

# Bunyip North BESS

Application Number: **03123**

Commencement Date:

Status: **Locked****12/09/2025**

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## 1. About the project

### 1.1 Project details

#### 1.1.1 Project title \*

#### 1.1.2 Project industry type \*

#### 1.1.3 Project industry sub-type

#### 1.1.4 Estimated start date \*

#### 1.1.4 Estimated end date \*

## 1.2 Proposed Action details

**1.2.1 Provide an overview of the proposed action, including all proposed activities. \***

## Proposed Action overview

The proposed Bunyip North Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the Project or Proposed Action) is being developed by Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd, in its capacity as trustee of the Bunyip North Project Trust, which is wholly owned by RES Australia Pty Ltd.

The Project is wholly located within the Cardinia Shire Local Government Area (LGA), approximately 80 kilometres (km) south-east of central Melbourne in Victoria's Gippsland region and approximately 2.5 km north of the Bunyip town centre.

The Project is anticipated to have a storage capacity of up to 400 megawatts (MW) / 2,400 megawatt-hours (MWh), with an onsite connection to the existing 220 kilovolt (kV) transmission network via a new transmission terminal station, the Bunyip North Terminal Station (BNTS). Project infrastructure will be situated within the bounds of the Project Area which covers an area of approximately 30.8 hectares (ha). The Project Area is located at 30 Tonimbuk Road, Bunyip North. The final location for Project infrastructure will maintain a development and construction buffer of at least 200 m from Threatened Species preferred habitats. While a small portion of the Project Area overlaps with the 200 m buffer, this area will be entirely avoided by the Project (Avoidance Area) to maintain this Threatened Species buffer. Refer to **Figure 1 Indicative Project Layout and Figure 4 Ecology Survey Area and Biodiversity Values (Attachment 1 – Project Figures, pg. 1 and 4)**.

Following the outcomes of environmental surveys (see Section 3.2.1 of this form), the Project Area was selected to avoid direct impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) whilst remaining in proximity to existing transmission infrastructure. The Project Area also benefits from good access to transport infrastructure, being located adjacent to Princes Freeway.

Subject to detailed design, Project infrastructure will include the following components:

- A series of battery units - modular containerised units comprising battery banks and associated management systems.
- Power Conversion System (PCS) – bi-directional inverter(s) and transformer skids to convert Direct Current (DC) output from the BESS to Alternating Current (AC) (and vice versa) for transformer voltage step-up and grid connection.
- On-site substation (high voltage [HV]) – including 33/220 kV step-up transformer(s), switchgear, busbars, earthing, protection and metering equipment, reactive power plant and connection points to the BNTS.
- Underground low voltage (LV) or medium voltage (MV) cabling – to connect BESS enclosures, inverters (PCS units), and auxiliary systems.
- HV connection infrastructure – to connect the on-site substation to the BNTS via either overhead or underground connection within the Project Area (to be confirmed through detailed design and in consultation with the network operator).
- BNTS – to connect the Project to the established Victorian Declared Shared Network (DSN), a new 220 kV terminal station will be built for the Project to connect into the existing Yallourn Power Station to Rowville Terminal 220kV Transmission Line via a direct cut-in arrangement.
- Site preparation and civil works such as the construction of hardstand areas, batters and foundations.
- Ancillary infrastructure such as a control room, Operations and Maintenance (O&M) storage area, temporary construction compounds and laydown areas, car parking, security fencing, business identification signage, water storage tanks, fire detection and suppression systems, a fire water and stormwater management system and landscape screening.
- Main site access from the Princes Freeway along the southern boundary of the Project Area.
- Internal access roads (gravel or sealed) to support access for construction, operations and emergency vehicles.

## Purpose of the Proposed Action

Victoria has legislated renewable electricity generation targets of 65% by 2030 and 95% by 2035, along with energy storage capacity targets of at least 2.6 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 and 6.3 GW by 2035 (*Renewable Energy (Jobs and Investment) Act 2017* (Vic), as amended 2024).

The Project aims to support these targets by delivering large-scale battery storage capacity to assist in integrating renewable generation, enhancing network reliability, and strengthening energy security for Victorian communities and businesses. It is also expected to provide local and regional economic benefits, supporting jobs and investment during construction and operation.

### **Proposed Action construction activities**

Construction of the Project is anticipated to commence in mid-2027 with a peak workforce of around 75 personnel. Construction and commissioning are expected to last for 24 months, with a targeted operational date of mid-2029.

Key activities during construction are expected to include, but are not limited to:

- Site access and establishment – establishment of temporary fencing and signage, site offices, amenities, laydown areas, and internal access roads and parking areas to support construction activities.
- Road upgrades – localised upgrades to the existing road network (Princes Freeway) to facilitate access undertaken in consultation with the responsible road authorities.
- Earthworks – grading, drainage formation and spoil management to prepare level platforms for the BESS, construction, on-site substation and BNTS compounds.
- Vegetation management – removal of a small area of low constraint vegetation and protection of native vegetation, in accordance with environmental approvals.
- Civil works and foundations – construction of concrete pads, equipment foundations, and drainage infrastructure to support the installation of BESS units, transformers, inverters and switchroom components.
- On-site substation construction – installation of 33/220 kV step-up transformer(s), switchgear, busbars, control building, earthing and reactive power equipment.
- BNTS construction – installation of switchgear, busbars, control and protection systems, and other equipment required to connect to the existing 220 kV transmission network, including construction of new overhead line sections and towers to facilitate diversion of the existing line.
- Electrical installation and integration – delivery and installation of BESS containers, PCS units (inverters and transformer skids), and interconnection cabling between equipment, the on-site substation and BNTS.
- Commissioning – pre-energisation checks, energisation, testing and grid-compliance verification of the BESS, the on-site substation and BNTS.

### **Proposed Action operational activities**

The operational phase will involve the ongoing management, monitoring, and maintenance of the Project, including the BESS, on-site substation, BNTS, and associated infrastructure. The Project will operate continuously and be subject to continuous remote monitoring, with regular reporting and environmental monitoring undertaken in accordance with relevant regulatory, safety, and environmental requirements.

It is anticipated that the Project will require approximately two to four full-time equivalent staff during operation, primarily for remote monitoring, asset management, and periodic on-site maintenance activities. Additional specialist personnel may be engaged intermittently to undertake HV inspections and testing associated with the BNTS and connection infrastructure. Routine maintenance will include equipment servicing, vegetation management, and asset performance checks to ensure the Project continues to operate safely and efficiently.

Typical inspection and maintenance activities may include:

- Ongoing infrastructure performance and environmental monitoring.

- Vegetation fuel load reduction to mitigate bushfire risk.
- Routine and ad-hoc maintenance works, including repair or replacement of equipment.
- Use and maintenance of infrastructure and property, including easement areas and access tracks.

The Project is anticipated to have an operational life of 20 years based on current design life.

#### **Proposed Action decommissioning activities**

At the end of its operational life, the Project may be upgraded, repowered, or decommissioned subject to relevant land agreement and planning approval requirements. Decommissioning activities will be conducted in accordance with applicable approvals and regulatory requirements and will generally include the removal of above-ground infrastructure and services, and rehabilitation of the site to a stable condition consistent with surrounding land uses. The BNTS may remain in place for ongoing use as part of the transmission network as operated by the Declared Transmission System Operator.

