

**Submission
No 95**

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY
ZONES (REZ) ON RURAL AND REGIONAL
COMMUNITIES AND INDUSTRIES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES**

Name: Mr Stephen Johnston

Date Received: 29 January 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the impact of Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) on rural and regional communities and industries in NSW.

A major concern is the fact that renewable energy projects are not regulated by legislation. These projects should have to abide by Government legislation. In particular the decommissioning of renewables.

Has anybody considered with the REZ how much land mass will be required now and into the future? Will it be sustainable?

Land holders are losing their development rights on their own property. Particularly when a project is classified as State Significant. For example, I won't be allowed to build another house or farm stay accommodation within a certain distance of the turbines. Just because I haven't built before the changes on 12th November 2024. I would be classified as vexatious if I object just because I want the same rights as any other Australian land holder. Renewable projects shouldn't be allowed within 2 km of a neighbour's property as it affects their lands usage. The cost of public liability for a neighbour next to a renewable project is now cost prohibitive. The land devaluation to neighbouring properties of these projects should be a consideration. I have been told by real estate agents that my property could be devalued by at least 30% to 40%. Noting that I would also have a lot less interested parties wanting to buy the property. Given this information there is definitely not enough compensation to neighbouring properties especially with the implications that these renewables have on their land.

Immediate neighbours to (renewables) are bearing the brunt of the projects and just been classified as collateral damage. This is treating us as 2nd class citizens.

The renewable energy projects are creating division within the affected rural communities. For example, you only have to ask someone who is now living next to a wind farm and a host of a wind farm. They will tell you that due to the lack of community engagement and equal consultation they now don't speak to each other. My neighbours and I are currently experiencing this at the moment in the Upper Lachlan Shire. The division is experienced in the wider community with people in town and council especially Councillors. Community consultation is nearly no existent. The project developers should have to announce they are coming to an area. In particular let people know where they specifically would like to propose a project. Currently project developers are not regulated and aren't doing community engagement until they have all the hosts contractually signed up. The project developers need to be regulated as they use divide and conquer tactics to get people sign up under duress. For example, people are left feeling like it is a done deal, and they have no option. Having the mentality "If I can't beat them, I will have to join them." The project developers don't allow for group negotiations to benefit all parties that are being impinged. This shows the divide and conquer mentality. Further division is created since councils are not able to be a part of the consultation process. They are excluded from the planning of these projects. Why should councils be excluded from the planning process as they represent the community in which these projects are going to be in. To better help the communities and to compensate them for their contribution for taking on the burden of renewables. Renewable energy hosts land should be reclassified to industrial land so councils can gain more revenue. Example electricity generation is industrial not agricultural.

The project developers cause emotional anxiety and undue stress to neighbours and community. In particular the neighbours of a project are the most effected. They experience social isolation if they protest the projects. It should be noted that children of the community are affected with the emotional distress and the social isolation.

Safety for people and environment around the renewables has not been duly thought out. Bush fires are a real threat to rural communities. Taking this into consideration why would you put wind turbines in those areas? The wind turbines do occasionally catch fire and by being in a high wind area is a catalyst for a really dangerous fire scenario. I thought bush fire hazard reduction was supposed to be a reduction of the hazard not adding to the problem. There is definitely not enough emphasis on aerial fire protection in particular to wind farms that have residences next to them. There should be a concern of the possibility of toxic chemicals being leached out of the turbine blades. Example forever chemicals getting into the water and the food chain as another example why is the Meat and Livestock and LPA put in their accreditation. The question in the LPA accreditation is: "Do you have turbines and or solar panels or neighbour turbines and or solar panels?" Ask Barnaby Joyce this question. See attached web site for more information.

[Toxic Blade Time Bomb - WIND CONCERNS](#)

It should be strongly looked at that the Upper Lachlan Shire has more than enough wind turbines. Upper Lachlan Shire hosts 344 wind turbines already 53% of NSW load. It is starting to destroy our rural amenity; Upper Lachlan Shire is already carbon neutral. The shire is actually at minus carbon emissions output. It looks like there are certain areas that are taking on majority of the burden for renewables.

Thank you for taking the time to review my submission. I sincerely hope that the information provided will assist in providing the impact of Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) on rural and regional communities and industries in NSW.

Kind regards,

Stephen Johnston