



CAROL-ANN FLETCHER

OBJECT

Submission No: 196945

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|--|--|--|
| Organisation:  |  | Key issues: <i>Social and economic, Land use, Energy transition, Biodiversity, Visual, Traffic and Transport</i> |
| Location: <i>Tasmania 7322</i>   |  |  |
| Submitter Type: <i>an individual making a submission on my own behalf</i>  |  |  |
| Attachment: <i>Farmers Rejecting Wind Power Projects to Avoid Massive Clean Up Costs â€“ STOP THESE THINGS.pdf</i> |  |  |

Submission date: 9/6/2024 4:38:43 PM

*I feel wind turbine corporations, AEMO, AER, NEM are a financial scam where Australians are not being told the truth because Jim Chalmers is refusing to publicly reveal the corruption findings that were discovered under his predecessor, Josh Frydenberg (<https://theklaxon.com.au/chalmers-gives-frydenberg-free-pass-over-asic-report-stitch-up/>). Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, who promised transparency in his government is not doing anything about these ASIC (Australian Securities and Investment Commission) corruption findings. (<https://www.sydneysun.com/news/274402407/albanese-government-covers-for-coalition-in-asic-corruption-probe>) Therefore, because wind turbine corporations, AEMO, AER, NEM AND Marinus Link are all under ASIC, wind turbines and Marinus Links are FINANCIAL products rather than "energy" products that will NOT do what the wind turbine corporations, Marinus Link, local Councils, State and Federal Government say they will do. See the below links:*

*<https://abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?id=47630194562> - Marinus Link*

*<https://abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?abn=94072010327>- AEMO*

*<https://abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?abn=73102579788> - NEM*

*<https://abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?abn=82629939224> - AER*

*<https://abr.business.gov.au/ABN/View?abn=99094836263> - Renewable Energy Company Pty Ltd (just one example of an "energy" corporation under ASIC (Australian Securities and Investment Commission), which again, makes wind turbines a FINANCIAL product rather than an "energy" product and nothing more than an extremely dodgy scam that is NOT good for Australia or Australian constituents who are being forced to pay for this SCAM against their will. <https://drive.proton.me/urls/PBF6F01YT4#KFBhKnUpaSeX>*

*<https://podcasts.musixmatch.com/podcast/ben-fordham-live-on-2gb-breakfast-01hrxx3csmf1sz48j67gyataf6/episode/saturday-bureaucrats-using-dodgy-accounting-to-help-01j49snnc0sez90jb5b4g7yy72>*

*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-H0GCeS65uc> Environmental impacts of renewables in Queensland by Steven Nowakowski and Jeanette Kemp*

*"Taxpayers are entitled to know they are getting value for money from the billions of dollars being spent on projects to enable a transition to lower-emissions energy. Those responsible must not be allowed to write their own rules or forgo the widest possible consultation with those who represent the electricity users and taxpayers who ultimately must pay the bill. This is why FOI documents that detail the extent to which energy planners will go to shape how projects are scrutinised make sobering reading. The Australian Energy Market Operator has sought permission to break the rules and modify outside scrutiny for two crucial transmission line*



assets, the HumLink and VNI West projects." *Weekend Australian Editorial, More scrutiny, not less on power*  
31 January 2024

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/editorials/more-scrutiny-not-less-on-power/news-story/7d0da9122f82e29aae9f7487b1ec670c>

<https://www.skynews.com.au/business/media/labors-new-disinformation-campaign-backfires-after-people-submit-their-own-ads-for-factchecking-via-online-form/news-story/a9024371d5e2e3399d70ac4a0307b4c4>

<https://www.wind-watch.org/news/2024/08/29/hidden-wind-turbine-decommissioning-costs-a-risk-for-farmers/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/opinion/bowens-strategy-to-reduce-bills-hides-360-billion-in-costs-by-2050/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/opinion/energy-ministers-nuclear-arguments-riddled-with-errors/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/video/more-misinformation-from-csiro-on-nuclear/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/publication/submission-to-draft-2024-integrated-system-plan/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/publication/how-to-build-low-cost-nuclear-lessons-from-the-world/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/podcast/how-to-build-low-cost-nuclear-lessons-from-the-world-2/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/publication/submission-to-draft-2023-24-gencost/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/publication/submission-to-humelink-mcc-assessment/>

