

# **Board of Inquiry**

**(Turitea Wind-farm Proposal)**

**Submission of:**

**Michael Feyen**

**(Palmerston North Citizen and City  
Councillor)**

**Palmerston North – Manawatu**

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## INTRODUCTION

My Name is Michael Feyen. I am a 52 year old born and bred Palmerstonian and proud of it. My parents immigrated to New Zealand from Holland in 1952 and as a family we have been here ever since. I in turn bought up my children here in the city as well. I currently operate an award winning tourism business (Footprints) which is outdoors adventure, conference and events based. I socialize and work extensively in the Manawatu, Tararua and Horowhenua Districts. The Tararua Ranges are an integral part of my business and personal life and I have supplied thousands of people, from all walks of life, positive staff development and social experiences using this area in a number of different ways over the last 20 years.

I went to Our Lady of Lourdes School, Monrad Intermediate and Queen Elizabeth College all of which are local schools. I am an electrician by trade and worked for the then NZR here in Palmerston North for 9 years. I was then a front line Policeman in Palmerston North and Pahiatua (Tararua District) for 9 years. After leaving the Police through injury I studied at Massey University for 4 years full time and achieved a first class honours degree in Social Work and was awarded a Massey Scholarship.

Upon completion of this degree I set up a company called Footprints which focuses on staff and business development using the outdoors as a key 'grounding' component. Over time Footprints also became involved in conference and event organisation at a local and national level. A big focus was (and still is) to get companies, organisations and groups in general to come to the Manawatu, Tararua and surrounds for their experience. My clientele includes significant corporate, cultural, business and social service organisations from throughout the country as well as locally.

My work has positively changed the perspective of the Manawatu in the minds of many of these people. I always highlight to everyone what Manawatu means in Maori theology as I understand it. Manawatu means 'The heart stood still' and is in the context of one being in awe at what they have seen with the emphasis on the sheer beauty of the Manawatu River and Ranges. Just like falling in love. It is with this passion and belief that I speak to you as the commissioners on this panel. I have always felt a strong sense of 'guardianship' towards this area I call home in the land of the Rangitane.

I am therefore making this submission as a citizen, guardian and an elected city councillor for the Takaro Ward ('To Play') on the Palmerston North City Council. I have taken the time and the interest to try and further Palmerston North in its future establishment of its living standards, urban design, environmental standards and

sustainable authority for our own region. You will not be surprised why I am in total **opposition to the proposed Turitea Wind farm** in any form, and that there should be no Industrial Wind-farms whatsoever from south of the Pahiatua Track within the boundaries of Palmerston North City and the wider Manawatu District to the boundary with Horowhenua.

Horowhenua have a forward thinking council who are protecting their regions highlands (the Tararua Ranges) in their district plan from industrial wind-turbine projects. We as a district (Manawatu) must ensure that people understand exactly what is at stake from all aspects before a decision of this Board of Inquiry decides our environmental future. There is much at stake in how we as a city will progress after this decision. We also need to protect our region for our future generations and need to get this right as has been the case in the Horowhenua.

As you will see by my submission, I will challenge simply because it doesn't make any sense to completely compromise, in anyway, the last remnants of our ranges, native bush, birds, freshwater native and introduced fish and mountain ranges freshwater in the confines of our city. The huia bird was made extinct in the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges and is only one of the bad things we have done and continue to do to our environment. Now is the time to stop.

I have been in the company of so many exceptional local people over the last 3-4 years who have become our local and regional 'experts' in what is suitable and appropriate for our Tararuas and surrounding environment. To me these people are the ones we should have faith in for the future of our region. As you will have already witnessed the calibre of these people in terms of their knowledge, resolve, dedication and commitment in so many areas is fantastic and highly credible.

Huatau Marae for example are a very important source of information that needs to be listened to and seriously considered for the future of the environment of the Tararua Ranges.

I am not only supportive of these people but also of the hundreds of people who have stopped me on the streets and who have attended meetings who clearly had no initial knowledge as to the extent of the coverage of the Tararuas with turbines or the reasons as to why so many turbines could even find their way onto our hills.

## HOW I CAME TO BE INVOLVED

1. I am currently a Palmerston North City Councillor representing the Takaro Ward and decided to stand for council directly as a result of the Palmerston North City Councils original application to change the status of the Turitea Reserve to allow developments such as industrial wind-farms in its water catchment and surrounds.
2. This process was instigated and driven by the then CEO Paul Wylie and was just one of a number of initiatives that were causing much consternation with many people in Palmerston North at the time. The subsequent behaviour of the PNCC in relation to the Turitea Reserve change of status submissions process coupled with the lack of adequate balanced information being supplied to its citizens by way of the city publication (The Square Circular) and The Manawatu Standard relating to the pros and cons of such a developments galvanised my resolve to become an elected member of council and to ask questions from within the system.
3. I believed that the public were not being truthfully and honestly informed from the outset in what was going on in the Tararua Ranges and why? I worked very hard to become elected and was the highest polling candidate in Takaro.
4. I thought at the time, and still do that this was an extremely negative direction for the city to be pursuing and that there was so much at stake in terms of loss of environment and skyline for our future generations with no real gain for the city. At this time Tararua 1, 2 (completed) and 3 (consented); Te Apiti and Te Rere Hau (consented) had already transformed much of our beautiful skyline, impacted negatively on many residents and contributed so much sediment run-off to our water-ways. How much more did we need to give to satisfy the hunger of the 'national cause' to combat climate change?
5. I knew that we had approximately 25 kilometres of Tararua Ranges in the city limits of which 14 kilometres were already or about to be covered with industrial wind turbines of all shapes and sizes. As we now know they are actually now covered. The lack of uniformity in the size and scale of the turbines already gives the ranges a look of being a wind turbine junkyard on a massive scale and is having a huge direct effect on so many people who live within 1-10 kilometres of the turbines.
6. I pitied the amount of genuine people at Ashhurst and Fitzherbert East Road and surrounds who have had their lives negatively changed by the encroachment of wind turbines and now a whole new sector of residents were going to face the

same prospect.

