

Biodiversity Assessment, Tramway Road Battery Energy Storage System, Hazelwood North, Victoria



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Version B

Prepared for:

EKU Energy Projects
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Document Control

Project name	Biodiversity Assessment, Tramway Road Battery Energy Storage System, Hazelwood North, Victoria
Project number	2503
Project manager	Simon Scott
Report title	Biodiversity Assessment, Tramway Road Battery Energy Storage System, Hazelwood North, Victoria
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Report reviewer	Simon Scott
Other staff	N/A
Mapping	Stuart Cooney
File name	2503_BA_Hazelwood_BESS_Report_09122024
Version	B: incorporating updated access track layout and the results of the targeted flora survey.
Previous versions	Original report A: incorporating the Concept Layout Plan Version 2.1 dated 5 December 2024

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Cover Photograph

A photograph of vegetation within the study area taken during the current assessment.

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Executive Summary

Ecolink Consulting Pty Ltd was engaged by ECU Energy Projects (Australia) Pty Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Assessment at a proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) development site at Hazelwood North. The study area included the proposed BESS facility proposed to be located at Parcel 2\PS700402 on Monash Way, and two route options that were being explored for a transmission line connection into the Hazelwood Terminal Station; and one along Tramway Road one at the Marinus Link transmission area. The Biodiversity Assessment was undertaken to determine the ecological constraints of the study area and to inform the development design within the study area. This is the second iteration of the report (Version A), informed by the latest Concept Layout Plan, Version 2.1 dated 5 December 2024.

The study area is irregular in shape, covering approximately 70 hectares of land. It is zoned Farming Zone Schedule -- 1 and Special Use Zone Schedule -- 1 within the Latrobe Planning Scheme. The southern portion of the study area, including the BESS facility, is covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule -- 1 (ESO1). This ESO1 protects ecological features and environmental values from urban settlements and coal related infrastructure.

Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action modelling shows that the study area occurs within the Gippsland Bioregion and was historically covered by Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) 53: Swamp Scrub and EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland and EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest. Four patches of EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest, eight patches of EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland and three patches of EVC 53: Swamp Scrub were recorded during the assessment.

Eighty-seven flora species were recorded during the assessment (excluding the planted trees). This comprised 30 indigenous species, 11 Victorian native species that were not indigenous to the study area and 42 exotic species. Much of the study area consisted of pastures comprised of exotic grasses and environmental weeds. Where trees occurred, they often occurred on swales in straight rows, with evidence of irrigation systems and tree guards in the area. The oldest and largest trees on site were consistent with a cohort that included species such as non-indigenous Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata* and Southern Mahogany *Eucalyptus botryoides*, species not indigenous to the area, and thus, all trees on site were considered planted specimens. In some instances, patches of remnant understorey vegetation were observed, largely consisting of indigenous tussock grass species.

Eight threatened flora species have been recorded within three kilometres of the study area. There are three historical records of threatened flora species within the study area, and four were observed during the current assessment: Bog Gum *Eucalyptus kitsoniana*, Sticky Wattle *Acacia howittii*, Spotted Gum and Giant Honey-myrtle *Melaleuca armillaris*. All these species are available for purchase and known to be used horticulturally. Whilst Bog Gum and Sticky Wattle occur near, but not within the study area, the locations of these specimens in straight rows and planted on swales indicates they are likely to have been planted. A historic record of Daisy Fleabane *Erigeron conyzoides* occurs within the study area. It was not recorded during the current assessment, but further surveys of Tramway Road are warranted if it is proposed to be impacted. No threatened ecological communities were recorded during the current assessment. The proposed works are unlikely to significantly impact any remnant threatened flora species or threatened ecological communities.

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Biodiversity Assessment, Tramway Road BESS



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Twenty fauna species were recorded within the study area during the current assessment and this comprised sixteen birds (three introduced; thirteen native), one native amphibian, two native mammals and one invasive mammal. Five threatened fauna species have been recorded within three kilometres of the study area. There are no historical records of threatened fauna species within the study area, and none were observed within the study area, during the current assessment. There is some chance that White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*, Grey-headed Flying Fox *Pteropus poliocephalus* and Eastern Great Egret *Ardea alba modesta* may overfly or forage at the study area, however the study area is unlikely to provide limiting or breeding habitat for these species.

Flinders Pygmy Perch *Nannoperca* sp. 1 is represented highly in records within three kilometres of the study area. The study area hosts some aquatic habitat, in the form of the artificial drain, on the southern boundary of the study area, that diverts much of Eel Hole Creeks water. At the time of the assessment, the rate of flow within this drain was high, which is sub-optimal for Flinders Pygmy Perch. However, given the high numbers of records within the local area, and the potential to connect with other source populations containing preferred habitats, such as Bennetts Creek in the east, this species cannot be discounted from occurring within the study area. Targeted surveys for this species are recommended if the artificial drain, south of Eel Hole Creek, is proposed to be impacted by the project.

The previous iteration of the report recommended that the project:

- Ensure the development design avoids and minimises the impacts to native vegetation and biodiversity values in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation*;
- Identify any offsets for the unavoidable loss of native vegetation;
- Undertake a targeted flora survey within Tramway road if it is proposed to be impacted by future development. This would confirm the potential presence of threatened flora species such as Daisy Fleabane, but also inform a Protected Flora Licence application; and
- Undertake a targeted survey for Flinders Pygmy Perch in the artificial drain, south of Eel Hole Creek if it is proposed to be impacted by the project.

Targeted surveys for Daisy Fleabane and generally protected flora species were also undertaken, with no instances of either Daisy Fleabane or generally protected flora species surveyed. Design of the BESS is considerate of the artificial drain south of Eel Hole Creek and does not directly impact the potential habitat for threatened fish.

In this context, and based on the relevant legislation and policies, the following recommendations are made:

- To obtain regulatory approval:
 - Submit this report to the Minister for Planning in support of a planning permit application;
- Post approval, subject to regulatory approvals:
 - Engage a zoologist or wildlife handler salvage any wildlife from planted trees prior to their removal;

- Secure appropriate offsets for any approved impacts to native vegetation through an accredited Offset Broker. This includes:
 - 0.01 General Habitat Units;
 - With a minimum Strategic Biodiversity Score of 0.279;
 - Located with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority area or the Latrobe City Council municipality; and
- Prepare a Waterway Revegetation Plan of Eel Hole Creek;
- Prepare a Construction Environment Management Plan (or equivalent) which includes:
 - Protection of retained scattered trees within the study (if any); and
 - Using clean fill (if required);
 - Avoiding downstream and off-site impacts; and
 - Measures to minimise impacts associated with weed introduction and spread targeting noxious weeds such as:
 - African Box-thorn *Lycium ferocissimum*;
 - Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* spp. agg;
 - Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*;
 - Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*; and,
 - Sweet Briar *Rosa rubiginosa*.

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Introduction

Ecolink Consulting Pty Ltd was engaged by ECU Energy Pty Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Assessment at a proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) development site at Parcel PS700402 on Monash Way and multiple proposed transmission line route along Tramway Road and the Marinus Link transmission area, into Hazelwood Terminal Station, Hazelwood North, Victoria (the study area). The Biodiversity Assessment was undertaken to determine the ecological constraints of the study area and to support a planning permit application for the proposed development of the study area. This is the second iteration of the report (Version A), informed by the latest Concept Layout Plan, Version 2.1 dated 5 December 2024.

The assessment addresses the requirements of Clause 52.17 of the Latrobe Planning Scheme. Clause 52.17 requires mapping and assessing the location, extent and quality of native vegetation in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation* (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017). The Biodiversity Assessment also identifies the likely ecological constraints of the study area and recommends mitigation measures and offset requirements based on other relevant legislation and policies, where appropriate.

Therefore, the purpose of the Biodiversity Assessment is to:

- Determine the ecological values of the study area;
- Evaluate the extent and quality of native vegetation within the study area, required under the *Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation* (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017);
- Evaluate any impacts that are likely to occur to any ecological values as a result of the proposed development at the study area; and,
- Make recommendations to avoid or mitigate impacts to identified ecological values, as appropriate.

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Methods

Desktop Assessment

In order to determine the ecological values that have previously been recorded within the study area, and its vicinity, the following databases and literature were consulted:

- The Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) Protected Matters Search Tool to determine Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act), that are modelled to occur in the vicinity of the study area (Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water 2024);
- Planning Maps to identify the planning zones and overlays relating to environmental matters e.g. Vegetation Protection Overlays or Environmental Significance Overlays (Department of Transport and Planning 2024);
- The NatureKit webpage (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2023b) from the Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action (DEECA) to identify the historic and current Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs);
- The Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024f) for records of threatened¹ flora and fauna within three kilometres of the study area;
- Nearmap aerial photography to understand previous land use (Nearmap 2024);
- The Native Vegetation Information Management System (NVIM) to determine biodiversity offset requirements (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024d);
- The 'Weeds of National Significance' database (Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water 2023); and,
- Other relevant legislation and policies (as required).

Site Assessment

A site assessment was undertaken on 31 July 2024 by Consultant Ecologist, Liam McCormack and Project Ecologist Jessica Murphy. Liam and Jessica are suitably qualified and experienced to undertake such assessments and Liam holds a current Vegetation Quality Assessments (Habitat Hectares) Accreditation with DEECA (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024e).

All flora species observed within the study area were recorded, with the exception of planted vegetation that was not considered a 'weed' (i.e. planted vegetation that was not spreading or reproducing). Where a species was not able to be confidently identified in the field, a sample was collected and later identified. Plants were identified to species level wherever possible, however, some plants that were planted, cultivars, hybrids, or plants that did not contain suitable fertile material used for identification were recorded to genus level.

¹ Threatened flora and fauna includes species listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), and the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic).



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Vegetation communities such as EVCs and nationally significant vegetation communities were recorded (if observed) and compared with their corresponding benchmarks or thresholds to ensure that they were accurately assigned.

A list of all fauna species observed within, and immediately surrounding, the study area was produced. This list consists of species seen, heard, or identified by other evidence of their presence (e.g. feathers, scats). Leica 12 X 50 binoculars and call mimicry/playback were used to assist in the identification species.

The species, size (Diameter and Breast Height and Tree Protection Zone) and location of all 'scattered' indigenous trees was recorded using an iPad mini tablet that has an internal Global Positioning System (GPS) and the GIS Pro application (accuracy +/- 5 metres). The presence of hollows and birds' nests was also noted.

The presence of fauna habitat was noted, particularly in relation to potential habitats for threatened species. The greatest amount of time was spent surveying the highest quality fauna habitats (e.g. trees, water bodies, crevices or underground debris) during the assessment.

Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation

The *Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation* (the Guidelines) (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017) are required to be addressed under Clause 52.17 of the Planning Scheme. The Guidelines require that information regarding the biodiversity values of the site were obtained through:

- Site-based information that was measured or observed at a site, including:
 - Extent of native vegetation patches;
 - Large trees;
 - Native vegetation condition assessed in accordance with the *Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual – Guidelines for Applying the Habitat Hectares Scoring Method* (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004);
 - Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC); and
 - Sensitive wetlands and coastal areas.
- Landscape scale information that cannot be measured or observed at the site and includes maps and models procured from DEECA.

The Guidelines require a Habitat Hectare assessment in instances where the impact is to be assessed under the Detailed Assessment Pathway. It was not possible to determine the risk-based pathway for the loss of native vegetation prior to the site assessment, and we therefore opted to complete the Habitat Hectare assessment in accordance with the methodology prescribed within the *Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual – Guidelines for Applying the Habitat Hectares Scoring Method* (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004) where patches² of vegetation were observed.

² A 'patch' is defined as an area with at least 25% cover abundance of perennial native vegetation, or a group (i.e. three or more) trees forming a continuous canopy.

All indigenous vegetation was assessed, and then assigned a quality rating based on the Habitat Hectare score (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004). In addition, the location and species of indigenous 'scattered trees'³, and any 'large trees'⁴ within patches were mapped.

Limitations and Qualifications

The following limitations and qualifications apply to this report:

- The results of the desktop assessment are reliant on data obtained from various databases and other reports. These databases all have internal vetting procedures, however the accuracy of these historical data and some of the results provided within these reports cannot be verified. The desktop assessment does, however, rely on the most accurate data available.
- As with all ecological assessments, a greater survey effort is likely to yield additional flora and fauna records. Where these additional flora and fauna records may alter the recommendations made within this report (e.g. where additional threatened species may utilise habitats within the study area, or where threatened species may be impacted by the proposed development), further assessment has been recommended within this report, depending on the implications of relevant policies and legislation.
- Some flora and fauna species may only be recorded during certain times or seasons (e.g. plants that only contain above-ground biomass and are only visible annually, nocturnal mammals and birds, migratory birds, or fauna identified through seasonal breeding calls such as some frog species).
- The assessors did not gain full access to the northern area of private property, known as the Marinus Link land. The assessment in this area was undertaken as a visual 'over the fence' assessment as shown in Figure 1, utilising binoculars to attempt to assess the vegetation.

On the basis of the above, the author has made an informed decision about the likely presence of threatened species that may be present, or that may utilise habitats within the study area, based on a desktop assessment, a review of the species' biology, and an understanding of the ecological values of the local area.

Despite the limitations to the assessment listed above, the results gained by both a desktop and a field-assessment are adequate to address the purposes of this report.

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³ Scattered trees are defined as a native canopy tree that does not form a patch

⁴ Large trees are defined as meeting the size threshold specified in the bioregional EVC Benchmark

Results

The Study Area

Study Area Description and Land Use History

The study area is located in Hazelwood North, approximately two kilometres north of the town of Churchill and six kilometres south of Morwell. Morwell Opencut Coal Mine and associated Hazelwood Cooling Pond is located approximately 3.3 kilometres to the west of the study area. Remnant and plantation vegetation associated with the Strzelecki Ranges occurs to the south and east. Other land uses in the vicinity of the study area are generally agricultural.

