

Environment Protection Authority

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ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

11 August 2025

Paul West
Chairperson, Development Assessment Panel
Tasmanian Planning Commission
GPO Box 1691
HOBART TAS 7001

By Email Only: tpc@planning.tas.gov.au

Dear Paul West

CELLARS HILL WIND FARM MAJOR PROJECT RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR FURTHER ADVICE – EPA BOARD POLICY NOISE LIMITS FOR WIND ENERGY PROJECTS

I refer to your letter dated 5 August 2025 seeking further advice about the *EPA Board Policy – Noise limits for wind energy projects* (the Policy). I also note my letter of 6 August 2025 (Attachment 1) in which I provided you with further information about the implications of the Policy for the Cellars Hill Wind Farm Major Project (Cellars Hill Major Project).

To allow for questions and discussion about the Policy, the EPA is hosting a formal briefing for relevant staff from the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) and, as appropriate, members of the Development Assessment Panels (Panel) for Major Projects. The EPA Noise Specialist will attend this briefing. An invitation will be sent to Luke Newman and Michael Hogan of the TPC in due course.

In the meantime, and in response to the questions posed in your letter of 5 August 2025, I advise:

1. The Policy is not an environmental standard under the *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act (1994)* (EMPCA). The Policy will be applied by the EPA Board when undertaking its assessment of the Cellars Hill Major Project in accordance with the statutory requirements of EMPCA and the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA).
2. The EPA has also advised other relevant stakeholders about the Policy, including Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT), the proponents of pending wind farm assessments, local governments, consultants, the TPC and the Development Assessment Panels for all Major Projects that are wind farms.
3. The Policy was updated to provide clarity and certainty to the community, industry and regulators about operational design criteria and compliance measurements for noise emissions from wind farms, and to protect noise sensitive premises from wind farm noise during periods of low background noise.

The previous policy did not provide guidance on the methodology for measuring wind farm noise. The Policy clarifies that the design criteria and noise emission limits apply to the cumulative noise emissions from the activity, inclusive of wind turbines and all ancillary infrastructure. The Policy also clarifies that it applies to the design and operation of wind farm projects, and not to noise generated during construction. The previous policy was silent on these matters.

You state in your letter of 5 August 2025 that the EPA's representation does not highlight an inconsistency between the EPA Board's Assessment Requirement Notice (ARN) and the Panel's draft assessment criteria for

the Cellars Hill Major Project. While the Panel's draft assessment criteria correctly identify operational noise as a matter to be addressed, the requirement under assessment criterion (3.12) for the sound level of operating wind turbines to comply with the *New Zealand Standard NZS6808:2010 Acoustics – Wind farm noise* (NZ Standard) is in conflict with the Policy.

This is because the Policy requires the predicted equivalent operational noise level at any noise sensitive premises to not exceed the greater of 35dB(A) $L_{Aeq, 10 \text{ min}}$ or background (L_{A90}) + 5 dB(A), which will not necessarily be met by complying with the NZ Standard limit of 40 dB(A) or background +5 dB(A), whichever is the greater. My letter of 6 August 2025 also outlined the reasons why the EPA Board considers the NZ Standard unsuitable for use as the only basis for setting or enforcing noise limits for wind energy projects in Tasmania.

For ease of reference, I have attached a copy of the Policy (Attachment 2) and associated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to provide further details about how the Policy will be applied (Attachment 3).

If you require further information after considering this letter, I encourage you to attend the formal briefing with the EPA Noise Specialist as appropriate, or alternatively please contact Liz Richardson, Senior Environmental Officer on 0472 565 495.

Yours sincerely



Catherine Murdoch

DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Enc: Attachment 1. Letter to Paul West – EPA Board Policy noise limits (6 August 2025)

Attachment 2. EPA Board Policy on noise limits for wind energy projects

Attachment 3. FAQs EPA Board Policy

cc: Luke Newman, Senior Planning Adviser, TPC, Luke.Newman@planning.tas.gov.au