OUT20/13225

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Dear Ms Homsey

Project EnergyConnect (NSW - Western Section) - SSI 10040
Environmental Impact Statement

I refer to your email of 27 October 2020 to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) – Water about the above matter.

Please note our detailed advice in Attachment A provided by DPIE - Water and the NSW Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR).

Yours sincerely

Liz Rogers
Manager Assessments, Office of the Deputy and Strategic Relations
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment: Water
26 November 2020

ATTACHMENT A

Advice to DPIE Planning & Assessment regarding the EIS for the Project EnergyConnect (NSW - Western Section) - SSI 10040

Pre-Approval Recommendations

Water Licencing and Access

1. The proponent should provide clarification of the ability to obtain the necessary water volumes via relevant agreements and demonstrate sufficient water entitlements can be acquired where necessary. Where the water is to be sourced from a currently unauthorised source and/or where additional water take infrastructure is required, an impact assessment of this water take will be required.

The impact assessment of installing works to access water supplies combined with acquiring additional water entitlement will need to meet the rules of the relevant Water Sharing Plan and the Access Licence Dealings Principles Order (2004). Completing the impact assessment for additional water take infrastructure as part of the SSI determination process will enable exclusions from approvals under the *Water Management Act 2000* to apply.

Explanation

The water demands for the project have been defined at 616ML for construction. Insufficient information has been provided to confirm a secure and viable source of water supply is available to meet these demands. The EIS indicates that water would be supplied for construction via purchase from the existing water market within the region or from local council facilities or utility provider. However, the ability to obtain the necessary water from these sources, the associated agreements and access to water entitlement if required has not been provided.

Where there is the potential for water take/dewatering associated with piling or other activity to exceed 3ML, additional approvals and sufficient entitlement must be obtained in the relevant water source.

Monitoring Bores

2. The proponent should clarify the potential impacts to current monitoring bores and confirm how the desired monitoring outcomes will be achieved into the future via either new monitoring bores or altered construction works.

Consultation with relevant monitoring bore owners will be required.

Explanation

The EIS indicates that several groundwater bores may be damaged or require removal during construction. The WaterNSW real time data viewer shows GW088454-nested and GW087531 as monitoring bores owned by WaterNSW. GW600452 is shown as a monitoring bore that is privately owned. Monitoring bores provide important information to assist DPIE – Water and WaterNSW in managing the water resource and to identify potential impacts from development. Ensuring this can continue needs to be addressed.

Geomorphic Assessment

3. The proponent should clarify which is correct, as follows:

- There is inconsistencies in Tables 15-2 (EIS) and 4.3 (Tech. Report 6) where Great Darling Anabranch is identified as being in ‘moderate’ geomorphic condition according to the River Styles database (condition field) but ‘good’ condition in the description field.

4. The proponent should clarify the value of minor channels for delivering flow to main channels in flood and include a commitment to avoid direct impacts on lower order channels where possible.

   Explanation

   Technical Report 6 (p.37) makes the assumption that minor channels (1st and 2nd order streams) with no riparian vegetation and no regular flow would be in 'poor' geomorphic condition. In many of these systems, the minor channels carry flow only in flood and their dry state in low-flow periods does not necessarily constitute poor condition. We are concerned that designation of 'poor' condition may result in a diminished assessment of risk, reducing the imperative to avoid impacts on any channels where possible.

5. The proponent should clarify that a specific geomorphic monitoring or procedure will be detailed (in the Construction Environmental Management Plan) and in place to identify and address any impacts that arise from the project.

Post Approval Recommendations

6. The proponent must obtain relevant approvals and licences under the *Water Management Act 2000* before commencing any works which intercept or extract groundwater or surface water.
7. The Soil and Water management sub plan of the Construction Environmental Management Plan be provided to DPIE Water for review.
8. Works within waterfront land must be carried out to meet the requirements of the Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land (NRA 2018).

   Explanation

   Where works are required near or within watercourses such as temporary laydown areas, watercourse crossings and access tracks there is the potential for impacts to watercourses, both at the construction sites and downstream. It is understood that a Construction Environmental Management Plan will be prepared, along with associated sub-plans including a Soil and Water sub-plan. This is supported and the plans will need to ensure adequate buffers and controls are in place to minimise impacts to watercourses. This will need to be consistent with the "*Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land* (NRAR 2018)" and industry standard erosion and sediment control guidelines e.g. "*Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction* (Landcom 2004)".

END ATTACHMENT A