

Submission
No 15

INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS

Name: Mr Jim & Mrs Noreen Marshall

Date received: 5/08/2009

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23/07/09.

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5
Parliament House
Macquarie Street Sydney NSW 2000.

Dear Director,

Below is the submission that we lodged with the DoP in regard to the following development. We feel it fits the “terms of reference” for the Inquiry into rural wind farms.

Please find enclosed our submission in regard to the KYOTO ENERGY PARK project which is proposed for Scone, NSW. The following are the reasons why we strongly OBJECT to this project.

- 1. Position.** This project is inappropriately placed. From research it appears to be one of the most densely populated areas yet to host this Industry within NSW. The number of people residing around these two sites are more than a “handful” – from EA, Vol. 2. Page 834, 10.2. On the 16/02/08 Pamada held an information day, (the only one during the whole process, I may add) they themselves quote in regard to the letters they mailed, that 310 went out – 265 were to surrounding residents. Further on from that day – 16/02/08, Key Insights for Pamada state in their analysis there was support for renewable energies, (which we support) but there was opposition to the site selected for this Industry within Scone community.
- 2. Visual Impact.** This is covered in Key Insights results from the above day. EA. Vol 2. Page 850-851, quotes such as;
“This is an obscene development”.
“I voted green. I cannot fathom why such a beautiful landscape has to be ruined by turbines”.

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The above sample is only partly how my husband and I feel about the intrusion of these monsters into our environment. Measures are mentioned to mitigate the visual impact such as grow trees.

We have never grown trees! Why? Because we have at present, a 360 degree view of the most “amazing” landscape anywhere in the world plus our land abounds with trees. We have also travelled enough to appreciate “landscapes”. The other reason is fairly basic if you have understanding of how bushfires behave. Fire races up hill. We reside on top of a hill! We don’t want trees which would place us potentially in danger’s way. We have experienced a severe fire in our time here, some nine years.

EA. Page 316. Vol. 2. 9.1. Wind Turbines. “However the Middlebrook turbines are within a range of visual settings that include Castle Rock that has a local heritage rating, is within a 7(a) zoning and does have distinctive landscape character values.” (They do not mention that we have what is known as “Indian Head Rock” within this area as well). However they do go on to say, “the FEWER turbines that are built on Middlebrook the BETTER for the visual setting of Castle Rock and its distinctive landscape setting”.

3. Noise. For those of us who are going to be seriously impacted by 11, 150m high turbines right at our back door, within 2.9kms, this is of huge concern. At the open day back in 2008, when we asked the noise consultant about the noise impact and showed him where we were situated on the map he said, “will be noisy – you’ll get used to it.” We DON’T want to have noise pollution. The DoP in their own “local mining potential in the UHV strategic planning assessment” December 2005 state 11.4. noise and vibration “requires the mining company to purchase residential land in the “affected zone” and the “secondary management zone”.

Currently when compensation is mentioned in relation to this Industry affected parties are told for eg: “it is difficult to pay emotional compensation” or “we will not relocate you or pay compensation” or “we

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can't set a precedent". Please justify to us then, when in the DoP's own document the above is accepted practice for one section of the community regarding compensation, yet we have to accept noise pollution, (plus a multitude of other issues) which could very well affect our health, our lifestyle and our long term wellbeing. Research has been done in relation to noise issues for e.g.: by Dr.Nina Pierpont and Dr.Robin Phipps. One strongly suggests a buffer zone of 5km's, the other states that noise can be heard up to 10km's away. NOISE is a very real issue. Pamada themselves are aware that at sites they HAVE monitored they have "exceedances" as they so quaintly put it. The "complementary" mitigation offered, once again trees I believe, has been known to actually increase noise by up to 2db's. (NZ site).

4. Aboriginal Heritage. Vol.2. Page 650. We are alongside the Towarri National Park. The proposed Glen Range site which is one of the two sites involved in this project, borders Towarri at either end. The Wonnarua tribe have concerns re this particular site as they may well have in regard to Mountain Station because of the bird life and the Landscape.

Vol. 2. Page 650. Social value – refers to their spiritual beliefs. It is the home of the Wedge Tailed Eagle – their totem bird. You do not have to be Aboriginal to relate in this way to such a majestic species.

