Moomba to Wilton Pipeline – MW733 Compressor Station (Modification 8)

Application Number: **02751** Commencement Date: **21/01/2025** Status: **Locked**

1. About the project

1.1 Project details

1.1.1 Project title *

Moomba to Wilton Pipeline – MW733 Compressor Station (Modification 8)

1.1.2 Project industry type *

Energy Generation and Supply (non-renewable)

1.1.3 Project industry sub-type

Natural Gas pipeline

1.1.4 Estimated start date *

01/12/2025

1.1.4 Estimated end date *

31/12/2050

1.2 Proposed Action details

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

East Australian Pipeline Ltd, part of APA Group (APA) owns and operates the Moomba to Wilton Pipeline (the MWP). The MWP is an underground high-pressure natural gas transmission pipeline about 1,300 kilometres (km) long running between Moomba in South Australia to Wilton in New South Wales (NSW).

The MWP is operatedsubject
to the conditions of Pipeline Licence No. 16 issued under the *Pipelines Act 1967*

(NSW) {the Pipelines Act) and the Project Approval (SSI-15548591).

APA (the proponent) is proposing a further expansion of gas transportation capacity on its East Coast Grid. This expansion would be achievedthrough the construction of an additional compressor
station (MW 733) on the MWP. APA is therefore proposing to modify the existing SSI-15548591 approval to construct and operate this new compressor station at Mount Hope in NSW (the proposed modification).

The proposed modification involves the construction, operation,
decommissioning and rehabilitation of a new compressor station and associated ancillary infrastructure on the MWP in NSW.

Key elementsof the proposed modification include:

- a gas compressor stationwith 11.25 MW capacity
- a temporary accommodation camp to house construction workers during construction of the compressor station
- large and small vehicle parking and internal access tracks
- helipad for helicopter use when the road access is unavailable and in the case of a major emergency
- construction laydown area for the storage of construction materialsto support maintenance activities
- wastewater management system comprising a wastewater treatment plant and a designated area for spray irrigation disposal of treated wastewater
- a temporary borrow pit, if required
- an electrical cable from the existing telecom tower to the proposed compressor station.

The proposed modification would be located on APA owned freehold
land (Lot 3, DP DP593814), at 689 Merri Road, Mount Hope, located about 110 km south of the township of Cobar, within Cobar Shire Council as shown on Attachment A Figure 1 Project Overview (Att. A). The land parcel is Lot 3, DP 593814 containing a project area of 18.43 hectares (ha) that was considered as the general location for the proposed modification and the 7.53 ha disturbance footprint that would accommodate the proposed compressor station and ancillary infrastructure as shown on Att. A. There is a 10.90 hectare avoidance area that comprises the balance of the project area outside of the disturbance footprint.

The MWP easement passes through the northern portion of the study area with the proposed compressor immediately to the south of the MWP and the temporary accommodation camp site to the southwest of the compressor station as shown in the proposed layout shown on Figure 1.3 of Attachment B, the Moomba to Wilton Gas Pipeline Modification Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (the BDAR, Att. B).

Construction of the compressor station is anticipated to commence in late Q3 2025, and take up to nine months, with an additional three months to commission. The compressor is anticipated to have
an operational lifespan of 25 years.

When the temporary accommodation camp is no longerrequired after the construction phase, the areas occupied would be rehabilitated.

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

Yes

1.2.3 Is the proposed action the first stage of a staged development (or a larger project)?

No

1.2.4 Related referral(s)

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1.2.5 Provide information about the staged development (or relevant larger project).

APA Group isworking through an expansion of gas transportation capacity of the East Coast Grid, which links Queensland to southern markets.

The expansion will increase winter peak capacity of the East Coast Grid through additional compression and increased forward capacity of the MWP and associated maintenance works on the South West Queensland Pipeline (SWQP) and the MWP.

The expansion is being deliveredin a number of stages[BH1] :

- Stage 1 (completed): the first stage of expansion works included the construction of a single site of compression on each of the SWQP and MWP.
- Stage 2 (completed): the second stage of expansion works includes the construction of an additional compressor station on each of the SWQP and MWP.
- Stage 3 (designand NSW State assessment stage), APA is undertaking engineering and design works and seeking approval for the Stage 3 of the expansion project which involves:
    - the construction of additional compressor stations on the MWP (MW733) at the project area near Mount Hope which is the **subject of this referra**l.
    - construction of an electric drive compressor station at Uranquinty on the Culcairn to Wagga Pipeline.

APA is investigating further stages as a part of the East Coast Grid Expansion and if committed will be subject to separate assessment and approvals processes.

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

- ***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999***

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation that provides a legal framework to protect and manage environmental values considered to be of national environmental significance.

The EPBC Act provides protection for listed Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), which are:

- World heritage properties
- National heritage properties
- Wetlands of international importance
- Listed threatened species and ecological communities
- Listed migratory species
- Protection of the environmental from nuclear actions
- Commonwealth marine areas
- The GreatBarrier Reef Marine Park
- Nuclear actions(including uranium mines)
- Water resources (that related to coal seam gas development and large coalmining development)

The only potentially relevant MNES is in relation to one potentially impacted threatened species listed under the EPBC Act. No threatened ecological communities were recorded in the disturbance footprint or the project area. There are no Commonwealth or National heritage listed places within the project area or in close proximity. An EPBC approval will be required, should the proposed action be determined controlled action.

- ***Native Title Act 1993***

The *Native Title Act 1993* recognises and protects native title rights in Australia. It allows a native title determination application (native title claim) to be made for land or waters where native title has not been extinguished by (for example) the grant of freehold title to land.A register of native title claims is maintained by the National Native Title Tribunal.

A search of the National Native Title Register was undertaken on 18 July 2023which revealed the proposed modification is located within an area under Native Title registration application for Wongkumara People (Tribunal No QC2008/003). Native title claims are only applicable to Crown Land. As the proposed modification site is freehold land owned by APA then the native title claim does not affect the proposed action.

NSW Legislation

- ***Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979***

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) is the primary instrument that regulates the planning and environmental assessments and approval process for developments in NSW. The MWP was transitioned to SSI by order, which took effect by publication in the NSW Government Gazette on 11 December 2020 and the MWP operates under the SSI-15548591 approval.

APA is seeking to modify SSI-15548591 under the provisions of section 5.25 of the NSW EP&A Act which provides for the modification of an SSI approval. The proposed action is for Modification 8 to SSI-15548591.

- ***Pipelines Act 1967***

A licence to construct, operate and maintain a pipeline is required under the Pipelines Act 1967 (Pipelines Act). The MWP Pipeline Licence No.16 was granted in 1997 by the then Minister of Energy under the Pipelines Act. The operation of the MWP is authorised by Pipeline Licence No. 16. The

conditions of Section 4 clause 4.1 of the Pipeline Licence No. 16 require that APA must operate and maintain the pipeline in accordance with recognised standards and practices and must meet the requirements of the Pipelines Act, and *Australian Standard (AS) 2885: Pipelines - Gas and liquid petroleum.* A number of variations to Pipeline Licence No. 16 have since been granted to allow for construction and operation of laterals and compressor stations to maintain and operate the asset. Following determination of the proposed Modification 8 to the SSI-15548591 approval, APA will seek a variation to the Pipeline Licence No 16 to include the compressor station and the ancillary infrastructure included in Modification 8.

