Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing

Application Number: **03119** Commencement Date: **10/09/2025** Status: **Locked**

1. About the project

1.1 Project details

1.1.1 Project title *

Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing

1.1.2 Project industry type *

Tourism and Recreation

1.1.3 Project industry sub-type

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1.1.4 Estimated start date *

24/11/2025

1.1.4 Estimated end date *

30/12/2026

1.2 Proposed Action details

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

Parks Victoria recognises the deep and enduring connection of Traditional Owners to the High Country. We respect and acknowledge the First Peoples of the lands and waterways on which we live and work, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present.

This referral is submitted in recognition of the cultural, environmental and heritage significance of the Australian Alps, and reflects Parks Victoria's commitment to responsible land management, conservation, and respectful engagement with Traditional Owners.

Parks Victoria (PV) (the proponent) is proposing a 52-km 4-day/3-night hiking experience through Victoria's Alpine National Park, between Falls Creek and Mount Hotham **(Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf, Att-02_FHAC_Project Plan.pdf)**. This involves re-defining the current 37-km 3-day-2-night route between Falls Creek and Mount Hotham, to connect people with some of the region's most outstanding landscape features, including Victoria's second highest peak, Mount Feathertop. This project is called the 'Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing' (FHAC). **(Att-03_FHAC_Business Case.pdf, Att-04_FHAC_CrownFolio.pdf, Att-08_FHAC_Master_Plan.pdf)**

The location of the FHAC is the Alpine National Park, except for 2.3 km in the Mount Hotham Resort for the final section of the trail. The proposed action is all contained to the Alpine National Park, which is crown land managed by Parks Victoria.

The project has evolved and been refined based on values assessments and potential impacts, and community and stakeholder feedback.

The proposed action is:

- Trail upgrades and new trail infrastructure to improve the visitor experience and sustainability of trails on this route. The priority sections of the 52-km trail for track upgrades and new trail infrastructure have a linear total distance of 11.77 km. The track works predominantly comprise drainage treatments, followed by the installation of elevated boardwalks, and stepping stones, to manage existing impacts and improve track conditions in wetter areas and at crossings of minor drainage flows. Steps are also proposed in steeper sections to limit existing erosion and improve visitor access. The remainder of the treatments are localised to short sections of trail and tailored to local track conditions.
- Provision of 3 Overnight Nodes to support hikers along the FHAC. The Overnight Nodes will provide hikers with new and upgraded camping infrastructure, including elevated camping platforms, communal shelter and gathering spaces, and amenities.
- This includes:
    - Camping platforms to provide a stable and comfortable surface for campers to pitch tents and to minimise effects on ground surface and vegetation. A total of eight elevated camping platforms will be provided at each Overnight Node, at Cope Hut this involves the installation of three new timber-decked camping platforms and replacement of the platform boards for the five-existing camping platforms.
    - A formal communal gathering space at each Overnight Node, comprising of a gravelled area with boulder seating to provide outdoor gathering spaces.
    - An enclosed shelter at High Knob, modelled on the historic Federation Hut, to offer hikers an indoor gathering space for hikers to share meals and bond and shelter from weather.
    - Toilet facilities at Westons Hut and High Knob (N.B. There are existing toilet facilities at Cope Hut).
    - Formal pathways to connect camping platforms, communal areas and amenities to existing trails to improve accessibility and reduce impacts within the hiker camps from trampling.
    - Drawings of the proposed infrastructure can be found on **Att-03_FHAC_DrawingPlans.pdf All pages**.
- Conservation works and/or repair on up to 13 High Country huts along or near the FHAC. The works will be funded by the FHAC but will be undertaken in collaboration with the Victorian High Country Huts Association (VHCHA) **(Att-07_High_Country_Huts_Location.pdf, single page and Att-17_FHAC_HighCountry Huts Scope.pdf, All pages)**

Construction laydown areas for the trail works will use the existing trail and a 0.3–1.5 m buffer on each side where works occur. Final placement will be micro-sited before works begin to avoid impacts on significant environmental values.

For the 3 Overnight Nodes, construction laydown areas have been nominated on plan, though they may be adjusted within the disturbance footprint for each Overnight Node, following micro-siting. Construction laydown areas at Overnight Nodes will be used to accommodate storage of larger structures and to accommodate staging requirements, and contractors will be expected to manage materials and equipment within these constraints. Construction laydown areas will be re-habilitated following construction.

For the conservation works and repairs to the High Country huts, existing structure footprints and vehicle accessways (available for 11 of the huts) will be utilised as required for laydown areas.

Access to the FHAC project area is via various roads, management vehicle tracks, and walking trails intersecting the alignment. Vehicle access is available at several points between Falls Creek and Diamantina Spur, including Bogong High Plains Road (bitumen), Langford West Aqueduct Road, Cope West Aqueduct Road via Cope Saddle Track, Fainter Firetrail, and West Kiewa Logging Road (unsealed, management vehicles only).

Cope Hut Overnight Node is accessible to management vehicles and hikers via Cope Hut Track, a gravel track linking Bogong High Plains Road (west) and Langford West Aqueduct Road (east). Westons Hut Node is located on Westons Spur Track, accessible via West Kiewa Logging Road (west) and the Australian Alps Walking Track (east), with a 0.6 km walk required. High Knob Node on Diamantina Spur Track is accessible only on foot (4.0 km) via West Kiewa Logging Road (east), Bungalow Spur Track (west), and Razorback Track (south) (**Att-06_FHAC_Photos.pdf, all pages**).

Where vehicle access exists, construction materials will be delivered via existing roads and management tracks. Powered barrows may be used in some areas. In locations without vehicle access, materials and equipment will be airlifted to laydown areas. Buildings and structures—such as toilets, shelters, and camping platforms—are designed for off-site prefabrication and on-site assembly.

Construction materials (e.g. steel and imported gravel or stone) for the trail and Overnight Nodes will be selected based on structural needs, environmental and landscape sensitivity, and long-term durability. Construction will be undertaken by hand and/or with small machinery due to limited vehicle access and to minimise impacts. Visitor facilities (e.g. camping platforms, framing) will be prefabricated off-site where possible and assembled using hand tools or small machinery. No heavy machinery will be used. Works on High Country Huts will use traditional methods and materials, supplemented by modern tools (e.g. portable power tools, chainsaws, generators, safety gear) to improve safety, precision, and efficiency.

Trail works will have no operational requirements beyond regular inspection and maintenance. Vegetation management will follow Alpine National Park practices, maintaining clearance only to trail width to prevent encroachment.

New visitor facilities at the three Overnight Nodes will require operational and maintenance activities. Toilets at Westons Hut and High Knob use storage pod systems that need periodic emptying. Pods will be airlifted off-site at 75% capacity. Currently, two helicopter flights service existing toilets annually; an additional one to two flights may be needed, increasing the total to up to four per year. Other facilities will require minimal maintenance, integrated into existing schedules.

The total disturbance area associated with the proposed Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (FHAC) project is estimated at **3.89** hectares. (**Att-05_FHAC_Avoidance-Disturbance_Areas.pdf**). This includes:

- **3.55 ha** of native vegetation that will be disturbed due to construction activities, including the footprint of the trail, displacement of excavated materials (spoil), construction access (movement of people and machinery), and storage of materials and equipment.
- **0.44 ha** corresponding to the footprint of the 13 existing High Country Huts, which will not impact native vegetation as they are already built.

Of the disturbed native vegetation:

- **0.43 ha** will be permanently lost or modified, either through clearing beyond the existing trail width or due to shading under elevated boardwalks.
- **3.11 ha** will be rehabilitated or allowed to regenerate naturally following the completion of works.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf, pages 1-6**
- **Att-02_FHAC_Project Plan.pdf, page 1**
- **Att-03_FHAC_DrawingPlans.pdf, pages 1-3 for the Overnights details, and 4-41 for technical drawings**
- **Att-04_FHAC_CrownFolio**
- **Att-05_FHAC_Avoidance-Disturbance_Areas.pdf, page 1 for overview, pages 2-24 for detailed maps**
- **Att-06_FHAC_Photos.pdf, pages 1-7**
- **Att-07_High_Country_Huts_Location.pdf, page 1**
- **Att-08_FHAC_Master_Plan.pdf, Section 1, pages 8-15**
- **Att-09_FHAC_Business Case.pdf, section "Proposed FHAC", pages 3-5**

- **Att-17_FHAC_HighCountryHutsScope.pdf, section 3 Execution, pages 2-5**

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? *

Commonwealth Legislation Implications

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)
The EPBC Act applies to actions with potential to significantly impact Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES). Four MNES were modelled to occur or potentially occur within 10 km of the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (FHAC) (**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 3.3, pages 49-64**):
• **Listed threatened ecological communities** – Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens Community (multiple locations)
• **Listed threatened species** – 24 species likely or recorded in the project area (4 flora, 20 fauna)
• **Migratory species** – 2 species (potential impact to Latham's Snipe)
• **National Heritage Places** – Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage Place

Their relevance and a significance assessment against EPBC criteria are provided in the Environmental Assessment Report (EA) **(Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Sections 7.5.6 & 8.1; Table 22; Appendix 3**). While the realigned and upgraded FHAC is unlikely to have a significant impact on relevant MNES, the project has been referred to gain legal certainty.

Victorian Legislation Implications

Environment Effects Act 1978 (EE Act)
This is Victoria's primary framework for assessing projects with regional or state environmental effects. Referral is required where criteria for potentially significant effects are met. FHAC meets the criterion for *potential loss of ≥1 % of known remaining habitat or population of a threatened species*. Construction within Overnight Nodes will affect >1 % of the lower population estimate for four Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act species. An Environmental Effects Statement (EES) referral was submitted concurrently.

Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act)
The FFG Act conserves threatened flora, fauna, and ecological communities. Surveys recorded 59 listed flora species within the project area and a further 88 with potential to occur. Twelve species will be impacted by Overnight Node works. Trail alignment surveys will be undertaken pre-construction to avoid and minimise impacts. Where impacts cannot be avoided, species and numbers will be recorded and a Protected Flora Permit obtained. Impacts are detailed in **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.4.2, pages 117-128**.

National Parks Act 1975 (NP Act)
The NP Act governs protection and management of national parks. The Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan 2016 **(Att-20_Alpine NP Management Plan.pdf, whole document, FHAC specific information pages 12, 95-96, 111-113, 124,133**) provides strategic guidance. FHAC falls within Conservation and Conservation & Recreation management zones and several overlays (Bundara-Cobungra RNA, Mount Feathertop VEA, Red Robin VEA, Bogong High Plains VEA and VEA – Journey). The Management Plan supports FHAC development while protecting environmental and cultural values.

Planning and Environment Act 1987 (PE Act)
This Act establishes Victoria's planning framework. The project area is under the East Gippsland and Alpine Planning Schemes, within the Public Conservation and Resource Zone. Overlays include the Bushfire Management Overlay (entire area) and Heritage Overlay (Wallaces Hut – HO226; Blairs and Tawonga Huts – HO2). Clause 52.17 (Native Vegetation), Clause 52.05 (Signs) and Clause 62.02 (General exemptions) also apply. A permit application for tent platform works under the Bushfire Management Overlay was lodged with the Department of Transport and Planning on 28 August 2025.

Wildlife Act 1975
Regulates protection and management of Victorian wildlife. Anyone involved in fauna salvage or relocation before vegetation clearing must hold a Management Authorisation.

Water Act 1989
Governs works around designated waterways and land. A Works on Waterways permit will be required for trail construction near Diamantina River and Blanket Creek crossings.

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act)
Provides the framework for catchment protection and land management. Eight noxious weed species listed under the CaLP Act were recorded. Weed removal/control will occur pre-works, with vehicle/machinery hygiene measures implemented through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Post-construction monitoring will detect and control new incursions.

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
Protects Aboriginal cultural heritage. Harm, even unknowingly, is an offence. The required **C**ultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) (**Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, whole document** and **Att-12_FHAC_CHMP_18990_Redacted.pdf, whole document**) prepared by Latitude Heritage includes archaeological assessments, impact management conditions and contingency plans for unexpected finds. With no Registered Aboriginal Party for the area, **CHMP 18890** has been approved on 15/10/2025.

Heritage Act 2017 (HA Act)
Protects non-Aboriginal cultural heritage. One site, Wallaces Hut (H1616), is on the Victorian Heritage Register **(Att-17_FHAC_HighCountryHutsScope.pdf, Section Heritage Assessment, Page 5)**. No new sites were found. Investigations found no impact to known archaeological sites; no HA Act consent is required. Contractors will receive historical archaeological inductions and follow an Unexpected Finds Protocol.

Environment Protection Act 2017
Protects the environment and human health through a prevention-based approach and General Environmental Duty (GED), requiring all Victorians to take reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or reduce environmental risks.

