



The Victorian Government is introducing clear and consistent regulations for wind farm noise.

Wind farms play an important role in helping Victoria achieve its emissions reduction targets and ensuring a sustainable, reliable and affordable energy future for all Victorians.

It's important to ensure that the amenity of local communities is protected and to provide certainty for industry.

From 1 July 2021, wind farm turbine noise will be regulated under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*. The Government is introducing new requirements for wind farm operators to demonstrate compliance with noise standards.

EPA will be the primary regulator for wind farm turbine noise, providing a consistent approach across Victoria.

New Regulations under the Environment Protection Act

From 1 July 2021, the new *Environment Protection Act 2017* (as amended) introduced a general environmental duty to take reasonable steps to minimise risks of harm to human health and the environment, as well as 'unreasonable noise' provisions. These apply to all industries in Victoria, including wind farm operators.

From 1 August 2021, new Regulations are being introduced under this Act to set specific requirements for wind farm operators. These requirements do not change the limits for wind turbine noise but do set additional measures to demonstrate compliance.

These include:

- ongoing compliance with the relevant noise standard (the New Zealand Noise Standard NZS 6808 1998 or 2010, depending on the planning permit)
- implementation of a noise management plan, including a complaints management plan
- providing an annual statement detailing the actions that have been taken to ensure compliance
- completing a post-construction noise assessment
- conducting noise monitoring every five years.

These requirements have been developed based on a regulatory impact statement and on public consultation conducted in early 2021.

EPA will be the primary regulator for wind farm noise

As Victoria's independent environmental regulator, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) will be the primary regulator for wind farm turbine noise, for both new and existing facilities.

EPA will develop technical guidance in consultation with industry to support compliance with the regulations.

EPA will work with councils and the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) as appropriate to provide an effective response to noise complaints.

Changes in the planning system

Changes are also being made to the Victoria Planning Provisions to reduce duplication of requirements for wind farm operators and responsibilities for local councils

The main change is that future planning permits will not have mandatory conditions in relation to operational wind turbine noise, including the requirement to conduct a post-construction noise assessment, which is included under the Environment Protection Regulations. Local councils will no longer have responsibility for enforcing these conditions.

All other permit application requirements for wind energy facilities will remain, including the requirement to conduct a pre-construction (predictive) noise assessment to demonstrate that the facility can comply with the New Zealand Standard. The Minister for Planning will continue to be responsible for assessing applications and approving permits.

These changes do not affect conditions or enforcement responsibilities under existing planning permits. With the introduction of the new Regulations, in many instances it will be appropriate for wind farm operators to request amendments to remove or alter relevant permit conditions.

Changes under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act

From 1 July 2021, noise and other emissions from wind farm turbines will no longer be subject to the nuisance provisions of the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. Councils will still be required to investigate any nuisance complaints made under this Act that were unresolved at this time.

Complaints about wind farm noise

Any concerns about wind farm turbine noise should be raised directly with the wind farm operator. The operator will respond according to their complaints management procedures.

If unresolved, concerns about noise pollution can be reported to EPA via the 24/7 Pollution Report hotline – 1300 372 842. The AEIC can also be contacted if further assistance is needed.

Further information

Further information about responses to public consultation can be found on the [Engage Victoria website](#).

Planning amendment documents are available for online inspection at:

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/schemes-and-amendments/browse-amendments> .

For other questions about these changes please call the DELWP Contact Centre on 136186 or email windfarmnoise@delwp.vic.gov.au or development.approvals@delwp.vic.gov.au.

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