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SCOOP

Wind Turbine Syndrome affects more people than previously thought

A survey was conducted on wind farm noise as part of a Master's dissertation by Zhenhua Wang, a graduate student in Geography, Environment and Population at the University of Adelaide, Australia. The results show that 70% of respondents living up to 5km away report being negatively affected by wind turbine noise, with more than 50% of them "very or moderately negatively affected". This is considerably higher than what was found in previous studies conducted in Europe.

The survey was made in the vicinity of the Waterloo wind farm, South Australia, which is composed of 37 Vestas V90 3 MW turbines stretching over 18 km (1). These mega turbines are reported to be emitting more low frequency noise (LFN) than smaller models, and this causes more people to be affected, and over greater distances, by the usual symptoms of the Wind Turbine Syndrome (WTS): insomnia, headaches, nausea, stress, poor ability to concentrate, irritability, etc., leading to poorer health and a reduced immunity to illness.

The Danish government recognised recently that LFN is an aggravating component in the noise that affects wind farm neighbours. This prompted their issuing regulations that limit low-frequency noise levels inside homes to 20 dB(A). Unfortunately, as denounced by Professor Henrik Moller, they manipulated the calculation parameters so as to allow LFN inside homes to actually reach 30 dB(A) in 30% of cases. "Hardly anyone would accept 30 dB(A) in their homes at night", wrote the Professor last month (2).

A summary of the Australian survey has been published (3), but the full Masters dissertation has not been made available to the public. In the interest of public health, the European Platform against Windfarms (EPAW) and the North-American

Platform against Windpower (NA-PAW), have asked the University of Adelaide to release this important document.

A neighbour of the Waterloo wind farm, Mr Andreas Marciniak, wrote to a local newspaper last week: "Do you think it's funny that at my age I had to move to Adelaide into my Mother's shed and my brother had to move to Hamilton into a caravan with no water or electricity?" (4) Both Mr Marciniak and his brother have been advised by their treating doctors, including a cardiologist, to leave their homes and not return when the wind turbines are turning.

How many people will be forced to abandon their homes before governments pay attention, wonder the thousands of windfarm victims represented by EPAW and NAPA. "It'll take time to gather enough money for a big lawsuit", says Sherri Lange, of NAPA, "but time is on our side: victim numbers are increasing steadily."

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(1) - http://ecogeneration.com.au/news/waterloo_wind_farm_officially_opened/054715/

(2) - http://www.epaw.org/press/EPAW_NA-PAW_media_release_10Feb2012.pdf

(3) - <http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/evaluation-of-wind-farm-noise-policies-in-south-australia/>

(4) - Letter sent to the Editor of the Burra Broadcaster by Mr. Andreas Marciniak, windfarm victim.