

25 OCT 2011

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To Shire President Jane Trethowan
Shire of Kojonup Councillors and CEO Mr Stephen Gash
with copy to Mrs Jill Mathwin.

*Sent to all
Councillors, and
to Mrs Mathwin.*

Dear Steve,

When I last wrote to you on 29th August 2011, I thought that there may be a chance that a decision on the planning application for a wind farm at Flat Rocks would be made not long after that time. You may be nearer that decision making time now, and although it is a very busy time of the year, I am taking the liberty of sending you yet more reading material!

Yes, there's a fair bit of it but it doesn't take too long to read and you would know that I would not send you information if I didn't think it was relevant to the issue. It is, of course, your choice whether you read the material or not!

There are seven documents:

1. An article from the front page of The Australian of 30th August 2011 - one page;
2. An article on page 8 of The Australian of October 14th 2011 - one page;
3. Three pages - Dr Spring, Professor Warwick Anderson NHMRC, and Dr Carl Phillips, epidemiologist.
4. An article from The Courier, South Australia - Lennards Hill couple 'under siege' due to wind farm noise - one page.
5. One page from Professor Alec Salt following the Four Corners programme on 25th July 2011;
6. Three pages "Ontario wind farm health risks downplayed: documents" with asterisk highlights;
7. Six pages of Hansard proof copy of a Senate Committee Estimates hearing (cover page and pages 7 to 11) before which Professor Anderson of the NHMRC appeared - questions from Senator Judith Adams and from Senator John Madigan of Victoria. Included as two extra pages to that proof - a press release from Senator Madigan and the questions he tabled for reply later.

Kind regards.

Pam.

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Turbines blown away as winds of change sweep through clean energy industry

PIA AKKERMANS

AT least three proposed wind farms have been dumped or thrown into limbo over the past three months, as the Victorian government's tough new guidelines cause projects that have been years in the making to topple over.

New regulations that formed part of the Coalition's election platform yesterday came into effect, giving residents veto power over turbines within 2km of their home. Turbines have also been banned within 5km of major regional towns, and from scenic areas.

In the first signs that Victoria stands to lose billions of dollars from its economy and that invest-

ment will be redirected to other states, wind farm companies have already started to withdraw from Victoria or have had their projects thwarted.

Last week, Moyness Shire Council, in Victoria's southwest, voted to block wind giant Union Fenosa from receiving permit extensions for two wind farm projects. The Hawkesdale and Ryan Corner developments are now in serious doubt.

The council hailed the decision as a "wake-up call" for other wind farm projects, but the final say on the permits will rest with Planning Minister Matthew Guy.

Union Fenosa declined to comment specifically about the wind farms' likely future, but project development manager Shaq

Mohajerani said the new regulations could have a severe impact in Victoria and make other states such as South Australia more attractive.

Spanish company Acciona Energy announced in May that it would drop its plan to develop a wind farm with up to 40 turbines near Evansford, 158km northwest of Melbourne. It cited unspecified environmental reasons and lack of wind as making the project unviable, but local opponent Robyn Brew said it would have been impossible under the new laws anyway.

"We would have got a lot more noise," said Mrs Brew, who would have had turbines within 2km of her home. "It's bad enough as it is."

An organic farmer, Mrs Brew

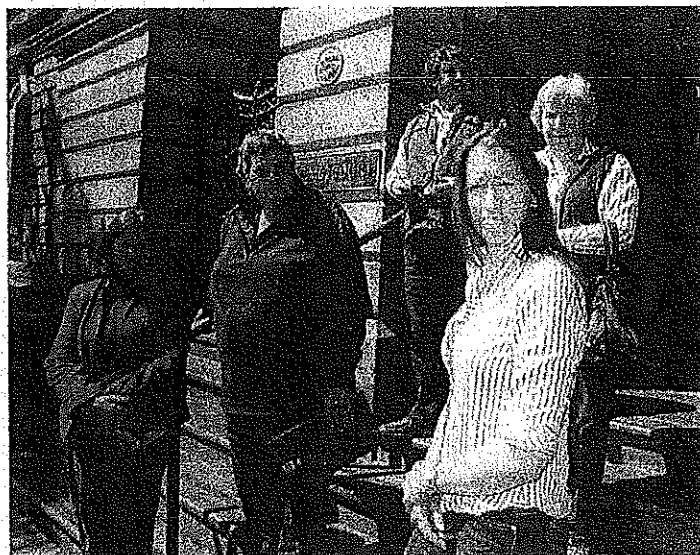
supported wind energy until she began to have health problems she attributes to turbines at the nearby Waubra wind farm.

The 128-turbine development triggered a Senate inquiry that recommended firmer noise limits and urgent research into turbines' potentially damaging health effects on nearby residents.

A Clean Energy Council survey of wind farm companies last year found the Coalition policy could stop up to 70 per cent of currently proposed wind farms.

CEC chief executive Matthew Warren said yesterday the new policy signalled future wind development was "closed for business" in Victoria, while the opposition warned it would cost regional jobs.

Court challenge puts wind farms in doubt



KELLY BARNES

Farmer Bill Quinn, second left, with fellow residents yesterday

A COURT challenge in South Australia could disrupt plans to develop wind farms across the country after AGL Energy conceded tests at its wind farm in the state's northeast detected a tonal noise above government-set limits.

