

# Australian Industrial Wind Turbine Awareness Network

## **PUBLIC STATEMENT**

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014

Network members from around Australia are pleased that the NHMRC have recommended multidisciplinary research directly into the adverse health impacts experienced by residents living near industrial wind turbine developments. This research is long overdue, and was recommended "as a priority" in June 2011, after the Federal Senate Inquiry into "The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms". No health research has since been funded.

Many members have expressed their concerns and anger at the misleading and deceptive way many journalists have portrayed the draft review by the NHMRC over the last week, and would like to express this by way of this public statement.

The NHMRC have NOT said there are no health issues.

They have stated: ***"there is consistent but poor quality evidence that proximity to wind farms is associated with annoyance and, less consistently, with sleep disturbance and poorer quality of life"***.

They have recommended research.

It is time the serious adverse health effects of rural residents currently negatively impacted by industrial wind turbines are taken seriously, and that the continual denial, denigration of sick people and lies about alleged scaremongering causing the symptoms stops.

Residents in Australia are leaving their homes both permanently and temporarily to reduce their exposure, having been advised to do so by their treating doctors. These medical practitioners understandably will not speak out publicly or put such advice in writing because of the toxic nature of the public debate in Australia, due particularly to the influence of wind industry advocate Simon Chapman from Sydney University, who recently stated that "research was not necessary". Simon Chapman's views have not come from any direct investigation of the residents - indeed he has refused to engage with them or to visit them, and refused offers to stay in their homes to experience the wind turbine noise.

Simon Chapman's ill-informed views have been actively propagated by others within the public health and Green political movements in Australia, and the active support of these trained health professionals in denying the serious adverse health effects has directly resulted in further suffering. This is arguably a breach of their professional ethics. It is also enabling the abuse of rural residents to continue.

While there are many stories to be told from negatively impacted residents I have included just one, of the hundreds of "anecdotal" stories dismissed by the NHMRC expert review panel, and not investigated by the state health authorities (in this case the Victorian Department of Health).

This story tells the story so well of just how those who are negatively impacted from industrial wind turbines feel and how they have been treated. This is the very reason why the research is so urgently needed. Full spectrum acoustic monitoring including infrasound, low frequency noise and vibration and concurrent direct objective physiological measurements of sleep, blood pressure, heart rate and cortisol are required, inside their homes, - because real people are being irreparably harmed by the sleep deprivation and physiological stress and other symptoms wind turbine noise causes.

---

The NHMRC has investigated wind farm health impacts only by reviewing scientific literature; they do not accept personal stories or individual medical reports and have not directly dealt with people experiencing harm in currently approved wind facilities or people about to be impacted upon.

In Australian society where public and individual health is protected by law and good government management, it is a duty to continue to investigate exactly what is being endured within regions hosting these massive industrial sites. Segregated by public outright dismissal, disregard and poor quality of life experienced living near or inside wind facilities is unbearable and unacceptable. To raise awareness of detrimental impacts of industrial turbines on people's health, I share some of my experiences living in the sphere of electricity producing generators, substations and high voltage transmission lines or 'wind farm' for the past 6 years of operation.

Evidence of negative impacts occurring near industrial turbines is now available world- wide and public education of and resolution of these problems is the NHMRC's, the Health Department and individually, our specific duty. True in situ, 'hands on' independent investigation of my families deteriorating well-being and acting on the recommendations made in Parliamentary reviews into wind farms can only help resolve the never-ending impact this industry inflicts on us.

My family and I are being profoundly disturbed with noise and vibration caused by wind turbines, about 850m away. We have lived here 17 years after relocating for a peaceful rural life; enjoyed until the wind facility was built against all recommendations in 2008. The ground was considered too unstable and not the terrain to sustain the tonnes of concrete bases supporting the towers and blades.

Problems arose from the start of construction, ignored by the Shire, the energy producer and the Government and in October 2011 after many disturbed nights and days, I could no longer stay silently living with distress. I started making further complaints, writing letters expecting someone would listen, show concern for us and do something about unbearable noise/sensations I tried very hard to ignore.

Nothing has actually been done here to stop the torment of noise or vibration, ever and no investigations have been conducted to date on our behalf by the company or government to specifically detect the cause of disturbance emanating from the wind facility.

I was shocked too at discovering rural people just like us, truly suffer and like us remain suffering. I mistakenly thought we were alone with this incomprehensible situation. I mistakenly believed the Planning Department was daily monitoring wind farm activities and everything would be taken care of.

The Victorian EPA is uninterested in wind farm noise, won't investigate it and never came and took care of it either.

It has publicly, untruthfully been stated by this company, "They have had no complaints at any of their wind farms". Many untruthful and uninformed statements are made and then blindly reported about wind farms and so-called anti-wind farm people, but unless you live with this you will not have any conception of how detrimental the actual wind facility is and name calling, labelling and belittlement will never remove the measurable and preventable noise and vibration causing harm.

