

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2014-2015, 25 February 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000073

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Wind Farms and Human Health

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

How does the NHMRC account for those who lease their land to wind farms not experiencing health problems?

Answer:

In regards to economic benefit from wind farms, the Information Paper states that:

- “There are a number of confounding factors that might provide an alternative explanation for any observed association between wind farms and health (such as: socioeconomic status; pre-existing chronic diseases; attitude to, visibility of or economic benefit from wind farms; and negative or positive expectations about the potential effects of wind farms). These factors were not consistently measured in the available studies. When they were, their possible effects on associations between wind farms and health effects were not always taken into account when analysing the results” (page 11).
- “Further analysis of three studies^{7,10-13,17} found that... [r]eported annoyance was higher when wind turbines were visible from the dwelling and lower when participants received economic benefit from the wind farm²⁵” (page 20).
- “In one study that did consider possible confounding factors participants who did not benefit economically from wind farms reported more sleep interruption than others.⁷ This was reported regardless of how close they were to the wind farm. Therefore it is possible that factors other than noise (such as economic benefit) could explain or modify the apparent association between wind farm proximity and sleep disruption” (page 20).