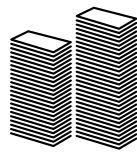


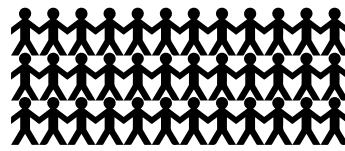
# The survey results *are in*

As promised, here's a more detailed report on the Winterbourne Wind Farm survey conducted by Voice for Walcha.



**523**

.. Number of valid surveys returned



**79.7%**

.. of the 523 survey responses **expressed concerns and objected** to the Winterbourne Wind Farm.



**8.8%**

... of the survey responses stated they had **no concerns** and supported the plan for this project.

## People with concerns > The issues expressed by people with concerns fall into 5 main areas

### 1 What has been lacking in the developer's process

**78.4%** of the people responding to the survey indicated that they did not think that the developer, Winterbourne Wind, had provided enough information for them to understand the impact of this project. There were numerous comments from people who said they support renewable energy but took particular objection to the way this project has been implemented.

In the written comments submitted in the surveys, the following issues were the key concerns:

- ▶ The developer, Winterbourne Wind, has not adequately consulted with the community
- ▶ The developer has not been willing to take part in community forums
- ▶ The developer has created serious community disharmony with the negotiation of secret contracts
- ▶ The developer has not provided information when requested, necessitating individual research
- ▶ The developer has not been honest
- ▶ The developer has not provided information to people that has been promised

*"I am thirteen years old. I will be 43 when any of the turbines and transmission towers are finished with. I will be the generation dealing with the decisions that are made now."*

*"Winterbourne Wind seem to be very secretive and reluctant to give out full detailed information on this development."*

- ▶ The developer has been remiss with consultations with host neighbours, especially in terms of the noise and visual impact of the proposed turbines
- ▶ The developer has not been forthcoming on details about the transmission lines, their location, and their impact
- ▶ The developer has not provided facts, only 'warm fuzzies'
- ▶ The developer has only released a slow trickle of information rather than providing all the information upfront

*"People in regional areas should not have to bear the costs of climate change for all Australians. We are appalled at the lack of solar energy on existing structures in metropolitan areas, while city dwellers support wind and solar industrial developments in rural backyards where they don't have to look at them. Their backyard happens to be our homes."*

### 2 What doesn't make sense about this proposed project

A total of **86.2%** of survey respondents expressed concerns about the Winterbourne Wind Farm (this % includes people who said they were 'neutral' or 'didn't know enough' but also submitted written comments expressing concern). There were many comments to the effect that there are just too many projects proposed for our area and that the cumulative impact, commencing with the Winterbourne project, will be too much for our community to cope with.

Following are some of the issues mentioned:

- ▶ Why construct an industrial site on prime agricultural land?
- ▶ Why interfere with essential farming practices (such as being able to fertilise crops from the air)?
- ▶ Why not use alternate forms of renewables which are more sustainable and do less damage?
- ▶ Why commence a project where the type of renewable chosen could be obsolete before the project is finished?
- ▶ Why aren't urban roofs being used as a source of solar power and mini wind turbines?
- ▶ Why are a small group of people able to sign contracts which impact on a whole community?
- ▶ Why so many large projects proposed, to encircle one small country town?
- ▶ Why the secrecy?
- ▶ Why is each project being assessed separately by the NSW Planning Department, rather than looking at the cumulative effect?
- ▶ Why isn't the whole community consulted with – as the first step in the process
- ▶ Why secret negotiations?
- ▶ Why threaten a world heritage national park?
- ▶ Why endanger the community's ability to fight bushfires?
- ▶ Why allow foreign ownership of resources in Australia?

Results continued over >

*Thanks again to everyone who took the time to send in a survey.*



### 3 What the community would lose

On analysing the written comments in the surveys, the following were listed as key concerns regarding what the community would lose if the Winterbourne Wind Farm went ahead.

