

I am writing concerning the Senator Fielding Inquiry into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms,

I support the use of wind power as one of the most developed sources of renewable energy.

In combination with other forms of renewable energy production we could stop send CO2 emissions into the air. We cannot continue to take the risks with our environment which are currently occurring. Just because coal power is cheap it does not mean it is good. Other countries are taking a responsible approach.

It is obvious that we need to have a mix of renewable energy resources and in time solar thermal will be very important. However, wind energy is currently the cheapest resource.

As an Australian I feel quite ashamed when I look at the statistics for wind production in other countries and yet in Australia we are still subsidising dirty coal power stations.

Wind Power Worldwide June 2010

Position	Country	Total capacity June 2010 [MW]	Added capacity June 2010 [MW]	Total capacity end 2009 [MW]
1	USA	36.300	1.200	35.159
2	China	33.800	7.800	26.010
3	Germany	26.400	660	25.777
4	Spain	19.500	400	19.149
5	India	12.100	1.200	10.925
6	Italy	5.300	450	4.850
7	France	5.000	500	4.521
8	United Kingdom	4.600	500	4.092
9	Portugal	3.800	230	3.535
10	Denmark	3.700	190	3.497
	Rest of the World	24.500	2.870	21.698
Total		175.000	16.000	159.213

Some of my reasons for supporting wind power -

While the power produced by many older wind turbines is not cost-competitive with other forms of electricity generation, some of the newest wind turbine designs may be able to match or beat the power prices from many coal and nuclear plants.

Advantages of wind power include:

- It forestalls or replaces the need to build potentially more polluting conventional power plants.
- It produces virtually no pollution of air, water or soil.
- It is renewable (non-depletable).
- Because of its modular nature, it is easy to add capacity as needed.
- Installing wind turbines is relatively quick.
- While the power is currently more expensive than that produced by natural gas-fired plants, the price of wind power is not affected by fuel price increases or supply disruptions.

Some of the potential issues associated with windfarm development include:

- Use of large tracts of land. However, simultaneous land uses such as agriculture and cattle grazing often occur.
- Erosion in desert areas.
- Changes in visual quality (since windfarms tend to be located at or just below ridge lines).
- Disturbances to wildlife habitats.
- Avian mortality due to collisions with wind turbines and associated wires (research is ongoing to reduce bird deaths).
- Noise (wind turbines generate both audible and low frequency [deep base vibration] sound waves).
- Fires caused by shorts in the electrical cables in the unlikely event that they become stretched or twisted when the turbines turn to catch the wind.

In Australia we have the example of the co-operative wind farm which is now being erected in Victoria at Hepburn.

One turbine can generate enough power for 1000 houses.

This is an example of where the people have acted because the government is slow to act. Local people were resistant to the idea at first due to the propaganda about noise, birds etc. They are now extremely supportive. Ask them about the social impacts.

from <http://www.hepburnwind.com.au>

"Construction is well underway on Australia's first community-owned wind farm. Our two turbines on Leonards Hill, 10 km south of Daylesford, Victoria, are expected to be operational in the first half of 2011. The farm is predicted to annually generate more power than is used by the houses of Leonards Hill, Daylesford and everything in between."

Yours sincerely

Mrs Ann B Brown, BSC Hons