<https://www.cis.org.au/publication/submission-to-humelink-contingent-project-application-stage-2/>

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[https://www.advanceaustralia.org.au/woke\\_act\\_labor\\_greens\\_government\\_fights\\_against\\_renewables?sfnsn=mo](https://www.advanceaustralia.org.au/woke_act_labor_greens_government_fights_against_renewables?sfnsn=mo)

*This does not even include the fact that wind turbines and their too high voltage transmission lines are such a fire hazard that firefighters will NOT go near the wind turbines or the transmission lines to put out the fires that start on them because they are too dangerous. (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2024-06-19/cfa-renewables-protest-volunteer-firefighters-transmission-lines/103995318>)*

*Or the fact that wind turbines are extremely harmful to biodiversity and and refugia areas - <https://www.wind-watch.org/news/2024/08/05/environmentalists-call-out-double-standards-between-farmers-and-wind-farms/>*

*Or the fact that wind turbines cause negative health effects and suffering due to infrasound noise:*

<https://stopthesethings.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/schmidt-klokker-wtn-health-effects-2014.pdf>

<https://docs.wind-watch.org/Schmidt-Klokker-Tables.html>

*Wind turbines also cause crashes with small aircraft:*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/620bb596e90e0710aa4b69f3/Piper\\_PA-22-150\\_G-ARDS\\_03-22.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/620bb596e90e0710aa4b69f3/Piper_PA-22-150_G-ARDS_03-22.pdf)

*I also object because these wind turbines are being forced upon Australian constituents in numerous communities against their will, even though they have very clearly and soundly said NO! to wind turbines AND to Marinus Link:*



**New South Wales Government**  
Independent Planning Commission

<https://drive.proton.me/urls/PBF6F01YT4#KFBhKnUpaSeX>

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/landholders-blocking-transgrids-humelink-transmission-line-receive-ultimatum-as-forced-land-acquisitions-loom/news-story/36a6218781f3ed4c5eac498318a88d38>

*Therefore, I DO NOT CONSENT to this wind turbine project or ANY other wind turbine project ANYWHERE in Australia.*

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NATION

EXCLUSIVE

## Landholders blocking Transgrid's HumeLink energy superhighway receive ultimatum as forced acquisitions loom

By CHRISTINE MIDDAP

7:09pm August 02, 2024. Updated 20 hours ago



246 Comments

When investment banker Keith Kerridge bought the ramshackle Hillasmount property in the NSW southern tablelands in 1989, he imagined returning the heritage-listed homestead to its glory days of the late-1800s.

“It’s such an unusual place, a significant place in the history of this area,” he says, walking along the sun-filled front veranda positioned to enjoy glorious views to a forested ridge. He points out the lath and plaster construction, the all-original exterior including the roof that’s rusted and sagging in spots but doesn’t leak.

Outside, he has restored the blacksmith’s and tinker’s huts and other tumbledown buildings. Inside, a roaring fire warms the original stone kitchen and throughout the home, period furnishings reflect a step-back-in-time quality, just as he wanted.

Built in 1879, this is one of precious few rural pioneering homesteads that remain in their original state, Kerridge says. The collection of historic buildings and the large garden draws a lot of interest; the last open day attracted about 100 visitors. “It is an excellent and rare example of vernacular Australian rural architecture,” he says.

The property’s isolated position at the end of a dirt road just north of Bannaby harks to earlier times and it’s this setting that has pitched Kerridge, a cattle breeder and significant local landholder, into battle with Transgrid, the giant electricity transmission operator tasked with building an energy superhighway to deliver the renewables required for the country’s clean, green transition.

Kerridge is one of the hold-outs, one of more than 100 impacted property owners along the planned 360km HumeLink route through southern NSW who have refused to strike a land access deal with Transgrid. It's a fight that's united the wealthy and connected, the quiet generational farmers, smaller landholders, professionals and young mums and dads.

Wagyu breeder Michael Katz, a former ING Bank chairman and Commonwealth Bank executive has been there from the start along with grazier Chrissy Hughes, wife of former attorney-general Tom Hughes, Malcolm Turnbull's father-in-law.

Ironically, it was Turnbull's vision for the much-delayed Snowy 2.0 that kickstarted the \$4.57bn HumeLink project that will impact the Hughes holding, along with thousands of hectares of forest and keenly held farmland.

