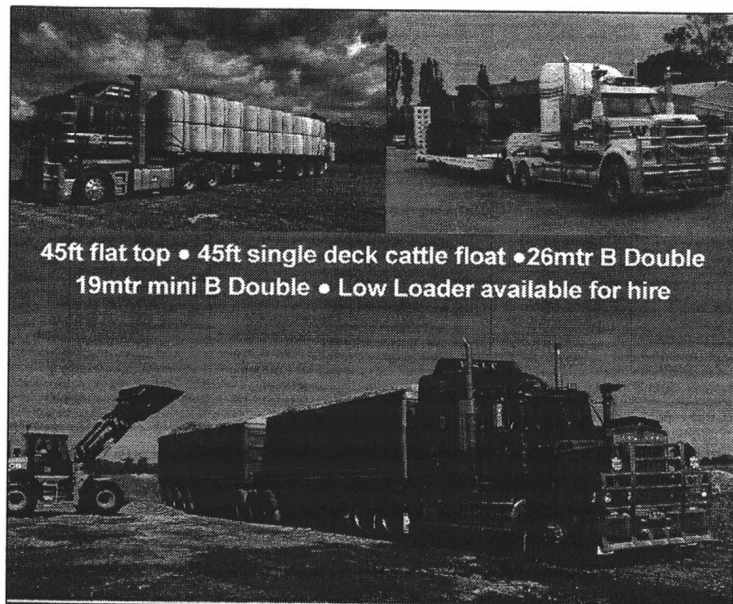


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letters to the editor



INFRASOUND – the noise you cannot hear

I'm a Sydney resident who regularly holidays in the beautiful New England and who is closely following the "wind turbines for Walcha" debate.

I'm deeply concerned for the people, livestock and fauna in and around the Walcha area to learn turbine proponents claim that turbine generated infrasound (below 20 Hertz and therefore inaudible yet still being felt by heart muscle fibres and other sensitive tissues) either doesn't exist or is a made up story by Luddite knuckle draggers that, for no good reason, oppose renewables.

Infrasound and the emotional, mental and physical stress it can inflict on the hearts and minds of all sentient beings is a well-documented scientific fact, one that was taught to me as a student in Naturopath College in the early 1970s. It's no Johnny come lately narrative dreamed up for the purpose of deceiving and misleading - it's the anti-infrasound brigade who are doing that.

In one of our college text books, Psycho-Dietetics, a treatise on the effect of good nutrition and lack of it on the brain, mind, moods and emotions, Author Dr Emmanuel Cheraskin MD of the University of Alabama, Birmingham, USA was so concerned about the deleterious mental health effects wrought by infrasound he devoted a whole chapter of his book to it.

Fortunately for us, vitamin company Blackmores sponsored Dr Cheraskin on a lecture tour of Australia in 1976. Dr Cheraskin explained to us how insurance company records and school attendance records clearly showed that in Chicago, on high infrasound days, motor vehicle accidents and school absenteeism were abnormally high. This, not surprisingly, struck a chord with an audience fully aware of Sydney as an uptight, truculent, truant town with a road rage problem. Not something you would wish on relaxed and working Walcha but which could happen given that the recent German research records infrasound travelling over a 20 kilometre radius. Scary stuff.

Dr Cheraskin went on to recall cases of infrasound from improperly fitted air-conditioning units bringing discord, low morale and high absenteeism to once harmonious, productive office environments, and how high infrasound levels around NASA launching pads significantly impaired the Astronauts ability to do mathematical calculations or translate verbal instructions accurately.

In a documentary (2018) by the science programme "planet e" - Infrasound, the experiment conducted by a medical team in Mainz University Medical Centre, Germany, led by researcher Professor Christian-Friedrich Vahl is most revealing. Under laboratory conditions Professor Vahl's team conducted a double blind control study of the effects of infrasound on individual heart muscle fibres. The excised experimental muscle fibres exposed to infrasound became up to 20% weaker whereas the non-infrasound exposed control fibres showed no decline in strength. This is significant. The stronger the heart the more blood it can pump uphill, against gravity, to the brain. The more the brain is suffused with blood, oxygen and nutrients the stronger, more functional and resistant to stress it is. It therefore stands to reason that the anxiety, insomnia, depression, dysperception and mood swings suffered by wind turbine refugees may, in part, be attributed to infrasound weakened heart muscles.

It seems reasonable to expect the heart muscle of livestock and fauna to also weaken by up to 20% in response to the stress of infrasound in the same way as human heart muscle, especially from the large 6MW wind turbines that spread their sound over a 20 kilometre radius which I understand are proposed for the Walcha area.

If for nothing else, for health sake I would urge all residents in the New England to stand against the wind turbine projects in and around the Walcha area before it's too late.

Phillip Alexander