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PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA SENATE ---SUBMISSION

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RURAL WIND FARMS

### **INTRODUCTION**

I am 58 years old and farm in South West Victoria and operate a beef and dairy enterprise of 300 beef cows and 300 milking dairy cows. I have had my life totally turned around and disrupted by DRYSDALE Wind farm planning, where I have had to move out of my home by ramifications of ELECTROMAGNETIC and NOISE issues affecting my health, because of MOYNE SHIRE COUNCIL planning process, where VERBAL PLANNING approval was given by MOYNE SHIRE [who failed to notify me] of relocation of two Radio Transmission masts within 220 metres of my home, this relocation I believe was done by radio company to eliminate or alleviate any future impact of radio transmission signal by wind turbines, where the radio company and wind farm co had an agreement that radio masts be spaced 800 metres from any future wind turbines. I quote from planning application document Wind Farm Developments {Australia} Ltd Rev 3 page 15 [“The applicants project manager learned of the proposed 3YB commercial radio tower at “Siberia” in 2004 and began discussions with 3YB in early 2005. After several discussions and email exchanges, 3YB’s Group Technical Manager agreed that a buffer zone of 800 m between the two Siberia radio towers and the nearest turbines\[s\] was sufficient.”](#)

These radio masts were constructed in 2006, and emit Noise and Electromagnetic Radiation [EMRs] much the same I believe as Wind turbines, with the EMR being constant, where wind turbines generated EMR depending on turbines turning and wind generated noise being less constant depending on prevailing weather conditions. At times Radio Masts can generate extreme noise.

### **HEALTH EFFECTS**

In 2009 my health had slowly declined, I took a holiday for 3 weeks. On return I was feeling much improved but after a few weeks back in my home next to the masts I became unwell again getting nose bleeds and headaches a couple of times a week. I realised and strongly believe it was my home environment that was making me sick, whether it be caused from the noise or the electromagnetic radiation or combination of both I cant say; but I now have great empathy for people at Waubra, who have had to move out of homes from apparent “Wind farm Sickness”. As a consequence of this

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unresolved issue I have since purchased another home a few minutes travel from Blighs Rd where I return to from the farm each night, I now feel much better and have not had a nose bleed since I have not been sleeping at Blighs Rd.

## **FARM VALUATION**

I strongly believe that my farm will be greatly devalued by Drysdale wind farm if it is constructed in the current approved format, which has six turbines within one hundred and fifty to three hundred metres of my property boundaries and four turbines within I estimate eight to twelve hundred metres of my house. I appealed Moyne Shire rating valuation and was turned down and told to re submit when wind farm is constructed, at the same time I appealed valuation because of radio masts and was successful with my farm valuation being adjusted down by Victorian Valuer General by the monetary amount of \$660,000.00. So it is proven that inappropriate locations of these types of facilities do reduce farm values significantly.

## **SOCIAL IMPACT**

I would ask that the Senate also consider the social impact on local communities with divisions arising with pro and anti wind farm groups, these division have split many sporting clubs, volunteer groups and school mothers clubs etc [These volunteers clubs and organizations are the Heart and Soul of Rural Australia] which will take years, if ever to heal and resolve tensions. These fractures in rural communities are the worst I have ever experience or observed on any issue and are brought about in my opinion because of the lack of properly formulated planning guides lines and regulations that must be followed.

## **PLANNING ISSUES**

I would also bring to the attention of this Senate inquiry another planning issue that arises on Drysdale Wind Farm. That of point-to-point communication paths that to me are essential services especially in emergency situations. It appears that Moyne Shire and VCAT have simply not address or have overlooked these point-to-point communication paths of which there are five across this site. In their consideration of this Wind Farm planning permit, approval is given to locate turbines within 66 metres of exclusion zone distance from signal centre line, and further approval given to micro site turbines up to 100 metres, [that is approval has been given by the regulatory authorities THE MOYNE SHIRE COUNCIL AND VCAT to compromised these essential services communication paths by 34 metres this simply seems extremely poor planning.](#) It would also appear that no consideration has been given to the combined or cumulative effect of eight turbines, generating electromagnetic interference and wind turbulence within 100 metres of these five Microwaves paths. It would seem logical that if 800m were agreed distance from radio masts a similar distance from microwave paths could or should be observed. I would further add that it appears the planning process is deficient in that the licence holders of these signals DO NOT have to be notified by Local Government of Wind Farm Planning Permit applications when common sense would require such notification to be mandatory.

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These oversights could affect the whole south west community and need to be addressed in this Wind Farm planning application, as I have found out during radio mast planning saga once something is built, even thought to me construction of Radio Masts is unlawful! As changes to the planning permit were approved verbally to re located this radio transmission facility up to 126 metres closer to my home and almost double the size [I quoted Former Victorian Planning Minister The Honourable Justin Madden MLC “ [Changes to a planning permit can not be verbally approved under Victorian planning legalisation](#)” ]

A VCAT merits hearing has approved so the Value and Sanitary of a Planning Permit must be questioned. To many it appears VCAT have authorised and approved an illegal and unlawful action of the Moyne Shire Council, which may well cost me my life’s work, but as only effects one property that does not seem to matter that legislated laws are ignored.

### ***OVERHEAD ELECTRICAL POWERLINES***

With Findings of Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission [of powerlines to be placed underground by gradual process], it simply lacks logic that new overhead powerlines have been approved in Wind Farms that are yet to be built in a high fire danger area like South West Victoria, this places the whole community at some risk. It would be hoped that the Senate inquiry recommend that the finding of the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission be adopted and are made retrospective that all powerlines, in yet to be constructed but have planning approval Wind Farms are placed underground.

I make myself available to travel to Canberra to present this submission to the Australian Senate Inquiry with all support documents, should that be necessary or required. A proud Australian who is not against Wind Farms but strongly against inappropriate siting of turbines. I am a victim of poor planning and would not like what has happened to me to happen to others.

Yours faithfully,

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J B Howard