Supporting Documentation

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.4.2, pages 117-128, Section 7.5.6, pages 133-135, Section 8.1, page 147; Table 22, pages 134-135; Appendix 3, pages 172-218**
- **Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, whole document**
- **Att-12_FHAC_CHMP_18990_Redacted.pdf, whole document**
- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 3.3, pages 49-64**
- **Att-17_FHAC_HighCountryHutsScope.pdf, Section Heritage Assessment, Page 5**
- **Att-20_Alpine NP Management Plan.pdf, whole document, FHAC specific information pages 12, 95-96, 111-113, 124,133**

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. *

Extensive stakeholder and community engagement was undertaken between 2016 and 2018 to create a Master Plan (**Att-08_FHAC_Master_Plan.pdf, Section 08 - Engagement, Page 98-99**) for the FHAC and again from 2022 in relation to the planning (draft concept design) and design (detailed design) phases of the FHAC project. The EA provides further information on consultation and engagement **(Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 6, pages 106-109**).

FHAC Master Plan

Developing the Master Plan involved regional community, key stakeholder and government agency consultation on the draft Master Plan and then working groups being utilised to provide direction for the final Master Plan. This initial engagement from late 2016 included engagement with stakeholders, including regional tourism bodies and local communities. The Master Plan was shaped by feedback on environmental values, cultural heritage, and visitor experience priorities.

Engagement included stakeholder sessions, open drop-in sessions and submissions. In total 229 submissions were received in the final rounds of consultation. Submission topics were:

- Development of roofed accommodation within the National Parks Victoria
- Campsite locations and quality
- Track alignment and quality
- Visitor numbers
- Project costs and benefits
- Environmental impact

FHAC Project – Planning and Design

For the planning and design of the FHAC project, engagement has continued with stakeholders and the community.

Traditional Owner groups

During preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) eight Traditional Owner groups with interests in the region were consulted. The Traditional Owner groups include the:

- Bangerang Aboriginal Corporation (BAC)
- Dalka Warra Mittung Aboriginal Corporation (DWMAC)
- Dhuduroa Waywurru Nations Aboriginal Corporation (DWNAC)
- Duduroa Dhagal Aboriginal Corporation (DDAC)
- Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLAWAC)
- Jaithmathang Traditional Ancestral Bloodline Original Owners First Nation Aboriginal Corporation (JTABOOFNAC)
- Nindi-Ngujarn Ngarigo Monero Aboriginal Corporation (NNNMAC)
- Jaithmathang Traditional Owner Group (JAOG)

A record of this consultation is included in the CHMP (**Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, Table 3 page 37-45 and Section 8 page36-48**)).

Stakeholder engagement

A Falls to Hotham Stakeholder Steering Advisory Committee was created in July 2020 to enable the sharing of information and guide the project. This Committee has convened eleven times and will continue to meet as the project progresses, including at key milestones. Members of the committee include:

- Parks Victoria
- Regional Development Victoria - Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR)
- Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy - DJSIR
- Falls Creek Resort Management
- Tourism North East
- Mount Hotham Resort Management
- Alpine Shire
- Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action (formerly Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning)
- Visit Victoria
- Bushwalking Victoria
- Victorian National Parks Association

- Alpine Resort Management Board
- Outdoors Victoria

Community Engagement Activities

In August and September 2022, community engagement was undertaken on the draft concept designs for the FHAC. This campaign was hosted via the Engage Victoria platform and generated a high level of public interest.

- 6,330 unique visitors accessed the Engage Victoria page
- Over 700 people participated in the consultation through:
    - Engage Victoria survey and submission
    - Email feedback
    - Online community information sessions
    - Pop-up sessions in-park and in local townships including Bright, Mount Beauty, Falls Creek, Mt Hotham, and Harrietville

Many participants used the opportunity to comment on draft concept designs to express their opposition. The key concerns raised related to:

- Environmental impacts
- Commercialisation of a National Park
- Project not aligning with primary purpose of National Parks
- Engagement process
- Access to the National Park

Many participants noted the design could be improved by reducing or removing the number of huts in the design. Some participants liked the simple nature of the design, trail improvements, the addition of elevated tent platforms, drinking water and toilet amenities. For further information on this consultation, refer to the FHAC Consultation Summary Report (**Att-19_FHAC_Community Consultation 2023.pdf, whole document**).

Community and stakeholder feedback from the planning phase was considered and incorporated into the design phase for the project.

In November 2024, Parks Victoria released updated project designs to the public, which included the removal of proposed infrastructure at sites identified as having high environmental and cultural value, as well as the removal of the roofed accommodation component. These changes were communicated through updates to the Parks Victoria website, direct engagement with stakeholders, and community information sessions. Key engagement activities included:

- Email updates sent to over 1,700 interested community members
- Website updates
- A series of four community information sessions held in Bright, Mount Beauty, and Harrietville, as well as online

Parks Victoria staff spoke with over 50 local residents during these sessions. The majority of community members expressed support and appreciation for the changes made to the project scope and design.

Supporting documents

- **Att-08_FHAC_Master_Plan.pdf, Section 08 - Engagement, Page 98-99**
- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 6, pages 106-10**
- **Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, Table 3 page 37-45 and Section 8 page36-48**)
- **Att-19_FHAC_Community Consultation 2023.pdf, whole document**
- Information on the FHAC project, community updates and a link to previous engagement on the Engage Victoria website is available on the Parks Victoria Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Project web page at https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/projects/eastern-victoria/falls-to-hotham-alpine-crossing-project. Link#1

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.

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☑ **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

ABN/ACN	95337637697
Organisation name	PARKS VICTORIA
Organisation address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000

Referring party details

Name	Luiz Dias
Job title	Senior Project Manager
Phone	03 8427 3022
Email	fhac@parks.vic.gov.au
Address	300 La Trobe 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? *

Yes

Person proposing to take the action organisation details

ABN/ACN	95337637697
Organisation name	PARKS VICTORIA
Organisation address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000

Person proposing to take the action details

Name	Luiz Dias
Job title	Senior Project Manager
Phone	03 8427 3022
Email	fhac@parks.vic.gov.au
Address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

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? *

No

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. *

Parks Victoria (PV) is a statutory authority established under the *Parks Victoria Act 2018 (Vic)* and manages Victoria's national, state and metropolitan parks in accordance with the *National Parks Act,* the *Parks Victoria Act* and other legislation. PV's core mandate is to protect and conserve natural and cultural values while enabling sustainable visitor use.

PV has a strong record of environmental stewardship, guided by statutory management plans and internal governance systems. It routinely undertakes environmental and cultural heritage assessments for projects and applies the mitigation hierarchy to avoid and minimise impacts. PV works in partnership with Traditional Owners, regulators and stakeholders to ensure compliance with State and Commonwealth requirements.

Legal compliance:
Parks Victoria has **not identified any proceedings under Commonwealth, State or Territory environmental laws** against it under a Commonwealth, State or Territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Responsible officer:
Luiz Dias Ferreira, Senior Project Manager, Parks Victoria, is the nominated officer for this referral.

Authorising office:
Nika Taghaddosi, Acting Program Director Captial Projects, Parks Victoria, is the authorising officed for this referral.

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

Parks Victoria's environmental policy and planning framework is guided by the Parks Victoria Act 2018, which establishes the organisation's responsibilities for managing Victoria's parks and reserves. The Act underpins Parks Victoria's commitment to protecting and enhancing environmental values, including biodiversity, cultural heritage, and landscape integrity. This legislative foundation informs the development and implementation of strategic plans, management frameworks, and operational guidelines that ensure environmental sustainability and conservation outcomes across all projects, including the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing which is included in the Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan (**Att-20_Alpine NP Management Plan.pdf, whole document**). and the Hut Maintenance Manual (**Att-18_GANP_Hut Maintenance Manual.pdf, whole document)**

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-18_GANP_Hut Maintenance Manual.pdf**
- **Att-20_Alpine NP - Management Plan.pdf**

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	95337637697
Organisation name	PARKS VICTORIA
Organisation address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000

Proposed designated proponent details

Name	Luiz Dias
Job title	Senior Project Manager
Phone	03 8427 3022
Email	fhac@parks.vic.gov.au
Address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

1.3.4 Identity: Summary of allocation

Confirmed Referring party's identity

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

ABN/ACN	95337637697
Organisation name	PARKS VICTORIA
Organisation address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000
Representative's name	Luiz Dias
Representative's job title	Senior Project Manager
Phone	03 8427 3022
Email	fhac@parks.vic.gov.au
Address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

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.

Same as Referring party information.

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? *

Yes

1.4.10 Enter purchase order number *

PO Number 227378

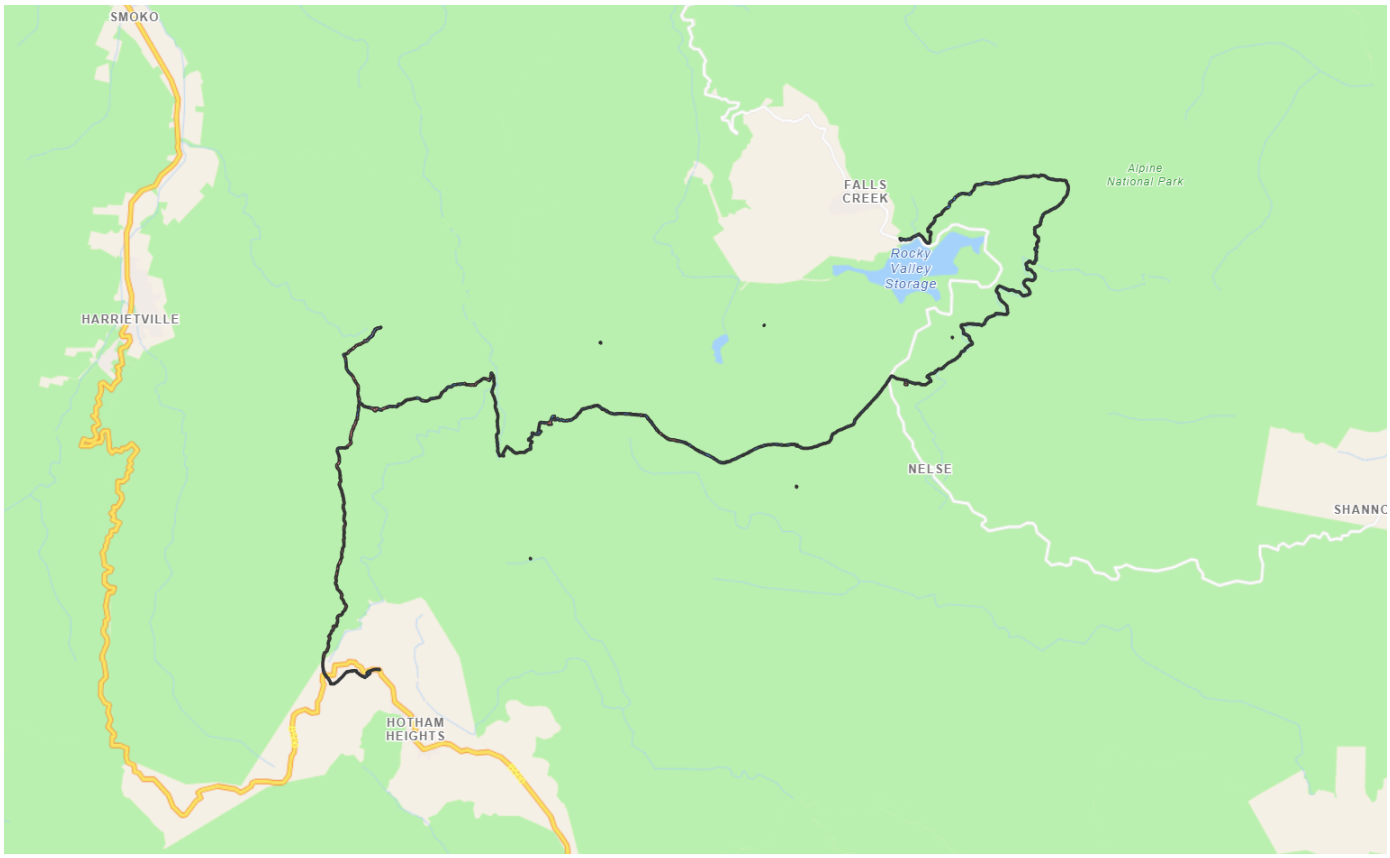
1.4 Payment details: Payment allocation

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

Referring party

2. Location

2.1 Project footprint



Project Area: 11.50 Ha **Disturbance Footprint:** 3.89 Ha **Avoidance Area:** 7.52 Ha

2.2 Footprint details

2.2.1 What is the address of the proposed action? *

Alpine National Park, Bogong High Plains Road, Falls Creek, Victoria 3699

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 within the Alpine National Park, with the exception of the final 2.3 km of the trail, which is located in the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort area (**Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf, page 2**).

The Alpine National Park is crown land managed by Parks Victoria.

The Mount Hotham Alpine Resort is crown land managed by Alpine Resorts Victoria. No action is proposed for the Alpine Resort extent of trail.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf, page 2**

3. Existing environment

3.1 Physical description

3.1.1 Describe the current condition of the project area’s environment.

Parks Victoria recognises the deep and enduring connection of Traditional Owners to the High Country. We respect and acknowledge the First Peoples of the lands and waterways on which we live and work, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present.

