

## **Prior to construction.**

- After viewing the proposed wind farm development plans at the Shire Offices and asking several questions the original planner offered us a contract which included double glazing of windows for any noise problems. They offered me a job maintaining the wind towers, job training in Germany and would pay for the whole family to go. An office and substation would be put in our front paddock. Pacific Hydro bought the company and reneged on the original agreement.
- We applied to access equity in our home loan and find a caveat has been placed on our property by Pacific Hydro. It took 8 weeks to reverse. Two other neighbours, unknowingly, also had caveats placed by mistake. At the original hearing at Glenelg Shire offices, I mentioned this and hoped this would be an opportunity for Pacific Hydro's representatives to just say sorry. They didn't ever apologise and this was when I first realised we were dealing with corporate bullies.
- The wind farm was originally stopped but Pacific Hydro reversed the umpire's decision on appeal. Even though the environmental effects study stated the ground unstable and most towers should not go ahead.

- Original permit; Cape Bridgewater wind farm was the last of three to be constructed but was the first to go ahead. Makes sense with only four families living close by, less to impact and therefore have a voice. Also Cape Bridgewater is the highest point on coastal Victoria and 'if they can put them there they can put them anywhere'.
- Two thousand jobs are to be created. This was great at getting the town behind the project. If you protested against the wind farm it was said you didn't want jobs for the kids in town and did you want to be responsible for the green house gases.
- Some towers have been placed with no OH&S considerations i.e. Proximity to Blowholes Road.
- Prior to planning approval, Pacific Hydro CEO requested and organised a meeting to be at our house. I was away interstate, working for four weeks and I had to arrange time off and travel for the appointment. I needed to be present, my partner has a disability. They visited unannounced on another day, my partner was alone. He assured her there would be no noise or health issues from the proposed wind farm and when questioned further he became slightly verbally aggressive and bombastic, leaving my partner feeling upset and intimidated.
- Another Pacific Hydro employee suggested using a radio signal as an electronic screen against noise encountered.

- I attended the original hearing, held at the Glenelg Shire council offices, to have an input about the inconveniences and health concerns I had about the proposed wind farm. I was yelled at by a member of the public to “get a job” even though I had taken a day off work, without pay. Some fellow workers suggested that I wasn’t serious about my job if I could take time off for the meeting. Making comments, “Was I anti-jobs”. (Because I was questioning the wind farm proposal).
- 2000 jobs promised was the first of many lies, 50,000 tourists to Codrington wind farm over 2 years, a lie. No noise vibration because of new technology, a lie. Towers vibrate and echo like tuning forks causing structural damage to buildings e.g. Cape Bridgewaters original stone school building.

### **During construction.**

- About four years before completion I asked about visual screening and was advised that takes place on completion of the project. We planted our own trees where an extension to our home had been planned. We lost our western view and our relaxed evenings enjoying the sun set, to the visual impact of the wind farm.
- Wedge-tailed eagle nesting tree removed and they haven’t been sighted hovering and hunting over the Cape since.

- Delivery trucks ignored speed restrictions and often crossed double lines endangering local traffic and livestock. The speed limit on blowholes road was eventually lowered from 100km to 60km, slowing things down considerably for us and not necessarily the construction vehicles. When out walking the dog on Blowholes rd, some drivers considerately slowed down, many didn't.
- The wildlife roadside kill was bad enough that someone was removing them within 24hrs.
- The local community had to protest and request that the trucks stop during school bus drop off and pick up times, as the trucks weren't slowing down. It was decided the trucks were to stop for a ten minute window. Sometimes they still didn't stop and this prevented the bus from getting to the bus stop to collect the school children. The trucks were moving up a steep grade. Eventually a footpath was put in and the kids were partially off the busy road.
- There were traffic delays especially when the towers were being delivered.
- I reported a number of truck drivers throwing cigarette butts out of the window, to Pacific Hydro; I was told "They wouldn't be doing that".

