

Community Consultation Group

21 August 2024





Delivered by
AusNet

Project update

Megan Cusack





Stakeholder update

Carlee Grant

Proposed route update

When the updated proposed route north of Waubra was released in May, we let the community and CCG know that design and planning for terminal station works near Bulgana was progressing.

After changes to the project in 2023, the previously proposed terminal station to the north of Ballarat is no longer required, instead a new terminal station near Bulgana is required for the Western Renewables Link.

AusNet has identified the site for the new terminal station near Bulgana, which is to the north-east of the existing Bulgana Terminal Station. The terminal stations will be connected by a 220kV transmission line, and the 500kV transmission line will start at the new terminal station and run to Sydenham Terminal Station.

The terminal station site will be approximately 500 by 700m, however there may be changes depending on the layout and orientation of the final terminal station design.

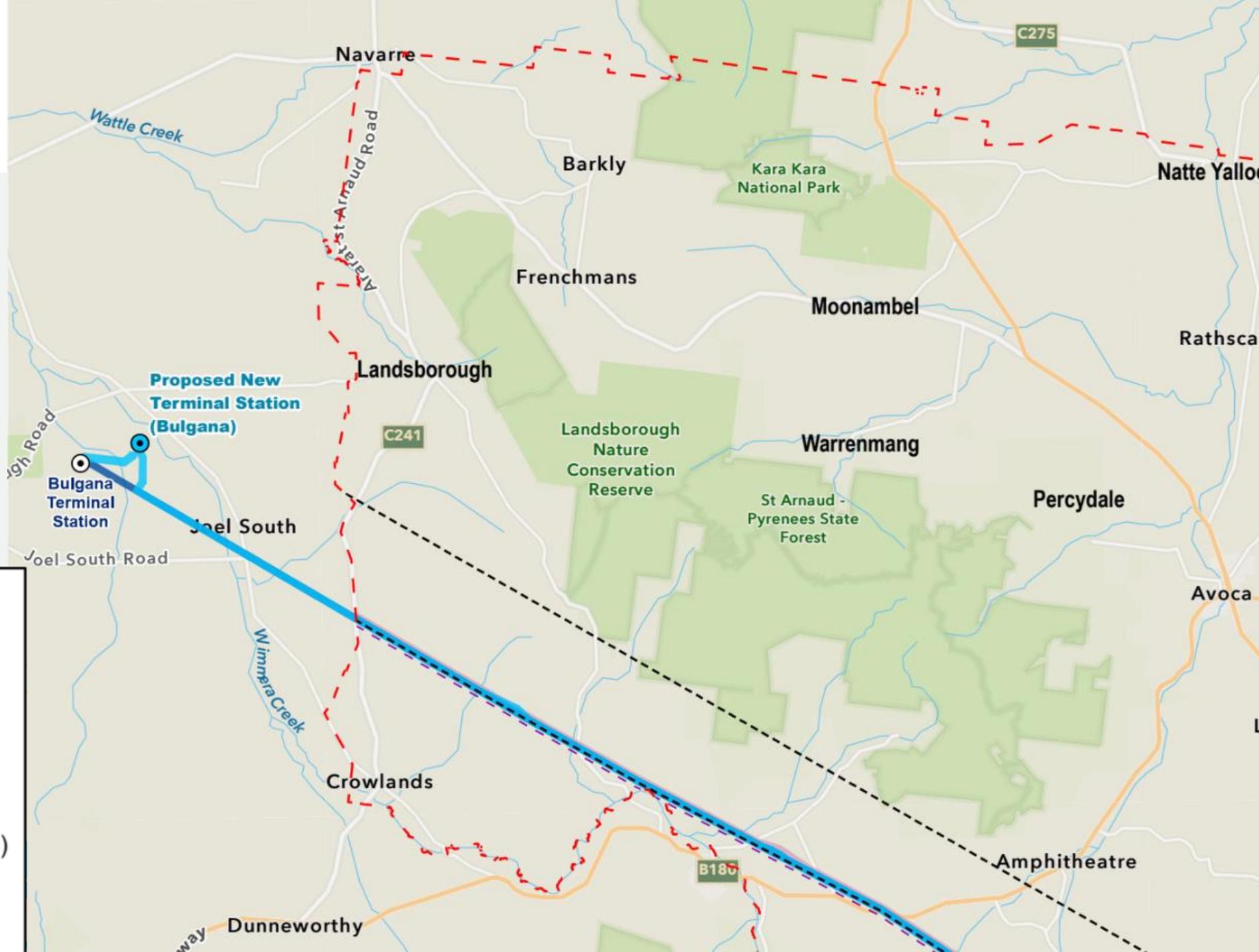


We have been engaging with landholders in the area for some time as well as undertaking field surveys and investigations to identify a suitable site for the new terminal station. There are many complexities to balance, including constraints around land availability, surface water and ecology impacts.

