|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 14 October 2020 | | |
| Hunter Water Corporation  PO BOx 5171  HRMC NSW 2310  Attn: Chris Gilmore  Dear Chris | |  |
| Subject: | LMCC Response to Belmont Drought Response Desalination Plant  – SSI-8896 | |

Thank you for notifying Council of the latest proposal for the Belmont Drought Response Desalination Plant. Apologies on this delayed response from Lake Macquarie City Council Staff.

Council has earlier responded to this project, in late 2019 (Belmont Desalination Plant SSI - 8896 -Council Ref: MISC/279/2017/B) and raised a number of issues at that time.

In response to this latest version Lake Macquarie City Council officers would like to note or seek the following to be addressed prior to, or as part of any determination.

**Environmental Planning**

The modification to avoid ground water drawdown on the Belmont Lagoon and surrounding wetlands is supported.

Issues associated any bycatch from drawing in ocean water should be addressed.

**Erosion and Sediment Control**

The Belmont Drought Response Desalination Plant Submissions and Amendment Report dated August 2020 has addressed earlier concerns. The proposed erosion and sediment control actions are in accordance with our DCP.

**Visual Amenity**

The site is adjacent to a number of important recreational and tourist places and facilities for Lake Macquarie City. The Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) findings are supported, however the mitigation measures for the site are no,t as they do not include any revegetation that addresses the identified visual impacts. Addressing the identified visual impacts from Nine Mile Beach and the western track brings multiple benefits to the site and broader environment that reflects positively on Lake Macquarie City. The VIA discusses the future Hunter Water plans for dune restoration and revegetation for the adjoining WWTP site, however this does not include the current site.

The following conditions are recommended:

A landscape restoration plan is to be prepared by a qualified landscape architect that includes concept and construction level documentation for revegetation of the dunal system (eastern boundary), northern and southern perimeter, and identify planting opportunities along the western boundary. The landscape documentation is to be informed by the visual impact assessment and biodiversity reports for the project and maximise opportunities for visual fragmentation and/or screening of the site from the east and west. The landscape works are to be undertaken concurrently with the construction of the facility and maintained in perpetuity.

The colours of the vertical elements on the site are to be visually recessive and include the darker greys and browns.

**Environmental Amenity**

Council’s previous submission comments are noted:

*Noise*

A Noise and Vibration Assessment Report has been prepared by GHD, dated November 2019.

The report has assessed the potential noise and vibration from construction and operation of the proposed project in accordance with the requirements and guidelines of the NSW EPA, and provided recommendations to mitigate impacts on the nearest sensitive receivers.

*Contamination*

A Contamination Assessment Report has been prepared by GHD, dated November 2019.

The assessment reported contamination in the soil and on the soil surface and determined that, at this stage, no significant human health or environmental risks to construction workers or future site users were identified, however disturbed soils are required to be managed to protect the environment. The report recommends a Contaminated Soil Management Plan (CSMP) be developed as part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan. The CSMP will also deal with unexploded ordnances.

**Flooding**

Minimum floor level for the development should be 2.36m AHD.

All unsealed electrical installations associated with the proposed development i.e. pumps, switches, power points, motors, etc, should comply with the protection against electrical shock provisions for damp situations” outlined in Australian Standard AS 3000 “Australian/New Zealand Wiring Rules”.

**Heritage**

The application includes an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment in accordance with OEH (BCD) requirements, which includes appropriate recommendations.

**Lake and Foreshore Impacts**

Section 3.4.1 of the Belmont Drought Response Desalination Plant Submissions and Amendment Report addresses clauses in the SEPP (Coastal Management) 2018, but does not appear to consider clause 15 of the SEPP.

Council also seeks clarification on the detail of the intake structure pipeline. In particular, we wish to ensure that this pipeline is installed at an adequate depth below the sea-bed to ensure that it does not result in altered sand movements in either the near-shore or off-shore area. Council studies identified a high amount of submerged sand movement along 9-Mile beach and we wish to ensure that the pipeline construction caters for future changes in the near & off-shore profile and does not interfere with sand movement patterns. We also wish to confirm the amount of sand that will be removed by the direct drilling process, and the proposed disposal location for this material.

The Belmont Drought Response Desalination Plant Submissions and Amendment Report (section 3.5.1) indicates that no further assessment is required regarding marine biodiversity impacts. Council remain concerned over the potential impacts on marine biodiversity, particularly larval impacts related to the operation of the intake structure. We suggest that an ongoing monitoring program is warranted to assess these impacts should the project be approved.

**Council Assets – Roads**

Ocean Park Road Belmont South has failed due to heavy vehicles gaining access to the nearby treatment works and beach access. Asset Management will require the road from Green Street to the main access gate to Hunter Water land, to be reconstructed.

Council has undertaken a pavement investigation of the road and it was identified, that asbestos was observed. This material imposes a level of complexity into the construction, which means the road will require a granular overlay 300-400mm thick and sealed to meet expect vehicle usage.

As part of these works stormwater will need to be catered for, that will require additional drainage to take a water build up from the northern side of the road and discharged into the sand dunes. Due to potential aboriginal artefacts being present, an impact study will be required for where the water discharge is likely to occur.

Further consultation with Council’s Sustainability section will be required regarding the formalisation of beach access in this immediate area.

**Engineering**

*Stormwater Management*

A suitable Stormwater Management Plan by GHD P/L Drg. 2219573 incorporating water harvesting, water quality facilities and site discharge index requirements in accordance with the Lake Macquarie DCP 2014 has been provided.

*Natural Water Systems*

The proposed development is located (within the vicinity of/adjacent to) Belmont Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean, which are considered natural water bodies. The stormwater management plan prepared by GHD P/L 2219573 has incorporated facilities which will eliminate or limit any likely adverse effects on the water body and/or ecosystem adjacent or downstream receiving waters. It is therefore considered that the development as proposed will have no significant adverse impacts.

*Design of Parking and Service Areas*

*Parking*

The internal driveway and car parking area (including turning movements) for the development appear adequate for the development and comply with the DCP 2014 requirements and AS 2890.1 Parking Facilities – Off Street Parking & AS 2890.6 Parking Facilities – Off-street parking for people with disabilities.

*Servicing*

The proposed development has included adequate facilities for service vehicles.

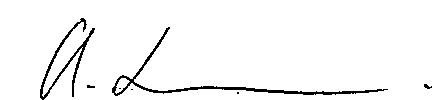
*Construction Management Plan*

A Construction Management Plan should be required and fencing provided along the western side of the site providing a barrier to the neighbouring wetlands and Belmont Lagoon.

The Construction Management Pan should specifically address avoiding impacts on the native vegetation to the west of Ocean Park Road. This would include avoiding impacts that might arise from use of the road to access the site or upgrading the road.

Should you require further information or clarification, please contact me on adleese@lakemac.nsw.gov.au or 4921 0201.

Yours faithfully,



Andrew Leese

A/Principal Development Planner

DA&C - Development