



Review of Noise, Light and Bird Strike Potential

Woollooware Bay Town Centre Stage 4 Residential/Hotel Project Application

Prepared for
Capital Bluestone

20 October 2016



DOCUMENT TRACKING

Item	Detail
Project Name	Woollooware Bay Town Centre Retail Stage 4 Residential/Hotel Project Application – Review of Noise, Light and Bird Strike Potential
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Approved by	Beth Medway
Status	Final
Version Number	2
Last saved on	20 October 2016
Cover photo	View east over the existing carpark and edge of mangroves

This report should be cited as ‘Eco Logical Australia 2016. *Woollooware Bay Town Centre Stage 4 Residential/Hotel Project Application – Review of Noise, Light and Bird Strike Potential*. Prepared for Capital Bluestone.’

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Template 29/9/2015

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2 Noise

The proposed retail complex is positioned at least 35 m from the edge of the mangroves. However, construction activity and recreational facilities (e.g. paths) will be closer to the mangroves than this distance.

2.1 Ecological considerations

Animals rely on meaningful sounds for communication, navigation, avoiding danger and finding food against a background of noise. The effects of noise on most species are poorly understood and fauna will perceive noise impacts differently (AMEC Americas Ltd 2005; Office of Planning, Environment & Realty; Eco Logical Australia 2006). Some fauna become stressed by noise, which can affect foraging or breeding, or they may leave an area, whereas other species or populations do not seem to be affected or may adjust to noise over time.

As far as determining impacts to fauna, the nature of the noise (e.g. high or low pitch; sudden or continuous) needs to be considered as well as the 'loudness' (measured in dB(A)) because animals perceive noise differently to humans. For example, microbats such as the Large-footed Myotis are more attuned to the high frequency band (e.g. metal on metal sounds), so may not be concerned by steady low pitch traffic noise (e.g. microbats often inhabit road culverts). However, loud ongoing noise may make it difficult for microbats to hear prey, which can adversely affect foraging (Siemers & Schaub 2011). As another example, many bird species are more sensitive to sudden loud noises (e.g. dogs barking) rather than continuous noise or noise that builds and fades away (e.g. aircraft).

For the purposes of this discussion, sensitive ecological areas are identified as:

- the mangroves on the northern side of the proposed development
- Towra Point Nature Reserve, which is located more than 0.5 km away (**Figure 1**).

2.2 Existing noise

The site of the proposed development is currently an open carpark on asphalt. The carpark is used on a daily basis, with cars regularly parking on the edge of the mangroves. More recently, the north-east corner of the car park has been used to store construction equipment and stockpile spoil. Noise levels have not been measured at this location.

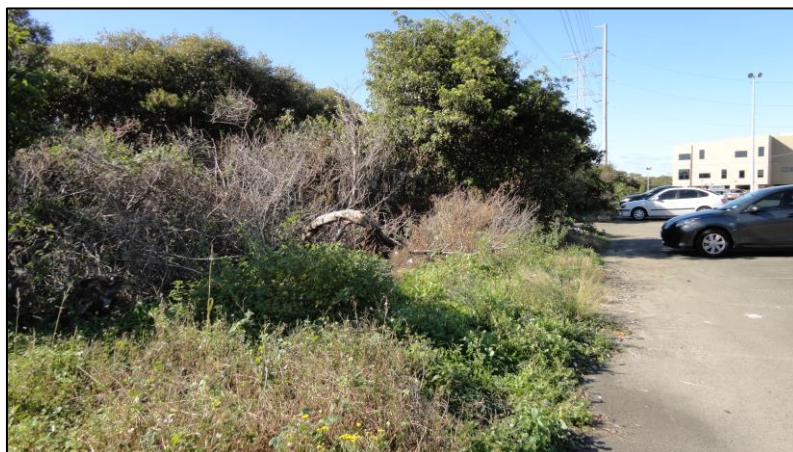


Figure 2: Cars parked on the edge of mangroves

2.3 Predicted noise

2.3.1 During construction

Noise levels predicted to occur at sensitive ecological sites during construction have been estimated by Acoustic Logic (2016) (refer to **Table 1**). Acoustic Logic states that calculated levels represent a maximum noise level and as such will not be accumulative. All calculated noise levels assume no screening and will reduce by 5-8 dB(A) with screening from other structures.

ELA notes that noise associated with construction of the Stage 4 Residential/Hotel area is more likely to be heard over a further distance across the bay, especially if carried by the wind, because of the lack of impediments such as vegetation.

