



Dear sirs

Having read the reference document I wish to register serious concern at the prospect of 40 or 50 wind farms of the scale of the Cattle Hill Wind farm being established in Tasmania.

The grounds for my concern cover three main issues.

Impact on our Environment

I see the future of Tasmania linked closely with the attractive environment we can maintain here, a natural place with reliable services, good communications and a moderate and distributed population. The present trends in property prices speaks volumes about the growing attraction of the state as a place for living well and working connected to the world.

If wind towers operations are to become every Tasmanian's daily experience this will deter a lot of talented people who could have offered much by relocating to the state. I can envisage a future when the absence of wind farms will be an ever increasing asset.

Wind farms may well be needed but they don't have to be built here where they have limited access to their markets.

Financial Risk

I have little confidence that Hydro will be, or even should be, up to the challenges of making big financial decisions. Basslink has been poorly handled and the ownership structure the government chose now mitigates against fixing its problems. Instead of fixing and augmenting Basslink the idea is to ignore it and move on to Marinus. Tasmanian consumers have however paid dearly for Basslink and regardless of who funds Marinus one has to expect that electricity consumers will eventually bear it's financial risk.

Wind farm developments by Hydro have also not been well handled. Hydro was overly cautious about wind when extra generation was really needed, then overreached with a joint venture in China and ended up with minor equity positions in very productive generation which they could have fully owned.

A key plank of the Renewable Energy Framework is pumped storage, now apparently a 750Mw capacity scheme on Lake Cethana. There is a huge national demand evolving for back up electricity generation when sun and wind fail, but Cethana will be so small as to be virtually irrelevant and may not even have access to Marinus if wind farms have some priority. Pump storage schemes only make money through arbitrage and high utilisation. With uncertain pricing and uncertain utilisation it becomes high risk indeed.

No apparent advantage to early adopters

The Framework features an emerging opportunity using surplus wind energy to produce hydrogen and suggests there will be benefits in becoming early adopters of this new technology. The only obvious benefit is access to federal subsidies and perhaps a pilot scale development.

Transfer to hydrogen will be hard, technically challenging, and require economies of scale for production, transport and markets. I think we have to be realistic. Tasmania made several early advances in paper pulp technology but could not maintain an industry because it was inevitable small scale.

Hydrogen production will likely develop where renewables are abundant, where the electricity market is large and where electrolysis can be used to somewhat balance the grid and provide energy storage. That place is never going to be Tasmania.

The first cryogenic H₂ ship is just being built and I have not heard of ammonia yet being used to transport hydrogen as a fuel.

Hydrogen may be good politics but common sense says wait and see before making significant investment.

I thank you for the opportunity to have input into the renewable energy plan and would be pleased to receive a critique of my opinions and observations.

Yours sincerely

Lyndon Stephenson

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