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SYDNEY NSW 2000**

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2nd December 2021

Kristine Marshall
Senior Project Manager
Taronga Conservation Society Australia

Dear Kristine,

SECTION 4.55 (1A) MODIFICATION - TARONGA ZOO UPPER AUSTRALIA PRECINCT – SSD-10456 - HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT LETTER

1. INTRODUCTION

This letter has been prepared by Urbs on behalf of Taronga Conservation Society Australia (**TSCA** – the ‘Proponent’) in support of a Section 4.55(1A) application to modify the original State Significant Development (**SSD**) Application SSD-10456 relating to the Upper Australia Precinct of Taronga Zoo.

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Taronga Zoo is located at Bradleys Head Road, Mosman and is situated in the Mosman Local Government area (LGA). The site is bounded by Bradleys Head Road to the east, Athol Wharf Road and Sydney Harbour to the south, Little Sirius Cove to the west and Whiting Beach Road to the north. Taronga Zoo is legally described as Lot 22 on DP843294 and is Crown Land managed by the TCSA (the Zoological Park Board).

Taronga Zoo has evolved over time from a Zoo that simply provides the traditional visitor experience of viewing animals in exhibits, to a Zoo that focusses on wildlife conservation, animal welfare and providing a range of visitor learning experiences. Taronga Zoo is one of Australia's most popular attractions, and together with Taronga Western Plains Zoo hosts more than 1.5 million visitors annually and contributes an estimated \$249 million per annum to the NSW economy. Taronga Zoo is a significant tourism attractor to the Mosman area and plays an important role in Mosman LGA, providing employment opportunities and contributing to the local economy.

The Upper Australia Precinct is surrounded on three sides by existing zoo facilities and adjoins Bradleys Head Road near the northern main zoo entrance. Adjoining the subject site, to the south, is the Australia Habitat Phase 1 and Taronga Wildlife Retreat which is completed and was open until the current COVID-19 pandemic forced its temporary closure. On the opposite side of Bradleys Head Road to the east of the site is Sydney Harbour National Park. The nearest residential areas to the proposed site are approximately 200 metres to the north on Bradleys Head Road and Whiting Beach Road. These areas are separated from the project site by the National Park and the zoo's car parking, forecourt and main entrance building.

The current Precinct contains existing exhibits and infrastructure for Australian animals. The existing facilities largely comprise open air exhibits, animal enclosures, pathways, landscaping and associated infrastructure/servicing areas. Existing uses and facilities in the Upper Australia Precinct area include:

- Avian Wetlands;
- Wild Ropes Course;
- Nocturnal House;
- Macropod Walk-through
- Koala Encounters venue; and
- Platypus House.

1.2. EXISTING APPROVAL

SSDA-10456 was approved on 21 December 2020 for the redevelopment of an animal exhibit known as the 'Upper Australia Precinct', which will complete the entire Australian precinct, including key attractions such as the Nocturnal House, Macropod walk and the commercial Koala Encounters venue. The Upper Australia Precinct is one of the pillars of Taronga's Centenary Capital Plan and will be a major tourist destination for international tourists to view Australian wildlife. The renewal of this area of the zoo will enhance the native landscape strategy of the existing precinct and greater communicate the connection of wildlife and the environment. The proposal aims to enhance the guest experience and presentation of Taronga Zoo with a focus to improve the welfare of animals.

The approved development will completely refurbish the existing Upper Australia Precinct, including a new exhibit design and layouts. This includes demolition of existing structures, and some excavation works, while still remaining sympathetic to the design intent of the original 1970s exhibits. The Upper Australia Precinct will display critically endangered Australian animals that form part of Taronga's wildlife conservation and education programs and upgrade "star" attractions including kangaroo, koala, platypus, wombat and emu exhibits. The approved development will incorporate three main exhibits:

- The existing Nocturnal House building will be reconfigured to improve functionality and accessibility as well as creating an immersive experience for guests with new exhibit design in a simulated night-time setting. The completion of Nocturnal House will provide Taronga Zoo with an innovative space to display nocturnal Australian animals.
- A new Koala Encounter and public koala canopy walk will be constructed to provide guests with a more naturalistic experience with koalas. An elevated walkway and tree house located 3-4 metres above the ground will be constructed within existing trees, the area will be supplemented with additional trees to create a forest. This will be located in the same vicinity as existing koala facility along Bradley's Head Road and provide a new space for educational koala talks within the Precinct.
- Macropod walkthrough will be extended to replace the existing wetland area. The topography is to be retained and the exhibit will be heavily landscaped to enhance the presentation and welfare of the various macropod/kangaroos that will be housed in this large open range exhibit.

