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Media Release

Waubra Foundation Calls for Research into Environmental Noise from Coal and Gas Extraction and Transport, as Well as Wind Turbine Noise

"The Climate and Health Alliance's recent report¹ into the adverse health impacts of coal mining in the Hunter Valley region in New South Wales has yet again highlighted the systemic regulatory failure of noise pollution regulations, and enforcement" said the Foundation's CEO, Sarah Laurie.

*"The community health impacts from excessive environmental noise are real, serious, and have been known to Australian Government Health authorities for more than ten years" she stated. "In 2004 the Environmental Health Committee issued a report detailing the known adverse health effects which include effects on sleep, stress, mental health, cardiovascular health, and children's learning."*²

The recent CAHA report details the frustration of rural residents when government noise pollution regulatory authorities fail to enforce breaches of noise limits. *"All too often the rural residents tell the Foundation of noise monitoring periods occurring when the noise polluter's activity is unusually quiet only to "ramp up again" the minute the acoustic monitoring equipment is heading down the road"* said the Foundation's CEO.

"Steven Cooper's recent work at Cape Bridgewater³ has relevance for other noise sources. The symptoms, sensations, health problems and diseases being reported to the Foundation by residents living near mines, including in the Hunter Valley region, make it clear that the well known sleep deprivation, physiological stress, vibroacoustic disease, and "noise annoyance" or "infrasound and low frequency noise syndrome" symptoms are also occurring and being diagnosed in these residents" she said. "However we have no idea of their noise exposures, and we need to know what sound and vibration thresholds in the infrasound range must not be exceeded in order to protect sleep and health."

"We call, yet again, for the proper funding of independent multidisciplinary research into a range of environmental noise sources including mining, gas extraction activities, power stations and other sources of infrasound, low frequency noise and vibration" she said. "There is no reason the NHMRC and Federal government cannot extend the promised wind turbine noise research to other sources of environmental noise."

"However in the meantime there is no reason why full spectrum acoustic monitoring inside and outside homes where noise nuisance is reported cannot be conducted continuously, and the results made transparently available in real time to all parties" said the CEO. "This will help stop the manipulation and rorting of the system by some noise polluters, who decrease their activity when they know acoustic monitoring is occurring."

CEO Mobile 0474 050 463 Sarah Laurie

¹ <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/climate-health-alliance-coal-and-health-hunter/>

² <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/health-effects-environmental-noise-other-than-hearing-loss/>

³ <http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/acoustic-engineering-investigation-at-cape-bridgewater-wind-facility/>