

WIND FARMS, PROPERTY VALUES AND RATES

INTRODUCTION

Recently, especially in Victoria, concerns have been raised that the conceded loss in value of properties that have become near-neighbours of Wind Farms will impact upon the rate-raising capacity of the effected rural shires.

The following model seeks to show that the loss in value of near-neighbours' properties will impact not upon Shire rate income, but upon the level of rates that all the Shire's properties will have to bear – impacted properties down, non-impacted properties up.

THE STATISTICS – A MODEL

Let us assume we have a Shire with ten properties of varying value, rated at \$0.16/\$1000 for our purposes, and that four of them have their value halved because of an adjacent Wind Farm Development.

Property	Valuation \$ x Ad. Valorem	= Rates	Valuation \$ x New Ad. Valorem	= New Rates
1	1000 x 0.16	1.60	1000 x 0.21	2.10
2	1000 x 0.16	1.60	1000 x 0.21	2.10
3	1000 x 0.16	1.60	* 500 x 0.21	1.05
4	2000 x 0.16	3.20	2000 x 0.21	4.20
5	2000 x 0.16	3.20	2000 x 0.21	4.20
6	2000 x 0.16	3.20	*1000 x 0.21	2.10
7	3000 x 0.16	4.80	3000 x 0.21	6.30
8	3000 x 0.16	4.80	3000 x 0.21	6.30
9	3000 x 0.16	4.80	*1500 x 0.21	3.15
10	<u>4000 x 0.16</u>	<u>6.40</u>	* <u>2000 x 0.21</u>	<u>4.20</u>
	\$22,000	\$35.20 (Limit Set by State Government)	\$17,000	\$35.70 (Limit Set by State Government)

In this model ad valorem rates raised by 31% (from 1.6 to 2.1 per \$1,000) to ensure Shire income stays at State set maximum of \$35+.

COMMENT

From this model, if 40% (4 out of 10) of properties have their value halved then for the Council to maintain its State-approved Rate Income amount of \$35.20 determined prior to the devaluation it would have to increase the ad-valorem rate on all properties from \$1.60/\$1000 of value to \$2.10/\$1000 of value – an increase of 31% of rates on all

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13th October 2013

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Assessment of property devaluation in the Southern Tablelands.

Since the erection of the Pomeroy turbines by the developer, Gullen Range Wind Farm Pty Ltd, subsidiary of the Chinese multi-national, Xinjiang Goldwind Science and Technology Co. Ltd, the value of our property has hugely decreased. The extraordinary intrusion of the sixteen turbines within two kilometres of our house has irreparably impacted on the value of our farm.

I have discussed the value of our property with Allan McDonald, Principal of The Professionals Real Estate, who informed us that our property would have to be heavily discounted if a sale were to be completed. He also stated that the majority of buyers are now far more aware of wind farms and will not even look at a property affected by these developments.

We are currently dealing with Jim Brewer, the principal of Jim Brewer Property Sales. Mr Brewer also informed us of the difficulty we will have selling our property. According to Mr Brewer, properties affected by wind developments are devalued by 20 to 60 percent. Our farm is at the 60% end.

Please note the development application for the Gullen Range Wind Farm was based on changes to property valuations on the **Crookwell 1 Wind Farm**. The property valuation report accepted by the Planning Department of NSW defies common sense by truly undermining the credibility of their valuation when **Crookwell 1** has eight turbines, each 45m high, with 22metre blades. By comparison, **Gullen Range** has 73 turbines. The towers will be at least 80 metres high and the rotor diameter 96 metres. This is combined with the additional visual impact of the infrastructure of a sub-station, extra transmission towers and a communications tower.

Dr Bjorn Lomborg, Director of The Copenhagen Consensus Centre, stated on ABC Radio National (30 September 2013) that the "\$130 billion dollars the German government has spent on solar panels will have the effect of delaying climate change, at the end of the century, by 37 hours! Wind energy provides about 1% of Europe's energy. The policies of Kyoto and Copenhagen have failed to have any material impact on climate change. The world has wasted a huge amount of time and money. If countries had invested these vast sums of money in research to compete against fossil fuels then maybe we could start to make a difference." This is from someone who believes in green energy.

