

Public Works Order Amendment Report

Gippsland Offshore Wind
Transmission 2 GW Project

11/08/2026

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Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ACHRIS	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Information Systems database
ALA	Andrew Long and Associates Pty Ltd
ASS	Acid Sulfate Soils
BAO	Buffer Area Overlay
BMO	Bushfire Management Overlay
BPMG	Best Practice Management Guidelines
BPA	Bushfire Prone Area
CASS	Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CFA	Country Fire Authority
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CHS	Cultural Heritage Sensitivity
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
DTSO	Declared Transmission System Operator
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (1999)
ERS	Environment Reference Standard
EVCs	Ecological Vegetation Classes
FFG	Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988)
FZ	Farming Zone
GLaWAC	Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
GMA	Groundwater Management Area
GQRUZ	Groundwater Quality Restricted Use Zones
HV	Heavy vehicle
kV	Kilovolt
LV	Light vehicle
MNES	Matters of National Environmental Significance
NEM	National Electricity Market
OSOM	Over-size over mass
PMST	Protected Matters Search Tool

Term	Definition
PSR	Priority Sites Register
PWO	Public Works Order
REZ	Renewable Energy Zones
SCO	Specific Controls Overlay
SUZ	Special Use Zone
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
TRG	Technical Reference Group
VBA	Victorian Biodiversity Atlas
VHR	Victorian Heritage Register
VHI	Victorian Heritage Inventory
VQA	Vegetation Quality Assessment
VVG	Visualising Victoria's Groundwater

Executive summary

VicGrid is developing the *Gippsland Offshore Wind Transmission 2 GW Project* (the Project). The Project comprises a new overhead transmission line extending from a proposed new terminal station in the area of Giffard (approximately six kilometres inland from the Gippsland coast) to a grid connection near Loy Yang Power Station in the Latrobe Valley.

The Project was declared to be *public works* under section 3(1) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* by a Public Works Order dated 24 September 2024 (PWO), triggering the requirement for an Environment Effects Statement (EES) to be prepared for the Project.

This report has been prepared to support a request by VicGrid for the Minister for Planning to consider amending the PWO for the Project to include additional activities that would be designated as excluded works to help facilitate efficient Project delivery timeframes. The report further suggests some minor editorial updates to the wording of the PWO to clarify technical aspects of the Project description.

'Excluded works' generally refer to early works for a project that are explicitly excluded from the scope of an EES, and therefore not subject to assessment by the Minister for Planning under the EES process on the basis that they would not have significant adverse impacts on the environment. As the works are excluded from the EES process, they may commence prior to the completion of the EES process, provided that any other required approvals are obtained.

Schedule 1 of the PWO for the Project identifies specific activities as 'excluded works'. Through the EES technical assessment process, VicGrid has identified an opportunity to include additional excluded works to help reduce overall Project construction timeframes ('proposed additional excluded works'). The proposed additional excluded works would further support the early delivery of critical infrastructure while ensuring minimal environmental impacts. The proposed additional excluded works are comprised of:

- **Activity 1 - Loy Yang Power Station switchyard works:** Installation of two new 500 kilovolt bays within the existing switchyard at Loy Yang
- **Activity 2 - Temporary construction compound and laydown area (3/4 Bench):** Works to establish Activity 2 include ground preparation and drainage works, site sheds, amenities, parking, laydown for storage, assembly and dispatch of materials and equipment, as well as minor utility connections.

An environmental and cultural heritage assessment of the sites of these proposed additional excluded works was undertaken, based on available desktop and site-based information. The assessment describes the existing conditions of the site in the context of key heritage and environment matters and identifies potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed additional excluded works. Where required, mitigation measures were identified to ensure that the proposed additional excluded works would not result in significant impacts.

The assessment of the proposed additional excluded works demonstrates that they expected to be very low impact due to their location within the existing and highly modified Loy Yang Power Station area. The Loy Yang Power Station switchyard is an existing facility, consistent with the nature of the proposed additional excluded works. Additionally, the temporary construction compound is planned for an existing, heavily modified area adjacent to the power station. As such, VicGrid believes that these works are appropriate to be included as excluded works requiring no further assessment in the wider project EES0F0F¹. Impacts can be appropriately managed via the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). With implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in this report, the proposed additional excluded works are not predicted to have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

VicGrid would ensure that appropriate targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders is undertaken to ensure that the excluded works (both current and the proposed additional) are delivered in a manner that minimises disruption and impact to the local community and supports the continued operation of existing infrastructure and land uses. The consultation process for the proposed additional excluded works would leverage the substantial stakeholder engagement that has been undertaken as part of the EES process for the Project.

If the Minister accepts the proposal to amend the PWO, the effect of the *Amending Order* will be to exclude the suite of 'excluded works' listed in Schedule 1 from the EES process, on the basis that the Minister is satisfied that those works would not have a significant effect on the environment.

¹ Noting that, as outlined in the EES scoping requirements, EES assessment of cumulative impacts associated with any excluded works would still be required.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Victorian Government has committed to emissions reduction through the *Climate Action Act 2017* (Vic), which establishes a long-term target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. This requires unprecedented amounts of renewable energy generation to meet electricity demand. To support achieving net-zero emissions, the Victorian Government has legislated offshore wind energy generation targets, including an initial target of at least 2 gigawatts (GW) of installed offshore wind energy capacity by 2032.

New transmission infrastructure is required in Gippsland to connect future offshore wind energy facilities to the National Electricity Market. To enable the initial 2 GW target to be achieved, VicGrid (a State Business Corporation as of 28 October 2025) proposes the *Gippsland Offshore Wind Transmission 2 GW Project*. This Project comprises the construction, operation, and eventual decommissioning of a new 500 kilovolt (kV) overhead transmission line (and towers) from an onshore connection hub in the vicinity of Giffard (inland from the Gippsland coast) to a grid connection at the Loy Yang Power Station 500 kV switchyard, in the Latrobe Valley. The Project is being developed primarily to support offshore wind generation in Gippsland, while also providing infrastructure that may support broader future electricity network needs.

The Project was declared to be *public works* under section 3(1) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act) by a PWO dated 24 September 2024, triggering the requirement for an EES. In June 2025, the Minister for Planning issued the EES Scoping Requirements. VicGrid is conducting technical studies to support the preparation of the EES, which will be publicly exhibited as part of the process before the Minister's assessment.

This report has been prepared to support a request by VicGrid for the Minister for Planning to consider amending the PWO for the Project to include additional excluded work that would facilitate increased efficiency in Project delivery timeframes. Minor editorial updates to the public works description in the PWO are also proposed. "Excluded works" are those works listed in Schedule 1 of the PWO which are excluded from the scope of the EES process that applies to the Project. As a result, these works may commence before, and independent of, the completion of the EES process, subject to any required approvals.

The objectives of this report are to:

- describe the proposed additional excluded works for the Project
- provide an assessment of the potential environmental effects of the proposed additional excluded works, and (where required) suggest appropriate mitigation measures to ensure residual impacts of the works are not significant
- outline any statutory approvals that may be required for the proposed additional excluded works
- detail the approach to further consultation, and
- describe and justify requested additional minor amendments to the wording of the PWO.

1.1.1 Excluded works

For the purposes of the Project, 'excluded works' are activities identified in Schedule 1 of the PWO that are expressly excluded from the scope of the EES assessment² and therefore have the potential to commence prior to the completion of the EES process (subject to relevant approvals where required).

Current excluded works

The PWO identifies specific works in Schedule 1 as 'excluded works' (Figure 1).

² Noting that, as outlined in the EES scoping requirements, EES assessment of cumulative impacts associated with any excluded works would still be required.

SCHEDULE 1
Excluded works
The following works are excluded from this declaration of public works:
1. Early works, including:
a. investigative works: geotechnical and environmental investigations, site surveys; and
b. locating existing utilities and services.

Figure 1 Excluded works as defined in Schedule 1 of the PWO

Proposed additional excluded works

VicGrid has identified specific 'proposed additional excluded works' that (subject to approval) would assist in reducing overall Project construction timeframes. The proposed additional excluded works are considered suitable to proceed in advance of the completion of the EES, having regard to their minimal environmental, heritage and social impact, that they are preparatory in nature and will occur on or in close proximity to the highly disturbed Loy Yang Power Station.

It is proposed that these proposed additional excluded works do not form part of the declared public works under section 3 of the EE Act where the Minister for Planning is satisfied that the proposed additional excluded works are not likely to have a significant effect on the environment.

The proposed additional excluded works are comprised of:

- **Activity 1 - Loy Yang Power Station switchyard:** Installation of two new 500 kilovolt (kV) bays within the existing switchyard
- **Activity 2 - Temporary construction compound and laydown area (3/4 Bench):** Works to include ground preparation, site sheds, amenities, parking, laydown for storing, assembly and dispatch of materials and equipment, minor utility connections.

The delivery of these proposed additional excluded works would help facilitate early completion of low-impact and preparatory activities ahead of the Minister's assessment of the EES, allowing a more efficient project delivery sequence. Progression of the proposed additional excluded works would not prejudice the EES assessment or the Minister's consideration of the declared public works.

The proposed additional excluded works comprise works and activities that are comparable, in scope and scale, to the routine renewal and upgrade work activities that are standard practice in industrialised areas in Gippsland such as the Loy Yang Power Station, and do not involve any activity or works that are novel or "out of the ordinary".

Notwithstanding whether the Project proceeds, the proposed additional excluded works, if undertaken, would still deliver benefits to the State. The upgrade works proposed at the switchyard for Activity 1 would support future transmission infrastructure development and augmentation. The ground improvement and compound establishment works at the Activity 2 site would also result in enhanced infrastructure and increase the future development opportunities for State-owned land.

1.2 Additional requested amendments to PWO

In addition to the proposed additional excluded works described above, VicGrid has identified some minor editorial updates to the public works description in the PWO to clarify technical aspects of the description of the Project. These requested changes are described and justified in Section 5 of this report.

2 Description of proposed additional excluded works

This section outlines two key activities that make up the proposed additional excluded works, referred to below as Activity 1 and Activity 2.

2.1 Activity 1 - Loy Yang Power Station Switchyard works

All works proposed for Activity 1 are within the existing Loy Yang Power Station switchyard (see Figure 2) which is already a highly modified site. Construction works would be undertaken as non-contestable augmentation by AusNet Services, given the existing switchyard is operated by the incumbent Declared Transmission System Operator (DTSO), AusNet.

The proposed additional excluded works include the installation of two new 500 kV bays (Bay 17 and Bay 18). Key works associated with the installation of the bays would include:

- extension of the existing 500 kV gantry (tie in at bay 16)
- extension of and connection to the existing 500 kV southern bus (from bay 16)
- connection to the existing 500 kV northern bus
- installation of four new sets (3 phases) of 500 kV single phase circuit breakers
- installation of eight new sets (3 phases) of 500 kV single phase disconnectors
- installation of post insulators
- installation of instrument transformers (incl. current/voltage transformers)
- establishment of new connections within the existing control and protection buildings
- establishment of new connections within the existing communications building.
- extension of (if required) and connection to the existing switchyard earth grid
- extension of the protection/communication trench from bay 16 to bay 18 (inclusive).

Refer to Figure 3 for the conceptual design of the Bay 17 and Bay 18 works and Plate 1 and Plate 2 provide locational context for the installation.

Ground disturbance required to establish footings for equipment would typically extend to a depth of approximately 750 mm, although some foundations may require piles extending up to approximately 10 m depth.

No new roads are expected to be required to facilitate the key works, as access to the site would utilise existing access tracks within the Loy Yang Power Station. A low daily volume of heavy vehicles is expected during the construction period, which is anticipated to be up to seven months. Over-size over-mass (OSOM) deliveries are not expected to be required for the works.

The proposed additional excluded works are entirely consistent with the current uses of the switchyard and are confined to a modified site already supporting the use as indicated in Figure 2 and Plate 1.