7. I was personally a supporter of industrial wind farm generated electricity, but I also believed that our regions (Manawatu and Tararua Districts) contribution to this cause, at a national level, was now high enough and had long ago reached the 'tipping point' of excess. We had already exceeded what should be expected of any region with the provision of wind powered industrial parks already in operation, consented to but not started or were close to completion in terms of construction.
8. I had by now changed from being a YIMBY (Yes in my back-yard) to a NIMBY (Not in my back Yard).
9. We, as a district had already lost any sense of balance in retaining much of our beloved Tararua Ranges and had quickly become over represented in terms of industrial wind-park developments that are better suited to being strategically placed over other parts of the country to share the national load and to be closer to the actual point of use. This concept is well practiced overseas but does not seem to be applied in New Zealand. This is not the only area in the country that has wind. We are a south Pacific Island and there is wind on a constant basis on almost any hill range you would want to look at which vary by only a few points in terms of velocity and constancy.
10. There was to me a very cogent argument as to why New Zealand should not be racing into turbine industrial parks anywhere in the country for power. The excessive power of the wind in this area necessitates constant heavy machinery in the ranges for a cycle of never ending repair work to the structures which in turn causes even more damage to the environment of the ranges.
11. I was and still am hugely worried at the possibility of there literally being no untouched Tararua Ranges left if **any** if this application by Mighty River Power (MRP) is accepted by this panel. The cumulative effect of so many turbines on the Tararua Ranges around Palmerston North is completely out of balance and I believe this industrialisation of our natural resources will have a permanent negative effect on future generations in terms of the lack of green space around the city.

12. The social impact on 10% of our population who live very close to this site and were awarded building consents to live in rural areas and to be guardians of their plots cannot be understated. Never did they imagine their space would be invaded by industrial giants who only a few will benefit from. We will become a city surrounded on three sides by industrial zones and future generations will have no concept of what a horizon looks like that is natural and not industrial. Not only will our heart miss a beat it will 'stop' as all of our beauty will have been affected - our ranges, skyline and water ways.
13. As I alluded to earlier, I became very interested in local body politics after viewing the initial advertisement in the Manawatu Standard that the council was looking at the idea of changing the purpose of the Turitea Reserve so that it could entertain the thought of putting wind turbines in what had previously been a restricted area around our water catchment.
14. I could not believe what I was seeing. The Turitea Reserve area has always been restricted to only PNCC and Horizons staff and some hunters to ensure that the safety and sanctity of our water supply was not and could not be compromised and now there was talk of wind turbines in the area. The general public had always been excluded from this reserve, and rightfully so, for years to help ensure such things as faeces, sediment and general rubbish from human beings would not and could not contaminate the sanctity of our water supplies.
15. Some of the current landowners who wish to have turbines on their land (and who can blame them with the huge inducements they appear to be offered and have received already) were in fact the only human instigated polluters of our water reserve through stock effluent run-off, fertilisation practices and sediment run-off from farm tracks. Now they will also provide an even higher significant sediment run-off to add to the mix if turbines are granted. This equates to a few people having such a huge effect on so many. A forward thinking PNCC would acquire this land to further safe-guard the sanctity of our water supply. Maybe MRP would like to assist in the purchase of this land given its stated environmental stance.
16. As I had observed the amount of construction and destruction required for these types of industrial wind farms by watching the progress of the earth works for roading, concrete batching plants, central switchboard complex, tower bases, transformer bases and power pole bases during the Tararua 1 and 2 sites as well as more latterly the Te Apiti and Te Rere Hau sites, I became even more concerned about what would happen to The Tararua Ranges particularly south of the Pahiatua Track, should this level of construction take place in our city's

water reserve catchment area and surrounds. It beggars belief to hear MRP saying that they can control sediment run-off. I believe this is absolute rubbish and not possible with constructions of this magnitude.

17. It has literally been like watching a cancer slowly cover the ranges once the first resource consent had been approved at Tararua One. To this day I cannot believe this Turitea Project has even gotten this far and that the choice has now (due to a Ministerial Call In) been taken away from those who live in Palmerston North and now sits with a Board of Inquiry such as this. Due to Government interference and poorly applied RMA processes we do not even have the destiny of our region in our own hands. There should be no more turbines consented to in the Tararua Ranges.

### **THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

1. Once the public notice had been advertised in the media the PNCC Management, Destination Manawatu and Mighty River Power (MRP) then began a full-on one-sided 'informational' campaign in relation to the Turitea Reserve Change of Purpose proposal for wind turbines. There was very little 'real' information available and everything that was being portrayed was geared towards ensuring positive views and outcomes to the unsuspecting city's residents.
2. Examples of this included promoting the concept that Grey Kiwis and North Island Robin returning to the Tararuas as well as 'ecological enhancements' to the water supply catchment reserve and Harding's Park as a result of the funding received by council for allowing turbines into the Turitea Reserve (refer to Square circular-Mayor Tanguay's comments).
3. Local submissions where called for and initially most of the response was positive given the very slanted information that was being presented by MRP and PNCC (refer again to Square Circular) and even The Manawatu Standard which at this point had no investigative journalist involved in writing articles on the subject. If one views the 'positive responses' they are nearly all single sentence or a paragraph responding to the thought of native birds and fauna returning to our hill-sides and the establishment of an eco-park.
4. An 'informational' tour was organised by PNCC, Destination Manawatu and MRP to take people from the Aokautere School by coach and army vehicles to the proposed Turitea site along the top of the Tararua Ranges, south of the Pahiatua Track.