Key activities may include:

- Disconnection and safe removal of electrical equipment and above-ground infrastructure associated with the BESS.
- Removal of concrete foundations, as far as practicable, with rehabilitation of the land suitable for resumption of agricultural use, or other use agreed with the host landowner (subject to land zoning restrictions).
- Management, recycling, or disposal of materials in accordance with environmental and waste regulations.

#### **1.2.2 Is the project action part of a staged development or related to other actions or proposals in the region?**

No

#### **1.2.6 What Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents are relevant to the proposed action, and how are they relevant? \***

In addition to this referral, the Project will seek the following approvals under Victorian legislation to facilitate the development and delivery of the Project:

- *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PE Act) – A planning permit is required for the use and development of the land for a utility installation under the PE Act in accordance with the Cardinia Planning Scheme (Planning Scheme).
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (AH Act) – A voluntary CHMP (No. 20711) for the Project is being prepared with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, the Registered Aboriginal Party for the Project, in accordance with the AH Act.

Depending on the final design, the Project may be subject to the following secondary requirements:

- Compliance with the requirements of the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.
- Permit under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- Obligation under the *Wildlife Act 1975* for the taking, handling, or relocation of wildlife prior to or during construction activities.
- Obligation under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* for the management of declared noxious weeds or pest animals.
- Approval under the *Water Act 1989* for works on, in, or within 20 metres (m) of a designated waterway or waterway reserve.
- Consent under the *Road Management Act 2004* for works within a road reserve.
- Consent under the *Electricity Safety Act 1998* for works that may affect electricity infrastructure or require compliance with electrical safety requirements.
- Licence under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* for the generation, distribution, or sale of electricity

**1.2.7 Describe any public consultation that has been, is being or will be undertaken regarding the project area, including with Indigenous stakeholders. Attach any completed consultation documentations, if relevant. \***

The Project has sought to undertake authentic and respectful consultation with all stakeholders and these objectives have formed an important role in the development of the Proposed Action. The Project recognises that early, transparent, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including the local community, is essential to building trust and fostering social licence for renewable energy projects. The Project prioritises meaningful participation throughout the Project lifecycle, ensuring that community voices and Indigenous perspectives are considered in Project planning and delivery.

### **Consultation undertaken to date**

Stakeholder engagement for the Project commenced in early 2025 and has included discussions with key statutory and community stakeholders such as:

- Cardinia Shire Council
- Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC)
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
- Melbourne Water
- Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
- Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
- AusNet Services
- VicGrid
- Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO).

Community consultation for the Project began in August 2025 through multiple channels:

- Project Website (<https://bunyipnorth-energystorage.com/>) including mailing list registration and phone and email contact avenues
- Letters sent to neighbouring residents within approximately 1.5 km of the Project
- Advertisements in the local Bunyip & District Community News
- Meetings with local community groups
- Information stalls hosted by the Project at three community events (Bunyip Community Markets in October 2025 and January 2026, and Bunyip Show in March 2026).

These activities have raised awareness of the Project and established early relationships with stakeholders in the Bunyip community.

### **Future consultation plans**

The Project will maintain a proactive engagement program throughout the Project's development process, including:

- Continued liaison with statutory authorities, local organisations and the local community.
- Ongoing consultation with Indigenous stakeholders to incorporate cultural heritage values and perspectives.

The Project is committed to a clear benefit-sharing approach and transparent communication. Feedback received during consultation has and will continue will inform the Project's design and mitigation strategies. This will ensure that community, environmental, and cultural values continued to be considered as part of the development process and into the later phases of the Project.

## 1.3.1 Identity: Referring party

### **Privacy Notice:**

Personal information means information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.

By completing and submitting this form, you consent to the collection of all personal information contained in this form. If you are providing the personal information of other individuals in this form, please ensure you have their consent before doing so.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the department) collects your personal information (as defined by the Privacy Act 1988) through this platform for the purposes of enabling the department to consider your submission and contact you in relation to your submission. If you fail to provide some or all of the personal information requested on this platform (name and email address), the department will be unable to contact you to seek further information (if required) and subsequently may impact the consideration given to your submission.

Personal information may be disclosed to other Australian government agencies, persons or organisations where necessary for the above purposes, provided the disclosure is consistent with relevant laws, in particular the Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act). Your personal information will be used and stored in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles.

See our Privacy Policy to learn more about accessing or correcting personal information or making a complaint.

Alternatively, email us at [privacy@dcceew.gov.au](mailto:privacy@dcceew.gov.au).

**Confirm that you have read and understand this Privacy Notice \***

### **1.3.1.1 Is Referring party an organisation or business? \***

Yes

## Referring party organisation details

<b>ABN/ACN</b>	12002773248
<b>Organisation name</b>	ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA PTY LIMITED
<b>Organisation address</b>	2000 NSW

## Referring party details

<b>Name</b>	Jenny Luk
<b>Job title</b>	Partner
<b>Phone</b>	+61 3 8606 4131
<b>Email</b>	jenny.luk@erm.com
<b>Address</b>	Level 8, 501 Swanston Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

## 1.3.2 Identity: Person proposing to take the action

### 1.3.2.1 Are the Person proposing to take the action details the same as the Referring party details? \*

No

### 1.3.2.2 Is Person proposing to take the action an organisation or business? \*

Yes

## Person proposing to take the action organisation details

**ABN/ACN** 688916672

**Organisation name** Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd

**Organisation address** Suite 6.01 Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

## Person proposing to take the action details

**Name** Ava Powell-Larwood

**Job title** Development Project Manager

**Phone** 0427 975 387

**Email** ava.powell-larwood@res-group.com

**Address** Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

**1.3.2.14 Are you proposing the action as part of a Joint Venture? \***

No

**1.3.2.15 Are you proposing the action as part of a Trust? \***

Yes

**1.3.2.16 Describe the nature of the trust arrangement in relation to the proposed action. \***

Bunyip North Project Trust was created specifically for the purpose of developing and owning the Project. The corporate trustee of the Bunyip North Project Trust is Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd.

All the units in the Bunyip North Project Trust are owned by Bunyip North Hold Trust (which in turn is wholly owned by RES Australia Pty Ltd).

See **Attachment 2 – Bunyip North Project Trust – Trust Deed.**

**1.3.2.17 Describe the Person proposing the action's history of responsible environmental management including details of any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources against the Person proposing to take the action. \***

The Bunyip North Project Trust was established in July 2025 by RES Australia Pty Ltd for the purpose of developing and owning this Project. The Trust is managed by Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd in its capacity as trustee, which is wholly owned by RES Australia Pty Ltd.

Neither the Trust nor the trustee has not been subject to any proceedings under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The Project has been managed in accordance with RES Australia Pty Ltd's established environmental management systems and standards.

RES Group was first established in 1981 in the UK, with its Australian business being established in 2004. Since its establishment in Australia, RES has developed and maintained an excellent record of responsible environmental management with respect to its projects. RES has previously undertaken a number of renewable energy projects regulated under the EPBC Act and has satisfactorily implemented all the conditions of its previous Commonwealth and State approvals, to the extent it has been the responsibility of RES to do so. RES is and remains committed to transparent and meaningful engagement with planning and environmental authorities, Traditional Owners, and local communities with respect to all RES projects, including the Proposed Action.

