

ASSESSMENT REPORT

NEWCASTLE PRIVATE HOSPITAL MP 08_0170 (MOD 2)

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an assessment of a request to modify the Project Approval for the Newcastle Private Hospital (NPH) at New Lambton Heights in the Newcastle local government area. The request has been lodged by ADW Johnson on behalf Healthscope Operations Pty Ltd (the Proponent), pursuant to section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

The application seeks approval for alterations and additions to the approved hospital building and the existing Kingston Hospital Building, and construction of an elevated pedestrian link between the existing Kingston and Croudace Buildings.

2. SUBJECT SITE

The site is located in the eastern part of the John Hunter Hospital campus at the intersection of Lookout Road and Jacaranda Drive, New Lambton Heights (refer to **Figure 1**).

The site contains several existing hospital buildings including the Kingston Building and the Croudace Building. The recently approved hospital building will be constructed on vacant land facing Jacaranda Drive (refer to **Figure 2**).

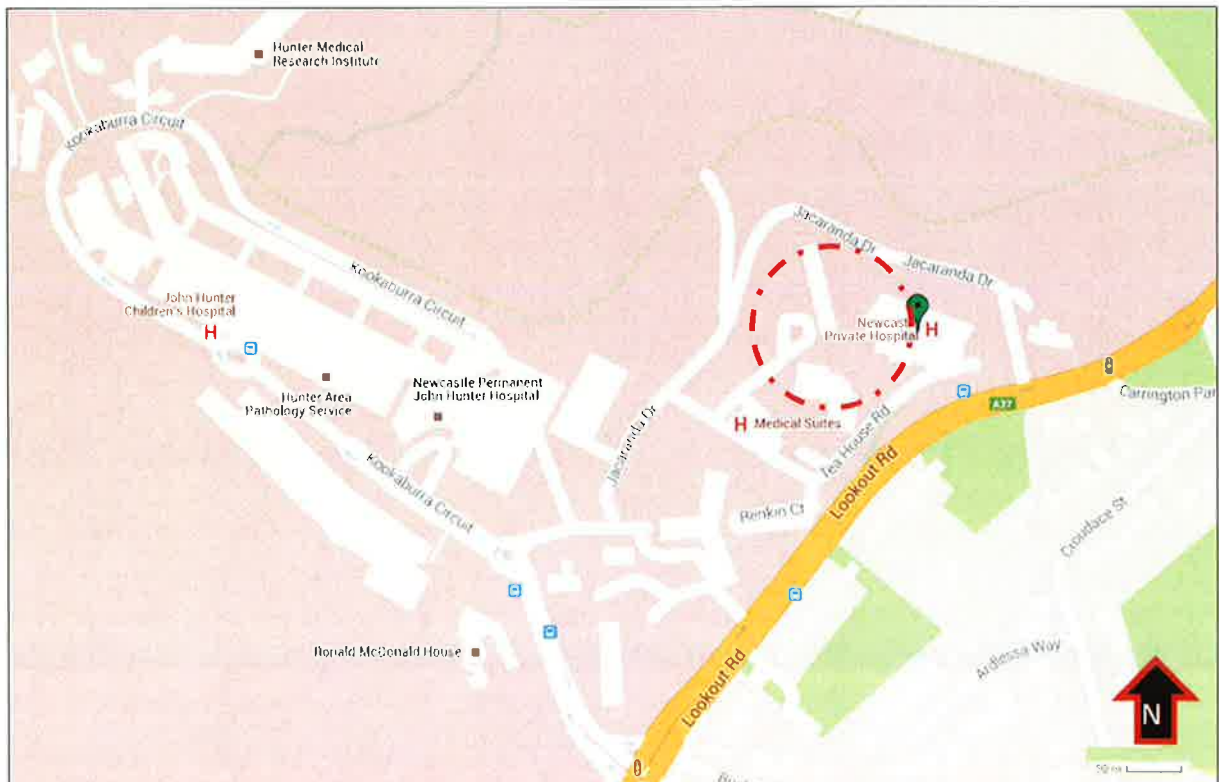


Figure 1: Site Location (Source: Nearnmap)

3. APPROVAL HISTORY

On 15 January 2010, Project Application MP08_0170 was approved by the Planning Assessment Commission (the Commission) for a new hospital building at NPH. Key aspects of the project include:

- construction of a six storey building, comprising three levels of hospital space above 3 levels of car parking;
- 60 inpatient beds;
- two operating theatres; and
- pedestrian connections to the existing Kingston Hospital Building.

