

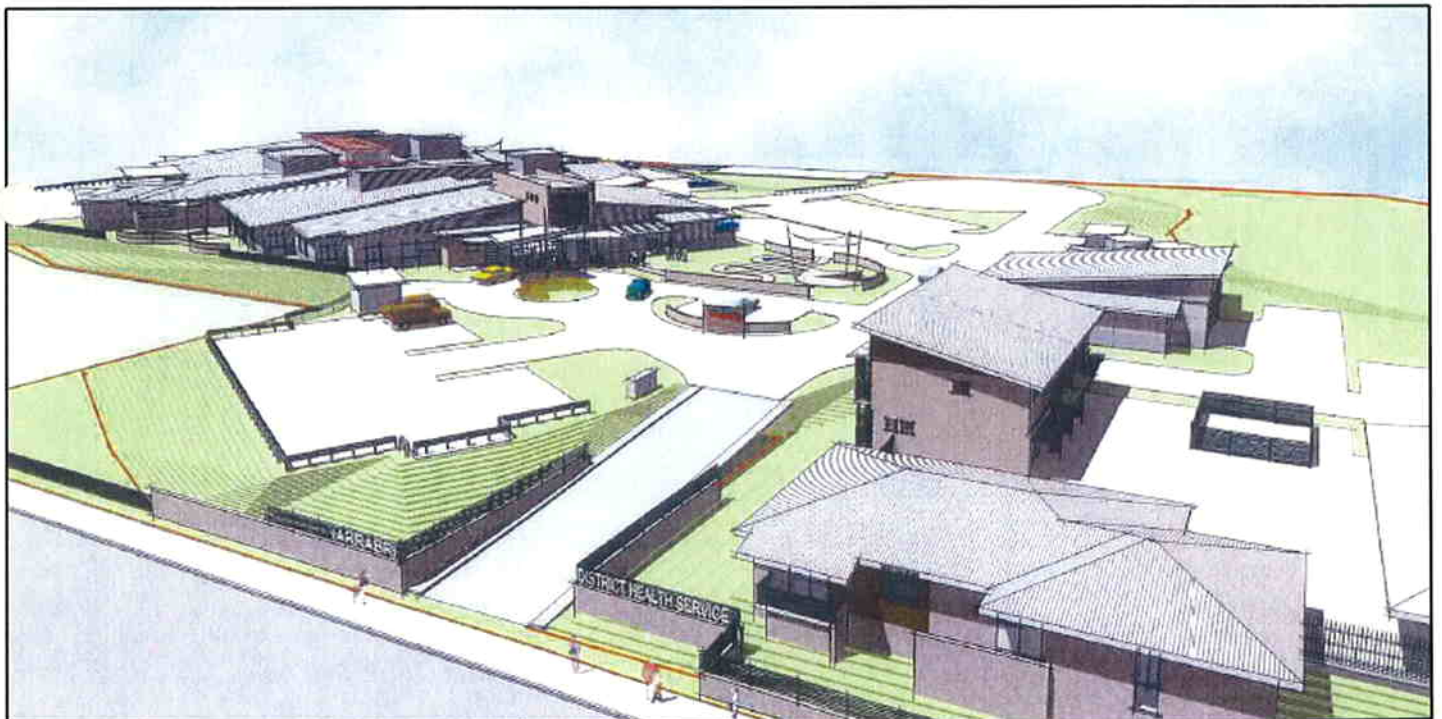


NSW GOVERNMENT
Department of Planning

**MAJOR PROJECT ASSESSMENT:
Narrabri Hospital
Proposed by Thomson Adsett Architects on
behalf of NSW Department of Commerce
MP08_0073**

Director-General's Environmental Assessment
Report
Section 75I of the
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

January 2009



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report on a Project Application seeking approval for the demolition of the existing hospital and the construction of a new public hospital at Narrabri pursuant to Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* ("the Act"). Narrabri Hospital is located at 11 Cameron Street Narrabri and is legally known as Lot 107 in DP 1036033.

Thomson Adsett Architects (the proponent) on behalf of NSW Department of Commerce is seeking approval for the following:

- Staged demolition of existing hospital building;
- Construction of a new single storey hospital building including emergency department providing 28 patient beds;
- Ambulance Station;
- Helipad;
- Staff accommodation comprising a duplex and single dwelling;
- Landscaped areas and car parking for 100 vehicles; and
- Associated infrastructure.

The estimated project cost of the development is \$26 million.

The proposal will create approximately 260 full time equivalent construction jobs and 100 full time equivalent jobs during operation.

The proposal was exhibited for a period of 31 days from 10 September 2008 to 10 October 2008. During the exhibition period, the Department received a total of 4 submissions from public authorities and 2 submissions from the public.

Public Authorities

Key issues raised in public authority submissions (RTA, Narrabri Shire Council, Heritage Council and Ministry of Transport) relate to flooding of the site; traffic access; car parking; ambulance movement; pedestrian linkages; stormwater services and building services. Specifically the RTA raised comments about the Ambulance emergency access, road layout, traffic control, car parking and pedestrian linkages. The Department has taken on board some of the recommendations made by the RTA, whilst their concern regarding the parking area for the Child Care centre is considered to not be entirely within the scope of this project and is best dealt with by Narrabri Council. Narrabri Council raised issues relating to car parking, access, on-site water storage and design issues. Where relevant, Council's recommendations have been included. Furthermore the Heritage Council and the Ministry of Transport raised no objections to the project.

Key issues considered in the assessment include: flooding, traffic and access, ecological sustainable development, heritage and landscaping.

Preferred Project Report

On 12 November 2008 the proponent responded to issues raised in submissions by public authorities and the public. The issues raised did not warrant the requirement for a Preferred Project Report and therefore no amendments were made to the project application.

Assessment

The Department has assessed the merits of the proposal and is satisfied that the impacts of the proposed development have been addressed via the proponent's Environmental Assessment, Statement of Commitments and the Department's recommended conditions of approval. Furthermore, the proposal adequately addresses the Director-General's Requirements for the project. Based on the reasons outlined in the body of this report, the Department is satisfied that the site is suitable for the proposed hospital development and that the project will provide environmental, social and economic benefits to the region. On these grounds, it is recommended that the project be approved, subject to the recommended conditions.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1.1 Site location

The address of the site is 11 Cameron Street Narrabri (Lot 107 DP 1036033) and is located within the local government area of Narrabri Shire Council and is owned by NSW Health. The site has an area of 29,390m². The hospital is part of the Hunter Area Health District. The site has a frontage to Cameron Street and to Gibbons Street and is situated adjacent to the banks of the Namoi River. The primary access to the Hospital is via Cameron Street which is serviced by a car parking area. The hospital can also be entered via the secondary entry point on Gibbons Street. The site is located approx 1 km from the Narrabri town centre via the Newell Highway.