Landholder-first approach

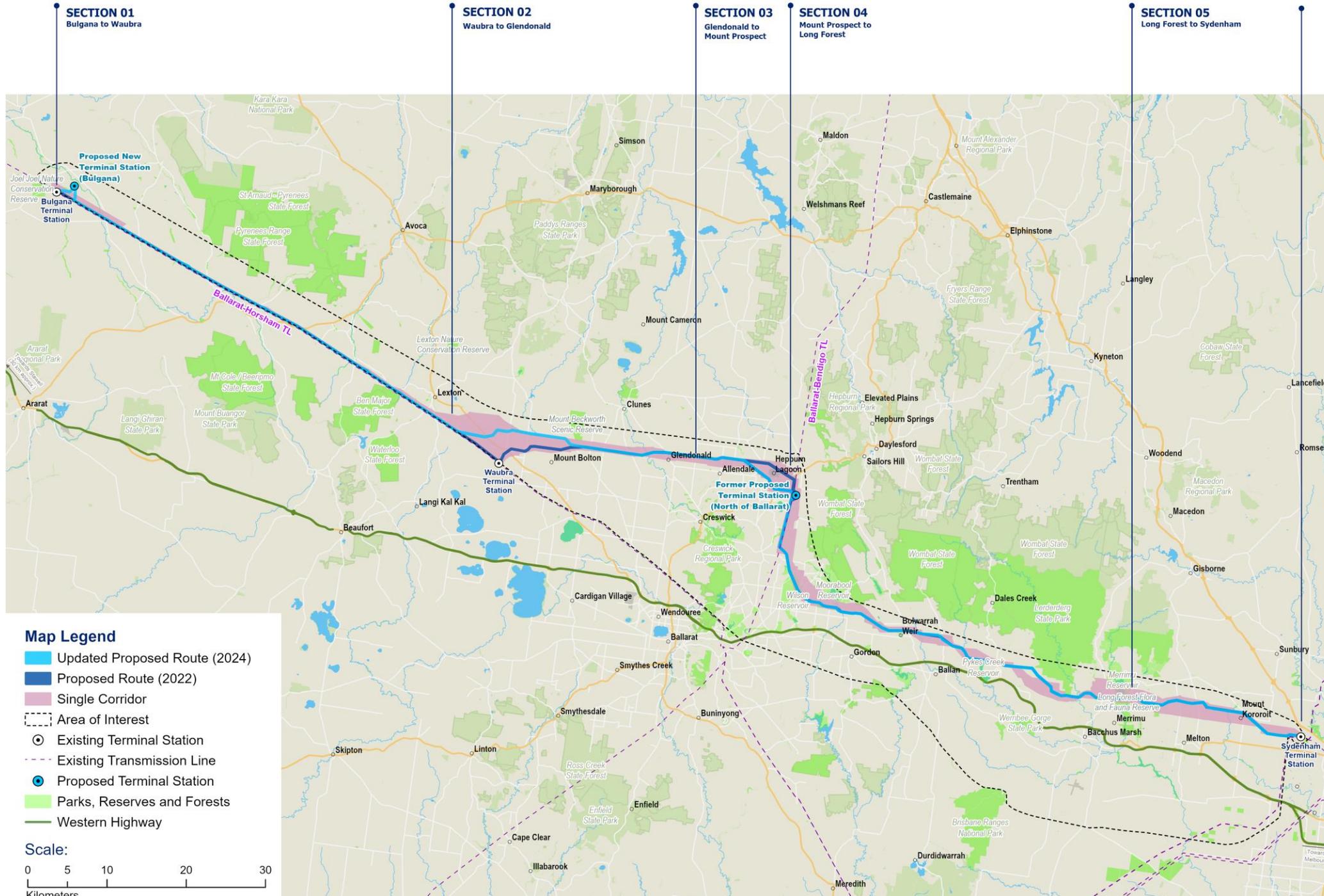
- Landholders are notified first that the updated proposed route was being made public, followed by stakeholders including the CCG.
- Surrounding landholders in the Bulgana area and all landholders along the alignment are notified next followed by neighbouring properties along alignment (if details are known to the project team). The broader community is then updated via an update to the project webmap, website FAQs, publication of a new fact sheet and an eUpdate sent to subscribers.

Proposed terminal station location near Bulgana



- Existing Terminal Station
- Proposed Terminal Station
- Existing Transmission Line
- Western Highway
- Local Government Area
- Area of Interest
- Updated Proposed Route (2024)
- Proposed Route (2022)
- Single Corridor