Therefore, to add insult to injury, not only are properties enormously devalued by the wind farm developments but there is strong evidence that their impact on climate change is questionable. Current policies may have a feel good quality but worldwide the reality is that they are achieving miniscule returns.

While communities both worldwide and in Australia fight against the destruction of their natural environment, communities like Collector, Gunning and Crookwell are being divided and destroyed by ill planned and poorly implemented wind farm developments. Those who are "rewarded" financially find it is at the expense of their neighbours.

Poor planning decisions based on easy access to transmission lines are undermining the goodwill Wind Farm Developments may have enjoyed.

The temporary financial gain to some in the local community is also being negated by the destruction of our local landscape. It is the magnet that attracts people who wish to retire to a small rural farm. These people are a major financial lifeline to communities like ours. Owners of devalued properties are reluctant to invest in improvements. It was our intention to extend our house this has now been shelved. Farmers with concessional blocks are unable to

sell at previous prices and are thus disabled from providing their own superannuation. At least two of our near neighbours have such blocks and it is now highly doubtful they will be able to sell.

I invite any person associated with a wind farm development to visit our farm and make their own assessment of the extent of the financial damage.

Yours faithfully

John Benjamin

ATT. (6)

Malcolm

From: "Grant Winberg"
Date: Saturday, 26 October 2013 9:08 PM
To:
Cc:
Subject: FW: Please forward to Malcolm Barlow.

Hi Malcolm

Richard is providing real life experience.

A letter to the Crookwell Gazette is the way to go.

Regards

Grant

----- Original Message ----- Date: 26/10/2013 6:43 PM From: Richard Bird

To:
Subject: Please forward to Malcolm Barlow.

Grant,

Hope all goes well with you. Sorry to impose on you like this but I only thought I had Malcolm's email address! Will you please forward same.

Malcolm,

To confirm my thoughts and opinion regarding the devaluation of properties in the vicinity of a proposed wind farm development I will cite here my own experience.

Our one acre property and residence is located on the Woodhouselee Road to the west of the site of the Crookwell 3 proposal, within 1.3 kilometres of our eastern boundary with 3 turbines and set to dominate our outlook on 3 separate aspects.

We have had this property on the market for more than fifteen months.

During this time many inspections were conducted with varying degrees of interest and the inevitable waning of enthusiasm for various reasons, however there were three instances which stick in my mind.

1. A young couple from Bathurst, moving to Goulburn to take up professional appointments, both keen to live in the country and commute to work and very enthusiastic about the property. They were unable to raise the necessary finance because of lending institutions' reluctance, I quote, 'property devaluation over time because of the windfarm proximity.'

2. Another young couple, also moving to Goulburn to be near the wife's ageing parents were unable to raise sufficient loan monies, once again citing the proximity of the windfarm as a deal breaker.

3. An older couple seeking to purchase a property for their daughter who had secured a teaching position in Goulburn. Finance was not an issue but they were advised by a local conveyancing firm to go out to Gunning and see some wind turbines for themselves. Suffice to say they purchased elsewhere.

The property has now been sold, however we had to reduce our asking price by \$30,000 to secure the deal. The purchaser had done her research and simply dug her heels in.

Best regards,

Richard Bird

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steve ward ELECTRICAL

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ATT. (7)

Saturday 12th October 2013

To Whom it may concern

My name is Steve Ward & my wife Kylie & I own a lifestyle property (160 acres) on Pejar road at Crookwell. Our small farm is a direct neighbour to the proposed Crookwell 3 wind farm. Our neighbouring property is applying to host 8 turbines, the closest turbine to be exactly 1klm from our house. All 8 turbines are under 2klm's from the house. Our house is one of three properties that will be affected by excessive noise, above the state guidelines, as clearly stated in the development application.

As a result of the proposed wind farm Kylie & I decided that we would sell the farm as we did not want to bring up our young children so close to wind turbines. We first placed the property on the market back in 2009, & although we knew that selling a rural block can take time, the proposed wind turbines have had a massive impact on prospective buyer's. Time & Time again people have loved the rural views & the secluded location, though their main concern is always the close proximity to the future wind towers, the noise & the visual impact.