For years I believed company hype it was sustainable with the environment and people's well-being at heart. Convinced we could continue to live here, next to a wind facility; pretended there were no ill health effects and property devaluations don't occur. I have tried to support this industry, to not rock the small community boat and used all kinds of positive thinking to convince my body it was lying to me and I have failed.

Govt. approved and company methods of determining noise is ineffective, measurement of decibels inaccurate and comprehensive, independent investigation is needed and wind farm permit conditions and subsidies, changed accordingly. For months and years the vibration/noise from the facility has been relentless.

I didn't often actually 'hear' noises my family and neighbours were hearing, unfortunately with new advanced digital hearing aids, even set to screen industrial noise, now I do. I feel/hear air borne sound/vibration, bone conducted sound, and sound vibrating through the ground, the swishing vibration from turbine movement, loud bangs, rumblings annoy me but high pitch squeals and constant vibration through the house and bed is most agonising. I cannot block disturbances out and it is not simply, an unproven case of nocebo. Like many others I can't escape.

Broadband noises, directly give me headaches, sleepless nights, being jolted awake in distress even after reluctantly taking prescribed sleep medication; often getting no further sleep, feelings of electricity, vibrations and through my body, feeling ill in the stomach and forehead and no energy what so ever.

Ongoing physical torture is the seismic like vibrations driving me mad most nights and days, and there is no escape anywhere on our small farm or inside. I feel them throughout our whole house, in my bed, at the kitchen table, everywhere. I feel this vibration as pressure on my body; I feel it vibrating through the floor, furniture, in the car and even through the ground outside. Independent monitoring conducted inside our house confirms a noise problem and acousticians and scientists recognise and acknowledge what I perceive is there and measurable.

Lack of direct support and industry initiated falsehoods create feelings of social abandonment and divide. I wonder just how we are expected to survive the torture of sleepless and disrupted nights caused by industrial noise exposure. An Endocrinologist recommended it would be best for my long term health to move away from the wind farm and my GP supports this.

Admission to Casualty with alarming high blood pressure caused great concern, a Cardiac Specialist investigated symptoms. I am no longer calm under stress. I have woken in the night frightened, with a pounding heart, rapid pulse and rapid breathing, for no reason other than wind farm disturbances. Hurting teeth, especially my capped tooth. Frequency of urination at different times; Hashimoto's disease, related to thyroid; A gynaecologist was consulted, my cycle often unnaturally commences when the turbines thunder, abating when the pressure eases.

Physically it is exhausting living near a wind farm I have little motivation left to get things done at home due to extreme lack of energy. Co-operatively but reluctantly, I am now on 'heart, thyroid, sleeping pills, allopathic treatment is no cure. At times I am extremely sensitive to sounds and loud noises and easily startled. I am always tired and my family all look tired, all the time; explained as

“ongoing years of sleep deprivation, move away”. Even after the rare undisturbed night’s sleep, I’m exhausted and tired upon waking and more than being simply tired; it’s a cellular level, bone deep tiredness.

It is difficult to concentrate and to stay patient. With no explanation or even words to describe some experiences, I am mute, disadvantaged. I experience stress and feelings of panic as autonomic response to noise. I was a person who rarely went to a Dr, never had headaches or this sort of tiredness, until the wind energy facility was constructed next door. I never had pain, slept well, I was healthy and I fortunately didn’t need drugs or blood tests.

I am shamed, angered and ‘so over it’ some times by my helplessness and distress caused by ongoing maltreatment. We endured a lot, silently for a long time and telling my family’s story is not to cause harm or to create fear, but to raise awareness of and concern about a situation that should not continue uninvestigated.

Victoria, March 2014.

Individual Politicians, and Public Health and Climate Health Activist Groups in Australia who have both failed to directly investigate the circumstances of these people, and who have actively propagated the “nocebo nonsense” wind industry propaganda include:

**Senator Christine Milne**

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansards%2Fc8ba53c5-ebc4-47a7-938d-14571d80a1cb%2F0014%22>

**Senator Richard Di Natale** <http://yes2renewables.org/2013/11/14/pollie-watch-senator-for-victoria-holds-anti-wind-farm-lobby-to-account/>

**Climate and Health Alliance executive members and “expert” advisors:** <http://caha.org.au/about/governance/>

**Public Health Association of Australia:** <http://www.phaa.net.au/board.php> and <http://www.phaa.net.au/environHealth.php>

**Doctors for the Environment:** <http://dea.org.au/about/committees>

**NETWORK CONTACT:** Patina Schneider Email: [aiwtan@hotmail.com.au](mailto:aiwtan@hotmail.com.au) Mobile: 0405 127 189

*“Man has a fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations”.*

Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment