



The Victorian Government invites feedback on proposed regulations for wind farm noise.

Wind farms play an important role in achieving Victoria's emissions reduction targets and a sustainable, reliable and affordable energy future for all Victorians.

New regulations are proposed to ensure that the amenity of local communities is protected and to provide certainty for industry. These will replace interim regulations, which are due to expire in October 2022.

What is being proposed?

Three alternative approaches to wind farm noise regulation have been assessed in a regulatory impact statement (RIS):

1. No additional regulation – relying on general provisions in the *Environment Protection Act 2017*
2. Direct regulation – setting specific requirements for compliance
3. Permissions – using a permit or other permission from the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to specify requirements for compliance.

The RIS identified that the preferred approach is direct regulation, as it is expected to provide greater certainty through an explicit and transparent regulatory framework.

The same package of requirements for wind farm operators is proposed under both the direct regulation and permissions options, as noted in Table 1.

Under all options, EPA will be the primary regulator for wind farm turbine noise, for new and existing facilities.

The Minister for Planning will continue to be responsible for assessing applications and approving permits for wind farm developments.

Why are new regulations needed?

The Environment Protection Amendment (Interim) Regulations 2021 were made on 26th October 2021; are currently in effect and will expire after 12 months. Ongoing regulations are required to ensure continuity and certainty for industry and community.

How does this relate to the interim regulations?

Proposed regulations about wind farm noise have been developed for public feedback: the Environment Protection Amendment Regulations 2022 ('proposed regulations').

The proposed regulations have the same requirements for wind farm operators as in the current interim regulations, with some minor points of clarification and updates to the timing of requirements. This includes two changes in response to public consultation on the previous draft regulations in January 2021:

- allowing greater flexibility in periodic monitoring of wind turbine noise, specifically the use of alternate assessment points
- continuing to allow for stakeholder agreements with wind farm operators.

Changes to the regulation of wind farm noise

February 2022

Table 1. Requirements for wind farm operators

Requirement in the interim regulations	Changes in the proposed regulations
Ongoing compliance with the relevant noise standard	No change
For properties subject to new stakeholder agreements, upper noise limit of 45dB or background sound plus 5 dB	Timeline of requirement coming into effect changed from 1 November 2021 to 1 June 2022
Completing a post-construction noise assessment within 12 months of commencement of operations	Timeline of requirement coming into effect changed from 1 November 2021 to 1 June 2022
Implementing a noise management plan, including a complaints management plan	Clarifying that the noise management plan must be provided to EPA upon request, with the timeline changed from 1 January 2021 to 1 June 2022.
Providing an annual statement detailing actions to ensure compliance, from 1 July 2022	Due date changed from three months after the end of the financial year to four months, as per the original regulations
Conducting noise monitoring every five years, from 1 January 2024	No change
No transitional provisions	Transitional provisions to preserve the requirements that applied under the interim regulations and any reports produced during this time

How to provide feedback

The Victorian Government invites public feedback on which of the regulatory approaches would be the most effective, and whether the proposed requirements for wind farm operators are appropriate.

This consultation will be available on the [Engage Victoria](#) website.

You can also respond by email to windfarmnoise@delwp.vic.gov.au.

More information

More information about the regulation of operational wind farm noise, including technical guidance is available from [EPA](#).

Concerns about wind farm turbine noise should be raised directly with the wind farm operator. The operator will respond according to its complaints management procedures. If unresolved, concerns about noise pollution can be reported to EPA via the 24/7 Pollution Report hotline – 1300 372 842 or you can send an email to contact@epa.vic.gov.au.

For any questions or further comments about this consultation, please email windfarmnoise@delwp.vic.gov.au

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ISBN 978-1-76105-890-5 (pdf)

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