

Tararua Range the sacrificial lamb

ACHIEVING a sustainable electricity supply to cope with New Zealand's future needs involves exploring, developing and adopting methods of generation that utilise renewable resources in a way that is not detrimental to the environment. Over the past five years New Zealand has incorporated wind generated electricity into the national grid, and electricity generated from the current Manawatu wind farms will be capable of contributing up to 30 percent of New Zealand's total wind generated electricity, once the fully consented site developments have been completed - enough electricity for the entire Manawatu region while still contributing to the national grid.

This is a hugely significant contribution, and according to the Electricity Supply Commission, amounts to the maximum loading that our current lines capacity and infrastructure can utilise. Wind is a freely available, non-polluting and renewable resource. The cost per kilowatt favours well with hydro and solid fuel generation, and as solid fuel costs rise the relative cost of wind generation will decrease. Wind provides an excellent, clean source of electrical energy. However, wind generation is immediate and cannot be stored. Wind is also intermittent, therefore consistency of supply from any one particular region cannot be guaranteed.

The question that Manawatu and Tararua people must ask is: Do we need more wind farms?

The answer should be a resounding no.

In order to extract the maximum benefit from wind generation the wind farms should be spread around New Zealand and

with higher numbers installed closer to the regions with the maximum demand. By concentrating wind farms in the Manawatu there is no guarantee of a regular supply to the national grid, therefore any extra wind farm development in this region is superfluous to the overall strategic development of New Zealand's wind generation capacity.

Unfortunately Palmerston North City Council believes that the Tararua Range should be the sacrificial lamb for New Zealand's dalliance with wind generation. With complete disregard to the future impacts on the environment, including the communities and people of this region, PNCC has already accepted close to \$300,000 from government SOE, Mighty River Power to test the viability of developing the Turitea Reserve into a wind farm.

The Turitea Reserve is our only significant surviving remnant of native forest and is our



SITE clearance for one windmill. Is this PNCC's idea of an eco park?

major catchment area for the city's water supply. Before installing 60-plus turbines in this reserve massive roading and earthworks will have to be undertaken and this will result in irreparable damage to the natural environment of the reserve. The idea that an eco park can be developed in an industrial zone shows a complete lack of understanding of the fragile nature of this ecosystem.

Given the climatic conditions in the reserve area and the soil damage from roading and earthworks, it would take up to 50 years before any significant native forest cover returned to the Turitea reserve. Interestingly, within 50 years the wind turbines would need to be replaced, leading to another round of deforestation and no possibility of a healthy regenerating area of native forest and, of course, no viable eco park.

Residents' health and welfare are what matter

A MILLION-dollar view or a million-dollar headache?



infra-sound. Current recommendations suggest that the noise levels should be no greater than 40dB(A) or 5dB(A) above the prevailing background noise. An acoustic contour diagram produced by Energreen Wind for its own wind farm development is highly misleading, as the diagram extrapolates the average of two 24-hour readings taken at two separate locations to encircle the entire Motorimu wind farm development proposed for the top of Millricks Line and Scotts Road. Plus their 40dB line conveniently bypasses all dwellings neighbouring the site.

Currently New Zealand has no code of practice for the effects of noise on local residents and the public are being fed disinformation regarding the negative effects of wind farms. An example of this

A LARGE number of countries throughout the world have adopted wind generation technology and while it is accepted that this form of electricity generation is highly beneficial there has been an increasing amount of opposition to further wind farm developments, especially where they have a direct impact on communities living close by.

For a country which prides itself on a clean green image the questions surrounding the negative environmental impacts of wind generation must be fully investigated and due consideration given to overseas research which is being used to establish codes of practice for the installation of on-shore wind farms.

Power companies do not deny that wind turbines produce noise. What they do try to cover up is the impact of noise on residents living within 4km of the turbines. In fact several residents affected by the Te Apiti and Tararua wind farms have been paid compensation by the power companies in exchange for their silence through the signing confidentiality agreements. It is also well-known that at least one family, living within 650 metres of a turbine, has been relocated due to sleep deprivation and associated illnesses while their house has been condemned as a result of vibrations, and again the family has been silenced with a confidentiality agreement. Turbines produce two types of noise: audible noise and

infra-sound include migraine, nausea, dizziness, palpitations stress and depression, as well as an increase in headaches, sleep deprivation and anxiety. These symptoms are well documented medical case studies from Europe and North America.

On February 3, 2004, Lord Dixon-Smith spoke in the House of Lords: "My Lords, the minister will undoubtedly be aware that the Danes have ceased the erection of further on-shore wind farms, in part as a consequence of health concerns. I hope he will also be aware that his colleagues in Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) have commissioned an investigation into the effects on health of low-frequency sound. Does that not suggest at the very least that the Government should consider a moratorium on further construction until the matter is properly cleared up?"