The legal challenge by South Australian farmer Bill Quinn centres on an argument that the turbines in AGL Energy's Hallett Wind Farm emit excessive noise that results in the sleep deprivation of residents living within 3.5km.

"It's the noise of the things and how close they are to houses," Mr Quinn said yesterday.

"The sound flows like water from the blades of the turbines, and it's so bad up around Mount Bryan that many people have been forced to move away."

The Victorian government last month honoured an election promise to place strict controls on how close wind farm developments could be built in proximity to houses and regional towns.

In NSW, the O'Farrell government is reviewing restrictions on wind farm developments that could put similar controls in place.

After losing his court case in the state's environment court in November last year, Mr Quinn yesterday began his appeal to the Supreme Court to overturn the Goyder Council's approval for AGL Energy to develop Hallett Wind Farm, a project comprised of five wind farms and more than 200 turbines.

Mr Quinn's appeal hinges on new evidence discovered since losing his initial court case: evidence AGL found wind turbines at Hallett Wind Farm emitted an audible tonal noise.

In a statement to the Supreme Court, Mr Quinn's counsel, Brian Hayes QC, said noise testing conducted since the initial trial had resulted in AGL shutting down eight of its turbines and showed neither AGL's existing wind farm nor the proposed wind farm were "capable of satisfying the Environmental Protection Authority's wind turbine noise limit of 40 decibels".

The manufacturer of the turbines, Suzlon, continues to expand its operations in Australia. In August, it announced plans to build a further 180 turbines on South Australia's Yorke Peninsula.

REBECCA PUDDY

Wind farm sickness: Ballarat doctor calls for study

Credit: BY BRENDAN GULLIFER, The Courier, www.thecourier.com.au 19 August 2011 ~~~

A Ballarat doctor yesterday joined the wind turbine debate, comparing the alleged link between health problems associated with turbines to cigarette smoking's connection to cancer back in the 1950s.

Sleep physician Dr Wayne Spring said he had been treating patients from Waubra and Leonards Hill and he supported a senate inquiry call for a formal health study.

"Research needs to be done into the whole concept of wind farms," Dr Spring said yesterday. "It's like cigarettes in the 50s; people didn't believe they caused lung cancer and now we've got people living near turbines coming in early with all sorts of conditions. We've got to acknowledge the facts.

"Some of these people are called hysterics or it's psychosomatic or they're labelled as jumping on the bandwagon. People in industry and government dismiss these people but this is an important issue."

Dr Spring's comments follow those this week of Daylesford doctor Andja Mitric-Andjic.

Dr Mitric-Andjic said she had been treating Leonards Hill residents for problems associated with sleep disturbance since turbines began operating in the area earlier this year.

Hepburn Wind chairman Simon Holmes a Court said much of the anxiety from residents living near turbines was created by "misinformation spread by anti-wind activists".

But Dr Spring said the problem was anecdotal evidence was not regarded as scientific.

"We do not have evidence," he said. "I can't be dogmatic but we do not have evidence to refute there is a problem.

"Patients present with a complex array of symptoms. You hear it once, then a second person comes along with something similar. By the third or fourth person, you're starting to think there's something here.

"Bad sleep is bad for you, regardless of whether it's caused by noise or anxiety about a situation."

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4. Extracts from Professor Warwick Anderson (CEO of NH&MRC) oral testimony to the Australian Federal Senate Rural wind farm inquiry, 31st March, 2011

p86

"..we are very aware that the high-quality scientific literature in this area is very thin.... a precautionary approach should be taken ... because, ... the absence of evidence does not mean that there might not be evidence in the future;..... and we are aware of some papers that have since been published."

COMMENTS RE ANECDOTES

P 87 We are encouraging scientists—epidemiologists and others—to think about this area and use the information that the anecdotes and individual patients have provided to better design epidemiological approaches to investigate the issues. Anecdotes are very valuable ways of honing the questions to be asked.

NH&MRC "WE DO NOT SAY THERE ARE NO ILL EFFECTS"

P 88 Prof Anderson

...Senator FIELDING—

..... It seems to me that that precaution may not be being taken because everyone is putting a very large weight on the NHMRC's rapid review statement and saying that there are no adverse health impacts from living near wind turbines and everyone is just approving them on that basis. That is of huge concern to me.

Prof Anderson—I know that the headline on that public statement says that, but the document does not say that. It did say that there was no published scientific evidence at that stage to positively link the two. That is a very different thing to saying that there are no ill effects and we do not say that there are no ill effects. We definitely do not say it that way

202.14.81.34/hansard/senate/commttee/S13730.pdf, or alternatively just google Australian Senate Rural wind farm inquiry Professor Warwick Anderson

5. Professor Carl Phillips, Epidemiologist, (formerly from Harvard)

There is overwhelming evidence that wind turbines cause serious health problems in nearby residents, usually stress-disorder type diseases, at a nontrivial rate.

The bulk of the evidence takes the form of what are probably thousands of adverse event reports. There is also a small amount of systematically-gathered data.

The adverse event reports provide compelling evidence of the seriousness of the problems and of causation in this case because of their volume, the ease of observing exposure and outcome incidence, and *case-crossover* data.

Proponents of turbines have sought to deny these problems by making a collection of contradictory claims, including that the evidence does not “count,” the outcomes are not “real” diseases, the outcomes are the victims’ own fault, and that acoustical models cannot explain why there are health problems so the problems must not exist.

