



REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL WIND FARM COMMISSIONER: A FACT SHEET

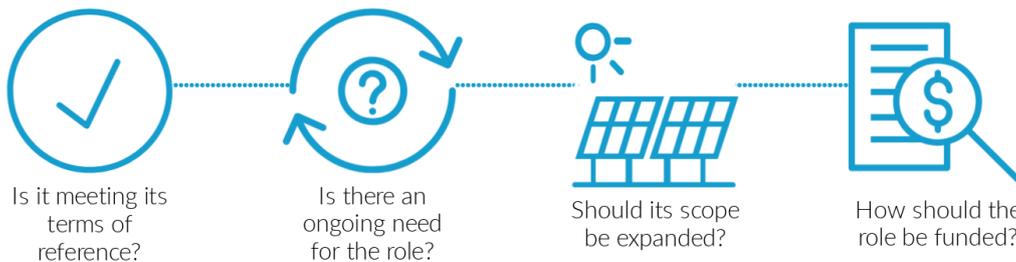
The Climate Change Authority has released its review of the National Wind Farm Commissioner. It is available at www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au.

Why did the Authority conduct this review and what does it cover?

The Climate Change Authority is an independent statutory agency, which provides expert advice to the Government on climate change policy.

The National Wind Farm Commissioner was appointed by the Australian Government in late 2015 in response to community concerns about wind farms. At that time, the Government said it would review the role in 2018. The Minister for the Environment and Energy, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, asked the Authority to conduct the review of the role of the National Wind Farm Commissioner, in response to that undertaking.

The Authority was asked to examine the role of the National Wind Farm Commissioner, in particular:



In undertaking this review, the Authority sought the views of community members, industry and government representatives through submissions and meetings.

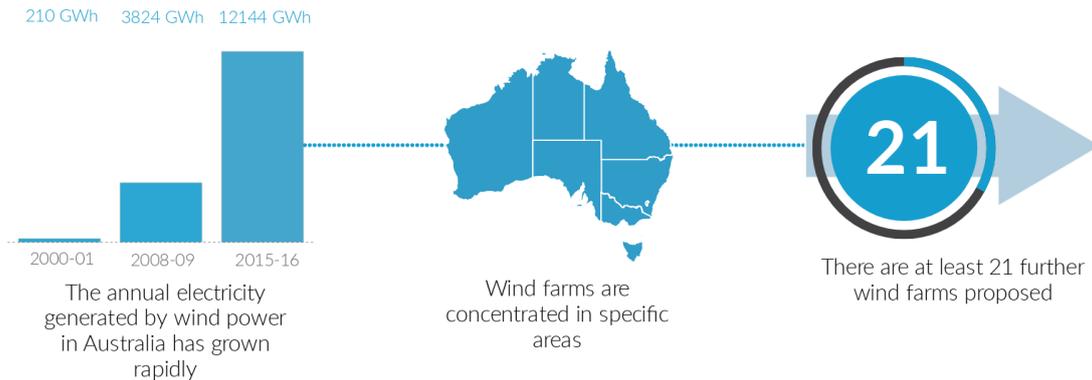
What are the National Wind Farm Commissioner’s main roles?

The National Wind Farm Commissioner’s main roles are to resolve complaints from communities about proposed and operational wind farms and work with industry and governments to develop and promote best practices for wind farm development and operation, including for complaints handling.



The wind industry in Australia

Wind energy in Australia has grown rapidly. This was primarily driven by the Commonwealth's Renewable Energy Target and assisted by advances in wind technologies.



Concerns about wind farms in Australia

Wind farm developments can have an impact on individuals and local communities including landholders who host turbines, owners of neighbouring properties and residents affected by construction.

Since the establishment of the Commissioner in late 2015, more than 163 complaints have been received, with 145 of those being worked through and closed by the Commissioner. Complaints relate to noise, potential health impacts, amenity, lack of community consultation, economic loss and shadow flicker from the wind turbine blades.

What has the review found?

The Authority found that, in general, the National Wind Farm Commissioner has exceeded expectations in dealing with complaints from individuals and communities affected by wind farms. The Commissioner has also made a number of best practice recommendations, which have improved the way the wind industry and governments work with affected communities.

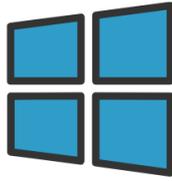
In light of these findings and the ongoing growth in the wind industry in Australia, the Authority recommends that the role continue for a further three years. The Authority also recommends that the Commissioner's scope be expanded with a modest increase in Australian Government funding to include large scale solar and storage such as large scale batteries given their potential to also cause community concerns.

The Authority recommends that the role and funding model be reviewed again in 2021 in light of the rapidly changing nature of the renewable energy industry in Australia.

With the goal of continuous improvement in mind, the Authority has recommended some enhancements to the accessibility and transparency of the Commissioner's complaints handling services and measures to broaden public awareness of the role.

More information on the recommendations is available on the next page. See the Authority's website for the full report: www.climatechangeauthority.gov.au/reviews.

Summary of recommendations on the National Wind Farm Commissioner



Increase transparency and processes for complaints handling



Increase accessibility and awareness of complaints handling and best practices



Continue and expand ongoing role

Increase transparency and processes around the Commissioner's complaints handling role

- The Commissioner include advice on meeting participation in the Office's complaints handling policy to clarify how support people and industry representatives can attend conciliation meetings after consultation with those participating. The complaints handling policy should also explain how individuals can provide feedback to the Commissioner.
- Tell people when and why their complaint is closed, and advise them the complaint can be re-opened if material new information becomes available. The Commissioner should also advise stakeholders the Office's handling of their complaint can be reviewed externally by the Commonwealth Ombudsman.
- Develop key performance indicators for the time taken to handle complaints (noting that complex complaints take longer) and report on performance against them.

Increase accessibility and awareness of the Commissioner's complaints handling and best practice roles

- Explore ways to improve awareness of the complaints handling role by engaging with stakeholders.
- Lead work with the states and territories on voluntary harmonised guidelines for wind farm community consultation, complaints handling and standards for wind farm development.
- Place a summary of the Commissioner's best practice recommendations on the Office's website.

Continue and expand ongoing role

- Continue the role for another three years with continued Australian Government funding.
- Expand the Office's scope to large scale solar and storage such as large scale batteries and consider a modest increase in funding.
- Review the role and options for funding again in 2021.