

Submission:

I write in support of wind farms.

I am pleased that the senate is undertaking this enquiry as it provides a much needed opportunity to balance the shrill views of a vocal minority who are opposed to all forms of renewable energy and the opportunity to move Australia into a thriving a renewable energy industry.

For the past 20 years I have been living 50 metres from a domestic wind turbine that provides much needed energy to power my home I share with my husband and three children in Daylesford. My wind turbine has been a welcome addition to our local neighbourhood and even though it makes noise when the wind blows (it is much louder than the commercial wind turbines) none of my neighbours have ever complained or have ever described being annoyed by the noise.

My wind turbine is very visible rising above the trees – 21 metres in the air and can be seen from a far away as Mt Franklin – a large hill outside of Daylesford. No one has ever said what an ugly structure – in fact most people say that it looks very elegant. I live opposite a golf course and my wind turbine rises above the green on the 14th hole and has provided a valuable educative function so that people can learn that wind energy can provide enough electricity to power a large home. All of the golfers are very envious to learn that my wind turbine doesn't go out in the frequent blackouts we have in the country.

I have never felt sick, dizzy, anxious, angry or sleepless from living near a wind turbine and I have never met anyone who has. I often visit Waubra where there is a large commercial wind farm as my son plays football and Waubra is part of our league. Waubra U18's are the reigning premiers in the Central Highlands League and when we visit the oval under the turbines I wonder why there is such a fuss as no one seems to mind their presence and local people are very happy as it has provided welcome income to the community. Those Waubra footballers do not seem to experience any ill health from living and training under the turbines!

It is very easy to claim that something causes you ill health when you dont like it. People can feel ill for a range of reasons and there is substantial evidence to support that when people are anxious and stressed their general health is poorer. People who claim they have experienced ill health from turbines no doubt believe they have – there is no credible, peer reviewed clinical trials that prove this – instead there is lots of evidence to show that turbines produce low noise levels, do not have concerning levels of electro magnetic radiation, do not vibrate the ground, do not make you lose sleep. These symptoms which any doctor will tell you are classic symptoms of anxiety and depression. Commonplace throughout all communities and triggered by a range of factors. What disappoints me so much about the ill informed debate about wind farms is that opponents of wind farms who usually do not live near them are scaring others into believing that they will get sic k and creating a level of anxiety that is unfounded.

I am also curious as to why there is not the same level of concern about the health impacts of those living next to coal fired power stations. There is ample scientific evidence and studies based on years of reseach that have docmented the tragic health outcomes of respiratory problems, pollution and deaths associated with those living next to these power stations. It

seems that no one cares about those children and no one worries about their visual amenity and their right to be free of pollution.

I have become involved in our local community wind farm, Hepburn Wind as I believe that community scale, small windfarms are a model for the future that can assist in building sustainable local communities. The two turbines proposed have received widespread community support and have inspired over 1600 people to invest in this project because they believe that wind energy is safe, positive and an important step in addressing the impact of climate change.

I know that your enquiry will receive important scientific evidence to support the safety of wind farms and I hope that my personal experience of living next to a wind turbine will add to this overwhelming body of evidence to support wind energy. Wind energy is a cost effective, clean form of electricity generation that has been used for centuries. Australia should embrace the opportunity to become a leader in renewable energy for the sake of our children.

Vicki Horrigan