The study area itself included the proposed BESS facility proposed to be located at Parcel 2\PS700402 on Monash Way, and two proposed transmission line routes entering the Hazelwood Terminal Station; one along Tramway Road one at the Marinus Link transmission area. One of these transmission lines is required to connect the BESS facility with the Hazelwood Terminal station in the immediate vicinity of the northern portion of the study area.

The study area is mostly flat. It contains a dwelling and several associated outbuildings, windrows, commercial power equipment, site sheds, carparks and pasture. In the north of the study area, the trees generally occur as plantations, to the south the trees generally occur as windrows along fence lines. Aerial imagery shows that all parts of the study area has previously undergone slashing since 2012, and parts of a wider timber plantation have occurred adjacent the Parcel PS700402 Monash Way part of the study area The plantation within the study area has since been clearcut in 2016 (Nearmap 2024).

Eel Hole Creek occurs near the southern boundary of the study area, however, it is a degraded ephemeral drain containing some moisture during the site assessment. Most underlying moisture, within the local area, has been diverted, east of the study area, into a deeper channelized drain, linear in nature and form, approximately 80 metres south of Eel Creek. Both hydrologic features still occur in the study area, however Eel Hole Creek terminates in a wetland structure on the eastern boundary of Parcel PS700402, whilst the drain continues to run eastward.

Local Planning Controls

The study area is irregular, covering approximately 70 hectares of land. It is zoned Farming Zone Schedule -- 1 and Special Use Zone Schedule – 1 within the Latrobe Planning Scheme. The south of the study area is covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule – 1 (ESO1). The ESO1 protects ecological features and environmental values from urban settlements and coal related infrastructure. No further ecologically relevant overlays such as Vegetation Protection or Significant Landscape Overlays.

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Flora

Flora Communities

The study area is located within the Gippsland Plain bioregion of Victoria. DEECA modelling of the vegetation within the study area suggest it was historically covered by Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) 53: Swamp Scrub, EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland and EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2023b) as listed below:

- EVC 53: Swamp Scrub is described as a '*Closed scrub to 8 m tall at low elevations on alluvial deposits along streams or on poorly drained sites with higher nutrient availability. The EVC is dominated by Swamp Paperbark *Melaleuca ericifolia* (or sometimes Woolly Tea-tree *Leptospermum lanigerum*) which often forms a dense thicket, out-competing other species. Occasional emergent eucalypts may be present. Where light penetrates to ground level, a moss/lichen/liverwort or herbaceous ground cover is often present. Dry variants have a grassy/herbaceous ground layer*' (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024b). EVC 53: Swamp Scrub is listed as Endangered within the bioregion.
- EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland is described as an '*An open, eucalypt woodland to 15 m tall occurring on a number of geologies and soil types. [It] occupies poorly drained, fertile soils on flat or gently undulating plains at low elevations. The understorey consists of a few sparse shrubs over a species-rich grassy and herbaceous ground layer*' (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024b). EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland is listed as Endangered within the bioregion.
- EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest is described as an '*Open forest to 20 m tall often above a heathy shrub layer and a diverse grassy, sedgy and herbaceous ground layer. [It] occurs on lowland plains and old river terraces made up of gravelly sandy clays*' (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024b). EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest is listed as Vulnerable within the bioregion.

Current vegetation modelling, by DEECA, suggests that some EVC 53: Swamp Scrub, EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland and EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest persists within the study area, however, the vegetation observed on site, shows a smaller extent than that which is modelled to remain.

Flora Species

Eighty-seven flora species were recorded during the assessment (excluding the planted trees). This comprised 33 indigenous species, 11 Victorian native species that were not indigenous to the study area and 43 exotic species.

Hazelwood Terminal Station and Road Reserves

Much of the area within Hazelwood Terminal Station and its road reserve consisted of pastures comprised of invasive grasses and environmental weeds. Dominant exotic grasses included species such as Sweet Vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Toowoomba Canary-grass *Phalaris aquatica*, Couch *Cynodon dactylon* and Kikuyu *Cenchrus clandestinus*, as well as environmental weeds, such as

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Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* spp. agg, Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, Rough Sow-thistle *Sonchus asper* and Buck's-horn Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* (Plate 1).

In some areas, groups of trees occurring in dense clusters were noted. The canopy species in these areas consisted of Red Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*, Manna Gum *Eucalyptus viminalis* subsp. *viminalis*, Spotted Gum *Corymbia maculata*, Snow Gum *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, Southern Mahogany *Eucalyptus botryoides*, River Red-gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus ovata*, Silver-leafed Stringybark *Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*, Bog Gum *Eucalyptus kitsoniana*, Sugar Gum *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* and Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora*. Species in the midstorey included Varnish Wattle *Acacia verniciflua*, Ovens Wattle *Acacia pravissima*, Hazel Pomaderris *Pomaderris aspera*, Sallow Wattle *Acacia longifolia*, Giant Honey-myrtle *Melaleuca amarillaris*, Prickly Paperbark *Melaleuca styphelioides*, Swamp Paperbark *Melaleuca ericifolia* and Black Sheoak *Allocasuarina littoralis* (Plate 2).

Within these treed areas the understorey was mostly absent. Species that did occur were usually hardy and invasive species such as Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* subsp. agg., Panic Veldt-grass *Ehrharta erecta*, Common Mouse-eared Chickweed *Cerastium glomeratum* and Flax-leaf Fleabane *Erigeron bonariensis* (Plate 3.).

In ten instances indigenous understorey occurred as degraded remnants or secondary vegetation. Eight patches of native vegetation were recorded to the west of the Hazelwood Terminal Station, and two patches of native vegetation occurred on the eastern side (Plates 4-5). These patches lacked diversity when compared with the EVC Benchmark, and were generally characterised by one or two dominant indigenous species such as Finger Rush *Juncus subsecundus*, Common Wallaby-grass *Rytidosperma caespitosum*, Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra* or Veined Spear-grass *Austrostipa rudis*.

Native trees occurred within and around the Hazelwood Terminal Station, and along its frontage to Tramway Road, mostly in dense clusters. They almost always occurred on swales in rows, with evidence of irrigation systems and tree guards (Plates 6-7). The suite of Gums *Eucalypt* species that occurred in these areas was often highly diverse, non-indigenous and inappropriate to the historic EVC mapping and underlying geology. In the case of two species, River Red-gum and Swamp Gum, were the only canopy species consistent with the expected EVCs and geology. However, the oldest and largest of these specimens observed on site were consistent with a cohort that included species such as Spotted Gum and Southern Mahogany which are not indigenous to the area (Plate 8). The midstorey of these areas consisted of a younger cohort of *Eucalypts*, as well as a range of Wattles *Acacia* spp. and paperbarks *Melaleuca* spp. Many of these trees and shrubs were also planted on swales and retained tree guards and irrigation. Nearmap aerial imagery shows a former plantation that did occur adjacent and at times within the study area to 2012, it is likely that all trees within the Hazelwood Terminal Station and its Tramway Road frontage were planted specimens retained from a former plantation (Nearmap 2024)..

A row of Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon* occurred on an artificial berm to the south-west of the Hazelwood Terminal Station. These trees were, in a straight line and were not remnant (Plate 9).



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Tramway Road

The study area included a span of Tramway Road, south of the Hazelwood Terminal Station frontage, but north of the Parcel PS700402 Monash Way frontage. This linear and narrow area mostly consisted of invasive pasture grasses such as Toowoomba Canary-grass, Sweet Vernal-grass, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Kikuyu within the road reserves. At times windrows of Monterey Cypress *Cupressus macrocarpa*, Southern Blue-gum *Eucalyptus globulus* subsp. *globulus* and Blackwood were observed. These trees were planted in straight rows along fence lines and are unlikely to be remnant (Plate 10).

600 Tramway Road

Direct access to the 600 Tramway Road was not available on the day of the assessment, the assessors surveyed the composition of vegetation from the northern and southern fences with binoculars.

Of the vegetation directly observable from the fence lines, only pasture grass species such as Annual Meadowgrass *Poa annua*, Yorkshire Fog, Toowoomba Canary-grass, Kikuyu and Couch could be observed (Plate 11). Some broadleaf weeds such as Ribwort *Plantago lanceolata* and White Clover *Trifolium repens* var. *repens* were also observed.

No distinctive features of indigenous grasses were observed in the distance, such as unique colouration or structure of seed heads.

600 Tramway Road was also being grazed by cattle and the texture and colouration of the vegetation in the distance was consistent with the other exotic cattle pasture seen throughout the study area.

Parcel PS700402 Monash Way

The study area included the entirety of Parcel PS700402, which mainly consisted of active cattle pasture (Plate 12). Most of this parcel comprised fields and pasture of invasive grasses such as Kikuyu, Couch, Sweet Vernal-grass, Yorkshire Fog, *Paspalum dilatatum*, Annual Meadowgrass and Toowoomba Canary Grass. Broadleaf weeds included Ribwort, White Clover and Flatweed *Hypochaeris radicata*.

Eel Hole Creek historically has run through the site, it appears to be an overflow from the Hazelwood Cooling Pond, servicing the immediate catchment. The creek largely occurs as a fold in the landscape and rarely contains running water, instead retaining some underlying moisture within the soil. It appears to terminate at the eastern boundary of Parcel PS700402 in a large semi-wetland structure (Plate 13).

Approximately 80 metres south of Eel Hole Creek, along the southern boundary of Parcel PS700402 an open drain occurs, between Monash Way and Tramway Road. This drain diverts the water from Eel Hole Creek just west of its underpass of Monash Way and carries it, parallel to the creek across the study area, before the creek terminates due to lack of water. This artificial drain then continues on, under tramway road, before reaching a confluence with Bennetts Creek just east of the study area.

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This drain has been advertised as part of a revegetation project and is lined with straight rows of River Red Gum, Eurabbie *Eucalyptus globulus* subsp. *bicostata*, Blackwood and Black Wattle *Acacia mearnsii* (Plate 14). The drain at times supported specimens of Finger Rush but in isolation and not at a cover abundance high enough to be classified as a patch.

Along fence lines other windrows occurred, mostly consisting of either Eurabbie or Monterrey Cypress (Plate 15). In one instance a gap within a windrow, was replaced with a relatively young specimen of Bog Gum (Plate 16).

Three patches of vegetation occur at the eastern reach of Eel Hole Creek. These patches consisted of Finger Rush and Common Reed *Phragmites australis*, and their extent, at times, reached into the Tramway Road road reserve (Plate 17).

Vegetation Quality Assessment

All patches scored poorly with Habitat Hectare Scores ranging from 8 to 9 (out of 100). The patches lacked Large Tree, Canopy, Log and Recruitment components compared against the EVC Benchmark (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024b) (Table 1).

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Table 1. Habitat Hectare assessment results

Patch			1	2	3	4	5
Bioregion			Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain
EVC name			Plains Grassy Forest	Plains Grassy Forest	Plains Grassy Forest	Plains Grassy Woodland	Plains Grassy Woodland
EVC number			151	151	151	55	55
Conservation rating within bioregion			Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Endangered	Endangered
Assessment Criteria		Maximum Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score
Site Condition	a. Large old trees	10	0	0	0	0	0
	b. Canopy cover	5	0	0	0	0	0
	c. Understorey	25	5	5	5	5	5
	d. Lack of weeds	15	0	0	0	0	0
	e. Recruitment	10	0	0	0	0	0
	f. Organic litter	5	2	2	2	2	2
	g. Logs	5	0	0	0	0	0
	h. Total (sum of a-g)	75	7	7	7	7	7
Standardise Score			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Landscape Value	j. Patch size	10	1	1	1	1	1
	k. Neighbourhood	10	0	0	0	0	0
	l. Distance to core	5	0	0	0	0	0
m. Habitat Score (sum of h-l)		100	8	8	8	8	8
n. Habitat score out of 1 (m÷100)			0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Size (ha)			0.228	0.012	0.017	0.025	0.036
Large Old Trees (LOTs)*			0	0	0	0	0

Table Note:

*Large Tree DBH is 80cm DBH within EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland and 70cm within EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest

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Biodiversity Assessment, Kilmore-Lancefield Road, Kilmore

Table 1. Habitat Hectare assessment results (cont'd)

Patch			6	7	8	9	10
Bioregion			Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain
EVC name			Plains Grassy Woodland	Plains Grassy Woodland	Plains Grassy Woodland	Plains Grassy Woodland	Plains Grassy Woodland
EVC number			55	55	55	55	55
Conservation rating within bioregion			Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered
Assessment Criteria		Maximum Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score
Site Condition	a. Large old trees	10	0	0	0	0	0
	b. Canopy cover	5	0	0	0	0	0
	c. Understorey	25	5	5	5	5	5
	d. Lack of weeds	15	0	0	0	0	0
	e. Recruitment	10	0	0	0	1	1
	f. Organic litter	5	2	2	2	2	2
	g. Logs	5	0	0	0	0	0
	h. Total (sum of a-g)	75	7	7	7	8	8
Standardised Score			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Landscape Value	j. Patch size	10	1	1	1	1	1
	k. Neighbourhood	10	0	0	0	0	0
	l. Distance to core	5	0	0	0	0	0
m. Habitat Score (sum of h-l)		100	8	8	8	9	9
n. Habitat score out of 1 (m÷100)			0.08	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.09
Size (ha)			0.016	0.066	0.063	0.141	0.049
Large Old Trees (LOTs)			0	0	0	0	0

Table Note:

*Large Tree DBH is 80cm DBH within EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland and 70cm within EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest

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Biodiversity Assessment, Kilmore-Lancefield Road, Kilmore

Table 1. Habitat Hectare assessment results (cont'd)

Patch			11	12	13	14	15
Bioregion			Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain	Gippsland Plain
EVC name			Plains Grassy Woodland	Plains Grassy Woodland	Swamp Scrub	Swamp Scrub	Swamp Scrub
EVC number			55	55	53	53	53
Conservation rating within bioregion			Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered	Endangered
Assessment Criteria		Maximum Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score	Patch Score
Site Condition	a. Large old trees	10	0	0	NA	NA	NA
	b. Canopy cover	5	0	0	0	0	0
	c. Understorey	25	5	5	5	5	5
	d. Lack of weeds	15	0	0	0	0	0
	e. Recruitment	10	0	0	0	0	0
	f. Organic litter	5	2	2	2	2	2
	g. Logs	5	0	0	0	0	0
	h. Total (sum of a-g)	75	7	7	7	7	7
Standardised Score			NA	NA	(x 1.15) 8	(x 1.15) 8	(x 1.15) 8
Landscape Value	j. Patch size	10	1	1	1	1	1
	k. Neighbourhood	10	0	0	0	0	0
	l. Distance to core	5	0	0	0	0	0
m. Habitat Score (sum of h-l)		100	8	8	9	9	9
n. Habitat score out of 1 (m÷100)			0.08	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.09
Size (ha)			0.040	0.040	0.354	0.151	0.057
Large Old Trees (LOTs)			0	0	0	0	0

Table Note:

*Large Tree DBH is 80cm DBH within EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland and 70cm within EVC 151: Plains Grassy Forest

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Tree Assessment

No indigenous scattered trees were present within the study area.

