

When I ask my friends for support in our battle to have wind farms located away from the coast they always respond that they are torn between my cause and their support for renewable energy. They are misled by the sort of rubbery figures that proponents quote to justify the State government's undemocratic process of approval for wind farms against enormous community opposition. If wind turbines are deemed to be in the national interest then let us share the burden of their ugliness around instead of imposing them on a community that patently does not want them, as is the case with the Bald Hills wind farm on the South Gippsland coast. Put some around the suburbs of Melbourne, including Williamstown and in Port Philip Bay. Put some near the surf coast where politicians have their beach houses. Don't dump them in safe Liberal and National party seats like Portland and South Gippsland. There are areas of Victoria where councils and residents are actively seeking wind farm development. Most of all put them there.

Our efforts to preserve the landscape values of our coastline should not be dismissed as a 'nimby' protest. Landscape does have a value, even when it has been modified by settlement. Our coastline is valued significantly by the people who live and work with its vistas every day but also by the thousands of visitors who stay or pass through on their way from Philip Island to Waratah Bay and Wilson's Promontory. My landscape lifts my mood every day yet I cannot look at it now and envisage 52 turbines the size of 40 storey buildings over a 9km stretch from the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park to the Bald Hills Wetland reserve without feeling ill.

The industrialisation of wind farms means that there will rarely be community approval for them. The 'rewards' paid to those prepared to have them on their land are patently unfair when the neighbours who surround the wind factories see their properties diminish in value while their enjoyment of their property is spoiled forever. Why not place a tower in each town amongst the communications towers where the impact will be minimal and no invasive grid connection will be needed? That way I can face my friends and feel that everyone is doing their bit to produce renewable energy.