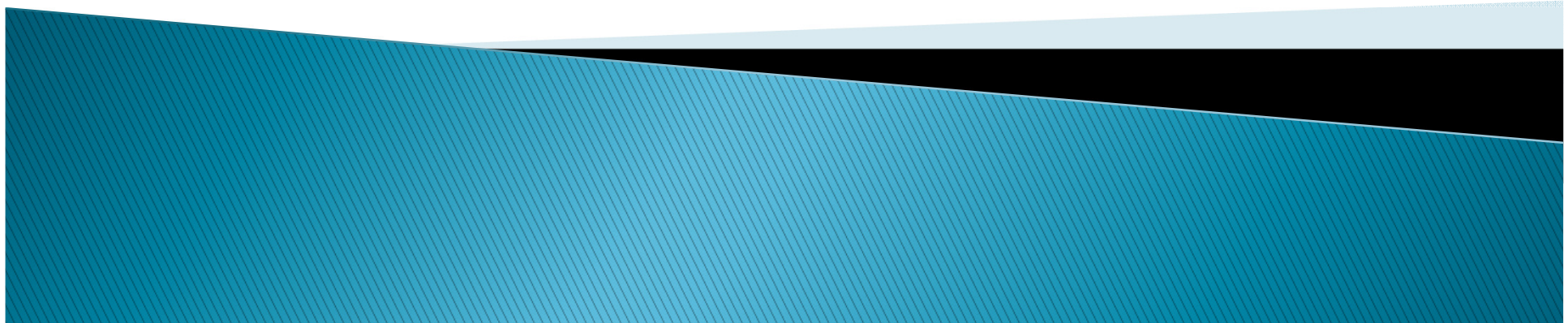


Submission to Senate Hearing in relation to Wind Farms (a case of Lal Lal Windfarm)

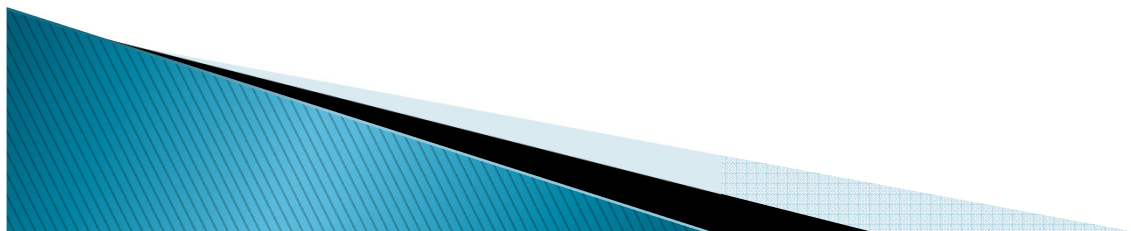
26 March 2011

Merraton Park Rural Retreat
179 Horsehill Road, West
Elaine



Senate Inquiry on Rural Windfarms

- ▶ I submit this presentation based on my experience with the proposed Lal Lal Windfarm (Elaine section) that has had a permit issued in 2009. The hearing panel I believed erred in that it did not consider the economic or social impacts of the proposed windfarm on individual landowners. It basically accepted everything the proponents put forward, and ignored the serious consequences that the siting of the turbines would have on the continued economic viability of our farming and tourism-based business.
- ▶ It relied almost solely upon a flawed Victorian Government document “Sustainability Victoria (2007) Wind Energy Myths and Facts.” In this document, it states there is no evidence to suggest e.g. that property values will be reduced because of windfarms. This is simply not true, and evidence from current and earlier valuations of properties and submissions from land valuers and real estate agents bares this out.
- ▶ As a resource economist, I have complete sympathy with the adoption of renewable energy, including use of wind turbines. However, if individuals are significantly affected, then society (users of the renewable energy) must compensate those affected by building the compensation into the price of generating the electricity from wind sources. The consumer should not benefit at the expense of individuals who lose out. This is not fair nor just, and could be considered un-Australian.