- ***Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016***

The *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* (BC Act) aims to maintain a healthy, productive and resilient environment consistent with the principals of ecologically sustainable development and in particular conserve biodiversity at bioregional and state scales, among other specific aims. Part 4 of the BC Act provides for the listing of threatened species and threatened ecological communities. Part 6 of the BC Act provides for a biodiversity offsets scheme for biodiversity values. Part 7 of the BC Act provides for biodiversity assessment and approvals under the EP&AAct. Section 7.9 of the BC Act states an application for SSI, under the EP&A Act is to be accompanied by a Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) prepared by an accredited assessor in accordance with the Biodiversity Assessment Method (BAM). Section 7.14 of the BC Act states the Minister, in making a determination, must take into account the likely impact of the development on biodiversity values assessed in the BDAR, and may require biodiversity offsets through the biodiversity offsets scheme.

The BDAR is attached to this referral (Att. B). The BDAR also includes consideration of the assessment and approval requirements of the EPBC Act.

- ***National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974***

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) provides the basis for the legal protection and management of Aboriginal sites and objects in NSW. Archaeological surveys undertaken to date have identified an Aboriginal site within the proposed action's disturbance footprint comprising an extensive moderate density artefact scatter which will be partly harmed by the proposed action. An Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) has been prepared for the proposed action to assess the significance of the impact. In accordance with Section 5.23 of the EP&A Act, an Aboriginal heritage impact permit for the salvage of the artefact scatter under section 90 of the NPW Act is not required given the MWP is an SSI project.

- ***Water Management Act 2000***

The aim of the *Water Management Act 2000* is to ensure that water resources are conserved and properly managed for sustainable use benefiting both present and future generations. Itis also intended to provide formal means for the protection and enhancement of the environmental qualities of waterways and in-stream uses as well as to provide for protection of catchment conditions. Potential impacts to surface water resources will likely to be negligible with the implementation of erosion and sediment controls prior to any excavation works in the proposed action site. Potential impacts to groundwater resources have been assessed as negligible. All construction and operational activities will be undertaken in accordance with a site-specific Soil and Water Management Plan required by condition B15 of the SSI-15548591 approval and approved by DPHI prior to implementation during construction and operational stages. The proposed modification would not involve aquifer interference.

- ***Local Government Act 1993***

Section 68(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) provides that specified activities can only be carried out with the prior approval of the relevant council, except where the LG Act, regulations or a local policy adopted under the Act allows the activity to be carried out without that approval.

The provisions of the LG Act apply to the modifications site which is located in the Cobar Shire LGA.

In accordance with section 68(1), council approval is required to carry out specified activities. These include (in Part C.6 of the approvals table) 'operate a system of sewage management (within the meaning of section 68A)'. The proposed wastewater management facilities at the temporary accommodation camp are considered to meet the definition of operating a 'system of sewage management' in accordance with sections 68A(1) and (2) of the LG Act.

In addition, Part A.1 of the approvals table includes 'Install a manufactured home, moveable dwelling or associated structure on land'.

Approval under section 68(1) of the LG Act would be sought for relevant components of the temporary accommodation camp.

NSW Environmental Planning Instruments

In accordance with section 5.22(2) of the EP&A Act, no environmental planning instruments (EPIs) substantially govern the operations of the MWP given the MWP is an SSI project.

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. *

Consultation with key stakeholders has occurred throughout the development of Modification 8 and would continue as needed, through the construction, operation and decommissioning of the compressor station. Consultation was aimed to:

- compliance with statutory requirements and expectations
- an informed community and key stakeholders
- understanding and incorporating community feedback and key issues into the design of the modification.

Stakeholders for the modifications were identified, and consultation has been undertaken as described below. As a general approach, APA seeks to build an open, ongoing relationship to facilitate clear channels of communication and feedback.

APA submitted a scoping report to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) to describe the proposed modification to construct and operate the MWP733 and associated ancillary infrastructure, the approval pathway, and the technical assessments to be prepared to assess the potential impacts of the proposed modification. DPHI confirmed acceptance of the scoping report via email on 19 December 2024.

An introductory overview email was sent to the NSW DCCEEW on 29 January 2025. NSW DCCEEW acknowledged the receipt of the email on 11 February 2025 and did not raise any specific matters for consideration in the BDAR.

A consultation letter was sent to Cobar Shire Council (Council) on 6 January 2025 in relation to the proposed modification. APA met with the Cobar Council Works Manager on 12 December 2024 to provide an overview of the proposed modification as well as discuss potential options for the supply of gravel and water for use during construction.

On 19 February 2025 a pre-referral meeting was held with the Cth DCCEEW to discuss the proposed modification and the clearing of native vegetation involved.

Heritage NSW was consulted as part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) via email on 13 December 2024. The consultation letter requested expressions of interest from relevant Aboriginal stakeholder groups and / or individuals who hold cultural knowledge relevant to the significance of Aboriginal objects or places within the Cobar area.

APA sent out letters to four identified sensitive receivers notifying them of the proposed modification on 13 March 2025. The letter outlined a brief description of the modification, the proposed duration and commencement date of works.

Consultation with the Aboriginal community was undertaken during the preparation of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) in accordance with the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents 2010* (DECCW, 2010) to assess the potential impacts of the proposed modification on Aboriginal cultural heritage.

This included:

- identifying key Aboriginal stakeholders, including Native Title claimant groups and local Aboriginal land councils (LALCs)
- sending letters to relevant organisations requesting details of Aboriginal people who may hold cultural knowledge relevant to determining the Aboriginal significance of Aboriginal objects and/or place within and adjacent to the modification site
- notification of the modification, assessment, and registration of interest (a total of seven Aboriginal parties registered interest)
- presentation of information about the modification, including survey methodology and draft reports of findings. No comments were received from the RAPs on the draft ACHAR.

A survey of the modification site was completed by OzArk on 11 December 2024 in collaboration with Aboriginal stakeholders representing the Ngemba, Ngiyampaa, Wangaaypuwan, and Wayilwan Aboriginal Corporations Registered Native Title Bodies Corporate.

1.3.1 Identity: Referring party

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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.

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1.3.1.1 Is Referring party an organisation or business? *

Yes

Referring party organisation details

ABN/ACN	39008488373
Organisation name	GHD PTY LTD
Organisation address	2000 NSW

Referring party details

Name	Ben Harrington
Job title	Technical Director - Biodiversity
Phone	0407 049 006
Email	ben.harrington@ghd.com
Address	Level 15 / 133 Castlereagh St. Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

1.3.2 Identity: Person proposing to take the action

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

No

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

Yes

Person proposing to take the action organisation details

ABN/ACN	064629009
Organisation name	EAST AUSTRALIAN PIPELINE PTY LIMITED
Organisation address	2000 NSW

Person proposing to take the action details

Name	Brian Connellan
Job title	Access and Approvals Lead
Phone	07 3223 3386
Email	brian.connellan@apa.com.au
Address	Level 25/580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

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. *

East Australian Pipeline Pty Ltd has an outstanding history of environmental management with only two infringement notices received over 23 years of operations.

The two penalty infringement notices (PIN) were issued by the Compliance Branch of the DPHI under Section 125 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* for two separate events at two different locations within the same APA site in southern NSW on 31 January 2017. The PINs stated the reason for both events as 'uncontrolled sediment release from work site during a rain event' and fined $15,000 each for the two PINs. The fines have been paid. The site works resulting in the uncontrolled sediment release were reviewed and rectified.

No other infringements have been received at any of APA's operations for the last seven years based on the proactive approach APA takes in managing its operations and ensure compliance with the regulatory requirements in its approvals.

