



**Planning &
Infrastructure**

**MAJOR PROJECT ASSESSMENT:
Port Macquarie Base Hospital Expansion
Wrights Road, Port Macquarie
(MP 11_0012)**



Director-General's
Environmental Assessment Report
Section 75I of the
Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

July 2012

ABBREVIATIONS

CIV	Capital Investment Value
Department	Department of Planning & Infrastructure
DGRs	Director-General's Requirements
Director-General	Director-General of the Department of Planning & Infrastructure
EA	Environmental Assessment
EP&A Act	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
EP&A Regulation	Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000
EPI	Environmental Planning Instrument
MD SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005
Minister	Minister for Planning & Infrastructure
PAC	Planning Assessment Commission
Part 3A	Part 3A of the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i>
PEA	Preliminary Environmental Assessment
PFM	Planning Focus Meeting
PPR	Preferred Project Report
Proponent	Health Infrastructure
RtS	Response to Submissions

Cover Photograph: Perspective view from the south-west

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NSW Government

Department of Planning & Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an assessment of a project application lodged by Health Infrastructure seeking approval for the construction of an addition to the existing Port Macquarie Base Hospital Building and operation of these facilities as part of the Port Macquarie Base Hospital pursuant to Part 3A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The proposal is located at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital Campus, Wrights Road, Port Macquarie.

The project application seeks approval for the construction and fit-out of a part two part four storey addition comprising seven new theatres, 69 new beds, 61 new treatment areas, two new procedure rooms, expansion of the emergency unit, a new Central Sterilising Services Department and a new Cardiac Catheter Suite. The proposal also includes demolition works, bulk earthworks, refurbishment of the existing hospital to provide 12 new beds, a new eight bed Emergency Medical Unit, an Urgent Care Centre, a new loading dock, a new emergency access/ambulance parking area, tree removal (89 trees), reconfiguration of the at-grade car park, landscape works and utility works.

The project has a capital investment value (CIV) of \$105.39 million and will generate 314 operational jobs and 1,200 construction jobs.

On 24 January 2011, the Director, Government Land and Social Projects, Major Projects Assessment, as delegate of the then Minister for Planning, formed an opinion that the project is a major project under clause 18 of Schedule 1 to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005 (MD SEPP), as it is a development for the purpose of providing professional health care services with a CIV of more than \$15 million. The proposal is a transitional Part 3A Major Project under the EP&A Act.

The site is zoned SP2 Infrastructure – Health Services Facility under Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Environmental Plan 2011 and the proposal is permissible with consent.

The proposal was exhibited from 8 March 2012 until 6 April 2012. The department received submissions from Port Macquarie-Hastings City Council, NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), Transport NSW and the Office of Environment and Heritage. One submission was also received from the public. The issues raised in the submissions were ecological impacts including loss of koala habitat, bushfire risk, provision of a secondary site access from Toorak Court, traffic impacts and the location of the bus shelter.

On 11 May 2012, the proponent provided a response to the issues raised in submissions and a Preferred Project Report (PPR). The response to submissions and PPR:

- clarifies the total number of car parking spaces to be provided on the site
- revised emergency access layout
- modifies the trees to be removed and includes a revised landscape plan to remove trees that were initially shown as being retained. This results in 89 trees in total to be removed.

The department has assessed the merits of the proposal and has found the key issues associated with the project include: built form; bushfire risk; ecology impacts; transport and access; environmental and residential amenity; and development contributions. The department is satisfied that the impacts of the proposed development have been addressed via the Environmental Assessment, Preferred Project Report and Statement of Commitments, and can be adequately managed through the recommended conditions.

The department considers the site to be suitable for the proposed development and that the application is in the public interest and is consistent with the objects of the EP&A Act (including ecologically sustainable development), the NSW 2021, and the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy. The project will significantly boost the facilities and capacity of Port Macquarie Base Hospital, providing important health infrastructure and jobs for the region. Consequently, the department recommends that the project application for the construction of the addition for the expansion of the operations of the health facility be approved, subject to conditions.

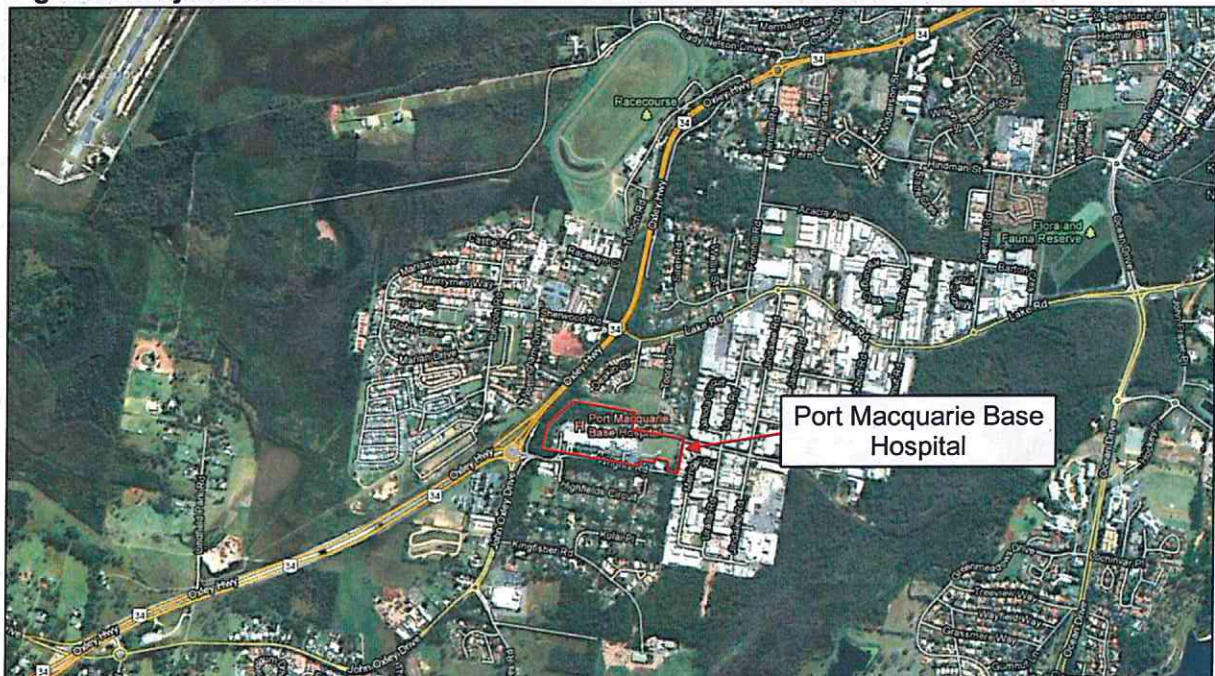
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1. BACKGROUND

Health Infrastructure (the proponent) proposes to construct an extension to the Port Macquarie Base Hospital to accommodate two new inpatient units, a Critical Care Centre, seven operating theatres, two day procedure rooms, a Cardiac Catheter suite, a peri-operative unit and an expanded emergency department at the new facilities and refurbished Port Macquarie Base Hospital, Wrights Road, Port Macquarie. The Port Macquarie Base Hospital campus is located to the north of Wrights Road and immediately to the east of the Oxley Highway Road corridor. The proposal is located in the western portion of the campus to the north-west of the existing main hospital building. The hospital location is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Project Location



1.1 Site Location and Description

The Port Macquarie Base Hospital campus (Lot 23 in DP1099567) is located three kilometres south-west of the Port Macquarie regional centre. The site is accessible from Wrights Road and the Oxley Highway, which connects the campus to the regional centre. The land is owned by the Health Administration Corporation.