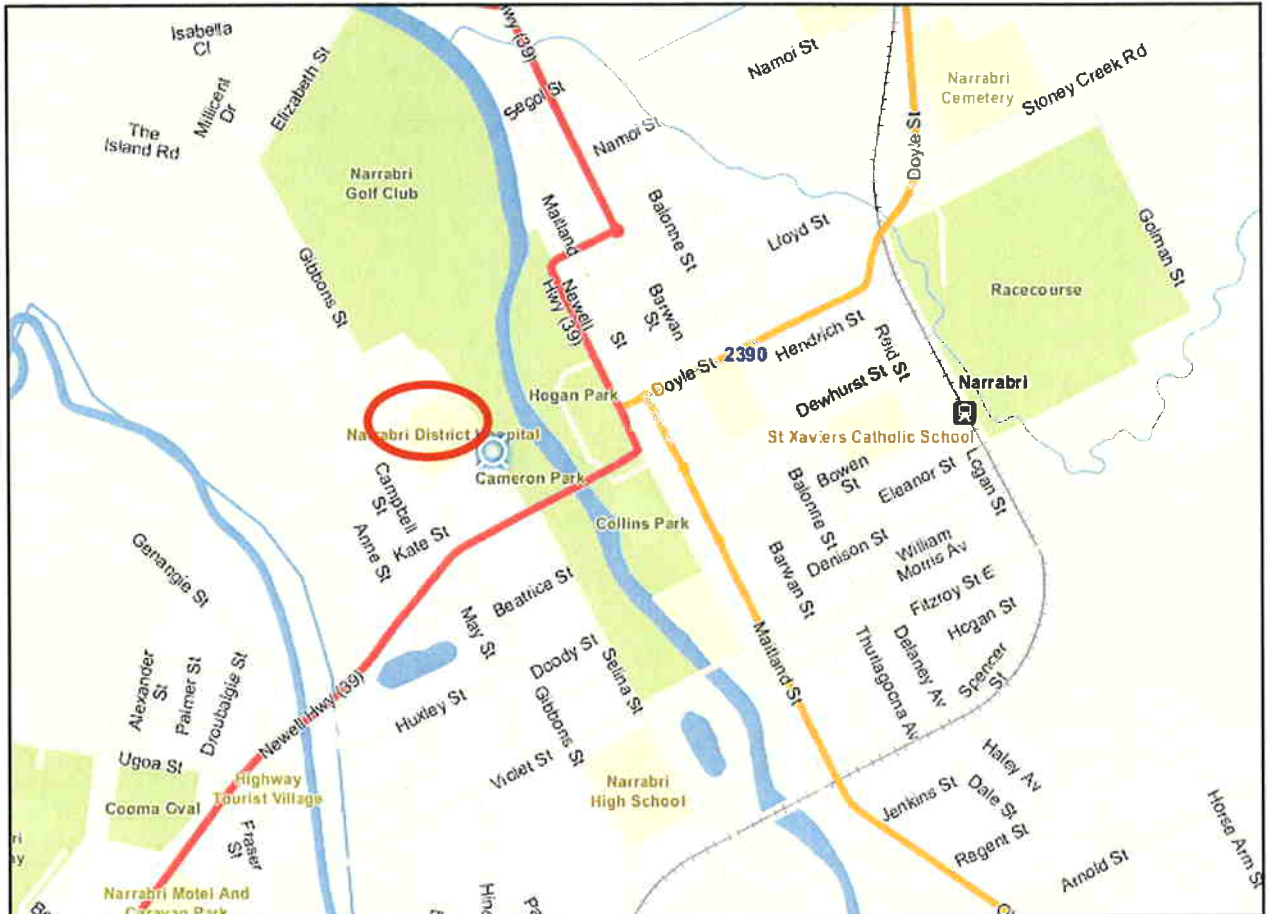


Figure 1: Site Location (red circle provides indicative location of site)

2.1.2 Existing site features

The site is located adjacent to the Namoi River and is surrounded by the Narrabri Golf Club, Cameron Park and Newell Highway Bridge. Currently the site accommodates a part two storey part three storey hospital building with associated outbuildings and informal helipad that was built in 1944. The hospital building accommodates less than one third of the site, with the remainder of the site being open space and car parking. Existing vegetation comprises of open grass land, shrubs and trees. The site is relatively flat with a gentle slope of 300mm west away from the Namoi River.

The town of Narrabri, including the hospital site, is located within the flood plain of the Namoi River and Narrabri Creek and is situated within the 1:100 ARI flood level. Narrabri Shire Council has a Flood Plain Management Policy in place to ensure all development complies with the required flood level.



Figure 2: Hospital Building with car parking, as viewed from Cameron St entry

2.1.3 Site Context

The town of Narrabri is located within the north west region of New South Wales, approximately 520 km from Sydney and 175 km from Tamworth, being the closest regional town. The town of Narrabri is serviced by a train station and is serviced by its own town centre, shops and emergency services.