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

Health, Safety, Environment and Heritage Policy - APA Group Limited

Please see attached the *Health, Safety, Environment and Heritage Policy* HSEH Policy), signed by the APA Chief Executive Officer (Adam Watson), dated 1 January 2023, for the proposed action company East Australian Pipeline Pty Ltd, part of APA Group, with filename Att 5-East Australian Pipeline Pty Ltd-HSEH Policy (Att 5), summarised below.

Purpose of the HSEH Policy

APA strives to be world class in health, safety, environment and heritage performance. Its foremost priorities comprise the health, safety and wellbeing of its workers and protection of the environment, heritage and the communities. APA is committed to managing and minimising its impact on the environment and heritage by fostering a culture of responsibility, leadership and awareness of the environment and heritage obligations and practices. Additionally, APA recognises its role as land stewards and aspire to respect the past and protect values for the future.

Objectives and implementation of the HSEH Policy

The HSEH Policy is underpinned by the HSEH Management System which outlines accountabilities for the following requirements:

- Proactively identify hazards and aim to eliminate or implement effective controls to minimise the risk of injury, illness to people
or unacceptable impacts on the environment and heritage as far as reasonably practicable;
- Provide systems of work that focus on guiding workers to manage and control critical risk;
- Provide a work environment and fit for purpose equipment that minimises the risk to workers so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Provide systems of work that empower workers to control the risks to themselves, others and the environment, whilst carrying
out their duties;
- Meet or exceed applicable HSEH statutory, regulatory, legal and social obligations;
- Adopt and monitor measurable, fit for purpose objectives and targets around HSEH performance;
- Consult, engage and educate with our workers and communities on HSEH matters that affect them;
- Undertake early intervention and support the rehabilitation of workers in the event of injury or illness;
- Establish a learning culture through investigation of incidents to embed learnings and reduce the risk of repeated events;
- Ensure HSEH leadership is visible across the organisation to promote a strong culture;
- Undertake activities to continuously improve the effectiveness of the HSEH Management System and controls.

Accountabilities by APA office holders

- The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing and supporting APA's commitment to HSEH Policy, and for monitoring the performance of the HSEH Management System. responsible for overseeing and supporting APA's commitment to HSEH Policy, and for monitoring the performance of the HSEH Management System.
- The CEO is responsible for resourcing the implementation of the HSEH Management System to ensure the HSEH Policy commitments are achieved.
- The Group Executive of each division is responsible for the implementation of the HSEH Management System within their area of responsibility.
- The General Manager HSEH is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the HSEH Management System, collating information and reporting on APA's performance.

- All workers have an obligation to manage HSEH risks that impact them, others, the environment and communities in which they operate. All workers have the authority to stop work if the HSEH risks cannot effectively be managed to an acceptable level.

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	064629009
Organisation name	EAST AUSTRALIAN PIPELINE PTY LIMITED
Organisation address	2000 NSW

Proposed designated proponent details

Name	Brian Connellan
Job title	Access and Approvals Lead
Phone	07 3223 3386
Email	brian.connellan@apa.com.au
Address	Level 25/580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

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	39008488373
Organisation name	GHD PTY LTD
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Ben Harrington
Representative's job title	Technical Director - Biodiversity
Phone	0407 049 006
Email	ben.harrington@ghd.com
Address	Level 15 / 133 Castlereagh St. Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

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.

ABN/ACN	064629009
Organisation name	EAST AUSTRALIAN PIPELINE PTY LIMITED
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Brian Connellan
Representative's job title	Access and Approvals Lead
Phone	07 3223 3386
Email	brian.connellan@apa.com.au
Address	Level 25/580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Confirmed Proposed designated proponent's identity

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

Same as Person proposing to take the action information.

1.4 Payment details: Payment exemption and fee waiver

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

No

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

No

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

No

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

No

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

No

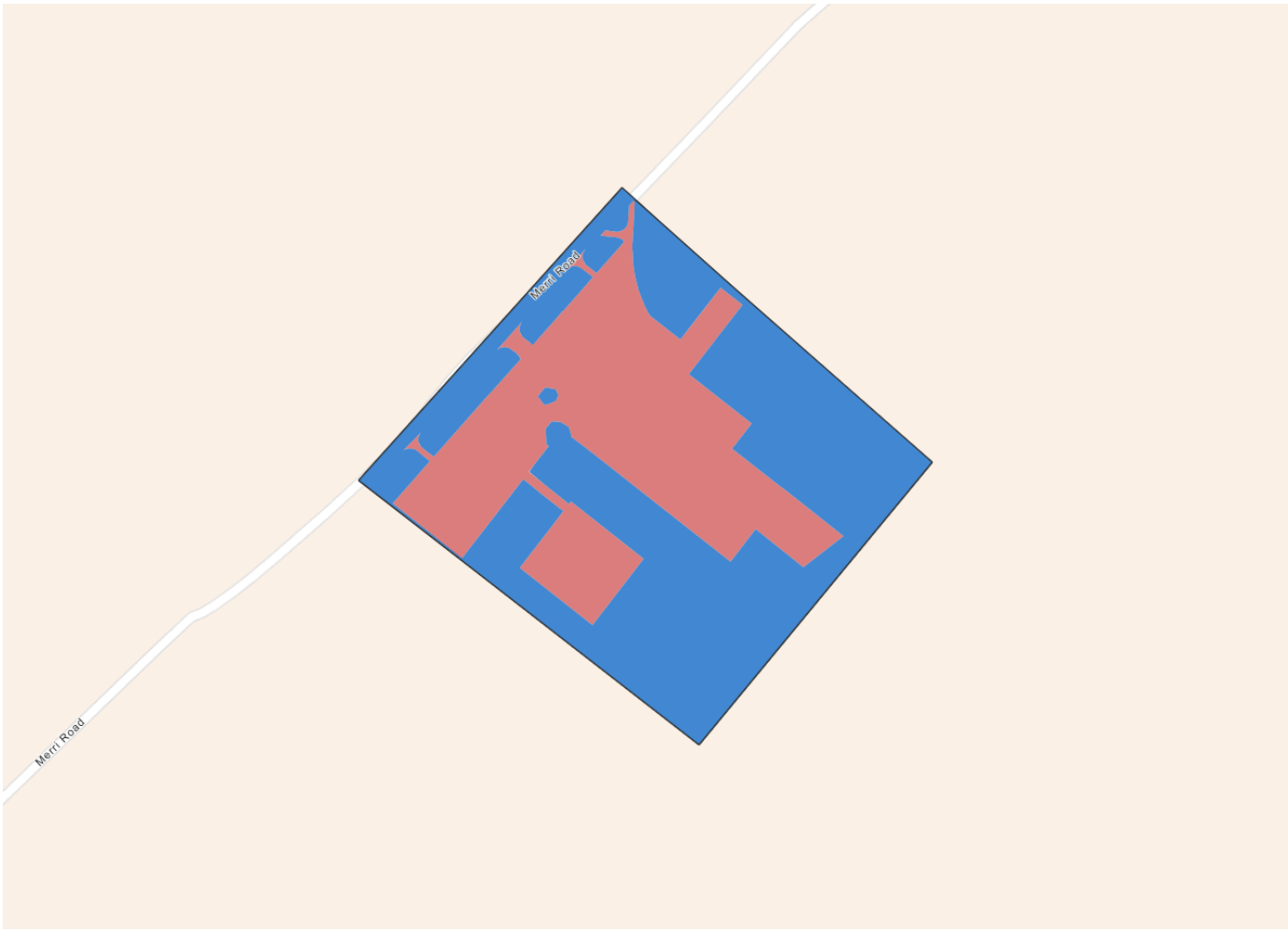
1.4 Payment details: Payment allocation

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

Proposed designated proponent

2. Location

2.1 Project footprint



Project Area: 18.43 Ha **Disturbance Footprint:** 7.53 Ha **Avoidance Area:** 10.90 Ha