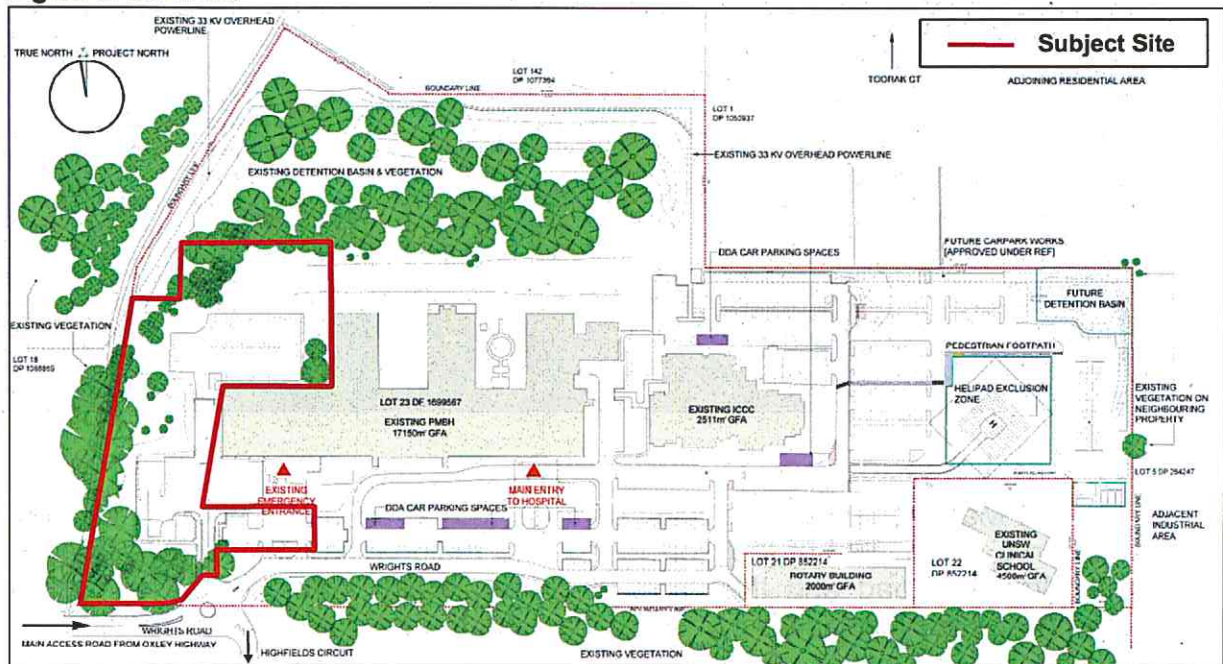
The campus comprises an area of over 9.2 hectares and contains a large scale hospital building, the cancer care centre building, various smaller buildings, a helipad and a large at-grade car park. Wrights Road is the primary access point into the campus and would provide direct access to the project site.

The proposal is located on the western part of the campus, immediately to the north-west of the existing building and bound by the western site boundary. Refer to Figures 2 and 3 for the existing campus layout. The site is currently primarily used as at-grade car parking and gas tank storage area (see Figure 3).

Figure 2: Aerial Site View



Figure 3: Site Plan



1.2 Surrounding Development

Development surrounding the campus consists of:

- low-scale residential development of one to two storeys to the north
- light industrial and industrial to the east
- low-scale residential development and medical and allied uses of one to two storeys to the south
- bushland and the Highway to the west and low-scale residential further to the west.

Immediately surrounding the proposed works is bushland and the main hospital building (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4: View of the southern portion of the site from the south - remnant bushland in the background (located on the site and the adjoining road corridor immediately to the west) and existing hospital building forming the eastern boundary of the proposed works



Figure 5: View of the northern portion of the site – existing hospital building in the foreground on the right from which the new addition will extend and replanted forest areas to be removed to accommodate extension on the left



2. PROPOSED PROJECT

2.1. Project Description

The project comprises the construction of a part two and part four storey addition to the main hospital building, which will support the provision of the following facilities and services:

- seven new operating theatres
- 34 new peri-operative and post-operative treatment areas
- 30 new acute care beds
- 24 critical care beds
- 15 paediatric beds
- two new day procedure rooms
- expansion of emergency unit from 14 to 27 bays
- a new Central Sterilising Services Department (CSSD)
- a new Cardiac Catheter Suite
- storage and support services.

The following associated works are also proposed:

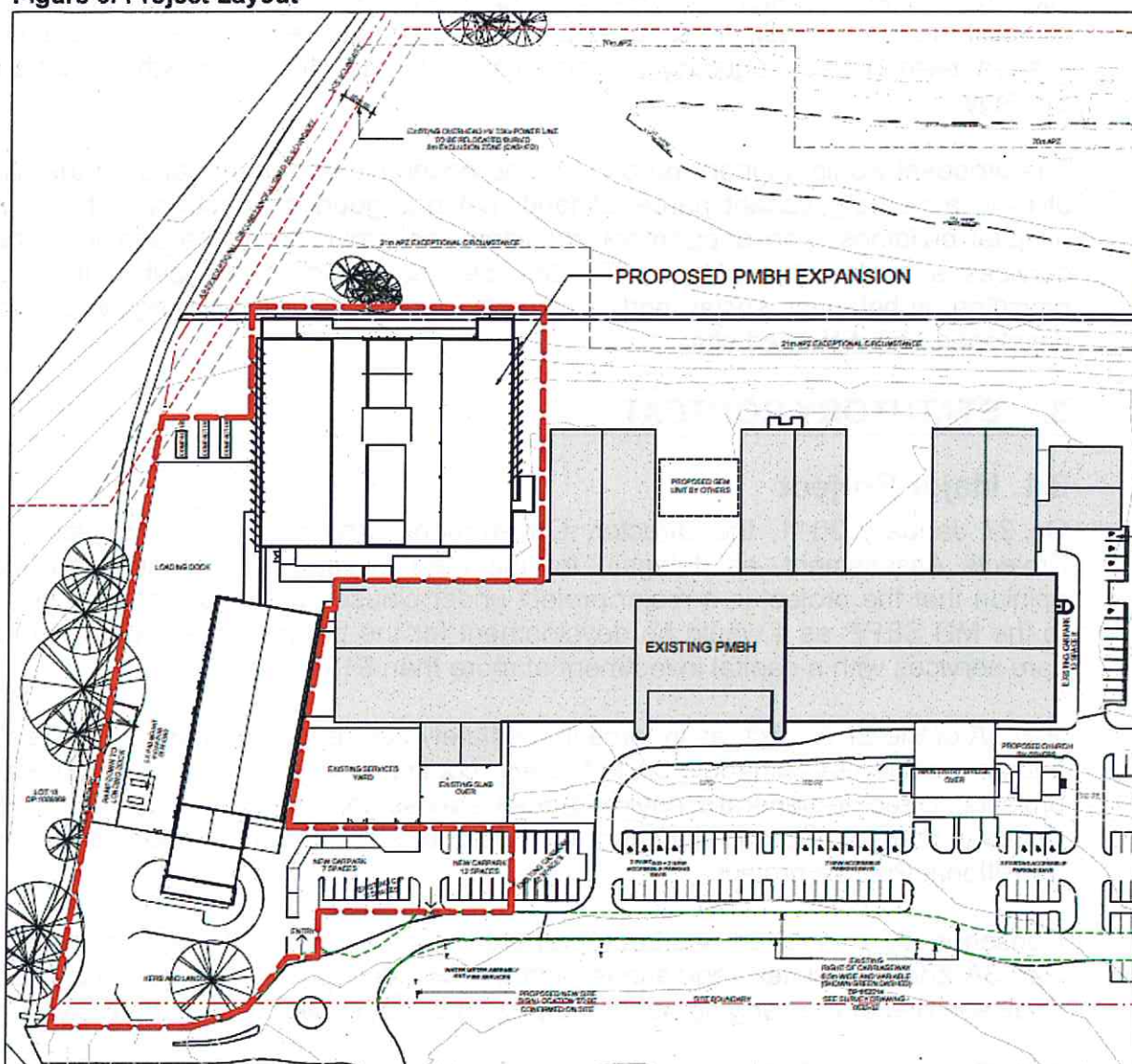
- demolition of 1,500 sqm of floorspace
- 12 new surgical beds (refurbishment of existing hospital)
- refurbishment of the existing emergency department to provide an eight bed Emergency Medical Unit
- refurbishment works to provide an Urgent Care Centre
- construction of a new loading dock and emergency access/ambulance parking area
- reconfiguration of the existing at-grade car park in the vicinity of the former emergency department entrance
- landscaping works
- bulk earthworks
- utility works including sewer augmentation works and two new substations
- the removal of 89 trees.

