

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications**  
**Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 81  
**Hearing:** Additional Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 2  
**Programme:** Climate Change and Renewable Energy (CCARE)  
**Topic:** Wind Farm Commissioner - Wind farm operating standards  
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**Question Date:** 08 February 2016  
**Question Type:** Spoken

**Senator Back asked:**

**Senator BACK:** Thank you. You mentioned, in response to an earlier question, that there are myriad standards. I presume you were referring to those within Australia. Could you just tell us how many different sets of standards are in operation in the different states and territories of Australia in relation to management or control of operation of wind farms.

**Mr Dyer:** I could not give you a precise answer, but there would be standards that are guidelines issued by each state government, there might be other standards issued by their environment departments, and then there is the standard that is prescribed in the planning permit itself, which could be a variant on the state's planning guidelines and standard.

**Senator BACK:** Do these guidelines, for example, speak of distances from dwellings to wind turbines et cetera? Is that the type of guideline that differs between the states?

**Mr Dyer:** Typically the noise standard is the main driver of a separation distance between a turbine and a dwelling.

**Senator BACK:** And therefore size of turbines, as they get bigger. Are you able to tell us at all—or perhaps take on notice—whether that has a different noise impact? Is a bigger turbine likely to, for example, create a wider or longer gap between the turbine and the nearest residence?

**Mr Dyer:** It could vary, and that is probably a good question to take on notice, but my understanding is that as the turbines have increased the noise has remained about the same—but it will vary by manufacturer.

**Answer:**

Based on preliminary expert advice, it is the Commissioner's understanding that the use of larger sized turbines generally results in fewer turbines on a wind farm which may be located further away from residences in order to meet noise standards. The overall noise impact of the wind farm should therefore not be increased by the use of larger sized turbines.