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NorthLinkWA
Perth-Darwin National Highway

Response to Submissions (Addendum No. 2)

Perth-Darwin National Highway (Swan Valley Section)

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Document Control

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Following the publication of the Public Environmental Review (PER) in September 2015, the OEPA requested Main Roads provide further information on potential indirect impacts to wetlands, threatened ecological communities (TECs), threatened flora, threatened fauna and reserves. Main Roads responded to this request in the Response to Submissions document (RTS), which was submitted to OEPA in December 2015 and subsequently revised and resubmitted in February 2016. Indirect impacts are addressed in the PER, Section 8.4.9 and Response to Submissions, Chapter 7, Response to Office of the Environmental Protection Authority Issues, Section 7.3.2, Impact Assessment, consolidated issue 154 (page 83). The OEPA has more recently requested clarification of this discussion to assist with determining the level of impact that is predicted. This report serves as a second addendum to the RTS responding to this query.

Indirect impacts of the proposal on these values as discussed in the above documents include the introduction and spread of weeds and/or pathogens, uncontrolled access and dumping of refuse, changes to surface and groundwater hydrology, feral predation, light and noise emissions, and fire.

The likelihood and extent of indirect impacts increases with proximity to the proposal and may result in an identifiable difference in the environment (e.g., altered population and community structure) between the edge and interior of a particular patch of vegetation, referred to as edge effect.

The predicted extent of edge effects is based on Main Roads' experience and research undertaken by academic institutions (see PER Sections 8.4.9 and 9.4.4). The PER and RTS explain that edge effects could extend up to 10 m from the new vegetation edge into the vegetation interior if appropriate management measures are not effectively implemented. Some degradation of conservation significant values (e.g., TECs, PECs and buffers to threatened flora) may occur with the extent and severity of degradation being a gradient from the new vegetation edge to the vegetation interior. Main Roads' experience indicates edge effects are considerably less than 10 m, negligible in some instances, and do not result in the loss of conservation significant values.

Main Roads has committed to implementing a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Flora and Vegetation Management and Monitoring Plan (FVMMP) which will regularly monitor edge effects at approximately 1 km intervals along the alignment, with early warning indicators to prompt management actions to avoid/minimise edge effects. With the knowledge of actual edge effects on similar road projects and the implementation of the CEMP and the FVMMP, it is expected that conservation significant values in the 10 m potential edge effect zone will be retained and hence edge effects on conservation significant values will be insignificant.

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