




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR HILL

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ADJOURNMENT

Chalumbin Wind Farm

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (6.21 pm): I rise to highlight the hypocrisy surrounding wind farms. The Tully-Millstream Hydro-electric Scheme was a clean, green approved project that had started construction to power 100,000 homes and save \$200 million in electricity transmission losses, with all profits returned to the state. Sadly, it was abandoned in 1988 due to the declaration of the Wet Tropics World Heritage area, in which the project would partially be located. Politicians, environmental groups, tree huggers—you name it—jumped on the bandwagon, citing perceived environmental concerns to stop the project.

Fast forward to today and there has been complete silence from politicians, the same environmental groups—the WWF and the Australian Conservation Foundation—towards the proposed Chalumbin Wind Farm on the Atherton Tablelands. This is despite the wind farm location being right next door to the World Heritage listed Wet Tropics area. These same environmental groups have now magically turned a blind eye and believe that if it is a wind farm it must be good. However, they could not care less about the destruction the wind farm would cause to our natural habitat and wildlife. Even the state and federal Greens are still silent on this issue. However, locals have been fighting back and are rallying to stop this wind farm that will be the third one built that surrounds the township of Ravenshoe. This wind farm will comprise some of the tallest turbines in the Southern Hemisphere which will destroy forest and threaten endangered species.

To further highlight the renewable fantasy to achieve the government's 50 per cent renewable target by 2030, this will require an additional 2,200 megawatts of new renewables, which means 540,000 hectares of land has to be cleared for wind farms, excluding transmission lines. As long as it is a wind farm, foreign owned companies can clear whatever they like. Governments continue to knock back any new water project proposed while at the same time wind farms are given a free pass to completely destroy natural habitat. There is hope with the state government earlier this month announcing a review of the requirements for wind farm developments to identify how they can better protect areas of high ecological and biodiversity value. I believe this is effectively an admission that the Chalumbin approval was a mistake and it is a clear warning to the federal minister ahead of a decision on final approval of the Chalumbin Wind Farm in September. In light of this announcement, I find it incredible that the federal government is still considering this project.

There is a town that has been continually done over and that is Ravenshoe, and I 100 per cent support them.