

Cindy Westbrook

From: Cindy Westbrook on behalf of Stephen Gash
Sent: Tuesday, 1 February 2011 3:38 PM
To: Dominique Hodge
Subject: ICR2877 - FW: windfarm submission
SynergySoft: ICR2877

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For records

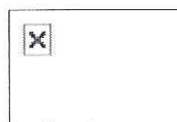
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FOR RECIPIENTS EXTERNAL TO THE SHIRE OF KOJONUP

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From: Sarah Rankin [<mailto:sarahrankin@bigpond.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, 1 February 2011 2:32 PM
To: Stephen Gash
Subject: windfarm submission

Hi Stephen
Please find attached my submission regarding the flat rocks windfarm.

Regards

Sarah

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Kingshurst Grazing Co

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Mr Stephen Gash

Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Kojonup

93 Albany Highway, Kojonup

Western Australia. 6395

Dear Stephen

RE: Proposed 150MW Flat Rocks Wind Farm Developmental Approval

I am writing as a proponent of the Flat Rocks Wind Farm development and a resident of both the Kojonup and Broomehill Shire. Having lived in the area for some 12 years I have seen the landscape change from one of primarily livestock production to one now dominated by broadacre cropping. I believe the proposed Flat Rocks Wind Farm development is another one of these agricultural progressions and would therefore like to offer my full support for the granting of developmental approval for the project.

As with any proposed change there will be those who embrace the opportunity and those who spread fear about its impacts (eg lifestyle, property values) and strive to divide the community. I have added some comments addressing the issues commonly raised by "anti wind farm" groups. I hope if you have been contacted by such groups or received their material that you check that the sources are credible and that you have been made aware of all the facts as from what I have seen more often than not, only half the story is being told.

I would also like to mention that my home will be in the closest proximatey to turbines should the proposal be granted Developmental Approval and I will have turbines located to west and north. I am planning on remaining an active member of the Kojonup community for many years to come. Kojonup is a vibrant community which in order to thrive into the future must embrace new industries and the oportuites they bring. Presented below are some of the socioeconomic and environmental benefits the Flat Rocks Wind Farm project will create for Kojonup;

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1.) Socioeconomic benefits:

The Flat Rocks Wind Farm development will provide direct and indirect employment opportunities for the residents of of Kojonup and the surrounding region. During construction upto 200 jobs will be created. These will include many local residents and contractors as the construction phase will require machinery operators, fencers, electricians, labourers and other individuals typically used in civil construction. (NOTE: MHE has already received an expression of interest and CV from a Broomehill based electrician in response to the advertisement for planning application)

Once commissioned the Flat Rocks Wind Farm will generate 10-15 permanent jobs through daily operations, ongoing maintenance and repairs.

Landowners who have agreed to host turbines on their land will receive an additional and reliable income stream which will strengthen their individual businesses and ensure their profitability in times of poor seasons. Once commissioned the wind farm will occupy 1% of their land so broadacre agriculture will continue as normal with minimal impact, therefore having little effect on the regions production.

Renewable energy generation will bring a new industry to our region and broaden its economic base. Facilities such as the one proposed have also been shown to attract tourism. Moonies Hill Energy Pty Ltd has been in consultation with a local collector about the possibility of combining a visitor area and viewing platform with a wool harvesting and memorabilia museum.

Finally it is expected that the Flat Rocks Wind Farm project will inject some \$30 million dollars into the local community. This figure is based on the input from other projects of this size and would directly affect businesses offering accommodation services, catering, building and construction supplies, finance and trade and labour related services.

2) Environmental benefits:

The Flat Rocks Wind Farm will generate 150 MW of clean renewable, emission free electricity at full capacity, enough to power 100,000 homes annually. Over the course of 12 months this will equate to a saving of around 660, 000 tonnes of CO₂, equivalent to removing 130,000 cars off the road.