The New Zealand Wind Energy Organisation publicly states: "We are working hard to ensure that the potential of New Zealand's world class wind energy resource is harnessed, for the benefit of all, in a responsible and sustainable manner for our generation and generations to come."

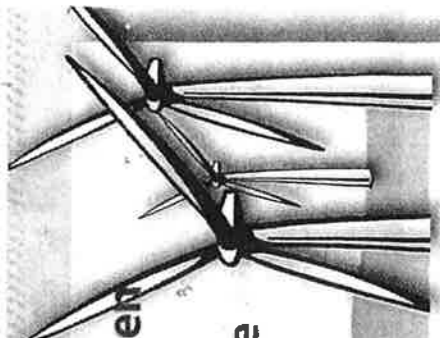
So come on PNCC, we are the Knowledge City, and we should take the time to do some independent research in order to make an informed decision and act in a responsible manner. Consider the health and welfare of the residents, don't desecrate our only significant native reserve and don't fill our 'regionally significant' skyline with towering turbines just for a



CLEAN and green industrialisation of the Tararua Ranges.

Turbines
3 Sept
2006.
Sept 32.

If the separate wind farm plans of Mighty River Power and Energreen Wind go ahead you will see upwards of 500 industrial turbines, or more, stretching from Wharite, along the slopes, ridges and skyline of the Tararua Ranges to the Horowhenua District (Tokomaru):



Te Apiti (Meridian) operational: 55 turbines
Tararua (TrustPower) Stages I and II operational, Stage III under construction:
 134 turbines

Te Rere Hau (NZ Wind Farms) under construction:
 97 turbines

Turitea (Mighty River Power) prospective:
 60 plus turbines on Palmerston North City Council reserve land, plus an unknown number on adjacent private land

Motorimu (Energreen Wind) prospective:
 129 turbines

THE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC

Points to consider

NATIONAL

What are the real benefits of wind farms and to whom do they accrue?

Wind farms are constructed on the basis that it is for the 'national good'. If the public can't be given the whole story about benefits and impacts this claim isn't being substantiated, and if local authorities aren't well informed they can't make good decisions. Is this ignorance, or is there something to hide?

How can intelligent development occur when there is no national wind farm-specific policy, and hoc wind farm projects are allowed, and affected communities are not consulted in the planning stages of proposed developments?

There are limits to the amount of wind-produced electricity New Zealand can efficiently accommodate, and on the degree to which we should rely on this particular form of production. What are those limits?

Profit making SOEs can establish wind farm developments. If the Government owns a development, AND sets energy and electricity policies and targets, AND sets the standards for the RMA consent process, how is this independent?

Profit making private companies can also establish wind farm developments. Financial benefits go to shareholders, and landowners with turbines on their properties, but wind farm neighbours, local residents, recreational users and the wider community must simply learn to live with any adverse consequences. Is this fair and reasonable, or divisive and unsettling?

Is it true that landowners who have wind turbines on their land receive large annual payments from development companies, and by retaining 'wind rights' can continue to receive these payments even if they sell their properties?

Why are there no 'best practice' guidelines in place to ensure high standards, and consistency and transparency across wind farm developments?

What are the health risks associated with wind farm developments, and what are we doing to safeguard the health and well being of people who live nearby against known and unknown health-related impacts of wind farms? International evidence from medical professionals exists, why is this being ignored? Other countries are developing guidelines so why aren't we?

Did you know that developers can sign people into confidentiality agreements that prevent these people speaking out about the problems they have suffered from nearby wind farms?

To avoid transmission losses and increase security of supply, wind farm developments should be located as near as possible to the area of consumption (full benefit derived through diversification). Why is this not happening in New Zealand? Where is our national strategy?

WILL OUR LOCAL COUNCILS SUPPORT A NATIONAL MORATORIUM ON WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT UNTIL CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BRINGS ITS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT INTO LINE WITH THE REALITIES OF WIND FARM DEVELOPMENTS?

REGIONAL

The Manawatu has less than 30km of ridgeline landscape. If all consents are granted there will be no real 'green space' of this type left.

Could the PNCC please present a scale model showing all built, consented and proposed wind farm developments between the Manawatu Gorge and Tokomaru?

Is the Manawatu seen as a 'soft touch' for wind farm resource consents, and is it the sacrificial region for wind farms?

What do our city councillors actually know, if anything, about wind farms?

Because there are wind farms already established in the region our councils have had an opportunity to research any adverse impacts on the local population. Why have they not done this, and why do they seem to only rely on information presented by developers?

PNCC landscape architect John Breckley is on record as stating that in his opinion, once all currently consented wind farms are built (Te Apiti to Te Rere Hau), the Tararua Ranges will have reached saturation point for wind turbines. Why has Council omitted him from the assessment process for the Turitea and Motorimu proposals – is his professional opinion not in line with Council direction?

Why is Destination Manawatu stating that wind farms are good for tourism without establishing the facts – what research have they done? No local tourist operators or ventures have been asked so how do they know?

