

# APPENDIX C

## Standard Criteria

## Burnett Catchment Water Infrastructure – Burnett River Dam

### C.1 Introduction

The *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act) requires Environmentally Relevant Activities (ERAs) to be authorised by an Administering Authority. Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection (Interim) Regulation 1998* lists all ERAs. Level 1 ERAs require a licence, while Level 2 ERAs require an approval. The Burnett River Dam Project has Level 1 ERAs. These are listed in **Table 1.1** of the EIS.

When deciding whether to grant or refuse an application for an environmental authority or deciding on the conditions of the authority, the Administering Authority must consider certain matters set out in the EP Act. One of those matters is the ‘Standard Criteria’.

### C.2 Standard Criteria

Schedule 3 of the EP Act defines the Standard Criteria and are listed below in **Table C.1**.

**Table C.1: Standard Criteria**

Criteria	Aspect
a	the principles of ecologically sustainable development as set out in the <i>National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development</i>
b	any applicable environmental protection policy
c	any applicable Commonwealth, State or Local government plans, standards, agreements or requirements
d	any applicable environmental impact study, assessment or report
e	the character, resilience and values of the receiving environment
f	all submissions made by the applicant and interested parties
g	the best practice environmental management for the activity under the authority, program or order
h	the financial implications of the requirements of the authority, program, order or permit as they would relate the type of activity or industry carried on under the authority, program, or order
l	the public interest
j	any applicable site management plans
k	any integrated environmental management plan for the authority; and
l	any other matter prescribed by regulation

The purpose of this Appendix is to address each of these criteria in turn, to show how these criteria are being met.

#### C.2.1 Criterion A

The key objectives of ecologically sustainable development as outlined in the *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* are:

- to enhance individual and community well being and welfare by following a path of economic development that safeguards the welfare of future generations;
- to provide for equity within and between generations; and
- to protect biological diversity and maintain essential ecological processes and life support systems.

The guiding principles for ecologically sustainable development as outlined in the *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development* are:

- “decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long and short term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations;
- where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- the global dimension of environmental impacts of actions and policies should be recognised and considered;
- the need to maintain and enhance international competitiveness in an environmentally sound manner should be recognised;
- cost effective and flexible policy instruments should be adopted, such as improved valuation, pricing and incentives mechanisms; and

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□ decisions and actions should provide for broad community involvement on issues which affect them”.

Each of these objectives and principles is addressed in turn below.

### **C.2.1.1 Individual and Community Well-being and Welfare**

The Burnett River Dam will provide benefits to the community in terms of income generation and employment. It will provide a net benefit to the community, both now and in the future.

### **C.2.1.2 The Intergenerational Equity Principle**

The Burnett River Dam Project will not significantly reduce, or fail to maintain, the health, diversity and productivity of the Queensland environment or affect future generations.

### **C.2.1.3 Protection of Biological Diversity and Essential Ecological Processes**

Surveys of the flora and fauna in the vicinity of the Burnett River Dam Project have been undertaken. Species and ecosystems observed during field assessment were assessed against the Queensland *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 1994*, the *Vegetation Management Regulations 2000* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulation 2000* to identify the conservation status of the species.

The Burnett River Dam will not have a direct impact on the Goodnight Scrub National Park, as the inundation area will not enter the Park boundaries.

On the basis of the available evidence, the Burnett River Dam Project does not pose a significant threat to terrestrial biological diversity or ecological integrity.

The construction of the Burnett River Dam will lead to a change in the distribution of habitats associated with the river and a movement in the distribution of aquatic species, particularly within the inundation area. Several species will benefit from the operation of the dam. This will include migratory species, lungfish, below the dam, turtles within the inundation area and the turtle *Elseya* sp. below the dam.

### **C.2.1.4 Decision-Making Based on Long and Short Term Economic, Environmental, Social and Equity Considerations**

The Burnett River Dam Project is important to the economic competitiveness of agriculture and industry in the Burnett region. The Burnett River Dam Project will provide immediate and long-term benefits to the economic and social fabric of Queensland, contributing to Commonwealth, State and Local economies, and adopting dam management strategies that recognises the environmental value of the catchment.

