

**Submission  
No 80**

## **INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS**

**Name:** Ms Martha Grahame

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21 August 2009

Dear Mr Cohen,

Thank you for the opportunity of writing a submission to you about rural windfarms. This is my personal submission.

I am 43 and live in rural NSW and have been a ALP and Green voter all my life but I have become very disillusioned with both parties in regard to the issue of windfarms.

I believe that human beings are responsible for climate change and that we need to do something quickly and decisively to combat it. However windfarms are not the answer. Anyone who has made a slight study of it can see they are merely window dressing so that city people can pretend they are doing something about global warming and get that warm inner glow, when they drive past one. They do not produce enough power to make one bit of difference. They cause environmental damage.

I am a member of the Taralga Landscape Guardians Inc, an organisation that was set up to stop the Taralga Windfarm, in the Southern Tablelands of NSW . This windfarm has 61 turbines and will be located 3 km from our historic village. The development will cause the bulldozing of NSW and federally endangered Tableland Basalt Forest and federally endangered natural temperate grassland. It will put countless other species in danger when they build the 34km transmission line through the bush. (The more expensive option of putting in a substation to connect to the existing transmission line didn't suit the developer or Country energy's priorities).

Our group fought this development in the NSW Land and Environment Court. The fight cost us \$130,000 in fees for lawyers and expert witnesses and caused us countless hours of hard work. When we ran out of money we had to represent ourselves. As a primary school teacher trying to be a barrister I can tell you it was a difficult and stressful time. The stress on our families was incalculable. The time we spent going to Sydney because the courts don't like to come to the country except for one or two days, was time we couldn't go to work.

The reason we fought the Taralga Windfarm was that;

- it was too close to neighbouring properties, ruining their visual amenity and creating noise problems, with no compensation,
- it was too close to our historic town, destroying property values and amenity
- it would seriously impact on endangered species and ecological communities.

The development was passed, although we won compensation for 4 neighbouring landowners and some protection for the environment. One of the landowners who now

must be bought out, is a man whose family has owned the property for more than 150 years. It was an official sanctuary for the Wedgetail eagle since the 1930s.

After our court case, we expected that the Department of Planning would in future cases require the developer to acquire neighbouring properties as was set out as a precedent in our case.

We were wrong. The Department of Planning did not pay any attention to our case and are still approving windfarms that will cause a visual and noise nuisance to neighbours without any compensation.

Unhappily for us too, is that our official complaints to the Department of Planning about the Developer's breaches in regard to environmental protection at the Taralga windfarm construction site have been left unanswered.

I believe you are a clever and principled man Mr Cohen and I know that the leader of your party Mr Bob Brown is a good and ethical man. I know that you and he fought the Franklin Dam because it was wrong. It was a "Power at any cost" mentality that was going to ruin a beautiful place. Windfarms are a similar problem except they are "hardly any power" at any cost.

I urge you to think about this issue a bit more deeply than the "spin" provided by the Wind industry. They don't care about the environment. They don't care about the endangered ecological communities, they don't care about the wedgetail eagles. (In fact they admit they expect to kill a few each year). They don't care that they don't generate a useful amount of power. They are only interested in money.

The power generated by the Taralga Windfarm, if it were working 24 hours per day would be approx 120 – 180mW. (depending on the turbines used). The developer has stated they expect it to work at approx 30% capacity. It will therefore produce an average of 36- 55mW at any one time. NSW needs approx 12,000mW of power to run at any given time.

Now we hear the Rees government is going to fast-track even windfarms as small as 30mW installed capacity. What a joke. Their average output of 10mW of power will really come in handy.

**WAKE UP**, if you want to save the environment, please do not waste my hard earned tax dollars subsidising this fraud. Look after the environment instead !

Investigate gas plants that produce less greenhouse gases than coal, promote less consumerism and waste, put money into experimental technology. Stop giving money to these windfarm carpetbaggers. They will destroy the Southern Tablelands.

I would be happy to discuss these matters further or give evidence to your committee.

Yours faithfully

Martha Grahame