

The Social and Economic Effect of Rural Wind farms.

Submission by John Carter,

The Social and Economic Effect of Rural Wind farms.

I submit the following submission to your Inquiry.

General.

Any officer seriously involved with this Inquiry should first read “The Wind farm Scam” by UK scientist John Etherington . Etherington illustrates the insanity of the European windfarm period – particularly Denmark. He does not cover the usual Australian copying of a technology that is proven to be very inefficient and whose use is in decline. Australia is moving into a time of electricity shortage as well as budget deficits as infrastructure that has not been maintained for years falls apart. Wind power is unreliable and far more costly than other forms of electricity. The spending of scarce money on the hopelessly inefficient wind farm “side show “ will be seen by future generations as insanity .

You have heard and will hear a lot about the effectiveness and the effects of wind-farms.

I have actually lived within 3 kms of the first wind farm in NSW for 13 years. Others may conjecture—I have experienced. Most of my comments are based on actual experience.

I follow your terms of reference in order

(a) Any adverse health effects for people living in close proximity to wind farms;

Since the commencement of operations of Crookwell 1 in 1998 my wife has experienced strange problems with her health. She developed severe pain in many muscles. She had trouble sleeping... In August 2006 she was diagnosed as having Polymyalgia Rheumatica and put on Cortisone treatment—which she has had to maintain ever since. This removed the pain but then she developed vertigo, numb left finger, and numb left side of her mouth, flickering focus and then severe headache. When tired her face would turn scarlet, left hand would go a purple colour and upper arm would ache. I read about a complaint called Wind Turbine Syndrome on the Internet. Dr Nina Pierpont has become a World authority on the subject.

Dr. Sarah Laurie of South Australia is working with the WAUBRA Foundation on health problems associated with wind turbines and recently attended a Symposium on the subject in Toronto .

List of symptoms for Wind Turbine Syndrome.

(Dr Nina Pierpont and Dr. Sarah Laurie)

Sleep Disturbance.

Headache (Head being squeezed in vice)

Tinnitus

Vertigo

Nausea

Visual blurring

Rapid heart rate-“Heart leaping from chest”.

Irritability

Concentration and memory loss.

Panic episodes – lip quiver.

My wife's symptoms matched many of those listed above.

We are in a TV reception removing electromagnetic bubble which emanates from the nearest tower (2 kms. away).

I contacted Mr. Tim Strachan at The Energy Store, Bondi as I had read of his work with electromagnetic problems. I made an appointment and Mr. Strachan made a pendant for my wife on the end of which is metals and crystals enclosed by plastic.

Since wearing it (from December 6th. 2008) most of the symptoms have disappeared. She is sleeping better than for years. None of the above symptoms have occurred when she is at our unit in Sydney.

No turbine should be erected within 3 kms of a dwelling on health grounds.

(b) Concerns over the excessive noise and vibrations emitted by wind farms, which are in close proximity to people's homes;

We live to the NE of the turbines and do not consciously hear the fans turning –on the occasions that they do turn. They are operating at an absurd 12% efficiency!

The Dooley family live on the opposite side of Crookwell 11 Wind turbines They are within 2kms to the South of the nearest turbine. They hear the “Whoosh, Shoosh” washing machine noises and have had very severe headaches after fencing near the turbines. One of them died of cancer and the family used to sit up at night with him as bleeding incidents occurred and an ambulance was immediately required. His widow is severely affected with sleeplessness, high blood pressure and nose bleeds .

(c) The impact of rural wind farms on property values, employment opportunities and farm income;

- Property values fall-the removal of subdivision approvals within 2kms of a turbine takes away the capital appreciation factor—the main economic reason for owning a rural holding--for both the owner AND HIS UNCOMPENSATED NEIGHBOURS.
- Any employment opportunity is very short lived (during erection).The Crookwell 1 Wind turbine power station has NO permanent employee stationed in Crookwell.
- Returns from turbines vary greatly but the income is cancelled out by loss of capital appreciation on a farm—as well as social rift as angry neighbours cut off.

The proposed Crookwell 11 development is an example. It will surround the 160 year ownership Dooley family farm and render their land practically valueless for subdivision or sale. Upper Lachlan Council Planning has already pointed out to one of their neighbours that subdivision will not be approved where a dwelling is within 2 kms of a turbine.

Another member of the Dooley family has 250 acres some 2kms to the south of the proposed Crookwell 11. He has had the land on the market for 7 years with not one inspection.

An officer from Union Fenosa approached a Goulburn valuer to value Dooley's land. I am informed that he told the valuer that \$600 /acre would be a suitable value!! This is at least \$1400 under values of comparative land (away from turbines) sold at the time.

Inability to subdivide obviously reduces the value of the land despite absurd claims to the contrary by developers.

Experience sees initial wind farm owners leave.

The owner who agreed to Crookwell 1 being erected on her property has since died but in her last weeks she said that, given her life again , she would never have agreed to the turbines being erected. Her farm is leased to a man who lives in Crookwell. Her daughters have signed petitions against any more wind-farms. An owner loses control of his/her farm to the operators with locked gates , unexpected traffic etc.

The Blayney wind farm's original owner sold. The figures on original owner sales in the Waubra area are still being collected but it will be a high percentage. See The Wind farm Scam for stories of UK experiences.

One of the main reasons for farm ownership is a life of independence. This is lost with the erection of wind turbines.

(d) The interface between Commonwealth, state and local planning laws as they pertain to wind farms; and the apparent complete lack of investigation by the NSW Department of Planning.