Now, it's crunch time. Transgrid says it has secured signed or in-principle access agreements with 76 per cent (197) private landholders. The rest, including Katz, Hughes and Kerridge, will be coerced to co-operate: threats of compulsory acquisition are becoming reality.

Kerridge and his partner, Charlotte Smith, recently returned from overseas to receive a Proposed Acquisition Notice which starts a formal 90-day acquisition process under the Just Terms Act.

Up and down the line, 68 landholders have been opening their notices, some with a sick feeling that this is the end; others with a vow they will not give up until the bulldozers roll in. Transgrid says another 46 notices will be issued this month.

It's an extraordinary situation, says Katz, who stands to have eight to 10 giant transmission towers on 70m-wide easements constructed on his Gurrundah property.

HumeLink is listed as a critical, state-significant project but he notes the PANs were issued before final government planning approval, or sign-off on final stage two costings from the Australian Energy Regulator. "It's a perverse travesty of justice, in so many ways, to have these PANs signed off, without those final approvals, in favour of the shareholders of Transgrid who are foreign entities," he says.

On Friday, the AER handed down its decision, knocking \$314m off Transgrid's stage two funding application but approving \$3.965bn in capital expenditure.

In response, Transgrid said it was assessing the determination and was awaiting finalisation of environmental planning approvals and Clean Energy Finance Council financing arrangements before making a final investment decision.

The regulator made a point of emphasising the importance of Transgrid engaging with local communities. "While HumeLink is a complex project of national significance, we recognise that it affects landholders and local communities on the transmission route and impacts electricity bills," AER chair Clare Savage said.

It's all cold comfort for Katz, Hughes and other landholders who have long argued that the power lines should be built underground to mitigate environmental and farming impacts, bushfire risk and visual effects.

They commissioned an expert report that argued undergrounding HumeLink with HVDC lines would cost \$7.3bn, well below Transgrid's estimates, and they want the NSW government to run the numbers again, taking into account the environmental, social and agricultural costs associated with the project.

"I can't understand why they won't even look at the undergrounding option, when it's so obviously the future," says Chrissy Hughes, who estimates their property at Bannister will get about seven 500kV transmission towers across 3.5km of farming land, along with associated access roads.

"It's going to make an awful mess of the place, quite honestly, and affect the local ecology too."

She says undergrounding would dissolve community opposition and grant Transgrid social licence. But the NSW government and Transgrid have remained steadfast that overhead is the best and cheapest option.

It's a vital project, they argue, to bring more affordable and reliable renewable energy to the grid and keep the lights on as coal generation is retired. There can be no more delays. "Australia is attempting a world first: a large-scale grid dominated by wind and

solar power built at breakneck speed,” Transgrid chief executive Brett Redman has said.

And so now Katz and the other landholders are looking anew at what towers, easements, access roads and overhead lines mean for their properties and surrounding landscape. “We’re stepping out the 70m (easements) and looking at the massive old eucalypts that will be destroyed. It goes smack bang through the middle of the place and takes out a lot of old-growth natural forests that we protected for years and years. This is just such a disaster,” Katz says.

Kerridge is also reassessing what HumeLink means for Hillasmount. When he embarked on preserving this gem from the past he didn’t imagine a future where 80m-tall steel transmission towers would slice along the forested ridge a little over 200m from the homestead.

“Siting transmission infrastructure so close to an item of significant cultural importance amounts to cultural vandalism,” he says. “Nobody could look at this and think it’s a good idea.”

## **Environmental cost**

Bill Johnson stands in a small patch of native forest, the only significant greenery between his 120ha sheep property at Bannister and a large wind farm and substation on a neighbouring property. Over the way, a solar farm sits in the folds of the land.

The altered landscape along his boundary means the vet-turned-farmer won’t be retiring to a house on the property, as planned, but this stretch of forest means a lot to him not just for its environmental values but because it was his late wife Alison who protected and nurtured it when they bought the old potato farm almost three decades ago.

They sought soil conservation assistance, fenced it off to exclude stock, controlled the weeds and feral animals. They watched the little forest grow as seedlings took hold and native grasses returned and they took note of the birds, gliders and bats that made use of it – proof, he thought, of the importance of remnant vegetation on agricultural land. Johnson reckons there are 167 mature trees here representing about seven species, including one that is a century old.



“We thought we were doing something right by the environment,” he shrugs.

