

# ADVERTISED PLAN

910 Princes Hwy,  
Bairnsdale

## Native Vegetation Assessment

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Prepared for **Bison Energy**

March 2023  
Report No. 22340.01 (1.0)



**Nature  
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# 1. Executive summary

Nature Advisory Pty Ltd undertook a native vegetation assessment of an approximately 20.73-hectare area of private land at 910 Princes Hwy, Bairnsdale. A solar farm is proposed to be constructed on the site.

This report presents the information relevant to native vegetation on the property to accompany a planning permit application under Clause 52.17 of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme, in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP 2017a), herein referred to as 'the Guidelines'.

The study area comprised a grazing paddock as well as the roadside reserves of Princes Hwy and Power Station Rd. Vegetation largely comprised non-native pasture grasses with planted windrows of non-indigenous natives and non-native species. Native vegetation in the study area was limited to concentrations of rushes in wetter depressions, aquatic species in dams, two large scattered trees and some native grasses and herbs growing along the road side of Power Station Rd.

The following native vegetation was recorded in the study area:

- Six patches of native vegetation, totalling 0.647 hectares; and
- Two large scattered trees.

The proponent proposes to remove 0.383 hectares of native vegetation in patches with no large trees.

The application site lies within Location 1. Based on the extent of native vegetation, the number of large trees, and the location category, the proposal must be assessed under the Basic assessment pathway. This **would not** trigger a referral to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

A Native Vegetation Removal (NVR) report for this proposal is provided in Appendix 7.

Offsets required to compensate for the proposed removal of native vegetation from the study area are:

- 0.055 general habitat units, with the following offset attribute requirements:
  - A minimum strategic biodiversity value (SBV) of 0.364
  - Located within the East Gippsland CMA boundary or the East Gippsland Shire Council.

Under the Guidelines all offsets must be secured prior to the removal of native vegetation.

The offset target for the current proposal will be achieved via a third-party offset.

The table below summarises the compliance of the information in this report with the application requirements of the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP 2017a).

| Application requirement |   | Response                      |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 1.                      | Information about the native vegetation to be removed.                            | See Section 5.2.              |
| 2.                      | Topographic and land information relating to the native vegetation to be removed. | See Section 4.1 and Figure 1. |
| 3.                      | Recent, dated photographs of the native vegetation to be removed.                 | See Appendix 5.               |



| Application requirement |  | Response         |
|-------------------------|--|------------------|
| 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.                                     | Not applicable.  |
| 5.                      | An avoid and minimise statement.   | See Section 6.3. |
| 6.                      | A copy of any Property Vegetation Plan contained within an agreement made pursuant to section 69 of the <i>Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987</i> that applies to the native vegetation to be removed.   | Not applicable.  |
| 7.                      | Where the removal of native vegetation is to create defensible space, a written statement explaining why the removal of native vegetation is necessary.<br><br>This statement is not required when the creation of defensible space is in conjunction with an application under the Bushfire Management Overlay. | Not applicable.  |
| 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).   | Not applicable.  |
| 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.   | See Section 6.7. |

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## 2. Introduction

Nature Advisory Pty Ltd undertook a native vegetation assessment of an approximately 20.73-hectare area of private land at 910 Princes Hwy, Bairnsdale. A solar farm is proposed to be constructed on the site.

This investigation was commissioned to provide information on the extent and condition of native vegetation in the study area according to Victoria's *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP 2017a), herein referred to as 'the Guidelines'. Potential impacts on flora and fauna matters listed under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* have been considered as part of a review of existing information and field investigation; no relevant implications were identified under either Act.

Specifically, the scope of the investigation included the following:

- Existing information on the flora and native vegetation of the study area and surrounds was reviewed and included:
  - DEECA's *Native Vegetation Information Management system* (NVIM); and
  - DEECA's *NatureKit*.
- A site survey was conducted and involved the following:
  - Characterisation and mapping of native vegetation on the site, as defined in Victoria's *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (the 'Guidelines');
  - Assessment of native vegetation in accordance with the Guidelines, including habitat hectare assessment and/or scattered tree assessment; and
  - Compilation of a flora species list for the site.

This investigation was undertaken by a team from Nature Advisory comprising Merinda Day-Smith (Botanist), Emma Wagner (GIS Analyst), Nhung Thi Hong Nguyen (Senior GIS Analyst), Chris Armstrong (Senior Botanist & Project Manager) and Dr Kate Callister (Senior Ecologist & Project Manager).

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## 3. Definitions, methods, and assessment process

### 3.1. Definitions

#### 3.1.1. Study area

The study area for this investigation is defined as private land at the address of 910 Princes Hwy, Bairnsdale and the adjacent roadside reserves of Princes Hwy and Power Station Rd.

#### 3.1.2. Native vegetation

Native vegetation is currently defined in Clause 73.01 of all Victorian planning schemes as ‘plants that are indigenous to Victoria, including trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses’. The Guidelines (DELWP 2017a) further classify native vegetation as belonging to two categories:

- Patch; or
- Scattered tree.

The definitions of these categories are provided below, along with the prescribed DEECA methods of assessment. Further details on definitions of patches and scattered trees are provided in Appendix 1.

#### Patch

A patch of native vegetation is defined as one of the following:

- 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<sup>1</sup> where the drip line<sup>2</sup> 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 DEECA’s Native Vegetation Information Management (NVIM) system (DEECA 2022b).

Patch condition is assessed using the habitat hectare method (Parkes *et al.* 2003; DSE 2004b) whereby components of the patch (e.g. tree canopy, understorey and ground cover) are assessed against an Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) benchmark. The score effectively measures the percentage resemblance of the vegetation to the original condition.

The NVIM system (DEECA 2022b) provides modelled condition scores for native vegetation to be used in certain circumstances.

#### Scattered tree

A scattered tree is defined as:

- A native canopy tree that does not form part of a patch.

Scattered trees are counted and mapped, the species identified and the circumference at 1.3 m above the ground is recorded.

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<sup>1</sup> A native canopy tree is a mature tree (i.e. able to flower) that is taller than three metres and normally found in the upper layer of the relevant vegetation type.

<sup>2</sup> The drip line is the outermost boundary of a tree canopy (leaves and/or branches) where the water drips onto the ground.



### Tree Protection Zone

A Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) is defined as the area around the base of a tree, with a radius of 12 times that tree's diameter at breast height (DBH). The maximum TPZ is 15 metres, while a minimum of 2 metres applies. Dead trees are treated in the same manner.

### 3.2. Field methods

The field assessment was conducted on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023. During this assessment, the study area was surveyed on foot.

Sites in the study area found to support native vegetation or with potential to support listed matters were mapped through a combination of aerial photograph interpretation and ground truthing using ArcGIS Collector (accurate to approximately 5 metres).

Whilst this assessment was not designed to provide an exhaustive inventory of flora species in the study area, all efforts were made to schedule the site assessment at a time of year when most of the native vegetation life forms are likely to be present. The summer timing of the survey and condition of vegetation was considered suitable to ascertain the extent and condition of native vegetation.

### 3.3. Planning permit and application requirements

State planning provisions are established under the *Victorian Planning and Environment Act 1987*. Clause 52.17 of all Victorian Planning Schemes states the following:

~~A permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, including dead native vegetation.~~

A permit is not required if the following apply:

- If an exemption in Cl. 52.17-7 specifically states that a permit is not required.
- If a native vegetation precinct plan corresponding to the land is incorporated into the planning scheme and listed in the schedule to Cl. 52.17.
- If the native vegetation is specified in a schedule to Cl. 52.17.

