

Submission No: 16

7th June 2007

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry & Resources,
House of Representatives,
PO Box 6021,
Parliament House,
Canberra. ACT. 2600

Wind Turbines Dividing Victorian Rural Communities

I wish to advise my deep concerns about the enormous impact the development of Wind Turbines is having on rural communities in Victoria.

A proposal to develop a wind farm at Glenthompson, just near the Grampians National Park (called Oaklands Hills Wind Farm) is causing deep divisions within our small rural community which is struggling due to the prolonged drought.

This development is turning town people against country people and neighbours against each other.

Life in rural communities is challenging at the best of times as we deal with isolation, bush fires, drought and lack of services but now we are all being turned against each other.

How will we survive in the future, if we can't join together to fight fires, carry out Land Care works and do the enormous amount of voluntary work that small communities do.

I have been part of rural life for 55 years and my family has lived and farmed in the country for four generations. I have never come across the angst and hatred that is now dividing our Victorian rural communities over the development of wind turbines.

Everyone I speak to across Victoria affected by wind farm development, tells the same story of division in communities and even within families. What long term affects is this going to have on rural communities where issues like this can fester for generations?

1300 Wind Turbines proposed for western Victoria

I understand that there are currently 1300 wind turbines proposed to be developed in western Victoria alone.

These Wind Turbines in rural communities and landscapes is affecting the 'Spirit of the Bush' as we have already experienced in our community over the past months and they aren't even built yet. Can you imagine the emotional trauma that will evolve if they are? It will be horrific.

Something must be done urgently to find a more effective means of providing renewable energy without this enormous disturbance across rural Australia.

Why we didn't want Wind Turbines on our property

I and my family were asked to have wind turbines on our property, but for all the reasons listed in Attachment 1, we declined. Even when we did this, we did not understand the implications they would have in our community which has evolved since.

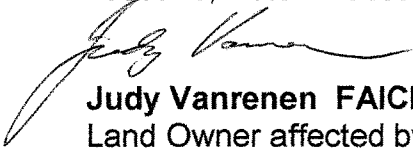
Now we are faced with having them on two of our boundaries and will suffer loss of amenities, decreased land values (which was our superannuation), noise and vibration effects and high visual impact with no say or consultation in the matter. It is not only ourselves that will be affected, but our employees who will have to live with the effects of having 43 turbines in close proximity to their working environment every day. Will Work Care cover any health issues our employees will have as a result of these Wind Turbines?

See attachments 2 & 3 - Health Effects of Wind Turbines from studies in the UK.

Effects on Tourism

I have a career in tourism spanning 30 years and currently own a global garden tour company called Botanica World Discoveries. We bring visitors from overseas and interstate to visit western Victoria and The Grampians National Park. I fear for the reaction from our customers, if they arrive here in a few years to find our beautiful landscape dotted with industrial wind turbines. Will they choose instead to visit destinations without wind turbines? I'm sure they will.

Please feel free to discuss any issues regarding this with either myself or my husband, Peter Prasser.



Judy Vanrenen FAICD,

Land Owner affected by Proposed Wind Turbines

Founder Botanica World Discoveries

Immediate Past President – The Small Business Mentoring Service

Past Chair Southern Grampians Tourism Advisory Board

Centenary Medal recipient 'For voluntary service improving the performance of small business'

**cc. The Hon. Steve Bracks, Premier of Victoria
Ted Ballieu MLA, Leader of the Victorian Opposition**