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Letters to the editor

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The problems with wind farms are real

THIS is now simply too much information in the public domain for the wind industry and its many, often ill informed supporters, to continue with any integrity their relentless attacks on the credibility of long suffering wind farm neighbours - people who know with certainty they have been adversely affected by the operation of nearby wind turbines, in many cases having to leave their homes permanently as a result.

Problems exist with wind farms, serious problems, long brushed under the carpet, and they exist in every country in the world where 'Big Wind' has spread its tentacles, imposing industrial installations on rural communities, initially by subterfuge and stealth, and often leading to their permanent fracturing.

AAT decision

THIS newspaper has recently reported on the Administrative Appeals Tribunal decision handed down in Adelaide last year, in which a senior

Federal Court judge decided that the noise annoyance produced by wind farms was a 'plausible pathway to disease.'

The Tribunal importantly considered that the present method of sound measurement was not adequate to detect the level of low frequency sound in a receiver dwelling.

This is high level recognition of what the Waubra Foundation has been saying for eight years. It should make people think seriously about the spread of wind farms across western Victoria.

Scientists last year, at Germany's renowned Max Planck Institute, working with functional MRI machines, have demonstrated that sub-audible infrasound can be detected by areas of the brain associated with stress or threat responses - the primitive, instinctive brain - also known as the fight or flight, or startle reflex.

And that, stimulation over longer periods of time could exert a profound effect on autonomic functions and may eventually lead to the formation of symptoms such as sleep disturbances, panic attacks or depression.

The reports from those living with wind turbine noise emissions mirror precisely what is recorded in the study, the data from which perfectly corroborates their experiences of being woken from deep sleep with their hearts racing, horrible dreams, waking as if startled, notwithstanding that the noise from operating turbines may not necessarily be heard.

A highly qualified group of Swedish researchers are finding similar results and concluding that low frequency amplitude modulation is an important constituent of the annoying quality of wind turbine noise, considered to be far more disturbing than other noise sources at similar sound levels.

Amplitude modulation

AMPLITUDE modulation is the pulsing feature

of wind turbine noise brought about by the moving blades passing the stationary tower and it is increasingly being identified as what makes turbine noise so problematic to many people.

Waking in fright in the middle of a deep sleep is an involuntary response.

It is not something these people are imagining as a result of having a negative attitude to wind farms, being gullible or envious of their neighbours; the explanation for wind farm complaints provided by prominent Big Wind supporter, Simon Chapman, who has openly mocked the concerns of distressed residents.

In a paper delivered in December 2017, to the American Acoustical Association in New Orleans, sound expert, Steven Cooper outlined how he had been able to reproduce the exact same symptoms experienced by wind farm noise sensitised individuals in their homes, in his Sydney acoustic laboratory, by exposing them to inaudible pulsing, low and mid frequency sounds recorded in a bedroom at Cape Bridgewater, close to the eponymous wind farm.

A just concluded six-month investigation by Gatehouse Media, a company owning 130 daily, mostly rural, newspapers across the USA found that wind developers representing some of the world's biggest energy companies divide communities and disrupt the lives of residents. ... reporters interviewed more than 70 families living near three dozen current or proposed wind farms and identified through public documents and media reports an additional 400 families living near industrial wind turbines that have publicly complained about shadow flicker, noise and health problems.'

Push back against wind farms

A PUSH back is taking place right around the world against the government sanctioned rolling

out of seemingly unrestricted wind farms, with hugely increased in size turbines.

And it is not just a phenomenon in English speaking countries, another ill informed suggestion made by Simon Chapman.

More than half of European executives say resistance to onshore wind turbines in their country is too strong to allow for significant growth, according to a report by business services group Lloyd's Register, as reported this month.

And that resistance is in part driven by health concerns.

I will conclude with two lines from no less an authority than the British Medical Journal that published a scholarly article in 2012 warning about the concerns addressed above.

A large body of evidence now exists to suggest that wind turbines disturb sleep and impair health at distances and external noise levels that are permitted in most jurisdictions.

The problems with wind farms are real.

Toney Edney

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