



Your ref: SSI- 50831979
Our ref: DOC25/502224

Mr Drew Anderson
Senior Planner Officer
Transport and Water Assessments
Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure
PARAMATTA NSW 2000

By email: drew.anderson@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Anderson

Response to Submissions Report - Billabong Creek Environmental Water Regulators

Thank you for referring the Response to Submissions (RTS) for the Billabong Creek Environmental Water Regulators State Significant Infrastructure Project (SSI 50831979) via the NSW Planning Major Projects Portal. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the report.

NPWS acknowledges that Billabong Creek Water Regulators SSI form part of the wider Sustainable Diversion Limits and the Adjustment Mechanism Program (SDLAM), delivered under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (Water Group). The program aims to positively influence environmental water delivery by upgrading water assets to enable smarter use of water resources. NPWS supports the SDLAM program overall.

In NPWS's original comments on the SSI (as DOC24/957094), the agency raised concerns about the scope of hydrological and cumulative impact consideration, loss of heritage values and in the absence of planned environmental monitoring, considering the connective nature of waterways and wetlands in the Yanco System. The Yanco Creek System does contain lands reserved under the *NSW National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act), although not directly affected by works, NPWS, as the park authority, still has a vested interest in indirect and cumulative impacts of the SDLAM Program. The RTS Section 4.12 submitted considers the environmental matters raised by NPWS, and we acknowledge the response and provide the following recommendations.

NPWS recommends Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure consider requiring:

1. the Yanco Creek System Operational Plan preparation and delivery as a specific condition of any future planning approval under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, which includes a subsection of:
 - a. hydrological monitoring, compliance, and reporting framework, which is consistent and compatible with data collection and monitoring across the greater SDLAM Program. This will ensure monitoring and reporting are meaningful and integrated into the SDLAM reporting. This should include the location selected, type of monitoring assets required, installation method and timeframe within the Yanco Creek System.
 - b. biodiversity monitoring, compliance, and reporting framework, which can report on the SDLAM notated predictions on the negligible to positive environmental outcomes on biodiversity attributed to the works and water regulator operations. Demonstrating consistency with data collection across the SDLAM Program. This will ensure meaningful data collection, and biodiversity outcomes will be reported on. The

framework should allow for the collection of baseline data, variations to environmental water delivery in both a positive and a potential negative context, consistent with the commitments made in the RTS.

2. archival, salvage and repurposing actions as part of the Heritage Management Plan, ensuring loss of heritage values, where they are recognised, is managed consistently across the SDLAM Program. NPWS agrees that the historical value of water regulation assets relates to function. However, values are still attributed to the nature, construction, and representativeness of the structures themselves. This is known from the SDLAM delivery on NPWS estate.
3. repatriation of Aboriginal objects, displaced and salvaged, where land reserved or acquired under the NPW Act is selected as a preferred safekeeping site, protocols are set out Cultural Heritage Management Plan. This will ensure decisions made by the Aboriginal community about preferred management are documented. Where Aboriginal objects are to be repatriated or safekeeping sites established on the NPWS estate, protocols must adhere to the NPW Act, Heritage NSW directions and NPWS policy, conservation protocols and environmental assessment procedures. Early consultation with the NPWS Manager, Riverina Area, via npws.riverina@environment.nsw.gov.au is advised.

If you have any further questions, please contact Glen Wheatley, A/Manager, Riverina Area, on 0457979304 or at Glen.Wheatley@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Darren Pitt
A/Director, West Branch
NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

20 June 2025