The Project Approval has been modified on one occasion (MOD 1) to extend the lapsing date of the approval by two years to 15 January 2017.

Figure 2 shows the layout of the NPH. **Figure 3** illustrates the northern elevation of the approved building.

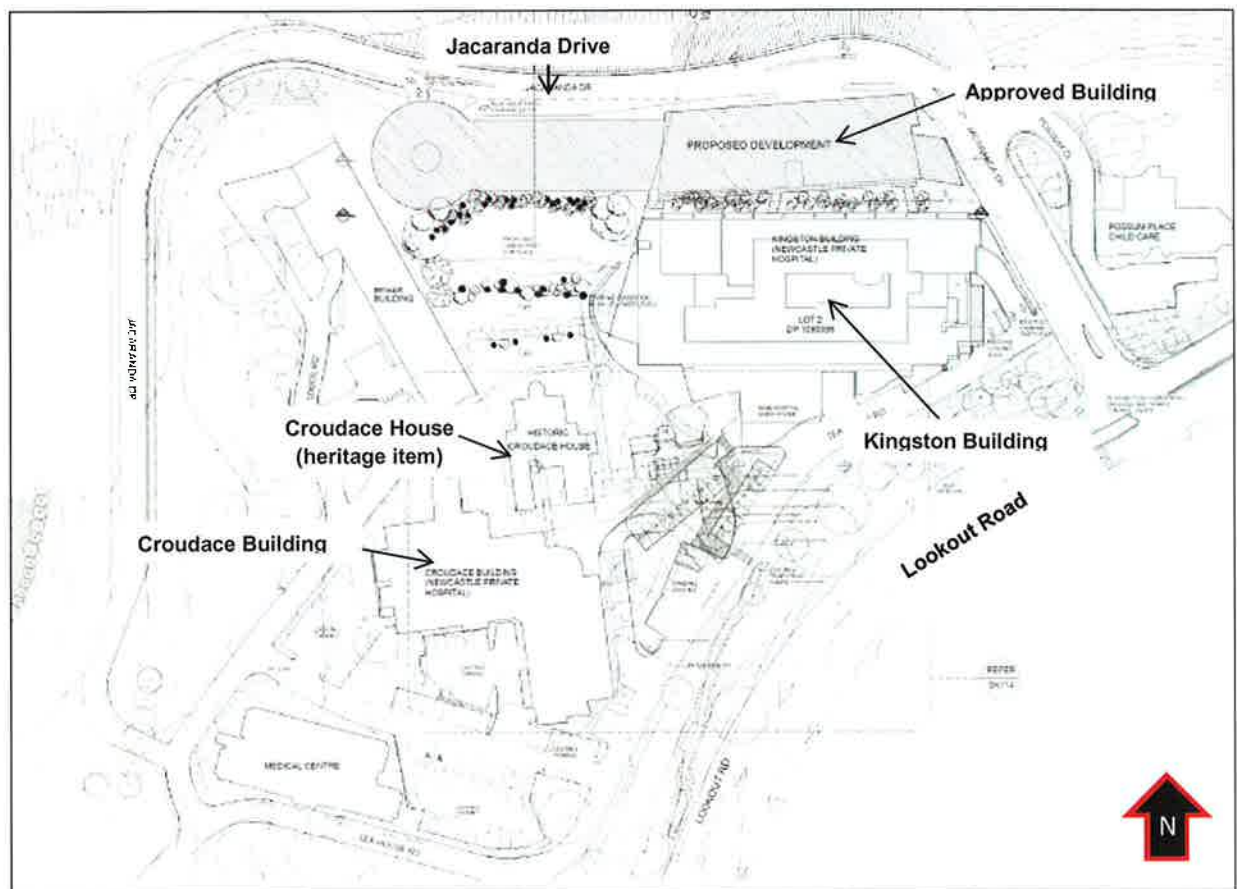


Figure 2: Site layout (Source: Proponent)

