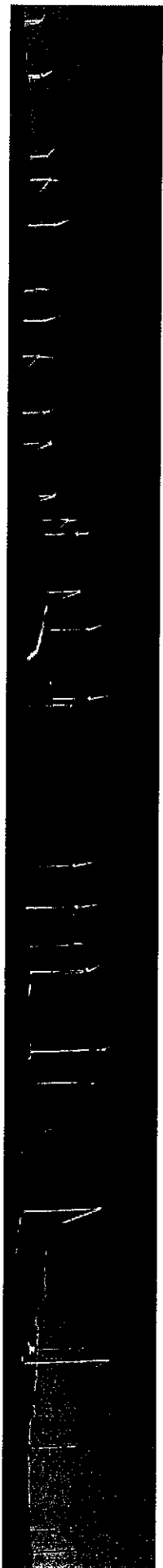


Supplementary
Submission
No 108b

INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS

Name: Mr George McLaughlin AM

Date received: 8/10/2009



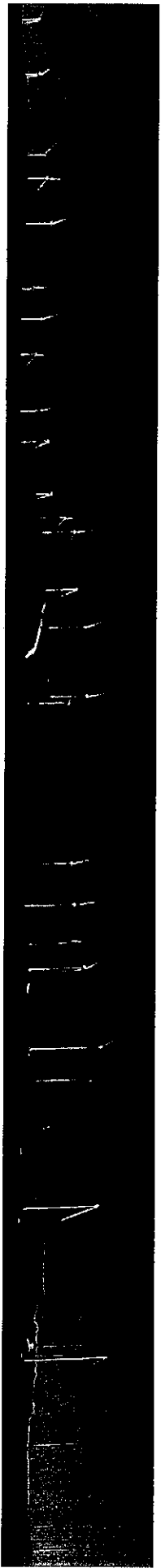
Inquiry into rural wind farms

Evidence to:

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5

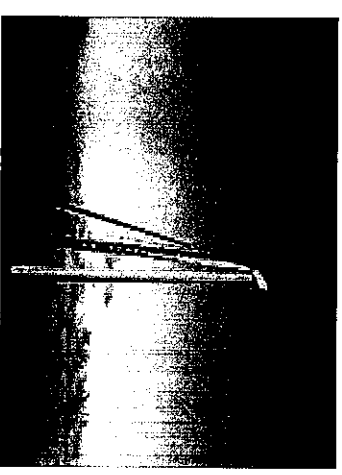
from:

George McLaughlin,



TOR #2 (a) visual impact

- Property transformed from restful visual appearance to one with imposing views of 52 turbines each the height of a 40 storey building
- Some of these less than 2km from residence
- Negative visual impact increases as distance from turbines decreases - impact at more than 8km very different from impact at less than 2km



TOR #2 (b) acoustic impact

- Acoustics are complex - much of the commentary made by non-experts is unreasonably simplified
- Unrealistic “marketing” comparisons – eg “like a babbling brook at 500m” rather than “like an airplane circling overhead at 20,000 feet” – it’s the **characteristics** of the sound, not simply the level
- pro-windfarm AWEA caution: “However, in hilly terrain where residences are located in sheltered dips or hollows downwind from turbines, turbine sounds may carry further and be more audible – our situation

TOR #2 (b) acoustic impact - continued

- RPV claims on nsw.planning website (Q52-Q90):
 - *there will be no annoying noise impact on neighbouring residents*
 - *the distance to neighbouring residences is more than adequate to prevent any noise nuisance*
 - *our studies have been conducted using a very conservative model. In short, there is no noise impact*
- The NIA methodology shown defective (10m vs 120m)
- A to Q80 – “*the Suzlon 2.1 was used as it produces the highest operational noise!!!”* – 67 of these were subsequently deployed

TOR #3 – ability to sell near neighbour property

- Those in proximity to wind turbines had either a higher rate of non-sale (11% vs. 3%) or took twice as long to sell
- <http://fw.farmonline.com.au/news/nationalrural/agribusiness-and-general/general/wind-farms-change-land-values/1359548.aspx>
 - the more intrusive the wind turbines in “lifestyle” terms, the bigger the negative price impact
 - most developers limited financial rewards to landholders with turbines actually on their land
 - In Europe there is a much more equitable payment system where people next door receive 50% of the lease payment and residents further away receive a 25% payment as compensation

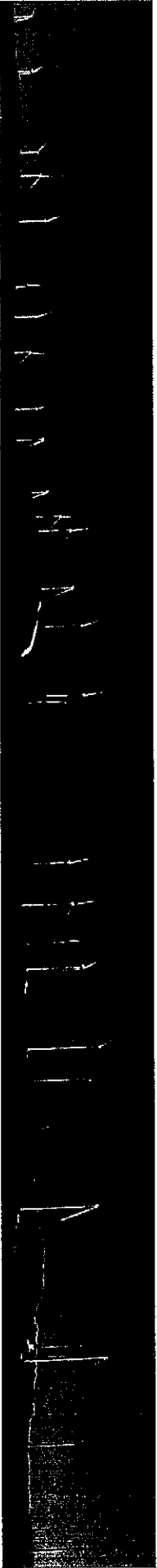
TOR #3 – ability to sell near neighbour property

- Many earlier studies concluding no negative impact have been disputed due to:
 - bias (who commissioned the study);
 - no account taken of distance from turbines (impact increases as distance decreases);
 - no account taken of properties that did not sell;
 - No distinction between “windfarmers” (whose properties generate revenue) and “near neighbours” (whose don’t)
 - conclusions generally influenced by sales of properties more than 5km distant from turbines



TOR #5 – locate datacentres close to sources of renewable energy

- Data centres are major consumers of power
- Windfarms should ideally be located well away from residences, but power transmission loss is an issue
- Solution – locate data centres close to remote windfarms/solar/geothermal and link these by optical networks – this is happening in other parts of the world
- This is a major thrust in US, Canada with increasing interest elsewhere
 - *See attached supplementary paper submitted to the committee*
- Well suited to Australia, esp with NBN rollout



Conclusions

- Potential negative impact on visual & acoustic amenity increases with decreasing distance to turbines
- Difficulty of selling property increases as distance to turbines decreases
- Negative impact often experienced at distances up to 2.5-3km away
- Legislated setbacks needed, or compulsory offer of purchase or Eu-style compensation/payment sharing for neighbours within 2.5km
- Evaluate further collocation of server farms (data centres) and wind/solar/geothermal sources, particularly in the context of the NBN.