We have had over a dozen prospective buyers, though the majority of these loved the place but would not even make an offer due to the wind towers. We have had two offers on the place & both of these were over 25% below market value.

As a result of the uncertainty about the wind farm being approved & the ability to sell our place we decided to purchase a house in town & move which has placed us under considerable financial pressure. We have just recently taken the farm off the market so that we could rent the house to ease the burden.

The proposed wind farm has not only made our place incredibly difficult to sell, it has also greatly reduced it's value & reduced the number of prospective buyer's.

Yours Faithfully,

Steve Ward

ATT. (8)

W J & J Dooley

October 18, 2013

Dear To Whom It May Concern:

We have 230 ac property in the Crookwell district; it has wonderful views over Pejar Dam and to the west beautiful undulation hills, the farm is currently been used for sheep grazing but has an approved 3 lot subdivision, there are 2 wind farms planned for the area one on the western side of us and one on the eastern side.

We listed our property when we first heard of the proposed wind farm on the western side that was back in March 2004, since that time we have had 8 Real Estate agents over 9 years and they could not sell it, we continually reduced the price to encourage a buyer but as soon as they learnt that there were Wind Farms approved to be built next door they were not interested, for example we recently had the property sold just waiting on them to sign the contract and put down the deposit, then we received a letter saying they had pulled out of the sale because of the Wind Farm approval next door .

Finally we have another buyer but at a much reduced price, the price is 42% of the original price listed, the new sale price is 20% below the NSW Valuer General Valuation of which we pay rates on.

There is no doubt that the proposed Wind Farms have devalued our property.

Yours Sincerely,

Wilf & Jean Dooley

ADDRESS TO THE PLANNING ASSESSMENT COMMISSION MEETING
REGARDING THE MODIFICATION APPLICATION BY GOLDWIND FOR
RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL OF ITS UNAUTHORISED CHANGES TO ITS
GULLEN RANGE WIND FARM.

(Crookwell Services Club, 05.09.2014)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1: *I am MALCOLM BARLOW, a resident of the Crookwell area since 1997 when my wife and I chose to spend our retirement years in the glorious countryside of the Southern Tablelands, and develop a small cattle-fattening and hay-growing property.*

1.2: *I am also a Shire Councillor and a member of three local Landscape Guardian groups with total members and supporters in the hundreds and, as elsewhere, all of which have emerged since giant wind farm projects have arrived to threaten to industrialise our rural countryside, destroy our social cohesion, threaten our health, and contribute to our soaring electricity bills.*

1.3: *Commissioners, I am well aware that basically your brief is to make recommendations relating to Goldwind's Modification Application and the Department's Report in response. However, some of what I am going to say to you is aimed not only to influence your decisions regarding the Application, but also to ask you to go a little beyond your terms of reference and make three recommendations to the Minister and Government.*

I will spell out these recommendations in my concluding remarks.

2. TWO CULPRITS – THE DEVELOPER AND THE DEPARTMENT

2.1: In my opinion there are two villains in this tragedy – an **arrogant Developer** and an **incompetent Department**.

This dual responsibility accounts for the huge demand by local residents and even our Council for a **full and independent judicial inquiry** into the whole project. Simply, the Developer is known to be arrogant and uncaring and the Department (up to recent times at least) is seen as inept, toothless, and even complicit.

2.2: Local residents ask:

2.2.1: Why was such a huge project in such a closely-settled area approved in the first place? There were 118 non-host residences located within 3.0 km of an approved turbine, including 61 within 2.0 km of a turbine, and this when there was a growing wave of evidence showing that such proximity posed a significant threat to the health of nearby residents.

2.2.2: Why did the Department never check on the Developer's compliance with Consent Conditions? Worse, when locals complained in mid-2013, the Department's Compliance Officer of the time had never visited the site, sided with the Developer in matters relating to breaches of work hours and noise control, then went on leave.

3. THE ROGUE DEVELOPER.

3.1: Throughout the unpleasant two-year Construction phase the Developer has proved to be arrogantly dismissive of its local impacts, non-compliant with Conditions of Consent, and uncaring of the concerns of local residents. I list but a few examples:

3.2: Crookwell Air Strip. The Developer originally wanted another 11 turbines at the north end of the project that would have impacted significantly on the safe operation of the nearby Crookwell air strip. These were deleted by the Minister in 2008 on safety grounds, but the greedy

Developer appealed this prudent position so placing its quantum of profits above the operational safety of the area's air strip.

