

News

# Waubra wind farm under scrutiny Final sign-off delayed

By **BRENDAN GULLIFER**

WAUBRA wind farm run by Spanish multinational Acciona is still under the microscope from the state government.

A government source said last week Planning Minister Matthew Guy had written to the company again demanding further information over ongoing noise testing.

"This is a complicated issue but the minister wants more information," the source said.

However, an Acciona spokesman said the company was still waiting ministerial sign-off.

"Acciona commissioned an independent 12-month post-construction noise monitoring report which

showed compliance, and submitted to the state government last October," the spokesman said.

"We are still awaiting government's final sign-off."

But a Spring Street insider said the minister's latest letter would have only "just been sent".

Acciona submitted a post-construction noise compliance report to the state government last October.

The report was peer-reviewed at the government's request.

"The advice from the Environmental Protection Authority and the independent peer reviewer has raised a number of issues with the report, including compliance with the relevant noise



Sam Stepnell

standard at several dwellings near the wind farm," according to a departmental letter dated December 2010.

It is understood relations between Acciona and residents claiming to be suffering ill health from nearby turbines continue to be testy.

A mother-of-three has made an impassioned plea

to Governor-General Quentin Bryce, claiming the government has failed to protect her family by allowing a nearby wind farm to operate in a non-compliant manner.

Sam Stepnell said the previous state government had been complicit in allowing the Spanish company Acciona to erect and operate turbines close to homes.

And Ms Stepnell said current Planning Minister Matthew Guy had not signed off on the wind farm although it had been in operation for two years.

"The minister still knows there is a problem with the non-compliant wind farm," Ms Stepnell wrote.

"What is he going to do to fix the current mess he inherited?"

Ms Stepnell said she had removed her son from Waubra Primary School along with other families because of alleged health effects associated with turbines.

Friends of the Earth spokesman Cam Walker said his organisation supported "getting to the bottom" of the wind turbine issue.

"We are not wind developers, so cannot comment on the design of the Waubra wind farm," Mr Walker said.

"We do understand that some people are getting sick as a result of living near turbines.

This is a terrible situation, and we support getting to the bottom of the issue."