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PUBLIC OFFICIALS RISK CRIMINAL CHARGES FOR TORTURE

The Waubra Foundation has issued a Public Statement to educate and warn public officials that they run the risk of being charged with torture under the Criminal Code Act 1995 if they continue to ignore and acquiesce in persistent sleep deprivation caused by excessive environmental noise.

“The UN Committee Against Torture have clearly stated that sleep deprivation used for prolonged periods is a breach of the Convention” said Waubra Foundation CEO, Sarah Laurie. The UN Committee went on say:

“Sleep deprivation can cause impaired memory and cognitive functioning, decreased short term memory, speech impairment, hallucinations, psychosis, lowered immunity, headaches, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, stress, anxiety and depression”

Chronic sleep deprivation is the most common complaint from residents living near industrial noise polluting developments in Australia and around the world, and was identified in the limited research considered by the recent National Health and Medical Research Council’s commissioned systematic literature review.

Recent developments nationally and internationally have reinforced the Foundation’s advice in June 2011 that there are serious adverse health effects including prolonged sleep deprivation, resulting from chronic exposure to wind turbine acoustic emissions including excessive audible low frequency noise out to 10km from existing wind turbines. This acoustic “zone of impact” distance will inevitably increase as wind turbine power generation capacity increases with larger, more powerful wind turbines with longer blades.

The recent declaration by the Brown County Town Health Board USA that wind turbines constitute a “Human Health Hazard” for “residents, workers, visitors and sensitive passersby” is a significant development, and we expect more such declarations to follow.

Litigation to prevent wind turbines from continuing to operate, in order to prevent additional harm to physical and psychological health, has been successful in the USA (Falmouth), Portugal and other European countries.

“All responsible authorities and public officials in Australia need to be aware that under the terms of section 274 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995, torture is expressly prohibited. There is therefore no legal excuse available for any public official who is currently allowing torture from sleep deprivation from excessive environmental noise to continue” stated Dr Michael Crawford, Waubra Foundation Director.

The Public Statement can be viewed and downloaded here:

<http://waubrafoundation.org.au/resources/public-officials-at-risk-criminal-charges-for-torture-public-statement/>

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