

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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Response to article by S. Cooper, "Wind farm noise - an ethical dilemma for the Australian Acoustical Society?", *Acoustics Australia* 40(2), 139-142 (2012)

In light of recent allegations of ethical misconduct directed at Australian Acoustical Society (AAS) members working on Australian wind farm projects, the question posed by the technical note would seem timely. Whilst an open discussion of this point is worthwhile, unsubstantiated statements such as "...it would seem to be more than 10% of the population are seriously affected" are not helpful contributions to a debate that already suffers from significant misrepresentations.

In contrast to some other sources of noise, including aircraft noise as raised in the technical note, wind farm noise assessment in all Australian jurisdictions has clearly defined limits applicable to operational noise, including in rural areas. A key point of all these policies is that they are not designed to prevent annoyance in all cases but to strike a balance between the potential advantages of wind energy developments in Australia with the potential adverse noise impacts on local

communities. We consider it essential that any discussion of appropriate ethical standards should therefore have due regard to this key balancing objective which underpins all noise assessment work. Such discussions should therefore address matters such as planning and energy policy and therefore require the input of experts outside of the acoustics profession.

It would seem appropriate for the AAS to formally respond on this matter, and provide clarification to its membership on the matter of ethical conduct in environmental noise assessment, recognising the factors raised above.

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