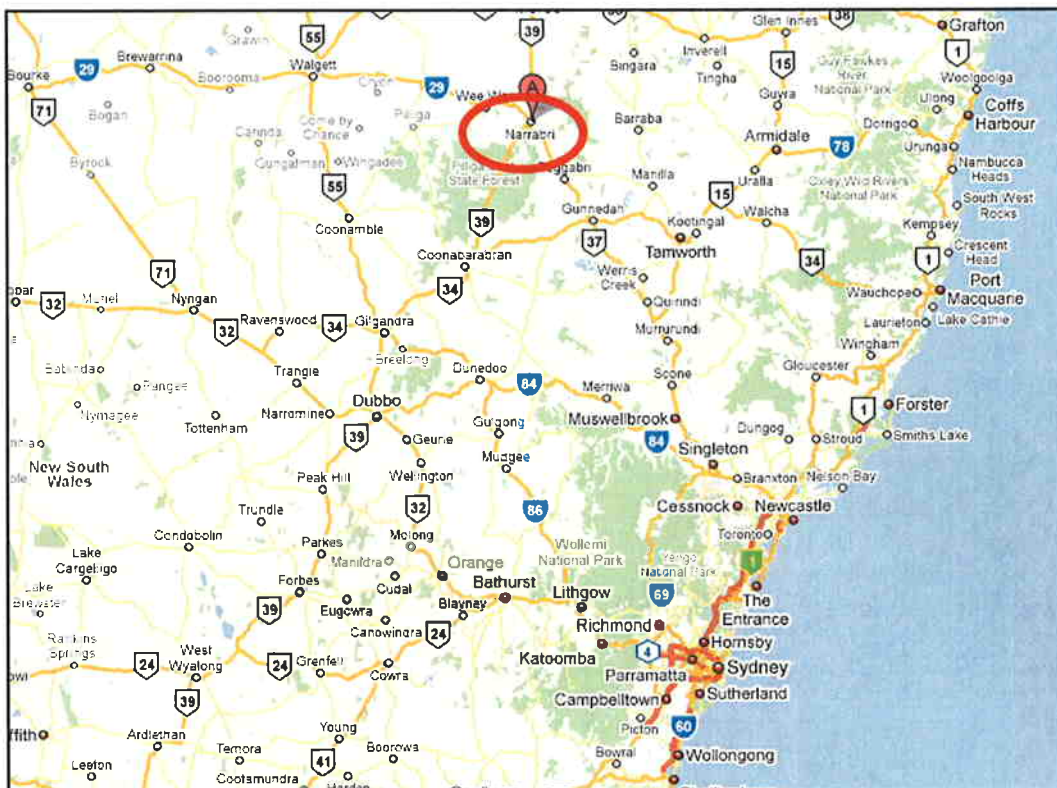


Figure 3: Context Map (red circle provides indicative location of site)

2.1.4 Surrounding development

To the south of the site is the Namoi Aged Care centre, to the north west is the Narruby Child Care Centre and to the north is the Jessie Hunt Nursing Home. Gibbons Street comprises of residential development primarily being low density dwellings. To the south of the site, the Newell Highway acts as the main arterial road that distributes access to other areas of the town. The town centre of Narrabri is located along Maitland Street which includes the location of the current Community Health Services, Ambulance Station, Library and Council offices.



Figure 4: Aerial Photo of Hospital and surrounding development

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proponent seeks approval to demolish the existing hospital building and construct a new hospital with associated ambulance features. The proposal includes the following:

- Staged demolition of existing hospital building. The existing hospital will remain in operation until the new hospital is fully built and opened. The old hospital will be then decommissioned and demolished.
- Construction of a new single storey hospital building including emergency department, helipad and associated medical services providing 28 patient beds;
- Construction of a free standing Ambulance Station building adjacent to the new hospital;
- Construction of staff accommodation comprising a two storey duplex and four bedroom dwelling;
- Retention of existing staff accommodation building and adjoining carport;
- Landscaped areas, internal road network and car park for 100 vehicles ; and
- Associated infrastructure.

Development Data

The proposal has a Gross Floor Area (GFA) of 5,467 m² which equals an FSR of 0.19:1.

	Proposed GFA
Hospital Building	4,800 m ²
Ambulance Station	186 m ²
Staff Accommodation	481 m ²
Total	5,467 m²

3.2 DEVELOPMENT IN DETAIL

The hospital redevelopment is significant for the future social and economic growth of the Narrabri town. The hospital development intends to provide health services for the immediate community as well as the regional surrounding area.

The project application proposes a single storey hospital building with associated health facilities. The services to be provided by the hospital include emergency care, pathology, primary and community health, child and family health, health education, mental health, aged care services, general surgery and a dental and medical centre. Specifically the hospital building will provide 28 hospital beds and the building will include a maintenance unit, catering unit, office/education unit, operating unit, administration and medical records area, diagnostics unit, emergency ward, patient unit and staff amenities. A support cluster within the hospital provides stores, maintenance and plant areas. A roof top plant room has been proposed to provide vertical elements to balance the predominant horizontal composition of the building.

Primary access to the hospital will be via Gibbons Street whilst an emergency access will be provided from Cameron Street. The hospital site is serviced by an internal road network which provides car parking, drop-off areas, loading access and connection to the helipad area. The ambulance station and staff accommodation are located adjacent to the main hospital building.

Development approval for enabling works such as minor demolition of outbuildings, land clearing and services diversion has been obtained from Narrabri Shire Council. These works have now been completed and the site is ready for the construction of the new hospital. The existing hospital will remain in operation until construction of the new hospital is finished.

The Narrabri Hospital site is located within the 1 in 100 ARI floor level. Narrabri Council has conducted flood management studies and these have determined that the minimum occupied floor level on the site must be constructed at least 500mm above the 1 in 100 ARI flood level. The proponent has provided a minimum floor

level report that concludes that the ground floor of the hospital must be built at RL 214.37. This RL of 214.37 includes the 500mm level above the 1 in 100 ARI. To achieve this level, a large portion of the site will be filled to a height of 1770mm above the existing ground level. The filled area will fall back to natural ground levels on all sides to ensure appropriate management of stormwater, floor water flows and accessibility.

Courtyards and outdoor spaces have been integrated into the design and layout of the hospital building. A pedestrian concourse will run along the eastern side of the site adjacent to the banks of the Namoi River, linking the hospital building to Cameron Street. Landscaping will be provided adjoining the pedestrian concourse and in surrounding smaller courtyards.

