

## ***NORTH EAST REGION SUSTAINABILITY ALLIANCE***

NERSA comprises representatives from 6 sustainability groups in North East Victoria and Southern New South Wales, namely Albury/Wodonga, Beechworth, Benalla, Bright, Wangaratta and Yackandandah, all of whom would like to express their concern at any moves to discredit or hold up the development and implementation of wind farm technology, or for that matter, any other effective forms of renewable energy.

The Royal Society of Chemistry (UK) ran a headline in its journal 'Chemistry World' a while back which stated '***Australia Worst Carbon Polluters***'. As the world's worst per capita carbon polluter Australia must do everything possible to increase its quota of renewable energy, and wind farms should form an integral part of our mix of energy sources. Surveys being conducted in North East Victoria at present for the 100% Renewables Campaign are indicating that many of our citizens feel that Australia should be moving much more rapidly to replace its polluting coal fired power stations with cleaner forms of energy production.

There is little serious evidence to substantiate claims of wind farms causing any sort of harm, (and nothing on the scale of disease and death caused by coal mining and coal fired energy production), therefore we should be investing in wind farm technology rather than spending millions on trying to 'clean coal', with no guarantee of successful outcomes.

Wind farms are becoming more and more prolific in Europe as its member countries seek clean, efficient, and in time, cheaper, ways of providing power to their cities and towns, it is indeed an indictment of Australian governments that even the 'poorer' members of the EU, notably Spain and Portugal, are well populated with solar arrays and wind farms. Meanwhile Australians are still arguing about costs and benefits, whilst ignoring the risks and consequences of inaction.

No-one would dispute that wind turbines should ideally be placed at a sufficient distance from human residences to ensure they cause no discomfort, and where possible to avoid avian migratory pathways, but the time to quibble over aesthetics is long past. Our climate forming systems are fragile. Scientific consensus is that production of greenhouse gases is driving climate change rapidly towards a point of no return. In fact it is possible that the increasing frequency of extreme global climatic events we have seen in the recent past is a manifestation of this change. Certainly these events are what elementary physics would predict.

Can we really afford the luxury of further procrastination?

Gillian Baker  
North East Region Sustainability Alliance,