

THE AUSTRALIAN

Canadian research boosts Cooper's case on turbines

GRAHAM LLOYD THE AUSTRALIAN FEBRUARY 24, 2015 12:00AM

ACOUSTICS expert Steven Cooper has expanded his legal action to include vocal wind farm advocate Simon Chapman, as independent research was produced to support the findings of high-level infrasound at Cape Bridgewater in Victoria.

The Australian yesterday reported Mr Cooper was considering legal action against the ABC's Media Watch and its portrayal of him and his research on the effect of the Pacific Hydro wind turbines on local residents.

Participants in the Cape Bridgewater study, which was designed and financed by wind farm company Pacific Hydro, are considering joining the legal action against Professor Chapman over published comments which questioned their integrity.

Professor Chapman, from the University of Sydney completed his PhD on "Cigarette Advertising as Myth; A Re-Evaluation of the Relationship of Advertising to Smoking".

He has argued that health complaints by some residents living near wind farms are the result of psychological concerns rather than physical impacts.

In an article published on The Conversation website and highlighted by Media Watch, Professor Chapman said the six residents involved in the study "rush to their diaries to report 'sensations' when they are cued by audible changes in the sound?".

"No chance of any collusion in such a study when these six would all know each other, and half actually lived together," he said.

"If this dog's breakfast of a study means anything, it provides support for the nocebo hypothesis; those with pre-existing anxiety and antipathy to the turbines, when cued by audible sound from those turbines, record 'sensations' on cue."

But Mr Cooper said the findings of the Cape Bridgewater study did not focus on audible noise and that the infrasound that was recorded was inaudible.

He said residents were able to record changes in "sensations" which matched changes in the wind turbine operations which were measured separately. For the majority of the observations of high sensation severity, there was no change in the noise.

The Cooper study results have been hailed as significant by some of the world's leading acoustic experts but not accepted as proving a cause and effect relationship by Pacific Hydro.

Mr Cooper has received further support for his work at Cape Bridgewater from computer scientists in Canada who have been working to record sub-audible noise or infrasound from wind turbines since 2013.

Richard Mann, at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, said scientists there had arrived at a similar

position to Mr Cooper despite working in a different way.

“Our results show that wind turbines emit a characteristic pulsation (change in barometric pressure) that repeats with every blade passage,” Professor Mann said.

“This is consistent with the infra sound ‘signature’ you have reported.”

The Waterloo University research did not consider health effects from wind turbine infrasound. But Professor Mann said: “I join the many scientists and experts worldwide requesting a thorough investigation of wind turbine noise.”

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