

Senate Inquiry: The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

We live on a rural property within view of a planned wind farm and can't wait. We have visited a number of wind farm sites while travelling in Victoria and NSW and find them inspiring and pleasing to look at. We have chosen to power our home using Greenpower (100% wind) for a number of years.

I have a background in science (BSc Hons) and renewable energy (Cert IV RET, Dip Sust). I cannot credit the almost superstitious fears being promoted about wind farms at the moment. I have not seen any peer-reviewed evidence that convinces me that a wind farm constructed to world standards will produce a real "wind turbine syndrome". Standards already exist for controlling noise in quiet rural areas. Wind power generation appear to be a very sensible addition to a farming enterprise. The turbines integrate well into the rural landscape and those that I have seen do not appear to worry stock at all.

The various pseudo-scientific 'landscape guardian' groups neglect the case that continuing climate change will have a much more damaging impact on the landscape through more severe drought and flood events than wind farms could possibly have. Their promulgation of misinformation in this area has caused a great deal of stress and unnecessary fear in rural communities (like ours) and I believe constitutes the greatest negative social and mental health impact to do with wind farms.

Wind power alone is not able to solve Australia's need for renewable zero emission electricity, but is a significant, simple and well-established source of power with no significant downside. It is a technology that is relatively inexpensive per MW (once fossil fuel subsidies are considered) with quick energy-payback and can be rolled out quickly. The work of Prof. Peter Newman (CUSP), BZE and others clearly show how intermittent renewable energy sources can be integrated into the Australia electricity grid. The sooner we can stop hindering the industry in Australia the better for everyone.

Thank you,

Doug Rolfe
Buckley, VIC
9th February 2011