



Our Ref: C20/754

Date: 27 November 2020

Dear Ms Homsey

Re: EnergyConnect – NSW Western Section.

Thank you for referring the above proposal to DPI Fisheries for comment. I understand that the applicant wishes to construct a new high voltage interconnector between the NSW/SA border to Buronga NSW/VIC border.

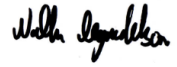
DPI Fisheries is responsible for ensuring that fish populations including threatened species are conserved and that there is “no net loss” of key fish habitats upon which they depend. To achieve this, the Department ensures that developments comply with the requirements of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (namely the aquatic habitat protection and threatened species conservation provisions in Parts 7 and 7A of the Act respectively) and the associated *Policy and Guidelines for Aquatic Habitat Management and Fish Conservation (1999)*. In addition, the Department is responsible for ensuring the sustainable management of commercial and recreational fishing and aquaculture within NSW.

The protection of riparian vegetation along inland streams of NSW has been identified as a primary action to reduce threats to fish in NSW. The degradation of native riparian vegetation along NSW watercourses has been listed as a “Key Threatening Process” under the *Fisheries Management Act* in recognition of its role in the decline of several threatened species of fish. DPI Fisheries policy requires riparian buffer zones to be established and maintained for developments in or adjacent to TYPE 1 or 2 fish habitats. The Murray River, Darling River and the Great Darling Anabranch are considered to be a TYPE 1 habitat and for such habitats DPI Fisheries require a buffer zone of 100 meters.

NSW DPI calculates habitat compensation on a minimum 2:1 basis for all key fish habitat to help redress other indirect impacts of development. The proposed works identify vegetation removal and trimming within the riparian zone at river crossings to meet the transmission line clearance height requirements. A strategy to offset the impacts of the proposed riparian zone vegetation loss is needed to meet the 2:1 habitat offset requirement. For example, the ability to utilise the cleared vegetation to restore instream woody habitat, would be an environmental compensation strategy seen to ensure no net loss of fish habitat post construction.

If you have any queries please call me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathan Reynoldson', written in a cursive style.

Nathan Reynoldson
Fisheries Manager (Albury)
Aquatic Ecosystems
NSW Department of Primary Industries