

Planning guideline

State code 23: Wind farm development

February 2025

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the guideline

Wind farm development has the potential for adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the natural environment. Wind farm development will be considered appropriate where unacceptable adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the environment do not arise from wind farm development.

The purpose of this guideline is to assist applicants in preparing development applications for new wind farms or changes to existing approvals. The guideline will assist applicants in preparing 'decision ready' applications responding to the purpose and performance outcomes of State code 23: Wind farm development of the State Development Assessment Provisions (SDAP). It also includes detailed methodologies for the following technical assessments:

- ecological assessment report
- bird and bat methodologies in an ecological assessment report
- noise impact assessment and noise monitoring
- electromagnetic interference impact assessment
- shadow flicker assessment.

This guideline is periodically reviewed as experience is acquired through construction of projects and updated information and technology around wind farms emerges.

This guideline is advice that only applies to a development application for a material change of use for wind farm development, applied for under the *Planning Act 2016* (the Planning Act).

This version of the guideline provides clarity for applicants around reports and supporting documents that should be lodged with the application as distinct to methodologies that should be used in preparing reports and strategies that would be conditioned with a development permit.

Following this guideline will assist applicants to develop project layouts, supporting technical reports, plans and strategies to enable assessments to be undertaken efficiently. Use of this guideline by applicants will not guarantee a favorable assessment outcome. SARA will seek its own advice when undertaking its assessment of an application and supporting material in order to reach an assessment manager decision.

The guideline will assist applicants in preparing applications responding to the purpose and performance outcomes of State code 23: Wind farm development of the SDAP only. Wind farm development is subject to impact assessment which is an assessment carried out against and having regard to broader matters beyond the SDAP provisions.

1.2 Wind farm definition

The Planning Regulation 2017 (the Planning Regulation) defines a wind farm as follows:

Wind farm

- a) *means the use of premises for generating electricity by wind force, other than electricity that is to be used mainly on the premises for a domestic or rural use; and*
- b) *includes the use of premises for any of the following, if the use relates, or is ancillary, to the use stated in paragraph (a)—*
 - (i) *a wind turbine, wind monitoring tower or*

- (ii) *anemometer;*
- (iii) *a building or structure, including, for example, a site office or temporary workers' accommodation;*
- (iv) *a storage area or maintenance facility, including, for example, a lay down area;*
- (v) *infrastructure or works, including, for example, site access, foundations, electrical works, substations or landscaping.*

A wind turbine means a machine or generator that uses wind force to generate electricity and includes the blades of the machine or generator.

1.3 SARA assessment

The Planning Regulation identifies that:

- the Chief Executive (through SARA) is the assessment manager for development applications relating to a material change of use for a wind farm where there is no other assessable development, or if there is other assessable development for which the Chief Executive is also the assessment manager);
- development applications relating to a material change of use for a wind farm are subject to impact assessment.

A development application relating to a material change of use for a wind farm is required to be assessed against State code 23: Wind farm development of SDAP. The wind farm development may also trigger assessment against other state codes within SDAP, for example State code 16: Native vegetation clearing.

1.4 Other approvals

There may be additional statutory requirements under the Planning Act, the Planning Regulation and other applicable legislation. Subsequent development applications (for example, operational works or building works applications) may also be required by a local government, SARA, a port authority or another entity as prescribed under the Planning Regulation.

Further approvals or permits may also be required from a range of entities including local authorities, the Commonwealth Government, the state-owned network service provider and air services stakeholders.

Although some of these other approvals are identified throughout this guideline, they should not be taken to be the full extent of other approvals that may be required for a specific proposal. The onus rests with applicants/proponents to determine and seek all relevant approvals prior to commencing construction of a project.

2.0 Pre-lodgement

It is highly recommended applicants seek pre-lodgement advice from SARA prior to lodging a development application.

Pre-lodgement advice can assist applicants in determining appropriate SARA triggers, understanding the requirements of the relevant SDAP codes and ascertaining SARA's preliminary views on the acceptability of site layouts. Advice on technical assessments, reports and methodologies to be used will also be provided as part of pre-lodgement advice.

Before requesting pre-lodgement advice from SARA, it is strongly recommended that the applicant consults with the following stakeholders on proposed project layouts:

- the state-owned network service provider (Energy Queensland) and the transmission provider (Powerlink Queensland). This is to ensure that the wind farm can ultimately be appropriately connected to the existing electricity grid. Refer to the [Australian Energy Market Commission's \(2014\) National Electricity Rules Chapter 5: Network Connection, Planning and Expansion](#) for further details. Consultation is also necessary to achieve safe setbacks from electricity lines to ensure security of strategic transmission corridors. Refer to the Energy Networks Australia (ENA) Guideline for Wind Turbines Proximity to Electricity Transmission Lines (ENA DOC 047-2022) for further details
- air services stakeholders (including Airservices Australia, Department of Defence, and all nearby air services aerodrome operators). This will ensure that risks to air services associated with the proposed wind farm are appropriately considered. The consultation should also include the relevant local government if they are responsible for operating any regional airports or aerodromes
- consultation with air services stakeholders should also consider possible electromagnetic interference impacts on existing radar, radio and telecommunication infrastructure. If the site is located within one kilometre of any telecommunications site, consultation with the infrastructure owner should also be undertaken to discuss any near-field effects on transmitting or receiving antennas
- the relevant local government/s to ascertain views in relation to impacts of construction haulage on local roads, impacts of construction workforce accommodation and the council's views on suitability of accommodating workers in existing townships, construction supply chain capacity issues, and broader social and economic impacts that the project may cause on local communities. Councils can also advise on additional approvals (e.g. operational works, building works, reconfiguration of a lot, road access/driveway permits etc.) that might be required for the project and ancillary uses
- the local community to help build social licence and community acceptance of the project. The Clean Energy Council's [Community Engagement Guidelines for the Australian Wind Industry](#) provides detailed guidance on conducting community engagement activities. One of the four local benefits principles underpinning Queensland Renewable Energy Zone development is 'genuine and ongoing engagement' and is a useful tool to help guide meaningful consultation with the community. Community stakeholders have become increasingly critical of the fact that most wind farms are code assessable and therefore proponents have no statutory requirement to consult. Proponents are strongly encouraged to proactively engage with local communities prior to lodging a SARA application as well as during the assessment of an application
- Department of Energy and Climate to discuss alignment of the proposed wind farm with Queensland's energy policy objectives and longer-term infrastructure planning activities
- Department of Resources, Land and Surveying Services to confirm the land tenure status. Under Section 199A of the *Land Act 1994*, a lease may only be used for its designated purpose. If a host lot is under a lease arrangement the wind farm use may not be consistent with the purpose of the lease for the lot and will need to be amended. Department of Resources will also advise if the project requires a S22A Relevant Purpose determination to lodge a material change of use application to SARA

- Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) to discuss impacts of development traffic on state transport infrastructure (road and rail), mitigation requirements and any separate approvals required directly from DTMR (for example constructing upgrades or placing third-party electricity infrastructure in state-controlled roads). This will ensure the information submitted with the application for MCU approval and obtaining further approvals (outside of the MCU approval process) does not delay construction of the development
- relevant railway managers to discuss approval requirements for taking oversize/overmass (OSOM) load over railway corridors or interfering with railway corridors
- the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator regarding approvals for OSOM movements
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), Sustainable Development Unit (Bushfire Resilient Communities) for advice on the requirements of a detailed bushfire management plan and safety and emergency management plan. This is to ensure bushfire prone areas are identified and that hazard analysis and risk to people and essential community infrastructure is assessed to achieve reduced exposure to natural hazards. QFES can advise on setbacks and asset protection zones, location and layout of wind farm development footprints, including associated infrastructure such as workers accommodation, high voltage lines, battery energy storage facilities, substations and switchyards. The consultation should also include QFES Regional Offices, Local Disaster Management Groups and any local community bushfire advisory groups for impact risk analysis and planning, emergency response, and bushfire mitigation.
- if the applicant considers that the vegetation categories or Regional Ecosystems are mapped incorrectly, it is recommended an application be made to amend the mapping prior to submitting a development application. Mapping can be amended through applying for a detailed Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV). Further information on how to apply for a PMAV is available online at <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/management/vegetation/maps/map-correction>

3.0 Supporting application material

This part of the planning guideline provides information on the typical reporting requirements for wind farm developments. The table below identifies the type of reports that are required to be submitted when lodging an application for a wind farm and the reports that are likely to be conditioned as part of a development permit for a wind farm.

The reports listed in the first column of the table is the minimum required to respond to the code. An information request is likely to be issued if an application does not include these reports. There may be circumstances where additional reports are required during the assessment. Further details regarding the content of these reports are included in Section 4 of the guideline.

Reports required at lodgement	Reports that will likely be conditioned
Protected wildlife and associated habitats and areas of high ecological value	
Ecological Assessment Report (PO1)	Vegetation and Fauna Management Plan (PO2)
Preliminary Rehabilitation Plan (PO4)	Rehabilitation Management Plan (PO4, PO6 & PO9)
	Cleared Vegetation Management Plan (PO2)
	Bird and Bat Management Plan (PO3)
	Bird Utilisation Survey Report (PO3)
Agricultural land	
Agricultural Land Assessment (PO5)	
Natural drainage patterns	
Site Plan identifying the extent of clearing proposed within any mapped or unmapped waterways (PO6)	Stormwater Management Plan (PO6 & PO9)
Protecting water quality and erosion control	
Erosion Risk Assessment (PO7)	Erosion and Sediment Control Plan – Construction (PO6 – PO9)
	Site Stabilisation Plan – Operations (PO6 & PO9)
Natural hazards	
Natural Hazard Risk Assessment Report (PO10 & PO11)	Bushfire Management Plans (PO10 & PO11)
	Safety and Emergency Management Plans (PO10 & PO11)
Acoustic amenity	
Noise Impact Assessment (PO12 & PO13)	Updated Noise Impact Assessment (PO12 & PO13)

Reports required at lodgement	Reports that will likely be conditioned
	Noise Monitoring Plan (PO12 & PO13)
	Operational Noise Strategy (PO12 & PO13)
Electromagnetic Interference	
Preliminary Electromagnetic Interference Assessment Report (PO14)	Final Electromagnetic Interference Assessment Report (PO14)
	Pre and post-construction assessment of the television and radio reception strength (PO14)
Shadow flicker	
Shadow Flicker Assessment Report (PO15)	
Workforce accommodation impacts	
Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report (PO16 and PO17)	
Areas identified by state or local government planning instruments as having high scenic amenity	
Visual Impact Assessment Report (If the relevant state or local government planning scheme has identified the site in an area of high scenic amenity) (PO18)	
Transport networks	
Heavy Vehicle and OSOM Construction Concept Strategy (PO21)	Traffic Impact Assessment (PO19 – PO22)
	Traffic Management Plan (PO19 – PO22)
Infrastructure	
Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report (PO23)	
Aviation safety, integrity and efficiency	
Aviation Impact Statement Report (PO24 & PO25)	Final Aviation Impact Assessment (PO24 & PO25)
	Wind Monitoring Tower Management Plan/Meteorology Masts Marking Plan (PO24 & PO25)
Community impact	
Community Engagement Report (PO26)	Complaint Investigation and Response Plan (PO26)
Decommissioning	

Reports required at lodgement	Reports that will likely be conditioned
Decommissioning Security Report (PO30)	End of Construction Decommissioning Management Plan (PO27 – PO29)
	End of Operation Decommissioning Management Plan (PO27 – PO29)
Other	
	Construction Environmental Management Plan

4.0 SDAP Assessment

This part of the guideline provides further details on the information that is required to support compliance with the purpose and performance outcomes of State code 23: Wind farm development.

Advice contained in this part of the guideline is the minimum required to respond to the code. Applicants are encouraged to provide additional material in support of aspects of a project that may be contentious, particularly challenging or pose significant risks to state interests.

4.1 Meeting the purpose of the code

Wind farm development has the potential for adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the natural environment. Wind farm development will be considered appropriate where unacceptable adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the environment do not arise from wind farm development.

The purpose of the code:

1. is to set out the minimum parameters of assessment necessary to demonstrate that a wind farm development can satisfactorily mitigate any unacceptable adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the environment; and
2. is to ensure that the impacts arising from the design, siting (including proximity to sensitive land uses), construction, operation and decommissioning of wind farms do not result in unacceptable adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the environment; and
3. is to ensure the assessment of wind farm developments must be informed by community and local government engagement.

The assessment benchmarks for the code comprise:

- a purpose statement which identifies the overall intent of the code
- performance outcomes which set assessment benchmarks which must be complied with to achieve the purpose statement of the code.

The code includes a purpose statement and performance outcomes. Despite any other provision of SDAP, compliance with the code will only be achieved where both the performance outcomes and purpose statement are complied with in full. Where the performance outcomes are not complied with, then compliance with the code cannot be achieved. Similarly, if the purpose statement is not complied with, then compliance with the code cannot be achieved. To clarify, compliance with the performance outcomes alone will not achieve compliance with the Purpose Statement.

4.2 Meeting performance outcomes: Protected wildlife and associated habitats and areas of high ecological value

Context

The construction of wind farms necessitates the clearing and civil works construction of significant access tracks, turbine pads, laydown areas and ancillary infrastructure. Medium to large sized wind farms can involve extensive clearing and earthworks due to the spacing required between turbines. Wind farms must be designed and sited to achieve compatibility, not conflict, with habitats of protected wildlife and areas of high ecological value.

Applicants are required to consider impacts on surrounding areas, not just the immediate land subject of the application. Wind farm construction and operations can have impacts beyond the project's boundaries. Waterways that could be impacted by construction or potentially affected by erosion and run off can extend well beyond project boundaries into adjacent sensitive areas. Likewise, impacts on the connectivity of habitats and movement patterns of flora and fauna needs to be cognisant of the ecological characteristics extend beyond the project's boundaries. These, and other aspects are important considerations particularly when a project is in proximity to National or State Parks, World Heritage Areas (including the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef) and the like.

To minimise ecological impacts, approval conditions will require areas cleared to facilitate the construction of a wind farm to be rehabilitated to the maximum extent practicable. This rehabilitation should be undertaken progressively as stages of a project are completed. The first phase of post-construction rehabilitation should all be in place within a short period of time after full operations commence.

To minimise impacts on bird and bat movements, turbine layouts need to respond to migratory routes of certain bird species. Wind farm operators will also be required to prepare Bird and Bat Management Plans aimed at minimising adverse impacts during the operational life of a project. These plans will include obligations to monitor and record any bird and bat mortality or injuries associated with operations.

Supporting action – PO1

During assessment

An **Ecological Assessment Report (EAR)** should be lodged with an application to demonstrate how the project complies with PO1 and PO2. This is a particularly important report that should be prepared comprehensively, by competent professionals of suitable expertise and has regard to the methodology outlined in **Appendix 1 – Ecological Assessment Report (EAR) methodology**.

An **EAR** is the principal report that will be reviewed by SARA to determine whether compliance with PO1 is achieved. Failure to prepare and lodge a comprehensive **EAR** with an application will result in Information Requests and/or Advice Notices being issued by SARA after lodgement.

An **EAR** should identify the nature and characteristics of all on-site flora and fauna. This information should then be correlated with the proposed project layout to identify and assess resultant risks to flora, fauna and associated habitats. The **EAR** should then outline how the project layout has been modified to, from the proponent's perspective, achieve compliance with PO1. This analysis and outline of how the project has been correspondingly modified is an important demonstration of how proposed disturbance has "*avoided*" unacceptable impacts on the habitats specified in PO1.

The rest of the **EAR** should then demonstrate how the proposed project layout aims to minimise and mitigate impacts on the habitats specified in PO1. As outlined on page 11 (Context of 4.2), it is also important that the **EAR** acknowledges and responds to the ecological values of areas outside of but proximate to the project site. This is particularly important if a project is proximate to National or State Parks/Forests and World Heritage listed areas (including the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef) and the like.

It is strongly recommended that applicants prepare an **EAR** having regard to **Appendix 1 – Ecological Assessment Report (EAR) methodology**.