Fortunately, thanks to the unchallenged expert evidence from a local pilot, Mr Jim Hutson, the Court dismissed the Developer's greedy appeal.

Thereafter, the Developer continued its "profits first, locals last" policy.

3.3: Hours of Constructional Work. Condition 2.8 of the Project Approval limited noisy construction work to 7.00 am – 6.00 pm on weekdays, to 8.00 am – 1.00 pm on Saturdays, and no such work on Sundays. Up to mid-2013 this Condition was routinely ignored with work regularly continuing well into Saturday afternoon and even well into Sunday nights.

On one such Saturday afternoon in May 2013, for example, a resident phoned to complain, and was told "... prove it, and I suggest you seek advice from the Department as to what is acceptable proof." (or similar words). Complaints to the Department's Compliance Officer of the time largely went unanswered, until residents complained to their Local Member. Soon after, the Developer applied officially for the work hours to be extended – local residents and our Council opposed this request.

3.4: Constructional Noise. Condition 2.10 of the Project Approval said that construction machinery was to be fitted with efficient silencers and noise mufflers, and that reversing alarms were to be replaced with flashing lights

This Condition was routinely ignored and when residents complained to the Department were shocked to find that the Compliance Officer accepted the Developer's response that these machinery changes "... were not warranted" and constituted an unnecessary extra expense, as well as his claim that he could not force them on his contractors because some of the came from interstate!!

3.5: Treatment of Resident PW 34: Mr John Benjamin will address you later in detail about how this Developer ruined his dreams.

Briefly, not content with placing three huge turbines within one km of John's home, the developer then moved one 115 m closer to his residence so that it was just 865m from his front door. Even worse, Goldwind then asked John to sign a "noise agreement" because it wanted to increase its blades by 5m which would mean that the turbines would exceed the allowed noise projections. John refused to agree to even greater noise, so they went ahead and installed the longer blades anyway.

3.6: The Re-siting of 69 Turbines Contrary to Condition 1.5 of the Project Approval. The supreme act of arrogance and disregard by this Developer is the unauthorised re-siting of 69 of the 73 turbines by distances of up to 187m.

Other speakers will no doubt elaborate on this astounding breach, so I will only offer two comments for your consideration

3.5.1.: My view is that this was driven by greed. The reason given for re-siting 33 of the turbines ^{was} to increase wind yield and minimise wake loss and for another 13 it was to increase turbine separation (and so avoid wake loss). In other words, to increase electricity production and so increase revenue (by man millions) over the years.

3.5.2: Of course, this boost in revenue is at the expense of the amenity of near-neighbours. Thus, of 22 turbines moved more than 50m, some 16 were moved closer to non-host residences – by 154m, 138m, 101m, 94m and 85m in five of the worst cases.

I could give other examples of this Developer's buccaneer behaviour and attitude, but one of the best and one of which you are no doubt aware, is its recent decision to withdraw from its agreement to undergo a

Modification Application process and proceed constructing its turbines in unauthorised sites.

4. THE INCOMPETENT DEPARTMENT

I have already hinted at the pro-developer bias and sheer ineptitude of the then Department in sections 2.2, 3.3, and 3.4 above, but will now elaborate further on this aspect of the project.

4.1: Lack of an Effective Compliance Checking System. Construction began in 2012, but a Compliance Officer did not visit the project, only about 200 km from Sydney, until early in 2014, and then only after a growing ground swell of complaints from long-suffering near-neighbours of the project.

For example, when a local resident phoned in a complaint in May 2013 regarding breaches of working hours and noise, the Compliance Officer of the time responded not by visiting the site but by phoning the Developer, accepting his answer, and then going on leave.

4.2: No “Cease and Desist” Order. At no time from November 2013, when it claimed to first become aware of the massive re-siting breaches, until now has the Department ordered the in-breach Developer to cease erecting any more of its wrongly-sited turbines – nor to cease operating those now-operational but wrongly-sited turbines earning questionable income for the Developer. Nor has it sought a Court injunction to this effect. One is entitled to ask why it has so weakly capitulated to this Developer?