There have been no reportable environmental incidents on projects owned and under development by RES or its subsidiaries. Aligned to the RES Group commitment to be a 'Power for Good', RES in Australia has demonstrated a strong focus on achieving best practice environmental and social outcomes which we achieve through thoughtful, innovative, and tailored approaches to development. This strong focus on best practice is amply supported by both in-house and external Subject Matter Experts, including a dedicated and specialist RES Australia Environmental Team.

### 1.3.2.18 If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework

RES recognises the unique nature of the Australian environment and its value to all Australian's. Building on the foundations of their values of passion, accountability, collaboration and excellence, RES' sustainability agenda is to power positive change by ensuring that our operations, products, and services make a net positive contribution to society and the environment.

To achieve the company's organisational commitments, RES will work to deliver against the following:

- Adopting a proactive approach of aligning to and, where practicable, exceeding industry best practice standards with respect to the environment.
- Undertaking our activities in an environmentally responsible manner and in accordance with applicable laws.
- Identifying opportunities to share environmental knowledge gained through our activities with relevant stakeholders, including Traditional Owners.
- Proactively participating in government consultation processes relating to the development or update to industry guidance, policy, and legislation.
- Identifying opportunities to work with Traditional Owners, local environmental organisations, and the community to identify and implement opportunities to support 'Caring for Country' activities.
- Best practice Environment, Social, Governance (ESG) performance, led through thoughtful, innovative, and tailored approaches to achieving social licence for environmental and sustainability matters.

Please refer to RES' Environment Policy (**Attachment 3 – RES Environmental Policy**) and Working with First Nations Rightsholders Policy (**Attachment 4 - RES Working with First Nations Policy**) for further details.

## 1.3.3 Identity: Proposed designated proponent

### 1.3.3.1 Are the Proposed designated proponent details the same as the Person proposing to take the action? \*

Yes

## Proposed designated proponent organisation details

**ABN/ACN** 688916672

**Organisation name** Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd

**Organisation address** Suite 6.01 Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

## Proposed designated proponent details

**Name** Ava Powell-Larwood

**Job title** Development Project Manager

**Phone** 0427 975 387

**Email** ava.powell-larwood@res-group.com

**Address** Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

## 1.3.4 Identity: Summary of allocation

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### ✔ Confirmed Referring party's identity

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

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ABN/ACN	12002773248
Organisation name	ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA PTY LIMITED
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Jenny Luk
Representative's job title	Partner
Phone	+61 3 8606 4131
Email	jenny.luk@erm.com
Address	Level 8, 501 Swanston Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

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### ✔ Confirmed Person proposing to take the action's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

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ABN/ACN	688916672
Organisation name	Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd
Organisation address	Suite 6.01 Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060
Representative's name	Ava Powell-Larwood
Representative's job title	Development Project Manager
Phone	0427 975 387
Email	ava.powell-larwood@res-group.com
Address	Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

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### ✔ Confirmed Proposed designated proponent's identity

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

## 1.4 Payment details: Payment exemption and fee waiver

**1.4.1 Do you qualify for an exemption from fees under EPBC Regulation 5.23 (1) (a)? \***

No

**1.4.3 Have you applied for or been granted a waiver for full or partial fees under Regulation 5.21A? \***

No

**1.4.5 Are you going to apply for a waiver of full or partial fees under EPBC Regulation 5.21A?**

No

**1.4.7 Has the department issued you with a credit note? \***

No

**1.4.9 Would you like to add a purchase order number to your invoice? \***

No

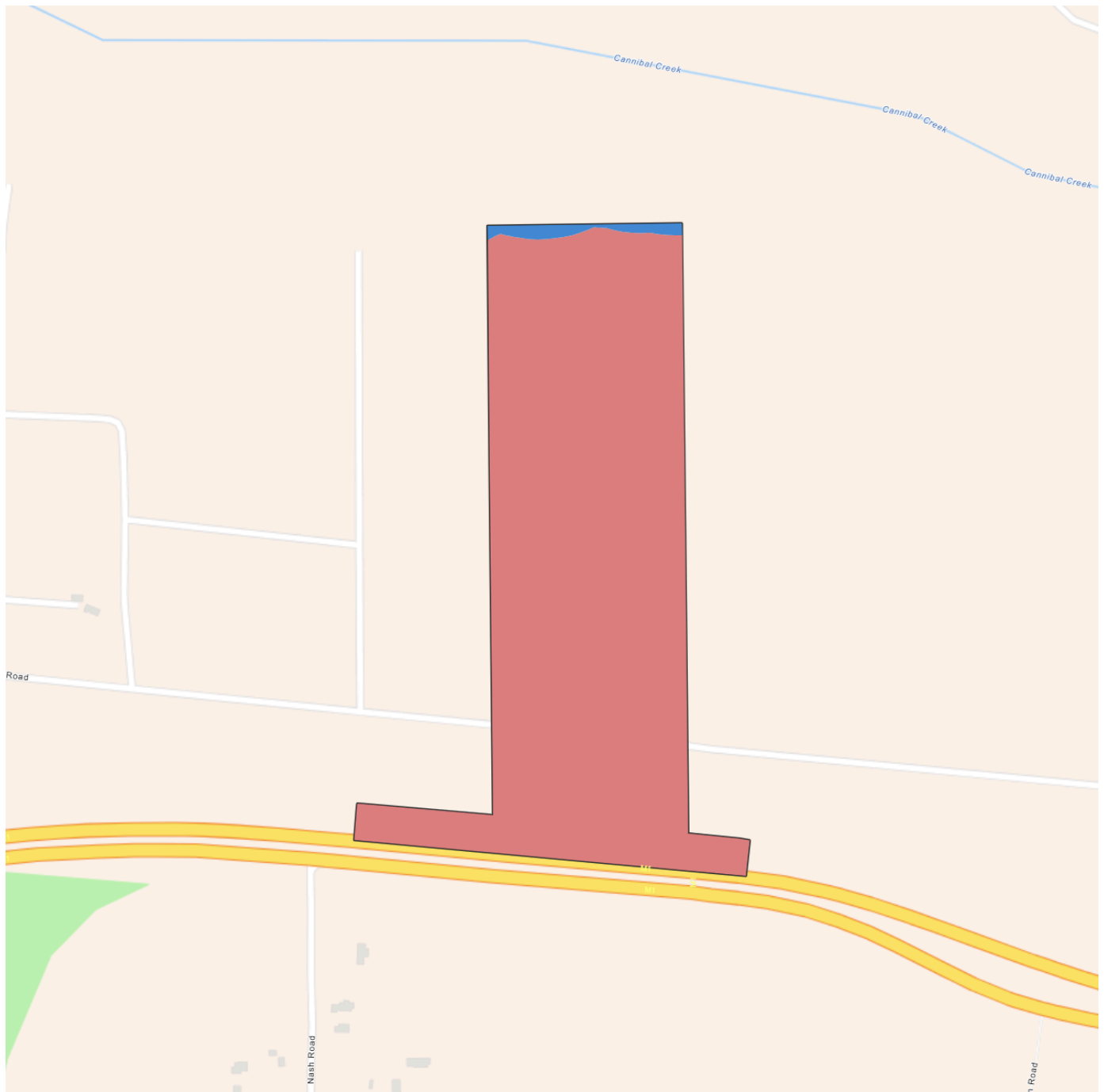
## 1.4 Payment details: Payment allocation

