



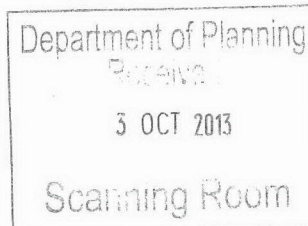
Office of  
Environment  
& Heritage



Your Reference: MP10\_0133\_MOD2  
Our reference: DOC13/65181; FIL10/11970-03  
Contact: Steve Lewer, 4908 6814

Ms Karen Jones  
Acting Director, Infrastructure Projects  
Department of Planning and Infrastructure  
GPO Box 39  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Tracy Bellamy



Dear Ms Jones

**RE: EXHIBITION OF MODIFICATION REQUEST FOR NEWCASTLE GAS STORAGE FACILITY – MODIFICATION 2 (MP10\_0133\_MOD2)**

I refer to your letter dated 20 September 2013 requesting comments and recommended conditions of approval for the 'Newcastle Gas Storage Facility – Modification 2'. The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) has undertaken a review of the EA (including its appendices, dated 13 September 2013) and provides the following comments.

OEH notes that the proposal will generally have a minor impact on biodiversity with the removal of approximately 0.17 hectares of native vegetation (i.e. Coastal Foothills Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest and Coastal Sand Apple Blackbutt Forest). This vegetation is not considered a threatened ecological community or represents significant habitat for listed threatened species. Additionally, OEH agrees that the proposal will not significantly impact on known or predicted threatened species. OEH understands that the proposal will predominantly impact on already highly disturbed areas, such as plantings, exotic vegetation with scattered trees (e.g. lawn) or native vegetation with a reduced or cleared understorey. As such, OEH is of the opinion that the proposal will not have a significant impact on local and/or regional biodiversity issues providing mitigation measures outlined in Appendix A – Ecological Assessment are adhered to.

The proposal avoids areas of an endangered ecological community (EEC), known records of the threatened tree - Earp's Gum (*Eucalyptus parramattensis* subsp. *decadens*), and core Koala habitat, albeit some minor impact marginal connective habitat. Although the Option B proposed pipeline route occurs adjacent to a 'Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on coastal floodplains' EEC, OEH acknowledges that long-term adverse direct impacts on this community are unlikely, even though some minor trimming of individual trees may be required. In general, OEH is of the view that the EA has adequately addressed biodiversity aspects of the proposal and has no further concerns. Biodiversity offsets achieved in the original assessment of the project adequately offset the minor impact of this proposal.

Due to resourcing issues, OEH is unable to review and provide comment on Aboriginal cultural heritage issues at this stage.

If you require any further information regarding this matter please contact Steve Lewer, Regional Biodiversity Conservation Officer, on 4908 6814.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Bath', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

1 OCT 2013

**RICHARD BATH**  
**Senior Team Leader - Planning**  
**Regional Operations**