5. I remind you that I was not a city councillor at this time but an interested and concerned member of the public.
6. The tour could only be described as a propaganda exercise devised to give as little information as possible as to consequences both good and bad relating to the siting and positioning of wind-farms. There was no balance provided at all.
7. One thing that really stuck out to me was the MRP representative (who appeared to be in charge on the day) rolling his 'eyes' at me when I asked him a question pertaining to the effects there would be on the inhabitants of the Turitea area given how close many people were living to the defined area and would the water quality be safe. When I challenged him about his behaviour he literally panicked and spent the next 10 minutes saying that he had not meant to roll his eyes. His (as well as other MRP staff present) attitude to me and others was dismissive of what many had to say and was distinctly just going through the motions.
8. For many, a far more appropriate informational tour should have included North Range Road upon which there were already completed wind-farm sites to view and therefore be able to gauge and visibly see what was required in terms of earth-works and construction. It felt like PNCC management and MRP had already struck a deal and all they needed to do was appease the 'yokels'. It is interesting to note that the council over this time had also even morphed in a wind turbines logo as the new emblem of the city. This emblem does not represent the Manawatu and most certainly did not find its way to the council table for approval as is required. I guess it was created as subliminal marketing by PNCC as no-one in council can answer my question on how it came to be except to say it was the most senior management of the time.
9. As a result of this appalling public relations exercise and the realisation of just how many people were getting very worried about proceedings and lack of balanced information relating to wind-farms in general, I subsequently helped develop a set of questions which many of us believed needed to be answered in relation to a number of aspects involved in the construction of an industrial wind farm in the Turitea Reserve and the then Motorimu application. By this time our local media were already avoiding a balanced approach of covering this topic.
10. I began to exhort Helen Harvey a writer at the time for The Manawatu Standard to take an interest in the proposal as the impacts on the future of the city's resources and environment were going to be huge. She subsequently wrote, what I and many others believe to be, the only qualitative investigative articles produced by this newspaper. Her articles spanned a relatively short period of

time before she left the area. I have my own views on the reasons for this and will give these under the guidance of this panel if required. In any event her departure was the end of any consistent serious questioning from all perspectives on the proposed Turitea or Motorimu wind-farms. Latterly since the 'Call in' was announced The Manawatu Standard has become more active but to I feel too little to late.

11. Many of those concerned about these matters also wrote letters to the editor but soon started complaining of their letters not making it into the paper. They were stone-walled. I might add that for many who spoke to council officers and wanted information they found it very difficult to get any information, if at all, and at one point some were told they would have to pay for 'officers' time. I was also attending numerous meetings relating to two wind-farm developments that were being proposed and these (lack of balanced media coverage) were a constant source of discussion by many attending. Many thought that the newspaper must be concerned for its advertising revenue given the PNCC, MRP and contractors are their clients in this respect. Who knows?
12. These numerous meetings concerned the Turitea and Motorimu developments which were both to be located south of the Pahiatua Track. I was very impressed by the passion, commitment and resolve of all those involved to become 'experts' and gain knowledge through countless hours of research into wind-farms and their effects. In essence it was almost like a giant team-building exercise with many people from diverse back-grounds combining together to 'ask the questions' which their city representatives should have done and been doing on their behalf.
13. During this time I paid for a double page in The Tribune, dated Sunday, September 3, 2006 which is (produce as evidence) a local community free newspaper with the numerous questions that a number of us felt should be asked, answered or at least looked on behalf of the unknowing and uninformed public at the time. Most of these questions have still not been answered and as there are still no 'best practice guidelines' in place either regionally or nationally are not likely to be at this point in time.
14. This Inquiry Panel can start the ball rolling by stopping this proposal and requesting a moratorium nation-wide until these questions which are now three years old and still unanswered have been attended to by the New Zealand Government.
15. I believe that we need something upon which the Resource Management Act can base itself on to stop these on-going commissions which go over the same

information time and time again simply because we as a nation do not have these best practice guidelines. This will save much grief to other communities in other districts who will face the same problems we have if they fall into the realm of 'the National Interest'.

16. The afore-mentioned set of questions and supporting articles in The Tribune definitely generated much more interest with residents as there was a large influx of late submissions opposing PNCC's plan to change the purpose of the Turitea Reserve which were submitted just prior to the closing date for the lodging of submissions. These questions also increased the number of submitters to the Motorimu project which ultimately got stopped. Before this article most submissions received by the PNCC were supportive as a result of the information provided by PNCC Square Circular and comments with the 'I would love to see kiwis back in the ranges' genre. Wouldn't we all like to see that?
17. The Change of Purpose to the Turitea Reserve submissions presented to the Palmerston North City Councillors, for most of those present, were a complete farce with councillors seemingly hell bent on making sure this proposal went through. There were very few submitters who spoke 'for' the change of purpose but many who eloquently and with knowledge spoke against. I felt at the time and still do that councillors must simply not have been getting sufficient quality information from PNCC Senior Management to be so fixated on the outcome of changing the purpose of the reserve.
18. There was hardly a question asked of submitters by any of the councillors. They simply did not listen to the many thought provoking submissions that were made. As one councillor stated (now our Mayor), "There's gold in them thar hills". The levels of predetermination at this time by councillors was felt by most interested parties and was based on the perceived self serving information being provided to them by the then, senior management and MRP.
19. My discussions with a number of City Councillors up to this point had indicated to me that they had very limited knowledge of either the positive or negative impacts to the area which were likely to occur with installing yet another wind-farm, let alone the huge impact on nearby residential areas.
20. They seemingly had no idea about the huge negative impacts to those who live within 1-10 kilometres of wind-farms, the ecological damage to flora and fauna, erosion through earth-works and turbine vibration, the visual effects of covering the Tararuas with renewable energy constructions on ridgelines and the huge amount of roading to be set up to accommodate the huge increase of heavy traffic on rural roads. But they did know that there would be Kiwis back in the

ranges if the turbines went in.

21. For many who tried over the next few years to get information from PNCC it was often 'mission impossible' and topped off with a terse unhelpful attitude and long delays. It was a 'them and us' attitude established by PNCC management and MRP. I found that once I was elected as a councillor this did not initially change much. I requested information at council workshops on a number of occasions but there was always an excuse or 'somebody else like MRP' knows that and we don't, and you need to ask them type of attitude. Management who had been involved in the initial public consultation had a very cool and evasive attitude towards me. I advised my concerns to our new CEO Paddy Clifford in relation to this.
22. I told Mr Clifford that there had previously been, in my opinion, a severe lack of information to both the public and the council upon which the councillors in particular had based previous decisions. I was also very interested in ascertaining if the previous CEO (Paul Wylie) and his officers knew of the extent of the wind-farm outside of the reserve. In other words, did they know that turbines would also be on surrounding farm land and to what extent? If they did it appears they never passed this information on to the city councillors.
23. There was finally a specific councillor workshop conducted in relation to the Turitea Win Turbines which was most unhelpful and I found the council officers involved to be either uninformed or evasive. Getting information, even though I was now a city councillor, was like pulling teeth and I found the whole thing terribly frustrating. It took a lot of talking to even get copies of the PNCC agreement documents with MRP. These documents had to be signed for by councillors who wanted them, for security and confidentiality reasons. I was thankful to our new CEO for beginning the process of 'openness', transparency and access towards interested councillors.

