

Submission To EPA Inquiry

I refer to Question 4 in the discussion paper:

How can the EPA's role in safeguarding the community against the health impacts of pollution be clarified or strengthened?

The most important role for the EPA in safeguarding the community is to allow any adversely affected citizens to express their concerns via a competent and non-judgemental authority. The issue of wind turbine noise causing severe problems to people forced to live too close to the latest huge wind turbines has never been addressed by the EPA. In NSW and SA the EPA is responsible for noise monitoring. No such law applies in Victoria. Sleep deprivation is a major cause of a myriad of health impacts leading to acute and chronic medical conditions. Also the effect of not being able to get a normal good night's rest has a negative impact on those who operate machinery or any other occupational function where one has to be alert at all times to avoid accidents. Children who are sleep deprived because of noise pollution underperform at school and play.

The monitoring of noise or noise pollution should not be regarded as a regulatory burden, but as an essential part of protecting the general public. It is known that the EPA plays no part in the policing of wind turbine noise and the way in which wind farm operators do exceed noise regulations is ignored by regulatory authorities. Acoustic testing uses averages, not peaks and troughs, which distorts results. Audible noise only is the criteria and infrasound is not part of the testing.

The recently completed Federal Senate Enquiry into wind turbines recommended:

*The committee recommends that all State Governments consider shifting responsibility for monitoring wind farms in their jurisdiction from local councils to the State Environment Protection Authority."*

In the Terms of Reference point # 4, I consider this is a very important area as it calls for fair treatment of the community through environmental regulation. The principle of a fair go and a duty of care has so far been ignored by wind farm proponents, State Governments and Local Councils but the TOR calls for environmental justice to be adhered to.

In reference to point #2 I wish to state that as a person living in a small rural community in Victoria where a huge wind farm has been approved with turbines well within 2 Kms of my dwelling, 2 only 1 Km away, my expectation of the EPA and its environmental regulator is that my position would be considered and turbine placement be changed so that I will not be affected adversely by noise pollution. I would expect that my concerns would be addressed before construction began as, once the towers are built at a huge cost it is too late to correct the problem. It is impossible to unscramble an egg.