

Strategic Relations and Communication

Email: HNELHD-SRC@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au

Our Ref: M16/7079 MDR/aw



Health

Hunter New England
Local Health District

16 January 2016

Ms Catherine Turner

Via email

cturner@exemail.com.au

Dear Ms Turner

Thank you for your recent email to the Hon Pru Goward MP, Minister for Mental Health, raising your concerns about the V8 Supercar Series race taking place in Newcastle in November 2017.

As your email included some questions on the potential health effects for residents living in proximity to this event, Minister Goward requested that Hunter New England Local Health District to investigate these health-related concerns.

I have asked the Environmental Health team in Hunter New England Population Health to look into the noise issues associated with events like the V8 Supercar Series, and they have provided the following information for your consideration.

Some common activities and associated noise levels are:

- 60 decibels: Conversational speech
- 70 decibels: Shower or dishwasher
- 80 decibels: Alarm Clock
- 90 decibels: A lawn mower
- 110 decibels: A rock concert
- 140 decibels: A jet engine at take off

The noise at a V8 Supercar event can range from 90 to 140 decibels. This noise level has potential hearing health impacts for drivers, pit crew, marshals and volunteers as they are exposed to noise in much the same manner as a 'noisy workplace'. I expect that these participants and staff would take precautionary measures according to workplace health and safety guidelines associated with this type of work.

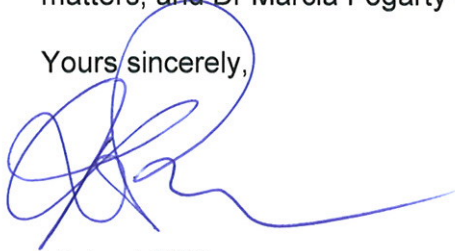
Advice from the Environment Health Team is that it is unlikely that the noise of V8 Supercars racing on a track will cause hearing damage to the casual observers or spectators who attend the event. I am advised that this is because the noise level diminishes as one is located further away from the race cars.

Some residents living in close proximity to the proposed race circuit in Newcastle may find the noise to be an annoyance. I am advised that fortunately research shows the noise levels likely to be experienced by residents during the race do not pose any health dangers.

In preparing a response to your questions, I also sought advice from Dr Marcia Fogarty, Executive Director, Mental Health Services, to determine any risks to resident mental health associated with the event. Her advice is that there does not seem to be any documented evidence of adverse mental health effects from living in close proximity to street car race circuits.

Thank you again for raising your concerns relating to this event. If you wish to discuss the issues further, please contact Mr Philippe Porigneaux, Environmental Health Manager Hunter New England Population Health on 4924 6494 for environmental noise and health matters, and Dr Marcia Fogarty on 4033 5169 for mental health concerns.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Michael DiRienzo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael DiRienzo
Chief Executive
Hunter New England Local Health District