

Supplementary  
Submission  
No 72a

## INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS

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Thank you for the opportunity to meet with the Inquiry Committee and to make a supplementary submission.

Regarding the effects of noise on nearby residences:

Since the visit from the Inquiry Committee my family has experienced increased noise levels from the operating wind turbines of the Capital Wind Farm. As you are aware the turbines are situated on two opposite sides of our property; when the wind is blowing from the North West or West significant noise comes from the turbines to the North of our property, when the wind is blowing from the East or South the noise comes from the Turbines to the South of us. I am finding that I wake frequently during the night and have difficulty going back to sleep, on the occasions when the wind has dropped and the turbines are still, the relief of silence is like a weight lifted from my shoulders. The noise is constant, twenty four hours a day when the turbines are operating. In the construction phase of this installation, noise from machinery was also quite noticeable, often starting early in the morning and continuing all day. Dust from the construction of roads and from leveling of turbine sites has contributed to almost constant sinus problems since construction began.

Effects on the Environment:

Our 26ha property is a temperate native grassland and 19ha are the subject of a voluntary conservation agreement with the NSW Government. At present ours is the only Grassland in the State to be conserved in this way; it has regenerated from heavily grazed sheep paddocks over the past 15 years to become a healthy ecosystem supporting small mammals, reptiles and much bird life. Temperate Native Grasslands are declining in NSW with resultant loss of habitat and species. The installation of the 68 wind turbines on land surrounding our property which had the potential for similar regenerative processes now precludes any such environmental change as well as threatening Lake George, the largest inland lake in NSW, which is a breeding site for a large number of species of water birds, including some vulnerable species. Because the turbines are built on ridgelines and hilltops they will potentially alter the rate at which water (rain) enters the catchment i.e. runoff from the concrete pads surrounding the turbines will recharge the groundwater at a faster rate and may contribute to increased salinity both in the catchment soils and in the water of Lake George.

Careful consideration of land degradation issues needs to be given to all large scale windfarm proposals. From our experience with the planning process for the Capital Windfarm, no independent scrutiny was made of any environmental issues raised by us or any others, our concerns were put to the proponent and dismissed as trivial, or having been factored in to the proposal. I have seen no evidence that any of the concerns were taken seriously.

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the power industry has been touted as a real benefit to the environment from the installation of large scale windfarms. Increasingly statements by Federal Government spokespersons reveal this not to be the case, while all of our base load energy is generated by coal fired power stations, emissions will remain as they are at present. Seemingly it will take some time to construct and commission gas fired power stations which while they emit at a lower level than coal will still produce a large amount of CO<sub>2</sub> etc. Wind powered energy is not carbon neutral when construction and ongoing running costs are considered.

Small landholders such as ourselves are at great disadvantage when dealing with the financial might of developers such as Renewable Power Ventures, who own the Capital Windfarm. My family has been treated with rudeness bordering on contempt by officers of the company and also some consultants employed by them. We were told from the first visit of the proponent that this industrial complex would go ahead, that there was no way we could stop or change it. We naively believed there was a consultation process which would provide a mechanism for robust and fair discussion and thorough examination of issues raised; this proved

not to be the case, with even officers of the NSW Department of Planning telling us that as the State Government was committed to the construction of windfarms, the opposition of a few nearby residents would carry little weight; this has left us disinclined to participate in the public domain when it seems that outcomes are /fait accompli /from the outset.

Ruth Corrigan