

To the Environment Court

ENV-2007-WLG-000098 - Appeal by Motorimu Wind Farm
Paul Stichbury Section 274 party
26 January 2008

Background.

I came to Palmerston North in 1957 and one of my earliest childhood memories is of the summertime visits made with my family to the Kahuterawa Reserve to swim and enjoy a picnic. Of course in those days there was no threat of a forest of wind turbines to shatter the tranquility of what is an iconic natural setting, only a few kilometres from the city. I have introduced my nieces and nephew, all under the age of 5, to the same experience twice during the past month, something they have greatly enjoyed. The Tararuas are a majestic backdrop to the city and as a teenager and into my twenties I regularly ran cross-country over Polson's farm at Aokautere, along Greens road to Kahuterawa Road and also up Scotts Road. I am very familiar with the area and it was for this reason and the love both my wife and I have for this particular rural landscape that 8 years ago we purchased a small forest block in Ngahere Park with an outstanding view. No one at the time knew anything of plans to saturate the area with turbines. Please note that the comments which follow all relate to the impact this development makes on the amenity value of our property and our right to enjoy it undisturbed.

Our land.

Our block is one of approximately 25, 20 of them with residences (two currently under construction) which are either on or very near the 300 metre contour line which has 75 turbines approved at Motorimu and which in a south easterly are pointing directly at us. Any one associated with this court case has our permission to at any time visit our land at 309 Ngahere Park road and to drive onto the section. There you will get a very good feel for the impact of the wind farms which have been both consented and proposed. We have no objection to those North of the Pahiatua track which have been consented. This has now become the Manawatu's wind farm zone, although it has grown haphazardly.

Contact with Motorimu Wind Farm LTD.

There has been none. Owners of properties to the south of Kahuterawa Road have had dealings with the company with sound monitoring, photomontages etc, but this has not been done for any property owner in Kahuterawa Road, Greens Road or Ngahere Park that I am aware of. Mr Frank Boffa's evidence on behalf of MWFL is contradictory. On page 33 he states that in a rural landscape survey he carried out in 1990 for PNCC the Kahuterawa and Tiritea (Turitea) valleys and the foothills and terraces had high landscape qualities. He does not now believe that this same area would today be classified as outstanding. None of the residents ,except those who stand to make money from turbines, would agree with him. Whatever changed his mind ? I can only surmise that this was a conclusion that Mr Boffa came to because he was paid for it by MWFL. On page 11, section 48 Mr Boffa correctly identifies the "high " impact 81 m high turbines will make on those unfortunate to live within a 5km radius. He has not visited affected properties, see page 12, section 49. Our property falls within that radius. His conclusion on page 16, section 70 admits to the foothills having high landscape and rural amenity values which should be appropriately recognised " after the fact " in a proposed District Plan Review. This is unacceptable. Mr Bernhard Voll draws attention to MWFL's objection to what he calls the restrictive noise conditions imposed by the Commissioners - see page 5, section 17. This is, in my opinion, tantamount to an admission that the wind farm in operation will be unacceptably noisy and certainly impact on residences in the greater area. My wife and I visited the Te Apiti wind farm on several occasions during strong

westerlies and approached the installation from both the Woodville and Ashhurst sides. We were struck by just how noisy the turbines were from a vantage point that was approximately 3 km from the nearest turbine. No reasonable person should expect people to have to live with such persistent and disturbing noise. How many noise experts would be willing to purchase property near a wind farm ?

Community impacts.

