

Panel 6:

A National Assessment Framework

The objective of this project is to provide a sound and transparent framework for the identification and assessment of landscape values, the assessment of the impact of wind farms on landscape values, site impact assessment and mitigation and community consultation processes. The framework needs to be able to be applied consistently across the country in keeping with internationally recognised heritage principles.

Our initial research in developing a framework suggests that it should provide a clear series of steps to inform any wind farm development process. The proposed steps are as follows:

Within each of the steps identified above, communities & professionals would need to work together to develop a shared understanding of landscape values and potential impacts on those values. Your feedback on your experience on other projects will assist us to prepare a working model for developers and communities across Australia.

What do you like about the proposed framework?

Does it provide enough flexibility to meet the needs of different projects and locations?

Does it provide enough certainty and consistency in your opinion?

What do you think could be changed or improved about the framework?

What are the key messages would you like to convey to the Australian Council of National Trusts, wind industry and regulators about community involvement in assessing landscape values?

Thank you for your time and input.

National Assessment Framework: Summary Content of Each Step

This table contains summary information about a process described in full (including definitions of terms) in the draft National Assessment Framework report.

	STEP 1: Assess the Landscape Values		STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4
	1A: Preliminary Landscape Assessment	1B: Full Landscape Assessment	Describe & Model the Wind Farm in the Landscape	Assess the Impacts of the Wind Farm on Landscape Values	Develop Management & Mitigation Measures
Input to proponent's pre-feasibility assessment	Input to proponent's formal application for regulatory approval				
Purpose	To identify any readily ascertainable issues relevant to landscape values that might influence the development of a wind farm on this site.	To document and evaluate community-held values about the wind farm site and surrounding landscape.	To describe and depict the proposed wind farm in its landscape setting.	To assess, in a rigorous and transparent manner, the likely impacts of the proposed wind farm on the identified landscape values.	To develop and test measures to manage and mitigate the impacts of the wind farm on the identified landscape values.
Consultation Objectives	Understand documented community values. Ensure that the preliminary assessment is informed by an analysis of the scope of potential stakeholders.	Develop a consultation and engagement plan to facilitate an understanding of community-held landscape values. Implement the consultation and engagement plan to support the involvement of identified stakeholders in defining landscape values.	Ensure the depiction and modelling relates to identified landscape values, including visual and non-visual aspects.	Provide accessible information regarding the likely impacts of the wind farm on identified landscape values. Facilitate community understanding and feedback on the likely impacts of the wind farm on identified landscape values. Seek community input into the development of management and mitigation measures. Indicate the level of community satisfaction and agreement with proposed management and mitigation measures.	
NEED FOR DIRECT COMMUNITY INPUT?	OPTIONAL	ESSENTIAL	OPTIONAL	ESSENTIAL	
Required Outputs	A preliminary analysis that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> summarises existing research about landscape values in the area affected by the proposed wind farm; draws preliminary conclusions about locations from which the proposed wind farm is likely to be visible, and the relative importance of the landscape values in the area within which it may be visible; identifies any strongly-held community values that might influence the development of a wind farm in this landscape; and identifies substantial gaps in knowledge to be addressed in subsequent stages. 	A detailed report on the landscape values of the wind farm site and surrounding landscape that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes (in words, maps and images) the natural and cultural characteristics relevant to understanding landscape values; identifies the communities for whom the landscape is or might be held in high regard; describes places or features in the landscape, and characteristics or associations, that are valued by communities; evaluates the significance of landscape values, and identifies elements of local, state or national significance; and provides maps and other graphic material to support the description of landscape values. 	A description of the proposed development (in words, maps and images), including the size and type of turbines, all ancillary infrastructure and other landscape modifications. Graphic material (photomontages, animations, real-time models or video) depicting the wind farm in the landscape in ways that will allow impacts to be rated. A factual report describing the relative visual intrusion of the wind farm, to inform statements about impacts in Step 3.	A report that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a description of the identified landscape impacts, and the values on which they impact; an evaluation of the acceptability of individual landscape impacts and of the wind farm as a whole; a description of the methodology used to identify and rate impacts; supporting material including graphic depiction of impacts; an explanation of the rationale for management and mitigation measures in response to Step 3; an outline of the process followed to determine and agree mitigation measures; any changes made to location, siting or design; recommendations for ongoing management and maintenance, including the preparation of landscaping plans (if required); notes and proceedings of community evaluation / involvement sessions, including an assessment of the extent to which community satisfaction and agreement with proposed management and mitigation measures has been achieved; and a final evaluation of the wind farm's impact on landscape values and recommendations to the wind farm developer for development application. 	