Transgrid has told him the entire stand will have to go to make way for Humelink. Its ecologists have been through and marked-up the important hollow-bearing trees but it seems no amount of nesting hollows will save it; he’s been told that most of the trees will end up as firewood.

Johnson supports greater use of renewables and understands the need for upgraded transmission but questions the environmental cost that comes with the rollout of HumeLink’s overhead lines. It’s a massive and complex project comprising 835 transmission towers each with 24 conductors (wires) on 70m-wide easements with 683km of access tracks and a footprint of 8835ha through undulating rural valleys and hills, along rural fringes and the foothills of the Great Dividing Range.

Up and down the route, Landcare groups and farmers have expressed concern at the loss of native plants and trees used for shade and windbreaks, habitat and soil conservation.

“This highly significant loss of local biodiversity, and bird and animal habitat, is dismissed by HumeLink as a small part of the hundreds of hectares being cleared to make way for this transmission line,” Johnson says.

“What I really want is for someone in power to stand in this forest and say ‘this is important, we should preserve it’”.

A short drive away, poet, farmer and long-time local Landcare volunteer Russ Erwin stands in his native seed orchard – planted in conjunction with Greening Australia – and tries to work out what will be left after the bulldozers come through.

He’s spent four decades transforming this once relatively tree-less farm, and landholders around the district mention his efforts. “It’s not much but it has been the earnest work of one individual to accept the science and to do what can be done – often following guidelines propounded by government agencies,” Erwin notes.

He’s received a PAN and is trying to not sound defeated as he walks along his property in fading light to an orchestra of bird song.



“It’s like you know the axe is coming down, but you’re just waiting for the feel of it on the back of your neck,” he says.

## **‘Bullying tactic’**

Building a new high-voltage transmission network traversing farms and forests between Wagga Wagga, Bannaby and Maragle was never going to be easy.

Run it through national parks and expect trouble; move it from one farmer’s land and it will affect their neighbour and ignite a local feud; site it through state forests and invite more criticism.

Timber industry body, the Softwoods Working Group, says the HumeLink route will result in the loss of about 400ha of prime timber plantations and more than 300ha of native forest in the Bago state forest. “This would represent a rather ironic situation where a renewable energy project can only be enabled by facilitating deforestation of native forest,” the group wrote in response to Transgrid’s environmental impact statement.

The Department of Planning and Environment’s Biodiversity, Conservation and Science Directorate also raised concerns about the potential for serious and irreversible impacts on some endangered sites and species. Transgrid has identified potential ramifications for 58 threatened flora species and 33 threatened fauna including 12 birds and 11 mammals.

Some 90 Aboriginal heritage sites have also been identified within the project footprint, and Transgrid is consulting with local traditional owners.

It insists it is doing all it can to avoid and minimise environmental harm and adds that biodiversity impacts will be offset.

Landholders point out this does nothing for their local environment, for the old-growth trees and remnant vegetation lost from their farms.

It’s been a long fight, and landholders issued with PANs are angered by this latest development.

“It is another bullying and bulldozing tactic, backed by government, to send out PANS to landholders, which is adding enormous stress to an already diabolical state,” says staunch opponent Rebecca Tobin, whose family farm is affected.

Transgrid says it makes every attempt to reach settlement with property owners through “fair, respectful and transparent negotiations.” In NSW private landowners hosting new high-voltage transmission lines have been offered a set rate of \$200,000 per kilometre of transmission line, paid out in annual instalments over 20 years.

A spokesperson said compulsory acquisition was used only as a last resort and that once a PAN was issued, negotiations could be held during a 90-day period.

“Transgrid aims to negotiate an agreement with more than 90pc of landowners who receive a PAN, as was the case when acquiring land for EnergyConnect,” the spokesperson said.

“We acknowledge the sensitivities of communities and landowners, given the scale of the HumeLink project, and that’s why we have undertaken significant community, stakeholder and consumer representative engagement.”

These statements only serve to anger landholders who say they have tried to engage.

At Hillasmount, Keith Kerridge says he’s had meetings, tried to understand why the new 500KV line couldn’t simply follow an existing smaller Transgrid corridor that already runs along the southern edge of his property and clips the edge of Tarlo River National Park.

He argues that building a new line along the northern route will be longer and more expensive and will damage mature vegetation and the character of Hillasmount, which is subject to the Upper Lachlan Environmental Plan that aims to conserve heritage items, including their settings and views.

