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Is there an appropriate model of community wind turbine ownership for New Zealand?

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
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Te Rere Hau, Manawatu (Source: personal photograph)

Abstract

Historically, public ownership of telecommunications, railways, ports, and energy, amongst other infrastructure, has been important in New Zealand. In the electricity sector local authorities generated and supplied electricity from the early 1900s. Thus in a sense electricity generation was in the hands of community owned and operated trading enterprises. However, the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s brought significant restructuring of this infrastructure based on the market model of privatisation. Since 1992 energy companies have been required to operate as successful businesses despite being ultimately owned by community trusts which, in effect, hold the assets of the energy company in trust for the community. However, it is arguable as to whether this model actually pursues social and community objectives.

Community ownership of wind turbines is common in some European countries, but there are currently no examples of this form of ownership in New Zealand. This thesis defines community ownership and by examining case studies in Scotland, Denmark and Australia, proposes a model of community ownership appropriate to wind turbine ownership in New Zealand. Specifically, this thesis seeks to identify community ownership models that are capable of promoting holistic environmental justice by reconciling social justice with ecological justice.

A number of forms of community ownership are identified in the various case study countries and a comparative analysis is carried out of these exemplars. On the basis of these studies it is found to be possible for a form of community ownership of wind turbines to exist in New Zealand that incorporates both social justice and ecological justice principles as holistic environmental justice.

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List of Abbreviations

ATA	Alternative Technology Association
BSX	Bendigo Stock Exchange
CC	Commerce Commission
DSP	Dominant Social Paradigm
DWTOA	Danish Wind Turbine Owners Association
EA	Electricity Act 1992
EC	Electricity Commission
EAA	Electricity Amendment Act 2004
EECA	Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority
EIRA	Electricity Industry Reform Act 1998
FE	Future Energy
GREL	Gigha Renewable Energy Limited
HICEC	Highlands and Islands Community Energy Company
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
HREA	Hepburn Renewable Energy Association
kWh	Kilowatt hour
MCE	Ministerial Council for Energy
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MfE	Ministry for the Environment
MRET	Mandatory Renewable Energy Target
MUHEC	Massey University Human Ethics Committee
MWh	Megawatt hour
NIWA	National Institute of Water and Atmosphere
NSD	New Social Democracy
NZ	New Zealand
NZCPS	New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement
NZEECS	New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy
NZES	New Zealand Energy Strategy
NZ ETS	New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme
OCSE	Officials Committee on Sustainable Energy
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

PRE	Projects to Reduce Emissions Programme
REC	Renewable Energy Certificate
RESF	Renewable Energy Support Fund
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
ROC	Renewable Obligation Certificate
SEF	Sustainable Energy Forum
SV	Sustainability Victoria
TM	Transitional Measures
UK	United Kingdom
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
VRET	Victorian Renewable Energy Certificate
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

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