

Parliamentary Commission on Environment and Heritage

Area: Wind Energy Development

State: New South Wales

Topic: Wind Energy Development

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Submission No: 81

Inquiry into the development of Australia's non-fossil fuel energy industry

Case study into selected renewable energy sectors

SUBMISSION by Jennifer and Humphrey Price-Jones

Committee Secretariat,

Preamble:

I wish to submit the following in relation to the inquiry into renewable energy sectors - in particular the wind energy industry. My submission covers the concepts of

- 1. the detrimental effects of wind turbine installations on rural communities
- 2..the devastating effects of wind turbine installations on individuals

1. We own and run a cattle property near Crookwell , on the Southern Tablelands of NSW. This area has been (and continues to be) targeted by the Wind Energy Industry to establish wind turbine installations.

Crookwell I Wind Farm was the first to be established in NSW. It has 8 turbines which have never produced the wind company's stated power capacity and in fact the turbines have often been under repair. The wind industry states that wind turbine installations are a boon to tourism but this definitely **has not been** the case in Crookwell.

Our area's growth has come from new residents who seek out a rural lifestyle and wish to avoid industrial landscapes. It has been our experience that once the possibility of the

establishment of a wind turbine installation is known, land sales diminish or disappear. This is devastating to small rural economies such as ours. New residents are essential to the prosperity of our economy - they employ local builders, local electricians, local plumbers, local fencing contractors, buy their groceries locally, use local stock and station agents and local vets, send their children to local schools.

This is what keeps the rural economies of the Southern Tablelands viable but we will feel the dire effects of wind turbine installations on our economy as **Crookwell II, Cullerin Range, Conroy's Gap** and **Taralga** 'wind farms' have been approved for development and further 'wind farms' are in the process of survey for **Bannister** and **Kialla**.

There is no need to emphasise the economic distress of rural communities due to the ongoing drought and the effects of this drought will be felt for many years to come. The additional burden due to wind turbine installations could easily be the breaking point for some of these economies.

Of course, these impacts will also have federal, economic consequences .

2. We have personal knowledge of the devastating effects that the threat of wind turbine installations has on individuals. We are both executive members of a community group called the Friends of Crookwell Inc. which was established to protect the rural landscape and amenity of the Crookwell area.

When the Crookwell II 'wind farm' was muted neighbours of the proposed site came to our group seeking assistance to protect their amenity. Community members were forced to use their own limited funds to prove the inaccuracies of the proponents' Development Application and Environmental Impact Study and illustrate the detrimental effects of noise, shadow flicker, visual impact, land devaluation, ecological impacts etc to the NSW Department of Planning and Resources. The response from this NSW Government Department was that it didn't check the Development and Environmental documents as it believed that they would be accurate "because the developer said so". This highlights the necessity of an independent review of competency of such development applications and associated documents as it is unconscionable that community members are forced to raise their own funds to indicate the glaring errors apparent in many of this industry's development documents.

We have watched with dismay as two of the neighbours of Crookwell II 'wind farm' have physically suffered as a direct result of the stress imposed by this intended development. Norman Williams and Leon Annabel are used to the stresses we all face as farmers, but when faced with a state government who intends to install wind farms against all logical argument and ignoring the impact on innocent individuals, these men became so overwhelmed their health deteriorated until they were hospitalised. It is devastating to men such as this, that farms which have been successfully managed for 4 or 5 generations, against all natural disasters, can be made economically deficient by a government's desire to appease the conscience of urban voters.

Prior to the proposal of a wind turbine installation, Taralga was a small, close-knit rural community. This changed dramatically as developers canvassed property owners to sign

contracts to host turbines, insisting that this contract must remain totally confidential. The town quickly became divided as those who had signed, saw their chance to make limited money being threatened by those who were advocating that turbines in this historically significant town would impact greatly on the town's future and have a devastating effect on their land values.

Those who opposed turbine installation suffered death threats, had their windows smashed, friendships were broken and the cohesion of this town was lost for ever.

Many in Taralga are now suffering the real effects of medically diagnosed depression.

This is not an unique situation, the same can be said for the Cullerin and Conroy's Gap communities and is now beginning in Kialla and Bannister.

After years of assisting others in protecting their amenity, we are now faced with the prospect of turbines on our boundaries as well. The consequences may not appear dire to those in urban areas who will not have their beachfront views disturbed or continually suffer from the thump, thump, thump, thump of the turbine noise but for us the consequences are a real and everyday experience. Our daughter is 12 years old, and intended to follow us in running our property. She already takes a keen interest in grazing strategies and is intimately attached to our land and the wildlife it hosts. Since being informed by a developer that our property would neighbour turbines, she is continually upset and often I find her crying in her bed at the prospect of her home life being changed irrevocably – as she regards the whole farm as her home. Our son is 32 and is building a house on a block on the property. He had intended to use his land value as collateral to further his farming enterprise. The funds he can now raise are limited as the value of his land has diminished. As is the case for most primary producers, our property was to be the only inheritance we could leave our children - through no lack of hard work or fault of our own, the value of this inheritance will be drastically reduced as soon as the Development Application is approved.

The consequences of wind turbine installations are real for real people who are trying to maintain a farming or grazing property but in rural areas where there is opposition to their establishment the economic and Greenhouse Gas Emissions benefits are not real .

Jennifer and Humphrey Price-Jones