

FAQs - Operational Queries

1. How has the bushfire risk been addressed?

To manage bushfire risk, a fire emergency response plan is required to be prepared prior to works commencing (condition 13e).

This Plan requires the following specific matters;

- A minimum of 45,000 litres of water to be made available on site, solely for the purpose of fire fighting.
- Outline procedures for ongoing vegetation management, fuel control and provision of fire fighting equipment during declared fire danger periods.
- Ensuring all internal roads are suitable for fire fighting vehicles including turn around areas.
- Onsite introduction of the wind farm, prior to operation, for the local CFA, council, police and emergency services.
- Ongoing training and site inductions for key internal and external stakeholders to ensure they are aware of and familiar with fire management requirements for the site.

2. What is the risk of turbines catching on fire?

The risk of a turbine catching fire is low.

Through the passage of time, turbines are utilising advanced technologies to ensure they continue to be safe.

The proposed model turbine will have an inbuilt fire suppression system which is activated by smoke and arc detection. This is run through an inbuilt safety system.

3. How do complaints get lodged and responded to?

Complaint management plans are required to be prepared and approved as part of the planning permit (conditions 20-25). Complaints on various issues are to be outlined within the Management Plans.

A copy of the previously approved general complaint investigation and response plan can be sourced from the link below (also on our website, under the Useful Links section);

https://www.woolsthorpewindfarm.com/files/ugd/6a122b_c7dfcb6567d3441ab6ff2392312ee4b0.pdf

This provides a clear example of what is expected and escalation, where required.

The proponent will provide avenues for complaints via;

- Telephone
- Email
- Mail

4. What if I have a specific complaint about noise? Who do I report this to?

Recent changes to legislation mean that there is a new approach to managing operational noise complaints. The current planning permit requires the operator to comply with the New Zealand Standard and also makes reference to the EPAs role in noise issues.

An operator of a wind farm is required to ensure that operational noise complies with the noise limits in the relevant standard, and to manage and review wind farm noise. This is reflected in the permit conditions.

Noise management plans are also required as part of the planning permit conditions for ongoing adherence.

We refer to the below Department of Transport and Planning website which provides a summary of the changes and process;

[Wind turbine noise \(planning.vic.gov.au\)](http://planning.vic.gov.au)

5. What further acoustic testing is required?
Under the planning permit, acoustic assessments are required at various points;
 - Prior to works commencing – concurrent with the endorsement of plans and documents, a predictive acoustic assessment is required (condition 16).
 - Post-construction – once construction is completed, a post-construction acoustic assessment is required to be undertaken. The purpose of this is to validate the accuracy of the predictive acoustic assessment.
6. What happens when it is windy or extreme weather events?
The wind turbines will stop turning at wind speeds above 25 m/s (90 km/h). This is to prevent high forces resulting from the wind damaging turbine components.
7. We are concerned about the impact to bats and birds. What is being done about this?
A condition of the permit requires a Bat and Avifauna Management Plan (BAM Plan) to be prepared in consultation with the Department of Environment and Department of Planning (condition 14).

This Plan is required to outline management measures to reduce impacts to specific avifauna species as well as more general measures. BAM Plans are commonly required to all wind farms though the specific avifauna species identified in the area changes from project to project.

Critically, the ground clearance level between the turbine blade and ground, which is 66 metres, will be the most critical element to minimise impacts noting the average flight height of avifauna is well below this threshold.

8. How will the wind farm impact agricultural aviation contractors?
Agricultural aircraft operators usually practise a safe distance of separation from obstacles (such as a turbine or powerlines or trees) of two times the wingspan of their aircraft. Mid-sized aircraft utilised for the agricultural operations may typically have a wing span of about 15 metres, so pilots spraying fertiliser (for example) would typically practise around 30 m of separation.

The planning permit for Woolsthorpe Wind Farm requires turbines to meet the following setbacks;

- Minimum 350 metre spacing between turbines (condition 3c)
- Minimum 150 metre setback from external property boundaries (condition 3m)

With turbine blades of 82 m in length, no part of any turbine will come within 68 m of the site boundary (or neighbouring property), which is more than twice the normal distance of separation practised by agricultural pilots.

The above permit conditions seek to ensure that turbines are located within the site boundaries so as to not prejudice aerial applications.

In low speed wind conditions suitable for aerial agricultural applications, turbines are most commonly stationary or turning slowly and therefore the impact to aerial applications flying from downwind turbulence is no greater than where turbines were not present.

Further analysis regarding the impacts of aerial applications can be sourced from the expert Planning Panel report:

https://www.planningpanels.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/681075/Woolsthorpe-Wind-Farm-Permit-Amendment-Panel-Report-.pdf

9. What is the impact of turbines of aerial fire fighting?

As discussed through the Planning Panel Report, specialised low flying aircraft are used for aerial firefighting. These aircraft will only be flown under clear skies and where the environs are safe to do so.

There is also the ability for the wind turbines to be turned off in the event of a bushfire.