Threatened Flora Species and Ecological Communities

Eight threatened flora species have previously been recorded within three kilometres of the study area (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024f). None of these threatened flora species are predicted to occur within the study area based on the Protected Matters Search Tool (Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water 2024). A consolidated list of these threatened flora species, as well as their conservation status under the EPBC Act, the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Vic) (FFG Act) Threatened List (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024c), their preferred habitats and the likelihood of occurrence for each species is provided in Table A3.

Three threatened flora species have previously been recorded within the study area, and four were recorded during the current assessment: Bog Gum, Sticky Wattle, Spotted Gum and Giant Honey-myrtle. These same species were identified during a recently completed Targeted Flora Survey (Ecolink Consulting Pty Ltd 2024).

Bog Gum is listed as critically endangered in Victoria under the FFG Act. Bog Gum typically occurs at at-coastal sites, such as Wilsons Promontory, Apollo Bay and the Glenelg-Portland area and the study area falls north of the species natural range (Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne 2024). Bog Gum is readily available for purchase and is often utilised horticulturally, and it is concluded that the Bog Gum trees within the study area have been planted.

Sticky Wattle is listed as vulnerable in Victoria under the FFG Act. Sticky Wattle is indigenous to the local area, occurring in the Upper McAllister River and the Strzelecki Ranges, although the closest naturally occurring record was observed 13 kilometres to the east and the heart of the species range occurs 30 kilometres to the south-east (Atlas of Living Australia 2024). The study area does not provide damp forest habitats which are suitable for this species. The species is widely utilised horticulturally due to its quick growth habit and pendulous foliage, and it is concluded that the Sticky Wattle present has been planted.

The natural range of Spotted Gum in Victoria is limited to a lone population south of Buchan. It is also indigenous to New South Wales and Queensland. Spotted Gum is extensively cultivated and planted as an ornamental tree throughout Victoria. Spotted Gum is listed as vulnerable in Victoria under the FFG Act however on the basis that the trees have been planted, no further consideration of this listing is made. The study area does not provide habitat to naturally occurring populations of Spotted Gum.

Giant Honey-myrtle is listed as Endangered in Victoria under the FFG Act. The natural range of Giant Honey-myrtle in Victoria is limited to a population in far East Gippsland and an island offshore from Wilsons Promontory (Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne 2024). It also occurs in New South Wales. Giant Honey-myrtle is extensively cultivated and planted as an ornamental and windrow tree throughout Victoria, and it is concluded that this species has been planted within the study area. Giant Honey-myrtle was naturally recruiting from parent plants.



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In 2019, a record of Daisy Fleabane *Erigeron conyzoides* was made within the study area and reported to the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas. It is an unverified record by was attributed to Biosis Research during a targeted survey of Tramway Road (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024f). This species is typically confined to the Victorian alpine regions, and generally not the Gippsland Plain bioregion. This species was not recorded during the current assessment. A targeted survey for this species, as well as other threatened species has been completed. (Ecolink Consulting Pty Ltd 2024). completed by Ecolink Consulting (2024) failed to locate this plant and it is concluded that this individual is no longer likely to occur within the study area.

Strzelecki Gum *Eucalyptus strzeleckii* has been recorded approximately two kilometres south of the study area in 2023, this record notes that the eighty specimens observed were cultivated (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024f). The species is endemic to the area and would have likely been present historically. Despite this no specimens were observed on site, and given all trees observed on site were parts of plantations or windrows it is unlikely that naturally occurring specimens of Strzelecki Gum remain within the study area.

High levels of modification to the study area reduces the potential of further threatened flora species occurring. It is highly unlikely that the study area provides significant habitat to any other naturally occurring threatened flora species due to its extensive history of land modification and vegetation clearance.

The modelling used by the Protected Matters Search Tool suggests that one nationally significant vegetation community may also occur within the study area being Gippsland Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis* subsp. *mediana*) Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland (Critically Endangered). The vegetation within the study area is not representative of this threatened ecological community, based on its topography, EVC classification and the observed species mix and weediness.

Fauna

Fauna Species and Habitats

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Twenty fauna species were recorded within the study area during the current assessment. This comprised sixteen birds (three introduced; thirteen native), one native amphibian, two native mammals and one invasive mammal. All these species are common to the area. No reptiles were recorded during the assessment, although it is likely that skinks and snakes would occur within the study area, amongst areas containing understorey vegetation and organic litter or debris. It is expected that a greater diversity of fauna species would be recorded with a greater amount of time on-site.

The open areas that comprise much of the study area are likely to provide habitat to generalist species, such as Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen* and Noisy Miner *Manorina melanocephala*, which are widespread and common species throughout open paddocks throughout Victoria. This habitat has low ecological value as it is generally homogenous and lacks important components of structure, floral diversity and fauna resources that a diverse range of species might exploit. Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans* were observed utilising the Gum species for habitat. Whilst smaller, less gregarious birds such as Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus* and Willy Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*



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were observed utilising the treed areas for cover. Tree hollows observed in some of the larger trees provide nesting opportunities for birds and roost habitats for bats. It is probable that arboreal mammals such as Common Ringtail Possum *Pseudocheirus peregrinus*, Common Brushtail Possum *Trichosurus vulpecula* and bats may utilise the trees.

Some moist depressions provided habitat to Common Eastern Froglet *Crinia signifera*, which was heard calling from these areas. White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica* was observed hunting amongst these areas. A specimen of Black Kite *Milvus migrans* overflew the study area, it appeared to be crossing from a perch near the southern drain to hunting grounds amongst the adjacent pasture.

Evidence of Common Wombat *Vombatus ursinus* diggings were observed to the north of the Hazelwood Terminal Station. Similarly, this area hosted a small mob of Eastern Grey Kangaroo *Macropus giganteus*, that were grazing the mown areas, before retreating to the plantations for cover.

Threatened Fauna Species and Communities

Five threatened fauna species have previously been recorded within three kilometres of the study area (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024f) (Figure 2). A further 31 threatened fauna species are predicted to occur within the study area, based on the Protected Matters Search Tool (Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water 2024). A consolidated list of these threatened fauna species, as well as their conservation status under the EPBC Act and the FFG Act Threatened List (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2023a), their preferred habitats and the likelihood of occurrence for each species is provided in Table A4.

There are no historical records of threatened fauna species within the study area, and no threatened fauna species were recorded within the study area during the current assessment (Table A4, Figure 2). Many of the species modelled to occur by the Protected Matters Search Tool, and recorded within the three-kilometre buffer area, are species that are dependent on habitats that are not provided by the study area such as Southern Greater Glider *Petauroides volans*. None of these species are likely to be impacted by the proposed development of the study area (Table A4).

Flinders Pygmy Perch *Nannoperca* sp. 1 is represented highly in records within three kilometres of the study area. Despite this, the only true aquatic habitat, featuring connectivity, surveyed within the study area, was the artificial drain south of Eel Hole Creek. This drain provides the only aquatic habitat within the study area, and provided poor quality habitats for fish. At the time of the assessment, the rate of flow within this drain was high, which is sub-optimal for Flinders Pygmy Perch. However, given the high numbers of records within the local area, and the potential to connect with other source populations containing preferred habitats, this species cannot be discounted from occurring within the study area. Targeted surveys for this species are recommended if the artificial drain, south of Eel Hole Creek, is proposed to be impacted by the project.

Eastern Great Egret *Ardea modesta* has two recent records within three kilometres of the study area. The species is likely to be an occasional visitor or may opportunistically forage at the aquatic habitats within the study area, as it would with other dams, waterways or waterbodies within the landscape. However, this species is unlikely to breed within the study area, and development is unlikely to significantly impact this species. .

The study area may provide foraging opportunities for Grey-headed Flying-fox *Pteropus poliocephalus* or air space over which some threatened species, such as White-throated Needletails *Hirundapus caudacutus*, may fly on occasions when moving around the landscape. However, the study area itself does not provide important resources to either of these species, and the development of the study area is unlikely to impact these species.

No fauna communities listed under the Victorian FFG Act were recorded within the study area.

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Discussion

A detailed summary of the legislation that was considered when preparing this report is provided in Appendix 2. The discussion presented in this section of the report does not reiterate information provided in Appendix 2, but summarises the results and recommendations arising from the interpretation of this legislation.

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)

The desktop assessment identified 16 threatened flora and 36 threatened fauna species, as well as one threatened ecological community, listed under the EPBC Act, which may occur within the study area.

Almost all of the EPBC Act-listed flora and fauna species that were identified during the desktop assessment, are, in fact, unlikely to occur due to the absence of suitable habitats or the degraded nature of habitats within the study area. There is a moderate likelihood that Grey-headed Flying-foxes forage at the study area or that White-throated Needletails fly over the study area, however the proposed development is unlikely to significantly impact either of these species, because neither of these species are likely to rely on the habitat within the study area for important phases of their lifecycle.

The limited and degraded native vegetation within the study area does not meet thresholds to classify as any of the threatened ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act.

On this basis, a referral to the Commonwealth DCCEEW is not recommended for the project.

Environmental Effects Act 1978 (Vic)

The *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) establishes a process to assess the environmental impacts of a project. If applicable, the Act requires that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) be prepared by the proponent. The proposed development of the study area as a precinct may warrant a Referral to the state Minister for Planning to determine where there is a significant impact to flora and fauna pursuant to the *Environmental Effects Act 1978*, and whether an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required.

The referral criteria for the 'individual' and 'combination of' potential environmental effects is well documented in the *Ministerial Guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Environmental Effects under the Environmental Effects Act 1978* (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2007). An assessment of the likely project impacts against the referral criteria of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) is provided in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, a referral to the Minister is not required for the current project.

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Table 2. Assessment of the project against the individual potential environmental effects referral criteria of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic).

Referral Criteria	Referral Criteria Met	Response
Potential clearing of 10 hectares or more of native vegetation from an area that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is of an Ecological Vegetation Class identified in the bioregion; or is, or is likely to be, of very high conservation significance; and is not authorised under an approved Forest Management Plan or Fire Protection Plan. 	No	Impacts to native vegetation have been calculated at 0.048 ha. Vegetation is otherwise not considered to be of very high conservation significance.
Potential long-term loss of a significant proportion of known remaining habitat or population of a threatened species within Victoria.	No	Although several threatened flora and fauna species have been recorded within the vicinity of the study area, none are likely to be significantly impacted by the proposed development.
Potential long-term change to the ecological character of a wetland listed under the Ramsar Convention or in 'A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia' (Environment Australia 2001).	No	The development will not impact any Ramsar wetlands or Wetlands of National Importance
Potential extensive or major effects on the health or biodiversity of aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems, over the long term.	No	The development will not impact the health or biodiversity of aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems, over the long term.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)

The desktop assessment identified 16 flora species and 36 fauna species listed under the FFG Act that may occur within the study area (Tables A3 and A4). As stated above, there is a moderate likelihood that some mobile animals, with large home ranges, may utilise or fly over the study area on occasion (Eastern Great Egret, White-throated Needletails or Grey-headed Flying Foxes). However, the development of the study area is unlikely to significantly impact any threatened species.

There is a low to moderate likelihood that Flinders Pygmy Perch may occur within the study area on when Eel Hole Creek is retaining water. Targeted surveys for this species were recommended if the artificial drain south of Eel Hole Creek was proposed to be impacted, directly, or indirectly, by the project. The latest Concept Layout Plan (Version 2.1 dated 5 December 2024) shows that the creek will be avoided and further surveys are not recommended. Indirect impacts are proposed to be managed in accordance with an approved Construction Environment Management Plan.

The FFG Act, which was amended in 2021, contains an obligation or duty on public authorities and ministers to consider potential biodiversity impacts when exercising their functions. The FFG Act



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requires ministers and public authorities (including Councils) reasonably consider the objectives of the Act where projects may impact upon biodiversity, so far as is consistent with the proper exercising of their functions. It is therefore anticipated that regulators (DEECA and Latrobe City Council) will give due consideration to the FFG Act when considering the approval for the project.

Flora listed as 'Protected' under the FFG Act includes three categories:

1. Flora listed as 'threatened' on the FFG Act (discussed above);
2. Members of communities which are listed as threatened on the FFG Act; and
3. Declared Protected Flora.

The 'incidental take' of declared flora taxa within these categories may require a permit from the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), as discussed below. The FFG Act provides two different categories for declared flora taxa: 'generally protected flora' and 'restricted use protected flora'. These categories can include whole families or genera. 'Generally protected flora' includes all plants from the family Orchidaceae (i.e. orchids) and 'Restricted use protected flora' includes, for example, most species of genus *Acacia* (wattles), most species of family *Asteraceae* (daisies), family *Ericaceae* (heaths), all of family *Polypodiopsida* (ferns) except Austral Bracken *Pteridium esculentum*, and all genus *Thysanotus* (fringe-lilies) among other species and groups (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024a).

