

Noise Assessment

Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm
Gunnedah, NSW.



Document Information

Noise Assessment

Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm, Gunnedah NSW.

Prepared for: ITP Development Pty Ltd

Southern Cross House

Level 1, 19 Moore Street

Turner ACT 2612



Prepared by: Muller Acoustic Consulting Pty Ltd

PO Box 678, Kotara NSW 2289

ABN: 36 602 225 132

P: +61 2 4920 1833

www.mulleracoustic.com

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1	PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES.....	5
1.2	SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT.....	5
2	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	7
2.1	BACKGROUND	7
2.2	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION WORKS.....	7
2.3	DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED OPERATION.....	8
2.4	POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE RECEIVERS.....	9
3	NOISE POLICY AND GUIDELINES	11
3.1	INTERIM CONSTRUCTION NOISE GUIDELINE.....	11
3.1.1	CONSTRUCTION NOISE MANAGEMENT LEVELS.....	13
3.1.2	CONSTRUCTION SLEEP DISTURBANCE	14
3.2	NOISE POLICY FOR INDUSTRY	14
3.2.1	PROJECT NOISE TRIGGER LEVELS (PNTL).....	15
3.2.2	RATING BACKGROUND LEVEL (RBL).....	15
3.2.3	PROJECT INTRUSIVENESS NOISE LEVEL (PINL)	15
3.2.4	PROJECT AMENITY NOISE LEVEL (PANL).....	16
3.2.5	MAXIMUM NOISE ASSESSMENT TRIGGER LEVEL.....	18
3.3	ROAD NOISE POLICY.....	18
4	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	19
4.1	CONSTRUCTION NOISE MANAGEMENT LEVELS	19
4.2	OPERATIONAL NOISE CRITERIA.....	19
4.2.1	PROJECT INTRUSIVENESS NOISE LEVELS	19
4.2.2	PROJECT AMENITY NOISE LEVELS	20
4.2.3	PROJECT NOISE TRIGGER LEVELS	20
4.2.4	MAXIMUM NOISE ASSESSMENT TRIGGER LEVELS	21
4.3	ROAD TRAFFIC NOISE CRITERIA.....	21

5	MODELLING METHODOLOGY	23
5.1	CONSTRUCTION ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	23
5.2	OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	24
5.2.1	OPERATIONAL NOISE MODELLING SCENARIOS	24
5.2.2	METEOROLOGICAL ANALYSIS	25
6	RESULTS	27
6.1	CONSTRUCTION NOISE RESULTS.....	27
6.2	OPERATIONAL NOISE RESULTS	29
6.3	MAXIMUM NOISE LEVEL ASSESSMENT - OPERATIONS	29
6.4	ROAD TRAFFIC NOISE ASSESSMENT.....	32
7	RECOMMENDATIONS	33
7.1	CONSTRUCTION NOISE RECOMMENDATIONS.....	33
7.2	OPERATIONAL NOISE RECOMMENDATIONS	34
8	CONCLUSION	35
APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS		

1 Introduction

Muller Acoustic Consulting Pty Ltd (MAC) has been engaged by ITP Development Pty Ltd (ITP) to complete a Noise Assessment (NA) for the proposed Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm near Gunnedah, NSW (the 'project'). This report presents the methodology and findings of the NA for the construction and operation of the project.

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

A NA is required as part of the Statement of Environmental Effects (SEE) to be submitted to the Gunnedah Shire Council (GSC) as part of the Development Application (DA). The purpose of the NA is to quantify potential environmental noise emissions associated with the construction and operation of the project. Where impacts are identified, the assessment includes recommendations for potential noise mitigation and management measures.

1.2 Scope of the Assessment

The NA includes the following key tasks:

- review construction and operating activities to identify key noise generating plant, equipment, machinery or activities proposed to be undertaken as part of the project;
- identify the closest and/or potentially most affected receivers situated within the area of influence to the project;
- establish existing noise levels to determine project-specific construction Noise Management Levels (NMLs), and operational noise criteria;
- undertake 3D noise modelling to predict levels that may occur as a result of the construction and operation of the project at the closest and/or potentially most affected receivers;
- provide a comparison of predicted noise levels against relevant construction and operational criteria;
- assess the potential noise impacts associated with construction and operational aspects of the project; and
- provide feasible and reasonable noise mitigation and management measures, and monitoring options, where NMLs or operational criteria may be exceeded.

A glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviations used in this report is provided in **Appendix A**.

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2 Project Description

2.1 Background

ITP propose to construct and operate a 5 Megawatt (MW AC) solar farm using photovoltaic (PV) technology at 781 Wandobah Road, approximately 6.5km south of Gunnedah, NSW.

2.2 Description of Proposed Construction Works

The project includes installation of groups of north facing PV modules (approximately 2m x 1m) on mounting structures up to approximately 2.7m in height. An estimated 12,000 PV panels will be installed using a single axis tracking system, tilted +/- 60° along the north-south axis. The PV mounting structure would comprise steel posts driven up to approximately 1.5m to 3.5m below ground using a small pile driver. Additional support structures would be attached to the piles, which would then support the PV panels.

Earthworks will primarily involve trenching which is required for cabling of each PV array/module to the inverters. Other minor earthworks would be completed for the preparation of the site and in most cases a concrete slab would be required to support the ancillary infrastructure. Most of the infrastructure would be pre-fabricated off-site, delivered and assembled on-site.

It is anticipated that the solar farm would be constructed in stages, with two to three stages in construction at any one time over a three month period during standard construction hours.

During construction and operational phases, all vehicles would access the project from the Wandobah Road directly to the site.