Results of the Flora, Vegetation and Fauna report (December 2010) show that these environmental benefits come at no cost to the existing environment. The study undertaken by Mattiskie Consulting found that as the proposed turbine sites for the Flat Rocks Wind Farm project are located entirely within cleared farmland it will have a very low impact on native vegetation, native fauna habitats or native species. The overall conclusion of the survey being that there are no impediments to the development of the wind farm facility, from a flora, vegetation and fauna perspective, proving the remnant vegetation areas are not disturbed.

As I raised earlier, there has been a some fear mongering in the community over the past few weeks. A group of neighbours have been meeting to discuss all the "ill" effects of wind farm developments with the majority of their information coming from fanatic

websites rather than scientific, peer review journals. In view of this I have included a summary of recent research papers conducted in Australia to address the common issues being raised.

3) Impacts of the proposed development:

3.1 Human Health

There are many concerns raised in the community when wind farm developments are announced. Typically these involve the impact of the wind turbine generators on human health. Below is a summary of the recent report published by the NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Council) "Wind Turbines and Health – A rapid Review of the Evidence – July 2010" taken from the NHMRC website.

"Synopsis

Wind power has been gaining prominence as a viable sustainable alternative to other forms of energy production. Studies have found that there is increasing population demand for 'green' energy. In Australia, this has been encouraged by the introduction of the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act in 2000 and the Renewable Energy Target Scheme in 2009.

*As with any new technology, wind turbines are not without controversy. **Those who oppose the development of wind farms contend that wind turbines can adversely impact the health of individuals living in close proximity.***

Public Statement

*The Public Statement presents the current evidence relating potential health impacts of wind turbines on people living in close proximity. **The Statement concludes that there is currently NO published scientific evidence to positively link wind turbines with adverse health effects.***

Evidence Review

The Evidence Review presents findings from a rapid review of the evidence from current literature on the issue of wind turbines and potential impacts on human health. The Review focuses on concerns regarding the adverse health impacts of infrasound, noise, electromagnetic interference, shadow flicker and blade glint produced by wind turbines."

To ensure that people living close to the proposed wind farm are not adversely affected the company (MHE) has undertaken numerous studies to ensure that all criteria in regards to noise, shadow flicker, electromagnetic interference and blade glint are in

accordance with the guidelines presented in the Western Australian Planning Commissions Planning Bulletin No 67 – “Guidelines for Wind Farm Development”.

A recent paper commissioned by the Clean Energy Council (November 2010) to investigate the impact of environmental noise, has concluded that there is NO evidence that residents will suffer any direct or indirect health effects from living near operating wind farms **provide all planning guidelines are adhered to**. Again I have included a summary of the report as presented by the Clean Energy Council;

“Experts Silence Wind Farm Noise

Australia has some of the toughest, most up-to-date guidelines controlling wind farm noise in the world. There is no evidence that residents will suffer any direct health effects from living near operating wind farms, according to an independent report released by the Clean Energy Council today.

The Clean Energy Council's Chief Executive Mr Matthew Warren said the Wind Farms Technical Paper on Environmental Noise by acoustic consultancy Sonus reinforced existing independent research.

"Although wind farms have been generating clean energy safely for many years in Europe, we conducted this study to see how the Australian guidelines stack up. The results are very reassuring for communities in regional Australia, who will directly benefit from the investment in wind energy," Mr Warren said.

Wind farms currently provide enough clean energy to power nearly 800,000 Australian homes (1841 megawatts). The report says their advantages need to be balanced with the needs of communities in their vicinity.

The report was prepared to provide the latest information to communities, developers, planning and enforcement authorities and other stakeholders on environmental noise from wind farms.

The report concludes there is extensive evidence that the noise from wind farms developed and operated in accordance with the current standards and guidelines will not have any direct adverse health effects.

It summarises research conducted into issues including, health impact and annoyance, infrasound and low frequency noise, amplitude modulation and sleep disturbance.

It notes: "All noise from any source including wind farms, which is audible, will result in complaints from some people. Recent research indicates the potential for complaints, annoyance and its associated stress and health impacts may be exacerbated by rhetoric, fears and negative publicity."

The report finds

Once wind farms are built the rates of complaints are very low in Australia and New Zealand and if a noise can be heard, then annoyance can result for some people, regardless of the noise level or the standard or guideline that applies.

