

Neighbours Warn of Din From Wind Turbines

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Manawatu residents say they are being `driven stupid' by the sound.

MANAWATU residents say they are being "driven stupid" by noise from wind turbines, despite living twice as far away as those planned for Makara.

Two residents who live up to three kilometres from Te Apiti and Tararua wind farms spoke at the resource consent hearing for Meridian Energy's proposed Makara wind farm yesterday.

On the Makara Guardians group's last day of evidence, Wendy Brock described three consecutive days of relentless noise and throbbing from 18 turbines 2.5km from her Ashhurst home.

"You have this drone, you can't escape it. After three days the residents were just worn down, fed up."

Meridian's Project West Wind proposes 70 turbines, some within 1km of homes. The Makara turbines would also be 35 metres taller than Te Apiti's.

Mrs Brock said Meridian's consultation for Te Apiti did not prepare residents for the noise levels.

"The turbines make noise, lots of it."

In the past month she had complained to Palmerston North District Council seven times, but did not feel she was being taken seriously.

Meridian has already paid an undisclosed sum to move one Manawatu family who could not live in their house because of noise and vibrations.

Daniel Sproull's farm lies within sight of both wind farms. He said he feared for Makara residents if Meridian's 70 turbines were allowed.

"If these go ahead and your place is downwind, you're stuffed."

The turbines' sound at Te Apiti, 3km away, was like a truck rumbling past his house, though "it doesn't pass in seconds, it can rumble for hours".

The turbines were enough to "drive you stupid".

Several nights he was woken by turbine noise, thinking the clothes dryer had been left on overnight or road works were directly outside his property, he said.

"All noise control could say was they would put mine with the other complaints."

Project West Wind would "destroy ordinary Kiwis' lives", he said.

Makara Guardians presented expert evidence that criticised Meridian's noise expert Malcolm Hayes, who had said the West Wind turbines would not exceed noise standards.

A report by Australian environmental consultant Robert Thorne said Meridian's evidence addressed only some of the noise issues that would affect residents. It was inadequate under Resource Management Act requirements.

The type of turbines proposed had special audible characteristics not considered by Meridian, which meant they could be heard as far away as south Karori, the report said.