



June 2026

# South Gippsland Highway Realignment Project

Annual Compliance Report No. 6

March 2025 to March 2026

EPBC Approval No. 2017/8070

DOC/26/31564

Prepared for

Audit and Assurance Section  
Compliance and Enforcement Branch  
Environment Assessment and Compliance Division  
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water  
GPO Box 3090, CANBERRA ACT 2601



## Approval Information

Criteria	Details
<b>Approval number</b>	2017/8070
<b>Approval holder:</b>	Department of Transport and Planning NB. Due to Machinery of Government changes VIDA Roads is now responsible for the delivery of the Action during the design and construction phase.
<b>ABN:</b>	61 760 960 480 VIDA Roads is a project office within the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority, which is an administrative office within the Victorian Department of Transport & Planning (ABN 69 981 208 782).
<b>Approved action</b>	Realign the South Gippsland Highway south of the township of Koonwarra in South Gippsland.

## Document Control Record

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## Terms, abbreviations, and definitions

The terms, abbreviations and definitions that have been used in this document are listed in the below table.

Term/Abbreviation	Definition
<b>CPB</b>	CPB Contractors
<b>DCCEEW</b>	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (the Department)
<b>DEECA</b>	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (previously the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP))
<b>EPBC Act</b>	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
<b>MNES</b>	Matters of National Environmental Significance
<b>MRPV</b>	Major Road Projects Victoria
<b>OMP</b>	Offset Management Plan
<b>RAMP</b>	Revised action management plan
<b>VIDA</b>	Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority
<b>VIDA Roads</b>	VIDA Roads (formerly Major Road Projects Victoria, MRPV)

# 1 Executive Summary

The South Gippsland Highway Realignment Project (the Project) is a road realignment between Koonwarra and Meeniyan, locally known as the Black Spur.

The final approval to Referral No. 2017/8070 under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) was given to VIDA Roads on the 18 January 2019. A subsequent variation to the approval occurred on 16 May 2022.

Under Condition 13 of the decision notice, an annual compliance report is required to be published on VIDA's website within 60 business days following the relevant twelve-month anniversary of the commencement of the action. The report must address compliance with each of the conditions of the approval, including implementation of any management plans as specified in the conditions. The project commenced on 30 March 2020.

This compliance report addresses the status of the Project against the conditions of EPBC Act Approval No. 2017/8070. This is the sixth compliance report to be prepared for the South Gippsland Highway Realignment Project and relates to the period between 30 March 2025 to 30 March 2026.

VIDA is compliant with all conditions referenced in EPBC Act Approval No. 2017/8070 for this reporting period.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Purpose of this report

This report details the Project's compliance with the conditions of Approval No. 2017/8070 under the EPBC Act in accordance with Condition No. 13 of the approval.

### 2.2 Background

The South Gippsland Highway Realignment Project involves realigning a stretch of the South Gippsland Highway between Koonwarra and Meeniyan. CPB Contractors was awarded the contract to deliver the upgrade and construction commenced 30 March 2020.

The Project involves:

- building a new section of highway between Old Koonwarra-Meenian Road and Minns Road to reduce the length of highway from 3.4 km to 2.3 km
- building two new bridges over the Tarwin River
- building an underpass east of the new Caithness Road intersection for the Great Southern Rail Trail
- realigning the Great Southern Rail Trail under the new river bridge at Minns Road
- closing off access to the old section of highway to through traffic east of Caithness Road while retaining access for local residents
- maintaining access to Caithness Road by a new intersection and upgrades to the existing intersection at Minns Road
- installation of safety barriers.

A project map is provided in Appendix A.

### 2.3 Description of activities

The approved action is to realign the South Gippsland Highway south of the township of Koonwarra in South Gippsland. Construction of the project is complete however minor defects work, landscaping and monitoring remain ongoing.

### 3 Performance and Compliance (EPBC 2017/8070)

Table 2 below contains the compliance assessment against the conditions in Approval EPBC 2012/6568 for activities carried out between 30 March 2025 to 30 March 2026.

Table 1: EPBC Act Approval Notice 2017/8070 compliance results Year 6 (2025-26)

Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
1	For the protection of Australian Grayling ( <i>Prototroctes maraena</i> ):	<p>The approval holder must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not undertake in-stream works, except to implement the remediation works in accordance with condition 1A below;</li> <li>implement the mitigation measures described in Attachment A, and</li> <li>only undertake ground-disturbing works on the floodplain, including earthworks, construction of haul roads and hard stand areas and installation of the temporary bridge structure, during December to March (inclusive) unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mitigation strategies are implemented in accordance with Attachment B; and</li> <li>monitoring and reporting of Australian Grayling in the Tarwin River within 1 km of the action is undertaken in accordance with Attachment C.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>In-stream remediation works were completed in March 2022 in accordance with the requirements of Condition 1A (see below).</p> <p>Mitigation measures have been implemented in accordance with Attachment A Conditions where required.</p> <p>All ground-disturbing works carried out on the floodplain have been conducted during December to March or been conducted in accordance with Attachment B Conditions.</p> <p>In accordance with the Conditions in Attachment C post-construction targeted species monitoring for Australian Grayling occurred during April 2023 and April 2024.</p>	Compliant
1A	For the protection of Australian Grayling ( <i>Prototroctes maraena</i> ):	To remediate the Tarwin Riverbank slip event, the approval holder must implement the remediation works.	<p>Remediation works were completed in March 2022. No additional works occurred during this reporting period.</p> <p>An inspection of works by the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority on 21 July 2022 followed up by email on 22 July 2022 confirmed their satisfaction with remediation works undertaken and the close out of relevant Works on Waterways Permit conditions.</p>	Compliant

Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
2	For the protection of Strzelecki Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i> ):	The approval holder must ensure that no more than 181 Strzelecki Gum individuals are removed as a result of the action.	137 Strzelecki Gums were removed during construction. One additional Strzelecki Gum fell over within the Project area during inclement weather. The final impact on Strzelecki Gum is below the 181 individual trees permitted to be removed.	Compliant
3	For the protection of Strzelecki Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i> ):	The approval holder must ensure that lopping or root disturbance impacts to remaining Strzelecki Gum are minimised in accordance with directions from an on-site, suitably qualified person.	During construction No-go zone fencing was installed around all vegetation to be retained in consultation with arborists. All vegetation was inspected in pre-clearing site assessments and Tree Protection Zones were established where it was identified that there was any potential for works to impact vegetation, including Strzelecki Gum individuals. All No-Go zone fencing was removed at project completion.	Compliant
4	For the protection of Strzelecki Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i> ):	Prior to commencement of the action, the approval holder must provide written evidence to the Department of a licence agreement placed on the offset area and provide a shapefile of the offset area to the Department.	The signed licence agreement and shapefile of the Strzelecki Gum offset site was provided to the Department by MRPV on 4 March 2020. Receipt of this information was acknowledged by the Department Compliance Monitoring Team on 5 March 2020. Following this the project commenced on 30 March 2020.	Compliant
5	For the protection of Strzelecki Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i> ):	The approval holder must implement the Offset Management Plan (OMP).	The Offset Management Plan is being implemented with Year 7 of works completed. Actions in Table 4 of the OMP are currently on track. Annual reports for 2020-2026 (inclusive) have been completed. The report for Year 7 of works is included in Appendix B.	Compliant
6	For the protection of Strzelecki Gum ( <i>Eucalyptus strzeleckii</i> ):	If the management action standards specified at Table 4 of the Offset Management Plan are not achieved by the end of the ten-year offset implementation period, the approval holder must submit an alternative Strzelecki Gum Offset Plan to the Minister for approval within twelve months of the end of the ten-year offset implementation period.	Actions in Table 4 of the OMP are currently on track.	Compliant
7	Notification of date of commencement of the action	The approval holder must notify the Department in writing of the date of commencement of the action within 10 business days after the date of commencement of the action.	Notification was sent to the Department on 3 April 2020 advising that the activity commenced on 30 March 2020. The Department acknowledged receipt of the notification on 8 April 2020.	Compliant

Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
8	Notification of date of commencement of the action	If the commencement of the action does not occur within 5 years from the date of this approval, then the approval holder must not commence the action without the prior written approval of the Minister.	The action has commenced.	Compliant
9	Compliance records	The approval holder must maintain accurate and complete compliance records.	Records of the implementation of management plans/programs are being maintained along with ongoing monitoring data.	Compliant
10	Compliance records	If the Department makes a request in writing, the approval holder must provide electronic copies of compliance records to the Department within the timeframe specified in the request.	Compliance records to be provided to the Department upon request.	Compliant
11	Preparation and publication of plans	<p>The approval holder must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• submit plans electronically to the Department for approval by the Minister;</li> <li>• publish each plan on the website within 20 business days of the date the plan is approved by the Minister or of the date a revised action management plan is submitted to the Minister, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minister;</li> <li>• exclude or redact sensitive ecological data from plans published on the website or provided to a member of the public; and</li> <li>• keep plans published on the website until the end date of this approval.</li> </ul>	<p>Plans have been submitted and approved and are currently published on VIDA's website.</p> <p><a href="https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/south-gippsland-highway/environment">https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/roads/south-gippsland-highway/environment</a></p>	Compliant

Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
12	Preparation and publication of plans	The approval holder must ensure that any monitoring data (including sensitive ecological data), surveys, maps, and other spatial and metadata required by the Offset Management Plan is prepared in accordance with the Department's Guidelines for biological survey and mapped data (2018) and submitted electronically to the Department in accordance with the requirements of the Plan.	<p>Monitoring data and reporting has been undertaken to date as defined in the OMP.</p> <p>Relevant data has been submitted electronically to the Department in accordance with the OMP.</p>	Compliant
13	Annual compliance reporting	<p>The approval holder must prepare a compliance report for each 12-month period following the date of commencement of the action, or as otherwise agreed to in writing by the Minister. The approval holder must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>publish each compliance report on the website within 60 business days following the relevant 12-month period;</li> <li>notify the Department by email that a compliance report has been published on the website within five business days of the date of publication;</li> <li>keep all compliance reports publicly available on the website until this approval expires;</li> <li>exclude or redact sensitive ecological data from compliance reports published on the website; and</li> <li>where any sensitive ecological data has been excluded from the version published, submit the full compliance report to the Department within 5 business days of publication.</li> </ul>	<p>This is the sixth compliance report completed for the project and will be published on VIDA's website in accordance with Condition 13.</p> <p>Notification was provided to the Department on 11 June 2025 following the publication of the fifth compliance report.</p>	Compliant
14	Reporting non-compliance	The approval holder must notify the Department in writing of any: incident; non-compliance with the conditions; or non-compliance with the commitments made in plans. The notification must be given as soon as practicable, and no later	There have been no incidents during the current reporting period.	Compliant

Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
		<p>than two business days after becoming aware of the incident or non-compliance. The notification must specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the condition which is or may be in breach; and</li> <li>b) a short description of the incident and/or non-compliance.</li> </ul>		
15	Reporting non-compliance	<p>The approval holder must provide to the Department the details of any incident or non-compliance with the conditions or commitments made in plans as soon as practicable and no later than 10 business days after becoming aware of the incident or non-compliance, specifying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) any corrective action or investigation which the approval holder has already taken or intends to take in the immediate future;</li> <li>b) the potential impacts of the incident or non-compliance; and</li> <li>c) the method and timing of any remedial action that will be undertaken by the approval holder.</li> </ul>	There have been no incidents during the current reporting period.	Compliant
16	Independent audit	<p>The approval holder must ensure that independent audits of compliance with the conditions are conducted for the 12 month period from commencement of the action and for every subsequent 12 month period until completion of the action, or as otherwise requested in writing by the Minister.</p>	<p>On 2 March 2021 MRPV contacted the Department to request clarification of the intent of Condition 16.</p> <p>On 29 March 2021 MRPV received a letter from the Department advising that an independent audit of the Approval need only be conducted if an audit is specifically requested in writing by the Minister.</p> <p>This letter is attached as Appendix C.</p> <p>To date VIDA Roads have not received a request from the Minister to submit an annual independent audit report.</p>	Not applicable during 2025-2026 reporting period.

