

# SCARE/SCATTER GUNS

The Environmental Protection Act 1994 does not provide noise standards for every type of activity. The following Guide has been developed using a guideline "Noise Control measures for using scare guns" published by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection in 2001 (formerly Environmental Protection Agency) in to assist with legislative compliance.

Gas scare guns are commonly used by farmers, due to their simplicity, low maintenance and comparatively low cost, to protect crops from pests such as birds and flying foxes. Operators of scare guns are encouraged to consider the impact of noise on neighbours. The scare gun emits a loud blast at predetermined intervals that acts as a deterrent to pests. This blast from the scare gun can create an environmental noise nuisance (EP Act 1994 Section 15) particularly if the scare gun is used in close proximity to residential houses. It is an offence under the EP Act 1994 (Section 440) to create an environmental nuisance.

Operators of scare guns should adopt all sensible and practicable measures available to minimise noise impacting on neighbours and noise sensitive places.

The following procedures should be adopted by operators of Scare Guns:

- Maintaining a distance of greater than 300m between any scare gun and any neighbours property boundary,
- Operation of a scare gun or guns shall only occur between the period half an hour before sunrise and half an hour after sunset. These timings will be reduced to between sunrise and sunset if complaints are received. The time of sunrise and sunset shall be determined from the Bureau of Meteorology records.
- Each scare gun must not emit more than 70 blasts in total on any one day. At all times, the interval between blasts from any one scare gun must be 10 minutes or longer.
- Where a number of guns are used on one property or where a neighbouring property also uses scare gun(s), it is the responsibility of the property owners to co-ordinate the timing of the blasts of their guns to within thirty seconds of the adjacent guns(s). This will allow a minimum of at least nine (9) minutes between all blasts, thus minimising the nuisance effect.
- The positioning of a scare gun or guns should minimise its effects on neighbours/noise sensitive places. This may be achieved by;
  - Using the shielding effects of natural features to reduce noise impact;
  - Pointing the scare gun away from neighbours/noise sensitive places;
  - Placing the scare gun as far away as practicable from any neighbour/noise sensitive place (at least 300m as stated earlier).

When environmental nuisance is created by noise from the scare gun(s), the use of the scare guns should be minimised and alternative methods of crop protection considered. Alternative methods include:

- Visual scarers such as the use of cheaper, more effective portable lights (producing high intensity flashes at random intervals), scarecrows or suspended fertiliser bags, wine cask bags, car yard bunting and shiny tape or aluminium strips;
- Recorded distress call systems that imitate injured birds or the calls of predator species;
- Netting (ultra violet resistant) cages over crop;
- Crop placement to restrict access to pests.