

AUGUST 2022

Updated proposed route overview



Delivered by

AusNet

Purpose

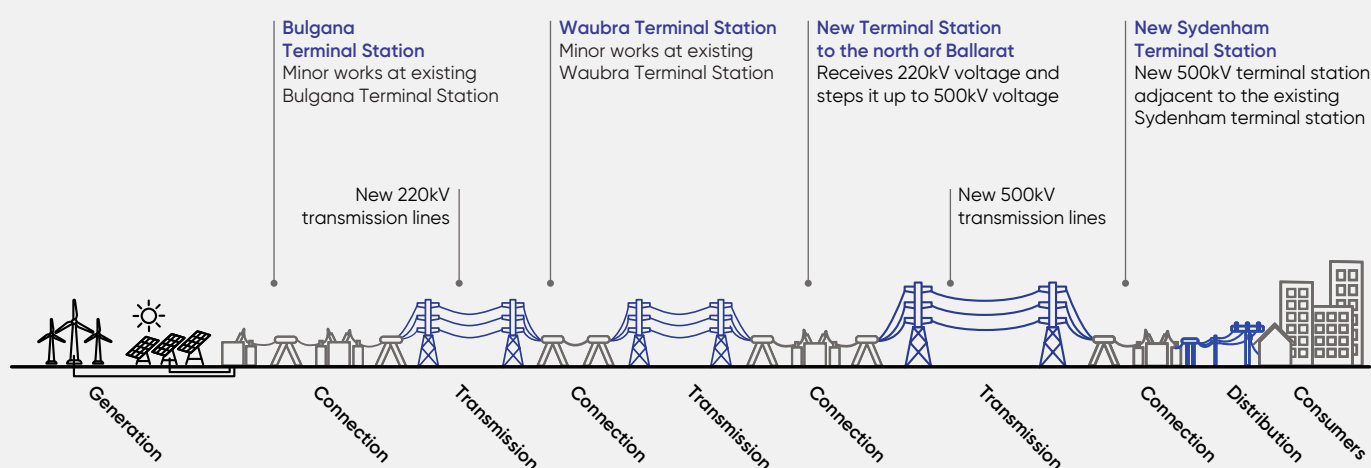
This document provides information about updates to the proposed route for the Western Renewables Link.

The proposed route, released in November 2021, has been revised based on additional information collected through consultation with landholders and stakeholders, government agencies and authorities, and Traditional Owners, along with further field work and technical studies.

More information on the proposed route is available in the Proposed Route Overview (November 2021), available on the [Western Renewables Link website, Resources page](#).

You can also view more information about the proposed route on the interactive map on the [project website](#).

Western Renewables Link



New overhead double circuit 220kV transmission line between the existing Bulgana Terminal Station, connecting to the existing Waubra Terminal Station and a new terminal station to the north of Ballarat.

From there, a new overhead double circuit 500kV transmission line connecting to a new terminal station at Sydenham.

For illustrative purposes only



Why is the proposed route being updated?

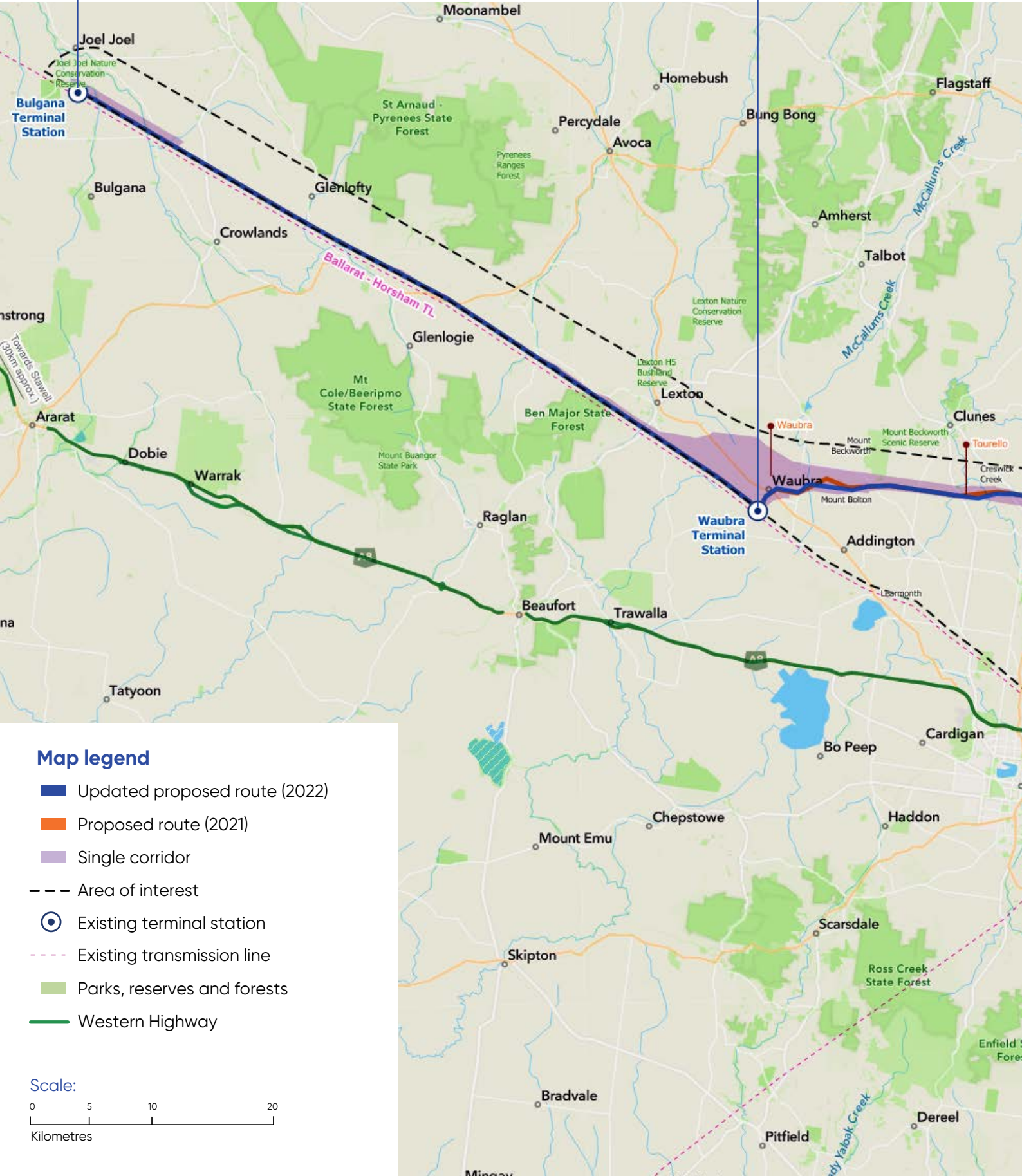
As new technical and landholder information is received, we have refined the proposed route to minimise the overall impact of the proposed transmission line on landholders, the community, and the environment. This process commenced with desktop studies at a broad regional scale and has become more focused over time. Most recently, we have identified refinements at a localised and individual property scale based on input from landholders and other stakeholders, and the outcomes of field surveys and technical studies.

A range of technical studies have informed the refinement of the proposed route including land use, agriculture, flora and fauna, Aboriginal cultural heritage, historic heritage, and landscape and visual amenity. This information, including the associated field surveys, has enabled us to make changes to the proposed route to avoid some specific impacts and minimise the overall impacts of the project on the community and environment. While all landholder requests have been considered, before a change is made to the proposed route, the request must be assessed against the aim to avoid and minimise overall project impacts, meaning not all requests have resulted in updates to the proposed route.