Background

- ▶ Property:
 - 609 acres of prime agricultural land; substantial homestead (& Rural Retreat) and infrastructure for sheep, cattle, cropping enterprises.

Owner background:

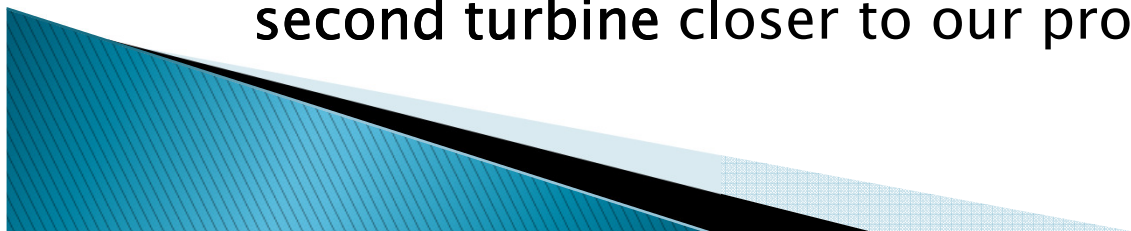
- Agricultural & natural resource economist
- Commercial pilot (Multi-engine IFR rating)
- ▶ Rural retreat history: 2002–2011
 - Retired from University early to run Merraton Park:
 - Farming venture (originally part of the historic *Larundel* property owned by the *Austin* family)–alongside Narmbool
 - Tourism orientation (upmarket B & B; weddings; farm stays; family reunions; fly-ins: ability to land on the property & taxi to homestead.



Objection to part aspect of the proposed wind farm at Elaine


The planning submission fails to take into account:

- ▶ Visual amenity aspect of the present and further development of Merraton Park Rural Retreat;
- ▶ Resultant economic impact on Merraton Park Rural Retreat (and its further development);
- ▶ Two turbines directly compromise access to the property (by air)–safety aspect;
- ▶ Inadequate consultation in the planning process to consider mitigation of the visual impact of the wind farm
 - including NO consultation regarding the addition of a second turbine closer to our property (ESWT23).



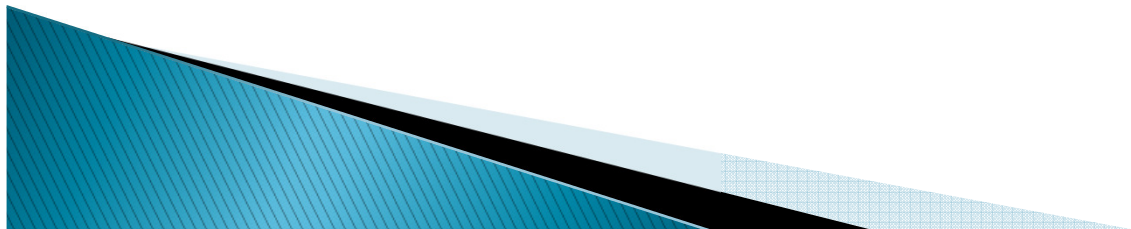
Background to the Objection

Policy and Planning Guidelines Report (2003)

- ▶ “The challenge is to ensure that we develop Victoria’s wind resource in a way that appropriately balances environmental, economic and social factors.” p5
 - ▶ “Assessing wind energy developments therefore requires careful balancing of the impacts.”
 - ▶ “Appropriate consideration needs to be given to the broader benefits of wind energy and the harnessing of commercially driven development opportunities, whilst at the same time, putting in place appropriate standards to protect critical environmental values and recognise local issues.” p14
- 

Policy and Planning ...

- ▶ “Planning should contribute to the provision of renewable energy by facilitating wind energy development in appropriate locations.
- ▶ In particular, planning should:
 - consider the economic and environmental benefits to the broader community of renewable energy generation and the effects on the local environment and landscape.” p20
 - [Ref: Moorabool Shire Council submission of Wednesday 12th November, 2008]



Site Analysis Requirements

- ▶ “In relation to the surrounding area:
Existing land uses;
 - direction and distances to nearby dwellings, townships, urban areas, significant conservation and recreation areas, major roads, tourist routes, airports, aerodromes
 - and existing and proposed wind energy facilities;
- ▶ The siting and use of buildings on adjacent properties;
- ▶ Photomontages or other visual simulations showing the appearance of the development in the context of the surrounding area and from key view points.” p24



Site Analysis Requirements ...