**1.4.11 Who would you like to allocate as the entity responsible for payment? \***

Proposed designated proponent

# 2. Location

## 2.1 Project footprint



**Project Area: 30.81 Ha Disturbance Footprint: 30.36 Ha Avoidance Area: 0.45 Ha**

## 2.2 Footprint details

### 2.2.1 What is the address of the proposed action? \*

30 Tonimbuk Road, Bunyip North Victoria

### 2.2.2 Where is the primary jurisdiction of the proposed action? \*

Victoria

### 2.2.3 Is there a secondary jurisdiction for this proposed action? \*

No

### 2.2.5 What is the tenure of the action area relevant to the project area? \*

The Project Area is located on Lot 2 of Plan of Subdivision PS315155, at 30 Tonimbuk Road, Bunyip North. The Project Area comprises approximately 27.6 ha of private freehold land and 3.2 ha of public land (road reserve) to accommodate the proposed new access from the Princes Freeway (Lot 1 TP871515). The access to the BESS facility is proposed to be established within the road reserve of the Princes Freeway, a declared arterial road managed by DTP. Refer to **Figure 2 Land Use and Tenure (Attachment 1 – Project Figures, pg. 2)**.

## 3. Existing environment

## 3.1 Physical description

### 3.1.1 Describe the current condition of the project area's environment.

The Project is located approximately 80 km south-east of central Melbourne and 2.5 km north of the Bunyip town centre, within the Cardinia Shire Council LGA. The Project Area is mapped on land zoned as 'Green Wedge Zone' (Schedule 1) under the Planning Scheme. The Project Area is predominantly rural, with the surrounding areas characterised by open agricultural landscapes, fragmented patches of native vegetation, low-density development and prominent HV electricity infrastructure.

Following the outcomes of environmental surveys (see Section 3.2.1 of this form), the Project Area was selected to avoid direct impacts to MNES and Threatened Species preferred habitats around Cannibal Creek whilst staying in proximity to existing transmission infrastructure. The Project Area is bounded by agricultural land to the north, east and west, with the Princes Freeway to the south. Four existing 220 kV overhead transmission lines forming part of the National Electricity Market (NEM) grid infrastructure run within the southern section of the Project Area.

The Ecology Survey Area is located at the intersection of two bioregions, the Highlands – Southern Fall (HSF) and the northern limit of the Gippsland Plain Bioregion. The entirety of the Project Area is covered by an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1).

There are no mapped waterways or drainage lines within the Project Area. Aquatic habitat with the potential to support native flora and fauna is located outside of the Project Area. Three farm dams were present within the Ecology Survey Area (the area where the ecology survey was completed and is inclusive of the Project Area), two of which supported native emergent and fringing aquatic vegetation, while Cannibal Creek—the nearest mapped waterway and located approximately 250 m north of the Project Area—also supported instream aquatic and fringing vegetation. The Project Area avoids these three farm dams and Cannibal Creek, with a minimum 200 m buffer applied to each of these features to avoid impact on these higher value habitat areas. The Project Area falls within the Melbourne Water catchment management authority.

The Project Area is highly modified, with private land primarily consisting of open grassy paddocks used for livestock grazing and hay production. The majority of the Project Area is dominated by a combination of annual and perennial grasses and commonly associated agricultural weeds. Small, planted clusters of trees are present in the form of hedgerows between paddocks and in the Princes Freeway road reserve. Native vegetation is predominantly limited to outside of the Project Area, largely to the north, and dead trees are common in this area (as a result of the 2019/2020 Black Summer Bushfires).

### 3.1.2 Describe any existing or proposed uses for the project area.

The dominant land use within the Project Area is agricultural, primarily livestock grazing and hay production. In the southern part of the Project Area, the existing Yallourn Power Station to Rowville Terminal 220 kV transmission line, operated by AusNet Services, traverses the site.

### 3.1.3 Describe any outstanding natural features and/or any other important or unique values that applies to the project area.

The entirety of the Project Area (except for the Princes Freeway road reserve) is affected by an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) which provides for the protection of the hills in the north of the municipality as they hold significant landscape and environmental value.

Ecologically significant locations are present within the broader landscape surrounding the Project Area. Several Parks and Conservation Reserves lie within a 20 km radius, with the closest location (Cannibal Creek Streamside Reserve) being approximately 810 m to the east of the Project Area.

#### **3.1.4 Describe the gradient (or depth range if action is to be taken in a marine area) relevant to the project area.**

The Project Area is mostly flat with slight undulation, lying between two 60 m elevation contours. This reflects a low-gradient landform with minimal slope across the Project Area.

## 3.2 Flora and fauna

**3.2.1 Describe the flora and fauna within the affected area and attach any investigations of surveys if applicable.**

A desktop search of ecological values known, likely or predicted to be present within the Ecology Survey Area (an area of approximately 65 ha and is inclusive of the Project Area and its surroundings) was undertaken using government databases and spatial datasets to determine the likelihood of occurrence of MNES. The desktop search examined known and modelled biodiversity values associated with the Ecology Survey Area and a buffer area of 10 km (the Locality).

An ecological field survey was undertaken on 30 April 2025 within the Ecology Survey Area. Habitat assessments were undertaken opportunistically and involved evaluation of habitat quality and macro/micro features necessary to support general biodiversity as well as specific target species. Survey techniques were non-invasive and aimed to provide a high-level assessment of the type and condition of habitats present and identify areas of priority for further assessment. Key findings are summarised below.

## Flora

The EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) results predicted 19 flora species to occur within the Ecology Survey Area. However, only two (2) threatened flora species are considered to have the 'potential to occur' within the Ecology Survey Area (refer to **Attachment 5 – Ecological Assessment Report, Section 3.4.1, pg. 16**):

- Strzelecki Gum (*Eucalyptus strzeleckii*).
- Green-striped Greenhood (*Pterostylis chlorogramma*).

No threatened flora species or their preferred habitat(s) were observed within the Project Area during the field survey. If present, these species are only likely to be present within the native vegetation patches associated with Cannibal Creek (which is approximately 250 m north from the Project Area).

## Fauna

The ecological assessment identified 16 threatened and/or migratory fauna species that may occupy, utilise, or pass over habitat within the Ecology Survey Area (refer to **Attachment 5 – Ecological Assessment Report, Section 3.4.2, pg. 16 to 19**). These species comprise nine birds, three (3) mammals, two (2) reptiles, one (1) fish, and one (1) amphibian. If present, these species are likely to only occasionally visit the Ecology Survey Area for foraging, temporary refuge, or dispersal between higher quality habitats.

Five (5) threatened species were considered 'likely to occur' within the Ecology Survey Area. This was based on the presence of preferred habitat and recent records within the Locality:

- Dwarf Galaxias (*Galaxiella pusilla*).
- Glossy Grass Skink (*Pseudemoia rawlinsoni*).
- Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus obesulus*).
- Growling Grass Frog (*Ranoidea raniformis*).
- Swamp Skink (*Lissolepsi coventryi*).

