

Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Kiersten Fishburn  
 Secretary  
 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI)  
 Locked Bag 5022  
 Parramatta NSW 2124

**RE: Request for extension to Industry-Specific Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements for State Significant Development Application SSD-45576956 – Gene Technologies Building, Children's Medical Research Institute (CMRI), Westmead**

Architecture  
 Urban Design  
 Planning  
 Interior Architecture

This letter seeks an extension to Industry-Specific Secretary Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS) (hospitals, medical centres and health research facilities) issued for a State Significant Development application (SSD-45576956) for the redevelopment of the Children's Medical Research Institute (CMRI) site for the Gene Technologies Building.

The SEARs were granted on 27/06/2022 and expire two years from the date of issue. This letter updates the SEARs request dated 24 June 2022 and seeks an extension to the SEARs of two years.

The project triggers State Significant Development (SSD) on the basis it is development with a capital investment value (CIV) of more than \$30 million for the purpose of a health or medical research facility, under Section 14(c) of Schedule 1 of State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021.

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It is noted that Industry-specific SEARs apply to SSD applications, other than those that:

- Would be designated development but for the Act, section 4.10(2); or
- Are partly prohibited by an environmental planning instrument (EPI); or
- Are wholly prohibited by an EPI, to the extent permitted by the Act, section 4.38(5); or
- Are a concept development application for SSD.

Architectus can confirm that none of the above apply, for the subject proposal.

**Site and context**

The site is located within the Westmead Health and Education Precinct and directly adjoins several medical research and clinical services buildings including the Westmead Hospital, the Children's Hospital at Westmead (CHW), the Kids Research building, the Westmead Institute for Medical Research and the site of the future Paediatric Services Building and the new KIDSPARK (CHW forecourt).

The site currently contains the first stage of the CMRI redevelopment, the Ainsworth Tower.

CMRI obtained planning approval from the Minister for Planning to expand their building on 31 August 2009 (Application No.: MP08\_0159) and subsequently obtained a Section 75W modification (Application No.:MP08\_0159-Mod-1) to allow the staged construction of a 7-8 storey building with an additional subterranean basement level, approved by the A/Director Metropolitan and Regional Projects North as delegate for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure on 7 October 2011. However, redevelopment did not occur and since then the need for a Gene Technologies Building has evolved to comprise an 8-10 storey building (plus 1 basement level).

The Ainsworth Tower is an 8 storey building with one basement level, of which three levels are for research support functions, five levels are for wet laboratory research and one level is for plant/services infrastructure. Adjoining the Ainsworth Tower is the existing CMRI building, which was completed in 1992. The existing CMRI building incorporates research, administrative, seminar, and building support areas distributed across two levels.