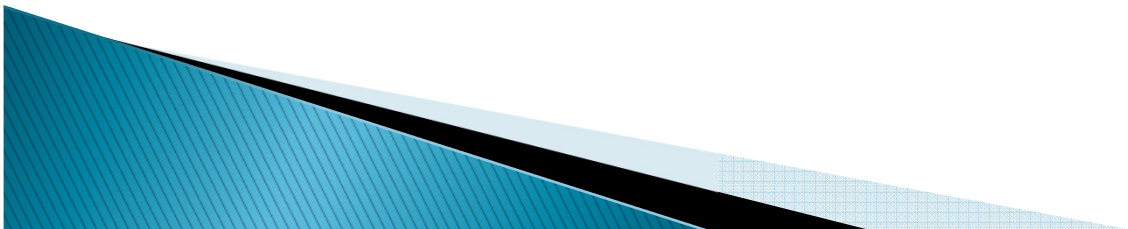
- ▶ “An assessment of the visual impact of the proposal on the landscape ...
- ▶ the economic and social impacts of the proposal; likely amenity effects on the surrounding area due to blade glint, shadow flicker, overshadowing and electromagnetic interference; ...
- ▶ the extent to which the proposal has been designed to manage any potential adverse impacts;
- ▶ the impact on aircraft safety including the views of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority if within a 30 km radius of an airfield; and
- ▶ the cumulative effects of the proposal having regard to other existing or proposed wind energy facilities in the area.” p25



Matters for Consideration

“2 VISUAL AMENITY

- ▶ The degree to which a wind energy facility has a visual impact depends on the magnitude of the change to the landscape caused by the development taking into account:
 - the visibility of the development;
 - the locations and distances from which the development can be viewed; ... “p28

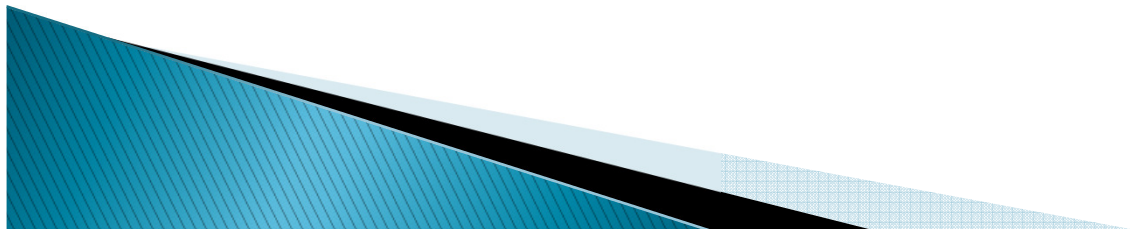


Matters for consideration ...

“Impact reduction considerations

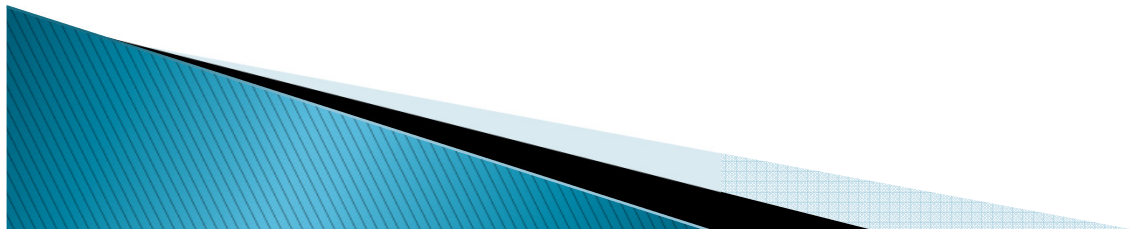
The following measures may be considered as appropriate:

