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## 13 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND VISUAL AMENITY

### 13.1 Impacts on Visual Amenity

Section 5.5 of the EIS assessed the potential beneficial and adverse impacts of the Project on landscape character and visual qualities of the site and surrounding area. The assessment described the sources of potential impacts on landscape character and visual amenity of the inundation area, dam wall, any broad-scale clearing, and realignment of the Bruce Highway and other roads. The EIS also identified a number of appropriate measures to enhance, avoid, reduce, remedy or offset negative landscape or visual impacts that may result from the Project.

#### 13.1.1 Infrastructure Relocation

One submission raised the issue about the relocation of infrastructure, particularly relocated road works, and its impact on the landscape character and visual amenity of property and the veracity of mitigation measures to lessen the impact.

As outlined in Section 5.5.3.4 of the EIS, a range of mitigation measures are proposed for both the construction and operational phases of the Project. The objectives of the mitigation measures are to:

- protect and enhance the landscape and visual amenity of the visual catchment during construction and operation of the Project;
- engage affected communities and individuals in the landscape design of the Project; and
- identify and implement detailed landscape planning addressing visual and social/recreational elements of the Project.

In order to minimise impacts associated with the relocation of infrastructure, Section 5.5.3.4 of the EIS proposes that a Landscape Design and Management Plan be developed. The Landscape Design and Management Plan will include the landscape design of new road works and associated drainage flows (to contain any contaminated road runoff). Section 5.5.3.4 also identifies that specific Landscape Masterplans will be prepared under the EMP framework and in consultation with adjoining owners. Issues such as drainage and visual screening will be incorporated into these specific design master plans. The Landscape Master Plans will also be prepared (in consultation with stakeholders) regarding the treatment of visually exposed infrastructure. Tree Grants and assistance with planting by local residents should be encouraged and can be incorporated into the Landscaping contract during the detailed design phase.

The EMP (Construction) includes environmental objectives, performance criteria and management actions to address the visual and landscape impacts of all proposed works and construction sites.

#### 13.1.2 Changes to the natural environment

Several submissions raised issues regarding the potential for stagnation of water downstream of the impoundment caused by the reduction in flows and similar edge effects within the impoundment.

There is a misconception that water will not be released downstream as a result of the dam and the Mary River will become stagnant. As discussed in Chapter 4 of the Supplementary Report, modelling of the proposed operation of the dam shows that releases from the dam will occur almost every day. In fact, in the 110 year simulation, there are only 53 days with no flow from the dam which is equivalent to 0.1% of the time.

As stated in Section 6.1.2.3 of the EIS, impacts of changes to flows will rapidly reduce downstream as inflows from tributaries lessen the contribution of the Project catchment to the overall flow. Water levels will be comparable to existing levels within the Mary River, within a relatively short distance.

The visual impact of the Project downstream is also addressed in Section 5.5.3.4 of the EIS. This section identifies mitigation measures for both the construction and operation phase of the Project. The aims of the mitigation measures include:

- to protect and enhance the landscape and visual amenity of the visual catchment during construction and operation of the Project;
- to provide integrated design for the management of critical changes to the landscape associated with the effects of the new water edge on vegetation, bank stability, water level fluctuation, and public access;
- to engage affected communities and individuals in the landscape design of the Project; and
- to identify and implement detailed landscape planning addressing visual and social/recreational elements of the Project.

The preparation of the Landscape Masterplan for the inundation area, as described in Section 5.5.3.4 of the EIS, will address issues such as the management of existing vegetation within the FSL, the design and management of the FSL edge treatment to avoid erosion and protect steeper slopes and future “banks”, manage water level fluctuations and provide for the establishment of pioneer riparian plantings consistent with existing vegetation.

The Landscape Masterplan will take into account the views of adjoining landholders and specific Landscape Masterplans will be prepared for urban or tourist areas addressing the effects of the inundated areas and also associated infrastructure such as roads, as described in Section 5.5.3.4 of the EIS. Particular attention will be given to the early establishment of suitable vegetation and the creation of special areas suitable for water based recreation and enjoyment.

The implementation of the management measures proposed for the construction phase are designed to integrate the new structures and the impoundment into the landscape. To ensure this is the case, Section 5.5.3.4 of the EIS proposes that the Project monitors the landscape development, including downstream, areas, for at least five years following the first attainment of the FSL of the waterbody. As a further mitigation measure not described in the EIS, monitoring of the landscape should also be undertaken downstream during construction and up until the attainment of the FSL of the impoundment.