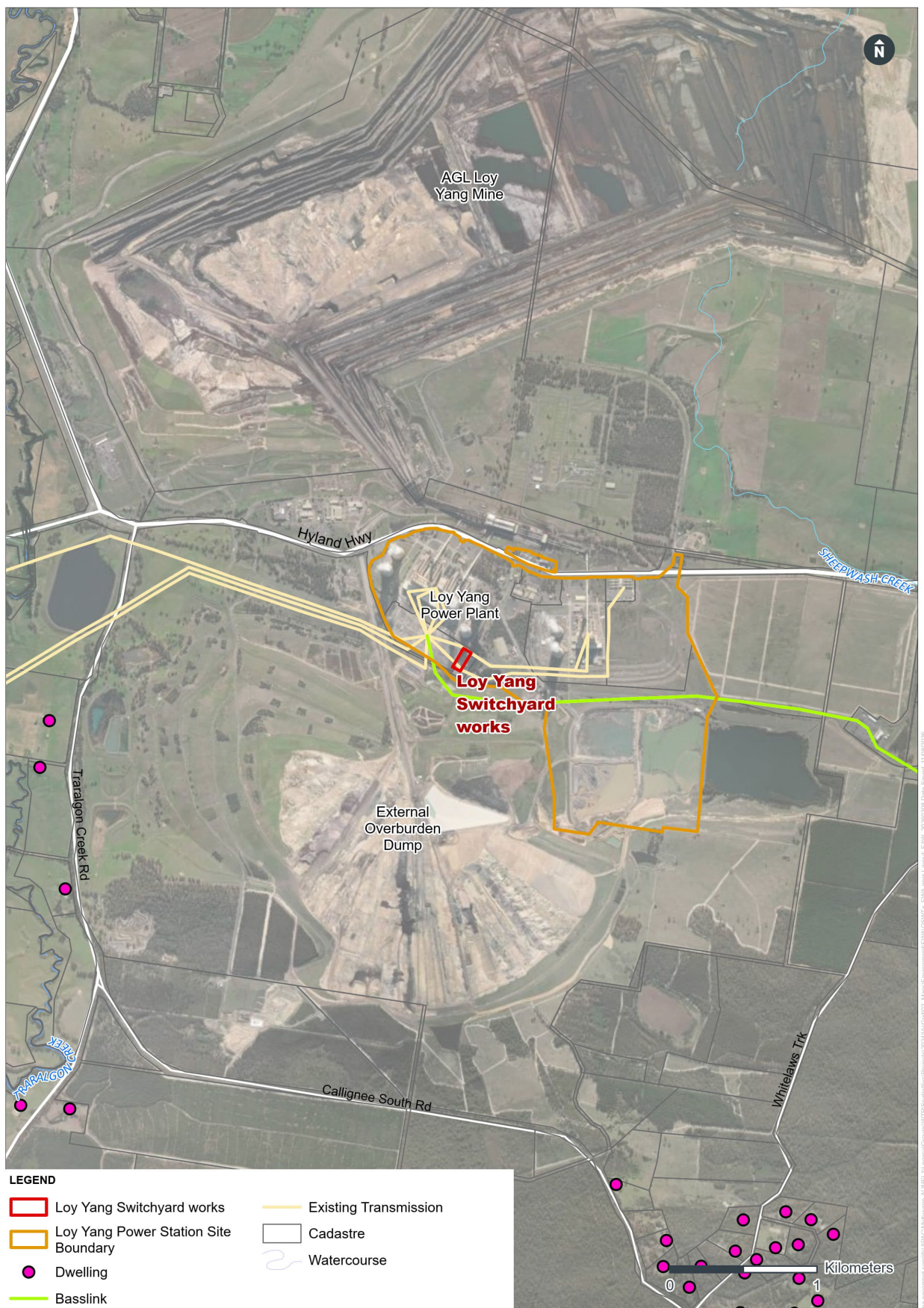


Figure 2 Site location – Activity 1 Loy Yang Power Station Switchyard works

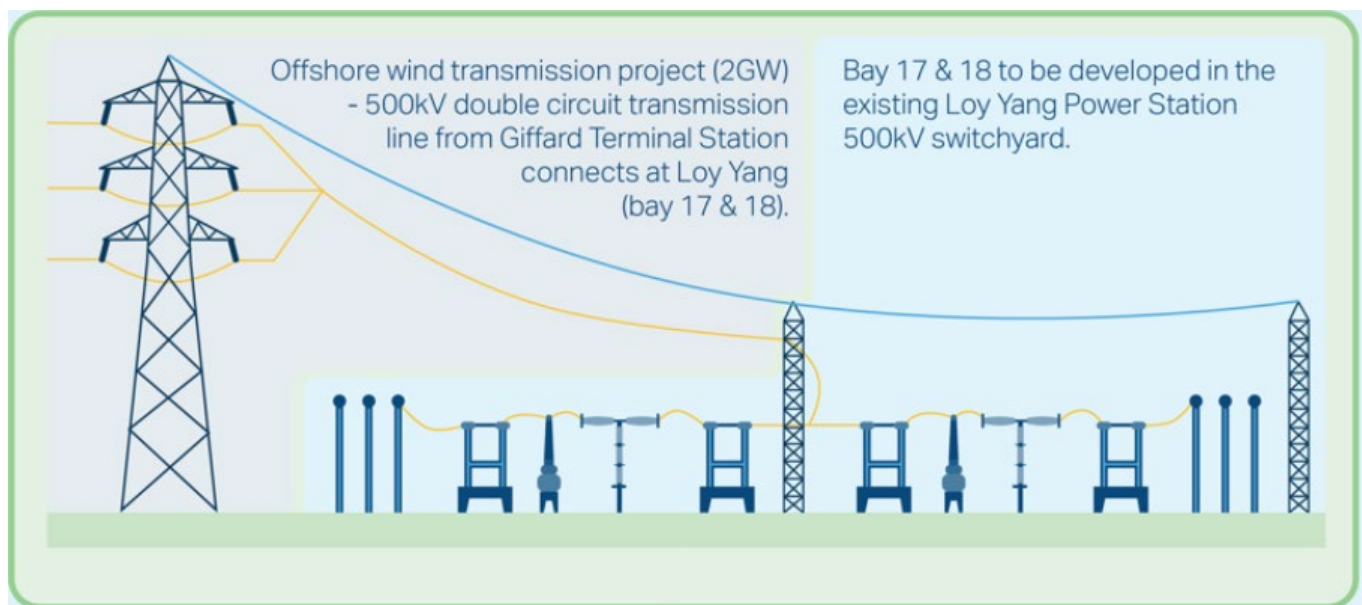


Figure 3 Conceptual sectional view of connection between new transmission line to new works in Bay 17 and 18



Plate 1 Location within switchyard where the proposed Bay 17 and Bay 18 would be installed



Plate 2 View of switchyard facing west

2.2 Activity 2 – Temporary construction compound and laydown area (3/4 Bench)

All works proposed for Activity 2 are within the Loy Yang Power Station (see Figure 4 for Activity 2 location). Construction works would be undertaken by the primary contractor engaged by VicGrid for the construction of the Project (Development Partner).

The proposed additional excluded works include the establishment of a temporary construction compound and laydown area measuring approximately 215 m x 345 m in size (referred to as the 3/4 Bench). Figure 5 provides the indicative site layout. Key works associated with temporary construction compound and laydown area would include:

- ground preparation and associated earthworks (limited to site stripping, light compaction and distribution of crushed rock surfacing as site is already benched);
- establishment of laydown areas, including (where needed) minor grading and installation of surface drainage infrastructure; and
- construction of temporary construction site facilities (construction compound) including site sheds, dome shelters, placement of portable buildings/offices and amenities (toilet, kitchen and rest areas), fencing and parking for light vehicles.

In the north-eastern corner of the site (see photo in Plate 3), works would include electricity and water connection works for the construction compound, including:

- excavation/trenching up to 2m (subject to existing utility depth); and

- protection of existing gas main during water and electricity connection works.

Ground disturbance required for the works would include stripping of topsoil, minor grading of the bench area to provide a free draining surface, light compaction for stability, placement of crushed rock surfacing, installation of temporary stormwater drainage infrastructure including stormwater channels/swales and minor pit and pipe system (if required) (see Plate 4 for existing site conditions).

There are existing, well-formed tracks that provide vehicular access to the works site. No new access tracks would be required for establishment of the construction compound and laydown area, however small ramps may need to be constructed at the access points to the 3/4 Bench and resurfacing of existing unsealed tracks may be required. A mixture of light and heavy vehicles will be required for the works with a construction duration approximately three months. Low daily heavy vehicle volumes are expected mainly for earthmoving equipment, water trucks and delivery of imported hardstand material where required. Over-size over-mass (OSOM) deliveries are not expected for the works.



Figure 4 Site location – Activity 2 Temporary construction compound and laydown area

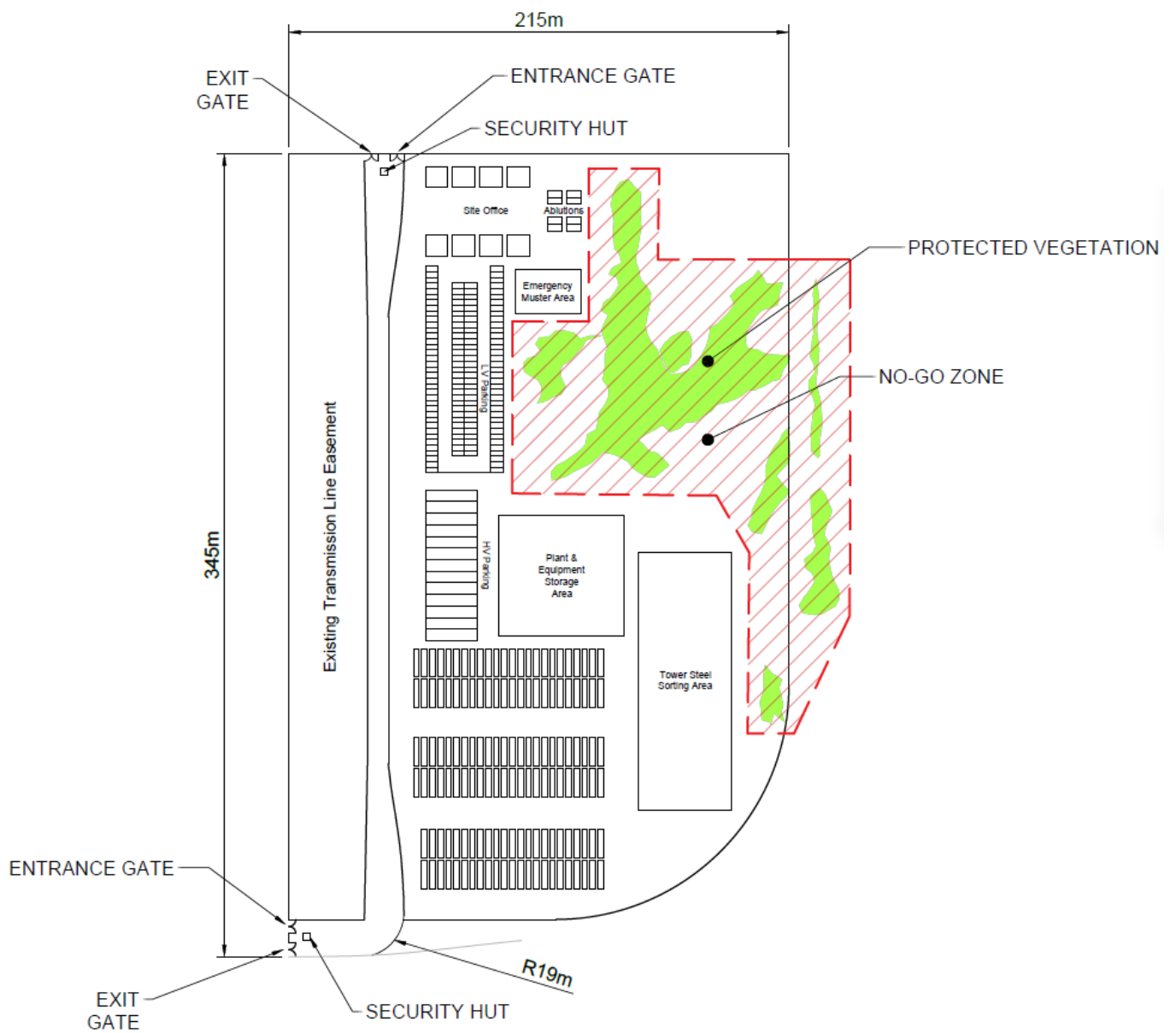


Figure 5 Activity 2 - Indicative site layout (Bellwether)



Plate 3 View of Activity 2 site facing south



Plate 4 View from northeast corner of bench where utility connection works are proposed

3 Assessment methods for proposed additional excluded works

This section outlines the assessment methodology adopted to assess the potential for significant environmental effects arising from the proposed additional excluded works. This includes an 'overall' assessment method applied to the assessment for all aspects, as well as additional 'specific' methods applied to certain aspects where further investigations or fieldwork were required to supplement the information available from the EES technical studies completed to date.

