

Mr Lindsay Nash
Project Director, North
Transport for NSW
76 Victoria Street
Grafton NSW 2460

Our ref: SSI-4963
Your ref: SF2015/017648
File: OBJ14/11502-3

Attention: Kylie Wells

11/02/2022

Dear Mr Nash

**Pacific Highway - Woolgoolga to Ballina - Biodiversity Offset Package W2B (SSI-4963)
Biodiversity Offset Package September 2021**

I refer to your letter of 19 October 2021 submitting the updated Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway *Biodiversity Offset Package September 2021* (BoP Update 3) for the Planning Secretary's consideration under condition D5. I note the two previous reports for the Biodiversity Offset Package were submitted by Transport for NSW (TfNSW) in December 2017 and May 2020.

Under CoA D5 the Applicant was required to prepare and implement a Biodiversity Offset Package to detail how the ecological values lost as a result of the SSI would be offset. The Department has reviewed the BoP Update 3 which provides the final suite of properties identified as offset sites for the Woolgoolga to Ballina project. The BoP Update 3 includes details of baseline populations, habitat suitability and the presence or absence of threatened and ecological communities of the selected offset sites and how these will be protected, managed and monitored.

The 28 properties identified as Biodiversity Offset Sites provide the total area required (3520.76 ha) and a surplus (1360.10 ha). An ecological assessment report has been provided for each property and a protection mechanism has been allocated to each site for management and monitoring.

The BoP Update 3 outlines direct offsets for all of the 19 MNES impacted. Of the total 38 biometric vegetation communities the offset impact requirements are met for 36 communities impacted by the project through either direct offsets or trades. There remains a shortfall of 1.36 ha for the saltmarsh and mangrove communities in the Clarence River catchment.

I note that parts of the offset properties identified were affected by the 2021-21 bushfires and are in the process of regeneration.

Accordingly, the Planning Secretary has approved the *Woolgoolga to Ballina Pacific Highway Upgrade Biodiversity Offset Package September 2021 (30/09/2021)* in accordance with condition D5 of the Infrastructure Approval, subject to TfNSW:

1. Providing confirmation of the offsets for saltmarsh and mangrove communities and the timing for the provision of these offsets, their location and how the site(s) will be protected in perpetuity. The views of DPI-Fisheries on the proposed offsets must be provided, and;
2. Status of the final offset property (Site 54) to be secured. Confirmation that the site has been secured must be provided to the Department.

The Department requires that the above information be provided by 10 March 2022.

Please ensure that the approved plan is placed on the project website at the earliest convenience.

Should you have further queries regarding this matter, please contact Bethany Lane on (02) 9585 6775.

Yours sincerely



Michael Young
Principal Planner
Transport Assessments

As nominee of the Planning Secretary