Proposed Route Update

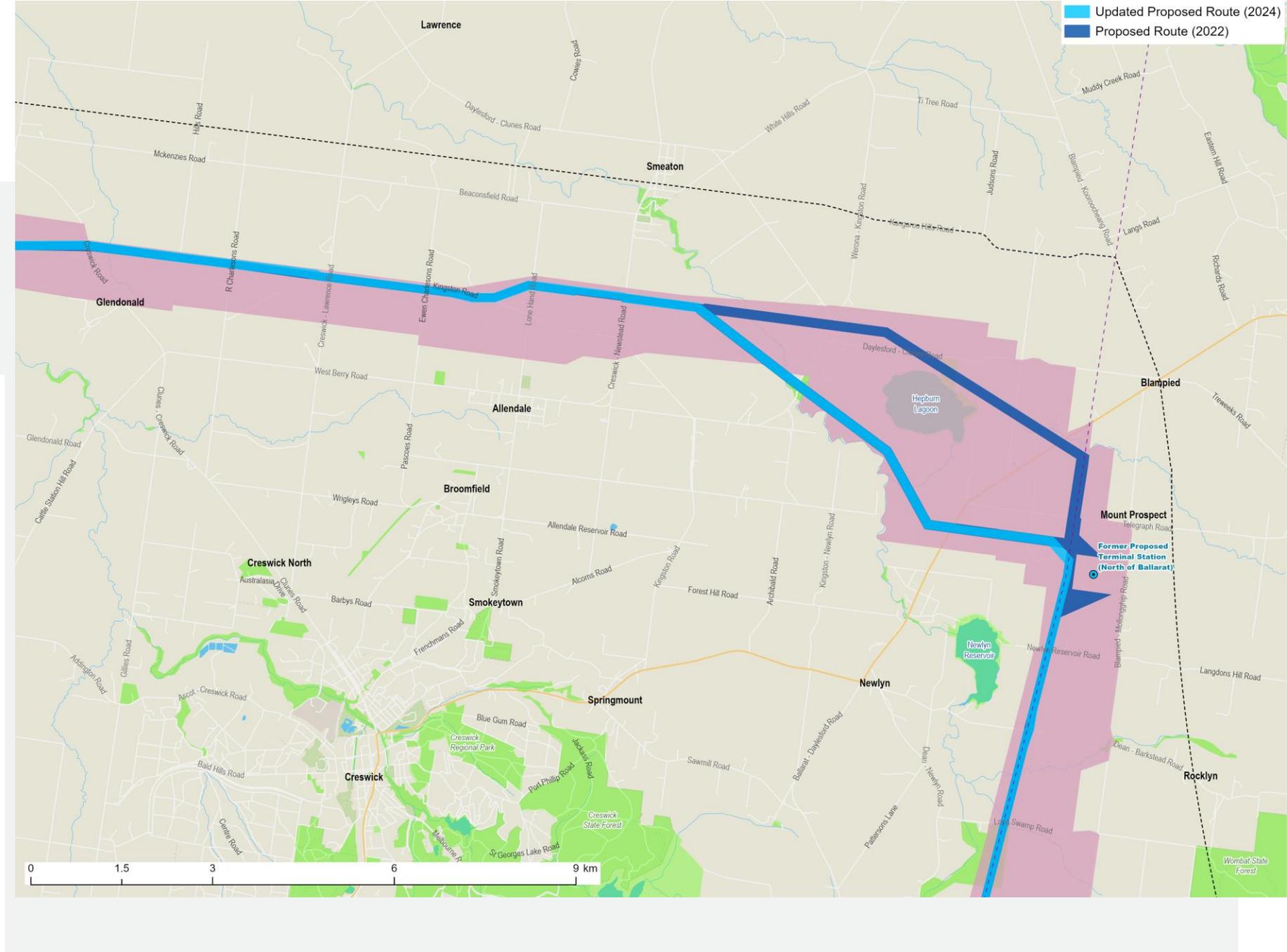


Section 3: Glendonald to Mount Prospect

Southern option around Hepburn Lagoon was confirmed in September 2023 as the proposed route in this area.

The route has been updated around the former terminal station location north of Ballarat (which is no longer required) and where the proposed route joins the existing Ballarat to Bendigo transmission line easement. Discussions with the landholder are ongoing.

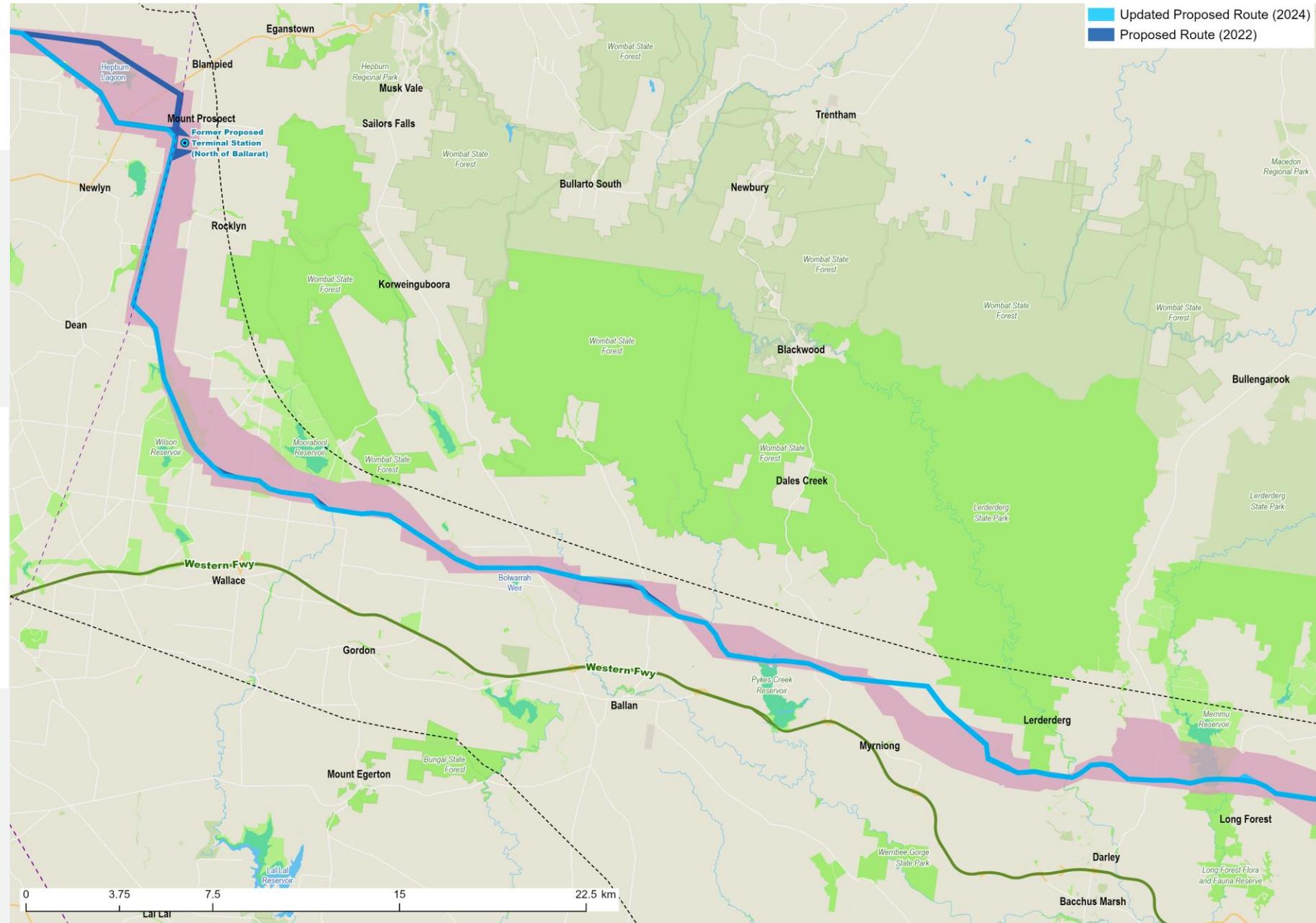
Tower location and access track changes have also been made.



Section 4: Mount Prospect to Long Forest

No major updates in this section.

