

**Submission
No 13**

INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS

Name: Mr Stuart & Mrs Heather Carter

Date received: 5/08/2009

The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000

31/7/09

Dear Mr Cohen

Re: Rural wind farms inquiry

The idea of wind energy is not new in the Upper Hunter area.

During the project, *Building A Sustainable Future* (BASF), co-ordinated by Scone Parkville Environment Watch (SPEW), some years ago, the idea of wind energy sites in the Upper Hunter was promoted following the release of the NSW Wind Atlas in 1996 by SEDA.

Prominent locals, Patrice Newell and Peter Hodges, were featured in a local newspaper story and in association with this awareness raising article, a window display at the Scone Advocate office in the main street included model wind turbines. It highlighted the contribution that this form of renewable energy could make to the state's energy mix. It was one of the most popular displays staged by SPEW during the BASF project.

At no stage was there any objection to the prospect of wind turbines being installed in the region.

Rural land holders saw it as an opportunity to diversify their incomes. Residents in general viewed it as an opportunity to be part of a clean, green future.

It was during this time that wind tests were being undertaken on the sites where a set of wind turbines is currently being proposed on the hills to the North West of Scone.

It is important that turbines be installed on those sites that maximise the energy generating capacity of the wind turbines. Generally the higher the blade centre, the greater the potential for each turbine to perform at its best.

In a sense, in the bigger picture, this minimises the overall number of turbines required to supply the energy needs of local and more distant communities.

The proposition that these same turbines should be located on disused mine sites further down the valley cannot be justified, since the wind potential at these sites would limit the opportunity to maximise each turbine's performance. Wind farms have the potential to make rural communities self-sufficient in power and need to be located close to their energy customers.

We suggest the risks and loss of amenity highlighted by some rural communities is exaggerated. Wind farms have been established all around the world and sometimes quite close to people's homes. We don't believe the danger of bushfire, the killing of wildlife and birds, the noise of the blades or illness due to 'flickering' are compelling or factual enough reasons to not use wind turbines for energy production.

There is already sufficient roof area in Australia to supply the electrical energy requirements of the Australian people. When combined with energy efficiency, energy conservation and passive solar design, solar energy with supplementation from wind, should be our Number 1 goal.

In the interim, the current economic and political climate suggests to us that wind energy is a means of power generation that needs to be embraced and given the opportunity to contribute to the distributed power generating capacity of the state..

We encourage the Committee to support the installation of wind turbines as a step in the right direction of weaning us off coal fired power stations and making the transition to a low carbon economy within the shortest possible timeframe.

Yours sincerely
Stuart & Heather Carter