind industry brings to our area.

These benefits include employment, investment, tourism opportunities, support for community groups and of course the production of clean, green energy.

I've seen wind farms create both direct and indirect jobs, from those employed to build towers through to local cafes who make lunches for workers. Tourists clearly enjoy the wind farms, often stopping to take pictures of the impressive wind generators. Community groups from sporting clubs through to service groups benefit from sponsorship funding and practical support for their initiatives.

Most importantly wind farms produce pollution free energy, something that is vital if we are to halt climate change. As a mother to a 1 year old daughter I am pleased to be involved in an industry that is working towards a better, brighter and more sustainable future.

In my work role I have spent a significant amount of time on or near wind farm sites. Although the turbines do produce some noise I have never found it to be at levels that are annoying or would prevent me from having a regular conversation, even at extremely close range. Importantly, at no time have I ever suffered any adverse health impacts at all as a result of being close to a wind farm. When visiting wind farms I often see cattle and sheep grazing happily around the towers or using them as shade from sun or shelter from rain so it is clear they are not perturbed in any way either.

From discussions with family and friends who also live in the area I can confidently say that the vast majority support wind farms in our area.

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward my opinion.

Holly Marsh