

28 November 2019
Ref No.: 2682-1228

Health Infrastructure
PO Box 1060
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2060

For TSA Management on behalf of Health Infrastructure

Re: Roof top gardens and bushfire

Please find below, a response to a request for information regarding the inclusion of roof top/sky gardens and the associated bushfire risk and additional technical constraints for construction standards.

Rooftop gardens incorporated into the Tweed Valley Hospital building would need to be managed as an Inner Protection Area (IPA) and meet the landscaping requirements of Appendix 5 of Planning for Bushfire Protection (PBP) 2006 and Appendix 4 of PBP 2018. Technically, a rooftop garden does not meet these requirements as an IPA is required to be separated/not connected to the building.

Roof top gardens pose an additional risk of bushfire as they provide a fuel source/potential ignition and a potential entry point for embers directly from the roof to the building. This is especially the case with ember attack from potential bushfires that are in proximity to the hospital.

In order to therefore achieve separation and to validate to the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) that the heightened risk of bushfire from roof top gardens has been adequately addressed, would require demonstration that there is no connectivity between the roof and the building. Incorporation of roof top gardens would need increased construction standards to ensure that embers landing on the roof top gardens are of no threat to the building. This could be via higher construction standards and additional design elements, such as double automatic doors, to prevent embers entering the building which would be an additional cost.

If the increased bushfire threat from roof top gardens has been adequately addressed, through additional design construction and ongoing maintenance requirements, roof top gardens can be feasible. In this instance however, it is our understanding that Health Infrastructure have sought to minimise the potential for additional bushfire risk to the new hospital and, coupled with the technical design/construction standards and associated costs that would be required, have made the informed decision to no longer propose such features as part of the Project.

Yours sincerely
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