- An area of the Petrified Forest was removed to construct a truck turn-in, Pacific Hydro assured us there would be no damage to the environment i.e. any trees or shrubs removed would be replaced. They haven't restored it. When questioned they said the DSE had given approval, which they hadn't. No-one in the community knew the turn-in was planned.
- Local roads were ripped up by the heavy transport, we were assured roads would be restored and they are still not repaired properly. When questioned, Pacific Hydro said it is a Vic roads problem.
- Temporary power lines were put in alongside our fence line with no notification and still haven't been removed.
- Electricity power disruptions for months, for ten or more hours at a time, most times with no forewarning, - no generators were supplied. We'd have to ring powercor to find out if it was a general fault or something to do with the wind farm and how long it would be out. Our freezer would be defrosting, no power for the water pump, no showers, no running drinking water, no toilet, no stove.
- We contacted Pacific Hydro on behalf of our quadriplegic neighbour who without electricity was put in life threatening situations especially at night. (He wouldn't want or make a fuss because of his condition, which is why I acted quietly on his

behalf. Pacific Hydro assured me a generator would be provided to him, it never was.)

- We were never told that wind farms use electricity to make electricity. One positive since the wind farm has been operating, we are never without power for long, our area must have top priority for repairs.
- Many more tonnes of limestone road base and cement were used in construction because once the surface of these fragile dunes were exposed, contractors realised that the ground was most likely too unstable to facilitate such a heavy industry. (As per the environmental effects study).
- Nauseating smell of 2pac paint from nearly 1km away. (Workers not given P.P.E. and would become disoriented from exposure in confined spaces).
- Interstate and overseas workers put on individual work contracts and not EBA rates i.e. No overtime, flat rate and no P.P.E. for fumes, working in the rain, no ten hour breaks between shifts, an extreme breach of health and safety guidelines especially because of the use of cranes.
- Towers higher and in different positions to planning montage.

- Told where and how visual screening would be funded, no fast sacrificial species allowed due to non native status.
- Originally no chemical sprays were going to be used on tree planting areas. In order to get screening trees we eventually agreed to a spraying schedule which was not followed. Four applications of herbicide were used to be used to negate weed growth, only one was applied. We have more weeds now where the trees are than ever. Sacrificial non-natives were now included. It took constant phone calls and stress to get those trees planted. Three years later they are only three feet high and not in the place we wanted for most effective screening i.e. highest point on our property. They don't screen the turbines at all.

### **Since operating, 1<sup>st</sup> three months.**

- Requested lights on tower entries are turned off at night. We were assured prior to approval there would be no lights on the towers or turbines. They remain on.
- Requested daily wind noise data recordings – on official paperwork.

- Mentioned some nights earplugs are needed to sleep, especially on still nights with no other sound masking the constant whomp, whomp noise. Ear plugs don't prevent sound conducting through bone, so it is an ineffective solution to noise.
- Blade flicker has caused vertigo.
- We have had no response by Pacific Hydro to any of these issues in either writing or a phone call.

### **1<sup>st</sup> three months until now.**

- Wind farm decibel levels are above accepted level but are only shown as dots on a small annual graph. We are still requesting a daily readout.
- The device used for recording the decibel levels was kept on and down the road from our property, the microphone and stand were always being blown over, the readings were/are ineffective, the first readings were useless and no data was available for awhile. Meanwhile we had a new baby and the inconvenience of a worker speeding up the driveway coming to check the recording equipment. This device is only recording the sound heard by ear. It is not recording the subsonic sounds, the sounds we feel or the sounds going through the ground.



- Towers act like a tuning fork resonating through the ground, causing the ground and our house to vibrate. This becomes worse on windy days. This at times, constant vibration drives my partner 'mad'.
- We have discovered oil spatters on the west wall and roof of the house, we believe it comes from the lifting chain and appears to be water soluble. We don't know if it is harmful and have requested MSD sheets to no avail. We don't know if our water is safe to be drinking or washing in.
- One morning I woke up feeling uneasy, grumpy and couldn't understand why. Eventually I realised the wind towers were not going and the peace and quiet, which was the reason we moved from the city to here, was now extremely annoying. How can this be so?
- The original old Cape Bridgewater school house has vibrated to pieces.
- Government roads are locked; there is now only the single main road in or out of Cape Bridgewater. A concern in an emergency evacuation.
- Wind towers are not switched off during total fire ban days. This really concerns us, as when the tower in S.A. recently caught fire, C.F.A. members were not allowed near it. It was just left to burn. We don't know Pacific Hydro's fire plans or what their response to a turbine fire here at Cape Bridgewater will be.

- There is no after hours emergency number listed anywhere for the Cape Bridgewater wind farm. (To our knowledge).
- Low flying aircraft still fly over the roof of our house and we are less than a kilometre away from the wind farm. The Portland airport staff say aircraft are not supposed to and to report it to the civil airway authority. Another inconvenience.
- It is the oddest experience living next to a wind farm. It defies rationality, the blades stop turning and still you feel the vibrations and negative effects. Perhaps it is lack of knowledge of the full workings of a wind farm.
- Last year we had a months holiday away from the area, it took a few days to feel rested and realised we really had needed a break from the constant exposure to noise. It has been far more noticeable on our return how disturbing the wind turbines can be.
- During a local community meeting, a pacific hydro representative when questioned about why funding to set up a sustainable learning farm was rejected, said in response, “We don’t care about the environment, we are a power generating company”.

At this meeting I also asked why were turbines shown on the front of the cape and not behind as agreed with John Doyle. Another representative replied “John Doyle was never going to have wind towers on his property, he was a sacrificial lamb”. Tell that to John Doyles grandchildren, who were bullied and victimised on the school bus because the Doyles supported the wind farms.

- The tower closest to Blowholes Rd, has one blade which makes significantly more noise than others.
- Another landowner has told me while they lived in a gully; the towers are much louder than where they live now. Their new home, on higher ground, has towers closer but less disturbance. So maximum distances may be irrelevant. He also said, “It is unfair that he is gaining an income from having the wind towers and his neighbours who are also greatly impacted, get nothing”.
- People see the wind farm, see the blades turning, think of the power they are generating, and say, “What’s the big deal?” They generally only see them on nice sunny days when they are out for a drive. The turbines are quietest sitting beneath them. This is why Pacific Hydro on the Codrington wind farm open day, bussed people to the base of a turbine from the marquees which were a long distance away, and had loud bands and excessive background noise. We are here in all weather conditions and the turbines are often noisiest on gentle wind days and they are especially noisy, with a westerly wind and between 1-6am.

- Kangaroos and foxes have moved off Cape Dunesque, where the towers are.  
They graze closer to our place in the middle of Cape Bridgewater. The rather shy black faced swamp wallaby is being killed by traffic, in ever increasing numbers as they move from where the turbines are.
- Pacific Hydro asked for a community meeting to be catered for, including alcohol, at the local beach Kiosk/Café and didn't pay the owner, the thousand dollars or so, for several months.
- Since the very first public whispers of a wind farm, the Cape Bridgewater population was divided in opinion, it no longer has the same community spirit and friendships have been lost. Children were bullied on the local school bus and property was vandalised, upsetting the family concerned, who were fearful. No turbines were going on their property, they just supported it.

## **Questions**

Can the vibrations be dampened?

We all know that high decibel levels cause hearing loss; it is also known that constant low level noise causes hearing loss. Why is this never mentioned by the wind farms, when declaring there is no noise problem?

Why won't wind farm companies investigate infrasound levels of wind farms?

The Chinese have done studies on the effects of infrasound on university students, why are these results not investigated?

Can the wind farm, turbines, blades and substation be turned off at night so we can sleep all night and wake up refreshed?

Is there fire fighting equipment/water on the wind farm site, is the Cape Bridgewater C.F.A. capable of responding to a wind farm fire? Do C.F.A. members need special training?

Can we stop ours and other people's health being compromised by wind farm operations?

Why did Vestas not win the contract to supply blades for the Portland wind project when the project was not to go ahead until the Portland blade factory was in operation?

Is this because Vestas infrastructure is underground and therefore not the cheapest tender of the three quotes offered?

Is the oil splatter causing pollution of our water tanks and drinking water or contaminating bore water? Why is it so difficult to obtain necessary MSDS sheets?

What are they hiding?

Why are the government roads locked?

How does the former Glenelg Shire CEO become project manager, of a wind farm construction site which is in said shire?

Did council members have/accept shares from Pacific Hydro prior to approval?

How can a planning minister disregard an environmental study which states the ground is too unstable for the bulk of the proposed wind farm?

Why is Pacific Hydro going through so many CEO's?

On 774 radio, Steve Martin was interviewing people when it was stated that the Pacific Hydro wind farm was receiving 1.3 billion dollars in subsidies. When this question was put to the CEO, the reply was “that is a slight exaggeration”, there was no outright denial. I have heard figures of 2.8 billion and more in subsidies, what are they really getting and how many schools, hospitals, roads etc would that buy?

Are we going to discover five years down the track, huge health problems from exposure to a power station and a company that has ignored overseas health impact studies? I.e. hearing loss, heart problems, depression, hypertension etc.

Will our health be affected long term by exposure to the chemicals?

Why is the council trying to change the zoning of Cape Bridgewater and what is their agenda?

Why was the Cape Bridgewater wind farm allowed to go ahead and people can't get a planning permit to build a home on their property which was purchased in good faith?

How did Pacific Hydro get a planning permit approved when there was a heritage overlay in progress in this area? Did the Glenelg Shire Council put a hold on the overlay proceedings so the construction could go ahead?

Do wind farms use more green house gases to make and erect than they ever save?

Has there been or going to be a post wind farm geological survey of the subterranean catacombs and caves of Cape Bridgewater? These were of concern on the original environmental impact survey.

Is it true that the more income the turbine creates for the landholder the more likely the wind farm infrastructure will remain beyond the original proposal of a 20 year wind farm?

The Pacific Hydro construction manager has stated “These towers have a life span of 75 years and as technology increases/improves we can keep replacing the nacelle and blades for the life of the tower”. Does this mean they won’t be dismantled in our children’s lifetime?

Why is the distance of residences from towers greater in Europe?

Why do wind tower companies ignore studies regarding infrasound?

## **Problems**

- Planned health retreat can’t go ahead due to blade flicker, noise and vibrations.
- Disrupted sleep patterns.
- Headaches, irritability, rapid heart beat, waking up frightened in the middle of the night.
- The vibrations and noise affect our intimacy.
- Frequent waking at night with an urge to urinate, with a full bladder and only do a small wee and five minutes later have the urge to go again. This is affecting visitors as well.
- GP’s aren’t interested, just look at you blankly, and don’t know anything about the wind farm health issues and don’t have the time or perhaps encouragement to be interested. We heard on ABC Radio that the Victorian Chief Health Officer

says there are no adverse health affects from wind farms, how has he concluded that and what are we experiencing then?

- Need to use ear plugs at night to try to sleep.
- There are times the noise/vibrations are so loud, so disturbing; we're woken in the middle of the night, wondering if there's been a violent car accident. The noise levels must exceed the 'acceptable noise levels' and if so, the software of the generators must be adjusted to prevent these loud noises. The acceptable noise level needs investigation.
- Vibrations coming up through the house, and go on for days at a time.
- Oil splatter from the turbines on western wall of house and roof, not responded to by Pacific Hydro. (Requested M.S.D.S. sheet). Neighbours have experienced the same oil issues.
- Power poles vibrate in unison with the wind turbine noise/movement. Is this vibrating down the temporary power line that should have been removed after construction?
- Have not walked to springs on the G.S.W.W. since construction.
- Have not been able to observe blue whale migration during upwelling.
- Have not been able to go for evening walks or enjoy the sunset.
- No longer have baths, the vibrations come up through the bath! It's not relaxing.
- Can no longer take dog for a walk down locked government roads.
- A farmer neighbour experiences his farm machinery shed ringing like a bell and can't work in it.