A Permit is required for the removal of 'generally protected flora' from public land from DEECA in development situations. An action is exempt from requiring a Permit to take 'generally protected flora' from private land, where the flora is being taken by the landowner, or with the permission of the landowner (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024a). A Permit is not required from DEECA for the incidental take of 'restricted use protected flora' from public land.

A Permit to Take Protected Flora would be required for the removal of the naturally recruiting (not planted) Giant Honey-myrtle plants occurring within the Tramway Road road reserve. Two Black Wattles Black Wattle *Acacia mearnsii* were also recorded within the Tramway Road road reserve. These trees are listed as Protected Flora (Restricted Use), which do not require a Permit to Take prior to their approved removal. Planted trees are exempt from requiring a permit prior to their removal. In any case, consistent with best practice, the project does not require the removal of any vegetation within the Tramway Road road reserve, and a Permit to take Protected Flora is not required for the project.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)

Due to the presence of native vegetation within the study area, the proposed development would require a planning permit from the Latrobe City Council under Clause 52.17 prior to the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2023c). The applicant is required to demonstrate how it applied the three-step approach to avoid, minimise and offset impacts to native vegetation (discussed below).

The ESO1 that covers the south of the study area seeks to protect ecological features and environmental values from urban settlements and coal related infrastructure. The presence of the

ESO1 over Eel Hole Creek and the southern drain indicates a natural feature that should be avoided, and buffered from proposed coal-related infrastructure.

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (Vic)

Primary considerations of the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (Vic) relate to soil and water conservation, as well as the management of pest plants and animals. Five weed species that are listed as 'noxious' within the West Gippsland Catchment Management Area were present within the study area (Table A1, Appendix 1). These weeds include:

African Box-thorn *Lycium ferocissimum*; Blackberry, Ragwort, Spear Thistle and Sweet Briar *Rosa rubiginosa* which are all listed as 'Regionally Controlled' within the catchment. The proponent is required to 'control the spread' of all 'regionally controlled' species from their property.

African Box-thorn and Blackberry are also listed as 'Weeds of National Significance', although there are no additional legislative obligations to manage weeds under this listing.

The project should aim to remove these plants when construction commences, and ensure they are removed during the future landscaping and maintenance of the study area. It is expected that weed management would form part of best practice land management and *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (Vic). As a minimum, this should include:

- Controlling weeds prior to the commencement of works, during works and after works are complete;
- Prepare a Waterway Revegetation Plan of Eel Hole Creek; and
- Avoiding downstream and off-site impacts through erosion and sediment control measures, particularly near the drainage line and Eel Hole Creek at the south of the study area.

Wildlife Act 1975 (Vic)

It is likely that some locally common species of fauna will be displaced by the proposed development. Furthermore, there remains a low likelihood that animals may be accidentally injured when disturbing soil and removing vegetation. All native vertebrate wildlife is protected under the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic), and therefore contractors must use due care when removing vegetation and fill from the study area. It is recommended that a zoologist or wildlife handler salvage any wildlife from trees prior to their removal (if required).

Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation

The Three-step Approach

Applicants who wish to remove native vegetation must generally demonstrate how the application meets the three-step approach to:

1. Avoid the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation;
2. Minimise impacts from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation that cannot be avoided; and

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3. Provide an offset to compensate for the biodiversity impact from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

Avoidance and Minimisation Statement

Avoidance is generally demonstrated through appropriate development design.

The previous iteration of the report recommended that, where practicable:

- Development design is considerate of the native vegetation and that the development (including roads and infrastructure) be sited away from the highest quality native vegetation where possible;
- When considering the removal of vegetation, it is recommended on the basis of improved ecological outcome that the plantation trees within the study area are preferentially retained over exotic pasture;
- Any retained trees, inclusive of their Tree Protection Zone, be avoided wherever safe and practicable as recommended in the arborist report;
- Retained trees include protection of the Tree Protection Zone as per the *Australian Standards for the Protection of Trees on Development Sites* (Standards Australia 2009);
- Any tree pruning for the proposed development should be undertaken by a suitably qualified arborist, and should not exceed 30% of the overall tree canopy;
- Vegetation which is to be retained is protected from construction activities, in accordance with a Construction Environment Management Plan;
- Sediment, erosion and pollution control measures, in accordance with the EPA Guidelines (EPA Victoria 1991; EPA Victoria 1996), are incorporated in the Construction Environment Management Plan to avoid indirect impacts to downstream/downhill areas of greater ecological significance; and,

In response, the current project has attempted to avoid native vegetation wherever practicable, as shown on the Cogency (2024) Concept Layout Plan Version 2.1 dated 5 December 2024, and replicated on Figure 1 of this report. Vegetation associated with Tramway Road will generally be avoided as the powerline connection will be located along private property to the north of the BESS facility. However, an access track is required from tramway Road into the facility, which will result in the unavoidable loss of some vegetation located in Patch 13. Due to the extent of Patch 13, an alternative location for this road, which avoids impacts to native vegetation, is not available.

The project also requires powerline connection to the Hazelwood Terminal Station. A wide 80 metre powerline easement is nominated to allow some flexibility of construction personnel to identify and work within their most desirable location (Figure 1). It may result in the partial loss of Patch 10, although the applicant is committed to avoiding this vegetation wherever possible during the construction phase of the project.

The project was not the subject of any strategic level planning, but the project has considered local, state and Commonwealth policies and legislation. All of the works proposed are necessary to create essential infrastructure for the proposed development. No further opportunities exist to avoid and minimise the impacts of the project to native vegetation and biodiversity values.

Offsets

Offsets for the partial removal of Patches 10 and 13 have been determined by generating a Native Vegetation Removal report using the Native Vegetation Information Management system (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024d) (Appendix 3).

The Native Vegetation Removal report uses the data collected during the current assessment and modelled vegetation quality scores to determine offset requirements. The Native Vegetation Removal report also includes the species specific offset test, which determines if the proposed vegetation removal will have a proportional impact on any Victorian rare or threatened species habitat above a specific offset threshold, which is set at 0.005 per cent of total habitat for each species. The species specific offset test for the proposed vegetation removal confirmed that species specific offsets would not be required (Appendix 3). The results of the Native Vegetation Removal report are summarised below (Table 3).

Table 3. Offset requirements for removal of impacted native vegetation within the study area.

Offset Parameter	Result
Location Category	Location 1
Assessment Pathway	Basic Assessment Pathway
Total Extent Removed	0.048 hectares
General Offset Requirements	0.01 General Habitat Units
Minimum Strategic Biodiversity Score	0.279
Offset Location	West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) or within the Latrobe City Council municipality
Tree Offset	0 Large Trees

It is expected that offsets will be achieved through a third-party offset, through a vegetation broker, as securing the offsets on site is not practicable. We have confirmed that these offsets are readily available at multiple sites, with multiple brokers of the Native Vegetation Credit Register (Appendix 4). Ecolink Consulting can further assist with securing these offsets if required.

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Plates



Plate 1. Much of the area surrounding the Hazelwood Terminal Station consisted of slashed paddocks (30 July 2024).



Plate 2. Midstorey within the Hazelwood Terminal Station tree areas consisted of *Melaleucas*, *Acacias* and non-native *Pinus* species (30 July 2024).

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Plate 3. The understorey in the treed areas was dominated by Panic Veldt-grass *Ehrharta erecta* (30 July 2024).



Plate 4. Some indigenous grasses occurred to the west of Hazelwood Terminal Station (30 July 2024).

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Plate 5. Some remnants occurred on the eastern side of Hazelwood Terminal Station, outside of the treed areas (30 July 2024).



Plate 6. Many of the treed areas occurred in straight rows, atop swales (30 July 2024).

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Plate 7. Tree guards were observed on many trees within the study area (30 July 2024).



Plate 8. Where indigenous tree species occurred such as these Swamp Gums (Background), they were always part of a cohort of similar sized non-indigenous tree species such as the Spotted Gum (Foreground) (30 July 2024).

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Plate 9. A short row of Blackwoods and Black Wattles occurred on an artificial berm to the south of the Hazelwood Terminal Station (30 July 2024).



Plate 10. Most of the vegetation along Tramway Road consisted of windrows of Monterrey Cypress and Southern Blue-gum (30 July 2024).

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Plate 11. The Marinus Link land was surveyed from the north and south fence lines (30 July 2024).



Plate 12. The southern portion of the study area was pasture grazed by cattle (30 July 2024).

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Plate 13. The artificial drain, south of Eel Hole Creek was lined with two rows of planted trees (30 July 2024).

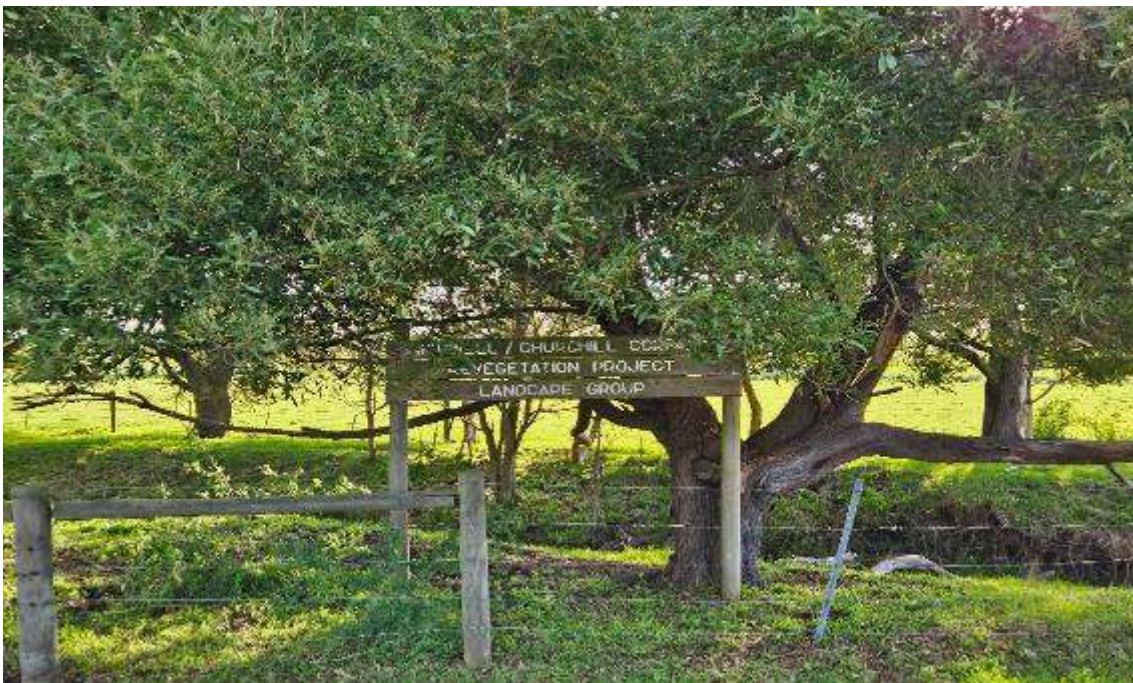


Plate 14. A sign designating the area around the artificial drain as a revegetation project (30 July 2024).

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Plate 15. One of the windrows within the southern property, mostly consisting of Eurabbie (30 July 2024).



Plate 16. A Bog Gum occurring between the Eurabbie specimens (30 July 2024).

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Plate 17. In the east, the remnant of Eel Hole Creek supports some indigenous, semi aquatic Rushes (30 July 2024).

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Figures

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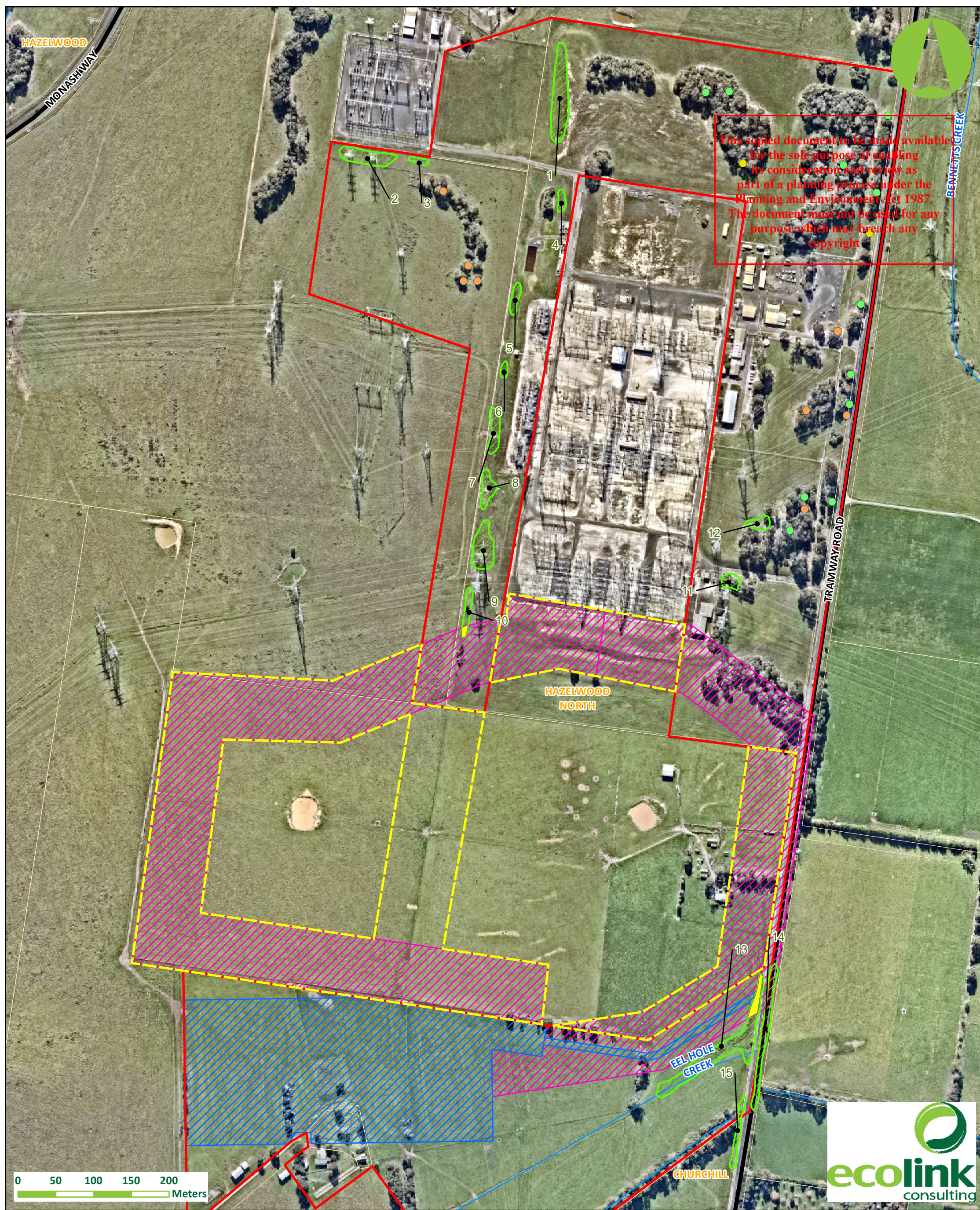