2.2 Footprint details

2.2.1 What is the address of the proposed action? *

689 Merri Road, Mount Hope, NSW, 2877

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

New South Wales

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? *

APA owned freehold land (Lot 3, DP DP593814)

3. Existing environment

3.1 Physical description

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

The disturbance footprint for the proposed modification is located about 110 km south of Cobar along Merri Road in the Cobar Shire Council local government area (LGA) on freehold land (no zoning applies) owned by APA as shown on Attachment A Figure 1 Project Overview (Att. A). The land parcel is Lot 3, DP 593814 containing a project area of 18.43 hectares (ha) that was considered as the general location for the proposed modification and the 7.53 ha disturbance footprint that would accommodate the proposed compressor station and ancillary infrastructure as shown on Att. A. There is a 10.90 hectare avoidance area that comprises the balance of the project area outside of the disturbance footprint.

The study area comprises agricultural land with low intensity sheep and cattle grazing, as well as the MWP and associated infrastructure maintained by APA. It contains good condition Poplar Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*) woodland, moderate condition shrubland and poor condition grasslands derived from previously cleared areas of Poplar Box woodland, on a gently undulling landscape typical of the semi-arid climatic zone of far-western NSW. The project area contains mainly grassland and shrubland with a small amount of woodland with canopy species such as Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea subsp. bimbil*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) present. There is a small area of non-native vegetation associated with existing infrastructure within the MWP near the western boundary of the project area and existing road tracks.

The project area includes an existing 100 metre (m) telecom tower, an ethane scraper station and natural gas scraper station and an existing unused dam, and the Moomba to Sydney Ethane Pipeline and the MWP run through the site. The modification site is zoned RU1 Primary Production under the Cobar Local Environmental Plan 2012. It is located in a largely remote area, with surrounding land uses comprising of undeveloped land and local roads. Crown land reserves surround the modification site. The closest residence to the project area is located approximately 5 km northeast. The closest towns to the site include Nymagee about 62 km northeast, and Euabalong West about 79 km southeast.

There are no waterbodies or watercourses in the project area. There is an unnamed ephemeral first order stream approximately 190 m southeast of the project area and a farm dam (Att. A). However, this mapped watercourse has no defined channel or discernible riparian features such as pools, banks or levees and the associated Poplar Box woodland is equivalent to vegetation in the surrounding plains and is not 'riparian woodland'.

There are occasional patches of sheet erosion throughout the project area and surrounds associated with grazing and other existing uses and previous land clearance. There are localised areas of scraped and piled rock fragments and woody debris associated with previous clearing and earthworks for MWP infrastructure.

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

The project area comprises native vegetation with low intensity sheep and cattle grazing, as well as the MWP and associated infrastructure maintained by APA. The project area is zoned RU1 Primary Production under the Cobar Local Environmental Plan 2012 site as is located on freehold land owned by APA. Therefore, no land use agreements with other parties would be required. It is located in a largely remote area, with surrounding land uses comprising of undeveloped land and local roads. Crown land reserves surround the project area. The proposed uses of the project area are continued use of the MWP, use of the new compressor station, and use of a temporary workers camp and wastewater treatment plant to support construction of the compressor station.

The compressor station would be operated remotely from APA's control centre in Brisbane and can operate up to 24 hours per day. The compressor station would have an operational lifespan of 25 years.

Operation activities would be carried out during daylight hours unless an emergency requires work to be carried out at night. These operations activities include minor maintenance, systems assessment and equipment repair. The compressor station would be designed to be remotely operated without onsite staff for most of its working life. Maintenance activities would require small workforce to be present at the modification site on an ad-hoc basis throughout the design life of the compressor station. Access to the modification site during operation would be consistent with access during construction via Werri Road, off Kidman Way. Since the modification site is operated remotely, it is expected that vehicle movements to and from the site would occur during operations activities such as maintenance or equipment repair and be kept to a minimum.

Associated parts of the project area would be rehabilitated following decommissioning of the temporary accommodation camp after construction to reduce the initial disturbance footprint. At the end of the compressor design life, the compressor station infrastructure would be decommissioned. All infrastructure would be removed to offsite locations and the disturbed areas within the modification site would be fully rehabilitated to form a final landform that would be consistent with the surrounding area.

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

There are no outstanding natural features or any important or unique values relevant to the project area that have been identified by either the NSW or Australian governments or revealed by the biodiversity assessment for the project.

The vegetation communities and habitats at the project area are typical of the semi-arid climatic zone of far-western NSW. There are many thousands of hectares of similar vegetation and habitats in the locality. Further information on natural features and/or important values is provided in the BDAR (Att. B, Section 3.2).

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 gradient across the project area is gentle, occurring between 270-280 m Australian Height Datum (AHD). The area is a gentle sloping plain. An unnamed, ephemeral drainage line is present approximately 190 m southeast from the project area, running southwest toward Merri Road. Additionally, approximately 500 m northwest from the site is an unnamed, ephemeral watercourse. The watercourses merge approximately 1.5 km southwest from the project area.

3.2 Flora and fauna

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

The project area is located on the Cobar Peneplain and contains terrestrial ecological communities of semi-arid, open woodland and derived communities. Most biodiversity values within the project area are associated with the more intact patches of Popular Box woodland where (*Eucalyptus bimbil subsp.* Bimbil) and White Cyprus Pine (*Callitris columellaris*) provide canopy, and hollow resources and stags for woodland birds, mammals, reptiles and tree frogs.

A terrestrial field survey identified flora and fauna species in moderate diversity and representative of biota typically recorded in the locality (Att. B, Appendix B). A pair of Pink Cockatoos (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*), listed as a vulnerable species under the BC Act and an endangered species under the EPBC Act, was recorded flying to the north of the project area during field surveys in November 2024. Locations of the observed Pink Cockatoos and other biodiversity values are shown on Attachment C, Figure 2 Biodiversity vales (Att. C). Up to six individuals of the species were observed opportunistically in the region surrounding the disturbance footprint on various occasions in November 2024. No other threatened species were revealed by the surveys.

The grassland-low and shrubland condition classes of the Popular Box woodland community which comprises the majority of the project area would support a range of open country species and disturbance-tolerant species derived from the better condition ecological community described above.

The terrestrial ecological communities within the project area are described in further detail the BDAR (Att. B, Chapters 4 and 5).

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

One plant community type (PCT) has been identified and mapped within the project site: Poplar Box - Gum Coolabah - White Cypress Pine shrubby woodland mainly in the Cobar Peneplain Bioregion (PCT 103). It occurs as woodland, shrubland and low condition grassland vegetation zones in the project area and surrounding area. Vegetation and other biodiversity values are shown on Att. C. Detailed justification for the selection of this PCT and vegetation zone descriptions are provided in the BDAR (Att. B, sections 4.2, 4.3).

Native vegetation in the project area contains moderate to high exotic plant cover, mainly in the ground layer, including Branched Centaury (*Centaurium tenuiflorum*), Barley grass (*Hordeum leporinum*), White horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), Patterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*) and Maltese Cockspur (*Centaurea melitensis*).