Additional works approved as part of the Upper Australia Precinct redevelopment include the following:

- Creation of a new defined western entry for the precinct;

- Upgrades to back of house facilities for animal care;
- Additional toilets and amenities for staff and visitors;
- Other supporting infrastructure and walkways; and
- Modifications to the existing Wild Ropes Course including removal and reinstatement of poles necessary to accommodate the design.

2. DESCRIPTION OF MODIFICATIONS

This section describes the proposed modifications to the architectural and landscape plans. Copies of the amended plans prepared by Lahznimmo Architects accompany this application (**Appendix A**).

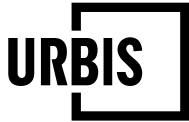
Eleven locally endemic trees are to be removed as they are damaged or will have major encroachments into their Structural Root Zones (**SRZ**). The trees to be removed include:

- Tree 20 *Eucalyptus robusta* (Swamp Mahogany) – not impacted by the development however, the tree has a basal wound with internal decay and a vertical crack over development site within a fall distance of the children’s play area.
- Tree 45 *Eucalyptus saligna* (Sydney Blue Gum) – the tree has expired due to the ropes course attachments, which has induced irreversible decline.
- Tree 67 *Banksia integrifolia* (Coast Banksia) – the proposal works are within the TPZ and SRZ.
- Tree 87 *Hymenosporum flavum* (Native Frangipani) – the proposed works are within the TPZ and SRZ.
- Tree 92 *Eucalyptus robusta* (Swamp Mahogany) – the proposed works are within the TPZ and SRZ.
- Tree 123 *Eucalyptus botryiodes* (Bangalay) – this tree is subject to removal as it failed during an extreme weather event.
- Tree 129 *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (Broad-leaved Paperbark) and Tree 130 *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River She-oak). The proposed development will cut into the SRZ of these two trees. Tree 130 also has a substantial lean over the proposed path hence, these trees are to be removed.
- Tree 156 and Tree 157 *Eucalyptus botryiodes* (Bangalay) – the proposal will encroach on their TPZ and SRZ.
- Tree 162 *Casuarina Cunninghamiana* – The proposal will encroach on the TPZ and SRZ.
- Tree 179 *Lophostemon Confertus* – The proposal will encroach on the TPZ and SRZ.
- Tree 185 *Lophostemon Confertus* – The proposal will encroach on the TPZ and SRZ.

Trees to be replaced on the broader Taronga Zoo site to reflect but will not be located within the Upper Australia Precinct to ensure no impacts on the bushfire risk.

Plans used to inform the assessment of heritage impact associated with the modification include the following:

- A-DA-2-07 – 07 – Tree Protection and removal Plan – 11th November 2021.



- Addendum Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Sydney Arbor Trees, 11th November 2021.

2.1. PROPOSED MODIFICATION TO CONDITIONS OF CONSENT

Urbis on behalf of TCSA are therefore submitting a Section 4.55(1a) modification to alter the following Conditions of Consent:

A2. The development may only be carried out:

...

(e) In accordance with the approved plans in the table below.

Proposed to update list of approved drawings to include modified tree protection and removal plan.

Biodiversity Offsets (Condition B24)

B24. A total of 4 ecosystem credits and 3 species credits must be retired prior to the commencement of any vegetation clearing. Details confirming compliance must be provided to the Certifier and Planning Secretary.

Proposed to be updated to '4-5' ecosystem credits.

Construction Environmental Management Plan

B30. Prior to the commencement of works, the Applicant shall prepare and implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the development and be submitted to the Certifier. The CEMP must:

...

(t) include the relevant recommendations detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Sydney Arbor Trees, dated 18 June 2020;

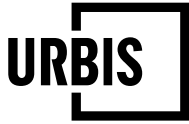
(u) include a site-specific tree protection plan

(v) include the relevant recommendation and mitigation measures detailed in the Biodiversity Development Assessment Report, prepared by Narla Environmental, dated 4 November 2020 October 2021

Item (t) Proposed to be updated to include the addendum Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Sydney Arbor Trees, dated 11th November 2021. Item (v) proposed to be updated to reflect the updated Narla Environmental Report, prepared October 2021.

Protection of Trees (Condition 41)

C41. During construction, trees must be managed in accordance with the site-specific tree protection plan in the CEMP and in accordance with the relevant recommendations detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Sydney Arbor Trees, dated 18 June 2020



Proposed to be updated to include the Addendum Arboricultural Impact Assessment, prepared by Sydney Arbor Trees, dated 11th November 2021. Proposed to be amended to include the list of trees proposed for removal, and stipulate the requirement for their replacement within the Taronga Zoo site.

2.2. HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT

Urbis have reviewed the plans as they relate to the proposed removal of trees, along with the Section 170 Register for the Australia – Upper section of Taronga Zoo.

Tree Removal

Table 1 below assess the heritage impact of the removal of each tree.