### **C.2.1.5 The Precautionary Principle**

The Burnett River Dam Project has undertaken an environmental impact assessment, including an assessment of the risk of unacceptable environmental harm, consistent with the Precautionary Principle. The findings have been used to determine appropriate environmental control strategies. These have been incorporated into the Environmental Management Plans given in the EIS.

### **C.2.1.6 Global Environmental Impact**

The operation of the Burnett River Dam will comply with the System Operation Management Plan, with will be prepared in association with a review of the Water Allocation and Management Plan. These documents and operational procedures will be prepared through an iterative process to take advantage of broad community and agency views.

The Burnett River Dam is to be constructed in a highly modified and regulated catchment, with minor global environmental impact.

### **C.2.1.7 The Development of a Strong, Growing and Diversified Economy which can Enhance the Capacity for Environmental Protection**

The Burnett River Dam Project will provide additional water supplies to a rapidly growing region of Queensland, where there is an established and productive agricultural industry. Provision of additional water resources, with improved reliability will help underwrite the continued development of the region and lead to an increasing sustainable region from an economic perspective. This growth represents a significant addition to the Queensland and Australian economy. The Burnett River Dam Project will encourage the use of local suppliers and contractors during construction and operations.

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### **C.2.1.8 Enhancing International Competitiveness in an Environmentally Sound Manner**

The Burnett River Dam Project will enhance Australia's international competitiveness, through the provision of water for irrigation to improve agriculturally productivity and competitiveness of the Bundaberg region, creating exports, while not causing significant adverse environmental impacts.

### **C.2.1.9 Cost-Effective and Flexible Policy Instruments**

The Burnett River Dam Project supports the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments in their adoption of cost-effective and flexible policy instruments.

### **C.2.1.10 Community Involvement in Decisions and Actions**

Community consultation, including traditional owners has been undertaken and will continue through and beyond the current approval process. The Burnett River Dam Project will continue to have contact with the community of the Burnett catchment as the project progresses. A 1800 freecall telephone number, already in place, will be maintained to answer community queries, and to provide community access to information.

## **C.2.2 Criterion B**

The following EPPs have relevance to the Burnett River Dam Project:

- Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 1997*
- Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 1997*
- Environmental Protection (Waste) Policy 2000*

### **C.2.2.1 Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 1997 (EPP (Water))**

The EPP (Water) will apply to the Burnett River Dam Project will during the construction of the dam and during the operation of the storage, through the SOMP. Environmentally relevant activities to be undertaken during the construction of the dam will be conducted so that the waste water and stormwater do cause an impact on the environmental values of the Burnett River or other waterways. Devices such as bunding, construction of construction storage areas and sediment and erosion control measures will be used to contain the impact of the construction activities and protect waterways.

The operation of the Burnett River Dam will comply with the SOMP. The SOMP will reflect the requirements of the EPP (Water).

### **C.2.2.2 Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 1997**

The EPP (Air) establishes guidelines for ambient air quality and technology-based standards for point-sources emissions. The guidelines are adopted from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council (ANZECC).

Schedules of the EPP (Air) state air quality levels that are the maximum for contaminants that may be present in the air environment. Air quality will be an issue that will require management during the construction phase of the project, as a result of dust generation by construction activities. The EIS addresses how dust will be controlled during the construction of the dam, including:

- wetting of areas of exposed soil;
- rapid and progressive reinstatement of disturbed areas;
- restrictions on dust generating activity during high winds; and
- timing of vegetation removal as late as possible before closure of the dam.

### **C.2.2.3 Environmental Protection (Waste) Policy 1997 (EPP (Waste))**

The EPP (Waste) outlines a preferred waste management hierarchy and principles for achieving good waste management. Waste management is most relevant during the construction of the Burnett River Dam, where construction materials and wastes will be managed. In accordance with the requirements of the EPP (Waste), waste will be reduced to the greatest extent practicable.

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### C.2.3 Criterion C

The EIS will be reviewed by a group of Referral Agencies consisting of Local, State and Commonwealth Government representatives. The plans, agreements, standards, and any other requirements will be considered prior to these agencies approving the EIS.

