

Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme (NMIS)
Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle Strategy

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Tasmanian
Irrigation

Revision	Date	Author	Reviewer	Comments
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1. Context

The natural values assessment (NVA) undertaken for the Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme (NMIS) identified several Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle nests in the vicinity of the project footprint. The federal approval for the NMIS (EPBC 2022/09295) contains requirements for the management of potential construction and operational impacts to Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles and their habitat.

2. Protocol Objectives

The objectives of the protocol are to minimise any potential impacts to Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle during construction and operation of the project.

3. Management of the Strategy

The protocol will be managed by TI's Ecologist with oversight from the General Manager Environment Health and Safety and project teams. The persons who hold these positions must have a working knowledge of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* and the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*.

4. Management measures

4.1 Proximity constraint measures

To mitigate harm to the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle and ensure the relevant approval requirements are met for the project, proximity constraints have been applied to eagle nests for the project, with timing linked to the defined **eagle management constraint period** from the beginning of July to the end of January. The following proximity constraints for construction and operational works must be met:

- No construction works are to occur within 1000 m of an **active eagle nest** during the **eagle management constraint period** unless the works are not visible from any **active eagle nest**.
- No construction works are to occur within 500 m of an **active eagle nest** during the **eagle management constraint period** (except to avert serious threat to life, property or the environment as identified in Section 4.3).
- No construction works are to occur within 200 m of any tree that contains a Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle nest.
- During the operational period of the project, no planned maintenance is to be conducted within 500 m of any **active eagle nest** during the **eagle management constraint period**.

4.2 Aerial nest search

If any construction is to occur during the **eagle management constraint period**, an **aerial nest search** must be undertaken to detect all **active eagle nests** within 1250 m of any area within the project area where construction is planned during the **eagle management constraint period**.

Aerial nest searches conducted for the project must be undertaken in the following manner:

- In accordance with the Fauna Technical Note 1: Eagle Nest Searching, Activity checking and Nest Management

- Between 1 March to 30 June of any given year

At least once within any given two-year period, within the project area, an **aerial nest search** must be undertaken in each area which fall within 1250 m of any area where construction is planned during the **eagle management constraint period**.

Eagle nest activity assessments (utilising assessment methods supported by the Forest Practices Authority) will be carried out as required. If an activity assessment conclusively shows that a nest is not active for that season, then works can be undertaken within the **eagle management constraint period** without risk of disrupting a breeding event. If a nest is found to be active, then no works will occur until the end of the **eagle management constraint period** to avoid potential disturbance. Eagle nest activity assessments will be carried out as required for the duration of the construction phase of the project from late October to late December. Until an activity assessment is completed at the commencement of each season, all known nests must be considered 'active'.

4.3 Unplanned repair work or maintenance

In the event that unplanned repair work or maintenance must be undertaken during the **eagle management constraint period**, unless the repair work is urgently required to avert serious threat to life, property or the environment, the following is applicable:

- Unless an activity assessment was undertaken in accordance with the **Fauna Technical Note 1: Eagle Nest Searching, Activity checking and Nest Management** to detect all **active eagle nests** within 1,250 m of the location, assume that all known nests are **active eagle nest**.
- It must be ensured that before entering the project area, all workers are aware of the location of all **active eagle nests**.
- It must be ensured that no person or vehicle enters any area within 200 m of an **active eagle nest**.
- It must be ensured that no person looks directly towards an **active eagle nest** while they are within 1,000 m of an **active eagle nest**.
- It must be ensured that unless not visible from any **active eagle nest**, no heavy vehicles and no more than 2 light vehicles enter any area within 1,000 m of an **active eagle nest** and that, in any seven-day period, no vehicle enters within 1,000 m of an **active eagle nest** more than twice.
- It must be ensured that no heavy vehicles, and no more than 2 light vehicles, enter any area within 500 m of an **active eagle nest** and that, in any seven-day period, or enters within 500 m of an **active eagle nest** more than twice.
- It must be ensured that, in any seven-day period, unless not visible from any **active eagle nest**, no vehicle remains within 1,000 m of an **active eagle nest** any longer than 30 minutes and that regardless of visibility, no vehicle remains within 500 m of an **active eagle nest** any longer than 30 minutes, unless a **suitably qualified eagle specialist** has provided prior written agreement to the use of vehicles for longer than 30 minutes, specifying the required safeguards and mitigation measures and justification that harm will not result from the presence of the vehicles for longer than 30 minutes.
- If safety requirements allow, workers should be instructed to not wear hi-visibility clothing while in the allowed proximity to an **active eagle nest**.
- It must be ensured that no vehicle is parked within sight of an **active eagle nest**.

- It must be ensured that workers always remain within 5 m of one another (where practical) and no work breaks are conducted while within 500 m of an **active eagle nest**.
- In the event that unplanned repair work or maintenance must be undertaken during the **eagle management constraint period**, and that repair work is urgently required to avert serious threat to life, property or the environment, the approval must adhere to the requirements of condition 8 of EPBC 2022/09295) as closely as possible while giving priority to avert the serious threat to life, property or the environment.

4.4 Blasting works

Any blasting works require authorisation by Tasmanian Irrigation.

Definitions

The meaning of bolded words or terms is as follows:

Aerial nest search means an ‘aerial search’ conducted using helicopters to identify and record the location of **Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle** nests, and as described in the **Fauna Technical Note 1: Eagle Nest Searching, Activity checking and Nest Management**.

Active eagle nest means any **Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle** nest site unless the nest site has had an activity check conducted by either the **Forest Practices Authority** or a **suitably qualified eagle specialist** and determined to be inactive.

Eagle management constraint period means the period commencing on 1 July and ending on 31 January in the same financial year, unless a shortened or lengthened period of this name is determined (identified annually in November) and publicly advised by the **Forest Practices Authority** in writing.

Fauna Technical Note 1: Eagle Nest Searching, Activity checking and Nest Management means the *Fauna Technical Note 1: Eagle Nest Searching, Activity checking and Nest Management, version 4.2*, **Forest Practices Authority** April 2024.

Suitably qualified eagle specialist means a person who has attended and passed an eagle management course organised or approved by the **Forest Practices Authority** with at least 5 years’ experience in eagle nest management.

References

Fauna Technical Note No. 1: Eagle nest searching, activity checking and nest management, Version 4.2 April 2024, Forest Practices Authority 2024.