A viable community is one where people are attracted to the area and properties can be readily bought and sold at a fair price. Now that it is generally known that the area is under the threat of industrialisation by wind turbines this viability has been shattered. Building a house is unwise with the uncertainty posed by the Motorimu and Turitea wind farms and as a result we have had to continue renting when a completed house could have been ready for us more than a year ago. 6 months ago we placed our property on the market, open to offers, but have received not one offer either verbal or written. Effectively the developers and proposers of the Turitea and Motorimu wind farms are controlling surrounding properties without having to purchase them. On their leased property all benefits, tax deductions and income accrue to them, while the rest are left with a depreciating, illiquid asset on which they pay rates. The current owners of the Motorimu wind farm are able to leverage against their asset and sell on commercially favourable terms to another party (before the wind turbines wear out, become unfashionable, or are superseded by much cheaper solar power technologies). Any future corporate owner will have virtually nil social responsibility to the local community other than to obstruct what would be to them irksome noise constraints. As the noise standards will be reviewed and strengthened to defend the rights of neighbours to such an industrial installation, it is in Motorimu's interests to get expedient approval for the extra 38 turbines. Claims by Mr Bernhard Voll that MWFL and Allco place a high value on community relations do not in my view add up. The maps used in support of Gavin Lister's evidence are out of date, omit roads in the Kahuterawa and Ngahere Park area and do not include the numerous new houses (some under construction) or the small rural residential sections in new subdivisions which are either for sale or have recently been sold. On page 21, section 52 of his evidence he claims correctly that the Tararuas are " outstanding " but then compares them to the very distant Tongariro volcanoes and Whanganui River which are not in the Manawatu and not the subject of wind farm development. This makes no sense in my view. He furthermore acknowledges that nearby residents will be likely to be more "sensitive" to a nearby wind farm than someone who is passing by, page 27, section 72. This is an understatement of the obvious if ever there was one. Jonathan Procter in his evidence supporting MWFL appears at first to be saying that Rangitaane O Manawatu have no real objection to turbines but on page 39 of the Cultural Impact Assessment report for Taneuiarangi Manawatu Incorporated makes it clear that this organisation does in fact have real concerns and makes these three points.

1. Turbines dominate and detract from the natural environment.
2. Concern at the impact of wind farm construction and operation on the local community.
3. The potential lack of community responsibility by MWFL.

He also notes that there are few rules or plans or policies to provide guidance for the location and construction of wind farms. Had there been this wind farm would, in my opinion, never have been contemplated in the first place. The Commissioners to their credit have endeavoured to provide such guidelines. Gavin Lister draws attention , page 9, sections 22 and 25 of his evidence to the fact that the Palmerston North District Plan has objectives which state the goal of preserving and enhancing the " natural " environment. You can not do that with a wind farm.

Environmental impacts.

The endangered native bush falcon is endemic to this area and they frequent our land. I have been an amateur ornithologist for most of my life and the birdlife in the area is one of the things which attracted me to purchase our property. Richard Seaton correctly points out that the area of the 75 consented turbines is a feeding ground for the falcons which number amongst our most endangered species. This area

contains high numbers of prey species. Should turbines be installed MWFL will not need to monitor the bird strikes for long as they will quickly eliminate falcons from the area. 38 more turbines will speed up the process. Updraft winds attract raptor activity. Isobel Gabites on page 22 of her evidence, section 94, makes the point that additional wind farms will pose a threat to this threatened species. Claims that birdlife displaced by noisy, dangerous turbines will move elsewhere is disingenuous as they live there in the first place because there is nowhere else for them to live. Jonathan Procter in his evidence has compiled a list of taonga species for Rangitaane O Manawatu. The falcon does not appear on this list, nor does it appear on a list that Rangitaane would like to see protected. This is a glaring omission. MWFL's claim that they will monitor bird strikes is hardly comforting. It will be too late. This wind farm is simply in the wrong place.

Global warming.

Much will no doubt be made by Motorimu Wind Farm LTD that their scheme will save the planet. As I understand it the Court's driving motivation is to get to the truth and to produce a fair outcome. To do this it is necessary to discount the hysteria surrounding global warming. The science is far from certain and as a teacher who has for years taught about global warming, but until 18 months ago to my shame without a critical eye, I am now very doubtful that the extreme claims of climate catastrophe are even remotely true. The threat of global warming has become a very convenient diversion from the real threat of liquid fuel depletion. Oil has recently reached \$100 per barrel, something which is a harbinger of massive economic and societal change to come. <http://www.theoil Drum.com/tag/update>
The forces behind wind farms are attempting to prop up the continuously, expansionary oil based economic system which we currently operate under and to claim a financial stake which they can then flick on to the gullible before this house of cards collapses. What better way than to dress it up under the guise of global warming. However, more electricity means more economic expansion, which in turn means more "dreaded" CO2, more cheap imports from Asia, more suburban sprawl, more fossil fuel consumption, more air pollution. But any economic downturn will result in less electricity being used. The volume of material which I could put before the Court disputing the basic tenets of warming alarmists is simply overwhelming and growing. Many alarmists in North America are, as I write this, shoveling snow from their driveways. So for the sake of brevity I offer these facts which are generally ignored by the media.

