



OUT21/7465

Megan Fu  
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NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

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Dear Ms Fu

**John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct (SSD-9351535)  
EIS**

I refer to your email of 31 May 2021 to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) Water and the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) about the above matter.

This project is the construction and operation of a new seven storey Acute Services Building, refurbishment works to selected existing hospital buildings, and associated landscaping, infrastructure and road works.

Our main concern is that the proponent has not provided sufficient information to demonstrate the likelihood of groundwater interception or take during excavation and/or operation.

Please note our detailed advice in **Attachment A**.

Any further referrals to DPIE Water and NRAR can be sent by email to [landuse.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:landuse.enquiries@dpie.nsw.gov.au), or to the following coordinating officer within DPIE Water:

Alistair Drew – Project Officer  
E: [Alistair.drew@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Alistair.drew@dpie.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely

Liz Rogers  
Manager, Assessments, Knowledge Division  
**Department of Planning, Industry and Environment: Water**  
26 July 2021

## Attachment A

### Detailed advice to DPIE Planning & Assessment regarding the John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct (SSD-9351535) EIS

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#### Explanation

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The EIS and supporting documentation does not directly consider the NSW Aquifer Interference Policy (AIP) 'minimal impact considerations'.

It is unclear from the EIS and supporting documentation, whether the proposed activities will result in direct or indirect take of groundwater. Grouting of historical mine workings is proposed, possibly below the depth of water table, and would potentially constitute an aquifer interference activity.

While no groundwater was intercepted during excavation of test pits that were dug to a maximum depth of 0.9 metres below ground level (mbgl), construction excavations are proposed to depths of 8-10 mbgl. The Geotechnical Assessment report indicates that two boreholes were constructed, however, no detail on water level measurements were included. Water levels of between 11.6-15.90 mbgl are mentioned in the Contamination Assessment report. The geotechnical assessment further notes that "*a detailed understanding of the groundwater conditions at the site is very important*" in relation to detailed design and construction, suggesting that interception of water table is possible.

DPIE Water considers that the proponent has not provided sufficient information to demonstrate the likelihood of groundwater interception or take during excavation and/or operation.

#### Recommendations

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##### Prior to approval

- Identify if the water table will be intercepted by cut and fill activities, and if so provide information on the predicted groundwater inflow volume generated.
- Report on whether the groundwater take is less than the 3ML licensing exemption offered under the *Water Management (General) Regulation 2018* or a licence is required.
- Provide a statement of impact against the 'minimal impact considerations' as defined in the NSW Aquifer Interference Policy (2012).

##### Post approval

- Provide a detailed and consolidated site water balance.
- In the event groundwater is intercepted during construction, the proponent must ensure that any take is appropriately licenced unless eligible under an exemption.
- All works on waterfront land as defined by the *Water Management Act 2000* must be in accordance with the NRAR Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land. The NRAR Guidelines can be found here <https://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/water/licensing-trade/approvals/controlled-activities/guide>

**End Attachment A**