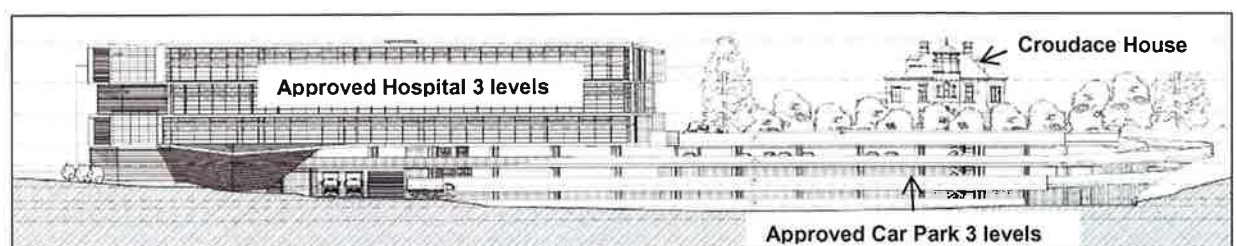


Figure 3: View showing the approved northern elevation (Source: Proponent)

4. PROPOSED MODIFICATION

On 9 November 2015 the Proponent lodged a section 75W modification application (MP08_0170 MOD 2) seeking approval for alterations and additions to the approved hospital building and the existing Kingston Hospital Building, and construction of an elevated pedestrian link between the existing Kingston and Croudace Buildings.

The modification application originally included a two storey addition to the approved hospital building. However, the Proponent removed one of the proposed storeys in response to concerns raised in submissions regarding the proposed height of the building and its associated visual impacts.

The proposal would also result in the following changes to the hospital:

- a reduction in three car spaces to a total of 380 car parks;
- an increase in 15 patient beds to a total of 197; and
- an increase of one operating theatre to a total of ten;
- an expanded imaging department and recovery area.

The proposed modifications are described in **Table 1** and the key external changes are illustrated in **Figures 4** and **5**.

Table 1: Summary of Proposed Modifications

Component	Proposed Modification
<i>External Changes</i>	<p><i>Approved Hospital Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construct one additional hospital level comprising 30 inpatient ward beds (proposed third floor); • reduce pedestrian access to the Kingston Building to one link at ground level and the first floor; <p><i>Existing Kingston Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construct a first floor addition to accommodate a recovery area above the existing entry; • extend the eastern end of the first floor to accommodate a new operating theatre; • construct an elevated pedestrian link to the Croudace Building; • minor adjustment to the loading areas a result of re-location of storage to Basement 2; • reconfigure the footprint of the plant area at the eastern end of the second floor to match the level 1 extension below; • re-organise the at-grade car park spaces to accommodate the elevated pedestrian link;
<i>Internal Changes</i>	<p><i>Approved Hospital Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interchange the medical suites at the second floor with the 30 bed ward at the ground floor; • change first floor ward to CCU ward (reduction in 15 beds) • provision of additional lift servicing all floors including the basement levels; • minor change to the location of the exit stairs to address paths of travel at each approved level; • provision of two car spaces for persons with a disability and six motorcycle parking spaces in Basement 3; • rationalise the loading area at Ground Level; • provide five motorcycle spaces in Basement 2; • remove one car space adjacent to the access ramp at each basement level; <p><i>Existing Kingston Building</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relocate the central sterilising services department (CSSD) from Level 1 to Basement 2 to replace the laundry area, which will now be provided off-site; • provide new openings in the northern wall at Basement 2 for designated pedestrian access to the approved building;

- loss of six beds to allow expansion to medical imaging at ground floor (no change to building envelope);
- re-arrangement of the rehabilitation ward and the link connection at the ground floor to the approved building;
- minor adjustment to the loading area a result of relocation of storage to Basement 2.



Figure 4: Perspective view of the approved building and the proposed additional floor from the north (Source: Proponent)



Figure 5: Perspective view showing the proposed link between the Kingston Building and Croudace Building (Source: Proponent)

5. STATUTORY CONSIDERATION

5.1 Section 75W

The application was originally approved under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act). Although Part 3A was repealed on 1 October 2011, the project remains a 'transitional Part 3A project' under Schedule 6A of the EP&A Act, and hence any modification to this approval must be made under the former Section 75W of the Act.

The Department is satisfied that the proposed changes are within the scope of Section 75W of the EP&A Act, and do not constitute a new application.

5.2 Approval Authority

The Minister for Planning is the approval authority for the application. However, under delegation dated 16 February 2015, the Acting Executive Director Key Sites and Industry Assessments may determine the application as:

- the local council has not made an objection; and
- a political disclosure statement has been made, but only in respect of a previous related application; and
- there are less than 10 public submissions in the nature of objections.

6. CONSULTATION

The Department publicly exhibited the proposal for 14 days, placed advertisements in the Sydney Morning Herald, Daily Telegraph, and Newcastle Herald, consulted with Newcastle City Council (Council), Transport for NSW (TfNSW), Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and wrote to surrounding landowners.

