

## Facts blow wind myths away

Recently in two probing articles, *The Australian* environment editor Graham Lloyd drew back the curtain exposing the fallacious myths perpetrated by those who believe wind power will save the planet and who will say anything to advance what has become a noble cause.

Many acolytes for wind power perhaps are an exemplar of warriors for a noble cause, absolved from ethical behaviour, where the end justifies the means in prosecuting a righteous case for the greater good – disregarding those whose rights are trampled in the process.

The [first Lloyd article destroyed the myth](#) that landholders who hosted wind turbines on their properties and received significant remuneration for doing so never seemed to be afflicted by adverse health impacts from turbines. Landholders who host turbines are bound by gag claims in their contracts from speaking out publicly, which is why the public in general are not aware of the very [real distress some turbine hosts are suffering](#). These gag clauses are denied by wind farm supporters, but are confirmed [here](#) by solicitors Slater and Gordon. Bravely, turbine host David Mortimer from South Australia was quoted by Lloyd saying, he would gladly return the money to have wind turbines removed from his property. Do people really believe Mortimer is imagining his adverse health impacts, as is malevolently claimed by health academics with no clinical experience, from something he enthusiastically embraced at first and from which he is well rewarded?

The second well-peddled myth is that there is no published peer-reviewed evidence linking adverse health impacts with turbine operation. This was true up to July 2011 when the first of a dozen peer-reviewed papers was published in scientific journals. So now the mantra has changed to no 'credible' peer-reviewed evidence. And when did apologists for global energy companies become the adjudicators of what is and is not acceptable peer-reviewed material?

As the real truth about wind power becomes more and more difficult to suppress, the goal posts keep being shifted to accommodate the myths.

Lloyd wrote of [the paper published in October 2012](#) in the *Journal of Noise and Health* by three well qualified medical researchers linking wind turbine operation at two U.S. wind farms with ill health. Extracts from the paper are revealing: "residents welcomed the installation (of turbines) for their proposed financial benefit and their attitudes only changed once they began to operate and the noise and health effects became apparent" and "the great majority of those living within 1.4km expressed their desire to move away as a result of turbine operation".

These statements are completely at odds with the [public campaigns by health academics](#) and other 'environmental' journalists who have never even interviewed those suffering adverse health impacts from wind farm noise. Instead of being prepared to [investigate the issue with an open and enquiring mind](#), they have been at the forefront of a campaign determined to mock, denigrate and vilify anyone who dares to question the myths of wind power.

These shattered myths and the news two weeks ago that the U.K. government will review planned wind energy projects there following rapidly [growing community revolt](#) over electricity price rises and health effects will provide an interesting backdrop to a senate hearing currently underway.

Senators John Madigan and Nick Xenophon have introduced a bill into parliament to refuse Renewable Energy Certificates to wind farms that fail to conform to guidelines and emit excessive noise. The bill will have no impact on wind farms that comply with noise guidelines. The Environment and Communications committee held a public hearing in mid-November, prior to debate on the bill this week in the Senate.

Those supporting the intent of the bill to curb excessive noise presented undisputed acoustical data to verify their arguments. Wind industry supporters not only failed to present any data to the committee hearing to underpin their case, they spent their time querying the motives of community groups who are part of the community backlash over wind farms that is surpassing opposition to coal-seam gas mining [according to Origin Energy](#) last week.

On November 13<sup>th</sup> rural residents from three states rallied at parliament to support the bill and demand action on the rapidly mounting evidence their concerns over excessive wind farm noise are valid.

This bill follows the Commonwealth government's mothballing in September of well-regarded 2011 senate inquiry recommendations for acoustical and health studies to determine the degree of adverse health impact from wind turbine operation. The recommendations were supported by the Victorian and NSW governments, the wind industry, environment groups and communities in four states. The government agreed with the key inquiry recommendations, but jibbed at taking action.

The government bears some responsibility for the current situation despite not having control over state planning laws. It is the Commonwealth that has created the financial incentive via the Renewable Energy Certificates that drives the wind industry. The government must now take responsibility for addressing the issue of state sanctioned harm to some rural residents.

It is totally unacceptable that some large energy companies acting irresponsibly should be rewarded with taxpayer funded Renewable Energy Certificates for causing harm that is driving some people to abandon their homes.

In a decision recently handed down in an Ontario environment court it was declared "This case has successfully shown that the debate should not be simplified to one about whether wind turbines can cause harm to humans. The evidence presented...demonstrates that they can...the debate has now evolved to one of degree".

It is perhaps indicative of the political times that it has taken senators independent of the major parties to display the moral courage to challenge the narrative of the noble cause and act on the concerns of their long suffering constituents.

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