The South Australian Government places primary importance on meeting its target to have 33% of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2020. In order to meet this objective, it is timely to review existing planning policy in relation to wind farm facilities.

The changes proposed are designed to underpin the role of Councils in wind farm development assessment in recognition and support of the key role Councils play in the assessment and development of the State’s wind power industry. Updating the policy framework for the assessment of wind farm facilities will provide certainty and clarity to the community, industry and investors.

The amendments will deal with the specific issue of visual amenity by making it plain that wind farms are an acceptable form of development in areas of relatively low population densities, usually areas zoned rural and coastal.

The amendments will recognise that wind farms have visual impacts and they oblige developers and planning authorities to manage these impacts. As a guide, a managed impact would be one where a one kilometre separation distance has been established between residences and the nearest wind turbine unless a lesser distance is negotiated between a land holder and developer.

The intention is to bring the Council development pathway more into line with the State Government’s Crown development pathway reflecting the current trend of developers choosing the State’s pathway over the Council’s. The overwhelming reason for this preference is that the outcomes of the Government processes cannot be appealed, except on the grounds of judicial review of process. Wind farms will be assigned Category 2 status in the less populated zones to reinforce the Government’s policy position that they are a form of development envisaged for these zones and therefore third party appeal rights should not be available.

In addition to the revised planning policy framework, there are a number of initiatives currently being explored by the South Australian Government. RenewablesSA (Department of Premier and Cabinet) is exploring, through legislative amendment, the creation of a wind farm notification regime to enable broader consultation for those directly affected by wind farm developments. A regional liaison manager will be established to assist Councils and others on renewable energy issues, a fund will be provided for Councils to access expert consulting advice when assessing renewable energy proposals, and new guidelines will be produced for limiting access by wind farm developers to the Crown development pathway.

For further information on these initiatives visit the RenewablesSA website <www.renewables.sa.gov.au>
Area Affected Map

The area that would be affected by the proposed changes is shown on the map attached.
What is a Development Plan Amendment (DPA)?

A Development Plan contains the planning controls which guide what can and cannot be developed within a Council area. Planning authorities use these planning controls to assess new development proposals.

A Development Plan Amendment (DPA) is a document that describes changes to a Development Plan.

A DPA must be prepared in accordance with strict processes set out by legislation. A key part of the process is to formally release the DPA so that the public can review the proposed changes and make written submissions.

Background

South Australia currently has 14 operating wind farms with another one under construction.

More than $2 billion has been invested into wind farms in South Australia providing 1,150 megawatts of capacity. To date 534 wind turbines have been installed representing around 54% of Australia’s total wind power generating capacity.

In 2010/2011, wind comprised 21.7% of electricity generated within South Australia – three years ahead of the SA Strategic Plan target of 20% of electricity generated by renewable sources by 2014 and nine years ahead of the national target.

The next milestone in the development of the renewable energy industry is to achieve 33% of electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

The State Government wants to provide greater certainty to communities and investors around renewable energy development.

One of the options available is to review the current planning policies relating to wind generated, renewable energy facilities in Development Plans across the state to ensure they are consistent and clear in intent, helping to achieve the renewable energy target set.

It is also timely to review these policies as they have not been substantially reviewed since their original introduction in 2003.

What changes are being proposed?

The purpose of this DPA is to review land use policy applying to wind farms.

This DPA is proposing to amend current policies at the council-wide level in relation to renewable energy facilities, in particular wind farms. It will also introduce both new and amended policies for wind farms and ancillary development, at the General (council wide) level and in certain zones where such facilities are more appropriate and therefore more likely to be located.

The policies in the DPA will be aimed at providing greater clarity for the development of wind farm facilities, by recognising them as an envisaged form of development in some zones of relatively low population densities. The policy will recognise that wind farms may need to be located in prominent locations to take advantage of the wind required for effective operations.

Interim Operation

The DPA will be on ‘Interim Operation’ for 12 months from the start of the public consultation period. This means that the policies being proposed in it will apply during this time.

Interim Operation is used when the Minister for Urban Development, Planning and the City of Adelaide (the Minister) considers that it is necessary in the interests of orderly and proper development.

In this case, the Minister considers that interim operation will allow for the timely application of an updated and relevant policy framework relating to renewable energy facilities, in particular wind farms and ancillary development. It will also provide clarity and certainty to the industry as well as an enhanced facilitative policy framework that will allow for orderly and proper development.

This does not mean, however, that changes to the policies cannot occur following the consultation: changes can occur if considered appropriate and your views and those of other individuals and organisations will certainly be taken into account.
Want to know more?
You can view the DPA document online at <www.sa.gov.au/planning/dpas> or in hard copy by visiting, during office hours:

- **Naracoorte Lucindale Council**
  Degaris Place, Naracoorte
  tel: (08) 8760 1100

- **City of Port Lincoln**
  Level One, Civic Centre, 60 Tasman Terrace, Port Lincoln
  tel: (08) 8621 2300

- **District Council of Peterborough**
  108 Main Street, Peterborough
  tel: (08) 8651 3566

- **Department of Planning and Local Government**
  Level 5, 136 North Terrace, Adelaide
  tel: (08) 8303 0791

Have your say
The consultation process is run by the Development Policy Advisory Committee, an independent statutory committee which provides advice to the Minister on planning and development issues. The consultation includes the acceptance of written submissions and public meetings.

Written submissions
Written submissions on the DPA will be received from the public for a period of eight weeks, from 19 October 2011 to 13 December 2011.
Submissions should be sent to:
**The Presiding Member,**
**Development Policy Advisory Committee**
Statewide Wind Farms DPA
- by post: c/-
  Department of Planning and Local Government
  GPO Box 1815, Adelaide SA 5001
- by email: dpac@sa.gov.au
- by fax: (08) 8303 0627

Please note: All public submissions will be available for viewing from the close of submissions until the conclusion of the public meeting(s) on the Department of Planning and Local Government website at <www.sa.gov.au/planning/dpas> and at the offices of the Department of Planning and Local Government, Level 5, 136 North Terrace, Adelaide.

Written submissions should clearly indicate whether you wish to be heard at the scheduled public meetings.

Public consultation meetings
Following the close of written submissions, public consultation meetings, at which submitters can present verbally, are scheduled at the following locations:

- 7pm on Tuesday 10 January 2012
  Port Lincoln Hotel,
  1 Lincoln Highway, Port Lincoln

- 7pm on Tuesday 17 January
  Mercure Grosvenor Hotel,
  125 North Terrace, Adelaide

- 7pm on Tuesday 24 January 2012
  Naracoorte Town Hall,
  95 Smith Street, Naracoorte

- 7pm on Thursday 2 February 2012
  Peterborough Town Hall,
  108 Main Street, Peterborough

Important note: If no submissions are received or if no-one requests to be heard by the Committee the scheduled public meetings may not be held. Please check the Department of Planning and Local Government website before the scheduled date of the meeting to find out whether it is being held. If you wish to make a verbal submission you must state this in your written submission.

What happens then?
Following the consultation process and the receipt of a report from the Development Policy Advisory Committee, the Minister will consider whether to make amendments to the DPA and whether to proceed with its implementation. If the DPA is adopted, the policy and mapping changes proposed will then be made to the affected Development Plans.