

# **EPA Board Communiqué**

**March 2020**

*Regular Meeting 136, Tuesday 3 March*

## **Eagles and Wind Farms**

The Board has previously discussed the need for a more strategic approach to the impact of wind-farms on eagles and has referred a letter from a raptor expert to the Policy and Conservation Branch of DPIPWE for comment. Hence, the Board was pleased to have a presentation on research into eagle monitoring, GPS tracking and habitat use from James Pay. James carried out much of the work for his PhD at the University of Tasmania and is hoping to follow up and develop it subject to funding. The Board was impressed with the potential of the research and methodology to facilitate a more informed and accurate assessment of the impact of future windfarms on eagles and asked EPA Tasmania to investigate if there was any way that the Board could support and/or promote the proposed research.

## **Special Fee Remission – Neckon, Port Latta windfarm**

This is a small wind-farm that would not normally be regulated by the EPA. The annual fee for development that are called in for assessment defaults to the maximum specified in the Fee Regulations. Construction of the windfarm has not yet commenced. The Board agreed to grant a special fee remission to Neckon for the 19/20 fee period and an ongoing remission to reduce the annual fee to be equivalent to the lowest fee category for windfarms.

## **Wind Energy Project Noise Limits**

The Board has previously used a NZ standard on noise from wind farms to set noise limits in Tasmania (40 db(A)). Recently, other Australian jurisdictions have moved away from the NZ standard and set a lower limit. EPA Tasmania recommended to the Board that, in line with other jurisdictions, a lower standard (35 dB(A)) be adopted in Tasmania. The Board discussed the proposal with the EPA Noise Specialist, including whether there are options for operators to reduce noise, if necessary, and the implications for power production. It was noted that all established and approved windfarms in Tasmania, bar one, would meet the new standard.

The Board was generally satisfied that the proposed new standard was appropriate, but sought further information on the effect that a new standard would have on windfarms currently under assessment, and whether the NZ standard had been specified in the Board's guidelines for these developments.

## **Offset Guidelines for Impacts on Eagles from Wind Farms**

EPA Tasmania and the Policy and Conservation Branch have developed guidelines for developing and assessing appropriate offsets for wind farm impacts on eagles.

The guidelines are high level and not prescriptive to accommodate a range of possible impacts from this industry and variations between wind farm proposals. The guidelines have been signed off by the Secretary of DPIPWE. The Board noted the guidelines.

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