

Noise Assessment

Finley Solar Farm
Finley, NSW



Document Information

Noise Assessment

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Finley, NSW

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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	8
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)	15
3.2.5	MAXIMUM NOISE LEVEL ASSESSMENT	17
3.3	ROAD NOISE POLICY	17
4	NOISE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	19
4.1	CONSTRUCTION NOISE MANAGEMENT LEVELS	19
4.2	CONSTRUCTION VIBRATION	19
4.3	OPERATIONAL NOISE CRITERIA	20
4.3.1	PROJECT INTRUSIVENESS NOISE LEVELS	20
4.3.2	PROJECT AMENITY NOISE LEVELS	21
4.3.3	PROJECT NOISE TRIGGER LEVELS	21
4.3.4	MAXIMUM NOISE TRIGGER LEVELS	22
4.4	ROAD TRAFFIC NOISE CRITERIA	22
5	NOISE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	25

5.1	CONSTRUCTION ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	25
5.2	OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY	27
5.2.1	OPERATIONAL NOISE MODELLING SCENARIOS	27
5.2.2	METEOROLOGICAL ANALYSIS	27
6	NOISE ASSESSMENT RESULTS	29
6.1	CONSTRUCTION NOISE RESULTS	29
6.2	OPERATIONAL NOISE RESULTS	30
6.3	MAXIMUM NOISE LEVEL ASSESSMENT - OPERATIONS	30
6.4	ROAD TRAFFIC NOISE ASSESSMENT	30
7	RECOMMENDATIONS	33
7.1	CONSTRUCTION NOISE RECOMMENDATIONS	33
7.2	OPERATIONAL NOISE RECOMMENDATIONS	34
8	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	35
APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS		

1 Introduction

Muller Acoustic Consulting Pty Ltd (MAC) has been engaged by KDC Pty Ltd (KDC) to complete a Noise Assessment (NA) on behalf of Providence Asset Group (PAG) for the proposed Finley Solar Farm near Finley, 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 Berrigan Shire Council 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

PAG propose to construct and operate a 5 Megawatt (MW) solar farm using photovoltaic (PV) technology at Broockmanns Road, approximately 2km west of Finley, 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 of approximately 1.5m in height. An estimated 14,000 PV panels will be installed using a single axis tracking system, tilting along the north-south axis. The PV mounting structure would comprise steel posts driven up to approximately 1.5m below ground using a small pile driver. Additional support structures would be attached to the piles, which would then support the PV panels.

Where cabling of each PV array/module to inverters is required to be underground, earthworks will primarily involve trenching. 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 six month period during standard construction hours.

All vehicles would access the project from the Newell Highway onto either McNamara Street or Tongs Street via Hamilton Street/Dales Road onto Broockmanns Road during construction and operational phases.

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 20 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 7m spacing between each row. The hub height of each tracker is 1.5m with the peak of the modules reaching a height of 2.3m 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 a powerline to the point of connection on Hamilton Street or Dales 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

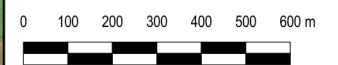
ID	Description/Address	Receiver Type	Coordinates (GDA94/MGA55)	
			Easting	Northing
R1	Broockmanns Road	Residential	368549	6054657
R2	138 Broockmanns Road	Residential	368604	6054865
R3	92 Broockmanns Road	Residential	369044	6054833
R4	Broockmanns Road	Residential	369256	6054840
R5	Dales Road	Residential	369627	6054064
R6	194 Dales Road	Residential	368774	6052759
R7	231 Broockmanns Road	Residential	367337	6053577
R8	16503 Riverina Highway	Residential	368628	6055348
AR1	Golf Course	Active Recreation	369497	6053590
H1	Hospital	Hospital	370173	6054888

FIGURE 1
PROJECT LAYOUT
MAC190968-05
Finley Solar Farm



KEY

- Receivers
- Access Route
- Panel Array
- Construction Compound
- 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; and
- NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), NSW Road Noise Policy (RNP), 2011.

