



WINDFARMS AND LANDSCAPES VALUES - NATIONAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Wind Farms and Landscapes Values – National Assessment Methodology project is joint project between the Australian Council of National Trusts (ACNT) and Australian Wind Energy Association (Auswind), funded by the Department of the Environment and Heritage under the Low Emission Technology and Abatement Program.

This project builds on a joint project undertaken in 2004/05 by the ACNT and Auswind *Wind Farms and Landscapes Values Stage 1 Report, Identifying Issues, March 2005*, a copy of which can be located on the ACNT website - www.nationaltrust.org.au

That report concluded “there is growing unity of the need for consistent, transparent and comprehensive consideration of the special values of the landscapes in which wind farms might be sited, and there is a desire for consistent and adequate community involvement in this.”

The objective of this “stage 2” project is to provide a sound and transparent, nationally applicable framework for:

- Identifying and assessing landscape values;
- assessing the potential impacts of wind farms on landscape values;
- site impact assessment and mitigation; and
- community consultation procedures.

The project will be undertaken in three key phases.

Development of a draft Methodology(ies)

A suitably qualified consultant will be appointed to prepare draft methodologies based on a review of best practice in Australia and overseas. This will include a thorough review of relevant landscape, heritage and environmental literature and an analysis of the scope and potential applicability of methodologies to the project objectives. The methodology(ies) will be informed by the issues documented in the Stage 1 Report and build on the strengths of existing methodologies including guidelines and protocols for the visual representation of development proposals and best practice, and appropriate community consultation.

Testing of the draft Methodology(ies)

The Stage 1 project identified the need for consistent and adequate community involvement in the assessment of the siting of wind farms. Testing of the draft methodology is a critical component of this project. The methodologies will be expected to apply nationwide so extensive consultation is essential. Consultation sessions will be held in each State and Territory commencing in early 2007.

Incorporation of feedback received

The final component of the project will be to incorporate the feedback received from the consultation sessions into the draft methodology(ies) and obtain sign off from the Boards of both Auswind and the ACNT.

The outcomes of the project will be incorporated into the Auswind Best Practice Guidelines. The Auswind Accreditation Scheme, currently under development and to be based on ISO 14001 principles, will independently audit compliance with the Best Practice Guidelines.

The ACNT will consider adoption of the project outcomes as ACNT policy on the siting of wind farms.

If you would like to be placed on the stakeholder database to receive information about this project and in particular the consultation sessions, please email sjones@auswind.org