



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

Our Ref: DOC19/104080

Your Ref: SSD 5792

Mr Chris Ritchie
Director, Industry Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Attention: Ms Deana Burn

Dear Mr Ritchie

**Re: Response to Submissions SSD 5792 Cairncross Waste Management Facility Expansion,
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council**

Thank you for your email dated 7 February 2019 about the Response to Submissions for the Cairncross Waste Management Facility Expansion (SSD 5792) in the Port Macquarie Hastings local government area, seeking comments from the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). I appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

The OEH has reviewed the *Cairncross Waste Management Facility Expansion – Response to Submissions* (RtS) prepared by Arcadis dated 11 December 2018 and provides the following comments.

We note and support the following changes to the proposal:

- a. The addition of a mitigation measure (AB-04 in the 2015 OEMP) for unexpected, identified or suspected Aboriginal objects.
- b. The Biodiversity Offset Strategy that quantifies the offsets required for the Stage 3 works and describes how the offsets will be funded and managed, including the timeframe for delivery.
- c. The commitment to rezone the koala corridor for environmental protection and manage it in perpetuity under the Port Macquarie Hastings Council's Public Bushland Management Program.
- d. The commitment to prepare a draft Vegetation Management Plan and provide it to the OEH for review prior to finalisation.
- e. The relocation and resizing of the Stage 3 basin to capture and treat all sediment laden runoff during a 95th percentile 5-day rainfall event due to the sensitive receiving environment being the Rawdon Creek Nature Reserve (NR).

However, the issues we raised regarding a vegetated buffer to protect the NR and the adequacy of the koala corridor have not been satisfactorily addressed.

The OEH previously recommended a 50 m wide vegetated buffer to the NR) and that all infrastructure, including the Strategic Fire Advantage Zone (SFAZ), be located outside the buffer. This has not been implemented.

As described in Figure 6.8 of the RtS, within that recommended buffer there will be a 30m wide SFAZ consisting of 24 m of modified vegetation and a 6 m wide access track. The SFAZ is required to be managed "in accordance with the prescriptions provided by the NSW Rural Fire Service's Environmental Assessment Code 2006" (the Code). Under the Code mechanical work can occur in a SFAZ up to a maximum of 6 metres from boundary fencing but must not involve the removal of native vegetation older than 10 years.

The OEH supports the location of fencing along the access track rather than along the NR boundary. However, we do not consider that the proposed SFAZ will maintain adequate screening for recreational users and protect the visual amenity to the NR, as claimed in the RtS, because the native understorey and shrub layer will be cleared. A visual and ecological buffer to the NR is required that is fully vegetated.

The OEH also recommended the sediment basin, leachate tank and pump station (approximately 163 m by 20 m in size) be located outside the 50 m wide koala corridor in the Stage 2 and Stage 3 development. This has not been implemented.

The RtS in addressing the Rural Fire Services response states that the koala corridor and the SFAZ will be implemented from the commencement of the Amended Proposal providing a permanent 50 m fire break to the south and 30 m fire break to the south-east. The leachate tanks require 20 m of defensible space around them and this does not seem to have been accounted for in the proposed layouts in the revised concept plan diagrams.

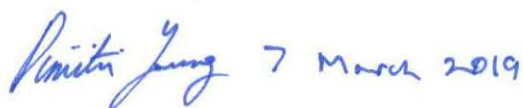
While we note the basin will be reduced in size over time and will be removed following rehabilitation there is inadequate justification that the remaining 20 m will provide enough area for fauna movement. The OEH does not consider the basin and the associated infrastructure to be compatible with the objective to provide an adequate corridor for koala and other fauna movement and it will prevent the effective revegetation and restoration of this area.

The OEH recommends that:

1. A fully vegetated buffer with a minimum width of 10 m is required to the Rawdon Creek Nature Reserve boundary and should be located outside the 30 m wide Strategic Fire Advantage Zone.
2. The sediment basin, leachate tank and pump station for Stage 2 must be relocated outside the 50 m wide koala corridor.
3. Before the application is determined, clarification is required regarding the requirement for a permanent 50 m wide fire break to the south as outlined in the RtS, as this would negate the commitment for the retention of a 50 m wide koala corridor and prevent the revegetation and restoration of this area.

If you have any further questions about this issue, Ms Rachel Lonie, Senior Conservation Planning Officer, Conservation and Regional Delivery, OEH, can be contacted on 6650 7130 or at rachel.lonie@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



DIMITRI YOUNG
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