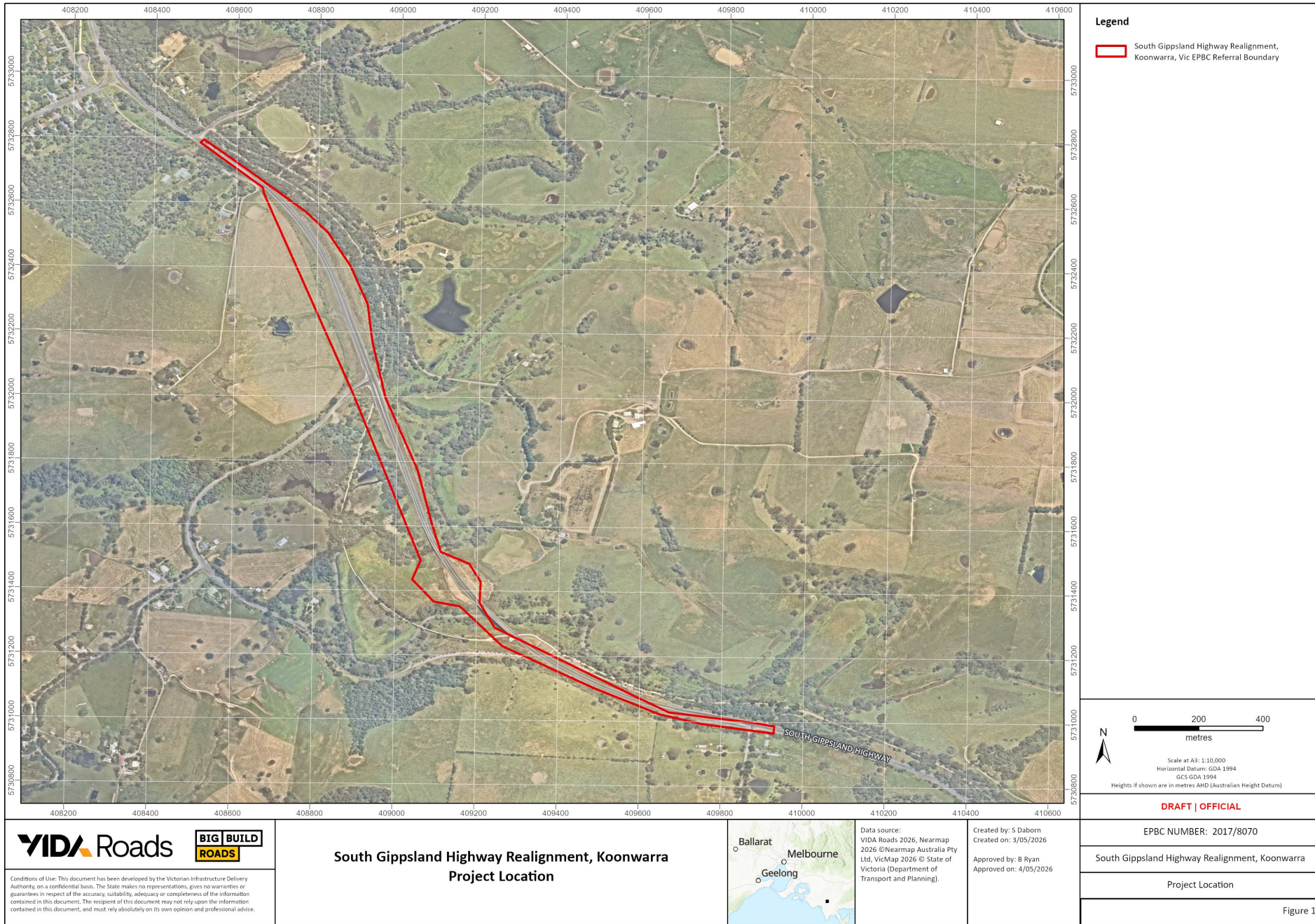
Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
17	Independent audit	<p>For each independent audit, the approval holder must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide the name and qualifications of the independent auditor and the draft audit criteria to the Department;</li> <li>only commence the independent audit once the audit criteria have been approved in writing by the Department; and</li> <li>submit an audit report to the Department within the timeframe specified in the approved audit criteria.</li> </ul>	No audit has been requested to date.	Not applicable during 2025-2026 reporting period.
18	Independent audit	The approval holder must publish the audit report on the website within 10 business days of receiving the Department's approval of the audit report and keep the audit report published on the website until the end date of this approval.	No audit has been requested to date.	Not applicable during 2025-2026 reporting period.
19	Revision of action management plans	The approval holder may, at any time, apply to the Minister for a variation to an action management plan approved by the Minister under condition 5, or as subsequently revised in accordance with these conditions, by submitting an application in accordance with the requirements of section 143A of the EPBC Act. If the Minister approves a revised action management plan (RAMP) then, from the date specified, the approval holder must implement the RAMP in place of the previous action management plan.	No variation to action management plans has been required to date.	Not applicable during 2025-2026 reporting period.
20	Revision of action management plans	The approval holder may choose to revise an action management plan approved by the Minister under condition 5, or as subsequently revised in accordance with these conditions, without submitting it for approval under section 143A of the EPBC Act, if the taking of the action in accordance with the RAMP would not be likely to have a new or increased impact.	No variation to action management plans has been required to date.	Not applicable during 2025-2026 reporting period.

Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
21	Revision of action management plans (RAMP)	<p>If the approval holder makes the choice under condition 20 to revise an action management plan without submitting it for approval, the approval holder must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• notify the Department in writing that the approved action management plan has been revised and provide the Department with:</li> <li>• an electronic copy of the RAMP;</li> <li>• an electronic copy of the RAMP marked up with track changes to show the differences between the approved action management plan and the RAMP;</li> <li>• an explanation of the differences between the approved action management plan and the RAMP;</li> <li>• the reasons the approval holder considers that taking the action in accordance with the RAMP would not be likely to have a new or increased impact; and</li> <li>• written notice of the date on which the approval holder will implement the RAMP (RAMP implementation date), being at least 20 business days after the date of providing notice of the revision of the action management plan, or a date agreed to in writing with the Department.</li> <li>• subject to condition 23, implement the RAMP from the RAMP implementation date.</li> </ul>	No variation to action management plans has been required to date.	Not applicable during 2025-2026 reporting period.
22	Revision of action management plans	The approval holder may revoke their choice to implement a RAMP under condition 20 at any time by giving written notice to the Department. If the approval holder revokes the choice under condition 20, the approval holder must implement the previous action management plan approved by the Minister.	No variation to action management plans has been required to date.	Compliant

Condition Number	Condition Reference	Condition of Approval	Compliance Status	Comments / Evidence
23	Revision of action management plans	<p>If the Minister gives a notice to the approval holder that the Minister is satisfied that the taking of the action in accordance with the RAMP would be likely to have a new or increased impact, then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>condition 20 does not apply, or ceases to apply, in relation to the RAMP; and</li> <li>the approval holder must implement the action management plan specified by the Minister in the notice.</li> </ul>	No variation to action management plans has been required to date.	Compliant
24	Revision of action management plans	<p>At the time of giving the notice under condition 23, the Minister may also notify that for a specified period of time, condition 20 does not apply for one or more specified action management plans.</p> <p>Note: conditions 20, 21, 22 and 23 are not intended to limit the operation of section 143A of the EPBC Act which allows the approval holder to submit a revised action management plan, at any time, to the Minister for approval.</p>	No variation to action management plans has been required to date.	Compliant
25	Completion of the action	Within 30 days after the completion of the action, the approval holder must notify the Department in writing and provide completion data.	Activity is yet to be completed with landscaping works ongoing.	Compliant

## Appendix A Project Map

Figure 1: South Gippsland Highway Realignment –Koonwarra



**Appendix B South Gippsland Highway Realignment, Koonwarra, Strzelecki  
Gum Offset Site Annual Report 2025-2026**

## **Report for VIDA Roads**

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South Gippsland Highway Realignment, Koonwarra  
(Black Spur) - EPBC Act 1999 (2017/8070) Strzelecki  
Gum Offset Site

Annual Report 2025-2026

**May 2026**

Tania Brooker & Tim Bowler

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## Citation

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## Disclaimer

ID Ecological Management and any associated contractors engaged for this project have endeavoured to provide an accurate and current document. However, this document is not guaranteed to be without flaw or omissions. The information and recommendations provided are current at the time of writing but do not account for any changes in circumstances after the time of publication. ID Ecological Management accepts no liability for any error, loss or other consequence caused or arising from using the information provided within this report.

## Acknowledgements

**Ben Ryan** – Environment Manager, Major Road Projects Victoria

**Mark Bradbury** – Regional Manager (Bass Coast), ID Ecological Management

**Tom Glover** – Supervisor, ID Ecological Management

## Version Control

Status	Date	Revision type	Reviewed by	Amended by
<b>Draft 1.1</b>	23/03/2026	First draft, first review	T. Bowler	T. Brooker
<b>Draft 1.2</b>	27/04/2024	Draft released to client for review		
<b>Final</b>	01/05/2026	Final version released to client		

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

This annual report for VIDA Roads (formerly Major Road Projects Victoria), aims to provide an update on the progress of native vegetation conservation and improvement works at the Black Spur Offset site, relating to the South Gippsland Highway Realignment. Condition 5 of the approval for EPBC 2017/8070 requires the approval holder to implement the Offset Management Plan and Condition 13 requires a compliance report for each 12-month period following the date of the commencement of the action (DoEE, 2019), being 30<sup>th</sup> March each year.

The Offset Management Plan specifies a range of management actions including revegetation, weed management, pest animal control and protection of the site from stock and unauthorised access (Bowler, Brooker, & Imbery, 2018).

This annual report provides the following:

- Summary of management actions required to be undertaken on the site;
- Summary of works undertaken at the site between April 2025 and March 2026;
- Photographic evidence of works undertaken;
- Comparisons of photo points between 2019 and 2026;
- Comments on issues or threats to the site identified during the current period; and
- Recommended actions to be undertaken as a result of observations.

This report is the 7<sup>th</sup> year since works commenced on site.

## 1.2 Site Details

The offset site is located on either side of the South Gippsland Highway Realignment, on Crown Land alongside the Tarwin River West Branch and Black Spur Creek, approximately 500 metres east of the township of Koonwarra in South Gippsland (*Figure 1*).

The site is approximately 8.7 hectares in size and includes a remnant patch of native vegetation within a degraded area, 1.2 hectares in size, which is to be used as a Strzelecki Gum revegetation site (*Map 1*). The remnant patch areas host a total of 238 Strzelecki Gums of varying sizes from very small recruits to very large mature trees recorded (Bowler, Brooker, & Imbery, 2018), along with an additional 235 planted, recruited or translocated Strzelecki Gums (*Section 2.6*).

