

## Authorities examine complaint against anti-wind farm activist

[Amber Jamieson](#) | Apr 23, 2013 11:54AM

Prominent anti-wind farm activist Sarah Laurie is being examined by the National Health and Medical Research Council's ethics committee regarding claims she has breached ethical research codes.

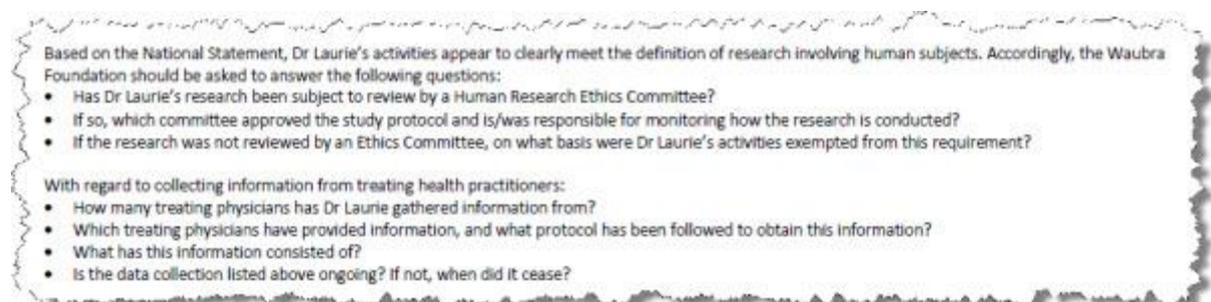
Well-known anti-wind farm campaigner Sarah Laurie is being examined by the national peak body for medical research over claims she breached ethical codes of research conduct.

The National Health and Medical Research Council confirms it has received a complaint regarding the research being conducted by Laurie, the CEO of the Waubra Foundation (a small but powerful anti-wind farm activist group). A spokesperson told *Crikey*: "NHMRC takes all complaints received seriously and are following up on this matter."

The concerns about Laurie's research ethics are outlined in a document written by an anonymous academic and first sent to the Public Health Association Australia. The document alleges Laurie is not currently registered as a medical practitioner but has been conducting activity that meets the definition of medical research involving human subjects. On her website, Laurie uses the title of "Dr" and [describes herself as a former GP](#).

The dossier outlines the incidents where Laurie claims to have conducted interviews with residents affected by wind turbine health issues, collected blood pressure data, given medical advice and/or clinical judgment, referred to people as "research subjects" and discussed accessing medical records and personal health journals. It also asks if Laurie's research has been reviewed by a Human Research Ethics Committee:

"The Medical Board of Australia in conjunction with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency advises that medical practitioners should be registered if they have any direct clinical contact with patients or provide treatment or opinion about individuals."



After examining the document, the CEO of the Public Health Association Australia, Michael Moore, forwarded it on to the heads of the NHRMC, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, the Health and Community Service Complaints Commissioner of South Australia and the Waubra Foundation.

“It was something which should not be ignored because I thought there were serious ethical issues which had been raised, ethical issues that would distort the debate over the appropriateness of wind farm technology,” Moore told *Crikey*.

For years Laurie and her Waubra Foundation (named for the Waubra wind farm in Victoria) have campaigned against the use of wind farm technology, claiming wind turbines have serious health impacts — known as “wind turbine syndrome” — for local residents. As Australia’s most prominent anti-wind farm campaigner, Laurie is regularly used as a media commentator about wind farm health issues; she recently appeared on [ABC Radio National](#) and [2GB](#).

“From our perspective, it’s a matter of ensuring that policy debates take place on sound evidence and that the research is appropriately conducted,” said Moore.

A new [study by public health professor Simon Chapman](#) indicates health complaints about wind turbines were rare until anti wind-farm groups began a campaign against supposed medical issues in 2009. [Another recent study](#) led by University of Auckland researcher Fiona Crichton demonstrates that residents who expect health issues from wind turbine health issues are more likely to develop the symptoms.

When called to ask about the document and its claims, Laurie told *Crikey* it was “inappropriate for me to comment at this time”.

The Health and Community Service Complaints Commissioner of SA and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency told *Crikey* they don’t comment on individual cases. An AHPRA spokesperson notes it is an offence under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law to present as a registered medical practitioner if you are not, and a court may impose a maximum penalty of \$30,000 for an individual “holding out”.

Read the original article at [http://www.crikey.com.au/2013/04/23/medical-authorities-examine-complaint-against-anti-wind-farm-activist/?wpmp\\_switcher=mobile](http://www.crikey.com.au/2013/04/23/medical-authorities-examine-complaint-against-anti-wind-farm-activist/?wpmp_switcher=mobile)