- ▶ The loss of confidence about the future of Walcha
- ▶ The loss of people from the area as they do not want to live surrounded by wind farms
- ▶ The loss of families from Walcha because they cannot afford the rent increases
- ▶ The loss of biosecurity
- ▶ The loss of the freedom of movement to drive around Walcha, plus to and from other towns
- ▶ The loss of tourists – who provide a very substantial input of funds to the town
- ▶ The loss of wildlife, especially high-flying birds
- ▶ The loss of confidence in emergency services being able to function optimally
- ▶ The loss of trees when they are more important than ever
- ▶ The loss of the ability for landowners to plan for the future
- ▶ The irretrievable loss of rural beauty

*“We believe there are much more efficient forms of green energy than wind towers that won't jeopardise the productivity of the land, the bird life, and most importantly pit neighbour against neighbour, brother against brother, and friend against friend.”*

*“The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Report needs to be redone and proper community consultation needs to happen for the whole community.”*

*“I believe that the community voice isn't being listened to by council and the developers.”*

*“Disappointed that Winterbourne Wind has been so secretive; that it has bullied host landowners and neighbours; that it hasn't been open and made people adequately aware.”*

### 4 What would be degraded / diminished

In terms of what would be degraded or diminished in the Walcha community, following are some of the key issues mentioned in the returned surveys:

- ▶ The damage and degradation of the roads during the lengthy construction period, with no guarantee that they will be fixed at the end
- ▶ The potential damage to physical and mental health of people
- ▶ The threat to health of both livestock and wild animals
- ▶ The reduction in the quality of life for the people who live here
- ▶ A reduction in property values: for host landowners, host neighbours, town dwellers, and any property that has a view of the turbines
- ▶ A huge demand made on local infrastructure and resources

*“If my property is devalued because of the 70 wind turbines I will see from my house, will I be compensated?”*

*“Walcha should not be an energy focused district. It is (was) a pasture wonderland and vital food bowl.”*

### 5 The unknowns

People wrote quite extensively about their concerns with the ‘unknowns’ of this proposed project. These concerns included:

- ▶ The unknown longer-term health impact on the people living close to the turbines
- ▶ The lack of a guaranteed responsibility for the disposal of the turbines
- ▶ It is unknown who the developer would be at the end of the project
- ▶ The unknown longer-term impact on the health and welfare of animals (including both farming animals and wildlife)
- ▶ The local roads aren't in good shape now, so what would they be like during the construction period?
- ▶ The unknown impact on the future for the next generation wanting to farm in this area
- ▶ The safety of children who would be catching school buses along the proposed turbine transport route?
- ▶ The impact of the lives of people whose property entrances are on the turbine route
- ▶ Where would all the construction materials be sourced, especially the water?
- ▶ What will the impact be on the lives and livelihoods of host neighbours?
- ▶ What will the impact be on the ability of planes using the Walcha aerodrome to land safely, especially when there is a low fog?

*“What does our future farming and succession planning look like?”*

*“The project should go back to the drawing board and properly advanced through ethical paths.”*

### People with no concerns\*

**8.8%** of the 523 survey responses stated they had no concerns and supported the plan for this wind farm.

In terms of those who support the project, the following issues were mentioned in the surveys:

- ▶ We need turbines for our source of power
- ▶ Positive impact economically
- ▶ Financial benefit for town and residents
- ▶ Income to support farmers, community & council
- ▶ Financial security for host landowners
- ▶ Council will not have to amalgamate
- ▶ The project will generate employment
- ▶ It will “put Walcha on the map”
- ▶ “The towers will be outside town and won't interfere with town itself”
- ▶ “The wind farm is the business of the people it actually affects, not the people on the other side of town”
- ▶ “Winterbourne is ideally located for a project of this nature and scale”
- ▶ It will stop the current decline in the community
- ▶ “Towers power local communities”

*\* Important to note, approximately half of the respondents in this category are land hosts who will host turbines for this project.*

#### Voice for Walcha > Drop-in Shop

The drop-in shop is open to help folk make an online submission to the Environmental Impact Statement. The drop-in shop in the Telecottage building, is open from 8-10am and 1-2pm, Monday to Friday with a possibility to open on Saturday's if interest/need is shown. The comment period for the EIS is expected to end around the 12th December. **This is the community's last chance to speak up.**