This referral is submitted in recognition of the cultural, environmental and heritage significance of the Australian Alps, and reflects Parks Victoria's commitment to responsible land management, conservation, and respectful engagement with Traditional Owners.

The FHAC is located in the high-country of north-eastern Victoria, approximately 380 km north-east of Melbourne. **(Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf, page 1**) The FHAC connects the two Alpine Resorts of Falls Creek and Mount Hotham, utilising the existing trail network through the Alpine National Park, and can be easily accessed from the towns of Harrietville to the west, Mount Beauty to the north, and Omeo via Dinner Plain to the south.

This area is known as the Victorian High Country and Victorian Alps and forms part of the Great Dividing Range.

The project area is within the Victorian Alps Bioregion and the majority of the project area is located within the Alpine National Park, the largest of Victoria's alpine parks and reserves. A small section of the project area is in the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort area, though no new works are proposed along this section of trail.

The Alpine National Park protects some of Victoria's most spectacular and intact natural country, nationally listed spectacular and distinctive landscapes and geology, and a diverse range of flora and fauna, including many threatened species and communities (**Att-20_Alpine NP_Management Plan.pdf, Executive Summary, pages v-vi**).

The Alpine National Park is one of 11 National Parks across Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, which form part of the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage Place, which was included on the National Heritage List of Australia under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999, in 2008.

The proposed FHAC traverses the high-elevation plateaus and slopes of the Bogong High Plains, ranging from c.1600 m to 1800 m ASL, to the steeply intersected gullies and high, exposed ridgelines west of the Bogong High Plains to Mount Hotham. It incorporates Mount Feathertop – Victoria's second highest peak at 1922 m ASL, which is located to the north of the Great Divide, on the ridge between the Kiewa and Ovens Rivers and Mount Buller (VRO 2025). The FHAC passes through largely intact expanses of native vegetation from treeless alpine communities, through to sub-alpine communities, and descents through montane areas. However, the area is intersected by an extensive trail network, including sealed roads (Bogong High Plains Road and the Great Alpine Road), gravel management vehicle tracks and formal and informal walking trails. Numerous waterways also intersect the proposed FHAC, ranging from small drainage lines and headwaters across the Bogong High Plains, to aqueducts, creeks and rivers such as the Diamantina River along the West Kiewa Logging Road.

The Alpine National Park is largely surrounded by Crown land (**Att-04_FHAC_CrownFolio.pdf, whole document**), which primarily includes State Forest, but also includes other parks and reserves, such as Historic Areas and Wilderness Parks. The Victorian alpine parks and reserves, and surrounding State Forest offer a diverse range of destinations and recreational activities which are supported by a wide network of access roads and trails, facilities and services. These include, walking, camping, horse-riding and snow sports, as well as short journeys from local townships and Alpine Resorts which make significant contributions to the local and broader Victorian economy (**Att-20_Alpine NP_Management Plan.pdf, Executive Summary, page ix**). The Alpine National Park and surrounding reserves also protect large expanses of remote and largely untracked environments which also provide the opportunity for challenging and self-reliant recreational activities, such as bushwalking and camping.

The land is primarily zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone under both the Alpine and East Gippsland Planning Schemes. The activity is consistent with the zones and as such a planning scheme amendment is not required (**Att-20_Alpine NP_Management Plan.pdf, Section 3, pages 25-29**). A planning permit is required however for a component of the activity under a planning overlay - the Bushfire Management Overlay. An application has been lodged to the Department of Planning and Transport for this permit.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf, page 1**
- **Att-04_FHAC_CrownFolio.pdf, whole document**
- **Att-20_Alpine NP_Management Plan.pdf, Executive Summary, pages v-vi; Executive Summary, page ix; Section 3, pages 25-29**

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

Existing uses:
The project area lies primarily within the Alpine National Park and partly within the Mount Hotham Alpine Resort. The Alpine National Park is managed by Parks Victoria for conservation and low-impact recreation under the *National Parks Act 1975 (Vic)* and the Public Conservation and Resource Zone under the Alpine and East Gippsland planning schemes. Existing uses include (**Att-20_Alpine NP_Management Plan.pdf, Executive Summary, page vi)**:

- Recreational activities: Bushwalking, camping (dispersed and at designated sites such as Cope Hut and Dibbins Hut), horse riding on specified routes, and seasonal snow-based activities.
- Heritage and tourism: Visitation to High Country Huts (e.g., Wallace Hut, Cope Hut, Westons Hut) and scenic lookouts.
- Conservation management: Ongoing ecological monitoring, fire management, and maintenance of park infrastructure.

Proposed uses:
The existing uses remains unchanged.

Supporting Documentation

- **Att-20_Alpine NP_Management Plan.pdf, Executive Summary, page vi**

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

Outstanding geodiversity and geomorphology

The FHAC traverses the Bogong High Plains South – Site of Geological and Geomorphological Significance (**Att-26_FHAC_Geomorphology_Interp.pdf, Section 4, pages 25-28; Att-25_FHAC_Lidar Interpretation.pdf, Section 2.1.13, page 22**), encompassing Mount Cope, Mount Jim, Cobungra Gap and Mount Loch. Distinctive High Plains Gneiss and Bogong Volcanics, plus landforms such as stepped topography and fault-related stream capture, provide important evidence for the geological evolution of the Victorian Alps. Periglacial relics (e.g., block streams and solifluction features) represent rare mainland expressions of cold-climate processes.

Aboriginal cultural landscape

The project area forms part of a rich Aboriginal cultural landscape. Numerous Aboriginal groups were living and accessing the Alpine region for thousands of years. Historical accounts and the archaeological record demonstrate that river valleys were favourable camping spots and travelling routes through the mountains. The upper reaches of the mountains would have been accessed for the annual bogong moth season. (**Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, Section 9.6.3, pages 82-83**) The Aboriginal cultural landscape embodies the human story of use and change in the context of the physical landscape, including landforms, granite outcrops, waterways and springs, which have cultural meanings and associations, together with recorded tangible heritage places, such as artefact scatters, and intangible heritage places that are associated with the history, stories and traditions of the broader area.

One of the most significant activities was the Bogong moth harvest, which drew large gatherings to high peaks like Mount Bogong and Mount Feathertop. These events were not only vital for sustenance but also for cultural exchange, involving ceremonial rites and complex harvesting practices that reflect deep spiritual and ecological knowledge of Country.

Heritage places and the “high-country huts” narrative

The built heritage strongly reinforces human interactions with the high country. The High Country Huts are the expression of the National Heritage expression. Wallace’s Hut is individually listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR), while Blairs Hut and the Tawonga Huts complex have local recognition; Cope Hut, Blairs Hut and Tawonga Huts are also recognised by the National Trust. Collectively, these huts—and associated features such as yards and bridle routes—express themes of transhumant grazing, early alpine recreation, and water-harvesting infrastructure (e.g., Kiewa Hydro-Electric Scheme aqueducts) that are central to the Alps’ cultural history. **(Att-13_FHAC_HAA_Survey.pdf, Section 3.3.2-3.3.4, pages 13-14; Att-07_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Table 3.6, pages 67-71,Att-14_FHAC_HAA_Summary.pdf whole document)**

Aesthetic/visual values and sense of remoteness

The openness, elevation and remoteness of the terrain produce a strong wilderness character. The landscape includes panoramic views across the Bogong High Plains, the dramatic profile of Mount Feathertop and The Razorback, and isolated huts within natural settings. These elements are not only aesthetically significant; they operate as tangible links to layered histories, making the landscape a “living archive” and a key expression of National Heritage aesthetic and social values. (**Att-16_FHAC_LVIA.pdf, Section 2.3, page 11**)

Remote and Natural Area values

Sections of the trail route lie within the Bundara–Cobungra Remote and Natural Area, which contains the largest area of untracked alpine vegetation in Victoria. Management requirements here prioritise the protection of remoteness and opportunities for self-reliant recreation, reinforcing wilderness attributes central to community value.

Unique alpine ecosystems and hydrological significance

The project area encompasses rare and ecologically significant alpine environments that are uncommon in the Australian landscape. Alpine peatlands and bogs, which occur along parts of the FHAC route, are particularly important for their hydrological functions—acting as natural water filters, regulating stream flows, and supporting a range of specialised flora and fauna. These ecosystems are highly sensitive and slow to recover from disturbance. The area also supports stands of Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*), there are occurrences of long-unburnt individuals, a species which are increasingly rare due to the frequency and intensity of recent alpine bushfires. These trees contribute to both biodiversity and the visual character of the landscape, reinforcing its ecological and aesthetic value. (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 4, pages35-78**)

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-07_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Table 3.6, pages 67-71**
- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 4, pages35-78**
- **Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, Section 9.6.3, pages 82-83**
- **Att-13_FHAC_HAA_Survey.pdf, Section 3.3.2-3.3.4, pages 13-14**
- **Att-14_FHAC_HAA_Summary.pdf, Whole document**
- **Att-16_FHAC_LVIA.pdf, Section 2.3, page 11**
- **Att-25_FHAC_Lidar Interpretation.pdf, Section 2.1.13, page 22**
- **Att-26_FHAC_Geomorphology_Interp.pdf, Section 4, pages 25-28**

*The Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) for the FHAC project is being provided in two versions: a full version that includes detailed information about sensitive cultural heritage places and individual representatives of the Traditional Owner groups **Attachment 11**, and a redacted version that omits this sensitive content to ensure confidentiality and cultural respect while remaining suitable for broader circulation **Attachment 12**.*

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 FHAC traverses a highly varied alpine landscape with significant elevation changes. The route spans approximately 52 km and crosses altitudes from around 1,050 metres above sea level (ASL) in the West Kiewa Valley to 1,922 m ASL at Mount Feathertop, Victoria's second-highest peak.

- Starting point (Falls Creek): ~1,600 m ASL
- Bogong High Plains: 1,600–1,800 m ASL (gentle gradients across open plains)
- Diamantina River crossing: ~1,050 m ASL (steep descent from Westons Spur)
- Diamantina Spur ascent: rises sharply to ~1,800 m ASL
- High Knob and Razorback ridgeline: 1,800–1,922 m ASL
- Mount Hotham trailhead: ~1,750 m ASL

Geomorphological and geotechnical assessments (**Att-26_FHAC_Geomorphology_Interp.pdf, whole document and Att-24_FHAC_Geotech_Risk_2025, whole document**) have been undertaken to inform terrain and ground conditions across the project area, including slope gradient analysis. These assessments were based on high-resolution LiDAR imagery acquired specifically for the project (**Att-25_FHAC_Lidar Interpretation.pdf, Section 3.1, page 28**). The terrain varies significantly, ranging from gently undulating slopes across the Bogong High Plains to short very steep gradients exceeding 30 degrees in sections such as the Diamantina Spur. This information has been critical in guiding trail alignment, infrastructure placement, and safety considerations.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-24_FHAC_Geotech_Risk_2025, whole document**
- **Att-25_FHAC_Lidar Interpretation.pdf, Section 3.1, page 28**
- **Att-26_FHAC_Geomorphology_Interp.pdf**

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.

Ecological assessments of the FHAC project area have been undertaken by Abzeco, in four stages, between 2020 and 2025, and The Ecology Office in 2025, to document the ecological values of the project area, identify potential impacts and to inform the scope and design of the project

Variations in the proposed track alignment (with a 20 m buffer either side of the track) and locations of overnight nodes were surveyed on-foot between November 2020 and March 2024, with surveys in 2020, 2022 and 2024. In total, 64 km of trail and 21 potential locations for overnight nodes were surveyed. The trail assessment area was broken down into 18 sections, with some not carried through to the final FHAC project scope. The EA (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, section 4, pages 35-78**) summarises the findings for the whole project area.

Summary of Key Findings
Based on the surveys and analysis of existing data (Abzeco 2021–2025, - **Att-21_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2021.pdf, whole document & Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, whole document)**, the project area supports a diverse range of alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems, including 12 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) within the final footprint. These communities occur along an altitudinal gradient from montane forests (~1,050 m ASL) to treeless alpine herbfields (>1,800 m ASL). The area provides habitat for numerous native species and several listed threatened species under the EPBC Act (and FFG Act).

A total of 329 native flora species were recorded in the project area during on-ground assessments, many of which are characteristic of sub-alpine and alpine environments and have evolved to withstand the harsh conditions of high altitudes (Abzeco 2025 - **Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.1-3.5.3.2., pages 59-111**).

150 threatened flora species have been identified by Abzeco (2025 - **Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.6-3.7.3, pages 112-130**) as potentially occurring in the project. Of these, 60 threatened flora species (EPBC Act and FFG Act) were recorded immediately adjacent to the trails, within the 20 m-wide assessment buffer along the trail alignment, and/or at the 3 Overnight Nodes (**Att-21_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2021.pdf, section 3.2.2-3.2.4, pages 57-100; Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, section 3.5.1, page 71-111; Att-23_FHAC_OV3 Flora TEO 2025.pdf, whole document**). These species were recorded incidentally during flora and fauna assessments along the alignment and through targeted surveys of the proposed Overnight Nodes. Threatened flora species are concentrated along the Bogong High Plains and Bundara–Cobungra RNA, with the highest density recorded along Trail Section 6 (30 species).