Table 1: Maximum construction noise at surrounding locations (Acoustic Logic 2016)

Equipment Type	Sound Power Level (SWL)	Location					Discussion
		Mangroves directly adjacent to the site	20m from the site	40m from the site	60m From the Site	Towra Point 500m from the site	
Hydraulic Hammers	115	87 dB(A)	81 dB(A)	75 dB(A)	71 dB(A)	50 dB(A)	Intermittent noise level as equipment cannot run continuously
Concrete Saw Cutting	114	86 dB(A)	80 dB(A)	74 dB(A)	70 dB(A)	49 dB(A)	Only when in operation
Excavator (without hammer)	98	70 dB(A)	64 dB(A)	58 dB(A)	54 dB(A)	33 dB(A)	Detailed noise levels based on worst case levels (ie operating at boundary of the site with the wetlands)
Drill Pilling equipment	105	77 dB(A)	71 dB(A)	65 dB(A)	61 dB(A)	40 dB(A)	Detailed noise levels based on worst case levels (ie operating at boundary of the site with the wetlands)

2.3.2 During operation

Noise associated with the proposed loading dock and various plant and equipment located along the northern end of the retail facility are likely to have ongoing impacts on fauna inhabiting the nearby mangroves. However, there is considerable uncertainty about the degree of impact because fauna inhabiting mangroves near the stadium and car park may already be accustomed to elevated noise levels compared to fauna inhabiting Towra Point.

2.4 Predicted impact on fauna and mitigation measures

Fauna at Towra Point are unlikely to be affected by the construction or operational noise from the proposed retail centre because of noise attenuation over distance. Significantly higher levels of noise are likely to be experienced in the nearby mangroves and this may result in fauna avoiding these areas, at least temporarily during construction in close proximity to the mangroves.

The following measures will mitigate some of these impacts:

- Where possible, select quieter types of machinery and equipment, or use construction techniques that are quieter.
- Limit construction noise to daylight hours so that peak fauna foraging periods at dawn, dusk and night-time are avoided, particularly when construction activity is in close proximity to the mangroves.
- Minimise noisy construction activities within 50 m of habitat areas during October to January, as this is an important period in the life-cycle for many species inhabiting this area.
- Establish a dense vegetated buffer between the retail facility (particularly near the loading dock) and the mangroves to mitigate some of the operational noise at the level of the mangrove habitat.
- Consider installing noise monitors at sensitive locations within Towra Point to determine if noise from WBTC is detectable and if further controls would be needed e.g. more restricted periods of work or types of activities.

3 Lighting

3.1 Background

Excessive lighting not only causes light pollution and wastes energy but also impacts on the natural environment by affecting the activity rhythms of both plants and animals (Outen 1998). The mangroves adjacent the proposed retail centre provide habitat for nocturnal species such as microbats, including the *Myotis macropus* (Large-footed Myotis) which is listed as vulnerable under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

Microbats are affected by artificial lighting because of the following reasons (Fure 2006, Jones 2000):

- Many species of bats are known to sample the light levels before emerging from their roost; only emerging for their night's hunting when the light intensity outside reaches a critical level after sunset (Swift 1980).
- Artificial lighting disrupts the normal 24-hour pattern of light and dark which is likely to affect the natural behaviour of bats. Light near a roost access point will delay bats from emerging and shorten the amount of time available to them for foraging.
- Bright light may reduce social flight activity and cause bats to move away from the light area to an alternative dark area.
- Illuminating a bat roost creates disturbance and may cause the bats to desert the roost.
- Artificial lighting can also affect the feeding behaviour of bats. In most bat species there is an evening period of activity followed by another at dawn. These two flights correlate with the peak flight times of nocturnal insect prey. Insects are attracted to light particularly if it is a single light source in a dark area.
- Artificial lighting can increase the chances of predation. It is believed that *Myotis* species shun bright light as a predator avoidance strategy.

3.2 Mitigation measures

The main mitigation measure regarding light is to ensure that the mangroves are not illuminated during construction or as part of the building and path design. Lighting should not be directed toward or in the mangroves.

4 Bird strike potential

The site is located near important migratory bird habitat at Towra Point and Taren Point. Wetland birds also inhabit the nearby mangroves.

4.1 Background

A significant numbers of birds are killed or injured due to impact with windows on buildings, particularly when buildings are situated within migratory flight paths. Birds hit windows for three reasons:

- they don't see them as a barrier and attempt to fly through them
- they see habitat reflected in them and attempt to navigate to some point in the reflection
- they are attracted to lights on buildings at night and fly near to them.

Complete or faceted reflective facades appear to be especially problematic.

The majority of bird strike studies reviewed have been done in North America and Europe where there are populations of migratory birds that have died after colliding with plain mirrored glass building facades (see example below). There are no comparable Australian studies that were identified and this remains an area of potential future research.



Figure 3: Example of a mirrored glass façade that can cause bird strike (from Sheppard 2011)

4.2 Proposed facades

The proposed north and south facing facades of the Stage 4 Residential/Hotel complex are illustrated in **Figure 4** and **Figure 5**. The proposed design seeks to reduce potential for bird strike by featuring a variety of window and external wall treatments and styles, rather than a uniform reflective facade as shown in **Figure 3**.



Figure 4: Proposed north-eastern façade Stage 4 Residential/Hotel



Figure 5: Proposed southern façade Stage 4 Residential/Hotel

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