The field survey determined that no preferred habitats for any threatened fauna species were present within the Project Area, and no threatened species were recorded. A 200 m construction and development buffer considers any higher value habitat areas associated with Cannibal Creek. Habitat features within the Ecology Survey Area that may support these species are shown in **Figure 4 Ecology Survey Area and Biodiversity Values (Attachment 1 – Project Figures, pg. 4)**. Habitat for Swamp Skink and Glossy Grass Skink was present in the form of dense sedges and rushes, swamp scrub and areas of grassy understorey of open woodland within the Ecology Survey Area. This habitat was considered a subset of the broader Southern Brown Bandicoot habitat shown in Figure 4, and is therefore not shown separately. Overall, the Project Area represents general habitat that may provide occasional or incidental refuge and foraging opportunities and is unlikely to be of significance to any threatened fauna species.

Four (4) Migratory species listed under the EPBC Act were considered to have the potential to utilise the Ecology Survey Area (refer to **Attachment 5 – Ecological Assessment Report, Section 3.4.2, pg. 17-19**). These were:

- Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*)
- Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)
- Rufous Fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*)
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)

No Migratory species were recorded within the Project Area during the field survey. The Project Area is unlikely to provide habitat critical to their survival owing to the highly modified, cleared nature of this area. The potential for these species to occur in the area is based primarily on the presence of general habitat features associated with Cannibal Creek and nearby farm dams located outside of the Project Area. Any use of the Ecology Survey Area, and especially the Project Area within, by Migratory species is therefore expected to be temporary and opportunistic as individuals move between other areas of high-quality habitat.

### **Ecological Communities**

The EPBC Act PMST results predicted two (2) Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs) to occur within the Ecology Survey Area:

- *White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland.*
- *Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains.*

Refer to **Attachment 5 – Ecological Assessment Report, Section 3.4.3, pg. 21.**

No TECs were observed within the Ecology Survey Area (including the Project Area) during the field survey. The field survey confirmed that these TECs are 'unlikely to occur' within the Ecology Survey Area due to the absence of requisite species.

### **3.2.2 Describe the vegetation (including the status of native vegetation and soil) within the project area.**

### Native vegetation

The majority of the Project Area is dominated by a combination of annual and perennial grasses (such as Rye Grass [*Lolium* sp.], Paspalum [*Paspalum dilatatum*] and Cocksfoot [*Dactylis glomerata*]) and commonly associated agricultural weeds (including Flatweed [*Hypochaeris radicata*] and Buck's-horn Plantain [*Plantago coronopus*]). Small, planted clusters of native and introduced trees (primarily Swamp Gum [*Eucalyptus ovata*], Flax-leaf Paperbark [*Melaleuca linariifolia*] and Wallangara White-gum [*E. scoparia*]) are present in the form of hedgerows between paddocks and within the Princes Freeway road reserve.

One patch (0.202 ha) of regrowth attributable to EVC 793 Damp Heathy Woodland is located along the south-eastern boundary of the Project Area within the Princes Freeway road reserve (refer to **Attachment 1 – Project Figures, pg. 4**). This patch comprises regrowth of Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) scrub with introduced species, including several high threat weeds such as Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* spp. agg.), Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*), Couch (*Cynodon dactylon*), and annual grasses.

### Soils

A spatial map layer of soil type for Victoria identified the Project Area having an Australian Soil Classification of Sodosols. These soils are characterised by a clear or abrupt textural B horizon and in which the major part of the upper 0.2 m of the B2t horizon (or the major part of the entire B2t horizon if it is less than 0.2 m thick) is sodic and not strongly acid. Hydrosols and soils with strongly subplastic upper B2t horizons are excluded.

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) databases indicate that the Project Area contains regions where acid sulphate soils (ASS) have a high probability of occurrence. Appropriate environmental management measures, consistent with best practice, will be implemented during construction to minimise any potential risks associated with ASS.

No Erosion Management Overlays (EMO) exist within the Project Area.

## 3.3 Heritage

### 3.3.1 Describe any Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas or other places recognised as having heritage values that apply to the project area.

There are no Commonwealth heritage places located within or nearby the Project Area. The closest Commonwealth heritage place is the Leongatha Post & Telegraph Office, approximately 50 km south-east of the Project Area.

### 3.3.2 Describe any Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area.

The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) of the Project Area. There are no identified areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity nor registered Aboriginal places on the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR) within the Project Area. The Project Area avoids areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity associated with Cannibal Creek, situated approximately 250 m to the north.

A registered Native Title claim exists over the Project Area (VC2025\_002-1), however there is currently no Native Title determination in place. Aboriginal heritage matters for the Project will be managed in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic) through the relevant RAP.

Despite no Aboriginal cultural heritage being identified to date and the Project Area being outside of areas of mapped Cultural Heritage Sensitivity (to which a mandatory CHMP trigger would apply), the Project is proactively progressing a voluntary CHMP with the BLCAC which is currently underway. The standard and complex (archaeological) assessments have not identified any cultural heritage material. Once approved, the voluntary CHMP will provide a mechanism to manage and mitigate the risk of harm to any previously unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage.

## 3.4 Hydrology

### 3.4.1 Describe the hydrology characteristics that apply to the project area and attach any hydrological investigations or surveys if applicable. \*

There are no mapped waterways or drainage lines within the Project Area. The nearest mapped waterway is Cannibal Creek, located approximately 250 m north of the Project Area.

Farm dams (with the potential to support native flora and fauna) are mapped across the Ecology Survey Area, but not within the Project Area. Farm dams are a permanent source of water, installed to facilitate agricultural activities.

A Flood Overlay and a Land Subject to Inundation Overlay are also present within the Ecology Survey Area but outside of the Project Area, with these overlays associated with the Cannibal Creek.

A flood modelling assessment was undertaken, and the findings were:

- The Project Area is mapped outside the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) extent of the Victorian Flood Database (VFD), and is not shown as flood-prone in Cardinia Shire Council's flood mapping.
- Predicted surface water flooding within the Project Area was found to be minor, with depths generally less than 0.15 m and flow velocities typically below 0.6 metres per second (m/s) under the 1% AEP event. This reflects a low flood hazard environment, with overland flow primarily characterised by slow-moving sheet flow that poses minimal risk to structures or operations.

Refer to **Attachment 7 – Flood Modelling Assessment** for more details.

## 4. Impacts and mitigation

## 4.1 Impact details

**Potential Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) relevant to your proposed action area.**

<b>EPBC Act section</b>	<b>Controlling provision</b>	<b>Impacted</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>
S12	World Heritage	No	Yes
S15B	National Heritage	No	Yes
S16	Ramsar Wetland	No	Yes
S18	Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	No	Yes
S20	Migratory Species	No	Yes
S21	Nuclear	No	Yes
S23	Commonwealth Marine Area	No	Yes
S24B	Great Barrier Reef	No	Yes
S24D	Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas	No	Yes
S26	Commonwealth Land	No	Yes
S27B	Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas	No	Yes
S28	Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency	No	Yes

### 4.1.1 World Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

#### 4.1.1.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \*

No

#### 4.1.1.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.

\*

There are no World Heritage properties located within or in proximity to the Project Area.

### 4.1.2 National Heritage

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

#### 4.1.2.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \*

No

#### 4.1.2.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.

\*

There are no National Heritage places located within or in proximity to the Project Area.

### 4.1.3 Ramsar Wetland

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ramsar wetland
No	No	Western Port

#### 4.1.3.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \*

No

#### 4.1.3.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.

\*

There are no Ramsar Wetlands within or in proximity to the Project Area. The nearest is the Western Port Ramsar Site, approximately 26 km south-west.

