

1st April 2014
Professor Geoff Dobb
Vice President AMA

Re AMA Position Statement – Wind Farms and Health

Dear Professor Dobb

I had a letter prepared to send you yesterday but on checking your AMA website I read your latest information – “Wind Farm Fears Blown Away”, which seeks to reiterate and again give support to your Position Statement – Wind Farms and Health.

I wish to know what prompted you, Dr Hambleton and your association to put out the statement referred to above. It sounds and appears to be expressing a viewpoint about wind turbine technology that has come directly from the public relations and propaganda information of proponents of wind energy who have vested interests and the Clean Energy Council. I do not know how much interest you have taken in the subject of possible harm being caused to human health if they are forced to live too close to the latest huge modern wind turbines but I suggest that your position statement has many shortcomings.

What has become of the Hippocratic Oath where “first of all do no harm” is often quoted?

As a Registered Nurse and retired midwife, now only involved in taking part in vaccination sessions at “flu” season, I recall vividly being instructed by formidable charge nurses over 50 years ago to always listen to what my patients had to say about their health concerns. In your second bullet point you advise individuals who experience heightened anxiety or diminished health and well-being in the context of local wind farms that they should seek medical advice. That is a ludicrous suggestion as the problems patients exposed to turbines are suffering from do not stem from medical conditions but are associated with chronic sleep deprivation among other adverse effects. Medical advice is not called for in this case, but consideration from the wind farm proponents and developers as to where they position the turbines in relation to where the non host rural dwellers live. Professor Simon Chapman’s famous “nocebo” effect or his claim that non host landholder neighbours are sick with envy because they do not gain financially are complete rubbish.

Further on you refer to extensive local community consultation and engagement being necessary well before the development begins. This has not been done in the past in Victoria in any meaningful way as the result has always been that the Planning Department’s intention is always to approve the plans. I hate to say it but this issue is completely political. There is no thought or consideration for the sufferers – in other words **commercial interests far outweigh any duty of care owed to patients.**

My husband and I are, at the ages of 72 and 74, living within 1000 metres of an approved but not yet commenced 107 turbine wind energy facility with 150 metre high turbines complete with red flashing lights, just across the paddock from our bedroom window. We have repeatedly asked the developer if he would please move the turbines back a further 1000 metres but he has not complied in any way and does not intend to help. We have been trying for five years now to prevent a potential disaster in our retirement years. We do not want our good health jeopardised. My husband Frank has LQT Syndrome, will be in line for a pacemaker at some time in the future, and

apart from coronary heart disease and positioning of a stent five years ago, is in very good health as I am also. We have six children and twelve grandchildren, all of whom spend quite a bit of time on our small farm. Three of the children and four grandchildren also inherited LQTS. We have some concerns about the effect of electromagnetic radiation on them. The Victorian electricity company Powercor, when they installed a Smart Meter at our house, positioned it well away from our outside wall as they said, on the advice of the energy Ombudsman, they could not guarantee that Frank and all of the family affected by LQTS would not be harmed.

All we are asking for is some recognition from the AMA and NHMRC that there are many very real problems associated with poor planning, all of which could have been avoided by good communication, discussion and compromise. We are not at all against clean green energy solutions and are not advocates of coal as the answer to our future energy needs. There has been a divide created by those who promote wind energy as the answer to all our problems, as they put us straight in the anti-renewable energy basket. This is unfair and untrue in our case but so hard to counteract.

As someone who has had an interest in all things related to health all my life, I know that the Medical Profession is often beholden to various organisations and companies with a lot of financial resources. Grants and scholarships etc. are the life blood of the research which needs constant updating and costs millions of dollars. I plead with you Professor Dobb to look carefully at both sides of the coin. It takes a very serious reason for farm folk to leave their homes, businesses, lifestyles, communities, schools, churches and a way of life they may have known for generations because they can no longer live there. Please do not let that happen in our shire of Moorabool in Victoria. Support the call for full spectrum acoustic studies, if for no other reason than to protect the health of the rural residents. The developers can still have their wind energy but not at the cost of the physical and mental health of non host neighbours. My last thought is that if the wind companies are correct in their claims that anxiety is behind all the ill health, why are they afraid of releasing all the available information regarding full spectrum acoustic testing. Completely independent studies are called for.

Yours sincerely

Name withheld
Victoria