Comment on the proposed changes to the SA Planning and Design Code in regard to the siting of Renewable Energy Facilities.

Terry Reardon

The new Code should recognise the impact of wind farms on the Southern bentwing bat (SBWB). This species is listed federally as a Critically Endangered Species. This species has a distribution from about Colac in Victoria to Robe in South Australia. Two thirds of the population occurs in SA, and the largest of three maternity caves is situated at Naracoorte Caves Reserve. Some 40 wintering caves are located in a broad region in the upper and lower South East of SA.

Recent evidence from post-construction mortality surveys of wind farms in Victoria has shown SBWBs are killed by collisions with wind farm turbines. I understand that the recently formed National SBWB Recovery Team has established a working group to investigate ways of mitigating the impact of wind farms on SBWB.

Recent research based in SA has shown large scale and regular movements between the maternity cave and wintering caves as well as between wintering caves suggesting the likely risk for collisions is higher than previously considered.

As wind farms are considered as one of the threats to the survival of the species, I believe the new Planning and Design Code should consider a moratorium on any proposed new wind farms south of -36.80 degrees latitude in SA. A more refined exclusion zone should be developed in the new Planning Code in consultation with the new SBWB Recovery Team.

I would be happy to provide the links to the appropriate documents referred to above and provide further information on this matter.

Terry Reardon

Bat Specialist