Chris Ainsworth, the president of the nearby Taralga Historical Society, also objects to the construction, which would disrupt the historically significant homestead and setting. “I’m upset that it brings an industrial look to a house that has been here so long and is so well preserved.”

Over in Yass, sheep farmer Mary-Jane Betts says she's had meetings and invited Transgrid engineers to come to the farm, which has been in her family for 90 years, to examine alternative routes that will save a fenced-off 175ha conservation zone and lessen impacts on farming practices.

“I have received funded monies for environmental projects over many years to secure a viable future for our waterways and wildlife corridors. A more environmentally and visually destructive location for the powerlines could not be imagined,” she says.

She hasn't yet received a PAN, but the exhaustion and worry is clear in her voice.

In Bannister, Chrissy Hughes also has a notice. “We've got to either sign up or face the consequences by the 16th of September,” she sighs.

She'll be asking for an extension as she takes advice and weighs up her options.

She tries to strike an optimistic tone: “It's not too late. I believe it's not too late.”

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**CHRISTINE MIDDAP** ASSOCIATE EDITOR, CHIEF WRITER

Christine Middap is associate editor and chief writer at The Australian. She was previously editor of The Weekend Australian Magazine for 11 years. Christine worked as a journalist and editor in Tasmania,

Queensland and NSW, and at The Times in London. She is a former foreign correspondent and London bureau chief for News Corp's Australian newspapers.

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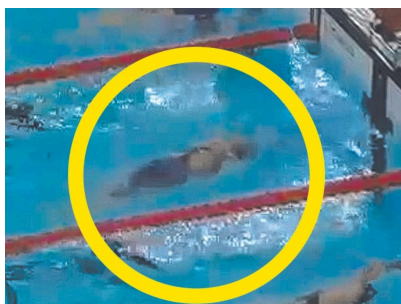
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# Energy Minister's nuclear arguments riddled with errors

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Zoe Hilton , Alex Bainton

June 7, 2024 • THE AUSTRALIAN

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Mark Twain famously quipped that "Facts are stubborn things, but statistics are pliable". Energy Minister Chris Bowen is certainly entitled to his facts, but he should be more careful with his statistics.

His piece on Tuesday argued that nuclear will mean more expensive electricity for consumers and that's why a number of other G20 countries have already rejected it. He's wrong.

Mr Bowen claims that CSIRO's GenCost has found nuclear to be the most expensive form of energy every year since 2018.

In fact, it was only in 2024 — and just a few weeks ago — that GenCost finally included large-scale nuclear in their estimates. This cut costs by a factor of three over previous estimates for small modular reactors.

Once realistic plant lifetime and capacity factors are included, the CSIRO's numbers clearly show nuclear is competitive with renewables.

Mr Bowen touts the CSIRO's claim that nuclear plants will operate at as little as 53% capacity.

In reality, this will be closer to 90% as the capacity factor of nuclear is driven by low marginal operating costs. For comparison, the average capacity factor for the US fleet is 93%.

The 53% figure assumes we will privilege wind and solar's access to the grid over nuclear. The question remains as to why we would prioritise intermittent renewables that destabilise the grid over cheap, clean and reliable nuclear.

In California, a state with similar levels of renewables to Australia, the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant achieved a capacity factor of nearly 90% over the last five years.



Mr Bowen claims expensive power plants can't produce cheap power.

However, the truth is that nuclear plants last 60 to 100 years, a much longer timeframe than the CSIRO's assumption of 30 years. Their shorter timeframe only considers how long investors are willing to wait to fully recoup up-front capital costs and does not consider the future benefits for consumers of having cheap, clean and reliable power for decades afterwards.

Transitioning to a grid dominated by 'cheap' renewables is expensive.

Not only do taxpayers and consumers have to pay for expensive transmission and storage projects, but we also end up paying massive subsidies to the renewables industry too.

A Centre for Independent Studies report released this week found that these subsidies totalled \$29 billion over the last decade from federal government programs alone.

Mr Bowen claims four G20 countries "are not considering nuclear": Germany, Italy, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia.

In reality, aside from Germany, these countries are all eager to build a nuclear industry.

Italy's Energy Minister recently said "we must consider the use of nuclear in the short and medium term", while Saudi Arabia has established a company to develop nuclear power, and is building a 30kW research reactor.

