



Biotech Daily

Tuesday March 22, 2016

Daily news on ASX-listed biotechnology companies

NHMRC \$3.3m For Windfarm Health Impacts AMA, Biotech Daily Comment

The National Health and Medical Research Council says it has awarded two grants worth \$3.3 million to study the effects of wind farms on human health.

The Council's chief executive officer Prof Anne Kelso said that further research was needed to explore the relationships between wind farms and human health.

"Existing research in this area is of poor quality and targeted funding is warranted to support high quality, independent research on this issue," Prof Kelso said.

The council said that research at South Australia's Flinders University would explore relationships between noise from wind farms and effects such as annoyances and reduced sleep and quality of life, while research at the University of New South Wales would investigate "the broader social and environmental circumstances that may influence the health of people living near wind farms".

Prof Kelso said the grants would support "only high quality, well designed research proposals ... NHMRC supports only the most outstanding research".

"Each application for this funding underwent the same stringent independent review process we apply to all NHMRC grant applications," Prof Kelso said.

The Council said that the grants were awarded in response to the 2015 Targeted Call for Research into Wind Farms and Human Health, following the release of the February 2015 NHMRC Statement: Evidence on Wind Farms and Human Health.

That report said: “There is no direct evidence that exposure to wind farm noise affects physical or mental health.”

“While exposure to environmental noise is associated with health effects, these effects occur at much higher levels of noise than are likely to be perceived by people living in close proximity to wind farms in Australia.”

[Australian Medical Association](#)

In 2014, the AMA categorically rejected the health claims, saying: “The available evidence does not support the view that the infrasound or low frequency sound generated by wind farms ... causes adverse health effects on populations residing in their vicinity.”

“The infrasound and low frequency sound generated by modern wind farms in Australia is well below the level where known health effects occur, and there is no accepted physiological mechanism where sub-audible infrasound could cause health effects.”

“Individuals residing in the vicinity of wind farms who do experience adverse health or well-being, may do so as a consequence of their heightened anxiety or negative perceptions regarding wind farm developments in their area. Individuals who experience heightened anxiety or diminished health and well-being in the context of local wind farms should seek medical advice.”

The AMA said that the reporting of health scares and misinformation could contribute to heightened anxiety and community division.

“Electricity generation by wind turbines does not involve production of greenhouse gases, other pollutant emissions or waste, all of which can have significant direct and indirect health effects.”

[Biotech Daily Comment](#)

Biotech Daily is astounded that the NHMRC has co-operated with what is clearly a political move from some members of the Liberal National Party Government to restrict what they call “unsightly” wind farms in favor of the apparently more attractive open-cut coal mines.

There have been a plethora of reports on wind farm noise and indeed this writer has occasion to stay very close to a major wind farm. There is no noise.

The NHMRC is wasting scarce grant funding on a political stunt.

David Langsam
Editor