These claims appear to have swayed many non-expert observers, though they are easily debunked. Moreover, the last of them, coupled with other information, means that we do not know what, other than kilometers of distance, could sufficiently mitigate the effects.

There has been no policy analysis that justifies imposing these effects on local residents. The attempts to deny the evidence cannot be seen as honest scientific disagreement, and represent either gross incompetence or intentional bias (emphasis added).

This is not a case where dispassionate analysis and charitable interpretations of people’s actions are appropriate. The attempts to deny the evidence of health problems cannot be seen as honest disagreements about the weight of the evidence. **Honest disagreements about scientific points are always possible. But when proponents of one side of the argument consistently try to deny the very existence of contrary evidence, make contradictory claims, appeal to nonsensical and non-existent rules, treat mistaken predictions as if they were evidence of actual outcomes, play semantic games to denigrate the reported outcomes, and blame the victims, then they are not being honest, scientific, or moral.** They are preventing the creation of optimal public policy and damaging the credibility of science as a tool for informing policy.

Moreover, assuming their lack of plausible arguments really does mean that there are no defensible arguments to be made on that side of the issue, then **their persistence in making implausible arguments is directly responsible for hurting lots of people.**

from <http://www.windturbinesyndrome.com/news/2011/health-policy-expert-hammers-wind-energy-junk-science/>



August 22, 2011
Australia

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Leonards Hill couple 'under siege' due to wind farm noise

By BRENDAN GULLIFER, The Courier, thecourier.com.au 19 August 2011

Trevor and Maree Frost say they are under siege in their Leonards Hill home of 30 years because of noise from the Hepburn wind farm.

Mrs Frost, a part-time cleaner at Daylesford District Hospital, said she had suffered extreme sleep deprivation since the two turbines began operating earlier this year.

"I've had enough," Mrs Frost, 57, said this week. "I want something done. I want my life back. That's all I want."

Mr Frost, a 65-year-old firewood supplier, said he was not so badly impacted but had witnessed the deterioration of his wife over recent months.

"She makes a lot of mistakes because of a lack of sleep," he said.

Mrs Frost said the noise varied from a low whoosh to like a jet engine, depending on wind velocity and direction.

She said she was forced to wear earplugs while working outside.

"It's not acceptable for country life," she said.

"What we've worked for in the last 20 or 30 years, it feels like it's all been for nothing.

"This is our place. I've never had anything that has interrupted my sleep like this, even when you've lost someone in your family. The stress is there all the time."

And the couple say their daughter, Jenna, 22, was forced to move away from home because of noise from the turbines, about 520 metres from their house.

"She couldn't hack it," Mr Frost said. The situation is complex for the tightly-knit Leonards Hill and Korweinguboorra communities around the wind farm.

The turbines are located on land owned by Mr Frost's cousin, Ron Liversidge. The two men haven't spoken in recent months.

Mr Frost said he and his wife had made an official complaint to Hepburn Wind and were keeping a diary of the noise impact.

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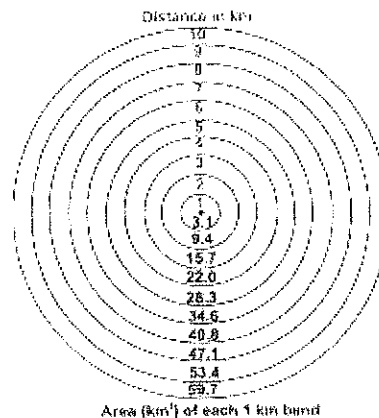
If you watched Four Corners on 25.7.11 (wind farms & health effects) you should consider Professor Alec Salt's interpretation of Professor Wittert's study.

Why pro-wind studies often use a 10 km radius

Salt, Alec

Last week I was reading of an Australian study, by a Professor Gary Wittert, which had shown sleeping pill usage for those living near wind turbines was no greater than the general population. The study compared those living within 10 km of turbines with those living more than 10 km away. There have been similar studies with property values using a 5 mile or 10 km radius that showed property values are not affected by wind turbines. Had you ever thought why they pick a 10 km radius?

Consider this graphic. It shows 1 km bands with the calculated area for each band shown in blue.



Let's keep it easy and assume that households are evenly distributed and there is one household for every 10 square kilometers.

So, within 2 km (the two innermost bands) of the turbine, the area is $3.1 + 9.4 \text{ km}^2 (=12.5 \text{ km}^2)$ which would represent 1.2 households.

Now let's consider the two outermost (9 km and 10 km) bands. The area of these bands is $53.4 + 59.7 \text{ km}^2 (=113.1 \text{ km}^2)$ which represents 11.3 households. So the outermost bands have about TEN TIMES the number of households of those living within 2 km, making sure that the contribution of the inner bands is diluted, swamped, covered up or however else you would describe it.

Or consider if you live within 2 km of a turbine. The outer bands of those living from 2–10 km from the turbine adds up to 301.6 km^2 , which would represent 30.1 households – which is 24 TIMES the number of households within 2 km.

No wonder your voice is being "drowned out". The bigger the circle, the more "dilution" occurs.