Proposed route map with updates

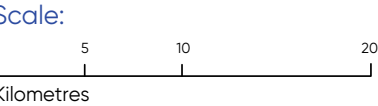
Section 01
Bulgana to Waubra

Section 02
Waubra to
Glendonald

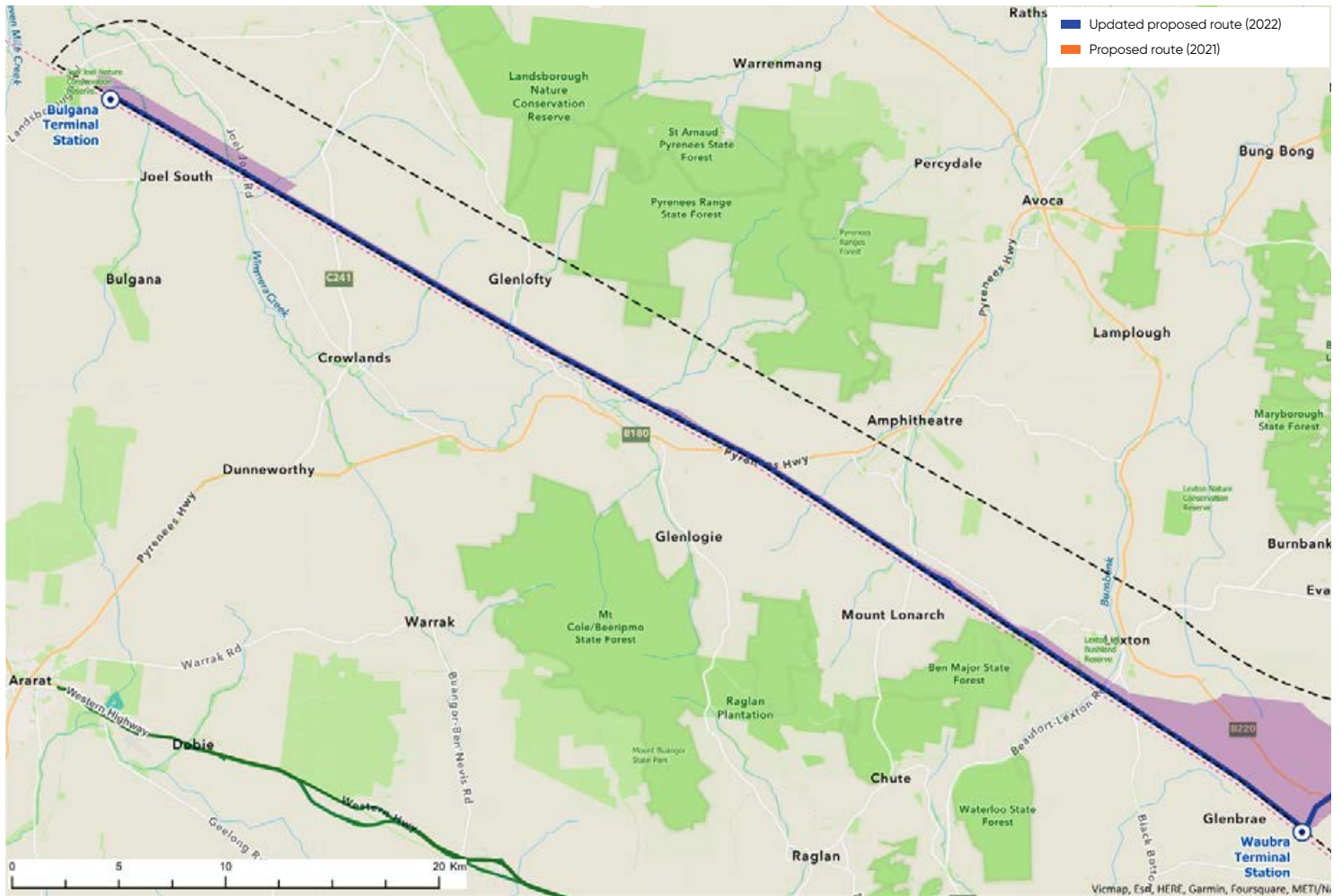


Map legend

- Updated proposed route (2022)
- Proposed route (2021)
- Single corridor
- Area of interest
- Existing terminal station
- Existing transmission line
- Parks, reserves and forests
- Western Highway

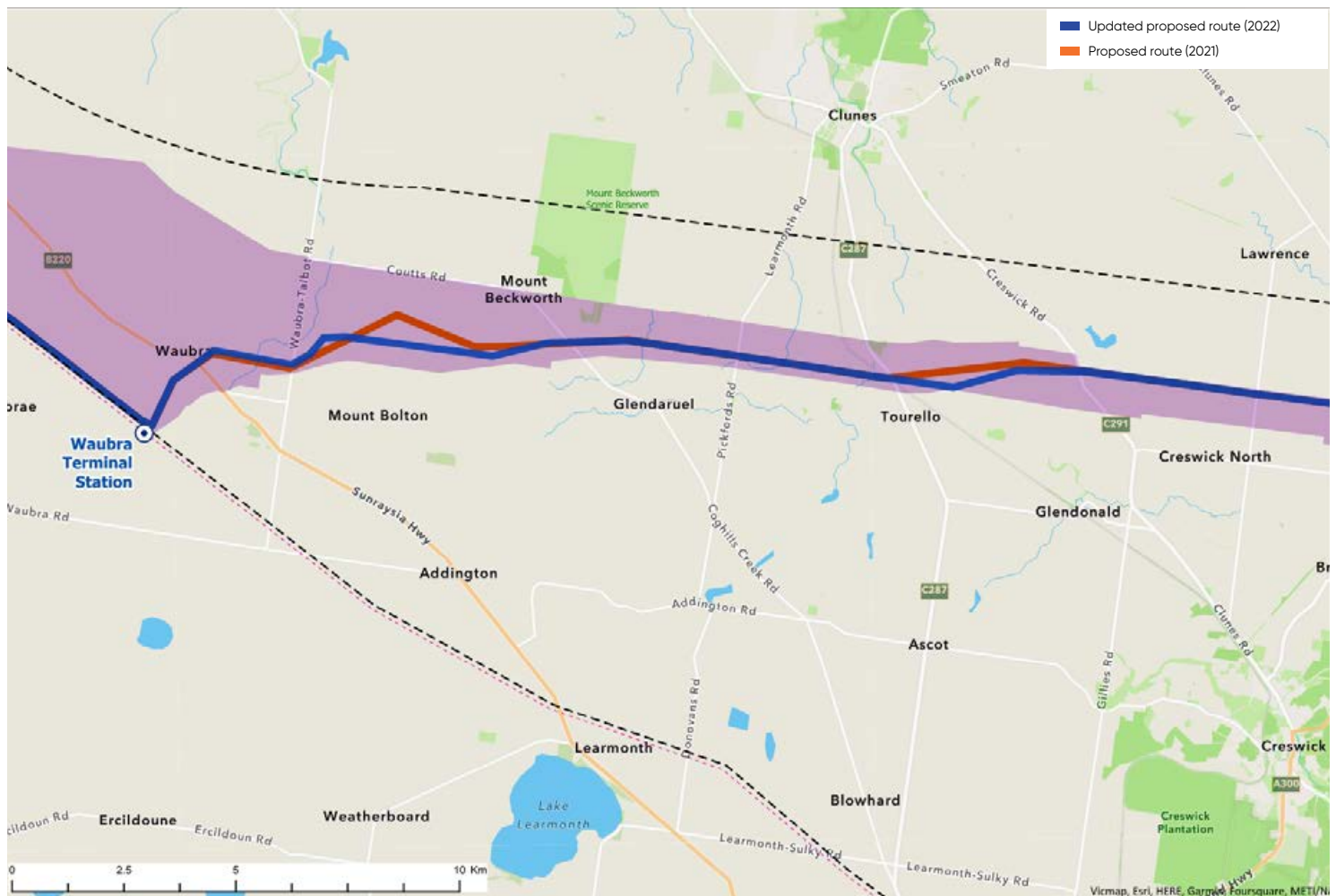


SECTION 1 – BULGANA TO WAUBRA



Bulgana to Waubra

The proposed route remains the same between Bulgana and Waubra.



Waubra to Glendonald

Proposed route (2021)

The proposed route between Waubra and Glendonald traverses properties generally used for broadacre cropping, with irrigated cropping and forestry plantations in some areas. Mount Bolton and Mount Beckworth are recognised visual features of the landscape that are avoided by the proposed route. Volcanic cones, which are recognised places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance, and sites protected by significant landscape overlays are avoided by the proposed route.

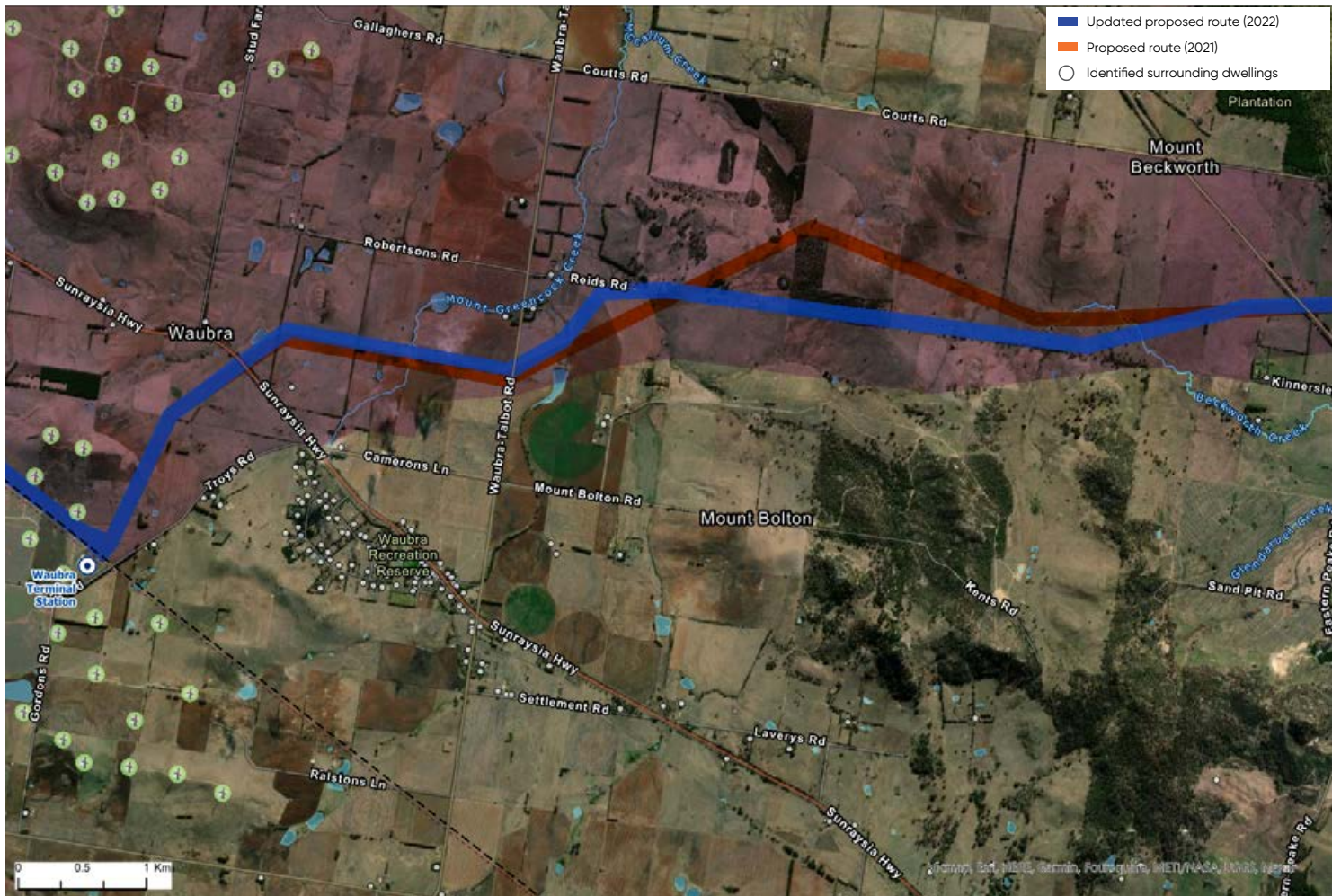
Why is the proposed route being updated here?

