



Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council

22 March 2016

MEDIA RELEASE

NHMRC awards funding into wind farms and human health

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has awarded two grants totalling \$3.3 million to enrich the evidence-based understanding of the effects of wind farms on human health.

NHMRC CEO Professor Anne Kelso noted that further research is needed to explore the relationships between wind farms and human health.

“Existing research in this area is of poor quality and targeted funding is warranted to support high quality, independent research on this issue.

“To address this, we need well designed studies conducted by excellent researchers in Australian conditions.

“These grants directly support the Australian Government’s commitment to determine any actual or potential effects of wind farms,” Professor Kelso said.

NHMRC funded research at the Flinders University of South Australia will explore relationships between noise from wind farms and effects such as annoyances and reduced sleep and quality of life.

Research at the University of New South Wales will investigate the broader social and environmental circumstances that may influence the health of people living near wind farms.

The outcomes of this research will assist in developing policy and public health recommendations regarding wind turbine development and operations in Australia.

Professor Kelso said it was important to note that the funding will support only high quality, well designed research proposals.

“NHMRC supports only the most outstanding research. Each application for this funding underwent the same stringent independent review process we apply to all NHMRC grant applications,” Professor Kelso said.

These grants are awarded in response to the 2015 Targeted Call for Research into Wind Farms and Human Health, following the release of the *NHMRC Statement: Evidence on Wind Farms and Human Health*.

Information relating to the individual grants is available on the NHMRC website – nhmrc.gov.au

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GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

Associate Professor Peter Catchside, Flinders University of South Australia

\$1,357,652

Good sleep is essential for normal daytime functioning and health. Wind farm noise includes audible and unusually low frequency sound components, including infrasound, which could potentially disturb sleep through chronic sleep disruption and/or insomnia. This project will, for the first time, directly evaluate the sleep and physiological disturbance characteristics of wind farm noise compared to traffic noise reproduced in a specialised and carefully controlled laboratory environment.

Professor Guy Marks, University of New South Wales

\$1,943,934

The human health impact of infrasound that comes from wind turbines has not been well researched. This project will assemble a team of researchers with a broad range of expertise to run a short term and longer term study to investigate whether exposure to infrasound causes health problems. The short term study will be laboratory-based and run for three one week periods. The longer term study will be community based and run for six months. Sleep quality, balance, mood, and cardiovascular health will all be measured.