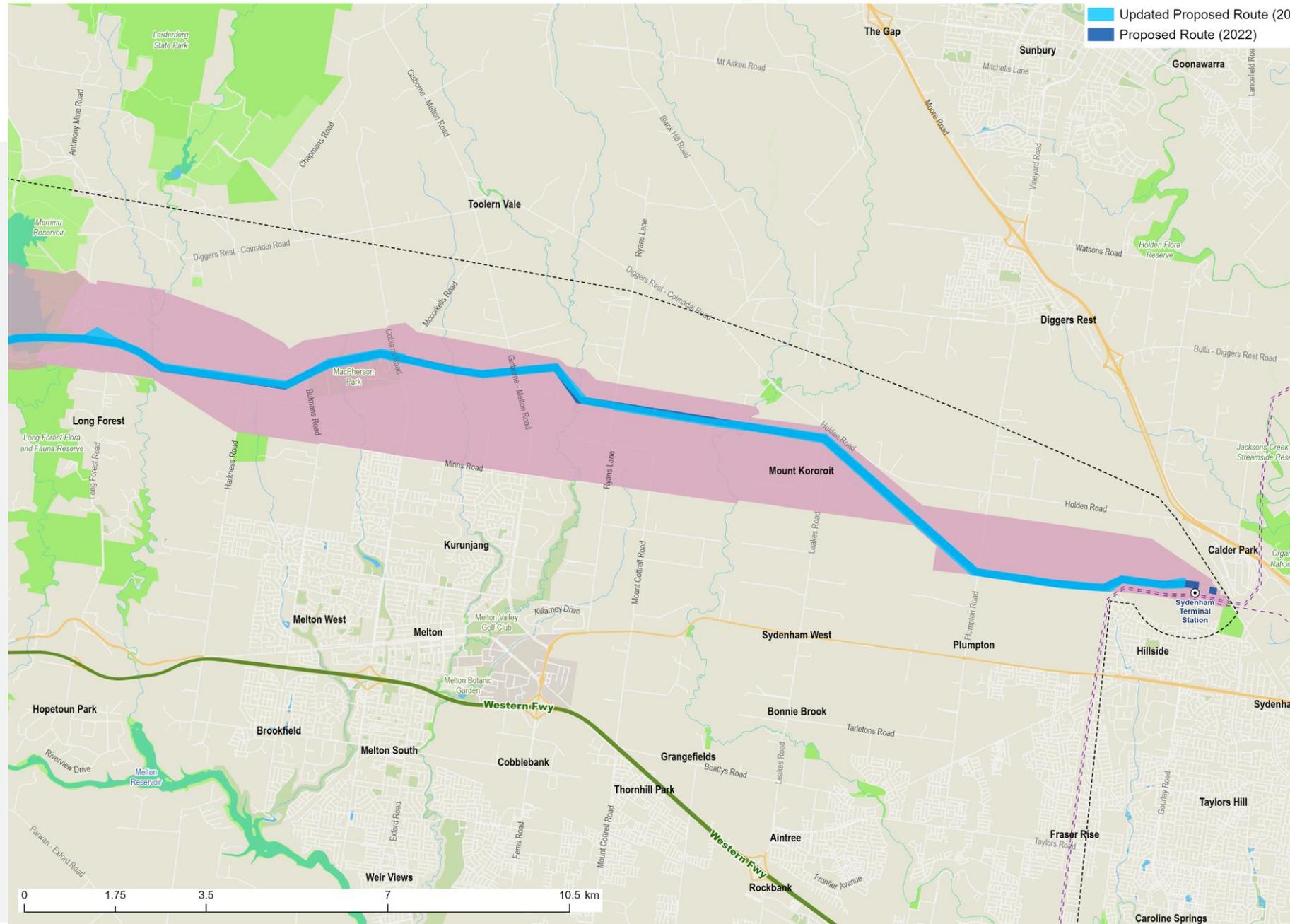
Several more minor updates and tower and access track changes have been made as a result of landholder and technical specialist feedback.



Section 5: Long Forest to Sydenham

No major changes in this section.

Tower location and access track changes have been made as a result of landholder and technical specialist feedback.



Upcoming community engagement for the EES program

EES communications and engagement Program:

- **Stage 1: EES Discovery (Q3/Q4 2024)**
- Stage 2: EES submission (Q4 2024/Q1 2025)
- Stage 3: Pre EES public exhibition (Q1/Q2 2025)
- Stage 4: EES public exhibition (Q2 2025)
- Stage 5: Public inquiry period (Q2/Q3 2025)
- Stage 6: Minister's Assessment /Decision (2025)

Purpose of engagement

- Share latest project updates
- Share EES survey findings;
 - Highlight study findings from key EES studies including Aboriginal cultural heritage, Historical heritage, Fauna and Flora, Landscape and visual impact and social and community
- Discuss the draft Planning Scheme Amendment
- Seek input on the above from community into the planning process

How we'll engage for Stage 1: EES Discovery

- Pop-up information sessions
- Community webinars
- Stakeholder survey
- Workshops/briefings
- Field day attendance
- Printed collateral
- Advertising
- Digital

Pop-up locations....

LGA	Township	Location	Dates	Timings
Hepburn Shire Council	Creswick	Creswick Hub - Hepburn Libraries & Council Customer Service	Monday 2nd September	11am – 5pm
Ballarat City Council	Ballarat	Stockland's Wendouree	Wednesday 4th September	11am – 5pm
Northern Grampians Shire Council	Stawell	Stawell (shop front) Main Road	Monday 9th September	11am – 5pm
Pyrenees Shire Council	Beaufort	Beaufort Community Resource Centre and Library	Wednesday 11th September	11am – 5pm
Moorabool Shire Council	Ballan	Ballan Neighbourhood House	Monday 16th September	11am – 5pm
Moorabool Shire Council	Bacchus Marsh	The Village Shopping Centre	Wednesday 18th September	11am – 5pm
Melton City Council	Melton	Woodgrove Shopping Centre	Monday 23rd September [^]	11am – 5pm
City of Brimbank	Taylors Lakes	Watergardens Shopping Centre	Wednesday 25 th September [^]	11am – 5pm



