

# **Proposed Victoria Mother and Child Hospital development on Erf 9194 Pietermaritzburg:**

## **Comments on buffer zone between the proposed hospital development and the sensitive adjacent Queen Elizabeth Park grassland**

In the document sent 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016 titled “**Proposed Victoria Mother and Child Hospital development on Erf 9194 Pietermaritzburg: Comments on potential effects of this development on the adjacent Queen Elizabeth Park grassland**”, the following recommendations were set out:

### “COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the event that the hospital development is permitted, it is imperative that the following issues are adequately addressed.

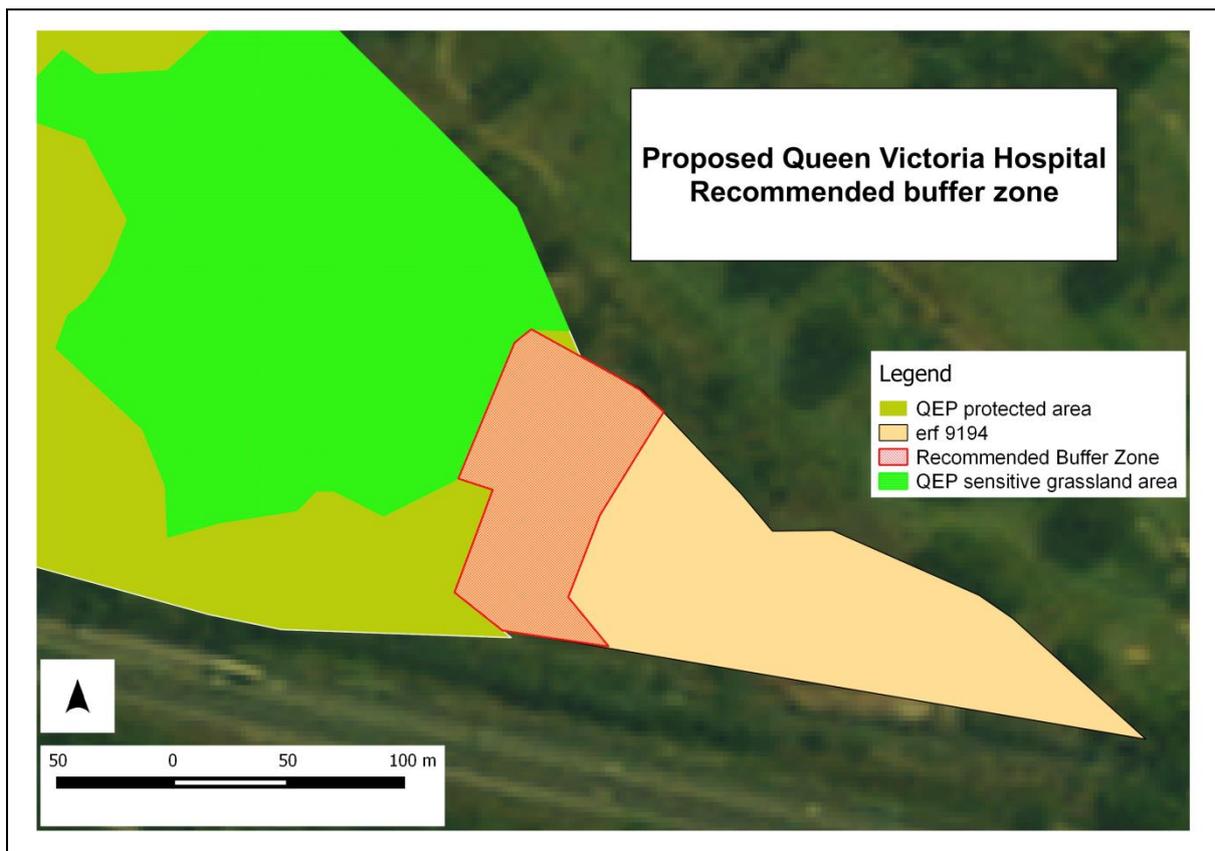
1. **BOUNDARY BUFFER ZONE:** A boundary buffer zone within Erf 9194, at least 50m wide, must be permanently established between the fence around the grassland and any proposed structures associated with the hospital. This item is deemed to be essential.
2. **SHADING:** The position and height of any buildings or structures will have to be such that any shading caused by these structures falls outside of the outer boundary of the 50m-wide buffer. This is essential because the grassland requires full sun throughout the year.
3. **BURNING OF QEP GRASSLAND AND FIREBREAKS:** Annual burning of adequate firebreaks (time of year to be determined by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife ecologists) and the biennial burning of the grassland in late winter must continue because the grassland is a fire-maintained climax vegetation type; i.e. the indigenous species which occur in it have developed adaptations over eons which enable them to avoid the harmful effects of fire occurring at certain times of the year. The resultant smoke and wind-blown ash and dust which will follow burning will have to be accommodated by the proposed hospital. Should the grassland not be burnt regularly (every second year in late winter), woody species, especially alien problem plant species, and tall grasses will rapidly invade the area. This will not only lead to the loss of many of the indigenous species, including the Hilton Daisy, but will also result in an increased fire load which will pose a serious fire hazard to the proposed hospital and surrounding property.
4. **LANDSCAPING PLANT SPECIES:** Only locally endemic plant species may be used for landscaping around the proposed hospital to prevent contamination of the grassland.
5. **FENCING:** Adequate fencing must be in place to prevent pedestrian and vehicle access from the hospital to the grassland. However, the fence must be gated with lockable gates to facilitate access in the event of an emergency.

6. **RUNOFF:** Any storm water drainage from the hospital buildings or hardened surfaces must be diverted away from the grassland.

7. **CONSTRUCTION:** Prior to commencement of construction, the contractor must agree to abide by all items in the contract relating to the adjacent QEP Midlands Mistbelt Grassland: throughout the construction period, the area (including the buffer zone) may not be used for dumping spoil, disposal of litter, or erecting temporary structures (e.g., offices and toilets). These instructions must also stipulate that any fire, whether accidental or set deliberately by the contractor or sub-contractor to this grassland, is a legal infringement and constitutes a serious threat to the security of the buildings of EKZNW and private vehicles of staff and visitors who work or visit EKZNW and others who seek recreation on the land on which EKZNW is situated.”

A request was subsequently received from Green Door Environmental to provide more detail in the form of a map on the recommended buffer zone referred to in Point 1 above.

The following map indicates the recommended position for the placement of the buffer zone of at least 50m in order to minimise the impact of the hospital development on the sensitive QEP mistbelt grassland:



Map 1: Recommended minimum buffer zone between the proposed VCC hospital development and the QEP boundary.

It should be noted that the buffer is wider in the northern section as this is where the boundary is closest to the Hilton daisy plants.

It should be noted that this buffer zone may need to be extended to accommodate points 2, 6 and 7 above.

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