

I write in support of the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment (Excessive Noise from Wind Farms) Bill 2012.

It is time that wind farms are held accountable for excessive noise and that there is an Australian Standard for what is termed excessive noise.

Wind Farms should be required to publish on the Internet information about noise, wind speed and direction weather conditions and power output:

A wind company representative at a meeting has told me in our home that we have to expect noise from the turbines. What constitutes noise? It comes in many forms as audible, low frequency/infrasound, vibrations from sound, etc. How much noise do we have to endure? Who is responsible for the baseline noise measurements? We agreed to have noise monitoring on our property prior to construction of a wind farm near us, as part of the agreement we requested a copy of that noise data. It was not forthcoming after many emails; phone calls and 1:1 requests to company representatives we were finally told it could not be located! After many months and numerous interruptions to our business during construction of the wind farm we agreed to another family meeting to discuss problems but only if the noise data was presented to us and to our amazement it was miraculously found.

We have been confused, frustrated with the process and lack of answers from the wind farm company. At this same meeting we were told that our previous problems were “history”. You would have to expect that from these dismissive attitudes when we felt that we had expressed reasonable concerns that we would be cynical. We asked and were given a 1800 phone number to lodge any noise concerns. This phone number is not manned 24hours. Who deals with our problems when they occur at night or on a weekend or after business hours? How can we trust that our calls will be counted if we are unable to have a receipt for our call? We were told that the regulatory body for noise complaints is the EPA but they do not deal with noise complaints from wind farms as was published in our local newspaper. There is a lot of confusion over “noise”. We welcome a regulatory body that will be responsible and mandated to act when a wind farm contravenes the law.

Health Issues from excessive noise have been well documented both within Australia and overseas they cannot be dismissed without proper independent scientific investigation. To date I have not seen any outcome from recommendations made into the social and economic effects of rural wind farms hopefully this Bill will rectify this alarming situation.

As farmers bordering a wind farm we expect a good quality of life, we want to manage our businesses, continue to look after our families and animals without harassment of noise be it audible, low frequency, infrasound or vibrations from sound. We want to continue living in our own homes and to continue our family farm succession plans. We have a right like any other person to sleep peacefully in our own beds at night.