Table 1 – Assessment of impact

Tree / Species	Reason for removal	Heritage Impact & justification
Tree 20 Eucalyptus Robusta	Basal wound with internal decay, fall risk.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 45 Eucalyptus Saligna	Expired due to ropes course.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 67 Banksia Integriolia	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 87 Hymenosporum Flavum	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 92 Eucalyptus Robusta	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 123 Eucalyptus Botryoides	Failed during weather event.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 129 Melaleuca quinquenervia	Proposed works require removal, also has substantial lean over pathway.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.

Tree / Species	Reason for removal	Heritage Impact & justification
Tree 130 Causarina Cunninghamiana	Proposed works require removal, also has substantial lean over pathway.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tre 156 Eucalyptus Botryiodes	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 157 Eucalyptus Botryiodes	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 162 Casuarina Cunninghamiana	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 179 Lophostemon Confertus	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.
Tree 185 Lophostemon Confertus	Proposed works require removal.	Low – not on S.170 register. Contributes to overall Australian character but proposed to be replaced within overall Zoo site.

As demonstrated in the table above, Urbis have identified that the trees proposed for removal do not constitute significant cultural plantings within the Taronga Zoo grounds and are not identified on the Section 170 register for the site. While the trees do contribute to the overall Australian Landscape character of the site, significant trees are not proposed to be impacted by the development and will be retained. This will ensure a continuation of the overall Australian character of the site. Furthermore, trees proposed for removal will be replaced within the Zoo site. Plans for the proposed tree removal are included below (Figure 1), along with the S.170 plan for the Upper Australia precinct (Figure 2). Note this was prepared in 2013 and has not been updated to reflect the approved works under SSD-10456.



Figure 1 – Tree Protection and removal plan
 Source: Lahznimmo Architects, November 2021

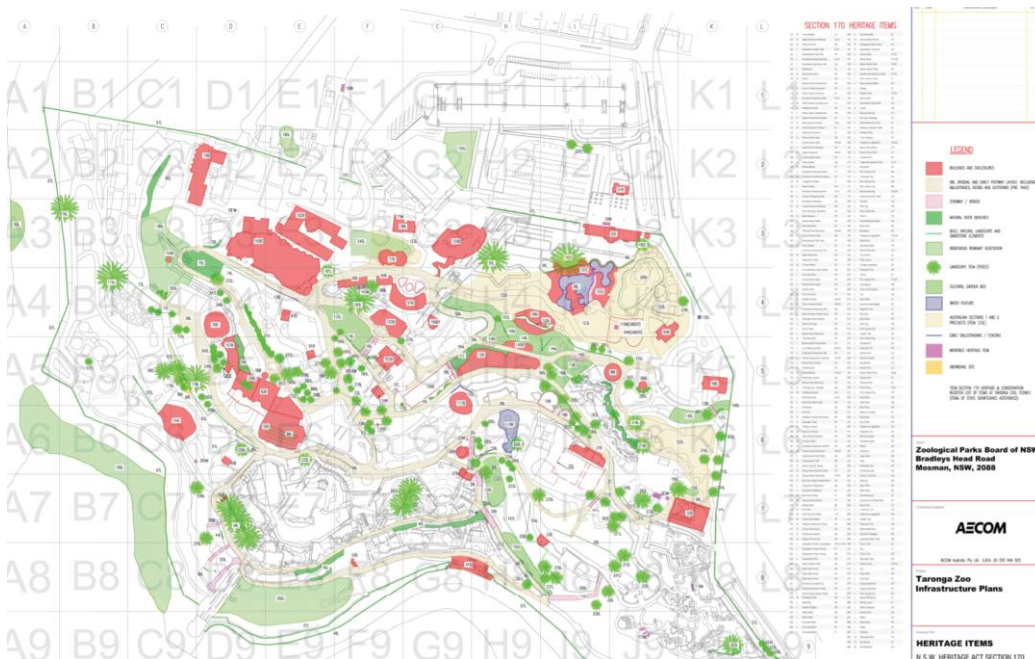
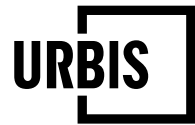


Figure 2 – Section 170 register plan for Upper Australia Precinct, note that trees are indicated by green tree symbol. Note no significant trees are proposed for removal.
 Source: AECOM, August 2013.



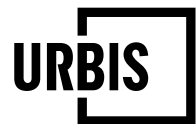
3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the above impact assessment, Urbis recommends the approval of the S.455(1A) modification on heritage grounds for the removal of trees on a heritage basis, subject to the replacement of trees within the Taronga Zoo site to ensure the continuation of the Australian Landscape Character across the broader site.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alexandria Barnier". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Alexandria Barnier
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APPENDIX A

AMENDED PLANS