

Open letter on Wind Farms & The Renewable Energy Target. –Aug 2014

One hundred days until Victoria's election. I write opposing a RET supporting the growth of wind turbines and adverse renewable energy industry impacts on Australians and rural communities. I ask how you support the needs of isolated rural families like mine coping with illness, coping with inadequate protection and inadequate response to harmful impacts of wind turbines on our lives.

Wind turbines have negative impacts on community physical, mental health and well-being, including turbine maintenance crews, due to poorly, too closely sited, poorly regulated and unmonitored emissions of broadband noise and vibrations. Compounded by Government failure to act on behalf of affected people they represent.

Prolonged exposure to industrial noise levels near wind farms violates human rights to a healthy environment and rights to protection and safety in our homes.

Wind energy production is treacherous to rural communities and ideological regimes supporting the growth of this harming industry promote tactics of marginalisation, ridicule and suppression Parliament is well aware of through efforts of a handful of Senators such as Senators Madigan, Back and Xenophon and the Waubra Foundation; and inquiries into impacts of wind farms on rural communities.

8 cents per REC paid to the government will be inadequate to cover the health and legal cost if impacts and noise torture is allowed to continue unabated. Public officials may be held criminally liable and responsible for damage under the United Nations convention of torture and under Health and well-being legislation, for failing to protect Australian citizens from reasonable harm through wilful blindness.

Community Consultations with wind energy generators do not protect my right to justice, nor offer any form of environmental protection or justice for my family. I object to a biased consultative process controlled by the energy proponent so content and outcomes of consultation meetings conceal the truth of what occurs in my community.

Departments fail to protect against adverse impacts of wind and renewable energy industries on Australians and rural communities

I reside 800m close to CBWF, a semi-circular 29 turbines, 2MW wind facility built next door in 2008. 19yrs ago we moved here to practice Organic and Permaculture principles on our farm of 17 hectares. I believe in protecting and treating the environment and its inhabitants consciously and with respect, not by the dogma of renewables.

In the Barwon South West Region many turbines and wind farms cover vast areas between Portland and Geelong, Ballarat and as far as Ararat and this rural population is increasingly, adversely impacted by turbine noise and vibration. The rush for more and more turbines while the system fails Australians is horrifying e.g. at Mt Gellibrand, Peshurst or Crowlands.

Intensive noise studies at three Cape Bridgewater homes severely impacted by turbine noise and vibration show a direct correlation between wind farm output levels and subsequent disturbance to residents including myself. Steven Cooper's preliminary findings of this noise and vibration are accessible on Pacific Hydro's website. Bob Thorne's report '*Wind farm noise and human perception a review*' –updated 2014, also documents impacts at Cape Bridgewater and supports setback zones.

If you support the RET and you support wind farms then you support ongoing, unrectified harm to marginalised rural people, our lifestyles, businesses and our health. You support an industry that has dire and ongoing impacts on quality of life in rural households and farmhouses, on the elderly, disabled and on children.

Impacts: Valuation of our property 'unofficially deems it as unsaleable' and value has lowered. Objecting Land Rates and Valuation on the grounds of wind farm impacts and loss of amenity resulted in an insultingly minor refund and small Rate drop. During a recent shutdown of wind farm operation I slept a total of 33hrs out of exhaustion, my blood pressure normalised without medication and unrelenting, unbearable noise and vibration impacts and had more energy, motivation and productivity; usually expended on surviving the daily onslaught to my body and senses. An

Endocrinologist and different GP's have advised me to relocate to restore good health. Family and friends are unable to visit because their health may be impacted. Understandably no-one travels cross-state to suffer sleep or health disturbances. Leaving on day or overnight stays to escape noise puts financial burden on family expenses with accommodation, food and fuel costs we cannot afford. Additional medications, investigative studies and travelling costs may not be required, without year after year exposure to ongoing wind farm impacts.

Protective Set-back distances need to be further as impacts increase with increased levels of generated output.

Set-back laws established by Mr Baillieu are not retrospectively applied in our case; neither are they 'anti-wind farm laws' as named by associates of the wind industry such as Friends of the Earth.

The 2km turbine setback from rural homes and 5km setback from regional cities were enacted to protect people from noise and harm that Governments and the wind industry are and have been well aware of; shown in prediction levels and mapped contours of noise on areas surrounding wind facilities submitted in application of Planning Permits; and evidenced in the many studies into health and noise available on the Waubra Foundation website.

Recent changes to Victorian Planning laws without consulting the public, allow technological applications to harvest more wind, make more noise; yet those important setbacks remain and **should stay** remaining to partially protect other rural Victorians and families from potential harmful emissions from wind energy generation plants. Although Portland is one of the 21 regional cities with a 5km setback zone, Stage 4 of the PWEPP proceeds close to residences, regardless and without any measures such as independent noise monitoring or guarantee of no impacts.

'Turning off lights' is a meaningless gesture to reduce carbon emissions.

RET means; taxpayer handouts in the form of LSGC's or REC's, subsidies the wind industry itself admits they can't function without; exorbitant costs of added infrastructure required to connect wind farms to the energy grid; Australians being forced into 'energy poverty' through unaffordable energy bills; manufacturers and businesses shut down regardless of historical importance of their product or provision of authentic jobs; business relocating to cheaper Asian countries with extreme Carbon footprints and pollution levels.

Pacific Hydro on ABC Radio News broadcast on 22.7.14, actually argued for higher demand of power usage, without a care that when wholesale demand goes up, so do the power prices. Meaning higher electricity bills for all of us and future tripling of prices, no-one can afford. Once publicly proclaiming "We are not for the environment".

Wind supporters tell me I'll be responsible for green house problems and climate change yet not one coal fired power station has been turned off or shut down. Renewables require a 'spinning reserve' of constant back up power when wind doesn't blow or sun doesn't shine. Wind farms are polluters; they don't operate independently of coal or gas. They don't take cars off roads, don't provide permanent jobs and certainly don't power any homes near them.

For many reasons support of wind farms and renewable energy and thus the RET is unviable.

I oppose the harming of people in the name of greed and jobs and the mantra, 'big business always comes first'. Renewables must not be at the cost of people's health and rights to a good night sleep. Government recognises health problems and has allocated \$100,000 funding for health studies near wind farms.

Renewables do not abate carbon emissions; create horrid conditions for workers in China mining rare earth minerals required in the manufacture of turbines just for a turbine lifespan of twenty odd years; renewables make life for me and so many others one of unending pain and discomfort, with 'unsellable' houses and no escape.

Would you put 'jobs' that fail to eventuate, or 'investments' before the health and well-being of your partner, your children or your sister or parents? Would you risk your Super? Would you torture them for years on end with unrelenting industrial noise and vibration they will never adapt to? How will you deal with marginalised, devastated rural people enduring renewable energy generation turbines next door? How will you get my support or my vote?

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