The landscape comprises slightly undulating foot slopes and outwash areas, and very broad undulating lowlands with scattered granite outcrops and incised channels. Relief is up to 8 m. Soils are sandy and loamy red earth.

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.

A search on publicly available heritage databases was undertaken to determine the presence of non-Aboriginal heritage items near the project area. The search returned with no non-Aboriginal heritage items with National, Commonwealth or State significance.

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

The results of the Aboriginal Heritage Information System (AHIMS) search in November 2024 identified: one site with the project area, identified as an artefact scatter and a hearth (MW733-AS1, AHIMS 34-1-0068). Five previously recorded Aboriginal sites are located within 2 km of the modification site consisting of four artefacts and an Aboriginal resource and gathering site.

Two Aboriginal sites were recorded during a survey undertaken in December 2024:

– an artefact scatter (MW733-AS2) in the northeast corner of the site

– an isolated artefact find (MW733-IF1) on the eastern site boundary.

Several artefacts were also recorded within what was assessed to be part of the existing M733-AS1 artefact scatter and hearth site.

Archaeologically, MW733-IF1, MW733-AS1, and MW733-AS2 are of low scientific value. They primarily consist of unmodified flakes made from common local geological materials, with a degraded hearth at MW733-AS1 lacking datable material. Disturbances such as grazing, vegetation clearing, infrastructure development, and erosion have further reduced their integrity, limiting their potential to provide insights into past Aboriginal occupation.

The recorded sites have low aesthetic value, as they are not visually prominent and exist within a landscape modified by agriculture and infrastructure. Additionally, they hold no historic significance, as they are not associated with any notable historical figures, places, or events.

There are no known historical values associated with the modification site.

As a portion of MW733-AS1 would be harmed due to construction of the proposed modification, the collection and movement (‘salvage’) of visible surface artefacts is proposed, in accordance with a salvage methodology, to manage the impact of the proposed modification and the loss of heritage value at the site.

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. *

The project site does not contain any permanent or semi-permanent watercourses. An unnamed, ephemeral drainage line is present approximately 190 m southeast from the project site, running southwest toward Merri Road. Additionally, approximately 500 m northwest from the site is an unnamed, ephemeral watercourse. The watercourses merge approximately 1.5 km southwest from the modification site. There is no riparian vegetation associated with the two watercourses.

The baseline topography of the site exhibits predominantly undulating terrain with a slope descending from the north to the south of the site.

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	No	Yes
S16	Ramsar Wetland	No	Yes
S18	Threatened Species and Ecological Communities	Yes	Yes
S20	Migratory Species	No	Yes
S21	Nuclear	No	Yes
S23	Commonwealth Marine Area	No	Yes
S24B	Great Barrier Reef	No	Yes
S24D	Water resource in relation to large coal mining development or coal seam gas	No	Yes
S26	Commonwealth Land	No	Yes
S27B	Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas	No	Yes
S28	Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency	No	Yes

4.1.1 World Heritage

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

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

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

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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. *

No World Heritage properties occur within a 20km radius of the project area. These protected matters are well beyond the maximum potential extent of direct or indirect impacts arising from the proposed action.

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.

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

No

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

No National Heritage properties occur within a 20km radius of the project area. These protected matters are well beyond the maximum potential extent of direct or indirect impacts arising from the proposed action.

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	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. *

None of the wetlands within or in close proximity to the project area are wetlands that are listed in the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar wetlands).

A search of the EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Tool carried out on 4/11/2024 identified three Ramsar Wetlands within 600 km:

- Riverland (400-500 km downstream)
- The Coorong and Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Wetland (600-700 km downstream)
- Banrock Station Wetland Complex 500-600 km downstream).

No impacts to the ecological character (the biological, physical and chemical components) of Ramsar wetlands are anticipated during construction or operation.

The closest Ramsar wetland to the project area is at least 400 km downstream. The Ramsar Wetlands that are downstream of the project area are well beyond the maximum potential extent of direct or indirect impacts arising from the proposed action, noting:

- The gentle topography at the project area, relatively small proposed clearing areas, and short construction period, meaning that the risk of erosion or sedimentation would be mitigated by the proposed construction methodology and erosion controls
- Small extent of changes to surface landforms and water flows in the project area which would result in a negligible effect on the many thousands of square kilometres of catchment feeding these Ramsar Wetlands and their tributaries.

4.1.4 Threatened Species and Ecological Communities

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

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

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

Threatened species

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Acacia curranii	Curly-bark Wattle
No	No	Amytornis striatus striatus	Mukarrthippi Grasswren, Striated Grasswren (sandplain)
Yes	Yes	Aphelocephala leucopsis	Southern Whiteface
No	No	Aprasia parapulchella	Pink-tailed Worm-lizard, Pink-tailed Legless Lizard
No	No	Austrostipa metatoris	
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
Yes	Yes	Falco hypoleucos	Grey Falcon
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	Grantiella picta	Painted Honeyeater
No	No	Hemiaspis damelii	Grey Snake
No	No	Lathamus discolor	Swift Parrot
No	No	Leipoa ocellata	Malleefowl
No	No	Lepidium monoplocoides	Winged Pepper-cress
Yes	Yes	Lophochroa leadbeateri leadbeateri	Major Mitchell's Cockatoo (eastern), Eastern Major Mitchell's Cockatoo
No	No	Macquaria australasica	Macquarie Perch
Yes	Yes	Melanodryas cucullata cucullata	South-eastern Hooded Robin, Hooded Robin (south-eastern)
No	No	Neophema chrysostoma	Blue-winged Parrot
Yes	Yes	Nyctophilus corbeni	Corben's Long-eared Bat, South-eastern Long-eared Bat

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Pedionomus torquatus	Plains-wanderer
No	No	Phascolarctos cinereus (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT)	Koala (combined populations of Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory)
Yes	Yes	Polytelis swainsonii	Superb Parrot
No	No	Rostratula australis	Australian Painted Snipe
Yes	Yes	Stagonopleura guttata	Diamond Firetail
No	No	Swainsona murrayana	Slender Darling-pea, Slender Swainson, Murray Swainson-pea

Ecological communities

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Ecological community
No	No	Grey Box (Eucalyptus microcarpa) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia
No	No	Weeping Myall Woodlands

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. *

The BDAR identifies the suite of threatened species that could occur at the project area based on the desktop assessment, habitat assessment and targeted surveys employed (Att. B, section 5.4.2, Appendix A). The proposal would result in direct impacts to up to 6.44 ha of native vegetation and associated threatened species habitat through:

- removal or modification of up to 5.54 ha of native vegetation for compressor station, access tracks and associated infrastructure
- modification of up to 0.9 ha of native vegetation in the effluent irrigation area.

The proposed action would result in a minor impact on habitat connectivity comprising:

- Construction of the compressor station and camp would reduce connectivity through the disturbance footprint by decreasing shelter and creating physical barriers.
- It has conservatively been assumed that the application of treated effluent would remove or significantly modify up to 0.90 ha of native vegetation by harmfully altering soil moisture and/or nutrient content.
- Removal of native vegetation cover and operation of the proposal would create a gap in east-west habitat connectivity about 450 m wide and about 490 m wide in north-south connectivity.

There are thousands of hectares of semi-arid woodland and shrubland similar to that in the disturbance footprint in the locality. In this context the disturbance footprint is unlikely to comprise a key link in a resource corridor, or to be critical to the ongoing connectivity of habitat in the local area.