The proposed route has been realigned to minimise land use impacts in this area.

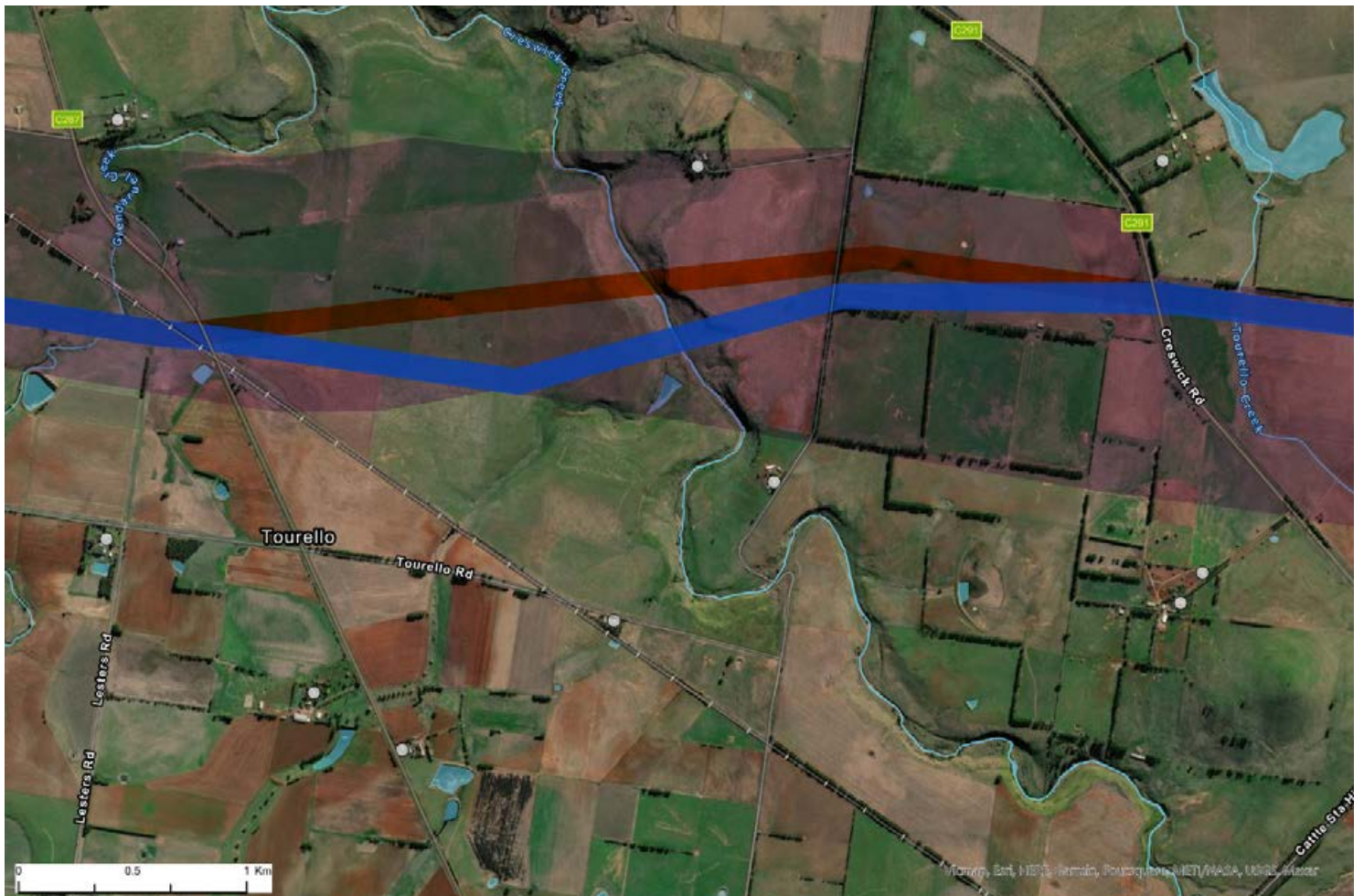
Updated proposed route (2022)

Updates to the proposed route have been made to more closely follow property and parcel boundaries where possible between Waubra and Glendaruel, and to the north-east of Tourello near Creswick Creek.

