



Chris Knight
Environment Manager
The Bloomfield Group
PO Box 4
East Maitland NSW 2323

06/05/2020

Dear Mr Knight

**Rix's Creek North Project (MP 08_0102)
Biodiversity Offset Extension Request**

I refer to your letter dated 21 April 2020, requesting a further extension to secure the areas described in the biodiversity offset strategy, as outlined in condition 39 of Schedule 3 of MP 08_0102.

I note that since the last extension was granted in 2019, substantial progress has been made, as the previous delays concerning Ausgrid and the removal of a caveat are now resolved, the Apple Tree Flats Conservation Area has been gazetted with NSW National Parks and Wildlife, and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) are reviewing the conservation agreement and survey plans for the Martins Creek and Northern Biodiversity Areas.

I understand that the BCT have advised that it needs to complete site visits at the Martins Creek and Northern Biodiversity Areas, which are currently limited because of restrictions associated with the current COVID 19 pandemic. The Department acknowledges the genuine progress that has occurred since the last extension was granted and the limitations associated with these current restrictions.

Following careful consideration, the Secretary has agreed to a further 12 month extension, until 30 April 2021, to secure the areas described in the biodiversity offset strategy, as outlined in condition 39 of Schedule 3 of MP 08_0102. The Department considers this to be an appropriate and sufficient timeframe for BCT to undertake site visits and finalise its assessment of the conservation areas.

If you have any more questions, please contact Melanie Hollis at the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on 8217 2043 or at melanie.hollis@planning.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Matthew Sprott
Director
Resource Assessments
as nominee of the Secretary