

Letter of Support for the Winterbourne Wind Farm (Proposal ID ssd-10471)

I hereby declare that I support the Winterbourne Wind Farm proposed for the Walcha and Uralla LGA. I am a host landholder and strongly feel the passive income earned from this development would have substantial benefits to our immediate family, our farming business and the local community.

In times of drought the income from the wind farm would help us purchase feed and reduce the enormous mental challenge farmers endure when faced with a drought. It is well publicised that suicide rates are high for farmers, as they have a lack of control over environmental factors including crops, markets and climate change. This all results in financial and mental distress which can eventually drive a farmer to take his own life. The drought in recent years placed an enormous amount of stress on my husband, myself and our young children. According to the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), in November 2021 the organisation presented findings from their study and found that between 2009 and 2018, there were 370 farmer suicides reported; this equates to one farmer taking their life every 10 days. This statistic was almost 60% higher than non-farmers. Certain demographic characteristics had higher suicide rates, including male farmers whom were young to middle aged. My husband falls into this criteria and one day my sons will too. If we can provide this generation and the next with secure income and set them up financially to ensure they are never put under such enormous financial stress, we are contributing to their mental health and wellbeing for the next drought. The next drought will be worse than the last, unless we start educating individuals on climate change and play our part in the transition to renewable energy to combat climate change. The passive income will also take the burden off the government to support farmers when they are facing environmental challenges. This also contributes to less taxes paid by all Australians.

We now face the challenge of paying back the debt we now have from the last drought and hope that we can do this in time for the next crisis we are faced with. We currently have Foot & Mouth Disease on our doorstep and the thought of having to slaughter our livestock is devastating. We do not have crops, our business is solely livestock. We, as farmers, consider the benefit of having this passive income a life changing benefit that would provide us with financial stability and allow for succession planning for many generations.

It would allow us to educate our children; providing them with life experiences they can not get if they were to attend a local high school. It would allow them to attend university and bring home new skills to run the farm.

It would allow the next generation to grow up understanding the importance of climate change and what we need to do to secure power.

I understand that the construction of the project would create some disruptions during the construction phase to the local community, however this is only for a short period and the benefits outweigh the negativity voiced by 'anti-wind' groups that are spreading false information through town.

This brings me to another concern: I am strongly of the opinion the group/s formed in town known as the 'Voice for Walcha' or 'Red4' have intimidated, threatened and harassed members of the community who are land hosts. They have used propaganda to scare members of the community, encouraging them to drop into their 'Voice for Walcha' office and writing submissions on their behalf. Members of the community that are for the development have not been able to make comments, have articles or opinions printed in our community paper, as the staff of the paper are anti-wind. I have spoken to so many individuals in the community commenting that there is no rebuttal to the anti-wind articles in the paper; this is solely because we were denied this opportunity. Members of the community have been approached by the anti-wind groups telling them their businesses will be closed in 2-3 years' time if these developments get off the ground. Their verbal abuse to individuals that support the wind farms is disgraceful. Constant phone calls and messages sent through social media platforms and direct to mobile phones is harassment and disrespectful. Any member of the community who supports the wind farm is harassed and shamed into hiding for making a comment. The anti-wind groups are claiming the development will destroy the community; they are the sole destroyers of the community. **All** of the anti-wind group members are very successful in their own right, and they all run very successful businesses in town and around the district. They have controlled the propaganda agenda. Jealousy is a word that comes to mind!

If this development is not approved, our lights won't turn on! This is a global decision, a state significant development. This decision impacts our family now and in the future. The passive income will support our farming business: help us develop a fair succession planning agenda and support our general mental health in times of drought (or FMD). NSW need this development to be approved.