

## Senate Speech – Wind Turbines

18 June 2015

[Senator DAY](#) (South Australia): I am just astounded. Senator Waters says that this committee and members of the inquiry have been duped by fake science. I can assure Senator Waters that we have not been duped by fake science. We have been persuaded by the dozens and dozens of people who, unlike Senator Waters, actually live near wind farms. We have heard from dozens of witnesses. There have been hundreds of submissions. We have heard from dozens of qualified researchers. We have seen admissions by health bodies that more research is needed. I did not have much of an interest in wind farms when this inquiry was first established, but a few things appealed to me: firstly, I have a science background; secondly, it is because it is to do with sound, as I am a musician and so I am interested in sound; and, thirdly, I was a pilot and I have heard quite a bit of evidence from pilots.

The basic tenet of science and one of the founding principles of science is not that you have to prove that something is true; the onus is on science to prove that something is false. For people to say that science has not proven that there has been or that there is a link between wind turbines and health is not the issue at all. One could go back in history and find many examples of new research and ground-breaking scientists—going back as far as Copernicus, Galileo, Einstein and Newton—who came up with theories. In fact, there is a great story of Albert Einstein from when he came up with his theory of relativity. His colleagues said, 'It's not true. We have a letter here from 100 of your colleagues to say that it's not true.' He responded, 'Why did you bring 100? You only need one. You only needed one scientist to prove that my theory of relativity is not true.'

This report has been absolutely fascinating. The inquiry has gone across the land. This report tabled by its chair, Senator Madigan, records the committee's concerns with, in particular, the issue of infrasound. I had not heard much about infrasound. We all know about audible levels of sound and we know about dog whistles. I hear that term 'dog whistling', which is an inaudible sound at the very high frequency end of the sound spectrum and only dogs can hear it. That is why it is called a dog whistle. It turns out that there is sound at the other end of the sound spectrum. I do not know what particular animal you might summon with a whistle if one could be designed that emitted very, very low frequencies! It is this very low frequency area that has fascinated scientists and acousticians. Apparently, there is very strong evidence from dozens and dozens of people who testify that they have had serious health effects from this.

We have a very basic principle in our court system where a person stands in the dock or stands in the witness box and they give testimony. It is a basic principle that they can say, 'I saw this with my own eyes and this happened to me.' It is not hearsay. It is firsthand evidence. I am persuaded, as groups like the NHMRC are also persuaded, that more research is needed in this area. I have also seen a report from the early 1980s, going back 30 years, making a link between low frequency infrasound and health.

The committee believes that the recommendations in this report are crucial in putting in place regulatory structures and guidance that will set clear, consistent and robust parameters for future wind farm developments. Quite frankly, at the moment, it is a free for all. They are a law unto themselves. We heard evidence from local shire councils who are way out of their depth in attempting to regulate and enforce compliance with planning regulations. We heard from state governments, who also are struggling with having to enforce compliance on wind farms. For the federal government to adopt and establish regulatory structures to set clear, consistent and robust parameters can only be a good thing. These recommendations are intended for implementation federally, but they will direct and guide state and territory governments in their planning approval processes.