### **HOW PROTECTED ARE WE AS A REGION?**

1. The perception for many, including myself, in this region is that there is no real protection for regions such as the Manawatu when the government policy clearly wants as many wind-farms as possible to generate an income through carbon credits, to meet its Kyoto Protocol commitments via its SOE's. There is, in my opinion a definite conflict of interest on the part of the Government and no real

protection for regions and their communities when it comes to wind-farms.

2. During my two years in council I have attended a number of National Conferences as a delegate on behalf of the city that have focussed on Planning, RMA, water ecology and so forth to educate myself as best as possible in these particular areas. I have attended the 2008 and 2009 National Planning Conferences, the 2008 Local Government New Zealand Conference and most recently the 2009 National RMAL (Resource Management Act Legislation) Conference.
3. The 2008 Planning Conference (sponsored by Meridian another SOE) was particularly interesting as there were workshops for helping attendees try to understand the government's and business positions on carbon credits and how it applied to government, business and councils. I am sure that if you were to interview the many who attended you would ascertain that there was only confusion and little in the way of understanding at the time. These workshops to me were a farce with most not understanding what the government policy actually was about at the time.
4. I asked a question of then Minister Mallard at his Conference opening speech regarding what was in place to protect regions such as the Manawatu from wind turbine inundation and the sanctity of its water supply. He did not answer the question at all and this was very much noticed by the 350 plus people who were there. Many commented on this fact to me during the course of the conference. The question is, 'How could he answer when there was no policy then or now and the government wants the income it derives from this new industry?'
5. The 2009 Conference was sponsored by Mighty River Power (SOE) and I focussed on water ecology issues specifically relating to sediment run-off which occurs through major constructions such as wind-farm developments. Professor Mike Joy (a local resident and an expert in his field) who has made a submission to this panel provided an excellent lecture which included the negative effects of sediment run-off on fresh-water ways and the fish that live in these environments.
6. I found it interesting that two large power providers, both of which are State Owned Enterprises (Government owned) and in the business of acquiring land use for their purposes were sponsoring planning conferences such as these.
7. The 2009 National RMAL (Resource Management Act Legislation) Conference was frankly scary with the first part of the new legislation applied from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2009. Many workshops, though not stated in the conference itinerary,

used wind-farms as a discussion topic for the proposed changes as examples. I was amazed at how many I spoke to who were present that viewed this new legislation as just a way for central government to fast track developments such as wind-farms, roading etc no matter the real consequences.

8. The new Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is a frightening beast when you consider it has been implemented to simplify and speed up processes to achieve crisper decisions in a more timely way' (Minister Nick Smith). The old RMA which I thought was good legislation – just poorly applied, has now been vilified as an impediment to progress by a self serving government.
9. Under the EPA the community will now have very little real opportunity to have a say in what is best for their 'living arrangement' especially if the government describes a project as 'in the national interest'. The EPA simply brings these matters even more 'in-house' in that it sits within the Ministry for the Environment and will no longer have any real autonomy. It is in reality a consent processing authority within the Ministry of the Environment and I believe just be for the rubber stamping of the Government will to impose such projects upon districts such as ours. Yes the government truly does want to show 'leadership' for the environment but only on its terms.
10. **As an aside**, one thing I learned at the various workshops was that Commisioners (we were told by commissioners on a question and answer panel) did not like 'too much passion' being expressed during hearings by submitters and also took a dim view of those they considered to be 'obsessive'. I consider a number of experts I have heard at these hearings as being decidedly obsessive about their evidence and therefore no different from 'layman' submitters except they can have the cover of being described as an 'expert'.
11. Many people do become very passionate about what could happen to their lives, livelihoods and living arrangements when these types of projects present themselves. How else but with 'passion' can you express yourself when the stakes are so high?
12. When you consider the publicly stated payments made by both Meridian and MRP to the government it is patently clear why the government wishes to continue this lucrative income stream, no matter the consequences to regions such as the Manawatu. It is not simply about the provision of electricity power (whether it is need or not) but seemingly more about the income the government can derive from the more turbines it can put up anywhere.

13. For example, Government owned profit making SOEs (MRP and Meridian) can establish wind-farm developments with relative ease as they have what appear to be unlimited financial resources and a tunnel vision of establishing wind-farms in some regions, no matter the cost to the environment or the social and economic impact on those who oppose for a myriad of reasons.
14. It is frankly scary how much money is available to MRP to wear down all opponents whether they are individuals, groups, organisations or councils to achieve its (Government's) goals. It has cost PNCC close to \$1 million so far just on this 'Call in' hearing and council has also had to reduce the levels of attendance by senior legal council to try and hold the costs down a little for the rate-payer. Having sat through large periods of these hearings I have felt the long durations of questioning by MRP's legal team of not only it's own experts but the cross examination of experts giving a counter viewpoint has been clearly excessive. The Australian expert on Landscape is a classic example of this.
15. They (MRP-SOE's) have also offered inducements such as buying the Motorimu dept and using this as a bargaining chip to mitigate cumulative effects. This factor alone shows me that MRP are concerned about the fast growing public perception and understanding of cumulative effects and is just trying to water down the extent of these cumulative effects that will exist with any further wind-farms south of the Pahiatua Track.
16. I am also aware of the massive inducements to land-owners by way of financial arrangements that are simply too good to turn down for turbines on their properties. Also the numerous recreational incentives such as high cost events, trips, accommodation and so forth. I have been advised that one of the 'trips' for land owners was an all expenses paid excursion to the international Formula 2 race meeting at Taupo. I believe Mr. Poff and MRP can enlighten you more on this. I also believe that all of these inducements should be made public and that MRP should divulge this information. It is easy to see why community relationships in rural areas affected have declined so much.
17. Those opposing have certainly not been accorded anything in the way of inducements but have been lumbered with huge costs through paying taxes, rates, power accounts, legal fees and for their own time related to this matter. Having sat through these hearings the promised payments to these land owners must be huge given they (the land-owners) have had paid legal council at these hearings for lengthy durations of these hearings. I would like to know if MRP is contributing or paying for this legal council in anyway either directly or as part of their contracts with land-owners? It has cost the PNCC close to \$1 million dollars. One has to wonder if MRP are generously going to pay for this legal

representation as well as a sign of good-will no matter the outcome.