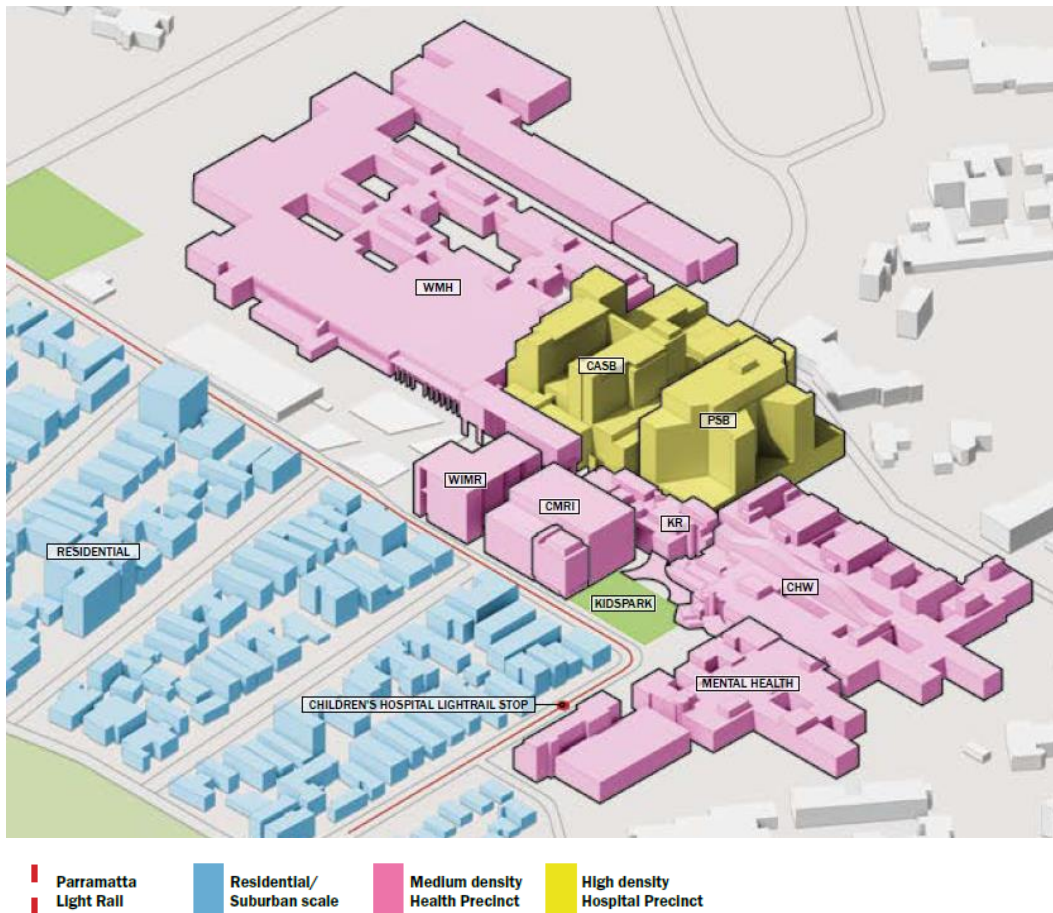
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Nominated Architect  
 CEO  
 Ray Brown  
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Refer to **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** for site context. Site details and planning controls are summarised in **Table 1**.



**Figure 1 Site and immediate context**  
 Source: NearMap with Architectus edits 2024



**Figure 2** Immediate site context – Existing, approved and proposed buildings  
 Source: Hassell, 2022

- Key:*  
 CMRI – Children’s Medical Research Institute (existing and proposed)  
 WIMR – Westmead Institute for Medical Research (existing)  
 KR – Kids Research building (existing)  
 PSB – Pediatric Services Building (approved)  
 CASB – Central Acute Services Building (existing)  
 CHW – Children’s Hospital at Westmead (existing)

**Table 1 Site, project and planning control summary**

Address	214 Hawkesbury Road, Westmead NSW 2145
Legal description	Lot 101 DP 1119583
Landowner	Health Administration Corporation Leased to the CMRI on a 50-year rolling lease, due for renewal in 2042.
Applicant	Children’s Medical Research Institute
Land Use Zoning	SP2 Infrastructure (Health Services Facility) under the Parramatta Local Environmental Plan 2023 (PLEP2023).
Height of buildings	No maximum building height control applies to the site under the PLEP2023.
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	No FSR controls apply to the site under the PLEP2023.
Permissibility	As the site is zoned SP2 for the purpose of Health Services Facility under PLEP2023, development of a health services facility (hospital) for medical research purposes is permissible within the zone.

SSD trigger	Development for the purposes of a hospital with a CIV of more than \$30 million is state significant development under Section 14(c) of Schedule 1 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021. The proposed works are estimated to have a CIV exceeding \$30 million, and therefore the development is considered SSD.
Heritage	<p>There are no identified heritage items or conservation areas located on the site.</p> <p>The nearest heritage item is located to the east of the site and is the Cumberland District Hospital Group (Heritage NSW item ID: 5051959). Just beyond this is the heritage area <i>Cumberland District Hospital (including Wisteria Gardens)</i>. The recently approved Paediatric Services Building is visible from this area and therefore it is quite possible the CMRI would be as well. Any visual impact to this heritage area will be assessed in the EIS.</p> <p>No Aboriginal sites or places are located on the CMRI site; however, three Aboriginal sites are located within 200 metres from the lot boundary.</p>
Contamination	The site is contaminated with asbestos. It is possible due to the site's history that there are also contaminants associated with potential importation of fill materials from unknown origins as this has been the case on other sites in the vicinity. A contamination assessment will be conducted to document all known sources of contamination and any required remediation.
Flooding	The site is located outside of the Probable Maximum Flood area mapped by City of Parramatta Council. Flood prone areas in the vicinity are associated with the Upper Parramatta River. The nearest flood affected area to the site boundary is from Research Lane (50 metres north). This portion of the Westmead Health Precinct is considered a low risk area.
EPBC Act / BC Act	<p>It is anticipated no approval under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) is required.</p> <p>A Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) Waiver request was made on 18 July 2022 and granted by the former Department of Planning and Environment on 5 August 2022 in accordance with the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (BC Act). The BDAR waiver remains valid until 4 August 2024.</p>