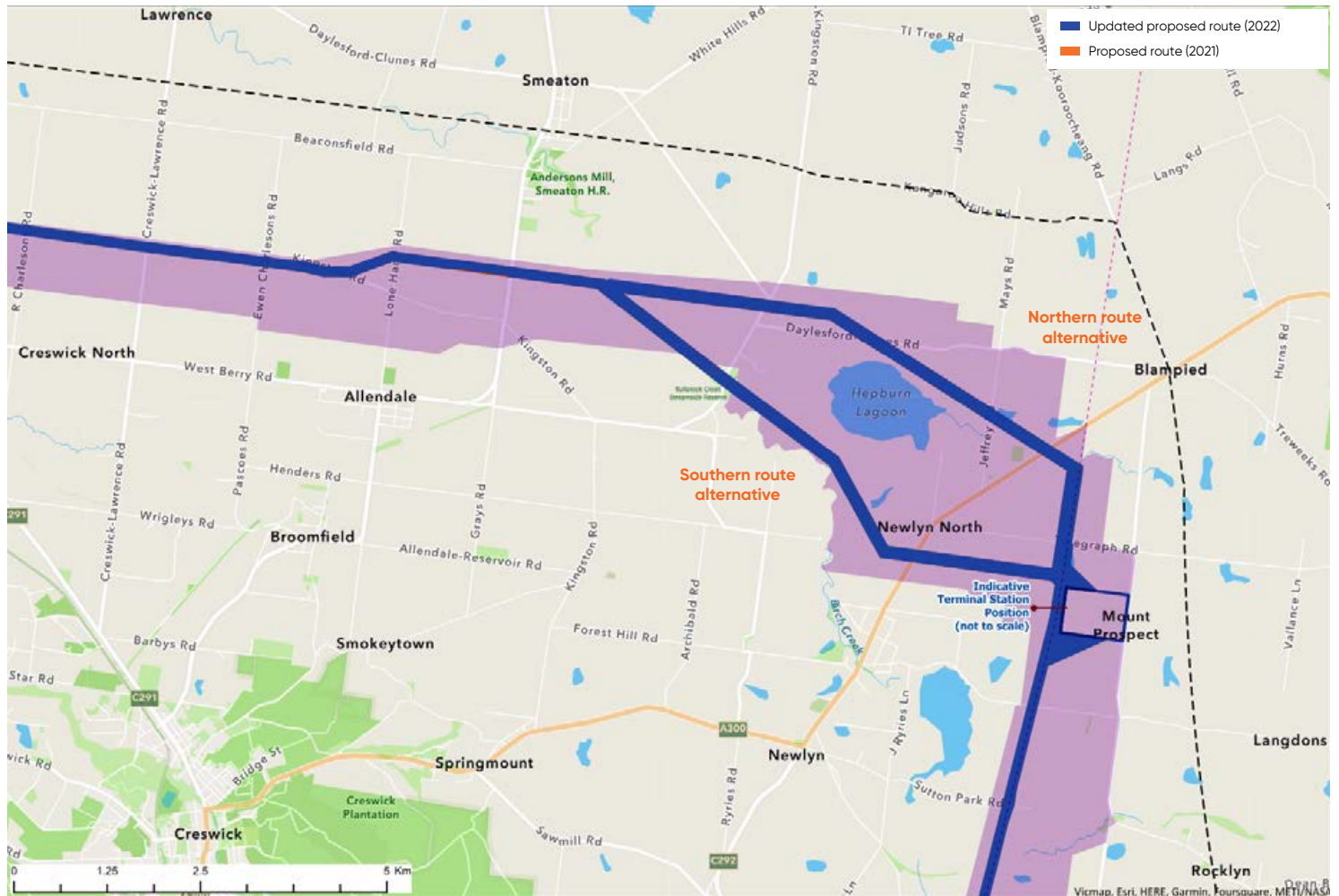
SECTION 2 – WAUBRA TO GLENDONALD



Waubra to Glendonald



SECTION 3 – GLENDONALD TO MOUNT PROSPECT

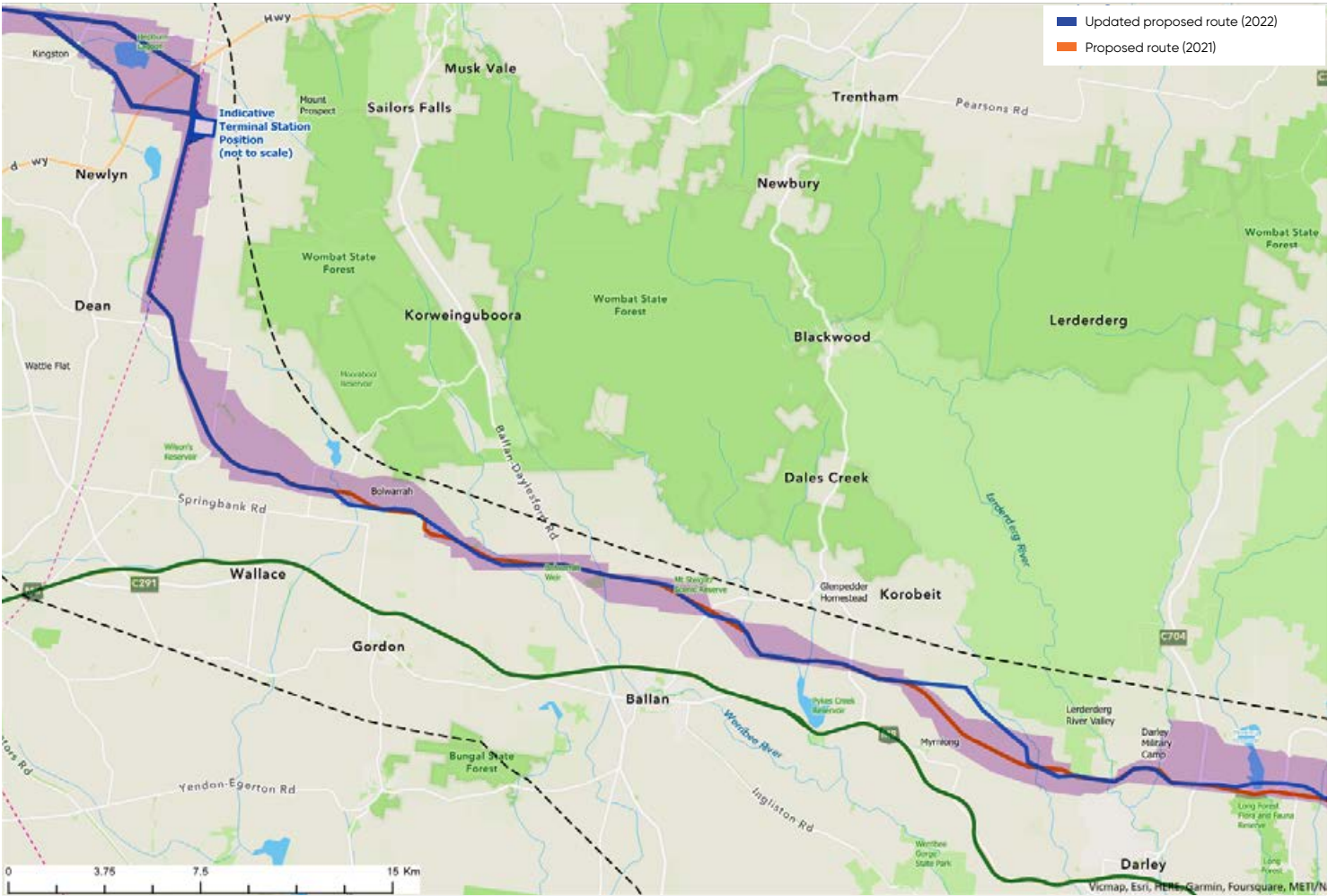


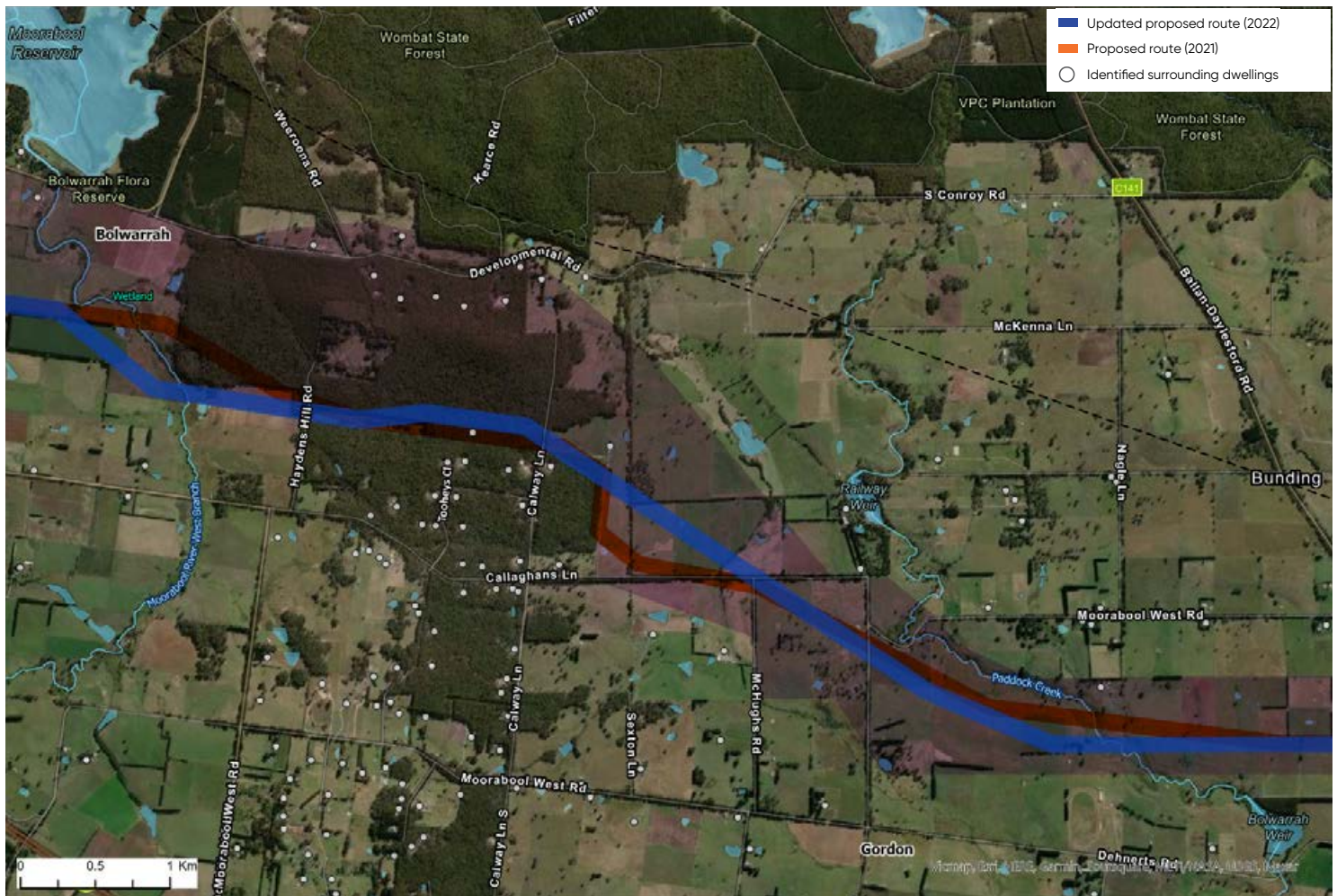
Hepburn Lagoon alternatives

Two alternatives, north and south of Hepburn Lagoon, were identified as part of the proposed route in November 2021 for further investigation. A decision on the proposed route in this area has not yet been made. The potential agriculture and land use impacts, Aboriginal cultural heritage, and native flora and fauna impacts, including to platypus and birds, relating to these alternatives will be outlined in the Environment Effects Statement.



SECTION 4 – MOUNT PROSPECT TO LONG FOREST





Bolwarrah

Proposed route (2021)

Ecological assessment of this area identified bushland containing potential habitat for greater gliders, listed as endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)* (EPBC Act), powerful owls and other native fauna including koalas. While aiming to minimise impacts on bushland, the proposed route also sought to maximise the distance to houses. While close to some houses, the proposed route provided more distance to a greater number of houses toward the town of Gordon to the south and Developmental Road to the north. To protect habitat, the proposed route was designed to cross bushland on freehold land, south of Wombat State Forest near Bolwarrah, in an area where vegetation clearing had occurred in the past. This aimed to minimise the length of the proposed route in native vegetation and clearing required.

Why is the proposed route being updated here?

Following feedback from landholders, several alternative proposed routes have been considered in this area to avoid and minimise impacts on properties, visual amenity and flora and fauna.

Further field studies have been completed for flora and fauna and landscape and

visual impacts in this area. The wetland adjacent to Moorabool River West Branch and the bushland have been identified as potential habitat for the growling grass frog, listed as vulnerable under the EPBC Act. Brooker's gums, listed as endangered under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)* (FFG Act), are present in this area.

