

Living near a wind turbine

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The Risks of Living near Wind Turbines

In late 2012 Simon Chapman was remunerated by lawyers acting for Infigen energy for providing an expert report on psychogenic aspects of wind farm noise complaints for possible use in a Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal hearing. Expert witnesses have a general duty to courts, not to any party in proceedings, as set out here:

In Barrett's short film, 15 hosts and some of their neighbours from the central Victorian district near the town of Waubra tell what it's like to live surrounded by large turbines.

Turbine hosts at Waubra earn A\$8,000 a year for each turbine on their land. In the bush, the expression that wind farms can "drought-proof a farm" is common: a land owner with ten turbines can wake up each morning comfortable in the thought that a tough year with poor rain or bad frosts can be ridden out, thanks to income from wind generation.

All of Barrett's interviewees say they can hear the turbines but none say they are bothered by them or suffer from any health problems they attribute to the turbines. If there is such a phenomenon as "wind turbine syndrome" it would seem it is a condition that, remarkably, can be prevented by the wonder drug called money.

Significantly, too, none of those interviewed say their contracts prevent them from speaking publicly about their experiences with hosting turbines, repudiating the mantra of wind farm opponents that suffering hosts are gagged from speaking out by evil wind companies.

In 2010, a small group comprising mostly wealthy landowners established the Waubra Foundation, which opposes wind farms being established near their country estates. None of the directors of the foundation nor its chief executive, an unregistered former GP Sarah Laurie, live within 125km of Waubra, yet took on the name of the town to highlight what they believe are serious health problems associated with living near wind turbines.

Barrett's film reveals the deep resentment that Waubra residents feel about these out-of-towners hijacking their town's good name. None say that Laurie has ever contacted them, with one commenting, "I wouldn't give them the time of day if they turned up here."

Laurie and the Waubra Foundation have done all they can to spread concern about the harms they allege are caused by living near wind farms. One former Waubra resident has been particularly prominent, speaking emotionally at anti-wind farm meetings about how wind farms have ruined his health and caused his family to

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move to Ballarat, at great personal expense.

In a statement that would be of immense interest to Apple, Samsung and Nokia, he recently told a meeting in Barringhup that electricity generated by wind turbines started charging his cell phone without it being plugged in:

I've had my ... mobile phone go into charge mode in the middle of the paddock, away from everywhere.

In 2012, he wrote a public submission to a parliamentary inquiry where he revealed he had suffered a serious head injury some eight years before the wind farm opened in 2010:

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