

## Rye Park Wind Farm Development Submission

From: Rod & Ros Gibson of [REDACTED]

- Welcome to Boorowa and thank you for ~~the time to listen to our giving us~~ the opportunity to present our views on the Rye Park wind farm development.
- We are involved landowners with 1 wind turbine proposed for our property. Unfortunately ours is one of the 25 turbines recommended to be removed from the project.
- Our 200 acre property is about 5 km north of Rye Park on Grassy Creek Road and is considered very poor country. The rocky ridgeline peaks at 720m and is mostly covered in sifton bush (an invasive native bush/weed that tends to dominate the landscape of the type of poor country and ridgelines that surrounds Rye Park).
- We are passionate about renewable energy and had been looking into the possibility of installing wind power generation well before any of the wind farm developers came along. We went down the track of off grid solar instead.
- In our opinion wind farms need to be part of the energy generation mix. The Rye Park area is ideally suited; it is out of the way and has a proven high wind resource. Currently wind turbines are the cheapest, most efficient and least polluting technology for producing energy. In addition, they can be built and commissioned in a very short period of time (about 2 yrs), an attractive proposition in given our current energy crisis.
- We believe that the Rye Park wind farm is a good project and that Tilt is a responsible developer. This ~~is~~ developer seeks to build this project (not sell it on!) and form a long term relationship with our community. They have a proven record with their wind farm at Snowtown in South Australia. They have worked very hard to overcome the legacy of the previous developer, by regularly updating involved landholder on their progress, seeking to improve their relationship with involved councils, and endeavouring to provide honest community consultation. Trust Power, now Tilt Energy, are one of only a couple of companies that have voluntarily offered neighbour agreements for adjoining landholders not hosting turbines!
- In addition to generating enough clean energy to power 160,000 homes and reducing carbon emissions by 770,000 tonnes this project, with all 109 proposed turbines, has the potential to deliver to our local region;
  - supplementary income to over 50 local farming families who have with signed contracts to host wind turbines or have neighbour agreements,
  - employment opportunities for large numbers of locals during the construction phase,

- 12 new permanent jobs in the local community (hopefully taken up with young families to help bolster numbers at our local school!) once the development is operational,
- An Investment of \$49m during construction and \$2-3m per annum for the life <sup>of the project</sup> through payments to landholders, local employees and community fund contributions,
- \$272,500 annually to the community fund to improve our local services. This could include; improved internet and telephone connection, water security for village residents, and a vehicle to provide community transport to assist a rapidly aging demographic,
- people in this community generally derive their income from doing multiple jobs or if they are farmers have off farm jobs to supplement farm income. The flow on from the landowner payments has the potential to provide many more part time and casual jobs, potentially providing sustainable work for the next generation.

➤ What would the income from one wind turbine mean for us;

- we could employ people to help us with our on farm environmental improvements, something we have been very passionate about, including, weed control, planting more trees, installing protective fencing, and undertaking erosion control,
- materials required for these projects would be purchased locally and benefit local businesses,
- being able to employ a gardener for a day per week (\$10,000 pa at today's rates) and someone to clean the house for a morning a week (about \$3,500 pa) would lighten our load considerably, and there are many other occasional jobs that we could employ people to do rather than doing them ourselves,
- this extra bit of support could allow us to stay on the farm much longer, continuing to live the healthy lifestyle the farm provides us, and hopefully this will keep us out of the aged care environment for as long as possible!
- we prefer to shop locally wherever we can, however, as time goes on and we are unable to travel too far from home shopping will be restricted to the local area,
- as you can see other than a little bit of travel we selfishly would like to undertake, most of the additional money received from hosting a wind turbine would flow on to the local community.

➤ The Department of Planning and Environment has recommended that the wind farm development be reduced by a further 25 turbines based largely on visual grounds for village residents. Originally the project was for 126 turbines which were voluntarily reduced by the developer by 17 turbines after negotiations with the department and with potentially the further reduction by 25 turbines this would amount to an overall reduction of almost 35%. This could jeopardize the whole project?

- The Rye Park wind farm project was commenced in 2008. It seems incredible to us that after all the environmental studies and direct negotiations between the department and the developers that now, in 2017, a further restriction has been imposed on the project based on the visual impact of the development on village residents. A visual impact that the Department's own independent assessment report rates as low to moderate.
- Wind farms always have a visual effect, however, this visual effect is totally subjective. All studies done into the visual aspect of wind farms have shown the overwhelming majority of people like looking at wind turbines.
- The closest turbine to Rye Park is 3.2km away (ours is about 5km away) from the village and not on the closest ridgeline but the one behind. Of the 16 turbines in question most village residents will see very few and then only part of turbines from their homes.
- Many may not be aware that any resident within 4km of a wind turbine is entitled to have trees planted for screening purposes. This would be a great opportunity to beautify the village environs while softening the visual impact of the turbines.
- There have been some noisy objectors to the development but our experience has been that most do not live in the Rye Park area. We know for sure that all the residents for the first 10km along Grassy Creek Road (the most affected residents at the northern end of the project) are in favour of the project and believe that Rye Park residents are equally split between those for, those against and those that don't care either way.
- In conclusion, we would be very disappointed if the 25 turbines were to be removed from this project. It would mean;
  - 30,000 less homes could be powered by clean energy,
  - the Rye Park Community Fund would receive \$40,000 less a year,
  - landholders and their families would miss out on \$400,000 in payments per year,
  - NSW loses *a significant percentage* towards its 2020 renewable target.

Our property is not able to contribute to the agricultural economy in any meaningful way such as growing lucernes or raising cattle but we could host a wind turbine that has the potential to produce enough energy to power 1,200 homes, that's all the homes in Boorowa and Rye Park!