

**Submission  
No 7**

## **INQUIRY INTO RURAL WIND FARMS**

**Name:** Dr Ben Ewald

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This is a personal submission from Dr Ben Ewald, 1st August 2009

There is no confidential material in this submission. The submission is this email, there is no attachment.

I believe that wind energy is the cheapest and most scaleable renewable energy that is currently available, and although other forms of generation such as geothermal may be cheaper in the future, they are currently experimental. It is in Australia's interests to expand wind generation to 4 times current capacity over the next ten years.

Benefits:

Wind energy can provide a new income stream to land owners in rural areas, some of whom face economic difficulty due to drought and changing climate.

Wind energy is less capital intensive and provides more jobs per KW installed than current forms of generation, an important factor in rural areas.

Wind turbines are large and therefore visible from a long way, but do not emit smoke plumes so are more visually pleasing than other forms of generation.

Actions NSW should take:

- 1) There should be a state government agency responsible for assessing wind resources across the state, in the same way there is a body responsible for water resources. This will provide base line data for companies or individuals considering establishing wind generation facilities, making it more certain to select sites for intensive wind monitoring.
- 2) NSW should work with other states to develop professional skills training and certification for wind turbine mechanics.
- 3) Planning rules should be adopted that do not allow objection to wind farm development on visual grounds, or on miniscule risk to wildlife.
- 4) NSW Dept of the environment and climate change should commission research to establish if there are any migratory bird flyways that would be impacted by wind farms and specifically permit wind farms in all other areas.
- 5) The setback of wind turbines from residences should be clearly set, eg 500m however this should be able to be waived by the owner of the residence.

Conflict of interest declaration:

I own a small number of shares in various publicly listed companies that own wind farms, eg AGL and Origin

Ben Ewald