The 1 EPBC Act threatened flora species observed was:

- *Argyrotegium nitidulum* – Shining Cudweed

A total of 78 fauna species were recorded during field assessments throughout the FHAC assessment area of which 73 were native species. Fauna observed included alpine specialists such as the Mountain Pygmy-possum, Broad-toothed Rat, Guthega Skink, Spotted Tree Frog and Alpine Stonefly.

30 threatened fauna species (20 under EBPC Act) have been identified by Abzeco (2021and 2025) (**Att-21_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2021.pdf, Section 3.3.2, pages 101-105; Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3-7, pages 112-128**) as potentially occurring within the project area. Of these 11 threatened fauna species were recorded during the flora and fauna assessments and the limited targeted surveys that were undertaken across the assessment area and included eight threatened species listed under the EPBC Act.

4 of the 8 EPBC Act threatened fauna species recorded within the project area are habitat specialist with a distribution restricted to sub-alpine and alpine environments in Victoria. These are:

- *Cyclodomorphys praealtus* - Alpine She-oak Skink
- *Eulamprus kosciuskoi* – Alpine Water Skink
- *Liopholis guthega* - Guthega Skink
- *Pseudemoia cryodroma* – Alpine Bog Skink

Two species listed as Migratory under the EPBC Act 1999 (and also listed as threatened under the EPBC Act) were identified as having the potential to occur within the FHAC assessment area. These are:

- *Hirundapus caudacutus* - White-throated Needletail
- *Gallinago hardwickii* - Latham's Snipe

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, section 4, pages 35-78**
- **Att-21_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2021.pdf, whole document, section 3.2.2-3.2.4, pages 57-100 and Section 3.3.2, pages 101-105;**

- **Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, whole document, section 3.5.1, page 71-111 and Section 3-7, pages 112-128; Section 3.1, pages 59-111**
- **Att-23_FHAC_OV3 Flora TEO 2025.pdf, whole document**

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

Vegetation Overview

The project area is located in the Australian Alps Bioregion where vegetation is characterised by a series of communities with distinct altitudinal zones, from the lower slopes and tablelands, to montane, sub-alpine and alpine zones. The vegetation across these zones is defined by changes in species composition and structure, including height and understorey characteristics, growth forms, and the dominance of eucalypts, which reflects changing climatic factors, soils, topography and slope (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Sections 4.2–4.3 and 4.7, Table 7, and Appendix 4 for detailed vegetation mapping, EVC descriptions, and soil profiles**).

Native vegetation within the project area varies along the altitudinal gradient, from alpine treeless vegetation communities on the higher peaks of the Bogong High Plains (c. 1600 to 1800 m ASL), descending through sub-alpine areas around Langford Aqueduct, to the montane forests around Diamantina River (1050 m ASL), climbing back through sub-alpine woodland along Diamantina Spur to treeless alpine vegetation near High Knob and Mount Feathertop, and tracking back down through sub-alpine and up to alpine environments around Mount Hotham Resort.

A total of 21 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) were mapped as part of the broader FHAC assessment area. Of these, 12 EVCs occur within the current project area. The remaining nine were recorded along trail sections and proposed overnight node locations that are no longer included in the FHAC project scope.

Within the project area, 10 of the 12 EVCs intersect with areas proposed for works. These vegetation communities are representative of alpine, sub-alpine, and montane ecosystems, and vary in both conservation status and ecological condition.

The 10 EVCs intersecting with areas proposed for works and their conservation status are:

1. Alpine Damp Grassland - Rare
2. Alpine Dwarf Heathland – N/A
3. Alpine Grassland - Rare
4. Alpine Grassy Heathland - Rare
5. Alpine Rocky Outcrop Heathland – N/A
6. Alpine Valley Peatland - Endangered
7. Montane Damp Forest – Least Concern
8. Snowpatch Grassland – N/A
9. Sub-alpine Shrubland - Rare
10. Sub-alpine Woodland – Least Concern

Threatened Ecological Community

The Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens (EPBC Act – Endangered) occur within the project area, particularly around Cope Saddle and other peatland systems. These communities are highly sensitive to disturbance and play a critical role in hydrological regulation and carbon storage.

Vegetation Condition

Vegetation condition varies across the project area:

- Native vegetation is generally intact in remote alpine and sub-alpine zones, particularly within the Bundara–Cobungra RNA and Bogong High Plains.
- Snow Gum woodlands are a key feature of the alpine landscape and are specifically recognised in the National Heritage listing. These stands are sensitive to fire and slow to recover due to short growing seasons.
- Long-unburnt Snow Gums are increasingly rare in Victoria. Seven patches were mapped within the FHAC assessment area, including along Trail Sections 4, 5, and at Cope Hut and High Knob Overnight Nodes **(Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.3, pages 69-70**).

Introduced Vegetation

Introduced species are present but generally confined to disturbed areas such as existing tracks, camping nodes, and historic grazing sites. These areas also show signs of weed invasion, particularly in lower elevation zones. (**Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.4, page 70)**

Soil Types and Condition

Soils within the FHAC project area vary significantly with elevation, geology and landform. The route traverses a mix of alpine, sub-alpine and montane environments, each with distinct soil characteristics:

- Alpine and sub-alpine zones (e.g., Bogong High Plains, Mount Cope, Mount Jim, Mount Loch) feature shallow, poorly developed soils with high organic content. These areas are subject to long periods of snow cover, low temperatures, and exposed rock, which limit soil formation and increase erosion risk.
- Peat soils occur in Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens, particularly around Cope Saddle. These soils are highly sensitive to disturbance, and their integrity is critical for hydrological function and carbon storage.
- Montane areas (e.g., Diamantina River valley) contain deeper, moderately drained soils, including Brown and Yellow Podzolic types, which are more stable but still vulnerable to erosion if vegetation is removed.
- Geomorphological features such as stepped topography, fault-related stream capture, and blockfields are present in areas like Cobungra Gap and Mount Jim. These landforms influence soil depth, drainage and erosion patterns.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Sections 4.2–4.3 and 4.7, Table 7, and Appendix 4 for detailed vegetation mapping, EVC descriptions, and soil profiles.**
- **Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.3-3.4, pages 69-70, For descriptions and mapping of all EVCs recorded within the FHAC assessment area. Mapping of EVCs within areas proposed for works as part of the FHAC project are shown in Appendix 1b.**

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 overseas that apply to the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (FHAC) project area. The project area is located within the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves National Heritage place, which is listed on the National Heritage List (NHL) for its natural and cultural values.(**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 3. pages 49-74**)

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

The FHAC Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) 18890 (**Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, whole document and Att-12_FHAC_CHMP_18990_Redacted.pdf, whole document**) outlines the Aboriginal Cultural Values that apply to the project area. Below is a summary of the key outcomes of the three assessment stages associated with the CHMP. The CHMP has been resubmitted to First Peoples State Relations in September 2025 and is pending final approval.

The desktop assessment found that the region was a diverse alpine environment that supported numerous Aboriginal groups and highlighted the importance of the Bogong moths to Aboriginal people in the region. Further, landforms that could provide shelter or access to resources (such as terraces, plateaus, and ridgelines) generally had a higher cultural heritage sensitivity while steep or exposed slopes were generally less archaeologically sensitive. The assessment also identified that the activity area contained a mosaic of all of these landforms. Aboriginal cultural heritage in the region was predominantly stone tools (i.e. quartz), along with culturally modified trees.

During the Standard Assessment, which covered the broader FHAC assessment area, 18 Aboriginal objects were identified, being fourteen isolated stone artefacts, three culturally modified trees, and one boulder with a potential grinding groove. One stone artefact has been registered as VAHR 8324-0217 ‘Bogong High Plains LDAD’ and four stone artefacts have been registered as VAHR 8324-0218 ‘Razorback LDAD’. (**Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, Section 12.2, pages 198-213)**

As part of the Complex Assessment two artefacts were recovered and registered as a new Aboriginal Place: Westons Spur – LDAD 1 (VAHR 8324-0221). (**Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, Section 12.2, pages 198-213)** As part of the Complex Assessment specific conditions developed in consultation with relevant Traditional Owners and First Peoples – State Relations were developed as well as contingencies for the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage which may be encountered during the activity.

Supporting Documentation:

Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18990_APPROVED.pdf, whole document and Section 12.2, pages 198-213

Att-12_FHAC_CHMP_18990_Redacted.pdf is also provided, which is a redacted version of the CHMP, excluding sensitive information

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. *

Various geomorphological assessments of the project area have been undertaken. This includes information on wet surfaces and drainage lines, with LiDAR models of the broader environment – upslope, downslope and catchment area beyond the project area.

Hydrology characteristics

Surface water
The project area traverses the alpine headwaters of multiple streams and artificial conveyance features. The FHAC alignment intersects or adjoins: Rocky Valley Creek and Rocky Valley Aqueduct (Section 1a), Watchbed Creek (Section 3), Langford East and West Aqueducts (Section 5), Cope Creek and Cope East Aqueduct (Section 6), the Kiewa River West Branch (Section 12), the Diamantina River (Section 12) and Diamantina Creek (Section 15), as well as Blanket Creek (Section 14). Westons Hut Overnight Node is located near to a tributary of the Kiewa River West Branch (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 4.6, pages 71-72**)

Numerous minor channels, unchanneled flow lines and culverts also occur along the route. Four main waterway types were identified in the assessment area, differentiated largely by the degree of lateral confinement, which constrains channel adjustment and influences local flow regimes.

- Bedrock-controlled
- Confined (with occasional floodplain pockets):
- Aqueducts
- Alpine Bog communities

Groundwater and hydro-geomorphic controls
Groundwater expression is locally evident as discrete springs where shallow flow is forced to the surface by low-permeability units; two such springs were noted along Bungalow Spur and are to be avoided by works. At the western edge of the Bogong High Plains, the Kiewa River West Branch is structurally controlled, its valley follows the Kiewa Thrust Fault and has incised along a mylonite zone up to ~1.5 km wide, indicating strong geological influence on drainage alignment and baseflow pathways.

Groundwater and Wetland Systems

Groundwater expression occurs in permanently wet areas, particularly within Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens (EPBC Act – Endangered) (**Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.5.1.1, pages 71-73**). These wetlands form along streams, valley floors, and waterlogged slopes where impeded drainage and a consistent groundwater supply maintain the water table at or near the surface. The incomplete decomposition of organic material under these saturated conditions creates peat soils, which have high water-holding capacity and play a critical role in modulating water flow, filtering nutrients and sediments, and maintaining water quality throughout the catchment.

The gradual release of water from these peatlands during spring and summer snowmelt is essential for sustaining downstream ecosystems and hydrological connectivity. These systems also support a mosaic of associated ecological communities and groundwater-dependent species.

Hydrological connectivity to Ramsar wetlands
There are no Ramsar-listed wetlands within or near the FHAC project area.

Soil and Geomorphology Influence

Peat soils in bogs and fens are highly sensitive to disturbance. Compaction or drainage alteration can reduce water retention, accelerate drying, and lead to erosion and channelisation. Geomorphological controls, such as the Kiewa Thrust Fault and associated mylonite zones, influence valley alignment and groundwater pathways in the western Bogong High Plains and Kiewa River West Branch. (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 4.7, pages 71-75**)

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 4.6, pages 71-72 and Section 4.7, pages 71-75**
- **Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.5.1.1, pages 71-73**

4. Impacts and mitigation

4.1 Impact details

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

EPBC Act section	Controlling provision	Impacted	Reviewed
S12	World Heritage	No	Yes
S15B	National Heritage	Yes	Yes
S16	Ramsar Wetland	No	Yes
S18	Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	Yes	Yes
S20	Migratory Species	Yes	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. *

The project area is not within or near any World Heritage Areas.

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.

Direct impact	Indirect impact	National heritage
Yes		Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves

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

Yes

4.1.2.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

The project area is located within the Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves (AANP) National Heritage place, which is included in the National Heritage List (NHL) under the EPBC Act for its natural and cultural values. GML Heritage Victoria Pty Ltd were engaged by Parks Victoria to prepare a national heritage impact assessment for the proposed FHAC project, given the significance of the location. (**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.2, 105-131**)

The AANP National Heritage place is listed in the NHL for meeting National Heritage criteria A (events and processes), B (rarity), D (representativeness), E (aesthetic characteristics), G (social value), and H (associations with significant people). The proposed action involves physical works such as trail upgrades, construction of overnight nodes, and conservation works to historic huts.

GML's assessment detailed that encroachments on natural heritage attributes are the main potential threat to natural heritage values. These include impacts to alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems, EPBC-listed ecological communities, and habitats for rare and endemic species. The proposed action also affects Indigenous heritage values through disturbance to artefact scatters, which will be managed through salvage and repatriation protocols. Historic heritage values may be affected by changes to the setting and fabric of historic huts and grazing landscapes. The assessment focused on adverse impacts only, as required under the EPBC Act, and excludes beneficial impacts from consideration.

