

Draft LPP23 – Large-Scale Renewable Energy Facilities



November 2025

This policy was adopted by Council to set governing principles in place that align the strategic direction of the organisation with:

Focus Area: *Caring for our natural environment*

Outcome Statement E1: *Natural landscapes are protected and managed to preserve and restore their biodiversity and cultural values*

Focus Area: *Caring for our natural environment*

Outcome Statement E2: *New development is concentrated within clearly defined areas to avoid impacts on remaining farmland and ecosystems*

Focus Area: *Caring for our natural environment*

Outcome Statement E4: *The Shire and community are committed to climate action, reducing carbon emissions and achieving net zero*

Focus Area: *Managing our built environment*

Outcome Statement B6: *Our built environment is functional, sustainable, accessible, safe, and sympathetic to the surrounds*

Introduction

This local planning policy is formulated within the framework of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River Local Planning Scheme No.2, guided by the Planning and Development Act 2005 and the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015. It aims to provide clear guidelines for the establishment and operation of large-scale renewable energy facilities within the Shire of Augusta Margaret River while adhering to legislative requirements.

This local planning policy fills a current gap in state planning policy as the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) are still in development of a planning code for renewable energy facilities. If the new state planning code overrides or contradicts this local planning policy, the Shire will further review the policy to ensure consistency.

Objectives

- Large scale renewables do not have significant impacts on landscape values without broader community acceptance of those impacts.
- The amenity and enjoyment of the local environment is protected and preserved.
- The broader environmental benefits of a transition to renewable energy is balanced with local impacts.
- Impacts on local infrastructure are mitigated through contributions or improvements to infrastructure associated with proposals.
- Environmental impact is minimised and biodiversity is supported, with the precautionary approach implemented for high risk environmental issues.

- To ensure that productivity of prime agricultural land is not compromised.
- Reasonable levels of amenity are maintained through restricting the impacts of noise on sensitive land uses.
- Land that has been utilised for large scale renewable development is returned to its previous state without cost to the community, environment or purpose for which the land is zoned.
- The community shares directly in the benefit of investment in large scale proposals.

Application

This Policy has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 Deemed provisions Schedule 2 Part 2 Division 2 – Local Planning Policies.

The policy applies to any situation in which Large Scale Renewable development may be considered under the Planning Scheme.

This policy applies to facilities used to generate energy from a renewable energy source (such as solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, biogas, and includes battery storage), where energy produced is primarily intended for export to the electricity grid or for commercial/industrial use, and associated transmission infrastructure.

It does not include renewable energy systems where the energy produced principally supplies a domestic, rural or small business premises and any on-selling to the grid is secondary (e.g. rooftop solar panels or domestic-scale wind turbines). These renewable systems are either exempt under the deemed provisions or may be adequately considered under the general provisions of the Planning Scheme.

The provisions and requirements of this Policy may be reduced depending upon the scale, location of the proposal and whether it is considered to be ancillary to existing partly development.

Policy

1. Land Capability

- 1.1 Renewable energy facilities should be sited and designed to ensure they do not compromise the ongoing use of land for agriculture. Proposals must demonstrate how agricultural activities will be maintained alongside the renewable energy development and address any potential risks to biosecurity, contamination or animal welfare.
- 1.2 Where practicable, facilities should be located on land identified as having low agricultural capability to minimise conflict with productive farming operations.