The key components of the project are listed in Table 1. The project layout is shown in Figure 6.

Table 1: Key Project Components

Aspect	Description
Height	18.75 metres
Site Area	9.2 hectares
GFA	12,500 sqm
Total beds	89 new beds (69 new beds in the new addition and 20 beds in the refurbished existing hospital building)
Total treatment areas	61 new treatment areas
Car parking	19 new car spaces
CIV	\$105.39 million
Jobs	314 operational and 1200 construction

Figure 6: Project Layout



2.2. Project Need and Justification

The department considers that the proposed facilities would support the delivery of public health services and responds to State strategic health delivery plans, which identify the need to provide additional medical and surgical services to cater for current and future demand. The proposal would support key priorities in the NSW 2021, the State's 10 year plan, to increase investment in infrastructure and making more beds available to provide access to world class healthcare. The purpose built facility will provide additional beds and enhance the critical care, surgical and emergency services at the hospital.

The delivery of the additional facilities and services is consistent with the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, which recognises the role that the health sector is expected to play in the economic development of the region and its ongoing role of providing additional employment opportunities. The expansion of the services at Port Macquarie Base Hospital is consistent with the vision of providing these land uses in urban areas. The further consolidation of health services at the hospital campus is consistent with the Port Macquarie Hastings Urban Growth Management Strategy, which identifies health services as one of the largest and growing sectors of the local

economy. The hospital is expected to continue to grow and support the establishment of a medical services cluster. The subject development is identified as a short term project requiring implementation in the Urban Growth Management Strategy.

The proposal would support the orderly and economic use of the land on the site by utilising a partially vacant parcel of land that has good connectivity with the main hospital buildings. The department considers the provision of the additional health services a sustainable outcome for the site that satisfies the public interest by providing substantial social and economic benefits whilst utilising a previously developed and disturbed site.

3. STATUTORY CONTEXT

3.1. Major Project

On 27 January 2011, the Director, Government Land and Social Projects, Major Projects Assessment, as delegate for the then Minister for Planning, formed an opinion that the project is a major project under clause 18 (Hospitals) of Schedule 1 to the MD SEPP as it would be development for the purpose of professional health care services with a capital investment of more than \$15 million.

Part 3A of the EP&A Act, as in force immediately before its repeal on 1 October 2011 and as modified by Schedule 6A to the Act, continues to apply to transitional Part 3A projects. Director-General's environmental assessment requirements (DGRs) were issued in respect of this project prior to 1 October 2011, and the project is therefore a transitional Part 3A project.

Consequently, this report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Part 3A and associated regulations, and the Minister (or his delegate) may approve or disapprove of the carrying out of the project under section 75J of the EP&A Act.

3.2. Delegated Authority

The Minister has delegated his functions to determine Part 3A applications to the department where:

- the council has not made an objection, and
- there are less than 25 public submissions objecting to the proposal, and
- a political disclosure statement has not been made in relation to the application.

One submission was received from the public and council has not made an objection to the proposal. There has also been no political donation disclosure made for this application or for any previous related applications, and no disclosures made by any persons who have lodged a submission to this application.

Accordingly the application is able to be determined by the Deputy Director-General, Development Assessment and Systems Performance under delegation.

3.3. Permissibility

The site is zoned SP2 Infrastructure – Health Services Facility under Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Environmental Plan 2011 (PMHLEP). Hospitals are permissible in the zone with development consent.

3.4. Environmental Planning Instruments

Under Sections 75I(2)(d) and 75I(2)(e) of the EP&A Act, the Director-General's report for a project is required to include a copy of, or reference to, the provisions of any State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) that substantially governs the carrying out of the project, and the provisions of any environmental planning instruments (EPI) that would (except for the application of Part 3A) substantially govern the carrying out of the project and that have been taken into consideration in the assessment of the project.

The department's consideration of relevant SEPPs and EPIs is provided in Appendix D and include:

- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Development) 2005;
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007;
- State Environmental Planning Policy No. 55 - Remediation of Land;
- State Environmental Planning Policy No 44 - Koala Habitat Protection; and
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Environmental Plan 2011 (PMHLEP).

3.5. Objects of the EP&A Act

Decisions made under the EP&A Act must have regard to the objects of the Act, as set out in Section 5 of the Act. The relevant objects are:

- (a) *to encourage:*
 - (i) *the proper management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources, including agricultural land, natural areas, forests, minerals, water, cities, towns and villages for the purpose of promoting the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environment,*
 - (ii) *the promotion and co-ordination of the orderly and economic use and development of land,*
 - (iii) *the protection, provision and co-ordination of communication and utility services,*
 - (iv) *the provision of land for public purposes,*
 - (v) *the provision and co-ordination of community services and facilities, and*
 - (vi) *the protection of the environment, including the protection and conservation of native animals and plants, including threatened species, populations and ecological communities, and their habitats, and*
 - (vii) *ecologically sustainable development, and*
 - (viii) *the provision and maintenance of affordable housing, and*
- (b) *to promote the sharing of the responsibility for environmental planning between the different levels of government in the State, and*
- (c) *to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment.*

The department has considered the objects of the EP&A Act and considers that the application is consistent with the relevant objects. The assessment of the application in relation to these relevant objects is provided in Section 3.6 and Section 5 of this report.