## Project Description

The Applicant, CMRI, is seeking approval for SSD of a health services facility for medical research purposes.

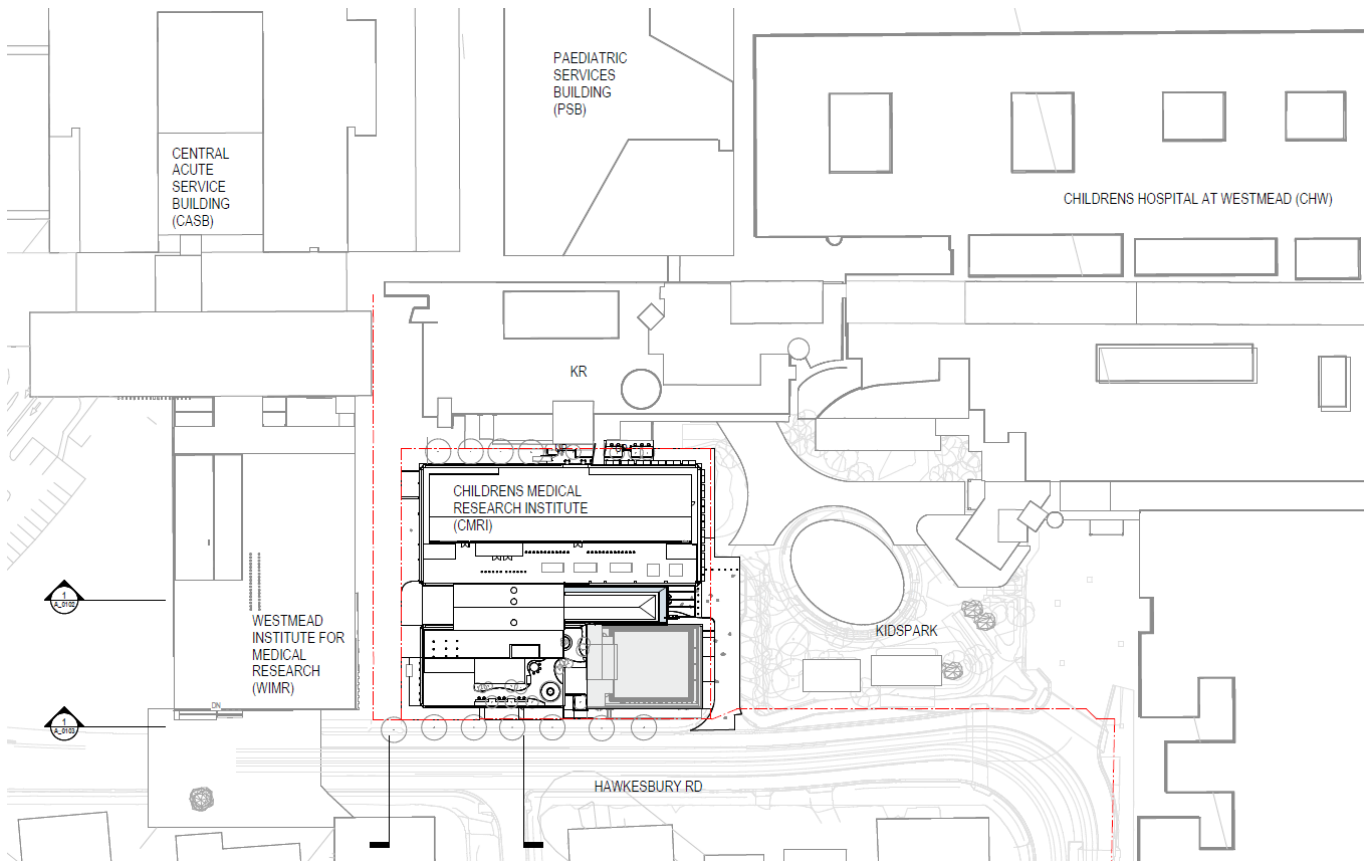
The redevelopment of the site will seek approval for:

