

The Senate

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Committee of Privileges

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Persons referred to in the Senate

Professor Simon Chapman AO

169th Report

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# Report

1.1 On 8 December 2017, the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Scott Ryan, received a submission from Professor Simon Chapman AO seeking redress under the resolution of the Senate of 25 February 1988 relating to the protection of persons referred to in the Senate (Privilege Resolution 5).

1.2 The submission referred to comments made about him in the Senate by Senator Leyonhjelm on 5 December 2017. The President accepted the submission and referred it to the Committee of Privileges.

1.3 The committee met and, pursuant to paragraph (3) of Privilege Resolution 5, decided to consider the submission. The terms of the response, which the committee now recommends for incorporation in *Hansard*, have been agreed to by Professor Chapman and the committee in accordance with Resolution 5(7)(b).

1.4 The committee draws attention to paragraph 5(6) of the resolution which requires that, in considering a submission under this resolution and reporting to the Senate, the committee shall not consider or judge the truth of any statements made in the Senate or in the submission.

1.5 The committee **recommends:**

That a response prepared by Professor Simon Chapman AO in the terms specified at Appendix 1, be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins

**Chair**



# Appendix 1

## Professor Simon Chapman AO

Pursuant to Resolution 5(7)(b) of the Senate of 25 February 1988

Reply to speech by Senator Leyonhjelm

(5 December 2017)

On the night of December 5, 2017 Senator Leyonhjelm made comments about me in the Senate. He referred to two matters (1) comments made about oral evidence given by me to the current House of Representatives enquiry into e-cigarettes and (2) comments about my recently published book, co-authored with Dr Fiona Crichton, *Wind Turbine Syndrome: a communicated disease* (Sydney University Press, 2017).

I now seek to exercise my rights as a person adversely named in the Senate to have this response incorporated in the parliamentary record.

### My qualifications

Senate Leyonhjelm states that I am not qualified to provide expert advice on health matters, and specifically names wind farms and health and gun control.

“Chapman’s qualifications are an undergraduate degree in sociology and a PhD in social medicine, specifically related to the semiotics of cigarette advertising. If you need to know the meaning behind an ad for Marlboro, Dr Chapman might just be the man for you — or at least he can claim to know a bit about the subject — but, if you need professional advice on health matters or, indeed, anything of a scientific or technical nature, you’d be best to steer well clear of him.”

My full CV can be found here:

<http://api.profiles.sydney.edu.au/AcademicProfiles/profile/resource?urlid=simon.chapman&type=cv>

Senator Leyonhjelm’s assessment of my expertise would appear to be very different to the following agencies:

- World Health Organisation: awarded me the World No Tobacco Day Medal for tobacco control, 1997.
- National Heart Foundation: awarded me President’s Gold Medal, 1999.
- American Cancer Society: awarded me [Luther Terry Medal for Outstanding Individual Leadership](#). 13<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Tobacco or Health, August 2003 (international peer voted)
- National Health & Medical Research Council: my research selected as one of Australia’s “10 best” in [2005](#) and [2010](#) (as part of team led by Prof Melanie Wakefield)
- Thoracic Society of Australia: awarded me [President’s Award](#) 2006

- NSW Premier's Award: [Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year](#), 22 May 2008
- Academy of Social Sciences of Australia (FASSA) Elected [Fellow](#) 2008
- Public Health Association of Australia awarded me Sidney Sax Medal [2008](#):
- Faculty of Medicine, University of Sydney Distinguished Professorial Achievement Award, November 2012
- Royal College of Physicians of the United Kingdom Elected Honorary Fellow, Faculty of Public Health, March 2013
- [Officer in the Order of Australia](#) (AO) Queen's Birthday Jun 10, 2013 "for distinguished service to medical research as an academic and author, particularly in the area of public health policy, and to the community."
- Australian Skeptics Inc awarded me [Australian Skeptic of the Year](#) Nov 23 2013

### **Expertise on wind farms and health**

In recent years, I have been invited to review scientific manuscripts on this area for seven specialised international research journals (*Noise and Health*; *the International Journal of Acoustics and Vibration*; *Journal of Low Frequency Noise, Vibration and Active Control*; *Environmental Research*; *Environmental Pollution*; *the Journal of Psychosomatic Research*; and *Energy Policy*). The National Health and Medical Research Council appointed me as an expert reviewer of their 2010 rapid review of the evidence on wind farms. The Australian Acoustical Society, the Australasian College of Toxicology and Risk Assessment and the Clean Air Society of Australia and New Zealand, all asked me to give plenary session talks to their scientific meetings of acousticians and environmental health specialists in recent years.

