

SENATE INQUIRY SUBMISSION

1. My wife and I have 765 acres at Collector. The property was purchased in October 2005 with the intention of creating an environment to which we could move and enjoy the company of our children (5 + partners) and 13 grandchildren. This has been achieved.
2. We are appalled at the secrecy surrounding the proposed Industrial Wind Farm by Transfield at Collector. The first we, or the general population of Collector, knew about this proposed Industrial Windfarm was the receipt of a newsletter from Transfield inviting the community to an “open house discussion” about the development.
3. Neighbours have apparently, at least 5 years ago, entered into secret agreements to host wind turbines on their properties. None of these agreements are required to be publicised in any way. A title search of host land holder properties does not provide any information. Including us, there are a number of people in and around Collector who have purchased properties and moved to the area that now find themselves, if the Industrial Wind Farm development proceeds, in a situation where they will be surrounded by these Industrial Wind Farms. Those properties within 10 km from a turbine will be eventually uninhabitable. In addition, it also means that the properties are virtually unsaleable (according to overseas and Victorian experience) and if sold at all will be sold at a significant discount to real value

There are a number of areas regarding Industrial Wind Farms that demand a full Government enquiry:

1. Health Considerations

Wind Farm developers are correct in claiming that there isn't any peer reviewed scientific evidence to support mounting claims of serious and many illnesses now being linked to Industrial Wind Farms.

However, anecdotal evidence is mounting daily. There is now a Japanese Government prohibition on any further installation of wind farms for 4 years pending full Government Enquiry. There is currently a bill before the Connecticut House Energy Committee proposing a one year moratorium on all commercial wind energy projects until new regulations to protect public's health and safety are developed and enacted . The tobacco and asbestos industries had no adverse health reviews until it was too late.

In the circumstances, it is imperative that a stop be put to any further developments pending a full judicial enquiry.

2. Land Values

The attached email from Elders is quite clear:

“I have been a Licensed Estate Agent for 30 years, specialising in the sale of Rural property, essentially all over Australia, with an emphasis on Victoria and the Riverina. I have held senior Management positions with the largest Rural real estate Companies in Australia. In recent years the growth of activity and the actuality of wind towers throughout the Victorian rural landscape has been significant.

Challicum Hills, Coddington, and Mt Mitchell have all emerged as large scale wind farms, located on the tops of the low hill country, interrupting the landscape for many kilometres.

Of significant importance, is the negative effect on the value of adjoining lands where wind towers have been erected. Visually, the towers are seen by the majority of the market as repulsive. Audibly, the towers effect the stillness a property enjoys, in particular the resonating tones in the night, invading serenity of the adjoining lands.

A proliferation of wind towers adjacent to a property has the same effect as high voltage power lines, rubbish tips, piggeries, hatcheries, and sewerage treatment plants, in that, if buyers are given a choice, they choose not to be near any of these impediments to value.

The ultimate effect is that the number of buyers willing to endure these structures is significantly less than if the structures were not there. This logically has a detrimental effect on the final price of the adjoining lands.

Experts assess the loss of value to be in excess of 30%, and sometimes up to half.

My personal experience is that when an enquiry (potential buyer) becomes aware of the presence of wind towers, or the possibility of wind towers in the immediate district of a property advertised for sale, the “fall out” of buyers is major. Very few go on to inspect the property, and even fewer consider a purchase. On the remote chance they wish to purchase, they seek a significant reduction in the price.

There is absolutely no doubt, that the value of lands adjacent to wind towers falls significantly in value. The ambience of a rural property is important, and oftentimes, the sole reason why a purchaser selects a particular area or district. The imposition of wind towers, destroys this ambience forever.

3. Scientific indications are that in the next 5-6 years, solar technology will be on a price parity with wind. Therefore, within 10 years, we could reasonably expect Wind Turbines to be obsolete. Indeed that was agreed as an achievable goal by Prime Minister Gillard and Secretary of State Clinton at a meeting late in 2010

Wind Turbine developers should be required to provide a guarantee fund bond on the basis of \$2m per turbine to cover the costs of removal of the obsolete industrial wind turbines.

Community Compensation Fund

Most landholders receive approximately \$12/\$15k per year for turbines.

Wind Turbine developers endeavour to pay as little as possible – obviously.

At Collector, Transfield is proposing to pay \$2,500 per turbine – woefully inadequate.

Should be \$ for \$ - management of these community funds should be carefully established.

Grave concerns re the basis on which wind farms have been established

(a) the health impacts of wind farms in Australia;

- (b) the impacts of wind farms on surrounding property values;
- (c) the social impacts of wind farms on rural communities; and
- (d) the commercial practices of the wind farm industry.

Bushfires

There are a number of reported incidents in South Australia and overseas of bush fires caused by faulty industrial wind turbines. Indeed it is understood that the rural fire fighting service in South Australia has prohibited fire fighters from going closer than 1 kilometre from a turbine which is on fire.

Summary

There are a number of other issues that need to be investigated.

To this end it is submitted that there should be a moratorium on any further installation pending a full inquiry. Victoria has announced such an inquiry – it would make sense for the NSW and Federal Governments to link with the Victorian Government to establish an Impartible Inquiry.

A. Hodgson ~~/AM~~

Judy/Hodgson

9th February 2011