



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

Your reference:
Our reference: DOC18-447293
Contact: Simon Stirrat
(03) 5051 6218
Date: 20 July 2018

Michele Bos
Strategic Development Officer
Wentworth Shire Council
PO Box 81
WENTWORTH NSW 2648

Via email: Michele.Bos@wentworth.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Bos

RE: Belah Heights and Tapio Station Planning Proposal

I refer to your email dated 19 June 2018 to the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) seeking our comments on the above planning proposal. This response is in regard to statutory matters relating to application of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

We have reviewed documentation and provide the following comments.

OEH and other agencies previously recommended that existing offset areas, including Southern Mallee Reserves, should be zoned E2 in the Wentworth Local Environment Plan in 2011. We understand that prior to 25 August 2017, an application to have a clearing offset transferred from Belah Heights E2 zoned land to Tapio Station was approved by Local Land Services.

While the original rationale for council to zone the land E2 was an offset obligation that has now been relinquished, the biodiversity values that determined that the area was a suitable offset for the original clearing still exist on the site, including habitat for several threatened species which have been recorded on and around the property. Mallee vegetation communities in this area are important and continued clearing and fragmentation, especially close to the river, is an ongoing threat, and potentially limits the ability of species like the Regent Parrot to reoccupy suitable habitat.

It is council's decision as to how land is zoned, however we consider that the biodiversity values of the area, particularly the obvious threatened species habitat values, and the landscape context of the parcels should be taken into consideration when determining rezoning proposals such as this.

Should you wish to discuss these matters further please contact Simon Stirrat on (03) 5051 6218, or at simon.stirrat@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

ANDREW FISHER
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South West Region
Regional Operations
Office of Environment and Heritage