

Submission
No 108

INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS

Name: Mr George McLaughlin AM

Date received: 31/08/2009

Dear Ms Duffy (also Ms Victorino, Ms Mihaljek, the honourable Pru Goward and Mick Vietch)

I seek your leave to make a late submission to the NSW Rural Wind Farm Inquiry

I was unaware of the Inquiry until my neighbour mentioned it to me yesterday, and I suspect many other wind farm neighbours are also unaware of it.

We have a number of wind turbines within 2 km of our house and a few hundred metres from our house have imposed views of 52 of the 67 wind turbines of the Capital windfarm (between Tarago and Bungendore) a number less than 2km away

Since the closest turbines were activated, we have had many sleepless nights due to the incessant noise generated from these. (see below)

The various documented assurances (see below) that noise from the wind turbines would not be a nuisance is demonstrably untrue.

What is even worse, and needs to be brought to the inquiry's attention, is that despite the numerous complaints that we, and our neighbours, have made neither Renewable Wind Ventures (RPV), nor the Department of Planning, have even given a courtesy acknowledgement of our complaints. No-one has done anything to mitigate the noise impact, which we were assured (documented in NSW Dept of Planning documents) would not happen. Indeed RPV give the impression that because the NSW Government is so supportive of Wind Farms that they can ride roughshod over anyone who complains and whose life is negatively impacted by their actions. The defeat of legitimate challenges by country NSW people in the NSW courts have added to the sense of helplessness of those of us whose lives have been impacted for the worse.

While we acknowledge that Wind Power has a place in the portfolio of energy solutions, proper, fair and reasonable account needs to be taken of the impact on lives of people like us. A more rigorous assessment of the case put forward by wind farm constructors (who make very large amounts of money from these ventures) needs to be undertaken. It is quite clear that in the case of the Capital Wind Farm project, many of the assurances given (and especially with respect to noise) have been false, as have been the claims that windfarms will not affect a neighbour's ability to sell his property at a fair price. As a real estate agent told us, RPV's claim that the windfarm will have no impact on property values is in the same category as the statements by tobacco companies that smoking did not cause lung cancer.

Some very basic planning processes need to be put in place, examples should include:

- using the quietest possible turbines (not the cheapest) - In the public documentation for the Capital Wind Farm is a statement indicating that the turbines used in the Capital Wind Farm are the noisiest of three mentioned.
- ensuring a realistic minimum distance of turbines from residences (given the noise levels we are getting from the 8 -10 turbines within 2.5km from our residence, I would suggest this would have to be 3-4 km)
- requiring constructors to buy out windfarm neighbours who do not want to remain there, or at least requiring them to pay the difference between what a genuinely independent party would assess the property to be worth and a sale price actually achieved. To not do so means that by default windfarm neighbours are paying the cost

for the wind power component used by city dwellers

- ensure that people who live in and understand the impacts on windfarm neighbours are included in the group that set planning standards.

If you grant leave for me to make a late submission, I am willing to provide a more detailed submission if you require this.

If you are unable to do so, I hope that our parliamentary representatives will at least listen to our plight and help us present our case

The messages below referring not only to the fact that the publicly documented assurances (on the NSW Dept of planning website) that noise would not be of any nuisance are demonstrably false, but that no-one from either RPV or the Department of Planning has provided any acknowledgement or responses to the complaints (same for me and my neighbours) and the noise continues unabated.

I hope you will be able to respond positively to my request to include this and the information below (or a more detailed submission if that is your preference) as a late submission to the inquiry. If not, I hope our NSW parliamentary representatives will help us with our plight.

yours sincerely

George McLaughlin, AM
(on behalf of myself, wife Sue and son Duncan)