

To: Senate Committee for "The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms"

From: Adam Shepherd
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To whom it may concern,

To the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, may I first thank you for the opportunity to submit my thoughts on Wind powered energy to this committee. I must however say how surprised I am that this enquiry has been opened. Furthermore, I must say I am disappointed that my tax-paying dollars are being spent on an exercise that has been repeated world over.

I have been following debate on the health effects into wind turbines on human health. To put it into context, I live in Eganstown situated 7km from Daylesford. There are wind farms some distance away in Waubra and also in the neighbouring Moorabool shire. As there is about to be a wind farm in my own shire of Hepburn, I naturally wanted to inform myself of any argument on the subject.

It appears the debate has found the same slippery path as the climate change debate as a whole. The vast majority of scientists have not found any link between wind farms and health deterioration. Some "studies" have been conducted that at best have found "possible links". These studies are generally conducted by scientists, and in some cases general practitioners, who are at best on the fringe of the subject matter.

They also seem to be the studies that are directly financed by the opposition proponents to wind farming. This creates great news headlines of "Studies have found", but unless you dig deep into the source, you could be fooled into thinking there is a real argument and a real need to investigate. I believe there is not. There was even one case out near the Waubra wind farm after the state governments' extensive study that found no health effects, that a local opposing resident mortgaged his house to the tune of 46 thousand dollars for his own study. The result, not surprisingly, found there was an issue. There is a local GP on the payroll of a group called "Landscape Guardians" running around issuing certificates saying the farms are harmful. I have not as yet seen any independent study that supports these paid pieces of "evidence" findings. I could however find many studies that say the effect is akin to that of city traffic noise. So can I therefore ask the honourable upper house to hold a study into the effects of Melbourne trams?

Another argument used is that cost of unit production of wind power is high compared to coal. This may well be the case, but never takes into account the costs of coal power once it leaves the source. There are huge issues with loss over transmission distances. Wind power can be generated and delivered locally. The amount of waste that occurs in creating energy from coal in Gippsland and transmitting it to western Victoria is huge. Then there is the cost of the transmission towers to consider. Not factored is the cost and risk of potential bushfires due to the delivery infrastructure. The cost of maintenance of the powerlines. Then the environmental cost of waste product created. For many things including power supply, the model of centralisation is no longer working. We really do need to start looking at the idea of "Think Global, act Local". There is so much benefit for local delivery, including employment and therefore local economic stimulus.

The final argument is used that wind farms devalue nearby properties. This does not appear to have happened anywhere in the world. In fact, you could argue in light of the local economic growth, property values are likely to increase as the flow on effect of employment opportunities makes the locality more viable to live in.

I hope this enquiry take my thoughts in all seriousness and do not hamper the momentum required as the planet needs to find new ways of supporting its energy needs without further environmental damage.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Shepherd', written in a cursive style.

Adam Shepherd