18. For many in the community, including myself, the personal financial cost has been high. There have been hundreds of hours going to meetings and hearings. Personally there have been hundreds of hours of reading, research, attending National Planning Conferences, RMAL Conferences and writing submissions such as this, as well as just plain old thinking about the situation. I feel utterly worn out and have very little confidence in the entire process. I am hopeful that this panel will be the 'cavalry' that turns up just in time to save the heroes from destruction.
19. Clearly, if the government owns a development, sets the national energy and electricity policies and targets, and sets the standards for the application of the Resource Management Act, and has no national best practice guidelines relating specifically to Wind farm developments, HOW IS THIS INDEPENDANT? How can members of the public believe and trust the fact that they are being protected by the RMA or anything else for that matter? It is patently clear that we as a city stand to lose our entire ranges environment in the supposed national interest. What about our region's interest? Does this not count? There is seemingly no protection for districts who have allowed electricity companies (especially SOE'S) to get a 'toe in the door'. Will the door ever be able to be closed again?
20. This coupled with the government enforcing a 'call in' mechanism to be heard by government appointed commissioners could be seen to be creating an unwanted vicious self serving circle. In fact it has created an industry in its own right, of experts of every persuasion seeking what avenue they should follow to ensure an on-going income in this new hearings industry. Most Noise experts seem to be available to organisations like MRP and Meridian but are loath to offer their services to opponents of wind-farms.
21. Landscape experts seemingly can have a 'bob each way'. IE perpetually argue for wind-farms or against wind-farms. Overseas experts for any occasion who have no knowledge of the local environment such as landscape are bought into the country to impose their expertise. I often wonder why our very own PNCC landscape architect (John Brinkley) who had gone on record stating that the Tararuas were saturated with these kinds of developments, was then immediately omitted from the assessment process by PNCC Management of the time? His professional opinion was obviously not in line with MRP or central government direction.

22. The MRP and Meridian legal teams must love this type of work and the income they generate from this line of work. So many hearings, asking the same questions, from literally the same groups of experts in front of a finite group of commissioners all because we do not have National Best Practice Guidelines in this area.
23. I believe the 'Call In' was invoked by the government through pressure from it's SOE's (MRP included) as the PNCC through a number of new (First term councillors) and staff members under a new CEO had managed to show that the process had been very murky and that there had been insufficient facts and evidence by the previous CEO and MRP to councillors upon which they based their original decision to change the status of the Turitea Reserve in the first place for the purpose of installing wind turbines.
24. Since the 2007 Local Body Elections the 'passing' by PNCC of both the Notice of Motion for an environmental officer position be established at PNCC (a first) and the Notice of Motion for the instigation of National Best Practice Guidelines for the siting and location of wind turbines was clearly indicating disquiet by more and more councillors that the relationship with PNCC and MRP was definitely open to question.
25. This, and the fact that MRP were conducting themselves in a manner which did not seem to be one of a healthy 'partnership' with PNCC through the lack of information sharing and changing the goal posts. Councillors (who were involved in the original decision) are adamant that they had not known the extent of the wind-farm and I believe the 'call in' was invoked **not** because PNCC no longer had the ability to make a decision but that PNCC were now even more in a position to make an informed decision that the Minister or SOE's would not like.
26. Once our new C.E.O (**this position is in itself is another Government imposition on local councils through the Local Government Act**) had started to get established in his role the wheels of motion started turning a little in terms of getting some answers to questions for both myself and citizens of the Manawatu whom I represent. I presented a notice of Motion for 'Best Practice Guidelines for the Location and Siting of Wind Turbines' to be established and also for the PNCC to establish a position for an Environmental Officer as we did not have one and I feel that Mr Clifford (CEO) has done a great job in at least giving the city an opportunity to make it's views known to this commission even if it is by way of a neutral stance.

27. The remit for the establishment of National Best Practice Guidelines for the siting and positioning of Wind Farm turbines subsequently made its way to the 2009 Local Government New Zealand AGM and was passed. It will at some stage be presented to Government for consideration. This will be too late for our region if you as commissioners do not call for either a moratorium until we have guidelines or simply refuse MRP's application.
28. In my opinion, had Mr. Clifford had been our city CEO at the time this whole business started it would never have gotten past the investigation stage and we would not even be sitting here talking about turbines in the water catchment. I ask the question, "Where is the accountability of city or regional CEO's who appear to have not given full facts to councillors upon which they have based their decisions"? These people seem to be able just to wander of into the mist and find another position with another council and leave behind a mess of huge proportions with no personal consequences while communities must live with the consequences.

### **CUMULATIVE VISUAL EFFECTS ON TARARUA RANGES**

1. It has been plain for all to see during the course of these hearings (particularly at Arena Manawatu) that the Tararua Ranges are spectacular and clearly has changing moods during the course of any given day. It is also very clear that a significant part of the ranges are already covered with turbines and any south of the Pahiatua track will be totally visible and give the impression on blanket cover.
2. It has also been clear to me that the visual effects literally change in a 'minute' depending on the weather conditions. One minute you can barely see the turbines and the next they are 'in your face' and look almost like they are just over the road. I have spoken to many people while watching sports events from the grandstands at this venue about the turbines whilst gazing at the Tararuas. Most had no knowledge what-so-ever that turbines were being planned for south of the Pahiatua Track. Asked if they would like to see them on this part of the horizon as well, the response in every case has been no, "We have enough" and "They're not going to let that happen are they'.
3. I participated in a petition conducted by Jan Dixon which obtained 2000 signatures in a very short time opposing more wind turbines in the Tararuas. This petition was handed to Labour M.P Ian Lees Galloway at Parliament

Buildings by Ms Dixon and supporters including myself. Signatures were gained at a rate of one every 90 seconds from people who were able to view a photo montage for the first time of what the Tararua Ranges would look like from the city with the turbines installed on them. This montage was only provided by the developers at a very late stage. It was amazing, but not surprising, to see people reactions when they realised the scale of the development and they could not sign quickly enough.

