

Appendix A: Meeting assessment requirements

Where a wind farm application is State significant development (SSD), specific assessment requirements are specified in Director General's Requirements (DGRs). This appendix includes information to assist applicants with assessing particular impacts from a wind farm proposal in cases where DGRs require particular impacts to be assessed. The assessment must be detailed in the proponent's EIS.

Landscape and visual amenity

The visual impact of a wind farm depends on the extent of the change to the landscape caused by the development, taking into account:

- the visibility of the development
- the locations and distances from which the development can be viewed
- landscape values and their significance
- the sensitivity of the landscape features to change

The visual impact of the development relates to:

- the number, height, scale, spacing, colour and surface reflectivity of the wind turbines
- the quantity and characteristics of lighting, including aviation obstacle lighting (subject to CASA requirements and advice)
- potential for visual clutter caused by turbine layout and ability to view through a cluster or array (visually well ordered series) of turbines in an orderly manner
- the removal or planting of vegetation
- the location and scale of other buildings and works including transmission lines and associated access roads
- proximity to sensitive areas
- proximity to an existing or proposed wind farm, having regard to cumulative visual effects.

The features of the landscape include:

- the topography of the land
- the amount and type of vegetation
- natural features such as waterways, cliffs, escarpments, hills, gullies and valleys
- visual boundaries between major landscape types
- the type, pattern, built form, scale and character of development, including roads and walking tracks
- flora and fauna habitat
- cultural heritage sites
- the skyline

Assessing landscape and visual amenity impacts

DGRs typically require a comprehensive assessment of the impact of a proposed wind farm on the landscape character, landscape values, visual amenity and any scenic or significant vistas to be undertaken. There should be a particular focus on any neighbours' houses within 2 km of a proposed wind turbine that do not host the wind farm facility. The assessment should include:

- a description of the assessment methodology and a clear justification of it including discrete justification of the methodology for assessing impacts at neighbours' houses within 2 km of a proposed wind turbine
- a description of all relevant components of the project, including turbine heights and layout – where micro-siting or a range of turbines is proposed, the assessment should be based on the 'worst case' layout and turbine height
- a description of the landscape including key features