During construction, traffic generated by the project would include employee and delivery vehicles. During the peak construction period, the daily traffic volume is expected to be up to four heavy vehicles (semi-trailers or b-doubles) per hour and 25 light commercial vehicles or equivalent mini buses for worker transport during the morning and afternoon peaks.

2.3 Description of Proposed Operation

PV infrastructure on site will comprise of groups of PV panels installed in rows running north to south. Each row of PV modules will rotate to track the sun across the sky from east to west each day. There is approximately 6.25m spacing between each row. The hub height of each tracker is 1.5m with the peak of the modules reaching a height of 2.7m when the array is fully tilted.

Electrical cabling would be attached beneath the modules and would connect the individual PV modules to each other. Inverters will be located centrally to groups of PV panels and connected to each other by underground cables. The PV modules will be on a single axis tracker system which will follow the sun and move in an east to west direction.

The project will be contained solely within the site as shown in **Figure 1**.

The project would operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with no permanent staff on site. During operation, the PV panels would generate electricity which would be fed into the power grid via connection located on Wandobah Road. Key noise emissions from the operation of the project are associated with the inverter and transformer(s). It is noted that emissions from these sources are anticipated to be acoustically insignificant compared to ambient background noise levels at assessed receivers.

When required, maintenance activities will occur during standard working hours (except for emergencies) and are expected to include:

- panel cleaning;
- repairs or replacement of infrastructure, as required; and
- land management including mowing to control vegetation as required.

Typical noise sources associated with maintenance activities would include light vehicle movements on site and maintenance of equipment.

2.4 Potentially Sensitive Receivers

Using aerial photography, geospatial information and other project design information, MAC has identified the following potentially sensitive receivers that may be affected by noise from operation or construction activities and project related road traffic. **Table 1** presents a summary of receiver identification address and coordinates. These are reproduced visually in **Figure 1**.

Table 1 Noise Sensitive Receivers				
ID	Description/Address	Receiver Type	Coordinates (MGA 56)	
			Easting	Northing
R1 ¹	781 Wandobah Road	Residential	234474	6562235
R2	671 Wandobah Road	Residential	234708	6563296
R3	239 Booloocooroo Road	Residential	235623	6563586
R4	309 Booloocooroo Road	Residential	236172	6563049
R5	367 Booloocooroo Road	Residential	236771	6562779
R6	400 Booloocooroo Road	Residential	236305	6562254
R7	934 Wandobah Road	Residential	233620	6560984
R8	886 Wandobah Road	Residential	232354	6562234
R9	Carlyon Avenue	Residential	234636	6564141

Note 1: Project related receiver.



FIGURE 1
Project Layout
MAC180781-12
Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm

KEY

- Receivers
- Access Route
- - - Panel Array
- Project Boundary



3 Noise Policy and Guidelines

This Noise Assessment has been conducted in accordance with the following key policy and guidelines:

- NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change, NSW Interim Construction Noise Guideline (ICNG), 2009;
- NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA's), Noise Policy for Industry (NPI), 2017;
- NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), NSW Road Noise Policy (RNP), 2011; and
- US Federal Highways Administration/Environmental Protection Agency-Report 550/9-74-004 March (US FHWA).

The assessment has also considered and applied the following additional policy, guidelines and standards where relevant:

- Australian Standard AS 2436-2010 (R2016) (AS 2436) – Guide to Noise and Vibration Control on Construction, Demolition and Maintenance sites;
- Australian Standard AS 1055:2018 – Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise;
- Australian Standard AS /NZS IEC 61672.1-2019 (AS 61672) – Electro Acoustics - Sound Level Meters Specifications Monitoring; and
- Australian Standard AS IEC 60942-2004 (AS 60942) – Electroacoustics – Sound Calibrators.

3.1 Interim Construction Noise Guideline

The assessment and management of noise from construction work is completed with reference to the Interim Construction Noise Guideline (ICNG). The ICNG is specifically aimed at managing noise from construction work regulated by the EPA and is used to assist in setting statutory conditions in licences or other regulatory instruments. The types of construction regulated by the EPA under the POEO Act (1997), include construction, maintenance and renewal activities carried out by a public authority, such as road upgrades as described in Schedule 1 of the POEO Act.

The ICNG sets out procedures to identify and address the impact of construction noise on residences and other sensitive land uses. This section provides a summary of noise objectives that are applicable to the assessment.

The ICNG provides two methodologies for the assessment of construction noise emissions:

- Quantitative, which is suited to major construction projects with typical durations of more than three weeks; or
- Qualitative, which is suited to short term infrastructure maintenance (for projects with a typical duration of less than three weeks).

The methodology for a quantitative assessment requires a more complex approach, involving noise emission predictions from construction activities to the nearest relevant receivers. The qualitative assessment methodology is a more simplified approach that relies more on noise management strategies. This study has adopted a quantitative assessment approach.

The quantitative approach includes identification of potentially affected receivers, description of activities involved in the project, derivation of the construction noise management levels, quantification of potential noise impact at receivers and, provides management and mitigation recommendations. **Table 2** summarises the ICNG recommended standard hours for construction.

Table 2 Recommended Standard Hours for Construction	
Period	Preferred Construction Hours
Day (Standard construction hours)	Monday to Friday - 7am to 6pm
	Saturdays - 8am to 1pm
	Sundays or Public Holidays - No construction

The recommended hours do not apply in the event of direction from police, or other relevant authorities, for safety reasons or where required in an emergency to avoid the loss of lives, property and/or to prevent environmental harm. Work conducted outside of standard hours are considered out of hours work (OOH). OOH periods are divided into two categories representing evening and night periods and cover the hours listed below:

Period 1 (evening/low risk period): Monday to Friday – 6pm to 10pm, Saturdays – 1pm to 6pm, Sundays – 8am to 6pm.