Add this to the list of things where "size matters", and next time you see a study like this, consider the radius and area that was chosen. The choice of the circle size plays a major role in the result obtained and speaks volumes about the motivation of the author.

by Alec Salt, Professor, Department of Otolaryngology, Washington University School of Medicine
via *Wind Concerns Ontario* ¹¹¹

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September 22, 2011

Ontario

Ontario wind farm health risks downplayed: documents

By Dave Seglins and John Nicol, CBC News, www.cbc.ca 22 September 2011

Ontario's Ministry of the Environment is logging hundreds of health complaints over the province's 900 wind turbines but has downplayed the problem, according to internal ministry documents obtained by CBC News.

According to 1,000 pages of internal government emails, reports and memos released under Ontario's Freedom of Information Act, the government scrambled to figure out how to monitor and control noise pollution.

The documents were released after a lengthy and costly battle waged by Barb Ashbee. Ashbee and her husband Dennis Lormand say they suffered a series of ailments after wind turbines began operating near their home in Amaranth, near Shelburne, northwest of Toronto. The area is now home to 133 wind turbines — the largest industrial wind farm in the province.

After being told theirs was the only complaint in the area, Ashbee and Lormond learned that MOE officials at the Guelph District Office had been tracking more than 200 complaints dating back to 2006 when the wind farm first started operating.

Their home was bought out by Canadian Hydro Developers (now Transalta) in June 2009, one of six homeowners who sold their houses to the utility company.

Each seller had to sign confidentiality agreements. But the Lormands have risked legal repercussions by breaking their silence and speaking exclusively to CBC News this week. They said they want to warn the public about what they claim are the dangers of living near wind turbines and the supposed breakdowns in government monitoring.

"We were silent. I wouldn't say boo to anybody. But the longer this goes on, nobody's doing anything! And now we have an (Ontario) election two weeks away. Nobody understands what's going on out here."

Sleepless nights sparked activism

"It was terrible—we'd go nights in a row with no sleep," said Ashbee. "It was a combination of the loud noise—the decibel, audible noise—and also this vibration that was in the house that would go up and it would go down."

The couple moved into their home in December 2008 just as the wind farm became operational. But they said they immediately noted a loud swooshing noise from nearby turbines and a persistent, unexplained hum resonating in their home.

Ashbee said she called the power company and the environment ministry night after night and was initially told by government enforcement officers that hers was the only complaint in the area.

"We were told [the wind company] was running in compliance, that there were no problems.

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“We’d just have to get used to it.”

But she said the Ministry of Environment (MOE) was misleading her, and that there had been hundreds of complaints.

Ashbee launched a lengthy battle using Ontario’s Freedom of Information Act and eventually received more than 1,000 pages of internal MOE correspondence.

According to the documents, government staff downplayed the problem while scrambling to understand and control wind turbine noise pollution.

MOE officers warn supervisor

According to the documents, MOE field officer Garry Tomlinson was slow to process Ashbee’s noise complaints. But he began trying to conduct his own noise monitoring tests when confronted with many more complaints and consultants reports by Canadian Hydro Developers that revealed noise violations.

Tomlinson consulted acoustics specialists at Ryerson University and within the MOE. He concluded and warned his supervisors that the ministry “currently has no approved methodology for field measurement of the noise emissions from multiple [turbines]. As such there is no way for MOE Field staff (and I would submit anyone else) to confirm compliance or lack thereof.”

Tomlinson also gave a tour to two assistant deputy ministers Paul Evans and Paul French on May 1, 2009, advising them of the problems they were encountering.

Ministry officials at the Guelph office, including manager Jane Glassco, attended community meetings in Melancthon and Amaranth townships in the summer of 2009, where Glassco acknowledged people were “suffering” and that many were claiming to have been forced out of their homes due to noise pollution.

By 2010, other staff at the Guelph office were warning officials at the ministry headquarters in Toronto that the computer modelling used to establish Ontario’s wind turbine noise limits and safe “set back distances” for wind turbines was flawed and inadequate.

Cameron Hall a fellow field officer at the MOE in Guelph wrote to his managers warning that the province was failing to properly account for the “swooshing sounds.”

CBC News presented some of the ministry documents to Ramani Ramakrishnan, a Ryerson University professor and acoustics specialist who has written several reports and conducts noise pollution training for MOE staff.

Ramakrishnan has recommended to the MOE that wind turbines in rural areas should have far stricter limits but says if the province enforced the regulations – it would have a major impact on wind farms around the province.

“First implication,” Ramakrishnan says, “is that the number of wind turbines in wind-farms would have to be reduced considerably and wind-farm developers would have to look for localities where they are not impacting the neighbourhood.

“A five-decibel reduction in acceptable noise is quite noticeable and perceptible” and the MOE field staff are recommending up to 10 decibel reductions in some cases.

Ashbee, who is returning to her old job as a real estate agent, said there are several people near turbines who won’t speak for fear that their land values will go down.

Her husband Dennis doesn't blame the wind turbine company:

"It's our government that backs it up. It's the government that's making people sick and forcing them out of their homes. And it's all being suppressed."

CBC News repeatedly requested an interview with Ontario's Environment Minister John Wilkinson, who is also engaged in a provincial election campaign seeking re-election as MPP for the riding of Perth-Wellington. Those requests were denied.

Transalta, who took over the company that bought out the Ashbee-Lormand home, told CBC News in a statement that such confidentiality agreements are standard, designed to protect the privacy of both sides. Neither the company nor the couple would discuss the \$300,000 price listed on local land registry records as being the amount for which the couple's home was transferred to the power company.