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. For guidance on negotiating agreements see section 7.2.2.
Active Recreation	65dBA (external)	Golf course. Sporting fields
Hospital	45dBA (internal)	Hospitals

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 adopted RBLs relevant to the project are contained in **Section 4.1**.

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. Hence, when assessing intrusiveness, background noise levels need to be measured.

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 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.

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
Active Recreation	All	When in use	55
Hospital	All	Noisiest 1hr	35 (internal)

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 Level Assessment

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 4.4**.

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4 Noise Assessment Criteria

Background noise monitoring has not been conducted for this project and hence, the minimum applicable Rating Background Levels (RBL) 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, dB LA90(period)	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)
Active Recreation	When in use	N/A	65 (external)
Hospital	Noisiest 1hr	N/A	45 (internal)

Note 1: See Table 2 of this report for Recommended Standard Hours for Construction.

4.2 Construction Vibration

Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) 2006, Assessing Vibration: A Technical Guideline (the 'Guideline') provides guidance on determining effects of vibration on buildings occupants. The guideline does not address vibration induced damage to structures, blast induced vibration effects or structure borne noise effects.

A qualitative assessment of potential vibration impacts has been completed. Due to the nature of the works proposed and distances to potential vibration sensitive receivers, vibration impacts from the project would be negligible.

The Construction Noise Strategy (Transport for NSW, 2018) sets out safe working distances to achieve the human response criteria for vibration. The key vibration generating sources proposed to be used are a small pile driver for panel mounts and a vibratory roller used for road construction. For a large vibratory roller, the Construction Noise Strategy sets a safe working distance of 25m to achieve the residential human response criteria for continuous vibration. Therefore, as the nearest receivers to the project are greater than 25m, human exposure to vibration is anticipated to be minimal. Furthermore, where the human response criteria are satisfied, the structural or cosmetic criteria for sensitive receivers will be achieved.

Therefore, vibration impacts are not considered to be a significant issue and have not been considered further in this assessment.

4.3 Operational Noise Criteria

4.3.1 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(period)	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.

4.3.2 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	Noise	Assessment	Recommended ANL	PANL	PANL
Type	Amenity Area	Period ¹	dB LAeq(period) ²	dB LAeq(period) ³	dB LAeq(15min) ⁴
Residential	Rural	Day	50	50	53
		Evening	45	45	48
		Night	40	40	43
Active Recreation		When in use	N/A	N/A	55 (external)
Hospital		Noisiest 1 hour	N/A	N/A	35 (internal)

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 15-minute assessment period as per Section 2.2 of the NPI.

4.3.3 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 Receivers (Rural)	Day	40	53	40
	Evening	35	48	35
	Night	35	43	35
Active Recreation	When in use	N/A	N/A	55 (external)
Hospital	Noisiest 1 hour	N/A	N/A	35 (internal)

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.

4.3.4 Maximum Noise Trigger Levels

The maximum noise trigger levels shown in **Table 9** are based on night time RBLs and trigger values as per Section 2.5 of the NPI.

Table 9 Maximum Noise Trigger Levels			
Residential Receivers			
dB LAeq(15min)		dB 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: As per Section 2.5 of the NPI, the highest of the two criteria are adopted as the trigger level.

4.4 Road Traffic Noise Criteria

The road traffic noise criteria are provided in the RNP. For this assessment, the 'local road' category, as specified in the RNP, has been adopted for Broockmanns Road and the 'sub arterial road' category for McNamara Street and Tongs Street has been adopted. It is acknowledged that the functional classification of McNamara Street and Tongs Street are a 'Collector Road' in accordance with the Roads and Maritime Noise Criteria Guideline (April 2015). However, the Road Noise Policy does not provide separate noise criteria for Collector Roads but applies the sub-arterial category to all roads that are not classified as local roads. 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	McNamara Street	Existing residences affected by additional traffic on existing arterial roads generated by land use developments	60dB LAeq(15hr)	55dB LAeq(9hr)
Sub Arterial Roads	Tongs Street		external	external
Local Roads	Broockmanns Road	Existing residences affected by additional traffic on existing local roads generated by land use developments	55dB LAeq(1hr)	50dB LAeq(1hr)
			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 Noise Assessment Methodology