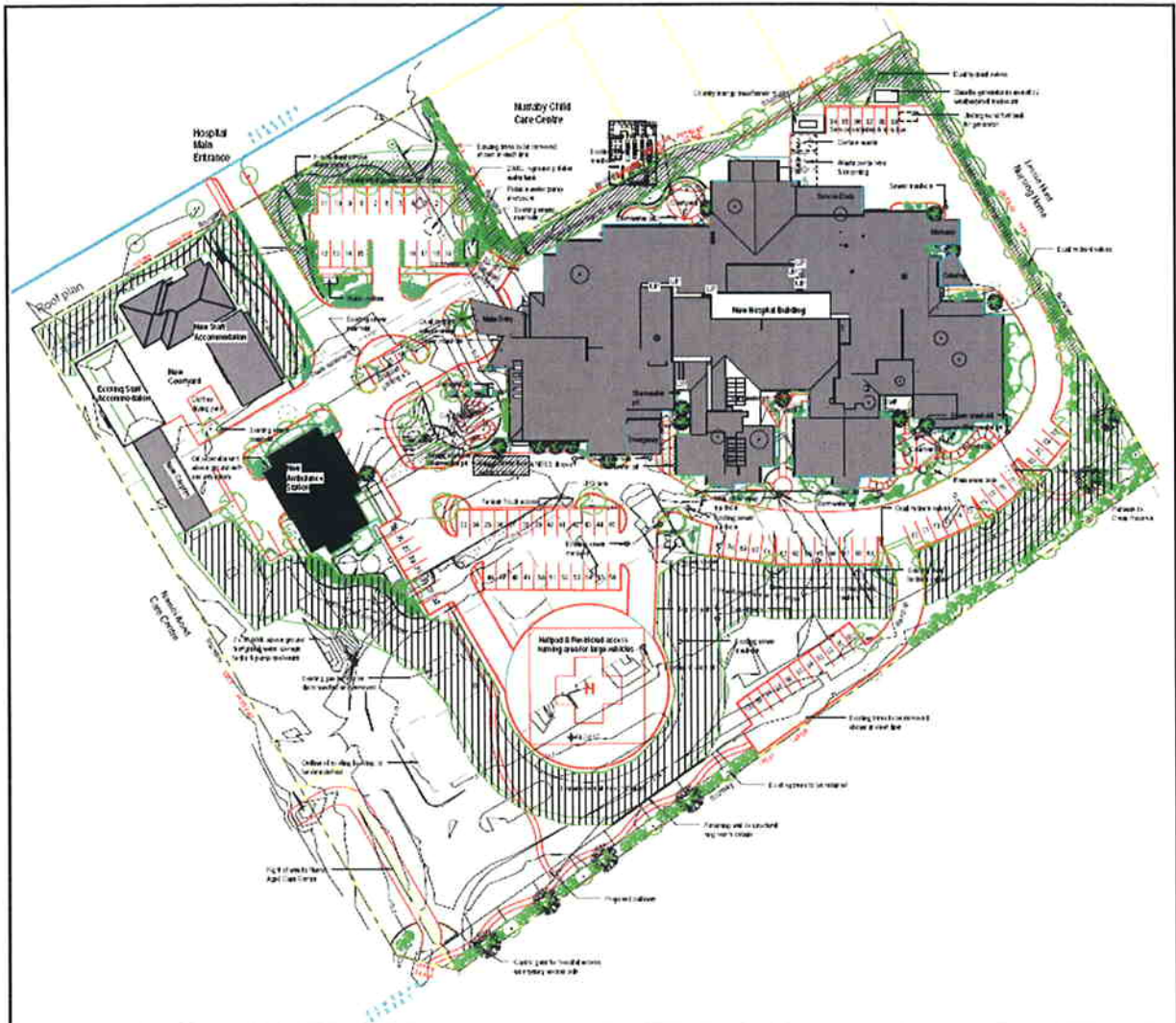


Figure 5: Site plan of proposed hospital



Figure 6: View from south west



Figure 7: View from north east

3.3 STAGING

The project has been designed to allow for the continuation of existing hospital services during the construction of the new hospital building. This is achieved by staging the development in the following schedule:

Stage One: Enabling works including demolition of vacant ancillary building and clearing of the site. The enabling works have provided a temporary sealed access road and sealed car park to be utilised during construction. Narrabri Council has granted consent to these works and they have since been carried out.

Stage Two: The construction of the main building and permanent access roads from Gibbons Street including internal road network and the filling of the natural ground level. The construction of the ambulance station and staff accommodation buildings will follow this phase. During the commissioning of the new hospital, both the old and new hospital facilities will operate simultaneously as services are transferred, including primary and community health moving on the site.

Stage Three: Opening of the new hospital building and demolition of the old hospital building to allow for the completion of the helipad, remaining internal road network and associated landscape.

3.4 PROJECT AMENDMENTS

The proponent has responded to issues raised in submissions by public authorities and the public and has provided additional information to clarify the issues. Additional information has included clarification of flooding issues, car parking, access and hospital layout. The issues raised do not warrant the requirement for a Preferred Project Report and therefore no amendments were made to the project application.

4 STATUTORY CONTEXT

4.1 MAJOR PROJECT DECLARATION

State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 (Major Projects SEPP) outlines the types of development declared a major project for the purposes of Part 3A of the EP&A Act. For the purposes of the SEPP certain forms of development may be considered a Major Project if the Minister (or his delegate) forms the opinion that the development meets criteria within the SEPP.

Schedule 1, Clause 18 of the Major Project SEPP provides that a project for a hospital with a Capital Investment Value of more than \$15 million is a Part 3A project. The Capital Investment Value for the proposal is estimated at \$26 million.

On 29 April 2008, the Director-General formed the opinion that Part 3A of the Act applied to the proposed development. In doing so the Director-General declared the proposal to be a Part 3A project.

4.2 PERMISSIBILITY

The subject site is zoned Special Uses under the Narrabri Local Environmental Plan No 2 and a hospital is classified as permissible development with consent.

4.3 DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS (DGEARS)

On 20 May 2008, the Director-General issued environmental assessment requirements (DGEARS) pursuant to Section 75F of the EP & A Act. The key issues to be addressed in the DGEARS issued related to:

- Urban form and design;
- Amenity impacts;
- Transport and traffic;
- ESD measures;
- Helipad;
- Construction and operational impacts; and
- Services.

The DGEARS are provided in **Appendix C**.

4.4 OBJECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT 1979

The objects of any statute provide an overarching framework that informs the purpose and intent of the legislation and gives guidance to its operation. The Minister's consideration and determination of a project application under Part 3A must be informed by the relevant provisions of the Act, consistent with the backdrops of the objects of the Act.

