

I write in support of rural wind farms based on their broad social, economic and environmentally sustainable benefits in comparison to significant public monies and concessions given to road infrastructure, mining and carbon intensive energy industries within Australia and grave concern that our priorities are mis-guided, political opportunism debases future planning that is required for the next 50 –100 years, rather than concerned but ill conceived navel gazing on the now.

I understand that public polling conducted shows widespread regional support for wind farm projects and I endorse this. I urge representative senators to respect the whole of Australia and act in fostering its future energy independence and play a role in actions, future generations will respect as marked turning points for the better.

Renewable energy is an essential part of our response to climate change, and, by a wide margin, wind power is currently one of the most commercially and technically viable forms.

Australian states already have a well developed wind farm planning controls which are among the most onerous in the world. Any changes to these controls should be equitably and consistently applied across other industries and be informed by science. In Victoria, the new government has moved markedly to restrict wind farm potential, even within communities that want less restrictive regulation. This is unrepresentative politics and such actions blunt the pro-change community for endeavours such as wind farms.

The Senate Committee should not propose provisions that would unnecessarily make the development of the Australia wind industry more difficult or onerous than it already is.

Current research by respected institutions supports claims that wind farms pose no health risks for people living in close proximity. Research conducted on modern wind turbines has shown that the levels of low frequency sound are well within accepted thresholds and are comparable to naturally occurring phenomena.

Studies have found no statistical evidence that wind farms negatively affect property values.

The wind industry employs more people per unit of energy than either coal or gas generation and the resulting jobs are widely spread across many regions.

Land owners benefit from a new source of income, without any measurable impact on farming operations.

Communities benefit from job creation, local investment and the community funds that are commonly implemented by project proponents. The Hepburn Wind project is expected to provide more than \$1,000,000 to the local community over the next 25 years — the local community will benefit more than the landlord.

Wind farms are widely supported in the community. Hepburn Shire received 343 letters in relation to the Hepburn Wind Project, with 95% in support. Recent NSW polling shows more than 85% support wind power.

With more than 100,000 turbines installed globally, wind farms are not new. The vocal minority views are consistent with the implementation of any unfamiliar technology that has short, medium and long-term merit for Australian society.

Community wind farms are common in Europe — Denmark has more than 2,100. These projects empower local communities to constructively engage in the transition to a future with lessening pollution and energy independence.

I request the Senate Committee not propose or support unreasonable restrictions on an industry and rural communities that I see are acting progressively towards environmental sustainability.