

Re: Buronga Landfill Expansion (SSD-10096818)

Implications for Far West Region

Background

The Buronga Landfill is located on a 124ha site over 4km to the north of the Buronga Settlement. Wentworth Shire Council proposes to expand the facility to increase waste volumes up to 100,000 tonnes/year to be staged over 120-year life of the facility. The waste facility is intended to become a regional landfill through accepting waste from other neighbouring local government areas.

The proposal triggers State Significant Development under Schedule 1 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (State and Regional Development) 2011*.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been reviewed by the Local and Regional planning team. Feedback has been provided below relating to implications for statutory land use planning, strategic land use planning as well as the demand for a regional facility.

Statutory land use planning

The Buronga Landfill under the *Wentworth Local Environmental Plan 2011* is zoned as SP2 Infrastructure (Waste or Resource Management Facility). The continued operation and expansion of landfilling and waste disposal activities is a permitted land use activity under the SP2 zone. Additionally, the expanded waste facility is occurring within the existing SP2 zoned footprint and no future rezoning planning proposals are required.

The waste facility is surrounded by RU1 Primary Production zoned land including extensive grazing activities and irrigated horticulture as well as remnant vegetation. However, there is potential for land use conflict if the environmental impacts of landfill (e.g. windblown litter, leachate, stormwater runoff, groundwater contamination) is not appropriately mitigated and managed.

Strategic land use planning

The Buronga landfill appears to be appropriately located from a strategic land use planning perspective due to the buffer distances to nearest sensitive receivers (>900m) as well as current residential zones (>3.6km). Additionally, the proposed landfill footprint expansion is occurring in a northerly direction and does not encroach on future development in Buronga (>3.3km to the south) as strategically identified in Figure 4.1 (page 42) of the *Buronga Gol Gol Structure Plan 2020*.

Far West Regional Plan 2036

The *Far West Regional Plan 2036* sets the strategic direction for the Far West Region and is currently undergoing a five-yearly review.

Section 4.1.1.2 of the EIS (page 55) refers to the *Far West Regional Plan 2036* and the Directions relevant to the Buronga Landfill expansion. However, the EIS will need to be updated to refer to the correct Direction numbers contained in the *Far West Regional Plan 2036*. For instance, the EIS refers to Direction 23 when it should be Direction 29 (i.e. rural residential development). Additionally, Direction 26 should be corrected to Direction 21 (i.e. cross border communities).

The Buronga Landfill expansion if approved, has implications for the Far West region in that it could support changes in the waste management practices of numerous local government areas and cross-border communities as well as support circular economy initiatives. There are also impacts on freight networks and employment opportunities. However, the demand for a regional waste facility has not been adequately demonstrated within the EIS document as further discussed below.

Demand for regional waste disposal facility

There are inconsistencies and issues with the calculations and waste sources for the regional waste facility as well as adequately demonstrating the demand for such a large-scale facility being established in Buronga in the Far West region.

For instance, in Section 1 Executive Summary (page 4), the EIS refers to accepting waste volumes of up to 100,000 tonnes per annum and states:

“It is also proposed to accept waste from the surrounding NSW local government areas (LGAs), such as Balranald, Central Darling and Murray River and from interstate councils such as Mildura and Renmark-Paringa.”

However, the local government areas of Murray River and Renmark-Paringa are not referred to anywhere else within the EIS document and this includes the Traffic Impact Assessment in Appendix H.

There also appears to be limited evidence of the need for a regional waste disposal facility or that the neighbouring councils would support transporting their waste to such a facility. This includes lack of a memorandum of understanding or support letters from these other councils that will send their waste to Buronga. The EIS only refers to waste from Central Darling Shire Council and Balranald as:

“it may be advantageous for these councils to operate unmanned or small vehicle waste transfer stations and transport waste to a larger facility”.

Additionally, the *Regional Waste Strategy 2017-2021* prepared by RAMROC is not referred to within the EIS Section 4.1 Strategic Context (page 55-62). This is despite that Wentworth local government area is part of the RAMROC region and the strategy focuses on future services and infrastructure for the region. A regional scale waste disposal facility was not identified as an action within this regional waste strategy.

There is also concern how the waste disposal amount of 100,000tonnes/year was determined. Table 2.1 (page 16) refers to waste volumes from neighbouring local government areas of Wentworth, Balranald, Broken Hill, Central Darling and Mildura. These five LGA’s have combined waste of 37,953 from kerbside collection and whilst this volume doesn’t account for other waste streams taken directly to landfill (e.g. building and demolition waste, steel), it still does not appear to add up to justify the proposed expansion to 100,000 tonnes/year. This is particularly concerning considering that population projections for both Wentworth and Mildura are projecting a modest increase (+0.3-0.5%).

There is concern that waste will be transported from other further areas could be disposed at Buronga from further afield such as Melbourne and South Australia. This could have cross-border implications and impact on regional road and freight networks.

Further action required

As indicated above, the following action is required to update the EIS:

- Updated Far West Regional Plan numbering errors
- Request additional information on justifying the demand for regional scale facility and 100,000tonnes/year limit