The objects of the Act in section 5 are as follows:

- (a) *to encourage:*
- (i) *the proper management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources, including agricultural land, natural areas, forests, minerals, water, cities, towns and villages for the purpose of promoting the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment,*
 - (ii) *the promotion and co-ordination of the orderly and economic use and development of land,*
 - (iii) *the protection, provision and co-ordination of communication and utility services,*
 - (iv) *the provision of land for public purposes,*
 - (v) *the provision and co-ordination of community services and facilities, and*
 - (vi) *the protection of the environment, including the protection and conservation of native animals and plants, including threatened species, populations and ecological communities, and their habitats, and*
 - (vii) *ecologically sustainable development, and*
 - (viii) *the provision and maintenance of affordable housing, and*
- (b) *to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning between the different levels of government in the State, and*

- (c) to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment.

Of particular relevance to the assessment of the subject application is consideration of the Objects under section 5(a). Relevantly, the Objects stipulated under section 5(a) (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) are significant factors in forming the determination of the application and the project is considered to comply with these objects of the Act. Further the project does not raise significant issues with regards to (vi) and (viii).

4.5 ESD PRINCIPLES

The *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991* provides five accepted ESD principles:

- (a) decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations (**the integration principle**);
- (b) if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation (**the precautionary principle**);
- (c) the principle of inter-generational equity - that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations (**the inter-generational principle**);
- (d) the conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making (**the biodiversity principle**); and
- (e) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted (**the valuation principle**).

The Department has considered the proposal in relation to the ESD principles and has made the following conclusions:

- **Integration Principle** – The proposed development facilitates the construction of a new hospital for the township of Narrabri providing improved hospital facilities and services for the region. The development will provide for the short-term and long-term economic and social development of the area.
- **Precautionary Principle** – The site is identified as having a low level of environmental sensitivity. Conditions of approval are recommended to mitigate any potential significant impact on the environment arising from the development. However the hospital site is subject to flooding. In response to the flooding issues the proponent proposes to raise the ground floor of the buildings to be above the 1:100 Average Recurrence Interval Flood level. The resulting raised floor level will be 1700mm above the existing ground floor being RL 214.37. If as a result of climate change the 1:100 ARI flood level increases, the proponent has included a 500mm freeboard within the 1770mm raised platform. In addition there is a Flood Management Plan in place as well as an evacuation management plan.
- **Inter-Generational Principle** – The site's redevelopment for a new hospital providing improved health services and facilities to the community is considered to meet this principle. Through implementation of the enabling works programs and staged construction, environmental and management practices currently employed on the site will be enhanced or introduced to ensure the environment is protected for future generations.
- **Biodiversity Principle** – Natural vegetation on the site is limited due to the existing hospital facility and the site does not contain any threatened or vulnerable species, populations, communities or significant habitats. The project application proposes to increase the vegetation on the site by the provision of landscaped courtyards, garden beds and the plantings of approximately 80 new trees. Details are provided on the submitted Landscape Plan.
- **Valuation Principle** – The project application will provide improved hospital facilities for the area. The hospital will continue to be a large employer in the region and assist in the economic and social development of the Narrabri region.

The proponent is committed to ESD principles which are detailed in the Environmental Assessment, including maximising use of natural light and ventilation, use of thermal massing and thermal insulation, minimisation of water usage and waste sorting facilities.

4.6 SECTION 75I(2) OF THE ACT & CLAUSE 8B OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT REGULATION 2000

Section 75I(2) of the Act and Clause 8B of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 provides that the Director-General's report is to address a number of requirements in the Director General Report. These matters and the Department's response are set out as follows:

Section 75I(2) criteria	Response
Copy of the proponent's environmental assessment and any preferred project report	The Proponent's EA and response to submissions are located on the assessment file and in a CD-Rom in Appendix E .
Any advice provided by public authorities on the project	All advice provided by public authorities on the project for the Minister's consideration is set out at Appendix F of this report.
Copy of any report of a panel constituted under Section 75G in respect of the project	No statutory independent hearing and assessment panel was undertaken in respect of this project.
Copy of or reference to the provisions of any State Environmental Planning Policy that substantially govern the carrying out of the project	Each relevant SEPP that substantially governs the carrying out of the project is identified and assessed.
Except in the case of a critical infrastructure project – a copy of or reference to the provisions of any environmental planning instrument that would (but for this Part) substantially govern the carrying out of the project and that have been taken into consideration in the environmental assessment of the project under this Division	An assessment of the development relative to all environmental planning instruments is provided in Appendix D .
Any environmental assessment undertaken by the Director General or other matter the Director General considers appropriate.	The environmental assessment of the project application is this report in its entirety.
A statement relating to compliance with the environmental assessment requirements under this Division with respect to the project.	The proponent's EA addressed the DGR requirements and is considered to have satisfied those requirements as addressed in this report. Refer to the Conclusion in Section 7 of this report for a statement relating to this requirement.
Clause 8B criteria	Response
An assessment of the environmental impact of the project	An assessment of the environmental impact of the proposal is discussed in section 5 of this report.
Any aspect of the public interest that the Director-General considers relevant to the project	The public interest is discussed in section 5 of this report.
The suitability of the site for the project	The suitability of the site for the project is discussed in section 5 of this report
Copies of submissions received by the Director-General in connection with public consultation under section 75H or a summary of the issues raised in those submissions.	A summary of the issues raised in the submissions is provided in section 6 and Appendix G of this report.

4.7 ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS (EPIS)

4.7.1 Application of EPI's to Part 3A projects

To satisfy the requirements of section 75I(2)(d) and (e) of the Act, this report includes references to the provisions of the environmental planning instruments that govern the carrying out of the project and have been taken into consideration in the environmental assessment of the project application

A summary of compliance with the relevant EPI's is in **Appendix D**.

5 ASSESSMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

5.1 KEY ISSUES

Key issues considered in the Department's assessment of the Environmental Assessment include:

- Flooding;
- Traffic, car parking and access;
- Helipad;
- Landscaping;
- Ecological Sustainable Development;
- Heritage
- Construction Impacts;
- Drainage;
- Operational Impacts;
- Statement of Commitments;
- Public interest.

5.2 FLOODING

The hospital site is located within the 1 in 100 ARI flood level with occurs at an RL of 213.87 (See Figure 8). A Flood Management report states that the existing hospital site would be inundated in the event of a 1:50 year flood and that in the event of a 1:100 year flood the ground levels of the hospital would be inundated to a level of 1.5-1.8 metres of water. The image below illustrates a 20 year flood which occurred in 1984. The aerial photo shows the surrounding areas of the Narrabri town being inundated however the hospital site is not inundated (circled red).