Figure 1: Results of the current assessment

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Legend

Study Area

- Access Provided
- Over-the-fence Assessment
- BESS Area and Access Track
- Transmission Corridor (80m)
- Patches of Native Vegetation



Planted Threatened Species

- Bog Gum
- Giant Honey-myrtle
- Spotted Gum
- Sticky Wattle
- Impacted Vegetation

















Tramway Road, Hazelwood North,
Victoria

Legend

-  Study Area
-  3km Study Area Buffer

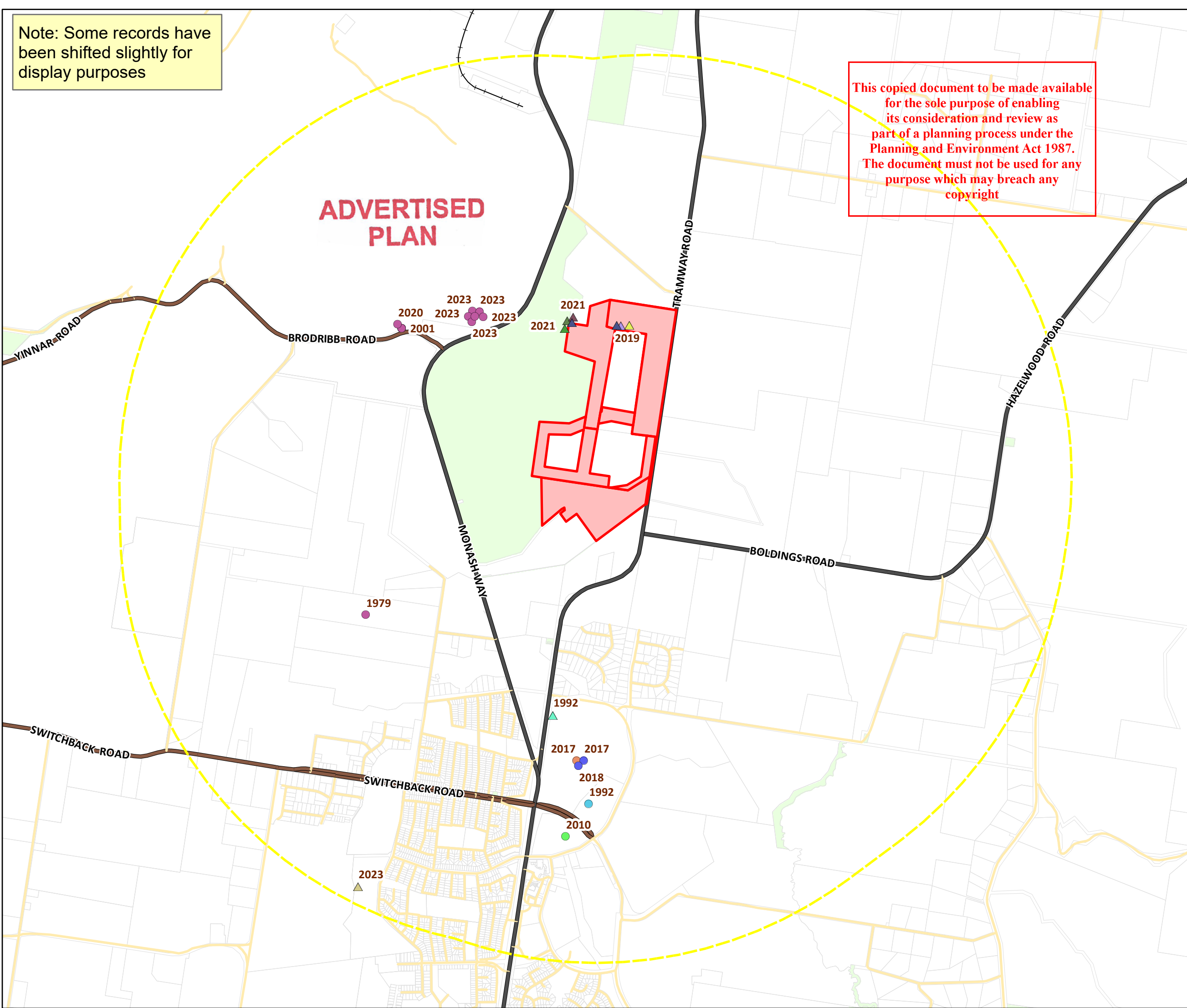
Common Name

-  Caspian Tern
-  Eastern Great Egret
-  Lewin's Rail
-  Glossy Grass Skink
-  Flinders Pygmy Perch
-  Bog Gum
-  Daisy Fleabane
-  Giant Honey-myrtle
-  Matted Flax-lily
-  Spotted Gum
-  Sticky Wattle
-  Strzelecki Gum
-  Yarra Gum
-  Public Land



Note: Some records have been shifted slightly for display purposes

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Flora and Fauna Tables

Table A1. Flora species recorded within the study area

Origin	Common Name	Scientific Name	Weeds of National Significance	Noxious Weeds Classification
*	African Box-thorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>	Yes	Controlled
	Annual Fireweed	<i>Senecio glomeratus</i>		
*	Annual Meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>	-	-
*	Aster-weed	<i>Symphyotrichum subulatum</i>	-	-
*	Bastard's Fumitory	<i>Fumaria bastardii</i>	-	-
	Black Sheoak	<i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>	-	-
#	Black Wattle	<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	-	-
*	Blackberry	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> spp. agg.	Yes	Controlled
	Blackwood	<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	-	-
	Blue Pigroot	<i>Sisyrinchium iridifolium</i>		
cr	Bog Gum	<i>Eucalyptus kitsoniana</i>	-	-
	Bristly Wallaby-grass	<i>Rytidosperma setaceum</i>	-	-
*	Brown-top Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	-	-
*	Buck's-horn Plantain	<i>Plantago coronopus</i>	-	-
*	Cape Weed	<i>Arctotheca calendula</i>	-	-
*	Clustered Dock	<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	-	-
*	Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	-	-
	Common Blown-grass	<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i> s.l.	-	-
*	Common Centaury	<i>Centaureum erythraea</i>	-	-
	Common Cudweed	<i>Euchiton involucratus</i>	-	-
*	Common Mouse-ear Chickweed	<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>	-	-
*	Common Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	-	-
	Common Spike-sedge	<i>Eleocharis acuta</i>	-	-
	Common Wallaby-grass	<i>Rytidosperma caespitosum</i>	-	-
*	Cootamundra Wattle	<i>Acacia baileyana</i>	-	-
	Cotton Fireweed	<i>Senecio quadridentatus</i>	-	-
#	Couch	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	-	-
*	Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	-	-
#	Eurabbie	<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> subsp. <i>bicostata</i>	-	-
	Finger Rush	<i>Juncus subsecundus</i>	-	-
*	Flatweed	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	-	-
*	Flaxleaf Fleabane	<i>Erigeron bonariensis</i>	-	-
*	Galenia	<i>Aizoon pubescens</i>	-	-

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Origin	Common Name	Scientific Name	Weeds of National Significance	Native Plant Species
en #	Giant Honey-myrtle	<i>Melaleuca armillaris</i> subsp. <i>armillaris</i>	-	-
	Hairy Willow-herb	<i>Epilobium hirtigerum</i>	-	-
	Hazel Pomaderris	<i>Pomaderris aspera</i>	-	-
	Hop Wattle	<i>Acacia stricta</i>	-	-
	Jersey Cudweed	<i>Laphangium luteoalbum</i>	-	-
	Kangaroo Grass	<i>Themeda triandra</i>	-	-
*	Kikuyu	<i>Cenchrus clandestinus</i>	-	-
	Knead Wallaby-grass	<i>Rytidosperma geniculatum</i>	-	-
	Manna Gum	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	-	-
*	Monterey Cypress	<i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i>	-	-
*	Onion Grass	<i>Romulea rosea</i>	-	-
#	Ovens Wattle	<i>Acacia pravissima</i>	-	-
*	Pale Pigeon-grass	<i>Setaria pumila</i> subsp. <i>pumila</i>	-	-
	Pale Rush	<i>Juncus pallidus</i>	-	-
*	Pampas Grass	<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>	-	-
*	Panic Veldt-grass	<i>Ehrharta erecta</i>	-	-
*	Paspalum	<i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>	-	-
*	Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	-	-
	Prickly Moses	<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	-	-
*	Prickly Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca styphelioides</i>	-	-
*	Ragwort	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	-	Controlled
#	Red Ironbark	<i>Eucalyptus tricarpa</i>	-	-
*	Ribwort	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	-	-
	River Red-gum	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>	-	-
*	Rough Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i> s.l.	-	-
#	Sallow Wattle	<i>Acacia longifolia</i> subsp. <i>longifolia</i>	-	-
	Sheep's Burr	<i>Acaena echinata</i>	-	-
	Silver-leaf Stringybark	<i>Eucalyptus cephalocarpa</i>	-	-
	Small Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum hyssopifolia</i>	-	-
*	Small-flower Mallow	<i>Malva parviflora</i>	-	-
#	Snow Gum	<i>Eucalyptus pauciflora</i>	-	-
#	Southern Blue-gum	<i>Eucalyptus globulus</i>	-	-
#	Southern Mahogany	<i>Eucalyptus botryoides</i>	-	-
*	Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	-	Controlled
	Spiny-headed Mat-rush	<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	-	-
vu #	Spotted Gum	<i>Corymbia maculata</i>	-	-
	Star Cudweed	<i>Euchiton sphaericus</i>	-	-
*	Stinkwort	<i>Dittrichia graveolens</i>	-	-
*	Sugar Gum	<i>Eucalyptus cladocalyx</i>	-	-

Origin	Common Name	Scientific Name	Weeds of National Significance	Noxious Weeds Classification
	Swamp Gum	<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	-	-
#	Swamp Paperbark	<i>Melaleuca ericifolia</i>	-	-
*	Sweet Briar	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	-	Controlled
*	Sweet Vernal-grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	-	-
*	Tall Fleabane	<i>Erigeron sumatrensis</i>	-	-
	Tall Rush	<i>Juncus procerus</i>	-	-
*	Toowoomba Canary-grass	<i>Phalaris aquatica</i>	-	-
	Variable Willow-herb	<i>Epilobium billardiareanum</i>	-	-
#	Varnish Wattle	<i>Acacia verniciflua</i>	-	-
	Veined Spear-grass	<i>Austrostipa rudis</i>	-	-
*	Water Couch	<i>Paspalum distichum</i>	-	-
	Weeping Grass	<i>Microlaena stipoides</i> var. <i>stipoides</i>	-	-
*	White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i> var. <i>repens</i>	-	-
	Yellow Box	<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	-	-
*	Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	-	-

Table Notes:

* – Exotic # – naturalised

This table does not include ornamental plants, trees or shrubs that were not spreading or reproducing beyond where they were planted.

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Table A2. Fauna species recorded within the study area

Origin	Common Name	Species Name
Birds		
	Australian Magpie	<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>
	Little Raven	<i>Corvus mellori</i>
	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
	Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>
	Magpie-lark	<i>Grallina cyanoleuca</i>
	Masked Lapwing	<i>Vanellus miles</i>
	Noisy Miner	<i>Manorina melanocephala</i>
	Pied Currawong	<i>Strepera graculina</i>
	Red Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>
	Superb Fairy-wren	<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>
	Welcome Swallow	<i>Hirundo neoxena</i>
	White-necked Heron	<i>Ardea pacifica</i>
	Willy Wagtail	<i>Rhipidura leucophrys</i>
*	Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
*	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
*	Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Amphibians		
	Common Eastern Froglet	<i>Crinia signifera</i>
Mammals		
	Common Wombat	<i>Vombatus ursinus</i>
	Eastern Grey Kangaroo	<i>Macropus giganteus</i>
*	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>

Definitions

* - Introduced species

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Table A3. Threatened flora species that have previously been recorded within, or within three kilometres of the study area (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024f), or that has habitat that may occur within the vicinity of the study area (Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water 2024).

