

Letter to the Editor, Hamilton Spectator, Saturday 21st September, 2013

INDISPUTABLE FACT

I have written the following in response to Myles Peterson's article in The Spectator on 14th September 2013.

It is an indisputable fact that many people living near to wind energy facilities are suffering negative impacts. The Macarthur wind facility is no exception as is clearly shown in the preliminary survey, where 23 households, with 63 residents, reported impacts.

This is alarming considering that the facility has only been operational for a short period and that the surveyed area contains the proposed wind energy facilities of Peshurst (225 turbines) and Willatook (90 turbines), where stakeholders will likely be silenced by contractual confidentiality clauses.

I am appalled by Pro Winds' Andrew Bray's statements that say the reporting of a survey will cause suffering and "do more harm than good". His inference is that the respondents' symptoms are caused by mental stimulus and not by the full sound spectrum emanating from the massive Macarthur turbines.

As Mr Bray is neither a physician nor an acoustician, one wonders what sort of person belittles the suffering of others. His "diagnosis" is made without examining a single person, conducting an independent study or even speaking to those suffering adverse health effects.

Even Friends of the Earths' spokesman Mr Cam Walker, stated "we do understand that some people are getting sick as a result of living near turbines. This is a terrible situation, and we support getting to the bottom of the issue" (Ballarat Courier, October 3, 2011)

Why has there never been independent studies conducted where the sufferers are interviewed, examined and long term recording of infrasound and low frequency noise inside people's homes? Why have the Government Health Departments and the EPA ignored the issues? Where are their responsibility and ethics codes of practice?

There are certainly many, many impacted residents around Australia who have been pleading for answers, such as people living near to Waubra, Toora, Cape Bridgewater, Glenthompson, Hepburn, Waterloo, Cullerin, Capital etc.

The Australian Federal Senate, in 2011, recommended that urgent research be conducted into the health impacts of wind farms.

The NHMRC are currently undertaking another literature review of health impacts and the CEO, Professor Warwick Anderson has recommended a cautionary approach and has stated that "we do not say there are no ill effects".

The wind industry has long been well aware of the problems of infrasound and low frequency noise. As far back as 1987, a peer reviewed research paper was presented at the wind industry's Windpower Conference by NASA scientist, Neil Kelley et al, that clearly showed that infrasound and low frequency noise can cause negative health symptoms.

The new Coalition Government has a policy to conduct independent research and real-time recording of the full sound spectrum of wind facilities.

In April 2013 at the VCAT hearing into the Cherry Tree wind farm, the Commissioners acknowledged the existence of direct evidence of a range of symptoms in residents living near to wind facilities. They also acknowledged a lack of studies and research by what they called a "knowledge vacuum" and have thus delayed their decision.

The survey merely asks the residents, using a simple questionnaire, if they are being impacted and to detail those impacts. The purpose of the survey was to document their experiences.

It is not about petty political point-scoring it is about genuine concern that many people living near to wind facilities are experiencing adverse health impacts.

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*Please note that I can supply many sources of peer-reviewed articles regarding the impacts of wind facility noise.