- Demolition of the existing CMRI building (constructed in 1992) over two phases to facilitate decanting;
- Construction of the following building made up of:
  - Phase A, an 8-storey building including one subterranean basement level for dry workspace and wet laboratories;
  - Phase B, a 10-storey building plus one subterranean basement level for wet laboratories, dry workspace, logistics and stores, communal space, discovery centre and end of trip facilities;
- Overhead pedestrian connection to the Kids Research Building;
- A basement carpark to accommodate 47 vehicles;
- Vehicular access routes via Research Lane (servicing and car park access) and KidsPark Lane (formally Ambulance Road) (shared zone and emergency access);
- Associated earthworks;
- Signage zones to building elevations;

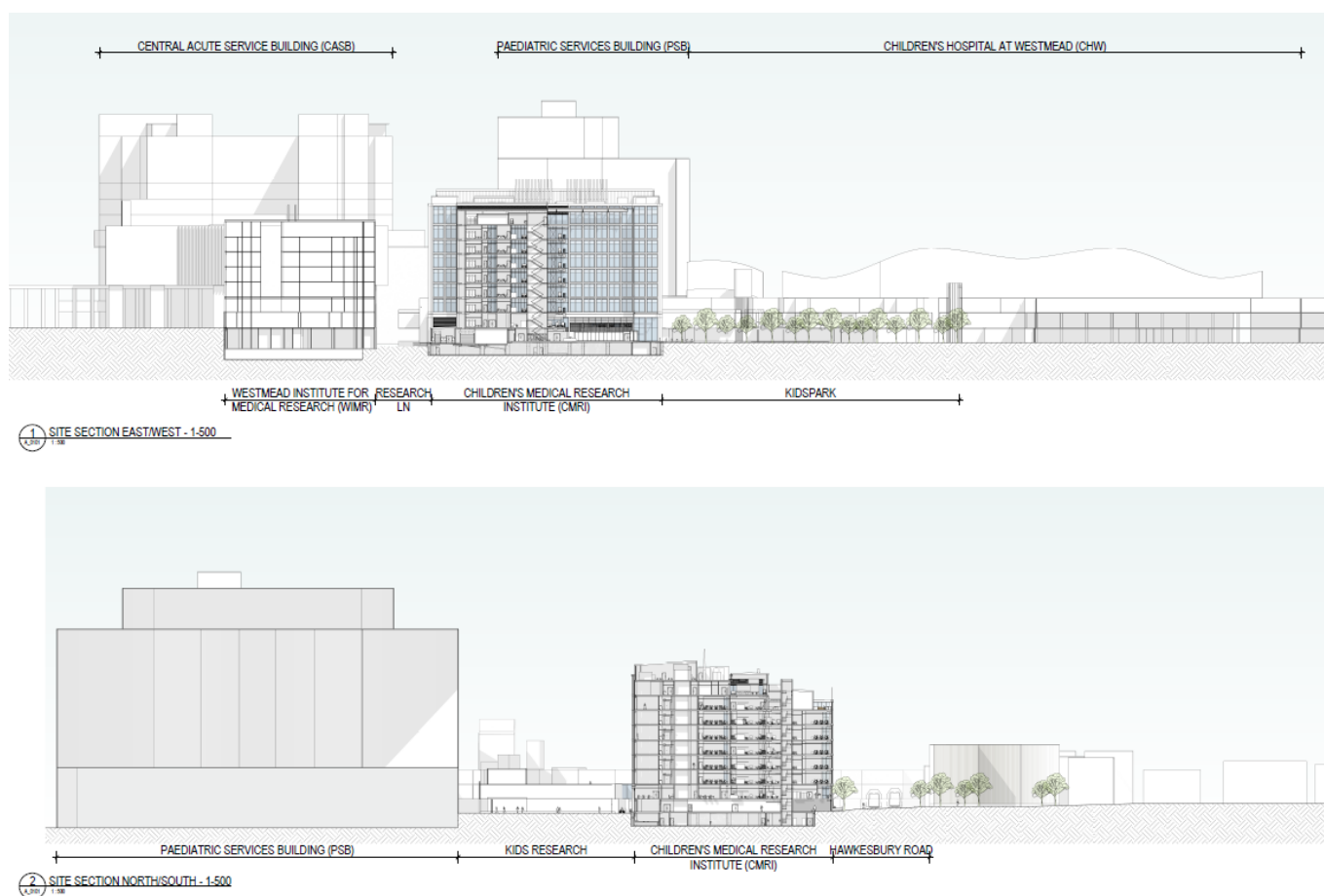
- Tree removal; and
- Landscaping.