Impact Assessment: Agriculture & Forestry

Daryl Poole
Shane Annett

Impact assessment: Agriculture & Forestry

Agricultural specialists, farm management economists
Experience in agricultural impact assessments for:

- Solar and wind farms
- Transmission lines (e.g. Star of the South)
- Road construction

RMCG Team

- Daryl Poole
- Shayne Annett
- Jake Gaudion
- Adrian Kennelly
- Duncan Wallace
- David Geddes (Forestry specialist)



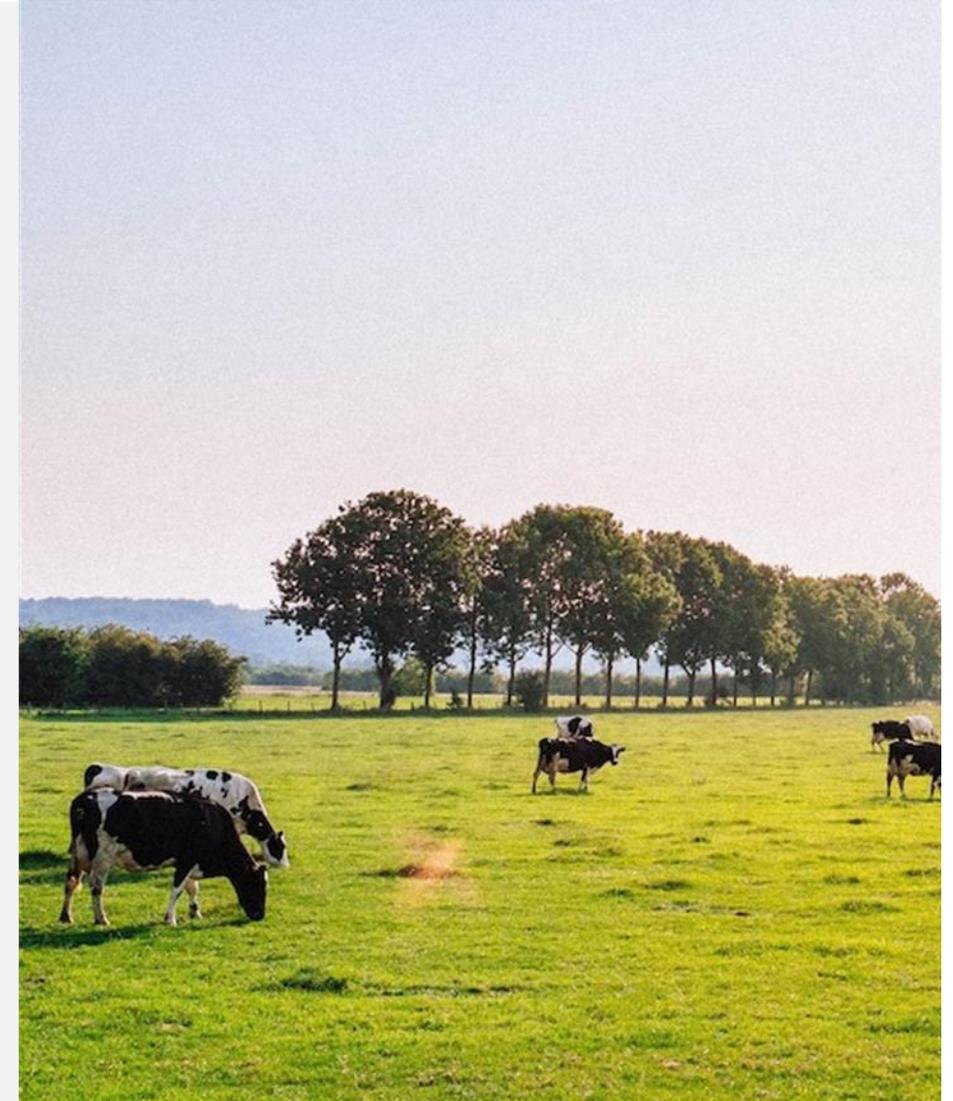
Today's briefing

- Scope of the easement
- Our method
- Understanding impacts
- Consultation
- How we approached the project
- Some challenges and how we tackled them



Scope

- Existing agriculture and forestry
- Impacts on agriculture and forestry operations
- Impacts on the entire project and significance of them
- Recommendations to avoid or minimise potential impacts





Method

1. What is there now?
 - Existing conditions
2. Impacts – construction, operation and decommissioning
 - Lost production
 - Disruption of restrictions on farm activities; livestock disturbance
 - Isolation and redundancy of land
 - Soil and water – protection, contamination
 - Biosecurity
3. Mitigations
 - Avoid or minimize effects
 - Unavoidable impacts (compensate)

