

Executive Summary

Hornsby Shire Council is seeking to undertake the Hornsby Park Drainage Upgrade Project (the 'proposal') under Part 5 of the New South Wales (NSW) *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act). The proposal seeks to upgrade the existing drainage infrastructure to the east and north of the existing quarry void to a suitable standard for safety. Some of the earth embankments conveying the stormwater are not considered structurally sound. To ensure stormwater is safely conveyed through the Site, the drainage system is to be upgraded to current standards to cater for a 1 in 100 year event. The proposal also includes changes to the road to the north of the void adjacent to the existing drainage line. The proposal is separate from the previously approved Hornsby Quarry Rehabilitation Works Development (DA/101/2019) (the 'approved project').

A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) has been prepared to identify the significance of any adverse environmental impacts that could arise from the proposal and to determine whether there is a need for further assessment through an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The proposal will result in a number of impacts to environmental values including short-term impacts, such as construction-related impacts (noise, air quality etc.) and long-term impacts, such as impacts to biodiversity and non-Aboriginal heritage areas.

Due to the presence of the threatened ecological community (TEC) Blue Gum High Forest within the Site, Council considered a number of location and design iterations to minimise the extent of works within this community, as well as minimising impacts to other areas of native vegetation. The proposed design was chosen for these reasons.

Given the increased frequency of large rainfall events occurring and the recurring significant impact on the existing infrastructure and natural systems, the do-nothing approach will lead to costly on-going maintenance issues and negative environmental impacts. Future embellishments and infrastructure planned within the void including a lift (subject to approval) would be jeopardised by future sediment and water inundation, if a do-nothing approach is adopted.

A total of 0.94 ha of land will be disturbed for the proposal, including 0.62 ha of vegetation. A total of 0.34 ha of highly modified Blue Gum High Forest Critically Endangered Ecological Community will be removed by the proposal, and a total of 0.62 ha of habitat for threatened fauna species will be removed. Indirect impacts to retained vegetation and habitat may occur, such as runoff, erosion and sedimentation, pollution and edge effects. A number of these impacts are already present with the development footprint due to previous clearing and existing land uses, and indirect impacts are expected to be localised and are not considered to cause a substantial change in habitat. The proposal is not considered to result in a significant impact to Blue Gum High Forest and potentially occurring threatened fauna species in accordance with a test of significance.

One locally significant heritage item, Diatrema Hornsby Quarry and surrounding vegetation/Hornsby Diatrema Area, will be directly impacted by the proposal. This heritage item will be impacted through vegetation clearing, earthworks, installation of drainage structures and revegetation. These changes will result in a physical and visual change to 0.76 ha of the heritage item, of which 0.08 ha overlaps with the approved project's footprint. There will be no impact on the Diatrema face as part of the proposal. In the broader context, the proposal in conjunction with the approved project, will enable retention of the characteristics of the heritage item. Artefact (2021b) has assessed the proposal as having only a minor physical and visual impact on the heritage item, and a minor cumulative impact.

There is some potential for minor short-term impacts to the physical environment to occur during construction, including alterations to the hydrological regime, an increase in noise and vibration and a decrease in air quality due to increased dust. Such impacts will be subject to mitigation measures to ensure impacts are reduced to an acceptable level. The proposal will also contribute to cumulative impacts in conjunction with the approved project within the Site, such as an increase in the loss of vegetation (0.62 ha), an increase in impacts to the locally significant heritage item - Diatrema Hornsby Quarry and surrounding vegetation (0.68 ha).

A number of measures have been implemented to avoid or minimise any potential environmental impacts that are associated with the proposal, which includes location and design changes to reduce the area of native vegetation and habitat directly impacted. A comprehensive set of mitigation measures are proposed to manage impacts to environmental values that could not be avoided. Compensatory measures will be implemented for the loss of native vegetation through the application of the *Green Offsets Code 2015* (Hornsby Shire Council 2015a). A total of 3.72 ha of land is proposed to be used to offset the impacts to 0.62 ha of vegetation. It is proposed that the offsets will have in-perpetuity protection through a Voluntary Conservation Agreement in partnership between Council and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust. Due to an overlap between the development footprint and the approved project's footprint, the finalisation of the offsets package for the approved project will need to account for the development footprint.

This assessment considers that impacts to environmental values are manageable through the implementation of mitigation and compensatory measures, and not significant. As a result, the proposal is unlikely to significantly affect the environment and an EIS is not required.