

MOORABOOL WIND PROJECT

Sorting the **FACT** from the **FICTION**



The following is a response to falsehoods circulating in relation to the Moorabool Wind Project since it was announced in May.

For more information on myths confronting the wind energy industry in Victoria, refer to the Sustainability Victoria's publication *Wind Energy – The Myths and the Facts* www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

FICTION

Wind farms receive a subsidy from the government.

FACT

Other than for the odd small community owned project, the wind industry is not subsidised by the tax payer. The Moorabool Wind Project is not subsidised by the State or Commonwealth Governments and will not receive a cent of taxpayer money.

FICTION

The Shire of Moorabool gains no financial benefit from the project.

FACT

The Shire of Moorabool is expected to receive over \$260,000 per year from the proposed Moorabool Wind Project alone, in today's money for 25 – 35 years.¹

FICTION

The construction of wind farms will damage roads leaving the Shire out of pocket.

FACT

Any roads to be used to build the wind farm are inspected prior to construction. Damaged roads from wind farm construction traffic would be repaired at no cost to ratepayers. Such an arrangement would be formalised with the Shire should a planning permit be issued². In addition to any planning permit requirements the Shire can require damage to be repaired under the *Road Management Act 2004*³.

FICTION

If it's too windy the wind farm will be turned off.

FACT

Modern wind turbines, such as our preferred choice of wind turbine, are only turned off during maintenance or during works on the electricity grid. During storms electricity will be produced but rotor speed will be controlled and power output may be reduced⁴.

¹ 25 August 2005, Victoria Government Gazette Order in Council of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000*.

² Lal Lal Wind Farm Planning Permit SP/05/0461 Condition 14.

³ Section 112 *Road Management Act 2004*

⁴ 2007 Enercon Wind Turbines – Product Overview.

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FICTION

Guidelines don't exist to control the development of wind energy facilities

FACT

The *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Wind Energy Facilities* have been in existence in Victoria since 2003⁵. These guidelines were reviewed in September 2009⁶. The guidelines are incorporated into all planning schemes and must be met for a project to be approved.

The Commonwealth is also preparing national guidelines which will improve national consistency in wind farm planning and approval processes and to help address some of the barriers to wind farm development⁷.

FICTION

The right of objection to wind energy facilities does not exist.

FACT

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* ensures people can object to a wind energy facility. As the proposal is over 30MW in size the Minister for Planning will be responsible for deciding on the permit application, rather than then Moorabool Shire Council⁸. This does not prevent formal objections to the proposal. It is common practice for the Minister for Planning to appoint an independent planning panel to consider objections and submissions in response to such projects.

FICTION

Wind farms will result in a loss of jobs. In Spain, every new 'green job' has resulted in the loss of 2.2 jobs from other industries⁹.

FACT

If approved the Moorabool Wind Project will employ in the order of 100 full time jobs during the construction period and 30 full time ongoing positions to operate the facility. These are new positions and will not result in any loss of jobs from other sectors.

Jobs in the renewable energy sector are increasing worldwide. Over the last three years, the wind energy sector worldwide almost doubled, with jobs increasing from 235,000 in 2005 to 440,000 in the year 2008¹⁰.

The claims made by Calzada G, in relation to Spain, are strongly disputed by the regional Spanish Government of Navarre¹¹, while others question the methodology and findings of the study itself¹². Other studies suggest that there can be major benefits to regions involved in a shift from coal fired power generation to a renewable energy economy, by way of thousands of new jobs¹³.

⁵ <http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/resources/documents/windenergyguidelines.pdf>

⁶ Amendment VC 60 Advisory Note 22.

⁷ <http://www.environment.gov.au> ⁸ Sustainable Energy Authority Victoria (2003) *Policy and planning guidelines for development of wind energy facilities in Victoria*.

⁹ Calzada G (2009) *Study of the effects on employment of public aid to renewable energy sources*. Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.

¹⁰ World Wind Energy Association (2009) *World Wind Energy Report*

¹¹ José María Roig Aldasoro, Regional Minister of Innovation, Enterprise and Employment Government of Navarre (2009) *Navarre: Renewable Energies*

¹² Lantz E & Tegen S (2009) *NREL Response to the Report Study of the Effects on Employment of Public Aid to Renewable Energy Sources from King Juan Carlos University (Spain)*

¹³ Anthea, B, Mitchell W, Welters R (2008) *Policy Report – A Just Transition to a Renewable Energy Economy in the Hunter Region, Australia*. Centre of Full Employment and Equity, University of Newcastle, June 2008.

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FICTION

Wind energy does not reduce carbon emissions.

FACT

Every unit of wind energy cuts carbon emissions¹⁴. It is often stated by opponents of wind energy that not one of Victoria's coal fired power stations have been shut down due to wind farms. While it is technically feasible to replace coal generated electricity with renewables¹⁵, it may be some time before coal power stations are fully replaced by renewable electricity or low carbon technologies.

It should also be noted that while electricity demand continues to increase strongly, it has been some time since a coal fired power station has been constructed in Victoria.

Wind energy is a very positive part of an overall package of technologies that will reduce our current and future reliance on carbon intensive electricity generation.

FICTION

Electricity costs more when generated from the wind compared to solar

FACT

Electricity produced by the wind is significantly cheaper compared to solar and is one of the most cost efficient sources of renewable energy. If the costs associated with carbon pollution are also considered, wind energy will become competitive with coal and gas fired generation in the coming years¹⁶.

FICTION

Wind farms are a risk to public health and safety

FACT

There is no credible evidence whatsoever that would suggest wind farms, which comply with the *Policy and Planning Guidelines for Wind Energy Facilities* are a risk to public health and safety.

It is often claimed by those opposing wind energy proposals that 'low frequency noise' or 'infrasound' is responsible for illness in those living around wind farms. Infrasound from a turbine is so low that it is inaudible. There is no reliable evidence to indicate any effects on people when infrasound is present at an inaudible level¹⁷.

FICTION

The project will affect my television reception.

FACT

Wind turbine structures can affect nearby television reception. If the project is approved it would be constructed after analogue television has been replaced by digital television. Digital signals are generally unaffected by wind turbines. Pay and satellite TV signals are also unaffected¹⁸. In the past wind energy companies have had to rectify television reception where it has been affected by the operation of a wind farm and reception problems have not been ongoing.

¹⁴ Sustainability Victoria (2006) *Wind Energy – The Myths and the Facts*

¹⁵ Diesendorf, M (2003) *Why Australia needs wind power*. Published in Dissent, no. 13, Summer 2003/04, pp.43-48

¹⁶ McLennan Magasanik Associates (2009) *Report to AGEA: Comparative Costs of Electricity Generation*. Prime Ministerial Task Group on Emissions Trading (2007) *Report of the Task Group on Emissions Trading* Commonwealth of Australia.

¹⁷ Bellhouse G (2004) *Low Frequency Noise and Infrasound from Wind Turbine Generators: A Literature Review*. Prepared for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority Bel Acoustic Consulting.

¹⁸ Bechley M (2009), *Assessment of Electromagnetic Interference Issues for the Proposed Moorabool Wind Project*. Garrad Hassan Pacific Pty. Ltd.