

Inquiry into Auditor General Report No.202: Meeting Obligations to Protect Ramsar Wetlands (2016)

Mr Andrew Lester

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Name of Organisation: Save Yarram Group

Position: Member

Submission

We appreciate that this submission is outside that timeframe the committee had set and we thank you for granting an extension to allow us to share our concerns regarding the governance of Ramsar sites.

I write on behalf of the Save Yarram group. This community group is drawn from the Yarram/Alberton/Port Albert/Hedley area and exists to oppose an inappropriate development that we feel will have an inevitable adverse impact on the Ramsar site at Alberton/Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Park.

The proposal is from Synergy Wind to build 34 turbines <http://www.synergy-wind.com/projects/alberton-wind-farm/> . Some of the turbines will only be 1 km from the Ramsar site. This information is not on the Synergy Wind website but one of our members has drawn a map that shows that most of the 34 turbines are within 5km of the Ramsar site (attached).

We seek to raise with the committee our concern that the Managers of Ramsar sites should be able to respond to proposals for the generation of energy, or any other industrial scale change to the environment, near Ramsar sites. We seek that the Managers of this site are empowered to investigate the impact of energy generation of their own volition, and that their views and opinions are made known to the planning authority. We are concerned that the current stewardship of this may not have the capacity to intervene on behalf of Ramsar sites at a time when Champions for Ramsars are needed

We seek that the committee improve the public administration and accountability for this Ramsar site by recommending that a Ramsar management plan be developed. We further seek that the management plan applies the provisions of the DELWP Policy and Procedures for developing wind energy facilities in

Victoria https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/9696/Policy-and-Planning-Guidelines-for-Development-of-Wind-Energy-Facilities-in-Victoria.pdf

In particular, we seek that the provisions of 2.1.4 be applied to all Ramsar sites in Victoria and a 5km turbine buffer is created. We seek this for the same reason it exists for the Bellarine and Mornington Peninsulas, the Great Ocean Road and the Bass Coast west of Wilson's Promontory - "in recognition of their landscape and environmental values". The area covering Corner Inlet to the Gippsland Lakes is of different, but equal, landscape and environmental quality. It concerns us that

this area does not receive the same focus as other areas of the coast and this lack of focus may preclude the 'managers' from seeing the threat in the same way that local citizens do.

We seek that the committee consider the Synergy Wind proposal to be a high priority threat to the ecological character of this site and request that this threat be part of a management plan for this area. We note that the committee can investigate new issues and we ask that the issue of energy generation near Ramsar site be deemed a new issue.

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:

Are you interested in appearing before the committee in person to talk about your submission?

Yes, if this is possible but we understand that phase of the process may have been completed.

Attachment: Synergy Wind Overlay Map V1-Model