Updated proposed route (2022)

The proposed route has been realigned to the south near Moorabool River West Branch to reduce impacts on native vegetation including large old habitat trees and habitat for threatened species, areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity along and adjacent to that watercourse, and impacts to local wetlands on the Moorabool River. While impacts have been minimised, the updated proposed route does not avoid all areas of ecological value completely.

Following engagement with impacted and surrounding landholders, the proposed route has been realigned to the north between Haydens Hill Road and Calway Lane. The change will reduce the visual impact from houses near Tooheys Close by increasing the distance and screening from trees between the houses and the proposed route. Modifications between Calway Lane and McHugh Road were made to reduce impacts on several

freehold bushland properties. Near Paddock Creek, updates were made to reduce impacts on houses, visual amenity and land use.

The updated proposed route:

- Minimises impacts on heavily vegetated areas east of Moorabool River West Branch with potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Maximises use of cleared land east of Moorabool River West Branch and avoids a large cluster of endangered Brooker's gums however other clusters of Brooker's gums in this area are still impacted.
- Minimises impacts on native vegetation and potential habitat for greater gliders, listed as endangered under the EPBC Act, as well as powerful owls and other threatened and native species.
- Avoids the wetland adjacent to the Moorabool River West Branch, which is potential habitat for growling grass frogs.
- Maximises distance to houses in Tooheys Close area and reduces visual impact through screening.



Mt Steiglitz to Korjamnunnip Creek

Proposed route (2021)

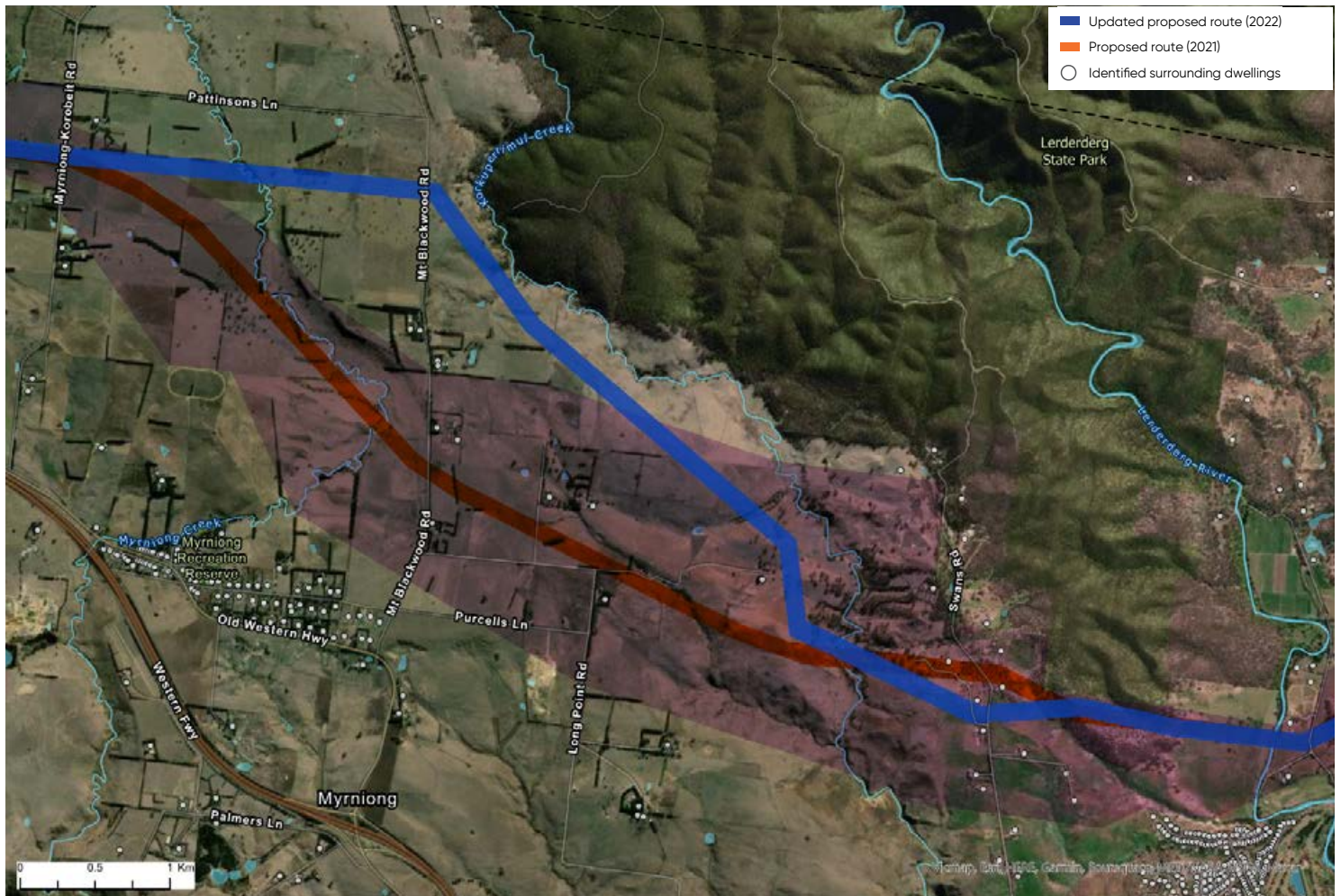
There are several houses in this area, particularly south of Andrews Lane which the proposed route aimed to avoid while balancing potential impacts to revegetated areas along local waterways.

Updated proposed route (2022)

The update to the proposed route has been made to increase the distance to houses and minimise land use impacts in this area.

Why is the proposed route being updated here?

A more accurate understanding of houses and buildings on properties and potential land use impacts has now been gained. This additional information led to a review of the proposed route in this area to determine if impacts could be further reduced.



Myrniong

Proposed route (2021)

The proposed route from north of Myrniong to south of Lerderderg State Park was designed to run along watercourse valleys to reduce its visibility in the undulating landscape and to avoid the challenging topography of the valley. There are several houses in the area and there is also riparian vegetation, along sections of the creeks, that form part of the Myrniong Biolink.

Why is the proposed route being updated here?

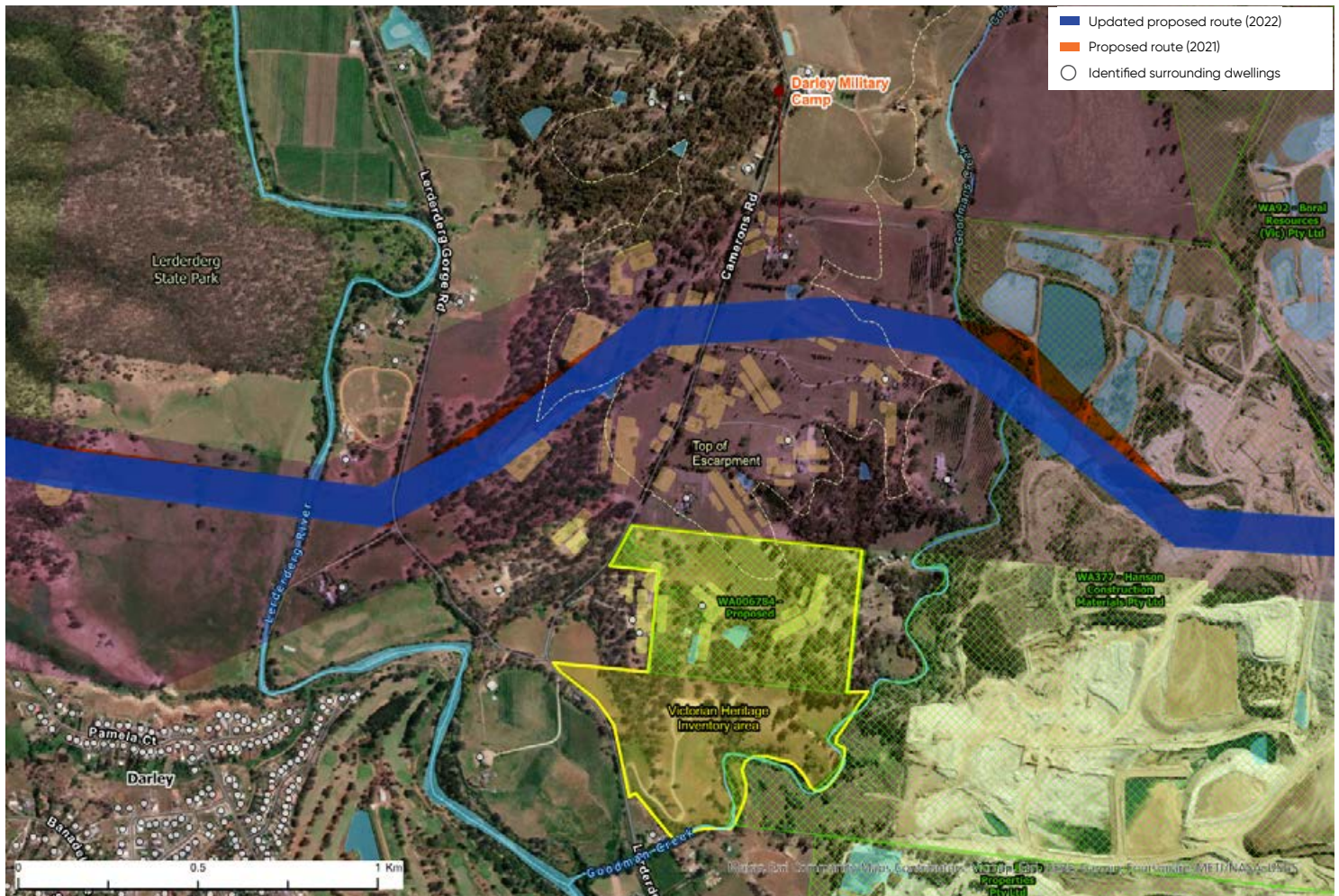
The community has identified visual impact as a key concern in this area. Discussions with landholders and investigations by technical specialists have identified that realignment in this area, to outside the single corridor identified in June 2021, would reduce potential impacts to visual amenity from Myrniong and land use impacts for several landholders.

