

MEMO

Project:	District Plan Review	Document No.:	Mm 001
To:	Waimakariri District Council	Date:	14 June 2019
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Delivery:	by email	Project No.:	20181370
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		Attachments:	No
Subject:	Response to Queries		

Jessica

Thank you for your queries raised in recent emails. Our response is as follows. We have included each of your questions in italics for clarity.

- 1. The draft noise limits for the light, general, and heavy industrial zones are the same (current zoning Business 2, 3 & 5). Why is this and do you think there should be difference in the noise levels for each of them to reflect the different nature of the zones?*

Our impression of the various industrial zones is that Business 1 is “light”, Business 5 is “general”, and Business 2 & 3 are “heavy”. We agree that there should be a differentiation between these, and suggest that Business 5 should be changed to 60/50 dB (daytime/night-time), with the other zones remaining as shown in our Deliverable 3 report.

- 2. Do you have any recommendations for dealing with noise from activities on the surface of water? Should the general noise levels apply, specific rules, or manage them through activity status? It appears to be addressed in your recommendations through the activity status for motorised vehicles, as you said it should be broadened to include additional examples such as watercraft.*

Our view is that there is no benefit in having rules for recreational users of water, because the general public are never going to give any thought to District Plan compliance when taking their boat out. However, we think it is essential that there is some control over commercial activities on the water, such as commercial jet-boating activities. In our experience, it is the commercial activities that are likely to result in adverse effects.

In our Deliverable 3 report (6.6.13), we suggested restricted discretionary status for motorised activities, and recommended that this explicitly included such activities as commercial jet boating. However, we note that the title of this clause suggests it is controlling recreational uses. This was not our intention.

- 3. Wind turbines - A setback of 500m is quite far and we want to be enabling. What was the rationale for this? Shouldn't the general noise standards apply since modern ones can be rather quiet?*

Although some modern turbines are “rather quiet”, others are quite noisy. Our review of noise data during the preparation of our Deliverable 3 report showed significant variation, and we therefore believe it is necessary to be reasonably conservative when writing a permitted activity rule.

One issue which occurs to us in reviewing our proposed wording (6.6.17) is that it may be useful to clarify that the 500 metre setback applies to any dwelling other than on the site where the turbine is located.

A rule has also been drafted in the utilities chapter for new installation, operation, maintenance, upgrading and removal of a small-scale wind turbine/s for small-scale and community-scale renewable electricity generation and its use. What do you think of this rule instead?

- a. Where there is only one wind turbine on a site, the turbine shall comply with the noise standards for the relevant zone;*



b. Where multiple wind turbines are clustered on one or more site, the turbine shall comply with NZS 6808:2010 Acoustics – Wind Farm Noise;

We can understand the thinking behind this rule. However, the limits set out in NZS 6808 are essentially the same as the night-time limits for general noise sources (in rural/residential zones), so items a and b amount to the same thing. The difficulty is that wind turbines cannot be measured using NZS 6801 because this standard doesn't provide for measuring in windy conditions. We are also of the view that requiring compliance with zone standards only works as part of a controlled or discretionary activity, because there is no mechanism for proving compliance of a permitted activity prior to installation of the turbine.

On balance, we prefer the setback rule which we proposed (6.6.17).

4. *What do you think about having separate noise limits for heat pumps in residential zones? A council staff member has commented:*

“The issue we have observed at Amy Place is some devices can come in just under the district plan levels BUT the incessant constant monotone noise is so penetrating that it drives people to despair and ultimately to their doctor. The constant heatpump noise in that case was so penetrating over a period of time that I’m wondering if 38DbA would be more realistic maximum level for these devices.”

We have deliberately been silent on the issue of heat pumps. Our experience suggests that a large percentage of heat pumps don't comply with night-time noise standards, yet only a small number result in complaints because the effects are a function of the layout of the adjoining dwelling. A rule explicitly requiring compliance could therefore prove difficult for many new homes. By remaining silent, Council staff could still refer to the District Plan standards when problems arise.

One suggestion would be for Council to have a guidance note that is issued as part of the building consent process. This note could highlight the issue of heat pump noise, and perhaps even offer guidelines on appropriate location and/or setbacks for outdoor units.

5. *In Deliverable 3 on page 16 it says “Night-time noise standards...compliance at upper levels shall consider locations immediately outside bedrooms”. Why from this location? Should it be locations where the effects are received?*

In re-reading this clause, we can see that it is poorly worded. The aim was to ensure that noise effects are assessed at appropriate locations. The issue is that there are times when strict compliance cannot be achieved because the adjoining building is multi-level and the boundary fence is ineffective at upper levels, yet there may be no effects at those upper levels.

On further reflection, we recommend moving items 4 and 5 to the “matters of discretion” section. It may be possible to merge them into one, with wording along the lines of the following:

“...the extent to which there are noise effects in the receiving environment at upper levels of multi-level buildings. Any assessment of noise effects shall consider the use of the receiving environment at the time of day being considered, and shall recognise that effects on bedrooms primarily occur at night, and effects on outdoor living areas are primarily during the day...”

6. *In Deliverable 3 on page 10 you recommend District Plan signal redevelopment of the Sutherlands Sawmill site should be for quieter activities. Was there anything in particular you had in mind e.g. do you mean the type of activities that are permitted in this zone, or through objectives and policies?*

We do not think controlling the range of permitted activities is appropriate because the issue lies solely with the sawmill site by virtue of its close proximity to a number of residential properties. In other words, this is an issue for this specific site rather than the zone as a whole, although there are arguably other sites on the perimeter of Business zones which could be in a similar position. We support the idea of addressing this through objectives and policies if possible.

7. *Is the intention to include, or not include, special audible characteristics in the rule that noise standards shall not exceed noise limits by 10 Db, or more?*

We assume you are referring to the proposed RD and NC rules in 6.4. We have deliberately not mentioned special audible characteristics. A compliance assessment under NZS 6802 will automatically include special audible characteristics.