Document highlights

* Ashbee and Lormond learned that MOE officials at the Guelph District Office had been tracking more than 200 complaints dating back to 2006 when the wind farm first started operating. *

MOE officials repeatedly told the couple in early 2009 that the power company (Canadian Hydro Developers) were in compliance with the law yet the company's own consultants report sent to the MOE concluded noise pollution from the turbines was generally higher than Ontario's limits.

* MOE field officers in Guelph in 2009 scrambled to learn more about how to properly record and test audible noise levels and low frequency sound. They warned superiors that Ontario's noise pollution models are filled with errors, that they lacked a proper methodology for monitoring (and thus enforcing) noise levels from turbines. *

MOE field officers and the acoustics specialists they hired repeatedly warned the province in 2009 and 2010 that there needed to be stricter noise pollution limits in rural areas, and in wind turbine environments where there is cyclical or tonal "swooshing sounds."

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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Proof Committee Hansard

SENATE

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Estimates

(Public)

THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2011

CANBERRA

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document by the committee, or could result, equally or in part, from the disclosure of the information or document to the committee as in camera evidence.

(5) If, after considering a statement by a minister provided under paragraph (3), the committee concludes that the statement does not sufficiently justify the withholding of the information or document from the committee, the committee shall report the matter to the Senate.

(6) A decision by a committee not to report a matter to the Senate under paragraph (5) does not prevent a senator from raising the matter in the Senate in accordance with other procedures of the Senate.

(7) A statement that information or a document is not published, or is confidential, or consists of advice to, or internal deliberations of, government, in the absence of specification of the harm to the public interest that could result from the disclosure of the information or document, is not a statement that meets the requirements of paragraph (1) or (4).

(8) If a minister concludes that a statement under paragraph (3) should more appropriately be made by the head of an agency, by reason of the independence of that agency from ministerial direction or control, the minister shall inform the committee of that conclusion and the reason for that conclusion, and shall refer the matter to the head of the agency, who shall then be required to provide a statement in accordance with paragraph (3).

(Extract, Senate Standing Orders, pp 124-125)

CHAIR: I welcome back Senator the Hon. Jan McLucas and the departmental secretary, Ms Halton, and portfolio officers. Ms Halton and officers, I want to express the committee's appreciation of your flexibility and your willingness to come in today so we can adjust our campaign. I do think it is probably better than being on at 10 to 11 at night, but I do not know. You have often had that pleasure!

National Health and Medical Research Council

[08:32]

CHAIR: I welcome officers from the National Health and Medical Research Council. Senator Adams will start the questioning.

Senator ADAMS: It is good to see you again, and I am sure that you know the questions I am going to ask you. I would like to talk about the perceived health effects caused by wind turbines and the general issues that are associated with the probably plague proportions of wind turbines that are about to hit Australia. My first question is: have you received any research applications related to the study of wind turbines and their effect on human health?

Prof. Anderson: No, we did not receive any applications around the health effects of wind farms in the current calendar year, the grants that were just announced.

Senator ADAMS: Under your guidelines, do the applicants have to be from Australian universities, or can you receive applications from overseas?

Prof. Anderson: The rules around that are that the first named researcher on a grant has to be an Australian citizen or resident, and the grant, when granted, needs to be administered by an Australian research institution. However, the other chief investigators, the other researchers applying, do not have to be Australian, so an international researcher could apply with an Australian for research in our funding schemes.

Senator ADAMS: One of the recommendations from the committee inquiry was for funds to be set aside for this research. Has any of the funding been expended by the NHMRC in that respect?

Prof. Anderson: We are currently working with the department, who are putting together a response for the government to the inquiry findings. One thing I might say in passing is that we do have a funding scheme for partnership project research where people who have identified a need for research can partner with medical researchers working at our universities, hospitals or institutes and put an application to us in a special scheme. We have two schemes for research: one is the big Project Grant Scheme and the other is the partnership projects. So interested parties could contact Australian researchers and make an application in that way. That funding scheme will open next year and I am sure that many people will have read the Senate report and, we would hope, put some applications to us.

Senator ADAMS: What is the name of that scheme?

Prof. Anderson: It is called Partnerships for Better Health Grants.

Senator ADAMS: Are you aware of the recent court case in Canada where the judges found that there are adverse health effects caused by wind turbines?

Prof. Anderson: Yes. Following the workshop we had last year, which you are aware of, quite a number of the participants have kept in touch with us and have been sending us literature through that period of time.

CHAIR: They have been doing the same with us.

Senator ADAMS: We are being kept in the loop too.

Prof. Anderson: Good. As you know, we have already agreed that we would do a literature review update. My staff tell me that they expect to have finished that by the middle of 2012. So I can assure you that any of the literature sent to us we will consider as part of the suite of literature we look at. It would be taken into account depending on the scientific view of all the literature as part of that report. It should be completed and provided to our council by June 2012.

Senator ADAMS: This is not a question but an observation from the *Australian* today. Mr Rann in South Australia is saying that, as far as the setback for turbines goes, they are going to be a lot closer to communities. They are not prepared for these problems. Of course, the Victorian guidelines are far stricter, with the two-kilometre setback, and New South Wales look as if they may follow the same example. But South Australia are saying they do not care. The hard part for me is that we have not come to any conclusion with this, but we had people come and give evidence at our inquiry who obviously were sick and had problems. There is \$30 billion for renewable energy projects, so money will go into those, and they will mainly be wind. I am very pleased that we had the inquiry and gained that evidence, but it is something I would like to see the NHMRC continue to follow up on because it is, in my opinion, going to cause problems down the track.

