

Invitation to Submit to Senate Inquiry on Wind Turbines – Brian Frederick Kermond

I was a permanent resident of 107 Blowholes Road, Cape Bridgewater, Victoria.

I was employed full time with an Irish based wind turbine construction team, Windhoist, to erect a wind facility at Cape Bridgewater in February 2008. I had worked long hours and consistently for a period of six months when the wind facility was almost completed and became online.

At this time I began to experience some major disturbances with my health including dizziness, nausea, fatigue, ear pressure and vision impairment. I consulted a local doctor who was concerned for my overall health including all of the above and my lowered blood pressure. He initially thought I may have been suffering a type of viral labyrinthitis but did not establish any such result. I continued to experience these symptoms and could not return to my work or any other industrial related work to this day.

I found that my symptoms continued whilst at home with a waxing and waning effect at different times and situations, including whilst sleeping at night or when my body was positioned near the ground.

On occasions I was taken to the hospital emergency ward whilst suffering these symptoms.

I was given medication for the dizziness symptoms and sent home after rest.

I have a form of hyperacusis between my ears and brain, and have seen local, hearing specialists, audiologists, Neurologists, ENT Specialists, and general surgeons. They all were inconclusive in their reports but where possible recorded the severity of symptoms stating there is no medical data to refer to and they are not familiar with this type of exposure when the wind facility was discussed.

When placed in certain situations and environments which replicate the initial symptoms of the wind facility and at our home (1.5 kilometres from the Cape Bridgewater Wind Farm Site) I suffer the above health symptoms and head pressure and severe head pain. When removed from these environments it dissipates after a period of 24-36 hours and I am often totally incapacitated for this time which is distressing and frustrating and so tormenting to feel so helpless and hopeless to myself, my family and society.

I moved my family of four from our residence at Cape Bridgewater in 2010 after we had all been subjected to the torture of trying to co-exist near the neighbouring wind facility. We were the first residents to move away, to our knowledge, knowing that the wind facility was damaging our quality of life and wellbeing. It was tormenting to be seen as over-sensitive and ‘crazy’ or referred to the nocebo effect of creating the problem and for even thinking we could be impacted so severely as to leave our home of twenty years.

We have not been able to return to live at our home for any extended period of time and cannot be there when the conditions of the weather and wind facility are not favourable. This appears to be most of the time the wind facility is online.

This has impacted my own and my family unit physically, emotionally, socially and financially.

We were financially stable and had no loans or debits owing. It has been a huge burden to try to survive and attempt to live a basic standard of lifestyle in order to function adequately and contribute to our society in a productive way. We were happy to volunteer for community or social activities and were an integral part of our children's lives in school sports and socially.

I am totally destroyed by the lack of support from all departments, big or small, (including government and community, and local council, the Glenelg shire) in validating our liberty and democratic rights to live in our own home of choice peacefully.

During this time of not residing at our home we have incurred a substantial rise in rates and a Heritage Overlay has been placed on our house which was a ruin and was deemed of no value when we first acquired it in 1980's. This Heritage Overlay had been initiated by council prior to the wind farm being built and then dropped during the wind facility construction phase and reinstated after the completion of this industrial project. There was also a period of rezoning the area around the wind facility to which landholders have lost their right to build and create business opportunity in this now "sensitive" area. We have objected to the placement of the Overlay on the grounds that the council and planning department did not consider the importance of the human element to the maintenance and significance of buildings within the overlay feasibility or the environmental impacts. We have observed the deterioration of walls and structural features of our home and felt the ground vibration whilst the walls were crumbling.

There has been a considerable interruption to our power feed from the National Grid Lines which has caused countless outages and equipment failure and we have incurred additional expense in replacing or repairing our valuables many times. The power company, Powercor have replaced three transformers at the Pole closest to our home within the past few years and have been quoted and documented from the employees that our power issues are emanating from the nearby wind facility and they have exhausted all resources and means to rectify this problem. They also stated they could not guarantee such problems would not continue to occur .Since the establishment of the wind facility we now share our existing domestic power supply on the same pole as the high voltage industrial outgoing power of the wind facility. This power fluctuates and our home which is at the end of the power line with single wire earth return basis, known as swer(single wire earth return), with sandy soil type our standard earthing has now become inadequate for this domestic supply. Our soil is now deemed 'static' and plants struggle to grow and survive in these conditions. We have

had instruments to measure the levels of electricity in the atmosphere and on our bodies at the area of the neighbouring wind facility, which recorded high levels and was not present away from the site. This confirmed what we have been sensing for some time.

There are other serious issues we believe; the electro-magnetic fields or radiation emanating from the wind facility and/or power infrastructure and the toxic emission of lubricating products and other from the wind turbines. Pacific Hydro agreed to this testing but recently denied their obligation. We strongly believe both of these have further added to our health issues and inability to live in our home. We still have a product in our rain water tank which appeared on the roof of our house and has still left stains. We contacted the shire health inspector, in 2010 who agreed that it appeared to come from the wind turbines adjacent to our home and rain down on our roof. The stains still exist for inspection as does the product in our water. We noted a mechanical failure at a nearby turbine at the time of this discovery. Our son was being treated for exposure of an oil/petroleum product for his skin rash at this time. We were drinking and washing in this water being our only supply.

We have also observed a noticeable change of behavioural patterns in the local fauna, particularly the kangaroo and koalas. Also sheep, goats and cattle. This correlates with the wind direction and characteristics of the wind facility. It is disturbing to witness these native and rural animals in a state of shock and stress, unable to move on many occasions appearing confused and totally out of character. The local wedge-tail eagle population have diminished to infrequent sightings that were once frequenting our family property and the land the wind turbines occupy, for many generations. Their original nesting sites are now abandoned as they were in close proximity to the wind farm. We also have been shocked to find at random many dead bird carcasses of varied species with no apparent cause of death. Refer to the Pacific Hydro Environmental Policy.

The issues above are only a snapshot of the regular, numerous, serious and destructive elements we have experienced. We are still enduring the existing complications in an accumulative scale.

In 2011 I was invited as an affected resident to attend a senate enquiry organised by the NHMRC in Canberra to share the effects and experiences of living in close proximity to a wind farm. Although recommendations were made to our relief, the issues addressed were not acted upon.

Since recent and thorough professional noise testing has been performed by reputable acousticians with comprehensive reports, it has been noted that our house has been found to have acute levels of sound emissions, possibly one of the worst in the world. Our bedroom in particular is classified as a “torture chamber”, and this was our place of rest!

We are still forced to live away from our home of twenty years with many inconveniences, added expenses and suffering both temporary and permanent health complications. We are desperate to resolve this to prevent any more unnecessary suffering.

This is the truth to the best of my ability and understanding,

Brian Kermond