Council provided the following comments for consideration:

- the increased height of the approved building above the surrounding treeline would result in an adverse visual and scenic impact;
- Council's Development Control Plan requirements should be addressed;
- the car spaces next to the vehicle ramps reduce the sightline for drivers;
- a designated pedestrian pathway linking the existing buildings should be provided within the reconfigured at-grade car park to minimise vehicular/pedestrian conflict;
- confirmation should be provided that the loading dock accessed from Jacaranda Drive would be able to accommodate forward entry and exit for all service vehicles, and whether there is adequate sight distance for drivers exiting onto Jacaranda Drive; and
- While hospitals were previously exempt from payment of contributions, Council's current version of its S94 Contributions Plan does not exempt hospitals.

TfNSW provided the following comments for consideration:

- the sustainable travel requirements in the original approval should be maintained;
- as part of the Travel Plan the location of bus stops on Lookout Road should be reviewed to provide more direct access to the hospital;
- a Construction Traffic Management Plan should be provided prior to commencement of construction.

RMS raised no objection to the proposal.

The **RFS** raised no objection to the proposal, subject to compliance with their advice on the original application.

One **public** submission was received, objecting to the proposal. The submission raised concern with the increased height of the approved building above the treeline, and the view impacts to the north-east from the Croudace Building (heritage item).

7. RESPONSE TO SUBMISSIONS

The Proponent provided a Response to the Submissions (RtS) addressing the issues raised by agencies and the public submission. The RtS includes the following changes to the design:

- removal of the proposed fourth floor containing ten consulting suites to reduce its visual impacts;

- removal of three car spaces (one at each basement level) near the access ramps to improve driver sight lines and safety; and
- provision of a footpath next to the accessible at-grade car park between the Kingston and Croudace Buildings to provide a safe pedestrian route at ground level between the buildings and the car park.

In response, Council advised that the deletion of the proposed fourth floor is welcomed, but requested that careful consideration be given to the height of the building.

8. ASSESSMENT

The Department considers the key issues associated with the proposed modification are:

- visual impacts;
- heritage impacts; and
- traffic impacts.

All other issues are considered in **Table 2** below.

8.1 Visual Impact

The NPH is located on an elevated ridge and has an extensive visual catchment from the surrounding area. Council raised concern with the potential visual and scenic impacts as a result of the proposed additional height of the approved building above the surrounding vegetation. In response to these concerns, the Proponent reduced the height of the proposal by one storey (or approximately 4 m). Council advised it supported the deletion of the upper most floor, but requested that careful consideration should still be given to the proposed overall height of the building.

The Department notes that the immediate visual catchment outside the hospital campus is limited to the intersection of Lookout Road and Jacaranda Drive. When viewed from this vantage point the proposed building height is generally consistent with the height and bulk of the existing Kingston Building (refer to **Figure 6**). The view from other vantage points in Lookout Road would be limited by intervening buildings, vegetation and topography.

The proposal would also be visible from a wider perspective around 1.7 to 1.8 km away above surrounding vegetation (refer to **Figures 7 and 8**). The Department has considered the visual impacts of the proposed building from these wider vantage points and is satisfied that the proposed additional storey would not result in any unacceptable impacts on scenic quality given the building remains generally consistent with the height of the overall tree line along the ridge. The Department also considers that the additional storey is only a minor element in the context of these expansive distant views.



Figure 6: View from the intersection at Lookout Road and Jacaranda Avenue (Source: Proponent)