Period 2 (night/medium to high risk period): Monday to Friday – 10pm to 7am, Saturdays/Sundays – 6pm to 7am (8am on Sunday mornings).

There are no out of hours work proposed for this project.

3.1.1 Construction Noise Management Levels

Section 4 of the ICNG details the quantitative assessment method involving predicting noise levels and comparing them with the Noise Management Level (NML) and are important indicators of the potential level of construction noise impact. **Table 3** provides the ICNG recommended LAeq(15min) NMLs and how they are to be applied.

Table 3 Noise Management Levels		
Time of Day	Management Level LAeq(15min) ¹	How to Apply
Recommended standard hours: Monday to Friday 7am to 6pm Saturday 8am to 1pm No work on Sundays or public holidays.	Noise affected RBL + 10dB	The noise affected level represents the point above which there may be some community reaction to noise. Where the predicted or measured LAeq(15min) is greater than the noise affected level, the proponent should apply all feasible and reasonable work practices to meet the noise affected level. The proponent should also inform all potentially impacted residents of the nature of work to be carried out, the expected noise levels and duration, as well as contact details.
	Highly noise affected 75dBA	The highly noise affected level represents the point above which there may be strong community reaction to noise. Where noise is above this level, the relevant authority (consent, determining or regulatory) may require respite periods by restricting the hours that the very noisy activities can occur, taking into account times identified by the community when they are less sensitive to noise such as before and after school for work near schools, or mid-morning or mid-afternoon for work near residences; and if the community is prepared to accept a longer period of construction in exchange for restrictions on construction times.
Outside recommended standard hours.	Noise affected RBL + 5dB	A strong justification would typically be required for work outside the recommended standard hours. The proponent should apply all feasible and reasonable work practices to meet the noise affected level. Where all feasible and reasonable practices have been applied and noise is more than 5dBA above the noise affected level, the proponent should negotiate with the community.

Note 1: The Rating Background Level (RBL) is an overall single figure background level representing each assessment period over the whole monitoring period. The RBL is used to determine the construction noise management levels for noise assessment purposes and is the median of the ABL's.

3.1.2 Construction Sleep Disturbance

Section 4.3 of the ICNG (DECC, 2009) states that a sleep disturbance assessment is required where construction activities are planned to occur for more than two consecutive nights. Given that construction activities are anticipated to occur during standard construction hours, sleep disturbance has not been considered in this assessment.

3.2 Noise Policy for Industry

The EPA released the Noise Policy for Industry (NPI) in October 2017 which provides a process for establishing noise criteria for consents and licenses enabling the EPA to regulate noise emissions from scheduled premises under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.

The objectives of the NPI are to:

- provide noise criteria that is used to assess the change in both short term and long-term noise levels;
- provide a clear and consistent framework for assessing environmental noise impacts from industrial premises and industrial development proposals;
- promote the use of best-practice noise mitigation measures that are feasible and reasonable where potential impacts have been identified; and
- support a process to guide the determination of achievable noise limits for planning approvals and/or licences, considering the matters that must be considered under the relevant legislation (such as the economic and social benefits and impacts of industrial development).

The policy sets out a process for industrial noise management involving the following key steps:

1. Determine the Project Noise Trigger Levels (PNTLs) (ie criteria) for a development. These are the levels (criteria), above which noise management measures are required to be considered. They are derived by considering two factors: shorter-term intrusiveness due to changes in the noise environment; and maintaining the noise amenity of an area.
2. Predict or measure the noise levels produced by the development with regard to the presence of annoying noise characteristics and meteorological effects such as temperature inversions and wind.
3. Compare the predicted or measured noise level with the PNTL, assessing impacts and the need for noise mitigation and management measures.

4. Consider residual noise impacts - that is, where noise levels exceed the PNTLs after the application of feasible and reasonable noise mitigation measures. This may involve balancing economic, social and environmental costs and benefits from the proposed development against the noise impacts, including consultation with the affected community where impacts are expected to be significant.
5. Set statutory compliance levels that reflect the best achievable and agreed noise limits for the development.
6. Monitor and report environmental noise levels from the development.

3.2.1 Project Noise Trigger Levels (PNTL)

The policy sets out the procedure to determine the PNTLs relevant to an industrial development. The PNTL is the lower (ie, the more stringent) of the **Project Intrusiveness Noise Level** (PINL) and **Project Amenity Noise Level** (PANL) determined in accordance with Section 2.3 and Section 2.4 of the NPI.

3.2.2 Rating Background Level (RBL)

The Rating Background Level (RBL) is a determined parameter from noise monitoring and is used for assessment purposes. As per the NPI, the RBL is an overall single figure background level representing each assessment period (day, evening and night) over the noise monitoring period.

The RBLs relevant to the project are contained in **Section 4**.

3.2.3 Project Intrusiveness Noise Level (PINL)

The PINL ($L_{Aeq}(15min)$) is the RBL + 5dB and seeks to limit the degree of change a new noise source introduces to an existing environment.

3.2.4 Project Amenity Noise Level (PANL)

The PANL is relevant to a specific land use or locality. To limit continuing increases in intrusiveness levels, the ambient noise level within an area from all combined industrial sources should remain below the recommended amenity noise levels specified in Table 2.2 (of the NPI). The NPI defines two categories of amenity noise levels:

- **Amenity Noise Levels (ANL)** – are determined considering all current and future industrial noise within a receiver area; and
- **Project Amenity Noise Level (PANL)** – is the recommended level for a receiver area, specifically focusing on the project being assessed.

