



Transport  
for NSW

# Freight Noise Attenuation Program: FAQs



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## What is the Freight Noise Attenuation Program (FNAP)?

The Freight Noise Attenuation Program (FNAP) is a \$50 million 10-year program that aims to minimise the impact of freight rail noise on homes and some sensitive use community buildings adjacent to NSW Government managed rail corridors.

## How does the FNAP work?

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) aims to reduce the impact of freight rail noise by installing noise-reducing treatments in eligible homes and buildings. These treatments include:

- Installation of new or upgraded windows
- Installation of new or upgraded external doors
- Enclosing or sealing gaps, vents and openings, where practical
- Installation of ventilation systems to allow for the circulation of fresh air when windows are closed.

TfNSW prioritises treatments based on exposure to night time freight rail noise.

The program is delivered by a panel of suitably qualified service providers under contract to TfNSW.

The program is currently focused on the NSW Government managed freight rail corridor in an area bounded by Newcastle in the North, Lithgow in the West, and Nowra in the South. To be eligible for the program, homes must meet criteria related to:

- The rail noise level at the residence.
- The building structure and its date of construction.

## Who can apply for FNAP?

Homeowners can apply to have their home included in the program by sending in a completed application form to TfNSW.

The application form is available from the program website

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/programs/freight-noise-attenuation-program>

The FNAP team will process the application by registering the details into the FNAP database and will respond with a FNAP identification number within 20 business days of receiving the application.

## What are the eligibility criteria?

To be eligible for the program, the dwelling must be:

- Exposed to external rail noise levels above 70dBA during the day ( $L_{Aeq(15hour)}$  7am to 10pm) or 65dBA during the night ( $L_{Aeq(9hour)}$  10pm to 7am). TfNSW measures rail noise levels across the network on an ongoing basis. If the dwelling is not near any previous noise monitoring locations or within a designated catchment area then further noise monitoring may be undertaken.

- Classified as an occupied residence or other noise sensitive land use according to accepted definitions across government.
- Not part of a building that is more than 3 levels above the ground, as these buildings are not eligible under the program.
- Not part of a development that was approved after 1 January 2009 because these homes should have been built to meet internal noise limits in line with the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure).

## **How is the work planned and delivered?**

Treatment is offered to all the eligible homes in a particular catchment area. TfNSW gives priority to catchments with the highest night time  $L_{Aeq}$  noise levels.

The geographical extent of a catchment area may be limited by:

- Changes to how the land is used (such as residential to commercial).
- An elevation change compared to adjacent properties (including where the rail line goes into a cutting or behind a noise barrier).
- A major road dividing the neighbourhood.
- A railway station.
- A council boundary.
- Natural features such as creeks or reserves.

The program has an annual budget of up to \$5 million which allows up to 200 homes to be treated. This is why treatments are prioritised, and this is why some eligible homes are not treated for some years.

Once work in a catchment area is completed, it is unlikely that the program will revisit that same area for some time even if an application is received. This is to minimise mobilisation costs and ensure the program is delivering value for money. If an applicant rejects a treatment offer and then re-applies after works in a catchment area are complete, or they fail to submit an application until the works have moved on from their area, then treatments may not be able to be undertaken for several years.

## Do I need to pay for the FNAP treatment?

Treatment is free provided the eligible applicant has owned the dwelling for 7 years or more at the time of offer. If the dwelling has been owned for less than 7 years, TfNSW will offer building treatments on a cost-sharing basis as outlined below:

Ownership length (at the time of the treatment offer)	Owner contribution
0–2 years	85%
2–3 years	70%
3–4 years	55%
4–5 years	35%
5–6 years	20%
6–7 years	10%

If the dwelling is sold after the applicant applies for building treatments, TfNSW will calculate the owner contribution as if the ownership has not changed provided the initial application was not withdrawn.

Please note: the cost of building treatments will not exceed a cap of \$30,000 per dwelling (2015 dollars) including all labour and materials. This cost is indexed to Consumer Price Index from the FNAP inception in 2015

## How does the treatment process work?

The treatments offered under FNAP have been proven to substantially reduce freight rail noise impacts. Treatments are restricted to habitable rooms. To receive treatment, the dwelling must be in a reasonable condition, and the owner is responsible for fixing any issues before treatment can commence.

