



South Road Overpass Work in the Wetlands

Stage 1 of the Port River Expressway project required the construction of a roadway loop for an overpass connecting the expressway with Salisbury Highway and South Road, through a portion of the existing Barker Inlet Wetlands.

The alignment of the overpass was determined by minimising potential adverse impacts on the wetlands' function, while maintaining appropriate overpass design for desired safety, speed and efficiency requirements.

The Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) understood from an early stage that special environmental planning and management would be required in consultation with environmental authorities and the City of Port Adelaide Enfield to construct the overpass through the wetlands.

During initial consultation with these key stakeholders, it was realised that there were opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the wetlands.

In late 2003, environmental specialists undertook a bird species assessment of the Barker Inlet Wetlands to determine any impact on birds, including migratory birds, during construction works and the operation of the overpass.

This assessment identified that common bird species such as the White-bellied Sea-Eagle and the Peregrine Falcon occupied the Barker Inlet Wetlands. Protected species recorded at the site or adjacent region included the Black-shouldered Kite, Nankeen Kestrel and Pacific Black Duck.

Improvements to the wetlands were completed in early 2004, in addition to the construction work of the overpass, which included the creation of deeper water holes to assist in preventing them from drying out, creation of islands for animals and plants and an increase in the wetlands capacity to retain water. These improvements are expected to enhance the attractiveness of the wetlands for bird life. It is thought that over thirty species of birds could potentially occupy or use the Barker Inlet Wetlands at some stage.

To cater for bird life during construction and operation of the overpass, two crossings, large enough for swans, were built under the embankment of the overpass to allow passage to the central water basin (Keller's Hole) located in the roadway loop.

Based on experience with similar projects elsewhere, it is expected that any birds displaced during the construction period will return once the construction work is completed. Some birds continued to use the wetlands during times of the day and night when construction was not taking place and some remained during construction.



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