Common Name	Species Name	National Status	FFG Act Status	Habitat Preferences	Most Recent Record	Habitat Present on Site	Likelihood of Presence*
Austral Toad-flax	<i>Thesium australe</i>	Vulnerable	Endangered	A semi-parasitic on roots of a range of grass species, notably Kangaroo Grass.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Bog Gum	<i>Eucalyptus kitsoniana</i>	-	Critically Endangered	Coastal lowlands from Yarram west to Cape Otway, and Mt Richmond near Portland	2021 (1)	No	Present
Clover Glycine	<i>Glycine latrobeana</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Grassy woodland; plains grassland; box woodland; dry sclerophyll forest.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Daisy Fleabane	<i>Erigeron conyzoides</i>	-	Endangered	Confined to rocky alpine sites in Victoria (e.g. Mt Howitt area, Mt Hotham, Bogong High Plains, Mt Cobberas no. 2) and rarely collected.	2019 (1)	No	Moderate
Dense Leek-orchid	<i>Prasophyllum spicatum</i>	Vulnerable	Critically Endangered	Coastal and hinterland heath and heathy woodland	NPR	No	Unlikely
Giant Honey-myrtle	<i>Melaleuca armillaris subsp. armillaris</i>	-	Endangered	Mainly confined to near-coastal sandy heaths, scrubs slightly raised above saltmarsh, riparian scrubs, rocky coastlines and foothill outcrops eastwards from about Marlo. Occurrences to the west are naturalised.	2021 (2)	No	Present
Green-striped Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis chlorogramma</i>	Vulnerable	Endangered	Open forest and woodland	NPR	No	Unlikely

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Common Name	Species Name	National Status	FFG Act Status	Habitat Preferences	Most Recent Record	Habitat Present on Site	Likelihood of Presence*
Matted Flax-lily	<i>Dianella amoena</i>	Endangered	Critically Endangered	Grassy Wetland; Red Gum woodland; plains grassland; grassy woodlands.	1992 (1)	No	Unlikely
River Swamp Wallaby-grass	<i>Amphibromus fluitans</i>	Vulnerable	-	Beside swamps in grassy low open forest, riparian scrub. Required moist soils, tolerates inundation.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Spotted Gum	<i>Corymbia maculata</i>	-	Vulnerable	Indigenous to the Tara Range, south of Buchan, but also widely used as a street tree	2021 (1)	No	Present
Sticky Wattle	<i>Acacia howittii</i>	-	Vulnerable	Grows in moist forest	2019 (1)	No	Present
Strzelecki Gum	<i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i>	Vulnerable	Critically Endangered	Fragmented populations in the Strzelecki Ranges, on a range of sites including ridges, slopes and along the banks of streams, but particularly foothills and flats	2023 (80)	Yes	Moderate
Swamp Everlasting	<i>Xerochrysum palustre</i>	Vulnerable	Critically Endangered	Seasonal or permanent wetlands	NPR	No	Unlikely
Swamp Fireweed	<i>Senecio psilocarpus</i>	Vulnerable	-	High-quality herb-rich wetlands on plains	NPR	No	Unlikely
Thick-lip Spider-orchid	<i>Caladenia tessellata</i>	Vulnerable	-	Grassy sclerophyll woodland on clay loam or sandy soils	NPR	No	Unlikely
Yarra Gum	<i>Eucalyptus yarraensis</i>	-	Critically Endangered	Tolerates heavy soils and limited inundation found throughout the Yarra Valley	2021 (1)	No	Unlikely

Table Notes:

NPR – Not previously recorded

*** Likelihood of Presence Definitions:**

Unlikely – Site does not contain habitat and/or it is outside the species' known, current distribution.

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Low – Site contains some marginal habitat, but the species was not observed and has not been recently recorded in previous surveys in the area.

Moderate – Site contains preferred habitat that may support a population of the species. However, other factors, such as fragmentation, disturbance or predators may be impacting any local population.

High - Site contains the preferred habitat which is likely to support the species.

Present – Preferred habitat is present on the site, and the species was observed on the site, or recently recorded at the site.

NPR – No previous record, modelled presence only under the EPBC Protected Matters Search results.

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Table A4. Threatened fauna species that have previously been recorded within, or within three kilometres of the study site (Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action 2024f), or that has habitat that may occur within the vicinity of the site (Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water 2024).

Common Name	Species Name	EPBC Act Status	FFG Act Status	Habitat Preferences	Most Recent Record	Habitat Present on Site	Likelihood of Presence*
Birds							
White-throated Needletail	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Aerial insectivore that rarely lands to perch, often sleeping on the wing	NPR	Yes	Moderate
Lewin's Rail	<i>Lewinia pectoralis</i>	-	Vulnerable	Grassy, reedy or thickly vegetated areas usually close to water.	2010 (1)	No	Unlikely
Australian Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Endangered	Critically Endangered	Uncommon summer migrant to Victoria. Lowlands on shallow freshwater swamps with emergent vegetation, and flooded salt marshes.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Estuaries, tidal mudflats, mangroves, shallow river margins, coastal or inland	NPR	No	Unlikely
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Vulnerable	-	Not threatened	NPR	No	Unlikely
Latham's Snipe	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Vulnerable	-	Wet grasslands, open and wooded swamps.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Endangered	Endangered	Estuaries, tidal mudflats, mangroves, shallow river margins, coastal or inland	NPR	No	Unlikely
Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	-	Vulnerable	Coastal, offshore waters, beaches estuaries, some inland birds	2017 (1)	No	Unlikely

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Common Name	Species Name	EPBC Act Status	FFG Act Status	Habitat Preferences	Most Recent Record	Habitat Present on Site	Likelihood of Presence
Australasian Bittern	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Endangered	Critically Endangered	Reed beds, dense vegetation of freshwater swamps and creeks.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Eastern Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba modesta</i>	-	Vulnerable	Floodwaters, rivers and shallows of wetlands, intertidal mud flats.	2018 (2)	Yes	Moderate
Grey Falcon	<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	-	Vulnerable	Shrubland, grassland and wooded watercourses of arid and semi-arid regions, although it is occasionally found in open woodlands near the coast	NPR	No	Unlikely
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami</i>	-	Vulnerable	Typically found in eucalypt forests and woodlands containing a high density of their main food source, the Black She-oak <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>	NPR	No	Unlikely
Gang-gang Cockatoo	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	Endangered	Endangered	They inhabit cool, wet forests, particularly alpine bushland, but may visit urban parks and gardens to feed	NPR	No	Unlikely
Swift Parrot	<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Winter migrant from Tasmania. Generally prefers Box-Ironbark forests and woodlands inland of the Great Dividing Range during winter.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Blue-winged Parrot	<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>	Vulnerable	-	A range of habitats from coastal, sub-coastal and inland areas, right through to semi-arid zones	NPR	No	Unlikely
Brown Treecreeper	<i>Climacteris picumnus</i>	Vulnerable	-	Dry woodland; forest clearings, eucalypts along streams.	NPR	No	Unlikely

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Common Name	Species Name	EPBC Act Status	FFG Act Status	Habitat Preferences	Most Recent Record	Habitat Present on Site	Likelihood of Presence
Painted Honeyeater	<i>Grantiella picta</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Open box-ironbark forests and woodlands, particularly where trees are infested with mistletoe.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Regent Honeyeater	<i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>	Critically Endangered	Critically Endangered	Depends on nectar and insects from Box-Ironbark Eucalypt forests. Only breeding habitat lies in Northeast Victoria and central coast of NSW	NPR	No	Unlikely
Pilotbird	<i>Pycnoptilus floccosus</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Temperate wet sclerophyll forests and occasionally temperate rainforest, where there is dense undergrowth with abundant debris	NPR	No	Unlikely
Hooded Robin	<i>Melanodryas cucullata</i>	Endangered	Vulnerable	Lightly timbered woodland, mainly dominated by acacia and/or eucalypts.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Diamond Firetail	<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Open grassy woodland, heath and farmland or grassland with scattered trees.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Mammals							
Spot-tailed Quoll	<i>Dasyurus maculatus maculatus</i>	Endangered	Endangered	Forests including large intact areas of vegetation for foraging.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Southern Brown Bandicoot	<i>Isodon obesulus obesulus</i>	Endangered	Endangered	Heathy forest, heathland and coastal scrub.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Southern Greater Glider	<i>Petauroides volans</i>	Vulnerable	Endangered	Wet sclerophyll forests, requires large tree hollows for nesting	NPR	No	Unlikely

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Common Name	Species Name	EPBC Act Status	FFG Act Status	Habitat Preferences	Most Recent Record	Habitat Present on Site	Likelihood of Presence
Yellow-bellied Glider	<i>Petaurus australis</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Occur in tall mature eucalypt forest generally in areas with high rainfall and nutrient rich soils	NPR	No	Unlikely
Long-nosed Potoroo	<i>Potorous tridactylus trisulcatus</i>	Vulnerable	Critically Endangered	Heathy woodland	NPR	No	Unlikely
Broad-toothed Rat	<i>Mastacomys fuscus mordicus</i>	Endangered	Vulnerable	A range of habitats from sub-alpine to coastal heathland, with high vegetative coverage in high rainfall areas	NPR	No	Unlikely
New Holland Mouse	<i>Pseudomys novaehollandiae</i>	Vulnerable	Endangered	Heathlands, woodlands with a heathy understorey, open forest and vegetated sand dunes - in areas with soft, deep sandy soil in which to make burrows.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Grey-headed Flying-fox	<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Roost sites commonly occur in gullies, in vegetation with dense canopy cover and close to water.	NPR	No	Moderate
Frogs							
Martin's Toadlet	<i>Uperoleia martini</i>	-	Critically Endangered	Found only along the east coast of VIC and southernmost coast of NSW.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Growling Grass Frog	<i>Litoria raniformis</i>	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Permanent lakes, swamps, dams and lagoons.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Reptiles							
Swamp Skink	<i>Lissolepis coventryi</i>	-	Endangered	Low lying wetlands including swamp margins, tea tree thickets.	NPR	No	Unlikely

Common Name	Species Name	EPBC Act Status	FFG Act Status	Habitat Preferences	Most Recent Record	Habitat Present on Site	Likelihood of Presence*
Glossy Grass Skink	<i>Pseudemoia rawlinsoni</i>	-	Endangered	Swamp and lake edges, salt marshes and boggy creeks with dense vegetation	1992 (1)	No	Unlikely
Fish							
Australian Grayling	<i>Prototroctes maraena</i>	Vulnerable	Endangered	Clear gravelly streams; deep slow flowing pools.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Dwarf Galaxias	<i>Galaxiella pusilla</i>	Vulnerable	Endangered	Slow moving waters, including ephemeral drains.	NPR	No	Unlikely
Flinders Pygmy Perch	<i>Nannoperca sp. 1</i>	-	Vulnerable	A range of freshwater habitats, preferably with structure	2023 (212)	Yes	Moderate

Table Notes:

This table excludes species listed exclusively as 'migratory' or 'marine' under the EPBC Protected Matters Search results.

NPR – Not previously recorded

*** Likelihood of Presence Definitions:**

Unlikely – Site does not contain habitat and/or it is outside the species' known, current distribution. Birds and bats may fly over.

Low – Site contains some marginal habitat, but the species was not observed and has not been recorded in previous recent surveys in the area. Birds and bats may fly over.

Moderate – Site contains preferred habitat that may support a population of the species. Birds and bats may opportunistically or seasonally forage at the site.

High – Site contains preferred habitat which is likely to support the species. Birds and bats are likely to regularly (at least seasonally) forage or roost at the site.

Present – Preferred habitat is present on the site, and the species was observed on the site, or recently recorded on the site.

NPR– No previous record, modelled presence only under the EPBC Protected Matters Search results.

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Appendix 2. Legislation

Commonwealth Legislation

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)* (EPBC Act) is to provide for the conservation of 'Matters of National Environmental Significance'. The Act defines eight Matters of National Environmental Significance:

- World Heritage properties;
- National Heritage Places;
- Ramsar wetlands of international significance;
- Nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities;
- Listed migratory species;
- Commonwealth marine areas;
- The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; and,
- Nuclear actions.

Under the Act, actions that are likely to have a significant impact upon Matters of National Environmental Significance require approval from the Federal Environment Minister. This approval is sought through a referral process for a particular action. An action includes any project, development, undertaking, activity or series of activities. Consideration of the requirement for an 'EPBC Referral' to the Minister has been made within this report.

State Legislation

Environmental Effects Act

The *Environment Effects Act 1978 (Vic)* provides for assessment of proposed projects (works) that are capable of having a significant effect on the environment. The Act does this by enabling the Minister administering the Environment Effects Act to decide that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) should be prepared.

The Minister might typically require a proponent to prepare an EES when:

- There is a likelihood of regionally or State significant adverse effects on the environment;
- There is a need for integrated assessment of potential environmental effects (including economic and social effects) of a project and relevant alternatives; and,
- Normal statutory processes would not provide a sufficiently comprehensive, integrated and transparent assessment (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2007).

Referral criteria: individual potential environmental effects

- Individual types of potential effects on the environment that might be of regional or State significance, and therefore warrant referral of a project, are:
- Potential clearing of 10 ha or more of native vegetation from an area that:
 - is of an Ecological Vegetation Class identified endangered by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (in accordance with Appendix 2 of Victoria's Native Vegetation Management Framework); or

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- is, or is likely to be, of very high conservation significance (as defined in accordance with Appendix 3 of Victoria's Native Vegetation Management Framework); and
- is not authorised under an approved Forest Management Plan or Fire Protection Plan
- Potential long-term loss of a significant proportion (e.g. 1 to 5 percent depending on the conservation status of the species) of known remaining habitat or population of a threatened species within Victoria;
- Potential long-term change to the ecological character of a wetland listed under the Ramsar Convention or in 'A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia';
- Potential extensive or major effects on the health or biodiversity of aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems, over the long term;
- Potential extensive or major effects on the health, safety or well-being of a human community, due to emissions to air or water or chemical hazards or displacement of residences; and,
- Potential greenhouse gas emissions exceeding 200,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per annum, directly attributable to the operation of the facility (Department of Sustainability and Environment 2007).

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Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)

The *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998* (Vic) (FFG Act) provides a legal framework for enabling and promoting the conservation of all Victoria's native flora and fauna, and to enable management of potentially threatening processes on public land. The Act lists native species, communities, and processes that threaten native flora and fauna, under Schedules of the Act. This enables the assessor and regulators to establish management measures to mitigate impacts on listed values within Victoria.

