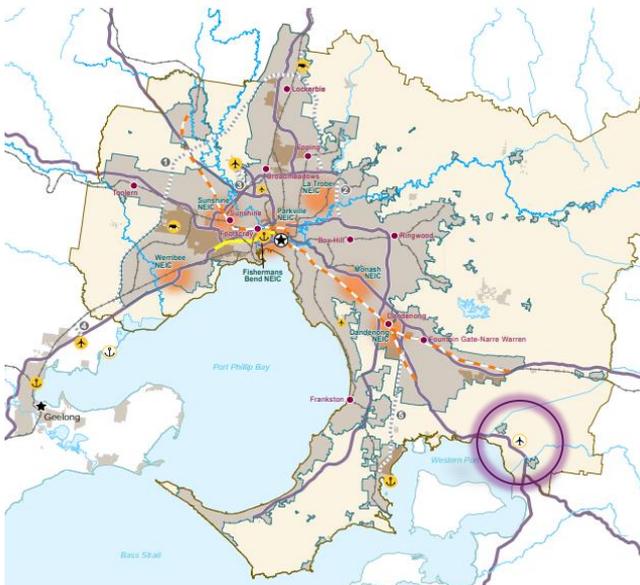


# Possible South-East Airport Pathway

Plan Melbourne Implementation Plan Action 49:  
Plan for possible airport in South East Region

## Background

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 and Victoria's eight regional growth plans all acknowledge the importance of maintaining and planning for adequate interstate and international gateway terminal capacity to serve passengers and freight to 2050 and beyond.



Plan Melbourne Map 2: Melbourne 2050 Plan

 Transport gateway – possible airport (indicative)

## Key actions in the Plan Melbourne Implementation Plan support future airport capacity planning.

Plan Melbourne identifies the need to plan for a future possible airport in the south-east of Melbourne “to serve the long-term needs of south-east Melbourne and Gippsland”. The airport would be developed the private sector and serve one third of Victoria’s population (including over 300,000 residents of the broader Gippsland region).

### Action 48: Strategy for future gateways

Protect options for future air and seaports and intermodal terminals through appropriate planning frameworks... This should include decisions on the relative priorities for investment in:

Bay West or the Port of Hastings

Western Interstate Freight Terminal and/or the Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal

Avalon Airport and a potential South-East Airport.

### Action 49: Plan for possible airport in South East Region

Finalise a preferred site beyond Koo Wee Rup, should demand warrant this beyond 2030. Preserve this future option by incorporating planning protection for flight paths and noise contours and the alignment for a connection to the rail line at Clyde.

## Previous proposals

There have been several speculative proposals over the years for an airport to serve the long-term needs of south-east Melbourne and Gippsland. The general location in the south east has been identified as early as 2002 in *Melbourne 2030*. The target markets have variously focused on general aviation, interstate, and international travellers. Potential sites have included Hastings, Tooradin, and Caldermeade.

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The arguments advanced highlight the long travel times to reach either Melbourne Airport or Avalon Airport and the potential to serve one third of Victoria's population. The example of several overseas cities with populations greater than 4 million having multiple airports is often quoted – in the case of London there are six international airports successfully competing in the one market.

Recent advocacy work undertaken by Cardinia Shire Council, attention has focused on a site at Caldermeade, which includes an area previously used as a wartime airstrip. This site abuts the former South Gippsland rail corridor.

## Aviation policy context

Outside of current impacts on aviation due to COVID-19, trends in the aviation industry argue both for and against a third commercial passenger airport for Melbourne. On the one hand, the growth of Melbourne Airport as a major international hub linking to a dense network of regional and interstate services maximises the capacity for passengers to interchange between flights. On the other hand, the growth of charter flights and discount airlines creates potential for competition targeting particular markets. There are potential benefits to competition, to reduce airport charges and the fares for passengers.

Melbourne's general aviation sector is serviced Essendon, Moorabbin and to a lesser extent, Point Cook airports. They each play an important role and are likely to continue operating for many years.

## Planning context

A major airport requires a location which is carefully chosen to avoid impacts on any nearby urban areas, yet proximity to a city and the user population is critical to its effectiveness. Melbourne continues to benefit from the legacy of past strategic planning, which meant that when Essendon Airport needed to be replaced, the current location at Tullamarine was set aside and the corridors into it protected to minimise operational impacts. Melbourne Airport, as a result, remains a highly competitive, curfew free airport.