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#### 3.3.1. Application requirements

Any application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation must comply with the application requirements specified in the Guidelines (DELWP 2017a).

When assessing an application, Responsible Authorities are also obligated to refer to Clause 12.01-2S *Native vegetation management* in the Planning Scheme that, in addition to the Guidelines, refers to the following:

- *Assessor's handbook – applications to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation* (DELWP 2018a).
- Statewide biodiversity information maintained by DEECA.

The application of the Guidelines (DELWP 2017a) is explained further in Appendix 1.

#### 3.3.2. Referral to DEECA

Clause 66.02-2 of the Planning Scheme determines the role of DEECA in the assessment of native vegetation removal permit applications. If an application is referred, DEECA may make certain recommendations to the responsible authority in relation to the permit application.

Any application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation must be referred to DEECA if any of the following apply:

- The impacts to native vegetation are in the *Detailed* assessment pathway;

- A property vegetation plan applies to the site; or
- The native vegetation is on Crown land that is occupied or managed by the responsible authority.

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## 4. Existing information and results

### 4.1. Site description, zoning and overlays

The study area for this investigation (Figure 1) constituted approximately 21.4 hectares of private and public land located at Bairnsdale, approximately 232km east of Melbourne and bordered by the Princes Hwy to the south, Power Station Rd to the west, a VicTrack rail reserve to the north and private pasture to the east.

The study area supported alluvial sediments comprising sand loam in a gently undulating landscape. The study area contained a grazing pasture with a cattle yard in the east and two small, largely empty dams in the centre-south section with drainage running between them. The roadside reserves also had drainage trenches dug along their length.

The study area and surrounds has a history of grazing and agriculture since European settlement. Land use has remained largely unchanged with the exception of the expansion of the Bairnsdale township to the east and a power station to the west.

Vegetation in the study area was dominated by non-native pasture grasses in the grazing paddock including African Love-grass, Brown-top Bent and Cocksfoot. Some broadleaf weeds were present including Spear Grass, Hairy Hawkbit and Ribwort. The western edge of the paddock supported planted non-indigenous native and non-native species including Giant Honey-myrtle, Blue Gum, Radiata Pine and Sugar Gum. One large remnant Gippsland Red-gum was located near the eastern fence line. Native vegetation in the grazing paddock consisted of large clusters of rushes growing in wetter depressions, aquatic pondweed in the dams and sparsely scattered Spear Grass, Wallaby Grass and Kangaroo Grass on the northern and eastern fringes of the paddock.

The Princes Hwy roadside comprised invasive understory weed species including Paspalum, Toowoomba Canary Grass and Drain flat sedge as well as some scattered, immature Gippsland Red-gum saplings (possibly planted), some small Blackwood shrubs and one small remnant Gippsland Red-gum. Power Station Rd reserve comprised a mixture of native grasses including Spear Grass, Kangaroo Grass, Wallaby Grass and invasive grasses including Toowoomba Canary grass, Brown-top Bent, Cocksfoot and Paspalum. Some small scattered red Burjan shrubs and immature Gippsland Red-gum trees were growing in the drainage trench. One large Gippsland Red-gum was recorded in the roadside reserve on the southwestern fence line.

The study area lies within the Gippsland Plain bioregion and falls within the East Gippsland catchment and East Gippsland local government area.

#### 4.1.1. Zoning

The study area is currently zoned Farming Zone (FZ1) in the East Gippsland Planning Scheme.

The purpose of this zoning is to provide for the use of land for agriculture and to ensure that non-agricultural uses, including dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture. Also to encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.

The study area is located in a bushfire prone area.

#### 4.1.2. Overlays

The following planning overlays are applicable to the study area:

- *Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 7 (DDO7)* – The purpose of this overlay is to ensure development in the Highway corridor in non-urban areas is managed to minimise adverse effects on



the safe and efficient flow of traffic along the highways. This may relate to the current investigation because the decision guidelines assess the potential impact of the use or development on significant vegetation in the highway corridor.

- *Vegetation Protection Overlay – Schedule 1 (VPO1)* – The purpose of this overlay is to ensure that development of access to private land, and road maintenance and construction activities occur so as:
  - To conserve areas of vegetation with high conservation value by minimising the extent of vegetation loss.
  - To conserve and enhance fauna habitat and habitat corridors by minimising the extent of vegetation loss and encouraging regeneration of indigenous species.
  - To preserve existing trees and other vegetation where it contributes to high landscape and aesthetic values.

Implications of the proposal under these overlays are provided in Section 0.

## 4.2. Native vegetation

Pre-1750 (pre-European settlement) vegetation mapping administered by DEECA was reviewed to determine the type of native vegetation likely to occur in the study area and surrounds. Information on Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) was obtained from published EVC benchmarks. These sources included:

- Relevant EVC benchmarks for the Gippsland Plain bioregion<sup>3</sup> (DSE 2004a);
- *NatureKit* (DEECA 2023a).

### 4.2.1. Species recorded

During the field assessment 47 plant species were recorded, of which 20 (42%) were indigenous and 27 (58%) introduced or non-indigenous in origin. A full list of flora species observed is provided in Appendix 4. Planted vegetation within the study area has not been included in the species list.

### 4.2.2. Patches of native vegetation

Pre-European EVC mapping (DEECA 2023a) indicated that the study area and surrounds would have supported Plains Grassy Woodland/Gilgai Wetland Mosaic (EVC 259), and Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) prior to European settlement based on modelling of factors including rainfall, aspect, soils and remaining vegetation.

Evidence on site, including floristic composition and soil characteristics suggested that Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55), was present in the form of highly degraded, derived grassland scattered across the grazing paddock and Power Station Road reserve (Figure 1). A description of this EVC is provided within the EVC benchmarks in

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<sup>3</sup> A bioregion is defined as “a geographic region that captures the patterns of ecological characteristics in the landscape, providing a natural framework for recognising and responding to biodiversity values”. In general bioregions reflect underlying environmental features of the landscape (DNRE 1997).

Appendix 6.

Six patches (herein referred as habitat zones) comprising the abovementioned EVC, were identified in the study area (Table 1). This totalled an area of 0.647 hectares of native vegetation in patches and included no large trees.

**Table 1: Description of habitat zones in the study area**

| Habitat Zone | EVC                             | Description  |
|--------------|---------------------------------|--|
| A, B, C      | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | <p>These habitat zones comprised concentrated areas of Rush (<i>Juncus sp.</i>) which represents now highly degraded Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) within the grazing paddock.</p> <p>No trees or shrubs were present.</p> <p>Weed cover was high (50-70%), occupying all inter-tussock spaces and comprised largely of African Love-grass, Brown-top Bent and Paspalum. Introduced broadleaf weeds Spear Thistle and Hairy Hawkbit were also present.</p> <p>HZs B and C also incorporated small dams which were largely dry at the time of the survey. These dams supported some other native aquatic and semi-aquatic plants such as Pondweed, Spike Sedge and Common Water Ribbons.</p> <p>Note: Rush is scattered across the entire grazing paddock, however, the areas recorded meet the 25% cover requirement to constitute a patch under the Guidelines.</p>   |
| D, E, F      | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | <p>These habitat zones comprised areas of native vegetation growing along the drainage trench on the Power Station Road that represented degraded Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55).</p> <p>No large trees were present in the patches.</p> <p>All HZs were dominated by native grasses: Spear Grass, Wallaby Grass and Kangaroo grass. Weed cover varied across HZs and was dominated by Toowoomba Canary-grass, Cocksfoot, Brown-top Bent and Paspalum.</p> <p>For HZs D and F weed cover was moderate to low with inter-tussock spaces revealing bare ground and bryophytes.</p> <p>Habitat zone E supported two small Burgan shrubs as well as a few small immature Gippsland Red-gum trees. Weed cover was higher in HZ E and generally supported higher standing biomass due to the dominance of Kangaroo Grass. Within drainage trenches some native herbs were present including Branched Goodenia, Kidney Weed, Small St John’s Wort and Cudweed. Bryophytes were also present.</p> <p>Litter cover was moderate comprising material from nearby planted Eucalypts.</p> |

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The Vegetation Quality Assessment (VQA) results for these habitat zones are provided in Table 2. More detailed habitat scoring results are presented in Appendix 2. Details of large trees in patches are provided in Appendix 3.