The FFG Act was amended in 2021 and now contains an obligation or duty on public authorities and ministers to consider potential biodiversity impacts when exercising their functions. The FFG Act requires ministers and public authorities (including Councils) reasonably consider the objectives of the Act where projects may impact upon biodiversity, so far as is consistent with the proper exercising of their functions.

The types of potential impacts on biodiversity that should be considered include:

- Long and short term impacts;
- Detrimental and beneficial impacts;
- Direct and indirect impacts;
- Cumulative impacts; and,
- Potentially threatening processes (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2021).

It is therefore anticipated that regulators will give due consideration to the FFG Act when considering the approval for the project.

In additional, a 'Permit to Take Protected Flora' is required to 'take' listed flora species that are members of listed communities or protected flora from public land. 'Taking' flora is defined as any action which results in the removal or death of a native plant. A permit is not required under the FFG

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Act for private land, unless listed species are present and the land is declared 'critical habitat' for the species. On public land the permit is issued by DELWP.

An evaluation of the likelihood of the presence of significant flora and fauna species on the subject site, including those listed under the FFG Act that have previously been recorded in the vicinity of the site, has been undertaken.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Vic)

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic) (P&E Act), later amended by the *Planning and Environment (Planning Schemes) Act 1996* (Vic) provides the foundation of planning schemes in Victoria. Planning schemes set out policies and provisions for the development and protection of land within each municipality in Victoria.

The *Planning and Environment (Planning Schemes) Act 1996* provides for the Minister for Planning to prepare a set of standard provisions for planning schemes called the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP). The VPP is a state-wide reference document or template from which planning schemes are sourced and constructed. Incorporation of references such as the *Guidelines for the Removal Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation* into Section 12 of the VPP ensures that all municipalities must consider this policy. Local zones and overlays, such as Environmental Significance Overlays, may be incorporated into Section 30 and 40 of the planning provisions by each Council, but only remain relevant within that municipality.

The objectives of the P&E Act are to integrate local land use, development planning and development policy with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels through a set of planning schemes. The Act also establishes a clear procedure for public participation in decision making in amending planning schemes.

Some important sections of the planning scheme, in relation to the ecological values of a site, include:

- Section 12 of the State Planning Policy Framework, which identifies, and aims to protect, key biodiversity assets from inappropriate development;
- Clause 52.17 which identifies where native vegetation removal is exempt from requiring a planning permit; and
- Clause 66 which identifies all of the mandatory referral authorities. In particular, the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action is identified as the recommending referral authority if a proponent proposes:
 - 'To remove, destroy or lop native vegetation in the Detailed Assessment Pathway as defined in the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation*;
 - To remove, destroy or lop native vegetation if a property vegetation plan applies to the site; and
 - To remove, destroy or lop native vegetation on Crown land which is occupied or managed by the responsible authority' (Department of Transport and Planning 2024).

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Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (Vic)

The *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (Vic) (CALP Act) is the principle legislation relating to the management of pest plants and animals in Victoria. Under this Act, landowners have a responsibility to avoid causing or contributing to land degradation. Where possible, landowners are required to conserve soil, protect water resources, eradicate 'regionally prohibited' weeds, prevent the growth and spread of 'regionally controlled' weeds and control pest animals. The CALP Act lists the species that are considered weeds and pest animals.

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Wildlife Act 1975 (Vic)

Victoria's *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic) and the *Wildlife Regulations 2002* (Vic) protect all indigenous vertebrate fauna, some non-indigenous vertebrate fauna, and some invertebrate fauna listed as 'threatened' under the FFG Act. The *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic) prevents intentional injury to wildlife and stipulates that a licence should be granted where there is a possibility that wildlife are injured, or where wildlife is to be kept, relocated or traded.

In most cases, where the proponent is planning to develop a site, a planning permit approval provides this licencing approval, however, this report advises if an additional permit is required. Circumstances where this legislation may not be relevant is where fish are involved, on public land where additional regulatory approval is required, or where other permits are required (such as where fauna are required to undergo invasive procedures or installation of telemetry systems).

Fisheries Act 1995 (Vic)

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The *Fisheries Act 1995* (Vic) provides the legislative framework for the regulation, management conservation of Victorian fish species and their habitats. As with the Victorian *Wildlife Act 1975* described above, the key method to ensure compliance is through licencing. Where fish, or their habitats, are likely to be impacted, this report will identify additional requirements.

Other relevant policy

Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017c)

The *Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation* (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017) were released by DELWP in December 2017. A permit to remove native vegetation under clause 52.16 and 52.17 of the Victoria Planning Provisions is required unless:

- The table of exemptions to this clause specifically states that a permit is not required;
- It is native vegetation or an area specified in the schedule to the clause;
- A Native Vegetation Precinct Plan corresponding to the land is incorporated into the relevant planning scheme; or
- Bushfire exemptions apply in bushfire prone areas (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

The Guidelines describe the permitting process for applications to remove native vegetation on private and public property within Victoria. A key strategy of the State Planning Policy Framework,

relating to biodiversity, is to ensure that there is no net loss to biodiversity as a result of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation. This is achieved through iteratively applying the three-step approach:

1. Avoiding the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.
2. Minimising impacts from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation that cannot be avoided.
3. Providing an offset to compensate for the biodiversity impact from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017; p. 4).

Native vegetation is defined in the Victoria Planning Provisions as 'plants that are indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses' (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

Native vegetation is further classified into two categories (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017):

- A remnant patch of native vegetation (measured in hectares) is either:
 - An area of vegetation where at least 25 per cent of the total perennial understorey plant cover is native, or
 - Any area with three or more native canopy trees where the drip line of each tree touches the drip line of at least one other tree, forming a continuous canopy, or
 - Any mapped wetland included in the *Current Wetlands Map*, available in DELWP systems and tools.

OR

- A scattered tree (measured in number of trees), is a native canopy tree that does not form a patch (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

In addition, a canopy tree with a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) greater than or equal to the large tree benchmark for the relevant bioregional EVC is defined as a large tree. Large trees can be either a large scattered tree or a large tree within a patch.

The contribution that is made by native vegetation to the biodiversity values of Victoria is determined through an assessment of both site-based information and landscape scale information.

At a site-based level, the contribution is determined through an assessment of:

- The extent of native vegetation;
- The number of large trees (either within a patch or scattered trees), relative to the appropriate EVC benchmark;
- The native vegetation condition, which is determined through a Habitat Hectare assessment
- The conservation status of the Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) to which the vegetation can be classified; and,
- The presence of sensitive wetlands and coastal areas.

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At a landscape scale, the value of the vegetation is determined with reference to its strategic context in the Victorian landscape. This is determined by the vegetation's 'Strategic Biodiversity Score' (SBS) and its 'Habitat Importance Score' (HIS) for its value to rare and threatened species (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

All native vegetation within Victoria has a SBS that has been determined through spatial modelling, based on its rarity, level of depletion, species habitats, and condition and connectivity (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017). SBS scores are between 0 and 1 and are used to determine the offset required for the loss of that vegetation. Native vegetation only has a HIS score if it is habitat for a particular rare or threatened species (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017). There are two types of rare or threatened species habitats that may be provided by native vegetation:

- **Highly localised habitats for rare or threatened species** – where impact to this particular patch of native vegetation could result in a significant biodiversity impact, such as a breeding colony or species with a limited geographic extent.
- **Dispersed rare or threatened species habitats** – where habitat for the threatened species has become depleted or fragmented over time (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

The HIS is used to apply the decision guidelines in relation to the removal of a patch of native vegetation and to determine offset requirements (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

Applications to remove native vegetation are categorised against one of three assessment pathways. These pathways are categorised as:

- Basic – limited impacts on biodiversity.
- Intermediate – could impact on large trees, endangered EVCs, and sensitive wetlands and coastal areas.
- Detailed – could impact on large trees, endangered EVCs, sensitive wetlands and coastal areas, and could significantly impact on habitat for rare or threatened species (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

This is initially determined in two ways, based on the 'location map' and the extent risk of the vegetation proposed to be removed. The location risk is determined with reference to the *Native Vegetation Location Risk* map available on DEECA's website. This map shows whether native vegetation is classified as Location 1, 2 or 3.

The extent risk is determined based on the amount of native vegetation that is proposed for removal and includes the area (in hectares) of impact to native vegetation, the number of scattered trees, and the number of large trees (Table A5).

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Table A5. Assessment pathways for removal of remnant patches of native vegetation (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

Extent	Location		
	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3
Less than 0.5 hectares and not including any large trees	Basic	Intermediate	Detailed
Less than 0.5 hectares and including one or more large trees	Intermediate	Intermediate	Detailed
0.5 hectares or more	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed

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All applications to remove native vegetation must include the following information:

1. Information about the native vegetation to be removed, including:
 - a. The assessment pathway and reason for the assessment pathway;
 - b. A description of the native vegetation to be removed;
 - c. Maps showing the native vegetation and property in context;
 - d. The offset requirement, determined in accordance with section 5 of the Guidelines that will apply if the native vegetation is approved to be removed.
2. Topographic and land information relating to the native vegetation to be removed;
3. Recent, dated photographs of the native vegetation to be removed;
4. Details of any other native vegetation approved to be removed, or that was removed without the required approvals, on the same property or on contiguous land in the same ownership as the applicant, in the five year period before the application for a permit is lodged;
5. An 'Avoid and Minimise' statement;
6. A copy of any Property Vegetation Plan contained within an agreement made pursuant to section 69 of the *Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987* (Vic) that applies to the native vegetation to be removed;
7. Where the removal of native vegetation is to create defensible space, a written statement explaining why the removal of native vegetation is necessary;
8. If the application is under Clause 52.16, a statement that explains how the proposal responds to the Native Vegetation Precinct Plan considerations at decision guideline 8, and
9. An offset statement providing evidence that an offset that meets the offset requirements for the native vegetation to be removed has been identified, and can be secured in accordance with the Guidelines (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017; p. 20-21).

If the application will be assessed under the Detailed Assessment Methodology, the following additional requirements apply:

10. A site assessment report of the native vegetation to be removed, including:
 - a. A habitat hectare assessment of any patches of native vegetation, including the condition, extent (in hectares), Ecological Vegetation Class and bioregional conservation status.
 - b. The location, number, circumference (in centimetres measured at 1.3 metres above ground level) and species of any large trees within patches.

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- c. The location, number, circumference (in centimetres measured at 1.3 metres above ground level) and species of any scattered trees, and whether each tree is small or large.
11. Information about impacts on rare or threatened species habitat, including:
 - a. The relevant section of the Habitat importance map for each rare or threatened species requiring a species offset.
 - b. For each rare or threatened species that the native vegetation to be removed is habitat for, according to the Habitat importance maps: - the species' conservation status - the proportional impact of the removal of native vegetation on the total habitat for that species - whether their habitats are highly localised habitats, dispersed habitats, or important areas of habitat within a dispersed species habitat (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017; p. 22).

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Ten decisions guidelines are identified within the Guidelines that the responsible or referral authority must consider when deciding on an application to remove native vegetation. These are summarised as follows:

1. The degree to which the application avoids and minimises impacts to native vegetation, and where vegetation is proposed to be removed, the highest quality vegetation is avoided;
2. The role that the vegetation to be removed has in relation to landscape services such as erosion control, ground-water quality, waterway quality;
3. The role of the vegetation in the preservation of landscape features;
4. Whether any part of the native vegetation to be removed, destroyed or lopped is protected under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic);
5. The need to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation to create defensible space to reduce the risk of bushfire to life and property, having regard to other available bushfire risk mitigation measures;
6. Whether the native vegetation to be removed is in accordance with any Property Vegetation Plan that applies to the site;
7. Whether an offset that meets the offset requirements for the native vegetation to be removed has been identified and can be secured in accordance with the Guidelines;
8. Whether the application is consistent with a Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (where relevant);
9. For applications in both the Intermediate and Detailed Assessment Pathway only, the impacts on biodiversity values that would occur as a result of vegetation removal; and,
10. For applications in the Detailed Assessment Pathway only, the impacts on habitat for rare or threatened species (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

Offset requirements

In all cases where native vegetation is approved for removal, the proponent is liable for the security of an offset site that meets the requirements under the Guidelines. An offset can be either a:

- First party offset – on the same property as the proposed removal of native vegetation, or on another property owned or managed (in the case of Crown land) by the party requiring the offset, or
- Third party offset – on another party's property. Third party offsets are traded as native vegetation credits.

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In most cases a third party offset is the simplest and most cost effective means of securing the required offset.

There are three components to offset requirements:

1. Offset type (general or species).
2. Offset amount (measured in general or species habitat units).
3. Offset attributes.

Two types of offset are identified: General Offsets and Specific Offsets. Specific Offsets may only be required if the native vegetation to be removed is habitat for rare or threatened species that are identified in an Intermediate or Detailed Assessment Pathway application (Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017). To determine this, a 'Specific Biodiversity Equivalence Score' is calculated by multiplying the habitat hectares with the HIS for each species that may be impacted. For each of the species, this figure is divided by the sum of all the Specific Biodiversity Value Scores calculated for the remaining vegetation under investigation to give a specific offset threshold for each species. If the amount of vegetation removed exceeds this threshold, then a Specific Offset is required. If it does not exceed the threshold, then only a General Habitat Offset is required (Table A6)(Department of Environment Land Water and Planning 2017).

Table A6 summarises the offset requirements for each of the Assessment Pathways and offset types.

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Table A6. Offset requirements for the removal of native vegetation

Assessment Pathway	Offset Type	Offset amount		Offset attributes	
		Risk Adjusted Biodiversity Equivalence	Species Habitat Requirement	Vicinity	Strategic Biodiversity Score
Basic Assessment Pathway	General offset	1.5 times the general biodiversity equivalence score ¹ of the native vegetation to be removed.	No restrictions.	In the same Catchment Management Authority boundary as the native vegetation to be removed.	At least 80 per cent of the SBS of the native vegetation to be removed.
Intermediate or Detailed Assessment Pathway	General offset	1.5 times the general biodiversity equivalence score of the native vegetation to be removed.	No restrictions.	In the same Catchment Management Authority boundary as the native vegetation to be removed.	At least 80 per cent of the SBS of the native vegetation to be removed.
	Specific offset	For each species impacted, 2 times the specific biodiversity equivalence score of the native vegetation to be removed.	Likely habitat for each rare or threatened species that a specific offset is required for, according to the specific-general offset test.	No restrictions.	No restrictions.

