

Australian Industrial Wind Turbine Awareness Network

10th December 2012

Media Release

INCREASED FIRE RISK FROM WIND TURBINES



Lake Bonney Wind Farm SA

The recent weekend bushfires near proposed wind energy developments, one in **Victoria**, in the area of the proposed **Cherry Tree** wind energy project and one on the **Yorke Peninsula, SA** near the proposed **CERES** Wind Energy project clearly highlight the danger of locating large industrial wind turbines in high fire risk areas.

Rural fire brigades are not equipped to extinguish fires in 150m high burning turbines and must wait for the turbine to collapse before they can safely extinguish the fire.

This is completely at odds with the long-standing protocol of timely attendance and speedy fire suppression to remove the threat of fire spreading.

Further increasing the risk of dangerous fire escalation is the inability to use aerial fire support because of safety issues from operating near large wind turbines.

The government must introduce regulation to prohibit the operation of wind turbines in high fire risk areas on days of severe fire danger.

It is undisputed that Industrial scale wind turbines increase the risk of fires and that here is no effective means of timely fire suppression.

Wind energy developments are continuing to be built in fire prone areas. There is total disregard for extra fire protection requirements that should be in place due to the increased fire risks from wind energy developments and hazards and restrictions associated with fighting fires around wind energy developments.

- Fire can start from turbine operation or lightning strike to the turbine
- Each turbine is a potential incendiary device, with up to 800 litres of highly flammable gear box oil in the nacelle.

Links to the reality of turbine fires.

<http://www.adelaidenow.com.au/burning-wind-turbine-starts-fires/story-e6freol3-1111118739534>

<http://www.windaction.org/pictures/1527>

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2009/02/04/2482542.htm>

<http://www.wind-watch.org/news/2010/11/20/cant-fight-the-fire/>

www.turbinesonfire.org

- Turbines are continuing to operate on days of high fire danger (When other potential sources of fire ignition cease operating. eg: harvesting)
- Turbines have the potential to spread burning flying debris over a wide area increasing the danger to life and property and spreading of fire.
- Water bombers are restricted from operating in the vicinity of wind turbine developments because of wake turbulence resulting in safety issues.

Link to Wake Turbulence caused by wind turbines:

<http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/how-much-efficiency-is-lost-by-putting-hawts-near-one-another-in-a-wind-farm/>

- Visibility due to smoke is a major hazard when flying in bush fires, increasing risk for accidents and collisions

Current firefighting strategies are inadequate to protect people living in the vicinity of wind energy developments from raging fires in our often hostile Australian climate.

It is only a matter of time before there is going to be a catastrophic fire that could have been avoided, because proper due diligence by all responsible authorities has not occurred.

Planning authorities must not site wind turbines in areas where there is a high fire danger and risk to life and property.

Fire Authorities must ensure that wind turbines do not operate on days of high fire danger and must put strategic policies in place for wind energy development zones.

Under the section 266 of the Criminal Code – it is the duty of ...

‘everyone who has in their charge or under his control anything, whether living or inanimate, or who erects makes or maintains anything whatever, who in the absence of precaution or care may endanger human life, is under a legal duty to take responsible precautions against and use reasonable care to avoid such danger, and is criminally responsible for the consequences of omitting without lawful excuse to perform such duty’.

‘R v Pacino: Extending the criminal Negligence?’

<<http://www.murdoch.edu.au/elaw/issues/v5n1/mcfar51.html>> (accessed 11 December 2007)

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