

Submissions
Climate Change Authority
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Submissions: Review of the National Wind Farm Commissioner

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My name is Dr Fiona Crichton and I have spent a great deal of the last six years conducting research to unpack the factors explaining community health anxiety about wind farms, and testing potential pathways for health complaints attributed to exposure to wind turbines. In essence, my studies indicated that concern about health effects and symptom reporting could be explained by exposure to anxiety provoking misinformation about wind farms leading to a process of symptom misattribution. Given this finding I also explored possible strategies to reduce anxiety and symptom reporting in community settings. This research can be found in a variety of peer reviewed publications [1,2,3,4,5,6,7].

My comprehensive summary of evidence based strategies to reduce anxiety and symptom reporting, can be found here [<https://t.co/GXHexcKOsX> – chapter 8]. In totality evidence indicates that meaningful community engagement, consultation, and most of all fair processes around wind farm development and operation, will neutralise community anxiety and alleviate health complaints. The chance for community members to be heard, to have concerns addressed, and to be part of processes that recognise the importance of procedural and distributive justice, is critical. The work conducted by the National Wind Farm Commissioner has been invaluable in this regard. The Commissioner is aware of the issues that drive community anxiety and has demonstrated an ability to ameliorate that anxiety and reduce health complaints. Importantly, findings by the Commissioner in his role as an impartial investigator, without any direct interest in wind farm development, are more credible and reassuring to anxious members of the community, than explanations or assurances provided by wind farm companies. This has led to better outcomes for wind farm communities, in the form of reduced anxiety and complaints, and for Australia as a whole. The Commissioner has also provided evidence based, informed, practical guidelines for wind farm companies to improve processes around wind farm development and to reduce the likelihood of misapprehensions, resentment, or discord developing within the community. These guidelines, which will continue to be updated, are exemplary and of ongoing value as a framework for wind farm developers to adopt best policies and practices when engaging with the community. As a whole, the Commissioner has led efforts to promote best practice, information availability, and has provided a central, trusted source for disseminating information.

Overall, the Wind Farm Commissioner has been instrumental in reducing anxiety and wind farm health complaints in Australia. Given that anxiety provoking misinformation about wind farms continues to be perpetuated through the media, particularly the internet, at this stage, in my expert opinion, this role continues to be necessary to ameliorate concern and alleviate symptom reporting in the community.

I am happy to be contacted and to make further submissions if required.

Signed this 12th day of April 2018:

Fiona Crichton

My Publications

BOOK PUBLICATIONS

1. Chapman, S., & **Crichton, F.** (2017). *Wind Turbine Syndrome: A communicated disease*. Sydney, Australia: Sydney University Press

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

2. **Crichton, F.**, & Petrie, K. J. (2015). Accentuate the positive: Counteracting psychogenic responses to media health messages in the age of the internet. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 79, 185-189. [doi:10.1016/j.jpsychores.2015.04.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2015.04.014)
3. **Crichton, F.**, Dodd, G., Schmid, G., & Petrie, K. J. (2015). Framing sound: Using expectations to reduce environmental noise annoyance. *Environmental Research*, 142, 609-614. doi: 10.1016/j.envres.2015.08.016.
4. **Crichton, F.**, & Petrie, K. J. (2015). Health complaints and wind turbines: The efficacy of explaining the nocebo response to reduce symptom reporting. *Environmental Research*, 140, 449-455. [doi:10.1016/j.envres.2015.04.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2015.04.016)
5. **Crichton, F.**, Chapman, S., Cundy, T., & Petrie, K. J. (2014). The link between health complaints and wind turbines: support for the nocebo expectations hypothesis. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 2, 220. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2014.00220
6. **Crichton, F.**, Dodd, G., Schmid, G., Gamble, G., Cundy, T., & Petrie, K. J. (2014). The power of positive and negative expectations to influence reported symptoms and mood during exposure to wind farm sound. *Health Psychology*, 33, 1588-1592. doi:10.1037/hea000003
7. **Crichton, F.**, Dodd, G., Schmid, G., Gamble, G., & Petrie, K. J. (2014). Can expectations produce symptoms from infrasound associated with wind turbines? *Health Psychology*, 33, 360-364.