2. Landscape and visual impact

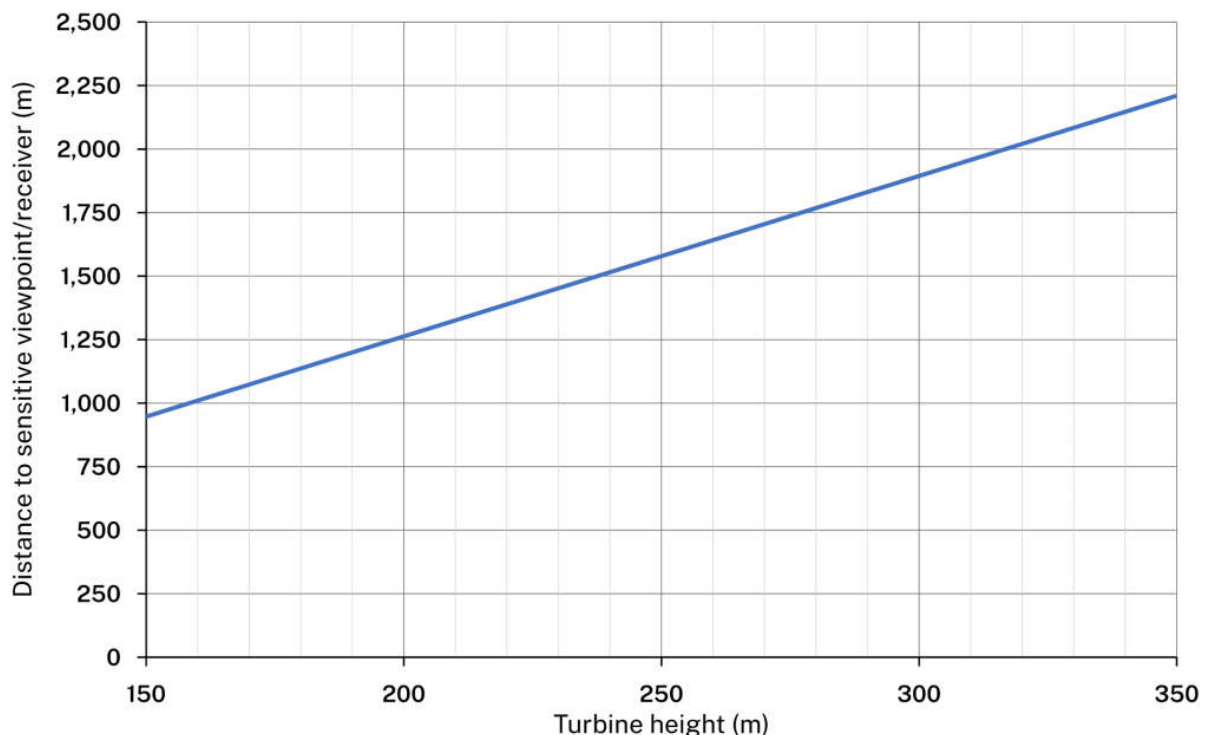
- 2.1 The visual impacts of a proposal shall be determined based on formal evaluation of impact using a manner consistent with the technical supplement for landscape character and visual impact assessment (NSW). Despite this forming the basis for evaluation due regard shall be given to the WAPC 'Visual Landscape Planning in Western Australia' manual and proposals will reflect the principles and guidelines for Wind Farms outlined in this manual.

2.2 In addition to 2.1, due regard will be given to the social acceptance of any resultant landscape impact of a wind farm, informed by community perception and acceptance of change made known by submissions on a specific proposal.

2.3 Where landscape impact is very high or high, and community acceptance is low, consideration will be given the strategic need for the facility in the context of projected demand and alternative energy potential in the SWIS.

2.4 Landscape impacts may be mitigated by negotiated agreements with owners of sensitive premises subject to significant visual impacts.

2.5 Unless subject to a neighbour agreement, large scale wind turbines shall be setback from sensitive premises in accordance with the following:



2.6 Wind Farms shall be sited to avoid areas of landscape significance and prominent landscape features and shall be sited on flatter sites or lower topography.

2.7 Wind turbines should have uniformity in terms of colour, size, and shape, where appropriate, and should not adversely impact upon nearby properties by reason of shadow flicker, blade glint or lighting.

2.8 Where practical, landscaping should be implemented within the development site, and associated properties and reserves, to mitigate the visual impact of the development from sensitive land uses, and public roads.

3. Noise/Amenity

3.1 Applicants are required to demonstrate that any proposed renewable energy facility and associated infrastructure can comply with the WA Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 (Noise Regulations) at a noise sensitive premises.

