



HUNTER WATER CORPORATION

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2 December 2025

Our Ref: HW2025-1570

Energy, Resource and Industry
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy St
Parramatta NSW 2150

Attention: Jarrod Blane
Via the Major Projects Portal

Dear Jarrod,

RE: SSD-99860959 – SEARs ADVICE FOR PROPOSED DRY SAND QUARRY AT 3631 NELSON BAY ROAD, BOBS FARM, NSW 2316

Thank you for referring the proposed Bob's Farm Sand Quarry project to Hunter Water Corporation (Hunter Water) for comment regarding preparation of the Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs).

Hunter Water's interests in the vicinity of the proposed development are described below in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Location of the proposed Bobs Farm sand quarry development in relation to the gazetted North Stockton Catchment Area (catchment boundary indicated by the black line). Also shown are the locations of Hunter Water water mains (dark blue line following Nelson Bay Road) and easements for services and access (light blue dashed line with brown hatching)

Potential impacts from the proposed sand quarry on Hunter Water's interests are:

- Impacts on the quality and/or quantity of water in the Stockton aquifer; and
- Impacts on Hunter Water built assets and services in the vicinity of the project area.

Each of these are described in more detail below.

North Stockton Catchment Area

As the regional water utility, one of Hunter Water's primary interests in the project is related to potential impacts on the local groundwater source, the Stockton Sandbeds aquifer, part of which is a gazetted 'special area' under the *Hunter Water Act 1991* and described in the *Hunter Water Regulation 2024* as the North Stockton Catchment Area (NSCA). The NSCA is located to the south-east of the proposed project area (south-east of Nelson Bay Road) and is reserved as a potential emergency borefield water supply source for the Lower Hunter. Hunter Water has easements for access and services located within the NSCA.

Hunter Water notes that the proposed activity may potentially have significant local and adjacent ecological and hydrogeological impacts. These impacts could result from a significant tract of natural bushland being cleared. In addition to the direct impacts of the clearing on biodiversity, it is also expected to lead to changes to the water balance of the aquifer. Increased recharge on the final landscape (due to less evapotranspiration by trees, both in the short-term and the long-term, depending on the adopted site rehabilitation approach) can be expected to increase the groundwater level at the site and nearby. It is also noted that a 40ML groundwater licence entitlement is held and may be used to supply water to the proposed quarry operation.

The project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should provide clarity around the proposed water use and describe the short and long-term impacts on the aquifer hydrology associated with the proposed development.

Regarding Section 6.7 'Groundwater', Hunter Water recommends that the groundwater impact assessment not rely upon water level information from Hunter Water bores in the general area to provide sufficient data spatially or temporally, noting that Hunter Water ceased collecting water level data in this area in 2014.

Potential Water Quality Impacts

Hunter Water expects that all development in drinking water catchments will demonstrate a Neutral or Beneficial Effect (NorBE) on water quality. A development is considered to demonstrate NorBE if the development:

- a) has no identifiable potential impact on water quality, or
- b) will contain any water quality impact on the development site and prevent it from reaching any watercourse, waterbody or drainage depression on the site, or
- c) will transfer any water quality impact outside the site where it is treated and disposed of to standards approved by the consent authority.

Further details are provided in Hunter Water's "Protecting our Drinking Water Catchments: Guidelines for developments in the drinking water catchments", a copy of which is available on Hunter Water's website at <http://hunterwater.com.au/development-guidelines>. The guidelines were prepared in consultation with the Department of Planning and Environment, local councils and NSW Health

The difference between the dry extraction proposal and the previous dredging proposal at the site (SSD-6935) is clearly described in the Scoping Report and is acknowledged. The proposed sand extraction limits to a height that maintains at least a 0.7 metre buffer above the maximum predicted groundwater table is consistent with other approved quarry projects in the area and is considered appropriate by Hunter Water.

Whilst the proposed project is adjacent to the NSCA and studies in the area have described a general groundwater flow direction of north-west, away from the NSCA and towards Tilligerry Creek, there is potential for the project to impact the quality groundwater in the underlying aquifer from spills and related incidents if not effectively managed. The proposed management of these risks should be described in the EIS.

Hunter Water notes the key assessment considerations listed in Table 5 of the Scoping Report (20 October 2025), prepared by ADW Johnson on behalf of the proponent. We are supportive of the identification of the

NSCA in Section 6.6 'Surface Water' and Section 6.7 'Groundwater' and the proposed impact assessments and methodology indicated.

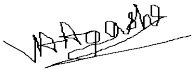
Hunter Water is supportive of the proposed assessment approaches in both Section 6.14 'Soils' and Section 6.15 'Rehabilitation', noting that best practice rehabilitation stems from early consideration, prior to operations commencing, with a thorough understanding of local ecology and geology. Understanding both soil management and the intended rehabilitation strategy is important where potential water quality risks are concerned.

Water Servicing

Hunter Water notes that Section 3 of the Scoping Report indicates that the proposed sand quarry may seek to utilise a connection to Hunter Water's water main on Nelson Bay Road to supply water for operational purposes. The feasibility of this should be clarified with Hunter Water and described in the EIS, including details of the proposed usage.

If you require further advice or information please direct enquires to the undersigned.

Yours sincerely



Varun Agashe
Group Manager, Development Services