¹ The general biodiversity equivalence score is determined by multiplying the vegetation's habitat hectare score by its SBS.

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Appendix 3. Native Vegetation Removal Report

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Native Vegetation Removal Report

NVRR ID: 337_20241218_BXK

This report provides information to support an application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation in accordance with the [Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation](#) (the Guidelines). This report is **not an assessment by DEECA** of the proposed native vegetation removal. Offset requirements have been calculated using modelled condition scores.

Report details

Date created: 18/12/2024

Local Government Area: LATROBE CITY

Registered Aboriginal Party: Gunaikurnai

Coordinates: 146.42999, -38.28784

Address:

MONASH WAY HAZELWOOD NORTH 3840

530 TRAMWAY ROAD HAZELWOOD NORTH 3840

Regulator Notes

Removal polygons are located:

Summary of native vegetation to be removed

Assessment pathway	Basic Assessment Pathway		
Location category	Location 1 The native vegetation extent map indicates that this area is not typically characterised as supporting native vegetation. It does not meet the criteria to be classified as Location Category 2 or 3. The removal of less than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation in this area will not require a Species Offset.		
Total extent including past and proposed removal (ha) <i>Includes endangered EVCs (ha): 0.048</i>	0.048	Extent of past removal (ha)	0
		Extent of proposed removal - Patches (ha)	0.048
		Extent of proposed removal - Scattered Trees (ha)	0.000
No. Large Trees proposed to be removed	0	No. Large Patch Trees	0
		No. Large Scattered Trees	0
No. Small Scattered Trees	0		

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Offset requirements if approval is granted

Any approval granted will include a condition to secure an offset, before the removal of native vegetation, that meets the following requirements:

General Offset amount ¹	0.01 General Habitat Units
Minimum strategic biodiversity value score ²	0.279
Large Trees	0
Vicinity	West Gippsland CMA or LATROBE CITY LGA

NB: values within tables in this document may not add to the totals shown above due to rounding

The availability of third-party offset credits can be checked using the Native Vegetation Credit Register (NVCR) Search Tool - <https://nvcr.delwp.vic.gov.au>

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1. The General Offset amount required is the sum of all General Habitat Units in Appendix 1.

2. Minimum strategic biodiversity value score is 80 per cent of the weighted average score across habitat zones where a General Offset is required.

Application requirements

Applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation must include all the below information. If an appropriate response has not been provided the application is not complete

Application Requirement 1 - Native vegetation removal information

If the native vegetation removal is mapped correctly, the information presented in this Native Vegetation Removal Report addresses Application Requirement 1.

Application Requirement 2 - Topographical and land information

This statement describes the topographical and land features in the vicinity of the proposed works, including the location and extent of any ridges, hilltops, wetlands and waterways, slopes of more than 20% gradient, low-lying areas, saline discharge areas or areas of erosion.

See attached Biodiversity Assessment (Ecolink Consulting 2024)

Application Requirement 3 - Photographs of the native vegetation to be removed

Application Requirement 3 is not addressed in this Native Vegetation Removal Report. All applications must include recent, timestamped photos of each Patch, Large Patch Tree and Scattered Tree which has been mapped in this report.

Application Requirement 4 - Past removal

If past removal has been considered correctly, the information presented in this Native Vegetation Removal Report addresses Application Requirement 4.

Application Requirement 5 - Avoid and minimise statement

This statement describes what has been done to avoid and minimise impacts on native vegetation and associated biodiversity values.

See attached Biodiversity Assessment (Ecolink Consulting 2024)

Application Requirement 6 - Property Vegetation Plan

This requirement only applies if an approved Property Vegetation Plan (PVP) applies to the property
Does a PVP apply to the proposal?


No

Application Requirement 7 - Defendable space statement

Where the removal of native vegetation is to create defendable space, this statement:

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- 
- Describes the bushfire threat; and
 - Describes how other bushfire risk mitigation measures were considered to reduce the amount of native vegetation proposed for removal (this can also be part of the avoid and minimise statement).

This statement is not required if, If the proposed defensible space is within the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO), and in accordance with the 'Exemption to create defensible space for a dwelling under Clause 44.06 of local planning schemes' in Clause 52.12-5.

N/A

Application Requirement 8 - Native Vegetation Precinct Plan

This requirement is only applicable if you are removing native vegetation from within an area covered by Native Vegetation Precinct Plan (NVPP), and the proposed removal is not identified as 'to be removed' within the NVPP.

Does an NVPP apply to the proposal?

No

Application Requirement 9 - Offset statement

This statement demonstrates that an offset is available and describes how the required offset will be secured. The Applicant's Guide provides information relating to this requirement.

See attached Biodiversity Assessment (Ecolink Consulting 2024)

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Next steps

Applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation must address all the application requirements specified in the Guidelines. If you wish to remove the mapped native vegetation you are required to apply for approval from the responsible authority (e.g. local Council). This Native vegetation removal report must be submitted with your application and meets most of the application requirements. The following requirements need to be addressed, as applicable.

Application Requirement 3 - Photographs of the native vegetation to be removed

Recent, dated photographs of the native vegetation to be removed **must be provided** with the application. All photographs must be clear, show whether the vegetation is a Patch of native vegetation, Patch Tree or Scattered Tree, and identify any Large Trees. If the area of native vegetation to be removed is large, provide photos that are indicative of the native vegetation.

Ensure photographs are attached to the application. If appropriate photographs have not been provided the application is not complete.

Application Requirement 6 - Property Vegetation Plan

If a PVP is applicable, it must be provided with the application.

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Appendix 1: Description of native vegetation to be removed

General Habitat Units for each zone (Patch, Scattered Tree or Patch Tree) are calculated by the following equation in accordance with the Guidelines

General Habitat Units = extent without overlap x condition score x general landscape factor x 1.5, where the general landscape factor = 0.5 + (strategic biodiversity value score/2)

The General Offset amount required is the sum of all General Habitat Units per zone.

Native vegetation to be removed

Information provided by or on behalf of the applicant			Information calculated by NVR Map							
Zone	Type	DBH (cm)	EVC code (modelled)	Bioregional conservation status	Large Tree(s)	Condition score (modelled)	Polygon extent (ha)	Extent without overlap (ha)	SBV score	General Habitat Units
1	Patch	-	GipP0055	Endangered	-	0.200	0.010	0.010	0.380	0.002
2	Patch	-	GipP0055	Endangered	-	0.200	0.038	0.038	0.340	0.008



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Appendix 2: Images of mapped native vegetation

1. Property in context



-  Proposed Removal
-  Property Boundaries



300 m

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2. Aerial photograph showing mapped native vegetation



□ Proposed Removal



150 m

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3. Location Risk Map



Proposed Removal

Location 1

Location 2

Location 3

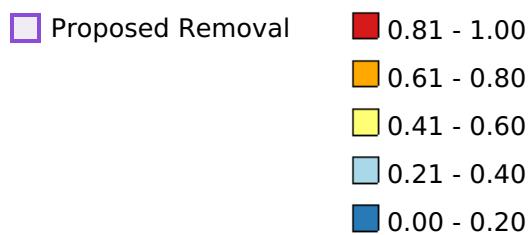


150 m

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4. Strategic Biodiversity Value Score Map



150 m

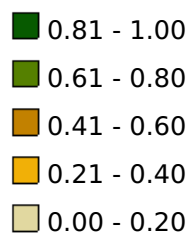
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5. Condition Score Map



Proposed Removal



150 m

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6. Endangered EVCs

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■ Proposed Removal

■ Endangered 1750 Ecological Vegetation Classes



150 m

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Appendix 4. Native Vegetation Credit Register Search Result

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Report of available native vegetation credits

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This report lists native vegetation credits available to purchase through the Native Vegetation Credit Register.

This report is **not evidence** that an offset has been secured. An offset is only secured when the units have been purchased and allocated to a permit or other approval and an allocated credit extract is provided by the Native Vegetation Credit Register.

Date and time: 18/12/2024 05:58

Report ID: 27822

What was searched for?

General offset

General habitat units	Strategic biodiversity value	Large trees	Vicinity (Catchment Management Authority or Municipal district)	
0.01	0.279	0	CMA	West Gippsland
			or LGA	Latrobe City

Details of available native vegetation credits on 18 December 2024 05:58

These sites meet your requirements for general offsets.

Credit Site ID	GHU	LT	CMA	LGA	Land owner	Trader	Fixed price	Broker(s)
BBA-0115	2.914	0	West Gippsland	East Gippsland Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Bio Offsets
BBA-0119	3.052	73	West Gippsland	South Gippsland Shire	Yes	Yes	No	VegLink
BBA-0138	12.119	419	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Ecocentric
BBA-0759	18.868	659	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Contact NVOR
BBA-1041	0.547	180	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Contact NVOR
BBA-2321	0.093	16	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Bio Offsets, VegLink
BBA-2348	3.442	0	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	VegLink
BBA-2757	0.436	0	West Gippsland	Bass Coast Shire	No	Yes	No	Bio Offsets
BBA-2810	7.758	613	West Gippsland	Latrobe City	Yes	Yes	No	VegLink
BBA-2833	5.401	20	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Ethos
BBA-2849	2.678	0	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Abezco, VegLink
BBA-2850	5.888	0	West Gippsland	Latrobe City	Yes	Yes	No	Abezco, VegLink
BBA-2855	1.478	0	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	VegLink
BBA-2875	32.836	1037	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Abezco

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TFN-C0698	0.087	16	West Gippsland	East Gippsland Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Bio Offsets, Ecocentric, Ethos, VegLink
TFN-C1442	2.726	58	West Gippsland	Baw Baw Shire	Yes	Yes	No	TFN
TFN-C1692	0.238	238	West Gippsland	South Gippsland Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Ecocentric, Ethos, VegLink
TFN-C1893	0.080	23	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Ecocentric, Ethos, VegLink
VC_CFL-2320_02	0.249	0	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	VegLink
VC_CFL-3696_01	1.511	250	West Gippsland	Bass Coast Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Bio Offsets, Ethos, VegLink
VC_CFL-3797_01	16.033	941	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	Bio Offsets, Ecocentric, VegLink
VC_TFN-C2078_01	0.028	46	West Gippsland	Wellington Shire	Yes	Yes	No	VegLink

These sites meet your requirements using alternative arrangements for general offsets.

Credit Site ID	GHU	LT	CMA	LGA	Land owner	Trader	Fixed price	Broker(s)
----------------	-----	----	-----	-----	------------	--------	-------------	-----------

There are no sites listed in the Native Vegetation Credit Register that meet your offset requirements when applying the alternative arrangements as listed in section 11.2 of the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

These potential sites are not yet available, land owners may finalise them once a buyer is confirmed.

Credit Site ID	GHU	LT	CMA	LGA	Land owner	Trader	Fixed price	Broker(s)
----------------	-----	----	-----	-----	------------	--------	-------------	-----------

There are no potential sites listed in the Native Vegetation Credit Register that meet your offset requirements.

LT - Large Trees

CMA - Catchment Management Authority

LGA - Municipal District or Local Government Authority

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Next steps

If applying for approval to remove native vegetation

Attach this report to an application to remove native vegetation as evidence that your offset requirement is currently available.

If you have approval to remove native vegetation

Below are the contact details for all brokers. Contact the broker(s) listed for the credit site(s) that meet your offset requirements. These are shown in the above tables. If more than one broker or site is listed, you should get more than one quote before deciding which offset to secure.

Broker contact details

Broker Abbreviation	Broker Name	Phone	Email	Website
	Fully traded			
Abezco	Abzeco Pty. Ltd.	(03) 9431 5444	offsets@abzeco.com.au	www.abzeco.com.au
Baw Baw SC	Baw Baw Shire Council	(03) 5624 2411	bawbaw@bawbawshire.vic.gov.au	www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au
Bio Offsets	Biodiversity Offsets Victoria	0452 161 013	info@offsetsvictoria.com.au	www.offsetsvictoria.com.au
Contact NVOR	Native Vegetation Offset Register	136 186	nativevegetation.offsetregister@deeca.vic.gov.au	www.environment.vic.gov.au/native-vegetation
Ecocentric	Ecocentric Environmental Consulting	0410 564 139	ecocentric@me.com	Not available
Ethos	Ethos NRM Pty Ltd	(03) 5153 0037	offsets@ethosnrm.com.au	www.ethosnrm.com.au
Nillumbik SC	Nillumbik Shire Council	(03) 9433 3316	offsets@nillumbik.vic.gov.au	www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au
TFN	Trust for Nature	8631 5888	offsets@tfn.org.au	www.trustfornature.org.au
VegLink	Vegetation Link Pty Ltd	(03) 8578 4250 or 1300 834 546	offsets@vegetationlink.com.au	www.vegetationlink.com.au
Yarra Ranges SC	Yarra Ranges Shire Council	1300 368 333	biodiversityoffsets@yarraranges.vic.gov.au	www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

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For more information contact the DEECA Customer Service Centre 136 186 or the Native Vegetation Credit Register at nativevegetation.offsetregister@delwp.vic.gov.au

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Obtaining this publication does not guarantee that the credits shown will be available in the Native Vegetation Credit Register either now or at a later time when a purchase of native vegetation credits is planned.

Notwithstanding anything else contained in this publication, you must ensure that you comply with all relevant laws, legislation, awards or orders and that you obtain and comply with all permits, approvals and the like that affect, are applicable or are necessary to undertake any action to remove, lop or destroy or otherwise deal with any native vegetation or that apply to matters within the scope of Clauses 52.16 or 52.17 of the Victoria Planning Provisions and Victorian planning schemes

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