

**Submission  
No 19**

## **INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS**

**Organisation:** Glen Innes Severn Council  
**Name:** Mr Hein Basson  
**Position:** General Manager  
**Date received:** 10/08/2009

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31 July 2009

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir

**Re: ENQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS**

The Glen Innes Severn area has been identified on the NSW Government's Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability Wind Atlas as an area suitable for wind power generation. One of the Federal Government's election promises was that they would introduce a new Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET). The MRET will require retailers to source 20% of their electricity from renewable energy by 2020. This would require around 1,000 MW of new wind power per annum for the next 13 years. (Ref: Wind Prospect).

The NSW Wind Atlas shows the Glen Innes Severn area as a valuable wind resource in this regard. Council has three (3) major wind farm developments occurring within the Local Government Area (LGA) at this point. Council anticipates an increase in this type of development into the future. The challenge will be to encourage such sustainable development whilst protecting the amenity of affected residents, despite in most instances not being the consent authority. Due to the lack of State Government direction and guidelines in this regard Council adopted a Development Control Plan (DCP) for Wind Power Generation and a copy is attached for your information.

Council remains concerned in regard to the lack of guidelines by the State with regard to Wind farm development. In particular the lack of guidelines for suitable buffer distances for the location of wind turbines to a residential dwelling. A guideline in this regard would provide certainty for both developers and the community.

The lack of adequate noise guidelines is also of concern. The most current guidelines used appear to be the South Australian Environment Protection Authority's *Wind Farms – Environmental Noise Guidelines, 2003*. This combined with changes to the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* whereby Council's are now the Authorised Regulatory Authority (ARA) causes concern for Local Government.

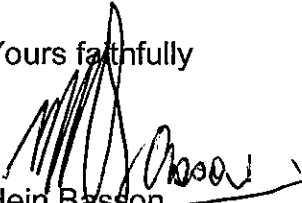
These changes were made without any consultation with Local Government. The fact that Council, in the majority of instances, is not the consent authority however will be the ARA for noise complaints from wind farms puts many smaller regional Council's in a difficult situation. Investigation of complex noise complaints from wind turbines will place pressure on both Council resources and staff expertise.

It is requested that the inquiry consider recommending to the NSW Government that:

1. That guidelines be developed for the suitable location of wind turbines with regard to suitable buffer distances be determined for the location from a residential dwelling;
2. That noise guidelines be developed to guide developers when considering wind farm development; and
3. The *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* be amended so as the Department of Environment and Climate Change are the Authorised Regulatory Authority for wind farm development.

Trusting you will give these matters your favourable consideration. For further enquiries please do not hesitate to contact Graham Price, Director Development & Environmental Services on . . . or the undersigned on . . .

Yours faithfully



Hein Basson  
**GENERAL MANAGER**