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Australian Senate
Community Affairs References Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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Inquiry into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms

Dear Senators,

Much detail of our community opposition to the proposed Tuki wind farm can be seen on the website www.spacountryguardians.org.au which was set up by people in the surrounding area.

In the first instant Windpower Pty Ltd a company with a paid up capital of \$2 wooed the local authority – Hepburn Shire Council for 12 months, without the ratepayers and residents knowledge. The Shire Council already held in low esteem must have seen benefit from dealing with Windpower and also benefit in not informing the community of the proposal for installing some nineteen 130 meter high wind turbines on the prominent escarpment north of the township of Smeaton.

Finally with only seven days' notice and after convincing both the local Smeaton State School, which my four children were former pupils of, and the Smeaton Bowling Club prior to the above public meeting, we the residents were informed of the windfarm.

So commenced a three year long battle and final success to a community, which is prepared to be governed but not ruled.

Lifelong friendships have been destroyed, business associations terminated and local cooperation very seriously damaged as a consequence. One serious loser has been the Smeaton State School, who through the greed of the Principal Mr P Liddle and the parent's council with the prospect of Windpower cash donations is now down to 17 students from approx. 30+ when the issue arose. The Bowling Club from being pro wind farm has belatedly become neutral and not wanting to talk of this community destabilizing episode.

I am saddened by the whole episode, the Hepburn Shire Council who forgot the people they are elected to represent, the Victorian State Government and particularly Premiers Bracks and Brumby whom if either knocked on my door I would turn set the dogs on, former Planning Minister Madden and his colleague former Energy Minister Bachelor at no time showed concern for those with turbines proposed within 1km of their homes using that old excuse "for the greater good".

Our community by waging a public opposition and not observing the advised process of "due process" stopped the proposal. The community, the district and indeed the Hepburn Shire with surrounding areas are all losers and the whole district is socially and economically different now.

Yours Sincerely

Jim Elsworth