Indonesia is planning to deliver 8 GW of nuclear by 2035 and 35 GW by 2060.

Why has Germany shut down its nuclear plants? Scandalous documents released by German courts revealed that anti-nuclear Greens apparatchiks rewrote expert reports which had said continued operation for several years was safe.

Germany is now on track to miss its 2030 emissions targets. Their electricity prices are so high the government is providing relief packages to the manufacturing industry worth €28 billion over the next four years.

Three parties representing 41% of Germany's parliament are now calling for a return to nuclear, so it's not even clear the current policy will stand.

Yet Germany still relies on French electricity, which is 70% nuclear.

It is more important than ever to ensure that every dollar we spend on emissions reduction goes as far as it can.

The Australian government needs to take the nuclear option seriously, as the rest of the world is, and lift the ban so that Australians will be able to enjoy cheap, clean and reliable electricity for decades to come.

Alex Bainton and Zoe Hilton are Senior Policy Analysts in the Energy Program at the Centre for Independent Studies.

Office

Level 1

131 Macquarie St

Sydney

NSW 2000

# Contact

**+61 2 9438 4377**

## Office

[cis@cis.org.au](mailto:cis@cis.org.au)

## Media

[kpincott@cis.org.au](mailto:kpincott@cis.org.au)

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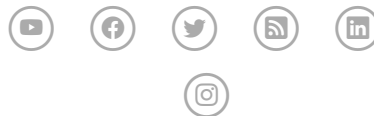
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## STOP THESE THINGS

# Farmers Rejecting Wind Power Projects to Avoid Massive Clean Up Costs



(<https://stopthesethings.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/turbine-collapse-ok1.png>).

Farmers are rejecting offers to host wind turbines to avoid being left with the massive cleanup costs after these things grind to a halt. At first blush, being paid an annual license fee of \$10-25,000 per turbine, per year sounds lucrative enough. However, put that against the \$600,000 plus cost of demolishing and removing a single turbine, and the deal soon loses its gloss. Indeed, the ultimate multi-million-dollar cost of removing dozens of turbines from a farming property, makes the piddling revenue stream look like chump change.

With plenty of evidence to show that these things have an **economic lifespan of around 15 years** (<https://stopthesethings.com/2016/05/30/panic-erupts-infigen-set-to-offload-worn-out-australian-wind-farms-to-even-greater-fools/>) – not the wildly ambitious 25 years touted by the wind industry – farmers considering signing up to **25-year landholder agreements** (<https://stopthesethings.com/2023/06/24/wind-industrys-callous-treatment-of-rural-communities-driving-farmers-revolt/>) have good reason to think hard before they sign.

Demolition and removal is a specialist and, accordingly, expensive enterprise: **Demolition Squad: What Happens to Worn Out Wind Turbines? They Get Blown to Bits** (<https://stopthesethings.com/2021/06/19/demolition-squad-what-happens-to-worn-out-wind-turbines-they-get-blown-to-bits/>).

STT has been providing warnings to the gullible and unwitting farmer for some time now: **Blown Away: Counting the Colossal Cost of Cleaning Up 'Clean' Energy's Monstrous Mess** (<https://stopthesethings.com/2019/11/29/blown-away-counting-the-colossal-cost-of-cleaning-up-clean-energys-monstrous-mess/>)

Well, it seems that at least some of them have taken notice.

More recently, a group called AgForce – representing Queensland's cane, cattle, grain and sheep, wool & goat producers – has also been providing sensible advice and timely assistance to those contemplating signing landholder agreements with wind power outfits.

We'll return to AgForce in a moment, with an extract from their submission to the Queensland government regarding decommissioning costs, among other things, but first here's a story from Queensland Country Life about sensible farmers rejecting the 'opportunity' to be left with a colossal cleanup bill when these things give up the ghost in a decade or so from now.

### **Vestas Tara wind farm project rejected by several landholders**

Queensland Country Life

Brandon Long

20 September 2023

A confidential proposal to build one of Australia's biggest wind farms on the Western Downs has been knocked back by several landholders due to concerns over decommissioning.

Danish company Vestas is proposing to develop a 1200MW, 167-turbine wind farm south of Tara, with the aim to start construction by 2027.

For comparison, Acciona Energia's 1026MW, 180-turbine MacIntyre Wind Farm near Warwick will be the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere when finished in 2024.