3.2 In addition to 3.1, wind farms shall comply with the following criteria:

Noise Description	Acoustic Level
The outdoor (free-field) weighted equivalent acoustic level (LA _{eq}), assessed at all noise affected existing or approved sensitive land uses on an associated premises	1. 40dB(A); 2. the background noise (LA ₉₀) by more than 5dB(A); whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height .
The outdoor (free-field) weighted equivalent acoustic level (LA _{eq}), assessed at all noise affected existing or approved sensitive land uses on an non-associated premises	1. 35dB(A); 2. the background noise (LA ₉₀) by more than 5dB(A); whichever is the greater, for wind speed from cut-in to rated power of the wind turbine and each integer wind speed in between referenced to hub height

3.3 Ongoing monitoring of noise shall be carried out over the life of the project with results provided to the Shire annually in a transparent manner which is easily accessible for community members.

3.4 Developers must assess and mitigate to the greatest extent possible, electromagnetic interference to mobile telephones, radio reception and television reception.

4. Environmental impact

4.1 Renewable energy proposals must demonstrate that environmental values are protected and managed throughout the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the development.

4.2 Clearing of native vegetation is to be avoided. Renewable energy facilities should be sited on cleared land, including access tracks and associated construction areas and transmission infrastructure.

4.3 Where clearing of native vegetation is demonstrated to be unavoidable due to technical or feasibility considerations, clearing is required to be firstly, minimised and secondly, mitigated through appropriate environmental offset.

4.4 Proposals shall be located away from environmentally sensitive areas of high ecological value and setback a minimum of 100 metres from waterways.

4.5 Proposals shall minimise impacts on fauna with particular focus on identifying and mitigating risks to birds and bats through appropriate siting, design and ongoing management. In that respect proposals shall maintain a sufficient setback from consolidated vegetation and habitat and mitigate impacts on flight paths for birds and bats.

4.6 Proposals shall identify, manage and mitigate impacts on surface and groundwater. In particular, construction impacts on groundwater resources shall be supported by detailed evaluation of potential impacts on local ecosystems, including through Acid Sulphate Soil risk assessment. Utilising the precautionary principle, risks shall be avoided or minimised.

4.7 Proposals shall identify and mitigate any greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the project.

- 4.8 Proposals will establish a framework for ongoing environmental monitoring, reporting and adaptive management over the life of the project.
- 4.9 Proposals will address cumulative environmental impacts in the context of existing land use

5. Emergency Management

- 5.1 The proposal is to address emergency management, particularly fire risk, in consultation with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and local bushfire brigades.
- 5.2 Developers are to provide a Bushfire Management Plan for areas that fall within the Bushfire Prone Area. Reference should be made to *State Planning Policy 3.7 – Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas* (SPP 3.7). It is also recommended that the developer review the Victorian Country Fire Associations document - Design Guidelines and Model Requirements for Renewable Energy Facilities v4 (2023), as this document provides a best practice approach to considering bushfire risk and fire safety measures in the design, construction and operation of renewable energy facilities (including windfarms).

6. Construction and Decommissioning

- 6.1 The proposal shall demonstrate that traffic impacts including any impacts on infrastructure will be mitigated through appropriate management measures, road upgrades and a road maintenance agreement where necessary.
- 6.2 Technical evaluation of road condition and upgrade requirements will be provided in accordance with WALGA technical guidance notes. Resulting upgrade and maintenance contribution requirements will mitigate any impacts on the road network from both construction, operations and decommissioning.
- 6.3 Worker's accommodation, where proposed, is to be located in existing population centres and consideration should be given to the implementation of long-term sustainable housing that benefits the community.
- 6.4 Developments will be subject to a restricted timeframe for approval at which point end of life considerations will require either decommissioning or further approval.
- 6.5 The applicant must demonstrate how all infrastructure, including footings and subsurface components, will be removed at the end of the project life, and that the site will be rehabilitated to its pre-development condition or an agreed alternative standard in a binding decommissioning plan.
- 6.6 The decommissioning plan is expected to be updated to reflect best practice and changes in technology at the time of decommissioning, including details on how it will be funded and enforced. It should incorporate life cycle assessment and sustainable reuse of structures and footings.