Other approvals (associated with PO1)

Where clearing of vegetation is unavoidable and has been approved by SARA, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all relevant approvals and permits are obtained, including under the *Planning Act 2016*, the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*, the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Supporting action – PO2

During assessment

The **EAR** lodged to demonstrate compliance with PO1 is also the key report that will demonstrate compliance with PO2 during assessment.

Conditions of approval

If, during the assessment, SARA is of the view that an application has complied with PO1 (effectively ‘avoiding’ sensitive areas to an acceptable level), compliance with PO2 will be achieved through conditions of approval. These conditions will require the preparation of several detailed plans prior to commencing construction. These plans will include:

- a **Vegetation and Fauna Management Plan (VFMP)**. A **VFMP** addresses all aspects of the clearing of vegetation to ensure that impacts on flora and fauna are minimised and mitigated. A **VFMP** may be required to be prepared in accordance with relevant sections of an **EAR** that was submitted for assessment.
- a **Cleared Vegetation Management Plan (CVMP)** outlining how all felled vegetation is proposed to be stacked, stored, reused, mulched and/or removed off site. The **CVMP** will also include strategies to manage bushfire risks associated with the clearing and management of vegetation.

Supporting action – PO3

Conditions of approval

Where SARA is of the view that turbine layouts do not pose an unacceptable risk to bird and bat movements, achieving compliance with PO3 will be realised through conditions of approval requiring the preparation of a **Bird and Bat Management Plan (BBMP)** prior to commencement of operations.

A **BBMP** needs to:

- be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist
- be based on ‘as-constructed’ project details
- identify all ‘at risk’ bird and bat species (i.e. all threatened and common species), seasons, and areas within the project site which may attract high levels of mortality
- incorporate baseline data, including where relevant, additional pre-operational surveys, Collision Risk Modelling and Population Viability Analysis
- identify threshold (trigger) levels for all at risk species
- identify mitigation measures and implementation strategies to reduce impacts on bird and bat species
- include a decision-making framework and adaptive management approach, including triggers for mitigation measures such as operational shut-down of relevant turbines during certain periods
- outline a monitoring regime that requires operators to undertake regular searches for evidence of bird and bat mortality and to maintain records of details of all incidences of bird and/or bat mortality
- recommend the use of technologies that may assist in reducing bird and bat strikes. Operators are encouraged to be informed of and deploy latest technologies that may assist with minimising bird and bat strikes.

In addition to a **BBMP**, applicants will be conditioned to undertake a **Bird Utilisation Survey Report (BUSR)**. This **BUSR** will:

- need to be carried out by suitably qualified ecologists
- use BACI design
- be undertaken over 2 seasons after the commencement of operations
- inform a post commencement of operations report demonstrating utilisation of the site by species identified in earlier stages of the survey.

Supporting action – PO4

Proponents are required to rehabilitate areas cleared for construction that are **not** required to be retained as cleared for the operations of the wind farm. This will include all areas cleared for temporary uses such as workers accommodation sites, concrete batching plants, construction site offices and construction laydown and materials

storage areas. Those parts of the cross sections of access tracks that were cleared to establish the tracks and facilitate construction but are **not** required to remain cleared during operations and normal maintenance of the wind farm, will need to be stabilised and replanted. This progressive rehabilitation will improve the environmental values of the construction disturbance footprint while also achieving compliance with PO8 (managing erosion and sediment run off).

During assessment

Applicants should provide a **Preliminary Rehabilitation Plan (PRP)** with a lodged application to demonstrate how PO4 will be complied with. This could be included as a section within an EAR or as a separate report. This plan should provide a framework outlining how rehabilitation will be undertaken and managed across the site. In broad terms, the plan should be guided by overarching objectives to rehabilitate cleared and disturbed areas back to their pre-existing project condition as far as practicable. While the plan will focus on overall outcomes to be achieved at the completion of construction it should also outline how progressive rehabilitation will be undertaken as construction phases are completed. This plan should outline:

- principles that will guide detailed rehabilitation strategies across the different types of areas to be rehabilitated (different track profiles, hardstand areas, large flat cleared areas for camps etc relative to pre-existing conditions, RE vegetation types and environmental values)
- proposed approaches to rehabilitation and restoration to be deployed over different cleared typologies including the various track cross sections, areas around turbine pads and layover, areas cleared for temporary ancillary infrastructure etc
- proposed approaches to management, monitoring and reporting of replanting and restoration efforts over time.

Conditions of approval

To achieve compliance with PO4, SARA will condition a detailed **Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP)** to be prepared after construction has commenced and prior to its completion. An RMP must be prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, be generally in accordance with relevant sections of a lodged **EAR** or **PRP**, and outline how areas cleared for construction will be:

- rehabilitated (returned over time to pre-disturbance regional ecosystem or condition); and/or
- restored (using grasses, groundcovers and other local indigenous species that are consistent with the composition of surrounding vegetation communities); and/or
- stabilised (using hard engineering devices and measures complemented by landscaping) prepared cognisant of and complementary to a **Site Stabilisation Plan – Operations (SSPO)** (which will also be conditioned to achieve compliance with PO8) reflective of agreements to deliver parts of the disturbance footprint to a condition requested by landowners.

Applicants will also be conditioned to monitor and provide yearly progress reports on rehabilitation outcomes for 5 years after the commencement of full operations of the wind farm.

Note: Rehabilitation imposes will not reduce or remove the need for an environmental offset under other relevant legislation or codes, unless there is adequate demonstration that the rehabilitation works will address impact on matters of environmental significance. Refer to section 3.5.2 of the [General guide for the Queensland Environmental Offsets framework](#) for further information.

4.3 Meeting performance outcomes: Agricultural land

Context

Wind farm developments can result in adverse impacts on and/or loss of **high-quality agricultural land** values in regional areas and across Queensland. This can create unacceptable adverse impacts on individuals, communities

and the environment. Project layouts should be informed by the requirement to significant loss of **high-quality agricultural land** values.

Supporting action – PO5

During assessment

Applicants are required to submit an **Agricultural Land Assessment** report that demonstrates the proposal does not result in a significant loss of **high-quality agricultural land** values over the site.

The **Agricultural Land Assessment** report should address the following:

- identify whether the site contains high-quality agricultural land values (as defined in State code 23 of SDAP)
- if the site contains high-quality agricultural land values, provide an agricultural land impact analysis which is to:
 - be prepared by a suitably qualified professional and with consideration to any relevant parts of the *Guidelines for Agricultural Land Evaluation in Queensland* (Queensland Government, 2015)
 - include a description of the previous use of the site for agricultural production (if any)
 - include an assessment of soils and land suitability for agricultural production
 - be informed by the assessment of soils and land suitability
 - provide information about the agricultural potential of the high-quality agricultural land values area over the site
 - demonstrate that the development is located and designed to ensure that there is no significant loss of high-quality agricultural land values over the site and that PO5 is complied with.

4.4 Meeting performance outcomes: Natural drainage patterns

Context

Given their extensive footprints, most wind farms impact on natural waterways and drainage lines in the landscape. Waterways and crossing points can require extensive modification to accommodate vertical curves required for heavy and long construction haulage vehicles. Impacts on waterways and wetlands need to be considered from a catchment perspective. Waterway networks and wetlands that feed into important rivers and waterbodies are sensitive. Development within the Reef regions in the Great Barrier Reef catchment, including Cape York, Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay Whitsunday, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary must be carefully considered due to the potential to harm the Great Barrier Reef.

Site layouts need to be mindful of sensitive waterway and crossing points and need to consider if impacts from interventions can be appropriately managed. Impacts that need to be considered include whether the waterway is associated with sensitive, threatened and/or important species such as frogs. The realistic ability to manage erosion and run off at waterway intervention points also needs to be considered during site layout. Consideration must be given to the consequences arising from a failure of erosion management and sediment control devices associated with prominent waterways. If such a failure would result in significant to catastrophic impacts on the waterway, then proponents must reconsider site layouts to avoid this level of risk.

All clearing and civil works associated with wind farm construction needs to be managed to minimise adverse impacts on natural drainage patterns on site.

Supporting action – PO6

During assessment

Provide a **site plan** that identifies the extent of clearing of vegetation proposed within any mapped or unmapped waterway (being a river, stream, waterway, drainage feature or inlet of a sea) or wetland. Further, evidence that all proposed interferences with natural drainage patterns, waterways and wetlands will not result in unacceptable impacts on receiving waterways, wetlands and catchments.

Conditions of approval

If, during an assessment, SARA is of the view that PO6 can be complied with, conditions of approval will require the preparation of a detailed **Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP)** prior to the commencement of full operations of the wind farm. This plan will be informed by a **Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP)**, **Erosion and Sediment Control Plan – Construction (ESCPC)** and **Site Stabilisation Plan – Operations (SSPO)** to ensure an integrated approach.

Other approvals

Approving a material change of use for a wind farm does not preclude the need for proponents to determine whether a separate development application under the Planning Act, or compliance with the Accepted Development Requirements for operational works that is construction or raising waterway barrier works, is required. Further information on what constitutes a waterway barrier work is available through the [Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website](#).

4.5 Meeting performance outcomes: Protecting water quality and erosion control

Context

The construction of a wind farm and its associated infrastructure necessitates significant vegetation clearing and earthworks. Wind farms typically take several years to be constructed. During this time extensive areas of access tracks, turbine pads and laydown areas are exposed and unvegetated. To avoid detrimental impacts on waterways and catchments it is critical that wind farms under construction manage erosion and run off to a high standard.

Consideration needs to be given to the level of risk and hazard from an erosion perspective in the preparation of site layouts. An **Erosion Risk Assessment** should be done to inform site layouts and should also be submitted to SARA for assessment. If the project is approved, conditions attached to the material change of use will require the preparation of a detailed **Erosion and Sediment Control Plan – Construction (ESCPC)** prior to commencing construction. This plan must then be rigorously implemented throughout construction and subsequent site activities.

Supporting action – PO7

During assessment

An **Erosion Risk Assessment**, using the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) should be undertaken to inform the site layout prior to lodgement of an application (Renard, Foster, Weesies, McCool, and Yoder, 1997). The assessment should consider elements such as slope, soil dispersity, erosivity and rainfall frequency. This assessment should be used to determine if parts of a site layout, even if treated with erosion control devices, pose an unacceptable risk during construction to receiving waterways and catchments. Site layouts should be modified to ensure that all proposed areas of disturbance can be appropriately managed during and after construction.

The **Erosion Risk Assessment** submitted in support of the application should highlight any aspects of project construction that will require particular erosion and hazard management techniques and treatments for focus in the preparation of a detailed erosion and sediment control plan. This could include soil, groundwater or surface waterbody data collection in areas that could be impacted by sediment movement.

Supporting action – PO8

Conditions of approval

If, during assessment, SARA is of the view that PO7 is complied with, compliance with PO8 will be achieved through a condition of approval requiring the preparation of a detailed **Erosion and Sediment Control Plan – Construction (ESCPC)**. An **ESCPC** will:

- be prepared prior to commencing any on-site clearing
- need to be prepared by a suitably qualified professional
- be prepared in accordance with best practice guidelines and standards
- recommend measures to prevent and/or mitigate accelerated soil erosion
- include a monitoring and reporting program
- include an emergency response protocol to minimise erosion and run off during extreme weather events experienced during the construction period.

Supporting action – PO9

Conditions of approval

Compliance with PO9 will be achieved through a combination of conditions of approval requiring the preparation of a:

- **Rehabilitation Management Plan (RMP)** (see supporting action – PO4)
- **Erosion and Sediment Control Plan – Construction (ESCPC)** (see supporting action – PO8)
- **Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP)**
- **Site Stabilisation Plan – Operations (SSPO)**

An **SSPO** will be:

- prepared prior to commencement of full operations
- prepared in accordance with best practice erosion guidelines and standards
- informed by the **RMP**, **SWMP** and **ESCPS** to ensure an integrated approach to site rehabilitation, erosion management and stabilisation.

4.6 Meeting performance outcome: Natural hazards and extreme weather events

Context

Wind farms are typically located in remote areas that can be exposed to natural hazards such as flooding and bushfires and, in some cases, extreme weather events such as cyclones, heatwaves and droughts. The construction of wind farms involves significant numbers of workers spread over large areas. Wind farms can also impact on surrounding communities. Plans and strategies need to be in place to ensure the safety of on-site workers and the surrounding communities in the event of natural hazards or extreme weather events occurring.

Wind farms should be designed, constructed and operated to minimise the exposure and vulnerability of the built form of the wind farm to natural hazards and extreme weather events.

Design of site layouts needs to facilitate access for emergency vehicles to respond to bushfires and other events during the construction and operational phases of a project. Failure to design, construct and maintain access tracks could impeded the ability for workers to leave the site in emergency conditions while inhibiting access for emergency vehicles.

Supporting action – PO10 and PO11

During assessment

Site layouts should be informed by an assessment of natural hazard risk. A **Natural Hazard Risk Assessment Report** should be prepared and lodged with application to demonstrate compliance with PO10 and PO11. This assessment should demonstrate that all parts of the site layout would be responsive to the risks posed by natural hazards and extreme weather events that could affect the site.

Conditions of approval

Conditions will be imposed requiring the preparation of a detailed **Bushfire Management Plan (BMP)** and a separate **Safety and Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)** to ensure that construction and operational workforces and surrounding community members are appropriately protected.

The **BMP** must:

Be prepared in consultation with QFES, relevant landowners and relevant local governments and include:

- a fire hazard analysis
- evacuation procedures for construction workforce in the event of a bushfire emergency
- emergency response procedures for landowners and surrounding communities
- mitigation strategies to achieve the development outcomes in Part E of the *State Planning Policy July 2017 – Natural Hazards, Risk and Resilience*.

The **SEMP** should include the following details:

- a Hazard Analysis and Risk Assessment (HARA) undertaken in accordance with *AS/NZ ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines* and with *HB203:2006 Environmental Risk Management Principles and Processes*
- emergency evacuation plans for the construction and operation phases of the development
- safety management plans and emergency response procedures in consultation with the state and regional emergency service providers and provide an adequate level of training to staff who will be tasked with emergency management activities.

4.7 Meeting performance outcomes: Acoustic amenity

Context

Wind farm developments are typically sited in areas with low ambient acoustic levels. These areas typically have unique noise generating characteristics, including output that varies with wind speed and turbine location. The noise characteristics associated with wind farms are generally described within two categories:

- **Mechanical noise** which is produced from the gearbox and generator, bearings, yawing mechanism and blade pitch control mechanism in the nacelle and hub. Mechanical noise from modern wind turbines is not generally a dominant source of emitted noise.
- **Aerodynamic noise** which is noise produced by air passing over the blades of the wind turbine. Aerodynamic noise can be divided into four generation mechanisms: inflow turbulence, tip noise, trailing edge noise and blade tower interaction. Trailing edge noise is generally the most significant wind turbine blade noise source.

Noise generation associated with wind farm developments is complex. Audible acoustic emissions must be considered and modelled during the development assessment process. This guideline presents best practice noise criteria, as well as the methodology for assessment of wind farm noise. The applicable acoustic criteria have been

established based on national and international best practice, including a detailed review of the various standards, guidelines and frameworks in place throughout Australia, New Zealand and abroad.

Acoustic criteria

State code 23: Wind farm development, includes separate acoustic criteria for host and non-host lots. Where reference to ‘existing or approved sensitive land uses’ is included, this is taken to be at the time of lodgement of the application.

Host lots

A host lot (also commonly referred to as host property) means a parcel of land that accommodates any part of a wind farm development. Host lots will either be owned by the proponent or will be subject to a formal agreement between the landowner and the proponent, to host the wind farm on the land. Owners of host lots will need to provide owner’s consent for the development application to be properly made and lodged with the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works (the department) for assessment.

The acoustic criteria for the predicted acoustic level at sensitive land uses on host lots is listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Acoustic criteria for host lots

Noise characteristic	Time of day	Acoustic level does not exceed
Predicted ¹ outdoor (free-field) A-Weighted equivalent acoustic level (L _{Aeq}), assessed at all noise affected existing or approved sensitive land use(s)	Night (8 pm – 6 am)	1 45 dB(A), or
		2 the background noise (L _{A90}) by more than 5 dB(A),
whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height.		