Melbourne's major airports are generally located in the green wedges that protect the natural areas between the growth areas of the city, which extend along the major rail corridors, and in the case of Avalon Airport, within an internationally significant Ramsar wetland site.

The Victorian Government is committed to maintaining the curfew free status of Melbourne Airport and improving general accessibility. Upgrades to Skybus include the introduction of new direct routes to locations outside the CBD – including Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. Metro buses now directly serve Melbourne Airport, including the orbital Smart bus route.

In the medium term, the Melbourne Airport Rail link will become a reality with both the Victorian and Federal Governments committing \$5 billion each to delivery of a new service operating through a hub at Sunshine, connecting to regional rail services from Geelong, Ballarat, and Bendigo.

The Victorian Government is also committed to the ongoing development and protection of Avalon Airport as Victoria's second international airport. Avalon has developed in stages to accommodate commercial passenger services with plans to expand into the international passenger market. It is also home to freight and flight training activities.

Like a possible south-east airport, Avalon Airport bases its appeal on being closer for major populations, in this case Geelong and the Barwon region, and by offering price competition for travellers from the western suburbs.

## Matters for consideration

A possible third airport for Melbourne will impact on the capacity, services, and operations at existing airports, such as Essendon Fields, Moorabbin and Latrobe Valley Regional (Traralgon) airports, which service the south-east of Melbourne and Gippsland, as well as

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Melbourne and Avalon airports, which also serve the needs of Victoria. At the local level, businesses, and operations at other airports, such as Tooradin, Tyabb, and Phillip Island, may be affected by the introduction of a major airport in the region.

*Plan Melbourne* planning outcomes for Melbourne's green wedges and peri-urban areas recognise their importance to the state's economy, community, and environment. These areas contain a wide range of non-urban land uses and activities, including major transport infrastructure and associated buffers from residential and incompatible land uses.

As part of *Plan Melbourne*, the State Government is undertaking work to permanently protect Melbourne's green wedges and identified areas of strategic agricultural land in our green wedges and peri-urban areas to improve planning decision-making to support sustainable agriculture. The Westernport Green Wedge includes:

- some of Victoria's most productive agricultural land on peaty clay soils around Koo Wee Rup
- areas of international and national environmental significance, the Ramsar-listed Westernport Wetlands and the UNESCO Mornington Peninsula and Westernport Biosphere Reserve. Development in these areas trigger both State and Commonwealth assessments and approvals
- small townships and settlements, such as Koo Wee Rup, Tooradin, and Lang Lang, as well as parts of the Casey and Cardinia growth areas
- Tooradin Airport and part of Moorabbin Airport's airspace that extends to just slightly west of Koo Wee Rup and includes dedicated airspace for pilot training activities, in particular an aerobatic training area east of Berwick-Cranbourne Road and north of Ballarto Road.

A comprehensive feasibility study will be required to provide some resolution of matters raised above and a detailed framework for addressing and coordinating State and Commonwealth interests and assessment processes covering airport development and operations, regional economic development, land use planning and environmental management.

## Possible pathway

The possible option of developing a future airport to serve the needs of south-east Melbourne and Gippsland raises many issues which need to be identified to enable a private sector proponent to present a comprehensive proposal.

This pathway document briefly sets out these issues, and explains the processes required if a new airport is to be developed. It sets out broadly what needs to be done, including a feasibility study, to firm up any proposal for an airport.

**The State will seek all relevant advice, including from Infrastructure Victoria, so it can work with any future proponent to facilitate necessary approvals for a future third airport, put in place appropriate land use and environmental measures and plan for transport network improvements.**

## Regulatory framework

There are a large number of steps that would need to be navigated to achieve the approval of a new airport. Realistically this would take at least 5 years, and probably more than 10 years, with construction taking several years more.

At the same time, given the current growth in demand and developments underway and proposed at Melbourne and Avalon airports, it is probable that a south-east airport would not be required until around 2030 or later.

Notably, in the case of Sydney's Western International Airport at Badgerys Creek, some 40 years have elapsed since the acquisition of land commenced in 1986, until the commencement of construction in 2018 and the planned opening date in 2026.