There is minor risk of additional indirect impacts that is likely to be substantially mitigated through standard environmental management measures (Att. B, section 8.2).

A detailed assessment of potential direct and indirect impacts on threatened species as well as prescribed impacts such as changes to hydrology is included in the BDAR (Att. B, Chapter 8) and summarised below.

Threatened Fauna

The Pink Cockatoo has been recorded near the project area and there is potential habitat for a range of fauna species listed as threatened under the EPBC Act. The proposed action may remove or modify up to 6.44 ha of native vegetation and associated habitat for these threatened fauna species. A breakdown of the proposal footprint into various proposed activities and the associated intensity and duration of impacts is provided in the BDAR (Att. B, Table 8.6). Much of the indicative disturbance footprint shown on Att. A and Att. C would only be subject to partial or impacts such as use as a temporary camp site, application of treated effluent or short term vehicle traffic and the majority of understorey vegetation would be left undisturbed or would be allowed to regenerate. Impacts to groups of threatened fauna species with similar life histories, conservation significance and habitat requirements are described below.

Corben's Long-eared bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni)*

Corben's Long-eared Bat inhabits a variety of vegetation types, including Brigalow woodland, Buloke woodland, River Red Gum forest and Black Box woodland, but is most frequently recorded in box/ironbark/cypress-pine vegetation communities that occur in a north-south belt along the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range and into the Murray-Darling flood plain. There is potential foraging habitat for the Corben's Long-eared Bat throughout the disturbance footprint associated with PCT 103 Poplar Box - Gum Coolabah - White Cypress Pine shrubby woodland. The species would be unlikely to roost in the open, patchy vegetation in the majority of the disturbance footprint (vegetation zone PCT 130_poor-grassland) but may roost in vegetation zones PCT 130_shrubland and PCT 130_woodland areas with larger trees with hollows and crevices in the broader study area. The proposed action would remove 6.44 ha of potential foraging habitat containing a small area of short term diurnal roosting habitat for this species and generate noise and traffic in the vicinity of potential breeding habitat.

Potentially important populations of the vulnerable bird species Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*), Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*), Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) and Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*)

Construction of the compressor station and camp would remove or modify potential foraging and movement habitat for these semi-arid shrubland and woodland specialist species, impacting up to 6.44 ha of suitable habitat. No evidence of breeding or nesting was noted despite four diurnal bird surveys and nest tree censuses conducted over the study area (Att. B, table 5.3).

Access roads, construction of buildings and treated effluent would create gaps of up to 490 m in the native vegetation may affect breeding and sheltering of shrubland and woodland species. The impacts are restricted to a very small proportion of the available habitat for these species within the locality and there are extensive areas of equivalent or higher quality habitat in the local area including:

- Dense patches of trees and shrubs with hollows and crevices in the broader study area suitable for the Southern Whiteface and Superb Parrot.
- Tall trees in the broader study area that may provide suitable nesting for the Grey Falcon and large areas of connecting shrubland form suitable foraging habitat.
- Dense patches of woodland in the broader study area may provide nesting areas for the Diamond Firetail.

There is a minor risk of direct harm to these species during construction as they are mobile and likely to occur in the study area on a transient basis. Pre-clearing surveys would help mitigate the risk of direct harm.

The endangered bird species Pink Cockatoo (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*) and South-eastern Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*)

The Pink cockatoo was recorded flying over the disturbance footprint and there is potential foraging habitat for the Pink Cockatoo and South-eastern Hooded robin throughout the disturbance footprint associated with PCT 103 woodland, which includes favoured foraging resources such as Acacia and native Cypress pine. The construction of the compressor station, camp and associated actions would impact up to 6.44 ha of potential foraging habitat for these species. There are extensive areas of equivalent or higher quality habitat in the local area including:

- Potential breeding habitat for the species in the open woodland in the broader study area, including a number of candidate Pink Cockatoo nest trees with suitable hollows. No evidence of breeding was noted despite diurnal bird surveys and nest tree censuses including dedicated survey effort within the breeding season for the species (Att. B, section 5.2, table 5.3).
- Higher quality foraging habitat for the South-eastern Hooded Robin in areas of denser shrubland cover with tall native grass.

The construction of the compressor station, camp and associated actions would be limited to impacting 6.44 ha of poorer quality habitat and would not impact the extensive areas of alternative habitat in the locality and region that would form potential breeding habitat for these species.

There is a minor risk of direct harm to these species during construction as they are mobile and likely to occur in the study area on a transient basis. Pre-clearing surveys would help mitigate the risk of direct harm.

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 proposed modification would result in removal or modification of up to 6.44 ha of native vegetation and associated threatened species habitat. A breakdown of the disturbance footprint into various proposed activities and the associated intensity and duration of impacts is provided in the BDAR (Att. B, table 8.2). Much of the indicative disturbance footprint shown on Att. A and Att. B would only be subject to partial or temporary impacts, noting:

- other than the compressor station footprint, as few trees as possible would be trimmed or removed to allow construction and understorey vegetation would be allowed to regenerate
- vegetation removal and excavation of soil would occur within a small portion of the camp site and understorey vegetation would be left undisturbed or would be allowed to regenerate
- operational access tracks are aligned with existing tracks and would require minimal upgrade or increases in traffic volumes.

The proposed action would increase the degree of habitat fragmentation in the project area by creating gaps of up to 490 m but would not permanently isolate any areas of habitat. The habitat to be removed or modified comprises a small proportion of that available in the project area and locality which includes many thousands of hectares of shrubland and open woodland.

There is minor risk of additional indirect or operational impacts that is likely to be substantially mitigated through standard environmental management measures (Att. B, section 8.4).

Assessments of significance have been completed pursuant to the Australian Department of Environment (2013), *Matters of National Environmental Significance impact guidelines 1.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Att. B, Appendix E) and are summarised below.

These assessments of significance consider the ecology and habitat requirements of individual threatened species in addition to the overall consideration of impacts of the proposed action described above. The main conclusions for groups of species with similar life histories or habitat requirements are summarised below.

The proposed action is unlikely to have a significant impact on an important population of the vulnerable species Corben’s Long-eared Bat (*Nyctophilus corbeni*) given:

- The limited extent of native vegetation to be removed (6.44 ha) in comparison to the extensive areas of alternative habitat in the locality.
- The limited quality of habitat to be removed in terms of extent, age class, vegetation structure, species composition and general condition.
- The proposal is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the size or breeding cycle of a population of the species.
- The proposed modification will only result in a minor increase in the degree of fragmentation between retained areas of habitat for the species and will not result in any isolation of habitat.
- The disturbance footprint is unlikely to be important to the recovery of the species.

The proposed action is unlikely to have a significant impact on important populations of the vulnerable bird species Southern Whiteface (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*), Grey Falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*), Superb Parrot (*Polytelis swainsonii*) and Diamond Firetail (*Stagonopleura guttata*) given that:

- Only a small area of native vegetation (6.44 ha) would be removed or modified, which represents a very small proportion of the available habitat for these species within the locality.
- The proposed modification is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the size or breeding cycle of an important population of these species.
- The proposed modification will only result in a minor increase in the degree of fragmentation between retained areas of habitat for these mobile species and will not result in any isolation of habitat.
- The disturbance footprint is unlikely to be important to the recovery of these species.