Updated proposed route (2022)

The proposed route has been moved approximately 1km north-east toward Lerderderg State Park, further away from Myrniong. The proposed route aims to minimise impacts to areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity along and adjacent to Myrniong Creek. The update moves the proposed route closer to Korkuperrimul Creek but maintains a separation from the creek to reduce potential impacts on areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.

The updated proposed route:

- Reduces the visual scale of towers from Myrniong township through increased distance between the transmission line and the town.
- Locates the transmission line in an area where it will be screened or filtered in views from a greater distance along Mt Blackwood Road.
- Increases distance to some houses on farming land.
- Is more effectively set against the backdrop of forested hills and ridges of the Lerderderg State Park reducing visual impacts on adjacent houses.
- Minimises impacts on the area of cultural sensitivity associated with Myrniong Creek with potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage.



Darley military camp area

Proposed route (2021)

The proposed route traverses the north of the historic Darley military camp area, used by soldiers during World War II, which extends east and west of Camerons Road. The proposed route aims to minimise impacts to the military camp area and historic heritage. Only part of the military camp to the south is listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory however the same level of heritage protection applies to the entire military camp area under the *Heritage Act 2017*.

The proposed route traverses Grey Box Grassy Woodlands, listed as a threatened ecological community under the EPBC Act, that occur on the face and on top of the escarpment east of Lerderderg River. The woodlands provide migratory habitat for swift parrots, listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act, as they move through the area. The proposed route also traverses areas known for several species listed as threatened under the FFG Act.

The proposed route aims to minimise impacts to quarry operations in the area.

Why is the proposed route being updated here?

Further investigations of the potential impacts of the proposed route on historic heritage, biodiversity and existing land uses in this area have been undertaken. The outcomes led to a review of the proposed route to understand if the potential overall impacts of the project in this area could be further reduced or avoided with refinements.

Further consultation with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions on the quarries and potential extractive industry operations, Heritage Victoria on the historic military camp, and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on ecology in this area has also been undertaken.

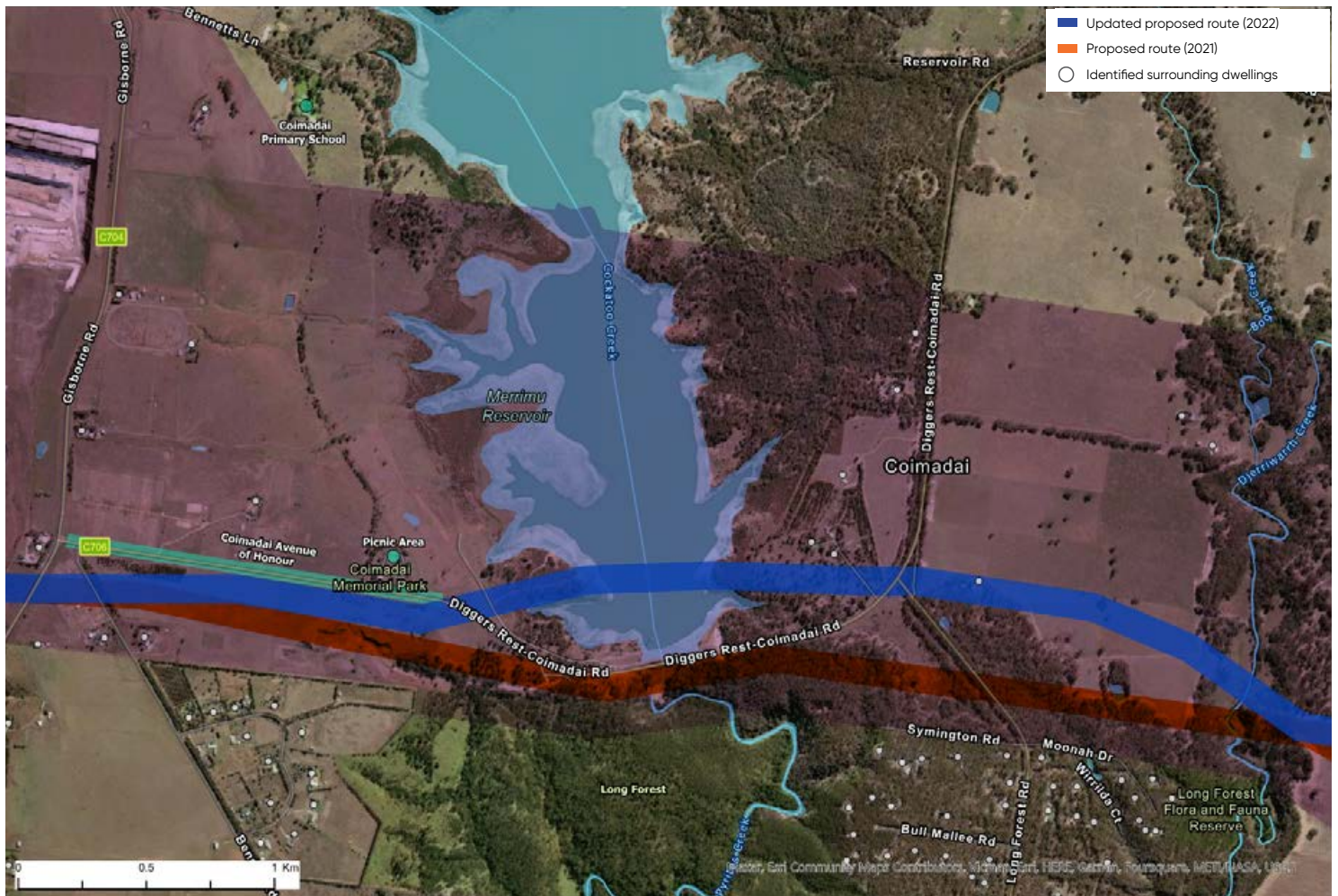
Updated proposed route (2022)

A number of alternatives were assessed in the area to see if the impacts to the military camp site and Grey Box Grassy Woodlands could be further reduced. This resulted in the refinements shown being made in this area.

Further consultation at Darley

As noted in the Proposed Route Overview (November 2021), Darley residents have provided feedback that project alternatives should be considered in the area between Darley and the Lerderderg State Park.

Community and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken at Darley on the tower design options (double circuit, single circuit and monopole) in late-2022. Partial undergrounding at Darley is also continuing to be investigated as part of the Environment Effects Statement preparation. This consultation and further investigation will inform the final design of the transmission towers and/or underground construction in this area.



Merrimu Reservoir

Proposed route (2021)

The proposed route followed the Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road (avoiding the Coimadai Avenue of Honour), between Long Forest and the Merrimu Reservoir. The proposed route aimed to minimise disturbance to flora and fauna, including threatened species within Long Forest, and impacts to views from the Merrimu Reservoir picnic ground and memorial toward the Merrimu Reservoir.

The northern extent of Long Forest includes two threatened ecological communities, Grey Box Grassy Woodlands and Natural Temperate Grassland, listed under the EPBC Act, and Rocky Chenopod open-scrub communities, listed under the FFG Act. A large number of threatened flora species were identified in the woodland area including Bacchus Marsh wattle and brittle greenhood orchid, listed under the FFG Act. There are also records of brush-tailed phascogales, listed under the FFG Act, in this area.

Why is the proposed route being updated here?

Stakeholders suggested moving the proposed route to the north to avoid the high-quality native vegetation and threatened species south of Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road and impacts to Long Forest and its significant ecological values.

Further consultation on the proposed route and potential impacts was also undertaken with Southern Rural Water, the owner of the Merrimu Reservoir, and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

Based on the findings of field work, stakeholder consultation and input from technical specialists, this update to the proposed route was identified.