**Table 2: Summary of Vegetation Quality Assessment results**

| Habitat Zone | EVC                             | Area (ha)    | Condition score (out of 100) | No. of large trees in HZ |
|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| A            | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | 0.173        | 11                           | 0                        |
| B            | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | 0.135        | 11                           | 0                        |
| C            | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | 0.210        | 15                           | 0                        |
| D            | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | 0.041        | 19                           | 0                        |
| E            | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | 0.083        | 17                           | 0                        |
| F            | Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) | 0.004        | 16                           | 0                        |
| <b>Total</b> |                                 | <b>0.647</b> |                              | <b>0</b>                 |

#### 4.2.3. Scattered trees

Scattered trees recorded in the study area would have once comprised the canopy component of Plain Grassy Woodland (EVC 55).

Four scattered trees occurred in the study area (Figure 1), including the following:

- Two large scattered trees ( $\geq$  80-centimetre DBH); and
- Two small scattered trees (< 80-centimetre DBH).

Details of all scattered trees recorded are listed in Appendix 3.

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**Figure 1: Study area and native vegetation**

**Project:** 910 Princess Hwy Solar Farm, Bairnsdale.

**Client:** Bison Energy

 Study area

**Native vegetation**

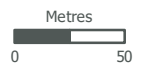
 Large scattered tree

 Small scattered tree

 Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55)



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## 5. Assessment of impacts

### 5.1. Proposed development

The current proposal will involve the construction of a solar farm with associated infrastructure including access tracks, battery storage facility and power pipelines.

To determine the extent of impacts to native vegetation, the proposed design plan was overlaid with the native vegetation mapped as part of this investigation. Based on this plan, native vegetation impacted by the following was considered removed:

- Direct removal:
  - Native vegetation within all proposed building envelopes including removed vegetation to accommodate roads and pipelines.
- Consequential removal:
  - Native vegetation within 10 metres of all proposed building envelopes.
  - Native vegetation required to be removed for the creation of defensible space.
  - Trees with the more than 10% of their TPZ encroached.

### 5.2. Proposed native vegetation removal

The current proposal footprint will result in the loss of a total extent of 0.383 hectares of native vegetation as represented in Figure 2 and documented in the Native Vegetation Removal (NVR) report provided by DEECA (Appendix 7).

This comprised the following:

- 0.383 hectares of native vegetation in patches (with no large trees in patches);

The native vegetation to be removed is not in an area mapped as an endangered EVC.

We understand that that no native vegetation has been approved for removal on the property within the last five years.

Photographs of native vegetation proposed for removal are provided in Appendix 6 Appendix 5.

### 5.3. Design recommendations

The following design recommendations are provided to avoid/minimise impacts on native vegetation, and flora and fauna habitats:

- Two large scattered trees were recorded within the study area. The initial battery layout impacted one of these trees. Updates to the layout have enabled retention of this tree.
- Native vegetation along Power Station Road is of higher quality and impacts should be avoided. The disjunct nature of the patches makes it possible to avoid entirely if current driveways are used. In addition to this, efforts should be made to limit the spread of weeds in this area.

Further mitigation recommendations to mitigate impacts to native vegetation during construction are provided in Appendix 9.

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## Figure 2: Native vegetation removal


**Project:** 910 Princess Hwy Solar Farm, Bairnsdale.


**Client:** Bison Energy

 Study area


 Impact area

### Native vegetation

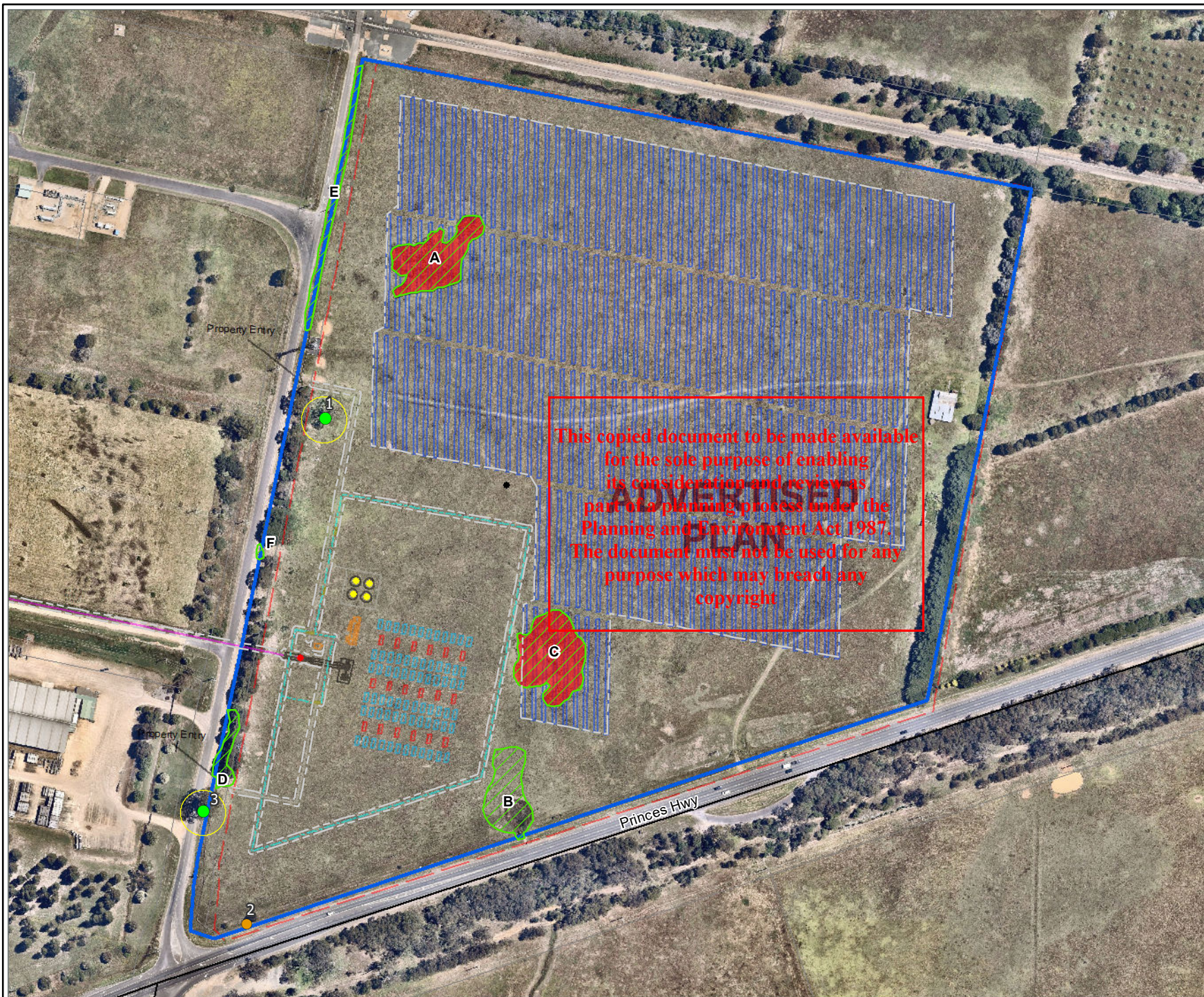
 Large scattered tree

 Small scattered tree

 Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55)

 Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)

 Native vegetation to be removed



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## 6. Implications under legislation and policy

### 6.1. Clause 12.01 of the of the Planning Scheme

The proposal must satisfy the principles underpinning Cl. 12.01 which aim to protect and enhance Victoria's biodiversity. The principles involve avoiding habitat fragmentation, creating wildlife corridors, conserving biodiversity, and protecting threatened species. The current condition of the property is highly degraded and fragmented leaving little opportunity to implement these principles. However, the development plan retains the highest ecological values of the site by the protection of the two large trees and roadside native vegetation. These trees will continue to provide habitat for common bird species and potentially arboreal mammals. The only vegetation to be removed is highly degraded and of little ecological value

### 6.2. Clause 52.17 of the Planning Scheme

A permit for the proposed removal of native vegetation is required under Cl. 52.17 of the State Planning Provisions.

#### 6.2.1. Exemptions

Exemptions listed in Cl. 52.17-7 relevant to the study area are:

- *Planted vegetation*: Native vegetation that is to be removed, destroyed or lopped that was either planted or grown as a result of direct seeding. This exemption does not apply to native vegetation planted or managed with public funding for the purpose of land protection or enhancing biodiversity.
- *Regrowth*: Native vegetation that is to be removed, destroyed or lopped that has naturally established or regenerated on land lawfully cleared of naturally established native vegetation, and may be classified as one of the following:
  - Less than 10 years old, or
  - Austral Bracken (*Pteridium esculentum*), or
  - Within the boundary of a timber production plantation, as indicated on a Plantation Development Notice or other documented record and has established after the plantation; or
  - Less than ten years old at the time of a property vegetation plan being signed by the Secretary to DEECA (as constituted under Part 2 of the *Conservation, Forests and Lands Act 1987*) and is shown on that plan as being 'certified regrowth'; and on land that is to be used or maintained for cultivation or pasture during the term of that plan.

This exemption does not apply to land where native vegetation has been destroyed or otherwise damaged as a result of flood, fire or other natural disaster.

The clearing along both sides of the fence when combined must not exceed 4 metres in width, except where land has already been cleared 4 metres or more along one side of the fence, then up to 1 metre can be cleared along the other side of the fence.

### 6.3. Avoid and minimise statement

In accordance with the Guidelines, all applications to remove native vegetation must provide an avoid and minimise statement that describes any efforts undertaken to avoid the removal of, and minimise the impacts to biodiversity and other values of native vegetation, and how these efforts focused on areas of native vegetation that have the highest value. Efforts to avoid and minimise impacts to native vegetation in the current application are presented as follows:

- *Strategic level planning* – The Vegetation Protection Overlay partially covering the study area is designed to protect significant vegetation corridors at a landscape level. The design plan is design to have no impact on vegetation covered by this overlay.
- *Site level planning* – The proposed development has been designed to avoid and minimise impacts to native vegetation by avoiding any impact on higher quality vegetation. Additionally, the design plan has been adjusted for the retention of all large trees and higher quality native vegetation.

**6.4. Modelled species important habitat**

The current proposal footprint will not have a significant impact on any habitat for any rare or threatened species as determined in Appendix 7.

**6.5. Assessment pathway**

The assessment pathway is determined by the location category and extent of native vegetation as detailed for the study area as follows:

- **Location Category:** Location 1
- **Extent of native vegetation:** A total of 0.383 hectares of native vegetation (including no large trees).

Based on the extent of native vegetation removal being <0.5 hectares, not including any large trees, and being in Location 1, the Guidelines stipulate that the proposal is to be assessed under the **Basic** assessment pathway, as determined by the following matrix:

**Table 3: Assessment pathway matrix**

| Extent of native vegetation                          | Location Category |              |            |
|--|-------------------|--------------|------------|
|  | Location 1        | Location 2   | Location 3 |
| < 0.5 hectares and not including any large trees     | Basic             | Intermediate | Detailed   |
| < 0.5 hectares and including one or more large trees | Intermediate      | Intermediate | Detailed   |
| ≥ 0.5 hectares                                       | Detailed          | Detailed     | Detailed   |

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This proposal **would not** trigger a referral to DEECA based on the above criteria.

**6.6. Offset requirements**

Offsets required to compensate for the proposed removal of native vegetation from the study area are:

- 0.383 general habitat units, with following offset attribute requirements:
  - A minimum strategic biodiversity value (SBV) of 0.364
  - Located within the East Gippsland CMA boundary or the East Gippsland Shire Council.

Under the Guidelines all offsets must be secured prior to the removal of native vegetation.

**6.7. Offset statement**

The offset target for the current proposal will be achieved via a third-party offset.

An online search of the *Native Vegetation Credit Register* (DEECA 2023c) has shown that the required offset is currently available for purchase from a native vegetation credit owner.

Evidence that the required offset is available is provided in Appendix 8. The required offset would be secured following approval of the application to remove native vegetation.

## 6.8. Zoning

The design plan accommodates the current zoning (FZ1) of the East Gippsland Planning Scheme as the proposed use will not affect surrounding agricultural land use or vegetation.

## 6.9. Overlays

*Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 7 (DDO7)* – The design plan adheres to the overlay by applying the appropriate setbacks from significant surrounding features as well as avoiding any impact physically or visually to the vegetation along the Princes Hwy corridor.

*Vegetation Protection Overlay – Schedule 1 (VPO1)* – The design plan adheres to the overlay by avoiding any impact on significant vegetation and minimising impact on native vegetation covered by the overlay.

## 6.10. CaLP Act

The *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) requires that landowners (or a third party to whom responsibilities have been legally transferred) must eradicate regionally prohibited weeds and prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds.

Property owners who do not eradicate regionally prohibited weeds or prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds for which they are responsible, may be issued with a Land Management Notice or Directions Notice that requires specific control work to be undertaken.

In accordance with the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, the noxious weed species listed below, that were recorded in the study area, must be controlled.

- African Love-grass (C)
- Spear Thistle (C)
- Blackberry (C)
- St John's Wort (C)

Precision control methods that minimise off-target kills (e.g. spot spraying) should be used in environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. within or near native vegetation, waterways, etc.).

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## Appendix 1: Details of the assessment process in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (DELWP 2017a)

### Purpose and objective

Policies and strategies relating to the protection and management of native vegetation in Victoria are defined in the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF). The objective identified in Clause 12.01 of all Victorian Planning Schemes 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 to be achieved through the following three-step approach, as described in the Guidelines:

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.
3. Provide an offset to compensate for the biodiversity impact from the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

**Note:** While a planning permit may still be required, if native vegetation does not meet the definition of either a patch or a scattered tree, an offset under the Guidelines is not required.

