

Noise and Health

DPE treatment of the concerns of the community.

The Flyers Creek wind farm, Modification 4 DPE Assessment shows, on Page 14, that 21 community submitters raised Noise as a key issue, with a further 16 raising the key issue of Health effects.¹ This is understandable given the high number of non-associated residences in close proximity to multiple turbines, along with the 40% increase in turbine capacity and the corresponding 56% increase in rotor swept area.

The Department confidently advises the Commissioners that:

*Infigen provided a response to **all** matters raised in submissions (emphasis added), which is, of course, a false statement. Even though false, it is not material and therefore not an offence under the Act, however anyone familiar with Infigen and the Department would immediately see it for the untruth it is.*

In advising Commissioners on the community issue of Noise and Health, the Department responds on Page 25 of its Assessment:

- *The NHMRC has concluded that, “**there is no consistent evidence that wind farm cause adverse health outcomes in humans**”, and that any further health-related studies should be limited to areas within close proximity of wind turbines.*²
- *The Department will continue to monitor contemporary scientific research outcomes to ensure its position reflects robust evidence on any health effects, including any advice released from the National Wind Farm Commissioner and the Independent Scientific Committee on Wind Turbines.*
- *Based on the above, the Department does not consider that the proposed modification (or the project as a whole) would result in any adverse health outcomes for the local community.*

(Note: It was nice of DPE to include host properties in this blanket judgment – I hope they don't exercise the opportunity to litigate! Further, it appears to be very courageous statement pertaining to a wind farm with 35 non-associated residence within 2.15 km of a turbine!)

The NHMRC document from which this highlighted quotation above purportedly comes is well over four years old.³

Unfortunately that highlighted NHMRC quotation above doesn't actually appear to have come from any published NHMRC document.⁴ The closest statement from the NHMRC is a conclusion that:

¹ By contrast, Infigen, in its Response to Submissions, nominated 12 submitters raising Noise and 5 raising Health (2 of these submitters raising both). Something wrong you would think?

² The distance recommended by the NHMRC was a maximum of 1500 metres

³ <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/statement-wind-farms-human-health-eh57.pdf> (February 2015)

⁴ The **only** Googled response to the Department's version is to the Department's Assessment itself, probably due to the incorrect use of the singular “wind Farm”

“...there is currently no consistent evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans”

What is the major difference between the real NHMRC quotation and the DPE variant 4 years later? DPE left out “currently” which significantly changes the meaning of the quotation.⁵

The author of the DPE Assessment and the signatories want you to believe that what was arguable over 4 years ago, is unconditionally correct now, which it provably isn't. The Waubra Administrative Appeals Tribunal decision alone puts paid to it. Also, just this May, a team headed by Kristy L Hansen from Flinders University concluded in a paper published in the Journal of Sound and Vibration titled **Prevalence of wind farm amplitude modulation at long-range residential locations** that (from the abstract):

“The presence of amplitude modulation (AM) in wind farm noise has been shown to result in increased annoyance. Therefore, it is important to determine how often this characteristic is present at residential locations near a wind farm. This study investigates the prevalence and characteristics of wind farm AM at 9 different residences located near a South Australian wind farm that has been the subject of complaints from local residents. It is shown that an audible indoor low-frequency tone was amplitude modulated at the blade-pass frequency for 20% of the time up to a distance of 2.4 km. The audible AM occurred for a similar percentage of time between wind farm percentage power capacities of 40 and 85%, indicating that it is important that AM analysis is not restricted to high power output conditions only. Although the number of AM events is shown to reduce with distance, audible indoor AM still occurred for 16% of the time at a distance of 3.5 km.”

The connection between annoyance, lack of sleep and health issues is well established and **the use of sleep deprivation is a common torture technique**. The cited NHMRC recommendation that studies should concentrate on receptors up to 1.5kms away from a turbine is invalid based on this paper.

The NHMRC could hardly deny knowledge of this study, its results and conclusions, since **THEY FUNDED THE RESEARCH!**

The deletion of the most significant word in the whole quotation would appear deliberate and therefore must be formally challenged and questioned for accuracy.

One must assume that the Department's Noise Specialist would have approved the Noise section of the Assessment and as such, the DPE must take responsibility. It is an easy matter to fact check the exact quote, as I did.

Removing the word “currently” alters the whole meaning of the statement. It is the key word.

You are being **profoundly** and **materially** misled. Is that not an offence under the Act?

⁵ We could probably have an academic discussion re the meanings of the NHMRC's “health effects” and the Department's “health outcomes”. Three errors in a one line quotation!