A computer model was developed to quantify project noise emissions to neighbouring receivers for typical construction activities and operations. DGMR (iNoise, Version 2020.0) 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 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 four construction scenarios have the potential to occur simultaneously at up to two key 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 Teams 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	182	78	84
	1 minute per 15-minute period			
2.5MW Inverter ²	Constant	2	81	84
5MVA Transformer ²	Constant	1	77	77

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

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

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, Noise Enhancing Meteorological Conditions as per Table D1 of the NPI have been adopted in the noise modelling assessment and are summarised in **Table 13**.

Table 13 Modelled Site Specific Meteorological Parameters – Noise Enhancing Meteorological Condition

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

6 Noise Assessment Results

6.1 Construction Noise Results

Noise levels were predicted to each assessed receptor assuming receiver heights of 1.5m above ground level for typical construction activities for standard construction hours. **Table 14** summarises the predicted noise level range and maximum predicted noise level for each of the construction scenarios (trenching, piling and assembly) at identified residential receivers.

Noise levels at one receiver (R1) are expected to exceed the NMLs when works are at their nearest proximity. The exceedance would be temporary, of short duration and is primarily due to piling activities.

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
R1	Broockmanns Road	26-48	48	45	No
R2	138 Broockmanns Road	24-45	45	45	Yes
R3	92 Broockmanns Road	23-44	44	45	Yes
R4	Broockmanns Road	22-42	42	45	Yes
R5	Dales Road	23-44	44	45	Yes
R6	194 Dales Road	22-43	43	45	Yes
R7	231 Broockmanns Road	21-41	41	45	Yes
R8	16503 Riverina Highway	20-39	39	45	Yes
AR1	Golf Course	24-45	45	65	Yes
H1	Hospital	20-35	35	70	Yes

Note 1: Noise levels from construction activities vary due to their position across the project site with respect to surrounding receivers.

6.2 Operational Noise Results

Noise levels were predicted at each assessed receiver assuming heights of 1.5m above ground level during the night time for noise enhancing meteorological conditions as described in **Table 13**. **Table 15** summarises the predicted operational noise levels which are demonstrated to comply with the PNTLs at all residential receivers.

Table 15 Predicted Operational Noise Levels - Noise Enhancing Meteorological Conditions

Receiver ID	Description/Address	Predicted Noise Level dB LAeq(15min)	Limiting Night PNTL dB LAeq(15min)	Compliance Achieved
R1	Broockmanns Road	<30	35	Yes
R2	138 Broockmanns Road	<30	35	Yes
R3	92 Broockmanns Road	<30	35	Yes
R4	Broockmanns Road	<30	35	Yes
R5	Dales Road	<30	35	Yes
R6	194 Dales Road	<30	35	Yes
R7	231 Broockmanns Road	<30	35	Yes
R8	16503 Riverina Highway	<30	35	Yes
AR1	Golf Course	<30	63	Yes
H1	Hospital	<30	68	Yes

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.

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 generate significant maximum noise events.

6.4 Road Traffic Noise Assessment

The major transport route for all vehicles to access the project site from the Newell Highway via either McNamara Street - Hamilton Street or Tongs Street - Dales Road onto Broockmanns Road. During construction, traffic generated by the project includes 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 20 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 the closest receivers on either McNamara Street or Tongs Street (20m) and Broockmanns Road (110m) have been completed. There are no residential receivers on the sections of Hamilton Street/Dales Road. The calculation 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
McNamara Street	20m	51dB LAeq(15hr)	60dB LAeq(15hr)	Yes
Tongs Street				
Broockmanns Road	110m	44dB LAeq(1hr)	55dB LAeq(1hr)	Yes

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

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7 Recommendations

7.1 Construction Noise Recommendations

It is noted that construction noise emissions are anticipated to exceed the relevant NMLs depending on the type of construction and proximity of activities to receivers. Recommendations for consideration during the construction phase to reduce emissions to the surrounding community for this project may include:

- 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;
- minimise 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 Discussion and Conclusion

Muller Acoustic Consulting Pty Ltd (MAC) has been engaged by KDC Pty Ltd (KDC) to complete a Noise Assessment (NA) for the proposed Finley Solar Farm, near Finley, NSW. The assessment has quantified potential noise emissions associated with the construction and operation of the project.