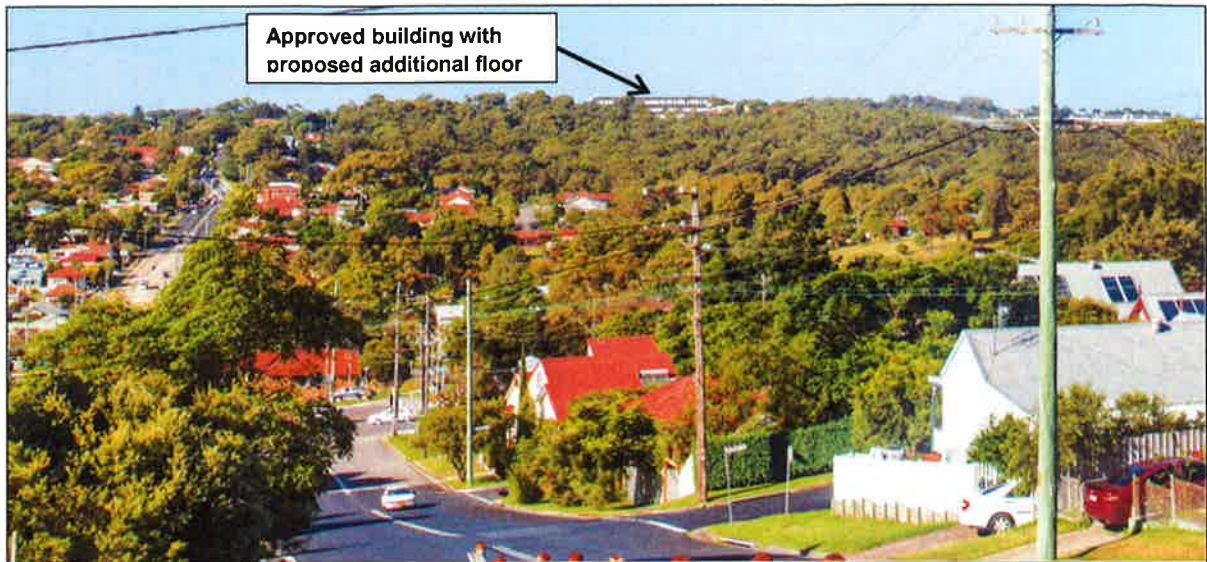


Figure 7: View from Dent Street, Lambton (1.8 km to the north) (Source: Proponent)



Figure 8: View from Moorehead Street and Griffith Road Lambton (1.7 km to the northeast) (Source: Proponent)

The Department also notes that the external façade of the additional storey would be consistent with the design of the approved building, therefore minimising its visual impacts. The Department's assessment therefore concludes that the proposed additional floor would not result in any adverse visual impacts.

8.2 Heritage Impact

The subject site contains Croudace House and its remnant gardens, which are listed as items of local heritage significance under Newcastle Local Environmental Plan 2012. The key potential heritage impacts associated with the proposal include the visual impact of the elevated walkway and additions to the Kingston Building on the remnant garden and curtilage of Croudace House. One submission also raised the issue of view loss from within Croudace House.

The proposal includes a first floor addition at the entry to the Kingston Building, and an elevated pedestrian link between the Kingston Building and the Croudace Building at the rear of Croudace House (refer to **Figure 5**). The Proponent's Statement of Heritage Impact (SHI) concludes the elevated pedestrian link would have minimal impact on the heritage significance of Croudace House given its siting as far away as practical from the house, and its transparent envelope (i.e. glazed) and slender form. The SHI recommends a consistent

material and colour selection where the pedestrian structure joins the existing buildings, and the installation of an interpretation panel. Also, the proposed addition to the Kingston building would have minimal heritage impact given it covers an existing area of the entry portico, and is a relatively small addition compared to the scale of the building.

The Department notes that the elevated pedestrian link would provide an important functional connection for staff and patients between the hospital buildings, and would allow Croudace House to be viewed above ground level. The Department also considers the proposed addition to the Kingston Building would be minor in the context of the existing building resulting in little or no impact on the setting of Croudace House. The Department is therefore satisfied these aspects of the proposal would not result in any adverse heritage impacts.

Croudace House also benefits from significant views to the north and north-east. It includes an observation tower, which was built specifically to take advantage of these views. The approved building was designed to minimise any potential view impacts from Croudace House and its curtilage by locating the higher building element outside the view curtilage (i.e. at the eastern end of the building behind the Kingston Building). The proposed additional floor would also be located at the eastern end of the building and would not be visible, or affect views from Croudace House. The Department's assessment therefore concludes there would be no additional heritage impacts on the Croudace House view curtilage.

8.3 Traffic Impact

The proposed modification would lead to a minor increase in traffic generation as a result of the additional demand generated by the proposal, which includes:

- 15 additional hospital beds;
- one additional operating theatre; and
- 39 additional hospital staff.

Based on the rates specified in the *RTA Guide to Traffic Generating Developments*, the proposal would generate 4 additional vehicle trips per hour (vtph) in morning peak and 21 vtph in the evening peak. The Proponent's traffic assessment modelled the signalised intersection at Lookout Road/Jacaranda Drive in order to predict the likely delays, queue lengths and level of service. The additional traffic generated by the proposed modification increases the delays and queue lengths by less than two seconds and one car length, respectively. Therefore the additional traffic would not have any noticeable impact on the performance of the local road network during peak traffic periods.