# Possible South-East Airport Pathway

By preserving the option early, and identifying the approval pathway, it is expected that Melbourne could achieve a much shorter timeframe for approval and construction. It is likely to be at least a decade before a proponent steps forward. Therefore, a private proponent needs to be committed and capable of planning over a realistic timeframe.

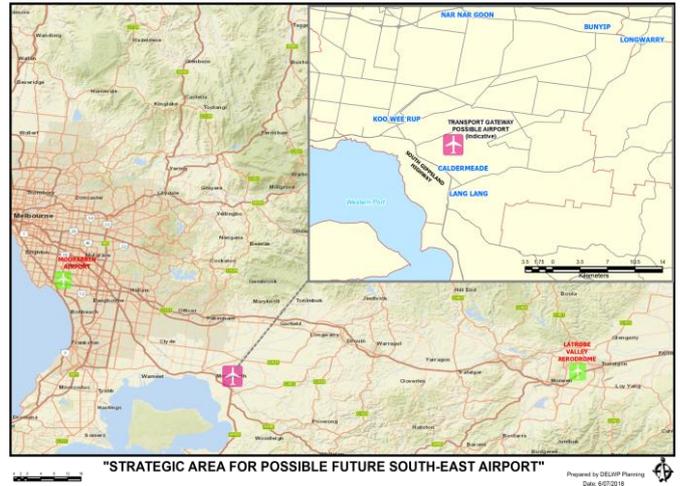
There are several Federal and State government agencies responsible for assessing proposals and granting the many approvals needed for the operation of a major airport. Key agencies are shown in Tables 1 and 2. The planning steps that would be required are broadly addressed in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 1 Commonwealth and State Government key agencies**

Commonwealth	State
Airservices Australia (AsA)	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR)
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE)	Department of Transport (DoT)
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC)	

These agencies administer several Acts and Regulations at both a Commonwealth and State level which have implications for the development of a major airport.

The key Acts and Regulations are listed in Table 2. Some of these are minor or procedural, but others require comprehensive work to be completed in advance and have significant timeframes for public consultation and final decision making.



# Possible South-East Airport Pathway

**Table 2 Commonwealth and Victorian key legislative frameworks<sup>1</sup>**

Legislation	Regulation
Air Navigation Act 1920	Air Navigation Regulation 2016  Other regulations promulgated since 1984 also include aircraft engine emissions, aircraft noise, aerodrome flight corridors and fuel spillage requirements
Air Services Act 1995	Air Services Regulations 2019
<i>Airports Act 1996</i>	Applies only to former Federal Airports Corporation airports – in Victoria these are Melbourne, Essendon and Moorabbin airports.  The Act has been included to allow readers to understand the scope of provisions relating particularly to airport master plans, airport environmental management and airport development plans.
Airspace Act 2007	Airspace Regulations 2007
Aviation Transport Security Act 2004	Aviation Transport Security Regulations 2005
Civil Aviation Act 1988	Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998  Other regulations promulgated since 1988 also include buildings control, air carriers' liability, fees and circuit layouts.
Customs Act 1901	Customs Regulations 2015
Defence Act 1903	Defence Regulations 2016 (Part 11--Defence Areas and Part 11A--Defence Aviation Areas)
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000
Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006	Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018
Aerodrome Landing Fees Act 2003	
Building Act 1993	Building Regulations 2018
Climate Change Act 2017	Climate Change Regulations 2017
Environment Effects Act 1978	
Environment Protection Act 1970 <sup>2</sup>	Environment Protection regulations promulgated since 1989 cover a large range of matters that may apply

<sup>1</sup> The regulations here are intended to be representative of the scope of regulations that can apply under each listed Act. Further detail and a full listing of relevant legislation and regulations can be found at the following legislation websites:

Federal Registrar of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>  
Victorian legislation: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>