#### C.2.3.1 Plans

The Burnett River Dam is located in Shires of Kolan, Biggenden, Perry and Gayndah. The current land use is cattle grazing and orchards. The Planning Schemes relevant to the Burnett River Dam are the planning schemes of the four Shires. Provision of a major storage facility is currently not provided for within the existing Planning Scheme documents. Should the project proceed then modifications will be required to the Shires planning documents, both in terms of the zoning and the Strategic designations and will typically also include development controls such as restrictions on subdivision and stringent controls over waste and emissions.

#### C.2.3.2 Agreements

The Commonwealth Government is a signatory to agreements on climate change, migratory birds, world heritage, and biodiversity. There are four main principles of these conventions:

- the precautionary principle;
- intergenerational equity;
- conservation of biological diversity; and
- improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.

These principles are covered in **Section C.2.1** of the Standard Criteria above.

#### C.2.3.3 Standards and Requirements

The relevant standards are those set out under the *National Environmental Protection Council (Qld) Act 1994* (NEPC Act). This reflects the Commonwealth legislation, which provides for standards that will have effect nationally.

Section 34 of the EP Act refers to these measures and provides that where a National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM) commences under national law, then the measure is taken to be an ‘environmental protection policy’ (EPP) under the EP Act, if it is approved.

To date, the following measures (NEPM) have been taken under the NEPC Act:

- Ambient Air Quality
- National Pollutant Inventory (NPI)
- Used Packaging Materials

To meet the requirements of these NEPM’s, the Proponent will:

- comply with the EPP (Air) as discussed in **Section C.2.2.2**;
- ensure controlled wastes are not moved interstate;
- prepare and submit to the EPA a report (Annual Return) on emissions to land, water and air;
- report as required under the NPI provisions; and
- implement a Waste Management Plan.

### C.2.4 Criterion D

The Proponent has undertaken numerous studies to determine the environmental impact of Burnett River Dam Project, as well as drawing on a vast body of reports, investigations and planning studies completed over the past on water resource development projects in the Burnett catchment. The findings of the studies undertaken by the Proponent and a summary of relevant background studies are presented in this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Burnett River Dam Project will instigate a program of environmental monitoring as detailed in this EIS.

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### **C.2.5 Criterion E**

The environment surrounding the Burnett River Dam Project is described in the EIS. The area of the activity does not impact upon the conservation estate, and the activity will not add significantly to the vulnerability of the area to natural hazards such as flood, fire or erosion.

### **C.2.6 Criterion F**

The Proponent will make several submissions to Government in support of their bid to gain approval for the construction of the Burnett River Dam. These submissions include:

- the draft EIS and supplementary EIS; and
- development applications to the relevant local authorities, where necessary.

Interested parties will have the opportunity to also make submissions on the project, through comments on the draft EIS, the environmental licence application.

### **C.2.7 Criterion G**

Best practice environmental management is defined in the EP Act, Section 18(1), as ‘the management of the activity to achieve an ongoing minimisation of the activity’s environmental harm through cost-effective measures assessed against the measures currently used nationally and internationally for the activity’.

The Burnett River Dam Project has environmental management provisions that meet ‘Best Practice’. Key features of the dam include operation of the dam in accordance with operational plans that comply with broader catchment water resource plans and obligations, monitoring of environmental impacts, through the project EMP, to identify and respond to impacts while they are manageable.

### **C.2.8 Criterion H**

The Burnett River Dam Project will directly employ about between 40 and 80 people during the construction phase.

Provision of additional water resources, with improved reliability will help underwrite the continued development of the region and lead to an increasing sustainable region from an economic perspective. This growth represents a significant addition to the Queensland and Australian economy. The Burnett River Dam Project will encourage the use of local suppliers and contractors during construction and operations.

### **C.2.9 Criterion I**

The Burnett River Dam will provide employment and wealth for Queenslanders. Issues of public interest and concern are dealt with during the EIS process, and the Environmental Authority Application process.

### **C.2.10 Criterion J**

Site management plans will be prepared for the project and form part of the EMP included in the EIS.

### **C.2.11 Criterion K**

An IEMS is a prescribed matter under S43 of the EPR. A submission on the proposed IEMS is provided under **Section C.2.6**.

### **C.2.12 Criterion L**

Other matters prescribed by the Regulation (Regulation 67 of the *Environmental Protection (Interim) Regulation 1995*) are the Standard Criteria for air and noise. These have been considered under **Section C.2.2**.