

Mr Chairman,

Firstly, to deal with conflict of interest – none of my properties Avondale, Indigo or Dunvegan are currently or were previously scheduled to host wind turbines so I have no conflicts to declare.

I speak **in support** of both the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm and the proposed improvements to the Aarons Pass Road.

My reasons for this support are as follows:

a) Crudine Ridge Wind Farm

*i) Visual amenity*

The possible problem of loss of visual amenity has been addressed by the progressive reduction in the number of wind turbines from 110 to 77 then to 37, a 2/3 decrease from the initial proposal.

*ii) Employment*

The wind farm will provide direct employment in both construction and maintenance phases

In addition, the income provided to landowners who host wind turbines will allow them to employ other local residents to undertake fencing, weed spraying, animal handling, ploughing and crop sowing work on their properties instead of undertaking all such work themselves

In both instances there is the ripple effect to the local towns and villages increasing patronage at shops, cafes, restaurants and hotels which in turn acts to increase employment in the larger district and improve the economy.

*iii) Health Impacts*

As a medical practitioner I am cognisant of the research into the health effects of wind towers. Both international and Australian research indicate that lack of pecuniary enhancement rather than proximity to the wind tower appears as a major determinant for the development of symptoms. In summary there appear to be no genuine health impacts.

*iv) Climate Change*

I have been to Alaska and witnessed the loss of permanent snow capping on the Brooks Range above the Arctic Circle. I have travelled to South Georgia and Antarctica and seen first hand the retreat of the glaciers on South Georgia and the breaking up of the Antarctic ice shelf, both consequences of climate change and global warming. Locally, we have just experienced among the hottest summers and autumns on record, as well as experiencing the worst drought in 50 years with local cities (Dubbo, Orange) moving to water restrictions while towns further west have run out of water. Science is telling us that we have till 2030 to alter our trajectory and significantly reduce carbon emissions to avert irretrievable damage to our planet.

Therefore, it is time for Australia to behave as the adult in the room and significantly reduce our carbon footprint so that we can exert moral authority over the large polluters. Projects such as the Crudine Ridge Wind Farm are part of that solution, particularly if they connect to storage (batteries, pumped hydro, superheated water) and provide the capacity to replace baseload or dispatchable power from carbon dependent sources.

b) Improvements to the Aarons Pass Road.

*i) Road Condition*

If the committee has not already driven the Aarons Pass I would suggest that they do so on their return journey. The road is narrow and winding with poor visibility due to vegetation growth close to the road edge. After storms the Aarons Pass is frequently obstructed by fallen trees or large branches. The road surface has recently been graded but is usually potholed with loose gravel build

up on bends and requires maintenance more frequently than the once per year allowed by Mid-Western Regional Council. In short it is hazardous and desperately overdue for upgrade.

*ii) Vegetation Clearance*

The proposed clearance is necessary to provide adequate visibility of oncoming vehicles. The 5km section closest to the Castlereagh Highway which has been cleared allows decent visibility and safety. This is in stark contrast to the succeeding 10-12 km of the road where an oncoming vehicle's dust is frequently not visible until it is less than 200m in front. There are numerous examples of greater vegetation clearance by landholders around fence lines than that proposed by CWP Renewables on the road, one example is 4-5km from this Hall between Pyramul and Windeyer. These fence line clearances have all been undertaken without environmental assessment or provision of offsets. Provision of offsets by CWP mitigates the road edge clearance.

*iii) Endangered Species*

Many of the species identified are not endangered and are present in significant numbers on private land, I have significant amounts of yellow and red box on Avondale and Indigo. But for the identified endangered species propagation and conservation is clearly indicated. I would be happy to have such species planted in appropriate areas and provide stock protection as indicated to assist with propagation and conservation.

*iv) Benefits*

An upgraded road improves travel times for local residents to work in Rylstone, Kandos or Ilford. An additional benefit would be increased opportunities for tourism and climate independent income such as farm stays for landholders with additional dwellings.

In summary

There are numerous benefits arising from the wind farm and the upgrade of the Aarons Pass road with few disadvantages, most of which have already been addressed.

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