



Wind power a safe and healthy alternative to fossil fuels

Media release

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The national coalition of health care groups, the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA), has today released its Position Statement on wind turbines and human health, rejecting the claims of anti-wind groups that wind power poses a threat to health.

Developed by the organisation's scientific advisory group on behalf of the members of CAHA, the Position Statement underscores the fact that renewable energy generation such as wind power provides a safe and healthy alternative to fossil fuels.

"There is no credible peer reviewed scientific evidence that demonstrates a link between wind turbines and direct adverse health impacts in people living in proximity to them," CAHA Convenor Fiona Armstrong said.

"In contrast, Australia's current energy generation that relies on the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and gas is not only contributing to climate change but (particularly in the case of coal) also poses significant threats to human health."

The *Health and Wind Turbines* paper finds while large-scale commercial wind farms have been in operation internationally for many decades, often in close proximity to thousands of people, there is no scientifically validated evidence of any associated increase in ill-health in these populations.

"The balance of current scientific evidence indicates that while a small proportion of people may experience annoyance associated with wind turbines, on the whole no direct adverse physiological health effects related to wind turbines have been demonstrated," Ms Armstrong said.

"In contrast however, there are well documented and serious threats to human health from burning fossil fuels for electricity generation and transport in the form of cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and cancer," Ms Armstrong said.

"It is estimated that the harm to health from emissions from Australian coal-fired power stations is costing the Australia community \$A2.6 billion annually. Together with the health damage from fossil fuel powered transport emissions, this amounts to an annual health bill of almost \$6 billion, as well as contributing to more than 1000 deaths each year."¹

CAHA Members: Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW); Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM); Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS); Australian Hospitals and Healthcare Association (AHHA); Australian Health Promotion Association (AHPA); Australian Institute of Health Innovation (AIHI); Australian Research Alliance of Children and Youth (ARACY); Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN); Australian Nursing Federation (ANF); Australian Psychological Society (APS); Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN); CRANAplus; Doctors for the Environment Australia (DEA); Doctors Reform Society; Friends of CAHA; Health Consumers' Network (Qld); Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA); Royal College of Nursing Australia (RCNA); Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP); North Yarra Community Health (NYCH); Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH); Women's Health in the North; World Vision.

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The CAHA Position Statement on Health and wind turbines can be downloaded at www.caha.org.au

¹ Biegler, T. *The hidden costs of electricity: Externalities of power generation in Australia*, Report for the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE), 2009.