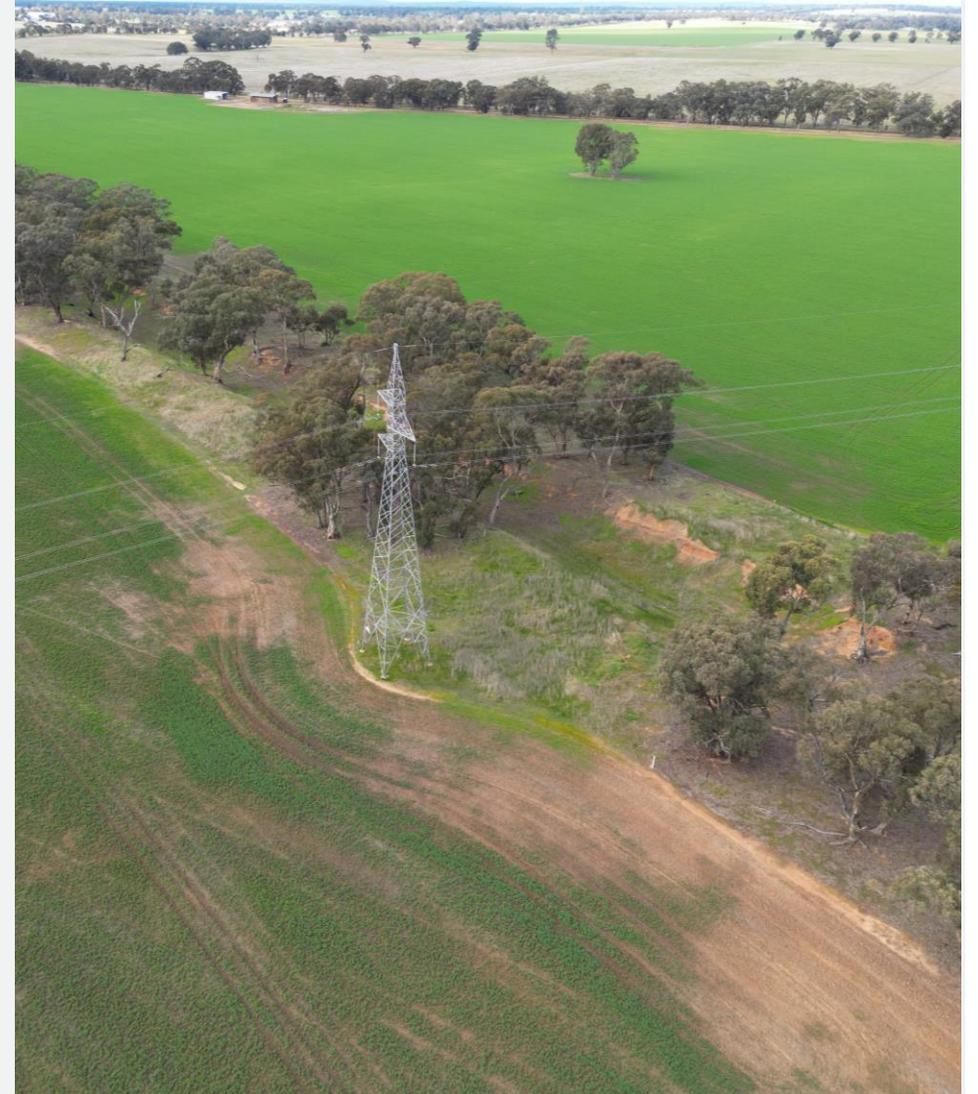
1. What is there now

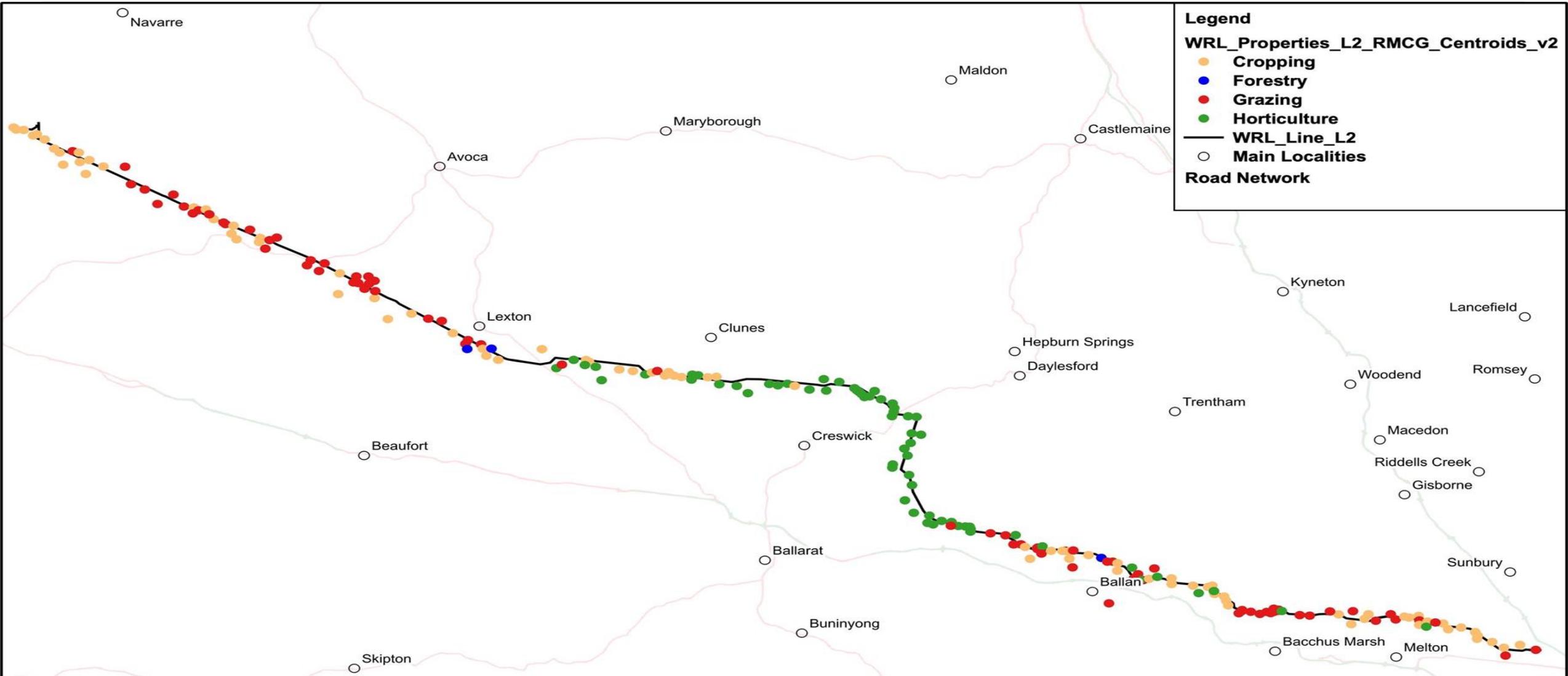
AusNet data on every property
Imagery: looking at all impacted properties

Parcel by parcel:

- Location info
- Infrastructure
- 'Highest value' use:
 - Grazing
 - Cropping (broadacre)
 - Horticulture

