

Date

September 2009

Issue

Industry noise and response to community concerns.

KIC Position

Noise is an inevitable part of industry and is regulated to minimise impacts on sensitive premises such as nearby residential areas.

The Kwinana Industrial Area (KIA) has a substantial buffer which creates space between it and community residences. This serves to protect industry and the community from the consequences of industrial noise impacts.

The weather conditions can influence how noise travels, for example wind direction and speed, or the presence of a temperature inversion layer or a water body, can magnify, direct or concentrate noise.

It can be difficult to determine the source of noise, or to differentiate it especially where there are a number of sources in close proximity.

The Noise Regulations are currently being reviewed by the State government. Industry's position is that noise levels should be measured at noise sensitive premises (receptors) rather than at the industrial site boundary..

Noise within industrial boundaries is minimised as much as reasonably possible, and companies emitting noise manage this as an occupational health and safety issue for their workers.

Kwinana industry believes that the Noise regulations should require compliance measured at the location of sensitive premises, not at industrial site boundaries, because this is where the nuisance, if any, is actually felt.

KIC encourages all member companies to work towards reducing noise emissions, especially to within regulated levels.

KIC has concerns that the noise emitted from rail and road transport corridors (which are exempt from the regulations) may at times have a significant contributory noise effect on communities, rather than noise from specific industries.

Background Summary

KIC has conducted an annual survey over many years to measure local community attitudes towards Kwinana industries. Respondents come from Rockingham, Kwinana and Cockburn. In the 2008 survey 4% of those surveyed consider noise pollution to be one of the main social or environmental impacts associated with industries.

Noise will only impact the community within close proximity to its source, but the continuing presence of excessive noise can become a real problem for people affected by it.

Whilst the survey confirms that noise is an issue for a minority of the community, the nuisance factor has been raised as an issue from time to time at the Communities and Industries Forum (CIF). KIC therefore believes it critical to respond to these community concerns.

To determine on an ongoing basis if industry noise levels are excessive or if they are increasing, KIC developed a cumulative noise model which can be used to predict noise levels.

To address community concern, KIC is continuing to work closely with relevant groups and individuals and formed a Noise Reference Group (NRG) where members of the group can raise their concerns and find out about what industry is doing to reduce noise impacts. The NRG has as its members, community representatives, local government Councillors and Officers, DEC Regulators and KIC industry representatives.

In 2005 KIC engaged consultants Herring Storer Acoustics to update the computer noise model so that noise levels experienced by the community at various locations (based on reported industry noise emissions) could be compared with the earlier baseline study levels of 2001.

While the results showed some reductions in noise emissions, industry noise levels exceeded some of the State government Assigned Levels for a small percentage of the year. Despite this, there remains concern about noise levels from within some parts of the community living closer to industry.

The results of the 2005 KIA Cumulative Noise Model Update indicate that:

- o KIC member industries have successfully reduced noise levels in the last four years
- o There has been a net noise reduction in industrial noise levels received at noise sensitive premises
- o Noise levels at some locations do on some occasions exceed the terms of the *Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997* (ie. the Assigned Noise Levels)

Information about the NRG, including terms of reference and minutes of meetings, is available on the KIC website.

The KIC will continue to liaise with regulators to ensure regulations and the interpretation of regulations are relevant to the needs of industry and the community.

Relevant Resource Materials

- Cumulative Noise Model of the KIA – Baseline Study Report, SVT Engineering Consultants (*November 2001*)
- Cumulative Noise Model of the KIA, Herring Storer Acoustics (*July 2005*)

- KIC Noise Fact Sheet (*August 2005*)
- Annual KIC Community Attitudes Survey, Colmar Brunton (*October 2005*)

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