### Assessment pathways

The first step in determining the type of assessment required for any site in Victoria is to determine the assessment pathway for the proposed native vegetation removal. The three possible assessment pathways for applications to remove native vegetation in Victoria are the following:

- Basic;
- Intermediate; or
- Detailed.

This assessment pathway is determined by two factors:

- **Location Category**, as determined using the state’s Location Map. The location category indicates the potential risk to biodiversity from removing a small amount of native vegetation. The three location categories are defined as follows:
  - **Location 1** – shown in light blue-green on the Location Map; occurring over most of Victoria.
  - **Location 2** – shown in dark blue-green on the Location Map; includes areas mapped as endangered EVCs and/or sensitive wetlands and coastal areas.
  - **Location 3** – shown in brown on the Location Map; includes areas where the removal of less than 0.5 hectares of native vegetation could have a significant impact on habitat for rare and threatened species.
- **Extent of native vegetation** – The extent of any patches and scattered trees proposed to be removed (and the extent of any past native vegetation removal), with consideration as to whether the proposed removal includes any large trees. Extent of native vegetation is determined as follows:
  - **Patch** – the area of the patch in hectares.
  - **Scattered Tree** – the extent of a scattered tree is dependent on whether the scattered tree is small or large. A tree is considered large if the diameter at breast height (DBH) is equal to or greater than the large tree benchmark DBH for the relevant bioregional EVC. Any scattered

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tree that is not a large tree is a small scattered tree. The extent of large and small scattered trees is determined as follows:

- **Large scattered tree** – the area of a circle with a 15 metre radius, with the trunk of the tree at the centre.
- **Small scattered tree** – the area of a circle with a ten metre radius, with the trunk of the tree at the centre.

The assessment pathway for assessing an application to remove native vegetation is subsequently determined as shown in the following matrix table:

| Extent of native vegetation                          | Location Category |              |            |
|--|-------------------|--------------|------------|
|  | Location 1        | Location 2   | Location 3 |
| < 0.5 hectares and not including any large trees     | Basic             | Intermediate | Detailed   |
| < 0.5 hectares and including one or more large trees | Intermediate      | Intermediate | Detailed   |
| ≥ 0.5 hectares                                       | Detailed          | Detailed     | Detailed   |

**Note:** If the native vegetation to be removed includes more than one location category, the higher location category is used to determine the assessment pathway.

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*Landscape scale information – strategic biodiversity value*

The SBV is a measure of a local location's importance to Victoria's biodiversity, relative to other locations across the state. This is represented as a score between 0 and 1 and determined from the SBV map, available from NVIM (DELWP 2022b).

*Landscape scale information – habitat for rare or threatened species*

Habitat importance for rare or threatened species is a measure of the importance of a location in the landscape as habitat for a particular rare or threatened species, in relation to other habitat available for that species. This is represented as a score between 0 and 1 and determined from the habitat importance maps administered by DEECA.

This includes two groups of habitat:

- **Highly localised habitats** – Limited in area and considered to be equally important, therefore having the same habitat importance score.
- **Dispersed habitats** – Less limited in area and based on habitat distribution models.

Habitat for rare or threatened species is used to determine the type of offset required in the detailed assessment pathway.

*Biodiversity value*

A combination of site-based and landscape scale information is used to calculate the biodiversity value of native vegetation to be removed. Biodiversity value is represented by a general or species habitat score as follows.

The extent and condition of native vegetation to be removed are combined to determine the habitat hectares as follows:

$$\text{Habitat hectares} = \text{extent of native vegetation} \times \text{condition score}$$

The habitat hectare score is combined with a landscape factor to obtain an overall measure of biodiversity value. Two landscape factors exist as follows:

- **General landscape factor** – determined using an adjusted strategic biodiversity score, and relevant when no habitat importance scores are applicable;
- **Species landscape factor** – determined using an adjusted habitat importance score for each rare or threatened species habitat mapped at a site in the Habitat importance map.

These factors are subsequently used as follows to determine the biodiversity value of a site:

$$\text{General habitat score} = \text{habitat hectares} \times \text{general landscape factor}$$

$$\text{Species habitat score} = \text{habitat hectares} \times \text{species landscape factor}$$

*Offset requirements*

A native vegetation offset is required for the approved removal of native vegetation. Offsets conform to one of two types and each type includes a proportional multiplier to address the risk of offset:

- A **general offset** is required when the removal of native vegetation does not have a significant impact on any habitat for rare or threatened species (i.e. the proportional impact is below the species offset threshold). In this case a multiplier of 1.5 applies to determine the general offset amount.

$$\text{General offset (amount of general habitat units)} = \text{general habitat score} \times 1.5$$

- A **species offset** is required when the removal of native vegetation has a significant impact on habitat for a rare or threatened species (i.e. the proportional impact is above the species offset threshold). In this case a multiplier of 2 applies to determine the species offset amount.

$$\text{Species offset (amount of species habitat units)} = \text{Species habitat score} \times 2$$

**Note:** If native vegetation does not meet the definition of either a patch or scattered tree an offset is not required.

*Offset attributes*

Offsets must meet the following attribute requirements, as relevant:

- General offsets
  - **Offset amount** – general offset = general habitat score × 1.5

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- **Strategic biodiversity value** – the offset has at least 80% of the SBV of the native vegetation removed
- **Vicinity** – the offset is in the same CMA boundary or municipal district as the native vegetation removed
- Habitat for rare and threatened species – N/A
- **Large trees** – the offset includes the protection of at least one large tree for every large tree to be removed
- Species offsets
  - **Offset amount** – species offset = species habitat score × 2
  - Strategic biodiversity value: N/A
  - Vicinity: N/A
  - **Habitat for rare and threatened species** – the offset comprises mapped habitat according to the habitat importance map for the relevant species
  - **Large trees** – the offset includes the protection of at least one large tree for every large tree to be removed

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## Appendix 2: Detailed Vegetation Quality Assessment results

| Habitat Zone                    |                         |      | A     | B     | C     | D     | E     | F     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Bioregion                       |                         |      | GipP  | GipP  | GipP  | GipP  | GipP  | GipP  |
| EVC Number                      |                         |      | 55    | 55    | 55    | 55    | 55    | 55    |
| Total area of Habitat Zone (ha) |                         |      | 0.173 | 0.135 | 0.210 | 0.041 | 0.083 | 0.004 |
| Site Condition                  | Large Old Trees         | /10  | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
|                                 | Tree Canopy Cover       | /5   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
|                                 | Lack of Weeds           | /15  | 2     | 2     | 6     | 9     | 2     | 6     |
|                                 | Understorey             | /25  | 5     | 5     | 5     | 5     | 10    | 5     |
|                                 | Recruitment             | /10  | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 1     | 0     |
|                                 | Organic Matter          | /5   | 2     | 2     | 2     | 3     | 2     | 3     |
|                                 | Logs                    | /5   | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
|                                 | Site Condition subtotal |      |       | 9     | 9     | 13    | 17    | 15    |
| Landscape Context               | Patch Size              | /10  | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     |
|                                 | Neighbourhood           | /10  | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
|                                 | Distance to Core        | /5   | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     | 1     |
| Total Condition Score           |                         | /100 | 11    | 11    | 15    | 19    | 17    | 16    |

\* Modified approach to habitat scoring - refer to Table 14 of DELWP's Vegetation Quality Assessment Manual (DSE, 2004).

