Infrasound claims

Wanted: study of wind farm effects

BY BRENDAN GULLIFER

The real problem with the wind turbine industry is that we should be heralding this clean and green technology — but instead we're pitting neighbour against neighbour.

That's the view of recently retired University of Ballarat engineering lecturer Graeme Hood.

Mr Hood hit the headlines last year when he undertook limited sound testing at Waubra in response to residents who reported experiencing nausea, headaches and sleep deprivation.

Initial results showed definite infrasound readings from turbines.

Infrasound is undetectable by the human ear and is not measured by normal wind farm sound monitoring equipment.

According to a recent British study, infrasound can trigger anxiety, sadness, revulsion and fear.

And the jury is still out on other effects.

Mr Hood is quick not to lay the blame at the feet of the wind farm companies.

"Obviously, they don't want to hurt people," he says. "They don't want to make people sick because that's not good business."

He says the companies are legally operating within the confines of existing wind-farm legislation.

"But the people who are objecting to the wind farms, the people who are getting sick, are not going to go away," he says.

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"Mr Hood says the issue is complex, but the next step is relatively simple.

"We need to spend some time and some money and get in there, free of politics, and see what's going on."

"I'd dearly love it if someone announced a study, if someone was prepared to get in there and talk to people properly, take measurements and find out once and for all what's going on and how we fix the problem."

According to a Victorian government website, the state has eight operating wind farms comprising 266 turbines.

Another 28 wind farms comprising 1322 turbines have been approved but are not yet operational.

Another 21 wind farms are in the feasibility stage.

Both the Victorian and federal governments say there is no proof of any health problems caused by turbines.