Submission to Senate Inquiry: Renewable Energy, Excessive Noise.

I support the proposed Renewable Energy (Electricity) Excessive Noise from Windfarms Bill 2012.

I have experienced noise from the Capital windfarm since 2009, which has been exacerbated and since the Woodlawn Wind farm began operating recently. I believe that those of us who live close to wind energy installations should be protected from the debilitating effects of this often continuous noise. There is no escape, when working outside the house or inside, awake or asleep, the noise is intrusive.

I live close to the Capital and Woodlawn Industrial Wind Turbines. Seventeen turbines to the north west of my home, fourteen to the south west and twenty to the east. The distance of the turbines from our house varies from 2km – about 5km.

As my husband is seriously ill and I care for him at home we have no alternative but to be here. We cannot travel far from home and even to stay somewhere overnight is a major undertaking.

The Capital turbines began operating in 2009, immediately I was astonished by the level of noise emanating from them, often ranging from the intensity of a truck about to enter the house to an aircraft flying low over head. The noise varies according to the wind speed at the turbines and the direction of the wind. Often there is a whoomp, similar to an amplified bass drum. At times although the noise is less it is relentless, unchanging in intensity, a continuous presence which I find debilitating. Still days when the turbines are not operating are bliss.

Frequently my sleep is disturbed by the noise; I am often startled awake three or four times a night and unable to return to sleep for some time. I suffer from tiredness, headaches, increased ear pressure and earache since the turbines began operating.

Initial complaints to the operator of the windfarm resulted in noise monitoring being undertaken by the company, the device being placed about 50 metres from my house. This was in place for several weeks. However, since it was removed and after repeated requests to discuss the data, we are still waiting for information gathered at that time in 2009. Complaints to the NSW Department of Planning and also the local Council have also not resulted in any action to either monitor the noise or provide any advice or help in dealing with the issue.

I have found interaction with windfarm personnel difficult; phone calls are not returned; complaints have been brushed off or completely ignored.

Legislative change might help to ensure that turbines are sited away from homes and rural work places.

Ruth Corrigan