Prof. Anderson: I can assure you that we will keep following this. As I said earlier, we will encourage applications for research. Of course, like all applications to us, they will undergo rigorous review as part of the process, but unless people apply we cannot fund the research. So, as I say, we would encourage people to do so.

Senator ADAMS: Thank you very much.

Senator MADIGAN: Is the NHMRC aware that the wind energy developers and local, state and federal government politicians and bureaucrats are misusing and misquoting the public statement and the rapid review to assert that wind turbines are completely safe and there are no health effects?

Prof. Anderson: We are aware that all sorts of people are saying things which we cannot control about the review. We think the review is very clear in what it says.

Senator MADIGAN: I am aware that the NHMRC has recommended a precautionary approach to development near rural residences. Is the NHMRC aware that this precautionary approach has not been adopted by the wind development conglomerates?

Prof. Anderson: You would understand that as a medical research body we do not have a role in regulating where wind farms and wind turbines are located. The role we play is to look at the research evidence and summarise that, and that is what we will be doing—updating our current statement by June next year.

Senator MADIGAN: What has been done to immediately react to this information?

Prof. Anderson: In, I think, June last year we had a workshop, which some of the senators know about, as you do too. At this conference we had people from the groups that have been affected by wind farms, some research scientists, two international experts in the effects of acoustic influences on health and people from the wind farm industry for a one-day workshop, where all sorts of different views were vigorously put. That was, from our point of view, a very important day. From that meeting, and in response to the Senate committee's inquiry, we have agreed that we should look at the peer-review literature again. We will complete that review of the literature by the middle of next year and then take it to our council. Our council does consist of the chief medical officers of every state and territory as well as the Commonwealth. So we will again have a very careful scientific look at the literature that is there on the potential effects on people's health.

Senator MADIGAN: I am aware of the NHMRC's report on the Wind Power and Human Health Scientific Forum of 7 June 2011 and that you have said you will amend the public statement by May 2012. In your expert opinion, is this soon enough to ensure that a public health issue is prevented from getting worse?

Prof. Anderson: Our consideration of this is to make sure that we have given enough time for further research to accumulate after the previous review. Our previous review, as our reviewers concluded, did not indicate—with the peer-review available literature then—that there were serious health effects identified in the published literature. But time has passed since then and research always takes a little while, so it is reasonable to leave some time and then review the literature. We will review all literature at that stage.

Senator MADIGAN: Is a precautionary approach not in line with the NHMRC's statutory responsibility to protect the public health?

Prof. Anderson: That is why we said in the initial review that we believe a precautionary approach should be taken at this time.

Senator MADIGAN: Have you briefed the relevant federal government ministers about the report on the scientific forum, the recent research papers that have been published in scientific peer-review journals and the recent law court findings—the case in Ontario Canada referred to by Senator Adams earlier?

Prof. Anderson: We have briefed the minister on the work that we have done. When we have completed the literature review by the middle of next year we will brief our minister at that stage as well.

Senator MADIGAN: Are you aware of the recent appeal to the Supreme Court of South Australia based on noise issues where expert evidence was given by Professor Colin Hansen, professor of mechanical engineering at Adelaide University, of actual noise measurements taken at Mt Bryan? The court found that a significant proportion of residents within 3½ kilometres of the Suzlon S88 turbines are likely to experience annoyance from turbine noise and this will include sleep disturbance. This was confirmed by residents' affidavits to the court.

Prof. Anderson: I am very pleased to say that many people keep us informed of all sorts of activities that are occurring around this area of considerable concern to the community. Our role really is not to do a running comment on this but to look at the scientific peer reviewed literature from time to time and come to a conclusion based on that. What others do with our literature review is up to them in their government or other roles.

Senator MADIGAN: Are you aware of the existence and the content of the Waubra Foundation's explicit cautionary notice? It was issued by the Waubra Foundation immediately after the Senate inquiry report because there was nothing about setback distances in the report, nothing about a moratorium on siting close to homes.

Prof. Anderson: The Waubra Foundation are in very regular contact with us and make sure that we are aware of literature and other events that they feel we should be aware of. I want to emphasise that we do not have a role in commenting about setback or distance or any of those regulatory matters. We are a medical research body, so our role is to look at the scientific literature, do that as clearly and as unbiased as we can, and then allow others with statutory responsibilities or community concerns to look at that literature and use it in the way that they feel is appropriate.

Senator MADIGAN: Is the NHMRC aware that there are now well over 20 families across Australia who have been driven out of their homes because of serious ill-health since neighbouring turbines started operating or have been advised to do so by their doctors?

Prof. Anderson: I cannot say we are specifically aware of that but, as you are probably aware, in our literature review we did urge people with concerns to speak to their family doctors because this is one way, not the only way but one way, in which research questions can be formed and targeted better. So again I would say that people with concerns should definitely talk to their medical practitioner.

Senator MADIGAN: Is the NHMRC aware that some residents are homeless or are living in sheds or caravans and are being ignored by health authorities in each state who currently quote the NHMRC statement that there is no peer-reviewed evidence and therefore by implication are inferring they cannot possibly be sick?

Prof. Anderson: They have misread our report if that is the conclusion they are making. I should say that this issue was brought to us by the chief medical officers on our council so they were certainly being concerned by then to bring that issue to the NHMRC. That triggered the original literature review, and of course they will be the first to see the new literature review once it is finished as our council members.