- ▶ siting and designing to minimise impacts on views from areas used for recreation based on landscape values and from dwellings;”



Amenity Issue: Merraton Park

- ▶ Currently:
 - Rural retreat–B & B; weddings; fly–ins etc
- ▶ Planned development of MP:
 - 6 units possibly expanding to 12 for retired people (up–market), to include:
 - Units for living
 - Vineyard
 - Restaurant/Conference centre
 - Lake
 - Tennis court
 - Par 3 golf course and chipping green



Zone of Visual Impact

1.5–3.0 km	<p><i>Highly visible and will usually dominate the landscape</i></p> <p>The degree of visual intrusion will depend on the wind turbine placement within the landscape and factors such as foreground screening.</p>
<1.5km	<p><i>Will be visually dominant in the landscape from most viewing locations</i></p> <p>Dominates the landscape in which they are sited.</p>

Matters for consideration ...

AVIATION

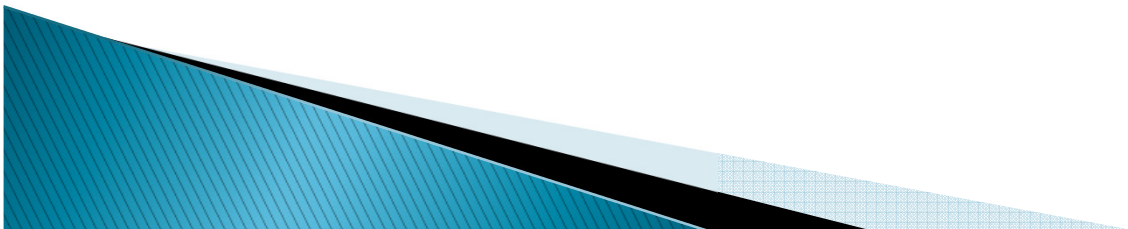
“4 AIRCRAFT SAFETY

- ▶ The height of wind energy turbines can be substantial resulting in potential impact upon nearby airfields. Consultation with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority is necessary to determine any airfields within a 30 km radius and associated requirements.

Evaluation


- ▶ Turbines should not protrude into any obstacle limitation surface for any airfield.

