

Origin Energy on Notice for Not Being Protective of the Health and Rights of Neighbours

Origin Energy's Proposed Changes to the Blade Length and Height of the Turbines at Stockyard Hill Will Cause Irreparable Harm to the Health of Our Community.

Origin claims the increase in turbine height is "improving project efficiencies". This is clever corporate wording for 'improving profits' at our community's expense and also makes the Stockyard Hill Project more attractive to on-sell to foreign investors.

Here is what this means for residents:

- The proposed turbine height changes contravene condition three of the Planning Permit's specifications. No new planning application has been received by the State Government or the Pyrenees Shire for these significant alterations.
- Change to turbine blade length and height is being promoted to allow a substantial increase in turbine power. However, increasing the power capacity means a similar increase in noise; with a significant increase in the percentage of that power being the dangerous infrasound. In fact, this is what has happened at some of the most damaging projects in Victoria and South Australia.
- Changes like this are obtained by "secondary consent" from the Planning Minister without consultation or even notice to the community. Disasters like the Waubra, Macarthur and Waterloo wind farms are the result. These disasters will be mirrored at Stockyard Hill.
- Origin appears to be seeking secondary consent to, in effect, increase the size of the turbines to at least 3.4MW. Origin's application for a permit was based upon noise modeling of a 2 MW turbine. This is a **70% increase** in the capacity and also in the noise emitted. Further independent analysis into the impact of this much increased noise on project neighbours has not been conducted.
- Is Origin proposing to place the larger turbines where the originally approved smaller turbines were placed? Or do they intend to rework the noise predictions and the turbine placements so as not to exceed the noise guidelines? They do not say, do they? Simple stuff: power goes up so does the noise, and the greater percentage of that noise is the potentially damaging infrasound. Origin knows this. If the turbine size is increased and the spacing not appropriately adjusted, the project will not be compliant and the scale of health impacts substantially increased.
- Wind turbines are designed to operate with relatively smooth air inflow, but as they extract energy from the wind, the depleted wind exits the turbine in turbulent flow. If adjacent turbines are fed turbulent air their efficiency at producing power drops, but the amount of noise and particularly infrasound increases. That is why turbine manufacturers recommend minimum separation distances between turbines, for example 7 to 8 blade lengths. Are Origin going to ensure the layout is revised to take into account the longer blade lengths?
- Lets hear it from the secretive Origin on how they are going to protect neighbours' health and no garbage about "we meet the guidelines." The guidelines are known to be inadequate to protect neighbours. Origin, stop hiding behind guidelines that are quite simply a licence to damage. You have a separate and specific duty not to harm your neighbours, nor to trash our basic human right to live in our houses without disturbance.
- Origin declares it is commencing discussions with residents affected by the new changes. They actually commenced discussions weeks prior to this announcement.
- Origin Energy is aware of peer reviewed scientific acoustic and health studies as long ago as the 1980's proving that infrasound and low frequency noise is generated by both downwind-bladed and upwind bladed wind turbines, and that these frequencies can directly cause symptoms including sleep disturbance. The Victorian Noise Guidelines for wind projects do not mention infrasound. Who is looking after the country folk then? The Department of Planning? The Department of Health? The EPA? The Pyrenees Shire? Origin? None of the former. Think the Stockyard Hill Community Guardians and the Waubra Foundation.

A moratorium on all proposed and approved wind farms should be effective immediately until further independent acoustic and health research has been completed and the results made public. Stockyard Hill Community Guardians calls for a new planning application to be required from Origin Energy for the huge change in turbine size and the old permit made obsolete.