The Vestas Tara Wind Farm Project brochure given to landholders says "the decommissioning of a wind farm at the end of project life is the responsibility of the wind farm owner". While there are no documented decommissioning examples in Australia, some plans have calculated costs between \$400,000 – \$600,000 per turbine, according to the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner.

The AEIC says most planning permits require decommissioning responsibilities to rest with the project owner, however, in the event of default by the project owner, the liability for decommissioning ultimately may rest with the landholder.

Tara farmer Kieran Cook, who has been approached by Vestas to host wind turbines, said it was too risky. "There is a very high risk that we will be left with the cleanup cost of the wind farm and at \$600,000 or more per turbine, it is a risk we are not prepared to take," Mr Cook said.

Cam Benjamin owns a grazing property within the proposed Tara wind farm as well as property to the west. At the end of 2022, he hosted a meeting of 15 landholders at his property to consider the proposal in his area.

"A unanimous decision was reached to reject the wind farm proposal primarily because of the decommissioning risk," Mr Benjamin said. "I believe that developers are selling their proposals in the early stages of development and their reluctance to provide security up front for decommissioning is a clear indication that they fully understand the cost of that process. They are therefore exposing landholders to this risk. This risk is unaffordable and makes future planning extremely difficult."

Brett Wilson runs a broad scale farming operation and his properties adjoin stage one and are also included in the proposed stage two area. He has joined with his neighbours to refuse to host wind turbines, saying it is likely that the wind farm will be traded to an entity that is not equipped to decommission a wind farm of this scale.

Vestas was contacted for comment but did not respond by deadline.

On Monday, Nationals leader and Federal Member for Maranoa David Littleproud told the Rural Queensland Today podcast he had a “big issue” with the uncertainty of wind turbine decommissioning. “I’ve ... got a big issue about what happens at end of life and I’m really concerned about farmers getting left with this,” Mr Littleproud said. “They all go, ‘oh, we’ve got a tight contract’, but who’s the contract with at the end in 20 years time? ... it’ll be a shell company that has no assets and in fact you’re left with these big turbines you have to decommission.”

[Queensland Country Life \(https://www.wind-watch.org/news/2023/09/21/vestas-tara-wind-farm-project-rejected-by-several-landholders/\)](https://www.wind-watch.org/news/2023/09/21/vestas-tara-wind-farm-project-rejected-by-several-landholders/)



<https://stopthesethings.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/turbine-demolition1.png>

Now to AgForce, a group of very switched-on primary producers who have recognised that their kind have been taken for fools, for far too long. Here’s an extract of their recent submission to the Queensland government, which is bang on:

AgForce is a peak organisation representing Queensland’s cane, cattle, grain and sheep, wool & goat producers. AgForce’s purpose is to advance sustainable agribusiness and strives to ensure the long-term growth, viability, competitiveness and profitability of these industries. AgForce recently reviewed and proposed changes to the current Wind Farm Code (State Code 23) in Queensland, which included a section of the decommissioning of wind turbines:

## **2. Decommissioning**

The Code does consider that at the end of the project the requirement that the wind farm site will be returned, as much as practically possible, to its original condition. However, there is little guidance and protection provided to landholders in this space.

AgForce takes issue with the lack of guidelines surrounding the decommissioning of wind farms within Code 23.

Whilst it is a condition of the development approval that the **preparation of an end of operation decommissioning management plan be submitted to SARA before the wind farm is decommissioned** ([https://planning.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0027/83178/for-consultation-draft-planning-guidance-state-code-23-wind-farm-development.pdf](https://planning.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0027/83178/for-consultation-draft-planning-guidance-state-code-23-wind-farm-development.pdf)), we do not see that this is sufficient to adequately protect the interest of landholders.

Although some project operators include a clause in their contracts to create a trust fund to deposit the funds to decommission the project into, this is usually not contemplated to commence until towards the end of the project life, such as year 15, 20 or 25. This opens the landholder up to a number of risks.

The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner has referred to the event where the project owner defaults on the agreed conditions which therefore results in **the liability for decommissioning the project falling to the landholder** (<https://www.aeic.gov.au/observations-and-recommendations/chapter-1-host-landowner-negotiations>). Under section 73 of the Planning Act, the development approval binds the original owner of the premises, the owners' successors in title and any occupier of the premises. The ramifications of such an occurrence are manifold. The AEIC has also highlighted that the project operator may sell the project to another company over the course of the life of the project, which could easily result in the arrangement to fund the decommissioning being lost and the enforceability of the agreement being eroded over time. There is nothing in the Planning Act to provide for the development approval to bind the wind farm proponent/developer once it transfers the wind farm, or the successors in title to the wind farm or the holding company of the proponent. Often the wind farm proponent/developer is a \$2 subsidiary of a publicly listed company with no resources to fulfill the conditions – particularly the decommissioning condition.