The 45 dB(A) or 5 dB(A) above the background noise level described in Table 1 has been established to ensure the health and safety of individuals and the community, regardless of whether the landowner is receiving a financial benefit. The approach is consistent with that taken in other states and the recommendations of the World Health Organisation’s (1999) Guidelines for Community Noise, which specifies 45 dB(A) outside bedrooms with windows open, to protect against sleep disturbance.

Despite the above, agreements with landowners to host turbines must be an informed consent and must specify the predicted acoustic levels at all sensitive land uses on the property, and the setbacks from turbines to sensitive land uses.

To allow the wind farm to operate for the entirety of its projected lifespan, agreements with landowners must be maintained if the host lot is sold or leased.

Non-host lots

A non-host lot (also commonly referred to as non-host property) means a parcel of land that does not accommodate any part of a wind farm development. Non-host lots will either adjoin, or be near, the host lots containing the wind farm. Sensitive land uses on non-host lots are subject to more stringent acoustic criteria, unless a deed is agreed between the owner of the non-host lot and the proponent, with the owner of the non-host lot accepting increased acoustic levels and/or reduced setbacks from turbines at their respective sensitive land uses.

¹ Predicted by noise modelling carried out using the sound power levels of the proposed turbines in accordance with the methodology contained in Appendix 3 – Noise impact assessment methodology.

The acoustic criteria for the predicted acoustic level at sensitive land uses on non-host lots is listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Acoustic criteria for non-host lots

Noise characteristic	Time of day	Acoustic level does not exceed
Predicted ² outdoor (free-field) A-Weighted equivalent acoustic level (L _{Aeq}), assessed at all noise affected existing or approved sensitive land use(s)	Night (8 pm – 6 am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 dB(A), or • the background noise (L_{A90}) by more than 5 dB(A),
		whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height.
	Day (6 am – 8 pm)	1) 37 dB(A), or 2) the background noise (L _{A90}) by more than 5 dB(A),
		whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height.

The prescribed acoustic criteria described in Table 2 has been developed to minimise the impact on the amenity of noise affected existing or approved sensitive land use(s). The criteria must be achieved at the sensitive land uses of non-host lots unless a deed of release is negotiated and agreed between the owner of the non-host lot and the proponent.

A deed of release allows non-host lot owners to accept a reduced setback (relating to the applicable level of assessment) and/or agreed acoustic levels at their sensitive land uses. To ensure it is an informed consent, the deed of release must clearly articulate the agreement between parties, including the following information where applicable:

- the agreed setback distance, where less than 1,500m, between turbines and sensitive land uses
- the agreed predicted day and night acoustic levels at sensitive land uses
- explanation of the proposed variation to acoustic levels (departure from the criteria stated in Table 2) and any expected or potential impacts to amenity at the non-host lot owner’s sensitive land use(s).

Despite the above, and as previously outlined, an outdoor nighttime acoustic level of more than 45 dB(A) or 5 dB(A) above the background noise level at a sensitive land use is not considered suitable due to the potential for sleep disturbance (World Health Organisation, 1999) and will unlikely be accepted. Achieving this minimum level of protection is vital in protecting the health and safety of individuals and the community.

To allow the wind farm to operate for the entirety of its projected lifespan, agreements with landowners with respect to acoustic levels and setbacks must be maintained if the non-host lot is sold or leased.

Supporting action – PO12 and PO13

During assessment

The following action is required to demonstrate compliance with PO12 and PO13:

- submit a **Noise Impact Assessment** which demonstrates compliance with the prescribed acoustic level in Table 23.2 (for PO12) and Table 23.3 (for PO13) of State code 23: Wind farm development. The report must be undertaken by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant who is an RPEQ or is eligible for membership in the Australian Acoustical Society or whose firm is a member of the Association of Australasian Acoustical Consultants (AAAC). The **Noise Impact Assessment** must:
 - consider impacts on existing or approved sensitive land uses (at the time of lodgement)
 - include noise modelling and predictions of free-field acoustic levels at all existing or approved sensitive receptors
 - refer to **Appendix 3 – Noise methodologies** for further information on how to prepare a **Noise Impact Assessment**.

Conditions of approval

Operational noise monitoring

Should a wind farm development be approved, SARA will apply conditions of approval in relation to the noise criteria of the code. The conditions of approval will require that the proponent undertake operational noise monitoring within the first 12 months of the wind farm being fully operational. The conditions will also require the submission of a range of associated reporting, including a **Noise Monitoring Plan, Noise Monitoring Reports** and An **Operational Regime/Strategy**. The results of operational noise monitoring will be used for determining compliance with the noise criteria in the code and any conditions of approval.

Although operational noise monitoring does not form part of the assessment of a wind farm development application, it is important to understand the noise monitoring methodology to be used for operating wind farms in Queensland. This methodology is used by SARA when preparing and applying conditions of approval.

4.8 Meeting performance outcomes: Electromagnetic interference

Context

Wind turbines can block, reflect or refract electromagnetic waves affecting microwave, television, radar or radio transmissions and reception through Electromagnetic Interference (EMI). They can also on-transmit or scatter radio communication signals.

Supporting action – PO14

During assessment

A **Preliminary EMI Assessment Report** should be lodged to demonstrate how PO14 can be complied with. This report should outline all potential EMI impacts that could arise from the wind farm and demonstrate how these impacts can be acceptably managed through mitigation and/or management measures. These impacts should consider the use of all transmission and reception modes used by land owners. Refer to **Appendix 4 – Electromagnetic interference impact assessment methodology** for further details on how to prepare the preliminary EMI impact assessment.

Conditions of approval

Conditions of approval will require the preparation of:

- a **Pre and Post-construction assessment of television and radio reception strength** and monitoring and mitigation measures

- a **Final EMI Assessment Report**, prior to commencement of operations, outlining mitigation and operational management measures that need to be implemented to ensure that wind farm operations do not cause unacceptable EMI impacts.

Suggested further information

The Australian Communications and Media Authority database can assist in identifying communication services in a relevant area.

A search of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association's Radio Frequency National Site Archive database (RFNSA) provides information on Australian base stations, including electromagnetic energy reports, site locations and carrier contact details for existing sites.

4.9 Meeting performance outcomes: Shadow flicker

Context

The rotating blades of wind turbines can cast intermittent shadows that appear to flicker to an observer at a fixed ground position. Given the height of wind turbines, shadow flicker can be observed at considerable distances. Shadow flicker may occur in certain geographical positions at a particular time of day. For example, when the sun passes behind rotating blades of a wind turbine and casts a moving shadow over neighbouring areas. Shadow flicker from wind turbines can impact on the amenity of urban and rural development by creating a 'strobing' shadow effect. Given its potential for impacting on human health, shadow flicker levels prescribed in PO14 must be adhered to and cannot be breached through deed of release.

Supporting action – PO15

Conditions of approval

A **Shadow Flicker Assessment Report** should be submitted to demonstrate how PO14 can be complied with. This report should be prepared using the methodology outlined in **Appendix 5 – Shadow flicker assessment methodology**.

To achieve compliance with PO15, applicants will be conditioned to ensure that during operations shadow flicker does not exceed to levels specified in PO15.

4.10 Meeting performance outcomes: Workforce accommodation impacts

Context

The scale and nature of wind farm development results in extended construction times and typically requires a construction workforce beyond what is available in the local area. This can lead to proponents proposing large accommodation camps for construction workers on-site, in surrounding towns or a combination of both.

On-site workforce accommodation associated with the construction of a wind farm may deprive surrounding towns and communities of beneficial economic benefits, while both on-site and off-site workforce accommodation associated with the construction of a wind farm may cause adverse impacts for housing supply and create unacceptable pressure on community facilities, local infrastructure and services.

To achieve compliance with PO16 and PO17 applicants are required to determine a workforce accommodation strategy and assess its impacts prior to lodging an application.

Supporting action – PO16 and PO17

During assessment

All wind farm applications need to be accompanied by a **Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report**. This report should outline the proposed workforce accommodation strategy and an assessment of its impacts to demonstrate compliance with PO16 and PO17. This report should address:

- the expected construction period for the wind farm
- the expected number and profile of the workforce for the construction and operational phases of the project
- details of the proposed workforce accommodation strategy, including proposed on-site and/or off-site accommodation
- details of any consultation and/or agreements with the local government regarding the proposed strategy
- the analysis methodology used and workforce accommodation options considered. This should include an analysis of local and regional labour markets and an assessment of opportunities for local workers
- an assessment of positive and negative implications of using and/or supplementing accommodation options in existing townships/communities. This analysis should explore the implications of all, or part, of the workers accommodation being in exiting townships and should address: the availability of existing accommodation options; implications of commuting on local roads and implications of commuting distances and times from a workplace health and safety perspective
- demonstrate how proposed on-site workforce accommodation complies with PO16
- demonstrate how proposed off-site workforce accommodation complies with PO17.

Preparation of a **Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report** should draw on Queensland Government's 'Social Impact Assessment Guideline' (March 2018) and 'Supplementary material for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects under the Coordinator-General's Social Impact Assessment Guideline' (28 November 2023).

Conditions of approval

If SARA deems that PO16 is complied with, conditions of approval will mitigate impacts of approved on-site workforce accommodation.

If SARA deems that PO17 is complied with and agrees with recommendations of the **Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report**, conditions of approval will require the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the report in accordance with identified timings and thresholds.

4.11 Meeting performance outcomes: Areas identified by state or local government planning instruments as having high scenic amenity

Context

This performance outcome only applies to wind farms proposed in areas identified in a state or local government planning instrument as having high scenic or landscape amenity.

In order to access a suitable wind resource, wind farm developments may be located in exposed and highly visible areas (such as ridgelines and hilltops) which may be identified by a state or local government planning instrument as having high scenic amenity. In these settings the height and location of wind turbines may create an unacceptable level of intrusion into areas of high scenic amenity.

Supporting action – PO18

During assessment

If the relevant state or local government planning scheme has identified the site in an area of high scenic amenity, a **Visual Impact Assessment Report** is required to demonstrate compliance with PO18.

The report must:

- include visual simulations or photomontages demonstrating the anticipated visual appreciation of the proposed turbines from key public viewpoints and viewing corridors
- an assessment of how the turbines visible from view points and/or viewing corridors does not adversely impact on the scenic amenity.

4.12 Meeting performance outcomes: Transport networks

Context and supporting actions for PO19 – PO22

Wind farm construction involves significant volumes of construction traffic including heavy vehicle haulage. Turbine components such as masts, blades and transformers can require Oversize/Overmass (OSOM) haulage from a coastal port to a construction site many kilometres inland. Turbine foundations, access roads and ancillary infrastructure also necessitate the transport of large volumes of materials to the site. The OSOM and other heavy vehicle construction haulage typically contributes to significant, and at times, disruptive loads on local and state road networks during construction.

During assessment

Some wind farms have had significant difficulties in securing feasible haulage routes after gaining development permits. PO21 requires proponents to support applications with analysis providing a level of confidence that heavy vehicle haulage can be organised to support project construction following approvals. A **Heavy Vehicle and OSOM Construction Concept Strategy** should be prepared and submitted supporting compliance with PO21. All relevant stakeholders (including Port Authorities, local government traffic managers, DTMR regional offices and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator) should be consulted in the preparation of this strategy. The **Heavy Vehicle and OSOM Construction Concept Strategy** should outline:

- the consultation that has occurred with relevant stakeholders in the formulation of the strategy
- details of the proposed turbines and ancillary infrastructure key components that were used to inform the strategy formulation (for example, expected volumes and maximum dimensions and weights of components requiring OSOM haulage)
- proposed vehicle types and availability to be used for OSOM haulage
- key identified 'pressure points' on proposed OSOM routes such as bridges, structures, railway level crossings and any sections of constrained horizontal and vertical geometry
- details of how the proposed construction haulage can be feasibly achieved, at full cost to the proponent, including identifying appropriate 'pressure point' route mitigation measures and concept road upgrades.

If a proposal requires direct access for construction traffic off a state-controlled road, additional information will need to be submitted to demonstrate compliance with PO22. In these circumstances, details of proposed intersection upgrades need to be submitted with the application in accordance with DTMR's requirements under section 62 of the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994* permits and normal SARA requirements seeking to gain approvals for upgrades to state controlled roads.

Conditions of approval

All SARA approved wind farm applications will be conditioned to prepare a **Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA)** prior to the commencement of construction transport activities. The primary purpose of a **TIA** is to identify any upgrades that are required to state and local government road networks (including railway level crossings) to enable the passage of wind farm construction traffic. Any identified upgrades will need to be implemented at full cost to applicants prior to the commencement of construction traffic. Preparation of a **TIA** needs to include engagement with relevant stakeholders including local government traffic managers, regional DTMR officers and Queensland Rail (if railway level crossings are likely to be affected). The formulation of a **TIA** should be based on DTMR's GTIA

guideline, any relevant local government guidelines, policies or standards and Queensland Rail level crossing specifications.

Approved applications will also be conditioned to prepare a **Traffic Management Plan (TMP)** prior to commencement of construction activities. The primary purpose of a **TMP** is to outline management strategies for all types of construction traffic that warrant such strategies. As a minimum, a **TMP** needs to include a detailed management strategy to ensure the safe and efficient haulage of heavy and OSOM wind farm components from ports to construction sites. A **TMP** must also include but not be limited to providing:

- details of all wind farm components triggering OSOM haulage including details of maximum weights and dimensions (heights, widths and lengths)
- proposed haulage vehicle configurations including axle spacings, axle and gross masses, ground contact width, tyre sizes and evidence of ability of proposed vehicles to safely haul identified components
- loaded widths, length and height measurements of the various OSOM components to be hauled
- detailed route/s identification and assessment of ability of the identified routes to safely haul proposed OSOM components
- identified conflict points of OSOM component haulage with existing infrastructure (including but not limited to bridges, culverts and other structures)
- evidence that bridges, culverts and other structures on haulage routes can accommodate heavy haulage vehicles under load
- management strategies to ensure that railway level crossings and associated road safety are not adversely affected by construction traffic
- evidence of the capacity of escorts (police and non-police) to service haulage demands in accordance with relevant legislative requirements.

Other approvals

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all relevant approvals and permits are obtained, including under the *Planning Act 2016*, the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*, and the *Local Government Act 2009* to confirm the suitability of the road network for the movement of OSOM vehicles and mitigate impacts accordingly. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator can assist in identifying the proposed haulage route for OSOM vehicles, however other relevant entities, such as the Ports Authority, Energy Queensland, Queensland Rail and Local Government are also likely to have specific requirements to allow for the safe movement of items on the road network during construction.

Applicants will also need to consider and obtain permits as necessary under the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994* and *Electricity Act 1994* if seeking to place or connect to any third-party utility infrastructure within a state-controlled road.

4.13 Meeting performance outcomes: Infrastructure

Context

The scale and nature of wind farm construction typically involves significant construction workforces, extensive use of heavy machinery and significant consumption of construction materials (such as raw materials to manufacture concrete and access tracks). Therefore, the construction of a wind farm has the potential to adversely impact on the functioning of nearby towns and communities.

Wind farm applicants have an obligation to demonstrate that the construction of an approved project will not have adverse impacts on the infrastructure (including social infrastructure) and servicing needs of nearby towns and communities. Potential impacts arising during the construction of a wind farm need to be identified and measures to manage, mitigate and remediate any impacts proposed.

Supporting action – PO23

During assessment

The **Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report** required to support an application for PO16 and PO17 is the same report used to demonstrate compliance with PO23. In addition to the elements of this report required to respond to PO16 and PO17, the report should also include analysis and recommendations demonstrating how PO23 is complied with. The additional dimensions of this report should include, but not be limited to, an analysis of infrastructure and servicing demands generated through the construction phase of the project. In particular, this analysis should:

- identify essential infrastructure required to be utilised (such as water, waste, sewer, gas, electricity and communications)
- identify the nature of social infrastructure required to be utilised (such as health care, emergency services)
- identify infrastructure, materials and services required during construction of the project (such as potable and non-potable water, waste management, dealing with effluent, base materials for constructing access tracks, turbine foundations etc, energy requirements to support construction activities)
- having regard to regionally available infrastructure and materials capacity – identify areas where mitigation and remediation measures are required to achieve compliance with PO23
- having regard to the proposed workforce accommodation strategy – identify social infrastructure and services likely to be required to support the construction workforce
- document the existing capacity of relevant social infrastructure and services in potentially affected towns and nearby communities
- determine areas where the proposed construction workforce would adversely impact on existing social infrastructure and services
- recommend measures and remediation strategies to respond to identified impacts on social infrastructure and services to achieve compliance with PO23
- provide details of any agreements and/or engagement with any infrastructure providers, service providers and local governments that are relevant to demonstrating compliance with PO23.