3.1 Overall assessment method

To support VicGrid's request to the Minister for Planning to amend the PWO to include proposed additional excluded works, environmental assessments have been conducted to determine the potential impacts of the proposed works for Activities 1 and 2. The assessment considered potential environmental, heritage and social impacts of the proposed additional excluded works, with reference to the aspects identified in the EES scoping requirements issued for the Project.

Existing conditions were established to identify receptors, assets, values and uses which may be impacted by the proposed additional excluded works. This included consideration of aspects such as land use, biodiversity, contamination, noise, air quality, landscape and visual setting, bushfire risk, hydrological risk, traffic and known heritage values.

This report draws on information from desktop and field investigations as appropriate to each subject matter and the EES scoping requirements.

A site assessment was undertaken on 11 May 2026 to conduct ecology surveys to supplement the existing information available from the EES on flora and fauna habitat (see 3.2.2).

Considering the existing conditions, potential direct and indirect environmental impacts were identified. Where necessary, mitigation measures were proposed to ensure these impacts could be avoided, minimised, or managed to ensure no significant adverse impacts on the environment.

3.2 Specific technical methods

3.2.1 Land use and planning

The land use and planning assessment was undertaken to characterise the existing land use context of the proposed additional excluded works and to assess the appropriateness and compatibility of the proposed additional excluded works. The methodology focuses on analysing established land use patterns, the function of surrounding land uses, and the degree to which the proposed activities align with those land uses rather than on detailed development approval outcomes.

The land use and planning assessment did not consider environmental, or amenity matters such as noise, biodiversity or ecology, which are addressed in subsequent sections of this report.

The land use and planning assessment involved the following steps:

- Identification of the existing land uses within and immediately surrounding each proposed additional excluded works site
- Identification of the key characteristics and primary function of the affected land, including whether it is used for infrastructure, agricultural, rural, residential or other purposes
- Review of the applicable planning framework, including relevant planning zones, overlays and particular provisions, to understand the intended land use outcomes and policy context

- Assessment of the compatibility of the proposed additional excluded works with the existing land use context and the objectives of the applicable planning controls
- Identification of any relevant planning provisions, exemptions or approval requirements to confirm land use appropriateness.

The land use and planning assessment was informed by a review of:

- **VicPlan**, administered by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
- **Latrobe planning scheme** via Planning Schemes Online
- **Planning permit registers**, including the Latrobe City Council register and the Ministerial permit register
- **Aerial imagery**, including Nearmap and Google Maps.

The study area for the land use and planning assessment comprises land within the defined boundary of each proposed additional excluded works activity (refer to Section 2), with consideration also given to surrounding land uses within a 1 km buffer (where relevant) to understand land use character and compatibility. The 1 km buffer provides an appropriate extent for identifying and assessing potential indirect land use and planning impacts on adjacent properties.

Land use terminology has been applied in accordance with Clause 73.03 (Land Use Terms) of the Victorian Planning Provisions to describe the nature of the proposed additional excluded works, where relevant as stated in Table 1.

Table 1 Land use terms and associated proposed additional excluded works

Land use terms	Proposed additional excluded works activity
Utility installation: • land used to transmit, distribute or store power.	Loy Yang Power Station switchyard: 2 new 500 kV bays.
Minor utility installation: • sewerage or water mains • power lines designed to operate at less than 220,000 volts.	Temporary construction compound at the 3/4 bench: Minor utility connections including electricity and water.
Store: • land used to store goods, machinery, or vehicles.	Temporary construction compound at the 3/4 bench: Site sheds, parking, laydown for storage, assembly and dispatch of materials and equipment.

3.2.2 Ecology

The ecology assessment was informed by a targeted review of existing desktop information and field investigations undertaken within and surrounding the area of the proposed additional excluded works.

The desktop review included:

- A detailed review of database searches covering an area within a 10 km radius of the Activity 1 and 2 sites and available ecological field survey data. Desktop review and database searches included:
 - The Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST), administered by the Australian Government Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), to identify Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES).
 - The Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA), administered by the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA), for records of threatened flora and fauna species within 5 km of the sites.
 - NatureKit for information on Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) and Bioregions.
 - The DEECA current wetlands mapping.
 - DEECA's EVC Benchmarks necessary to undertake Vegetation Quality Assessments (VQA) as defined in Victoria's Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (DEECA 2025) (hereafter referred to as 'the Guidelines').

- Assessment of ecological impacts and legislative implications including:
 - Identification of potential direct and indirect impacts to extent ecological values.
 - Consideration of avoidance and minimisation measures for the proposed additional excluded works to appropriately manage ecological impacts.
- Review of implications for the works of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) and other relevant environmental legislation, and
- Identification of any further assessments required.

An ecology field assessment was undertaken on 11 May 2026 by two botanists (accredited by DEECA in Vegetation Quality Assessments) to inform the impact assessment for Activity 2.

The field assessment included:

- Recording incidental flora species encountered
- Mapping patches of native vegetation in accordance with the Guidelines (DEECA 2025)
- Assessing of the quality of any native vegetation using the Vegetation Quality Assessment approach (DSE 2004)
- Assessing patches of Plains Grassy Woodland (EVC 55) against the condition thresholds for the Threatened Ecological Community (TEC): Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland, and the Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland community listed under the FFG Act
- Recording location of declared noxious weeds and/or Weeds of National Significance (WoNS)
- The absence of native vegetation in the Activity 1 site was also confirmed during the field assessment.

3.2.3 Contamination

The impact assessment included:

- a review of relevant project documentation and previous contamination or acid sulfate soils (ASS) assessments relevant to the proposed additional excluded works
- a desktop assessment of the likelihood of contaminated land and groundwater from current land use at the Activity sites which comprised:
 - a review of current satellite photographs (Google Maps – satellite view) and current Planning Scheme zones to identify potentially contaminating activities and land uses as well as areas and features of interest.
 - a review of publicly-available Environment Protection Authority (EPA) information pertaining to the proposed additional excluded works including:
 - Priority Sites Register (PSR)
 - Statutory Environmental Audits conducted and Environmental Audit Overlays
 - Check Your Groundwater (CYG) areas
 - Groundwater Quality Restricted Use Zones (GQRUZ – formerly applied under the repealed *Environment Protection Act 1970* (Vic), now CYG areas)
 - licenced sites and areas
 - Victorian landfill register.
 - a review of other publicly available information to identify further detail on specific sites and features of interest, including:
 - Sands and McDougall business directory records (via Victoria Unearthed Interactive Portal map)
 - Victorian Rifle Association records
 - internet and website searches.

- a desktop assessment of the potential presence of ASS at the Activity sites, comprising:
 - a preliminary hazard assessment in accordance with Stage A of the coastal ASS (CASS) Best Practice Management Guidelines (BPMG) to determine the likelihood of ASS being present, as well as whether ASS (if present) would be disturbed (high-risk activity), including:
 - a review of the proposed construction methods to determine whether the works would involve activities considered high-risk to the disturbance of contaminated or ASS soils, if present.
 - a review of available ASS maps (Atlas of Australian Acid Sulfate Soils; Coastal Acid Sulfate Soils Distribution).
 - a desktop review of geomorphic indicators (regional geology, topography, surface water occurrence, depth to groundwater).

3.2.4 Noise and vibration

An assessment of existing conditions for the Project via noise monitoring was undertaken at logger locations from 7 October 2025 to 28 October 2025 and in accordance with AS 1055:2018 – *Acoustics – Description and Measurement of Environmental Noise* (Standards Australia, 2018). Two of the logger locations are relevant to the proposed additional excluded works sites. The existing conditions assessment method at these locations consisted of:

- Deploying unattended noise monitoring loggers for a period of approximately three weeks to characterise and quantify the existing ambient and background noise levels at the logger locations which assisted in setting the noise targets for the Project. Noise measurements were taken for each hour of the day, evening, and night time periods as defined in the Environment Protection Regulations 2021 (EP Regulations), Division 3, regulation 116 – Definitions – operating time periods.
- Undertaking simultaneous meteorological monitoring during the period of unattended measurements using an Automatic Weather Station (AWS) deployed at two logger locations, one near Loy Yang and one near the proposed Giffard Terminal Station.
- Day time observations of existing ambient noise sources at the logger locations (baseline locations) to supplement the logger measurements and identify ambient noise characteristics at the noise monitoring locations.
- Processing noise measurement data to remove invalid data caused by extraneous noise or adverse weather conditions.
- Using noise monitoring results and zoning levels to establish project specific noise criteria for the proposed additional excluded works, with consideration to the environment reference standard (ERS) formed under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (EP Act) and EPA Publication 1826.5 *Noise limit and assessment protocol for the control of noise from commercial, industrial and trade premises, and entertainment venues* (Noise Protocol) and construction guidelines, EPA Publication 1834.2 *Civil construction, building and demolition guide*.

A risk-based approach was then used for the assessment of impacts. The risk-screening process involved consideration of the exposure levels likely to cause annoyance and human health impacts. The impact assessment methodology included:

- Identification of the proposed additional excluded works construction methods that have the potential to create noise and vibration impacts at sensitive receiver locations.
- Identification of mitigation measures (where required).

3.2.5 Aboriginal cultural heritage

The high-level assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage was based on a desktop assessment of targeted areas and was conducted by Andrew Long and Associates Pty Ltd (ALA) specifically for the proposed additional excluded works considered in this report (ALA, 2026). No site inspection has been undertaken. The desktop assessment methods included an assessment of existing conditions, a search of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Information Systems database (ACHRIS) and a review of publicly available aerial imagery (e.g. Landata, Nearmap and MapShare VIC historical photomaps).

3.2.6 Historic heritage

The assessment of historical heritage is based on a desktop assessment of targeted areas and was conducted by ALA specifically for the proposed additional excluded works considered in this report (ALA, 2026). No site inspection has been undertaken. The desktop assessment includes an assessment of existing conditions and a search of relevant databases including:

- Victorian Heritage Register (VHR)
- Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI)
- publicly available aerial imagery (e.g. Landata, Nearmap and MapShare VIC historical photomaps).

4 Assessments of works and proposed mitigation

The sections below outline the existing conditions relevant to each discipline to identify receptors, assets, values and uses which may be impacted by the proposed additional excluded works. In the context of these existing conditions, the potential environmental, heritage and social impacts associated with the proposed additional excluded work are assessed, and where required, appropriate mitigation measures are also proposed. The approach to consultation is documented in Section 6.3.