The most abhorrent thing I have researched in regard to these industries is the fact that a "dollar" amount is mentioned to be paid to RSPCA for example, for every wedge tailed eagle slaughtered and even the powerful owl is mentioned on one industrial site. How hypocritical is that! On the one hand you destroy our superb birds and people's quality of life while on the other you proclaim to be doing something in regard to slowing up GHG emissions. Even Pamada themselves have stated at a meeting we requested that "in the scheme of thing –would produce very little unfortunately". They were talking about the Kyoto Energy Park. That was early days when they were talking 47 Wind Turbines – now we are down to 42 I believe.

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- 5. Property devaluation.** In the EA much of the rhetoric re property values was from overseas. Only Australian data should be considered. There is obviously reason for concern. Vol. 2. Page 995. "AusWea intends once more wind farms have been built to commission an independent investigation". This will be way too late to save us from the potential devaluation of property. Vol. 2. Page 863. "However when taking into consideration the amenity, lifestyle and non-agricultural development component of land surrounding a wind farm there is some consensus that a devaluation of properties in view of the wind farms may occur". "Farming properties appear to drop 10-15% near turbines", "rural residential values drop by 30-40% near wind turbines". It just wrecks communities! This from a gentleman, John Jess, who has been valuing property since 1982 in the Gippsland area. Why are we denying this is a very real issue for persons who reside near these things? We have another small block that is going to be impacted on also by this particular project (and believe another company plans to place more turbines behind it) so we miss out every way. It is an issue and it needs to be dealt with prior to any more of these Industries going ahead. If it isn't an issue why are we having a State Parliamentary Inquiry into the "best locations for the industry and their impact on property values?" (ABC radio 06/09)
- 6. Decommissioning;** This is a huge concern the "decommissioning" process, as it's referred to. It needs to be the "dismantling" process and "the company" should be made to allocate a certain amount of \$'s annually into a trust fund (they have stated that they will make lots of money, as will the landholder) so we can be assured that at some stage (if not in our lifetime) that these monsters will be removed from our Landscape forever.

In conclusion I find it ironical that everyone gets "a bite of the cherry" apart from those most severely affected. The massive subsidy's that are handed out from both state and federal funds (is no doubt taxpayer's money? – we are

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taxpayers).The winners being the developer, the landholder, the local council, the indigenous community, the local community (I quote; to support meals on wheels, buy footy jumpers, ABC radio 10/07/09). Yet we the people who stand to lose so much are treated abysmally. If our claim that we are a democratic society has any merit at all, as part of the approval process it should be stated “after 12 months if persons are struggling to live with these “turbines” and wish to re-locate then they are to be paid out by the wind farm owner and the landholder. This could be based on the current land assessment, plus the cost of a comparable home replacement.”

I finish off our submission with other quotes from the DoP’s document “local mining potential in the UHV strategic planning assessment”, December 2005. “Residents have access to expansive rural views and open space, clean air and relative peace and quiet”. “The character of the landscape is highly valued by many people and in itself provides a major resource to the shire”. Upper Hunter Shire believe population has increased one of the reasons being the “rural lifestyle on offer”.

I ASK WHY ARE WE CHANGING IT TO A LARGE INDUSTRIAL SITE?

How quickly we forget! For and on behalf of – (end of submission to DoP.)

“Your terms of reference which we ask you to focus on in particular are”; minimise residential and environmental impacts.

How can this be done? Ensure that they are NOT located anywhere within at least 10km’s of any residence. This will hopefully avoid some of the noise as well as the huge visual impact.

Impact of rural wind farms on property values.

In a fair and just society you cannot have agreement with one section of the community in regard to compensation (mining) and allow another section (who are going to be impacted on maybe even more so) with noise, vibration and multiple other issues such as flicker, blade glint, electromagnetic interference,

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so the list continues and not offer compensation. If this inquiry is to report on the true issues in relation to this Industry (for that is truly what it is) then all of the above concerns need to be dealt with before another approval is granted for any other industrial wind turbines to be erected. COMPENSATION has to be part of the approval process if Government's continue to place this Industry at people's back door! Property such as "rural residential" (which is the greater majority around the KEP project) is often people's super fund. So what right has anyone, let alone State and Federal Governments, (who promote people to be "self funded retirees") to assist in the devaluing of that property up to 30% and more in some instances.

I trust our concerns will be taken seriously and a positive change comes about as a result,

Jim and Noreen Marshall.

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