Any cropping, whole area allocated to cropping
Any horticulture, whole area allocated to horticulture





2. Possible impacts

AusNet data on every property

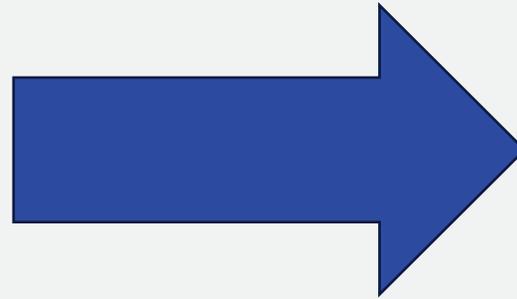
Imagery: looking at all affected properties

Parcel by parcel:

- Location info
- Infrastructure

Highest value use:

- Grazing
- Cropping (broadacre)
- Horticulture

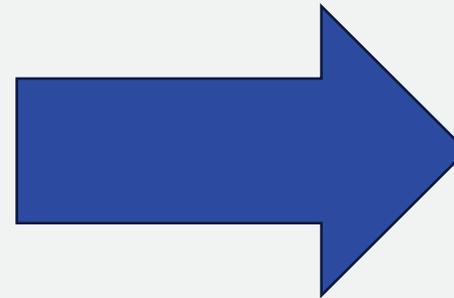


**Initial understanding of
property-level impacts**

2. Possible impacts

Gather local info and check impacts:

- Drove the route (twice)
- Potato industry – growers and processors
- AusNet land team
- Local governments
- AgVic staff
- Vic Serrated Tussock Working Party
- Interviews with landholders
- Community consultation sessions
- VFF briefing
- Case Studies



**Confirmation of
property-level
impacts
(during construction
and operation)**

2. Possible impacts

1. Case studies

Identify concerns, check against WRL project

1. **Sheep Farm**

2. **Mixed farming (horticulture, cropping, grazing)**

3. **Horticulture and cropping (potatoes, garlic, cereals)**

2. Impacts: assessing them

Measurement:

Extent

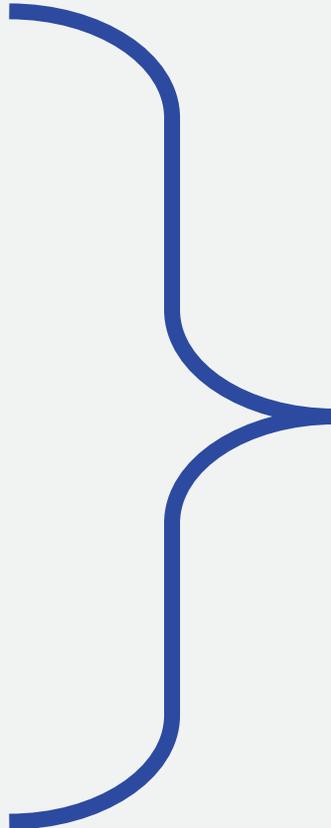
- Area

Duration

- Construction phase only
- throughout project life

Magnitude

- Value of production
- No use or partial



Total Impact and Significance

- Local
- Regional
- State

2. Impacts: identified

Categories:

- Lost production
- Isolation and redundancy of land
- Disruption or restrictions on farm activities; livestock disturbance
- Soil and water – protection, contamination
- Biosecurity

A. Lost production – Construction & operation

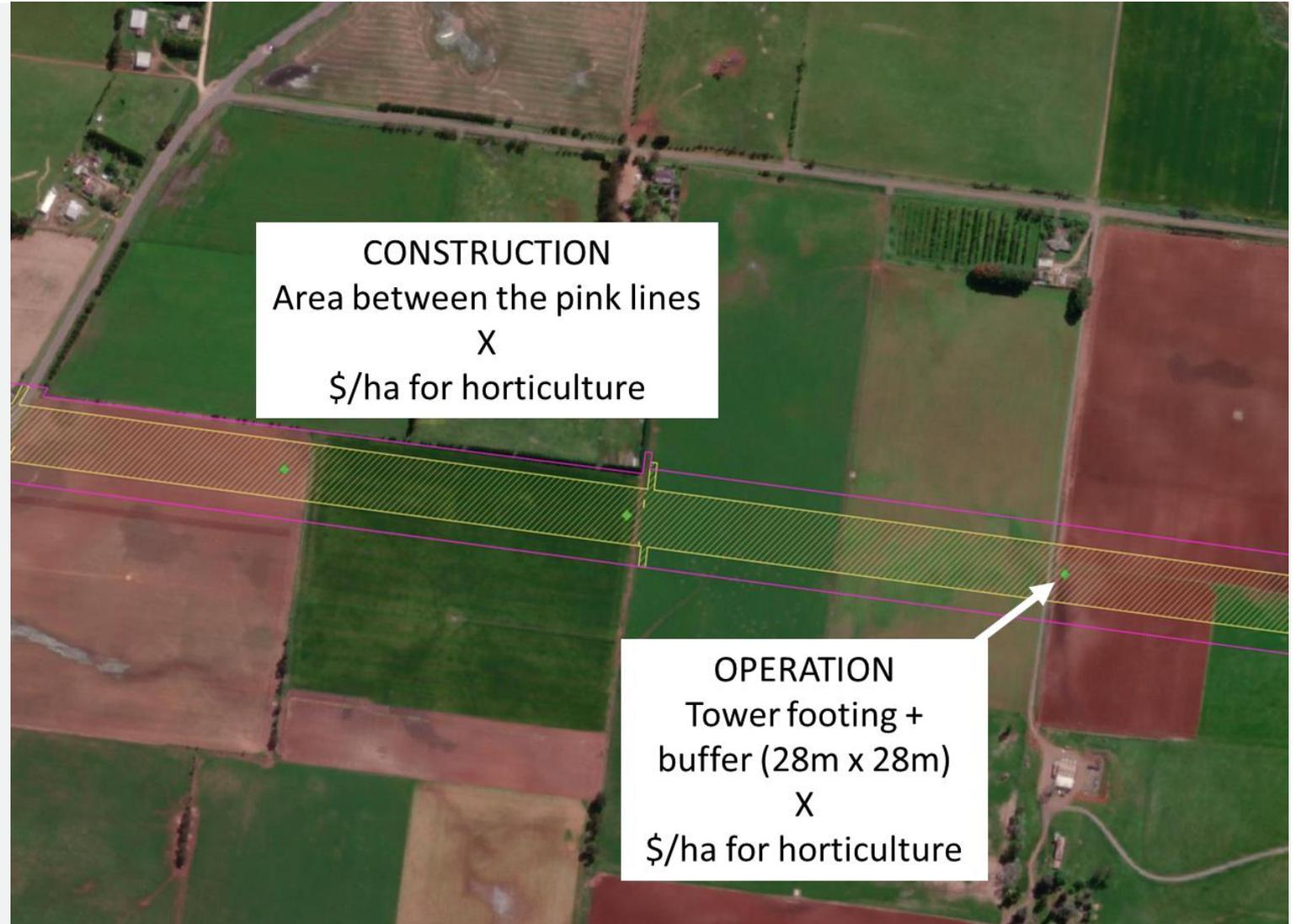
Formula = Area X \$ Value/HA (ABS Gross Value of Ag Production)