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**Appendix 3: Large trees in patches and scattered trees recorded in the study area**

| Tree No. | Common Name       | Scientific Name                                      | DBH (cm) | Circumference (cm) | Habitat Category     | Radius of TPZ (m) | Remove/Retain | Notes           |
|----------|-------------------|--|----------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1        | Gippsland Red-gum | <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> subsp. <i>mediana</i> | 138      | 434                | Large Scattered Tree | 15                | Retained      | Habitat hollows |
| 3        | Gippsland Red-gum | <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> subsp. <i>mediana</i> | 137      | 430                | Large Scattered Tree | 15                | Retained      | Habitat hollows |

**Notes:** DBH = Diameter at breast height (130 cm from the ground); **TPZ** = Tree Protection Zone.

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## Appendix 4: Flora species recorded in the study area

| Origin | Scientific Name                                      | Common Name            | FFG | EPBC | CaLP |
|--------|--|------------------------|-----|------|------|
|        | <i>Acacia implexa</i>                                | Lightwood              |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Acaena echinata</i>                               | Sheep's Burr           |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Acetosella vulgaris</i>                           | Sheep Sorrel           |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Agrostis capillaris</i>                           | Brown-top Bent         |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Aira</i> spp.                                     | Hair Grass             |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>                         | Sweet Vernal-grass     |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Asparagus scandens</i>                            | Asparagus Fern         |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Austrostipa pubinodis</i>                         | Tall Spear-grass       |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Austrostipa</i> spp.                              | Spear Grass            |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Cenchrus clandestinus</i>                         | Kikuyu                 |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Centaurium erythraea</i>                          | Common Centaury        |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>                               | Spear Thistle          |     |      | C    |
|        | <i>Cycnogeton procerum</i> s.s.                      | Common Water-ribbons   |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Cyperus eragrostis</i>                            | Drain Flat-sedge       |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Dactylis glomerata</i>                            | Cocksfoot              |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Dichondra repens</i>                              | Kidney-weed            |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Eleocharis</i> spp.                               | Spike Sedge            |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Eragrostis curvula</i>                            | African Love-grass     |     |      | C    |
| *      | <i>Erigeron sumatrensis</i>                          | Fall Fleabane          |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> subsp. <i>mediana</i> | Gippsland Red-gum      |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Euchiton involucratu</i> s.l.                     | Common Cudweed         |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Goodenia paniculata</i>                           | Branched Goodenia      |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Hypericum gramineum</i>                           | Small St John's Wort   |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> subsp. <i>veronense</i>  | St John's Wort         |     |      | C    |
| *      | <i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>                            | Smooth Cat's-ear       |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>                          | Flatweed               |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Juncus</i> spp.                                   | Rush                   |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Kunzea ericoides</i> s.l.                         | Burgan                 |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Leontodon saxatilis</i> subsp. <i>saxatilis</i>   | Hairy Hawkbit          |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Lolium perenne</i>                                | Perennial Rye-grass    |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Microlaena stipoides</i> var. <i>stipoides</i>    | Weeping Grass          |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Oxalis perennans</i>                              | Grassland Wood-sorrel  |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Paspalum dilatatum</i>                            | Paspalum               |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Paspalum</i> spp.                                 | Paspalum               |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Phalaris aquatica</i>                             | Toowoomba Canary-grass |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>                           | Ribwort                |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Potamogeton tricarinatus</i> s.l.                 | Floating Pondweed      |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Romulea rosea</i>                                 | Onion Grass            |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> spp. agg.                    | Blackberry             |     |      | C    |
|        | <i>Rytidosperma setaceum</i>                         | Bristly Wallaby-grass  |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Rytidosperma</i> spp.                             | Wallaby Grass          |     |      |      |
|        | <i>Schoenus apogon</i>                               | Common Bog-sedge       |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Sporobolus africanus</i>                          | Rat-tail Grass         |     |      |      |

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| Origin | Scientific Name         | Common Name          | FFG | EPBC | CaLP |
|--------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----|------|------|
|        | <i>Themeda triandra</i> | Kangaroo Grass       |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Trifolium dubium</i> | Suckling Clover      |     |      |      |
| *      | <i>Vulpia bromoides</i> | Squirrel-tail Fescue |     |      |      |

**Notes:** EPBC = Threatened species status under the EPBC Act; FFG-T = Threatened species status under the FFG Act; FFG-P = Listed as protected (P) under the FFG Act; CaLP Act: Declared noxious weeds under the CaLP Act (S = State Prohibited Weeds – any infestations must be reported to DEECA that is responsible for control of these; P = Regionally Prohibited Weeds – landowners must eradicate these; C = Regionally Controlled Weeds – landowners must prevent the growth and spread of these; R = Restricted Weeds – trade in these weeds and propagules, either as plants, seeds or contaminants in other materials is prohibited).

\* = introduced to Victoria

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**Appendix 5: Photographs of native vegetation proposed for removal**

All photographs were taken on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023.



Habitat Zone A- Dominated by rush with high pasture grass cover



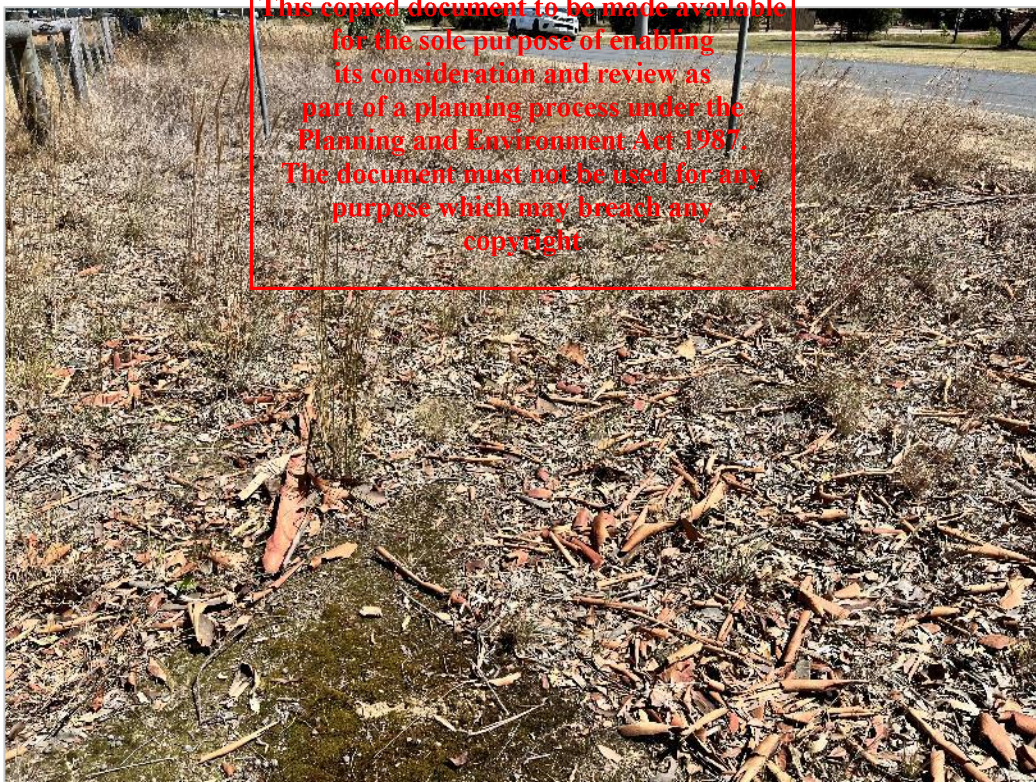
Habitat Zone B – Dried up dam surrounded by rush and Spike Sedge.

