FAQ’s

1. **How do I find out if SPP 5.4 applies to my proposal?**

   Refer to section 4 of the Policy. If your development proposal is within the trigger distance (as set out in Table 1 of the Policy) from any specified major road or rail corridor, and relates to a noise-sensitive land use/development, new or major upgrades to major roads and railways, then the Policy applies.

2. **Where do I find out to which major road and rail the Policy applies?**

   Existing major roads and rail to which the Policy applies is identified on spatial maps in the Implementation Guidelines (Appendix 9 of the Guidelines). The major roads and rail, along with approximate trigger distances, can also be viewed on the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage public map viewer at [www.dplh.wa.gov.au](http://www.dplh.wa.gov.au).

3. **Does SPP 5.4 apply to existing developments?**

   No. SPP 5.4 does not retrospectively impose noise mitigation measures over existing transport infrastructure or existing developments, however, home owners are encouraged to consider voluntary upgrades to their home to assist in managing noise where it may be beneficial to do so.

4. **What are the key changes that have been made to the Policy?**

   The policy review has focused on:
   
   - Improving implementation through the provision of clearer policy measures and guidance.
   - Simplifying the noise criteria/assessment (refer to question 6 and 8 below).
   - Enhancing deemed to comply options through quiet house design (refer to section 4.5 of the Guidelines).
   - Providing standardised templates for Noise Management Plans, local planning scheme provisions and notification on title wording (Appendix 4 to 6 of the Guidelines).

5. **What is a notification on title?**

   A notification on title is to advise prospective purchasers of the potential for noise impacts from major transport corridors. It’s generally required as a condition of development and/or subdivision for when estimated and forecasted noise levels exceed the policy’s outdoor noise criteria, following implementation of any noise mitigation measures. The WAPC’s Planning Bulletin 3 – Notifications on Title provides further guidance when such a measure may be imposed.

6. **What are the key changes to the screening assessment?**

   The Screening Noise Assessment table, now called the Noise Exposure Forecast table (Table 2 of the Guidelines), has been revised following comprehensive case testing of noise levels by an acoustic consultant. The Table has introduced noise exposure categories that correspond with quiet house design requirements.

7. **What is quiet house design?**

   Quiet house design aims to ensure that houses are built to ensure expected standards of living are upheld for development proposals that have predicted or measured outdoor noise levels that exceed the Policy’s noise criteria. This is achieved through the design and internal layout of rooms, provision for at least one protected outdoor area, and use of specified materials for glazing and insulation. Refer to section 4.5 and Table 3 of the Guidelines.

8. **What are the key changes to the noise criteria?**

   The dual target and limit noise criteria has been simplified into a single value for compliance and a new ‘concession’ to account for developments which occur behind existing screening and barriers such as housing, noise walls or bunding.
9. **Can alternative noise metrics such as $L_{A\text{max}}$ be used?**

The adoption of $L_{A\text{max}}$ metric was considered in the policy review but not recommended due to the likely significant implications for both developers and/or operators, including more stringent and costly building treatments, noise walls and larger physical separation distances. Short term noise events, which are well-captured by the $L_{A\text{max}}$ metric are more effectively controlled ‘at source’.

10. **What level of consultation has been undertaken in drafting SPP 5.4?**

The policy review has been overseen by the Western Australian Planning Commission and supported by a government/industry technical working group comprising wide representation of relevant stakeholders. A technical acoustic analysis has been undertaken by a team of specialist consultants.

11. **Does SPP 5.4 address ground borne vibration?**

No. As part of the policy review, technical investigations were undertaken to consider vibration. The findings were that vibration is best and most cost effectively addressed ‘at source’ through measures like track design, track grinding, wheel maintenance or speed restrictions in built-up areas. Addressing vibration would add significant additional complexity and be challenging to model and mitigate, adding to time constraints and cost to proponents without a guarantee for success.

12. **Who is responsible for assessing and determining noise impacts?**

The management of road and railway transport noise is a responsibility shared among various stakeholders. The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is the lead agency for ensuring that Noise Level Contour Maps, Noise Management Plans and Noise Exposure Forecasts are consistent with the policy, with technical assistance provided by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. Refer to section 2 of the Guidelines for full implementation responsibilities.