Updated proposed route (2022)

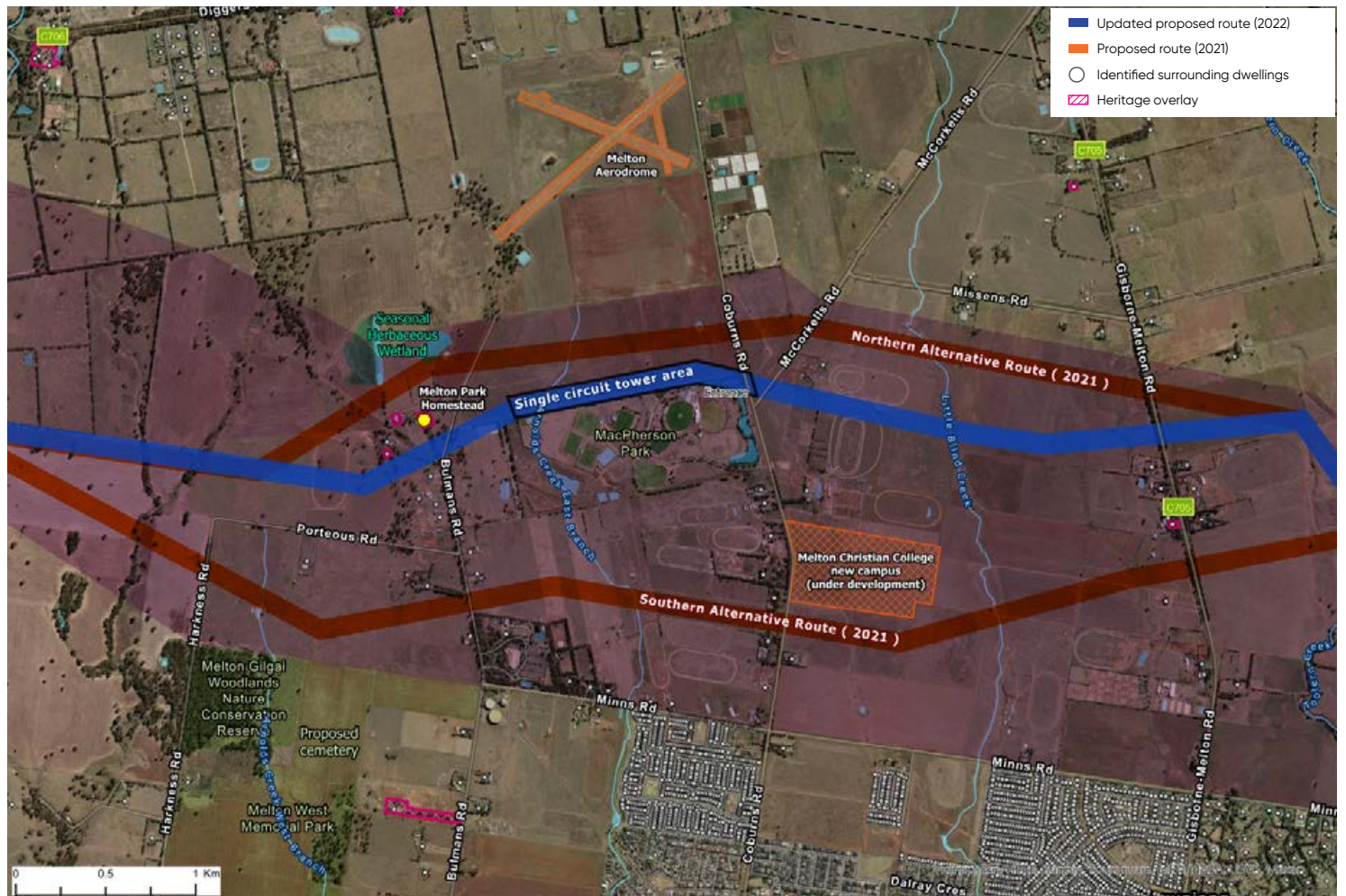
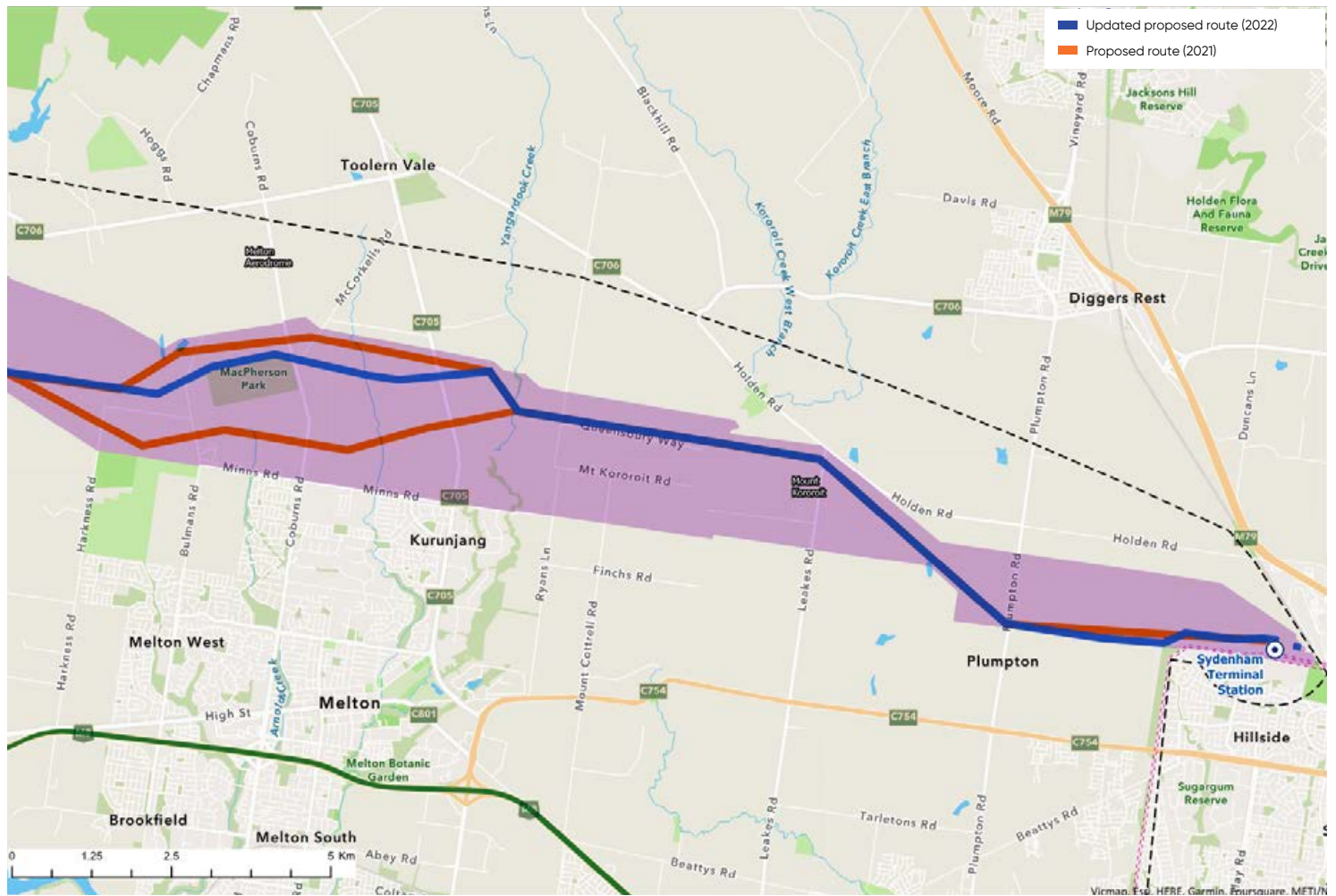
The proposed route has been realigned to the north of Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road and the Merrimu Reservoir dam wall, avoiding the reservoir pumphouse and associated infrastructure. The revised proposed route crosses the Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road closer to, but avoiding, the Merrimu Reservoir picnic area and memorial. Views from the picnic area across the reservoir will be impacted by this change. There is an opportunity to improve the views through landscaping

which will be explored with the owner, Southern Rural Water, and memorial and picnic user groups. The updated proposed route will avoid newly identified Aboriginal cultural heritage south of the Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road.

The updated proposed route:

- Avoids impacts on the significant ecological values of Long Forest.
- Avoids impacts on Aboriginal cultural heritage, including artefact scatters.
- Maximises distance to residential properties south of the Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road including those along Symington Road and Moonah Drive.
- Crosses Diggers Rest–Coimadai Road east of the Coimadai Avenue of Honour to avoid impacts on this community asset and potential associated social impacts.
- Traverses disturbed areas with little tree cover.
- Avoids potential impacts on any future Merrimu Reservoir dam wall upgrade works.
- Minimises impacts on Southern Rural Water's existing quarry operations.

SECTION 5 – LONG FOREST TO SYDENHAM



Melton – MacPherson Park

Proposed route (2021)

Two alternatives, north and south of MacPherson Park, were identified as part of the proposed route in November 2021 for further investigation.

The northern alternative ran closest to the existing runways at Melton Aerodrome, requiring lower towers to maintain safe operations at the aerodrome. The southern alternative provided a greater distance between the transmission line and the Melton Aerodrome but was closer to existing residential areas, the Urban Growth Boundary (Minns Road), the proposed new Melton Christian College campus, and the conservation reserve and memorial park.

Why is the proposed route being updated here?

Further consultation with the Department of Education, Melton City Council, the Melton Aerodrome owner and other stakeholders on the different impacts of the northern and southern proposed route alternatives has been undertaken.

Landholder feedback and advice from aviation, landscape and visual, biodiversity, social, and Aboriginal cultural heritage experts formed the basis of the assessment of the northern and southern alternative routes. As a result, the northern route, with modifications, was assessed as having the lowest overall impact.

Updated proposed route (2022)

The proposed route has been moved to align with the northern boundary of MacPherson Park balancing the distance between the transmission line and Melton Aerodrome to the north and the proposed new Melton Christian College campus to the south. The proposed route has been designed to minimise impacts to existing operations at the Melton Aerodrome and reduce the risk to aviation safety to as low as reasonably practical. A section of single circuit towers (two towers side-by-side), which are shorter than double circuit towers, are proposed near the aerodrome to improve safety and avoid impacts on existing flight paths.

