

Submission:

“I write in support of rural wind farms.

Considering the increasing volatility on the world’s fossil energy markets, increasing exploration costs indicating limitation of viable supply and the increasing pollution levels caused by utilising coal & oil as energy source I consider it extremely important for the survival of our society to allow and support all forms of energy generation, especially wind & solar. Whilst they might be slightly more expensive than traditional energy supply options I think this is caused by a crass miscalculation of actual costs. If one would include all costs associated with energy generation from mining raw materials to the actual electricity delivery at the consumer, costs for environmental damage, subsidies in form of rail/road/ports etc. windpower would be in my view the cheapest form of energy. Internalisation of External Costs is the key to properly compare options and I’d be glad to assist.

Whilst the rest of the world is embracing wind power at a large scale Australia worries about imagined health impacts, impacts on property values, impacts on communities essentially stopping the only viable alternative to burning coal from being further developed and deployed.

Renewable energy is an essential part of our response to climate change, and, by a wide margin, wind power is the most commercially and technically viable form.

Current research by respected institutions supports claims that wind farms pose no health risks for people living in close proximity. Research conducted on modern wind turbines has shown that the levels of low frequency sound are well within accepted thresholds and are comparable to naturally occurring phenomena.

Studies have found no statistical evidence that wind farms negatively affect property values.

The wind industry employs more people per unit of energy than either coal or gas generation and the resulting jobs are widely spread across many regions. In countries like Germany/US/Denmark tens of thousands of people have found viable and sustainable jobs in the wind industry whilst Australia loses talent in renewable energies on a significant scale (see AUSRA).

Land owners benefit from a new source of income, without any measurable impact on farming operations. This has been a major driver in UK and will help our struggling farmers diversify and thus sustain their farming operations and keep our rural communities lively rather than further supporting the move of younger people to the large cities.

With more than 100,000 turbines installed globally, wind farms are not new. Community wind farms are common in Europe — Denmark has more than 2,100. These projects empower local communities to constructively engage in the transition to a future without pollution.

Australian states already have a 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.

The Senate Committee should not propose provisions that would unnecessarily make the development of the Australia wind industry more difficult or onerous.”

I respectfully ask the Senate Committee to not only look at wind but all forms of energy generation when assessing impact. Whilst I support critical assessment as to impact of wind farms on the region and do not support putting wind farms in extremely scenic spots such as the Great Ocean Road Area I also respectfully submit that such impact is usually more positive than negative and quite in contrast to the negative impact of some rural subdivisions, industry settlements or other means of power generation. I invite the Senate Committee to hear the experience of wind farming in Germany and with community financing which in my view is a vital key to community acceptance and I'd be happy to speak should it be of interest.

Yours sincerely,

Bernhard Voll