



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

Your reference: MP11_0012
Our reference: DOC12/17860

Mr S Haddad
Director-General
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

RECEIVED

10 MAY 2012

Director-General

Att: Ms Megan Fu, Major Projects

Dear Mr Haddad

Re: Public exhibition of Major Project MP11_0012. Port Macquarie Hospital extensions

I refer to the recent public exhibition of the above project under Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and to an email request from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DP&I) (Ms Megan Fu, dated 26 April 2012) to the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) seeking comments on the proposal. OEH appreciates the opportunity to comment.

OEH has conducted a brief review of the exhibited documents posted on the DP&I website, and provides detailed comments with respect to certain biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage matters in Attachment A. On the basis of this review, OEH concludes it is able to support the proposal subject to the inclusion of the recommended Statement of Commitments (SOC) in any Determination issued by DP&I. OEH also recommends that the Determination includes conditions to protect downstream environments from the impacts of stormwater flows.

OEH notes from Ms Fu's email that the proponent is seeking to apply the BioBanking methodology to offset the removal of a limited number of Koala habitat trees. This option is not yet referred to in the draft SOC and OEH recommends that DP&I consult further with the proponent with a view to amending the SOC and any Determination conditions accordingly should the proponent wish to continue with this option. OEH confirms it can provide further post-Determination BioBanking advice to the proponent directly if requested.

The SOC appears to adequately address Aboriginal cultural heritage matters, as previously advised by OEH.

If you require further information or clarification please contact Conservation Planning Officer, Mr John Martindale on telephone (02) 6659 8222.

Yours sincerely

Dimitri Young 4 May 2012

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Attachment A: Summary of biodiversity planning matters

1. The proposal is consistent with the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy and the 2011 Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Environment Plan (LEP).
2. The Ecological Assessment (Jan 2012) prepared by Environmental Resources Management (ERM) Australia Ltd appears to be comprehensive and in accordance with OEH survey guidelines.
3. The hospital extension is proposed at the western end of the existing building on predominately cleared lands currently used for informal car parking and maintenance sheds.
4. There will be removal of some disturbed native Blackbutt open forest (less than one hectare) comprising some older remnant trees but mainly younger regrowth eucalypts and a small area of rainforest planted in 1994. With one possible exception, no hollow bearing trees were recorded.
5. More significant vegetation with demonstrated corridor value for threatened fauna, including Koala, along the John Oxley Drive road corridor and vegetated buffers to adjacent development to the north and south will be retained. Vegetation identified in Council's Koala habitat mapping in the south east of the site under Clause 7.5 of the LEP (and supporting Clauses 1-tree management, 11-hollow bearing trees and 13-Koala habitat of the 2011 DCP) will not be impacted.
6. Although not required under Part 3A of the EP&A Act, the proponent has completed a Section 5A assessment for threatened species, populations, ecological communities or their habitats and has concluded there will be no significant effect on these entities. OEH supports this conclusion.
7. There are no threatened flora or endangered ecological communities (EECs) recorded on site with the existing understorey having been managed to reduce bush fire hazards through mowing and slashing in accordance with asset protection zone requirements under the *Rural Fires Act 1997*. A number of threatened fauna were recorded but most forage widely (microchiropteran bats, Masked Owl) or are widespread migrants (Grey-headed Flying foxes). An exception is the Koala for which numerous records exist in the vicinity as demonstrated by the number of nearby road kills recorded by the local Koala hospital.
8. A suite of mitigation measures has been recommended by ERM and these are adopted in the draft Statement of Commitments (SOC). OEH supports these measures and recommends they be included in any determinations conditions imposed by DP&I. These measures include the requirement for compensatory planting at a 2:1 ratio for all Koala habitat trees removed under the Arboricultural Method Statement and the Landscaping Strategy. OEH notes the apparent intention of the proponent to enter into a BioBanking agreement to ensure the protection of these and other Koala habitat trees in the vicinity. OEH supports this initiative and is able to provide advice in this regard under any relevant determination condition.
9. The insertion of standard Aboriginal cultural heritage clauses in the SOC in accordance with previous OEH advice is supported. It is recommended these are reflected in any determination conditions.
10. OEH notes that issues relating to noise, site erosion, sediment control, dust, and storage of materials will be addressed in accordance with relevant Australian standards and best practice as detailed in the Environment and Construction Management Plans and as required by the DP&I Director-Generals Requirements. Conditions of Determination should be included to protect downstream environments from stormwater impacts.