6.7 Applicants should outline how funds will be directed into future decommissioning or refurbishment costs or alternative, perpetual legal mechanisms to secure decommissioning at end of life.

6.8 Decommissioning will ensure that affected land will be returned to a predevelopment condition or other preferable state suitable under the relevant zoning, once the renewable energy facility reaches the end of its lifecycle.

7. Community Engagement

7.1 It is expected proponents have carried out extensive engagement with community and other stakeholders prior to the submission of a development application. Evidence of this should be provided with the application, including how the proposal may have been changed in response to community concerns. Community Engagement should be informed by the Western Australian Local Government Associations (WALGAs) Community Engagement Guidelines, and where relevant,, the Clean Energy Council Guidelines for the Australian Wind Industry (2018).

7.2 Where a proposal is subject to a negotiated agreement a schedule of those agreements, matters excluded by each agreement and the negotiated term of the agreement shall be provided to the decision maker to assist in the determination of impacts.

8. Community Benefit Funds

8.1 All large-scale renewable energy projects will contribute to a Community Enhancements (Benefits) Fund (CEF) to ensure the local community directly benefits from large scale renewable developments.

8.2 The developer is to enter into an agreement with the Shire for a community benefit fund. This is to be a separate and enforceable agreement from the development approval. The agreement should include benefits that are related to the issues or impacts of the proposal and should reflect the values of the communities impacted. The proponent should fully disclose the nature of the proposed agreement and commitment to contribution to community benefit in association with any development application.

Relevant legislation

Planning and Development Act (2005)

Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015

Related documents

To be read alongside

- WA position statement: renewable energy facilities and any subsequent state planning policy or code.
- Community Engagement guidelines
- Powering WA Benefit sharing guidelines

Definitions

Associated premises means a dwelling or other sensitive premises which either occurs on the same property as a proposal or where the owner of a surrounding property has reached agreement with the proponent about the impacts of development and management of impacts, including acceptance of any discrepancy with criteria in this policy.

Community Enhancements (Benefits) Fund (CEF) – A fund to which the proponent contributes financially, for the benefit of the local community. Contributions are typically made annually over the life of the project and are used to support community projects, services, and infrastructure in accordance with this Policy. The CEF may also be referred to as a Community Benefit Fund in other documents.

Environmentally sensitive areas means an area so defined under the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004, a wetland, or area of vegetation containing Protected Environmental Communities, Threatened Environmental Communities or declared rare flora or fauna.

Landscape Impact means an objective measure of landscape impact ranging from very low to high in accordance with the method and principles outlined in the Wind Energy Guideline Technical Supplement for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (NSW, DPLHI 2024).

Large-scale renewable energy facility means a solar farm, wind farm or battery energy storage system that provides for commercial scale energy supply.

Offset means compensating for any unavoidable, residual impacts through activities including restoration or rehabilitation of similar local ecosystems or financial contributions to a fund for biodiversity enhancement.

Large scale renewable energy facility means premises, buildings or structures used to generate energy from a renewable energy source, where energy is being produced for commercial gain. It does not include solar panels or a wind turbine principally used to supply energy for an individual lot's private domestic or rural supply.

Negotiated agreement means a formal agreement between a proponent and the owner of land to manage the impacts of development and any discrepancy with criteria in this policy.

Non-associated premises means a dwelling or other sensitive premises where a negotiated agreement does not apply.

Sensitive Land Use includes dwellings and other forms of permanent or short stay accommodation, medical and educational establishments.

Small-scale renewable energy facility means solar, wind, battery or other energy generation not defined as a large scale facility.

SWIS means the South West Interconnected System (SWIS) - Western Australia's main electricity grid.

Document and version control table

Responsible Directorate	Sustainable Development and Infrastructure
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Adopted / approved by:	Council

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Version	Date	Decision Ref.	Brief description
1.0			Initial Adoption
1.1			Adopted for Advertising
1.2			Adopted