Preparation of a **Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report** should draw on Queensland Government's 'Social Impact Assessment Guideline' (March 2018) and 'Supplementary material for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects under the Coordinator-General's Social Impact Assessment Guideline' (28 November 2023).

Conditions of approval

If SARA deems that PO23 is complied with and supports the recommendations of a submitted **Workforce Accommodation and Infrastructure Report**, a condition of approval will require the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the report in accordance with identified timings and thresholds.

4.14 Meeting performance outcomes: Aviation safety, integrity and efficiency

Context

Wind farms inherently involve the construction of tall structures that can be considered a potential safety risk to low-flying commercial, private and defence aircraft. Other structures (including permanent wind monitoring towers) can be erected in association with wind farms and may also be hazardous to air services given their low visibility and intrusion into airspace. The movement, material and size of wind turbines and blades, as well as the marking

and lighting, also have the potential to interfere with radio communications equipment for other aircraft and the meteorological radar.

Applicants are required to determine if proposed wind turbines and wind monitoring towers will be located near areas where low-flying activities are likely to be conducted. It is imperative that aerial activities of on-site and surrounding land owners are also considered. Aerial activities may include:

- take-off and landing routes around military and civilian airfields, airports and aerodromes
- military training in a Military Danger Area and Military Restricted Airspace
- aerial agricultural spraying
- aerial mustering
- aerial fire-fighting
- power line inspections
- helicopter operations (including search and rescue)
- recreational aviation (such as gliding, paragliding and hang-gliding).

Management strategies must be developed where aerial activities have been identified to be potentially impacted by wind farm operations.

Supporting action – PO24 and PO25

During assessment

The following information is required to demonstrate compliance with PO24 and PO25:

- written evidence that the following entities (where relevant) have been consulted on the proposed development:
 - Airservices Australia
 - Department of Defence
 - the district aerodrome supervisor.

Consultation should be undertaken according to the Commonwealth Government's (2012) National Airports Safeguarding Framework – Guideline D - Managing the Risk to Aviation Safety of Wind Turbine Installations (Wind Farms)/Wind Monitoring Towers.

Risk assessment

Guidelines to manage the risk to aviation safety from wind turbine installations (wind farms and wind monitoring towers) have been developed by the National Airports Safeguarding Advisory Group (NASAG). NASAG's wind farm guidelines (Guideline D - Managing the Risk of Wind Turbine Farms as Physical Obstacles to Air Navigation) provide information to help identify any potential safety risks posed by wind turbines and wind monitoring installations from an aviation perspective. Potential safety risks include (but are not limited to) impacts on flight procedures, and communications, navigation and surveillance assets.

For all wind farm proposals, an **Aviation Impact Statement (AIS)** is to be submitted along with the application. Further information on what information is required for an Airservices aviation assessment is provided in Air Services Australia's Developments at and around airports guide. The **AIS** needs to be submitted as part of the application with a copy sent to the Airports Developments mailbox (airport.developments@airservicesaustralia.com), together with any supporting documents, spreadsheets, drawings and CAD files which will assist with the assessment.

The **AIS** must be prepared by a suitably qualified aerodrome consultant/specialist. The report should follow the guidelines outlined in the latest version of the EUROCONTROL guidelines on how to assess the potential impact of wind turbines on surveillance sensors, and must provide a detailed analysis covering, as a minimum:

- airspace procedures
- navigation/radar

The risk assessment should consider all potential aviation activities within the vicinity of the proposed wind farm as outlined above in the context of this requirement. A database that contains all certified aerodromes, for which the operators have been granted a certificate by CASA is available through the CASA website at www.casa.gov.au/search-centre/aerodromes.

Conditions of approval

Applicants will be conditioned to prepare a **Final AIS** outlining measures required to ensure that constructed turbines will not adversely impact on all relevant air services and activities.

Other approvals

A Defence approval is required for wind farm applications under the Defence (Aviation Areas) Regulation (DAAR). The Defence approval is separate to the assessment under the Planning Act. The DAAR apply height controls to buildings, structures, vegetation, and construction equipment and includes controls for any object hazardous to aircraft or aviation-related communications, navigation, or surveillance, regardless of whether the DAAR height controls are infringed. Further details about the DAAR can be found at the [Department of Defence Infrastructure Division](#).

For development in areas not subject to a DAAR, it is normal industry practice for applicants to seek Defence comments on the proposal as part of the risk assessment process prior to lodging a development application.

Airservices Australia (ASA) is responsible for recording the location and height of tall structures. The information is held in a central database managed by ASA and relates to the erection, extension, or dismantling of tall structures, the top of which is above 30 metres AGL (when within 30 kilometres of an aerodrome) and 45 metres AGL elsewhere.

Wind farm structures will meet the definition of a tall structure and the applicant will need to provide ASA with “as constructed” details. The details can be emailed to ASA at vod@airservicesaustralia.com.

The [State Planning Policy interactive mapping system](#) for transport infrastructure also includes relevant information on aviation facilities including communication, navigation or surveillance facilities and lists the aviation facilities identified by Airservices Australia and the Department of Defence for protection under the State Planning Policy. Specific location information and types of aviation facilities are provided and can assist in identifying relevant facilities in the vicinity of the proposed wind farm.

4.15 Meeting performance outcomes: Community impact

Context

Nearby communities and individuals can be significantly impacted by the construction of and operation of a wind farm. Affected communities and local governments need to be engaged with prior to lodging an application with SARA. This engagement creates beneficial awareness of projects and enables proponents to respond to feedback and modify project layouts and supporting strategies prior to lodging applications.

Supporting action – PO26

During assessment

All wind farm applications need to prepare and submit a **Community Engagement Report** to demonstrate compliance with PO26. This report should outline the following (but not be limited to):

- the community profile (i.e. potentially impacted communities) and analysis of key stakeholders
note: stakeholders could include nearby land owners, relevant local government/s, local, state and federal elected members, the native title party or traditional owners of the area
- details of all pre-lodgement engagement activities undertaken

- the nature of stakeholder feedback and issues raised during engagement activities
- how feedback and issues have been or will be addressed
- any documents evidencing outcomes from engagement activities – particularly views from relevant local governments.

Initial engagement activities could include letters to all identified key stakeholders, community meetings or information sessions, a project website with FAQs, key messages and contact details for the project and the use of social media or digital media platforms.

This report should give consideration to the Queensland Government's 'Social Impact Assessment Guideline' (March 2018) and 'Supplementary material for assessing and managing the social impacts of projects under the Coordinator-General's Social Impact Assessment Guideline' (28 November 2023).

Conditions of approval

Where deemed relevant, SARA may condition implementation of aspects of the Community Engagement Report.

A **Complaint Investigation and Response Plan (CIRP)** will also be conditioned. The **CIRP** will need to address:

- a toll-free telephone number and email for complaints and queries
- how contact details will be communicated to the public
- a process of investigation to resolve complaints
- a requirement that all complaints will be recorded in an incident register
- a requirement to summarise complaints, investigations and responses.

4.16 Meeting performance outcomes: Decommissioning

Context

Decommissioning a wind farm is the responsibility of the approval holder and is undertaken in two distinct phases:

- following completion of construction and commencement of full operations, then
- at the end of the operational life of the project.

Detailed decommissioning plans will be required prior to each of these project phases. Actions in these plans will be conditioned to be implemented in accordance with strategies outlined in the plans.

Decommissioning activities that are detailed in management plans should ensure that there are no adverse impacts on individuals, communities and the natural environment as a result. This typically involves activities to 'make good' the land and remove infrastructure.

PO30 requires evidence of financial security to ensure that the two phases of decommissioning occur in a timely manner with minimal risks to landowners and government.

Supporting action – PO27 to PO29

Conditions of approval

End of construction decommissioning

Conditions of approval will require proponents to prepare an **End of Construction Decommissioning Management Plan (ECDMP)** to be submitted to SARA prior to finalisation of construction of the wind farm. The **ECDMP** will outline all actions required to:

- remove all above ground non-operational structures and equipment such as construction site offices, concrete batching plants, on-site accommodation camps etc

- reflect any agreements with land owners about on-site conditions
- remove and clean up any contamination caused during construction as defined in the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

The **ECDMP** should not duplicate but needs to be compatible with **Rehabilitation Management Plans (RMPs)** and **Site Stabilisation Plan - Operations (SSPOs)** that will also be conditioned to be prepared prior to finalisation of construction activities.

End of operations decommissioning

Conditions of approval will also require the preparation of an **End of Operation Decommissioning Plan (EODMP)** six months prior to the ceasing of a wind farms' operations.

An **EODMP** should be informed by consultation with relevant stakeholders including landowners and will outline all actions required to:

- deconstruct and remove off-site all above ground structures and infrastructure (including turbines, substations, and above ground cabling)
- manage impacts on the transport network arising from removal of materials from the site
- dismantle turbine bases to a depth of 1m below surface level and cover with top soil
- lightly rip and reseed with native vegetation all hardstand areas (after being cleared of stone and geotextile material)
- decontaminate any affected areas in accordance with requirements of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

All of the above aspects of the **EODMP** can be varied through agreements with landowners who may desire to have certain project elements, such as parts of access tracks, left in situ to support the ongoing use of the property.

The **EODMP** should aim to maximise the recycling, repurposing and/or reuse of all materials removed from the site during decommission. A key objective of a decommissioning plan is to minimise materials destined for landfill and to implement the full decommissioning of the project as efficiently and sustainably as possible.

Supporting action – PO30

During assessment

To demonstrate compliance with PO30, applicants are required to provide a **Decommissioning Security Report**. This report needs to provide evidence of the proposed financial security (bonds, financial guarantees or similar) that will ensure timely compliance of decommissioning at end of construction and at end of operations - at no cost to landowners or the government.

Conditions of approval

If SARA deems that PO30 is complied with, a condition of approval will require the implementation of the proposed financial securities to underpin end of construction and end of operations decommissioning.

5.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Ecological Assessment Report (EAR) methodology

An **EAR** should be prepared and submitted with an application to demonstrate how PO1 and PO2 are to be complied with. This report should have regard to the methodology outlined below.

An **EAR** should include:

- project details including, history, location, site details, project footprint, expected operational life of the wind farm
- outline of planning and approvals framework relevant to the project
- description of detailed studies and expert inputs into the **EAR**
- details of desktop assessment of all relevant environmental documents, databases, maps and legislation used to identify ecological values both on and around the site
- details of how the desktop assessment informed field studies and surveys
- determining 'Likelihood of occurrence' for threatened flora and fauna
- details of ecological surveys undertaken including survey times, durations, expertise involved on survey teams and survey conditions. Two seasonal field surveys to map the vegetation and identify flora and fauna species, should be undertaken in accordance with *Methodology for survey and mapping of regional ecosystems and vegetation communities in Queensland*. Version 6.0 (Neldner et al, 2022) and consideration of *Terrestrial Vertebrate Fauna Survey Assessment Guidelines for Queensland*, Version 4.0 (Eyre et al. 2022). Further details on undertaking Bird and Bat utilisation surveys and studies are outlined in **Appendix 2 – Bird and bat methodologies in an EAR**
- description of the project environment including existing land uses, landforms and geology, presence of wetlands and waterways and climate
- description of vegetation communities including results of ground-truthed RE mapping showing distribution of individual RE types
- identification of and distribution of any threatened flora
- details of fauna habitat types
- details of fauna species (including birds and bats) including acknowledging status under relevant state and/or Commonwealth legislation
- details of invasive species (having regard to *Biosecurity Act 2014*)
- details of presence of pest animals
- bird and bat utilisation (having regard to **Appendix 2 – Bird and bat methodologies in an EAR**). Including species details and outcomes from **Bird Utilisation Study Report (BUSR)**
- description of identified vegetation corridors, linkages and connectivity and relevance to identified fauna
- description of MSES listed species and categorisation
- assessment of impacts of project construction and operations on flora, vegetation communities and fauna including:
 - based on details of proposed clearing involved with the project footprint
 - Collision Risk Modelling
 - consideration of potential impacts on the integrity of flora, fauna and landscapes of high-value wilderness areas (including but not limited to World Heritage Areas, National and State parks) proximate to the site boundaries

- statement of compliance with PO1. Details of how the lodged project layout has responded to habitats and species described in PO1 (including bird and bat mortality risks) such that '*adverse impacts*' are 'avoided'
- statement of compliance with PO2. Details of proposed mitigation measures that, subject to assessment by SARA, may form the basis of conditions of approval and parameters to be incorporated into detailed reports and strategies prepared prior to commencement of construction
- determination of Significant Residual Impacts (MSES matters)
- determination of MSES offsets
- figures, tables and appendices containing all relevant documents and reports used in the preparation of the **EAR**.

Appendix 2 – Bird and bat methodologies in an EAR

Assessment of impacts of a wind farm on birds and bats occurs in 2 phases. As outlined in **Appendix 1**, the on-site presence of birds and bats, and risks to them associated with an operational wind farm, are an important component of an **EAR** that should be submitted with an application. The primary purpose of an **EAR** is to demonstrate, from the perspective of an applicant, compliance with PO1 and PO2 of State code 23.

If SARA decides to approve a wind farm, conditions will be included requiring the preparation of a **Bird and Bat Management Plan (BBMP)**. The primary purpose of a **BBMP** is to guide the operations of the wind farm to minimise adverse impacts on bird and bat movements (section 4.3 Supporting action PO3 of this guideline).

Bird and bat considerations in an EAR

Consistent with advice outlined in **Appendix 1**, an **EAR** should contain details of the identification of birds and bats that will engage with the site, an assessment of risks to them posed by the project layout and inclusion in statements of compliance for PO1 and PO2 that bird and bats will not experience 'adverse impacts' from the layout and construction of the wind farm. Bird and bat risk analysis should be used to modify project layouts in circumstances where the use of the site by important bird species are at a high risk of collision with turbines, or the presence of large concentrations of bat species (e.g. cave dwelling bats) whose flight paths may be at risk of collision with wind turbines. This is an important consideration in achieving compliance with PO1.

In terms of birds and bats, an **EAR** should:

- be consistent, where relevant, with identification and risk assessment methodologies recommended for 'fauna' and 'species' in Appendix 1
- undertake desktop assessments encompassing particular habitats that may support significant bird and bat communities, such as Ramsar wetlands which will provide habitat for waterbirds, and caves which may provide roosting and breeding sites for bats (e.g. may suggest that given the proximity to a wind farm, there may be a potential to impact seasonal migration of protected birds)
- undertake field surveys to:
 - identify bird and bat habitats and habitat components, and validate the results of the desktop review
 - cover all planned areas of disturbance, including grid infrastructure, and should be undertaken across multiple seasons to capture variability in populations. A number of visits may be required depending on the species being surveyed and any changes in the size and layout of the wind farm. Data from field surveys should also provide sufficient information to determine whether any additional development applications or permits are required under other legislation
- include reference (or control) points and treatment points to allow for a 'Before and After Control Impact' (BACI) design if the site supports significant bird species (i.e. threatened or migratory species identified as possible, likely or known to occur, as well as all raptor species). A BACI design includes reference sites placed at a sufficient distance from the proposed turbine locations to obtain data outside the zone of influence of the turbines. Data is quantitative and is collected at pre-determined fixed points. The surveys are conducted during relevant seasons with regards to the species being studied and the location of the site and would normally involve sampling of different relevant habitats on the site. Data is usually recorded in a way that allows a collision risk model to be formulated to estimate the potential collision risk of a species. Data should also be captured to facilitate on going monitoring
- undertake Bird Utilisation surveys to identify the avian species on site, the numbers present, the height that birds fly, and the utilisation across the site. Utilisation studies should include a description of bird behaviour, which usually refers to activities such as feeding, resting or moving, as these can aid the understanding of potential impacts of a wind farm development. and modelling to identify species at risk of collision or displacement (particularly listed threatened species) Bird utilisation surveys should be undertaken in accordance with the Protocol for initial and continuing bird utilisation surveys stated within the *Interim standards for assessing the risks to birds from wind farms in Australia* (Brett Lane and Associates Pty Ltd 2005). The bird utilisation survey data recorded and presented in the EAR should include:

- all bird species surveyed
- height bird species fly at
- bird activity (e.g. soaring, foraging etc)
- undertake bat surveys to determine which bat species use the site, including for breeding, roosting, foraging or movement. Bat studies that are particularly designed to measure whether the site is used by species of concern can also be implemented. These may include studies to assess the use of a site by concentrations of threatened species, such as bats which may use a maternity cave within the vicinity of a proposed wind farm, thereby placing greater numbers of individuals at risk of collision with wind turbines. These studies may involve the design and implementation of a study that uses the deployment of bat call detectors at several strategically located sites over the period when bats are breeding and are most active, in the spring and summer months. Methods that can be used to identify the bat species on the site and give an indication of their use of the site include:
 - harp traps placed across presumed flight paths of bats
 - using bat detection systems to record and analyse the echolocation calls of bats.

