



Australian Acoustical Society

A.C.N. 000 712 658

NEW SOUTH WALES DIVISION

TECHNICAL MEETING

ARE WE ASSESSING CHILD CARE NOISE FAIRLY

The Date: Wednesday 12th September 2007

The Venue: NATIONAL ACOUSTICS LABORATORIES
126 GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD

The Time: 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm

The Panel: Ken Scannell, Tracy Gowen & Brian Marston

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the demand for child care, with many centres opening in “normal” suburban streets, with just a garden fence between the outdoor play areas and the neighbours’ garden.

Some may feel that children playing is a happy noise and that child care is part of life and should just be accepted. Others consider child care can be a very profitable business and should be treated as any other commercial operation which has “amenity” obligations to meet. Councils across NSW and the Land and Environment Court do not appear to have reached a clear decision on how to assess a child care centre. Background + 10dBA ?? Background + 5 with a tonality penalty????

What do you think? Would you like to live next to one?

We have assembled a panel of three people who will all initially provide answers to some pre-prepared questions and also talk about their own experiences and opinions. We will then open up to the floor for more questions and debate and possibly a show of hands about key issues, which will be recorded as a summary of the evening.

The pre-prepared questions are summarised overleaf and if enough members feel they have important additional issues which should be discussed by the panel please respond to me so I can forward the questions.

RSVP FOR CATERING PURPOSES

Monday 10th September 2007 to Neil Gross by email

neilg@wilkinsonmurray.com.au

‘ANYONE’ is welcome to attend and supper will be provided

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS / ISSUES

Should there be a certain number of children before assessment required ie 0, 5 or 10.

What should be assessed, indoor play, outdoor play (active and passive), drop off and pick up, additional traffic on local road network

Should the assessment be the same as any commercial premises and satisfy INP, possibly considering duration of outdoor play. And should there be a minimum background noise ie 30dBA

Should the acoustic assessment take into consideration the nature of noise and adjust criteria numerically or let the Council / Court make this decision as part of the overall pros and cons based on subjective judgement

If outdoor play is allowed to background +10 based on limited duration does this require all other noise (indoor, mechanical plant and pick up drop off) to either be inaudible (Back -10), barely audible (back -5) audible (Back + 0) or even clearly audible (back +5) ie do windows and doors need to be closed when the children are not outside

What is the correct assessment location. At boundary or within boundary (free field) or areas likely to be used for relaxing. For 2 storey houses overlooking a play area, should we consider upper floors at daytime (even if they are used as study rather than bedroom)

What assumptions can be made for the various noise sources (particularly children) ie typical SWL for different activities, different age groups and total number of children playing together

Does child care require any adjustment for character ie tonality

If a barrier on a residential boundary from outdoor play noise need to be higher than 2.5m, should that indicate the site probably isn't suitable, ie too low background and / or too many children.

What should a noise management plan address ie staff interaction and how this affects noise. Parental behaviour during pick up

Noise from Distressed children is it really the noise level or neighbours concern for their well being that may cause complaint

Is permanent monitoring (similar to warning lights in a pub) worth considering so staff can tell when noise levels increase

Should there be limits on noise ingress (traffic, rail, aircraft, industrial) to outdoor and internal areas, same as ECRTN for schools or different etc.