

Why will keeping a journal help me?

Information recorded in your journal has a few important uses for yourself and others.

- **Yourself** – residents have also reported that keeping a journal can be very helpful for themselves, especially in the early days when they are not sure if their symptoms are related to noise exposure or not
- **Your local health practitioners** – you can use it to demonstrate a correlation between symptoms and noise exposure if there is one. If you are sleep deprived, your memory can be affected, which makes it all the more important that symptoms and problems are documented accurately.
- **Acousticians** – who can use it to investigate if any of the acoustic measurements are directly correlating with the times when you are experiencing and reporting symptoms characteristic of noise exposure. A useful example is the detailed instructions which Steven Cooper gave to the residents at Cape Bridgewater in the recent acoustic survey commissioned by Pacific Hydro at their Cape Bridgewater Wind Development, to investigate longstanding complaints of sleep disturbance and other adverse health effects from some local residents. The instructions and one of the resident's handwritten templates can be downloaded at the end of this webpage.
- **Lawyers** – accurate and thorough documentation of symptoms with or without acoustic exposures may prove of assistance if there is subsequent litigation. It is very important to document what happens when you are not noise exposed, as well as when you are, so the comparison can be clearly seen.

How do I keep a journal?

What to record in:

You can record your journal in two ways:

- **Exercise book** – find an exercise book or something similar. Whatever it is, make sure you use this book only for recording your health data. That way everything is in the one place and it won't be confused with other information.
- **Computer spreadsheet** – use a program like Microsoft Excel (or similar) and record your symptoms electronically. If you use this

method, we recommend printing the spreadsheet or backing up the file every so often.

- Keep individual family members records separate, as everyone will be affected differently.

What to record:

- Date
- Time
- Blood pressure (if relevant)
- Heart rate (if relevant)
- Detailed description of symptoms. This could include:
 - what the symptoms feels like
 - what you are doing at the time the symptoms occur
 - how long the symptoms last, and
 - anything else you think is relevant
- Weather conditions (eg low cloud, cold frosty night, warm sunny day, wind less day, rain etc)
- Wind direction
- Estimated wind speed where you are located on the ground. For example: no wind, light breeze, strong or gale

When to record:

Very importantly, **it is best to do record your symptoms at the time you are experiencing them.**

Assessment of Sleep:

Visual (Linear) analogue are a simple easy way to visually record what the sleep over the preceding night was like. Information about methods of assessing fatigue [is available from Dr Millar's presentation.](#)

Recurrent assessment of sleep in this fashion can form part of a sleep diary, which is useful for residents and their health practitioners to view in order to better understand and quantify the severity of the sleep impact.

What does a Personal Health Journal Look Like?

[Download a Personal Health Journal template →](#)