

Planning Services

NSW Department of Planning & Environment

GPO Box 39

SYDNEY NSW 2001

**RE: Rye Park Wind Farm Project Application – Application Number 10-0223**

**Attention: Executive Director, Resource Assessments & Business Systems.**

I object to this project.

Economically, we are concerned about the reports from real estate agents in the local area (including Crookwell & Graben Gullen) that indicate that the retail value of our property will drop between 40 to 60%, and that the number of potential buyers attracted to the place will be slashed. A local real estate agent whose son purchased a property near a planned wind farm acknowledged that it was vastly underpriced compared with what it could have fetched if wind turbines were not approved nearby. When our property was purchased 20 years ago it was a run-down mess with poor fencing and deteriorating buildings. Much time and effort has been poured into building up the property to make it a viable and attractive concern with a current valuation of almost \$1 million. The projected loss in value will mean that the property will be worth no more than was paid for it. Trustpower states that there is no reduction in the price paid for properties, using the NSW Valuer General valuations to support this. These valuations relate to the land value for rates purposes but bear no resemblance to the actual sale value of the property or its 'saleability'. Recent new residents in the area have stated categorically that they would not have bought their properties if they had known that wind turbines were planned in the area. This means that there are fewer buyers willing to bid for the properties and so the sale price has to be set lower to get a sale. In 2009, the NSW Valuer-General released the findings of a study into the potential impacts of wind farms on surrounding land values. This is 7 years ago and more up-to-date data is required.

Hosts quote the reason for them accepting the proponent's offer to site turbines on their properties as a means to prop up their farms in times of drought and as income instead of superannuation. We all see our properties as a means to fund our old-age. However, with this now hanging over us most of us will lose that safety-net. The social cohesiveness of our community has been shattered causing a 'them-and-us' situation. The support and willing help required to sustain a small community in hard times such as bushfire and drought has been irrevocably lost. It has made many feel fearful that they will be trapped with a property that they cannot live in and cannot sell for enough to get out. The feel towards the hosts is not envy for the money that they are receiving but anger that they have selfishly put others in this situation. The desperation in the voices of many at the recent meeting with the Department of Planning representatives is heartbreaking evidence of this. The mental health of some members of the community is a major concern. The suicide rate is 1.2 to 2.4 times higher in regional and remote areas than in major cities (National Rural Health Alliance Inc Aug 2009). The suicide rate among male Australian farmers is almost 50% higher than the average in rural communities (Beyondblue). The stress of living and working in a rural environment is already well acknowledged with the natural disasters such as drought, bushfires and pest infestations adversely affecting the well being of rural Australians.

Twinned with this is the fact that many of the hosts do not even live on the property and even purchased the property when they learned that wind turbines were proposed.

We are aware that we are probably fighting a losing battle and cannot compete against corporate wealth or political agendas but we need to have our plight heard.

I reserve the right to submit further submissions