

**Submission
No 88**

INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS

Name: Mr Paul and Mrs Sue Adams

Date received: 25/08/2009

Paul and Sue Adams

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

Dear Sir,

I must strongly voice my opposition to the proposed Wind Farm Component of the Kyoto Energy Park at Scone. Sustainable energy production is essential, but this massively intrusive industrial development is wholly unsuited to the proposed site. My concerns are as follows:

Noise Production

Overseas experience shows that a minimum of three kilometers and preferably five kilometers is required to avoid excessive noise impacts on habited areas next to these developments. My dwelling is 1.9 kilometers from the turbines and will, at certain times, be exposed to industrial noise and sub sonic vibration that will cause distress and anxiety, particularly at night. The health effects of chronic exposure at close range are now referred to as "Wind Turbine Syndrome". Symptoms include sleeplessness, frequent waking, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, headache, and tinnitus. Testimony before the New York State Legislature Energy Committee in 2006, recommended a buffer zone of three to five kilometers, minimum, to avoid these health effects.

Noise levels of at least 40 dBA are predicted at our location and 48 dBA at others. Modeling error at 2 kilometers is + or - 2.3 dBA. Also, downwind propagation of noise can enhance noise levels significantly, particularly over large distances. The noise modeling using "ENM" software, which was not developed for wind farms, adds further uncertainty to the

predicted noise levels. Modulation effects also cannot be predicted prior to construction. The recommendation in the Environmental Assessment (EA) that the wind farm operator "control" the turbines to eliminate high degrees of modulation under certain atmospheric conditions is alarming and has no assurance of remedial action.

South Australia Wind Farms Environmental Noise Guidelines are being used in the absence of any national guidelines which are in draft form. No further wind farm developments should be approved until these national guidelines are finalized so that adjacent residents' (60 properties, 150 people) health and amenity are not needlessly sacrificed because of rushed uncontrolled wind farm developments. The South Australia Guidelines recommend that predicted equivalent noise levels should not exceed 35 dBA or the background noise level by 5 dBA.

The suggestion in the EA that this level should be increased by 5 dBA to 40 dBA or 10 dBA above background levels is outrageous and unjustifiable in view of the immense magnitude of the various impacts on residents from this wind farm. The noise modeling was calculated on the basis of 2.1 MV turbines. However, 3 MV turbines are now proposed. There is no information on how this last minute increase in power output will change noise levels at nearby residences; yet another unknown. These unknowns and uncertainties about the noise levels have the potential to increase noise at certain locations far in excess of the guidelines. Arbitrarily raising the allowable noise limits may be convenient for the proponents but has no justifiable basis. And why increase them only for residents close to the Middlebrook turbines?

Visual Impact

The Middlebrook region and the Glen Range were (until a specific zoning change in 2006 to allow for eco-generating devices...?) zoned Environmental Protection 'A' – Scenic Zone. So uniquely quiet and scenic that my wife and I decided to build in this intimate and beautiful small valley. I frequently walk on the ridges of the Towarri National Park, bordering my property and this is a source of relaxation and enjoyment. This will no longer be possible when noisy wind turbines tower over the ridges as close as 50 meters from the park boundary.

Users of the National Park and the ranges of the fauna within the park cannot co-exist with a development so incongruent with this natural environment and lethal for certain bird species. 150 meter high turbines are enormous and larger than most wind farms. They will be lined up not in undulating country as is usually the case but atop the steep, dramatic escarpment of the Glen Range. This will amplify the visual impact to a level acknowledged to be 'high visual

impact' for surrounding residents, i.e. incalculable loss and destruction of visual amenity for those who chose to live here for the intimate beauty of the landscape.

Our family has already made adjustments to accommodate three open cut mines in close proximity to our house, including early morning noise and dust from truck movements. The cumulative impact of an additional wind farm will become unbearable. The fifteen kilometer drive home from work was previously an opportunity to unwind from a high input, high stress occupation. Now, the daily drive will engender anxiety and anger because of the loss of unspoiled rural views and the sanctuary, peace and quiet that one's home should offer.

Aviation Requirements

The current configuration of the turbines on the Glen Range could limit utilization of Scone Airport for certain types of aircraft. Scone's thoroughbred industry is recovering from an Equine Influenza break in the horse population. Any additional impact on tourism and equine related travel would be unfortunate. As part owner of a large Veterinary Practice servicing the thoroughbred industry in Scone, we are receiving enquiries regarding potential adverse affects on thoroughbred population close to the turbines. Chronic health effects take time to become evident and we can only advise our clients that there is insufficient information for us to assure them their horses are safe.

Other wind farms have been required to have red flashing, medium intensity, synchronized lighting to ensure safety around nearby airports. No doubt CASA will require similar lighting for this project. This visual impact at night can be exacerbated by low level cloud cover reflecting red light onto the surrounding landscape.

Wildlife

Breeding pairs of Wedge-tailed Eagles are a feature of Towarri National Park and surrounding areas. The group doing the fauna impact assessment told me that there will be a 100% kill rate of these birds in range of the turbines.

As more eagles move into the area, they will die. An avian 'sink' is formed which ensures that losses continue for the life of the turbines. Bats, kestrels, and the endangered

Powerful Owl all inhabit the area and will be threatened. The reduction in the biodiversity of my area will be all too obvious without the eagles soaring above.

This wind farm is too close to the Towarri National Park boundary (50 meters) and should be moved so that the ranges of species within the park are not impacted.

Consultation

Although we are a neighboring property to this development, we have not been contracted by the proponents at any stage. Public meetings with the developers have been characterized by a lack of specific information, or no information on sensitive issues.

The original Aboriginal inhabitants of the area, who have "true knowledge", have not been consulted.

Property Devaluation

The consensus view is that property devaluations will occur; the only debate is by how much. Lifestyle properties, such as mine next to the wind farm, alone would devalue by 40%. This is not a fair or reasonable outcome in this situation we find ourselves in. We have had little choice and our opinions have not been sought.

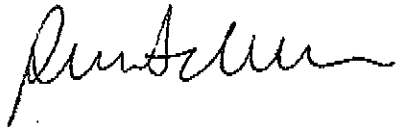
This wind farm will have a massive impact on the lives of my wife and I, along with the other families directly threatened due to their close proximity; not to mention, the loss of rural amenity for the whole community.

Scone will no longer have an unspoiled scenic, rural ambience and the community is now and will remain divided. Wind farms wreak havoc on communities.

Alternative renewable energy sources must be developed, but siting must be critically considered. Renewable doesn't mean it's right for any location. Current site selection for wind turbines simply requires willing private landowners, who by hosting such developments can expect to earn \$6,000 per turbine annually. They are the winners as are the owners of the Kyoto Energy Park, who earn carbon credits and the construction companies who provide the infrastructure. The losers are the impacted residents, the community as a whole, and the wildlife. The few whose quality of life is sacrificed pay too high a price for an industry whose

environmentally sustainable renewable energy credentials are not proven. Wind farms are not the solution. A mix of current and developing technologies will be required to meet our renewable energy targets. This won't be achieved by indiscriminately fast tracking windfarms.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Schuler".