Cannibal Creek, adjacent to northern extremity of the Ecology Survey Area, flows east for approximately 2 km where it connects with Bunyip River. The Bunyip River traverses approximately 30 km of highly modified agricultural land, with much of its length diverted to follow constructed drainage channels, before entering the Western Port Ramsar Site at Koo Wee Rup.

Although Cannibal Creek ultimately drains into the Ramsar Site, it is located approximately 250 m north of the northern Project Area boundary. With the implementation of a construction and development buffer and mitigation measures including the installation of erosion and sediment controls including sediment fencing, standard biosecurity hygiene protocols, and drainage management, indirect impacts to water quality or flow within Cannibal Creek are considered unlikely to result from activities associated with the construction or operation of the Project. Therefore, the Project is not likely to have a significant impact on the Western Port Ramsar site or any biodiversity values it supports.

#### 4.1.4 Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

### Threatened species

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	<i>Amphibromus fluitans</i>	River Swamp Wallaby-grass, Floating Swamp Wallaby-grass
No	No	<i>Anthochaera phrygia</i>	Regent Honeyeater
No	No	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>	Australasian Bittern
No	No	<i>Caladenia tessellata</i>	Thick-lipped Spider-orchid, Daddy Long-legs
No	No	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	Gang-gang Cockatoo
No	No	<i>Climacteris picumnus victoriae</i>	Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern)
No	No	<i>Dasyurus maculatus maculatus</i> (SE mainland population)	Spot-tailed Quoll, Spotted-tail Quoll, Tiger Quoll (southeastern mainland population)
No	No	<i>Dianella amoena</i>	Matted Flax-lily
No	No	<i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i>	Strzelecki Gum
No	No	<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	Grey Falcon
No	No	<i>Galaxiella pusilla</i>	Eastern Dwarf Galaxias, Dwarf Galaxias
No	No	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	<i>Glycine latrobeana</i>	Clover Glycine, Purple Clover
No	No	<i>Grantiella picta</i>	Painted Honeyeater
No	No	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	White-throated Needletail
No	No	<i>Isodon obesulus obesulus</i>	Southern Brown Bandicoot (eastern), Southern Brown Bandicoot (south-eastern)
No	No	<i>Lathamus discolor</i>	Swift Parrot
No	No	<i>Lissolepis coventryi</i>	Swamp Skink, Eastern Mourning Skink

<b>Direct impact</b>	<b>Indirect impact</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Common name</b>
No	No	<i>Mastacomys fuscus mordicus</i>	Broad-toothed Rat (mainland), Tooarrana
No	No	<i>Melanodryas cucullata cucullata</i>	South-eastern Hooded Robin, Hooded Robin (south-eastern)
No	No	<i>Nannoperca obscura</i>	Yarra Pygmy Perch
No	No	<i>Neophema chrysostoma</i>	Blue-winged Parrot
No	No	<i>Petauroides volans</i>	Greater Glider (southern and central)
No	No	<i>Petaurus australis australis</i>	Yellow-bellied Glider (south-eastern)
No	No	<i>Prasophyllum spicatum</i>	Dense Leek-orchid
No	No	<i>Prototroctes maraena</i>	Australian Grayling
No	No	<i>Pseudemoia rawlinsoni</i>	Glossy Grass Skink, Swampland Cool-skink, Rawlinson's Window-eyed Skink
No	No	<i>Pseudomys fumeus</i>	Smoky Mouse, Koomool
No	No	<i>Pseudomys novaehollandiae</i>	New Holland Mouse, Pookila
No	No	<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	Grey-headed Flying-fox
No	No	<i>Pterostylis chlorogramma</i>	Green-striped Greenhood
No	No	<i>Pycnoptilus floccosus</i>	Pilotbird
No	No	<i>Ranoidea raniformis</i>	Southern Bell Frog, Growling Grass Frog, Green and Golden Frog, Warty Swamp Frog, Golden Bell Frog
No	No	<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Australian Painted Snipe
No	No	<i>Senecio psilocarpus</i>	Swamp Fireweed, Smooth-fruited Groundsel
No	No	<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>	Diamond Firetail
No	No	<i>Thesium australe</i>	Austral Toadflax, Toadflax
No	No	<i>Xerochrysum palustre</i>	Swamp Everlasting, Swamp Paper Daisy

## Ecological communities

<b>Direct impact</b>	<b>Indirect impact</b>	<b>Ecological community</b>
No	No	Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains

<b>Direct impact</b>	<b>Indirect impact</b>	<b>Ecological community</b>
No	No	White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland

**4.1.4.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \***

No

**4.1.4.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

A total of 35 Threatened Species (19 flora and 16 fauna) and two (2) TECs were predicted by the EPBC Act PMST to occur within the Ecology Survey Area.

An assessment of the likelihood of occurrence for threatened species was undertaken and is provided in **Attachment 6 – MNES Report: Significant Impact Assessment (Section 4.1, pg. 9 to 10)**.

## Flora

Of the 19 threatened flora species predicted by the EPBC Act PMST to occur within the Ecology Survey Area, only two (2) species were assessed as 'potential to occur':

- Strzelecki Gum (*Eucalyptus strzeleckii*)
- Green-striped Greenhood (*Pterostylis chlorogramma*).

### Strzelecki Gum (*Eucalyptus strzeleckii*)

Strzelecki Gum is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. There are 279 records of Strzelecki Gum within the Locality. This species was not recorded during the field survey and was determined to not be present within the Project Area. Strzelecki Gum may be present within the broader Ecology Survey Area in native vegetation patches associated with Cannibal Creek although it was not recorded.

### Green-striped Greenhood (*Pterostylis chlorogramma*)

Green-striped Greenhood is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. There was a total of 67 records of Green-striped Greenhood within the Locality. No suitable habitat was found to be present within the Project Area, though such habitat does occur in the broader Ecology Survey Area within the native vegetation patches associated with Cannibal Creek. The past clearing and current land use including livestock grazing, combined with the extensive presence of herbivores including Wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*), European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), and Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*) recorded in the Ecology Survey Area suggest that where habitat does occur, it's unlikely that Green-striped Greenhood persists within the Ecology Survey Area.

In summary, threatened flora species are unlikely to occur in the Project Area. The MNES Report: Significant Impact Assessment (**Attachment 6**) found that, should either species discussed above, or any other threatened flora, be present in the Ecology Survey Area, no direct impacts from the Project are likely to occur and the Project does not trigger any EPBC Act significant impact criteria for threatened flora. The Project Area proactively avoids all preferred habitats for these species, and a development and construction buffer of at least 200 m will be maintained. The only potential indirect impacts identified (**Attachment 6 – MNES Report: Significant Impact Assessment, Section 4.3, pg. 13**), being the introduction of invasive species or pathogens, were assessed as low risk and are effectively mitigated through the Project's biosecurity management measures and standard biosecurity hygiene protocols. Therefore, the Proposed Action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact to threatened flora species.

## Fauna

Of the 16 threatened fauna species predicted by the EPBC Act PMST to occur within the Ecology Survey Area, only five (5) were assessed as 'likely to occur':

- Dwarf Galaxias (*Galaxiella pusilla*)
- Glossy Grass Skink (*Pseudemoia rawlinsoni*)
- Growling Grass Frog (*Ranoidea raniformis*)
- Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus obesulus*)
- Swamp Skink (*Lissolepis coventryi*).