4. From whatever direction you approach the Manawatu the current turbines are visible for miles. So many people who live in neighbouring regions, let alone the Manawatu will never see the Tararua Ranges in the Palmerston North district in their natural state again if this project is given the green light in any form.
5. We have 25 kilometres of Ranges of which approximately 14 kilometres are now covered. Enough is enough we have done our share for the national cause.

## TOURISM

1. When Tararua 1 and 2 wind turbine sites were constructed I would proudly take tours to the top of the Tararuas by vehicles such as vans, buses, horseback and quads to view our contribution to renewable energy as well as provide views of the city and surrounding regions. The tracks had been widened into roads big enough to have up to three milk tankers running sided by side on them. Yes, we as a district were doing our bit for the cause of renewable energy production and reducing our carbon emissions by allowing these industrial machines into our hills. The subsequent proliferation of turbines through the construction of Te Apiti, Tararua Three and Te Rere Hau have, to many become an icon in the sense that they are now viewed as 'monuments to stupidity'.
2. Access at Te Apiti is all that is required and literally the only place people go to if they want to see a wind turbine. They can easily get close to them by themselves if they have a car.
3. The turbines are certainly not a novelty or even of any interest to overseas tourists as they have them in their own countries. They come to New Zealand to see what the 100% pure clean and green image we portray is all about. They can see industrial objects anywhere in the world. From a tourism perspective I guess we can show these wind farms in terms of how you can ruin tourism. One could argue that we can now promote how you can ruin an environment by

inundation of wind-farms on natural landscapes.

4. Locally they still hold a degree of interest but not in the sense of people spending money to come all the way to Palmerston North to view them. After all they can be seen for miles.
5. I have had no tours to specifically view wind farm industrial sites for over 5 years now. The novelty has definitely worn off. I used to run regular overnight corporate staff development horse treks which involved numerous service providers to achieve. For example caterers, entertainers, activity providers, hire companies and transport providers. The camp-site I used is now compromised by the wind turbines. The noise can be horrendous and sleeping is often compromised.
6. The owner of the property consented to 5 turbines on his property. That is his prerogative but it has ruined the clean, green relaxed feel of the area. Quad and horse treks are still conducted on occasion in this area but not expressly for the wind-farms but simply because there is no where else to go. I had used a fully operational and certified camp which will never know a quiet night again due to these turbines, but I can no longer do this for the market I serve.
7. I could therefore never understand why Destination Manawatu had so often stated that wind-farms are good for tourism without any known communication with local service providers in this field or the provision of any evidence to support these claims. Who does Destination Manawatu represent? Did Destination Manawatu represent only the PNCC with the exclusion of private stakeholders in the field of tourism? Were Destination Manawatu concerned their PNCC funding may have been compromised by offering other advice than provided by PNCC and MRP.
8. The establishment of an eco-park with the supposed financial windfall for PNCC from this development is fatally flawed. I have been informed in council workshops that there is no guarantee that this money will be spent in this area of Harding's Park. Why even have an eco-park in an industrial area in the first place? This beggars belief and given the 'call in' cost to PNCC there will be no money for it anyway.

## NOISE FREQUENCIES

1. So much evidence has been provided at these hearings in this regard. The people of Fitzherbert East Road and surrounds, Ashhurst and Balance Valley Road and surrounds would be good people to listen to as for many their rural quality lifestyles have been hugely compromised. The residents surrounding Makara can also offer salient advice as well now that they are having the same negative experiences.
2. From personal experiences I have often stayed with friends at the top of the Tararuas and also on the base of the foothills on the Tararua district side of the ranges. For me there is absolutely no argument of the negative noise impact the existing turbines have made upon these areas and its residents. On many occasions the noise is very apparent, often intrusive and restful sleep often compromised.
3. It sounds like a train coming but it never arrives. It is a noise one can even feel. It is like the bass noise that emanates from noisy parties.
4. Without any doubt these consequences will be heard and felt by many people who live anywhere near where the proposed Turitea wind turbines will be situated.

## ECOLOGICAL

1. I have grave ecological concerns regarding the tributaries which lead from developments in the Tararua Ranges and into the Manawatu River system in general in terms, of sediment run-off from roading and construction.
2. The PNCC undertook the harvesting of a forestry block on South Range Road which was ostensibly because the trees had matured but was also to clear land for the proposed wind farm turbines. The trees were of appalling quality as they had never been looked after by way of good forestry practices such as pruning. They were however a fantastic nursery cover for natives trees that had grown up to a height of 7 metres beneath them. These trees were bull-dozed into the ground and lost during the harvesting of the pines.
3. The city had many acres of native trees growing there but the removal of the pines laid waste to them all. At the time I tried very hard to stop this forestry from happening. On the one hand the wind-turbines were to give PNCC an income to create an ecological park for native species plantings to occur and on the other hand we mowed down an already established native tree environment

that could easily have become our eco-park to make way for the prospect of turbines being erected in this area. The forestry practices were appalling and caused serious damage to South Range Road as well as massive sediment run-off into waterways and ultimately the Manawatu River.

4. I believe that given PNCC and Horizons poor management of these negative impacts to the environment, one must ask how are they going to control and management sediment run-off on a scale that will occur with the introduction of turbines to the areas in question? Simply put they have shown no expertise in this particular area thus far. How will PNCC or MRP absolutely guarantee that there will be no sediment runoff into the waterways, tributaries and Manawatu River during the construction phase if this proposal is accepted?
5. The constant repairs to existing turbines protracts the damage caused to the roads, sediment run-off and makes one wonder if the conditions are to extreme for the quality of the turbines themselves to be there in the first place. Heavy machinery such as large cranes and trucks are required for this type of work. Recently a very large crane crashed over a bank necessitating even more heavy equipment in the ranges. The truth is that there will always be heavy equipment in the ranges as repairs and maintenance is a constant factor relating to wind turbine sites.

## **SOCIAL IMPACT**

1. It has become very clear to me that even now that the general public, has a very limited understanding of the impact of the Wind Farm Industrial sites which are appearing at such a fast pace already, in the Tararua Ranges overlooking Palmerston North. In my opinion, the education of the public by PNCC, MRP the applicants and Central Government in relation to wind power generation, both the positive and adverse effects, has not been anywhere sufficient or appropriate.
2. The whole picture has purposefully not been outlined clearly enough. It would appear that this lack of information is to help ensure their (MRP & Central Government) own progress through the resource consent process (es) in relation to the Turitea Reserve and other proposed sites through out New Zealand.
3. Essentially Central Government are no longer in a position to impartially represent the best interests of the inhabitants of the Palmerston North electoral area in terms of unbiased assistance, as they are in a position of a conflict of interest.

