

25 August 2025



Department of
Transport and Main Roads

Dear [REDACTED]
Branch Head
Queensland Assessments Branch
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

RE: Variation to proposal - Warrego Highway Mount Crosby Road Interchange

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) (The Proponent) is proposing to upgrade the Warrego Highway (Ipswich -Toowoomba) and Mount Crosby Road Interchange (the Proposed action). The Proposed action seeks to alleviate traffic and improve road safety at the interchange. The Proposed action is located within the Ipswich City Council local government area.

The Warrego Highway is a nationally important east-west freight route that forms part of the National Land Transport Network and provides a vital link for Ipswich, Toowoomba and surrounding communities. Mount Crosby Road connects to the Warrego Highway at the boundary of Chuwar, Karalee and North Tivoli and forms a strategically important road corridor, providing a crucial north-south connection to the Ipswich town centre as well as a connection to the national highway network and greater Brisbane communities.

The Proposed action was referred to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) on 19 October 2023 (EPBC 2023/09701) for assessment of Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The Proposed action was determined to be a 'Controlled Action' on 7 March 2024 to be assessed by Preliminary Documentation for controlling provisions: Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 & 18A).

In response to DCCEEW's decision notice and request for information (RFI) received on 27 March 2024, a Preliminary Documentation Report is being prepared to assess potential impacts that may occur as a result of the proposed action on MNES.

1.2 Request for variation requirements

The proponent is requesting a variation to the Proposed action in accordance with Section 5.08 of the EPBC Regulations and DCCEEW's recommendation (via a meeting held on 24 June 2025). Under subsection 156A(1) of the EPBC Act, the Project's request for variation must be made in writing, provided to the department (through the EPBC Act Business Portal), and include the following:

- a. details of the proposed variation to the action;
- b. the reasons for the proposed variation;
- c. how the impacts of the proposed variation on matters of national environmental significance compare with those of the original proposal;

Telephone +[REDACTED]
Website www.tmr.qld.gov.au
Email [REDACTED]
ABN 39 407 690 291

- d. if applicable, the impacts of the proposed variation on matters of national environmental significance not considered in the referral or assessment of the original proposal;
- e. if applicable, alternatives, mitigation measures and offsets to compensate for additional impacts on matters of national environmental significance.

This letter fulfils these requirements.

2.0 Proposed variation

2.1 Details of the proposed variation to the action

The Proposed action will involve an upgrade of the Mount Crosby Road Interchange and Warrego Highway. This will alleviate traffic congestion and interchange queuing, improve safety and network efficiency.

The Proposed action was referred to the DCCEEW at the Concept design stage, when the Project footprint and description were understood at a high level, and the MNES values were well understood. The Project is currently at the 85% Detailed design stage, with a design freeze on the Project boundary.

Comparison of the Disturbance footprints is presented in Figure 1, detailing EPBC Referral 2023/09701 footprint and the Project footprint (variation to proposal).

The key features of the Proposed action include:

- Improvement and rationalisation of existing entry and exit ramps onto the Warrego Highway
- Provision of new entry and exit ramps onto and off the Warrego Highway via a new service road
- Improvements to roundabout approach roads
- New active travel pathways on Moggill Pocket Arterial Road and new Southern Service Road
- Upgrades to the existing pathway on Mount Crosby Road and Junction Road to shared pathway standards to achieve Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) compliance
- Construction of a new bridge on Moggill Pocket Arterial Road, over the Warrego Highway
- Upgrades to nearby state and locally maintained intersections as required
- Provision of fauna under and overpasses to facilitate fauna movement across the Warrego Highway
- Installation of noise barriers along Coal Road and Mount Crosby Road
- Construction of new and upgrades to existing drainage infrastructure
- Relocation or protection of existing public utility plant (PUP) to facilitate upgrade works.

The Project footprint includes temporary impact areas that will be rehabilitated to support connectivity for MNES values, such as koala and greater glider, to continue traversing across the upgraded roads via fauna furniture, such as glider poles and horizontal poles in culverts, which will connect to habitat areas outside the Project footprint via revegetation containing koala tree species. It is expected that construction of the Proposed action will commence in Q4 of 2026 and the operation phase will commence by Q4 2035. The indicative duration of active construction works is up to five years, which will be completed in stages across the ten-year construction phase.

Design changes to the Proposed action since the EPBC referral are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Comparison of Project Infrastructure requirements - referral and variation application

Infrastructure	Referral application	Variation application
Highway and Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bridge carrying a two-lane two-way road and a new shared path over the Warrego Highway connecting to Junction and Rea Roads • New westbound service road connecting the existing roundabout at Mount Crosby Road to the new arterial road and the new eastbound on-ramp to the Warrego Highway • Widening the roundabout on Mount Crosby Road south of the Warrego Highway to a two-lane circulatory carriageway on the northern half of the roundabout • Shared path provided on the south side of the service road • Connection to the new shared path on the west side of the new arterial road via a signalised crossing integrated with the signalised intersection of the westbound off-ramp and new arterial road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrades to nearby state and locally maintained intersections as required.
Environmental and Fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of temporary construction compounds and laydowns • Demolition of various components of the existing alignment to accommodate new works • Landscape and rehabilitation works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of fauna under and overpasses to facilitate fauna movement across the Warrego Highway
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No proposed upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of noise barriers along Coal Road and Mount Crosby Road • Installation of noise barriers along the new Eastbound entry ramp and Westbound exit ramp
Drainage and Utility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocation of existing public utility plant (PUP) to facilitate upgrade works. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of new and upgrades to existing drainage infrastructure • Relocation or protection of existing public utility plant (PUP) to facilitate upgrade works.
Additional infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No proposed upgrades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish passage and fauna infrastructure within new culverts. • New variable message signs (VMS) at either end of the project works (see 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4).



Figure 1 Disturbance Footprint Comparison



AECOM

0 80 160 m

- State controlled roads
- Local Roads
- Watercourse
- EPBC Referral 2023/09701 (19/10/2023)
- Project footprint (variation to proposal)

Warrego Highway (Ipswich - Toowoomba) and Mount Crosby Road Interchange
VARIATION TO PROPOSAL (EPBC REFERRAL 2023/09701)

Figure 1.2 - Disturbance Footprint Comparison

© AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM). All rights reserved. AECOM has prepared this document for the sole use of the Client and for a specific purpose, each as expressly stated in the document. No other party should rely on this document without the prior written consent of AECOM. AECOM undertakes no duty, nor accepts any responsibility, to any third party who may rely upon or use this document. This document has been prepared based on the Client's description of its requirements and AECOM's experience having regard to assumptions that AECOM can reasonably be expected to make in accordance with sound professional principles. Earthstar Geographics, Maxar © State of Queensland (Department of Resources) 2023



AECOM

0 170 340 m

- State controlled roads
- Local Roads
- Watercourse
- EPBC Referral 2023/09701 (19/10/2023)
- Project footprint (variation to proposal)

Warrego Highway (Ipswich - Toowoomba) and Mount Crosby Road Interchange
VARIATION TO PROPOSAL (EPBC REFERRAL 2023/09701)

Figure 1.3 - Disturbance Footprint Comparison

© AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM). All rights reserved. AECOM has prepared this document for the sole use of the Client and for a specific purpose, each as expressly stated in the document. No other party should rely on this document without the prior written consent of AECOM. AECOM undertakes no duty, nor accepts any responsibility, to any third party who may rely upon or use this document. This document has been prepared based on the Client's description of its requirements and AECOM's experience, having regard to assumptions that AECOM can reasonably be expected to make in accordance with sound professional principles. Earthstar Geographics, Maxar © State of Queensland (Department of Resources) 2023



AECOM



- State controlled roads
- Local Roads
- Watercourse
- EPBC Referral 2023/09701 (19/10/2023)
- Project footprint (variation to proposal)

Warrego Highway (Ipswich - Toowoomba) and Mount Crosby Road Interchange

VARIATION TO PROPOSAL (EPBC REFERRAL 2023/09701)

Figure 1.4 - Disturbance Footprint Comparison

© AECOM Australia Pty Ltd (AECOM). All rights reserved. AECOM has prepared this document for the sole use of the Client and for a specific purpose, each as expressly stated in the document. No other party should rely on this document without the prior written consent of AECOM. AECOM undertakes no duty, nor accepts any responsibility, to any third party who may rely upon or use this document. This document has been prepared based on the Client's description of its requirements and AECOM's experience, having regard to assumptions that AECOM can reasonably be expected to make in accordance with sound professional principles. Earthstar Geographics, Masar © State of Queensland (Department of Resources) 2023