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Habitat Zone C – Dam surrounded by high cover of rush.



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Habitat Zone E – Native grasses growing on roadside.

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Habitat Zone E – Kangaroo Grass growing in drainage trench of roadside.



Large Scattered Tree 1 – Gippsland Red-gum growing in grazing paddock inside western fence line.

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Large Scattered Tree 2 – Gippsland Red-gum growing on Power Station Road in south east corner of study area.

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**Appendix 6: EVC benchmarks**

Plain Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) – Gippsland Plain

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# EVC/Bioregion Benchmark for Vegetation Quality Assessment Gippsland Plain bioregion

## EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland

### Description:

An open, eucalypt woodland to 15 m tall occurring on a number of geologies and soil types. 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.

### Large trees:

| Species                | DBH(cm) | #/ha    |
|------------------------|---------|---------|
| <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp. | 80 cm   | 10 / ha |

### Tree Canopy Cover:

| %cover | Character Species                                  | Common Name       |
|--------|--|-------------------|
| 20%    | <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> ssp. <i>mediana</i> | Gippsland Red-gum |
|        | <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i>                    | River Red-gum     |

### Understorey:

| Life form                           | #Spn | %Cover | LF code |
|-------------------------------------|------|--------|---------|
| Immature Canopy Tree                | 1    | 5%     | IT      |
| Understorey Tree or Large Shrub     | 1    | 5%     | T       |
| Medium Shrub                        | 2    | 10%    | MS      |
| Small Shrub                         | 1    | 1%     | SS      |
| Prostrate Shrub                     | 1    | 1%     | PS      |
| Large Herb                          | 1    | 5%     | LH      |
| Medium Herb                         | 10   | 20%    | MH      |
| Small or Prostrate Herb             | 1    | 5%     | SH      |
| Large Tufted Graminoid              | 1    | 5%     | LTG     |
| Large Non-tufted Graminoid          | 1    | 10%    | LNG     |
| Medium to Small Tufted Graminoid    | 9    | 35%    | MTG     |
| Medium to Tiny Non-tufted Graminoid | 2    | 10%    | MNG     |
| Bryophytes/Lichens                  | na   | 10%    | BL      |

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### LF Code

### Species typical of at least part of EVC range

### Common Name

|     |   |                       |
|-----|---|-----------------------|
| T   | <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i>                   | Black Sheoak          |
| T   | <i>Acacia mearnsii</i>                            | Black Wattle          |
| T   | <i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>                         | Blackwood             |
| MS  | <i>Kunzea ericoides</i>                           | Burgan                |
| SS  | <i>Pimelea humilis</i>                            | Common Rice-flower    |
| PS  | <i>Bossiaea prostrata</i>                         | Creeping Bossiaea     |
| MH  | <i>Hypericum gramineum</i>                        | Small St John's Wort  |
| MH  | <i>Oxalis perennans</i>                           | Grassland Wood-sorrel |
| SH  | <i>Dichondra repens</i>                           | Kidney-weed           |
| SH  | <i>Poranthera microphylla</i>                     | Small Poranthera      |
| LTG | <i>Austrostipa rudis</i>                          | Veined Spear-grass    |
| LNG | <i>Gahnia radula</i>                              | Thatch Saw-sedge      |
| MTG | <i>Themeda triandra</i>                           | Kangaroo Grass        |
| MTG | <i>Carex breviculmis</i>                          | Common Grass-sedge    |
| MTG | <i>Lomandra filiformis</i>                        | Wattle Mat-rush       |
| MTG | <i>Schoenus apogon</i>                            | Common Bog-sedge      |
| MNG | <i>Microlaena stipoides</i> var. <i>stipoides</i> | Weeping Grass         |

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# EVC 55: Plains Grassy Woodland - Gippsland Plain bioregion

**Recruitment:**

Continuous

**Organic Litter:**

10 % cover

**Logs:**

10 m/0.1 ha.

**Weediness:**

| LF Code | Typical Weed Species         | Common Name          | Invasive | Impact |
|---------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------|--------|
| LH      | <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>   | Ribwort              | high     | low    |
| MH      | <i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>  | Cat's Ear            | high     | low    |
| MH      | <i>Centaureum erythraea</i>  | Common Centaury      | high     | low    |
| LNG     | <i>Holcus lanatus</i>        | Yorkshire Fog        | high     | high   |
| MTG     | <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> | Sweet Vernal-grass   | high     | high   |
| MNG     | <i>Romulea rosea</i>         | Onion Grass          | high     | low    |
| MNG     | <i>Briza maxima</i>          | Large Quaking-grass  | high     | low    |
| MNG     | <i>Briza minor</i>           | Lesser Quaking-grass | high     | low    |

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**Appendix 7: Native Vegetation Removal (NVR) report**

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# Scenario test – native vegetation removal

This report provides offset requirements for internal testing of different proposals to remove native vegetation. **This report DOES NOT support an application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation under Clause 52.16 or 52.17 of planning schemes in Victoria.** A report must be obtained from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

Date of issue: 27/02/2023  
Time of issue: 2:03 pm

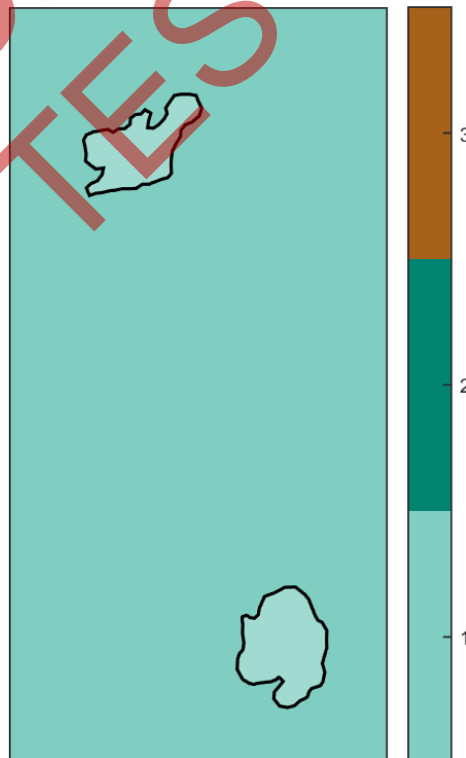
Report ID: Scenario Testing

|            |                                       |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Project ID | 22340_Bairnsdale_Solar_Removal_230227 |
|------------|---------------------------------------|

## Assessment pathway

| Assessment pathway                     | Basic Assessment Pathway   |
|--|--|
| Extent including past and proposed     | 0.383 ha   |
| Extent of past removal                 | 0.000 ha   |
| Extent of proposed removal             | 0.383 ha   |
| No. Large trees proposed to be removed | 0  |
| Location category of proposed removal  | Location 1<br>The native vegetation is not in an area mapped as an endangered Ecological Vegetation Class (as per the statewide EVC map), sensitive wetland or coastal area. Removal of less than 0.5 hectares in this location will not have a significant impact on any habitat for a rare or threatened species |

### 1. Location map



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# Scenario test – native vegetation removal

## Offset requirements if a permit is granted

Any approval granted will include a condition to obtain an offset that meets the following requirements:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>General offset amount<sup>1</sup></b>                | 0.055 general habitat units   |
| Vicinity  | East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (CMA) or East Gippsland Shire Council |
| Minimum strategic biodiversity value score <sup>2</sup> | 0.364   |
| Large trees   | 0 large trees   |

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

Appendix 1 includes information about the native vegetation to be removed

Appendix 2 includes information about the rare or threatened species mapped at the site.