3.6. Ecologically Sustainable Development

The EP&A Act adopts the definition of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) found in the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*. Section 6(2) of that Act states that ESD requires the effective integration of economic and

environmental considerations in decision-making processes and that ESD can be achieved through the implementation of:

- (a) *the precautionary principle,*
- (b) *inter-generational equity,*
- (c) *conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity,*
- (d) *improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.*

The proposal is located within an urban footprint on a previously developed and disturbed site. The proposal results in the loss of koala habitat, however, the proponent has committed to compensatory planting or developing a bio-banking assessment to ensure that an appropriate offset is planted or acquired. The site will not be impacted by rising sea level resulting from climate change. The proponent has incorporated ecologically sustainable design initiatives in this proposal and aims to achieve the energy efficient standards in the Building Code of Australia, which sets sustainability requirements for NSW government buildings.

The following sustainable design initiatives have been incorporated in the design and construction process:

- passive cooling measures including shading
- solar pre-heated and gas fired hot water system
- 3 and 4 star WELS rated water fixtures
- rainwater collection and storage as a non-potable water re-use.

The department also recommends that the project should target the measures required for a four star Green Star rating. On the basis of this assessment, the department is satisfied that the proposal encourages ESD, in accordance with the objects of the EP&A Act.

3.7. Statement of Compliance

In accordance with section 75I of the EP&A Act, the department is satisfied that the Director-General's environmental assessment requirements have been complied with.

4. CONSULTATION AND SUBMISSIONS

4.1. Exhibition

Under section 75H(3) of the EP&A Act, the Director-General is required to make the environmental assessment (EA) of an application publicly available for at least 30 days. After accepting the EA, the department publicly exhibited it from 8 March 2012 until 6 April 2012 (30 days) on the department's website, and at the department's Information Centre and at Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's offices. The department also advertised the public exhibition in the Port Macquarie Express on 7 March 2012. Adjoining landholders and relevant State and local government authorities were also notified in writing.

The department received six submissions during the exhibition of the EA – five submissions from public authorities and one submission from the general public.

A summary of the issues raised in submissions is provided in the following sections.

4.2. Public Authority Submissions

A total of five submissions were received from public authorities.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (council) does not object to the project and provided the following comments:

- confirmation of on-site car parking numbers is required
- the design of the new car parking area may result in manoeuvring issues
- pedestrian and bicycle circulation improvements and connections should be provided in the project application instead of as a part of a future transport management strategy
- an emergency/relief access road from Toorak Court for emergency and staff vehicles should be considered further
- further details are required on impacts of stormwater and sewer infrastructure and erosion and sediment control measures on tree retention
- the offset planting for loss of koala habitat needs to be identified and secured prior to determination and a plan of management prepared for the remaining koala habitat on the site
- further consideration of construction and operation noise impacts on the internal amenity of existing hospital wards is required
- notes that a full assessment of the mechanical plant has not been undertaken
- noise assessment uses superseded guidelines.

Council also provided recommend conditions of approval for the project, which are generally consistent with the department's standard conditions, including standard stormwater and drainage conditions. Council also recommended conditions covering the following site specific matters if the development is approved in its current form:

- payment of council's section 94A contributions levy
- water supply and sewer augmentation works
- traffic monitoring to confirm queuing from Oxley Highway will have acceptable traffic impacts on the Highfield Circuit roundabout and providing council with an undertaking to provide additional vehicle storage on Wrights Road if necessary
- providing traffic controls to ensure safe speeds for traffic exiting the hospital main access onto Highfields Circuit
- upgrade of access between Highfield Circuit and main hospital entry to a seven metre carriageway and provision of an off road shared walkway/cycleway.

NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) does not object to the project, however, indicated initially that there was insufficient information to undertake an assessment and identified the following issues:

- the location of the proposed buildings being closer to the bushfire threat than existing hospital buildings
- asset protection zones are required to comply with 'Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006' (PFB)
- access concerns given only a single access and egress point has been provided.

RFS provided a further submission which indicated that RFS does not object to the project and provided the following recommended conditions:

- that an asset protection zone be provided to the western boundary and 22 metres to the northern elevation be provided at the commencement of building works and in perpetuity and should be managed as an inner protection area

- the provision of water, electricity and gas and the arrangements for emergency evacuation should comply with 'Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006'
- new construction should comply with Australian Standards and be built to Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) 40 standard.

Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) supports the findings of the ecological assessment and provided the following comments:

- acknowledges that there are no threatened flora or endangered ecological communities on the site and that the proposal seeks to remove less than one hectare of disturbed native Blackbutt open forest and a small area of planted rainforest
- acknowledges that the threatened fauna recorded on site forage widely or are widespread migrants, except the koala for which numerous records exist
- supports the ecological mitigation measures that the proponent has committed to and these should be included in any conditions
- supports the use of a BioBanking agreement to offset the loss of koala habitat in the vicinity of the subject site
- recommended Aboriginal cultural heritage conditions to be included in any approval
- downstream environments should be protected from stormwater impacts during construction.

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) does not object to the project and provided the following comments:

- supports the additional car parking and provision of options to encourage alternative transport modes
- construction traffic should be restricted to outside peak periods unless a secondary access can be provided to limit impacts to Oxley Highway and Wrights Road intersection
- further consideration of cumulative traffic impacts of the current and future development is required and the requirement for a secondary access to the site
- further consideration of traffic impacts resulting from the new Oxley Highway and Wrights Road roundabout and traffic from urban development in Thrumster and Sancroix is required
- recommends a second access to Lake Road via Toorak Circuit be secured as any future development may require upgrades to the Oxley Highway and Wrights Road roundabout.

Transport NSW is generally supportive of the project and provided the following comments:

- relocation of the bus stop results in potential safety impacts and accessibility impacts
- a canopy should be provided to improve pedestrian amenity between the main hospital entry and relocated bus stop
- the delivery of the car parking should be staged.

4.3. Public Submissions

One submission was received from the public, which did not object but raised concerns regarding the loss of vegetation, impacts on threatened species and impact on the koala population.

The department has considered the issues raised in submissions in its assessment of the project.

4.4. Preferred Project Report and Proponent's Response to Submissions

On 11 May 2012, the proponent provided a response to the issues raised in submissions and a Preferred Project Report (PPR) (see Appendix C). The response to submissions and PPR:

- clarifies the total number of car parking spaces to be provided on the site
- revised emergency access layout
- modifies the trees to be removed and includes a revised landscape plan to remove trees that were initially shown as being retained. This results in 89 trees in total to be removed.

5. ASSESSMENT

The department considers the key environmental issues for the project to be:

- built form
- bushfire risk
- ecology impacts
- transport and access
- environmental and residential amenity.

