

To

The senate committee into wind farms

5 April 2011

Dear Senator/s

I live and farm sheep and cattle next to the village of Rugby. I have been improving the biodiversity and natural presence of the land through the planting of trees. Rugby has become an area proposed to house a wind farm. Rugby Wind Farm/Suzlon has not properly consulted with people who live in the area and neighbourhood. Myself and the majority of residents who turned up at a meeting advertised in the paper learnt that this was actually the third known meeting to have been held, as this is the case a very secretive negotiation has been carried out within the area and obviously a lot of the residents in the area have been left out of this process, we are talking about residents who will be directly affected by the erection of these industrial wind turbine towers, adjoining farmers who depend on their income and future value of their farms, land holders who have been improving their land over the last few years or over the last ten years, residents who have recently bought into the area for the picturesque pristine farming and co-combined wildlife areas, and the majority are planting trees and improving that co-existence with wildlife and farming. We learnt at that meeting a few farmer's had already decided to host the industrial wind turbines, taking up these lease agreements without due diligence or community feedback.

I would like to know how it was decided the environmental impact was negligible; who decided a pristine and productive environment could house these towers, the very infrastructure to erect these towers will impact on the fragile local environment. The effect on the wildlife and diverse native species returning is catastrophic. When was it decided the wedge tailed eagles can just live elsewhere, our wombats, koalas, possums, rock wallabies, echidnas, goannas, platypus, many species of frogs, birds such as kingfishers, kookaburras, wrens, whip birds, bower birds, thrushes, parrots, snakes , how was it decided to upset this equilibrium and that it does not matter.

For access to install and maintain the Turbines the criss-cross of countless roads and underground interconnection between these wind towers will be a burden for our wildlife and water resources.

I put it to you that our local ever running springs and creeks will be put at risk, creeks that for hundreds of metres disappear into the sub-surface should not be put at risk breaking the chain of aquatic biotic life, destroying these early developing fragile links. Marginal marshes and swamps will be changed and may cease to exist at all.

The few wetlands we have left in this area should not become permanent dry holes in the ground.

Why after an extended drought would our water resources such as springs or seasonal creeks be put at risk, imbalance due to the installation of Turbines will heighten the risk to our soils and ground cover associated with their location.

Why has rural Australia been embracing land-care, re-vegetation and encouraging the species regeneration if only to be knocked back again with industrial power station developments in a rural farming, co-existent wildlife remnant and corridor vegetation area. We are one of the driest continents on earth, what sound scientific evidence has there been done to determine the outcome of that fragile balance at risk.

I cannot envisage that ripping up virgin rocky bushland, displacing springs, running seasonal creeks, marshes and placing tracks for large equipment such as cranes and towers through cropping, grazing and native areas is not going to be an environmental nightmare for local wildlife, and for what remaining native flora we have left in Rugby. Due to the locations where they are being placed, the haste with which they are being instigated, the detriment to others, the manner in which they are being approved without community consultation and sound scientific independent consultative environmental evidence I do not support them in the surrounding area.

Sound scientific evidence has found a link between electromagnetic fields and illnesses.

Sound scientific evidence has identified risks to health associated with infrasound.

Sound scientific evidence has identified risks to health from excessive noise.

One thing for sure is they will provide a fire hazard for the Great Dividing Range and all farmland around them, many hundreds of thousands of acres. Many, many isolated villages will be at risk.

I believe in constructive soundly researched scientific alternative sources of renewable energy, that does not burden nor cause the redistribution of our human footprint on earth and that can be a viable alternative, that does not impact in other areas. Wind power is intermittent and it does not produce reliable energy, neither does it produce energy economically, it does not reduce dependence on oil, it has not replaced any conventional power plants, it does not significantly reduce CO2 emissions, there is no future regard set to the decommissioning of these wind turbine towers created.

For me it has been a very quick introduction to the realisation that a Industrialised Wind Powered Power Station spread over and into a vast rural location could even be envisioned and a very quick realisation that not enough sound scientific evidence to support the expenditure and location of this type of industrialised power station in Australia's farmland and adjacent to rural communities has been carried out.

The pressure we place upon the rural water supply is fundamental to five areas; water, food, energy, human health and ecosystem function, sound scientific evidence of vulnerability to this event has not been researched.

The recent advice on these wind towers is that they do not return on the investment

Technology is changing and improving so quickly we do not need to sacrifice great areas of farming, native areas and whole tracts of land without sound scientific evidence.

We all know we need to conserve our resources and reduce emissions; we need to recycle and develop alternative natural resources I believe in wind power as an alternative renewable resource

but I do not believe a Wind Powered Power Station backed up by conventional power stations provides that alternative in this rural area.

We have a moral obligation to reduce our impact, conserve and protect natural water courses and protect our rural neighbourhood now and into the future.

Geraldine Foti