How many Councillors have visited sites under construction, or proposed new sites?

Construction of each wind turbine requires a massive construction site – individual roading, deep excavation and tonnes of concrete. Are Councillors or the public aware of the damage caused?

Would any of our Councillors like to live where they can hear and see constantly spinning turbines within 2kms of their windows and barbecue areas?

Would our City Councillors build structures that are four times the height of the clock tower in the Square, and if not why not?

Can local authorities guarantee concerned citizens that if the Turitea and Motorimu wind farms go ahead property values, and currently legitimate land use options won't be adversely affected – if not, what compensation will they pay?

Wind turbines are BIG; they are constantly moving; and, they make a noise and vibrate. Is it true that a house on the Te Apiti site, 650 metres from the nearest turbine, was condemned because vibrations caused the house to move on its foundations, and occupants of the house suffered sleep deprivation and health problems?

COULD OUR COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES PLEASE SHOW GENUINE CONCERN AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AND PRIOR TO LODGEMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR RESOURCE CONSENT MEANINGFULLY CONSULT WITH ALL POTENTIALLY AFFECTED PEOPLE?

LOCAL

Turitea (PNCC/Mighty River Power)

If district councils such as PNCC enter into joint ventures with State Owned Enterprises such as Mighty River Power (Turitea), and have already received payments, how can that council have an open mind and truly "represent" the community in a full and independent manner?

Why has The Manawatu Standard, using the Freedom of Information Act, been unable to access details of financial agreements between Mighty River Power and the PNCC?

Publicly owned water catchment reserve containing native vegetation and habitats for many species of flora and fauna, this land is highly visible not only from the countryside but from the streets of Palmerston North. Is it appropriate for wind turbines to rise above and dwarf our only visible area of native bush, and to form a constantly moving backdrop to the city?

How many additional turbines are planned for adjacent private land and how close will they be to residential properties?

Do the public realise that the proposed turbines will be as high as 125 metres – four times the height of the clock tower in the Square, and that three of these wind turbines placed on top of each other would nearly equal the height of the ranges, foothills to ridge?

How can the Turitea Reserve be an 'eco park' when it has become an industrial site?

Is the PNCC Turitea consultation document pure spin doctoring? It appears contradictory and disguises a lack of specifics by labouring the alleged benefits of an "eco park", and the large "map" fails to illustrate the development's full context, i.e. all surrounding wind farm developments and proposals.

PNCC escorted busloads of people to see the lovely views from the proposed wind farm site. Why were these visitors only told the ridgeline was fabulous for its wind, but not that under relevant Regional Policy the skyline is meant to be protected as a landscape of regional significance – valued for its scenic qualities and as a backdrop to the foothills and plains? Why were the public not shown nearby construction sites so they could form a balanced

view about the vast changes that wind turbines produce?

If this proposal goes ahead how can the protection of Kaka, Kakariki, Keruru and other native birds and species be assured, and during construction how would their nesting habits remain undisturbed?

SAY 'NO' TO CHANGING THE STATUS OF THE TURITEA RESERVE UNTIL A GREATER BALANCE OF CREDIBLE INFORMATION IS PROVIDED. MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION NOW – BY 4 SEPTEMBER 2006

Motorimu (Energreen Wind)

Do you know that this wind farm proposal covers 5.5km of ridgeline from Te Mata to Tokomaru and that almost all of the 129 turbines will be visible from throughout the Manawatu and Horowhenua?

An area of farms, exotic forests and lifestyle blocks, here the Tararuas are striking for their high degree of visibility, steep hillsides and lovely proportions, and the ever-changing wash of colour from foothills to clearly defined skyline. Turbines are industrial structures, how will their size, appearance, glint and movement enhance the rural and scenic qualities of this area?

The closest residence to proposed turbines is 600 metres away, and many people live within the most critical distance for potential adverse effects – up to 3km. Many value the sense of quiet, space, peace and tranquillity – that is why they live here. If this wind farm is constructed, what will they hear and see?

PNCC is involved in a joint venture wind farm proposal with Mighty River Power – Turitea. How can they then fully act for the community in respect of a wind farm development next door (Motorimu)?

Why is the PNCC only engaged in consultation with Energreen and not the affected communities?

PROTECT OUR LANDSCAPE AND PEOPLE. SAY 'NO' TO MOTORIMU UNTIL NATIONAL STANDARDS REGARDING PROXIMITY, VISIBILITY AND NOISE ARE THOROUGHLY RESEARCHED AND ESTABLISHED – public notification of the Motorimu development will be posted in local papers soon (date not yet available)

Tararua-Aokautere Guardians Incorporated Society. Representing people concerned about the impacts of the proposed Turitea and Motorimu wind farms. We believe that local authorities are failing their citizens through a lack of vision and knowledge, and by not engaging in a public consultation process when wind farm developments are in the planning stage.

To show your support please contact the Society's President at:

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