Additionally, Section 2.4 of the NPI states: “*to ensure that industrial noise levels (existing plus new) remain within the recommended amenity noise levels for an area, a project amenity noise level applies for each new source of industrial noise as follows*”:

PANL for new industrial developments = recommended **ANL** minus 5dBA.

The following exceptions apply when deriving the PANL:

- areas with high traffic noise levels;
- proposed developments in major industrial clusters;
- existing industrial noise and cumulative industrial noise effects; and
- greenfield sites.

The NPI states with respect to high traffic noise areas:

The level of transport noise, road traffic noise in particular, may be high enough to make noise from an industrial source effectively inaudible, even though the LAeq noise level from that industrial noise source may exceed the project amenity noise level. In such cases the project amenity noise level may be derived from the LAeq, period(traffic) minus 15 dB(A).

Where relevant this assessment has considered influences of traffic with respect to amenity noise levels (ie areas where existing traffic noise levels are 10dB greater than the recommended amenity noise level).

The recommended amenity noise levels as per Table 2.2 of the NPI are reproduced in **Table 4**.

Table 4 Amenity Criteria

Receiver Type	Noise Amenity Area	Time of day	Recommended amenity noise level dB LAeq(period)
Residential	Rural	Day	50
		Evening	45
		Night	40
	Suburban	Day	55
		Evening	45
		Night	40
	Urban	Day	60
		Evening	50
		Night	45
Hotels, motels, caretakers' quarters, holiday accommodation, permanent resident caravan parks.	See column 4	See column 4	5dB above the recommended amenity noise level for a residence for the relevant noise amenity area and time of day
School Classroom	All	Noisiest 1-hour period when in use	35 (internal) 45 (external)
Hospital ward			
- internal	All	Noisiest 1-hour	35
- external	All	Noisiest 1-hour	50
Place of worship			
- internal	All	When in use	40
Passive Recreation	All	When in use	50
Active Recreation	All	When in use	55
Commercial premises	All	When in use	65
Industrial	All	When in use	70

Notes: The recommended amenity noise levels refer only to noise from industrial noise sources. However, they refer to noise from all such sources at the receiver location, and not only noise due to a specific project under consideration. The levels represent outdoor levels except where otherwise stated.

Types of receivers are defined as rural residential; suburban residential; urban residential; industrial interface; commercial; industrial – see Table 2.3 and Section 2.7 of the NPI.

Note: Day - the period from 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday or 8am to 6pm on Sundays and public holidays; Evening - the period from 6pm to 10pm; Night - the remaining periods.

3.2.5 Maximum Noise Assessment Trigger Level

The potential for sleep disturbance from maximum noise level events from a project during the night-time period needs to be considered. The NPI considers sleep disturbance to be both awakenings and disturbance to sleep stages.

Where night-time noise levels from a development/premises at a residential location exceed the following criteria, a detailed maximum noise level event assessment should be undertaken:

- LAeq(15min) 40dB or the prevailing RBL plus 5dBA, whichever is the greater, and/or
- LAmax 52dB or the prevailing RBL plus 15dBA, whichever is the greater.

A detailed assessment should cover the maximum noise level, the extent to which the maximum noise level exceeds the rating background noise level, and the number of times this happens during the night-time period.

Other factors that may be important in assessing the impacts on sleep disturbance include:

- how often the events would occur;
- the distribution of likely events across the night-time period and the existing ambient maximum events in the absence of the development;
- whether there are times of day when there is a clear change in the noise environment (such as during early morning shoulder periods); and
- current understanding of effects of maximum noise level events at night.

3.3 Road Noise Policy

The road traffic noise criteria are provided in the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW (DECCW), Road Noise Policy (RNP), 2011. The policy sets out noise criteria applicable to different road classifications for the purpose of quantifying traffic noise impacts. Road noise criteria relevant to this assessment are presented in detail in **Section 4.3**.

4 Assessment Criteria

Background noise monitoring has not been conducted for this project and hence, the minimum applicable RBLs of 35dBA for the daytime period and 30dBA for the evening and night time periods have been adopted in accordance with NPI methodology.

4.1 Construction Noise Management Levels

Noise Management Levels (NMLs) for construction activities at all residential receivers are 45dB LAeq(15min) (RBL +10dB). Construction activities are planned for standard hours, however the relevant NML standard construction hours and out of hours periods are summarised in **Table 5**.

Table 5 Construction Noise Management Levels			
Location	Assessment Period ¹	RBL, dBA	NML dB LAeq(15min)
All Residential Receivers	Day (Standard Hours)	35	45 (RBL+10dBA)
	Evening (OOH Period 1)	30	35 (RBL+5dBA)
	Night (OOH Period 2)	30	35 (RBL+5dBA)

Note 1: See table 2 for Recommended Standard Hours for Construction.

4.2 Operational Noise Criteria

4.2.1 Project Intrusiveness Noise Levels

The PINLs for the project are presented in **Table 6** and have been determined based on the RBLs +5dBA.

Table 6 Project Intrusiveness Noise Levels			
Receiver	Period ¹	Adopted RBL dB LA90	PINL dB LAeq(15min)
All Residential Receivers	Day	35	40
	Evening	30	35
	Night	30	35

Note 1: Day - the period from 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday or 8am to 6pm on Sundays and public holidays; Evening - the period from 6pm to 10pm; Night - the remaining periods.

4.2.2 Project Amenity Noise Levels

The PANLs for receivers potentially affected by the project are presented in **Table 7**.

