Nine turbine sites canned
Mayor calls Mighty River Power move a "token gesture".

Mighty River Power has moved to appease opponents of the Turitea Wind Farm by slashing nine turbine sites from its plans, including those closest to houses.

But Palmerston North Mayor Jono Naylor has labelled it a "token gesture".

The original wind-farm proposal was for sites for 136 turbines, of which 131 would be built.

Now there would be 127 sites, and 122 built, Turitea project manager Mark Henry said.

Five of the sites dropped are those closest to residents, some within 700m of houses. Now, the closest turbines will be just more than 1km away.

The further four turbines were removed from a wetland area in Brown's Flat for ecological reasons.

"They are in a sensitive area to the water reservoir and, having listened to the ecology experts and their explanation of the importance of this area, we decided to remove this turbine site."

Mr Henry said the decision to drop those sites was a response to community concern.

"We get feedback, and wherever we can we respond to that."

He hoped the removal of the nine sites would help dampen some of the opposition, because many people only opposed particular sites.

"There was a bunch of people who said we're not opposed to wind farms."
While unsurprised by Mighty River Power’s decision to drop turbines, Mr Naylor questioned the reasons behind it.

"To be fair, it probably looks like a token gesture to me."

It was good news that the company was listening to the public, but there were still more turbines that could adversely affect neighbours.

"I would imagine that the people who live up that way would want to see a more significant shift than that.

"The question I ask myself is, why did they not do this before they put the application in in the first place?"

Ross Cassells was pleased by the news, because his house was to be 630m away from a turbine.

It was a "step in the right direction" and a reflection of a positive working relationship with Mighty River Power, he said. "It's an outcome of the good communication."

But there were still turbines within 2km, which would have to be addressed. Residents planned to assess individual turbine sites to see what the impact would be.

"All the turbines within 2km are going to have quite a big impact."

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- Yes, risks are too great not to
- Only if they're really dangerous
- No, there's no need
- Absolutely not, it would damage business

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