## 1.3 Management Requirements

From the commencement of the agreement, VIDA Roads agreed to undertake the following management commitments for the 10-year implementation period:

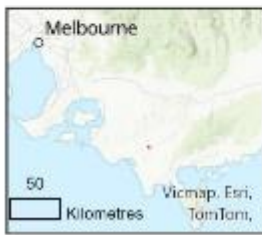
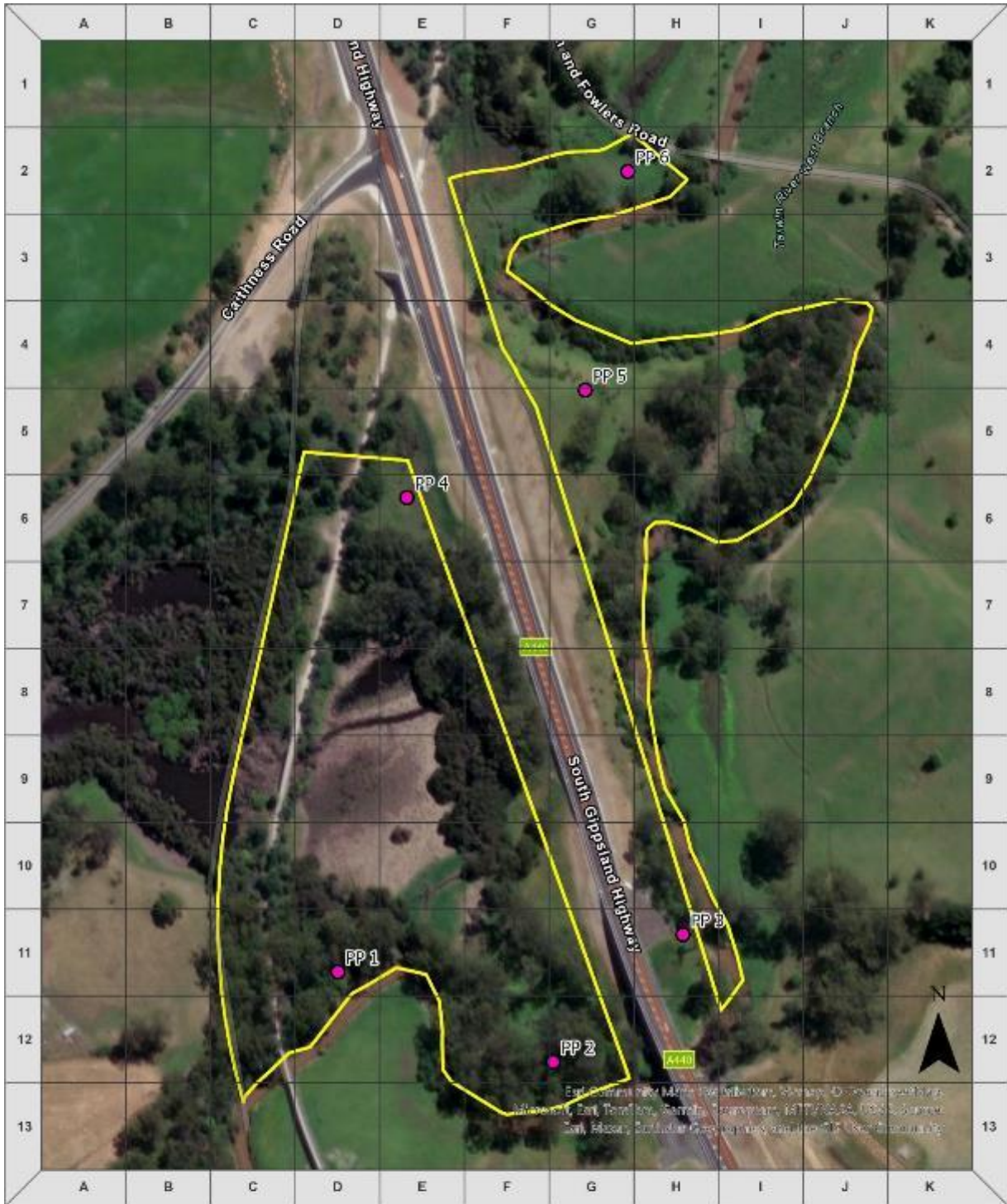
- Eliminate all woody weeds to less than 1% cover;
- Eliminate high threat herbaceous and grassy weeds to less than 1% cover;
- Ensure other herbaceous and grassy weed cover does not increase beyond current levels;

- Monitor for any new and emerging woody and herbaceous weeds and eliminate to <1% cover;
- Control rabbits and deer or their impacts if they pose a threat to the offset site;
- Retain all standing trees, dead or alive;
- Retain all fallen logs and fallen timber;
- Exclude stock; and
- Successfully establish 235 Strzelecki Gum trees.

(Bowler, Doherty, & Brooker, 2017)

These management actions were summarised in *Table 4* of the Offset Management Plan and included in *Appendix 1*, and this report provides specific detail on the progression of works to achieve these.

As required by the Offset Management Plan, monitoring of the success of management activities within the offset site must be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist annually for the term of the Plan. Monitoring was completed in February 2026 by Mr Tim Bowler- B.A.Sc. (Env. Sc.), a Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) accredited native vegetation assessor, with 10+ years of experience in environmental consultancy and flora and fauna assessments in South Gippsland.



### Legend

- Offset Site Boundary
- Photo Points

Spatial Reference: GCS: GCS\_GDA\_1994



**ID** Ecological Management  
 Project Application Date: 1/2/21  
 Data Exported: 25/04/2024

Figure 1: Offset Site

## 2 Summary of Management Works

The following sections provide a description of works undertaken on site during the 2025/2026 works period, between March 2025 and February 2026, and the site's progress towards vegetation improvements and management obligations. This summary is based on site observations and description of works undertaken by environmental work crews across the year, as well as a site audit to determine success, or otherwise, of weed control activities and the results of a weed audit which was completed in February 2026.

