

Oral Submission
in support of Submission No 537
before the Board of Inquiry
Turitea Call – In

Judy Milne

1. I wish to speak from the point of view of one who has lived for most of her life in the Kairanga district, in the so-called “visually insignificant” zone of visual influence of the existing windfarms, as well as of the proposed Turitea windfarm. Mr Wyatt, in his Assessment of Environmental Effects – Landscape and Visual Effects, places this zone in the 8.5km to 18km distance from a windfarm.

2. There has been little discussion of the influence of the Turitea windfarm in this zone in spite of the recognition in Mr Wyatt’s document that the ranges are an obvious feature when viewed from the flat alluvial plain (P37), and that some effects on the skyline will be more than minor (P41).

In the main, discussion has been limited to effects within the Palmerston North City Council territory. However, the Tararua Ranges are a shared landscape, which to the west is visible beyond the city limits into the Manawatu District. and further.

3. From the “visually insignificant” zone, we are not affected by such aspects as noise, traffic or proximity. However, being further back from the ranges enhances three very important points in relation to the windfarm:-

a) The full impact of the number of turbines is evident.

Kairanga and the surrounding districts are in zones A,B,C,and D of the mapping visibility parameters used by Mr Wyatt, in which the whole of 51 to 79 turbines will be visible, and the swept path of the blades of up to the total number of turbines This is on top of the high proportion of those in the existing windfarms already visible.

b) The full impact of the effects on the skyline will be seen.

The skyline we see stretches from the Ruahine ranges above Kimbolton and Apiti to the highest peaks in the Tararuas inland from Otaki. The parts of the skyline nearest to us are those already covered in turbines, or proposed to be.

Mr Wyatt finds it easier to use the term “more than minor”, rather than “major”, when describing this effect.

c) The full impact of cumulative effects will be obvious.

Already we see approximately 13kms of turbines strung out along the skyline, with an often tangled mass of uncoordinated movement below. Turitea will add another 12kms, making a total of around 25kms of skyline and foothills covered in turbines

4. I have been trying to marry the zones of visual influence used by Mr. Wyatt with my own perceptions, formed from living and working in this zone. I recognise that Mr Wyatt’s zones are guidelines only.

In this zone, the turbines are described as:-

“a small element in the landscape” – I disagree because, from that distance, as more of the view is sky above and flat plain in the foreground, the eyes are immediately drawn to the ranges as the most obvious and distinctive feature. The proportion of the turbines to the ranges in the existing windfarms is high. The lack of cityscape and clutter in the foreground also enhances the strength of the topography of the ranges, and the noticability of the turbines.

“often hard to discern” – the term “often easy to discern” is equally applicable, as “often” does not mean “usually” or “more often”. The towers and blades, whether rotating or still, of the existing windfarms, even in Te Rere Hau, are easily seen. Tararua and Te Apiti show up especially when the cloud behind is slate grey and the blades are facing the afternoon or setting sun.

“imperceptible in all but exceptionally clear light conditions” – we certainly do have conditions when the term “imperceptible” could apply, especially during strong equinoctial winds or times of low cloud. However, there must be a high incidence of

what must be exceptionally clear light conditions in the Manawatu, because the turbines are often very visible. Perhaps Mr Wyatt's Australian atmosphere contains more dust, smoke, and heat shimmer than ours, making his zones of influence less relevant in our conditions.

5. Arena Manawatu, at approximately 11kms distance, is in the same "visually insignificant" zone of Tararua 3. The same terms would be applied to what you can view from here.

Arena Manawatu would be near the outer edge of the "potentially noticeable" zone of the proposed Turitea windfarm, in which foreground vegetation and intervening landform can reduce the degree to which the turbines are noticeable .

We have a good view of the ranges from here, but so do many of the parks, sports fields and roads in Palmerston North. I do not consider "potentially noticeable" is an apt description.

6. Mt Stewart, at approximately 25kms from the existing windfarms, is outside the "visually insignificant" zone, where the supporting tower is considered "imperceptible" and the swept path of the rotor is "only visible in some lighting conditions". I don't have particularly good eyesight, but yes, I often see the towers of the existing shorter turbines, as well as the blades, and, in good conditions, even the turning of the little Te Rere Hau blades.

7. Four generations of my family have worked and raised their children in Kairanga. We have a love and great respect for our hills, which have always been a part of our lives, there as our backbone, a reference point, or a view to take in and reflect upon. Phrases like, "there must be heavy rain on the other side", important when living in an area prone to flooding by the Manawatu river, "there's a skiff coming up the hills",

warning us of the likelihood of showers, “the hills are drying up”, or just “come and look at what the hills are doing”, to share views of remarkable colour, shadow and lighting, are, amongst others, a part of our everyday vocabulary.

The book “Tararua, the Story of a Mountain Range” by Chris Maclean, has at its beginning, “Introduction: A Sense of Place”

A sense of place is just what our ranges give to us. We are reluctant to have their quiet solidarity lost behind a mass of more man- made towers and spinning blades.

8. Horizons Regional Policy Statement, the current operating document, recognizes the skyline of the Tararuas as an outstanding natural feature or landscape of regional importance, and provides for the protection of its values in Policy 8.3 p i (p 102). I fully endorse this, but am saddened that, in spite of this policy, the values of the Tararuas have been, to date, largely ignored, and sacrificed in the race for the windfarm dollar.

