

25 March 2020



ARTC REF# 5-0000-240-EAP-00-LT-0073

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Dear Erica,

## **SSI 7475 Inland Rail – Parkes to Narromine – Biodiversity Offset Strategy (BOS) Update- Restrictions to field surveys due to COVID-19**

ARTC Inland Rail is writing to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) to provide an update regarding delivery of the Biodiversity Offset Strategy in accordance with Condition E16 of the Inland Rail – Parkes to Narromine Conditions of Approval (SSI 7475).

ARTC would like to thank the Department again for approving an extension to the delivery of the Parkes to Narromine Biodiversity Offset Strategy (P2N BOS) in letter *'Inland Rail – Parkes to Narromine (SSI 7475) Extension of Time to Type of Request'*, received 4 February 2020, which extended the delivery of the BOS to 17 May 2020. This extension was requested as the Project needed to identify a small number of additional biodiversity credits, locate properties with vegetation suitable to fulfil the credit requirements, undertake field survey and negotiate with landholders.

ARTC Inland Rail and our consultant have been working to fulfil these requirements. However, as a result of the current global COVID-19 pandemic, and the Australian Federal and NSW State government restrictions on non-essential travel and social distancing measures. ARTC Inland Rail have made the decision that it is not appropriate to allow staff or consultants to travel to private properties to undertake field surveys at this time. As it is currently unknown how long the spread of COVID-19 will continue, ARTC Inland and our consultant have developed a strategy to submit the P2N BOS by 17 May 2020.

ARTC Inland Rail would like to inform the Department of how we intend to finalise the P2N BOS given the current travel restrictions. Since ARTC Inland Rail requested the extension to the delivery of the P2N BOS from the Department, ARTC has undertaken preliminary surveys at two properties. The project has selected one property to progress as part of the P2N BOS. Field surveys using BAM were scheduled for the week beginning 30 March 2020. As these surveys will no longer occur in the near future, ARTC Inland Rail intends to finalise and submit the P2N BOS including the anticipated credits generated from this property. Following reassessment of the COVID-19 situation and the domestic travel restrictions, ARTC

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The Australian Government is delivering  
Inland Rail through the Australian  
Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), in  
partnership with the private sector.

Inland Rail will undertake field surveys and draft the Biodiversity Stewardship Site Assessment Report (BSSAR) for this property. Work to retire credits is anticipated to occur as outlined in Condition E20.

If the Department would like to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact Roisin Feeney on rfeeney@artc.com.au.

Yours sincerely,

  

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Andrew Skele (Mar 25, 2020)

Andrew Skele  
**Environment Manager - NSW**