Over 12 years we have seen a chain of four companies sell their investment in these two local wind farm sites in a bewildering display of "Drop the handkerchief". The first applicant for Crookwell 11- Gamesa was investigated and found to have capital of \$1100! There was a raft of shelf companies underneath with no value. The recent non payment of local contractors by the developers of the Gullen Range Project illustrates the flimsy economic standing of the developing company involved there.

Now, we find the Spanish multi national company- Union Fenosa vastly increasing the initially allowed height of their proposed turbines on a lower elevation than Crookwell 1. Crookwell 11 is now in its seventh year as a proposal. A few demountables were erected two years ago (within a week of its application lapsing) to keep the application valid. This has prevented land sales and is " dog in the manger" behaviour as they wait for Government money.

. I wrote to the Minister for Planning and the Department seeking answers to a series of questions. I received no answers—just advice that Crookwell 11 was to proceed...

If it wasn't for risk to our health, the damage to the scenery and depreciation in land values and scandalous waste of taxpayer money this is all material for a farce. Union Fenosa has been either unwilling or unable to answer the questions asked by local residents. The NSW Department has been "overseeing" a sham. I believe that the Department of Planning has failed completely in its regulatory role and is either incompetent or in the hands of the developers. Media stories of Mafia involvement by some of the companies involved here have come from Nicaragua and Sardinia and do not surprise when one uncovers all sorts of promises and lies in local proposals.

(e) Any other relevant matters.

Any officer seriously involved in this Inquiry should read "The Windfarm Scam" By John Etherington (UK).

1. Role of utility-scale wind generation in:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions generated by electricity production
- Producing off peak and base load power.

The inability of inland wind farms to achieve what is claimed.

We opposed Wind farm 1 – We were told that it was a trial and that there would be no more wind farms in our area. I have had both Peta Seaton and Katrina Hodgkinson separately seek the economics of Wind farm 1 under FOI--all to no avail. Clearly it is an embarrassment to the Government. However, I was lucky to chance upon an employee in the accountancy division of Eraring Energy. In confidence, she told me that Crookwell 1 was losing very big money. This accorded with our daily observation of stationery turbines and my lifetime experience with water windmills here. We have also been told that the Wind farm operates at 12% efficiency.

THERE IS INSUFFICIENT WIND IN THIS AREA TO RUN A VIABLE WIND FARM.

The comment "Predicted high energy generation of these turbines" on page 4 of the initial submission for Wind farm 11 illustrated a naive or deceptive approach to the whole project. A

dispassionate analysis of the 13 year performance of Crookwell Wind farm 1 would illustrate the economic insanity of erecting turbines in this area.

Professor Michael Dureau, CEO of the Warren Centre at Sydney University told me that “No Australian wind farm with any landmass between it and the South Pole will ever be profitable”.

2. Locating rural wind farms to optimise wind resource use and minimise residential and environmental impacts.

I repeat ,Professor Michael Dureau, CEO of the Warren Centre at Sydney University told me that “No Australian wind farm with any landmass between it and the South Pole will ever be profitable”.

Scenic vandalism for no purpose.

Despite several requests I have never sighted the ‘independent’ (Canadian, Dennis Williamson from Victoria) assessment of the visual impact of 55 turbines being inserted into the valley to the South of Lake Edward. I love this valley; I have planted over 40,000 trees over 50 years. If there was a proven case that the public good was an overriding factor I would have to accept the desecration –However ,despite 8 years of requests for the results of the Crookwell Wind farm 1 “ trial” they have never been released. I don’t believe that either Upper Lachlan Shire Council or the Department of Planning has attended to its obvious responsibility to evaluate the trial and release its findings.

Bushfire Risk

A submission to Upper Lachlan Council by Councillor Barlow has highlighted the cases of fire arising from wind turbine malfunction in the predominantly bushfire free Northern Hemisphere. The proposed development is in a very bushfire prone area. A turbine malfunction on a summer day with heavy westerly wind could see the Southern Highlands wiped out. 1965 and 1983 saw such events—now, as population density has multiplied, the damages claims could run into \$ billions.

Ice Throw, Blade Failure and Tower Collapse

Councillor Barlow’s submission lists the disasters in the Northern Hemisphere from the above causes. I find the siting of turbines within 250 metres of the busy Crookwell/ Goulburn road quite astounding. Either no one has done any homework on the danger or the developers and Department of Planning are quite irresponsible—or both.

Removal of TV reception.

In 1998-9 when our TV disappearance was investigated, it was proven that we are in an electromagnetic bubble that emanates from the turbines 2 kms away. We had to erect a satellite dish to get reception and are still unable to get Wollongong TV—instead we get Alice Springs with its limited relevance to our interests.

4. Mechanisms for encouraging local ownership and control of wind technology.

No sane person would put money into wind technology away from the Southern Ocean in Australia.

Professor Michael Dureau, CEO of the Warren Centre at Sydney University told me that “No Australian wind farm with any landmass between it and the South Pole will ever be profitable”.

Bob Carr –“We could cover all NSW with wind farms, kill all the Kookaburras and still not generate 10% of our power needs”.

Mach Hooke “ To equal the output of a coal fired power station we would have to erect a wind turbine every 200 metres on the road between Melbourne and Sydney.”

This is the reason that Crookwell 1 and the proposed Crookwell 11 have already had four owners in an ongoing game of “drop the handkerchief until Government bails us out”

5. The potential role of energy generated by rural wind farms in relation to the Australian Government’s proposed Renewable Energy Target.

Their impact will be negligible. See reasons above.