Note that harp traps will require a permit to catch and handle bats from state wildlife regulatory authorities and will also require Animal Ethics Clearance. Non-intrusive methods such as bat call detecting will generally not require a permit because they do not involve the catching or handling of bats. Whichever methods are used, these must only be employed by suitably qualified and experienced ecologists.

Note that bat utilisation data cannot be obtained by using the above techniques, which are only useful for species identification and to gain an appreciation of populations). Currently the only possible means of quantifying the density of bats on a site is using techniques such as radar, but even these systems have their limitations. As such, a likelihood of occurrence assessment is recommended to identify at risk species (including high flying species that are not listed as threatened under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 or the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999).

- undertake additional species-specific surveys (where required) to assess the potential impacts of a wind farm development on significant species such as listed threatened species, or species at particular risk (e.g. birds of prey, wetland birds or bats at risk of collision with wind turbines)
- undertake Collision Risk Modelling (CRM) for all threatened species known to occur, as well as all high flying species such as raptors. The data from either general bird utilisation studies or species-specific utilisation studies can be entered into CRMs which aim to estimate the number of birds at risk of colliding with wind turbines on a site. They are generally used for testing potential impacts on significant species. CRMs generally use bird observational data from the site and bird size, flight speed, population sizes, and avoidance rates, along with inputs about the technical specification of wind turbines (e.g. turbine height, blade length, blade dimensions) and wind direction. This data and any assumptions should be included within the EAR with justification where necessary on species included and omitted from the CRM. CRMs can provide an indication of the magnitude of the collision risk by particular bird species at a site. In the absence of observed data, scenario modelling can be done, where a series of assumptions about bird use at a site are entered into the model to assess collision risk. The inputs can be varied to test a range of scenarios.

Appendix 3 – Noise methodologies

This guidance material has been prepared for wind farm applicants, proponents, planners, assessment managers, and acoustic consultants to provide practical information on how to address the assessment criteria for noise impacts associated with wind farm developments.

Part 1 of this appendix details the methodology that must be adopted for noise impact assessments, prepared when modelling the acoustic impacts of a proposed wind farm.

Part 2 of this appendix details the methodology that must be adopted for operational noise monitoring, being the measurement of noise resulting from operating wind turbines.

This guidance material assumes that all acoustical assessments and monitoring relating to wind farm developments are conducted by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant with suitable acoustic experience.

Part 1 – Noise impact assessment methodology

Wind farm developments are typically sited in areas with low ambient noise levels and have unique noise generating characteristics, including output that varies with wind speed and turbine location. The assessment and modelling of noise impacts during the development assessment phase is a crucial factor in determining the potential impacts on existing or approved land use(s) in proximity to a wind farm proposal.

General

A unique characteristic of wind farms is that there is an increase in noise level emitted from each turbine as the hub height wind speed at the site increases. The increase in hub height wind speed is typically accompanied by a slightly lesser increase in ground level wind speeds which may increase the background noise level at sensitive land use receptor locations, particularly at higher wind speeds. Wind turbines typically start generating electricity at hub wind speeds around 3-4ms⁻¹ (11 km/h) and reach maximum or 'rated' capacity at wind speeds of around 11ms⁻¹ (40 km/h) at the turbine hub height.

The types of noise wind turbines produce can be classified into the following categories:

- Mechanical noise which is produced from the gearbox and generator, bearings, yawing mechanism and blade pitch control mechanism in the nacelle and hub. Mechanical noise from modern wind turbines is not generally a dominant source of emitted noise.
- Aerodynamic noise is noise produced by air passing over the blades of the wind turbine. Aerodynamic noise can be divided into four generation mechanisms: inflow turbulence, tip noise, trailing edge noise and blade tower interaction. Trailing edge noise is generally the most significant wind turbine blade noise source.

This guideline provides a framework for the assessment of noise impacts associated with wind farm developments.

Sensitive land use receptors

The code's noise criteria apply to all existing or approved sensitive land uses for which sensitive receptors may be identified. Sensitive land uses mean any of the following as defined in the code:

- caretakers' accommodation
- childcare centre
- community care centre
- community residence
- detention facility
- dual occupancy
- dwelling house
- dwelling unit
- educational establishment

- health care services
- hospital
- hotel
- multiple dwelling
- non-resident workforce accommodation
- relocatable home park
- residential care facility
- resort complex
- retirement facility
- rooming accommodation
- rural workers' accommodation
- short-term accommodation
- tourist park.

A sensitive land use receptor does not include a temporary or mobile habitable building structure sited on the land (i.e. a caravan on private property).

Wind turbine noise characteristics

The wind turbine noise criteria contained within the code take into account the fundamental characteristics of wind farm noise, including aerodynamic noise from the rotating blades, amplitude modulation, the mechanical noise of the gearbox and other hub and nacelle components, as well as other less frequent and short-term noises that may occur, such as braking or start-up procedures. Specifically, the following characteristics have been considered in determining the criteria:

- Amplitude Modulation (AM) is an expected characteristic of wind turbine noise (commonly described as a 'swish'). Enhanced amplitude modulation (EAM) has been reported from a limited number of wind farms on limited occasions. Considerable research has been conducted and is ongoing to determine and fully understand the sources of amplitude modulation generation and the conditions which may enhance amplitude modulation to a level which is considered by receptors to be an adverse noise characteristic. Current international research is aimed at defining and measuring EAM further so that suitable assessment standards can be developed, if necessary.
- Modern turbines produce broadband noise across the frequency spectrum. With large separation distances, higher frequency noise is attenuated at a greater rate, resulting in a higher concentration of lower frequency noise at residences. It is noted that the normal acoustic environment contains many other sources of low frequency sound which are commonly experienced, such as the sound of diesel engines, aircraft flyovers, blasting, mechanical plant (including pumps, compressors, air-conditioners and gas turbines), surf waves breaking on a beach, waterfalls, thunder, wind blowing the foliage of trees and shrubs, etc.

Tonality

A correctly operating wind turbine may exhibit sound with tonal characteristics. These characteristics can be minimised or avoided by careful design and/or mitigation measures. Wind farm developers should seek to avoid the installation of wind turbines that exhibit sound with tonal characteristics by specifying the supply of wind turbines from a manufacturer which guarantees that the supplied wind turbines will not exhibit tonal characteristics at the sensitive land use.

Impulsivity

Impulsive sound is a transient sound which is not a normal characteristic of wind turbine noise, but which may occur infrequently because of mechanical or aerodynamic problems with the wind turbine. Impulsive sound is best addressed during the operational phase by maintenance when it occurs.

Noise criteria

The noise criteria apply to aspects of normal wind farm operations which can be readily predicted at the planning stage of the development. Noise modelling predictions are to be free field near existing or approved sensitive land

uses. Measurements of background noise levels and operational noise levels are to be conducted at the same, or similar, locations, normally between 5 metres and 20 metres from the sensitive land use.

Wind turbine noise levels

The predicted A-weighted equivalent noise level for wind farm development, assessed as free field noise levels at all existing or approved sensitive land use receptors, at a normal height of 1.5m AGL, must not exceed:

On host lots:

- Outdoors night time (8 pm to 6 am) L_{Aeq} 45 dB(A) or the background noise (L_{A90}) by more than 5 dB(A), whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height.

On non-host lots:

- Outdoors day time (6 am to 8 pm) L_{Aeq} 37 dB(A) or the background noise (L_{A90}) by more than 5 dB(A), whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height.
- Outdoors night time (8 pm to 6 am) L_{Aeq} 35 dB(A) or the background noise (L_{A90}) by more than 5 dB(A), whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height.

OR

- If a deed of release is negotiated between landowner and proponent, the agreed level and not exceeding outdoors night time (8 pm to 6 am) L_{Aeq} 45 dB(A) or the background noise (L_{A90}) by more than 5dB(A), whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height.

L_{Aeq} is the equivalent noise level emitted by wind turbines. L_{A90} is determined by the data collection and regression analysis procedure of this guideline (refer to below Data compilation and correlation section relating to Background noise and wind speed data).

The night time period of 8 pm to 6 am has been selected for separate analysis to provide more emphasis to the value of prevention of sleep disturbance. The limitation of the night period to 6 am provides consistency with the assessment times used by Queensland Transport and Main Roads for State-controlled roads and the commonly approved commencement time of 6 am for rural based industries, such as quarries. Restriction of the night period to 8 pm to 6 am will avoid the shoulder period between 6 am and 7 am which typically contains an increased level of road traffic noise, rural activities and natural extraneous noise (i.e. increased ambient noise levels) compared to the pre-6 am period.

The noise criteria must be applied only during the normal operating hours of each sensitive land use.

For example, day-time noise limits would generally apply to a school, commercial office, or childcare centre, whilst a residential dwelling, aged-care facility or relocatable home park would be subject to both daytime and night-time noise limits.

Staged wind farm development

The methodology in this guideline is intended to apply to greenfield sites where no wind turbines are installed. A single wind farm may be developed over several stages. Where a wind farm is proposed to be developed over several stages, the noise criteria that are applied to the initial stage of development approval will be applied to the cumulative noise level of all subsequent stages of the development.

Background noise from nearby wind farms

The wind turbine noise criteria that are applied to a new or expanded wind farm development will be based upon the same background noise scatter plot and regression analysis as used for the existing wind farm for the sensitive land uses (i.e. criteria must be based on the background noise level without the contribution of noise from existing wind farms).

Wind environment

Hub height

All wind data related to the wind environment at the site and the operating performance of the wind turbines shall be expressed in terms of the proposed hub height of the turbines.

Wind mast and monitoring instrumentation

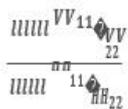
Wind masts must be constructed to a height of not less than 60 per cent of the proposed hub height with wind measuring instrumentation installed at a minimum of two heights near the top of the mast separated by an appropriate distance (ideally greater than 20m).

Wind data must be sampled so that 10-minute samples can be measured, or post-processed from the measured data, to allow correlation/synchronisation with noise monitoring 10-minute sampling periods.

Wind data

Wind data that is not measured at hub height shall be extrapolated to the hub height using the following equations:

Wind shear factor, α =
$$\frac{VV_{22} - VV_{11}}{H_{22} - H_{11}}$$



Extrapolated wind speed, VV =
$$VV_{11} + \frac{VV_{22} - VV_{11}}{H_{22} - H_{11}} (H_{FHH} - H_{11})$$



Where:

A = wind shear factor

V₁ = wind velocity at measurement height 1 in m/s

V₂ = wind velocity at measurement height 2 in m/s

H₁ = measurement height of V₁ in m

H₂ = measurement height of V₂ in m/s (H₁ or H₂ to be at least 60% of final hub height)

H_{FHH} = final hub height in m

V_{FHH} = wind velocity at final hub height in m/s

Wind farm design

All sensitive land use receptors must be identified for a minimum distance of 3 kilometres from the nearest potential wind turbine location in the area surrounding the proposed wind farm.

As a general guide, the minimum spacing between wind turbines should be three times blade diameter in the cross-wind direction(s) and five times blade diameter for the downwind direction(s) for the dominant wind directions. If the wind farm developer proposes to use alternate spacing distances, justification for the spacing distances must be provided.

The wind farm developer should select a representative wind turbine manufacturer(s) and model(s) to be considered for the wind farm and obtain the spectral sound power level data for the selected turbines from the respective manufacturer(s). The provided sound power level data shall be related to the hub height wind speeds.

Preliminary estimates of wind turbine noise levels must be calculated using a computer noise prediction model (refer to **below data compilation and correlation section relating to Noise modelling**).

The outcomes of the wind farm design preliminary noise modelling will be:

- identification of sensitive land use receptors that may be potentially impacted by wind turbine noise exceeding the noise criteria in the code
- identification of suitable representative sensitive land use receptors to be used for background noise monitoring to determine the applicable wind turbine noise criteria

- confirmation of the wind farm design, including the number of wind turbines, the type of wind turbines (i.e. standard or low noise trailing edge blade designs), the hub height, and the proposed wind turbine locations on the wind farm site.

Existing noise environment

Noise monitoring locations

The purpose of monitoring the existing noise environment is to:

- describe the ambient noise environment of the area surrounding the wind farm during the day and night period
- determine the background noise levels (L_{A90} , 10min) correlated for a range of hub height wind speeds for the day and night periods to determine the relevant outdoor wind turbine noise criteria at the selected representative noise monitoring locations.

Noise monitoring locations shall be representative of the nearest sensitive land use receptors to the proposed wind farm site and shall preferably include receptors in all direction(s) from the wind farm. Noise monitoring may be undertaken at a representative location for groups of sensitive land use receptors. The applicant shall justify the number and locations selected for noise monitoring given the:

- dimensions and scale of the proposed wind farm sit
- number and location of the potentially affected sensitive land use receptors
- the topography and description of the physical environment between the wind farm and the sensitive land use receptor locations.

Generally, noise monitoring must be conducted at all sensitive land use receptors where the predicted noise level is greater than 35 dB(A).

Ambient and background noise levels shall be measured at outdoor locations with the microphone at a height of 1.2–1.5 metres above ground level, within 20 metres of the receptor dwelling and at least 5 metres from any significant vertical reflecting surfaces. The monitoring locations must be on the wind farm side of a dwelling and as far as practicable from potential sources of domestic noise (e.g. air conditioners, water pumps, etc) and a similar distance from vegetation noise sources (trees) as the façade is from those sources. The monitoring location must not be screened from the proposed wind farm site by existing or potential future building structures on the sensitive land use site, such as sheds, tanks, or other potential barrier structures.

Monitoring locations shall be described by:

- location co-ordinates (GPS Latitude/Longitude)
- photographic images of the location and the surroundings in multiple directions.

Ground level meteorological monitoring

Meteorological monitoring at ground level shall be conducted simultaneously with the noise monitoring at selected locations near to the noise monitoring locations.

The purpose of the meteorological monitoring at ground level is to determine whether there was any rainfall or high wind speeds recorded during the noise monitoring period that might affect the measured noise levels. Wind or rain affected noise samples shall be discarded from the noise data set to be used for determining the noise criteria.

The number of meteorological stations deployed during the noise monitoring will be dependent upon the dimension and scale of the proposed wind farm, and the number and spread of the proposed noise monitoring locations. The applicant shall justify the number and locations selected for simultaneous meteorological noise monitoring during the noise monitoring studies. If the meteorological mast on the wind farm site (or in the vicinity) has the capability to measure rainfall during the noise monitoring period, separate rainfall sensors at ground level may not be required.

Monitoring synchronisation and duration

The noise monitoring instrumentation, the ground level meteorological monitoring station(s) and the wind mast anemometers shall be time synchronised for the duration of the noise monitoring so that 10-minute synchronised noise and meteorological data samples may be measured for compilation and analysis. The monitoring duration

must be at least six weeks to provide sufficient noise data for day and night periods. Any shorter duration must be justified.

