



16 February 2015

Joint Statement – Pacific Hydro & The Acoustic Group

In 2014, Pacific Hydro commissioned The Acoustic Group to undertake an acoustic study at the Cape Bridgewater Wind Farm. The report, which was the culmination of this study, was publicly released on 21 January 2015.

The report has generated a substantial amount of interest from both the media and the public.

While we understand that some of the technical aspects of the study may be difficult to understand, both Pacific Hydro and Steven Cooper have been concerned and disappointed with some of the public commentary about the report and some of the media reporting.

Therefore Steven Cooper and Pacific Hydro have provided a joint statement that they hope will clarify a number of aspects of the study and the report.

- Pacific Hydro's brief to The Acoustic Group was to see whether any links could be established between certain wind conditions or sound levels at Cape Bridgewater and the disturbances being reported by these six local residents.
- The study did not require evaluating acoustic compliance with the permit conditions, as this had already been established by others.
- The Acoustic Group and Pacific Hydro agree that the study was not a scientific study.
- The Acoustic Group and Pacific Hydro agree that the report does not recommend or justify a change in regulations.
- The Acoustic Group and Pacific Hydro agree this was not a health study and did not seek or request any particulars as to health impacts. Therefore, we cannot enter into a debate about health issues or health impacts that have been raised in the media and the written questions. We note that a recent NHMRC statement indicates that they will be conducting further work in this area which may be an appropriate place for rigorous health research to take place.
- From the outset Pacific Hydro required the study to be transparent and acknowledged that the co-operation between the parties was paramount.
- The study had a limited budget and timeframe (which was exceeded). A lot more work than originally envisaged was required to satisfy the brief.
- The Acoustic Group was engaged as the sole participant in the study.
- The Draft report from the study was provided to residents and Pacific Hydro before public release.
- Both Pacific Hydro and Mr Cooper agree that the study is a new approach to assessing the acoustic environment as it relates to wind turbines, involves a number of hypotheses that are yet to be fully tested and contains information that may prove useful as a basis for further study.

- The study clearly states that no correlation has been found with standard acoustic parameters versus the wind farm but the report suggests a correlation of some parameters versus wind speed.

Three findings have to date been the subject of debate:

- The study indicates residents' observations in relation to sensation followed a pattern related to certain operations of the wind farm that can be related to wind speed. A hypothesis of certain wind farm operations versus high sensation severity was proposed and then investigated with respect to narrow band measurement results.
- Based on the hypothesis proposed by Mr Cooper, the study indicates, on the basis of limited data, that the narrow band infrasound results agree with spectra obtained for other wind farms and from the Cape Bridgewater. This limited data exhibits a trend line with concentration on sensation severity 5, adapted from the AECOM audible noise ranking system.
- Mr Cooper has nominated such a level as a worst case scenario and has suggested a new weighting parameter dB(WTS) with an unacceptable level assigned to the data.

Both Pacific Hydro and Mr Cooper agree that the results of the study identify that further study is required to obtain a rigour that would withstand scientific scrutiny and that would go well beyond the scope of work.

Both Pacific Hydro and Mr Cooper agree that the outcome of the study can lead to further discussion amongst the community, regulatory authorities, planning authorities, other researchers and the wind industry. It is at this point that we are at tonight, where we will explain what has been done to date, so as to move forward into those discussions.

- End of Statement -