	<i>Hectares</i>	<i>\$ per HA</i>	<i>Total Value</i>
GRAZING			
CROPPING			
HORTICULTURE			
FORESTRY			



TOTAL Impact
Not about
individual farms
(i.e. not
compensation)

A. Lost production - Construction and operation



A. Lost production: whole of project

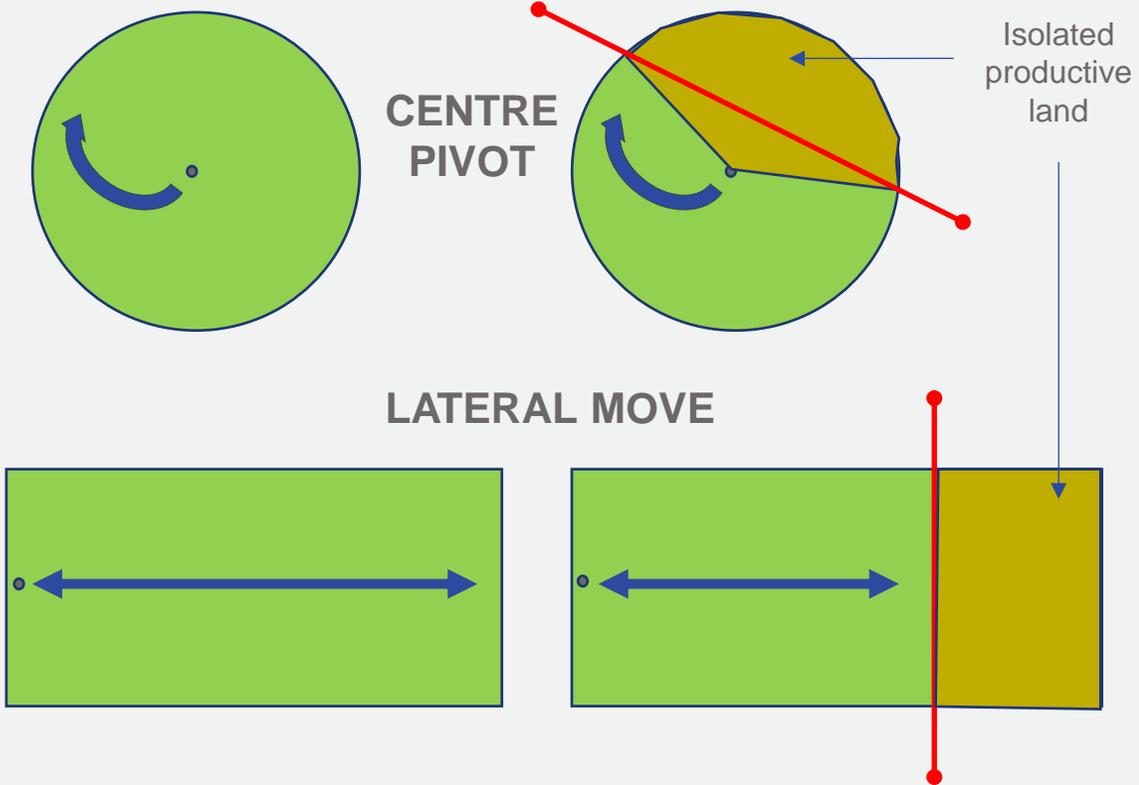
Value of agriculture and forestry production lost

- Total value – construction
- Total value – operation

Significance

- Local - descriptive
- Regional and State – as % of

B. Isolation and redundancy



C. Disruption or restrictions on farm activities; livestock disturbance

- Irrigation and stock water
- Movement around the farm – people, stock, machinery
- Access to shed, yards
- Livestock disturbance esp. during lambing or calving
- Spraying, fertilizing, harvesting etc. (including aerial)

D. Soil and water – protection, contamination

- Soil conservation (protect exposed soils) - prevent
- Soil compaction - prevent
- Soil or water contamination - prevent
- Rehabilitation of disturbed areas (soil profile)
- Re-establishment of pasture



E. Biosecurity – Weeds, pests, disease

- Known issues – potato cyst nematode, Ovine Johnes, varroa mite
- Focus on **preventative** actions
- Movement of personnel, vehicles, equipment and machinery
- Record keeping
- Monitoring and reporting

Avoid under-estimating impacts

For example, using the following assumptions:

- Highest value use
- That farms are at max stocking rate
- Entire construction area excluded from any agricultural use for the full duration of construction
- Production lost for whole year during construction phase
- All tracks are permanent

These factors mean that the estimated impacts are likely to be greater than the actual impacts