### Dwarf Galaxias (*Galaxiella pusilla*)

Dwarf Galaxias is listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act. There was a total of 46 records of Dwarf Galaxias within the Locality, with some records present in Cannibal Creek. Dwarf Galaxias typically occurs in slow flowing and still, shallow, permanent and temporary, freshwater habitats such as swamps, drains and the backwaters of streams and creeks. A field survey of the Ecology Survey Area was undertaken in which preferred habitat for this species was found to be present within Cannibal Creek located 250 m to north of the northern Project Area boundary and therefore outside of the Project Area.

Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus obesulus*)

Southern Brown Bandicoot is listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act. There are a total of 210 records of Southern Brown Bandicoot within the Locality. The Southern Brown Bandicoot is generally only found in heath or open forest with a heathy understorey on sandy or friable soils, and nests during the day in shallow depressions in the ground covered by leaf litter, grass or other plant material. High-quality habitat for the species was identified during the field survey, restricted to dense scrub and heathy woodland communities adjacent to Cannibal Creek located 250 m to the north of the northern Project Area boundary and therefore outside of the Project Area.

Growling Grass Frog (*Ranoidea raniformis*)

Growling Grass Frog is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. There are three (3) records of Growling Grass Frog within the Locality (within a shared catchment) near Two Mile Creek West (approximately 2.5 km to the north of the Ecology Survey Area). Growling Grass Frog is often observed in wetlands or slow-moving pools of water, basking in the sun on the leaves of floating plants, or foraging for insects and spiders in open grassy areas. On rainy nights, it may move between these clusters of permanent or temporary swamps and wetlands. During the field assessment of the Ecology Survey Area, suitable habitat for the Growling Grass Frog was identified in farm dams located near Cannibal Creek. The Project has applied a 200 m buffer to these identified habitat areas in accordance with the Significant Impact Guidelines for the Vulnerable Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009) with these habitat areas falling outside of the Project Area.

Glossy Grass Skink (*Pseudemoia rawlinsoni*)

Glossy Grass Skink is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act. There is one historical record of the species within 10 km of the Ecology Survey Area. Suitable habitat is associated with densely vegetated, moist environments typically occurring along creeklines, swamps, lakes or otherwise boggy areas. Glossy Grass Skink habitat is very similar to that of Swamp Skink (*Lissolepis coventryi*). Approximately 50% of the modelled range of Glossy Grass Skink is shared with the Swamp Skink. A field survey identified suitable habitat for the Glossy Grass Skink in the north of the Ecology Survey Area proximal to Cannibal Creek and the farm dams, located outside of the Project Area.

Swamp Skink (*Lissolepis coventryi*)

Swamp Skink is listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act. There are 18 records within 10 km of the Ecology Survey Area, including one record approximately 1.5 km north. Swamp Skink occupies densely vegetated swamps, freshwater and saltwater wetlands and wet heaths, typically associated with *Melaleuca* or *Leptospermum* thickets. Field surveys identified suitable habitat for the Swamp Skink within Cannibal Creek located 250 m north of the northern boundary of the Project Area and therefore outside of the Project Area.

In summary, threatened fauna species are unlikely to occur in the Project Area with no individuals being recorded during the field survey. The **MNES Report: Significant Impact Assessment (Attachment 6)** found that no direct impacts from the Project are likely to occur, and the Project does not trigger any EPBC Act significant impact criteria, for threatened fauna. The Project Area avoids all preferred habitats for these species and a development and construction buffer of at least 200 m will be maintained through all phases of the Project. While there is potential for indirect disturbances from development activities such as vegetation clearing, earthworks or pollutant runoff and introduction of invasive species or pathogens, these

were assessed as low risk (**Attachment 6 – MNES Report: Significant Impact Assessment, Section 4.3, pg. 13 to 14**) and can be effectively mitigated through appropriate mitigation measures, including weed management and installation of sediment and frog exclusion fencing to prevent contamination, sediment runoff, and potential foraging activities leading Growling Grass Frog or Southern Brown Bandicoot to enter the Project Area.

It was deemed that the remaining nine (9) threatened fauna species with the 'potential to occur' within the Ecology Survey Area are most likely to occur within the native vegetation patches associated with Cannibal Creek and incursions into the Project Area would be temporary visitations or flyovers *en route* to more suitable habitat. The Project Area avoids all preferred habitats for these species, and a development buffer of at least 200 m will be maintained through all phases of the Project. The only potential indirect impacts identified in **Attachment 6 (MNES Report: Significant Impact Assessment, pg. 13 to 14)** relate to the possible introduction of invasive species or pathogens; however, these were assessed as low risk and are effectively mitigated through the Project's biosecurity measures and standard hygiene protocols.

Therefore, the Proposed Action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact on threatened fauna species.

### **Ecological Communities**

Of the two (2) TECs identified by the EPBC Act PMST as potentially occurring within the Ecology Survey Area, the field survey determined that all 2 are 'unlikely to occur' within the Project Area for the following reasons:

- *White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland*
  - The Ecology Survey Area (and by proxy the Project Area) is outside the community's required bioregion.
  - No EVCs corresponding to this community were observed.
  - Dominant canopy species were not recorded during the field survey.
- *Natural Damp Grassland of the Victorian Coastal Plains*
  - No native grasslands were recorded in the Project Area during the field survey.

Due to the unlikely occurrence of these TECs, the Proposed Action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact to TECs.

## **4.1.5 Migratory Species**

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Common Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	Fork-tailed Swift
No	No	<i>Calidris acuminata</i>	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Pectoral Sandpiper
No	No	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	White-throated Needletail
No	No	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail
No	No	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey

**4.1.5.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \***

No

**4.1.5.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

The **MNES Report: Significant Impact Assessment (Attachment 6, Section 4.1, pg. 10)** identified four (4) Migratory species listed under the EPBC Act to have the potential to fly across the Ecology Survey Area. These include:

- Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*)
- Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)
- Rufous Fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*)
- White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*).

Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*)

Latham's Snipe is listed as Vulnerable and Migratory under the EPBC Act. There are 38 records within 10 km of the Ecology Survey Area, and its habitat comprises open, freshwater wetlands with low, dense vegetation. Field surveys identified suitable habitat for this species within and around Cannibal Creek and nearby farm dams located 250 m to the north of the northern boundary of the Project Area and therefore outside the Project Area.

White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*)

White-throated Needletail is listed as Vulnerable and Migratory under the EPBC Act. While 36 records occur within the Locality, this species is almost exclusively aerial and are unlikely to occur within the Project Area other than when flying overhead at considerable height.

Fork-tailed Swift (*Apus pacificus*)

Fork-tailed Swift is listed as Migratory under the EPBC Act, with only one record within the Locality. This species is almost exclusively aerial and are unlikely to occur within the Project Area.

Rufous Fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*)

Rufous Fantail is listed as Migratory under the EPBC Act. There are 56 records of this species within the Locality. The species typically inhabits moist, dense habitats, including mangroves, rainforest, riparian forests and tickets, and wet eucalypt forests. Rufous Fantail may utilise the riparian habitat associated with Cannibal Creek 250 m to the north of the northern boundary of the Project Area and therefore outside the Project Area.