The traffic Proponent's assessment also notes that the additional traffic represents less than one per cent of existing traffic volumes during peak periods. Traffic volumes in Lookout Road would also reduce by approximately 40 per cent following the construction of a new link planned between Jesmond and Rankin Park, providing additional capacity within the road network. The Department is therefore satisfied that the proposed modification would not result in any adverse impacts on the local road network.

8.4 Other Issues

Table 1: Assessment of Other Issues

Issue	Consideration	Recommendation
<i>Car parking</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the parking rates for hospitals and health facilities under Council's Development Control Plan 2012 (DCP 2012), the entire NPH is required to provide 193 car spaces, 33 bicycle spaces and 17 motorcycle spaces on the site. • On completion of the expansion to the hospital a total of 437 car spaces (380 new and 57 existing spaces), 25 motorbike spaces and in excess of 33 bicycle spaces would be provided. • The proposal therefore exceeds the parking requirements in DCP 2012 and is acceptable. 	No additional conditions or amendments necessary.

Issue	Consideration	Recommendation
<i>Section 94</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the existing approval was granted in 2010 hospitals were excluded from Council's Section 94A Contribution Plan. Council has advised that the Section 94A Contributions Plan has since been amended and while hospitals were previously exempt, the levy is now applicable to hospitals The Department considers that it is reasonable to apply Section 94 Contributions to the additional building works sought by modification application, consistent with Council Contribution Plan. A new condition is recommended accordingly. 	A condition requiring Section 94 Contributions, based on the additional cost of works arising from this modification request has been recommended.
<i>Bushfire</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is adjacent to bushfire prone land and the hospital campus is surrounded by bushland on three sides. The bushfire risk is managed through the implementation of an Asset Protection Zone, and by designing the building to certain standard in accordance with the requirements of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006, and the NSW Rural Fire Service. The proposed development does not affect the Asset Protection Zone and would result in any additional impacts or risk, providing the additional development is built in accordance with the required standards The Department notes these requirements are captured as conditions in the Project Approval and it is considered that the existing conditions are adequate to ensure bushfire impacts are appropriately managed on the site. 	No additional conditions or amendments necessary.
<i>Bus Stops</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TfNSW requested that Proponent review the location of bus stops on the site as part of their sustainable travel plan in order to provide more direct access between the hospital and bus services. The Department considers the proposed modifications do not give rise to a specific need to review the bus stop locations, but notes that existing Condition D4 requires the proponent to prepare a Sustainable Travel Plan in consultation with Council and TfNSW prior to occupation of the new building. The condition requires the plan to identify the most suitable location for provision of a shuttle bus, and therefore addresses the request of TfNSW. 	No additional conditions or amendments necessary.

9. CONCLUSION

The Department has assessed the modification and supporting information in accordance with the relevant requirements of the EP&A Act. The Department's assessment concludes that the proposed modification is appropriate on the basis that:

- the proposed hospital facilities provide a significant community benefit;
- the proposed additional floor does not alter the approved building to the extent it would result in unacceptable visual impacts;
- the bulk and scale of the approved building as a result of the proposed additional floor would be comparable with the existing Kingston Building;
- the elevated pedestrian link would provide an important connection between the hospital buildings for patients and staff;
- there would be no adverse impacts on the heritage significance of Croudace House or its view curtilage;
- there would be no adverse traffic impact on the local road network; and
- adequate on-site parking would be provided to satisfy the demand for parking generated by the expansion to the hospital.

Consequently, the Department considers the proposed modification is in the public interest, and should be approved subject to the conditions recommended in the Notice of Modification at **Appendix A**.

10. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Acting Executive Director, Key Sites and Industry Assessments as delegate of the Minister for Planning:

- a) **consider** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- b) **approve** the proposed modification under section 75W of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*; and
- c) **sign** the attached Notice of Modification (**Appendix A**).

Prepared by: Thomas Mithen

Endorsed by:



Anthony Witherdin
A/Director
Regional Assessments

Approved by:



David Gainsford 22/1/16
A/Executive Director
Key Sites and Industry Assessments
Planning Services

APPENDIX A: NOTICE OF MODIFICATION

The Notice of Modification can be found on the Department's website at the following address:

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7280

APPENDIX B: SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following supporting documents and supporting information to this assessment report can be found on the Department of Planning and Environment's website as follows:

1. Modification request

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7280

2. Submissions

http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=7280