

Submission Form for comments and Feedback
Draft Guideline: recommended Land Use Separation Distances

Submissions close: COB Wednesday 9 august 2017

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My submission seeks to address adverse environmental impacts of adjoining land use in relation to unreasonable, offensive odour as well as possible erosion. In the past my neighbour hosted 2 roosters, numerous hens, goats and pigs. All were housed to the side of the acreage, allowing offensive odour, 4.30am noise and run-off to occur. Together with regular burning of what smelt like feathers, carcass or offal, and early morning burning of diesel soaked green grass, the close proximity had a devastating effect on me, and my life style.

Please note the rural blocks in my submission while are each nearly 8 hectares, have only a width of 176.16 Lot 3203 (196 Edith Farms Rd) and 185.40 Lot 3204. They are long narrow blocks with lengths of 443.68 and 434.39 so there is sufficient room to house livestock and poultry further away from existing living quarters.

On no less than 3 occasions, I approached my neighbour in a friendly manner, but while cordial during our conversations, my neighbour did nothing to consider or deter the environmental nuisance effect on me of their livestock and poultry. Another neighbour, Mr John Hudson, finally phoned the Edith Farms Bushfire Brigade to complain about the frequent morning spot grass fires. The president at the time, Mrs Krista Valve attended and it was relayed to me later that it was assumed by the offending party that I was the person who complained. Unfortunately this did nothing to further cordial relations with my neighbour

5.4 Environmental regulation

Section 12 of the WPMP Act includes activity that has the potential to cause pollution resulting in environmental harm (including nuisance) or waste, land managers should have taken measures to manage and minimise off-site emissions which have the potential to cause land use conflicts.

No such consultation or inspection to the effects next door or downhill/downstream were conducted with me or with any of my neighbours that I am aware of. The first I learnt of the goats were noticing an extra wire fence attached and straining off the existing star pickets on the adjoining boundary fence. The electric attachments were not maintained to prevent the goats from entering my property on numerous occasions. I feared destruction of the native vegetation paramount to preventing erosion due to the slope of the land as well as ascetic benefits personally. I never knew what I would find upon arrival home each day from working in town.

As my block is lower than my neighbours, I also have to contend with run-off into my property from all animals housed adjacent to my house.

Once the land next door had been cleared with a scaping blade attached to a ride-on-mower, together with the constant animal traffic, the runoff increased greatly during the Wet Season with a 'waterfall' entering my property from next door.

I have photos documenting this event.

I contracted an earth works contractor to grade a wide bottom trench, so as to take the water run-off and associated manure/top soil/debris etc, past and around my living area, and into the creek which is a natural feature of this block.

I built my house off centre of my block due to the natural occurring creek. I could not foresee nor expect a neighbour to extend their livestock activities across their block extending to the nearest sensitive land use, namely my land & house.

The length of their property is 434.39 while the width only 185.40 so after their house being off centre and closer to my boundary, the stock were housed to the side of their house making them closer still and across to our shared boundary.

8. How to measure separation distances

8.1 Method One – this method allows me as a property owner of the sensitive use to utilise my whole property.

Where off-site effects may be experienced I request the offending activities be separated as far as possible from the nearest sensitive land use.

I have installed irrigation and plants are being grown near the boundary in an attempt for a green vegetation wall to assist alleviate any odours and/or noise. This is a slow work in progress and is now 3-4 years established.

10.1 Limitations – I also request the consideration of key parameters that influence emissions, dispersion including meteorology (wind speed, direction, intensity of rainfall).

I receive wind directly from the offensive smelling side of the property for more than half of the year. It lingers as I am low lying. The smell is evident around my veranda, and the pigs smell especially prohibited me from hanging my washing on the clothesline. The odour was so offensive it caused me to remain inside with windows and doors closed for days on end.

As previously stated, I am downhill of the next property so receive both runoff from uphill properties and from rainfall.

Please note: the pigs has since been removed but I have no way of knowing if and when they may return

I note that in your recommended land use separation distances guidelines, you define environment as to include 'land, air, water, organisms and ecosystems and includes (a) the well being of humans'.

I request distances and new considerations to the adverse activities as mentioned in my submission be considered to ensure land uses are not compromised.

I also note that the guidelines state 'may in some instances be larger or smaller when considering specific operational or environmental conditions'

Housing livestock directly across, in close proximity and downwind from existing residences is in no way suitable

Existing guidelines are too vague and difficult to enforce with regard to unreasonable odour. The day I had a visit from environment health, there was no smell which was a rare occurrence.

I would like to add that it be considered for a neighbour to request permission to house livestock and poultry from neighbours on each side of these narrow properties, much like the signage required for other land and building permits.

Rules concerning officers collecting escaped livestock are not really workable. Once the damage has occurred it is not ideal, due to the distance and time need for capture and the often irreversible native vegetation damage caused in relation to non native species.

I have lived in the Northern Territory for 31 years, on my block for 25 years and would like to continue to do so. Previously, I felt I had no option except to put my home on the market for sale due to the cumulative impact my neighbours actions were having on my health. After a short trip south, I returned with a renewed love and appreciation of both the Territory and my home.

Soon after my neighbour got rid of their livestock and poultry.

This episode made it clear to me that one is lucky to have good neighbours and to live in harmony with them. This is why most of us chose to buy properties after all. However, humans by nature, will not always consider others. It is for this reason we need stronger containment rules and regulations to stop any problem before it occurs.

I would like to thank you for taking the time in reading my submission.

I really hope you will consider strong and lengthy defining separation distances on rural blocks where conflict in land use may become an issue.



Lori Martin

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