Table 7 Project Amenity Noise Levels					
Receiver Type	Noise Amenity Area	Assessment Period ¹	Recommended ANL dB LAeq(period) ²	PANL dB LAeq(period) ³	PANL dB LAeq(15min) ⁴
Residential	Rural	Day	50	50	53
		Evening	45	45	48
		Night	40	40	43

Note 1: Day - the period from 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday or 8am to 6pm on Sundays and public holidays; Evening - the period from 6pm to 10pm; Night - the remaining periods.

Note 2: Recommended amenity noise levels as per Table 2.2 of the NPI.

Note 3: Project Amenity Noise Level equals the amenity noise level as there is no other industry in the area.

Note 4: Includes a +3dB adjustment to the amenity period level to convert to a fifteen-minute assessment period as per Section 2.2 of the NPI.

4.2.3 Project Noise Trigger Levels

The PNTLs are the lower of either the PINLs or the PANLs. **Table 8** presents the derivation of the PNTLs in accordance with the methodologies outlined in the NPI. For this assessment the night time PNTL of 35dB LAeq(15min) is the limiting criteria for residential receivers.

Table 8 Project Noise Trigger Levels				
Catchment	Assessment Period ¹	PINL dB LAeq(15min)	PANL dB LAeq(15min)	PNTL dB LAeq(15min)
Residential	Day	40	53	40
Receivers	Evening	35	48	35
(Rural)	Night	35	43	35

Note 1: Day - the period from 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday or 8am to 6pm on Sundays and public holidays; Evening - the period from 6pm to 10pm; Night - the remaining periods.

4.2.4 Maximum Noise Assessment Trigger Levels

The maximum noise trigger levels shown in **Table 9** are based on night time RBLs and trigger levels as per Section 2.5 of the NPI. The trigger levels will be applied to transient noise events that have the potential to cause sleep disturbance.

Table 9 Maximum Noise Assessment Trigger Levels			
Residential Receivers			
LAeq(15min)		LAmax	
40dB LAeq(15min) or RBL + 5dB		52dB LAmax or RBL + 15dB	
Trigger	40	Trigger	52
RBL +5dB	35	RBL +15dB	45
Highest	40	Highest	52

Note: Monday to Saturday; Night 10pm to 7am. On Sundays and Public Holidays; Night 10pm to 8pm.

Note: As per Section 2.5 of the NPI, the highest of the two criteria are adopted as the trigger level.

4.3 Road Traffic Noise Criteria

The road traffic noise criteria are provided in the RNP. For this assessment, there are receivers along Wandobah Road. The relevant road traffic noise criteria are provided in the RNP and are presented in **Table 10** for residential receivers.

Table 10 Road Traffic Noise Assessment Criteria for Residential Land Uses				
Road category	Road Name	Type of Project/Development	Assessment Criteria - dBA	
			Day	Night
			(7am to 10pm)	(10pm to 7am)
Arterial Roads	Wandobah Road	Existing residences affected by		
		additional traffic on existing arterial	60dBA LAeq(15hr)	55dBA LAeq(9hr)
		roads generated by land use developments	external	external

Note: For road noise assessments, the day period is from 7am to 10pm (ie there is no evening assessment period as there is with operational noise). Night is from 10pm to 7am.

Additionally, the RNP states where existing road traffic noise criteria are already exceeded, any additional increase in total traffic noise level should be limited to 2dB, which is generally accepted as the threshold of perceptibility to a change in noise level.

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5 Modelling Methodology

A computer model was developed to quantify project noise emissions to neighbouring receivers for typical construction activities and operations. DGMR (iNoise, Version 2021.1) noise modelling software was used to quantify noise emissions from typical construction activities and operations. iNoise is a new intuitive and quality assured software for industrial noise calculations in the environment. 3D noise modelling is considered industry best practice for assessing noise emissions from projects.

The model incorporated a three-dimensional digital terrain map giving all relevant topographic information was used in the modelling process. Additionally, the model uses relevant noise source data, ground type, attenuation from barrier or buildings and atmospheric information to predict noise levels at the nearest potentially affected receivers.

The model calculation method used to predict noise levels was in accordance with ISO 9613-1 'Acoustics - Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors. Part 1: Calculation of the absorption of sound by the atmosphere' and ISO 9613-2 'Acoustics - Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors. Part 2: General method of calculation'. The ISO 9613 standard from 1996 is the most used noise prediction method worldwide. Many countries refer to ISO 9613 in their noise legislation. However, the ISO 9613 standard does not contain guidelines for quality assured software implementation, which leads to differences between applications in calculated results. In 2015 this changed with the release of ISO/TR 17534-3. This quality standard gives clear recommendations for interpreting the ISO 9613 method. iNoise fully supports these recommendations. The models and results for the 19 test cases are included in the software.

5.1 Construction Assessment Methodology

Construction activities are proposed to be progressive (trenching, piling and assembly) and will occur at several locations simultaneously. Noise emissions were modelled for the following four scenarios:

- earthworks for internal road and compound construction including the stripping of topsoil and unsuitable soil and the placement and compaction of road base;
- earthworks involving trenching for cabling;
- piling of panel supports; and
- assembly of the panels.

It is envisaged that all construction scenarios have the potential to occur simultaneously at up to three locations across the site. Noise emission data and assumptions used in this assessment are summarised in **Table 11**. All significant noise generating construction activities will be limited to standard construction hours. Where low intensity construction activities are required to be undertaken outside standard construction hours, such as cabling, minor assembly, use of hand tools etc, they will be managed such that they are not audible at any residential receivers.

