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Media release

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Opposition to Wind Farms Hot Air

A detailed critique of concerns raised by anti-wind farm groups reveals the opposition is based largely on fallacies according to the deputy director of the Australia Institute Andrew Macintosh.

The critique is contained in a new report published today by the Institute. Mr Macintosh has co-authored the report entitled *Wind Farms: The facts and the fallacies*.

“A lot of hot air has been expended trying to undermine the economic and environmental credentials of wind farms,” Mr Macintosh said. “Our analysis of the best available national and international evidence shows convincingly that wind farms are an efficient and environmentally-friendly way of reducing greenhouse emissions while meeting Australia’s growing energy needs.”

He said the analysis showed that wind energy is cost-competitive with other forms of renewable energy, effectively displaces greenhouse gases and has only minor adverse environmental impacts.

Mr Macintosh said claims that wind farms negatively affect birds, bats and landscape values, are noisy and a fire risk are greatly exaggerated. All available evidence indicates that these risks have been overstated and that in practice the negative environmental impacts of wind farms are insignificant.

“The Coalition’s attempts to obstruct the wind industry are flying in the face of these facts,” he said.

Mr Macintosh and his co-author Christian Downie said the suggestion by the Federal Government and opposition parties in Victoria that local communities should have a veto power over wind developments is absurd. “Wind farms should be subject to the normal planning procedures and not be treated any better or worse than any other major energy development,” Mr Downie said.

The Federal Environment Minister is due to decide whether the proposed Bald Hills wind farm in Victoria will be allowed to proceed in the next two weeks.

“The Minister’s previous decision to block the proposal illustrates the extent of the politicisation of federal approval processes,” Mr Macintosh said. “The Coalition should help allay community concerns about wind farms rather than manipulating the situation for political purposes”.

The report can be found under ‘What’s New’ on the Institute’s website: www.tai.org.au.