In summary, the Project Area does not provide habitat features considered to support listed Migratory species. No individuals of the listed Migratory species were recorded during the field survey. Although Migratory species have potential to fly across the Ecology Survey Area, the potential for these species to occur has been determined solely on habitat associated with Cannibal Creek and nearby farm dams located outside of the Project Area. Any occurrence of Migratory species within the Ecology Survey Area is therefore likely to be temporary as they move between other areas of high-quality habitat. The Project will involve the construction of static built form that will not involve the movement of any component parts during the operation that could present a potential threat to the movement of these species through the Ecological Survey Area.

Due to the unlikely occurrence of these Migratory species and the absence of preferred habitat features within the Project Area, the Proposed Action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact to Migratory species.

## 4.1.6 Nuclear

**4.1.6.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? \***

No

**4.1.6.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

The Proposed Action is not related to a nuclear action.

**4.1.7 Commonwealth Marine Area**

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

**4.1.7.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \***

No

**4.1.7.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

The Project Area does not include, nor will it affect any areas within the Commonwealth Marine Area.

**4.1.8 Great Barrier Reef**

**4.1.8.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? \***

No

**4.1.8.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

The Great Barrier Reef Marina Park Area does not occur within the Project Area nor will it be affected by the Proposed Action.

**4.1.9 Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas**

**4.1.9.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on this protected matter? \***

No

**4.1.9.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

The Proposed Action is not a coal seam gas or large coal mining development.

**4.1.10 Commonwealth Land**

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

**4.1.10.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \***

No

**4.1.10.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

The Proposed Action will avoid direct and/or indirect impact to any Commonwealth land.

**4.1.11 Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas**

You have identified your proposed action will likely directly and/or indirectly impact the following protected matters.

A direct impact is a direct consequence of an action taken – for example, clearing of habitat for a threatened species or permanent shading on an ecological community as the result of installing solar panels.

An indirect impact is an 'indirect consequence' such as a downstream impact or a facilitated third-party action.

—

**4.1.11.1 Is the proposed action likely to have any direct and/or indirect impact on any of these protected matters? \***

No

**4.1.11.3 Briefly describe why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact.**

\*

There are no recognised overseas Commonwealth Heritage places within the Project Area or that will be affected by the Proposed Action.

**4.1.12 Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency**

#### 4.1.12.1 Is the proposed action to be taken by the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth Agency? \*

No

## 4.2 Impact summary

### Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will likely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

*None*

### Conclusion on the likelihood of unlikely significant impacts

You have indicated that the proposed action will unlikely have a significant impact on the following Matters of National Environmental Significance:

- World Heritage (S12)
- National Heritage (S15B)
- Ramsar Wetland (S16)
- Threatened Species and Ecological Communities (S18)
- Migratory Species (S20)
- Nuclear (S21)
- Commonwealth Marine Area (S23)
- Great Barrier Reef (S24B)
- Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas (S24D)
- Commonwealth Land (S26)
- Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas (S27B)
- Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency (S28)

## 4.3 Alternatives

### 4.3.1 Do you have any possible alternatives for your proposed action to be considered as part of your referral? \*

No

### 4.3.8 Describe why alternatives for your proposed action were not possible. \*

No alternative timeframes for the Proposed Action are proposed. Scheduling for the start of the Proposed Action is dependent on the Project securing all necessary planning and environmental permissions. Delays in securing these necessary permissions will adjust the Proposed Action's start date.

No alternative locations for the Proposed Action are proposed. The Project Area was selected to avoid direct impacts to MNES whilst staying in close proximity to existing transmission infrastructure. The Project Area also benefits from direct access to transport infrastructure, being located adjacent to Princes Freeway.

No alternative activities are proposed. The Proposed Action comprises the construction, operation, and decommissioning of a BESS which has been determined as necessary to support current energy storage targets.

## 5. Lodgement

## 5.1 Attachments

## 1.2.1 Overview of the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1 - Project Figures.pdf Bunyip North BESS Project Figures	14/04/2026	No	High

## 1.3.2.16 (Person proposing to take the action) Nature of the trust arrangement in relation to the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 2 - Trust Deed Bunyip North Project Trust_redacted.pdf	11/07/2025	Yes	

## 1.3.2.18 (Person proposing to take the action) If the person proposing to take the action is a corporation, provide details of the corporation's environmental policy and planning framework

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 3 - RES Australia Environmental Policy.pdf RES Australia Environmental Policy	04/12/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att 4 - RES Australia Working with First Nations Rightsholders Policy.pdf RES Australia Working with First Nations Rightsholders Policy	14/10/2025	No	High

## 2.2.5 Tenure of the action area relevant to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1 - Project Figures.pdf Bunyip North BESS Project Figures	13/04/2026	No	High

## 3.2.1 Flora and fauna within the affected area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1 - Project Figures.pdf Bunyip North BESS Project Figures	13/04/2026	No	High
#2.	Document	Att 5 - Ecological Assessment Report.pdf Ecological Assessment	14/04/2026	No	High

## 3.2.2 Vegetation within the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att 1 - Project Figures.pdf Bunyip North BESS Project Figures	13/04/2026		High

## 3.4.1 Hydrology characteristics that apply to the project area

Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document Att 7 - Flood Modelling Assessment.pdf Flood Modelling Assessment	24/02/2026	No	High

## 4.1.4.3 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact

Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document Att 6 - MNES Report Significant Impact Assessment.pdf MNES Significant Impact Assessment	15/04/2026	No	High
#2.	Link EPBC Act policy statement 3.14 Significant impact guidelines for the vulnerable growling grass frog <a href="https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..">https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..</a>			High

## 4.1.5.3 (Migratory Species) Why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact

Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document Att 6 - MNES Report Significant Impact Assessment.pdf MNES Significant Impact Assessment	14/04/2026	No	High

## 5.2 Declarations

## ✔ Completed Referring party's declaration

The Referring party is the person preparing the information in this referral.

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ABN/ACN	12002773248
Organisation name	ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA PTY LIMITED
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Jenny Luk
Representative's job title	Partner
Phone	+61 3 8606 4131
Email	jenny.luk@erm.com
Address	Level 8, 501 Swanston Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. \*

Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. \*

By checking this box, I, **Jenny Luk of ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA PTY LIMITED**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to this EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. \*

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

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## ✔ Completed Person proposing to take the action's declaration

The Person proposing to take the action is the individual, business, government agency or trustee that will be responsible for the proposed action.

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ABN/ACN	688916672
Organisation name	Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd
Organisation address	Suite 6.01 Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060
Representative's name	Ava Powell-Larwood

Representative's job title	Development Project Manager
Phone	0427 975 387
Email	ava.powell-larwood@res-group.com
Address	Level 6, 165 Walker Street, North Sydney, NSW, 2060

Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. \*

Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. \*

I, **Ava Powell-Larwood of Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd**, declare that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on, or attached to the EPBC Act Referral is complete, current and correct. I understand that giving false or misleading information is a serious offence. I declare that I am not taking the action on behalf or for the benefit of any other person or entity. \*

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

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## Completed Proposed designated proponent's declaration

The Proposed designated proponent is the individual or organisation proposed to be responsible for meeting the requirements of the EPBC Act during the assessment process, if the Minister decides that this project is a controlled action.

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Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. \*

Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. \*

I, **Ava Powell-Larwood of Bunyip North Project Co Pty Ltd**, the Proposed designated proponent, consent to the designation of myself as the Proposed designated proponent for the purposes of the action described in this EPBC Act Referral. \*

You may receive automated notifications that aim to assist you in tracking the progress of your project. You can opt out of these notifications by updating your communication preferences on your profile.

