

FLORA AND FAUNA ASSESSMENT

STAGE 3, REDEVELOPMENT OF WAGGA BASE HOSPITAL STURT HIGHWAY, WAGGA WAGGA CITY OF WAGGA WAGGA

prepared by

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1. The Study Area 1

1.0 Introduction

This Flora and Fauna Assessment was commissioned by Martin-Ollmann of Sydney on behalf of the Wagga Base Hospital Redevelopment. The purpose of the report is to update the flora and fauna assessment undertaken previously by Kevin Mills & Associates (KMA) (2011) relating to Stage 3 of the redevelopment.

The information contained in our previous report is generally not repeated here. The purpose here is to address the current legislation, namely the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW) which has come into effect since 2011. The assessment under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) does not require revisiting, as nothing has changed in terms of that Act nor its listings to warrant further consideration. Note that a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report has been prepared by others; this is a requirement for development of state significance.

2.0 The Study Area

The study area means the area of land that is likely to be affected by the proposal, either directly or indirectly and extends as far as is necessary to take all potential impacts into account. In this case, the area refers to the Stage 3 land located in the northwest corner of the hospital site; see **Figure 1**. As is evident on **Figure 1**, the land is level and highly developed, set within the urban environment of the City of Wagga Wagga.

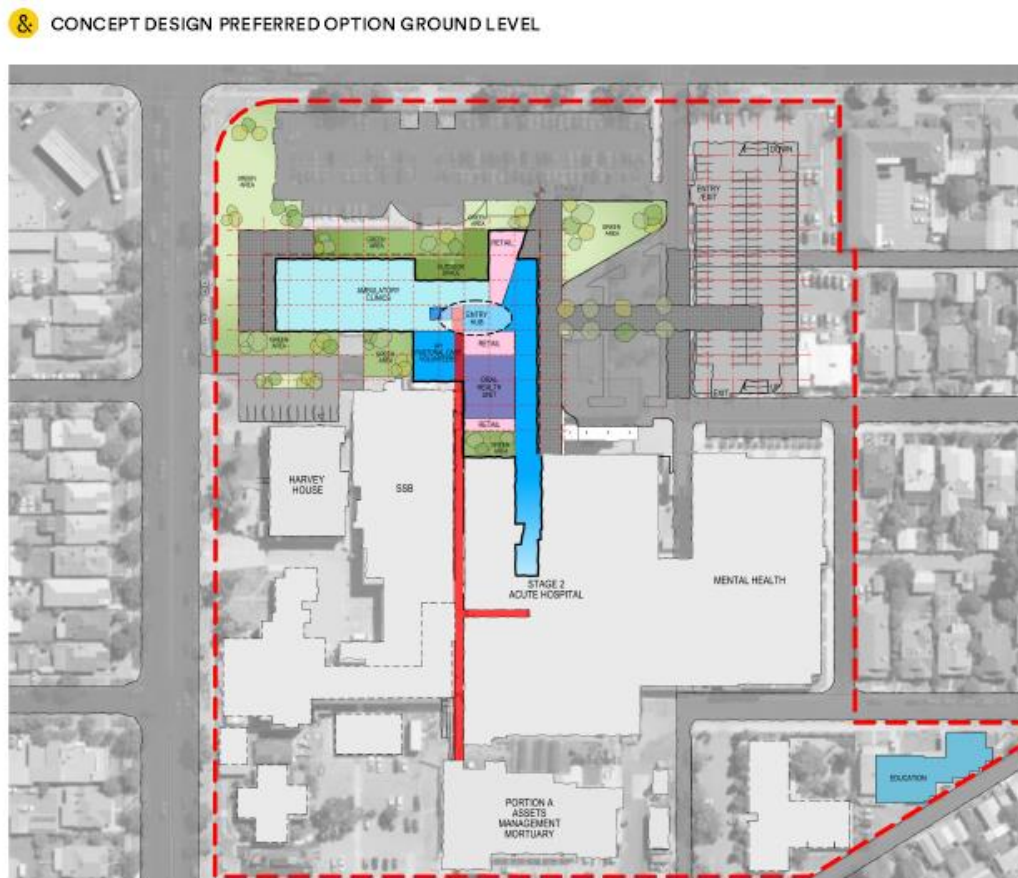


Figure 1. The Study Area.

The site was surveyed during the preparation of our last report (KMA 2011). While there has been changes on the site as the redevelopment has proceeded since that time, there are no significant changes to the character of the site as it pertains to ecological matters.

3.0 Habitat

The following description of the hospital site was provided by KMA (2011):

“[the] grounds of Wagga Wagga Hospital are a completely modified environment; there is no natural vegetation and almost no native plants on the site. Planted exotic trees, gardens and mown lawn are the vegetation on the site. Planted trees are the dominant feature on the site; these have been documented in the arborist’s report by Somewhere Landscape Architects (2011). That report contains a plan and a schedule of the trees on the hospital site...”

The current aerial photograph of the site shows that the land involved in the Stage 3 development has almost no vegetation on it, only mown grass, and certainly no habitats that are likely to be important to native plants and animals. The previous survey only recorded a few common urban birds on the site.