4.1 Activity 1 - Loy Yang Power Station Switchyard

The table below assesses the potential environmental, heritage and social impacts associated with Activity 1 and proposes mitigation measures where required. The proposed mitigation measures would be developed and implemented via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) developed specifically for the proposed additional excluded works. Given that the site is currently managed by AusNet, the CEMP would be developed with consideration of their existing operational plans and procedures for the site, as well as:

- AusNet’s Health, Safety, Environment and Quality Policy (AusNet, 2024)
- AusNet Bushfire Mitigation Plan (AusNet, 2025)
- Environmental Management Standards listed in AusNet Services HSEQ Minimum Standards for Delivery Partners (AusNet, 2021)

Table 2 Assessment of Activity 1 – Loy Yang Power Station Switchyard

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
Land use and planning	Activity 1 is located within an existing switchyard associated with the established Loy Yang Power Station and surrounding electricity transmission infrastructure. The planning zone is Special Use Zone Schedule 1. Schedule 1 to Clause 37.01 of the Latrobe Planning Scheme is entitled ‘Brown Coal’, and is shown on the planning scheme map as SUZ1. The site comprises hardstand and is directly surrounded by operational transmission infrastructure including switchyard bays, transmission lines, and associated transmission towers. There is existing vehicle access located to the south of the site. The surrounding land is similarly characterised by	Activity 1 is directly associated with electricity transmission and distribution activities that are long-established within the switchyard and broader Loy Yang Power Station. Activity 1 does not introduce a new land use, nor does it alter the existing function or character of the land. Activity 1 is contained within previously disturbed areas and the existing operational footprint of the Loy Yang Power Station. From a land use perspective, Activity 1 is consistent with the purpose and intent of the SUZ1, which is to facilitate major utility and energy infrastructure. No changes to access, off-site impacts, or conflicts with surrounding land uses are anticipated. Any land use impacts are expected to	No specific land use mitigation measures are required, as the works do not result in a change or impact to the approved or established land use. Construction activities would be managed in accordance with a CEMP to minimise temporary disturbances and ensure continued compatibility with surrounding industrial and utility operations. Activity 1 is consistent with the uses contemplated under SUZ1 for electricity generation and associated infrastructure. Ongoing compliance with relevant environmental and operational management plans would ensure that land use impacts remain minimal.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
	industrial and utility uses, with no sensitive land uses located within 2.8 kilometres of the switchyard. The Loy Yang Power Station and mine site, including the switchyard, are located within a designated Bushfire Prone Area (BPA).	be minor and temporary, largely limited to construction activities within an active electricity transmission precinct. Overall, Activity 1 is considered compatible with existing land uses and consistent with the broader planning policy framework applicable to the site.	The location, design and construction of the switchyard would also appropriately consider bushfire hazard and risk, in accordance with the BPA. Consultation with relevant stakeholders would be conducted for the works (refer Section 6.3).
Ecology	Activity 1 is located within the existing switchyard in an area that has previously been cleared and levelled. The area is a cleared gravel bench within a security fence (see Plate 1). Biodiversity investigations for the EES included this location and did not identify any native vegetation within the activity area. This finding was also confirmed in the site visit conducted on 11 May 2026. Given the highly modified nature of the site and the absence of native vegetation, the area is not considered to provide suitable habitat for threatened species or threatened ecological communities (TECs). While there is no vegetation directly within the Activity 1 site, there are patches of vegetation to the east and north of the site (Figure 6). The surrounding vegetation includes both native and planted vegetation. None of the adjacent vegetation is expected to be impacted by Activity 1.	Given the absence of native vegetation and other ecological values within the Activity 1 site, Activity 1 is not expected to result in any significant ecological impacts. No native vegetation removal would be needed and no ecology-related approvals or permits would be required.	The CEMP is to include standard measures for protecting ecological values including: • Clear delineation of work areas within Activity 1's site for the duration of the construction stage, to prevent accidental disturbance of surrounding vegetation (e.g. via establishment of no-go zones). • Biosecurity requirements to minimise potential for introduction and/or transport of weed material.
Land contamination	Activity 1's site is an active switchyard that has been in operation for approximately 40 years. During this time the site has supported electrical transformers which are typically cooled by oils, including mineral oil and synthetic oils. Electrical transformer oil is replaced generally around every 20-30 years and is likely therefore to have been replaced at least once for the original transformers. The switchyard is understood to be sealed with a combination of concrete and asphalt, thereby reducing the potential for soil impacts. It is not known whether the switchyard is bunded. No data has been able to be obtained from AGL	Activity 1 which includes foundation excavations for spread footings or piles, may intersect contaminated soils. Inappropriate management, handling, storage and/or disposal of contaminated soil has the potential to affect human health and the environment where: Contaminated soil could be excavated and exposed to human receptors on site via dermal (skin) contact, inhalation (of volatile components, dust and/or asbestos fibres) or incidental ingestion.	The CEMP is to include the requirement for characterisation of potential soil contamination at the switchyard site prior to construction. To achieve this, a soil investigation would be conducted in accordance with the Australian Soil Classification (ASC) National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM), EPA Victoria Industrial Waste Resource Guideline: <i>Soil Sampling</i> (IWRG 702) and Australian Standard 4482.3 <i>Guide to the investigation and sampling of sites with potentially contaminated soil</i> and other applicable guidelines and regulations.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
	regarding the contamination history of the switchyard, and therefore, the switchyard is considered to represent a high potential for soil contamination. Groundwater is understood to be present between 20 and 50 m depth below ground surface based on data from Visualising Victoria's Groundwater (VVG -accessed on the 29.4.26). As such it is considered unlikely that groundwater would be encountered during switchyard upgrade works.	The surrounding environment could be impacted by the stockpiling of contaminated soil, via leaching to soil or groundwater or runoff into surface waters.	Where disturbance of contaminated soil is unavoidable during construction activities, mitigation measures in the CEMP should be implemented and include measures/procedures for appropriate disturbance, handling, storage and disposal of contaminated soils, including consideration of the following aspects: • Management of potential dispersive soils including implementation of controls to minimise erosion and sedimentation • Stockpiles to be managed in accordance with EPA Victoria Publication 1895 <i>Managing Stockpiles</i> and other applicable guidelines and regulations. • Reuse or offsite disposal of soil should be undertaken in accordance with the EP Act, EP Regulations and EPA Victoria Publication 1828.3 <i>Waste disposal categories – characteristics and thresholds</i>.
Noise and vibration	The closest sensitive receptor to Activity 1 is a farm dwelling located 2.8 km to the west. Noise monitoring taken at Flynns Creek represents an acoustic environment similar to the nearby sensitive receivers, indicated a relatively quiet environment with the long-term background noise levels generally very low. Ambient levels are slightly higher due to occasional louder events. Daytime ambient noise levels of 55 decibel (dB) LAeq drop to 41 dB LAeq during the night period. The day and evening ambient noise levels are both greater than the predicted fine weather operational noise levels (22-42 dB(A)). Nighttime periods are slightly below the fair-weather level. Day, evening, night and Sunday background levels were all below or at the nighttime base noise limit of 32 dB(A) stipulated in part 5.3 – Noise subsection 2(b) of the EP Regulations, indicating the background noise is very low.	Activity 1 would generate noise and vibration during construction. Construction works would include piling and concrete placement, which is likely to produce high noise levels. Heavy machinery would also be required which is likely to produce high noise levels. Noisy works would be restricted to within the site, resulting in localised and temporary noise and vibration impacts. However, the closest sensitive receptors to Activity 1 are located at a distance of 2.8km, therefore they are predicted to experience low construction noise levels under 35 dB(A) LAeq. As a result, the impacts of the construction noise associated with Activity 1 are not expected to be significant.	To assist in minimising noise emissions, standard mitigation measures for minimising construction noise and vibration would be included in the CEMP in accordance with relevant guidelines including: • EPA Publication 1834: Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (2025). • Standards Australia AS 2436:2010 Guide to noise and vibration control on construction, maintenance and demolition sites.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
Air quality	Activity 1 is located within an established industrial area where air quality is influenced by both regional weather patterns and existing industrial activities. Winds in the area are predominantly from the west. Air quality monitoring data reviewed indicates that air quality has generally been good over the past five years. Occasional periods of poorer air quality were mainly due to smoke and windblown dust. There are no sensitive human receptors within 250 m and no ecological receptors within 50 m of Activity 1.	There is potential for construction works to have localised air quality impacts for a short duration, primarily from the generation of dust. However, the potential dust impacts on the environment are expected to be negligible due to the distance of human and ecological receptors from the Activity 1 site. Existing background air quality is not expected to significantly increase the risk of air quality impacts.	Standard mitigation measures for minimising air quality impacts would be included in the CEMP in accordance with the EPA Publication 1834: Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (2025). This would include: - Dust impacts from construction works will be minimised through watering of unsealed access tracks and work areas where required. - Speed restrictions on the construction access route within Loy Yang Power Station to minimise dust generation. Stabilisation of exposed soil and stockpiles where required.
Landscape and visual	<u>Landscape character assessment</u> Activity 1 is positioned within an existing electrical switchyard adjacent to a highly disturbed area which includes mine pits and power generation infrastructure. The Landscape Character Area (LCA) within which Activity 1 lies as <i>LCA 1: Power Stations/Coal Mine</i>. This LCA has been assessed as having a low landscape value due to the large-scale electricity generating infrastructure that dominates the undulating topography. For the purposes of this assessment, it is assumed that the sensitivity of the LCA is also rated low due to the similarity in the character of the proposed Activity 1 site and its immediate surrounds. <u>Visual sensitivity</u> The Activity 1 site is relatively visually isolated, given its position within an existing switchyard, surrounding built form and topography, and the few potential visual receptors with potential views to it. View Location 14 was identified as having potential views to nearby proposed infrastructure. This view location is located on Hyland Highway, Loy Yang, with visual receptors (including a low number of passing motorists) identified as having a low	<u>Landscape character impact assessment</u> The magnitude of change of Activity 1 is anticipated to be low. The proposal would comprise the addition of electrical infrastructure within an existing switchyard, with built form characteristically similar to existing elements within the site. Overall, the impact of Activity 1 on landscape character would be rated as low (neutral), using the landscape character impact assessment matrix (GLVIA3, 2013) given the low sensitivity and low magnitude of change. The neutral qualitative assessment rating has been assigned as there would be no reduction in the quality of the landscape due to Activity 1. <u>Visual impact assessment</u> The magnitude of change of Activity 1 is anticipated to be low, given the small extent (if any) of views from Hyland Highway that would be affected by the works. If seen from the Highway (noting the extensive amount of screening afforded by existing infrastructure) the change would comprise the slight increase in electrical infrastructure within an existing switchyard. The overall visual impact of Activity 1 is anticipated to be low (neutral) using the visual	No mitigation has been recommended as landscape and visual impacts are anticipated to be low, with no views or landscapes of high sensitivity recorded within the surrounding area and no reduction in the quality of landscape character or views.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
	sensitivity. No residential dwellings (or sensitive visual receptors) were identified within 3 km of Activity 1.	character impact assessment matrix (GLVIA3, 2013). The neutral qualitative rating has been assigned as there would be no reduction in the quality of the view from the Highway due to Activity 1.	
Bushfire	The site is located within the Bushfire Prone Area gazetted under the <i>Building Act 1993</i>, however is not located within the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) associated with the Latrobe City Council Planning Scheme. A saline water outfall pipe from Loy Yang Power Station is rated as having a very high risk from bushfire impacts, with a national and state level of impact. No vegetation is located within the Activity 1 site. Vegetation is located to the north, and planted and native vegetation to the east. Bushfire history of the area indicates the landscape of the Gippsland region can sustain frequent and large-scale bushfires, with bushfires commonly occurring between November and March.	Activity 1 is located within an existing switchyard area which is cleared of vegetation and the switchyard has standard bushfire protection zones around the site. Activity 1 is expected to have a minimal effect on vegetation extending within the broader landscape as firefighting mitigation measures would prevent the spread of unplanned fire into the broader landscape. Construction activities have the potential to result in bushfire ignition, which can cause uncontrolled and unplanned fires which can result in loss of life/injury, and the loss of or damage to environmental and/or cultural heritage values. These impacts arise through pathways such as ignition sources from undertaking hot works, vehicle and machinery use, or smoking. Storage and handling of combustible materials during construction provides a potential source of fuel for bushfires ignited by activities resulting from the proposed additional excluded works, or from a fire entering the Activity 1 site following external ignition. Any impacts would be temporary, limited in extent and during the construction phase.	It is anticipated that Activity 1 would be able to be undertaken under existing AusNet emergency plans and procedures for the site. The CEMP developed for Activity 1 would include appropriate measures for bushfire and emergency response, consistent with existing AusNet plans and procedures. These will include specific measures related to: • bushfire ignition and suppression • combustible materials storage and handling • responding to emergency scenarios.
Surface Water and Groundwater	<u>Groundwater</u> Bores relevant to the Project were assessed as being those with a total depth of less than 50 m. The majority of existing bores in the Loy Yang area are shallow, which are related to monitoring and operation of the Loy Yang mine. Groundwater is understood to be present between 20 and 50 m depth below ground surface based on data from VVG	<u>Groundwater</u> Groundwater is not expected to be intersected by the works, and therefore no direct impacts on groundwater are expected to occur. However, there is potential for groundwater contamination to occur due to a spill of hazardous materials on site. The CEMP would be required to include procedures for	The CEMP would include standard measures for surface and groundwater in accordance with relevant guidelines including EPA Publication 1834: Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (2025). Measures would be developed for: • minimisation of erosion and sedimentation

