Wind farm guidelines
Response given to Sydney Morning Herald

Why did Department of Planning representatives brief wind farm developers on the progress of the draft guidelines (18 July 2011) without giving the other side the same opportunity to understand the draft before its public release?

Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:

The department held a two-hour briefing for a number of developers from the wind farm industry in July to inform them of the repeal of Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the transitional measures for wind farm projects that were already in the planning system.

The repeal of Part 3A involved significant changes for the assessment of wind farms, as they were removed from schedule of projects that are classed as critical infrastructure and moved to the State Significant Development class for projects that would generate more than 30MW of power.

The department also advised the group of the likely introduction of new planning controls for wind farms and canvassed the matters that would likely be covered in future wind farm guidelines.

A four-hour workshop was held for the Landscape Guardians on 18 October 2011 to discuss a range of issues in relation to wind farms. This workshop was attended by representatives from the Departments of Planning, Health, and the Office of Environment and Heritage.

Input from both consultation sessions has been considered in the development of the wind farm guidelines.

Neither group has been given access to the draft Guidelines or had direct advice on the planning controls and measures that will likely be included in the Guidelines.

Anti wind farms group The Landscape Guardians say officials of the department repeatedly denied there had been any consultation with the industry and refused to show the LG group the same information until forced to in November - is this correct?

Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:

The draft guidelines have not been provided to any stakeholder group including industry, councils or the community.

A two-hour technical presentation on 18 July 2011 was attended by approximately 14 industry representatives.

A four-hour community workshop was held on 18 October 2011 and attended by approximately 16 community representatives, and representatives from other agencies to obtain information on key community concerns.

Following a request from community representatives, an additional three-hour meeting was held with community representatives on 15 December 2011.
What is the department's position on the issue of health impacts from wind farms - is there any proof, for example of health impacts from so-called infrasound?

*Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:*

The potential impacts from wind farm developments have been thoroughly researched and considered in the development of the wind farm guidelines.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure has consulted extensively with the Department of Health and the Office of Environment and Heritage in the development of the wind farm guidelines.

The department has also consulted with the Victorian and South Australia governments in developing the wind farms guidelines.

*When will the NSW Government’s wind farm guidelines be released? Will they be in draft or final form when released?*

*Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:*

The draft wind farm guidelines are currently being finalised and will be released in draft format for public consultation.