

Our Ref: C24/385

FE24/558

8 May 2024

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The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

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Re: **Mount Piper to Wallerawang Transmission (SSI-70279722) SEARs**

DPI Fisheries is responsible for ensuring that fish stocks are conserved and that there is no net loss of key fish habitats upon which they depend. To achieve this, DPI Fisheries 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 Fish Habitat Conservation and Management (2013)*. In addition, DPI Fisheries is responsible for ensuring the sustainable management of commercial, recreational and Aboriginal cultural fishing, aquaculture, marine parks and aquatic reserves within NSW.

The EA should specifically address impacts on the aquatic ecology and controls to be established for waterway crossings such as permanent access tracks, temporary access tracks that provide access to structures in or adjacent to *Key Fish Habitats* (Third order streams or larger (Strahler Stream Order System) such as Coxs River and Lake Wallace, and potential impacts on riparian vegetation as per below:

### **AQUATIC ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

An aquatic ecological assessment is required that addresses all direct and indirect impacts of the Mount Piper to Wallerawang transmission line project on *Key Fish Habitat* and associated flora and fauna during construction.

The Aquatic Ecological Assessment should cover the assessment requirements outlined in Chapter 3 of the *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management (2013)* including:

- Recent aerial photograph (preferably colour), map or GIS of the locality which details the Key Fish Habitat of the development site, all habitats impacted by the development, and waterway classification (CLASS) as defined in Tables 1 and 2 of the *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management (2013)*.

- Location details of all temporary and permanent infrastructure and construction activities, such as waterway crossings, transmission lines, access tracks, etc.
- Mapping of the full aerial extent of *Key Fish Habitat* types that will be impacted either directly or indirectly by the development with impacted habitats clearly identified on recent aerial photographs, maps or GIS.
- Quantification of the extent of aquatic and riparian habitat removal or modification that will result from the proposed development.
- Development of mitigation measures during construction (e.g. Environmental Management Plans) and operation (e.g. Operational Management Plan) including monitoring of proposed mitigation measures and plans to confirm their effectiveness.

### **WATERWAY CROSSINGS**

The construction of permanent or temporary access tracks or transmission lines through *Key Fish Habitat* should be in accordance with DPI Fisheries Guideline document: *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management (Update 2013)*, and the *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Friendly Waterway Crossings (DPI 2003)*. This is to ensure that the works are designed and constructed in accordance with best management practice and with minimal impact on the aquatic environment and fish passage requirements.

### **LOSS OF RIPARIAN VEGETATION**

There is also the likelihood of a loss of riparian vegetation associated with the proposed transmission line easement, alongside Coss' River and Lake Wallace. The "*degradation of native riparian vegetation*" has been listed as a Key Threatening Process under the provisions of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*. DPI Fisheries policy advocates the use of terrestrial buffer zones as per the *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management (Update 2013)* available on the Department's website at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/habitat/publications/pubs/fish-habitat-conservation> in order to maintain the riparian buffer zone and limit disturbance and susceptibility to bed or bank erosion.

Should you have any queries regarding this correspondence please contact me on 0429 908 856.

D. Ward.

David Ward  
Fisheries Manager, Murray Darling.