Table 11 Construction Equipment Sound Power Levels, Lw dBA re 10⁻¹² W				
Noise Source/Item	Utilisation %	Quantity	Lw/Item	Total Lw
Trenching & Earthworks				
Backhoe	80	1	104	103
Light vehicle	25	2	76	73
Total – Trenching & Earthworks				103
Piling				
Piling Rig (hydraulic)	80	1	113	112
Tele-handler	75	1	106	105
Light vehicle	25	2	76	73
Total – Piling				113
Assembly				
Mobile Crane/HIAB	75	1	104	103
Tele-handler	75	1	106	105
Light vehicle	25	2	76	73
Hand tools/Power tools	50	1	102	99
Welder	50	1	105	102
Total – Assembly				109
Transport (on site)				
Heavy vehicle	40	1	104	101
Tele-handler	50	1	106	103
Total – Transport				105

5.2 Operational Assessment Methodology

5.2.1 Operational Noise Modelling Scenarios

For this assessment, noise predictions were modelled for a typical worst-case operational scenario over a 15-minute assessment period based on the assumptions and sound power levels in **Table 12**. Plant noise emission data used in modelling for this assessment were obtained from manufacturers data or the MAC database. Where relevant, modifying factors in accordance with Section 3.3 and Fact Sheet D of the NPI have been applied to calculations.

Table 12 Operational Equipment Sound Power Levels, Lw dBA re 10⁻¹² W

Noise Source/Item	Activity	Quantity	Lw/Item	Total Lw
PV Panel Tracking Motor ^{1,2}	All tracking motors in operation	140	78	83
	1 minute per 15-minute period			
3MW Inverter	Constant	2	94 ²	97
5MVA Transformer	Constant	1	87 ²	87

Note 1: Tracking motor is situated underneath the PV panel, -5dB attenuation applied to account for shielding provided by the panel.

Note 2: Including modifying factor penalty of +5dB added for low frequency and +5dB added for tonality.

During the day, the panels track the sun from east to west, operating less than one minute every fifteen minutes. At sundown or before sunrise, the trackers reposition from a 60 degree tilt in the west to a 30 degree tilt in the east to the east. The worst case emissions scenario is when the panels reposition or reset requiring all trackers to operation simultaneously for 2 minutes.

5.2.2 Meteorological Analysis

Noise emissions from industry can be significantly influenced by prevailing weather conditions. Light stable winds (<3m/s) and temperature inversions have the potential to increase noise at a receiver.

Fact Sheet D of the NPI provides two options when considering meteorological effects:

- adopt the noise enhancing conditions for all assessment periods without an assessment of how often the conditions occur – a conservative approach that considers a source to receiver winds for all receivers and F class temperature inversions with wind speeds up to 2m/s at night; or
- determine the significance of noise enhancing conditions. This requires assessing the significance of temperature inversions (F and G Class stability categories) for the night time period and the significance of light winds up to 3m/s for all assessment periods during stability categories other than E, F or G.

Given that a detailed analysis of the significance of noise enhancing conditions has not been undertaken the meteorological conditions adopted in the noise modelling assessment are summarised in **Table 13**.

Table 13 Modelled Site Specific Meteorological Parameters

Assessment Condition ¹	Temperature	Wind Speed / Direction	Relative Humidity	Stability Class
Day - Calm	20°C	3m/s all directions	50%	D
Evening - Calm	10°C	3m/s all directions	50%	D
Night - Calm	10°C	2m/s all directions	50%	F

Note 1: Day 7am to 6pm Monday to Saturday or 8am to 6pm on Sundays and public holidays; Evening 6pm to 10pm; Night - the remaining periods.

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6 Results

6.1 Construction Noise Results

Noise levels were predicted at each assessed receiver at a height of 1.5m above ground level for typical construction activities. **Table 14** summarises the maximum predicted noise level from each of the construction scenarios (trenching, piling and assembly) at each receiver.

Table 14 Predicted Construction Noise Levels

Receiver ID	Description/Address	Predicted Noise Level Range dB LAeq(15min) ¹	Highest Predicted Noise Level dB LAeq(15min)	NML Standard Hours dB LAeq(15min)	Compliance Achieved
R2	671 Wandobah Road	24-45	45	45	Yes
R3	239 Booloocooroo Road	17-36	36	45	Yes
R4	309 Booloocooroo Road	16-34	34	45	Yes
R5	367 Booloocooroo Road	8-27	27	45	Yes
R6	400 Booloocooroo Road	15-33	33	45	Yes
R7	934 Wandobah Road	12-30	30	45	Yes
R8	886 Wandobah Road	8-27	27	45	Yes
R9	Carlyon Avenue	12-32	32	45	Yes

Note 1: Noise levels from construction activities vary due to their location across the project site.

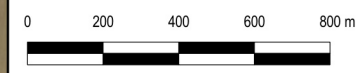
Noise levels are expected to satisfy the NMLs at all non project related receivers during standard construction hours. Figure 2 shows the 45dBA noise contour for the maximum predicted noise levels from each construction activity – piling, trenching and assembly. Receivers inside the respective 45dBA would experience noise levels above the NMLs.



FIGURE 2
Construction
Predicted Noise Levels
MAC180781-12
Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm

KEY

- Receivers
- Access Route
- Project Boundary
- Noise Level LAeq(15min)
- 45dB



6.2 Operational Noise Results

Noise levels were predicted at each assessed receiver at a height of 1.5m above ground level during worst case noise enhancing meteorological conditions. **Table 15** summarises the predicted operational noise levels which are demonstrated to comply with the PNTLs at all non project related residential receivers. Noise contours for typical operational noise levels during the night time period are presented in **Figure 3** and for tracking motor resetting in **Figure 4**.

