

Submissions
Climate Change Authority
GPO Box 787
ACT 2600

I write to highly commend the work of the Office of the National Wind Farm Commissioner and to urge that the contract of the Commissioner be renewed for a second term.

I am an emeritus professor in public health at the University of Sydney. I have had a long-standing interest in studying the phenomenon of complaints about windfarms and have published several research papers in scholarly journals as well as co-authored a book for Sydney University Press published late last year titled *Wind Turbine Syndrome: a communicated disease*.

<http://bit.ly/2rkVflm>

The book has an entire chapter (Chapter 6) devoted to considering groups and individuals who have complained about windfarms in Australia. We review the numbers and tactics of used by those who complain about wind farms in Australia, as well as examining in detail their arguments, evidence and the apparent motives of some.

I am well networked with many people connected with renewable energy in Australia. Since the time that the Office of the Wind Farm Commissioner was established I have heard nothing but praise for the changes that have resulted from his office's investigations.

Prior to the Office opening, complaints were directed at or through three main groups: owners and operators of wind farms; various arms or agencies of government, federal, state and local; and through courts. These were all characteristically highly protracted exercises where claims and counter-claims were made by the farm owners and the complainants, with each pitting their respective experts' assessments against each other. In the case of courts, financial risks of failed actions were immense and so understandably deterred legal consideration of disputes by complainants.

Deep mistrust and enmity often exists between complainants and wind energy operators, with some complainants being reasonably described as serial or even vexatious. Our book provides case studies of some of these complainants who are determined to do all they can to disrupt wind farm operation and expansion in Australia. While wind farm operators have been able to reach mutually satisfactory arrangements with some complainants, there exists core number who are committed to spreading opposition to wind farms with a frank and irrepressible agenda of disrupting their rollout.

For this reason, the importance of the work of the Commissioner, with his independence, investigatory remit, reporting responsibilities and accountability, cannot be overstated. The Commissioner's reports have confirmed that many "complaints" about wind farms are about those not even operating, and so which have no evidential basis other than worry and anxiety about the future.

Continuing investment in the Commissioner's role is likely to dramatically expedite the process confidence of the wind industry in investing in this critical component of renewable industry, so essential for Australia in its obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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April 9 2018