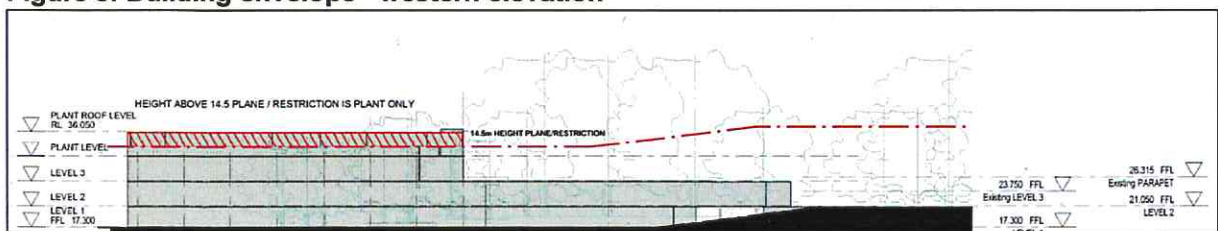
5.1. Built form

The proposal comprises a part two part four storey addition to the existing hospital building with 12,500 sqm of GFA, creating a fourth pod to the north of the existing building alongside the three other pods that extend from the rear of the main building (see Figure 7 – new works highlighted in red). The four storey component of the addition will be directly connected and integrated with the existing building whilst the two storey component wraps around to the west of the existing building.

Figure 7: Perspective of Main Hospital Building (proposed addition shaded red)

The PMHLEP prescribes a height limit of 14.5 metres for the campus and provides no floor space ratio controls. The proposal at a maximum height of 18.75 metres would exceed the height limit by 4.75 metres, which is generally comprised of the plant level (see Figure 8). The proponent has argued that the additional height:

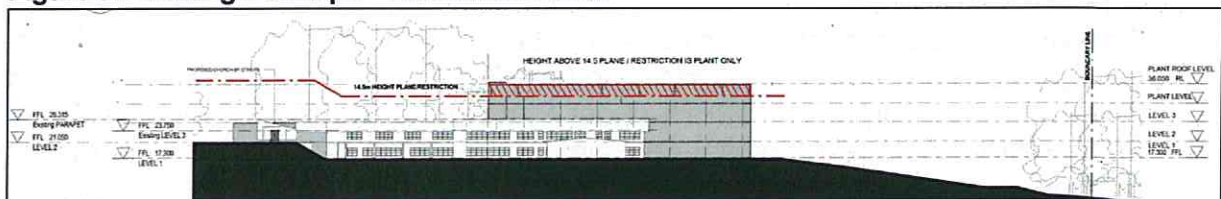
- would not result in any adverse environmental or amenity impacts given its position on the site, which is well screened by existing vegetation
- supports a transition in height across the site from west to east
- is necessary to provide the required expansion for the hospital, which is in the public interest
- is required given the increased floor to ceiling heights required by hospital facilities to accommodate services
- would also have acceptable visual impacts given that it is generally well screened from residential areas by existing vegetation, with only partial visibility through the vegetation from residential and industrial areas to the north and north-east.

Figure 8: Building envelope - western elevation

The proposed building would be higher than the existing hospital buildings (see Figure 9) and exceeds the height limits prescribed in PMHLEP, however, the department considers the height of the proposal acceptable as:

- it would be appropriately screened and setback from adjoining residential areas, with the closest residential property located greater than 100 metres from the addition
- the additional height ensures greater retention of the vegetation on site whilst providing adequate floor plates and floorspace for the delivery of essential health services
- the consolidation and expansion of health facilities is consistent with the strategic planning for the area and the objectives of the zone to support the provision of health infrastructure and prevent incompatible uses, as well as state policy to provide additional beds
- it would have minimal amenity or visual impacts as the addition is bounded by the road corridor, Wrights Road, the existing hospital building and replanted vegetation, which provides adequate visual and acoustic buffers as well limiting any overshadowing impacts to vegetated areas, roads, car parking areas and the existing building
- the additional height would not set a precedent given the nature of the use and the qualities of the site and therefore would not raise any matter of significance for State or regional environmental planning
- the delivery of additional health facilities that connect with the existing facilities would promote resource efficiency and would therefore be in the public interest and would result in a better outcome than maintaining the development, which would require the additional facilities to be developed across the campus
- the additional height is appropriate in the context of the site, which is characterised by large scale institutional buildings.

Figure 9: Building envelope – eastern elevation



The proposed building provides a modern contemporary design and incorporates design elements similar to that of the existing hospital buildings such as protruding staircases to ensure the new addition is compatible with the existing hospital building (see Figure 10). The bulk and scale of the proposal is considered appropriate within the context of the site as it is consistent with the large scale existing campus buildings footprints. The separation from the other pods and the articulation and variations between the façades provide interest and minimise the bulk of the addition.

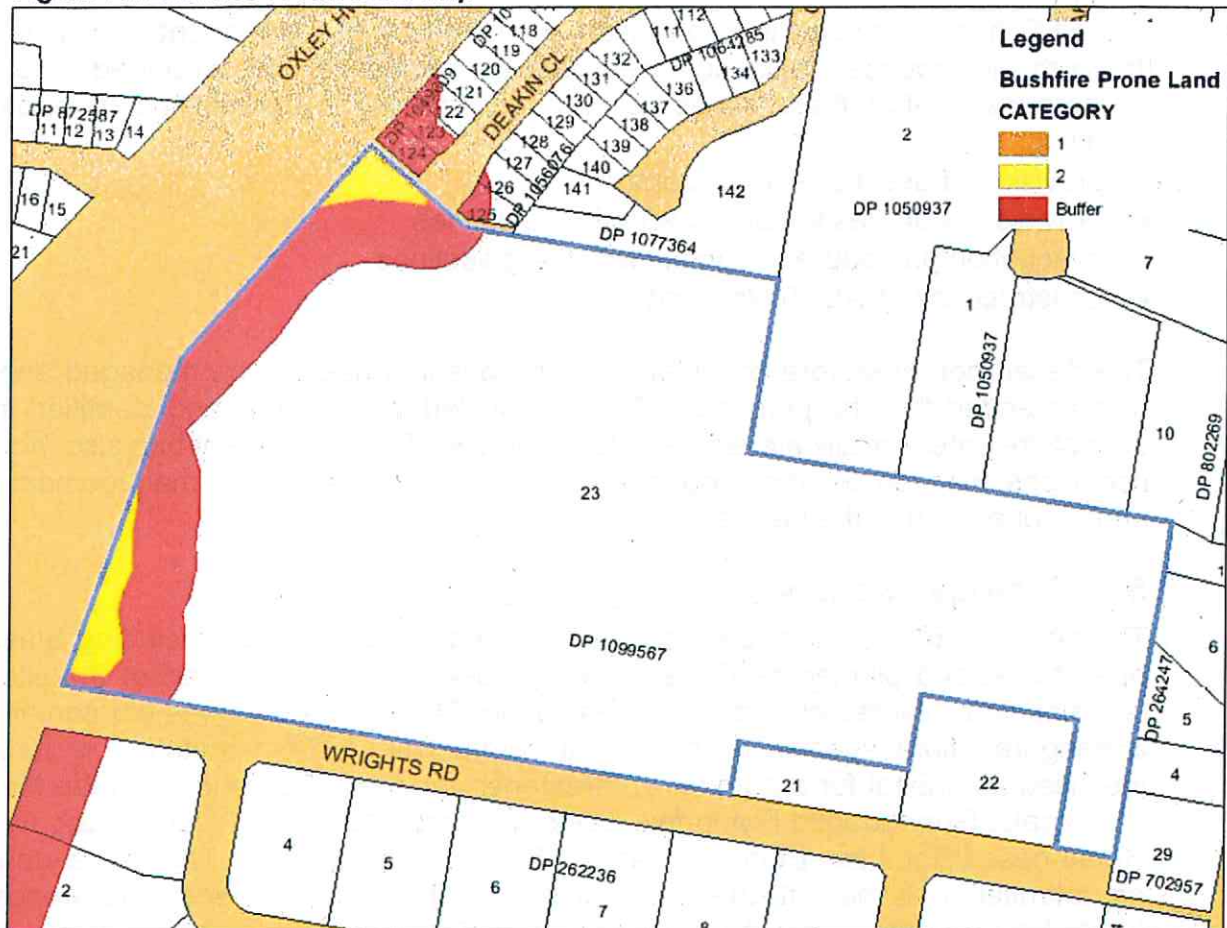
Figure 10: Illustrative perspective of north-eastern elevation of the proposal