p26

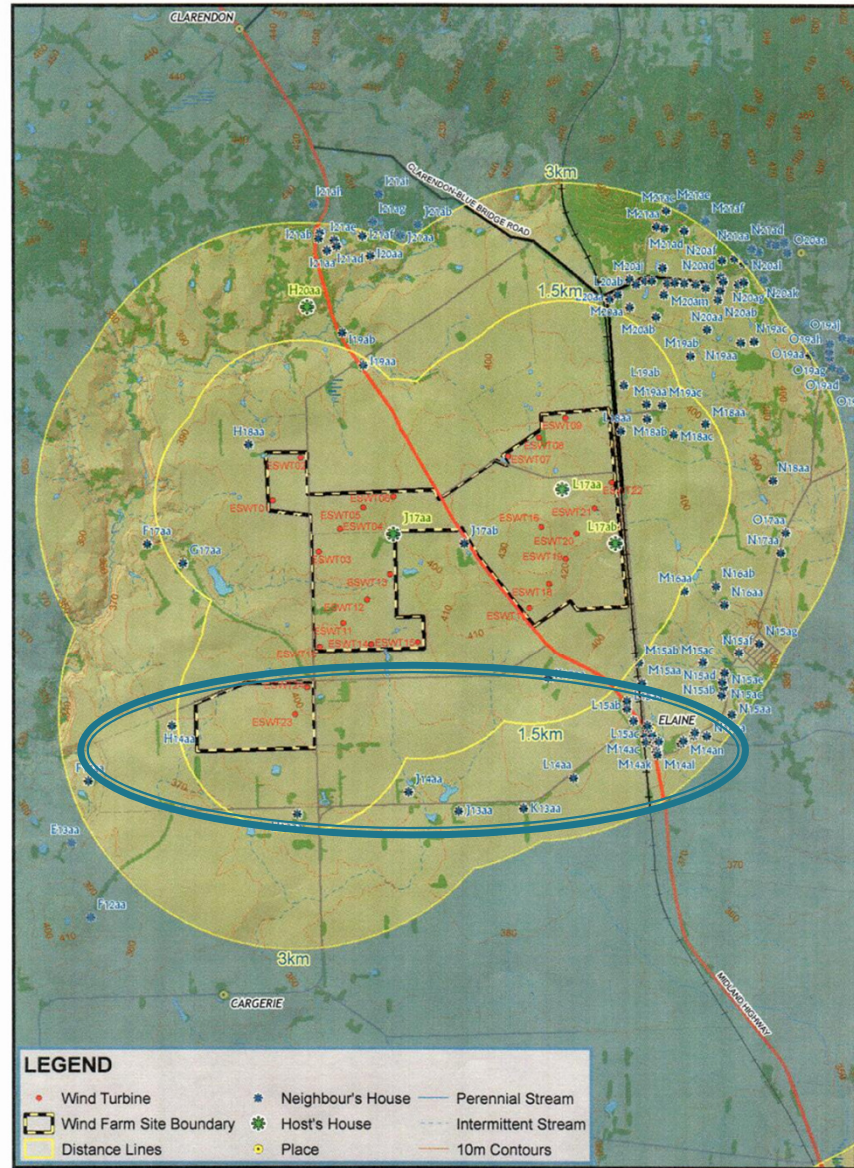


Aviation Issue: Merraton Park

Aerodrome

- ▶ Runway 04/22 (approximately NE/SW)
 - ▶ Approximately 2000 ft long
 - ▶ Available for fly-ins to retreat; crop spraying
 - ▶ Advertised on Merraton Park website; and in AOPA magazine & Aerodrome Directory
 - ▶ Meets standards of CASA for an Authorised Landing Area (ALA)–3NM circuit to 1500ft
 - ▶ Two turbines (ESWT23 & ESWT24) in the way of the runway for straight in approaches (from 5NM or 9km), overshoot and circuits (3NM or 5.5km).
 - ▶ Totally ignored in WestWind planning submission despite being informed on two occasions.
- 

Location of wind turbines ESWT23 & ESWT 24



LEGEND	
• Wind Turbine	★ Neighbour's House
⬡ Wind Farm Site Boundary	★ Host's House
— Distance Lines	○ Place
— Perennial Stream	— Intermittent Stream
	— 10m Contours

File:	LL_SM[E]_0020
Original Size:	A4
Map Scale:	1:60,000
Drawn by:	ASG
Date:	20080215

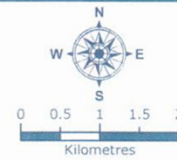


Figure 2.5
Houses Within 3km
of Wind Turbines
(Elaine Section)
Lal Lal Wind Farm



Consultation ...

Visits by:

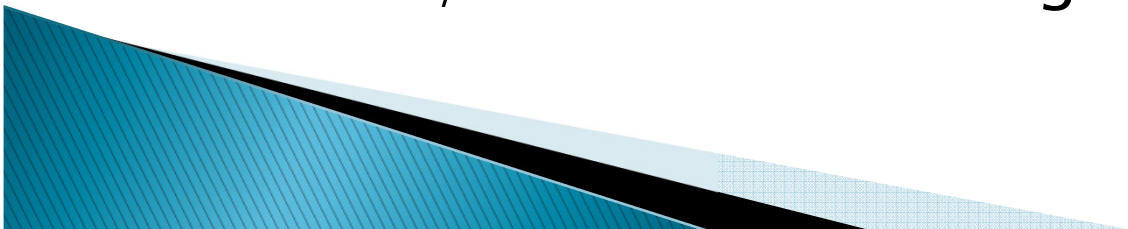
- ▶ Tobias Geiger and Angela Sutcliffe October 2007
 - Informed of retreat development, including location of the current airfield;

- ▶ Adam Gray, G Flynn and landscape architect (30 November 2007)
 - Informed of development of units and airfield—appeared quite disinterested in discussing the matter (G Flynn)
 - Photographs taken by architect; Told photomontage would be sent with photos from agreed location:




In summary:

- ▶ I was told a photomontage would be produced for MP as it directly affected our development within 3 km of homestead—actually 1.4 km);
- ▶ One only picture shown in submission (no montage showing turbine placements & impact as agreed);
- ▶ MP retirement/conference centre development totally ignored (as was the aerodrome);
- ▶ No proposal for mitigation of impact on the forthcoming development.
- ▶ Some discussion on location of powerlines by Vemtec/Vemco—misleading information provided.



