

Department of the Senate
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

5th February 2011

Re: Issues on the social and economic impact of rural wind farms

To Senate Community Affairs Reference committee,

When it comes to issues regarding the social and economic impact of wind farm I feel reasonably qualified to comment. I hold a senior management position with Keppel Prince Engineering, a major fabricator, and installer of wind towers in regional Australia. In addition to this I live in a rural environment within 3 km from the wind farm at Cape Nelson they are clearly visible from my home and i can walk to within metres of some of the towers.

Our business is one of the largest employers in the Glenelg shire (Portland, Victoria) employing over 150 directly and indirectly on wind farm work. The last two years has seen an extreme downturn in work in this industry due to the global financial crisis, and delays to changes in the renewable energy legislation. The implications these issues have had on the economic environment in the shire has been significant. Employee's uncertainty of security employment, lack of overtime opportunity and actual reductions in workforce has created a fall away in consumer spending and confidence in the region. Our company has had loss results in the last two years of which most can be attributed to the drop in wind tower work.

Likewise with the recent securing of the Macarthur wind farm, our company, our employees, and the community are already experiencing an increase in the morale and enthusiasm. With the momentum expected in this industry our company are looking to increase employment and expand operations with the possibility of an investment of over 7 million. Wind farms definitely have a beneficial impact on this rural community in both socially and economically.

From a personal perspective i have no objection to living close to the cape nelson wind farm, in fact i think they look majestic and are such an efficient way of generating power. Wind farms are placed in windy areas so even when you get close to the towers you cannot hear anything else but the wind blowing. When it is still they don't spin so there is still no noise. Where i live i cannot and have not had any medical or physical difficulties that could be contributed to the towers, or moving of the blades. It is obvious that i have a vested interest in this industry but i have no fear in living close to or even looking at the wind farm on this cape. I think it is a recognition that mankind is doing something positive for the planet and for the future of our children.

The negative minority seems to make lots of noise without realising the positive benefits associated with these farms. Nobody wants them in their backyard and that is understandable i don't have a problem with looking at them in my neighbours.

Your faithfully
Rob Tozer