The updated proposed route does not directly impact the sporting fields or user views toward the sporting fields. Perimeter planting proposed in the Melton City Council's MacPherson Park Future Directions Paper Draft Concept Plan would assist to partially screen views of the transmission line. The revised proposed route clips the north-east corner of MacPherson Park, where the entrance is currently located. We will continue to consult and work with Melton City Council on their future plans.

While outside the heritage overlay at Melton Park homestead, the updated proposed route will potentially impact the visual setting and entrance. Further investigation of the historic heritage impacts and mitigation measures are being undertaken and will be included in the Environment Effects Statement.

A northern proposed route:

- Increases separation from high density residential areas to the north of Melton and the Urban Growth Boundary, currently along Minns Road.
- Maximises distance from the Melton Christian College new campus site on Coburns Road.
- Maximises distance from Melton Gilgai Woodlands Nature Conservation Reserve and associated biodiversity and Aboriginal cultural heritage values.
- Maximises distance from Melton West Memorial Park and the development proposed by the Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust.

The updated proposed route:

- Avoids patches of threatened ecological communities of Natural Temperate Grassland, listed under the EPBC Act, and bulokes, listed under the FFG Act, on properties east of MacPherson Park.
- Avoids a Seasonal Herbaceous Wetland ecological community, listed as threatened under the EPBC Act, to the north-west of MacPherson Park and areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage sensitivity.
- Does not directly impact the sporting fields at MacPherson Park.
- Minimises impacts on landholders by following the boundaries of properties.
- Minimises impact on the current operations at Melton Aerodrome.

	Proposed route (2021) northern alternative	Proposed route (2021) southern alternative	Updated proposed route (2022)
Proximity to Melton Aerodrome	600 m	1900 m	900 m
Proximity to new Melton Christian College campus (under development)	1000 m	100 m	700 m
Proximity to Urban Growth Boundary	1800 m	450 m	1400 m
Proximity to Melton Gilgai Woodlands Nature Conservation Reserve	950 m	250 m	950 m
Proximity to Melton West Memorial Park	1250 m	150 m	950 m

Approximate distances only



Why does Victoria need this project?

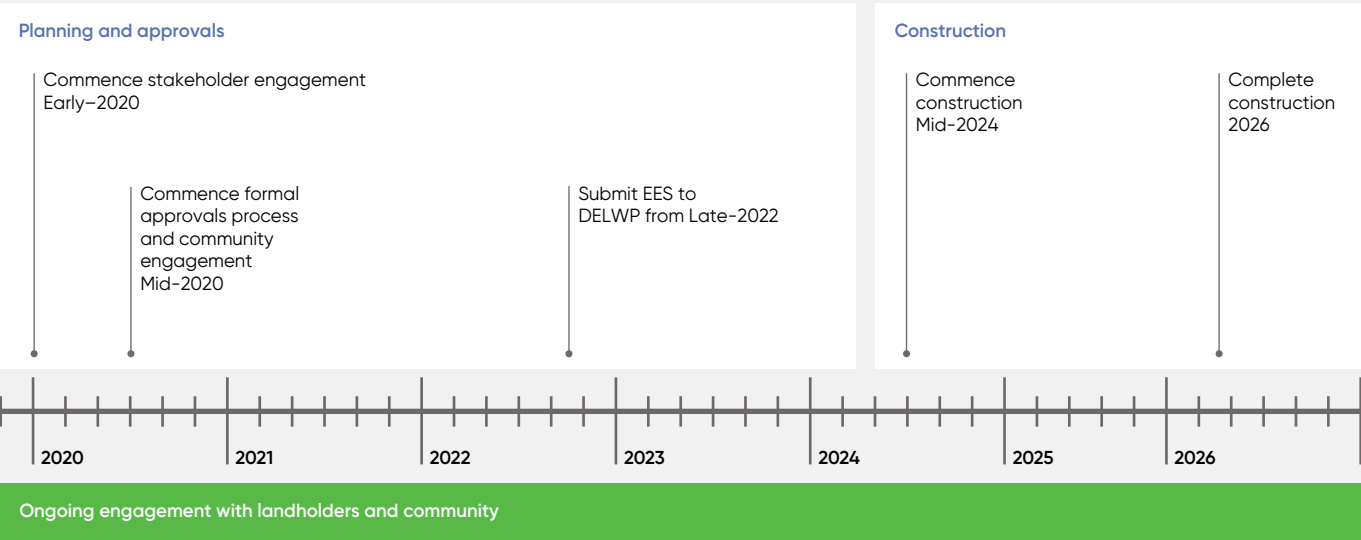
The Western Renewables Link is required to deliver more renewable energy from wind and solar farms in western Victoria, a key renewable energy zone, to homes and businesses across Victoria and into the National Electricity Market.

The project will reduce congestion on the existing transmission network and help unlock significant amounts of new renewable energy for Victorians.

Project timeline

The Western Renewables Link is a complex project which will be developed over several years with ongoing engagement with landholders, communities, industry and government. The Victorian Minister for Planning will assess the Environment Effects Statement and may recommend changes to the project proposed by AusNet. The project also requires several approvals including from the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments before construction may commence.

Decision-makers must consider the Victorian Minister for Planning's assessment of the environmental effects of the project, including the Minister's conclusions about the acceptability of those effects before making decisions about approvals.



More information

You can view more detail on the interactive map on the [Western Renewables Link website](#) where you can zoom in to specific areas and select relevant map layers to view such as land parcels, surface water and local government areas.

Next steps

Landholder consultation

Land Liaison Officers will continue working closely with landholders on the proposed route to understand their land use, consult on tower siting and access tracks, and provide information about the compensation process. A valuer will assess the value of compensation for each property and then an option for easement offer will be presented to landholders for their consideration.

Community engagement sessions

Community engagement sessions and stakeholder briefings will be held along the proposed route from August to September 2022. You can view the details on the [project website](#).

Environment Effects Statement

The Environment Effects Statement is currently being prepared for the Western Renewables Link. Technical studies are being completed and finalised, including impact assessment, selection of alternatives and recommendations of appropriate mitigation measures.

The Environment Effects Statement is expected to be submitted in late-2022 to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning for review before being exhibited for public comment. Public exhibition of the Environment Effects Statement is expected to occur early in 2023.

Who to contact

Landholders

If you are a landholder with a property within the proposed route, your dedicated Land Liaison Officer will be your main point of contact for all matters relating to the project, the proposed route and your property.

If you are not already in touch with your Land Liaison Officer, please contact us via the details below.

Surrounding landholders

If you live near the proposed route, but are not a landholder within the proposed route, there are dedicated people within the Stakeholder Engagement Team available to assist you. They will be your key point of contact for the project and will work with you to understand your concerns and address any project questions you have.

You can contact the Stakeholder Engagement Team via the contact details below.

Community

You can provide feedback on the proposed route by calling, emailing or using the feedback form on our website.




You can contact the project team via the contact details below.

Contact details

📞 1300 360 795
✉ info@westernrenewableslink.com.au
✉ PO Box 638, Ballarat VIC 3353
💻 www.westernrenewableslink.com.au
🗨 [Website feedback form](#)



Western Renewables Link information

 www.westernrenewableslink.com.au
 1300 360 795
 info@westernrenewableslink.com.au

Ballarat PO Box
PO Box 638, Ballarat VIC 3353

Information straight to your inbox

Sign up for information straight to your inbox at the project website www.westernrenewableslink.com.au.

Complaints

If you have a query, a compliment or a complaint, you can let us know by using the online enquiry form on www.westernrenewableslink.com.au. Or you can let us know by:

 1300 360 795
 info@westernrenewableslink.com.au
 PO Box 638, Ballarat VIC 3353

Feedback

You can provide feedback on this document via our website www.westernrenewableslink.com.au or by calling 1300 360 795 or by emailing info@westernrenewableslink.com.au

Need an interpreter?



If you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50.

Other sources of information

Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

(www.aeic.gov.au) including information about how to make a complaint, best industry practice and resources for landholders.

Australian Energy Market Operator

(www.aemo.com.au) including information on the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) process for this project.

Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria

(www.ewov.com.au) including information about complaints and dispute resolution.

Energy Safe Victoria

(www.esv.vic.gov.au) including information about the safe design and operation of high voltage transmission networks in Victoria.

Environment Effects Statement Process in Victoria

(www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria) including information about the environment assessment process managed by DELWP.

Essential Services Commission

(www.esc.vic.gov.au) including information about the regulation of transmission licenses in Victoria and the Electricity Transmission Company Land Access Statement of Expectations.

The information in this document is for reference only – it is not designed to be, nor should it be regarded, as professional or legal advice. You should seek appropriate independent professional and/or legal advice where appropriate and before making any decisions based on material in this document. The information is an overview (in summary form) and does not purport to be complete. This document, and the information in this document, will not form the basis of any contract or commitment. AusNet Services does not guarantee or warrant the accuracy, completeness, or currency of the information provided and AusNet Services, its directors, officers, employees, agents and advisers disclaim all liability and responsibility (including for negligence) for any direct or indirect loss or damage which may be suffered by any recipient through use or reliance on anything contained in or omitted from this document.



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