The Department’s Report states that the Developer “ceased construction” of 16 of the yet-to-be-erected turbines in June 2014 when it lodged its Modification Application. But this did not happen and construction continued so that by early-August only six turbines remained to be erected

4.3: The Department's "Slap on the Wrist" Response. Weakly, the Department's main response is to recommend one turbine to be re-located to its approved site (Ban 15) and another (Ban 09) also to be re-sited but only if the impacted non-host cannot be bought out. Why would the resident refuse – there are another eight turbines within two km of his small block which is virtually unsaleable?

One must ask why are no other turbines to be re-sited (eg., Pom 03 – 101m closer to a non-host, Pom 04 – 94m closer, Gur 07 – 85m, etc, etc), or at the very least some sort of compensation recommended for these impacted individuals.

Why has no penalty, monetary or otherwise, been recommended for the numerous breaches Conditions of Constructional Consent listed in 3 above. For two years local residents suffered disturbance from noise and lights, stress from traffic hazards, and frustration at lack of action on their complaints. Why is no redress recommended for these breaches?

4.4: The Questionable Scope and Methodology of the Report: The Department received 76 public submissions with 85% objecting to the Application or expressing concerns about aspects of it.

4.4.1: The major issue raised was **increased visual impact** which was mentioned in 35 submissions. To assess this concern two Departmental officers, with no qualifications or expertise in the field of landscape evaluation or visual assessment, visited the site a couple of times to somehow determine whether the new turbine sitings were visually more disturbing than the approved sites would have been. In some cases they were able to compare the now-built turbines with a Developer photomontage, but not always and who is to say that the photomontages were a true depiction anyway?

In all but two cases these unqualified and non-expert officers determined that the difference in visual impact was “not discernable”, “barely discernable”, “not perceptible”, and so on. Of course, the impacted residents have a different personal opinion to that of these two people, and also point out that one was heavily involved in the original approval of the project and so could be seen to have a conflict of interest in making his assessment.

4.4.2: The **impact on property values** was the equal second major concern in the submissions (32), while the **need for a judicial inquiry** and for some sort of **compensation** were equal third (31) as issues raised in the submissions. However, the Department’s Report ignores all three concerns but does address biodiversity issues which were raised only five times!!

Perhaps these major concerns are ignored because the Department would not come out blameless in a judicial inquiry, and perhaps the cash-strapped Government fears any talk of “compensation”.

5.PROPERTY DEVALUATION.. The final matter I wish to address is the impact of this project and its modification on neighbouring property values. I will be brief because I have addressed both of you before in detail on this matter – at Collector and Blayney (Flyer’s Creek). Therefore, I refer you to my papers from those two P.A.C. Meetings for numerous research articles on this impact and for a debunking of the industry’s claims of no impact.

However, I have some locally relevant information and another overseas example that I wish to present to you.

5.1: A Grabben Gullen Example. In 2013 properties in the Grabben Gullen area received the Valuer-General’s triennial estimate of their Unimproved Capital Value. Scores of them that were within sight and sound of the re-

sited turbines found that their values had fallen significantly.

In one street on the western outskirts of the village there are eight small-acreage lifestyle blocks. Six of these now have an easterly view dominated by the top half of five or six turbines about 2.0-2.5 km away, but the turbine view is blocked for the other two. The blocks also receive audible sound when an easterly is blowing. The six properties were devalued since 2010 by between 14% and 18%, but the value of the other two properties remained unchanged.

In discussions with the V.-G.'s Office, one resident was told that wind turbines were not necessarily the cause but did admit that "views" were a factor. The Office claimed that "sales in the area" were a major factor, but when asked for examples sent a list of sales in Roslyn (20km away), Gunning (25-30km), and Narrawa (25-30km), but none in Grabben Gullen.

In any case, even if lower sale prices in the vicinity had been the cause, one must ask why were the sale prices lower? The answer is giant, noisy wind turbines nearby.

5.2: Compensation Overseas. Previously, I have told you of the quite significant monetary compensation scheme operating in **Denmark** since 2009. The Danish Government also requires wind farm developers to offer 20% of the shares in ^{their} company to adult residents living within 4.5km of a turbine. In the **Netherlands**, the Dutch Government also has a compensation scheme for loss of property value due to wind turbine proximity, and the average payout in 2013 was about 8,000 pounds. Currently, in the **U.K.**, the Planning Minister (Nick Boles) is looking to introduce a similar scheme to compensate for loss of property value due to turbines, nuclear power stations, and so on. In **Sweden** there is push by the very large Danish population, who own holiday homes there, for some sort of compensation for loss of value and even saleability of their investments when wind turbines are built or even planned nearby.

My point is that pro-wind energy governments overseas admit to this unfair situation where wind farm developers and hosts make large profits but in so doing cause neighbouring residents to lose value from possibly their biggest asset.

6. FINALLY. Commissioners, to bring this arrogant Developer into line and to send a signal other Developers, I feel that **your Decisions should contain a real but reasonable punitive element.** Thus:

6.1: Turbines Ban09 and Ban15, which were moved 154m and 138m closer to non-host residences, should be deleted (not just re-sited or a property bought out). Re-siting involves destroying more farmland with new tracks, hardstands, concrete bases, etc, and would involve the Developer in several millions of dollars outlay. Deleting them only involves decommissioning costs, which the industry claims are not excessive, and the loss of income from two turbines. I would have recommended the same for turbine Pom03, but the impacted property is now classed as an "associated" property.

6.2: For the disturbance of resident's peace and quiet, the traffic hazards they have endured, and the dismissive arrogance with which complainants were often treated, the Developer be required to make ^a substantial donation to the local Rural Fire Brigade in the Bannister area.

6.3: The Department should not escape your Decisions. Its officers, who in 2008 approved this inappropriately located project, and those Compliance Officers in 2012-2013 who did nothing to ensure compliance should be dealt with according to the Department's policies regarding incompetence and dereliction of duty.

As well as your Terms of Reference requiring you to make Decisions on this Application by the Developer and the Report by the Department, I ask you to make three Recommendations to the Minister.

6.4: Recommend Greater Input by Local Councils in the Approval Process.

Where local Councils have a well-researched and locally-supported Development Control Plan for wind farms, then the project should be required to meet the controls laid out in the D.C.P. The Department, prior to granting Consent, should require the prospective Developer to consult with the Council concerned, and not grant Consent until the Developer has satisfied the Council's concerns.

6.5: Recommend that a Property Compensation Scheme Be Investigated.

It is a manifestly unfair situation where big developers and a few local hosts make large amounts of money from these turbines, but by so doing cause financial loss to near-neighbours (not to mention other negative impacts, such as sleep disturbance). If wind energy friendly governments overseas recognise and address this issue – at the expense of the Developer and not the taxpayer – why is it ignored in N.S.W.? Therefore, I ask you to recommend that a Work Party be set up to advise on the implementation of such a scheme.

6.6: Recommend A Judicial Inquiry Into this Project.

Given the virtually lawless behaviour of this rogue Developer as well as the ineptness of the Department as an approver and enforcer of compliance, there is an obvious need for a complete review of this project, and this can only be done through judicial processes – close examination of evidence, cross-examination of central figures, evidence under oath, and so on. Therefore, I ask that you recommend that the Government set up a judicial inquiry into all aspects of this project, and perhaps even all the legislation relating to wind farm developments.

Commissioners, I thank you for your attention, but more importantly ask you to impose reasonably punitive decisions upon the Developer, do

not let the Department off the hook, and make some ground-breaking recommendations to the Government.

(Malcolm Barlow, B.A.[Hons], M.A., Dip.Ed.[P-G], F.N.G.S.)

ATT-2

Gullen Range Wind Farm

Close

From:

John Benjamin

Date: 04 June 2013 07:11:17 PM

To:

julia.pope@planning.nsw.gov.au

[View message details](#)

Cc:

Dear Julia,

Re: Gullen Range Wind Farm - non compliance with Council conditions

For your information, please note that with regard to the conditions of approval for the building of the Gullen Range Wind Farm, it is a requirement that work stops at 6 pm.

On the 30 June 2013 construction works were still being carried out well after this time and late into the night.

Yours faithfully,

John Benjamin