4. I object to a consultation process, whereby discussions and promises made to landowners, that wind-farms are imminent before the public are even asked to contribute their thoughts. What this did was to create an impression in the minds of landowners that they are in for a financial windfall and that contractors gain the belief that there is a lot of work coming their way and so on. Off course when other people begin to question the process and the wind-farm looks like it may not happen, this sets these different interest groups against each other. Whole rural communities have fragmented and come into conflict as a result.
5. Citizens who believe that they will be negatively affected have spent countless hours worrying about what is going to happen to them and how things will change for them. They have also spent countless hours and resources as well as their energy trying to gain knowledge about all aspects of wind turbines and their effects both good and bad. Many are exhausted and feel that there is no real protection or interest in their plight. With a little communication, collaboration and true consultation in the early stages this whole predicament would not have had to happen. This has been a public relations disaster for our area from beginning to this point and many people have suffered emotionally and financially as a result.
6. The amazing amount of research by members of our Palmerston North society in the fields of culture, acoustics, vibrations, turbine efficiency, impacts on environment, impacts on flora and fauna, impact on residential areas, bird strike, health, general social well-being etc. is staggering considering it was all voluntary. The gained wisdom of these people must be taken notice of by the Panel as they represent our local population and they have a genuine interest in what is best for our residents. Their findings are far superior to any information PNCC had when it went into this contract with Mighty River Power and I would submit that MRP have been remiss in coming forward with information at the time that may have resulted in a different outcomes for them had PNCC been aware of this information.
7. Palmerston North is heavily promoted as The Knowledge City. Knowledge comes in many forms and I humbly submit that very little constructive balanced dialogue and information sharing had been forthcoming from the original PNCC CEO, central government and the developers (MRP) to the wider community of Palmerston North in relation to this matter. In fact many people who live in a close proximity to the proposed sites have only been informed by those who have questioned what is happening and to why it is happening.

8. The current information sharing provided by the developers in particular indicates a disregard and disrespect for the intellect and knowledge of many persons in our city who are interested in a progressive and well managed future using our natural resources more appropriately for Palmerston North.
9. I believe that the RMA, City Plan and District Plan do not appear to have solid provisions to avoid the over development of industrial wind turbine farms. There does not appear to be any specific statutory guidelines to stop this problem. It is now all up to this panel. Say no to any development regarding this proposal and recommend a national moratorium on the installation of wind turbines anywhere until there are National Best Practise Guidelines for the Siting and Location of wind turbines.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST?**

1. The perception for many is one of a conflict of interest on the part of the Government. For example Government owned profit making SOEs who can establish wind-farm developments. If the government owns or encourages a development, and sets energy and electricity policies and targets, and sets the standards for Resource Management Act consents, and has no best national best practice guidelines relating specifically to Wind farm developments, HOW IS THIS INDEPEDANT? How can members of the public believe and trust the fact that they are being protected by the RMA? It is patently clear that we as a city stand to lose our entire ranges environment and there is seemingly little protection for districts who have allowed electricity companies to get a 'toe in the door'. Will the door ever be able to be closed again?
2. The government essentially gains an income from other countries that require carbon credits and pay for them. In turn the government requires dumping grounds for as many turbines as possible to receive these payments to meet its own Kyoto Protocol commitment no matter the cost to regions such as ours.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS TO CONSIDER**

- 1) Why are there no 'National Best Practise' guidelines in place for the siting and location of industrial wind turbine farms after all these years? Would this not greatly assist everyone involved in a wind-farm application process?
- 2) What other council in New Zealand has changed the status of a reserve which is its main water service provision to establish an industrial area in it?
- 3) Is the Manawatu simply required nationally to become a sacrificial dumping ground for carbon emissions schemes that gains central government an income at our regions expense?
- 4) Why have no limits been set for wind-farm development in the Manawatu? When is enough – enough? (There has been ample time for the research and public consultation to occur and it is pointless to wake up when the horse has already bolted.)
- 5) Why have Horizons been so lax and uninterested and have seemingly not come up with a view point and some direction. Should they have taken a far more of a proactive stance to ensuring a safe guard for Manawatu's environment?
- 6) Why are our local national level politicians both past and present (i.e. Steve Maharey, Simon Power - Minister of State Owned Enterprises, and Ian Lees-Galloway) been so quiet publicly on this subject even though they have all been challenged on many occasions by residents of the Manawatu?
- 7) Why can the balance of our ranges (south of the Pahiatua Track) not been protected in legislation as has been the case in the Waitakere Ranges?
- 8) Why did Mighty River never provide scale models of the Tararua Ranges with its turbines placed on them for the public to get a better context of what was actually happening?
- 9) Why are so many more turbines on the menu now than when first stated by PNCC and Mighty River in relation to the Turitea?
- 10) How will PNCC, MRP or the government support the more than 10% of residents who live in such close proximity to the proposed wind turbines for loss of property value, double glazing and general loss of amenity? Or is it simply the landowners where the turbines will be situated who are considered?

- 11) Why has local media been so quiet on this issue-at least in terms of providing balanced stories and information to the public? Does this have something to do with the levels of advertising they get from councils or large companies involved in wind-farms?
- 12) Were our media (owned by a multi-national-Fairfax) concerned with losing advertising revenue from PNCC, Power companies and associated contractors) if they showed any type of opposition to the proposed wind farms?
- 13) How is it possible for PNCC or MRP to absolutely guarantee that there will be no sediment runoff into the waterways, tributaries and Manawatu River during the construction phase if this proposal is accepted?
- 14) Did PNCC have enough suitable information at the time of signing a contract with Mighty River Power? (NO they didn't appear to have – material limited to a wind farm in the Turitea Reserve not adjacent private land)
- 15) Did Palmerston North City Councillors have enough impartial information regarding wind-farms on which to base their initial decisions? In other words, did city management forward balanced and impartial information to city councillors.
- 16) How much of the initial technical information was supplied by Mighty River Power to PNCC upon which PNCC management based their conclusions and decisions on?
- 17) Has any other district provided as much wind-power generation as the Manawatu?
- 18) At the time of the original submission process why was so little cognisance taken of what the submitters had to say. Was this a good example of active listening and what the submitters had to say or was it simply that the council management itself did not have sufficient expertise?
- 19) Will Mighty River Power use the ploy of seeking 'surety of costs' as a ploy to frighten off potential further litigation? Remember Mighty River Power have literally and endless funding capital. They are the government.

