

Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

Dear Sir/Madam,

After reading a number of the submissions I felt it necessary to contribute my opinions and understanding of the concerns expressed. . I am employed in the renewable energy sector and believe there are several misconceptions about wind energy and many of these are articulated in the submissions I have read. .

A number of submissions have raised concerns about the noise associated with turbines.

I consider that this concern has no factual basis for the following reasons:

- the rigorous standards to which wind farms have to adhere to in order to gain environmental and social impact approval;
- improvements in the technology of wind generators which has resulted in minimal noise levels at wind farms; and
- The numerous studies relating to the health implications of wind turbines with nil findings.

The aforementioned studies include a study by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) that found that “there is currently no published scientific evidence to positively link wind turbines with adverse health effects”. In addition, a study by the Victorian Department of Health (WorkSafe, 2010) concluded that “the weight of evidence indicate[s] that there are no direct health effects from noise (audible or inaudible) at the levels generated by modern wind turbines.”

Wind turbines have been around for decades and with over 100,000 turbines installed worldwide, there has been ample opportunity for the negative impacts to be identified. However, to date there has been no peer reviewed research indicating negative health effects from turbines at the sound levels produced by operational wind turbines. From my personal experience, camping at a wind farm, wind turbines noise cannot be heard from distances beyond a few hundred metres from the turbines.

I wanted to conclude by stating that wind energy has been a proven renewable and clean energy source with great potential to be an important element of the energy mix in Australia. There remains huge potential for a greater volume of wind energy integration into the grid, with examples of much higher contribution from wind coming from countries like Denmark, Spain and Germany. I believe that, with the right framework and planning process, investment in the industry can greatly benefit the environment, communities and generate employment in rural Australia.

I am strongly supportive of sustainable growth in the wind energy industry.

Igor Brandao