

CONCERN ORIGINATED FROM THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICERS OF THE STATES

P 84 Professor Warwick Anderson

This issue was brought to us by the chief medical officers of the states of the National Health and Medical Research Council. They are members of our council. In 2009, being **aware of growing concern about the possible health effects** of wind farms or wind turbines as a result of their quest for us to look into it, we issued that public statement. We are keeping this under review, and we have always intended to do so, **because the review that we undertook of the literature showed that at that time there was not a lot of high-quality, peer-reviewed literature there.** On that basis we felt it very important to keep it under review

LITTLE HIGH QUALITY RESEARCH EVIDENCE IS AVAILABLE

P 86 Professor Warwick Anderson:

“As I said in my opening statement, **we are very aware that the high-quality scientific literature in this area is very thin.** That is why we were at pains to point out that we believe that **a precautionary approach should be taken** to this, because, as you would understand, **the absence of evidence does not mean that there might not be evidence in the future;** it is just that, at the stage when the review was done, it was not there. So we have kept an eye on the literature during the period of time, and **we are aware of some papers that have since been published.**”

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE INFORMS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH QUESTIONS

P 87 Professor Warwick Anderson:

On the anecdotes, **since our statement many groups and individuals have been in contact with us and we are aware of other descriptions and anecdotes of individuals, including from Dr Pierpont's work.** The point we are trying to make there is that although anecdotes can help form scientific investigation they are not by themselves that. So it was rather shorthand, I suppose, and it was followed up in the sentence below. **We are encouraging scientists—epidemiologists and others—to think about this area and use the information that the anecdotes and individual patients have provided to better design epidemiological approaches to investigate the issues. Anecdotes are very valuable ways of honing the questions to be asked.**

DO THE NH&MRC DO THEIR OWN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH?

P 87 Senator Fielding and Professor Warwick Anderson

Senator FIELDING—So you are not proposing any scientific investigation yourselves?

Prof. Anderson—No, we do not do scientific investigations ourselves as the NHMRC; we fund others to do that

COMMENTS RE ADOPTING PRECAUTIONARY APPROACH

P 87 Professor Anderson

...but I do want to make a point to anybody who is relying on this (Rapid Review). We regard this as a work in progress. We certainly do not believe that this question has been settled. That is why we are keeping it under constant review. That is why we said in our review that we believe authorities must take a precautionary approach to this. That is what we do say in medicine anyhow, but this is very important here because of the very early stage of the scientific literature....

NH&MRC “WE DO NOT SAY THERE ARE NO ILL EFFECTS”

P 88 Prof Anderson

...The main thing I wanted to say is that, if there are ill effects, that is a very important thing for the NHMRC. We have not done something and walked away, we are keeping it under review and we would expect that as the literature matures and becomes more advanced and there are better studies that the possible ill effects will emerge strongly...

...**Senator FIELDING**—

...you are making some, I think, rightly qualified statements that we have to take a precautionary approach. It seems to me that that precaution may not be being taken because everyone is putting a very large weight on the NHMRC’s rapid review statement and saying that there are no adverse health impacts from living near wind turbines and everyone is just approving them on that basis. That is of huge concern to me.

Prof Anderson—I know that the headline on that public statement says that, but the document does not say that. It did say that there was no published scientific evidence at that stage to positively link the two. That is a very different thing to saying that there

are no ill effects and we do not say that there are no ill effects. We definitely do not say it that way....