

6.15 Cumulative impacts

6.15.1 Existing environment

No other known developments are occurring or planned in the immediate vicinity of the proposal. There are future long-term plans to construct a second rail line parallel to the existing rail line although the timing for this is currently unknown.

A new powerline is proposed about 2.5 kilometres east of the proposal. This powerline would be constructed between the Wagga Wagga suburb of Bourkelands and the village of Uranquinty, to the south. The powerline would have a length of about 13 kilometres.

In addition, there is continuing expansion and proposed growth within the Lloyd residential area to the east and the Kapooka Military Area to the west. These developments have been planned to minimise impacts on native vegetation.

6.15.2 Potential impacts

Biodiversity

The development of a second rail line in the immediate vicinity of the proposal has the potential to further impact on ecology in the area through vegetation removal and disturbance. Additional vegetation removal may cause further fragmentation and degradation of Box-Gum Woodland.

The proposed powerline between Bourkelands and Uranquinty would require the removal of about 1.5 hectares of native woodland, of which about 1.2 hectares is Box-Gum Woodland listed under the TSC Act, and about 0.4 hectares is Box-Gum Woodland listed under EPBC Act. It has been assessed that this proposal would be unlikely to have a significant ecological impact (GHD 2012b).

The proposal would contribute to the cumulative impacts of vegetation clearing, habitat fragmentation, loss of habitat and degradation in the locality.

The proposal would be undertaken in a locality where there is considerable development pressure primarily for residential purposes. This was recognised during the development of the Wagga Wagga LEP. Subsequently, biocertification was sought for the LEP, including development and protection of biodiversity offsets areas in the form of the Planning Agreement Areas. The proposal would therefore potentially reduce the effectiveness of the Planning Agreement Areas in mitigating the impacts of residential development in the Wagga Wagga LGA.

Other road maintenance activities would be likely to contribute to cumulative biodiversity impacts. The significance of these impacts would vary depending on the amount of habitat removal and fragmentation and the type of environmental management measures adopted.

Other environmental impacts

Other cumulative impacts relate to heritage, soils and water quality, noise and vibration, traffic and access, visual amenity, air quality, socio-economic and land use impacts.

Residential development in the locality would be likely to have cumulative impacts in

relation to soils and water quality, noise, traffic, visual amenity, air quality, socio-economic and land use impacts. The proposal would increase the incidence of these impacts in the area.

Other road maintenance activities would be likely to have minor cumulative impacts.

The construction of a second rail line would also be unlikely to have substantial cumulative impacts (other than on biodiversity) due to the long time frame between the timing of its development and that of the proposal.

Cumulative benefits would relate to road and rail safety, freight efficiency and improved travel times.

6.15.3 Safeguards and management measures

It is considered that the potential for adverse cumulative impacts is most effectively addressed by the application of the individual safeguards and management measures proposed in the REF and summarised in Section 7.2.