Instrumentation

Sound

Background and ambient noise levels must be collected for continuous 10-minute intervals using sound level meters or noise loggers having Class 1 or Class 2 certification, in accordance with AS IEC-61672.1-2004 Electroacoustics – Sound level meters.

All noise monitoring equipment must have an inherent noise floor no greater than 20 dB(A). The meters or loggers must be suitably calibrated before and after measurements and if the difference is greater than 1dB, then the data must be discarded.

Windshields

Microphones must be protected with windshields which reduce wind induced noise on the microphone. Suitable windshields include those with a minimum diameter of 100mm and/or those including a double wind shield arrangement. In addition, noise samples recorded with microphone level wind speeds above 5 ms⁻¹ for more than 90% of any 10-minute period must be discarded from the regression analysis.

Meteorology

Instrumentation to measure the required meteorological data can take many forms but must include transducers able to quantify the wind speed to an accuracy of ± 1 m/s or better, and any occurrence of precipitation greater than 0.2mm. Statistical wind speed (i.e. equalled or exceeded for 90% of the measurement time to match the noise measurement parameter used) is the preferred wind speed measurement parameter. However, if wind monitoring instruments do not output the wind speed statistical parameters, then reporting of average wind speed is permissible.

If rotating cup anemometers or wind vanes are used, they must be appropriately maintained and in good condition. If cup anemometers are used, noise emissions from the equipment must not significantly contribute to the measured noise levels, particularly at higher wind speeds. If the instrumentation includes cooling fans, it must be ensured that the cooling fan noise level at the noise measurement location is at least 10 dB less than the ambient noise level.

Anemometers which use ultrasonic detection methods are possible. Ultrasonic anemometers have no moving parts and can measure wind speed, wind direction and the vertical vector of wind direction.

Data compilation and correlation

Rain

Noise monitoring conducted during rain periods may be adversely affected by the rainfall.

Noise monitoring samples measured in the presence of any rain (0.2mm or more) in any 10-minute monitoring interval shall be discarded from analysis. The rainfall shall be detected by the local ground level meteorological station installed as part of the noise monitoring studies.

Extraneous noise

Extraneous noise is defined as noise that is not typical of the long-term noise environment at monitoring or receptor locations. Extraneous noise may include noise of insects (if seasonal), birds (if seasonal), frogs (if seasonal), farm animal noise, local vehicle traffic, emergency services sirens, etc. For example, insect noise can be considered extraneous noise in some circumstances if it is not typical of the long-term noise environment.

Where dominant extraneous noise contributions are identified in the noise data set then the extraneous contribution must be removed. One method of achieving this would be by use of the frequency spectrum to provide a noise data set that is more representative of periods when the extraneous noise is not present. Removal of any dominant extraneous noise contribution is to be conducted prior to the affected noise data being included in the scatter plot for determination of the background noise level. The applicant shall clearly identify whether extraneous noise was present during the monitoring samples used for the data analysis. If the extraneous noise contributions are dominant in the noise samples, then the extraneous noise contribution shall be excluded or filtered. The

methodology used for adjustment or exclusion due to extraneous noise must be documented and justified in the reporting documentation.

Once the dominant extraneous noise contribution has been removed for the noise samples, the modified samples may be included in the scatter plot for determining the background noise levels.

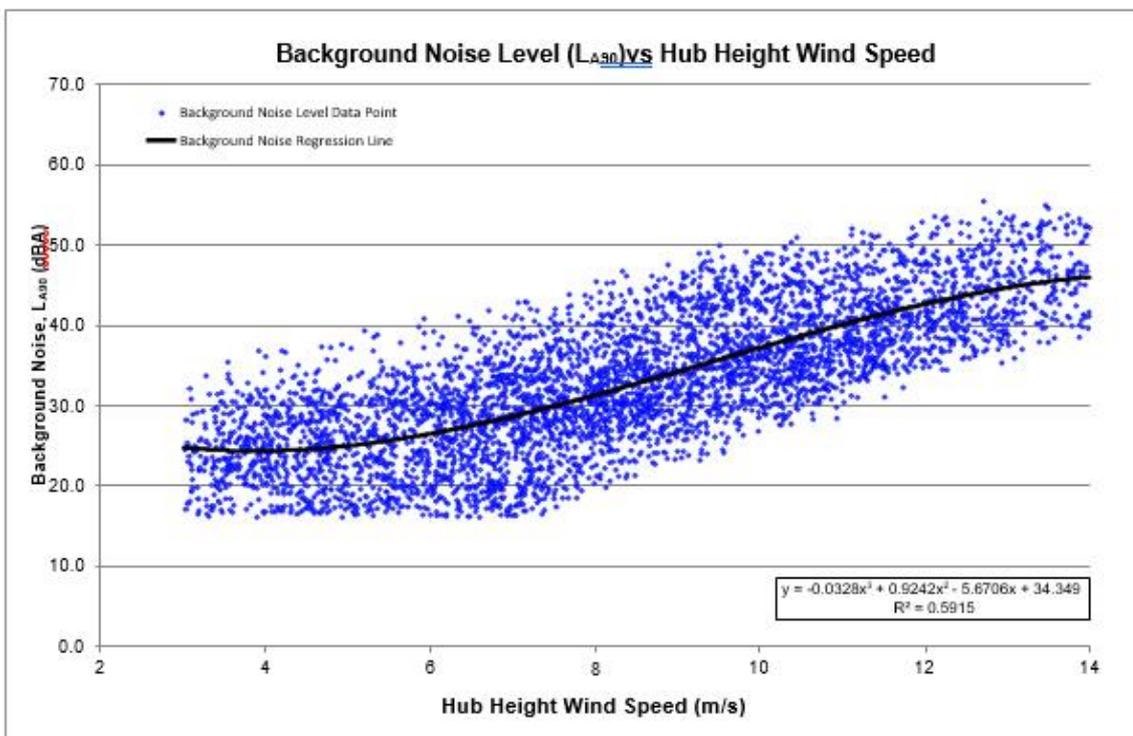
Background noise and wind speed data

Monitored noise samples shall be correlated with the corresponding hub height wind speed (between approximate wind turbine cut-in speed and the approximate speed of rated power) and plotted to form a scatter plot of the data for each of the day and night periods.

A best fit third order regression analysis shall be carried out separately on the day and night background noise hub height wind speed data. Any alternative analysis proposed (i.e., a bin analysis) must be justified by the applicant.

The graph for each relevant receptor showing the plotted points, the fitted regression line, the polynomial describing that line and the correlation coefficient shall be included in the development application.

Figure 1 shows a typical scatter graph and regression line.

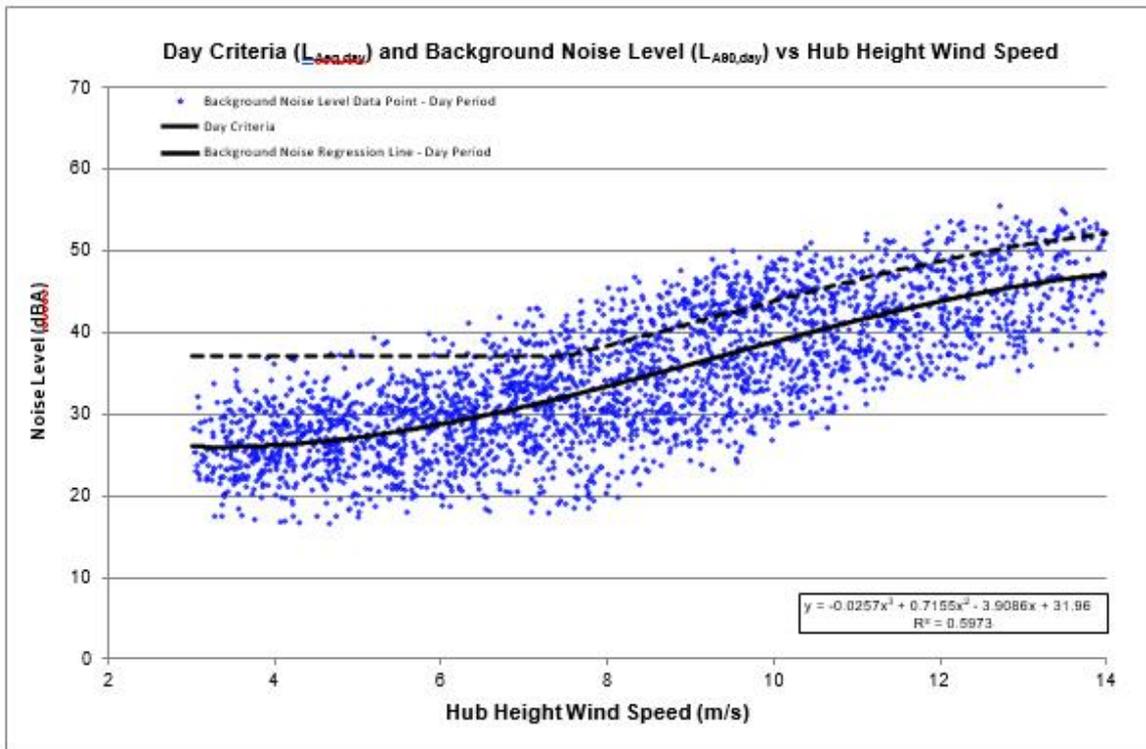


Background noise level at the sensitive land use receptor vs. hub height wind speed

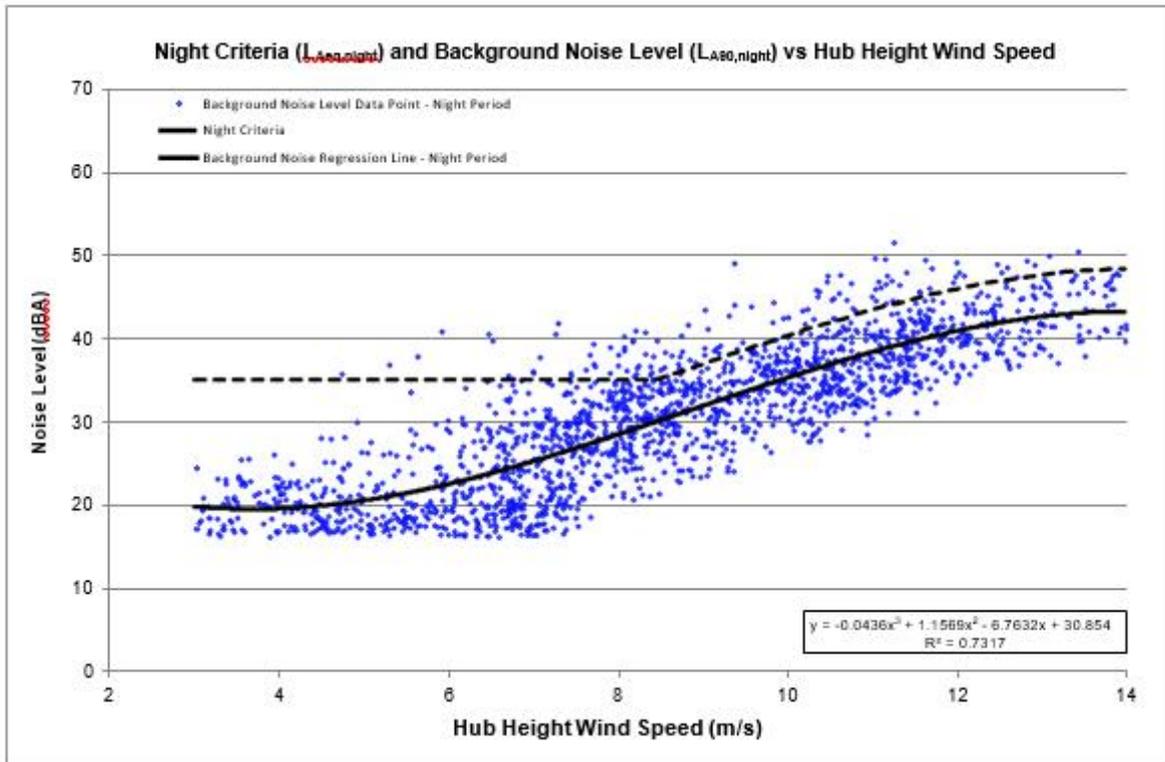
Wind turbine noise criteria

The base criterion must be overlaid on the scatter graph along with a line representing the background noise level regression

line plus 5 dB(A) for each of the day and night periods. The line formed by the combination of the minimum level and the background level plus 5 dB(A) line shall be the wind turbine noise criteria for the respective day or night period. Figure 2 and Figure 3 show typical wind turbine noise criteria plots for each daily period.



Wind turbine noise criteria plot for day period



Wind turbine noise criteria plot for night period

Predicted noise levels

Wind turbine noise levels shall be predicted at all identified sensitive land use receptors near the proposed wind farm for integer wind speeds from wind turbine cut-in speed to the speed of the rated power, with the wind speed referenced to hub height of the wind turbines.

Noise emissions from substation transformers are not included in the assessment of noise in this section. Substation noise will be assessed using the standard industrial noise methodology in Queensland.

Noise modelling

A suitable noise model must be selected to predict the worst-case noise level at sensitive land use receptors in the minimum octave band frequency range from 63 Hz to 4 kHz.

There is no standard noise model specifically applicable to sound propagation from wind farms.

ISO 9613-2:1996 Acoustics – Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors – Part 2: General method of calculation is commonly used for wind turbine noise assessments and are supported by a significant amount of research confirming that with a suitable level of safety factors and consideration of ground topography, the predicted noise levels agree well with measured noise levels during operations of the wind farm after construction.

Software programs which apply noise prediction algorithms in accordance with ISO 9613-2 are recommended for noise prediction assessments under this guideline, however alternative propagation algorithms such as Nord2000 or Harmonise, may also be used, provided relevant supporting information is provided.

ISO 9613-2 specifies a method for predicting LAeq noise levels at a distance from a source under meteorological conditions favourable to noise propagation, namely downwind propagation (<5 ms⁻¹), or equivalently propagation under a well-developed moderate ground-based temperature inversion, such as commonly occurs at night. The method is conservative because it assumes that the favourable propagation conditions occur simultaneously in all directions. Where receptors are located upwind of the dominant wind directions then the noise levels are expected to be less than predicted using this method.

Topographical ground contours with a 1 m or 5 m resolution are preferred for preparation of the noise model. If a lesser resolution is proposed (such as 10 m topographic contours), the lesser resolution must be justified in the context of proximity of sensitive land use receptors to the wind turbines and the shape, or irregularity, of the ground topography between the wind turbines and the sensitive land use receptors.

The noise prediction models shall have the following inputs, with alternative values supported by relevant documentation:

ISO 9613-2:

- warranted sound power levels
- 10°C temperature
- 70% relative humidity
- 50% acoustically hard ground and 50% acoustically soft ground
- barrier attenuation of no greater than 2 dB(A)
- 4m receiver height
- application of a 3 dB(A) correction where a "concave" ground profile exists.

If concave topography is present between a particular wind turbine location and a particular sensitive land use receptor location (e.g., wind turbine located on an elevated ridge relative to receptor location) then experience has shown that ISO 9613 predicted noise levels underestimate the actual measured levels, due to reduced ground effect and the potential for additional reflection paths.

A correction of +3 dB must be added to the calculated component overall A-weighted noise level for propagation 'across a valley', i.e. a concave ground profile, or where the ground falls away significantly, between a particular turbine and the particular receptor location.

