

Mr Jim Betts
Secretary
Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Attn: Michael Young

SF2015/017648

Dear Michael

Re: Woolgoolga to Ballina Condition D5 - Biodiversity Offset Package

Transport for NSW submitted the Biodiversity Offset Package (BoP) for the Woolgoolga to Ballina Upgrade in December 2017 and again in May 2020. Transport for NSW have addressed the detailed comments received from the Department in July 2020. There was a substantial delay in finalising the BoP as TfNSW awaited comments from Department of Water, Agriculture and the Environment. However, the BoP has now been updated and I am pleased to re-submit the BoP for approval.

Previous comments from DPIE have been addressed and contained in Appendix B of the BoP.

The BoP includes 28 offset sites providing 4881 ha of available offsets. Of this, 3520.76 ha has been used to offset the State vegetation offsets at 4:1 and the 19 Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) impacted by the project. Sixteen of the 38 vegetation communities impacted have been directly offset. The trades used to meet the shortfalls in 20 vegetation communities are outlined in Table 5.2. There is a remaining shortfall of 1.36 ha across the saltmarsh and mangrove communities in the Clarence River. Transport for NSW are currently working with DPI Fisheries on how to address these shortfalls. Direct offsets have been provided for all of the MNES impacted and all meet the requirements of the EPBC Act Offset Policy.

All but one of the properties have been secured and negotiations are still underway with the vendors to secure this property. Thirteen of the properties have already been protected, by BioBanking Agreements (12) or a transfer to the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The remainder of the sites are in the process of being protected, either by a Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement (10) or transfer to NPWS (5). The details of the protection mechanism used for each site is detailed in the BoP.

In addition to meeting the specific offset requirements, the BoP also provides protection of a number of key landscape scale linkages, improving fauna connectivity across the North Coast region. Seven of the properties included in this package were affected by the North Coast bushfires during the 2019-20 summer. Information on this has been provided

in Section 5 of the BoP, but all of the sites are regenerating well and this will continue to be tracked through the on-going monitoring required in the management plan for each site.

Should you have any questions on this matter please contact Dr Kylie Wells, Senior Environment Officer (Biodiversity), on 0457 834 087 or Kylie.Wells@transport.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lindsay', is shown on a light blue background.

Lindsay Nash 19.10.2021

Project Director, Woolgoolga to Ballina