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16 November, 2014

OPEN LETTER TO LEADERS OF ALL VICTORIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Regardless which political party is elected to govern Victoria in less than two weeks, members of the new parliament have an important challenge ahead; a challenge that all previous governments have deliberately and improperly avoided.

Rural residents in Victoria living near large industrial wind turbines have been publicly reporting serious adverse health effects since 2004.ⁱ These adverse health effects, including sleep deprivation, have resulted from systemic regulatory failure with respect to the following:

- regulatory failure with respect to planning regulations and permit conditions,
- failure to effectively regulate noise pollution with enforcement of breaches, and
- failure to investigate noise complaints or nuisance under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act.

The UN Committee Against Torture regards prolonged sleep deprivation as torture, as do the Physicians for Human Rights.ⁱⁱ

Our recent brief summary "***Important Information for All Politicians In Victoria***"ⁱⁱⁱ exposes ten long years of shameful neglect of this group of vulnerable Victorian families, since Dr David Iser first reported serious health problems to the then state government in May 2004.^{iv}

There has been a pattern of willful blindness and determined ignorance on the part of Ministers and public servants, regardless of which political party was in power. The only positive development by any government was the introduction of VC 82 (2 km setback), however even at the time that initiative was announced, there was field evidence indicating 10 km was required to protect resident's sleep if larger 3 MW turbines were installed.^v

Subsequent independent acoustic surveys by Emeritus Professor Colin Hansen's team have confirmed excessive levels of low frequency noise from 3 MW wind turbines in homes out to 8.7km.^{vi} Dr Bob Thorne's study at Waubra and Cape Bridgewater confirmed adverse health effects in residents living in homes out to 3.4km.^{vii} Les Huson's acoustic survey at Macarthur found there was no attenuation of infrasound out to 6.4km from the nearest wind turbine, and measured infrasound from the Hepburn Wind turbines 32 km away – in other words the infrasound generated by wind turbines will travel for great distances.^{viii}

More recently, to Pacific Hydro's credit, independent acoustician Steven Cooper has been commissioned by them to investigate three homes with severely impacted residents at Pacific Hydro's Cape Bridgewater Wind Development.^{ix} The final results of that acoustic investigation are awaited with great interest.

Conflicts of interest are apparent for each political party on the issue of industrial wind turbines, including both votes and commercial interests, for example

- donations from wind developers and manufacturers,
- protection of turbine hosts who are influential party members and donors, and
- ensuring the flow of money from federally issued Renewable Energy Certificates continues to union industry superannuation funds via their substantial investments in industrial wind developments

With only a few notable exceptions, such as ABC journalist Cheryl Hall,^x a gullible, compliant, and activist media in Victoria have ensured these problems are not highlighted objectively, indeed there has been a common practice of regurgitating wind industry spin and ridiculing sick and vulnerable people, rather than investigating the issues and reporting factually and accurately about what is happening.

The reported health and sleep problems are real, and were considered "real" and not "imagined" by the VCAT Commissioners in the appeal by Infigen against the unanimous rejection by the Mitchell Shire Council of the proposed Cherry Tree wind project.^{xi}

We urge each of you to carefully consider section 10 of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, and Division 274 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code 1995 with respect to your obligations to prevent torture, and cruel inhuman or degrading treatment.

Further detail is available in our recent public statement^{xii} explaining the potential personal liability of public officials, which was sent to all Victorian Parliamentarians.

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ⁱ <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/wind-storm-sixty-minutes-story-about-wind-farm-woes-at-toora-wind-farm-victoria/>

ⁱⁱ <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/public-officials-at-risk-criminal-charges-for-torture-public-statement/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/important-information-for-all-politicians-victoria/>

^{iv} <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/dr-david-iser-2004-conducts-first-survey-patients-living-near-wind-project/>

^v <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/about/explicit-cautionary-notice/>

^{vi} <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/hansen-zajamsek-hansen-noise-monitoring-waterloo-wind-farm/>

^{vii} <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/thorne-r-victorian-wind-farm-review-updated-june-2014/>

^{viii} <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/huson-l-expert-evidence-at-vcac-cherry-tree-hearing/>

^{ix} <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/cooper-s-pacific-hydro-cape-bridgewater-acoustic-testing-preliminary-results/>

^x <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/abc-tv-stateline-2/>

^{xi} <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/cherry-tree-vcac-final-orders-november-2013/>

^{xii} <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/public-officials-at-risk-criminal-charges-for-torture-public-statement/>