

Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

Senate Inquiry

To Whom It May Concern

Since 1978 wind power is the fastest growing electricity generation technology in the world. At the end of 2008, the global installed generating capacity was 120800 MW. The industry has had an annual growth rate in the last 25 years consistently of between 25 – 30%. Wind is the least expensive of the new renewable sources of electricity and is the backbone of the USA's, China's, India's, and the EU's renewable energy targets. In Germany a country of 82 million people in an area of 349,223 square kilometres there are 21,164 operating wind turbines. In Victoria with a population of 5.5 million people covering an area of 237629 we have approximately 220 turbines in operation. Germany and the EU continue to support to wind energy generation, and are continuing to set more rigorous targets for renewable energy generation. In light of this it seems ludicrous to be even having this debate.

Wind has the lowest measureable environmental impact of all sources of electricity. Quite simply, wind is the most effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Australia associated with energy generation.

There is no credible scientific evidence in the world that shows a link between energy generation from wind turbines and health. In contrast there is overwhelming evidence of the linkages between energy generation from the coal industry and human health impacts.

Whilst it is hard to ascertain from the scaremongering campaigns undertaken by the anti wind farm campaigners and the media, wind energy in regional and rural Australia does in fact have a very high acceptance rate. It provides for enormous local job opportunities, increased revenue for the agricultural sector and financial and social benefits for towns. It provides prosperity and reinvigoration into small township that have been suffering from population decline due to the lack of job prospects.

Studies have found no statistical evidence that wind farms negatively affect property values. I believe that the anti wind farm campaigners have more potential impact to lower property values due to their continued scaremongering tactics within the media.

The planning process for the development of a wind energy facility is very intense and lengthy. The application and information contained is highly scrutinised and developers go to lengths so not as to have any impact or have minimal on the environment. The issue of noise is carefully analysed during the planning stage and post construction. Community consultation is rigorous and extensive.

Renewable energy generation is critical to our future. Renewable energy generation is critical to tackle climate change. As the largest GHG emitter per capita in the world and as a country extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, Australia must take a positive approach to renewable energy and therefore to wind energy. The arguments by anti wind farm campaigners have long been put to bed in other countries, lets accept scientific findings and get on with

transforming our energy future. A country that embraces change and uses renewable resources (the wind, solar, tidal etc) combined with technological solutions to meet our energy demands.

Regards

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