The AEIC website states that **the cost to decommission each wind turbine ranges from \$400,000-\$600,000, depending on the size of the turbine** (<https://www.aeic.gov.au/observations-and-recommendations/chapter-1-host-landowner-negotiations>). This cost could increase vastly if there are structural failures or is unstable, where the AEIC states it could cost millions to remove each turbine from the project site. Concerningly, if the cost to decommission the wind farm did fall upon the landholder, there would likely be no avenue for the landholder to recover the costs of decommissioning the project as they would not have ownership over the project's assets. AgForce sees that if such a cost was put onto the landholder that this would be overly burdensome and almost impossible to undertake in some circumstances. Plainly, it is completely unacceptable that this is even a possibility with the current guidelines.

## 2.1 Recommendations in Response to Decommissioning

- It be mandatory for the proponent/developer to commence funding a decommissioning trust fund from the project's commencement, as it would be easier to obtain significant funding earlier on in the project life.
- Developer to organise for a bank guarantee, sinking fund, trust fund or a security bond deposit to be held by the landowner throughout the life of the project, so that landholders can have confidence that funds are being put aside by the proponent/developer.
- Clarity that any agreement between the original proponent/developer will be carried over to be an agreement between the landholder and any new company that buys the project.

AgForce notes that analogous requirements exist in Queensland's mining industry legislation, the EP Act<sup>9</sup> and federally in the offshore mining space.



AgForce is not recommending any requirements that are not already in existence in similar circumstances, hence it would seem that such a request would be wholly reasonable to impose upon wind farm proponents/developers.

You can read the full AgForce submission here: [AgForce – State Code 23 submission \(PDF\)](https://stopthesethings.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/agforce-state-code-23-submission.pdf)  
(<https://stopthesethings.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/agforce-state-code-23-submission.pdf>)



(<https://stopthesethings.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/turbine-demolition2.png>).

Posted on ~~October 8, 2023~~ October 1, 2023

## 3 thoughts on “Farmers Rejecting Wind Power Projects to Avoid Massive Clean Up Costs”

### 1. PLAN JANE SAYS:

April 2, 2024 at 11:09 am

I got offered a wind turbine contract. There are so many red flags and negatives to these contracts I wondered why anyone would sign one. On one side the contract tied the freehold title of the land for 25 + 25 years, the other side is a \$2 shelf company that can disappear overnight, and was only required to give 30 days notice to terminate contract. The contract leased the WHOLE property for them to come on to the entire place when they wanted with what machinery they wanted, but they didn't actually have to put up any wind turbines, so potentially pay no money for lease of the entire property for up to 50 years. I think they just needed access to the place next door and only wanted access roads for the next door place, so all access and heavy machinery and road making through this property for free. Also don't forget the concrete batching plant, they are huge. It was not mentioned in the contract, but the contract would have allowed that to be put where they wanted. Next just look at the simple necessity of re-fencing the property to fit in their roads. It would have cost over \$100K to fence out their roads that cut diagonally across the whole grazing enterprise. I knew of another property that had a turbine contract. At that stage they had not been able to use most of their 6000 acres for 3 years because the turbine company had removed much of their boundary fences during construction and not put them back because it

had not been specifically mentioned in the contract. There is more, so much more, negative, even before mentioning decommissioning. The \$10K or \$20K or \$30K per year per turbine ends up being chicken feed in the costs of having these things around.

↳ [Reply](#)

2. **SOMMER SAYS:**

**January 17, 2024 at 2:33 am**

Ask the leaseholders in Ontario what their contingency plans are. Some of them have 10 of them on their property.

↳ [Reply](#)

3. **WAL1957 SAYS:**

**October 8, 2023 at 9:41 pm**

Why would anybody risk bankruptcy by hosting these turbines on their land.

You would have to be a mug (or desperate), to allow these things on your land knowing that the developers could potentially default and you're left with the cleanup \$\$\$.

↳ [Reply](#)