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# Manawatu Standard

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**MANAWATU STANDARD STORY**

## Idyll under a cloud

04 March 2005

By HELEN HARVEY

### The dream of an idyll in the bush and a home on a hill has been shattered for a couple by 104 wind turbines.

Robert and Fiona Beale's property borders the proposed Te Rere Hau wind farm on the Tararua Ranges and the couple have lodged an appeal to the Environment Court against a recent decision to allow the wind farm to go ahead.

The appeal says the wind farm fails to "internalise" its adverse effects.

Adverse effects include noise and visual impact.

The couple's plans to start an eco tourism horse-trekking and cabin-stay development are on hold because the wind turbines would sit 30 metres from their land.

Mr Beale believes trying to stop the wind farm is unrealistic, so he is attempting to get the bottom two rows of wind turbines removed.

Then 19 hectares of bush reserve would act as a buffer between the turbines and the Beales' property, he said.

The cabins were to be built on a sheltered part of the ranges, have a log fire, an awesome view and be the perfect getaway.

But Mr Beale doesn't think having a windmill just outside the door would be appealing.

The only sounds on that part of the hills yesterday were birds and the wind rustling in the tree tops, until the sound of a chainsaw cracking the air was followed by a dog barking.

The chainsaw is in action on the other side of the valley and the dog is three kilometres away, Mr Beale said.

"Yet they tell us we won't hear the turbines just over the fence," Mr Beale said.

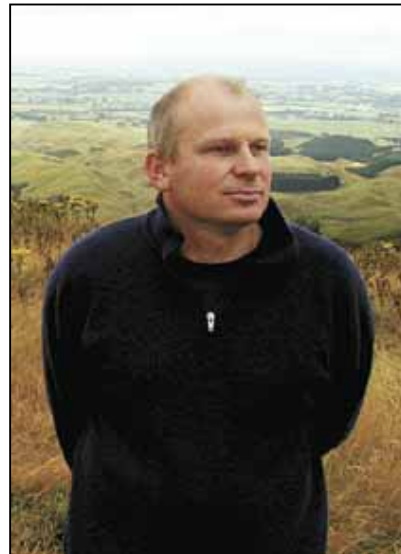
The couple have bought half the land they require for their dream and have first option on buying the rest when funds become available, he said.

"It's a 10-year plan, as we don't have money to bankroll it. Five years in, we are steadily building towards it."

Part of the dream was to build a house high on a hill and white tent pegs marking

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UNDER A CLOUD: Robert Beale stands where he planned to build his dream home. Behind him are awesome views of Manawatu and in front of him lies the prospect of wind turbines over the back fence. SUSAN SIU/Manawatu Standard

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out their dream home are visible in the long grass.

On one side, the view over Manawatu is breathtaking.

On the other, a fence marks the border between the Beales' property and the land owned by New Zealand Windflow. Turbines would whir 30m away from their back door.

Plans for the house are on hold, as are any ideas of horse-trekking and cabins.

Mr Beale said they don't know how trekking right under wind turbines would affect the horses.

The couple had to take a stand, but an appeal is expensive, he said.

"It's scary, to be honest. It's a very daunting exercise, not something taken lightly, but we have to stand up for our rights."

They have asked for mediation because they don't have a big budget, but retain the right to continue to the Environment Court if mediation fails.

"If it comes to that, we'll make the call then. We are not what you'd call well-off people. We don't have a lot of financial resources."

The situation was especially distressing for Mrs Beale, because while he has his job as a mechanic, the horses and cabins were her aspirations, Mr Beale said.

The couple started buying land five or six years ago, unaware wind turbines were just around the corner.

"It didn't come up on the LIM report. It's a very stressful period. We feel like we're banging our head on a brick wall."

New Zealand used to be a democracy, but now it is run by the people with the big chequebooks, he said.

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