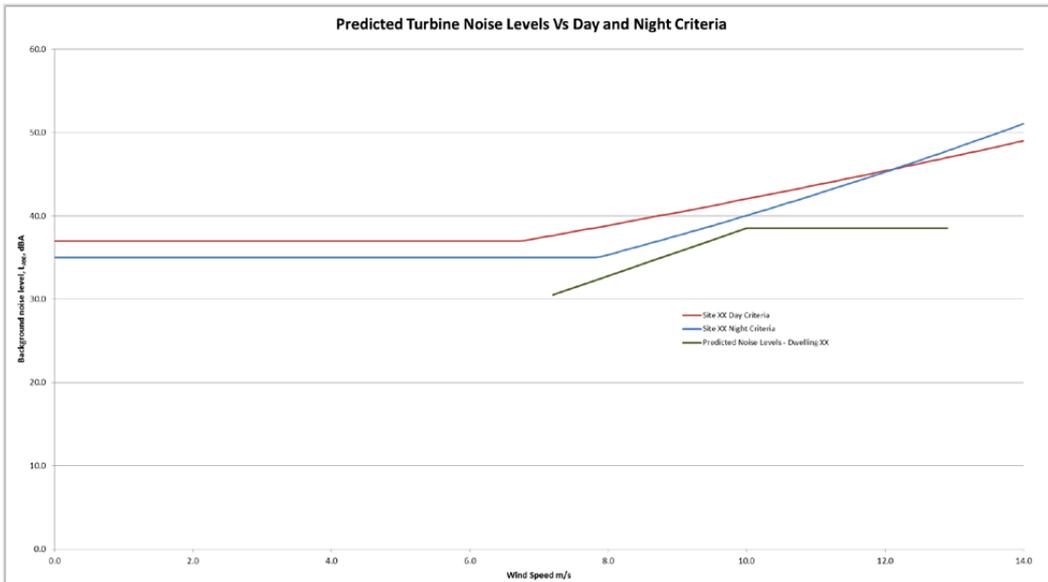
The recommended criterion for determining if the ground topography is concave is:

$$h_{mm} \geq 1.5 \times \frac{|h_{ss} - h_{rr}|}{2}$$

Where h_m is the mean height above the ground level of the direct line of sight from the receptor to the source (as defined in ISO 9613-2), and h_s and h_r are the heights above local ground level of the source and receptor respectively.

The predicted LAeq noise levels at each sensitive land use receptor shall be determined for each hub height wind speed and over-plotted on the noise criteria curves graph to compare the predicted wind turbine noise level and the

day and night criteria. Figure 4 shows a comparison of a predicted wind turbine noise levels per hub height wind speed with the noise criteria.



Predicted wind turbine noise levels vs. day and night criteria

Where alternative noise propagation algorithms or methods are used the input parameters must be documented in detail and supporting documentation regarding prediction uncertainties must be provided.

The following information shall be provided in the acoustic report supporting the development application:

- description of the noise propagation model and all input information. An electronic copy of the noise propagation model, including all noise prediction files and graphical output files shall be available for SARA upon request
- a tabulated list of worst-case predicted wind turbine noise levels at each identified sensitive land use receptor for each turbine integer wind speed for all wind turbines being considered for the wind farm
- noise contours (dB(A)) for the predicted wind turbine noise levels must be presented for the worst-case operational wind speed for the proposed wind farm development, showing predicted levels from at least 30 dB(A) contours
- the sound power levels of the proposed turbines referenced to turbine hub height wind speed, from cut-in wind speed to rated power, including the corresponding octave band sound levels from 63 Hz to 4 kHz.

Background noise levels from nearby wind farms

The noise from each individual wind farm shall meet the code noise criteria at existing or approved sensitive land uses, determined using background noise levels that existed before wind farm site developments.

Management of potential exceedances of criteria

Predicted noise levels from the proposed wind farm operation must comply with the code noise criteria for both day and night periods at all existing or approved sensitive land use receptors.

Where potential exceedances of the criteria are indicated as a result of noise prediction modelling, then modifications to the wind farm design (e.g. wind turbine layout, number of wind turbines operating, time of day for wind turbine operations, upgrade to low noise wind turbine type, etc.) must be carried out.

The development application shall comprise a proposal where the predicted wind turbine noise levels do not exceed the criteria for any sensitive land use receptor.

The **Noise Impact Assessment** prepared to support a development application for a wind farm must include all necessary documentation to fully satisfy the noise criteria within the code.

Part 2 – Noise monitoring methodology

This part defines the noise monitoring methodology to be used for operating wind farms in Queensland. It provides the method for measuring the noise from operating wind turbines; the results of which will be used for determining compliance with the noise criteria included within the code and any conditions of approval.

It is noted that noise experienced at sensitive land use receptors because of a wind farm will often be similar to, or lower than, the ambient noise from other sources, such as wind in the trees. This can make the separation of wind farm noise from ambient noise very difficult. Therefore, this methodology may be supplemented with additional noise measurements to assist in determining the contribution of noise from a wind farm. The additional measurements may include noise logging at an intermediate/alternative location between the wind farm and sensitive land use receptors or on/off testing. Any variation to this methodology should be discussed with SARA prior and justified accordingly based on site-specific circumstances.

Preparation of a Noise monitoring plan

Should a wind farm development be approved, the conditions of approval will require that the proponent prepare and submit to the department a **noise monitoring plan**, prior to the commencement of construction. The **noise monitoring plan** must provide details of the proposed operational noise monitoring for the specific circumstances of the wind farm and include, at a minimum, the following information:

- the proposed residential monitoring locations (including demonstration of any necessary access arrangements/consents)
- the proposed number of noise monitoring periods and the duration of each noise monitoring period
- the proposed make and model of equipment and wind shields used for noise monitoring
- the proposed method for determining wind speed and rainfall at microphone height
- details of any additional noise measurements to assist in the determination of the contribution of noise from the wind farm
- the measured background noise levels at the proposed residential monitoring locations
- the proposed method of determining wind speed at hub height (by direct measurement or measurement and correction) and demonstration that the wind speed is equivalent to the wind speed used for background noise monitoring.

In relation to the final point, the background noise monitoring conducted for the preparation of the development application is often correlated with the wind speed measured at wind masts on the wind farm site. As the project develops, wind masts are often removed to make way for wind turbines. Therefore, wind speed measurements from another location are often required for correlation with noise monitoring.

It is critical that the wind speed used for correlation within the noise modelling is equivalent to the wind speed used for correlation within the operational noise monitoring. One method is to use an anemometer from the nacelle of a wind turbine located close to the original wind mast. When using a nacelle anemometer an adjustment must be made to the measured wind speed to account for the passing of the blades. Another method is to use a permanent wind mast. Where a permanent wind mast is used, it must be correlated against the original wind mast for a period when both masts are present. This will allow any differences in wind speed to be factored into the noise monitoring.

Noise monitoring locations

Operational noise monitoring locations must be selected from the locations where background noise measurements have occurred, be representative of the nearest sensitive land use receptors to the wind farm and include, where possible, sensitive land use receptors in all directions from the wind farm. Proposed noise monitoring locations may require demonstration of necessary access arrangements/consents (i.e., where located on private property).

The applicant must justify the locations (including the number of locations) selected for noise monitoring about the site-specific circumstances of the wind farm, including:

- dimensions, scale, and layout of the proposed wind farm
- number and location of the potentially affected sensitive land use receptors
- comparison of predicted noise levels to the criteria within the code and subsequent conditions of any approval
- the topography between the wind turbines and the sensitive land use receptor locations.

Where possible, the noise monitoring equipment must be placed in the same location as where background noise measurements have occurred. Noise monitoring locations must be described within the **noise monitoring plan** by:

- location co-ordinates (GPS Latitude/Longitude)
- photographic images of the location and the surroundings in all directions.

Ground level meteorological monitoring

Meteorological monitoring at ground level must be conducted simultaneously with the operational noise monitoring at locations as near as possible to the noise monitoring locations.

The purpose of the meteorological monitoring at ground level is to determine whether there was any rainfall or high wind speeds recorded during the noise monitoring period that might affect the measured noise levels. Wind or rain affected noise samples must be discarded from the noise data set to be used for correlations.

The number of meteorological stations deployed during the noise monitoring will be dependent upon the dimension and scale of the proposed wind farm, and the number and spread of the proposed noise monitoring locations. The applicant must justify the number and locations selected for simultaneous meteorological noise monitoring based on site-specific circumstances and the selected noise monitoring locations. If a meteorological mast on the wind farm site (or in the vicinity) has the capability to measure rainfall during the noise monitoring period, separate rainfall sensors at ground level may not be required.

Instrumentation to measure the required meteorological data can take many forms but must include transducers able to quantify the wind speed to an accuracy of ± 1 m/s or better, and any occurrence of precipitation greater than 0.2mm. Statistical wind speed (i.e. the calculated wind speed exceeded for 90% of the measurement time to match the noise measurement parameter used) is the required wind speed measurement parameter.

If rotating cup anemometers or wind vanes are used, they must be appropriately maintained and in good condition. If cup anemometers are used, noise emissions from the equipment must not significantly contribute to the measured noise levels, particularly at higher wind speeds. If the instrumentation includes cooling fans, it must be ensured that the cooling fan noise level at the noise measurement location is at least 10 dB(A) less than the ambient noise level.

Anemometers which use ultrasonic detection methods are possible. Ultrasonic anemometers have no moving parts and can measure wind speed, wind direction and the vertical vector of wind direction.

Monitoring parameters

Although the guideline requires noise modelling to be conducted using the L_{Aeq} descriptor, it is not usually practical to measure the noise from a wind farm using the L_{Aeq} descriptor because intermittent noise from sources such as wind gusts in trees, vehicles, birds and insects are included. To minimise the interference from the intermittent noise sources, the L_{A90} descriptor is used as a proxy for the L_{Aeq} for the purposes of operational noise monitoring.

Monitoring duration and synchronisation

The noise monitoring instrumentation, the ground level meteorological monitoring stations and the wind mast anemometers must be time synchronised for the duration of the noise monitoring so that 10-minute synchronised noise and meteorological data samples may be measured for compilation and analysis.

The noise monitoring duration must be a minimum of six weeks to provide sufficient noise data for day and night periods. Any shorter duration should be discussed with the department prior and justified accordingly based on site-specific circumstances.

An important aspect is to ensure that the wind speed used for the correlation within the noise modelling is equivalent to (provides the same average wind speed as) the wind speed used for the correlation with noise monitoring. It is the proponent's responsibility to demonstrate that the wind speed used for monitoring is equivalent when considering location and wake effects (when the anemometer is downwind of a turbine).

Should a wind farm development be approved, the conditions of approval will require that operational noise monitoring be conducted twice within the first year of the development being fully operational (i.e., all proposed turbines operating). This will comprise the completion of noise monitoring once within three months and once following nine months of the development being fully operational. This will provide sufficient data over a twelve-month period for the department to determine compliance or otherwise with the noise criteria included within the code and any conditions of approval.

Instrumentation

Sound

Noise measurements must be collected for continuous 10-minute intervals using sound level meters or noise loggers having Class 1 or Class 2 certification in the previous two years, in accordance with AS IEC-61672.1-2004 Electroacoustics – Sound level meters.

All noise monitoring equipment must have an inherent noise floor no greater than 20 dB(A). The meters or loggers must be suitably calibrated before and after measurements and if the difference is greater than 1 dB(A), then the data must be discarded.

Windshields

Microphones must be protected with windshields which reduce wind induced noise on the microphone. Suitable windshields include those with a minimum diameter of 100 mm and/or those including a double wind shield arrangement. In addition, noise samples recorded with microphone level wind speeds above 5 ms⁻¹ for more than 90% of any 10-minute period must be discarded from the regression analysis.

Rain

Noise monitoring conducted during rain periods may be adversely affected by the rainfall. Noise monitoring samples measured in the presence of any rain (0.2mm or more) in any 10-minute monitoring interval must be discarded from analysis.

Extraneous noise

Extraneous noise is defined as noise that is not typical of the long-term noise environment at monitoring or receptor locations. Extraneous noise may include noise of insects (if seasonal), birds (if seasonal), frogs (if seasonal), farm animal noise, local vehicle traffic, emergency services sirens, etc. For example, insect noise can be considered extraneous noise in some circumstances if it is not typical of the long-term noise environment.

Where dominant extraneous noise contributions are identified in the noise data set then the extraneous contribution must be removed. One method of achieving this would be by use of the frequency spectrum to provide a noise data set that is more representative of periods when the extraneous noise is not present. Removal of any dominant extraneous noise contribution is to be conducted prior to the affected noise data being included in the scatter plot for determination of the background noise level. The applicant must clearly identify whether extraneous noise was present during the monitoring samples used for the data analysis. If the extraneous noise contributions are dominant in the noise samples, then the extraneous noise contribution must be excluded or filtered. The methodology used for adjustment or exclusion due to extraneous noise must be documented and justified in the **noise monitoring plan**. The methodology used for the operational noise monitoring must be consistent with that used for the noise modelling.

Preparation of a Noise monitoring report

Should a wind farm development be approved, the conditions of approval will require that the proponent submit separate noise monitoring reports, outlining the results of the noise monitoring, at three and twelve months following the wind farm being fully operational.

The noise monitoring reports must outline the derived wind farm noise level at sensitive land use receptors, adjusted for any tonality. This will be used by the department when determining compliance or otherwise with the acoustic criteria within the code and the conditions of approval, for sensitive land use receptors at each integer wind speed.

The noise monitoring reports must clearly outline the results of the noise monitoring as conducted in accordance with the **noise monitoring plan** prepared in accordance with this methodology.

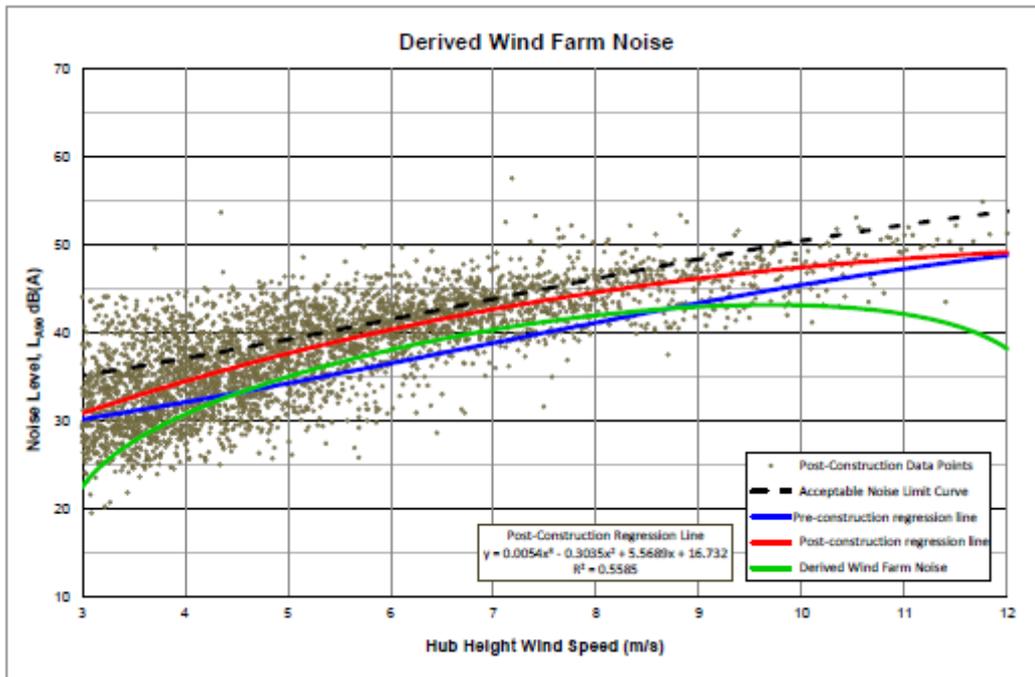
Correlation of noise and wind speed data

Monitored L_{A90} noise samples must be correlated with the corresponding hub height wind speed (between approximate wind turbine cut-in wind speed and the approximate wind speed at rated power) and plotted to form scatter plots of the data. As outlined, to minimise the interference from the intermittent noise sources, the L_{A90} descriptor is used as a proxy for the L_{Aeq} for the purposes of noise monitoring.

For monitoring locations, each of the day and night periods must have separate scatter plots. The data collected in all wind directions is used. A best fit third order regression analysis must be carried out for the noise and hub height wind speed data. Any alternative analysis proposed (i.e. a bin analysis) must be justified by the proponent.

The graph for each relevant receptor showing the plotted points, the fitted regression line, the polynomial describing that line and the correlation coefficient must be included on the plot.

The pre-construction (background noise monitoring) regression line is then subtracted from the post-construction (operational noise monitoring) regression line to determine the derived wind farm noise. It is noted that if background noise monitoring is not available, the operational noise monitoring measurement is taken as the derived wind farm noise level. Figure 5 shows a typical scatter graph and regression line analysis.