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
	(accessed on the 29.4.26). As such it is considered unlikely that groundwater would be encountered during construction and operation of the construction compound. <u>Surface water:</u> The Loy Yang Power Station switchyard sits within the Latrobe River Basin. There are no designated waterways within 1 km radius of the Loy Yang Power Station switchyard, with the nearest designated waterway being Traralgon Creek (approximately 3 km west). There are two waterbodies southeast of the Loy Yang Power Station switchyard, but still within the power station precinct. The closest of these waterbodies is approximately 1.3 km from the switchyard. These waterbodies are used for activities associated with the power station Victoria's and Gippsland's Climate is undergoing changes including rising temperatures and increasing intensity of heavy rainfall events.	managing any spills. Sodic soils have also been identified in the Loy Yang area, which have potential for localised risks related to soil salinity, dispersity and erosion. <u>Surface water</u> Activity 1 would occur in the existing switchyard which has a drainage system for containing and managing stormwater runoff. Soil disturbance for the works in the switchyard area has the potential to result in erosion and sedimentation. These potential impacts are expected to be mitigated through the CEMP. Given Activity 1's location and the setback from local waterways, with implementation of standard mitigation measures there is expected to be negligible impacts on local surface water values.	- storage and handling of hazardous materials on site (e.g. fuels and oils) - procedures for managing any spills.
Flood risk	The Loy Yang Power Station and switchyard do not sit within a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) or flood overlay and are not in the vicinity of major waterways. There minor waterways in vicinity of Activity 1 (see row above), however these are all ephemeral, with a small catchment area ($\leq 3\text{km}^2$) meaning they are unable to generate baseflows and instead flowing in response to rainfall events.	Given Activity 1 is not located within an LSIO or flood overlay, the activity is highly unlikely to be affected by flooding or to cause any measurable change to existing flooding patterns or flood risk in the vicinity. Flooding impacts are therefore considered to be negligible.	No specific flooding mitigation measures are required.
Traffic	Hyland Highway is the major east-west arterial near Loy Yang Power Station (see Figure 2). The baseline assessments found that the weekday average two-way traffic for Hyland Highway near Bartons Lane was 2709 vehicles, with only 9% of those being heavy vehicles (HV). Existing traffic volumes on the internal roads within the power station are low and are restricted primarily to maintenance activities.	There is potential for localised traffic impacts during construction works, due to the increase in light and heavy vehicle traffic associated with providing construction equipment, materials and workers to the switchyard for the works. This would add to the existing traffic on local roads. During the construction phase of Activity 1, low daily volumes of heavy vehicles are expected, primarily related to deliveries of electrical equipment and steel, and water	As a subplan of the CEMP developed for Activity 1, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) would be developed and implemented to ensure localised traffic disruptions are managed efficiently and effectively. The CEMP would include, at a minimum: requirements for vehicle inspections and vehicle washdown protocols

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
		trucks for dust control where required. This would add to the existing traffic volumes on Hyland Highway, as well as localised increases to the Loy Yang Power Station access road. Additional road usage could add to localised congestion for vehicles during the AM and PM peak. Increased road usage also has the potential to impact on the condition of local roads. Increases in construction traffic would require additional vehicle parking located on site, near the Loy Yang Power Station Switchyard. As Activity 1 is located within the existing power station, disruptions to traffic on public roads directly adjacent to the Activity 1 site would not be expected however there is the potential to temporarily affect movement of vehicles within the power station. Some of the residual impacts of the construction phase would carry over to the operational phase, but to a lesser extent as vehicle use for the operations phase would be restricted to periodic maintenance and repairs. Overall the traffic impact associated with both construction and operation are anticipated to be minor, with the appropriate implementation of mitigation measures.	• routine inspection and maintenance requirements for existing road and access track infrastructure within Loy Yang Power Station • movement frequencies and volumes of construction vehicles • designated site access routes, timing restrictions and signage to assist in minimising impacts on existing Loy Yang Power Station vehicle movements • documentation of car parking and loading requirements • requirements for communicating the arrangements for and impacts of construction traffic with Loy Yang Power Station management .
Aboriginal cultural heritage	A search of ACHRIS shows that there are no previously registered Aboriginal places within the Activity 1 site or within 50 m. Additionally, there are no named waterways within 200 m of the Activity 1 site. The Activity 1 site is therefore not located in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity (CHS). The Activity 1 site is located inside the Loy Yang Power Station Switchyard, which is a heavily developed area of the Loy Yang Terminal Station. While the works are proposed in an area with no existing bays or other heavy infrastructure, the area of the Activity 1 site was extensively disturbed during the construction of the	Activity 1 is not located in an area of CHS and therefore, if it were to be excluded from requiring assessment in the EES, it would not trigger the requirement for a mandatory CHMP. Additionally, due to the minimal ground disturbing works proposed and the extensive previous disturbance in the Activity 1 site, the area has been assessed as having a very low risk of harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage from the proposed additional excluded works.	As part of the CEMP, an unexpected finds protocol would be developed and implemented to ensure Aboriginal cultural heritage is managed appropriately if identified.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
	existing infrastructure and are now sealed. It is assumed the topsoil in the Activity 1 site was stripped by machinery in preparation for the construction of the switchyard's sealed foundations. The ground disturbing works proposed in the Loy Yang Switchyard are minimal and the area has been extensively disturbed from the construction of the Loy Yang Switchyard. It is therefore considered unlikely that Aboriginal cultural heritage is present in the proposed Activity 1 site. If Aboriginal cultural heritage is present in the site, it is highly likely to be in a disturbed context.		
Historic heritage	A search of the VHR and the VHI show that there are no previously registered historical places within the Activity 1 site. Additionally, a review of publicly available historical aerial imagery indicates there was no historical residence or other type of building in the Activity 1 site prior to the construction of the Loy Yang Switchyard. It is therefore considered highly unlikely that historical heritage is present. If historical heritage was present prior to the construction of the Loy Yang Switchyard, it would have been destroyed by the construction works.	Due to the minimal ground disturbing works proposed and the extensive previous disturbance in the Activity 1 site, Activity 1 has been assessed as having a very low risk of harm to historical heritage from the proposed additional excluded works.	As part of the CEMP, an unexpected finds protocol would be developed and implemented to ensure historical heritage is managed appropriately if identified.

4.2 Activity 2 - Temporary construction compound and laydown area

The table below assesses the potential environmental, heritage and social impacts associated with Activity 2 and proposes mitigation measures where required. The proposed mitigation measures would be developed and implemented via a CEMP developed specifically for the proposed additional excluded works. Given that the site is currently managed by AGL, the CEMP would be developed with consideration of their existing operational plans and procedures for the site, as well as AGL's general environmental management framework including:

- AGL Health, Safety and Environment Policy (2025)
- AGL Loy Yang Work Plan Variation (AGL, 2015)
- AGL Loy Yang Bushfire Mitigation Plan (AGL, 2025)
- AGL Loy Yang Mining Licence 5189
- EPA Operating Licence (OL000011149) for Loy Yang A Power Station

Table 3 Assessment of works - Temporary construction compound

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
Land use and planning	Activity 2 is located in cleared open land associated with the broader Loy Yang Power Station and mine operations, and at the time of the site visit on 11 May 2026 was subject to cattle grazing. Activity 2's site has already been benched and modified for operational purposes and forms part of the wider utility and industrial landscape associated with electricity generation and brown coal extraction. There is existing vehicle access located to the north and the south of the Activity 2 site and there are no sensitive land uses located within 3.8 km of the site boundary. The SUZ1 applies to the entirety of the Activity 2 site while the Buffer Area Overlay (BAO) affects the north of the site and the BMO is located to the east. Activity 2 is also located with a designated BPA.	Activity 2 involves the temporary establishment of a construction compound and laydown area to support construction activities within the Loy Yang Power Station precinct. These activities are temporary in nature and do not introduce a permanent or alternative land use. Activity 2 is confined to previously disturbed and benched land within an established utility precinct and would not alter the underlying long-term use or function of the site. The temporary construction compound is a customary and ancillary activity associated with major infrastructure and utility operations. Given the absence of nearby sensitive receptors and the containment of works to be undertaken within an existing operational area, land use impacts are expected to be minimal and largely confined to the construction phase. No changes to surrounding land uses, access arrangements or land use compatibility are anticipated.	No specific land use mitigation measures are required, as Activity 2 is temporary and consistent with the established and intended function of the site. Construction activities would be undertaken in accordance with the CEMP, including measures to manage site access, drainage, minor utilities and demobilisation following completion of works. Works within the BAO would be designed and undertaken to avoid potential impacts to existing major pipeline infrastructure. The location, design and construction of Activity 2 would also appropriately consider bushfire hazard and risk, in accordance with the BPA requirements and objectives applicable to the site. Consultation with relevant stakeholders would be conducted for the works (refer Section 6.3).

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
		Activity 2 is consistent with the intent of the SUZ1 and the existing use of the site, and no land use impacts are anticipated. Activity 2 aligns with the applicable planning provisions for the land, and no planning permit triggers are associated with the proposed scope of the Activity 2 unless easements are required (see Section 6.1.2 for further details).	
Ecology	The Activity 2 site and surrounding area have been subject to historic vegetation clearing and the site is currently used for cattle grazing. The ecology site survey conducted on 11 May 2026 identified patches of native vegetation immediately adjacent to the proposed work areas within the Activity 2 site, comprising approximately 0.5 hectares and representing Plains Grassy Woodland EVC (EVC 55). The location of these vegetation patches is shown in Figure 7. No tree canopy was present but saplings of Gippsland Red Gum <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> subsp. <i>mediana</i> were observed. Two patches of native vegetation ('habitat zones') were identified through the VQA assessment (see Plate 5) both assessed as low: habitat zone 1 score= 24 out of 100 and habitat 2 score=28 out of 100. The native vegetation mapped on site (EVC 55) is considered to be representative of the FFG-Act listed <i>Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland Community</i>, and also was assessed as being the derived grassland form of the Gippsland Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland TEC listed under the EPBC Act. Eastern Grey Kangaroo <i>Macropus giganteus</i> were observed in the surrounding area, and may utilize the site for grazing. Given the history of modification and continuing disturbance at the site, the poor quality of the vegetation and relative lack of habitat features, threatened fauna are considered unlikely to occur at the site.	No native vegetation occurs directly within the proposed work areas for Activity 2 and, as a result, no direct impacts to native vegetation are anticipated. However, patches of native vegetation occur immediately adjacent to the work area and have the potential to be indirectly impacted if not appropriately managed during construction (see Figure 7). Although the study site has been previously cleared, it appears that this may have been more than 10 years ago. The site as it currently exists provides ample space for the necessary works whilst allowing for the retention and protection of the native vegetation surveyed. As such, the Activity 2 site has been deliberately designed to avoid all native vegetation identified in surveys, and a no-go zone is proposed to be established to ensure its protection as illustrated in Figure 7. Accidental disturbance of native vegetation on site may occur if works occur within the designated no-go zone. Although unlikely, there is also the potential for collisions with wildlife to occur from construction vehicles. Additionally, indirect impacts on biodiversity may occur as a result of the introduction and/or spread of invasive weeds on site. Mitigation measures are proposed to be outlined in the CEMP to address these issues. Provided that the mitigations presented in the CEMP are followed, impacts on native vegetation or other significant biodiversity values are not considered likely as a result of the works.	No native vegetation or habitat for threatened fauna is expected to be directly impacted by the works and therefore no biodiversity offsets are expected to be required. The CEMP would include appropriate measures to minimise the risk of impact on ecological values during the works including: • Clear delineation of work areas within Activity 2's site for the duration of the works, to prevent accidental disturbance of surrounding vegetation. This is to include fencing and signage of the no-go zone identified in Figure 7. • Requirements for establishment and monitoring of no-go zone fencing around native vegetation • Biosecurity requirements including procedures for vehicle wash down prior to entering the site • Inductions for workers to include information on ecology mitigation measures • Speed limits on access tracks to minimise risk of wildlife collisions • Procedures for responding to any wildlife-related incidents • Weed control and monitoring measures

