



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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GREEN LIGHT FOR NATIONAL WIND FARM GUIDELINES AND POLICY

Federal Environment Minister, Peter Garrett today welcomed the agreement of state and territory environment ministers to advance the development of national wind farm guidelines.

Mr Garrett said the new guidelines would improve consistency and transparency in the wind farm planning and approval process and help address some of the barriers to wind farm development.

“Wind energy has the potential to deliver a significant proportion of Australia’s future electricity needs and an important role to play in helping Australia achieve our target of producing 20 per cent of our electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020.

”The Rudd Labor Government is serious about lowering our carbon emissions and producing energy in a cleaner way, but we also know that to do that we must agree on how best to manage a range of issues related to wind farm development like turbine noise, impacts on landscapes, and animals like birds and bats.”

Mr Garrett said the development of guidelines was one of the recommendations of a report on impediments to wind farm establishment, received by the Environment Protection and Heritage Council at their meeting in Adelaide, today.

Responsibility for the assessment and approval of proposed wind farms rests primarily with the states and territories. However, under the national environment legislation, the Commonwealth Environment Minister can also have a role to play where there are potential impacts on matters of national environmental significance.

“To compliment the work that will now get underway, my department is also working on a separate wind farm policy statement to help operators understand when to refer wind farm proposals for approval under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act,” Mr Garrett said.

“This policy is now on my department’s website for public comment at: www.environment.gov.au

“Both of these documents will help promote the development of this industry and I look forward to monitoring the development of the national guidelines over the next 12 months.”