Senator MADIGAN: When will the NHMRC brief the relevant federal government ministers? Which ministers will the NHMRC be briefing? Will it be the PM, the minister for health, climate change—who?

Prof. Anderson: I report to the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon. Mark Butler. That is my line of reporting. Of course we will also as part of the portfolio ensure the department is also fully briefed.

Senator MADIGAN: I am aware that the peer reviewers of the rapid review are Professor of Public Health Professor Chapman and Dr Leventhall from the UK. Would you agree that both these peer reviewers have demonstrated a clear bias on this matter? Who is responsible for the inclusion of a blog by one of the peer reviewers in the reference list of the rapid review?

Prof. Anderson: The great thing about running the NHMRC is that we have a lot of researchers with a lot of training—20 or 30 years—who often have very strong views on things. I would not use the word 'biased' at all but I would say that people come to views, whether it is on cancer research or anything else, from their own academic training and their own applications—their own research. The whole point of getting peer review always is to bring different views to the table as we assess, whether it is a grant application, a research publication or a review article.

There are certainly other views around, and that is why we included Professor Alves-Pereira from Portugal—who, as you probably know, has a different view to Professor Leventhall—in the workshop we did. We consulted

very widely around the world with our fellow organisations, other medical research funding bodies, around who would be the most appropriate people for that workshop. We received a wide range of views, but there was strong support for both those people.

Senator MADIGAN: Will you please confirm for me that Professor Chapman sits on one of the NHMRC grants committees? If he does not, did he at the time that the rapid review was written and/or released in 2010?

Prof. Anderson: I might have to take that on notice. We have over 1,000 people on our peer review committee. During the year we have used Professor Chapman often. He has been a sterling reviewer for the NHMRC over some decades and is certainly one of Australia's leading public health researchers. To answer your specific question I will just need to check our records.

Senator MADIGAN: From this evidence and your understanding of scientific peer review on a matter of public health, would you agree that the two peer reviewers of the rapid review, who are both biased and have received funding from the wind energy conglomerates and/or NHMRC research funding, do not constitute a professional peer review by a panel of relevant, independent experts?

Senator McLucas: I wonder if I could just interpose at this point. I think we have to be really careful about asserting bias and motives—well, you are asserting that these peer reviewers have certain motives. We are talking about two eminent scientists in the world. I do not know anything about them. But I have great respect for the NHMRC's ability to bring scientific thinking to this process. These sorts of questions are contentious, so we have, in Australia, one of the most internationally recognised scientific entities, which brings good science to making good recommendations to our community.

When things are contentious, people sometimes seek to denigrate the individual rather than the facts. I would encourage you to be very careful about attacking an individual rather than the science. I am not a scientist. I do not know your background. But we as politicians have to be extremely careful that we do not allow our position on a particular issue to cloud what we are being told by eminent people. I encourage you to be careful in your language so that you are not denigrating an individual—an individual who undoubtedly has great respect in the world. You can have a view on what the facts are, but please leave the personal alone.

Senator MADIGAN: I concur with what you are saying, Senator McLucas, but I have seen the denigration against other people, which I can tell you is quite vicious. I am not playing the person but I can assure you that I have seen things that absolutely shock me and sicken me to the stomach. When people come into your electorate office who are distraught, are crying and have left their homes—let me assure you that I do not raise these questions lightly. Chair, the rest of my questions I will table.

CHAIR: We will put them on notice, Senator.

Senator ADAMS: No, he has time.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Pursue your questions. We have time, Senator Madigan.

CHAIR: I am chairing the session. Senator Madigan actually said that he wished to table. That is your decision, Senator Madigan. You can table, but we have got time if you want to continue.

Senator MADIGAN: I am quite happy to table the remaining few questions.

CHAIR: Thank you, Senator. We will put them through and we will work with your office on that.

Senator ADAMS: I have a follow-up to the minister. Professor Chapman has been named by Senator Madigan, but Professor Chapman's writings have been very, very influential on the wind farm debate. The reason that the NHMRC are here today is that the statement that was made originally that there were no—and the whole scientific evidence was peer reviewed, admittedly. But this is a new phenomenon for Australia. There have been wind farms here for quite some time but they have not been around people's homes. It is only since the wind farm industry has started to put the turbines in close to people's homes that all these things have happened. To have peer review and scientific evidence—it is a very new phenomenon.

The problem is that this is increasing. I know that in Western Australia there are 35 applications into planning for wind farms or wind turbines to be erected, and unfortunately they are going into very rich agricultural land, very good areas. In one area that I am very familiar with, there are going to be 28 homes within two kilometres of the turbines. So there are all these sorts of issues, but unfortunately the developers are using the first statement that the NHMRC made as 'there are no effects to human health'. The interpretation is just an unfortunate thing. When you go into the evidence that the NHMRC put forward originally, they did say—and they have changed their statement. But the developers are not using that.

Unfortunately, with the new \$30 billion for renewable energy coming in, there is a lot of overseas investment, and that money is going to go offshore. It is not going to be here. There are all sorts of arguments. But, as a nurse,

I am very concerned, as is Senator Madigan, about the people who have actually been affected. Of course, Waubra has had wind turbines for a lot longer. It really is quite upsetting. The committee has had a lot of evidence from these people. But to actually get the scientific evidence—and this is why I am asking questions—is there any way that people from outside can partner with Australian people to come up with some more evidence on the issues that Senator Madigan has raised?

