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Dr Ian Holland
The State Senate
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT
2600

12 November 2012

Dear Dr Holland,

***Inquiry into the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment (Excessive Noise from Wind Farms) Bill 2012***

Windlab thanks the Senate Committee for the opportunity to respond to submissions it received in relation to its Inquiry into the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment (Excessive Noise from Wind Farms) Bill 2012. Windlab supports the CEC submission on this amendment.

Windlab concurs with Mr Arnott's statement that he at one point considered hosting turbines on the Rugby Project and as part of that process was supplied a draft wind farm lease agreement. After Mr Arnott had decided that he did not want to participate in the project, the participating landholders worked together to conduct due diligence on the lease documentation over an extended period, including procuring detailed legal advice at our expense. The final contract was changed significantly in favour of the interests of the landholders, as would be expected in a normal commercial negotiation.

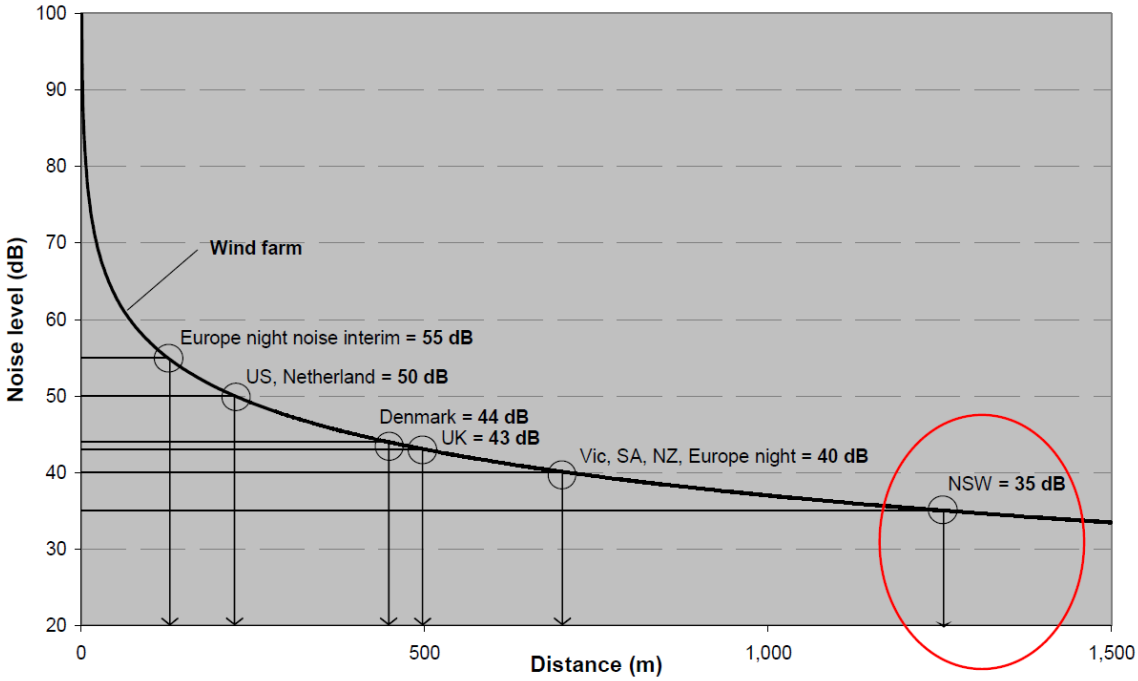
As part of a process to ensure landholders were well informed, the company hosted the landholder group on a tour of Capital Wind Farm and a separate personal tour for Mr Arnott and his farm manager. This trip aimed to make sure Mr Arnott had first-hand experience of noise at a variety of setbacks, most notably 1200m which would have been the closest turbine to his Haniminno residence.

Following release of the 2011 NSW draft Planning Guidelines: Wind Farms, and with the benefit of information gathered in consultation with community members such as Mr Arnott, a significant redesign occurred, reducing the project size by almost half. Both his Haniminno and his Little Plains Homesteads are now at least 2000m from proposed turbines, which will significantly reduce the visual and acoustic impact of the wind farm on his properties. Should the project be approved, the noise levels from the wind farm at Mr Arnott's country residences will fall well below the strict standards set by the NSW noise regulations. These regulations are stringent by both World and National standards as shown in the extract below (Draft NSW Planning Guidelines, Wind Energy, Dec 2011).

Yours Sincerely

Roger Price
Chief Executive Office

***Figure 2 – Comparison of NSW baseline A-weighted noise criteria with other jurisdictions***




**Note 1.** Noise setback distances are indicative only and do not account for site specific conditions which may increase or decrease the noise level. In NSW noise setback distances typically vary between 0.8 – 1.5 km due to project and site-specific factors such as turbine configuration, design, intervening topography and vegetation.

**Note 2.** Both the SA and NZ guidelines also set lower levels for areas of high amenity which attract a criteria of 35 dB(A). The SA guidelines apply 35 dB(A) in land use zones where the focus of the zoning is on "rural living" rather than primary production. In NSW, most wind farm applications have tended to be in areas where the focus of the land use zoning has been on primary production (e.g. RU1 Primary Production) rather than rural living (e.g. R5 Large Lot Residential).