

From: **Simon Holmes à Court**

Submission:

I would like to personally add my voice in support of the rural wind farms.

As chairman of Australia's first community-owned wind farm I have spent much time communicating with both the community and industry.

I firmly believe that, as the least cost clean energy solution available at scale, wind energy has a vital role to play in Australia's much needed transition to a lower carbon energy sector.

I am a member of a community that shows tremendous support for wind energy and understand the benefits it will bring to our local area. I have also witnessed much antipathy towards wind power in other communities where an orchestrated campaign of fear, uncertainty and doubt has been waged.

It is clear to me that the largest problems the wind industry has are not the issues that your committee is exploring, but rather the lack of social license in part of the community where misinformation has been sown.

I do, however, believe that it is possible for any project to be poorly implemented, and therefore support rigorous and consistent planning controls across the entire stationary energy sector.

Communities have a right to see project proposals evaluated against a balanced planning framework, and moreover, once projects are in operation, the community has a right to a robust process for handling any complaints against the development.

A small number of people living near a small fraction of wind farms in Australia do not currently feel that their concerns are being adequately investigate. It is in everyone's interests that these complaints are independently, rigorously and transparently investigated.

The growing community wind sector has an important role to play in educating the public about this important energy source. The membership of Hepburn Wind (almost 1600 in number) are a testament to public acceptance of this energy source, and our claim, that communities can share in the benefit of large scale clean energy infrastructure.

While the community energy sector will likely only ever play a small role in generating our nation's power requirement, I submit that the nascent sector will play a major role in securing and maintaining the social license the industry requires.

I appreciate this opportunity to make this submission to the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,  
Simon Holmes à Court