The proposal is setback from the site boundary to the west by a minimum of 16 metres, however, the new loading zone would extend to the western boundary. The department considers this acceptable as the land adjoins the Oxley Highway road corridor and is well screened by the existing vegetation. The proposal is also setback a minimum 70 metres from the northern boundary and within this setback substantial vegetation ensures appropriate screening to residential areas to the north.

The department considers the height of the building and scale of the development acceptable in the context of the site and its surroundings.

5.2. Bushfire risk

The western portion of the site is identified as bushfire prone land comprising Category 2 bushland and a buffer zone (see Figure 11). The development is 'Special Fire Protection Purposes' (SFPP) under Planning for Bushfire Protection Guidelines 2006 (PBPG) as it is a hospital development. SFPP developments generally have a greater reliance on providing a defensible space and providing adequate Asset Protection Zones to mitigate bushfire risk than relying on construction standards. PBPG also classifies the proposed works as infill development and acknowledges that the prescribed bushfire mitigation measures in PBPG may not be achievable for such development. In these instances, the objectives are to provide for the special characteristics and needs of the occupants, primarily provision of safe emergency evacuation procedures. The PBPG stipulates that for infill development the extensions should provide improved construction standards or be no closer to the hazard than the existing building footprint.

Figure 11: Bushfire Prone Land Map

The vegetation within the subject site and located adjacent to the north of the addition is identified as open forest and the vegetation adjacent to the west is identified as remnant bushland. As the location of the proposed works is in close proximity to this bushfire threat, APZs would be required to manage the risk. RFS has indicated that a minimum APZ of 50 metres would be required to the west to meet the requirements of PBPG if the development was a new building, based on the vegetation types and relevant slopes contained in the bushfire prone land.

The proponent has proposed reduced APZs (a 22 metre APZ to the north and a varying APZ to the west of between 16.9 metres and 28.9 metres) as they consider the development meets the exceptional circumstances in the PBPG, which allow for reduced APZs or location of APZs on adjoining lands. Therefore, the proposed APZs do not meet the minimum required under PBPG. The bushfire assessment acknowledges that the APZs proposed do not meet those required, however, considers that the development meets the objectives that can be applied when considering infill development. The proponent seeks to rely on these provisions and considers the infill development would contribute to the management of the bushfire hazard across the site by providing improved construction standards, Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) 40 instead of the minimum required BAL 29. In addition to this measure, the proponent has indicated that the proposal would provide new bushfire management measures, including an evacuation plan, fire management plan and mitigation measures such as upgrades to the existing hospital building where none currently exist. This would result in an overall improved outcome for the site as a more controlled and safer environment would be provided.

The RFS has reviewed the information submitted by the proponent and considers that with the proposed mitigation measures the project can be supported. The RFS has requested that these measures be reflected in any conditions of approval, including:

- provision of asset protection zones
- provision of utilities to comply with the guidelines
- evacuation procedure to comply with the guidelines
- construction to BAL 40 standard

The department therefore considers that the bushfire risk can be managed and has recommended that the proposed APZ be provided in perpetuity and identified in the annual fire safety certificate and registered on title. The department has also included conditions that require the proponent to prepare an evacuation management plan prior to operation of the new facilities.

5.3. Ecology impacts

The site includes remnant and replanted vegetation on the site, including Blackbutt open forest and planted rainforest. The proposal is located on part of the site that contains both planted and remnant vegetation. The vegetation does not contain any endangered flora species or ecological communities. The vegetation is however identified as habitat for a number of threatened fauna species, including the Masked Owl, koala, Grey-headed Flying-fox, Eastern Freetail-bat, Hoary Wattled Bat, Greater Broad-nosed Bat, Little Bentwing-bat and Eastern Bentwing-bat. The site is identified as potential koala habitat due to the presence of koala feed trees. The proposal is located on predominantly cleared lands, however, would require the removal of 0.1 hectares of vegetation (i.e. 89 trees) to facilitate the proposed building, loading zone and associated Asset Protection Zone (APZ).

The proponent seeks to offset the loss by replanting trees at a minimum ratio of 2:1 in a suitable off-site location. Council requested a site be identified for the compensatory planting. Further investigations by the proponent have revealed that a suitable location cannot be found within the vicinity of the site and that a BioBanking assessment would therefore be required to determine what offset is required or the credits that would need to be acquired to mitigate the loss. The proponent has committed to compensatory planting and undertaking a BioBanking assessment if a suitable location for compensatory planting cannot be identified. OEH acknowledged that the most important mature koala habitat within the road reserve and to the south east will not be impacted and considered the proponent's revised commitments for compensatory planting sufficient to offset any residual impact. OEH also indicated it would support local or on site replanting of trees at a greater ratio than that currently proposed and the retention of as many existing habitat trees where possible. The proponent has subsequently indicated that the BioBanking assessment has identified that 57 credits will need to be acquired if compensatory planting cannot be undertaken.

The department considers that the removal of the vegetation is acceptable as it does not comprise threatened flora species or an endangered ecological community. Also, whilst the removal of the trees would impact the foraging habitat of threatened fauna, in particular the koala, it is not expected to result in an increased risk of extinction given the surrounding habitat and proposed mitigation measures including:

- minimise vegetation clearance and protect native vegetation adjacent to the works
- pre-clearance inspections by an ecologist for fauna prior to clearing and rescue and re-location to a safe location if fauna is found
- implement erosion and sediment controls
- control weeds
- compensatory planting of koala feed trees at a minimum ratio of 2:1 and preparation of a BioBanking Assessment report.

The department considers the proponent's commitment to offset the loss appropriate given the minimal tree loss. However, the department considers that appropriate offset measures should be addressed during the initial construction stages given that the removal of the trees will be undertaken at this stage. Therefore, the department has included in the recommended conditions a requirement that within three months of the approval, a location for the compensatory planting or vegetation conservation will need to be identified, to the satisfaction of OEH, and an agreement to manage the land be entered into with the land owner. Alternatively, if an appropriate site cannot be found, a Biobanking Statement will need to be obtained or a Biobanking Agreement entered into identifying the relevant Biodiversity credits to be acquired, in accordance with the credits calculated in an OEH endorsed Biobanking assessment. The department has also included a recommended condition that requires that the compensatory planting be finalised prior to occupation and a vegetation conservation management plan for this land be registered on title or that the requirements of the Biobanking Statement or Agreement fulfilled and credits retired prior to occupation of the new facilities.