Figure 8: 1 in 20 Year flood (1984)

In response the project proposes to construct a raised platform across the site to allow for the continued operation of the hospital in the event of a 1 in 100 year flood. Under Council's policy, the ground floor of habitable rooms and buildings must be constructed at least 500mm above the 1:100 ARI flood level. Given the site is already below the 1:100 ARI flood level, the project involves raising the natural ground level by 1770mm to achieve an RL of 214.37 which includes the 500mm Council requirement. The RL of 214.37 has been determined

by the Surveyor's report which is based on a Flood Assessment undertaken by NSW Commerce. As such the hospital would not be flooded in the event of a 1 in 100 year flood and shall remain operational.



Figure 9: Flood contour lines with existing hospital site highlighted yellow

The raised platform will be constructed from clean granular filling materials as well as recycled crushed brick and concrete recovered during the enabling works stage. The surrounding road and outdoor levels have been designed to direct surface water away from the buildings and the helipad. The increased platform is not considered to have any flow-on impacts on adjoining properties given that if a flood were to occur, the surrounding properties and the entire Narrabri town would already be inundated. Therefore any flow-on impacts would be consistent with the impacts that would arise during a flood.

In the proponent's response to issues raised in submissions, they indicated that there is no accurate data available on the impacts of climate change on flood levels. However if climate change were to increase the 1:100 year flood level, then the proposed 500mm increased height would provide a freeboard medium to allow the hospital to remain in operation during the 1:100 year flood. In addition there is a Flood Management Plan as well as an evacuation management plan in place to enable the hospital to continue to operate in the event of a 1:100 year flood. In the event of 1:100 flood or worse, all transport around the site will be by watercraft as the entire Narrabri town will be inundated.

This represents a significant improvement on the existing situation where the existing hospital would be inundated by up to 1.8metre during the 1:100 year flood. The proposed increase platform will allow the hospital to remain in operation during the 1:100 year flood and the 500mm freeboard provides for future climate change impacts.

5.3 TRAFFIC, CAR PARKING AND ACCESS

Access and Emergency Access

Main access to the hospital site will be via the new entry along Gibbons Street which will act as a formal intersection. This main access will be used by all public vehicular access, loading/unloading and goods vehicles. A secondary emergency access will be provided from Cameron Street which will be closed with a gate and will only be accessible in the instance of a major emergency such as medical emergency, fire service access and emergency evacuation of the site. Ambulance vehicle movements will be via the main entry, however in the instance of a medical emergency the secondary access will be available for usage.

The secondary emergency access will retain the right of carriageway from Cameron Street to provide access to the Namoi Aged Care facility. A condition of approval has been included to ensure that the emergency gate is

electronically controlled from the main administration area in the hospital and that the road connection is to be properly sealed.

