



Liberal Democratic Party

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Wind turbine report vindicates Senate scrutiny

Liberal Democrat Senator for NSW, David Leyonhjelm has hailed the findings of the Select Committee Inquiry on Wind Turbines as vindication of his motion to establish the inquiry and confirmation that regulation of the wind industry needs to change.

“It is abundantly clear from the evidence of regulators, the community, local councils and wind farm operators that the status quo is untenable,” Senator Leyonhjelm said.

“Only the wind industry and its cheer squad disagree. There are glaring planning and compliance deficiencies plus growing evidence, domestic and international, that infrasound and low frequency sound from wind turbines is having an adverse health impact on some people who live in the vicinity of wind farms. This is not something a responsible government can ignore.”

The report is critical of the work previously undertaken by the National Health and Medical Research Council on wind farm noise emissions, which many have relied upon to declare wind farms have no adverse health effects.

The committee is also concerned about “the lack of rigour” behind the position statement of the Australian Medical Association on wind turbine operations. The inquiry report criticised the AMA for refusing to give evidence before the inquiry, describing their position statement as “irresponsible and harmful”.

The final report, tabled in the Senate today, retains the recommendations of the interim report (which the government has accepted) but expands on these and adds more.

Among them is a requirement for wind farms to comply with national noise standards in order to be eligible for consumer funded Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs),

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that eligibility for RECs cease after five years to lessen the financial burden on consumers, that state EPAs have jurisdiction over wind farms rather than local councils, that the Clean Energy Regulator be subject to a performance audit by the ANAO, and that the Productivity Commission be required to examine the impact of wind power generation on retail electricity prices.

"Senators involved in this inquiry have been attacked by the Big Wind lobby and those who see it is an assault on all renewable energy. The Labor representative on the Committee, Senator Anne Urquhart, joined this criticism following the interim report.

"However, the report shows there is a problem with the wind industry, not renewables such as solar, hydro, geothermal and biomass. There are potentially just as many jobs in these and nobody living close to them is getting sick. Labor's enthusiasm for renewables needs to incorporate some compassion for those being hurt."

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