

I have been a resident of Walcha since 1979. All our family have close attachments to the once tightly united community. This is unfortunately not the way it has recently become. Our children continue to be involved in agriculture within Walcha and it was Jules and my intention to remain in Walcha during the next phase of our life - moving closer to town which we consider a normal progression. If the proposed windfarm development goes ahead there is no way we would consider moving closer to Walcha as part of our plan. We strongly believe that if the project proceeds the current division will be permanently embedded within the community and the blight on the landscape will be irreversible.

Walcha is a highly productive agricultural region and the long-term effects of such a development are impossible to calculate. The development has been in the planning stage for many years and the entire process has been shrouded in secrecy by means of non-disclosure agreements and details of the planning process kept from the community. Representatives of the project have been invited to community meetings and on a recent occasion failed to attend. It is difficult to argue that the process is transparent when the project organisers have had many years to prepare submissions with well-funded lobbyists then give the community initially four weeks, then an extension granted upon community objections, to respond.

Claims of financial advantages to the community throughout the construction phase and in the longer term are not supported by the experiences of neighbouring communities. Disruption to our community during the construction process will be considerable and damage to the roads will be immeasurable. There are insufficient guarantees surrounding the decommissioning of turbines with a current claimed cost of \$500,000 per unit. Will it be left to landowners? It is currently claimed that there is a 30% devaluation of surrounding properties affected by the construction of wind turbines. Is this an acceptable cost to our community? What is the upside? This project could end up displaying unsightly monuments left by the few who thought they would benefit with the rest of the population being forced to endure. I strongly believe landowners should be allowed to pursue whatever endeavour they wish on their own land providing it doesn't impact their neighbours.

It is universally accepted that the current renewable technology – solar and wind – cannot provide the necessary baseload to maintain the current energy requirements. Australia currently has six remaining coal fired power stations which provide the baseload necessary. We are the fifth largest producer of coal globally (483 million tonnes) with China being our primary market. China has 2,363 coal fired power stations and are building or intending to build 1,171 more in the near future (Source: Worldometer – Coal Consumption by Country). These figures do vary slightly depending on information source but not significantly. How can it make sense for Australia to be closing coal fired power stations with a target of zero and supplying our coal to a country which is planning to nearly double their reliance in the short term? We will be subjecting our population to an expensive and unreliable supply while facilitating our major trading partner to expand their coal fired power industry.