### **Expertise on gun control**

I have published two papers on gun control, reviewing the impact of Australia's gun laws on the incidence mass shootings and over all firearm deaths. Both of these papers have had huge impact.

1. Chapman S, Alpers P, Agho K, Jones M. Australia's 1996 gun law reforms: faster falls in firearm deaths, firearm suicides, and a decade without mass shootings. [Injury Prevention](#) 2006;12: 365-72 doi:10.1136/ip2006.013714. See [rapid responses](#). [Citations:176) [[Viewed](#) 174,150 times by Nov 30, 2017] [[Altmetric](#)=2,319 #1 of 1,223 papers published in Injury Prevention] [Republished](#) in 2015 as one of 6 most influential papers published in Injury Prevention in their first 20 years. [[Viewed](#) 5,224 times by Nov 30, 2017; Total views: 179,374 by Nov 30, 2017 Altmetric=10]
2. *Chapman S, Alpers P, Jones M. Association between gun law reforms and intentional firearm deaths in Australia, 1979-2013* [JAMA](#); 2006 published online 22 Jun 2016. [[145,392 views by Dec 6, 2017](#)] [[Citations:6](#)] [[Altmetric](#)=1,998. #13 out of 20,877 JAMA papers scored by Altmetric. + Named by [New Yorker](#)



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*as one of 5 most notable medical research reports of 2016* [Editorial](#) + [Washington Post](#) + [New York Magazine](#)

### **Senator Leyonhjelm's comments about my evidence on e-cigarettes.**

Senator Leyonhjelm correctly noted that Public Health England had made a supplementary submission to the House of Representatives Committee, following my oral evidence. I have submitted a detailed response to Public Health England's claims which has been published on the Committee's website since Senator Leyonhjelm made his remarks. See <https://t.co/XNRNBSsXxF>

### **Comments made by Senator Leyonhjelm in relation to my expertise about wind farms and health**

**Senator Leyonhjelm:** "He [Chapman] said that the majority of Australia's wind turbines have never received a single complaint. The evidence didn't indicate that, but it's not relevant."

**Response:** I have published the only study of the history and distribution of complaints about wind farms in Australia, in the international peer-reviewed journal PLoS One. The abstract of this paper states:

"33/51 (64.7%) of Australian wind farms including 18/34 (52.9%) with turbine size >1MW have never been subject to noise or health complaints."

This paper was published in October 2013 and has to date been accessed 10,661 times. Not a single letter of correspondence or correction has been published in response to my data. I am aware of no other published data which contradict it.

**Senator Leyonhjelm:** "He claimed that complaints of adverse health effects from wind farms tend to be limited to anglophone nations — quite false, which the evidence confirmed. There were others."

**Response:** The Senate committee's (majority) report declared that it had received submissions about non-English speaking nations that 'contradicted' my point about Anglophone nations dominating complaints. In my book, I examine each of the submissions cited in the Senate report which are said to contradict my statement and conclude The relevant section of my book commences at page 70 here <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/17600>

### **Inaccuracies in Senator Leyonhjelm's statement**

Neither Becky Freeman nor Maurice Swanson are professors. Senator Leyonhjelm could have easily learned that had he checked and not relied on a report in the Australian newspaper.

**Senator Leyonhjelm:** "[Chapman] can be found soaking up hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayers' funds to conduct research that always seems tailored to suit his ideological agenda"

I retired from the University of Sydney at the end of February 2016 and no longer have any publicly funded research funds. The complete record of my competitively publicly funded research is found in my CV, linked earlier.