



7th February 2011
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia
By email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

Thank you for the opportunity for Roaring 40s to provide a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms.

Roaring 40s was formed in October 2005 as a joint venture between energy companies Hydro Tasmania and the CLP Group. Since this time Roaring 40s has developed into being one of Australia's leading renewable energy companies and currently has four wind farms in operation across both Tasmania and South Australia totalling 317MWs. In addition to this we are expecting to reach Financial Close on the Musselroe Wind Farm (168MW) in north east Tasmania in the middle of 2011 and hold a pipeline of other development projects across Australia which we are very keen to be able to develop.

As a significant wind farm developer in Australia Roaring 40s will be strongly affected by any changes to regulatory, policy and planning frameworks. We support effective policies aimed at reducing Australia's energy emissions and achieving national emissions reduction targets. A strong and stable framework is essential for the future development and deployment of low and zero emissions generation in Australia. Roaring 40s strongly supports the national Renewable Energy Target and the introduction of a price on carbon to aid the transition to a low emissions energy sector.

In response to some of the terms of reference for your inquiry we would like to draw your attention to the following important points:

- Research indicates there is extensive support for wind farms in the nation including strong support for wind farms being built in their local region;
- Wind farms displace fossil fuel generation and provide greenhouse gas emission abatement;
- Existing standards and guidelines currently used in Australia at a state and federal level for wind farm development are already among the most stringent in the world;
- Research conducted on modern wind turbines has shown that the levels of low frequency noise and infrasound are within accepted thresholds;
- Current research and scientific investigations have found that there are no adverse health effects for people living in close proximity to wind farms;
- Fixing an arbitrary minimum setback distance not based on any scientific evidence is counter-productive and inconsistent with other infrastructure planning;
- Any impacts of wind farms on surrounding flora and fauna are carefully assessed and managed or mitigated accordingly;
- Studies have found no statistical evidence that wind farms reduce property values; and
- There is no development activity in Australia that is required to compensate neighbours of an infrastructure project.

In addition to Roaring 40s established presence in regional and rural Australia we also participate in the further development of Australia's wind industry through our membership of the Clean Energy Council (CEC). Roaring 40s strongly supports the CEC submission to your inquiry.

Wind power has the potential to play a crucial role in lowering Australia's greenhouse gas emissions and meeting the 20% renewable energy target. Internationally wind power continues to grow at very high rates. In 2009:

- Wind power showed a growth rate of 31.7 %.
- The trend continued that wind capacity doubles every three years.
- All wind turbines installed by the end of 2009 worldwide are generating 340 TWh per annum, equivalent to the total electricity demand of Italy, the seventh largest economy of the world, and equalling 2 % of global electricity consumption.
- The wind sector in 2009 had a turnover of €50 billion.
- The wind sector employed 550,000 persons worldwide. In the year 2012, the wind industry is expected for the first time to offer 1 million jobs.

Source: World Wind Energy Report 2009 - WWEA

Stable and effective national policies are required to support the future development of wind farms in rural Australia and to ensure that wind farm developments are not subject to multiple layers of competing legislation. Further, it is essential that wind farm developments are fairly assessed against similar

infrastructure projects and are not subject to perverse approval regimes that will unnecessarily damage investment in rural Australia.

It should be remembered that wind farm developments occur in regional areas and there are significant economic benefits that flow back to these local communities.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide the Inquiry with further information about the contents of this submission or to present to the Inquiry. Should you have any queries or require further information, please contact myself on (03) 6213 4301.

Yours sincerely

Steve Symons
Managing Director