2.2 Reasons for proposed variation

The Project footprint and Proposed activities were reviewed for the following key reasons:

- To adequately respond to DCCEEW requesting the proponent reconsider the following items:
 - impacts within existing highway corridor,
 - impacts related to any functionally lost habitat,
 - feasibility of construction within the Project footprint,
 - provide further clarity to the Project description.
- Detailed design
 - Value Engineering
 - Addressing non-conformant design elements carried forward from the business case
 - PUP relocations and upgrades
- To capture latest design information, notably:
 - Laydown area in TMR owned lots
 - Rehabilitation corridors to reduce potential impacts related to connectivity and the potential functional loss of adjacent habitat patches.

2.3 How the impacts of the proposed variation on Matters of National Environmental Significance compare with those of the original proposal

Proposed impacts to the Project have been repassed through discussion with DCCEEW. The Proposed action will not trigger additional MNES as a result of the increase in Project footprint area (see Figure 1 for Disturbance Footprint Comparison). However, the quantum of area increased in the Project footprint (variation to proposal) has resulted in increased impact to MNES previously identified in original referral; koala and grey-headed flying-fox.

A comparison of impacts to MNES from Referral application to this variation application is provided in Table 2. In summary, MNES values impacted by the Project will remain as threatened species and communities only.

Table 2 Comparison of impacts to MNES - referral and variation application

MNES	Referral Application	Variation Application
World Heritage Areas	Nil	No change
National Heritage	Nil	No change
Ramsar Wetlands	Nil	No change
Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	Potential significant residual impact to listed threatened species.	No change
Migratory Species	No potential significant impact.	No change
<i>Other MNES (nuclear, Commonwealth marine area, Great Barrier Reef, Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas, Commonwealth Land, Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas, Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency.</i>	Nil	No impact

2.4 If applicable, the impacts of the proposed variation on Matters of National Environmental Significance not considered in the referral or assessment of the original proposal.

The ecology survey effort within the study area was sufficient to provide adequate data to inform the impact assessment of the updated footprint. There are no further changes to ecological values within the impact area, such as habitat types or features. No additional MNES values have been identified to be impacted as a result of the Project variation; however, there is a change in the quantum of area impacted per species.

2.5 If applicable, alternatives, mitigation measures and offsets to compensate for additional impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance

TMR has identified temporary impact areas that will be rehabilitated to facilitate fauna connectivity and reduce quantum of area previously expected to be functionally lost.

As discussed with DCCEEW, surveys have been undertaken at an identified offset site. The Proponent is committed to delivering an Offset Proposal and an Offset Area Management Plan to ensure any anticipated residual impacts are appropriately offset in accordance with the EPBC Act and the Environmental Offsets Policy.

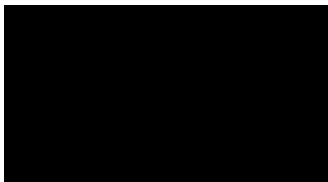
TMR has developed an Overarching Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) to be implemented to avoid, minimise, and mitigate direct, indirect and facilitated impacts to conservation significant species and communities. These measures are tailored for each phase of the Project and include strategies to maintain or enhance ecological connectivity, such as indicative fauna passage locations and infrastructure.

3.0 Closure

This letter presents a request for variation of the Proposed action (EPBC Number 2023/09701). At DCCEEW's request, this variation reassessed the change in the Project footprint on MNES. As presented in Table 2, the Proposed action will not trigger additional MNES as a result of the increase in the Project footprint area (see Figure 1 for change in Disturbance Footprint Comparison). However, the quantum of area increased in the Project footprint (variation to proposal) has resulted in increased impact to MNES previously identified in original referral; koala and grey-headed flying-fox. As a result, the Proposed action will apply these changes to the Offset Proposal and the Offset Area Management Plan. Following the outcome of the proposed variation, the Proposed action will deliver a Preliminary Documentation which will include the updated impact area and relevant supporting technical supports; including the OEMP, MNES technical report and Offset Proposal.

Should you have any queries in relation to the nature of the changes, or the material contained within this letter, please contact the address in the cover letter. TMR appreciates DCCEEW's prompt review of the material and determination of the variation application, in addition to the assessment process and finalisation of the Preliminary Documentation for the Proposed action.

Yours sincerely



Regional Manager (Delivery)