

**Newcastle Office**

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**Our Ref:** PR118415-1:MD  
**Date:** 20 November 2013

Attn: Wade Morris  
SNL Building Constructions Pty Ltd  
PO Box 4222  
Edgeworth NSW 2285

**Via:** email

Dear Wade

**RE: ECOLOGICAL ADVICE PROPOSED MULTIPLE DWELLING HOUSING AND MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT, WHITEBRIDGE NSW.**

RPS has been engaged by SNL Building Constructions Pty Ltd to undertake an Ecological Assessment for a proposed multiple dwelling housing and mixed use development, including strata subdivision over Lot 3 DP 26039; Lots 1, 2 and 3 DP 436503; Lot 4 DP 663765; Lots 1, 2 and 3 DP 349377; Lot 2 DP 26039 and Lot 3 DP 26039, 142-144 Dudley Road, Whitebridge, NSW.

The assessment aims to examine the likelihood of the proposal having a significant impact on any threatened species, populations or ecological communities listed under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act). This assessment recognises the relevant requirements of the EP&A Act 1979 as amended by the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Act 1997*. Assessment is also made with regard to those threatened entities listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Ecological investigations over the site have been carried out in accordance with the provisions set out within the Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) Flora and Fauna Survey Guidelines (2012). Given the highly disturbed / cleared nature of the site, assessment has been carried out in accordance with section 6.1 of the survey guidelines. The Fernleigh Track on the site's south-eastern boundary is nominated as a corridor on the LMCC Native Vegetation & Corridors Map.

A desktop assessment of the existing vegetation mapping for the area ( LMCC Vegetation Community Mapping) has described the vegetation on site as Map Unit (MU) 30 - Coastal Plains Smooth-barked Apple Woodland. A site inspection by RPS found the site to be degraded, with exotic pasture cover and contained less than 10 trees. An arborist report has been prepared by Treeology Pty Ltd (August 2013). The site inspection and arborist report confirmed that the site was once likely to be commensurate with MU 30, however is now characterised as cleared land. The site is therefore not commensurate with any ecological communities listed under the TSC Act or EPBC Act.

The site does not contain any significant habitat features for threatened species, populations or ecological communities known from the locality listed under the TSC Act or EPBC Act. The arborist report recorded two *Syzygium paniculatum* (Magenta Lilly Pilly) individuals within landscaped gardens of the vacant home at number 4 Kopa Street. This species is listed as Endangered under the TSC Act and Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. It is highly likely these individuals were planted by previous occupants and therefore are not part of any endemic populations, which the legislation aims to protect. During several site inspections, including meeting with representatives from LMCC on site, no additional threatened species, populations or ecological communities known from the locality have been observed.

The surrounding environment to the site is largely an urban interface with extant vegetation situated to the north-east across Kopa Street and within the Fernleigh Track, which flanks the site's eastern boundary. Beyond the Fernleigh Track (20-29m wide), the urban framework continues.

The area of vegetation north-east of the site is observed to be in a moderate to good condition which is attributed to the larger patch size. Patch size is estimate to be 2.8 hectares in a linear band of 500m in length and 50m to 80m width. Tenuous connectivity occurs between this patch and a much larger remnant in the north east.

The area of vegetation within the Fernleigh Track alignment exists as two linear strips fragmented by the track nominally 4m in width. The total area of vegetation in this area is 3500m<sup>2</sup> (comprising 1500m<sup>2</sup> on the western strip and 2000m<sup>2</sup> on the eastern strip) with a variable width of 5 metres to 15 metres on each side of the track. The vegetation condition within this area is in moderate condition with weed incursion observed (subject to ongoing active management from LMCC) and the understorey diversity and overall species richness responds to the cutting depth of the former rail alignment, where steepness increases when traversing in a southerly direction up until the Dudley Road overpass.

The Landscape Master Plan (Mansfield Urban, November 2013) for the site proposes to reintroduce native vegetation in the environmental zone that runs along the eastern boundary. The Landscape Master Plan responds to the bushfire prone land zoning over the site and balances the provision of ecological benefit whilst not establishing a bushfire threat. Following establishment and handover from the developer this area will be managed in perpetuity under the neighbourhood management plan or strata management scheme.

The reintroduction of native vegetation within this area will provide positive ecological benefits for highly mobile faunal movement within the locality and fits within the aims and objective of the LMCC Native Vegetation and Corridor Mapping. Furthermore the landscaping will provide a buffer to the Fernleigh Track and as such reduce any potential increase for indirect impacts arising from land development. Notably it is reasonable to conclude that edge effects will be reduced in this case given the pre-development site condition.

In summary:

- The site does not contain significant habitat attributes and no threatened species, populations or ecological communities listed under the TSC Act or EPBC Act known from the locality were observed on site during multiple site inspections.
- The proposed Landscape Master Plan will improve ecological function of the faunal movement corridor identified under the LMCC Native Vegetation and Corridors Mapping.
- The development will not have a significant impact on threatened species, populations or ecological communities listed under the TSC Act or EPBC Act known from the locality.

We trust this information is sufficient for your purposes, however should you require any further details or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the writer by telephone.

Yours sincerely  
**RPS**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matt Doherty', written over the typed name and title.

Matt Doherty  
Technical Director (Ecology)

Mansfield, H (Nov 2013) *Landscape Master Plan: Dudley Road and Kopa Street, Whitebridge NSW*. Prepared for SNL Building Constructions Pty Ltd. Issue A Mansfield Urban.

Atkins, J. (Aug 2013). *Preliminary Arborist's Report: Dudley Road and Kopa Street, Whitebridge NSW*. Prepared for SNL Building Constructions Pty Ltd. Treeology Pty Ltd.