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
Land contamination	Activity 2 is located immediately east of the existing power station within the Loy Yang Power Station. Activity 2 is located on an existing benched area that has been cut into the slope consistent with land for the adjacent power station. It is unknown whether any materials were imported to generate the bench although that would seem unlikely given the extent of the cut and the resultant availability of cut soils. It is not known whether this site has been used for any formal activity since construction of the bench although it may have been used for incidental activities, such as a lay down area. No laboratory data is available for the site. Groundwater is understood to be present between 20 and 50 m depth below ground surface based on data from VVG (accessed on the 29.4.26). As such it is considered unlikely that groundwater would be encountered during construction and operation of the construction compound.	Activity 2 which includes stripping, may encounter contaminated soils. Inappropriate management, handling, storage and/or disposal of contaminated soil has the potential to affect human health and the environment where: Contaminated soil could be excavated and exposed to human receptors on site via dermal (skin) contact, inhalation (of volatile components, dust and/or asbestos fibres) or incidental ingestion. The surrounding environment could be impacted by the stockpiling of contaminated soil, via leaching to soil or groundwater or runoff into surface waters.	The CEMP would include a requirement for characterisation of potential soil contamination at the laydown site prior to construction. To achieve this, a soil investigation would be conducted in accordance with the ASC NEPM, EPA Victoria Industrial Waste Resource Guideline: Soil Sampling (IWRG 702) and Australian Standard 4482.3 Guide to the investigation and sampling of sites with potentially contaminated soil and other applicable guidelines and regulations. Where disturbance of contaminated soil is unavoidable during construction activities, mitigation measures in the CEMP should be implemented and including measures/procedures for appropriate disturbance, handling, storage and disposal of contaminated soils, including the following: • Management of potential dispersive soils including implementation of controls to minimise erosion and sedimentation. • Stockpiles to be managed in accordance with EPA Victoria Publication 1895 <i>Managing Stockpiles and other applicable guidelines and regulations</i>. • Reuse (which should be undertaken where appropriate) or offsite disposal of soil should be undertaken in accordance with the EP Act, EP Regulations and EPA Victoria Publication 1828.3 <i>Waste disposal categories – characteristics and thresholds</i>.
Noise and vibration	The closest sensitive receptor to Activity 2 is a farm dwelling located 3.8 km to the west. Noise monitoring was undertaken at Flynns Creek, which represents an acoustic environment similar to the nearby sensitive receivers, indicated a relatively quiet environment with the long-term background noise levels generally very low. Ambient levels are slightly higher due to occasional louder events.	Activity 2 would include heavy machinery and clearing activities which is likely to produce high noise levels for a temporary period, which would add to existing noise sources in the power plant area. However, as the closest sensitive receptors to Activity 2 are over 3km away, available noise assessments indicate these sensitive receptors would experience low construction noise levels under 35dBA LAeq. As a result, the impacts of	Standard mitigation measures for minimising construction noise and vibration would be included in the CEMP in accordance with relevant guidelines including: • EPA Publication 1834: Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (2025).

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
	Daytime ambient noise levels of 55 dB LAeq drop to 41 dB LAeq during the night period. The day and evening ambient noise levels are both greater than the predicted fine weather operational noise levels (22-42 dB(A)). Nighttime periods are slightly below the fair-weather level. Day, evening, night and Sunday background levels were all below or at nighttime base noise limit of 32 dB(A) stipulated in part 5.3 – Noise subsection 2(b) of the EP Regulations, indicating the background noise is very low.	construction noise associated with Activity 2 are not expected to be significant.	Standards Australia AS 2436:2010 Guide to noise and vibration control on construction, maintenance and demolition sites.
Air quality	Winds in the area are predominantly from the west. Air quality monitoring data indicates that air quality has generally been good over the past five years. Occasional periods of poorer air quality were mainly due to smoke and windblown dust. There are no sensitive human receptors within 250 m of Activity 2.	There is potential for construction works to have localised air quality impacts for a short duration, resulting from the generation of dust. However, the potential dust impacts on sensitive human receptors such as dwellings are expected to be negligible due to the absence of such receptors within 250 m of Activity 2. Existing background air quality is not expected to significantly increase the risk of air quality impacts. There is the potential for dust generated by construction activities for Activity 2 to impact indirectly on nearby native vegetation if not appropriately managed.	Standard mitigation measures for minimising air quality impacts would be included in the CEMP in accordance with the EPA Publication 1834: Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (2025). This would include: - Dust impacts from construction works will be minimised through watering of unsealed access tracks and work areas where required. - Speed restrictions on the construction access route within Loy Yang Power Station to minimise dust generation. - Stabilisation of exposed soil and stockpiles where required.
Landscape and visual	<u>Landscape character assessment</u> As identified for Activity 1, the Activity 2 site is located within as <i>LCA 1: Power Stations/Coal Mine</i>, which was identified as having a low landscape value and low sensitivity to the proposed change. <u>Visual sensitivity</u> The location of Activity 2 is less visually isolated than Activity 1, being located closer to Hyland Highway. However, the view location was identified as having a low sensitivity. No residential dwellings (or sensitive visual receptors) were identified within 3 km of the Activity 2 site.	<u>Landscape character impact assessment</u> The magnitude of change of Activity 2 is anticipated to be low, comprising construction laydown activity within the vicinity of an existing piece of electricity generation infrastructure. Overall, the impact of Activity 2 on landscape character would be rated as low (neutral), with the neutral qualitative assessment rating has been assigned as there would be no reduction in the quality of the landscape due to Activity 2. The proposed activity would be utilitarian in character (in that function is valued over aesthetic design), similar to existing infrastructure.	No mitigation has been recommended as landscape and visual impacts are anticipated to be low, with no views or landscapes of high sensitivity recorded within the surrounding area and no reduction in the quality of landscape character or views due to Activity 2.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
		<u>Visual impact assessment</u> The magnitude of change of Activity 2 is anticipated to be low, given the small extent of the view from Hyland Highway that would be affected by the works. The change would comprise the addition of construction laydown activity seen with a backdrop of electrical infrastructure and the existing power station. The monumental scale of the adjacent power station diminishes the visual prominence of Activity 2 within the view, being a landmark element that spatially dwarfs the change within the view. The overall visual impact of Activity 2 is anticipated to be low (neutral), with the neutral qualitative rating been assigned as there would be no reduction in the quality of the view from the Highway due to Activity 2.	
Bushfire	Activity 2 is located within the Bushfire Prone Area gazetted under the <i>Building Act 1993</i>, however is not located within the BMO associated with the Latrobe City Council Planning Scheme. A saline water outfall pipe from Loy Yang Power Station is rated as having a very high risk from bushfire impacts, with a national and state level of impact. Activity 2's site is disturbed open grassland. Vegetation within 400 m of the Activity 2 consists of modified grassland to the east and the south. The vegetation continuity is disrupted by paved and un-paved roads. Land to the north and west (part of Loy Yang Power Station) is managed and does not present a bushfire hazard. Bushfire history of the area indicates the landscape of the Gippsland region can sustain frequent and large-scale bushfires, with bushfires commonly occurring between November and March.	Activity 2 is located within an open area which has been cleared as part of the Loy Yang Power Station. Activity 2 is expected to have a minimal effect on vegetation extending within the broader landscape as firefighting mitigation measures would prevent the spread of unplanned fire into the broader landscape. Construction activities have the potential to result in bushfire ignition, which can cause uncontrolled and unplanned fires which can result in loss of life/injury, and the loss of or damage to environmental and/or cultural heritage values. These impacts arise through pathways such as ignition sources from undertaking hot works, vehicle and machinery use, or smoking. Storage and handling of combustible materials during construction provides a potential source of fuel for bushfires ignited by activities resulting from the proposed additional excluded works, or from a fire entering the Activity 2 site following external ignition. Any impacts would be temporary, limited in extent and during the construction phase.	The CEMP would include appropriate measures for bushfires and emergency response. These will include measures related to: • bushfire ignition and suppression • combustible materials storage and handling • it is anticipated that the works would be able to be undertaken under existing Loy Yang Power Station emergency plans and procedures for the site.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
Surface Water and Groundwater	<u>Groundwater</u> Bores relevant to the Project were assessed as being those with a total depth of less than 50 m. The majority of existing bores in the Loy Yang area are shallow, which are related to monitoring and operation of the Loy Yang mine. Groundwater is understood to be present between 20 and 50 m depth below ground surface based on data from VVG (accessed on the 29.4.26). As such it is considered unlikely that groundwater would be encountered during construction and operation of the construction compound. <u>Surface water:</u> The Loy Yang Power Station switchyard sits within the Latrobe River Basin. There are no designated waterways within 1 km radius of the temporary construction compound, with the nearest designated waterway being Flynns Creek (approximately 3.5 km west). There are two waterbodies southeast of the Activity 2 site but still within the power station precinct. The closest of these waterbodies is approximately 350 m south the Activity 2 site. These waterbodies are used for activities associated with the power station Victoria's and Gippsland's Climate is undergoing changes including rising temperatures and increasing intensity of heavy rainfall events.	<u>Groundwater</u> Groundwater is not expected to be intersected by the works, and therefore no direct impacts on groundwater are expected to occur. However, there is potential for groundwater contamination to occur due to a spill of hazardous materials on site. The CEMP would be required to include procedures for managing any spills. <u>Surface water</u> Soil disturbance for the works has the potential to result in erosion and sedimentation. There is also the risk of contaminated surface water runoff to occur due to a spill of hazardous materials on site. These potential impacts are expected to be mitigated through the CEMP. Given Activity 2's location and the setback from local waterways, with implementation of standard mitigation measures there is expected to be negligible impacts on local surface water values.	The CEMP would include standard measures for surface and groundwater in accordance with relevant guidelines including EPA Publication 1834: Civil Construction, Building and Demolition Guide (2025). Measures would be developed for: • minimisation of erosion and sedimentation • storage and handling of hazardous materials on site (e.g. fuels and oils) • procedures for managing any spills.
Flood risk	The Loy Yang Power Station and switchyard do not sit within a LSIO or flood overlay and are not in the vicinity of major waterways. There are a number of minor waterways in vicinity of Activity 2, however these are all ephemeral, with a small catchment area ($\leq 3\text{km}^2$) meaning they are unable to generate baseflows and instead flowing in response to rainfall events.	Given Activity 2 is not located within an LSIO or flood overlay, Activity 2 is highly unlikely to be affected by flooding or to cause any measurable change to existing flooding patterns or flood risk in the vicinity. Flooding impacts are therefore considered to be negligible.	No specific flooding mitigation measures are required.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
Traffic	Hyland Highway is the major east-west arterial near Loy Yang Power Station (see Figure 2). The baseline assessment found that the weekday average two-way traffic for Hyland Highway near Bartons Lane was 2709 vehicles, with only 9% of those being heavy vehicles (HV). Of that existing traffic volume, it is assumed that: 5% of existing light vehicle LV westbound through movements along Hyland Highway are assumed to enter Activity 2 site, 5% of existing LV eastbound through movements along Hyland Highway are assumed to exit Activity 2 site. The same assumption is applied to HV movements. Traffic volumes on the internal roads within the power station are low and are restricted primarily to maintenance activities.	There is potential for localised traffic impacts during construction works, due to the increase in light and heavy vehicle traffic associated with providing construction equipment, materials and workers to the Activity 2 site for the works. This would add to the existing traffic on local roads particularly during the AM and PM peak. During the works, low daily volumes of heavy vehicles are expected, primarily related to earthmoving equipment and deliveries of additional hardstand material and the temporary buildings. Water trucks would also be used for dust control where required. This would add to the existing traffic volumes on Hyland Highway, as well as localised increases to the Loy Yang Power Station access roads. This would add to the existing traffic volumes on Hyland Highway, as well as localised increases to the Loy Yang Power Station access road. Increased road usage also has the potential to impact on the condition of local roads. Direct access to the Activity 2 site would be via existing internal roads within the Loy Yang Power Station. While this will minimise disruptions on public roads, there is the potential to affect movement of vehicles within the power station. Increases in construction traffic would also require additional vehicle parking located on site, however it is anticipated this could be accommodated within the Activity 2 site. Overall these impacts are anticipated to be minor, with the appropriate implementation of mitigation measures.	As a subplan of the CEMP developed for the works, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) would be developed and implemented to ensure localised traffic disruptions are managed efficiently and effectively. The CTMP would include, at a minimum: - requirements for vehicle inspections and vehicle washdown protocols - routine inspection and maintenance requirements for existing road and access track infrastructure within Loy Yang Power Station - movement frequencies and volumes of construction vehicles - designated site access routes, timing restrictions and signage to assist in minimising impacts on existing Loy Yang Power Station vehicle movements - documentation of car parking and loading requirements - requirements for communicating the arrangements for and impacts of construction traffic with Loy Yang Power Station management.
Aboriginal cultural heritage	A search of ACHRIS shows that there are no previously registered Aboriginal places within the Activity 2 site or within 50 m. Additionally, there are no named waterways within 200 m of the Activity 2 site. Activity 2 is therefore not located in an area of CHS. Additionally, historical aerial imagery indicates that extensive earthworks have taken place within Site 2, notable in 1985 and 1991 (Figure 8).	Activity 2 is not located in an area of CHS and therefore do not trigger the requirement for a mandatory CHMP if excluded from requiring assessment in the EES. Additionally, due to the extensive previous ground disturbance in the Activity 2 site, the area has been assessed as having a very low risk of harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage from the proposed Activity 2 works.	As part of the CEMP, an unexpected finds protocol would be developed and implemented to ensure Aboriginal cultural heritage is managed appropriately if identified.