It also discusses the "nocebo" effect – a worsening of mental or physical health based on fear or belief in adverse affects. This is the opposite of the well-known placebo effect, where belief in positive effects or an intervention may produce positive results.

Footnote: Sonus is an independent Australian consultancy, specialising in the monitoring, prediction, data analysis, policy development and assessment of environmental noise from factories, road, rail, aircraft, commercial and industrial sources and has extensive experience specifically related to wind farms."

3.2 Property Values

As the prevalence of wind farms has increased over the past decade so has the debate about their effect on property values, those which host turbines and those properties which neighbour them. Until recently little research had been conducted in Australia but in 2006 Henderson & Horning conducted a study in NSW which examined the "*Land Value Impact of Wind Farm Development – Crookwell New South Wales*".

The study found that the underlying agricultural productive capacity of the land subject to the wind farm and the surrounding property is not in any measured way affected by the development of the Crookwell wind farm meaning there has been no reduction in values. This finding supported the RICS perception survey of UK valuers, 72% of which believe that wind farm development has either no effect or had a positive impact on agricultural land values. It was concluded in the study that after completing the analysis of sales surrounding the wind farm development from 1990 to January 2006 that no measurable reduction in property values for properties that have sight line to the wind farm. This finding disproved the study hypothesis; "that visual amenity of the property with a sight line to the wind farm would translate to a reduction in value".

Finally the study stated that the most recent sales in the area that adjoins the wind farm indicated that factors such as soils, improvements and access to services are more important drivers in determining value than the visual amenity of the wind farm.

A more recent study prepared for the NSW Valuer General in 2009, "*Preliminary Assessment of the Impact of Wind Farms on Surrounding Land Values in Australia*," examined the impact of wind farms on surrounding land values in an Australian context through the analysis of sales transaction data. The main finding of the study was that the wind farms erected to date do not appear to have negatively affected property values in most cases.

The study examined 45 property transactions within eight study areas through conventional valuation sales analysis. Forty of the 45 sales investigated did not show any reductions in value. Five properties, classed as rural lifestyle, were found to have a lower than expected sale price (based on statistical analysis). It was mentioned that while these small number of price reductions correlate with the construction of a wind farm further work is needed to confirm the extent to which these were primarily due to the wind farm or if other factors have been involved.

Results of the study also demonstrated that a property's underlying land use may affect the property's sensitivity to price impacts. Properties in rural/agricultural areas, as is the case for properties neighbouring the proposal, appear to be the least likely to be affected by a wind farm with no reductions in value for rural properties evident at any of the eight wind farms investigated.

Residential properties in townships with distant views of a wind farm (more than 2-3 km away), also appeared to not have been negatively affected by a wind farm. The results for "lifestyle" properties on the other hand were not consistent as some experienced no reductions and whilst four were affected with reduced value. This reduction ranged from 6-27% with a weight in the mid twenties percentile. It should be noted however that in most locations there were other lifestyle properties located nearby which showed no reduction in value.

The paper also discussed the length of time taken to sell a property in close proximity to a wind farm development. This part of the study examined the affect of people being polarized by the wind farm with some in support and others refusing to live near one thus reducing the potential market. This however does not seem to be translated into reduced sale prices for the majority of sales data investigated in this study.

3.3 Effect on birds and livestock

Research presented in a paper by Sustainable Victoria in May 2007 states that monitoring has found that no rare, threatened or endangered birds or bats have been killed by wind turbines in Victoria. As stated in our Flora, Vegetation and Fauna report the Flat Rocks Wind Farm proposal places no threat to rare or endangered birds. Studies from the US have reported that bird deaths from wind farms is less than 0.02% of total bird deaths and that millions of birds die each year in collisions with windows, communication towers, buildings, powerlines and vehicles.

Other facts reported are that animals and livestock are not scared by the presence of wind turbines. In fact they have been known to use the shadow cast by the turbine for shade.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my submission and the reasons why I believe this proposal should be granted Developmental Approval as it will be good for the local and regional community and that the potential benefits far outway the unsubstantiated claims of harm.

Regards

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