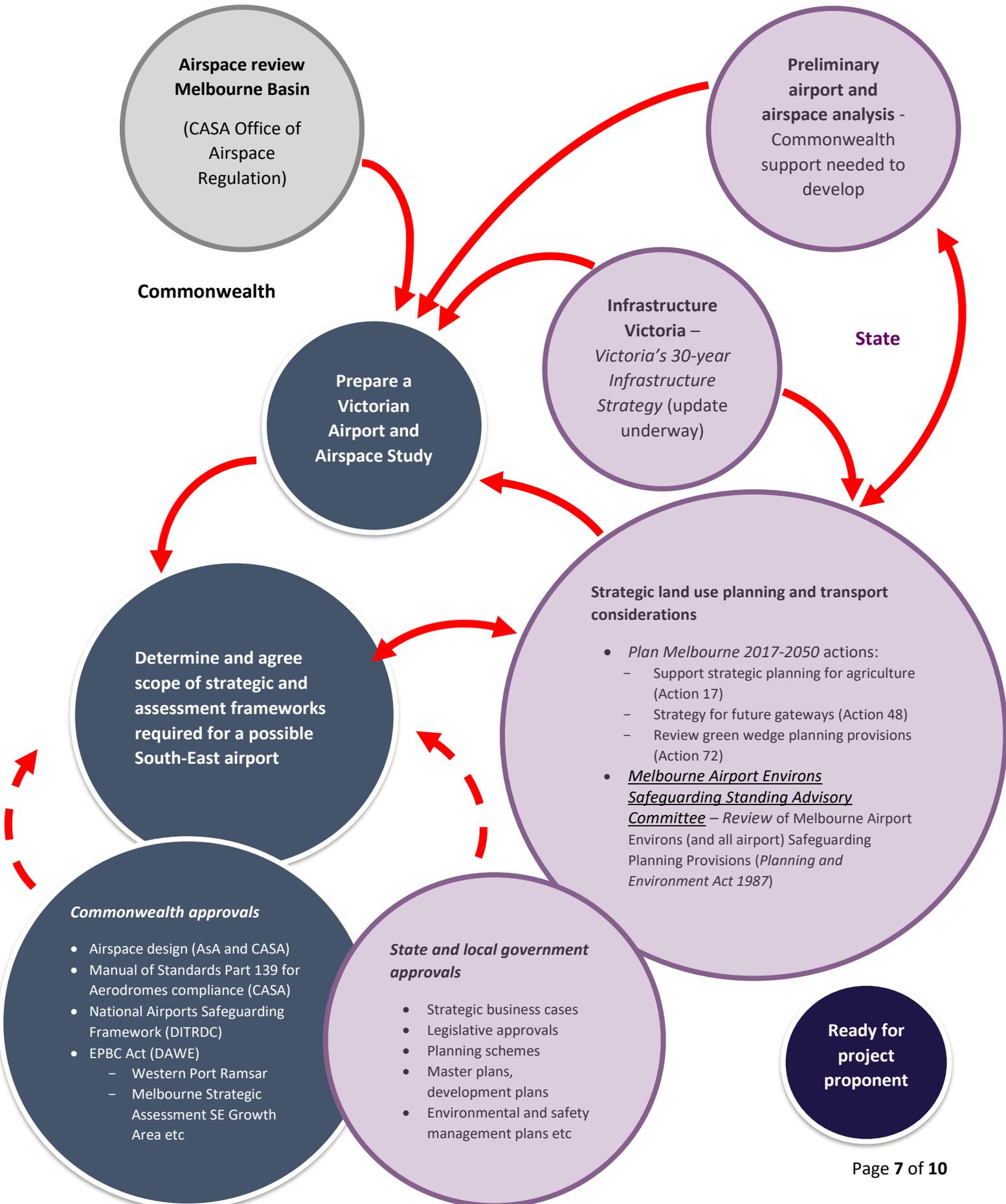
<sup>2</sup> *Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018* to commence 1 July 2021

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Legislation	Regulation
Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988	Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 2011
Heritage Act 2017	Heritage Regulations 2017
Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986	Land Acquisition and Compensation Regulations 2010
Land Act 1958	Land Regulations 2016
Local Government Act 1989	Local Government regulations promulgated since 1992 cover a large range of matters that may apply
Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009	Major Transport Projects Facilitation (Notification) Regulations 2013
Marine and Coastal Act 2018	
Pipelines Act 2005	Pipelines Regulations 2017
Planning and Environment Act 1987	Planning and Environment Regulations 2015 Planning and Environment (Fees) Regulations 2016
Sale of Land Act 1962	Sale of Land (Public Auctions) Regulations 2014 Sale of Land (Infringements) Regulations 2014
Transport Integration Act 2010	
Valuation of Land Act 1960	Valuation of Land Regulations 2014
Water Act 1989	Regulations promulgated since 1991 address a wide range of administrative and water related matters including:  Water (Application Fees) Regulations 1991 Water (Drillers' Licences) Regulations 2012 Water (Estimation, Supply and Sewerage) Regulations 2014
Wildlife Act 1975	Wildlife Regulations 2013