Aspect	Existing conditions	Impacts and findings	Proposed mitigation measures
	The ground disturbing works proposed in the Activity 2 site are extensive; however, extensive earthworks have already taken place across the site and it is therefore considered unlikely that Aboriginal cultural heritage is present in the Activity 2 site. If Aboriginal cultural heritage is present in the Activity 2 site it is highly likely to be in a disturbed context.		
Historic heritage	A search of the VHR and the VHI show that there are no previously registered historical places within the Activity 2 site. Additionally, a review of publicly available historical aerial imagery indicates there was no historical residence or other type of building in the Activity 2 in 1955 (Figure 9). It is therefore considered highly unlikely that historical heritage is present. Due to the absence of evidence of historical structures or other significant venues, the Activity 2 site has been assessed as having a very low risk of harm to historical heritage from the proposed additional excluded works.	Due to the absence of evidence of historical structures or other significant venues, the Activity 2 site has been assessed as having a very low risk of harm to historical heritage from the proposed Activity 2 works.	As part of the CEMP, an unexpected finds protocol would be developed and implemented to ensure historical heritage is managed appropriately if identified.

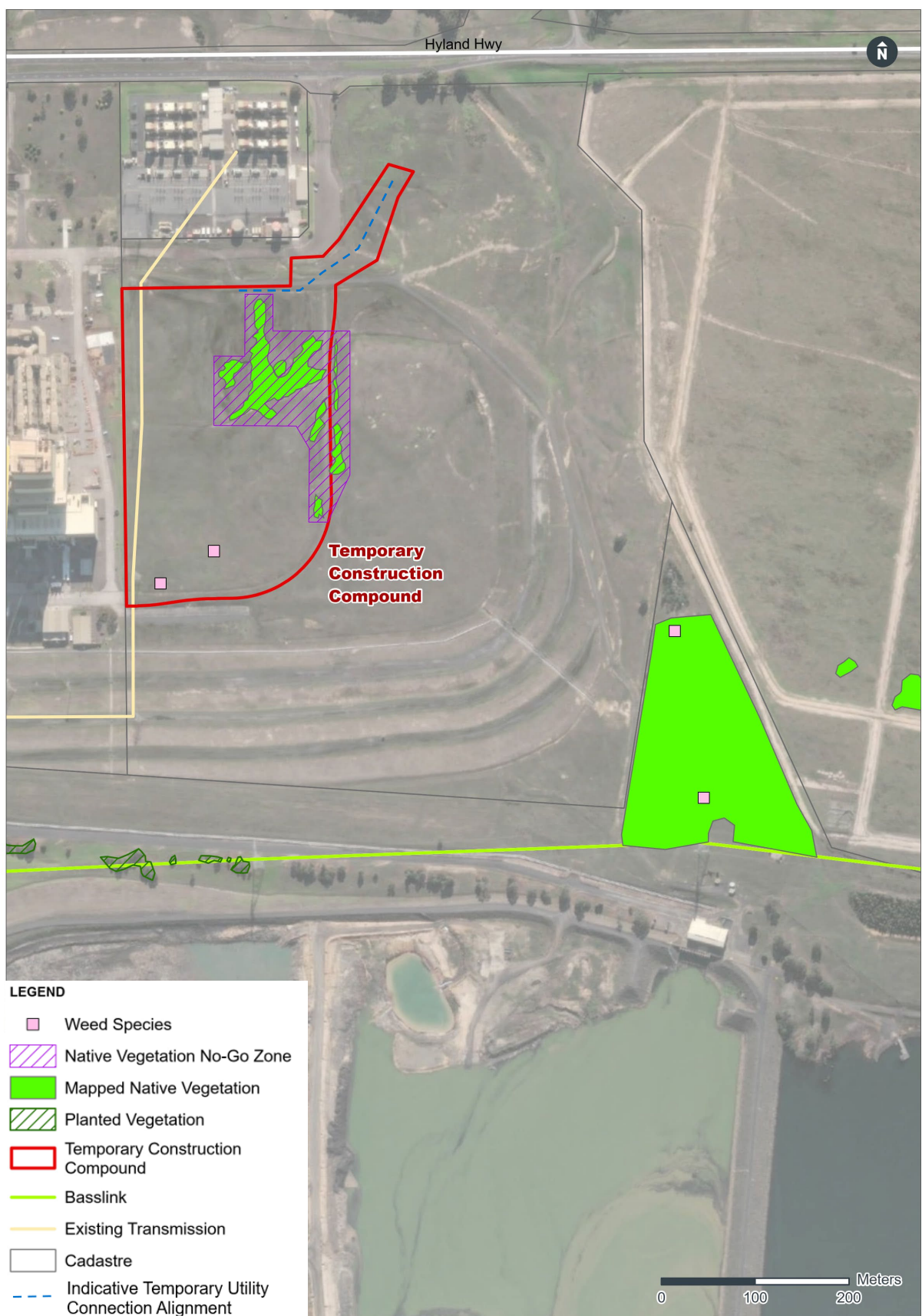


Figure 7 Ecology values – Activity 2 temporary construction compound and laydown area



Plate 5 Example photos of Plains Grassy Woodland EVC 55 regenerating at the Activity 2 site (Habitat zone 1 top photos and habitat zone 2 bottom photo)



Figure 8 Aerial image from 1991 showing major earthworks in the northern section of the Activity 2 site (Landata)



Figure 9 Historical aerial imagery of the Loy Yang Power Station area in 1955 (Landata)

5 Proposed amendments to the Public Works Order

5.1 Schedule 1 – excluded works

VicGrid recommends that the proposed additional excluded works, as described and assessed in Sections 1 to 4, are included in Schedule 1 of the PWO, which lists works excluded from the declaration of public works. It is recommended that the previous wording in Schedule 1 be retained, with additional items added to allow Activities 1 and 2 to be excluded works from the declaration. The specific updated wording proposed to Schedule 1 is shown in red text in Appendix A.

5.2 Minor editorial updates to the description of the public works

Amending Schedule 1 of the PWO also provides the opportunity for VicGrid to make targeted editorial updates to the description of the declared public works. These updates clarify several technical aspects of the Project that is subject to assessment in the EES, ensuring the Project's scope of works is accurately reflected without materially altering the scope of the declared public works.

These proposed changes are described and justified in Table 4, with the updated wording shown in red text in Appendix A. The proposed amendments in Table 4 do not expand, reduce, or otherwise alter the declared scope of works under the PWO.

Table 4 Proposed editorial updates to the public works description under the PWO

Current PWO wording	Proposed amended wording	Justification for change
A double circuit high voltage alternating current overhead transmission line from the proposed onshore connection hub (in the area of Giffard) to the proposed grid connection substation near the Loy Yang Power Station (in the Latrobe Valley).	A high voltage alternating current double circuit overhead transmission line from the proposed onshore connection hub (in the area of Giffard) to the existing grid connection terminal station near the Loy Yang Power Station (In the Latrobe Valley).	The Loy Yang Terminal Station is an existing grid connection terminal station (not proposed). The proposed amendment clarifies this and aligns the description with the Project scope.
An onshore connection hub in the area of Giffard broadly comprising a high-voltage substation plant and equipment, including transformers, synchronous condensers and switchgear.	An onshore terminal station that acts as a connection hub in the area of Giffard broadly comprising of high-voltage electrical plant and equipment, including power system control equipment and switchgear.	The proposed facility in the area of Giffard is a terminal station that acts as a connection hub. The offshore wind developers are responsible for building all elements of the 330kV switchyard. The amended wording improves technical accuracy and consistency with the Project scope.
A grid connection substation near the Loy Yang Power Station.	Augmentation to the existing terminal station near Loy Yang Power Station, to accommodate the grid connection.	The Project does not include construction of a new grid connection substation near the Loy Yang Power Station. The works include augmentation of the existing terminal station. The proposed amendment corrects the description to accurately reflect the nature and extent of the works.

6 Approvals

This section outlines any key approvals expected to be required prior to the commencement of each proposed additional excluded works activity.

Primary approvals (statutory approvals required to enable the excluded works) are outlined in Section 6.1 and secondary approvals (supporting approvals and consents required to facilitate delivery) listed in Section 6.2. In the event that the PWO is amended by the Minister, the intention would be to obtain the required approvals promptly as the works would no longer be subject to assessment in the EES.

6.1 Primary approvals

6.1.1 Activity 1 – Loy Yang Power Station Switchyard

A planning permit would be required under the Latrobe Planning Scheme as the proposed additional excluded works are associated with new standalone infrastructure, pursuant to Clause 4.0 of Schedule 1 to the SUZ1 (Clause 37.01).

Additionally, a planning permit would also be required under the Latrobe Planning Scheme pursuant to Clause 52.02 (Easements, Restrictions and Reserves), should any easements need to be created, varied or removed as part of the works.

No significant impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) from Activity 1 are anticipated and therefore a referral would not be required under the EPBC Act.

6.1.2 Activity 2 – Temporary construction compound and laydown area

No primary approvals would be required to enable the works proposed under Activity 2. The exception to this may be the requirement for a planning permit under the Latrobe Planning Scheme pursuant to Clause 52.02 (Easements, Restrictions and Reserves), should any easements need to be created, varied or removed as part of the works.

No significant impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) from Activity 2 are anticipated and therefore a referral would not be required under the EPBC Act.

6.2 Secondary Approvals/Consents

Secondary approvals and consents may need to be obtained as required to facilitate the proposed additional excluded works. In the event that the PWO is amended by the Minister, the intention would be to obtain the required secondary approvals promptly as the works would no longer be subject to assessment in the EES.

Confirmation of the secondary approvals and consents for proposed additional excluded works are subject to consultation with relevant landholders, the Department of Transport and Planning, and relevant referral authorities. Anticipated secondary approvals are provided in Table 5, however this list is not exhaustive.

Table 5 Secondary approvals potentially required to facilitate proposed additional excluded works

Secondary Approval	Activity 1	Activity 2
Crown Land Reserves Act (1978) consent and/or agreements will be obtained as required for works undertaken on Crown land	✓	✓
Land Act (1958) consent as required for occupation or use of unreserved Crown land if applicable	✓	✓

6.3 Consultation approach

VicGrid has engaged early and consistently throughout the preparation of the EES for the Project with a range of agencies and stakeholders. These include local councils and government agencies, regional associations and community groups, the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP), Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC), local landowners, communities and land managers.

If amendment to the PWO is approved to exclude the proposed additional excluded works, VicGrid would conduct targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders for each proposed additional excluded works activity in the lead up to and during Activity 1 and Activity 2. To facilitate this, VicGrid would update their existing Communication and Engagement Strategy to guide the management and delivery of community and stakeholder engagement.

Where required, contractors would also prepare and implement Construction Stakeholder Engagement Plans including a detailed plan for consultation activities tailored to the nature, location and potential impacts of specific proposed additional excluded works activities, to ensure that consultation is undertaken in a coordinated and proportionate manner.