Aesthetic and social values may be diminished by the introduction of new infrastructure that alters the sense of remoteness and naturalness. The severity of impacts was assessed based on duration, scale and intensity, and whether the action is likely to notably alter or diminish the values of the National Heritage place.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.2, 105-131**

4.1.2.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

No

4.1.2.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

The Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance provide guidance on matters which are likely to have a significant impact on heritage values. These include whether there is a real chance or possibility the action will cause one or more heritage values to be lost, degraded or damaged, or notably altered, modified, obscured or diminished.

Following assessment of the proposed action with reference to the National Heritage values, the context and intensity of the proposed works, and the guidance of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's Significant Impact Guidelines, the proposed action has been assessed by GML as having an overall moderate impact on the National Heritage values.

More specifically, the following heritage impacts have been identified (**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.3, 132-138**):

Criterion A – Events and Processes
Impacts to National Heritage values identified under criterion A include:

- Minor impacts to the natural heritage values, including glacial and periglacial features, biological heritage, and alpine ecosystems. These impacts are localised and reversible, with mitigation measures in place to avoid or minimise disturbance.
- Minor impacts to the Indigenous heritage values, particularly those associated with moth feasting and traditional travel routes. Artefact scatters identified along the Razorback Trail will be temporarily relocated and repatriated after works are complete, in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Management Plan.
- Minor to moderate impacts to the historic heritage values associated with transhumant grazing, especially at Westons Hut (Overnight Node 2) where new infrastructure may visually and physically alter the historic alpine grazing landscape. Conservation works to historic huts are designed to be sympathetic and consistent with the Burra Charter.
- Negligible impacts to the historic heritage values associated with scientific research, water harvesting and recreation, as key research sites and infrastructure are not affected, and recreational use is supported rather than diminished.

Criterion B – Rarity
To National Heritage values identified under criterion B:

- Minor impacts on the natural heritage values, including rare alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems and EPBC-listed ecological communities such as Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens. These communities are present in mosaic form along the trail and at overnight nodes, but impacts are minimised through micro-siting and construction methods.

Criterion D – Representativeness
To National Heritage values identified under criterion D:

- No impacts have been identified. The representative pastoral landscapes cited in the National Heritage listing are primarily located in Kosciuszko National Park (NSW), and not within the FHAC project area.

Criterion E – Aesthetic Values
To National Heritage values identified under criterion E:

- Minor to moderate potential impacts have been identified. The construction of new infrastructure at overnight nodes (especially Westons Hut) will alter the visual character of the landscape in those areas. While long-range vistas remain largely unaffected, medium and short-range views will be changed by the presence of camping platforms, amenities, and gravel paths. These changes may diminish the sense of remoteness and naturalness valued by visitors.

Criterion G – Social Values
To National Heritage values identified under criterion G:

- Moderate impacts have been identified. The project area is highly valued by bushwalkers, mountain cattlemen, and huts associations. The introduction of new infrastructure may reduce the perceived remoteness and simplicity of the experience, which are key aspects of its social value. However, the project also supports ongoing recreational use and community engagement with the landscape.

Criterion H – Associations with Significant People
To National Heritage values identified under criterion H:

- Negligible impacts have been identified. The natural and cultural landscape that inspired figures such as Baron von Mueller, Banjo Paterson, and Elyne Mitchell will remain largely intact. The proposed action does not affect specific sites directly associated with these individuals.

Based on this assessment, the impact on National Heritage values does not meet the threshold to be considered a significant impact.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.3, 132-138**

4.1.2.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.2.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

The Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by GML (**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5, pages 103-144**) concluded that the proposed action has been assessed as having an overall moderate impact on National Heritage Value therefore it is not considered to be a controlled action under the EPBC Act.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5, pages 103-144**

4.1.2.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

Avoidance and minimisation strategies have been considered throughout the planning and assessment phases for the FHAC that supports and protects National Heritage values. Below is an overview, while included in (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.9, pages 140-146**) is more detail on the specific avoidance and mitigation measures for the FHAC project.

Design phase

The FHAC Master Plan proposed a 57-km five day/four-night experience with four Overnight Nodes, each with roofed accommodation (hut numbers unspecified) and hiker camps with up to 12 camping platforms per hiker camp, while trail works included both new trails and widening of trails. Detailed project planning and assessments that followed investigated iteratively a number of alternative trail alignments and alternative Overnight Node locations, along with opportunities to avoid and minimise impacts. The current proposed alignment, Overnight Nodes and project scope are the result of a multi-criteria analysis that evaluated impacts to biodiversity, cultural heritage, landscape values, stakeholder and community feedback, and operational and maintenance requirements (refer Section 3.10). This change of scope:

- Removed roofed accommodation
- Removed proposed new trails
- Reduced the number of Overnight Nodes to three and the FHAC experience to a 4 day / 3 night hike.

Avoidance and minimisation strategies implemented during the design phase included:

- Alignment of FHAC route on existing walking and vehicle tracks, without widening, to reduce vegetation clearing and avoid impacts on trail construction and visitation in new, undisturbed areas.
- Limiting trail works to priority areas where trail works will improve environmental outcomes and the sustainability of trails, or where trail repairs or safety improvement are required.
- Locating Overnight Nodes in areas already used for camping, to avoid areas of high ecological and cultural heritage sensitivity, and to avoid impacts of construction and visitation in previously undisturbed locations.
- Siting of infrastructure within Overnight Nodes to ensure the retention of canopy trees and minimise clearing.

Specific measures taken to avoid impact to National Heritage values included:

- Removal of Overnight Nodes 1 Alternative, 2 Preferred and 2 Alternative to avoid loss or significant disturbances to areas of alpine peatland (i.e., Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens community).
- Removal of alternative Trail Sections 10a, 17 and Overnight Nodes 2 Preferred, 2 Alternative to avoid significant disturbance to areas of high geomorphologic significance, supporting per-glacial features.
- Removal of Tawonga Huts Overnight Node area and trail sections 8-10 to avoid impacting significant Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values
- Removal of Blairs Hut Overnight Node to avoid potential long-term disturbance impacts to breeding habitat for Gang-gang Cockatoo.
- Ensuring that the design of trail infrastructure is suited to the alpine environment and minimises the need for vegetation removal and soil disturbance, including the use of elevated boardwalks.
- Landscape Impacts
    - The project has been designed (i.e. extent, location, design, materials, colours) to limit potential impacts on the landscape. The avoidance and mitigation measures outlined in EA (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.9, pages 140-146**) detail the changes made to scope that have reduce the potential landscape impacts. One of the biggest mitigation measures has been utilising the existing trail alignment, limiting trail works to priority areas only and locating Overnight Nodes with less built infrastructure in areas already used for camping.
      The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (**Att-16_FHAC_LVIA.pdf, Sections 8.3-8.4, pages 101-102**) provided guidance for the project regarding landscape and visual impact, while the National Heritage impact assessment (**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.4, pages 139-142**) has assessed the project subsequently in terms of potential impacts on national heritage values which covers landscape impacts.
      Of the mitigation measures recommended by GML Heritage regarding how to reduce impact even further from ‘moderate’ in relation to Westons Hut, it is proposed that the seating be reduced, while the low scale maintenance of the paths in the Overnight Node will ensure this item softens in appearance over time.

Pre-construction phase

Mitigation measures to be implemented before and during construction will include pre-construction surveys covering threatened flora, threatened species fauna and trees that will provide further opportunity to avoid and minimise impacts to biodiversity values and the development of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Construction phase

Mitigation measures to be employed during construction cover materials, native vegetation, threatened fauna and waterways and wetlands and will involve on-ground implementation of measures and protocols that are outlined in the CEMP.

Materials

Material selection for the FHAC is guided by environmental sustainability, long-term durability, minimising impacts to the visual amenity and structural requirements. Material specifications for the project have been set for steel, stone, gravel and plant stock.

Native vegetation

Specific measure will be implemented during construction to minimise impacts to native vegetation and fauna habitats, and to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised impacts:

Waterways and wetlands

Sensitive construction techniques will be used for works on and around waterways and wetlands, particularly Alpine Bog systems. These will be detailed in the site-specific CEMP.

Post-construction

Post-construction mitigation measures will include:

- Rehabilitation of areas disturbed during works, in accordance with a Rehabilitation Plan. This will support the stabilisation of soils and reduce run-off and erosion.
- Implementation of a weed management strategy aimed at managing existing weed populations and preventing establishment of new weeds during construction and operation.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.9, pages 140-146**
- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.4, pages 139-142**
- **Att-16_FHAC_LVIA.pdf, Sections 8.3-8.4, pages 101-102**

4.1.2.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets are proposed.

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	Banrock Station Wetland Complex
No	No	Barmah Forest
No	No	Gunbower Forest
No	No	Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes
No	No	NSW Central Murray State Forests
No	No	Riverland
No	No	The Coorong, and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland

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 Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) or Nationally Important Wetlands within the vicinity of the FHAC.

The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (FHAC) project is located within the Victorian Alps and involves upgrades to existing walking tracks, installation of boardwalks, and development of low-impact visitor infrastructure such as campsites and shelters. The project area is situated upstream and at significant distances from several Ramsar-listed wetlands, including:

- Gippsland Lakes (approx. 50–100 km upstream)
- Barmah Forest, NSW Central Murray State Forests (approx. 150–200 km upstream)
- Gunbower Forest (approx. 200–300 km upstream)
- Hattah-Kulkyne Lakes (approx. 400–500 km upstream)
- Banrock Station Wetland Complex, Riverland, and The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland (approx. 600–700 km upstream)

Given these distances, the project is highly unlikely to result in direct impacts on any Ramsar wetlands. Furthermore, the nature and scale of the proposed works are such that indirect impacts are also considered negligible, for the following reasons:

1. No alteration to hydrological regimes

The project does not involve water extraction, diversion, or modification of natural flow paths. There is no interference with surface or groundwater systems that could affect downstream Ramsar wetlands.

2. Minimal risk of pollution or sedimentation

Construction activities are small-scale and will be managed under strict environmental controls, including erosion and sediment management plans. There is no anticipated release of pollutants or sediments that could travel downstream over such large distances.

3. No change to ecological character

The project is confined to alpine environments and does not intersect with wetland ecosystems. It will not introduce invasive species, alter habitat connectivity, or affect species dependent on Ramsar wetlands.

4. Catchment separation and buffering

The FHAC project lies within distinct sub-catchments of the Victorian Alps, which are hydrologically and ecologically buffered from the Ramsar sites listed. The long distances and intervening landscape features further reduce any potential for downstream effects.

5. Compliance with best-practice environmental management

The project will be delivered in accordance with Victorian and Commonwealth environmental standards, including the use of low-impact construction techniques and seasonal timing to avoid sensitive periods.

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
Yes	No	Argyrotegium nitidulum	Shining Cudweed
No	No	Burramys parvus	Mountain Pygmy-possum
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
Yes	No	Callocephalon fimbriatum	Gang-gang Cockatoo
No	No	Climacteris picumnus victoriae	Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern)
No	No	Colobanthus curtisiae	Curtis' Colobanth
Yes	No	Cyclodomorphus praealtus	Alpine She-oak Skink
Yes	No	Dasyurus maculatus maculatus (SE mainland population)	Spot-tailed Quoll, Spotted-tail Quoll, Tiger Quoll (southeastern mainland population)
Yes	No	Euastacus armatus	Murray Crayfish
Yes	No	Eulamprus kosciuskoi	Alpine Water Skink
Yes	No	Euphrasia crassiuscula subsp. glandulifera	Thick Eyebright
Yes	No	Euphrasia eichleri	Bogong Eyebright
Yes	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
Yes	No	Kelleria bogongensis	Kelleria
No	No	Leucochrysum albicans subsp. tricolor	Hoary Sunray, Grassland Paper-daisy
Yes	No	Liopholis guthega	Guthega Skink
Yes	No	Liopholis montana	Mountain Skink
No	Yes	Litoria spenceri	Spotted Tree Frog
No	Yes	Litoria verreauxii alpina	Alpine Tree Frog, Verreaux's Alpine Tree Frog
No	No	Lobelia gelida	
No	No	Macquaria australasica	Macquarie Perch
Yes	No	Mastacomys fuscus mordicus	Broad-toothed Rat (mainland), Tooarrana

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Neophema chrysostoma	Blue-winged Parrot
Yes	No	Petauroides volans	Greater Glider (southern and central)
Yes	No	Petaurus australis australis	Yellow-bellied Glider (south-eastern)
Yes	No	Potorous longipes	Long-footed Potoroo
Yes	No	Pseudemoia cryodroma	Alpine Bog Skink, Alpine Bog-skink
Yes	No	Pseudomys fumeus	Smoky Mouse, Konoom
No	No	Pterostylis oreophila	Blue-tongued Orchid, Kiandra Greenhood
Yes	No	Pycnoptilus floccosus	Pilotbird
No	No	Rostratula australis	Australian Painted Snipe
Yes	No	Thaumatoperla alpina	Alpine Stonefly
No	No	Thesium australe	Austral Toadflax, Toadflax
No	No	Viola improcera	Dwarf Violet

Ecological communities

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ecological community
Yes	No	Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens

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

Yes

4.1.4.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

Flora Species

Four flora species listed as threatened (Vulnerable) under the EPBC Act are considered likely to occur within the project area **(Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.2.1, page 67**), with Shining Cudweed recorded incidentally during vegetation surveys along five sections of trail.

