

16th February 2011

The Social & Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farm
Senate Enquiry

Dear Sir / Madam,

We wish to make a personal submission to the enquiry. We have been involved with a Planning Panel Hearing regarding the Stockyard Hill Wind Farm which is proposed for a large area between Skipton and Beaufort, SW of Ballarat in Victoria.

We are greatly concerned by a number of factors associated with this project. Whilst this Wind Farm has been reduced in size from its original format it still poses significant and long term impacts on our region. Government policy dictated that this project whilst subject to modifications, was virtually a fait accompli. No amount of fair or reasonable argument could have stopped this proposal such was the intent of the then government in Victoria to pursue wind energy developments. This project was granted approval at the last possible stage before the State Government election was called in Victoria in November 2010.

Our major concerns remain:

- ✓ A lack of extensive and thorough research and consultation. In fact there was only one community meeting held several weeks prior to submissions having to be lodged with the Planning Panel. Our communities have been irrevocably split by the processes used by proponents of the project.
- ✓ Impacts on threatened birds and animals – especially the Brolga which has had long established habitat on our property and is also documented in Departmental records. The effects on raptor and bat species are also of major concern. Australia already has lost substantial numbers of species which have disappeared due to inappropriate development. We can ill afford to continue this trend.
- ✓ Unknown effect on groundwater by major earthmoving associated with construction of nearby turbines. Our property relies heavily on subterranean water.
- ✓ Health impacts imposed by nearby proximity of turbines to residential properties is unresolved.

- ✓ Increased fire threat due to installation of turbines into an already high fire prone region and the increased work load placed on small communities and volunteers.
- ✓ Impact on property values and visual effects – particularly the accumulative when combined with other nearby wind farms.

We would welcome the opportunity to expand on these points and trust that the Senate Enquiry will make visits to regional and rural areas that have been impacted by Wind Farms.

Yours faithfully,