

Dr Iser conducts survey on wind power station effects

Promontory district medical practitioner and South Gippsland Shire Medical Officer of Health Dr David Iser has conducted his own confidential survey on the health effects of living near a wind power station.

Dr Iser said he was prompted to undertake such a study because "it has been brought to my attention that there may be adverse health effects caused to people living in close proximity to wind power stations.

"A literature review of studies overseas has shown that while there are no proven significant adverse health effects of a physical nature, there certainly has been documented cases of annoyance resulting in reduced wellbeing," he said.

"To my knowledge there has been no other studies done on this subject in Australia, and with this in mind I prepared and distributed 25 questionnaires."

Dr Iser's survey was sent to households located within about two kilometres of Stanwell Corporation Limited's 12-turbine wind power station on Silcocks Hill at Toora.

The survey asked the people who received the survey to provide their name and address if they wished, as well as to give an indication of their age group.

They were also asked to state the distance between their property and the nearest wind turbine, how long they had been living at the property, and whether they felt their health had been "adversely affected since the erection of the turbines".

Those respondents who thought their health had been adversely affected were asked to state whether they had experienced an increase of a number of symptoms since the turbines were built.

The list of symptoms Dr Iser sought information about included headaches, palpitations, excessive tiredness, stress, anxiety, tinnitus or ring-

ing in the ears, hearing problems, sleep disturbances, migraines, depression or any other related condition.

Respondents were asked to state whether they had approached their doctor in regard to any of these symptoms and to briefly describe any tests they may have undergone and/or treatment they may have received.

The final question in the survey asked respondents if they believed that "your quality of life has in any way altered since living near the wind turbines" and if so, how.

SURVEY RESULTS

Dr Iser said 20 or 80 per cent of the 25 surveys were returned to him during the six weeks after they were circulated.

The results of the survey were collated and analysed, with Dr Iser dividing the information into three categories; no health problems, minor health problems and major health problems.

Dr Iser said 12 of the 20 respondents reported no health problems whatsoever.

A further five people reported mild health problems, including disturbed sleep, especially on quiet nights, anxiety, stress and concerns about property values.

Three people reported major health problems, including sleep disturbances, stress and dizziness, which required investigation, treatment and medication.

"Overall, 12 of the 20 respondents showed no health problems, while eight out of 20 showed mild to major problems mostly related to sleep disturbance and stress," Dr Iser said.

"I would be interested in hearing from other people who may not have received my survey who think their health has been either unaffected or adversely affected because of living near a wind power station."