- Shining Cudweed *Argyrotegium nitidulum*
- Thick Eyebright Euphrasia *crassiuscula* subsp. *glandulifera*
- Bogong Eyebright *Euphrasia eichleri*
- Snow Daphne *Kelleria bogongensis*

Possible disturbance of potential habitat for the four EPBC Act-listed flora species will occur along seven sections of trail.

No EPBC Act-listed flora species were recorded within Overnight Nodes during initial field surveys or targeted surveys (**Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, section 3.2, page 6; Att-23_FHAC_OV3 Flora TEO 2025.pdf, pages 1-5; Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.4.1, page 116**).

Fauna Species

The proposed action could have potential direct or indirect impact on EPBC Act-listed fauna species as follows:

- Pathogen – ie potential introduction and/or spread of disease such as Amphibian Chytrid Fungus infection (Chytridiomycosis) could have implications for amphibian species.
- Noise disturbance - Noise disturbance during construction activities from helicopters (for airlifting of materials), small machinery and tools.
- Light pollution – Artificial light pollution can impact individual animals' health and fitness, as well as alter the food sources, community structure and ecosystems.
- Increased predation – Elevations structures within treeless alpine vegetation can provide perches for predatory birds.
- Habitat modification and degradation – Impacts associated with construction and through their use.

Potential impacts have been identified for 18 of the 20 EPBC listed fauna species that were identified as potentially occurring with the FHAC project area. They include 14 species impacted by the direct loss or disturbance to known or potential habitats as a result of the proposed trail upgrades and construction of the Overnight Nodes. (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.5.5, pages 131-132**) They are:

- Gang-gang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*, which is most likely to occur in the montane environments of the West Kiew Valley, but may also utilise Sub-alpine Woodlands.
- Alpine She-oak Skink *Cyclodomorphys praealtus*, Guthega Skink *Liopholis guthega* and Mountain Skink *Liopholis montana,* which occur in the low open alpine heathlands and grasslands that are widespread in the project area.
- Alpine Water Skink *Eulamprus kosciuskoi* and Alpine Bog Skink *Pseudemoia cryodroma*, which occur near wet or damp alpine and sub-alpine habitats, such as damp grasslands and alpine peatlands.
- Broad-toothed Rat *Mastacomys fuscus*, which is most likely to occur along waterways and damp habitats, including the tributaries and bog systems on the Bogong High Plains.
- Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii,* Alpine Tree Frog *Litoria verreauxii alpina* and Alpine Stonefly *Thaumatoperla alpina*, which may occur in wetland environments such as alpine bog and small tributaries.
- Spot-tailed Quoll *Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*, Long-nosed Potoroo *Potorous longipes,* Smoky Mouse *Pseudomys fumeus* and Pilotbird *Pycnoptilus floccosus* — ground dwelling forest-dependent species that potentially occur in Montane Damp Forest in the West Kiewa valley.
- Greater Glider *Petauroides volans* and Yellow-bellied Glider *Petaurus australis australis* — arboreal mammals that were recorded in Montane Damp Forest in the West Kiewa valley.

Most of these species are expected to occur along the trail alignment rather than at Overnight Nodes, and a number of these species were recorded within the project area during site assessments, including some in close proximity to the existing track.

Habitat for two species will not be directly affected by the proposed works but may be impacted by downstream impacts if works are not managed appropriately:

- Murray Spiny Crayfish *Euastacus armatus*
- Spotted Tree Frog *Litoria spenceri*

The Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) identified 12 additional fauna and flora species as potentially occurring, or for which habitat potentially occurs in the project area. These species are considered unlikely to occur within the project area due to a lack of suitable habitat and/or because the project area is outside of their currently known distribution. Desktop assessments and detailed field surveys have been undertaken to assess the likelihood and presence of threatened species or communities occurring in the project area therefore these species have been marked as having no direct or indirect impact from the proposed action.

Fauna – Species Identified in PMST but Not Present in Project Area

- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)
  - Uses edges of freshwater and saline wetlands, especially in coastal areas.
  - No suitable habitat occurs in the project area.
- Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)
  - Primarily coastal; sometimes uses freshwater wetlands with shallow water and mud substrate.
  - No suitable habitat occurs in the project area.
- Brown Treecreeper (south-eastern) (*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*)
  - Occupies dry open woodlands with rough-bark or stringybark eucalypts and grassy understorey.
  - No suitable habitat in the project area.
- Macquarie Perch (*Macquaria australasica*)
  - Natural distribution includes upper reaches of Mitta Mitta, Ovens, Broken, Campaspe and Broken Rivers.
  - Not considered to occur in the assessment area.
- Blue-winged Parrot (*Neophema chrysostoma*)
  - Occupies coastal and near-coastal eucalypt forests, grasslands, and saltmarsh to semi-arid zones (0–1200 m ASL).
  - No suitable habitat in the assessment area.
- Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*)
  - Typically found in shallow freshwater wetlands with dense vegetation.
  - No suitable habitat identified in the assessment area.

Flora – Species Identified in PMST but Not Present in Project Area

- Curtis' Colobanth (*Colobanthus curtisiae*)
  - Recorded only from the Snowy Range north of Licola and summits of The Bluff, Mount Clear, Mount McDonald.
  - Not known from the assessment area.
- Hoary Sunray / Grassland Paper-daisy (*Leucochrysum albicans* subsp. *tricolor*)
  - Collections in the Victorian Alps likely represent hybrids with *L. albicans subsp. albicans*.
  - Not confirmed in the assessment area.
- Lobelia gelida
  - Known from Mount Buffalo, Mount Reynard, and north of Licola.
  - Not known from the assessment area.
- Blue-tongued Orchid / Kiandra Greenhood (*Pterostylis oreophila*)
  - Highly localised in north-east Victoria; grows in montane to sub-alpine bogs under *Leptospermum grandiflorum*.
  - Not known from the assessment area.
- Austral Toadflax / Toadflax (*Thesium australe*)
  - Known in Victoria only from around Wulgulmerang; thought to be extinct in most of its range.
  - Not known from the assessment area.
- Dwarf Violet (*Viola improcera*)
  - Highly restricted; known from a single locality in the ACT and two in eastern Victoria (Nunniong Plateau, Mt Useful)
  - Not known from the assessment area

Ecological communities

One EPBC threatened ecological community will be impacted by trail upgrade works. The Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens/Alpine Bog Community directly intersects, or occurs adjacent to, the FHAC trail alignment in 27 locations. The trail alignment uses existing tracks but works will be undertaken at 21 locations, solely for the long-term protection of the community and to mitigate existing usage impacts, which include track braiding and vegetation trampling, resulting from off-track walking, erosion and channelisation.

The works proposed for the FHAC will result in the temporary disturbance of up to 0.074 ha of this community for the installation of elevated boardwalks and stepping stones over the existing trail. This area accounts for the installation of infrastructure and potential disturbance resulting from foot traffic and the laydown of materials during construction; although the boardwalks and stepping stones will be 'built from the track' as far as possible. The area of permanent loss or modification is much smaller (0.016 ha), which includes minor permanent losses for boardwalk footings and placement of stepping stones, and the potential effects of shading from the boardwalk panels. The boardwalks will allow light, water and snow melt to penetrate through to ground and are elevated to enable vegetation to growth beneath the boardwalk; however, it is reasonable to expect that there may be some ongoing influence of shading that may alter vegetation structure or composition beneath the boardwalk.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.4.1, page 116 and Section 7.5.5, pages 131-132**
- **Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.2.1, page 67 and Section 3.2, page 61**
- **Att-23_FHAC_OV3 Flora TEO 2025.pdf, pages 1-5**

4.1.4.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

No

4.1.4.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

The Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 – Matters of National Environmental Significance provide guidance on matters which are likely to have a significant impact on threatened species and ecological communities. These include whether there is a real chance or possibility the action will lead to a long-term decrease in the size of a population, reduce the area of occupancy, fragment an existing population, adversely affect habitat critical to survival, or interfere with the recovery of the species or community.

Following assessment of the proposed action with reference to the listed threatened species and ecological communities, the context and intensity of the proposed works, and the guidance of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's Significant Impact Guidelines, the activity has been found not likely to cause a significant impact on any listed threatened species or ecological communities.

The Significant Impact Assessment undertaken for this project is included in **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf – Appendix 3, pages 172-218**.

EPBC Act-listed Species

The project has been assessed as having the potential to impact on 4 threatened flora species and threatened fauna species, either directly or indirectly. Assessments against the Significant Impact Criteria have been undertaken for the species potentially impacted (see Appendix 5). This assessment has not identified significant impact.

In relation to flora the extent of habitat disturbance is considered relatively low (1.17-1.27 ha), with the actual area of loss likely to be much smaller than this. The location for the works proposed in areas where the EPBC-listed species may occur will be limited to the edges of the existing tracks. Given this, the likelihood that trail works will impact high-quality habitat, large numbers of individuals, or lead to habitat degradation is low. Further utilising micro-siting wherever possible for trail works, structures, and construction laydown areas, will further avoid impacting populations of these species.

Trail works are confined to existing disturbed trails and involve low-impact treatments (e.g., elevated boardwalks, stepping stones, stone pitching) designed to protect and stabilise sensitive areas and reduce ongoing trampling and erosion.

In relation to fauna potential impacts have been identified for 18 EPBC Act-listed species, including 14 species impacted by the direct loss or disturbance to known or potential habitats as a result of the proposed trail upgrades and construction of the Overnight Nodes. Most of the species are expected to occur along the trail alignment rather than at Overnight Nodes. The total area of habitat disturbance for the species is relatively small (0.03 – 2.75 ha) and are less than 1% on the known Area of Occupancy for all species. Given the relatively small areas of disturbance, most of which will occur along existing tracks, it is not expected that the project would have a significant impact on these species.

Pre-construction surveys will ensure species are not injured or disturbed during works, while most impacts to species can be avoided by micro-siting the placement of trail structures and visitor facilities and implementing best-practice construction management techniques.

As for the two species listed under the Migratory Schedule of the EPBC Act (and also listed as threatened under the EPBC Act) that are considered likely to occur within the project area — Latham's Snipe and the White-throated Needletail, the project area is not known to support important habitat for either of these species.

EPBC Act-listed Ecological Communities

The proposed FHAC utilises existing tracks, which intersect the Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens community in 27 locations. Trail works will be undertaken at 21 of these locations, primarily involving the installation of boardwalks or stepping stones over the existing trail footprint, where usage of the trail and off-track walking has caused track braiding or erosion. The proposed FHAC has the potential to result in the temporary disturbance of up to 0.074 ha of the Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens community during construction, and permanent loss of up to 0.016 ha (total area Victoria is estimated at 4372 ha). The estimated losses account for the installation of infrastructure (e.g., boardwalk footings), potential effects of shading, and foot traffic during construction; however, actual losses are likely to be less than this and will be limited to the edges of existing tracks. The works will, therefore, not reduce the overall extent of the ecological community.

All potential losses will occur at the edges of existing tracks and will therefore, not lead to further fragmentation of the community. The proposed works are intended to limit vegetation damage, and in the long-term will contribute to remediation. Soil disturbance will be kept to the minimum required for infrastructure installation; screw pile footings, driven to refusal, will be used for elevated boardwalks (if screw piles can't be used concrete footings may be required) and placement of stepping stones will require only minor excavation works to embed the rock in the trail surface.

Sediment and erosion controls will be in-place during all works within or near the community. Trail infrastructure is limited to localised areas where existing impacts are evident and will not involve substantial alteration of surface water drainage patterns, nor will it result in changes in ground water.

The elevated boardwalks may have some shading effect; however, the steel mesh will allow light, water and snowmelt to penetrate and flow beneath, and will ultimately allow vegetation growth beneath the structure. The effects of shading, if any, are likely to be minimal and localised. Overall, the works are unlikely to result in a substantial negative change to the species composition or structure of the ecological community, or the loss of functionally important species.

There is a small risk that construction activity may facilitate the introduction or spread of weeds or pathogens via machinery, footwear or construction materials. Strict hygiene controls will be implemented as part of a Construction Environment Management Plan to reduce this risk.

The boardwalks will be constructed of mild steel, to avoid potential impacts of heavy metal soil contamination from galvanised steel.