Note: the CMRI building constructed in 1992 is proposed to be demolished, while the Ainsworth Tower (completed in 2009) is proposed to be retained and would directly adjoin the proposed building.

Refer to **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** below which show conceptual images of the proposed development.



**Figure 3 Site Plan**  
Source: Hassell



**Figure 4 Site Sections**

Source: Hassell

### Consultation

In planning for the redevelopment of the CMRI site, stakeholders have been engaged since late 2021. A broad range of stakeholders have been consulted and will continue to be consulted including:

- CMRI staff through townhall meetings and an Executive User Group established May 2022;
- Immediate neighbours, including the University of Sydney, Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, Kids Research and Westmead Institute for Medical Research (WIMR);
- Several local and State MPs including the Office of the NSW Premier, the Office of the Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, NSW Minister for Jobs, Investment and Tourism and Western Sydney the NSW Minister for Regional Health, the NSW Minister for Health and Medical Research, the Office of the Minister for Infrastructure, Cities and Active Transport, Hon Gabrielle Upton MP (Leader of the NSW R&D Accelerator Initiative), NSW Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and NSW Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans;
- Health Infrastructure;
- The Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD);
- City of Parramatta Council;
- The Westmead Alliance;
- Westmead Health Precinct Steering Committee;
- NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte; and

- NSW Government agencies including:
  - Former Greater Cities Commission;
  - Government Architect NSW;
  - NSW Treasury;
  - Investment NSW;
  - Transport for NSW;
  - Former DPE Biodiversity and Conservation Division (now Environment and Heritage Division of Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW));
  - Heritage Council of NSW;
  - Former Heritage NSW (now Environment and Heritage Group of DCCEEW);
  - NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA); and
  - DPHI.
- Aboriginal stakeholders including the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council;
- Utility providers, including Water NSW, Sydney Water and Endeavor Energy;
- The general public;

Consultation with the following groups is yet to commence, and will occur prior to EIS lodgement:

- NSW Ambulance.

### **Request for SEARs extension**

The SEARs were granted on 27/06/2022. The proposal failed to receive funding in the June 2023 State budget and accordingly, the SSDA was put on hold.

CMRI are working closely with the Minister for Health and with Treasury to secure formal funding for the project in the upcoming State budget. Accordingly, CMRI are recommencing the project with construction targeted to commence in mid 2025 and completion by early 2029.

On the basis that the project does not fall into any of the categories that would disqualify it for industry-specific SEARs (i.e., it is not designated development, a concept proposal nor is it partially or wholly prohibited), it is requested that an extension of two years is granted for industry-specific SEARs for the proposed development. An additional two years is sought to provide sufficient contingency with any complications regarding detailed design, stakeholder input or funding approval.

I trust the above is sufficient to grant an extension to the SEARs. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on (02) 8252 8400 or [jane.fielding@architectus.com.au](mailto:jane.fielding@architectus.com.au).

Regards,



Jane Fielding  
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