

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-036

OUTCOME 10: Health System Capacity and Quality

TOPIC: WIND TURBINES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Heffernan asked:

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) issued a Public Statement that indicates no published scientific evidence exists to positively link Wind Turbines with diverse Health effects therefore, because the position is not settled it is recommended within the Public Statement that;

- A precautionary approach should be taken in relation to further development
- research outcomes should continue to be monitored
- wind turbine design standards should be complied with
- site evaluation should occur to minimise potential impacts
- people who believe they are experiencing health problems should consult their Doctor promptly

When the NHMRC has been informed of the potential misuse and misrepresentation of its Public Statement, what action has the NHMRC taken to correct the record?

Answer:

The NHMRC's legislated role includes providing evidence-based health advice to government and the Australian public.

The NHMRC held a forum on 7 June 2011, with the primary aim of updating its Public Statement. Invitees included environmental health experts, acoustic engineers and scientists, environmental health researchers, representatives from State and Territory health and planning/environment departments, members of the public living close to windfarms, major public interest groups involved with wind farms in Australia (eg Waubra Foundation), Department of Health and Ageing representatives and international experts from countries with substantial experience in wind turbines.

An additional benefit of this forum was that the range of stakeholders in attendance gained a better understanding as to the purpose of the Statement.