# Possible South-East Airport Pathway

Table 3: Commonwealth and State Government responsibilities



# Possible South-East Airport Pathway

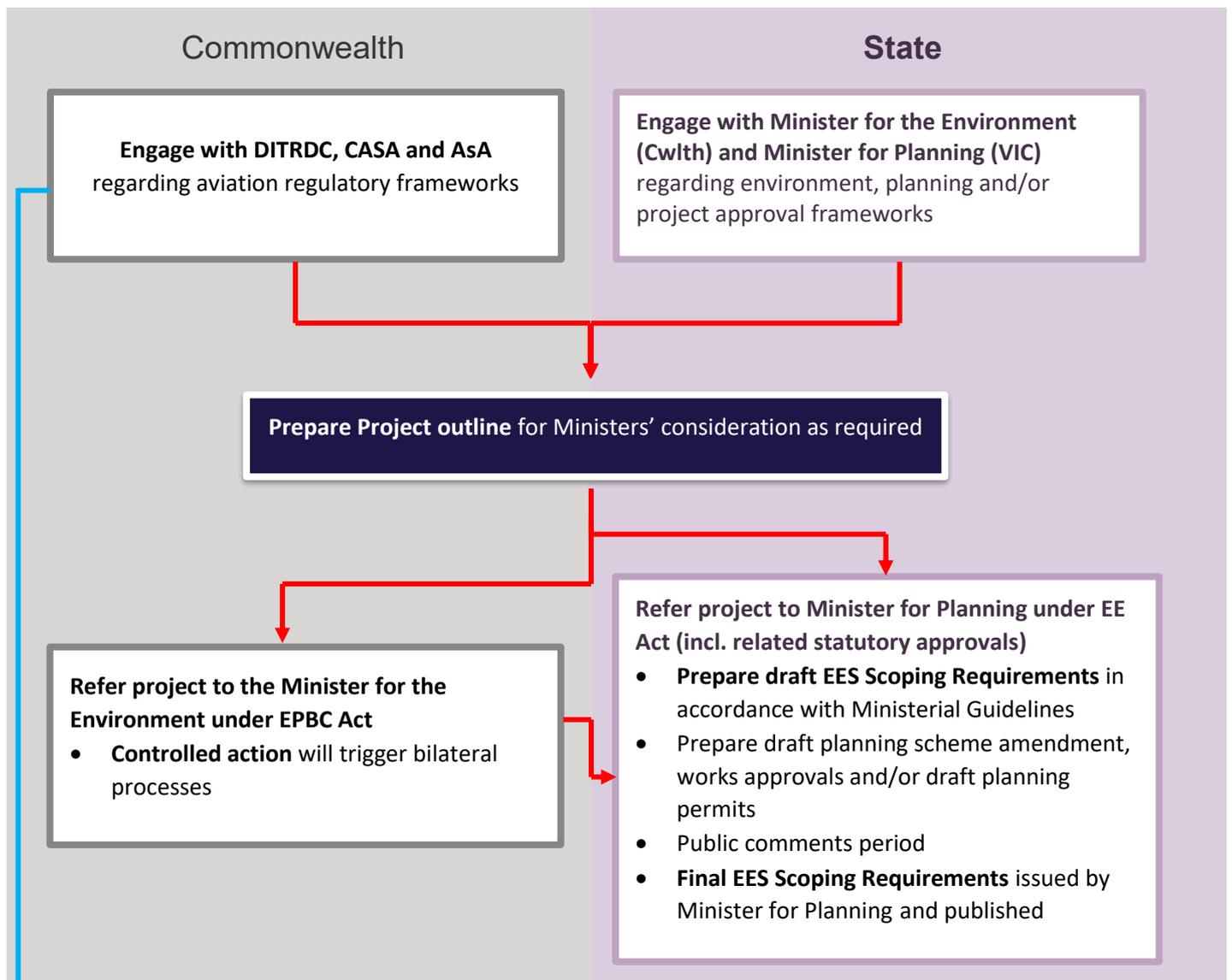
Table 4 Proponent responsibilities (indicative)