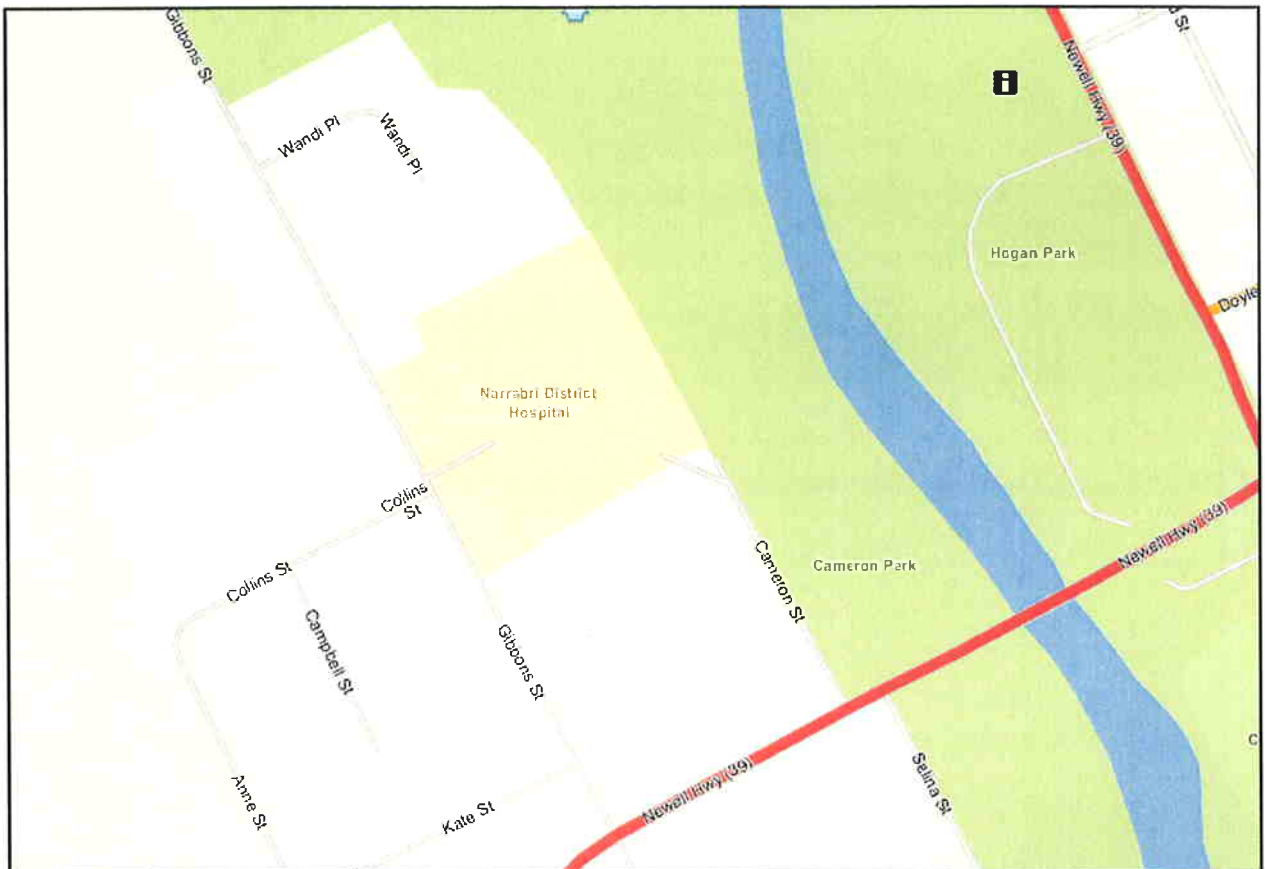


Figure 10: Access from Cameron Street and Gibbons Street

Car park layout

The internal road network has been designed to provide access to the key areas of the hospital and incorporates a round about and turning areas for easy navigation. The internal road network is connected with the car park. The car park provides 100 parking spaces and has been distributed into smaller car parking areas around the site to provide convenient access to the hospital entry points. There are approximately eight smaller parking areas. Two parking spaces adjacent to the roundabout at the main entry have been identified as difficult to manoeuvre and a potential hazard. A condition of approval has been included to delete these parking spaces and include them into another suitable area as well as for the inclusion of accessible parking spaces in the car park and for the car park to be signposted as a shared zone.

The Department is satisfied that the total number of car parking spaces is sufficient to service the development and that the car park layout is acceptable.

Traffic

The site is accessible via the Newell Highway and then the main Gibbons Street access. The hospital is positioned within close proximity to the Narrabri Town Centre and therefore is within walking or cycling distance. The proponent has included bicycle storage areas to encourage cycling usage.

The proponent has provided a Traffic Report that concludes that the site will be able to cater for the increased traffic movements resulting from the proposal, that the parking circulation is adequate, that site access is satisfactory and that the proposal complies with relevant guidelines. The RTA has raised no objections to the proposal however they have recommend some minor variations. These recommendations have been considered by the Department and where relevant have been included by way of conditions of approval.

Accordingly the hospital development will have no significant traffic impacts.

Child Care Centre Parking

The adjacent child care centre has utilised the vacant open space of the hospital site as a car parking area for its customers. This has been on the basis of an informal agreement between the hospital operators and the centre operators however as part of the project application the new hospital will occupy this vacant area and as such the child care centre's parking area will no longer be available. The proponent has advised that they have discussed this issue with the child care centre and the Council and that it is not possible to provide parking within the hospital development as this may contravene child safety guidelines nor is it the hospital's responsibility to provide car parking for adjoining non-related uses. As local road authority it is the responsibility of the Council to provide parking and associated road works. Further the RTA has recommended that on-street parking on Gibbons Street be provided to cater for patrons of the child care centre. As such this is an issue that should be resolved between the child care centre and Council and it is recommended that they both jointly investigate whether parking for the centre can be provided on Gibbons Street.

The child care centre has also expressed concern that the hospital redevelopment will block their rear fire access gate. The BCA stipulates that a fire egress from a site must lead to a public road way and not to private land. The proponent has advised that they will not be blocking any rear access gate to the child care centre as the hospital development will not be built to the boundary.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access to the hospital is provided along Gibbons Street and Cameron Street. The Cameron Street entry is connected to a foot path that integrates with the internal road network and leads to the main administration areas and emergency ward. The Department considers the provided access to be adequate.

Council has recommended that a bus shelter be installed on Gibbons Street. The proponent has installed a bus shelter at the main access of the hospital and this is considered to adequately meet the public transport amenity needs of the hospital development.

5.4 HELIPAD

The proposed helipad is located to the east of the site adjacent to the banks of the Namoi River. The existing helipad is located adjacent to the child care centre. The new location will ensure the helipad is further away from the child care centre. It is located in close proximity to the emergency ward for easy access and is connected to the internal road network. The helipad area also acts as a restricted turning circle for large vehicles. The proponent has advised that the helipad has been designed in accordance with the NSW Health Medical Helipad design guidelines.

5.5 LANDSCAPING

The project includes the establishment of landscaped garden beds, courtyards, trees and smaller traffic islands. The courtyards have been designed to be integrated into the layout of the hospital, such as the staff courtyard, children's play area and paediatric courtyard. Landscaping has been designed to articulate entry points and circulation providing amenity shade and establishing visual screening. Approximately 80 new trees are proposed to be planted around the site and with selection of plants focused on native vegetation.

The proponent has submitted a detailed landscape plan and the Department is satisfied with the proposed level of landscaping.

5.6 ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The hospital building has been designed to achieve 4 stars in Green Building Council Green star rating. The building is oriented north-south for optimum solar access to patient and occupied staff areas. Passive and active ESD principles have been incorporated into the development such as the building orientation, window sun shading, solar hot water heating, rainwater storage (100,000 litres), heat recovery from air conditioning, low VOC finishes, low energy lighting systems and the use of low embodied energy materials. The proponent also proposes to utilise a new lighting mechanism such as the Parans indoor sunlight system which utilises sunlight and fibre optic technology to transmit light without heat or UV transfer.

Materials uncovered during demolition such as brick and concrete are proposed to be re-used for fill in constructing the raise platform. In addition, suitable bricks recovered from the original building will be used in building and landscaping works. The Department is satisfied that the proposal adequately meets ESD principles.

5.7 HERITAGE

The existing hospital building is not a statutory listed heritage item. It was as built in 1944 during World War II and underwent extensions in 1973. The building is an example of Brutalist architecture and is considered as having some form of local interest as it is an example of an Interwar Functionalist Style hospital designed by the Government Architect. However its architectural integrity has been compromised by the renovations works conducted in 1973 and therefore the building is not heritage significant. As such it is considered appropriate that the building be demolished to accommodate a new hospital.

5.8 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

The site is located adjacent to an aged care facility and child care facility and therefore construction impacts should be minimised. The proponent has advised that construction traffic will use a dedicated entrance from Gibbons Street. During construction, a temporary staff and user parking will be provided as part of the Enabling Works programs.

A condition of approval has been included requiring the proponent to submit a Construction Management Plan that addresses noise, dust, construction hours, safety and complaints management, prior to the commencement of works.

5.9 DRAINAGE

A rainwater storage system has been provided in the form of a 100,000 litre storage capacity tank. This tank will provide for toilet flushing, irrigation, exterior building cleaning and vehicle washing in accordance with NSW Health guidelines. The proponent has provided a stormwater plan and a condition of approval will require that a final detailed stormwater plan be provided prior to construction.