*Appendix 1* provides a summation of current condition and actions taken as per *Table 4* in the Offset Management Plan.

### 2.1 Strzelecki Gum Condition

The condition of the remnant Strzelecki Gums is good across the site, although many have suffered some damage due to the severe weather conditions in early 2025, including many lost limbs and some medium-sized trees fallen in the west portion of the site. No removal or loss of Strzelecki Gums has been recorded at the site.

Weed control of grassy and herbaceous exotic species has continued beneath mature Strzelecki Gums to aid in the chances of recruitment by reducing competition.

The following works are required in Year 8 of the implementation of the offset plan to meet management commitments:

- Maintain and where appropriate, remove guards on planted and recruited Strzelecki gums.

### 2.2 Fencing

Fencing is present along the Rail Trail boundary in the south-west offset area, along the edge of the Rail Trail, and the adjoining farmland. All fencing remains in good condition. No fencing is currently installed along the boundary of the eastern offset area, with no-go fencing erected during the construction of the realignment having now been removed.

No evidence of firewood collection, stock intrusion or damage to existing fencing was observed or has been reported by environmental work crews.

### 2.3 Woody Weeds

*Table 1* displays the nine woody weed species recorded within the offset site, along with their current and target covers. Five of these species are listed under the *Catchment and Land Protection (CaLP) Act 1994* (Agriculture Victoria, 2017). All woody species are subject to the target of elimination, with emerging woody weeds also being monitored and removed by environmental work crews when found.

Weed control has been undertaken in this 2025-26 period targeting blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* spp. agg.), Madeira winter cherry (*Solanum pseudocapsicum*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Prunus (*Prunus* spp.) and willow (*Salix* sp.).

During the site audit in February 2026, woody weed locations were recorded, particularly in areas of past infestations, with weed cover estimates taken. Where species coverage was negligible, the cover was noted as less than 1%. Where areas contained a mixture of species, the proportion of each species was estimated. Weed coverages have remained steady since the previous annual report.

One species remains above its target % cover of <1%, being *Salix* sp. (willow), with coverage remaining unchanged compared to the previous monitoring period. An additional control run was completed in April 2026 to further reduce the cover of this species.

No new woody weed species have been recorded at the site.

Table 1: Woody weeds recorded, targets to achieve and current status (as at March 2026)

Scientific name	Common name	CaLP Act	Control Method	Timing	Target % Cover	Current % Cover
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	hawthorn	✓	Cut & Paint	Spring to Autumn	<1%	<1%
<i>Fraxinus</i> sp.*	ash tree		Cut & Paint	Spring to Autumn	<1%	<1%
<i>Genista monspessulana</i> *	cape broom	✓	Cut & Paint, spray with appropriate herbicide	Summer	<1%	<1%
<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i> *	sweet pittosporum		Cut & Paint	Spring to Autumn	<1%	<1%
<i>Prunus</i> sp.*	prunus		Cut & Paint	Spring to Autumn	<1%	<1%
<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i> *	sweet briar	✓	Cut & Paint, spray with appropriate herbicide	Summer	<1%	<1%
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> spp. agg.	blackberry	✓	Cut & Paint, spray with appropriate herbicide	Summer	<1%	<1%
<i>Solanum pseudocapsicum</i>	Madeira winter cherry		Dig out or Cut & Paint	All Year	<1%	<1%
<i>Salix</i> spp.	willow	✓	Cut & Paint	Spring to Autumn	<1%	2.5%

\* Newly recorded in 2020

Appendix 1 provides additional detail and comments in relation to woody weed control in Year 7.

The following works, as in previous years, are required in Year 8 of the implementation of the offset plan to meet management commitments:

- Maintain low Blackberry cover in previously areas of infestations, including at the southern end of both the western and eastern offset areas, particularly adjacent to the new bridge;
- Reduce Willow cover to < 1% from its currently estimated 2.5%, where safe to do so along steep, tall banks, by drilling and filling, or cut and paint; and
- Control scattered hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), ash tree (*Fraxinus* sp.) and prunus trees (*Prunus* sp.), particularly in the eastern offset area.

## 2.4 Herbaceous and Grass Weeds

Table 2 displays the herbaceous and grass weeds recorded within the offset site, along with their current and target covers. Three of these species are listed under the *CaLP Act 1994* (Agriculture Victoria, 2017), with four species requiring elimination within the Offset site. All other species must be controlled so as not to increase in cover from levels recorded in the Offset Management Plan (shown in Table 2 below).

Herbaceous weed control was undertaken across the offset site throughout the reporting period, predominantly in 2025, targeting pimpernel (*Lysimachia arvensis*), brassica (*Brassica fruticulosa*), perennial thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), ox-tongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), forget-me-not (*Myosotis* sp.), black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) and Wandering Trad (*Tradescantia fluminensis*). Grass control was also undertaken, targeting reed canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinaceae*), kikuyu (*Cenchrus clandestinus*) and Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*).

During the site audit in February 2026, herbaceous and grassy weed locations were recorded, particularly in areas of past infestations, with weed cover estimates taken. Where species coverage was negligible, the cover was noted as less than 1%. Where areas contained a mixture of species, the proportion of each species was estimated. Weed coverages have remained steady since the previous annual report.

Wandering Creeper coverage is estimated to be approximately 0.56% across the site, down from 1% in 2025 and 4% in 2024.

An additional control run targeting reed canary-grass was completed in April 2026, as access was available due to dry conditions. This species is difficult to control for most times during the year, as it largely occurs within the wetlands. Work in this area, completed during last years treatment period (2024-2025), has largely been undone due to further seasonal inundation, with estimated coverage returning to the previous estimate of 12%, up from 9% in year 6.