Appendix 3 includes maps showing native vegetation to be removed and extracts of relevant species habitat importance maps

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<sup>1</sup> The general offset amount required is the sum of all general habitat units in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> Minimum strategic biodiversity score is 80 per cent of the weighted average score across habitat zones where a general offset is required



# Scenario test – native vegetation removal

## Next steps

Any proposal to remove native vegetation must meet the application requirements of the Basic Assessment Pathway and it will be assessed under the Basic Assessment Pathway.

**This report DOES NOT support an application to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation under Clause 52.16 or 52.17 of planning schemes in Victoria.**

If you wish to remove the mapped native vegetation you must submit the related shapefiles to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) for processing, by email to [ensymnvrtool.support@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:ensymnvrtool.support@delwp.vic.gov.au). DELWP will provide a *Native vegetation removal report* that is required to meet the permit application requirements in accordance with *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (Guidelines).

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## Appendix 1: Description of native vegetation to be removed

All zones require a general offset, the general habitat units each zone is calculated by the following equation in accordance with the Guidelines:

$$\text{General habitat units} = \text{extent} \times \text{condition} \times \text{general landscape factor} \times 1.5, \text{ where the general landscape factor} = 0.5 + (\text{strategic biodiversity value score}/2)$$

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 in a GIS file |       |          |                            |               |                 |                 | Information calculated by EnSym |                        |           |          |               |             |
|---|-------|----------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------|-------------|
| Zone  | Type  | BioEVC   | BioEVC conservation status | Large tree(s) | Partial removal | Condition score | Polygon Extent                  | Extent without overlap | SBV score | HI score | Habitat units | Offset type |
| 1-A   | Patch | gipp0055 | Endangered                 | 0             | no              | 0.110           | 0.173                           | 0.173                  | 0.460     |          | 0.021         | General     |
| 1-C   | Patch | gipp0055 | Endangered                 | 0             | no              | 0.150           | 0.210                           | 0.210                  | 0.450     |          | 0.034         | General     |

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## Appendix 2: Information about impacts to rare or threatened species' habitats on site

This is not applicable in the Basic Assessment Pathway.

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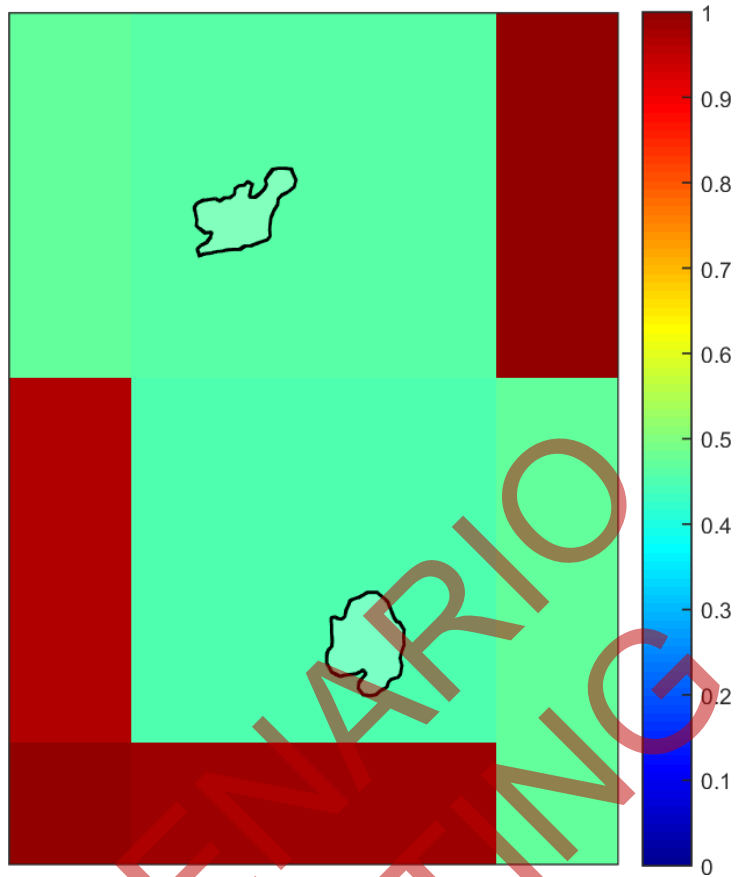
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# Appendix 3 – Images of mapped native vegetation

## 2. Strategic biodiversity values map



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**Appendix 8: Evidence that native vegetation offset requirement is available**

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# Report of available native vegetation credits

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: 28/02/2023 10:20

Report ID: 17895

## What was searched for?

### General offset

| General habitat units | Strategic biodiversity value | Large trees | Vicinity (Catchment Management Authority or Municipal district) |                      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------|---|----------------------|
| 0.55                  | 0.364                        | 0           | CMA   | East Gippsland       |
|                       |                              |             | or LGA  | East Gippsland Shire |

## Details of available native vegetation credits on 28 February 2023 10:20

### These sites meet your requirements for general offsets.

| Credit Site ID | GHU    | LT   | CMA            | LGA                  | Land owner | Trader | Fixed price | Broker(s)                   |
|----------------|--------|------|----------------|----------------------|------------|--------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| BBA-0115       | 2.987  | 0    | West Gippsland | East Gippsland Shire | Yes        | Yes    | No          | Bio Offsets                 |
| BBA-2323       | 14.848 | 86   | East Gippsland | East Gippsland Shire | Yes        | Yes    | No          | Bio Offsets, Ethos, VegLink |
| BBA-2843       | 15.103 | 903  | East Gippsland | East Gippsland Shire | Yes        | Yes    | No          | VegLink                     |
| TFN-C1621      | 1.387  | 1    | East Gippsland | East Gippsland Shire | Yes        | Yes    | No          | TFN                         |
| VC_CFL-3720_01 | 1.876  | 244  | East Gippsland | East Gippsland Shire | Yes        | Yes    | No          | Contact NVOR                |
| VC_CFL-3760_01 | 28.660 | 765  | East Gippsland | East Gippsland Shire | Yes        | Yes    | No          | VegLink                     |
| VC_CFL-3767_01 | 24.125 | 1629 | East Gippsland | East Gippsland Shire | Yes        | Yes    | No          | Ethos, 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                                      |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| 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@delwp.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 DELWP Customer Service Centre 136 186 or the Native Vegetation Credit Register at [nativevegetation.offsetregister@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto: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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## Appendix 9: Construction mitigation recommendations

Recommendations to mitigate impacts to vegetation during construction are provided below:

- Establish appropriate vegetation protection zones around areas of native vegetation to be retained prior to works.
- Establish appropriate tree protection zones around scattered native trees to be retained prior to works.
- Ensure all construction personnel are appropriately briefed prior to works, and that no construction personnel, machinery or equipment are placed inside vegetation/tree protection zones.
- A suitably qualified zoologist should undertake a pre-clearance survey of planted trees to be removed in the week prior to removal to identify the presence of any nests or hollows.
- If considered necessary based on the results of the pre-clearance survey, a suitably qualified zoologist should be on site during any tree removal works to capture and relocate any misplaced fauna that may be present.

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