The proposed action is unlikely to have significant impact on the endangered bird species Pink Cockatoo (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*) and South-eastern Hooded Robin (*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*) given:

- The limited extent of native vegetation to be removed (6.44 ha) in comparison to the extensive areas of alternative habitat in the locality.
- The limited quality of habitat to be removed, noting that the disturbance footprint does not contain any candidate nest trees for the Pink Cockatoo or a known population of the South-eastern Hooded Robin.
- The proposed modification is unlikely to have an adverse effect on the size or breeding cycle of a population of these species.
- The proposed modification will only result in a minor increase in the degree of fragmentation between retained areas of habitat for these species and will not result in any isolation of habitat.
- The disturbance footprint is unlikely to be important to the recovery of these species.

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. *

The proposed action is unlikely to be a controlled action as impacts to threatened species are not likely to be significant (Att. B, Appendix E).

Residual direct impacts to terrestrial threatened species habitats are minor in extent, duration and severity in the context of the extent of alternative habitat in the surrounding area. The habitat to be removed or modified would comprise a small portion of potential habitat for threatened fauna in the locality. The Pink Cockatoo (*Lophochroa leadbeateri*) has been recorded during surveys however the disturbance footprint contains only lower quality foraging habitat and is unlikely to comprise important habitat critical to the survival of the species.

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. *

APA initially selected sites for the proposed action based on criteria including proximity to the MWP, road access, power and water connectivity and apparent level of environmental constraint based on air photo interpretation. The disturbance footprint location was further refined through a detailed environmental constraints assessment carried out by GHD.

The 6.44 ha 'disturbance footprint' that would be directly affected by construction and the location of operational infrastructure is shown on Figure 1- Project overview (Att. A). The location of the proposed compressor station, laydown area, site accesses, camp area and effluent irrigation area was refined to avoid impacts to biodiversity values as far as possible. Specifically:

- including the use of existing access tracks for vehicle access and bare earth for wastewater irrigation where possible
- complete avoidance of the riparian corridor around the first order stream and farm dam to the south of the study area and associated woodland with hollow-bearing trees
- positioning of the temporary camp and construction laydown areas as far west in the study area as possible to avoid better condition woodland and to minimise the length of access tracks from Merri Road
- alignment of camp infrastructure, construction laydown areas and the borrow pit with poor condition or non-native vegetation as far as possible within the constraints of the lots owned by APA and location of the existing MWP infrastructure, resulting in an avoidance area containing 10.11 ha of native vegetation (Att. C).
- creation of an exclusion area around a hollow-bearing Kurrajong (*Brachychiton populneus*) located between the compressor station site and Merri Road and realignment of site access tracks to avoid this area (Att. B, Figure 4.1).

The 'avoidance footprint' within the project area would not be directly affected or subject to notable indirect impacts arising from the proposed action and includes higher value plant communities, habitat resources and other features of the natural environment that have been specifically avoided in the design of the proposed action.

Measures proposed to avoid and minimise impacts on threatened species are detailed in the BDAR (Att. B, Section 8.1).

Environmental management and impact mitigation measures would be implemented within the construction phase of the proposed modification. Construction would include, as a minimum, industry-standard measures for the management of soil, surface water, weeds and pollutants, as well as site-specific measures including the procedures outlined below. The proposed measures would include environmental safeguards for protection of downstream properties and waterways in accordance with relevant policy documentation and government guidelines. The minimum measures that would be included in Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) and implemented at the project area are presented in the BDAR (Att. B, section 8.4, section 8.4.1) and would include:

- clear demarcation of the limits of clearing and tree protection zones
- pre-clearing surveys with a particular focus on Pink Cockatoo and any fauna that may be resident in trees to be removed or trimmed
- hygiene procedures to prevent the introduction and spread of weeds or pathogens in areas of native vegetation
- supervision of clearing by an ecologist and implementation of measures to minimise risk of harm to resident fauna and salvage habitat resources.

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

The BDAR presents credit calculations in accordance with the BAM to determine the biodiversity offsets required for residual impacts on native vegetation and threatened species habitat. Species and ecosystem credits appropriate to the quantum of offset would be retired according to the BAM and the NSW Biodiversity Offset Scheme (BOS) (Att. B, Section 9.2, 9.4 and Appendix D).

Under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Environmental Offsets Policy* (DSEWPaC 2012) (the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy) biodiversity offsets are required to compensate for significant residual impacts on MNES. The BDAR includes the identification and assessment of potentially affected MNES, consideration of the potential significance of impacts on MNES pursuant to the *Matters of National Environmental Significance Significant impact guidelines 1.1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (DotE 2013). The outcome of these assessments is that the proposed action is not likely to result in a significant impact to any terrestrial threatened species or communities (Att. B, Appendix E). No biodiversity offsets for impacts on MNES are therefore proposed in accordance with the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy (DSEWPaC 2012).

The Commonwealth has formally endorsed the NSW BOS and BAM and the offset rules set out in the BC Act Regulation (DAWE 2020) and so if the proposed action is determined to be a controlled action the biodiversity offsets required under the EPBC Act would be secured through biodiversity credits according to the NSW system. Residual impacts to terrestrial threatened species or communities listed under the EPBC Act would be offset through biodiversity credits under the NSW BOS (Att. B, Section 9.2, 9.4 and Appendix D). This would include ecosystem credits for removal of habitat for EPBC Act-listed threatened and migratory fauna. The finalised BDAR would include details of the biodiversity credits associated with threatened species listed under the EPBC Act to help ensure that the specific like for like requirements of the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy (DSEWPaC 2012) are met.

4.1.5 Migratory Species

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

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

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

Direct impact	Indirect impact	Species	Common name
No	No	Actitis hypoleucos	Common Sandpiper
No	No	Apus pacificus	Fork-tailed Swift
No	No	Calidris acuminata	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris ferruginea	Curlew Sandpiper
No	No	Calidris melanotos	Pectoral Sandpiper
No	No	Gallinago hardwickii	Latham's Snipe, Japanese Snipe
No	No	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? *

No

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

There is broadly suitable foraging or resting habitat at the disturbance footprint for migratory bird species listed in Att. B., table 5.6 that may occur in, or fly over, semi-arid woodland, scrub and shrubland habitats. None of these species would be reliant upon habitats within the disturbance footprint for any part of their life cycle. They would be most likely to fly over the disturbance footprint, if present in the locality at all.

Referral guidelines have been published for 14 migratory terrestrial species with consideration of impacts mainly based on the presence of important habitat. Habitat in the disturbance footprint is not likely to support an ecologically significant proportion of the population of any of these species,
be of critical importance to the species at particular life-cycle stages, is not located at the limit of any of the species' range, and/or located within an area where the species is declining. As such, potential habitat in the study area and broader investigation area is not 'important habitat' for any of these species, as defined in the guidelines (DotE 2015). The proposed modification is not likely to result in any direct or indirect impacts to any migratory species as:

- there is no high-quality foraging or breeding habitat within the project area
- direct impacts are limited to the removal of small areas of potential foraging or resting habitat which constitute a negligible proportion of available habitat in the area
- indirect impacts on aquatic habitat such as sedimentation, erosion and contamination, light, vibration and noise impacts would be minimised through the implementation of standard mitigation measures
- weed management and strict biosecurity measures would be implemented as part of construction and ongoing operational mitigation measures
- these species are highly mobile and the proposed action would not create significant barriers to fauna movement
- the project area does not comprise important habitat for the species.