- Another neighbours' bedroom sounds like the inside of a drum.
- Try to contact the CEO of Pacific Hydro only to find there is often a new one.
- No notification that Pacific Hydro Portland office had moved or had a new phone number and try finding their number in the telephone book.
- Have never been personally offered a visit by a Pacific Hydro or Glenelg Shire Representative to discuss any concerns or problems, even though our concerns are well known to Pacific Hydro. Wind farm representatives are often heard big noting themselves by claiming they are working with communities, how? That they listen to the problems and go out and visit and that there are workers available to discuss any problems. It is our experience that Pacific Hydro doesn't respond to concerns for years and any information they post out, is too technical, irrelevant to the issue or from overseas. When you do have an opportunity to talk face to face with a representative, they demand an e-mail communication, or to put complaints in writing on one of their forms. A good corporate neighbour would have the common decency to respond to and address our concerns. Because there is no paper trail Pacific Hydro states no-one has complained yet. Talk is fine, people need solutions to problems and to be taken seriously and not marginalised as the 'loony' minority. It is really distressing as it is inferred that people are lying about their experiences. It is distressing to be disregarded when our health concerns are belittled.

- There is no avenue for a telephone complaint; any complaints have to be in writing even after speaking to a Pacific Hydro representative. This is annoying as sometimes as locals, we can hear problems with gearboxes, a frightening noise, which if addressed earlier, could save the company repair expenses, (at least six gear boxes have been replaced). Also meaning less noise stress for us and less chance of an industrial fire. Also in the middle of the night when you're angry and you can't sleep for the disturbances, it would be nice if a representative could hear the noise we hear, down the phone line.
- Wayward bus lines used to visit Cape Bridgewater bi-weekly with European tourists who loved the area because of no turbines, since construction Wayward buses no longer visit the area. Affecting local businesses.
- Two families have shifted from our locale due to the wind farm. Another family work shiftwork and often stay the night in Portland. We have no escape, we moved away from friends and family and better employment opportunities, to relocate here at what used to be pristine Cape Bridgewater. Even if we sold up, we couldn't afford to relocate.
- We are told this wind farm produces enough power to supply many thousands of homes when in fact it feeds straight into Portland Aluminium's high voltage switchyard. When asked why Cape Bridgewater wind farm is being constructed

we were told “We have already sold the power”. This sounds a lot like Enron, how can you sell something that isn’t there?

- Blades which were transported from overseas arrived damaged and had to be repaired. Blades have been taken off to be repaired also. We had been told arrogantly prior to approval by a wind farm representative there would be no audible noise or vibration, because millions of dollars are spent on precision engineering to ensure perfect aerodynamics and nothing on the turbine moves even a millimetre. You can visibly see the blades flexing and can hear the difference between each blade on the turbine closest to Blowholes Rd.
- Comments such as “If I told you a bus rumbling past gives you negative health effects you’d believe it” as sent by SMS to ABC Radio. These snide remarks we have to contend with all the time and they continue to divide communities. People are scared to express a ‘bad’ opinion on the wind farms, as personal verbal attacks are common, even from people you don’t know and you haven’t wanted to hear their righteous beliefs. And they don’t live near a wind farm. It would be more socially acceptable to talk about religion or politics, it would be safer.
- New construction guidelines recommend a minimum distance of 2 kms. from residences. Where does that leave us, we are living less than 1 km away from the closest turbine, which is one of the noisiest?

## **Comment in closing.**

Due to negative news reporting re- other wind farms, our investment and commitment to improving our home, garden and farm, at [REDACTED], has been severely hamstrung. Thus not being able to financially secure my family future as originally planned. When the towers are pulled down in 20 years, this problem will be rectified but if our health and house are in a state of disrepair, what sort of quality of life will we have in our golden years?

Even if I could convince my partner to sell up, (She states, “Why should we have to shift, this is our home”). The value of our land has been decimated by negative news coverage.

Will the wind farm business be viable at the cost of our health and massive subsidies?

We have been told a heritage overlay is being put on our area including our residence, it defies belief there is a wind farm in such an historical area of Victoria.

So where do we go from here. How can this situation be turned into a win/win situation for all of us.