## Proponent responsibilities

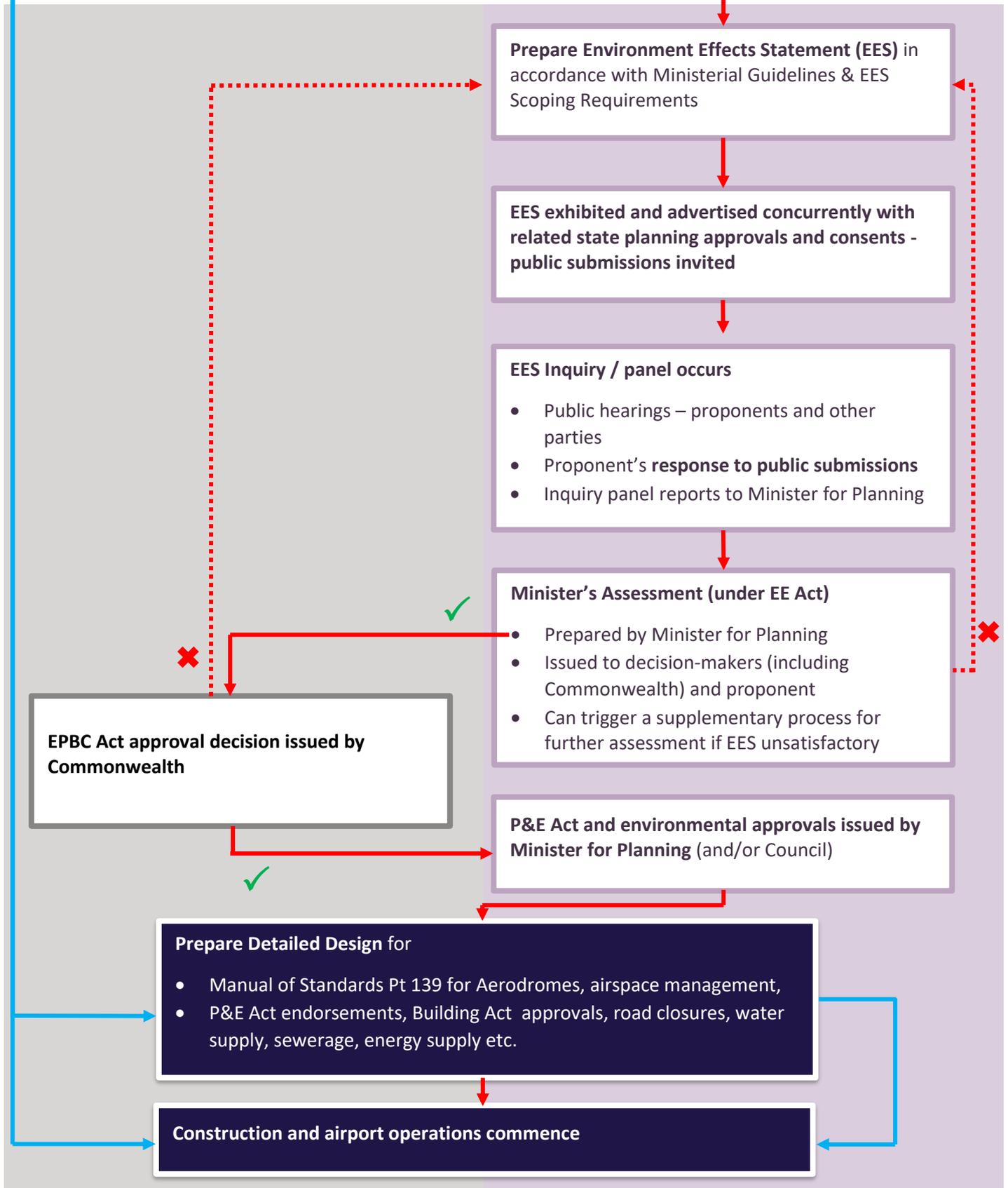
- Project feasibility and approvals
- Design of airport and airspace operational requirements
- Acquisition of affected land including buffers
- On site construction
- Airport business, employment targets

NB: *Red* arrows indicate approvals process

*Blue* arrows indicate on-going regulatory oversight



# Possible South-East Airport Pathway



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The above information is representative of the types of considerations a proponent is expected to undertake, including in making a referral to the Minister for Planning as established under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*. Please refer to <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment> for more detailed information regarding the EES process in Victoria, including procedures and timelines.

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