Council also requested that a koala management plan be prepared for the remainder of the site for the longer term management of koala habitat on the campus. The department considers that as the most important mature koala habitat is located within the road reserve, not within the hospital campus, and to the south east of the campus, which is not impacted by this development, it would not be appropriate for the proponent to prepare a koala management plan for this proposal.

5.4. Transport and access

5.4.1. Traffic impacts

The proponent's traffic analysis concludes that the additional traffic generated would result in an additional 260 vehicles per hour during the peak periods based on the provision of an additional 130 car parking spaces to meet the demand generated by the additional facilities.

The traffic assessment concluded that the level of service (LOS) at the Wrights Road/Oxley Highway intersection and the intersection at the Wrights Road/Hospital entry would remain at good levels of service (Level of Service A) during morning and afternoon peak periods. Minimal increases in average delays and queuing would occur. However, the assessment was based on an analysis of the Oxley

Highway/Wrights Road intersection in its former layout. RMS considered that the assessment should be based on the upgraded intersection layout.

The proponent has provided further traffic modelling that confirms that the altered configuration would slightly alter the level of service from Level of Service A to B at the Oxley South approach to the intersection in the AM peak period and the Wrights Road and the Oxley South approaches to the intersection during the PM peak period. The intersection is still considered to operate at a good performance level. The proposal would have similar impacts as previously calculated and would not have an adverse impact on the operation of the intersection as the only change in the Level of Service would be at the Wrights Road approach from Level of Service A to B during the AM peak period. All approaches would maintain a good performance level at the intersection (Level of Service A and B), whilst minimal increases in average delays and queuing would occur.

Accordingly, the development can be accommodated on the local road network and State road network. As the intersection would continue to operate efficiently, the department does not consider that council's request for on-going traffic monitoring necessary. Also, whilst council and the RMS wanted further consideration given to providing a secondary access to the site, to accommodate potential further development on the site, the department considers that the proponent would need to address this at any future application for further development of the site. The proponent has noted the on-going endeavours of council to secure a secondary access. Therefore, as the proposal would not adversely impact on the surrounding road network or the operation of intersections, the department considers the traffic impacts acceptable.

5.4.2. Car parking

The campus currently provides 528 car parking spaces. The proponent's traffic assessment calculated the parking requirements for the existing hospital to be 142 car parking spaces based on the rates in the former Port Macquarie Council DCP 18 Offstreet Parking Code of one space per five beds and one space per four staff. Council's current DCP and RMS's Guide to Traffic Generating Development do not provide a rate of car parking for public hospitals. The proponent considers the current car parking demand at the hospital, based on private vehicular travel mode share, comparable hospitals and the number of existing staff numbers and hospital beds/services would be approximately 575 car spaces. Therefore, the hospital has a shortfall of 47 car spaces based on survey data from similar development even though it would have complied with the former DCP.

A recent approval under Part 5 of the EP&A Act for the campus allows for an additional 276 car parking spaces to be constructed on the site on the eastern portion of the campus (currently under construction). These additional parking spaces are being delivered to address the existing shortfall, meet demand generated by this project and cater for special and unexpected circumstances as well as minimising vehicular circulation. This would result in a total 793 car parking spaces as 11 would be lost due to the reconfiguration of some of the existing spaces to spaces for persons with a disability.

The proponent has indicated that the proposal would generate a demand for approximately 125-130 car parking spaces, based on the current parking demand

and assumptions in Table 2, and therefore a total of 705 spaces would be required for the campus. The proposal results in a net loss of 45 car spaces (64 car spaces lost due to new addition and 19 new car spaces in the reconfigured car parking area to the south of the former emergency access). This results in a total number of 748 car spaces on the hospital campus. Therefore, the car parking on the site would exceed the projected total demand generated by the hospital upon completion of the addition.

Table 2: Car parking demand calculation

Current	Current Demand	Future Demand	Total Demand
Staff	370	48 (80% car usage for 60 staff at peak attendance)	420*
Visitors/Patients	205	29 (85% car usage for 100 patients/visitors spread over 6 hours with 1.5-2hr visits)	235*
Educational and Professional Visitors	-	48 (80% car usage for 100 students/researchers at 60% attendance)	50*
	575	125-130*	705*

* The proponent has rounded up these figures

The department considers adequate car parking will be provided on site to cater for the proposal. Whilst RMS and council queried the number of spaces, the proponent has clarified that a total 748 car parking spaces will be provided on the campus. As the bulk of the car parking being delivered on the campus was approved under a separate application, Transport NSW's request to stage the car parking and RMS's concerns regarding the layout cannot be addressed through this application. Furthermore, the proponent has provided further documentation to demonstrate that the layout meets the relevant Australian Standards and contends that the additional car parking is required given the existing shortage and will be supported by a transport management plan, which will promote public transport use.

5.4.3. Public transport

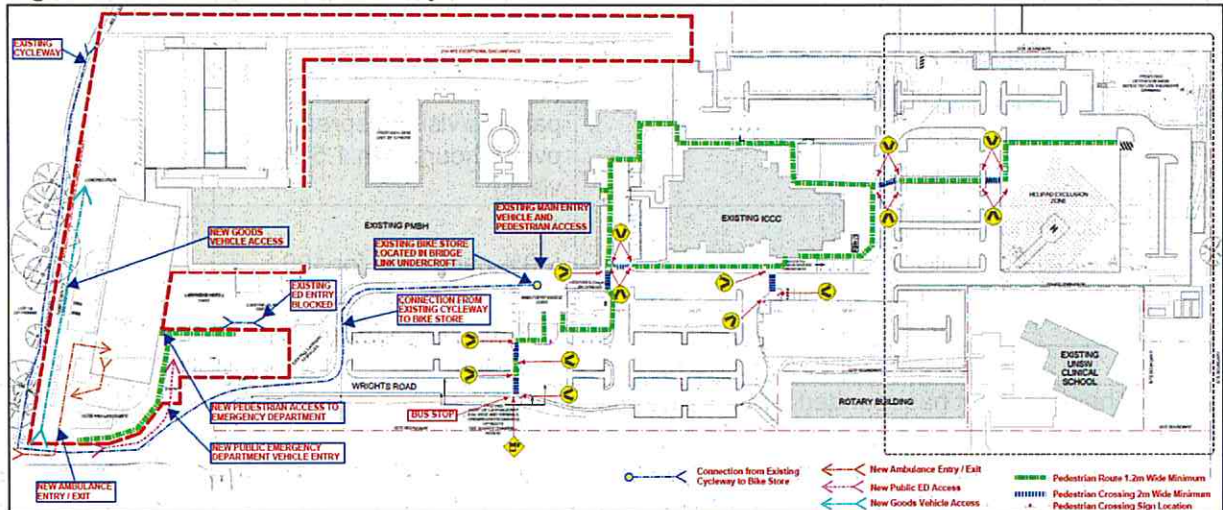
The site is supported by a bus service that connects the site to the Port Macquarie Town Centre. As the service runs on an hourly basis during AM and PM peak periods and every two hours during non-peak periods on weekdays and infrequently on the weekends, the department considers that this service does not provide frequent services and does not provide a high level of public transport support to the site. Accordingly, the department considers that whilst promotion of the use of the bus services is supported, an adequate supply of car parking should be provided on site.