4.1.6 Nuclear

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

No

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

This proposed action does not involve a nuclear action. The proposed action would not have any direct or indirect impact on:

- establishing or significantly modifying a nuclear installation or a facility for storing spent nuclear fuel
- transporting spent nuclear fuel or radioactive waste products arising from reprocessing
- establishing or significantly modifying a facility for storing radioactive waste products arising from reprocessing
- mining or milling uranium ore
- establishing or significantly modifying a large-scale disposal facility for radioactive waste
- de-commissioning or rehabilitating any facility or area in which an activity described above has been undertaken, or
- establishing, significantly modifying, decommissioning or rehabilitating a facility where radioactive materials at or above the activity level specified in regulation 2.02 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 (EPBC Regulations) are, were, or are proposed to be stored.

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. *

There are no Commonwealth Marine Areas within 200 km of the project area. These protected matters are well beyond the maximum potential extent of direct or indirect impacts arising from the proposed action.

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 project area is over 1000 kilometres to the southwest of the Great Barrier Reef and does not drain to the waters surrounding this protected matter. This protected matter is well beyond the maximum potential extent of direct or indirect impacts arising from the proposed action.

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

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

No

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

The proposed action does not involve coal seam gas or a large coal mining development.

4.1.10 Commonwealth Land

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

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

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

—

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

No

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

No commonwealth land overlaps with the project area.

4.1.11 Commonwealth Heritage Places Overseas

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

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

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

—

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

No

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

These protected matters are well beyond the maximum potential extent of direct or indirect impacts arising from the proposed action.

4.1.12 Commonwealth or Commonwealth Agency

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

No

4.2 Impact summary

Conclusion on the likelihood of significant impacts

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

None

Conclusion on the likelihood of unlikely significant impacts

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

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

4.3 Alternatives

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

No

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

APA is proposing an expansion of gas transportation capacity on its East Coast Grid that links Queensland to southern markets ahead of projected supply risks. Expansion is through the construction of additional compressor stations and associated works on both the South West Queensland Pipeline in Queensland and the MWP in NSW.

The expansion is being delivered in a number of stages:

- Stage 1 (completed): the first stage of expansion works included the construction of a single site of compression on each of the SWQP and MWP.
- Stage 2 (completed): the second stage of expansion works includes the construction of an additional compressor station on each of the SWQP and MWP.
- Stage 3 (design and NSW State assessment stage), APA is undertaking engineering and design works and seeking approval for the Stage 3 of the expansion project which involves:
    - Construction of additional compressor stations on the MWP (MW733) at the project area near Mount Hope which is the subject of this referral.
    - Construction of an electric drive compressor station at Uranquinty on the Culcairn to Wagga Pipeline.

This modification proposes part of the East Coast Grid Expansion project. The Modification 8 / MW733 compressor station is needed to support the expansion, by increasing capacity of the MWP. If works proposed in this referral do not progress, the compressor station will not be constructed and operated. Hence the required incremental increase in the transportation capacity of the MWP as part of East Coast Grid Expansion Project would not be achieved ahead of projected supply risks.

Therefore, there was no alternative to proceeding with the proposed action or proceeding with an alternative timeframe without supply risks.

Alternative locations were considered generally along the MWP. Site selection criteria included:

- availability of land through existing APA ownership or lease availability
- constructability issues, such as access, topography and ground conditions
- optimisation to increases in capacity (i.e. capacity planning)
- land use
- natural hazard risk, including susceptibility to flooding
- potential for environmental and social impacts.

Based on the constraints analyses undertaken by APA and other suitably qualified personnel, it was concluded that the proposed modification location presented a strategic location for ease of connection of the compressor station to the existing MWP in the shortest possible construction timeframe, minimal impacts on biodiversity and with the shortest duration of the potential construction impacts on air quality, noise, visual and traffic. Given the distant location of the modification site from the township of Nymagee, Cobar and any residential sensitive receptors, any social impacts of the modification's operational stage over its 25-year life will be negligible.

Therefore, alternative locations were not considered further and only the current location at MW733 is presented in this referral.

5. Lodgement

5.1 Attachments

1.2.1 Overview of the proposed action

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttA_12655381_EPBC001_Overview.pdf Project site overview figure.	14/05/2025		High
#2.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		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	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		High

3.1.1 Current condition of the project area's environment

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttA_12655381_EPBC001_Overview.pdf Project site overview figure.	15/05/2025	No	High

3.1.2 Existing or proposed uses for the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Link	Cobar Local Environmental Plan 2012 https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce..			High

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

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	16/06/2025	No	High

3.2.1 Flora and fauna within the affected area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025	No	High

#2.	Document	AttC_12655381_EPBC002_BiodiversityValues.pdf Biodiversity values figure	14/05/2025	No	High

3.2.2 Vegetation within the project area

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		High
#2.	Document	AttC_12655381_EPBC002_BiodiversityValues.pdf Biodiversity values figure	14/05/2025		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	AttA_12655381_EPBC001_Overview.pdf Project site overview figure.	14/05/2025		High
#2.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		High
#3.	Document	AttC_12655381_EPBC002_BiodiversityValues.pdf Biodiversity values figure	14/05/2025		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	AttA_12655381_EPBC001_Overview.pdf Project site overview figure.	14/05/2025		High
#2.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		High
#3.	Link	Matters of National Environmental Significance impact guidelines 1.1 https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/publi..			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	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf	15/06/2025		High

Biodiversity Development Assessment
Report for the proposed action

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

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttA_12655381_EPBC001_Overview.pdf Project site overview figure.	14/05/2025		High
#2.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		High
#3.	Document	AttC_12655381_EPBC002_BiodiversityValues.pdf Biodiversity values figure	14/05/2025		High

4.1.4.11 (Threatened Species and Ecological Communities) Proposed offsets relevant to avoidance or mitigation measures

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		High
#2.	Link	EPBC Act Condition-setting Policy https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/publi..			High
#3.	Link	EPBC Act environmental offsets policy https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/publi..			High
#4.	Link	Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1 - Matters of National Environmental Significance https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/epbc/publi..			High

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

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Document	AttB_12655381-REP-1_APA MW733 BDAR.pdf Biodiversity Development Assessment Report for the proposed action	15/06/2025		High
#2.	Link	Referral guideline for 14 birds listed as migratory species under			High

the EPBC Act. (PDF)
https://www.dcceew.gov.au/sites/default/files/do..

4.1.6.3 (Nuclear) Why your action is unlikely to have a direct and/or indirect impact

	Type	Name	Date	Sensitivity	Confidence
#1.	Link	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000 https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2000B00190/lates..			High

5.2 Declarations

Completed Referring party's declaration

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

ABN/ACN	39008488373
Organisation name	GHD PTY LTD
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Ben Harrington
Representative's job title	Technical Director - Biodiversity
Phone	0407 049 006
Email	ben.harrington@ghd.com
Address	Level 15 / 133 Castlereagh St. Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

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

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

☑ By checking this box, I, **Ben Harrington of GHD PTY LTD**, 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. *

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

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.

ABN/ACN	064629009
Organisation name	EAST AUSTRALIAN PIPELINE PTY LIMITED
Organisation address	2000 NSW
Representative's name	Brian Connellan

Representative's job title	Access and Approvals Lead
Phone	07 3223 3386
Email	brian.connellan@apa.com.au
Address	Level 25/580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

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

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

☑ I, **Brian Connellan of EAST AUSTRALIAN PIPELINE PTY LIMITED**, 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 would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

✔ 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.

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

☑ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *

☑ I, **Brian Connellan of EAST AUSTRALIAN PIPELINE PTY LIMITED**, 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. *

☐ I would like to receive notifications and track the referral progress through the EPBC portal. *