The results of the NA demonstrate that construction noise levels have potential to exceed relevant construction NMLs at one receiver location. Recommendations have been provided to minimise the potential noise impacts from construction, albeit of a temporary nature during the daytime over a six month construction period.

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

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

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

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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**.

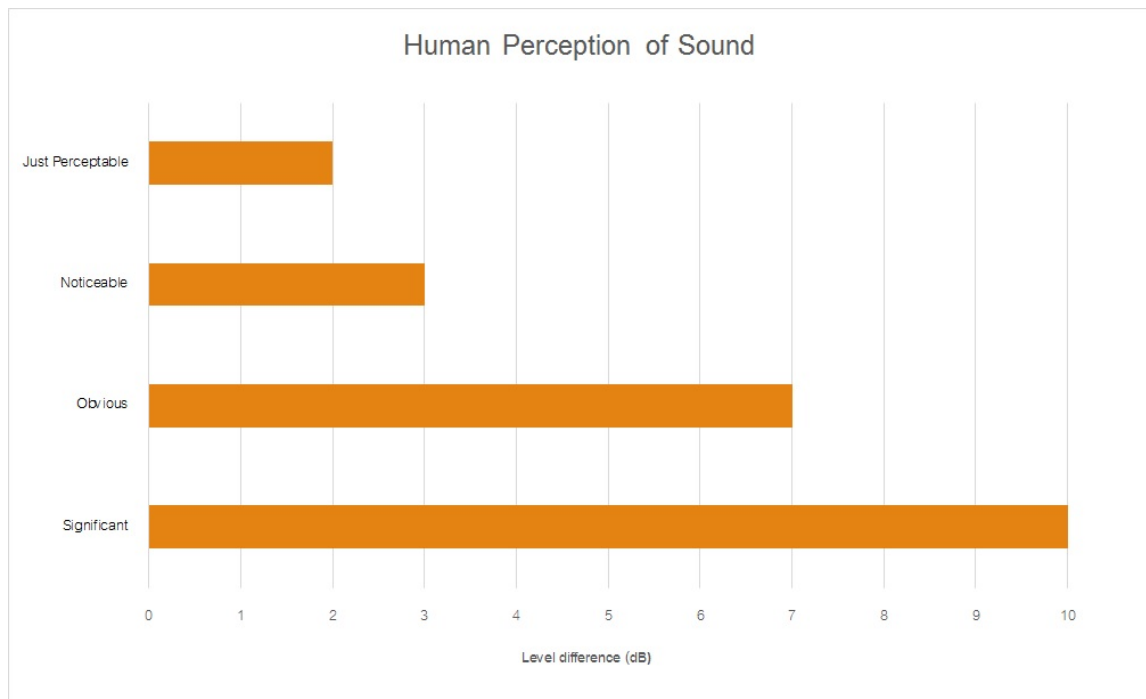
Table A1 Glossary of Terms	
Term	Description
1/3 Octave	Single octave bands divided into three parts
Octave	A division of the frequency range into bands, the upper frequency limit of each band being twice the lower frequency limit.
ABL	Assessment Background Level (ABL) is defined in the NPI as a single figure background level for each assessment period (day, evening and night). It is the tenth percentile of the measured LA90 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.
Extraneous Noise	Noise resulting from activities that are not typical of the area. Atypical activities include sources such as construction and holiday period traffic.
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,T	The summation of noise over a time period, T. It is the energy average noise from a source, and is the equivalent continuous sound pressure level over a given period.
LAmix	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 Pressure 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



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