TfNSW will engage a Works Coordinator to:

- Review each catchment area and confirm which dwellings are eligible.
- Confirm ownership of all eligible dwellings through land title information.
- Contact the home owners in writing and in person to introduce the program.
- Explain cost sharing arrangements, if applicable.
- Together with the Building Services Provider, visit each eligible dwelling and scope the proposed treatment, and then capture the agreed scope in a Dwelling Report.
- Provide the home owner with a Your Works Deed which outlines the proposed building treatments.
- Manage the work with regular reports to TfNSW.



- Confirm works are complete and document this for TfNSW.

## **Who undertakes the treatment work?**

TfNSW will engage a qualified and competent Building Services Provider from a panel of pre-qualified suppliers to deliver the treatments. The Building Services Provider will:

- Assist the Works Coordinator to scope the proposed treatments for the property.
- Work with the homeowner to arrange access to the property to complete the treatment works.
- If required, manage asbestos in line with the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 and WorkCover policies and fact sheets.

Throughout the process, the Building Services Provider provides regular reports to the Works Coordinator about their progress.

## **What happens when the work is completed?**

Once the works have been completed, the Building Services Provider will ask the homeowner to sign an acceptance certificate. The certificate is confirmation that the home owner is satisfied with the work that has been delivered in accordance with the Your Works Deed.

The home owner is under no obligation to sign the acceptance certificate until the agreed works have been delivered.

## **What if I am unhappy with how something is handled?**

If you raise an issue or dispute relating to FNAP, we will address it in a fair, objective and unbiased manner, in line with our Dispute Handling Procedure.

The guiding principles for complaint and dispute handling are:

- We will advise all applicants and participants how to complain or raise a dispute.
- We respect the applicant's or participant's right to complain, and we will treat them with respect.
- We will make our best effort to resolve all complaints within the time specified in the procedure.
- We will maintain a log of issues and disputes.
- We will handle unreasonable complaints in line with the NSW Ombudsman's Managing Unreasonable Complainant Conduct Practice Manual.

Under our procedure, TfNSW will escalate disputes when:

- The dispute cannot be resolved within the agreed timeframe.
- The applicant or participant requests to speak to a higher-level manager.

## What is the department's privacy policy?

TfNSW will also comply with the privacy principles set out in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW). TfNSW will hold any personal information at 18 Lee Street, Chippendale NSW 2008. People generally have the right to access and correct their personal information - please contact [privacy@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:privacy@transport.nsw.gov.au).

## What if I have more questions?

Our contact details are listed below should you have any questions that weren't addressed in this document.

**Phone:** 1800 446 517

**Email:** [railnoise@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:railnoise@transport.nsw.gov.au)

**Mail:** Transport for NSW

Freight Noise Attenuation Program

PO Box 973 Parramatta NSW 2124

## What else is Transport for NSW doing about freight rail noise?

The NSW freight rail network plays a vital role in supporting our economy and reducing congestion on our roads. To address impacts from freight rail noise particularly at night, Transport for NSW is implementing the Strategic Noise Action Plan. The Plan includes three complimentary streams:

1. Reducing freight rail noise at source, including wheel squeal and brake noise;
2. Delivering noise reduction treatments at properties impacted by high levels of existing freight rail noise; and,
3. Improving planning controls to ensure rail noise is properly addressed at the design stage of future developments.

### Stopping wheel squeal

Transport for NSW has identified that poor wagon steering is the root cause of wheel squeal. On 1 January 2018 Transport for NSW introduced a new standard which requires operators to fix their wagons over the next few years. We are working with operators to develop low-cost and effective solutions that can be rolled out quickly.

### Reducing brake noise

We have shown that enhanced brake shoes substantially reduce brake noise from coal wagons. We are working with our industry partners to implement these shoes on 400 wagons that operate through the Blue Mountains. We are currently working on solutions for other types of wagons and work with our industry partners to implement solutions across the wagon fleet as quickly as possible.

### Improving planning controls

Transport for NSW is partnering with Department of Planning and Environment to improve planning controls for development around freight rail lines. We are also developing a training package for local council officers and planners to ensure new homes are properly designed to address impacts from rail noise.



[transport.nsw.gov.au](http://transport.nsw.gov.au)

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