



Department of Primary Industries

FE20/667 C20/460

22 April 2021

Ms Mellissa Halloran
Senior Planning Officer, Special Activation Precincts
Department of Planning, Industry & Environment

Dear Ms Halloran

Re: *Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct Draft Master Plan*

Thank you for your referral of 21 July 2020 seeking comment on the proposal above from DPI Fisheries.

Incorporating ecological sustainability principles within the plan and featuring and rehabilitating waterways in the area are essential to ensure the conservation of fish and fish habitat. Planning instruments and associated strategies or planning statements need to identify and proactively protect waterways from inappropriate development. To achieve this protection, it is essential that waterways/watercourses, recognised sensitive aquatic habitats and other key fish habitats such as threatened species habitat mapping are included within land use mapping. The incorporation of maps identifying *key fish habitats* (including riparian buffers) in planning instruments and a set of development controls and restrictions should provide significant gains in the protection of sensitive habitats and consequent maintenance of fisheries productivity.

DPI Fisheries recommend considering the provisions of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and the departments *Policy and Guidelines for Fish Habitat Conservation and Management (Update 2013)* and offers the following comments for the Wagga Wagga Special Activation Precinct Draft Master Plan;

Many species of fish and other aquatic animals are migratory within freshwater habitats. The *Plan* should recognise that freshwater rivers, creeks and streams are just as much “wildlife corridors” as are linear strips of terrestrial vegetation and in conjunction with riparian buffer zones sustain high biodiversity. The main threats to fish movement along these corridors are dams, weirs, vehicular crossings and urban development.

Key Fish Habitat maps which have been prepared by DPI Fisheries are maps of environmentally sensitive areas for which can utilise the mapping layers to highlight the sensitivity of waterways and riparian zones for aquatic biodiversity. The aim of these maps is to highlight those habitats that are of most importance for protection and conservation to sustain fish populations.

In addition, *Fish Communities and Threatened Species Distributions of NSW* report <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/threatened-species/legislation-and-approvals/habitat/your-catchment/condition-of-fish-communities-in-nsw> contains more detailed mapping data of the condition of fish communities within the Special Activation Precinct area. Threatened species, populations and communities listed under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* which are known or expected to occur within the precinct area and are available at: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/species-protection/threatened-species-distributions-in-nsw> contains the following including;

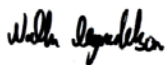
- The Trout Cod, *Macullochella macquarensis*, listed under schedule 4 as an endangered species.
- The Silver Perch, *Bidyanus bidyanus*, listed under schedule 5 as a vulnerable species
- The Murray Darling Population of the Eel Tail Catfish *Tandanus tandanus*, listed under schedule 4 as an endangered population
- The Endangered Aquatic Ecological Community in the Lower Murray River is also listed under schedule 4 of the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* and includes the Murrumbidgee River to below Burrinjuck Dam.

The department supports the current Wagga LEP provisions of Clause 7.5 Riparian lands and waterways. The inclusion of environmentally sensitive waterways that have been identified by DPI Fisheries and mapped as *Key Fish Habitats* should be included in mapping as an overlay or be used to provide buffers from development and performance standards or provisions should be placed upon development within the plan. It is recommended that these provisions continue to be implemented with respect to activities or developments proposed within or adjacent to *Key Fish Habitats* to ensure;

- Maintaining streambank and riparian buffer stability,
- Erosion and sediment control,
- Maintenance of vegetative cover,
- Minimisation of disturbance to in-stream habitats such as gravel beds, snags, aquatic macrophytes etc,
- Water quality protection,
- Rehabilitation and restoration following disturbance

If you have any queries do not hesitate to call me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



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