5.10 OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

Conditions of approval have been included to mitigate any issues during operation. A hospital operation management plan has been included as a condition of approval.

5.11 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENTS

The Statement of Commitments that were submitted with the application are located at **Appendix B**. The key issues identified are:

- Demolition of buildings to be in accordance with the requirements of AS 2601-2001.
- Construction and operation of the hospital in accordance with the Premiers memorandum No. 2003-2 High Environmental Performance for Buildings and the requirements of the Environmental Performance Guide for Buildings.
- Proponent will continue to liaise with Narrabri Shire Council and the local community during the development process.
- Design and documentation of the project to comply with the relevant provisions of the Building Code of Australia.
- Access and management: An Access and Safety plan will be prepared to ensure access during redevelopment is safe.
- Service: The proponent will comply with requirements of relevant public authorities for all services.
- Water Management: Design of stormwater disposal system to be in accordance with Australian Standards.
- Vegetation: Landscaping to be in accordance with landscaping plans.
- Construction Management: A Construction Environment Management Plan will be prepared prior to construction.
- Access for people with disabilities: The design of the hospital will permit appropriate, safe and dignified access by all people.
- Operation: An operational management plan will be prepared prior to the opening of the hospital.
- Planning agreements: Where relevant, all planning agreements will be identified and established.

The Statement of Commitments is considered to be reasonable for this proposal.

5.12 PUBLIC INTEREST

The project is in the public interest on the basis that the proposal will provide improved hospital and health services to the town of Narrabri and will meet the needs of the future population growth of the region. The project will deliver social and economic benefits to the locality and is considered to be in the public interest.

6 CONSULTATION AND ISSUES RAISED

6.1 PUBLIC EXHIBITION DETAILS

In accordance with Section 75H of the Act, a "Test of Adequacy" was undertaken by the Department which determined that the matters contained in the DGRs were adequately addressed in the Environmental Assessment prior to public exhibition.

The environmental assessment was publicly exhibited for a period of 31 days from 10 September 2008 to 10 October 2008 at the following locations:

- Department of Planning (Head Office) – Information Centre, 22 - 33 Bridge Street, Sydney
- Narrabri Shire Council – 46-48 Maitland Street Narrabri

The EA was placed on the Department's website during the course of the exhibition period.

Local residents surrounding the site were informed of the project application proposal in writing and invited to make a written submission. Details of the application were also published in the public notices section of the Narrabri Courier and the Sydney Morning Herald. The advertisement provided details of the proposal, exhibition locations and dates and how interested parties could make a submission. Government agencies, Narrabri Shire Council and other public authorities were also consulted.

The proponent also conducted their own Planning Meetings with local stakeholders during the design process. These stakeholders included Narrabri Council, RTA, community presentations and staff of the hospital and involved informal meetings to discuss the design, layout and function-ability of the hospital.

The proponent responded to submissions on the 19 November 2008 and did not make any amendments to the project.

6.2 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED ON ENVIROMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Department received a total of six submissions comprising two submissions from the public and four submissions from public authorities being the RTA, Ministry of Transport, Narrabri Shire Council and the Heritage Council.

The two submissions from the public included one letter of objection and one letter of support in principle.

6.3 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

6.3.1 Summary of issues raised in public submissions

The following issues were raised in the two public submissions: cost of project, drainage, car parking and fire exit. The two submissions were from a resident and the local child care centre. Car parking, drainage and access have been addressed in Section 5 of this report. The cost of the project is not a planning issue however the project is within the fee criteria for a Part 3A project and is a reasonable cost estimate.

All issues raised have been considered during the assessment of the project and are considered to be appropriately addressed. Discussion on the key issues which include those raised in submissions is in Section 5 of this report. A summary of all submissions received can be found in **Appendix G**. The proponent response to submission is included in **Appendix H**.

6.4 SUBMISSIONS FROM PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

To fulfil the requirements of Section 75I Clause 2(b) this report includes advice provided by public authorities regarding the issues to be addressed by the proponent in the EA. These issues formed part of the key issues raised in the DGEARs. The Department has reviewed the EA, submissions to the preparation of the EA by public authorities, the submissions received from public authorities during the EA exhibition period and additional information provided by the proponent. Unless noted to the contrary below, the Department is satisfied that the responses provided by the proponent in their EA and the additional response to issues raised in submissions are reasonable.

The issues raised in public authority submissions were: traffic access, flooding, on-site water storage, car parking, emergency access, pedestrian linkages, stormwater services and building services. Specifically the RTA raised comments about the Ambulance emergency access, road layout, traffic control, car parking and pedestrian linkages. The Ambulance emergency access has been incorporated into the design of the proposal and a

condition of approval recommends the access gate to be electronically controlled from the main reception area of the hospital. The road layout is considered to be adequate and a condition of approval recommends that all road works comply with RTA and Council guidelines.

The issues raised by Narrabri Council have been addressed, including the provision of on-site water storage within the hospital, adequate car parking and where relevant amended, and design issues have been incorporated where necessary. The Heritage Council and the Ministry of Transport raised no objections to the project.

The proponent has responded to the issues raised in submission by the public authorities and the public. The issues raised did not warrant any amendments to the proposal. Thus a Preferred Project Report was not submitted.

7 CONCLUSION

The Department has reviewed the environmental assessment and duly considered advice from public authorities as well as issues raised in public submissions in accordance with Section 75(2) of the Act. All the relevant environmental issues associated with the proposal have been extensively assessed.

The Department is of the view that the proponent has satisfactorily mitigated the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposal. The recommended conditions (at **Appendix A**) and implementation of the measures detailed in the proponent's Environmental Assessment report and Statement of Commitments seek to maintain the amenity of the local area, and adequately mitigate the environmental impacts of the proposal.

On these grounds, the Department considers the site to be suitable for the proposed development and that the plan is in the public interest. Consequently, the Department recommends that the plan be approved, subject to modifications.

8 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Minister:

- (A) consider the findings and recommendations of this report;
- (B) approve the project application for the Narrabri Hospital project, under section 75J *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*; subject to modifications of the concept plan; and sign the Determination of the Major Project (**tag A**).

Prepared by:



Wilfred Nino
Planner
Strategic Assessments

Endorsed by:



Simon Bennett
A/Director
Strategic Assessments



Jason Perica
Executive Director
Strategic Sites and Urban Renewal