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NSW Dept of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney, NSW 2001

Attn: Natasha Harras

RE: Environmental Assessment of Fencing Plans – MP 08_0200 Project Application Mod 5

LEDA Manorstead has made application for a modification of Approval MP_0200 amended fencing plans. The Dept of Planning and Environment has requested additional detail concerning the intent of the proposed changes and an assessment of any potential environmental impacts associated with changes in the fencing plans.

1. Background to the Revised Plans

The various versions of the fencing plan are linked to a number of development precinct specific modification applications which have been made over the past few years. The Drawing No 3310071E-044 has been revised a number of times to reflect the specific precincts and Rehabilitation/Management precincts relevant to each application. Hence these plans do not cover the entire site.

Two types of fencing have been proposed, permanent fencing around areas currently zoned as Open Space which will, following any proposed rehabilitation works, be rezoned as environmental areas. This fencing will remain in-situ once the development is constructed. Temporary high visibility fencing is proposed to demarcate sensitive areas during periods when construction is occurring in close proximity to these areas and would be replaced with permanent fencing once rehabilitation and/or construction works are complete.

The timing and extent of the installation of these fences is of course dependent on the timing and location of construction activities. The intent is that that the fencing, particularly the temporary fencing, would be installed on as “as required” basis prior to works occurring. Areas not subject to construction activities or needing specific protection measures in the foreseeable future could be left unfenced until such time as construction was proposed in the immediate vicinity.

Any temporary fencing installed is likely to degrade over time. Given the large size of the Cobaki development, and the extended times over which construction is taking place, installing fencing in areas where construction activities may be years from occurring is not necessary or indeed as being an efficient use of resources.

2. Changes to Fencing Plans in the Modification

The DoP has queried the rationale for removal of permanent fencing and/or changing of fencing types as part of the current modification application.

The changes in the proposed Modification application, Drawings 3310071E-044 (2), 3310071E-035 Rev E, 3310071E-036 Rev E and 3310071E-037 Rev E depict the fencing plans as would be practically applied during the proposed earthworks. Ultimately, post construction, permanent fencing at the site will remain unchanged.

The changes to fencing primarily involve the deletion of some temporary fencing in areas which although designated for future environmental rehabilitation are currently mapped as being “Low closed grassland with scattered trees (Pastoral and Mixed species)” by JWA (2010). This classification has been subsequently confirmed by SMEC in the existing Environmental Assessments for the currently approved Modifications (SMEC, 2013a).

3. Assessment of Environmental Impacts related to changes in the Fencing Plan

The Modification applications in question relate principally to the extraction of quarry materials from future development Precincts 9 and 11 to facilitate the filling of the Central Open Space, Southern Special Purposes precinct (SSPP) and adjacent roads.

The fencing in the revised Modification application was primarily intended to delineate the various rehabilitation/management precincts identified in the approved Revised Site Regeneration and Revegetation Plan (JWA, 2010) and its subsequent approved revisions (JWA 2012, 2013 and SMEC 2014a and 2013b). The condition of vegetation in these rehabilitation/management precincts varies in quality from comparatively intact forest with light to moderate weed infestations, to exotic pastureland completely devoid of trees and shrubs.

The condition assessment conducted by JWA (2010) identified the rehabilitation/management precincts in close proximity of the activities covered by the Mod application as being in moderate, poor or very poor condition. Subsequent inspections of the site support this categorisation.

A factor to consider with regard to the fencing is the sensitivity of the area in question. Areas such as cultural heritage sites and areas of remnant vegetation obviously require clear delineation if works are proposed to occur in their vicinity, but areas which are currently pastureland and which have been identified for revegetation/rehabilitation in the future are not critical in terms of the need for immediate protective fencing.

4. Conclusion

The rehabilitation/management precincts in the immediate vicinity of the works proposed are, as described, areas requiring rehabilitation and/or revegetation. In some case the areas in question are bare pasture dominated by exotic grasses and are indistinguishable from the surrounding areas which are not proposed for future revegetation. Revegetation of these areas will require complete manufacture of a replacement vegetation community.

The currently proposed changes to fencing location do not represent a significant increase in the risk of harm to the rehabilitation/management precincts.

If you require additional information or would like to discuss further please feel free to contact me on the numbers provided.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Alexander', written in a cursive style.

Jon Alexander
Principal Ecologist (SMEC)

References

James Warren and Associates. 2010. Revised Site Regeneration & Revegetation Plan. Cobaki Lakes Preferred Project Report.

James Warren and Associates. 2012. Revised Site Regeneration & Revegetation Plan. Cobaki Estate.

James Warren and Associates. 2013. Revised Site Regeneration & Revegetation Plan. Cobaki Estate.

SMEC. 2013a Environmental Assessment Report – Precincts 9 And 11 Borrow Areas – Bulk Earthworks

SMEC. 2013b Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) – Precincts 9 And 11 Borrow Areas – Bulk Earthworks

SMEC. 2014a Cobaki Estate Site Regeneration and Revegetation Management Plan – Precincts 1, 2, 6 and Central Open Space