## **ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS THE COMMISSIONERS MAY WISH TO CONSIDER**

- 1) During the hearing processes I have observed submitters who have had to get various off-shore consultants as Mighty River Power have literally had all New Zealand based consultants locked in to their own cause. Also I believe that many New Zealand based consultants would not want to be involved with submitters as this would or could seriously affect significant future work opportunities with large organisations such as Mighty River Power.
- 2) (The industry) Mighty River power are bullies and have never seriously listened to anything that they would see as oppositional to their way of thinking. They simply wear people down with litigation and access to much higher levels of capital.
- 3) Mighty River Power and previous PNCC Management through their actions have divided a community in an almost irreparable way.
- 4) Palmerston North and surrounds will be forever known as having industrialised their only remaining natural (organic) environment if this project happens.
- 5) Where is accountability of previous C.E.O for these atrocious decisions?
- 6) Remembering that even having to have CEO'S is a central government dictate.
- 7) A breach of contract is better than any prospect of damaging our water reserve and environment.
- 8) Apart from a small capital income what does our region really get for the loss of much of its environment?
- 9) It was not appropriate for the Minister to intervene and PNCC with the new council and CEO does have the capacity to take control of its own future by making sound decisions for the future of Palmerston North.
- 10) Calling in is merely a bullying tactic used by the government when it doesn't think it will get its way.
- 11) Manawatu is different from any other province in the country in that we have already done our share at a loss to a finite resource. Leave us alone with what we have left.

- 12) The Government's stated objective of cleaning up our waterways and ensuring fresh clean water as a priority is at odds with one of its own SOE's (Mighty River Power) intentions within the Turitea Reserve.
- 13) Intervention by the Minister is not appropriate unless he wishes to conduct a full investigation into how a local council (PNCC) can be manoeuvred and manipulated into such a situation by a government owned SOE. This has been trickery from the very highest levels. There is much at stake for many other areas around the country and they should actively take notice of what is happening to us as a province.
- 14) Power companies are raping our ranges as there is a national weakness in terms of protecting environments in relation to wind-farms and they are exploiting this anomaly.
- 15) Tourism (the second biggest industry in New Zealand) will be severely compromised by the industrialisation of our beautiful scenic areas. People come here to get away from exactly what we are doing to our landscapes.
- 16) Sustainable electrical practices are what are now required to complement the renewable energy provision (wind turbines) that have been installed. That is the balanced approach PNCC should be taking.
- 17) "The Turitea Wind Farm Proposal Project Summary July 2008" document states that MRP is required to demonstrate social responsibility to communities and is committed to environmentally responsible operations. How can an industrial area in the Turitea Water Reserve guarantee our drinking water is not compromised and also sediment run-off into the tributaries that run into the Manawatu River. The government are currently crusading about its intention to clean up waterways and to protect the sanctity of freshwater. This seems to be a conflict of interests.
- 18) Social responsibility should also include listening to the massive amounts of longitudinal research from overseas in terms of negative impacts on those that reside in close proximity to turbines such as increased traffic volumes, noise frequencies, visual aspects sediment runoff, decrease in property values etc.
- 19) Central Government's renewable energy is target driven and is not based upon analysis and planning conducive to win/win outcomes in the Manawatu. It appears to me MRP (Govt. Owned) has licence to ride rough shod over whoever

they like and with the governments blessing. We must reclaim control over our own environment and future for our future generations.

- 20) MRP intimidates all those who stand and ask questions which they see as an impediment potentially or otherwise.
- 21) Rescind the Turitea change of purpose. We must act decisively now to start to turn things around.
- 22) The council at the time was not given adequate, independent information (if any) on the potential environmental, social, or economic damage the city would sustain by signing up to an agreement to partner with Mighty River Power.
- 23) The council (at least councillors) and public were not made aware of MRP's overall plans for turbines on adjoining private land
- 24) Mighty Rivers request to call in the project can be seen as a tacit admission that they fear it would never make it through the RMA process.
- 25) The recent move by PNCC to distance itself from the partnership with MRP frees PNCC to oppose any further wind-farm development within the city boundary.
- 26) I believe that PNCC should seek government intervention (by way of PNCC taskforce-working party) including TAG etc as we are as a district being inundated with industrial turbines. Power companies (including govt. Owned SOE Mighty River Power) are using the 'lack of best regional and national practice standard to bulldoze through as many industrial sites as possible. This is not in good faith and definitely not good for our district. Also I believe that they did not make these intentions clear to PNCC management at the time of signing the contract.
- 27) Manawatu is first district to be inundated and there is nothing to protect us at this stage due to the lack of best practice standards. The Manawatu should be used as a test case in changing many laws and statute that are clearly not looking after and achieving balance.
- 28) I support a peer review as promised by PNCC but this peer review should be carried out by international personal (not within New Zealand) as I believe that too many people are either compromised or fear for their professional future and career as these large companies can and have seemingly cornered nearly everyone in the field (noise, landscape, ecology etc). Central government must agree to this. Time is not of the essence but getting it right for the Manawatu is.

- 29) Constant repairs to turbines protract the damage caused to the roads, sediment run-off. This makes one wonder if the conditions are to extreme for the quality of the turbines themselves. Heavy machinery such as large cranes and trucks are required.
- 30) Submitters should be paid by the PNCC for providing so much information that obviously PNCC did not have when it signed conditional agreements with their partner MRP.

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YOUR ENTIRE DISTRICT?**

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- 2- RAISED STRESS LEVELS**
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- 4- COMMUNITY IN FIGHTING**
- 5- VISUAL EYE SORE**
- 6- DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO HILLSIDES,  
FAUNA AND BIRDLIFE.**

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**BLADE - 30mtrs**

**TOTAL - 85mtrs to tip of blade**

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