CHAIR: I will take that as an extended statement, and the question that you put right in the middle of it—well done—was actually already answered, so that is fine; it is on the record.

Senator ADAMS: Thank you for the opportunity to clarify it.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Professor Anderson, this week there was an announcement about some moneys that have been put into NHMRC. Before I ask my questions, can I just set the parameters. You have a Medical Research Endowment Fund. Reading your statement it is referred to as an 'administered special account', and in your annual report as MREA.

Prof. Anderson: That is correct.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Okay. And how that works is that you start off with a certain amount each year and you then have your own source revenue from investments and other sources?

Prof. Anderson: No, it is really an appropriation from government in the estimates.

Ms Halton: Think of it like a trust fund.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Yes, I appreciate that. I just thought I saw, under 'own-source income' in your—

Prof. Anderson: You might be referring to where sometimes, if the department or others have some funds for research and wish us to do the peer review—because that is one of our areas of expertise—then that money will be paid into the Medical Research Endowment Fund.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Sure, but in any case it is an account whose funds are sourced from different areas.

Prof. Anderson: Yes, but mainly—

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Mainly government—okay, I understand that. So then the government puts in an amount per annum, you spend whatever you spend and there is a carryover to the year after?

Prof. Anderson: Yes, but there is also up to a couple of billion committed each year—

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Of course. But, for example, if I read on page 153 of your annual report it says the balance at 30 June was \$325 million.

Prof. Anderson: That sounds about right.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Okay. I just wanted to set the picture. To take you back, I understand that in 1999 there was a considerable injection of funds as a result of the Wills review.

Prof. Anderson: Yes.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: In 2007 there was an injection of approximately \$700 million by 2009-10. Does that sound about right, Professor?

Prof. Anderson: That sounds about right.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: All right. My question to you is: are the research grants announced by the minister this week a separate new investment from the government, over and above what was already provided for through the Medical Research Endowment Fund?

Prof. Anderson: No, it is funding out of the Medical Research Endowment Fund.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: That is what I thought. So the balance of the Medical Research Endowment Fund in 2010-11 was, as I said, as at 30 June, \$325 million?

Mr Kingdon: At 30 June 2011 it was \$314.5 million.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: Okay. So do you project across the forward estimates? Or is it a sort of hand-to-mouth existence there?

Prof. Anderson: Each year we commit against the Medical Research Endowment Fund and the forward estimates, although some of our grants run five or up to six years, so they do extend beyond that period. So at any one time we have commitments, as I said earlier, of maybe more than \$2 billion going forward. What we can



SENATOR JOHN MADIGAN
DLP Senator for Victoria

Press Release
An ill wind blowing for Australians
For immediate release

Only months after the closure of the Senate Inquiry into the social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms, the government has effectively ignored all recommendations by announcing a further \$30 billion to be spent on wind farms by 2020.

The Senate Inquiry gave seven mealy mouth recommendations, none of which seem to be taken into account in this latest injection of funds into dangerous technology.

Senator Madigan said it seemed the government is not taking the health of the Australian people seriously.

"The government knows from the senate inquiry that much more care needs to be taken with this kind of technology," he said.

"They are effectively thumbing their noses at the Australian people. The government has targets to reach and does not think twice about reaching them at the expense of the population's health."

"I want to know exactly why the recommendations from the committee have not been acted upon.

"I am calling for this senate inquiry to be reopened to give this matter the serious attention and consideration the Australian people deserve, before more of these harmful structures can plague our communities."

"It is a disgrace that the government is simply ignoring the wishes and the health of the people."

"The government has a duty of care for the people. The burden of proof is on the proponent to prove that there are no adverse health effects, not on the residents to prove that there is."

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Senator Madigan: Questions tabled at the estimates hearing of the Community Affairs Legislation Committee of the Senate on 20th October 2011 (not including those asked and recorded in the foregoing proof copy of the evidence taken before the Committee).

- I am aware of the NHMRC Report on the Scientific Forum: Wind Farms and Human Health, 7 June 2011. And that you have said you will amend the public statement by May 2012. In your expert opinion, is this soon enough to ensure that a public health issue is prevented from getting worse? This is in line with the NHMRC statutory responsibility to protect public health. When are you going to do something about this? *Comment from Pam: The first part of this question was asked during the hearing (towards the bottom of page 8), but the second last sentence was asked in the last question on that page, but the last sentence was not.*
- Are you aware of the reports of symptoms consistent with exposure to operating wind turbines being reported at distances up to 10km away from turbines?
- Who are the authors of the Rapid Review of the Evidence released by the NHMRC?
- I have an email here from Mr Paul Manning, dated 19/10/11 from Heather Bishop, Assistant Director / Emerging Issues in which he lists a number of peer-reviewed references that contain reviews of/ and or new evidence that has been published recently. Are you aware of the issues in this email?
- In the interests of transparency which was so sadly lacking the first time around with the NHMRC's Rapid Review with respect to both identities of authors and peer-reviewers, who are the people involved in the writing of the revised literature review?
- Will the identities of the peer-reviewers of the updated literature review and the text of their comments be made publicly available? When is it estimated that this will be completed? Is the NHMRC planning to amend the public statement in the interim? And when?