It is anticipated that this would include consultation with relevant local councils, Victorian Government agencies, infrastructure operators and land managers to address key considerations such as land access, infrastructure interfaces, traffic and transport, utilities, emergency management and environmental constraints. This would assist in ensuring that the proposed additional excluded works are delivered in a manner that minimises disruption to the community and supports the continued operation of existing infrastructure and land uses.

This consultation would build on, and be informed by, the ongoing stakeholder engagement being undertaken as part of the EES process, including consultation with members of the TRG, which comprises key regulatory agencies and authorities relevant to the Project.

The specific stakeholders to be consulted for each proposed additional excluded works activity would be identified in the strategies and plans discussed above and will depend on the specific planning and approvals pathways pursued for each of the works (where required).

For works within the Loy Yang area, consultation is expected to include key stakeholders associated with the operation of the Loy Yang Power Station and mine, including AGL, AusNet, Alinta Energy, Resources Victoria, Latrobe City Council, VicRoads and surrounding land managers. Engagement would also be undertaken with emergency services and fire management stakeholders, including the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and relevant Victorian Government departments such as the DTP.

For all proposed additional excluded works, consultation would be undertaken with GLaWAC, the sole RAP for the Activity 1 and 2 sites, so their input can inform the proposed approach and mitigation.

Consultation would continue throughout detailed design, approvals and construction to ensure that the proposed additional excluded works are delivered in a safe, coordinated and efficient manner, with appropriate consideration of stakeholder requirements and site-specific constraints.

7 Conclusions

This report has been prepared to support a request by VicGrid for the Minister for Planning to consider amending the existing PWO for the Project to include additional excluded work activities that would facilitate efficient Project delivery timeframes, as well as further minor editorial updates to the wording of the PWO.

The proposed additional excluded works would support efficient Project delivery while minimising disruption to landholders and other sensitive receptors in the surrounding area including road users and local residents.

VicGrid believes that including the proposed additional works in the excluded works under the PWO is warranted and is in the interests of progressing a state significant project, as it enables the relevant approvals to be obtained so that the proposed additional excluded works can commence while the EES process for Project continues. The proposed additional excluded works comprise works and activities that are comparable, in scope and scale, to the routine renewal and upgrade work activities that are standard practice in the industrialised areas of the Loy Yang Power Station, and do not involve any activity or works that are novel or “out of the ordinary”.

The environmental assessments of the works demonstrate that the works for Activities 1 and 2 are expected to be very low impact due to their location within the existing highly modified Loy Yang Power Station area, and in the case of the Loy Yang switchyard works, are also entirely consistent with existing infrastructure and use of the site. As such, VicGrid believes that these works are appropriate to be included as excluded works requiring no further assessment in the wider project EES³. Impacts can be appropriately managed via the implementation of a CEMP prepared specifically for the works. With implementation of the mitigation measures outlined in this report, the proposed additional excluded works are not predicted to have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

VicGrid would conduct appropriate targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders to ensure that all excluded works (both current and the proposed additional) are delivered in a manner that minimises disruption to the community and supports the continued operation of existing infrastructure and land uses. The consultation process would build off the substantial stakeholder engagement that has been undertaken as part of the EES process for the Project.

In the case that the Project does not proceed, the proposed additional excluded works would still deliver benefits to the State. The proposed additional excluded works at the switchyard for Activity 1 would support future transmission infrastructure development. The ground improvement and compound establishment works at the Activity 2 site would also result in enhanced infrastructure and improve the development options for State-owned land.

In addition to the proposed additional excluded works, VicGrid has identified some minor editorial updates to the public works description in the PWO to clarify technical aspects of the description of the Project. These amendments allow the scope of works of the Project to be accurately captured in the PWO, without materially changing the declared scope of the works proposed.

The proposed amendments to the PWO are provided in Appendix A.

³ Noting that, as outlined in the EES scoping requirements, EES assessment of cumulative impacts associated with any excluded works would still be required.

Appendix A – Proposed text amendments to Public Works Order

PUBLIC WORKS ORDER

Declaration under section 3(1) of the Environment Effects Act 1978

Gippsland Offshore Wind Transmission 2GW Project

The Minister for Planning, being satisfied that works proposed in relation to the Gippsland Offshore Wind Transmission 2 GW Project (Project) could reasonably be considered to have or be capable of having a significant effect on the environment, declares the works proposed to be undertaken by VicGrid, on behalf of the Victorian Government, for the purposes of the Project, to be 'public works' under the Environment Effects Act 1978.

The public works to which the Order relates broadly comprise the following:

- a ~~double-circuit~~ high-voltage alternating current ~~double circuit~~ overhead transmission line from the proposed onshore connection hub (in the area of Giffard) to the ~~proposed existing~~ grid connection ~~substation terminal station~~ near the Loy Yang Power Station (in the Latrobe Valley);
- an onshore ~~terminal station that acts as a~~ connection hub in the area of Giffard broadly comprising ~~of a~~ high-voltage ~~substation electrical~~ plant and equipment, including ~~transformers, synchronous condensers power system control equipment~~ and switchgear; and
- ~~a grid connection substation augmentation to the existing terminal station near the~~ Loy Yang Power Station, to accommodate the grid connection.

The study area for the proposed public works is depicted in Figure 1.

Procedures and requirements under section 3(3) of the Environment Effects Act 1978

The following procedures and requirements are to apply to the environment effects statement (EES) for the proposed public works.

- The EES is to document investigations of potential environmental effects of the public works, including the feasibility of associated avoidance, environmental mitigation and management measures, including:
 - a) a rationale for the proposed form of the Project and alternative corridors, site locations and other feasible options for the planning, construction and operation of the project;
 - b) potential effects on biodiversity and ecological values including native vegetation, listed flora, fauna and communities through loss, degradation or fragmentation of habitat, collision with transmission lines, or other ecological effects;
 - c) potential effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values;
 - d) potential effects on landscape values and amenity;
 - e) potential effects on surface water environments including waterways and wetlands; and
 - f) potential effects on socio-economic values and land uses, including agriculture, forestry and local communities.
- The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES will be set out more fully in scoping requirements. Draft scoping requirements will be exhibited for 15 business days, before final scoping requirements are issued by the Minister for Planning.
- VicGrid is to prepare and submit to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) an adequate draft EES study program to inform the preparation of scoping requirements.
- The level of detail of investigation for the EES studies should be consistent with the approach set out in the scoping requirements and be adequate to inform an assessment of the significance and acceptability of potential environmental effects, in the context of the Ministerial Guidelines for the Assessment of Environmental Effects.
- DTP will convene an inter-agency technical reference group (TRG) to advise DTP and VicGrid on the scoping requirements, the design and adequacy of the EES studies, and coordination with statutory approval processes.

- VicGrid is to prepare and submit to DTP its proposed EES consultation plan for engaging with the public and stakeholders during the preparation of the EES. Once completed to the satisfaction of DTP, the EES consultation plan is to be implemented by the proponent, having regard to advice from DTP and the TRG.
- VicGrid is to prepare and submit to DTP its proposed schedule for the completion of studies and preparation and exhibition of the EES, following preparation of the scoping requirements. This schedule will be finalised in consultation with DTP and is intended to facilitate the alignment of the proponent's and DTP's timeframes, including for TRG review of technical studies and main report.
- VicGrid is to apply appropriate peer review and quality management procedures to enable the completion of EES studies and documentation to a satisfactory standard.
- The EES is to be exhibited for a period of 30 business days for public comment, unless the exhibition period spans the Christmas-New Year period, in which case 40 business days will apply.
- An inquiry will be appointed pursuant to section 9(1) of the Environment Effects Act 1978 to consider the environmental effects of the public works.

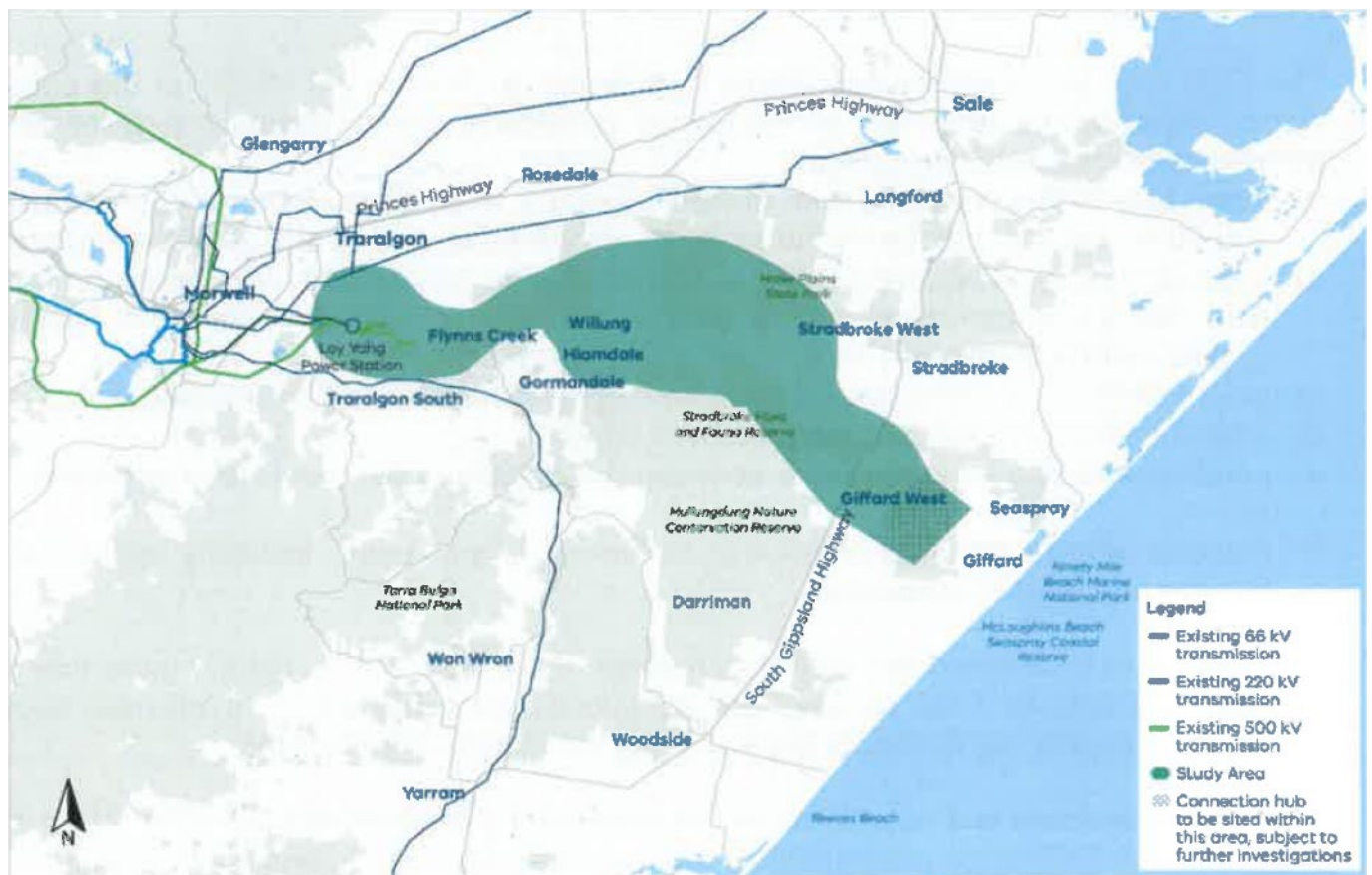


Figure 1. Study area for the proposed public works

SCHEDULE 1

Excluded works

The following works are excluded from this declaration of public works:

Early works, including:

- a. investigative works: geotechnical and environmental investigations, site surveys;
- b. locating existing utilities and services-;
- c. installation of new switchyard equipment including 2 new 500 kV bays and associated connection works within the existing Loy Yang Power Station switchyard; and
- d. establishment of a temporary construction compound and laydown area on land associated with the existing Loy Yang Power Station including ground preparation, access track and drainage works, establishment of temporary portable buildings/offices, site sheds, amenities, fencing, parking and minor utility connections.

Excluded works

The works specified in Schedule 1 hereof are excluded from the declaration of public works in this order.

HON Sonya Kilkeny MP

Minister for Planning

Date: