

Select Committee on Wind Turbines

From: Mr Colin Walkden

To : Committee on Wind Turbines

Subject: Submission to the Select Committee on Wind Turbines

Date; 22nd March 2015

The Secretary

My residence is 450 metres from the closest towers at the Windy Hill Wind Farm at Ravenshoe which began operations in the year 2000. A total of 5 turbines face my residence within 750mtrs. All are individually and cumulatively audible. I have and do continue to this day suffer from the excessive noise generated by these Turbines.

In reply to the terms of reference I have included my response to items, c; d; e; f; and i.

c) The role and capacity of the NHMRC in providing the level of information to state and territory authorities.

It is my considered belief from reading the reports and information released by this important national body they have failed in their duty to give a true picture to all stake holders as to the health effects on individuals residing in close proximity to wind farms (refer to section (i) and attached report).

It has become obvious to me that the last report released by the NHMRC did not take into account all the published literature and evidence that has been undertaken by both medical and acoustic experts. I have lived with the torture of noise coming from the Ravenshoe wind farm for nearly 15 years. I have suffered the effects of sleep deprivation and disturbance and the cumulative and psychological results this can have on humans. Any GP will tell you the possible effects constant lack of sleep can have on your mind and body. I am still suffering to this day.

D) The implementation of planning processes in relation to wind farms, including the level of information available to prospective wind farm hosts;

It has been my experience here at Ravenshoe that the planning process was absolutely inadequate. The local council at the time took advice from the developer; this in my opinion leaves the door open for the developer to mislead the planning authorities in relation to impacts on nearby residents. This same inadequate planning process is being repeated in the current Mt Emerald wind farm application. Local and state planning authorities must be given all the information so they can come to an informed decision. I do not believe this has happened in the past and certainly not to this day, examples include Cape Bridgewater, Waterloo, Toora and Waubra.

The so called community consultation process has also been a non-event when developers will not answer questions or provide information asked of them not only by concerned citizens but also by

government, I cite the Mt Emerald application where government had to ask for more information from the developer which they did not provide in their development application. This kind of tactic seems to be all too prevalent not only here but in other parts of the world and seems to be a deliberate attempt to hide the truth.

I am also concerned that there may be a lack of information provided to wind farm hosts. If there are no impacts on neighbours why are they required to sign contracts with "gag" clauses? This has been denied by the industry but the evidence presented to the public so far seems to put that under question.

e) the adequacy of monitoring and compliance governance of wind farms.

There seems to be a lack of willpower on behalf of authorities in this area. In my case the original Herberton Shire Council did not order the developer to undertake the required monitoring according to the Development Permit. The current Tablelands Regional Council after my noise complaint ordered monitoring is undertaken. In short the results were suspect to say the least. A second monitoring was done. This was also suspect as the results indicated a compliance of 00.6 of a decibel. In my opinion the monitoring protocols are totally inadequate as has been shown in the recent study by Steven Cooper at the Cape Bridgewater Wind Farm. We need the monitoring of wind farms undertaken by independent acoustic experts not by the developer as was in my case.

The following comments are extracts in the conclusion of a report to the Tableland Regional Council by Dr Bob Thorn (One of Australia's leading acoustician). Dr Thorn conducted his own survey while reviewing the noise monitoring results submitted to the Tableland Regional Council by RATCH

Quote;

"In my professional opinion based on my own measurements and observations the level of noise at the time of my survey from the Wind Farm was intrusive, disturbing, and above the noise limits under both the negotiated decision and the Environmental Protection (noise) policy 2008. This is due not only to the actual level of sound but to the character of the sound".

"In my professional opinion based on my own measurements and observations and discussions with Mr Walkden a level of noise from the Wind Farm is creating an environment that is not conducive to human health and well-being, as required by the Environmental Protection (noise) policy 2008. This is due not only to the actual level of sound but to the character of the sound".

"In my professional opinion based on my own measurements and observations and discussions with Mr Walkden the Wind Farm activity at Mr Walkden's home and environ is creating environmental harm adversely affecting Mr Walkden"

f) the application and integrity of national wind farm guidelines

I am of the firm belief that we can no longer operate wind farm guidelines according to the **New Zealand** standard 6808, which were drawn up by the wind industry for their own benefit. We need an Australian set of guidelines protecting all residence if we are to have a wind farm industry.

Australian States have differing noise standards as is the case in Queensland. These may not be appropriate in the case of noise associated with wind farms and the impacts on health of residences.

i. any related matter

I have attached a report from Mr Lex Peters, B Psych (Hons), MAPS, in relation to health effects on myself. This report was generated following referral from my GP Dr Ian Gibbs.

In concluding my submission I would like to say that as a victim of Low Frequency Noise and constant audible torture generated by the Windy Hill wind farm. A moratorium should be in place ASAP on any new wind farms and existing non-compliant farms should be shut down immediately.

The Waubra Foundation has advocated the Precautionary Principle be observed in the case of wind farms. In my circumstance the wind farm industry is self-serving and to date demonstrates disregard for negative impacts on residences. It appears that their only concern is the obscene income windfall from taxpayer subsidies (LRET).

This has to stop.

I thank the Senate Committee for the opportunity to participate in the democratic process on which our country was founded and one which we can be justifiably proud.

I welcome the opportunity to respond to any questions the committee may have. I also welcome the opportunity to meet with the committee should you engage with the MT Emerald Wind Farm Action group. Should you require copies of any of the reports or Statutory Declaration mentioned in my submission, I would be only to please to forward them. I have not included them in this submission to maintain brevity where possible.

Colin Walkden