

Submission:

I write in support of rural wind farms.

Citizens and communities must take responsibility for increasing the availability and use of renewable energy, both for responsible and sustainable use of natural resources and for a much-needed response to the rising damages of climate change.

Wind power is the most commercially and technically viable form, and small scale community projects as well as larger scale wind farms need to be encouraged, not discouraged.

Current research by respected institutions supports the following:

(1) no sound evidence of health risks for people living in close proximity.

(2) evidence that low frequency sound levels are well within accepted thresholds and are comparable to naturally occurring phenomena.

(3) no statistical evidence that wind farms negatively affect property values.

(4) positive employment gains from wind power – more people are employed per unit of energy in wind power than either coal or gas generation and the resulting jobs are widely spread across many regions.

(5) benefits to land owners from a new source of income, without any measurable impact on farming operations.

(6) benefits to communities and individuals from job creation, local investment and the community funds that are commonly implemented by project proponents.

The Hepburn Wind project, for example, is expected to provide more than \$1,000,000 to the local community over the next 25 years — the local community will benefit more than the landlord.

Wind farms are widely supported in our Hepburn community. Hepburn Shire received 343 letters in relation to the Hepburn Wind Project, with 95% in support.

With more than 100,000 turbines installed globally, wind farms are not new. The vocal minority views are consistent with the implementation of any unfamiliar technology. While these minority views should be listened to respectfully, they should be responded to with balance and appreciation of what the evidence shows and what the majority of the community desires.

As well, if any of the concerns come from those who deny the evidence of climate change, I do hope the Senate committee has the strength to recognise that those voices are not coming from a reasonable reading of the scientific and practical evidence.

Australian states already have well developed wind farm planning controls which are among the most onerous in the world. Any changes to these controls should be equitably and consistently applied across other industries and be informed by science.

I request that the Senate Committee not propose provisions that would unnecessarily make the development of the Australia wind industry more difficult or onerous. It is essential that we move forward with the wind power and other alternative power sources that conserve limited resources and operate in a sustainable manner.

It is natural that there may be some who do sincerely feel that a wind power operation near them may disadvantage them, but it is also true that we as a community must be willing to accept some challenges and difficulties in order for the community as a whole to prosper and to protect the environment for future generations. We must be concerned with the legacy we leave our children and grandchildren and beyond. Because of this, reasonably accessible wind power needs to be an option for each community.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Mary-Faeth Chenery, Ph.D.