Table 15 Predicted Operational Noise Levels

Receiver ID	Description/Address	Predicted Noise Level		Limiting Night PNTL dB LAeq(15min)	Compliance Achieved
		dB LAeq(15min)			
		Normal Operations	Trackers Repositioning		
R2	671 Wandobah Road	<30	<30	35	Yes
R3	239 Booloocooroo Road	<30	<30	35	Yes
R4	309 Booloocooroo Road	<30	<30	35	Yes
R5	367 Booloocooroo Road	<30	<30	35	Yes
R6	400 Booloocooroo Road	<30	<30	35	Yes
R7	934 Wandobah Road	<30	<30	35	Yes
R8	886 Wandobah Road	<30	<30	35	Yes
R9	Carlyon Avenue	<30	<30	35	Yes

6.3 Maximum Noise Level Assessment - Operations

A detailed maximum noise level assessment is not required as predicted noise levels for night time operations do not exceed the maximum noise level screening criterion of 40dB LAeq(15min) and there are no operational noise sources that could be considered to cause maximum noise events.



FIGURE 3
Normal Operations
Night Time
MAC180781-12
Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm

KEY

- Receivers
- Access Route
- Project Boundary

Noise Level LAeq(15min)

— 35dB

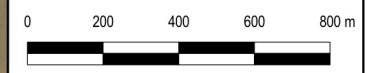




FIGURE 4
Tracking Motors Reset
Night Time
MAC180781-12
Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm

KEY

- Receivers
- Access Route
- Project Boundary

Noise Level LAeq(15min)

— 35dB



6.4 Road Traffic Noise Assessment

Access to the site will be directly off Wandobah Road which would be the major transport route for all vehicles to the access the project site. During construction, traffic generated by the project include employee/subcontractor and delivery vehicles. The traffic volume over a typical day for standard construction hours is expected to be up to four heavy vehicles (semi-trailers or B-doubles) per hour and 25 light commercial vehicles or equivalent mini buses for worker transport during the morning and afternoon peak hour periods.

Predicted noise levels from project related construction traffic at 15m from the road to represent the potential for receivers situated close to Wandobah Road between the project site and the township has been completed using the United States (US) Environment Protection Agency's road traffic calculation method and results are presented in **Table 16**. The US FHWA road traffic calculation method (based on equations in Appendix A-13) was used to predict the LAeq noise levels from construction vehicles travelling past receivers along public roads. This method is an internationally accepted theoretical traffic noise prediction model and is ideal for calculating road traffic noise where relatively small traffic flows are encountered.

Table 16 Predicted Construction Road Traffic Noise Levels

Road Name	Offset Distance to Receiver	Predicted Noise Level	RTN Criteria	Compliance Achieved
Wandobah Road	15m	45dB LAeq(15hr)	60dBA LAeq(15hr)	Yes

Results demonstrate that project construction traffic noise levels would comply with the relevant RNP criteria.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Construction Noise Recommendations

Whilst construction noise emissions are anticipated to satisfy the relevant NMLs, the following noise mitigation measures may be considered during the construction phase to minimise noise emissions to the surrounding community:

- a construction noise management protocol to minimise noise emissions, manage out of hours (minor) works to be inaudible, and to respond to potential concerns from the community;
- where possible use localised mobile screens or construction hoarding around plant to act as barriers between construction works and receivers, particularly where equipment is near the site boundary and/or a residential receiver including areas in constant or regular use (eg unloading and laydown areas);
- operating plant in a conservative manner (no over-revving), shutdown when not in use, and be parked/started at farthest point from relevant assessment locations;
- selection of the quietest suitable machinery available for each activity;
- avoidance of noisy plant/machinery working simultaneously where practicable;
- minimise impact noise wherever possible;
- utilise a broadband reverse alarm in lieu of the traditional high frequency type reverse alarm;
- provide toolbox meetings, training and education to drivers and contractors visiting the site during construction so they are aware of the location of noise sensitive receivers and to be cognisant of any noise generating activities;
- signage is to be placed at the front entrance advising truck drivers of their requirement to minimise noise both on and off-site; and
- utilise project related community consultation forums to notify residences within close proximity of the site with project progress, proposed/upcoming potentially noise generating works, its duration and nature and complaint procedure.

7.2 Operational Noise Recommendations

Operational noise predictions identify that relevant noise criteria would be satisfied at all receivers. Notwithstanding, it is recommended that the proponent actively minimise potential noise emissions from the project. To assist in noise management for the project it is recommended that a one-off noise validation monitoring assessment be completed to quantify emissions from site and to confirm emissions meet relevant criteria.

8 Conclusion

Muller Acoustic Consulting Pty Ltd (MAC) has been engaged by ITP Development Pty Ltd (ITP) to complete a Noise Assessment (NA) for the proposed Gunnedah 2A Solar Farm 6.5km south of the township of Gunnedah, NSW. The assessment has quantified potential noise emissions associated with the construction and operation of the project.

The results of the Noise Assessment demonstrate that noise emissions from the project would satisfy construction NMLs at all receiver locations.

Operational noise levels satisfy the NPI PNTLs for assessed receivers. However, recommendations to ensure noise levels are verified have been provided in this report.

Furthermore, sleep disturbance is not anticipated, as there are no operational noise sources that generate significant maximum noise events and noise emissions from the project are predicted to satisfy the EPA maximum noise level criteria.

Additionally, the NA demonstrates that the road noise criteria as specified in the RNP will be satisfied at receivers on the proposed transport route.

