

Submission to the NSW department of Planning & Environment on the Biala Wind Farm Project

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67 Payneham Road
College Park SA 5069
P 0422 974 857
E admin@dea.org.au
W www.dea.org.au

Healthy planet, healthy people.

DEA Scientific Committee

Prof Bob Douglas AO
Prof David de Kretser AC
Prof Robyn McDermott
Prof Hugh Possingham
Dr Rosemary Stanton OAM

Prof Stephen Boyden AM
Prof Dave Griggs
Prof Stephen Leeder AO
Prof Peter Newman AO
Prof Lawrie Powell AC
Dr Norman Swan

Prof Peter Doherty AC
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Prof Fiona Stanley AC

Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA) is a non-profit, non-politically aligned, independent national organisation of medical doctors, which advocates on health issues due to environmental factors. The organisation is aware that environmental exposures on a local, national and global scale can have a strong influence on health, and that the most profound disease prevention strategy is to ensure a healthy environment.

DEA's credentials to make an informed position stem from our public health experts who participate in our submissions and recommendations; in the following submissions specifically on wind farms.

Submission to the Senate inquiry into the regulatory governance and economic impact of wind turbines April 2015

http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/Inquiry_into_Economic_impact_of_wind_turbines_04-15.pdf

Submission to the South Australian Wind Farm Developments Inquiry and Health

http://dea.org.au/images/uploads/submissions/SA_Wind_Farm_Developments_Inquiry_and_Health_Submission_07-12.pdf

And in our many papers and submissions on the health benefits of renewable energy to be found on our web site www.dea.org.au

We support the approval of the Biala Wind Farm Project, for reasons set out in the DEA policy position on the health effects of wind farms

http://dea.org.au/images/general/DEA_Position_Statement_-_Health_Effects_of_Wind_Turbines_-_December_2014.pdf, which apply to this proposal.

The EIS states that electricity production from the Biala wind project would displace electricity that would otherwise emit 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year. In NSW this equates to 200 GWh of production since NSW electricity makes nearly exactly one tonne of CO₂ per MWh. The closest coal fired power station to Biala at Mt Piper releases 4.7 tonnes of SO₂ per GWh of electricity, based on the data from the National Pollutant Inventory for 2012. There would be a pollution reduction benefit of 940 tonnes less SO₂ released into the atmosphere per year if Biala replaces generation from Mt Piper.

Sulphur dioxide is a respiratory irritant which causes lung disease, and in the atmosphere it changes to sulphate particles which are part of the PM_{2.5} burden and can travel long distances. Work by ANSTO has shown sulphate particulates at Richmond in western Sydney can be traced back to Mt Piper and other coal fired power stations. Short term effects of SO₂ have been estimated to cause 2.3% of all hospital respiratory admissions

in people over 65 years in Australia's four largest cities. (Reference: Summary for policy makers of the health risk assessment for air pollution in Australia. 2013; Prof Geoff Morgan; copyright Commonwealth of Australia)

Generation of electricity from wind has immediate public health benefits from displacing coal fired electricity and improving air quality, as well as long term health benefits from reducing global climate risk. Doctors for the Environment Australia strongly supports the Biala Wind Farm Project because of these public health benefits.