



26 March 2015

Senator Anne Urquhart  
Select Committee on Wind Turbines  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: [windturbines.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:windturbines.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Senator Urquhart,

### Select Committee Inquiry on Wind Turbines

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Select Committee Inquiry into the application of regulatory governance and economic impact of wind turbines.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) is the largest professional and industrial organisation in Australia for nurses and midwives, with Branches in each State and Territory of Australia. With a membership of over 240,000 nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing, the core business of the ANMF is the professional and industrial representation of our members and the professions of nursing and midwifery.

The ANMF is a member of the Climate and Health Alliance, which is also submitting to this Inquiry. We are supportive of the CAHA submission.

While the Inquiry terms of reference are primarily around governance and the economic impacts of wind turbines, we can only comment on these points broadly. The focus of our response will mostly be on point i, other related matters.

The ANMF is cognisant of the need to transition from coal to renewable energy sources, due to threats posed to the environment, public health and the economy by climate change. Wind farms are one of several renewable energy options which are available to the Australian community, and should be encouraged to expand.

The Australian wind turbine industry is still developing. Wind farms now provide 3.4% of Australia's total energy production, and in South Australia they provide a substantial portion - 26% of total electricity supply<sup>1</sup>.

However, some sectors of the community have expressed concern that wind farms cause negative health impacts. On this issue, the ANMF refers the Committee to the paper below, 'Health and energy choices: background briefing paper', particularly to pages 26-28.

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<sup>1</sup> Health and energy choices: background briefing paper. Climate and Health Alliance, 2014. P 26.

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Concern about health impacts of wind farms has become an impediment to their further development, with some jurisdictions introducing restrictive regulatory controls at a time when renewable energy projects should be largely supported by government, not hindered. The ANMF is aware of the very recent NHMRC review of wind farms and human health, and refers the Committee also to the '*NHMRC statement: evidence on wind farms and human health*' (reference below). The NHMRC review found no evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans.

This rigorous NHMRC review should provide assurance as to the safety of wind farms to federal and state/territory jurisdictions wary of further developments due to possible negative health impacts.

Wind farms are a legitimate and valuable part of the energy mix and should be supported and regulated sensibly by all levels of government. Regulatory constraints, in light of the NHMRC statement, need to be promptly reviewed. Wind farms, alongside the suite of other renewable energy sources now available, must ultimately make up a much larger portion of Australia's energy supply in the longer term.

In the broader context of looming environmental, economic and public health impacts from climate change, attributed to the continued burning of coal and oil, the relative risks of wind farms are negligible.

Please refer to the documents below in support of our submission. Thank you for considering our views on this important issue.

*Health and energy choices: background briefing paper*. Climate and Health Alliance, 2014. Available at:

<http://caha.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Health-Energy-Choices-Bkgd-Briefing-Paper-201411081.pdf>

*NHMRC statement: evidence on wind farms and human health*. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2015.

Available at:

[https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/eh57\\_nhmrc\\_statement\\_wind\\_farms\\_human\\_health\\_0.pdf](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/eh57_nhmrc_statement_wind_farms_human_health_0.pdf)

If you have any questions or require further information on this issue, please contact Julianne Bryce, Senior Federal Professional Officer, ANMF Federal Office, Melbourne on 03 96028500 or [julianne@anmf.org.au](mailto:julianne@anmf.org.au).

Yours sincerely



**Lee Thomas**  
Federal Secretary