



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Dr Michael Spence
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

7 August 2012

[REDACTED]

Dear Mrs Rovensky

Thank you for your letters regarding Professor Simon Chapman's comments on wind farms. Professor Chapman was originally invited by the NHMRC to present a paper on research questions concerning psycho-social aspects of wind farm complaints. In that paper he raised the issue you describe and referred to international evidence that stimulated his hypothesis. By inviting him to speak on this matter at the forum, the NHMRC were presumably of the view that psychosocial aspects such as pre-existing views about wind farms and consideration of whether payment has a "protective" effect on the expression of annoyance and symptoms are relevant. His paper may be found at: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/media/events/index.htm> at the end of the page.

A recent court decision (<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/sa/SAERDC/2011/23.html>) regarding wind farms in South Australia recently stated that "On the issues of noise and health, we accept the evidence and assessments of Acciona's expert witnesses and where there is any conflict between them and the appellants' expert witnesses we prefer the evidence given by Acciona's experts." Acciona is a wind energy company and its witnesses declared under oath that there was poor evidence of any health harms arising from exposure to wind turbines.

Thus there are evidently reasons to believe that his position is correct or at any rate justifiable, even though you do not agree with him. Beyond these considerations, the University's Public Comment Policy expressly acknowledges that members of its academic community may engage in public discussion about matters in which they have expertise subject, of course, to behaving ethically and observing the usual civilities. This is a matter about which Professor Chapman has expertise.

Regarding the Crikey cartoon, it was clearly not sent to you by Professor Chapman and his forwarded email was originally sent to staff who would understand the context. I am sorry that you feel offended by it although the level of abuse targeted at Professor Chapman by people who disagree with him may go some way to excusing his insensitivity.

Yours sincerely

Michael Spence