Supporting documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf – Appendix 3, pages 172-218**

4.1.4.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.4.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

A comprehensive self-assessment under the EPBC Act Significant Impact Guidelines (Matters of National Environmental Significance) was undertaken for all relevant MNES, including:

- Listed Ecological Communities
  - Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens (Endangered)
- Listed Threatened Flora Species
  - *Argyrotegium nitidulum* (Shining Cudweed)
  - *Euphrasia crassiuscula* subsp. *glandulifera* (Thick Eyebright)
  - *Euphrasia eichleri* (Bogong Eyebright)
  - *Kelleria bogongensis* (Snow Daphne)
- Listed Threatened Fauna Species
  - *Burramys parvus* (Mountain Pygmy Possum)
  - *Callocephalon fimbriatum* (Gang-gang Cockatoo)
  - *Cyclodomorphys praealtus* (Alpine She-oak Skink)
  - *Dasyurus maculatus maculatus* (Spot-tailed Quoll)
  - *Euastacus armatus* (Murray Spiny Crayfish)
  - *Eulamprus kosciuskoi* (Alpine Water Skink)
  - *Gallinago hardwickii* (Latham's Snipe)
  - *Hirundapus caudacutus* (White-throated Needletail)
  - *Liopholis guthega* (Guthega Skink)
  - *Liopholis montana* (Mountain Skink)
  - *Litoria spenceri* (Spotted Tree Frog)
  - *Litoria verreauxii alpina* (Alpine Tree Frog)
  - *Mastacomys fuscus mordicus* (Broad-toothed Rat)
  - *Petauroides volans* (Greater Glider)
  - *Petaurus australis australis* (Yellow-bellied Glider (South-eastern))
  - *Potorous longipes* (Long-footed Potoroo)
  - *Pseudemoia cryodroma* (Alpine Bog Skink)
  - *Pseudomys fumeus* (Smoky Mouse)
  - *Pycnoptilus floccosus* (Pilotbird)
  - *Thaumatoperla alpina* (Alpine Stonefly)

Assessment Outcome:

- The assessment applied the EPBC Act Significant Impact Criteria for each MNES (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf – Appendix 3, pages 172-218f; Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.3, pages 132-138**).
- None of the criteria were met for any listed ecological community or species.
- Key reasons include:
  - Scale and nature of impact: Disturbance is small and localised, confined to existing trails and degraded areas. Permanent loss is limited to minor infrastructure footprints (e.g., boardwalk footings, stepping stones).
  - Avoidance and minimisation: High-value areas were excluded from scope; alternative trail sections and nodes with greater ecological risk were removed.
  - Mitigation measures: Elevated structures allow light and water penetration; drainage works maintain natural hydrology; strict environmental controls will prevent indirect impacts such as erosion or altered water flow.
  - Species resilience and recovery: Disturbed areas will be rehabilitated, and species are expected to re-occupy habitats post-construction.
  - No fragmentation or disruption of ecological function: Works will not isolate populations or significantly modify habitat critical to survival.

Conclusion:
Based on the Significant Impact Assessments (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf – Appendix 3, pages 172-218**), the proposed action does not trigger a significant impact on any Matter of National Environmental Significance. Therefore, the action is not considered a controlled action under the EPBC Act.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf – Appendix 3, pages 172-218**

- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.3, pages 132-138**

4.1.4.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

Avoidance and minimisation strategies have been considered throughout the planning and assessment phases for the FHAC. Below is an overview, while included in (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.9, pages 140-146**) is more detail on the specific avoidance and mitigation measures for the FHAC project.

Design phase

The FHAC Master Plan proposed a 57-km five day/four-night experience with four Overnight Nodes, each with roofed accommodation (hut numbers unspecified) and hiker camps with up to 12 camping platforms per hiker camp, while trail works included both new trails and widening of trails. Detailed project planning and assessments that followed investigated iteratively a number of alternative trail alignments and alternative Overnight Node locations, along with opportunities to avoid and minimise impacts. The current proposed alignment, Overnight Nodes and project scope are the result of a multi-criteria analysis that evaluated impacts to biodiversity, cultural heritage, stakeholder and community feedback, and operational and maintenance requirements (refer Section 3.10). This change of scope:

- Removed roofed accommodation
- Removed proposed new trails
- Reduced the number of Overnight Nodes to three and the FHAC experience to a 4 day / 3 night hike.

Avoidance and minimisation strategies implemented during the design phase included:

- Alignment of FHAC route on existing walking and vehicle tracks, without widening, to reduce vegetation clearing and avoid impacts on trail construction and visitation in new, undisturbed areas.
- Limiting trail works to priority areas where trail works will improve environmental outcomes and the sustainability of trails, or where trail repairs or safety improvement are required.
- Locating Overnight Nodes in areas already used for camping, to avoid areas of high ecological and cultural heritage sensitivity, and to avoid impacts of construction and visitation in previously undisturbed locations.
- Siting of infrastructure within Overnight Nodes to ensure the retention of canopy trees and minimise clearing.

Specific measures taken to avoid impact to specific values included:

- Removal of Overnight Nodes 1 Alternative, 2 Preferred and 2 Alternative to avoid loss or significant disturbances to areas of alpine peatland (i.e., Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens community).
- Removal of alternative Trail Sections 10a, 17 and Overnight Nodes 2 Preferred, 2 Alternative to avoid significant disturbance to areas of high geomorphologic significance, supporting per-glacial features.
- Removal of Tawonga Huts Overnight Node area and trail 8-10 to avoid impacting significant Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values
- Removal of Blairs Hut Overnight Node to avoid potential long-term disturbance impacts to breeding habitat for Gang-gang Cockatoo.
- Ensuring that the design of trail infrastructure is suited to the alpine environment and minimises the need for vegetation removal and soil disturbance, including the use of elevated boardwalks.

Pre-construction phase

Mitigation measures to be implemented before and during construction will include pre-construction surveys covering threatened flora, threatened species fauna and trees that will provide further opportunity to avoid and minimise impacts to biodiversity values and the development of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Construction phase

Mitigation measures to be employed during construction cover materials, native vegetation, threatened fauna and waterways and wetlands and will involve on-ground implementation of measures and protocols that are outlined in the CEMP.

Materials

Material selection for the FHAC is guided by environmental sustainability, long-term durability and structural requirements. Material specifications for the project have been set for steel, stone and plant stock.

Native vegetation

Specific measure will be implemented during construction to minimise impacts to native vegetation and fauna habitats, and to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised impacts:

Threatened fauna

A site-specific Fauna Management Plan will be implemented during construction to ensure that the risks to threatened fauna species from death and/or injury resulting from works is minimised.

Waterways and wetlands

Sensitive construction techniques will be used for works on and around waterways and wetlands, particularly Alpine Bog systems. These will be detailed in the site-specific CEMP.

Post-construction

Post-construction mitigation measures will include:

- Rehabilitation of areas disturbed during works, in accordance with a Rehabilitation Plan. This will support the stabilisation of soils and reduce run-off and erosion.
- Implementation of a weed management strategy aimed at managing existing weed populations and preventing establishment of new weeds during construction and operation.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.9, pages 140-146**

4.1.4.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets are proposed.

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
Yes		Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper
Yes		Apus pacificus	Fork-tailed Swift
Yes		Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Yes		Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
Yes		Calidris melanotos	Pectoral Sandpiper
Yes	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
Yes	No	Hirundapus caudacutus	White-throated Needletail
Yes		Motacilla flava	Yellow Wagtail

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

Yes

4.1.5.2 Briefly describe why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on these protected matters. *

Two species listed under the Migratory Schedule of the EPBC Act are considered likely to occur within the project area — Latham's Snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) and the White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*). (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 4.4.2, pages 63-68)** Both species are also listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. While the project area is not known to support important habitat for either species, the proposed action may still result in direct and indirect impacts.

Direct Impacts

- Habitat disturbance: For Latham's Snipe, potential habitat occurs in alpine bogs and drainage lines within Trail Sections 6 and 7. Works in these areas include construction of boardwalks and stepping stones, which will result in disturbance of up to 0.09 ha of potential habitat. Although the actual area of disturbance will be less, this represents a direct physical impact on habitat that may be used by the species. **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.5, pages 129-135**
- Presence and activity: Construction activities and increased human presence during and after the works may directly disturb individuals of either species if present, particularly during migration or foraging periods.

Indirect Impacts

- Habitat fragmentation and alteration: Even minor infrastructure can alter the structure and connectivity of habitat, potentially affecting the suitability of the area for migratory species.
- Changes in ecological conditions: The introduction of boardwalks and increased foot traffic may lead to subtle changes in vegetation, soil compaction, and microclimate, which could indirectly affect habitat quality.
- Disturbance from increased human activity: Ongoing recreational use of the upgraded trail may result in increased noise and movement, which could indirectly affect migratory species by altering their behaviour or deterring use of the area. (**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.2, pages 105-131)**

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 4.4.2, pages 63-68; Section 7.5, pages 129-135**
- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.2, pages 105-131**

4.1.5.4 Do you consider this likely direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact? *

No

4.1.5.6 Describe why you do not consider this to be a Significant Impact. *

Two migratory species listed under the EPBC Act are considered likely to occur within the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (FHAC) project area: the White-throated Needletail (Hirundapus caudacutus) and Latham's Snipe (Gallinago hardwickii). Both species are also listed as threatened under the EPBC Act.

White-throated Needletail

The White-throated Needletail is an almost exclusively aerial species in Australia, typically flying at altitudes between 1 and 1000 metres, and occasionally exceeding 1800 metres above ground level. It does not rely on terrestrial habitat for nesting or foraging within Australia, and instead feeds on airborne insects while in flight.

The FHAC project involves ground-level infrastructure such as walking track upgrades, boardwalks, and low-impact visitor facilities. There are no components of the proposed action that encroach significantly on the aerial environment used by the White-throated Needletail. Additionally, the project area is not known to support important habitat for this species. As such, the proposed action is not expected to result in any direct or indirect impacts that would affect the species' behaviour, habitat availability, or migratory patterns. Therefore, it is not considered to have a significant impact under the EPBC Act.

Latham's Snipe

Latham's Snipe is a ground-dwelling migratory shorebird that uses wetland habitats for foraging and roosting during its non-breeding season in Australia. The Bogong High Plains supports suitable roosting and foraging habitat for the species, but is not known to support important habitat.

Within the FHAC project area, potential habitat for Latham's Snipe occurs in alpine bogs and riparian areas, particularly in Trail Sections 6 and 7. These areas include grasses, sedges, and rushes adjacent to alpine bogs and drainage lines (**Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.7.2, page 127)**. Works in these areas involve the installation of boardwalks and stepping stones, which are designed to reduce existing trail impacts. These works will result in the disturbance of up to 0.09 ha of potential habitat, although the actual area of disturbance is expected to be significantly less.

The Area of Occupancy for Latham's Snipe is estimated at 13,000 km², and the proposed works will impact a maximum of 0.0009 km² of potential habitat. This area is considered negligible in the broader landscape context, and is not expected to alter the potential use of habitats or movement patterns of Latham's Snipe in the Victorian Alps. Furthermore, as the species breeds exclusively in the northern hemisphere, the project will not disrupt its breeding cycle.

A Significant Impact Assessment has been prepared for Latham's Snipe and is provided in **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf** (**Appendix 3, Pages 212-213)**. This assessment concludes that it is unlikely that the proposed action will result in a significant impact on the species. (**Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.2-5.3, pages 105-138)**

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf Appendix 3, Pages 212-213**
- **Att-15_FHAC_Heritage Impact Assessment.pdf, Section 5.2-5.3, pages 105-138**
- **Att-22_FHAC_EVA Abzeco 2025.pdf, Section 3.7.2, page 127**

4.1.5.7 Do you think your proposed action is a controlled action? *

No

4.1.5.9 Please elaborate why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action. *

Given the absence of important habitat, the negligible scale of disturbance, and the lack of significant impact on the ecological behaviour or life cycle of either species, the FHAC project is not considered to be a controlled action under the EPBC Act in relation to migratory species.

4.1.5.10 Please describe any avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action and attach any supporting documentation for these avoidance and mitigation measures. *

Avoidance and minimisation strategies have been considered throughout the planning and assessment phases for the FHAC. Below is an overview, while included in (**Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.9, pages 140-146**) is more detail on the specific avoidance and mitigation measures for the FHAC project.

Design phase

The FHAC Master Plan proposed a 57-km five day/four-night experience with four Overnight Nodes, each with roofed accommodation (hut numbers unspecified) and hiker camps with up to 12 camping platforms per hiker camp, while trail works included both new trails and widening of trails. Detailed project planning and assessments that followed investigated iteratively a number of alternative trail alignments and alternative Overnight Node locations, along with opportunities to avoid and minimise impacts. The current proposed alignment, Overnight Nodes and project scope are the result of a multi-criteria analysis that evaluated impacts to biodiversity, cultural heritage, stakeholder and community feedback, and operational and maintenance requirements (refer Section 3.10). This change of scope:

- Removed roofed accommodation
- Removed proposed new trails
- Reduced the number of Overnight Nodes to three and the FHAC experience to a 4 day / 3 night hike.

Avoidance and minimisation strategies implemented during the design phase included:

- Alignment of FHAC route on existing walking and vehicle tracks, without widening, to reduce vegetation clearing and avoid impacts on trail construction and visitation in new, undisturbed areas.
- Limiting trail works to priority areas where trail works will improve environmental outcomes and the sustainability of trails, or where trail repairs or safety improvement are required.
- Locating Overnight Nodes in areas already used for camping, to avoid areas of high ecological and cultural heritage sensitivity, and to avoid impacts of construction and visitation in previously undisturbed locations.
- Siting of infrastructure within Overnight Nodes to ensure the retention of canopy trees and minimise clearing.

