

4 February 2011

**SUBMISSION Re: Senate Inquiry into
The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms**

Dear Members of the Senate Inquiry:

I am a 62-year old retired businessman, living in the Daylesford area of the Central Highlands region of Victoria. I have been a proud member and contented investor in the local group known as **Hepburn Wind** since 2009. Hepburn Wind is the first ever locally based and community owned group dedicated to the construction of a two-turbine wind farm. At present, our group is in the process of installing two wind turbines and supporting infrastructure on a property at Leonard's Hill near Daylesford.

I understand that there may be some in the national Senate in Canberra who are climate change sceptics and deniers. But I certainly do not agree with this perspective. In fact, I am of the view that the recent weather disasters to strike Australia – starting with the Queensland floods of late December and early January, to the January flooding in some northern sections of Victoria, to the recent arrival of Cyclone Yaszi in northern Queensland – are nothing less than a direct result of climate change. And I, for one, place a lot of the blame for such climate change on carbon emissions from the coal-fired generators and power plants that dot this nation. It is obvious to me that this nation needs to urgently change the way that it produces electricity, or I believe that future climate change disasters may indeed increase in their intensity and destructiveness from what we have recently witnessed.

I am only one of nearly 1600 investors in Hepburn Wind, which is Australia's first community wind farm. As one of many such investors, I am strongly of the belief that such wind farms are a welcome addition to regional communities.

The following points have recently been brought to my attention:

- 1) The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recently concluded that "there is currently no published scientific evidence to positively link wind turbines with adverse health effects."
- 2) Research by Adelaide consultancy Sonus has recently shown that low frequency noise levels at the beach and in the CBD are typically higher than near wind farms.
- 3) Recent polling in regional NSW has shown that 85% support wind power with the majority supporting it in their communities.

- 4) Hepburn Wind has already created three direct jobs, and our project has already spent more than \$2 million in regional Victoria with more to come.
- 5) Our project was subject to strict planning conditions through the approvals process and will be closely monitored for compliance with some of the strictest environmental controls in the world.
- 6) Our project will contribute \$1 million to community initiatives over the next 25 years. In fact, Hepburn Will will be donating more to the community than it pays in lease fees to the landowner at Leonard's Hill.
- 7) Hepburn Wind is expected to cost \$13 million and generate more electricity each year than is used by the houses in Daylesford and much of the surrounding area. At the equivalent of less than \$6000- per house, no other renewable energy solution comes close.

In summary, I strongly support the local vision for cleaner, environmentally-friendly production of electricity that has been the driving force behind Hepburn Wind.

Sincerely yours,

Zachary Casper
Daylesford / Glenlyon