

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
INQUIRY ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RURAL WIND FARMS

I write in strong support of rural wind farms.

A clear majority of the Australian people support the generation of electricity by renewable technology, as an essential part of our response to climate change. Currently wind turbines are commercially and technically the most viable means to do this.

The Committee's deliberations on the issues listed for the inquiry must be informed by evidence rather than by unsubstantiated allegations.

Following a review of the scientific literature the NH&MRC in June 2010 concluded that there is no published scientific evidence to support adverse effects of wind turbines on health.

The noise generated by modern wind farms is much lower than that of typical city streets, and very little greater than the background noise in rural environments.

Community wind farms are common in Europe, particularly in closely-settled countries like Denmark and The Netherlands. Many of them are sited close to dwellings and farms, without adverse effects.

A recent study in Australia, by the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, found that rural wind farms were supported by 85% of respondents; 60% supported them even within 1–2 km of their homes.

Many people find the sight of wind turbines, with their almost silent, slowly-turning blades attractive. It is certainly far preferable to that of a coal-fired power station, emitting smoke and steam from high stacks.

I myself have invested in the Hepburn Community Wind Farm in Victoria. This project has strong support in the local community (95% of letters during the planning process were in favour), and will bring considerable economic gain to the community.

I urge the Committee to find that the social and economic impact of rural wind farms is strongly positive, and that their construction should be encouraged. To do less than that would be an irresponsible head-in-the-sand response to the dangers of climate change.

John Wells