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Mr Colin Phillips
Team Leader
Minerals Quarry Assessments
Planning and Assessment Group
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
4 Parramatta Square, 12 Darcy Street
PARRAMATTA NSW 2250

Dear Mr Phillips,

Hitchcock Road Sand Extraction and Rehabilitation Project, Maroota

I refer to the 21 July 2020 request for advice from the Environment, Energy and Science Group (EES) on the modification application for the above.

EES has reviewed the Statement of Environmental Effects (SoEE) supporting the modification and understands the landscape management requirements of the existing consent (conditions 22 to 25 of schedule 3) require the implementation of a biodiversity offset strategy (BOS) to offset the clearing of 3.7 ha of Sydney Hinterland Transition Woodland (SHTW). The BOS requires the rehabilitation of 12 ha of mined land with vegetation consisting of 7.9 ha of SHTW and 4.1 ha of 'other woodland'. To date, 4.2 ha has been rehabilitated with SHTW vegetation.

The modification to the landscape management requirements proposes a revised BOS which entails the protection and restoration of 8 ha of existing native vegetation within the development site (on Lot 214) secured through a positive public covenant as an alternative to revegetating a further 7.8 ha of mined land.¹

EES has assessed the revised BOS against the offset rules of the Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BO Scheme), and notes that the offsetting of impacts to SHTW through the protection of vegetation communities within Lot 214 do not meet the offset rules as the vegetation communities are generally not in the same vegetation class as SHTW. The offset would therefore not be considered 'like for like'. Despite this, EES supports the revised BOS as:

- there is more certainty that existing vegetation will provide better condition habitats than rehabilitated vegetation
- the vegetation communities on Lot 214 are generally within the same vegetation formation as SHTW, and therefore the use of Lot 214 as an offset would likely meet the variation rules under the BO Scheme
- the vegetation communities on Lot 214 provide known habitat for several threatened flora species
- there are some similarities between the vegetation on Lot 214 and SHTW, given the transitional nature of the vegetation.

¹ EES notes the revised BOS does not confirm the SoEE advice on page 7 that an additional 3.1 ha of mined land will be rehabilitated resulting in a total of 7.3 ha of rehabilitated mined land. It is recommended this matter be clarified.

Should you have any queries regarding this advice, please contact Richard Bonner, Senior Conservation Planning Officer on 9995 6917 or at richard.bonner@environment.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

13/08/20

Susan Harrison
Senior Team Leader Planning
Greater Sydney
Climate Change and Sustainability