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Reference: Winterbourne Wind Farm SSD-10471

I OBJECT to the Winterbourne Wind Farm development

- I declare that I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous 2 yrs.
- I acknowledge and accept the Department's disclaimer and declaration.

The reasons for my objections are well set out in the publications of "VoiceforWalcha" and also summarised perfectly in the "Winds of Change" article in our local paper – copy attached.

Our family has already installed panels which feed into the grid. If you are serious about alternative energy, why not pay a reasonable amount to encourage people to support the grid. We pay 29.46kwh for our power and receive 7.9/kwh for our feed in, is probably a "bit of a joke".

We are considering moving from Walcha because the town is now divided and will not heal. The landscape will be destroyed, and the construction period (and possibly after) will be a destroyer of roads, traffic patterns, public convenience and generally our town.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. M. Faulkner".

Sheila Faulkner

letters to the editor



The Wind of Change

Something needs clarification. Winterbourne Wind is not a "community-based project", it never has been. It has never had the support of the broader community and only benefits a few directly involved who stand to gain financially.

The proposed community fund is almost an insult when looking at the projected total revenue generated by the project.

Our family moved to the beautiful quiet town of Walcha in 2010 for a change of pace and to live an off-grid lifestyle. Many of our good Walcha friends are "blow-ins" as well. People who have started businesses in the area, work the land, enrich the community through artistic endeavours, volunteer in community organisations and send their kids to local schools.

Over the past twelve years we have made a conscious effort to run an environmentally sustainable agricultural business.

The majority of our electrical power requirements are generated on-farm through our stand-alone solar system.

We try our best to minimise any waste generated going into landfill.

We are truly concerned about the environment and try our best to do our part.

We were shocked to find out in 2020 that our farm would be located at the centre of the proposed Winterbourne wind project. If this goes ahead our serene home will be surrounded by dozens of 230m tall turbines (almost 4 times the height of the Sugarloaf tower), every one of these bird chomping monsters equipped with aviation beacon lights.

We have been kept in the dark about the scale and magnitude of the Winterbourne wind project by Walcha Energy and our involved neighbours. There still seems to be no accurate information available about exactly what will be going where (Turbines, Substations and Power lines).

Why was all of this planned in secret?

Why, at "5 minutes to midnight", do we still know so little?

In the meantime, we're battling our way through thousands of pages of EIS & appendices...

Due to our opposition to the wind farm there is now noticeable strain in the relationships with our neighbours (as most of them are in favour of the project given the huge financial benefit that will be coming their way once they become turbine hosts). The animosity seems unjust as all we are doing is trying to defend our way of life, our home and our investment.

At a recent community meeting we were told "our emotions don't matter as we're trying to save the planet here". What a laughable statement. Your new-found 'environmentalism' isn't fooling anyone. Do you recycle your waste? How big is your existing solar system? What else do you do to minimize your carbon footprint!

I realise that Australia needs to explore alternatives to coal fired power generation, however, proposing to build a wind farm of industrial proportions (one of the largest in the world) in such a small community is absolute insanity. It will destroy the flair of the town, damage our fragile ecosystem, ruin our already terrible roads, kill-off tourism... The negatives are almost endless.

If Walcha wants to do its bit towards a sustainable energy future why don't we look at the development of a local micro grid with a mix of solar and - if needed- smaller and less invasive vertical axis turbines and local battery storage. That way, we can meet our own energy demands and generate feasible electricity for our local community. Other towns are doing it already, so why can't we?

The project will also have a huge impact on tourism which is vital for Walcha's economy. Do people really think that a wind factory of industrial proportions will bring tourists to town? How many people drive out to Sapphire Wind Farm on a Sunday to gaze at the towers?

Do we really believe that those "400 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs through the construction period" will bring us 400 new families and help us repopulate Walcha? Will the 39 FTE jobs during Operation, including approx. 16 site - based jobs for the life of the project" entirely go to local contractors and tradespeople?

The divisiveness of this project is ruining our beautiful community.

Stef Cook