

OVERVIEW

Wind turbines are currently the main source of renewable energy in South Australia, with this state having around 54% of Australia's total wind power generating capacity. Currently, wind generates 50% of South Australia's electricity.

Currently, South Australia has 16 wind farms, with at least nine more having received planning consent or under construction. Another has received approval through the relevant Council's development assessment process.

MINIMISING IMPACT

There are a number of methods available to minimise the visual impact of wind farms. Consideration must also be given to the adjacent properties, landscaping and noise issues. Among other elements, an application must ensure that:

- All turbines look alike, having a clean, sleek appearance, with blades rotating in the same direction
- Turbine numbers are minimised, using the largest possible model (subject to the visual absorption capabilities and environmental considerations of the site) rather than numerous small ones (unless it is demonstrated that the small ones are less conspicuous)
- The siting of wind farms, ancillary roads and transmission infrastructure complements the natural landform, contours and landform backdrop, including ridgelines
- The choice of materials and colour (off-white and grey turbines, with low contrast for roads) used for the development complements the skyline and the backdrop of the view-sheds
- Vegetation removal is minimised and advanced planting of vegetation screens or other visual buffers is conducted as appropriate
- High quality vegetation and landform rehabilitation is incorporated (both onsite and off-site) as required - Wind Farm Developments are more appropriate in the Watershed (Primary Production) Zone and the Public Purpose Zone.
- Turbines are located reflecting the landscape and topographical features (e.g. a random pattern may suit a rolling, varied landform and a linear pattern may suit a coastal edge, farm or industrial site)
- Wind farms developments of all scales should avoid clutter, such as advertisements and equipment
- Siting and design minimise impact on views from areas used for recreation or for dwellings
- Night lighting is minimised (although this is required for the safe operation of a wind energy facility and for aviation safety)
- Light glare is minimised through measures such as baffling
- Underground electricity lines are used wherever practicable
- Earthworks are minimized, and measures are implemented to protect drainage lines and waterways
- All issues associated with a Wind Farm that impacts adjoining properties are considered carefully within the submitted proposal.

In the Watershed (Primary Production) Zone and the Public Purpose Zone, a Wind Farm development will be a Category 2 form of development. Within 2 kilometres of a Township, Urban or Residential Zone, the application will be Category 3.

Note: A Wind Farm is not non-complying in the Watershed (Primary Production) Zone and Public Purpose Zone. It is also not non-complying in the McLaren Vale Protection District of the Hills Face Zone.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS WHEN DEVELOPING A WIND FARM

The wind farm should be of a scale that appreciates the natural form, vegetation and topography of the land. Amongst other considerations, CFS requirements must be met for any proposal for a Wind Farm in the Adelaide Hills Council.

FORMS OF WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT THAT ARE NOT APPROPRIATE IN THE ADELAIDE HILLS COUNCIL INCLUDE:

- Proposals where excavation and/or filling of land where the depth of excavation and/or height of filling exceeds 3 metres when in association with the wind farm.
- Large Scale wind farms that do not consider the requirements to minimize impact (as listed above).
- Where land Divisions (including boundary realignments) are required for a Wind Farm proposal in the Watershed (Primary Production) Zone or Public Purpose Zone if the area is considered of significant Primary Production Value.

PLEASE NOTE

The information provided in this Fact Sheet is only intended to be a summary. All applications are considered on their individual merits and therefore situations may vary.

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Further information

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