Example of regression line analysis to determine derived wind farm noise level

Tonality

Tonality must be determined by logging the (L_{Aeq}) noise in one third octave bands at the residential locations. All 10-minute L_{Aeq} noise data (i.e. without data exclusion) in one third octave bands are separated into groups of integer wind speeds $\pm 0.5m/s$. For each 10-minute interval, where a one third octave band is 5 dB(A) above the level of both adjacent one third octave bands and there is no evidence that the noise is from another source, the 10 minute interval is potentially tonal.

Evidence that the noise is from another source could be by comparison with noise measured close to turbines or by listening to an audio recording of the sound at that time. The number of potentially tonal intervals in each wind speed group is added. Where the number of potentially tonal intervals is less than 10% in each wind speed group, it is concluded that the wind farm does not exhibit significant tonality. Where more than 10% of any wind speed group is potentially tonal at a residence, 5 dB(A) is to be added to the derived wind farm noise level at that wind speed.

Preparation of an Operational strategy

Should a wind farm development be approved, within the first twelve months of the wind farm being fully operational, proponents will be afforded the opportunity to rectify any non-compliance with the acoustic criteria within the code and the conditions of approval. This may include the implementation of turbine-specific operating measures/regimes or Wind Sector Management strategies.

At twelve months following the wind farm being fully operational, the conditions of approval will require that the proponent submit an Operational strategy. The Operational strategy must outline any specific operating measures/regimes or Wind Sector Management strategies required to ensure ongoing compliance with the

acoustic criteria within the code and the conditions of approval. The proponent will be required to operate the wind farm in accordance with the Operational strategy until the development ceases operations.

Appendix 4 – Electromagnetic interference impact assessment methodology

Methodology – assessment of potential electromagnetic interference impacts

An electromagnetic interference (EMI) assessment must be prepared to demonstrate that the wind farm development is designed and sited to ensure minimal EMI to pre-existing television, radar and radio reception or transmission. The assessment must detail all potential EMI impacts, provide a preliminary impact assessment and outline any required mitigation measures.

Review of licensed radio communication services

The applicant must conduct a search of the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) Register of Radiocommunications Licences to obtain a list of all licensed radio communications services that adjoin the wind farm. A radial distance of 50–60 kilometres from the centre of the wind farm would normally capture all the potentially affected services. This search will not determine whether users of radio communications devices operating under a class licence (typically low-interference, private operators) exist in the area. Early engagement could occur with such users to identify impacts up front. It is also suggested that applicants review the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association's Radio Frequency National Site Archive (RFNSA) database.

Identify potentially affected radio communication services

The applicant can determine which radio communication services may be affected by the wind farm development by calculating the distance between line-of-sight radio paths and the proposed wind farm. This may be specific to individual wind turbines, as any turbine (including blades) within a line-of-sight radio path or within proximity to a broadcast site may impact on the performance of a radar facility.

To calculate the distance between line-of-sight radio paths and the proposed wind farm, the Fresnel zone must first be calculated. The Fresnel zone is a volume of space between transmitting and receiving stations, through which radio waves will, if uninterrupted, travel in a straight line from the transmitter to the receptor.

Separation distances for the following categories are recommended to ensure a wind turbine will not interfere with a radio communications service:

- obstruction to radio line-of-sight path
- obstruction to radar line-of-sight
- near-field effects
- reflection/scattering.

Obstruction to radio line-of-sight path

An obstruction to radio line-of-sight path occurs when the location of a wind turbine causes radio communications signals to be partially or fully obstructed, resulting in a reduction or loss of signal. It is generally accepted that effects from obstruction by wind turbines can be avoided by placing the turbines, including blades, outside the second Fresnel zone of the line of sight path of a point to point radio link. This is considered a conservative approach.

The second Fresnel zone at any point can be calculated and is dependent upon the frequency of the signal, the length of the radio communications path, and the distance of the particular point in question along the radio communications path.

The maximum second Fresnel zone distance of a link occurs at the mid-point along the path. The formula for calculating the second Fresnel zone distance at any given point is shown in **Figure 1**.

$$F_2 = \sqrt{\frac{2\lambda d_1 d_2}{d_1 + d_2}}$$

where

F_2 = Second Fresnel zone radius

λ = Wavelength in metres

d_1, d_2 are distances from each end of radio path to the point under consideration

The formula for calculating the second Fresnel zone distance

Source: EPHC, 2010

Obstruction to radar line-of-sight

Radar services may be affected by wind turbines hundreds of kilometres away if they are located within the radar operating range and line-of-sight. As a guide, long range 23 centimetres (1300MHz) radars, such as those used for aircraft en-route surveillance, can have an operating range in the order of 200 nautical miles (radius of search volume in nautical miles), a 10 centimetres (3000MHz) aircraft approach radar 60 nautical miles, and a 3 centimetres (9000MHz) aircraft final approach radar 15 nautical miles. Individual radar operators will be able to advise whether a wind farm development may impact on their services.

Near-field effects

This occurs when a wind turbine is located in such close proximity to an antenna that it changes the characteristics of that antenna. Transmitting and receiving antennas have a 'near-field' zone, which requires freedom from any object that can conduct or absorb radio waves.

The near-field zone can be calculated based upon the frequency of the signal, the gain, and the orientation of the antenna. Typical calculations give the near-field zone for:

- high band Ultra High Frequency (UHF) signals, such as cellular telephones (800MHz to 1900MHz) as approximately 20 metres
- point-to-point microwave links as approximately 720 metres
- low band VHF paging systems approximately 4 metres.

As can be seen from the above examples, the near-field zone varies widely depending upon the service type. It is recommended that a wind farm applicant consider any telecommunications site within one kilometre of the proposed wind turbines as a potentially affected party with respect to near-field effects.

Reflection/scattering

Reflection/scattering occurs when radio signals are reflected (scattered) by the wind turbine blades, interfering with a radiocommunications signal.

A ratio of the scattered signal to the received signal can be used to determine the full effect of this form of interference. This can be calculated and is dependent upon the distance of the receptor and transmitter to the wind turbine tower. Some methods use worst-case Radar Cross Section (RCS) (which is conservative), or a variant on the second Fresnel zone calculation for users close to a wind turbine. RCS is relevant to all radiocommunications services, not just radar services.

Required Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) for different services is variable but can be of the order of 30 decibels (dB).

An exclusion zone to meet the SNR requirement can be calculated and is dependent upon the gain and radiation pattern of the antenna, the worst-case RCS and the distances between user, transmission tower and wind turbine. Higher frequency signals generally utilise antenna patterns with higher gain.

There is no single criterion for potential impact on radiocommunications services due to scattering. It is recommended that potential impact due to reflections/scattering must be discussed with a potentially affected party if the wind farm applicant intends to locate a wind turbine within two kilometres of any telecommunications site.

It should also be noted that the accuracy of radiocommunications site coordinates in the ACMA database is variable, and it relies upon the accuracy of individuals providing the correct data when applying for a new service. It also does not guarantee that a particular service is operating, or operating in accordance with ACMA regulations. Should there be an indication that any individual services may be impacted, or are within, for instance, five kilometres of causing an impact, then it is recommended that independent verification of the radiocommunications site co-ordinates is carried out to confirm the existence of any issues.

Methodology – preliminary impact assessment

Having determined which radiocommunications services may be potentially affected by the wind farm, a preliminary impact assessment must be conducted to determine the level of risk for each of the potential impacts that are expected for each identified service. This will assist in a preliminary determination of the mitigation methods to be considered at the next stage.

If there is a low risk of impact, or the impact cannot be easily quantified, then mitigation methods may be proposed for implementation after construction, when the actual effects can be measured. There may also be the opportunity to reduce any general exclusion zones due to the specific circumstances of the development. For example, some exclusion zones are based on methods using worst-case RCS to determine signal loss due to scattering. However, while RCS can be minimised, the actual RCS is difficult to determine accurately. Using the worst-case RCS can result in overly conservative exclusion zones.

This information will inform any required mitigation strategies to ensure minimal impacts on electromagnetic interference.

Methodology – mitigation strategy

Best practice to reduce the effects of EMI involves designing the wind turbines to minimise their Radar Cross Section (RCS). This reduces the extent to which the turbines will reflect or scatter radio energy. This can be achieved by:

- careful choice of tower and nacelle shape and construction materials
- the use of absorbing (or non-reflective) materials for blade construction
- consideration of the spacing of wind turbines in relation to any affected services.

As mentioned above, RCS is relevant to all radio communications services, not just radar services.

Mitigation options may be different for each individual service affected, depending on the type of service and the level of interference expected.

Appendix 5 – Shadow flicker assessment methodology

The suggested method for assessment for potential shadow flicker impacts is as follows:

- determine the extent of shadows from turbines, based on a distance of 265 m x maximum blade chord (no assessment is required for residences beyond this distance)
- identify all existing or approved sensitive land uses within the extent of shadows from proposed turbine positions
- use modelling software with relevant modelling assumptions (as identified in tables below) to calculate the theoretical annual shadow flicker duration at each existing or approved sensitive land use, accounting for topography
- consider possible impacts of shadow flicker and identifying those impacts with negligible or significant risks

Sensitivity

Shadow flicker duration can be very sensitive to location, varying by up to approximately 0.8 hours per metre of horizontal displacement (per annum). Thus, in an extreme case, one end of a sensitive land use may experience no shadow flicker while the other end may exceed the limit. For this reason, the assessment method requires reporting of the maximum value of shadow flicker duration within 50 m of the centre of a sensitive land use. This

addresses a range of other sensitivity considerations such as the offset between rotor and towers, and some minor inaccuracies in the modelling equations, as well as annual variation in shadow flicker.

Topographical variations will also need to be considered.

Recommended modelling assumptions

The assumptions or settings recommended for use in modelling shadow flicker are as follows:

Model Parameter	Setting
Zone of influence of shadows	265 m x maximum blade chord
Minimum angle to the sun	3 degrees
Shape of the sun	Disk
Time and duration of modelling	One full year representing a non-leap year 12 to 15 years after the date of DA submission
Orientation of the rotor	Sphere or disk facing the sun
Offset between rotor and tower	Not required
Time step	Ten (10) minutes or less
Effects of topography	Include
Receptor height	1.5 m – 2 m and window / balcony height where dwellings have more than one storey
Receptor location	A map must be provided and the highest level of annual shadow flicker within 50 m of the centre of a dwelling reported.
Grid size for mapping and assessment of shadow flicker at a receptor	Not more than 25 m

Means of mitigating modelled estimates

The table below contains some potential mitigation measures that may be used to reduce the modelled exposure on an existing or approved sensitive land use to shadow flicker.

Mitigation	Constraints
Cloud cover assessment	Annual limit reduced to 10 hours/year (see below for recommended method of assessment)
Vegetation blocking shadows	Where it can be shown that the view of a source turbine is completely blocked, the contribution of that turbine may be ignored.
Scheduling turbine operation	Annual limit reduced to 10 hours/year

The recommended method for assessment of cloud cover is to:

- obtain *Bureau of Meteorology* data on cloud cover from the closest site (reporting at least 9am and 3pm cloud cover) with at least three years of data
- determine monthly averages separately for the 9 am and 3 pm proportion of cloudy days
- reduce shadow flicker occurring in a given month by the proportion of cloudy days (evening shadow flicker must be reduced using the proportion from 3 pm and morning shadow flicker using the proportion from 9 am)
- sum the reduced monthly totals to determine the revised annual exposure.

6.0 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
°C	Degrees Celsius.
ACMA	The Australian Communications and Media Authority.
AGL	Above ground level.
AHD	Australian Height Datum.
AS	Australian Standard.
AS/NZS	Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard.
AIS	Aviation Impact Statement.
BBMP	Bird and Bat Management Plan.
BUSR	Bird Utilisation Survey Report.
BMP	Bushfire Management Plan.
BCA	Building Code of Australia.
CVMP	Cleared Vegetation Management Plan.
CIRP	Complaint Investigation and Response Plan.
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan.
dB	Decibel. The unit of sound level.
dBA	A measured sound pressure level that incorporates A-weighting is denoted LpA, and has units of dB(A), often written as dBA.
EAR	Ecological Assessment Report.
EMI	Electromagnetic Interference.
EP Act	<i>Environmental Protection Act 1994.</i>
EPP (Noise)	Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2008.
ESCPC	Erosion and Sediment Control Plan – Construction.
Hz	Hertz.
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission.

ISO	International Standards Organisation.
km	Kilometre.
km/h	Kilometre per hour.
LAeq	Time averaged A-weighted equivalent continuous sound pressure level.
LA90	A-weighted sound pressure level which is exceeded for 90% of the measurement period. Often referred to as the Background noise level.
m	Metre.
ms ⁻¹	Metres per second.
PRP	Preliminary Rehabilitation Plan.
QLD	Queensland.
RMP	Rehabilitation Management Plan.
RPEQ	Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland.
SEMP	Safety and Emergency Management Plans.
SMP	Stormwater Management Plan.
SSPO	Site Stabilisation Plan – Operations.
TIA	Traffic Impact Assessment.
TMP	Traffic Management Plan.
VFMP	Vegetation and Fauna Management Plan.

7.0 Glossary

Term	Meaning
Ambient noise level	The ambient noise level is the noise level measured in the absence of the intrusive noise or the noise requiring control. Ambient noise levels are frequently measured to determine the situation prior to the addition of a new noise source. Ambient noise levels would typically include a summary of all noise descriptors including L_{Aeq} and statistical parameters such as L_{A90} , L_{A10} and L_{A01} .
Amplitude modulation	Amplitude modulation special audible characteristics occur when there is significant amplitude modulation of the aerodynamic sound from one of more wind turbines such that there is a greater than normal degree of fluctuation as a function of the blade passing frequency (typically about once per second for larger turbines).
A-weighting	The A-weighting approximates the response of the human ear, particularly for sounds of moderate and low levels.
Background noise level	Minimum ambient noise level, evaluated as the level exceeded for 90 per cent of 10 minute sample periods ($L_{A90,10 \text{ minute}}$) during a defined time period of interest (e.g. daytime, evening or night-time).
Day	6 am to 10 pm.
dB	Decibel. The unit of sound level. A measurement of sound level expressed as a logarithmic ratio of sound pressure P relative to a reference pressure of $P_r=20 \text{ mPa}$, i.e. $\text{dB} = 20 \times \log(P/P_r)$.
Free-field	A region in space where sound may propagate free from any form of obstruction, usually greater than 5m from any significant vertical reflecting surface.
Frequency	Frequency is the number of pressure fluctuation cycles per second of a sound wave. Measured in units of Hertz (Hz). Sound can occur over a range of frequencies extending from the very low, such as the rumble of thunder, up to the very high such as the crash of cymbals.
Impulsiveness	Transient sound having a peak level of short duration, typically less than 100 milliseconds.
Hertz (Hz)	Hertz is the unit of frequency. One hertz is one cycle per second. One thousand hertz is a kilohertz (kHz).
L_{Aeq}	The equivalent continuous (time-averaged) A-weighted sound level.
L_{A90}	The A-weighted noise level equalled or exceeded for 90% of the measurement period. This is commonly referred to as the background noise level.

Low frequency noise	Sound with frequencies between 20Hz and 200 Hz.
Night	10 pm to 6 am.
Octave band	Sound, which can occur over a range of frequencies, may be divided into octave bands for analysis. For environmental noise assessments, sound is commonly divided into 7 octave bands. The octave band frequencies are 63Hz, 125Hz, 250Hz, 500Hz, 1kHz, 2kHz and 4kHz.
Sound pressure level (L _p)	A logarithmic ratio of a sound pressure measured at distance, relative to the threshold of hearing (20 µPa RMS) and expressed in decibels.
Sound power level (L _w)	The level of total sound power radiated by a sound source. A logarithmic ratio of the acoustic power output of a source relative to 10 ⁻¹² Watts and expressed in decibels.
Special audible characteristics	Distinctive characteristics of a sound which are likely to subjectively cause adverse community response at lower levels than a sound without such characteristics. Examples are tonality (e.g. a hum or a whine), enhanced amplitude modulation and impulsiveness (e.g. bangs or thumps).
Tonality	Noise containing a perceptible pitch component.

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