

August 17, 2021

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
C/- development.approval@delwp.vic.gov.au

RE: Delburn Wind Farm

Dear Sir/Madam,

In 2016 in response to the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiries, the Latrobe Valley was designated a Health Innovation Zone by the Victorian government to support communities in Latrobe to improve their health and wellbeing. The Zone gives voice to community aspirations in the planning and delivery of better health and wellbeing outcomes, and where a process of co-design with individuals and organisations is actively encouraged.

The Latrobe Health Advocate was appointed by the Victorian Minister for Health in May 2018, to offer independent advice on behalf of Latrobe communities to improve health and wellbeing service systems in Latrobe City. The role provides community-wide leadership for the Latrobe Health innovation Zone while maintaining a focus on strategic outcomes and systemic change.

In my role I promote the position that Health is Everyone's Business. I have been encouraged by the willingness of businesses in Latrobe to consider and prioritise the health and wellbeing of communities as they develop new enterprises and reflect on how their practices can support good mental and physical health both within their workforce and the communities in which they operate.

Since the establishment of the Latrobe Health Advocate's office, I have engaged regularly with local businesses, including ENGIE, Australian Paper, AGL Loy Yang, Chunxing and OSMI on matters that have the potential to impact the health and wellbeing of Latrobe communities. In 2019 I was appointed as the independent Chair of the Latrobe Valley Asbestos Taskforce. The taskforce brings together government agencies, local council, unions and community groups to work together to deliver the best outcomes for the management of asbestos in Latrobe Valley.

My aim is to influence development projects, government planning and decision-making processes in terms of how they:

- Actively involve communities in the design and decision-making process
- Create a healthy community
- Impact on climate change and the determinants of health; and
- Do not adversely affect community health

In line with the priorities of my role, and in response to concerns raised by communities across Latrobe, I have sought to be involved in the processes in relation to the above proposal. I have met with representatives of OSMI Australia and a number of community members who believe they will be directly impacted by the Delburn Wind Farm construction.

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I have also received information and advice from Andrew Dyer, National Wind Farm Commissioner and now, Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner, in relation to the support the Commission provides about best practices for the wind industry.

There are a variety of stances within Latrobe communities in relation to the Delburn Wind Farm. I have been approached by people strongly opposed to the development and others who support it.

Commentary has included:

- People expressing support for the employment opportunities that are promised by the project and for the associated economic benefits of increased employment in the area.
- People supporting the development of renewable energy projects in the Latrobe Valley.
- People citing a lack of trust in the information provided to them by the applicant and the relevant government bodies.
- People expressing concerns around the health impacts of the operation of the turbines, in particular infrasound effects. There is mixed evidence in this regard which causes confusion for those who are hesitant to accept the advice of experts.
- People expressing frustration regarding the perceived negative impact of the wind farm on property values.
- People expressing distress at the immediate impact on people's mental health of the application process and the proposal as a whole.
- People are apprehensive that the current maintenance practices of the plantation are not sufficient to mitigate any increased fire risk around the turbines.
- People are expressing concern around the proximity of turbines to roads and the possibility of distraction to drivers and riders on the road.
- People are unhappy with the possible impact to their enjoyment of their home as a result turbines/towers in their line of vision.
- People are uneasy regarding the independence of and expertise available to the Community Advisory Committee.

In considering the application of Delburn Wind Farm I recommend:

- DELWP considers the evidence surrounding the health impacts of infrasound on people occupying neighbouring properties.
- DELWP considers the opportunity to provide for better maintenance of the area surrounding the turbines, utilising local knowledge and expertise to better understand and manage the perceived fire risks.
- DELWP considers the psychological impacts of the approval process on those people who have raised concerns and works to mitigate the effects raised, by maintaining a transparent process, and ensuring evidence-informed communication strategies are employed to prevent unintended harm.
- DELWP considers the development of a communications strategy that includes awareness raising of the environmental and health benefits of clean energy in a transitioning economy, with communities in Latrobe.

Regards,



Jane Anderson

Latrobe Health Advocate