Specific measures taken to avoid impact to specific values included:

- Removal of Overnight Nodes 1 Alternative, 2 Preferred and 2 Alternative to avoid loss or significant disturbances to areas of alpine peatland (i.e., Alpine Sphagnum Bogs and Associated Fens community).
- Removal of alternative Trail Sections 10a, 17 and Overnight Nodes 2 Preferred, 2 Alternative to avoid significant disturbance to areas of high geomorphologic significance, supporting per-glacial features.
- Removal of Tawonga Huts Overnight Node area and trail 8-10 to avoid impacting significant Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Values
- Removal of Blairs Hut Overnight Node to avoid potential long-term disturbance impacts to breeding habitat for Gang-gang Cockatoo.
- Ensuring that the design of trail infrastructure is suited to the alpine environment and minimises the need for vegetation removal and soil disturbance, including the use of elevated boardwalks.

Pre-construction phase

Mitigation measures to be implemented before and during construction will include pre-construction surveys covering threatened flora, threatened species fauna and trees that will provide further opportunity to avoid and minimise impacts to biodiversity values and the development of a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Construction phase

Mitigation measures to be employed during construction cover materials, native vegetation, threatened fauna and waterways and wetlands and will involve on-ground implementation of measures and protocols that are outlined in the CEMP.

Materials

Material selection for the FHAC is guided by environmental sustainability, long-term durability and structural requirements. Material specifications for the project have been set for steel, stone and plant stock.

Native vegetation

Specific measure will be implemented during construction to minimise impacts to native vegetation and fauna habitats, and to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised impacts:

Threatened fauna

A site-specific Fauna Management Plan will be implemented during construction to ensure that the risks to threatened fauna species from death and/or injury resulting from works is minimised.

Waterways and wetlands

Sensitive construction techniques will be used for works on and around waterways and wetlands, particularly Alpine Bog systems. These will be detailed in the site-specific CEMP.

Post-construction

Post-construction mitigation measures will include:

- Rehabilitation of areas disturbed during works, in accordance with a Rehabilitation Plan. This will support the stabilisation of soils and reduce run-off and erosion.
- Implementation of a weed management strategy aimed at managing existing weed populations and preventing establishment of new weeds during construction and operation.

Supporting Documentation:

- **Att-10_FHAC_Environmental Assessment Report.pdf, Section 7.9, pages 140-146**

4.1.5.11 Please describe any proposed offsets and attach any supporting documentation relevant to these measures. *

No offsets are proposed.

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. *

No nuclear actions are associated with the proposed works.

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.

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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 proposed action does not take place in or near 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 proposed action does not take place in or near the Great Barrier Reef.

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 associated with large coal mining development or coal seam gas.

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.

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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 does not take place in or adjacent to 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.

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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. *

The proposed action is not associated with Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas.

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. *

Parks Victoria undertook an extended design and planning process to develop the current proposal. Several options were considered to avoid and mitigate impacts and were incorporated into the final design. The Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing Master Plan (2018) originally proposed four overnight nodes located near Cope Hut, Tawonga Huts, Blairs Hut, and close to Mount Feathertop. Following community consultation and further environmental and heritage assessment, the number of overnight nodes was reduced to three, and their locations were refined to avoid sensitive cultural and environmental areas.

Other considerations the lead to scope change were:

- Relocation of overnight nodes away from areas of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity and historic significance.
- Removal of operated huts and commercial infrastructure from the scope.
- Reduction in the scale and footprint of proposed infrastructure.

Importantly, the final proposed project uses exclusively existing trails. All new trail construction originally proposed has been removed from the scope to avoid impacts on sensitive environments and heritage values.

Alternatives that were not adopted were excluded due to their potential to cause greater environmental or heritage impacts, or because they conflicted with Parks Victoria’s management objectives and community feedback. For example, the original proposal to include operated huts and commercial infrastructure was removed to preserve the remote and natural character of the landscape. Similarly, overnight nodes near Tawonga Huts and Blairs Hut were excluded due to their proximity to sensitive heritage sites. The final design reflects a balance between providing improved visitor experiences and minimising impacts on the Cultural, environmental, landscape and Heritage values of the Australian Alps.

5. Lodgement

5.1 Attachments

1.2.1 Overview of the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf Location Maps of the project area.	23/09/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-02_FHAC_Project Plan.pdf The plan shows overview of the project.	29/07/2025	No	High
#3.	Document	Att-03_FHAC_DrawingPlans.pdf Plans for the project.	23/01/2025	No	High
#4.	Document	Att-04_FHAC_CrownFolio.pdf Crown Allotment 9A Parish of Darbalang.	18/09/2025	No	High
#5.	Document	Att-05_FHAC_Avoidance-Disturbance_Areas.pdf Maps indicating avoidance and disturbance areas of the project	24/09/2025	No	High
#6.	Document	Att-06_FHAC_Photos.pdf Photos from project site	07/07/2024	No	High
#7.	Document	Att-07_High_Country_Huts_Location.pdf Location of High Country Huts	11/08/2025	No	High
#8.	Document	Att-08_FHAC_Master_Plan.pdf Master Plan for Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing.	04/03/2022	No	High
#9.	Document	Att-09_FHAC_Business Case.pdf Business Case for Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing	04/03/2021	No	High
#10.	Document	Att-17_FHAC_HighCountryHutsScope.pdf Scope of works for High Country Huts	04/08/2025	No	High

1.2.6 Commonwealth or state legislation, planning frameworks or policy documents that are relevant to the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18890_APPROVED.pdf Approved CHMP - note the appendices are attachments to the application	14/10/2025	Yes	High
#3.	Document	Att-12_FHAC_CHMP_18890_Redacted.pdf Redacted CHMP	14/09/2025	No	High
#4.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	Yes	High
#5.	Document	Att-17_FHAC_HighCountryHutsScope.pdf Scope of works for High Country Huts	04/08/2025	No	High
#6.	Document	Att-20_Alpine NP - Management Plan.pdf Alpine National Park Maintenance Plan	14/08/2016	No	High

1.2.7 Public consultation regarding the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-08_FHAC_Master_Plan.pdf Master Plan for Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing.	04/03/2022	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#3.	Document	Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18890_APPROVED.pdf Approved CHMP - note the appendices are attachments to the application	14/10/2025	Yes	High
#4.	Document	Att-19_FHAC_Community-Cons_2023.pdf Community consultation report summarising, community engagement which was undertaken on the draft concept designs for the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing.	29/01/2023	No	High

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-18_GANP_Hut Maintenance Manual.pdf Great Alpine National Park hut Maintenance Manual	01/10/2022	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-20_Alpine NP - Management Plan.pdf Alpine National Park Maintenance Plan	14/08/2016	No	High

2.2.5 Tenure of the action area relevant to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf Location Maps of the project area.	23/09/2025	No	High

3.1.1 Current condition of the project area's environment

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-01_FHAC_Location_Maps.pdf Location Maps of the project area.	23/09/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-04_FHAC_CrownFolio.pdf Crown Allotment 9A Parish of Darbalang.	18/09/2025	No	High
#3.	Document	Att-20_Alpine NP - Management Plan.pdf Alpine National Park Maintenance Plan	14/08/2016	No	High

3.1.2 Existing or proposed uses for the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-20_Alpine NP - Management Plan.pdf Alpine National Park Maintenance Plan	14/08/2016	No	High

3.1.3 Natural features, important or unique values that applies to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-07_High_Country_Huts_Location.pdf Location of High Country Huts	11/08/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#3.	Document	Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18890_APPROVED.pdf Approved CHMP - note the appendices are attachments to the application	14/10/2025	Yes	High
#4.	Document	Att-13_FHAC_HAA_Survey.pdf Historical Archaeological Assessment to report if the proposed works will impact any historical archaeological values within the study area.	09/10/2023	No	High
#5.	Document	Att-14_FHAC_HAA_Summary.pdf Summary of the Historical Archaeological Report	09/10/2023	No	High
#6.	Document	Att-16_FHAC_LVIA.pdf Land and Visual Impact Assessment provide the Final Landscape LVIA in relation to the final design of the proposed new infrastructure	04/03/2025	No	High
#7.	Document	Att-25_FHAC_Lidar Interpretation.pdf Lidar interpretation digital elevations	09/02/2024	No	High
#8.	Document	Att-26_Geomorphology_Interp.pdf Geomorphology assesment of the proposed camping nodes and walking tracks.	19/04/2023	No	High

3.1.4 Gradient relevant to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-24_FHAC_Geotech_Risk_2025.pdf Geotech Risk Report	23/07/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-25_FHAC_Lidar Interpretation.pdf Lidar interpretation digital elevations	09/02/2024	No	High
#3.	Document	Att-26_Geomorphology_Interp.pdf Geomorphology assesment of the proposed camping nodes and walking tracks.	19/04/2023	No	High

3.2.1 Flora and fauna within the affected area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-21_FHAC_EVA-Abzeco-2021.pdf This preliminary environmental assessment identified natural flora, fauna and	29/09/2021	No	High

		geomorphological values that may be impacted by the proposed FHAC.			
#3.	Document	Att-22_FHAC_EVA_Abzeco_2025.pdf This FHAC Environmental Values Assessment (EVA) report includes consideration of the areas of existing track assessed in 2020/2021	10/04/2025	No	High
#4.	Document	Att-23_FHAC_OV3-Flora_TEO_2025.pdf This short report outlines the results of a vegetation survey at the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (	06/04/2025	No	High

3.2.2 Vegetation within the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-22_FHAC_EVA_Abzeco_2025.pdf This FHAC Environmental Values Assessment (EVA) report includes consideration of the areas of existing track assessed in 2020/2021	10/04/2025	No	High

3.3.1 Commonwealth heritage places overseas or other places that apply to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	Yes	High

3.3.2 Indigenous heritage values that apply to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-11_FHAC_CHMP_18890_APPROVED.pdf Approved CHMP - note the appendices are attachments to the application	14/10/2025	Yes	High
#2.	Document	Att-12_FHAC_CHMP_18890_Redacted.pdf Redacted CHMP	14/09/2025	No	High

3.4.1 Hydrology characteristics that apply to the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-22_FHAC_EVA_Abzeco_2025.pdf This FHAC Environmental Values Assessment (EVA) report includes	10/04/2025	No	High

consideration of the areas of existing track assessed in 2020/2021

4.1.2.2 (National Heritage) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	No	High

4.1.2.6 (National Heritage) Why you do not consider the direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	Yes	High

4.1.2.9 (National Heritage) Why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	Yes	High

4.1.2.10 (National Heritage) Avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	Yes	High
#3.	Document	Att-16_FHAC_LVIA.pdf Land and Visual Impact Assessment provide the Final Landscape LVIA in relation to the final design of the proposed new infrastructure	04/03/2025	No	High

4.1.4.2 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-22_FHAC_EVA_Abzeco_2025.pdf This FHAC Environmental Values Assessment (EVA) report includes	10/04/2025	No	High

		consideration of the areas of existing track assessed in 2020/2021			
#3.	Document	Att-23_FHAC_OV3-Flora_TEO_2025.pdf This short report outlines the results of a vegetation survey at the Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing (	06/04/2025	No	High

4.1.4.6 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why you do not consider the direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High

4.1.4.9 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Why you do not think your proposed action is a controlled action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	Yes	High

4.1.4.10 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High

4.1.5.2 (Migratory Species) Why your action has a direct and/or indirect impact on the identified protected matters

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area	29/09/2025	Yes	High

4.1.5.6 (Migratory Species) Why you do not consider the direct and/or indirect impact to be a Significant Impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High
#2.	Document	Att-15_FHAC Heritage Impact Assessment_2025.pdf	29/09/2025	Yes	High

Heritage Impact Assessment of the project area					
#3.	Document	Att-22_FHAC_EVA_Abzeco_2025.pdf This FHAC Environmental Values Assessment (EVA) report includes consideration of the areas of existing track assessed in 2020/2021	10/04/2025	No	High

4.1.5.10 (Migratory Species) Avoidance or mitigation measures proposed for this action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	Att-10_FHAC Environmental Assessment Report_PV_FINAL_Oct2025.pdf Environmental Impact Assessment Report	03/10/2025	No	High

5.2 Declarations

Completed Referring party's declaration

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

ABN/ACN	95337637697
Organisation name	PARKS VICTORIA
Organisation address	300 La Trobe Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000
Representative's name	Luiz Dias
Representative's job title	Senior Project Manager
Phone	03 8427 3022
Email	fhac@parks.vic.gov.au
Address	300 La Trobe 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, **Luiz Dias of PARKS VICTORIA**, 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.

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.

Same as Referring party information.

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

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

☑ I, **Luiz Dias of PARKS VICTORIA**, 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. *

☑ I, **Luiz Dias of PARKS VICTORIA**, the Person proposing the action, consent to the designation of **Luiz Dias of PARKS VICTORIA** 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.

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.

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

- [x] Check this box to indicate you have read the referral form. *

- [x] Check this box to confirm these are the correct identification details. *

- [x] I, **Luiz Dias of PARKS VICTORIA**, 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.