

- 7.54 Mr Andrew Durran, Executive Director of Epuron tabled an article prepared by the United Kingdom National Health Service titled *Are wind farms a health risk?* The article reviews the work of Dr Nina Pierpont, surmising that “[n]o firm conclusions can be drawn from this study as the design was weak and included on 38 people.”<sup>508</sup> The article also identified that many of the participants in Dr Pierpont’s study had pre-existing medical conditions that may distort her findings. However, the article acknowledges that “... it is physiologically and biologically plausible that low frequency noise generated by wind turbines can affect people ...”<sup>509</sup>
- 7.55 Pedersen and Wayne completed research into the impact of wind turbine noise on self-reported health and well-being. The study concluded that annoyance was the only adverse health effect that could be identified as being connected to wind turbine noise.<sup>510</sup> This issue of annoyance addressed later in this chapter in Section titled *Noise perception and annoyance*.

#### Committee comment

- 7.56 The Committee notes the concerns expressed by Inquiry participants regarding ‘Wind Turbine Syndrome’. The Committee further notes that research findings of ‘Wind Turbine Syndrome’ have not been published in a peer-reviewed journal.
- 7.57 The Committee is concerned that the significance of ‘Wind Turbine Syndrome’ is being unnecessarily exaggerated because Dr Pierpont is a medical doctor and has published a book on the issue, rather than any scientific merit of such a syndrome. As a result, a degree of fear is being instilled in communities that may host wind turbines. The Committee is concerned that, based on evidence received, this unwarranted fear may be causing greater health impacts than the presence of any actual ‘Wind Turbine Syndrome’.

### Noise perception and annoyance

- 7.58 This section analyses evidence and research that was presented to the Committee in relation to wind farm noise perception and annoyance. This research concluded that noise annoyance, such as that experienced by many Inquiry participants, is an adverse health impact caused by wind farms. The research also concluded that noise level alone does not determine levels of annoyance. Factors which influence this are identified in this section.
- 7.59 The physiological response to wind turbine noise was acknowledged by Dr Pedersen who described why the characteristics of wind farm noise are more troublesome than other sources of noise:

The most troublesome in the wind turbine noise is the amplitude modulation. That means that the sound levels increase and decrease with the pace of the rotor blades and we get this swishing sound and this, of course, treats the ear, because we were all equated once in a while when we needed to be very careful when we walked in the woods back millions of years ago, whenever it was and we walked around there and if

<sup>508</sup> Tabled document, National Health Service. *Are wind farms a health risk?*, 3 August 2009, p 1

<sup>509</sup> Tabled document, *Are wind farms a health risk?*, p 2

<sup>510</sup> Submission 81a, Attachment V, p 485