Targeted Call for Research into Wind Farms and Human Health now open

The National Health and Medical Research Council has today opened a Targeted Call for Research (TCR) into Wind Farms and Human Health.

The TCR will support research that addresses one or both of the following issues:

- The relationship between wind farm noise and health effects.
- The broader social and environmental circumstances that influence annoyance, sleep disturbance, quality of life and health effects that are reported by residents living in proximity to wind farms.

The call for research follows the recent release of the NHMRC Statement: Evidence on Wind Farms and Human Health and accompanying Information Paper, which were based on the findings of an independent review of over 4000 papers.

The Information Paper concluded that the body of direct evidence was small and of poor quality: “Internationally, there is little research evidence regarding the health effects of wind farms. Over 4000 papers were identified in the reviews and, of these papers, only 13 studies were found that considered possible relationships between wind farm emissions and health outcomes. Only one of these studies was conducted in Australia.”

The expert group which oversaw this work, the Wind Farms and Human Health Reference Group, identified areas for further research based on evidence gaps identified in the review.

In the Information Paper, the Reference Group recommended that, “Further evidence is needed to explore the relationships between noise at varying distances from wind farms and effects such as annoyance, sleep and quality of life. Research is also required to investigate the broader social and environmental circumstances that may influence the reporting of health effects in people living near wind farms.”

The TCR’s two research issues are based on those recommendations.

CEO Professor Warwick Anderson said it was important to note that the funding would only be used to support high quality, well designed research proposals.
“NHMRC supports only the most outstanding research and each proposal for this TCR will undergo the same rigorous peer review process we apply for all NHMRC grants,” Professor Anderson said.

“In opening this call for research, NHMRC has accepted the recommendations of our expert group contained in the Information Paper. To adequately address this issue we need well designed studies conducted by Australia’s best researchers,” he said.

Up to $2.5 million is available over five years to support the best submissions, drawing from funds set aside for targeted calls for research, dependent on NHMRC receiving high quality applications.

Researchers must submit their proposals through an approved Administering Institution by 6 May. Further information is available on the NHMRC website.

CONTACT: NHMRC Media Team

M: 0422 008 512
E: media@nhmrc.gov.au