The proponent has committed to developing a transport management plan for the site. The department supports this initiative as it would promote sustainable alternate transport modes such as cycling and car pooling options.

5.4.4. Vehicular and pedestrian access

Pedestrian and vehicular access to the site is via Wrights Road and the main pedestrian entrance is located centrally on the site and towards the north of the main building (see Figure 12). The main hospital entrance will continue to operate as such and the proposal would relocate the emergency and ambulance access to the west of the existing emergency access (see Figure 12). Therefore, given the western location of the proposed works, the proposal would have minimal impacts to existing pedestrian access paths, which would traverse areas to the south of the existing hospital building and to the east where the additional car parking area is being constructed (see pedestrian circulation plan – Figure 12).

Figure 12: Pedestrian circulation plan



Pedestrian access to the fourth pod addition would be from the existing main hospital entrance and the relocated emergency access. The two storey component is separated from the main building and will be accessible from the fourth pod on ground level and the main hospital building via linkages on the second floor. The site will be supported by an additional vehicle access from Wrights Road to support the new emergency access. This new vehicle access point would also be the new access point for the new loading dock. Whilst council and RMS considered a second vehicle access via Toorak Court was necessary, the traffic impacts do not warrant providing a formal additional access route at this stage.

The proposal would relocate the bus stop from north of Wrights Road to the south, which would alter pedestrian access to the main hospital entrance. Transport NSW raised accessibility for public transport users and their pedestrian amenity as an issue. Council identified the pedestrian access as an issue. The proponent has demonstrated that adequate pedestrian paths are provided from the new car parking areas to the main entrance and from the revised bus stop location. Whilst the relocated bus stop is located marginally further from the main entrance, an accessible path would still be provided.

5.5. Environmental and residential amenity

5.5.1 Operational noise impacts

The proponent has prepared an Acoustic Report that concludes that during operation, the proposal would be capable of complying with established criteria for noise sensitive receivers in the vicinity of the site (residential development to the north and south and surrounding hospital buildings). This would require the selection of appropriate plant items during the detailed design stage and the limitation of truck movements during night time periods to minimise noise impacts from the loading dock area. The indicative measures that would be required to ensure plant meets the relevant criteria are variable speed drivers for the cooling towers and screening to residential areas.

The department accepts that further detailed design of the plant is required prior to establishing the final mitigation measures required to manage noise levels. Accordingly, the department recommends that a condition be imposed that requires the proponent submit to the department a further acoustic assessment by a qualified acoustic engineer that confirms the detailed design of the mechanical plant is capable of mitigating noise impacts prior to certification of building works to ensure that they meet the recommended criteria. The department has included in the recommended conditions the requirement for the proponent to demonstrate that the proposal is capable of meeting the project specific maximum noise levels for residential areas as follows:

- 49dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the daytime, 46dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the evening and 44dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the night time for residential receivers to the north of the site at Deakin Close
- 44dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the daytime, 39dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the evening and 36dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the night time for residential receivers to the north-east of the site at Toorak Court.

The proponent did not identify a relevant maximum for hospital receivers, however, the department considers the maximum noise levels identified in the Industrial Noise Policy would be appropriate. The department has included in the recommended conditions the requirement for the proponent to demonstrate that the proposal is capable of restricting noise impacts to a maximum 35dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the noisiest one hour period for hospital wards (internal) and 50dB L_{Aeq} (15min) during the noisiest one hour period for hospital wards (external).

The Acoustic Report also considered potential noise impacts from traffic generated by the proposal. The assessment concluded that no adverse noise impacts would result as noise impacts are expected to be below the maximum 2dB above existing conditions recommended in OEH's NSW Road Noise Policy.

5.5.2 Construction Noise and Vibration Impacts

The proponent has identified the relevant noise management levels for the noise sensitive receivers (residential development, hospital buildings) during construction, in accordance with OEH's Interim Construction Noise Guidelines. The proponent has committed to preparing a noise and vibration management plan.

The department has recommended conditions to ensure that adequate measures are incorporated into the noise and vibration management plan to ensure the identified

construction noise levels in the acoustic assessment are adhered to, which should be prepared by a suitably qualified acoustic engineer.

5.5.3 Overshadowing impacts

The proposal would have minimal overshadowing impacts as the overshadowing from the new building primarily falls on the adjoining hospital building, car parking areas and the road corridor.

5.6. Development contributions

Council's Section 94A contributions plan applies to all future development and requires a levy of one per cent of the cost of the development for local infrastructure works. The proponent considers that as the proposal provides a community benefit, the proposal should be exempt from the contributions. The levy for the development would be approximately \$1.05 million.

Council's current s94A plan incorporates streetscape, parking, road and intersection upgrade works in the Port Macquarie, Wauchope/Western Area and Camden Haven areas.

Whilst Council originally requested that the condition be imposed, Council has since indicated that they support the proponent's justification for the exemption and do not consider a section 94A contribution warranted.

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure is able to vary the development contributions required after due consideration of the relevant contributions plan pursuant to section 94B of the EP&A Act. The department has considered the contributions plan and considers that given the community benefit, the proponent's request to waive the requirement for payment of development contributions is supported.

Furthermore, the department has considered the principles of circular D6 which outlines when contributions should be applied to Crown development under Part 4 and considers the same principles are applicable for major projects and therefore only stormwater drainage works and local road works should be funded through payment of contributions or works in kind. As the proponent has committed to providing the necessary stormwater works, no development contribution would be required in this respect. In regards to contributions for local street works, council's contributions plan makes no provisions for works on the streets in the vicinity of the development and therefore there would be no relevant contributions.

6. CONCLUSION

The department has reviewed the environmental assessment and considered advice from public authorities in accordance with section 75I(2) of the EP&A Act. All the relevant environmental issues associated with the proposal have been extensively assessed.

The construction and operation of the additional health facilities as part of Port Macquarie Base Hospital would provide a significant contribution to the ongoing development and consolidation of the health facilities on the site. The development is consistent with NSW 2021 which seeks to deliver improved mental health

outcomes and improve access to quality healthcare and the strategic objectives for the area, as outlined in the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy.

The proponent has adequately addressed the Director General's Environmental Assessment Requirements and satisfactorily mitigated the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposal. The recommended conditions, implementation of the measures detailed in the proponent's EA and appendices, PPR and appendices, and Statement of Commitments seek to maintain the amenity of the local area, and adequately mitigate the environmental impacts of the proposal.

The department considers the site to be suitable for the proposed development and that the application is in the public interest. Consequently, the department recommends that project application be approved, subject to conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Deputy Director-General, Development Assessment and Systems Performance, as delegate of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

- a) **Consider** the findings and recommendations of this report;
- b) **Approve** the Major Project Application (MP 11_0012), subject to conditions, under section 75J(1) of the EP&A Act, having considered all relevant matters in accordance with (a) above; and
- c) **Sign** the attached Instrument of Approval (Appendix E).


20/7/12
Director
Metropolitan and Regional Projects North


23.7.12
Executive Director
Major Projects Assessment


26/7/12
Deputy Director-General
Development Assessment & Systems Performance

APPENDIX A ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Provided on disk or see the department's website at
http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=4510