One new and emerging herbaceous weed was recorded at the site within this 2025-2026 period, pimpernel (*Lysimachia arvensis*), a benign herbaceous weed.

Table 2: Herbaceous and grassy weeds recorded and targets to achieve (as at March 2026).

Scientific name	Common name	CaLP Act	Standard to Achieve	Method	Timing	Target % Cover	Current % Cover
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> **	sweet vernal grass		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	Summer	2%	1%
<i>Aster subulatus</i>	aster		Eliminate to <1% cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	<1%	<1%
<i>Brassica</i> sp.	brassica		Eliminate to <1% cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	<1%	<1%
<i>Cirsium arvense</i> **	californian thistle	✓	Eliminate to <1% cover	Dig out or spot spray with an appropriate herbicide	Spring	<1%	<1%

Scientific name	Common name	CaLP Act	Standard to Achieve	Method	Timing	Target % Cover	Current % Cover
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	spear thistle	✓	Eliminate to <1% cover	Dig out or spot spray with an appropriate herbicide	Spring	<1%	<1%
<i>Cenchrus clandestinus</i>	kikuyu		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	Spring and Summer	10%	10%
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	cocksfoot		No increase beyond existing cover	Hand weed or spray with appropriate herbicide	Winter and Spring	1%	2%
<i>Ehrharta erecta</i> **	panic veldt-grass		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	1%	1%
<i>Galium aparine</i> **	cleavers		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	1%	<1%
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	yorkshire fog		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	Summer	2%	2%
<i>Lysimachia arvensis</i> +	pimpernel		Eliminate to <1% cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	<1%	<1%
<i>Myosotis sylvatica</i> **	forget-me-not		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	1%	<1%
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	reed canary grass		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	Spring and Summer	2%	12%
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	creeping buttercup		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	Spring	2%	2%
<i>Rumex</i> sp. **	dock		No increase beyond existing cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	<1%	<1%
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	ragwort	✓	Eliminate to <1% cover	Dig out or spot spray with an appropriate herbicide	Spring and Summer	<1%	<1%
<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>	wandering trad		Eliminate to <1% cover	Hand weed or spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	<1%	0.5%
<i>Viola odorata</i> **	scented violet		Eliminate to <1% cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	<1%	<1%
<i>Zantedeschia aethiopicum</i> **	arum lily		Eliminate to <1% cover	Spray with appropriate herbicide	All Year	<1%	<1%

\*\* New and Emerging

+ Newly recorded 2026

Appendix 1 provides additional detail and comments in relation to herbaceous weed control in Year 7.

The following works are required in Year 8 of the implementation of the offset plan to meet management commitments:

- Continued weed control to target ragwort and spear thistle is required to maintain coverages at <1%, particularly furthest away from access areas to prevent weed re-establishment;
- Control of creeping buttercup in the north-east of the site beneath the mature Strzelecki Gums to maintain low coverage;
- A continued effort to reduce coverage of Reed Canary-grass to its required 2% target coverage, predominantly in and surrounding the Black Spur wetland, which should encourage the indigenous *Persicaria* species (knotweed) to re-colonise the areas of high weed cover.
- Maintain low levels of wandering creeper, particularly in areas previously controlled (south-west, adjacent to the rail trail) and along the bank of the Tarwin River in the north-east of the site.

## 2.5 Pest Animals

No pest animal cameras were installed during this period. Two rounds of monitoring should be undertaken during each monitoring year.

Continued monitoring of pest animals within the site should continue to be completed annually to determine if any control is required, however no pest animal observations were made throughout the year by work crews.

## 2.6 Revegetation Planting

The offset target requires the recruitment of 235 Strzelecki Gums within the site.

During the 2024-25 management period, 58 Strzelecki Gums were planted in revegetation areas and 50 Strzelecki gums planted in the management 2025-26 period (June 2025).

During the previous site audit in April 2025, 226 Strzelecki Gum individuals (a mixture of planted and naturally germinated) were recorded within the offset, which had increased from 177 individuals in 2024. There are also a high number of recruits outside the offset site, particularly along the west and east edges of South Gippsland Highway.

A count of Strzelecki gum recruits and planted individuals was not undertaken during the February 2026 audit, with a count to be completed in 2027 to give time for the planted individuals to grow.

The following works are required in Year 8 of the implementation of the offset plan to meet management commitments:

- Monitor the health of planted and recruited Strzelecki gums, and removal wallaby guards where necessary.

### 3 Photos

#### 3.1 General



*Photo 1 – Healthy planted Strzelecki gum above wallaby guard, western offset area*



*Photo 2 – Extensive reed canary-grass in Black Spur wetland area*

### 3.2 Strzelecki Gum Condition



*Photo 3 – Mature Strzelecki gum adjacent to ridge in western offset area, much of which has fallen in storms*



*Photo 4 – Mature Strzelecki gum in eastern offset area*

### 3.3 Recruitment and Translocation



*Photo 5 – Planted Strzelecki Gum requiring stake and guard maintenance, western offset area*



*Photo 6 – Guarded Strzelecki gum in eastern offset area. Example of guards to be removed.*

### 3.4 Weed Control



*Photo 7 – Ragwort on steep hillside in eastern area*



*Photo 8 – Mature prunus weed in eastern offset*



Photo 9 – Area in western offset area previously infested with sweet pittosporum beneath burgan (*Kunzea ericoides* s.l.)



Photo 10 – Weed control of sweet pittosporum and wandering creeper has allowed a high rate of mountain clematis (*Clematis aristata*) in south-western offset area



*Photo 11 – Fraxinus on Tarwin River bank, eastern offset area*

### 3.5 Pest Animal



*Photo 12 – Cow pat in western offset area, possible from a cow crossing the low Tarwin River*

### 3.6 Photo Points

Photo point comparisons begin on the following page. Refer to *Figure 1* for photo point locations.

