



27 November 2024

Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2150

Contact Planner: Drew Anderson
drew.anderson@dpie.nsw.gov.au

**RE: Edward River Council Submission | State Significant Infrastructure Project
SSI-50831979 - Billabong Creek Environmental Water Regulators**

Thank you for allowing Edward River Council the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the *State Significant Infrastructure – Billabong Creek Environmental Water Regulators (SSI-50831979)*. It is understood that the New South Wales Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DEECW) are proposed to replace two existing weirs along the Billabong Creek with new regulators at Hartwood Weir and Wanganella Weir. It is understood the condition of the existing weirs are in a state of decline, poor functionality and will be replaced to improve efficiency, water management and delivery along the Billabong Creek catchment.

Council have reviewed the exhibition package published on the Departments website between 1st November and 28th November, and the meeting held with DPHI on 21st November 2024, Council makes the following general comments:

Council is in support of the design refinements associated with the Project in contrast to the initial Scoping Report and makes no objection to the proposal subject to the below considerations.

Water

Consistency and water availability should not be impacted as a result of the Project. Access to quality water and consistent baseline flows would be an anticipated result from the construction of the two new regulators within the Billabong Creek to ensure users continue to have adequate water access from the creek catchment. Council is in support of the Project, should minimal change to the existing hydrology and characteristics of the Billabong Creek have negligible impact to licenced users, the environment and dependent local communities (namely the Conargo and Wanganella townships).

Environmental Impacts

Any environmental impact to the Billabong Creek catchment should have negligible effect on the environment, by way of native flora and fauna, critical habitat and site sensitive ecosystems (aquatic and terrestrial). All measures should be taken to prevent and reduce contaminated surface water runoff, soil disturbance, and increases in salinity and turbidity during the construction of the regulators and demolition of the weirs.

Social Impacts

Council would anticipate that consideration for employee and skill labourers' accommodation is thoroughly considered prior to the commencement of works to ensure suitable housing is available for the duration of the project. Deniliquin and supporting communities have low availability of housing and tourist and visitor accommodation, with this development alone projecting a workforce of 26 personnel per day during construction over an 18-month period (*section 3.3 of EIS Main Report*). Edward River Council is anticipating a significant influx of skilled workers with the nearby renewable energy zone projects (REZ SSD projects) set to commence in the near future, creating a high demand for the limited housing stock.

Noting the above, Council supports the employment of local tradespeople where suitably qualified to facilitate this project.

Traffic & Access

Council would request that the condition of any existing road network utilised to deliver the project, including during construction, demolition, and ongoing operation, remain in a suitable and safe condition. Dilapidation of the roads should be assessed prior to works commencing and upon the completion of the project to ensure any impacted sealed and unsealed roads are not left in a damaged condition for local residents and users.

Should upgrades to existing intersections on major/high volume road networks be required to improve safety, these upgrades should be carried out prior to the commencement of regulator works at each location, and Council request notification prior to those works being carried out.

Cultural Heritage

Council requests the Proponent work closely with Local Aboriginal Land Council/s and First Nations people with regard to the destruction and/or relocation of cultural heritage items. Within the EIS and supporting reports, it is identified the Proponent will be required to destroy items of heritage significance. Where possible, Council supports the potential relocation and exhibition of any removed items in nearby museums or town monuments to retain local cultural heritage items/relics. Should the opportunity arise to display these relics/items, Council request consultation be undertaken with the LALC and traditional owners.

Edward River Council request that all measures are taken to mitigate and manage potential adverse impacts as a result of this development, and should you wish to discuss further, please contact the undersigned on 03 5989 3000.

Sincerely,



Maddison Gunter
Town Planner

On behalf of Edward River Council.
Encl.