

Presentation to YVC Planning Forum

Wednesday 13th July 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to present to you today.

The Australian Wind Alliance is a community advocacy group for wind energy. Our membership is made up of farmers, wind workers, local businesses and environmental supporters. We have approximately 800 members around the country, including a number in Yass and the surrounding region. Personally, I live and work out of Bungendore. For the last few years we have paid close attention to wind development in this area, attending CCC meetings, DPE and Planning Commission meetings, so we do understand the local context well.

In a nutshell, we see wind farms as a massive economic - and social - opportunity for wind districts like Yass Valley.

We're not so one-eyed that we don't see there are some warts on the wind industry. While we do support wind energy, we formally objected to a wind farm near Tarago because of what we saw as poor community engagement. It was rejected by DPE and ultimately withdrawn by the developer.

We absolutely acknowledge that there are genuine issues that need to be resolved but there are none that we don't think are resolvable.

As a council, you have an opportunity to show leadership and secure the maximum benefit for Yass Valley residents and ratepayers by continuing to embrace the opportunities wind presents.

Wind farms are now known quantities throughout regional Australia. Many other regional centres can vouch for these benefits in their own patch - Jamestown in South Australia, Ararat and Northern Grampians in Victoria, Glen Innes Severn and Inverell in Northern NSW, to name just a few. Ratepayers and community groups in neighbouring Upper Lachlan Shire receive more than \$250,000 every year from their wind farms. This will increase dramatically when three more proposed projects are completed.

A key part of this success is that in each of these shires, wind farms receive enthusiastic support from their local mayors and councils. This means that these councils are in a strong position to work with proponents to ensure promised benefits are delivered and concerns are addressed.

I'd like to draw your attention to the Fact Sheet I've distributed:

- This is an industry that will deliver real benefits for Yass Valley. No matter what your personal feelings about wind turbines, why would Council not seek to facilitate

development that offers these tangible benefits to your residents and to your farmer ratepayers?

In terms of specific objections, I'd like to note that, despite the anecdotes you have heard, there is no solid evidence that wind farms impact on property prices. The NSW government produced a report that found exactly that and real estate agents we've spoken to have also confirmed it. (And I'm happy to provide concrete examples and \$/acre figures of properties selling around wind farms atm).

Finally, again, while I don't want to discount the concerns of the vocal people you've heard from, it's important to note that there is no groundswell of opinion against wind farms in Yass Valley.

- Locally, we have door knocked dozens of local businesses on two separate occasions in the last two years seeking their opinion on wind farms, and we can report that there is strong underlying support for wind in the local business community. However, most businesses do not want to become involved in a debate where they have customers on both sides of the argument so you are unlikely to hear directly of this support.
- A good indicator of the extent of local objection is submissions to the NSW Planning Department on wind farm development processes. For the most recent, on the Bango Wind Farm, of the 91 submissions, only 17 were lodged by Yass Valley Council residents. Of these 17, 4 were in favour and 13 objected. So of 16,000-odd people in the Yass Valley Council area, a total of 13 felt sufficiently motivated to object to the biggest project in this area. Well under 1% of the population.

I hope today's discussion will allow Council to work towards a clearer position that recognises the benefits of wind to the area and I'm happy to offer myself as a resource beyond today to provide any information you require or to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.