

Our Ref: ID 2095

5 September 2023

Oliver Klein  
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cc: craig.ronan@one.ses.nsw.gov.au

Dear Oliver,

**Notification under section 2.13 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021 in relation to the proposed Wentworth Hospital Redevelopment**

Thank you for the notification under section 2.13 of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021* in relation to the proposed redevelopment of Wentworth Hospital, Wentworth. It is understood that NSW Health Infrastructure is proposing to carry out work including:

- The staged redevelopment of the hospital site to provide for the comprehensive replacement of existing health services with a new single-storey building, including a 19-bed inpatient unit, associated outpatient and community health services, and urgent care centre,
- New staff accommodation,
- Demolition of the existing main hospital building, site remediation works, and landscaping.

The NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) is the agency responsible for dealing with floods, storms and tsunami in NSW. This role includes, planning for, responding to and coordinating the initial recovery from floods. As such, the NSW SES has an interest in the public safety aspects of the development of flood prone land, particularly the potential for changes to land use to either exacerbate existing flood risk or create new flood risk for communities in NSW.

In summary, the NSW SES notes the flood information available for this area indicate that the Wentworth Hospital Site is a Low Flood Island and becomes isolated by riverine flooding of the Murray and Darling rivers before a 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood event and inundated in a Probably Maximum Flood (PMF). Noting that flood warnings are available for the site with long warning times of 45 days (or 6 weeks) for minor flood level and the recommendation is to evacuate once a moderate flood warning is received, it may be possible for people to safely evacuate from the site prior to evacuation routes becoming flooded.

Evacuation routes to Wentworth Airfield are cut by flood water before 5% AEP. It is understood that the Hospital Levee can provide inundation protection to the site during flood events in the order of 1% AEP and 0.5% AEP<sup>1</sup>. The NSW SES notes a Preliminary Flood Assessment was completed by Advisian, September 2022<sup>2</sup>, for the proposed hospital and the main hospital building is to be constructed on a fill mound to provide flood immunity up to 1% AEP.

Based on this review, we provide the following advice:

- Consider the impact of flooding on the infrastructure up to and including the Probable Maximum Flood (PMF).
- Pursue, if relevant, site design and stormwater management that minimises any risk to the community.
- Evacuation of hospitals and aged care can be complex and is known to be associated with an increased rate of mortality in patients and nursing facility residents. Therefore, it is the preference of NSW SES that all hospitals follow the application of sound land use planning and flood risk management. The NSW 2022 Flood Inquiry Recommendation 28 highlights that sensitive uses are known to have a higher risk to life and warrant the consideration of the impacts of even rarer flood events than the 1% AEP flood extent. This includes the impacts of essential services infrastructure disruption on the proposed development. The Inquiry recommends sensitive uses, including aged care facilities are situated on land outside the probable maximum flood (PMF) extent and essential services infrastructure is situated above the flood planning level to minimise disruption. The NSW SES also note there may not be alternative flood free locations in Wentworth and the distance to the next health hospital is approximately 45km, 30 minutes by road.
- Ensure workers and people using the facility during and after the upgrades are aware of the flood risk, for example by using signage. The level of flood awareness of visiting medical, nursing, and allied health staff to the Wentworth Hospital facility is likely to be significantly lower than within the resident Wentworth community. All warnings issued by the NSW SES are considered official warnings and will be viewed on the NSW SES website and the HazardWatch website and app which was launched by the NSW SES on 30 September 2022 as part of the launch of the Australian Warning System. This new site is geared to displaying official NSW SES warnings and in time flash flood warnings and warnings from other emergency services. The Australian Warning System uses three categories of hazard warnings: Advice, Watch and Act, and Emergency Warning. These categories replace the NSW SES' Evacuation Warnings and Evacuation Orders. Further information about the warning levels and actions can be found on the NSW SES website at <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-warnings/>

Please feel free to contact Gillian Webber via email at [rra@ses.nsw.gov.au](mailto:rra@ses.nsw.gov.au) should you wish to discuss any of the matters raised in this correspondence. The NSW SES would also be

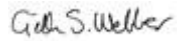
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<sup>1</sup> Wentworth Hospital Redevelopment Flood Emergency Response Plan May 2023, page 1

<sup>2</sup> Advisian (2021) – Wentworth Flood Study Rev D Final Draft

interested in receiving future correspondence regarding the outcome of this referral via this email address.

Yours sincerely



Gillian Webber  
Coordinator Emergency Risk Management - Regional  
**NSW State Emergency Service**