Based on the NA results, there are no noise related issues which would prevent the approval of the project. The results of the assessment shows compliance with the relevant operational and road noise criteria. Accordingly, no additional ameliorative measures will be required.

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Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

A number of technical terms have been used in this report and are explained in Table A1.

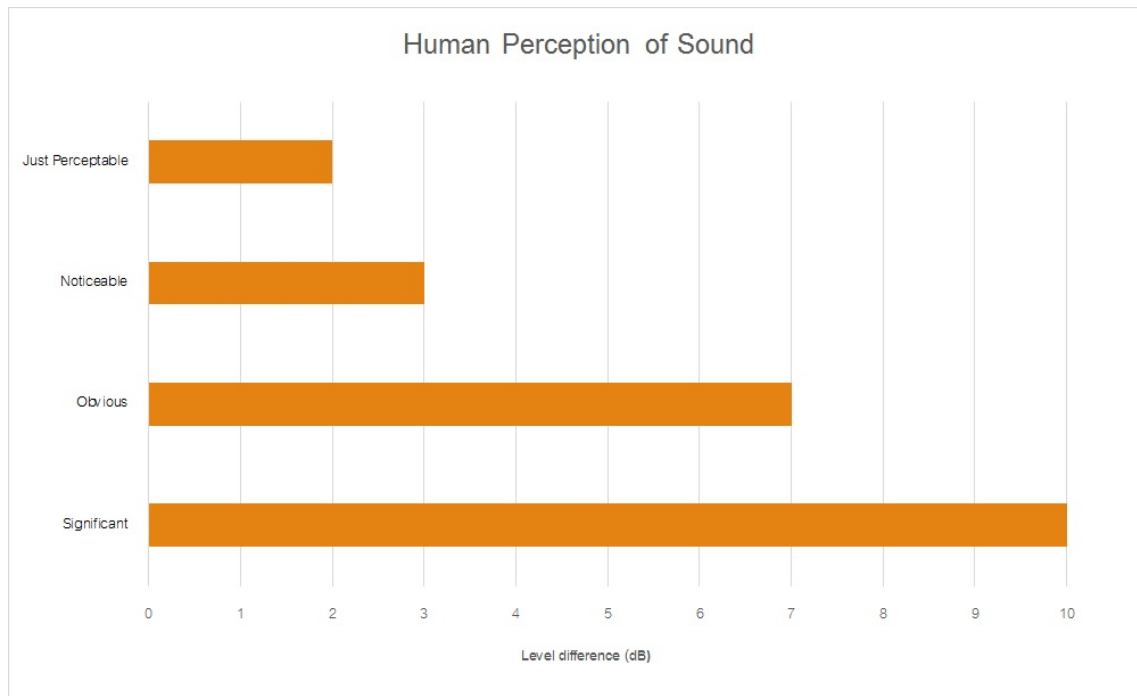
Table A1 Glossary of Terms	
Term	Description
1/3 Octave	Single octave bands divided into three parts
Octave	A division of the frequency range into bands, the upper frequency limit of each band being twice the lower frequency limit.
ABL	Assessment Background Level (ABL) is defined in the NPI as a single figure background level for each assessment period (day, evening and night). It is the tenth percentile of the measured L90 statistical noise levels.
Ambient Noise	The noise associated with a given environment. Typically, a composite of sounds from many sources located both near and far where no particular sound is dominant.
A Weighting	A standard weighting of the audible frequencies designed to reflect the response of the human ear to noise.
dBA	Noise is measured in units called decibels (dB). There are several scales for describing noise, the most common being the 'A-weighted' scale. This attempts to closely approximate the frequency response of the human ear.
dB(Z), dB(L)	Decibels Linear or decibels Z-weighted.
Hertz (Hz)	The measure of frequency of sound wave oscillations per second - 1 oscillation per second equals 1 hertz.
LA10	A noise level which is exceeded 10 % of the time. It is approximately equivalent to the average of maximum noise levels.
LA90	Commonly referred to as the background noise, this is the level exceeded 90 % of the time.
LAeq	The summation of noise over a selected period of time. It is the energy average noise from a source, and is the equivalent continuous sound pressure level over a given period.
LAmaz	The maximum root mean squared (rms) sound pressure level received at the microphone during a measuring interval.
RBL	The Rating Background Level (RBL) is an overall single figure background level representing each assessment period over the whole monitoring period. The RBL is used to determine the intrusiveness criteria for noise assessment purposes and is the median of the ABL's.
Sound power level (LW)	<p>This is a measure of the total power radiated by a source. The sound power of a source is a fundamental location of the source and is independent of the surrounding environment. Or a measure of the energy emitted from a source as sound and is given by :</p> $= 10 \cdot \log_{10} (W/W_0)$ <p>Where: W is the sound power in watts and W₀ is the sound reference power at 10-12 watts.</p>

Table A2 provides a list of common noise sources and their typical sound level.

Table A2 Common Noise Sources and Their Typical Sound Pressure Levels (SPL), dBA

Source	Typical Sound Level
Threshold of pain	140
Jet engine	130
Hydraulic hammer	120
Chainsaw	110
Industrial workshop	100
Lawn-mower (operator position)	90
Heavy traffic (footpath)	80
Elevated speech	70
Typical conversation	60
Ambient suburban environment	40
Ambient rural environment	30
Bedroom (night with windows closed)	20
Threshold of hearing	0

Figure A1 – Human Perception of Sound



Muller Acoustic Consulting Pty Ltd

PO Box 678, Kotara NSW 2289

ABN: 36 602 225 132

Ph: +61 2 4920 1833

www.mulleracoustic.com