- The Antarctic ice cover in 2007 expanded to what is thought to be a record maximum and overall temperatures have dropped by one degree since 1957. A part of Antarctica which is experiencing melting is under a recently discovered active volcano.
- http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/21/world/21volcano.html?_r=1&ref=europe&oref=slogin
- <http://www.newstatesman.com/200712190004>
- The Arctic ice melt is, according to NASA, the result of unusual winds blowing ice south into warmer waters and arctic sea currents are apparently cyclically warmer.
- <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/videos/earth/earth20071001/> NASA video.
- <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/news/news.cfm?release=2007-112> NASA news release.
- The retreat in sea ice is thought to be almost as much as in the 1930's and early 1940's, however satellite records have only been kept since 1979. The Northwest passage was navigated in 1905 and numerous times in the 1940's by the St Roch which is a star exhibit in the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Of course there is almost no one left alive today who can recollect these events. <http://www.vancouvermaritimemuseum.com/page216.htm>
- <http://canadafreepress.com/index.php/article/844>
- A 2006 study found Greenland has cooled since the 1930's and 1940's, with 1941 being the warmest year on record. Another 2006 study concluded Greenland was as warm or warmer in the 1930's and 40's and the rate of warming from 1920-1930 was about 50% higher than the warming from 1995-2005. One 2005 study found Greenland gaining ice in the interior higher elevations and thinning ice at the lower elevations. In addition, the often media promoted fears of Greenland's ice completely melting and a subsequent catastrophic sea level rise are directly at odds with the latest scientific studies

- The world is about one degree cooler than the Medieval warm period which saw grapes grown in the north of England
- Global warming predicts greater evaporation and hence greater rainfall. Droughts in Australia and the western United States are however thought to be the result of a strong La Nina weather pattern where the sea surface is cooler than normal, hence less evaporation, less rain.
- 1934 not 1998 was the warmest year for the United States. This correction was made by NASA without fanfare late last year. You may recall the dust bowl in the US at the time. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0920/p14s01-sten.html?page=1>
- The UK Met office in August 2007 finally had to admit that there had been no global warming since 1998 but "predicts" warming will resume in 2009 (on April 1st perhaps ?)
- There is absolutely no proven link between CO2 and global temperature increases. Atmospheric increases in CO2 in fact lag temperature rises by hundreds of years. Records show that there have been ice ages when the CO2 levels were 10 times today's. If you were worrying about greenhouse gases then methane, the gas produced by cows, is 23 times more warming than CO2. Of course dairy farms are heavy users of electricity.
- <http://nzclimatescience.net/images/PDFs/devansco2.pdf> <http://www.hawaiireporter.com/storyPrint.aspx?9c8600a9-6750-45cb-b7ee-c8ca6b6d3a75>
- Junk Science.com has issued a challenge to alarmists to validate their claims and is offering a prize of \$150,000 US. The challenge is perfectly reasonable. So far the prize has gone unclaimed. <http://ultimateglobalwarmingchallenge.com/>
- Climate science is far from settled. http://epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.Blogs&ContentRecord_id=f80a6386-802a-23ad-40c8-3c63dc2d02cb

My property and amenity rights are being held hostage by climate extremists and energy companies in the scramble for carbon credits that distort sensible long term development .The global warming catastrophism peddled by many who claim to be progressive is simply strengthening the hand of corporate interests over ordinary people.

PNCC.

I support PNCC's very strong opposition to MWFL's attempt to overturn the Commissioners' decision, a decision which was the result of much careful deliberation. This is a responsible attitude to take over environmental, landscape and amenity issues for the citizens it is duty bound to serve.

Mighty River Power.

MRP have proposed a very large windfarm adjacent to Motorimu and it is a great concern to me that they are a party in these proceedings and are supporting MWFL. In the UK common sense has prevailed and a large wind farm has just been turned down.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/highlands_and_islands/7208991.stm

There has been recent negative coverage in the press about the government's energy strategy and an obsessive reliance on wind energy with the prospect of unintended blackouts occurring. I believe the strategy is seriously flawed as it neglects solar energy, be it for water heating or for generating electricity. More and more people will become aware that they can now become energy self sufficient to a high degree at a rapidly reducing cost as new technologies come on stream and production is scaled up. Wind farms will then become much less relevant to the overall mix of electricity generation and as oil depletion and economic factors come to pass, as I have already commented on, they will be uneconomic and problematic to replace. I respectfully request that the Court upholds the Commissioners' findings and denies the additional turbines.

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