4.0 Threatened Species, Populations and Communities

Presence of Threatened Species and Communities

Lists of threatened species and communities are provided in Schedule 1 and Schedule 2, respectively, attached to the NSW *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act). Nationally threatened species are listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Information on the occurrence of threatened species in New South Wales is available online from the NSW Wildlife Atlas, maintained by the NSW Office of the Environment and Heritage. The Wildlife Atlas was interrogated for records of threatened species previously recorded in the local area; in this case the area is the Wagga Wagga local government area. The previous report listed the threatened plants, animals and ecological communities recorded from the Wagga Local Government Area; none of these would occur on the Stage 3 site.

5.0 Impact Assessment

Impact on Native Vegetation and Habitat (Biodiversity)

The proposed redevelopment of Stage 3 at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital will not involve clearing any native vegetation or natural habitats, nor habitat of any importance to native plants or animals. The Stage 3 site is most unattractive to the vast majority of native animals.

Biodiversity is defined under section 1.5 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* and Section 1.4 of the *Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2017*; the project is assessed using these criteria.

Section 1.5 of the Act

(a) *vegetation integrity—being the degree to which the composition, structure and function of vegetation at a particular site and the surrounding landscape has been altered from a near natural state,*

There is no natural vegetation on the site; no natural vegetation will be impacted by the proposed development.

(b) *habitat suitability—being the degree to which the habitat needs of threatened species are present at a particular site,*

There is no habitat for threatened plants or animals on the site.

(c) *biodiversity values, or biodiversity-related values, prescribed by the regulations.*

See below.

Section 1.4 of Regulations

(a) *threatened species abundance—being the occurrence and abundance of threatened species or threatened ecological communities, or their habitat, at a particular site,*

The probability of threatened species being on this site is very small, certainly no such species inhabits the site.

(b) *vegetation abundance—being the occurrence and abundance of vegetation at a particular site,*

There is no natural vegetation on the site; no natural vegetation will be impacted by the proposed development.

(c) *habitat connectivity—being the degree to which a particular site connects different areas of habitat of threatened species to facilitate the movement of those species across their range,*

There is no habitat on the site and no habitat connections will be impacted.

(d) *threatened species movement—being the degree to which a particular site contributes to the movement of threatened species to maintain their lifecycle,*

The site contains no habitat for threatened species.

(e) *flight path integrity—being the degree to which the flight paths of protected animals over a particular site are free from interference,*

The site is not on a flight path for any threatened or protected species; the proposed development does not represent interference to any flight path.

(f) *water sustainability—being the degree to which water quality, water bodies and hydrological processes sustain threatened species and threatened ecological communities at a particular site.*

There are no watercourses or wetlands on the site.

Assessment under the BC Act

Since 25 February 2018, the assessment process for a development is to be undertaken under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Section 7.3 of the Act contains a ‘test’ for determining if a proposed development or activity is likely to significantly affect threatened entities. This ‘test’ must “be taken into account for the purposes of determining whether a proposed development or activity is likely to significantly affect threatened species or ecological communities, or their habitats”. If the proposed development is likely to significantly affect threatened species, the application for development consent is to be accompanied by a ‘biodiversity development assessment report’.

(a) *in the case of a threatened species, whether the proposed development or activity is likely to have an adverse effect on the life cycle of the species such that a viable local population of the species is likely to be placed at risk of extinction,*

No threatened plants or animals are likely to inhabit or even visit the Stage 3 site.

(b) *in the case of an endangered ecological community or critically endangered ecological community, whether the proposed development or activity:*

(i) *is likely to have an adverse effect on the extent of the ecological community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction, or*

(ii) *is likely to substantially and adversely modify the composition of the ecological community such that its local occurrence is likely to be placed at risk of extinction,*

No endangered ecological communities occur on the Stage 3 site.

(c) in relation to the habitat of a threatened species or ecological community:

(i) the extent to which habitat is likely to be removed or modified as a result of the proposed development or activity, and

(ii) whether an area of habitat is likely to become fragmented or isolated from other areas of habitat as a result of the proposed development or activity, and

(iii) the importance of the habitat to be removed, modified, fragmented or isolated to the long-term survival of the species or ecological community in the locality,

As noted above, no threatened plants or animals, or endangered ecological communities occur on the Stage 3 site.

(d) whether the proposed development or activity is likely to have an adverse effect on any declared area of outstanding biodiversity value (either directly or indirectly),

The Stage 3 land does not contain a declared area of outstanding biodiversity.

(e) whether the proposed development or activity is or is part of a key threatening process or is likely to increase the impact of a key threatening process.

Key threatening processes (KTP) include such things as clearing of native vegetation and habitat modification, such as removal of dead wood and trees and loss of hollow-bearing trees. The proposed Stage 3 development does not involve any KTP.

Conclusion of significance assessment

In our opinion, the proposed Stage 3 development at Wagga Base Hospital is not likely to have a significant effect on any threatened species or community listed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, or their habitats, and the preparation of a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report is therefore not warranted.

6.0 Conclusion

This report has assessed the potential for the Stage 3 development at Wagga Base Hospital to impact upon ecological entities listed under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (NSW). The site does not provide important habitat for native plants and animals, including threatened species. The assessment concludes that there is not likely to be a significant impact upon listed plants, animals or communities and the preparation of a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report is therefore not warranted.

7.0 References

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