Wind Turbine Syndrome effect:

Ref. Pierpoint (2006) (MD, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine) FAAP

- ▶ “To recapitulate, there is in fact a consistent cluster of symptoms, the Wind Turbine Syndrome, which occurs in a significant number of people in the vicinity of industrial wind turbines. There are specific risk factors for this syndrome, and people with these risk factors include a substantial portion of the population. A setback of 1.5 miles (2.4km) from homes, schools, hospitals and similar institutions will probably be adequate, in most [NY State terrain] , to protect people from the adverse health effects of industrial wind turbines.” p3
- 

Conclusion

Request, as a minimum, to have the two turbines:

- ESWT23 & ESWT 24

deleted or relocated to further North (to near neighbouring land owner's house) from the wind farm proposal as they directly impact:

(a) the safety of pilots and passengers using the Merraton Park aerodrome;

(b) the amenity of the current and proposed development adjacent to the homestead will have a significant affect on our current and future business, and

(c) including the potential occurrence for Wind Turbine Syndrome to occur as the property is <2.4km from the nearest turbines.



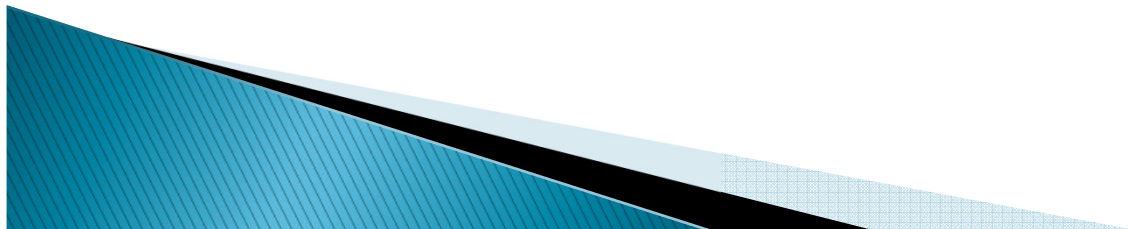
Other Considerations & Questions

- ▶ **Decommissioning of the turbines**
 - Whose responsibility?
 - Landowner? Wind farm owner/manager? Community?
 - Who will pay? And what guarantees they will actually be decommissioned in, say, 20 years time?
- ▶ **Statistics:**
 - 324 submissions to this hearing
 - 12 in favour (3.7%)
 - 312 against (96.3%)
 - Quite contrary to those surveyed by WW—got it wrong because they wouldn't listen.
- ▶ **Interference of VHF/UHF transmissions for aircraft in the area and fire fighting.**



Other Considerations ...

- ▶ **Property Values**
 - UK evidence shows a decline of 15% [Rosenbloom (2006)]
- ▶ **Curiosity affect → degrading affect on tourism → Victoria: the wind farm capital of Australia**
- ▶ **Power lines impact—as yet still unknown.**



References

Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria (2003) *Policy and planning guidelines for development of wind energy facilities in Victoria.*

Pierpoint, N (2006) *Wind Turbine Syndrome* Testimony before the New York State Legislature Energy Committee, March 7.

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Sustainability Victoria (2007) *Wind Energy Myths and Facts*, May.

CASA Chapter Eight–Standards for Aircraft Landing Areas, November 2000.

CAAP No.92–1(1) *Guidelines for Aeroplane Landing Areas* . July 1992.

Camera: Panasonic DMC–FZ7 1:2.8–3.3/6–72 35mm

