

Murray Schaefer
600 Seaham Road
Nelson's Plains 2324



21 May 2024

Dear Murray

Re: Winterbourne Wind Project

We respond to you as the Community Group – Voice for Walcha Inc – you are aware that we represent some 308 members of the Walcha Community, through an opt in commitment to the statement “I support the actions of Voice for Walcha, in their communications and activity, through my membership”. Given that many of these memberships represent a household, this is arguably a significant representation.

As highlighted on our Facebook page we have guidelines *“The purpose of this open page is to raise awareness of renewable energy projects being developed in the Walcha region. It is to deliver information to the local and wider community about concerns and negative impacts these projects are going to have on our environment, community, industries, workforce, infrastructure, families and way of life.”* Voice for Walcha is a not-for-profit incorporated association – we provide a public service and as such our messages are very much framed against what is in the ‘public interests’.

As we are sure your Solicitor has confirmed, only a living person can bring an action for defamation. The videos you reference are entirely consistent with our Facebook guideline ambitions and the public interest – certainly they don’t reflect false and misleading statements, and most certainly they don’t contain any such comments and suggestions in respect to your late brother, his reputation in the community and his integrity. We also maintain this stance in respect to your position as Executor of the Estate. To suggest that our videos are defamatory and an attempt to mislead the public as to anyone’s character and integrity is clearly a proposition we whole heartily reject. With respect, a nonsense proposition based on a convenient contextualisation of selected parts of a video.

What you have not mentioned in your letter is the commentary initiated by your son Michael under the video you reference, clearly identifying himself as ‘one of the beneficiaries of the deceased estate’ and continuing on to suggest ‘having there (sic) private business discussed on a public platform’. What is disconcerting is the communication by Michael to Cameron via a text message making accusations and allegations against Voice for Walcha that are not only categorically incorrect, they are most harmful in their substance and suggestion. As a group we know that there is no substance to his allegations and have chosen to ignore them at this point.

Moreover, we reject the comments made by you in the transcript enclosed with your letter. In particular, the details of your telephone conversation with Cameron are not only untrue, but wrongful and inappropriate. It is unclear why you have misrepresented the conversation in such a way, but it would seem to impeach his character and integrity. Any effort made to share this letter to a portion of the community, as appears to be the case, would only confirm your intention to discredit.

We also note your financial interest in the project, as Executor of the Estate of Greg Schaefer, and as such, shareholder in Walchawind Pty Ltd, part owner (5%) of Winterbourne Wind. We reject your fanciful and unfounded accusation of defamation, and see this more as an attempt to dissuade us from our efforts to inform the community around the risks of such developments, and as an attempt to discredit Voice for Walcha.

us@voiceforwalcha.com

Given our rejection of your claims, we don't see any need to contemplate the action you seek including any public apologies.

We acknowledge that Greg made a selfless contribution to Walcha Community – we recognise and respect that. In this regard we will explore possible editing of the video to remove reference to 'a deceased estate'. However please don't misunderstand that such a concession in any way diminishes the important message we convey in the video to potential hosts of wind farms in this case the proposed Ruby Hills development – *be fully aware through independent legal advice of documentary impact before committing contractually*. Cameron quite rightly stresses this imperative.

Essentially the Videos offer opinions based on some five (5) plus years exposure to Walcha Energy and Winterbourne Wind Project (WWF) and now to the Ruby Hills Wind Project. These opinions are based on our knowledge as landowners – are drawn from our accumulating knowledge of wind farm development and based on actual exposure to the WWF Developers documentation. We have seen the documentary trail – for WWF licences, options to lease, leases, tripartite deeds so we are reasonably well placed as landowners to offer an 'opinion' as to their broad cause and effect in a practical sense. But these remain 'opinions', observations and interpretations, not accusations or assertions. We hope many of the hosts seek to modify exposure to unforeseen consequences before commitment.

Please appreciate we remain committed to the task of educating and creating awareness for the broad community as to what we perceive is a legal minefield for host landowners. Of course, we can't pretend that the actions and decisions of individual landowners don't have implications for the broader community and potentially for generations to come.

As has been our practice from the outset we have remained respectful to the decisions of individual landowners.

Kind regards

Cameron Greig, per
Voice for Walcha