**Photo Point 1 – East**



*March 2021*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

***Photo Point 2 – North***



*May 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

***Photo Point 2 – West***



*May 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

***Photo Point 2 – South***



*July 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

***Photo Point 2 – East***



*July 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

***Photo Point 3 – South***



*May 2020*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 4 – North**



*March 2022*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

***Photo Point 4 – West***



*July 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

***Photo Point 4 – South***



*July 2019*



*May 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 4 – East**



*May 2020*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 5 – West**



*July 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 5 – West**



*July 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 5 – East**



*July 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 6 – North**



*March 2021*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 6 – West**



*May 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 6 – South**



*May 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

**Photo Point 6 - East**



*May 2019*



*March 2023*



*February 2026*

## References

- Agriculture Victoria. (2017, July 20). *Victorian Noxious Weeds List - Alphabetical by Scientific Name*. Retrieved from Declared noxious weeds and pest animals in Victoria | Legislation, policy and permits | Protecting Victoria from pest animals and weeds | Pests, diseases and weeds | Agriculture | Agriculture Victoria: [http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/365098/Victorian-noxious-weeds-list-by-scientific-name-20-July-2017.pdf](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/365098/Victorian-noxious-weeds-list-by-scientific-name-20-July-2017.pdf)
- Bowler, T., Brooker, T., & Imbery, B. (2018). *South Gippsland Highway Realignment, Koonwarra (Black Spur) - EPBC 2017/8070. Strzelecki Gum Offset Management Plan*. Research, Victoria: ID Ecological Management.
- Bowler, T., Doherty, W., & Brooker, T. (2017). *Report for VicRoads- High Risk-Based Pathway Biodiversity Assessment Report for South Gippsland Black Spur Highway Realignment*. ID Ecological Management.
- Brooker, T. (2018). *EPBC Act Preliminary Documentation (2017/8070)- South Gippsland Highway Realignment, Koonwarra (Black Spur)*. Research: ID Ecological Management.
- DoEE. (2019, January 18). Approval - South Gippsland Highway realignment, Koonwarra, Victoria (EPBC 2017/8070). Canberra, Australia.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Year 7 Works Summary

Action #	Management Action	Standard to be achieved	Year 7 Notes
1	Monitor health of and threats to remnant Strzelecki Gum on site.	<p>Retain all remnant Strzelecki Gums on site.</p> <p>Encourage recruitment events of Strzelecki Gum from remnant mature trees through management actions.</p> <p>Record new Strzelecki Gum recruits.</p>	<p>Mature trees largely remain standing, with some individuals being felled by high winds.</p> <p>Limbs have fallen throughout the site and retained as logs.</p> <p>Weed control works completed around mature Strzelecki Gums to promote recruitment.</p> <p>During the inspection in April 2025, 226 Strzelecki Gum individuals (a mixture of planted and naturally germinated) were recorded within the offset, which has increased from 177 individuals in 2024. A count was not completed in February 2026.</p> <p>There are also a high number of recruits outside the offset site, particularly along the west and east edges of South Gippsland Highway.</p>
2	Maintain fencing in good condition around entire boundary of all sites where fencing exists or is required.	<p>Maintain current fencing to exclude stock.</p> <p>No firewood collection within the offset site.</p> <p>Repair fence immediately upon identification of damage.</p>	<p>Monitoring of fencing undertaken during site visits by environmental work crews.</p> <p>Fencing is in good order where present.</p> <p>No evidence of firewood collection or stock intrusion into site or fence repairs required.</p>
3	Eliminate all woody weeds. Monitor for any re-sprouting or seedlings and eradicate.	<p>Aim to eliminate all listed woody weeds by end of Year 5.</p> <p>&lt;1% cover of all listed woody weeds at the end of Year 10.</p> <p>Minimise off-target damage from control activities (avoid all native plants).</p>	<p>Weed control works, particularly controlling Blackberry and Willows, were completed throughout the year, with more willow control required in Year 8.</p> <p>Willow cover along the Tarwin River remains above its target cover of &lt;1%, currently at 2.5%.</p>

Action #	Management Action	Standard to be achieved	Year 7 Notes
4	Monitor for and eliminate all new and emerging woody weeds.	<1% cover of all woody weeds at the end of Year 10.	No new woody weed species were recorded for Year 7.
5	Eliminate all high threat herbaceous and grassy weeds.	<p>Aim to eliminate all listed high threat herbaceous weeds by end of Year 5.</p> <p>&lt;1% cover of all high threat herbaceous and weeds at the end of Year 10.</p> <p>Minimise off-target damage from control activities (avoid all native plants).</p>	<p>All high threat herbaceous species recorded as &lt;1% or at required coverages excepting Cocksfoot (2%) and Reed canary grass.</p> <p>Wandering Trad was recorded at approximately 0.5%, compared to 15 in 2025, 1.5% in 2024 and 4% in 2023.</p> <p>Reed Canary Grass, being the dominant high threat grassy weed particularly in the Black Spur swamp area, requires further control in Year 8 to decrease its cover across the offset site. It has been increased in coverage from 9% in 2025 back to 12%, which was the coverage recorded in 2024.</p> <p>Control of high threat herbaceous and grassy weeds required to continue to maintain coverages achieved.</p>
6	Ensure all other herbaceous and grassy weeds do not increase in cover across the site.	<p>No increase beyond existing cover for all herbaceous weeds.</p> <p>Minimise off-target damage from control activities (avoid all native plants).</p>	Continued weed control targeting herbaceous species is still required.
7	Monitor for and eliminate all new & emerging herbaceous weeds	<1% cover of all new and emerging herbaceous weeds at the end of Year 10.	One new weed species was recorded for Year 7, being pimpernel.
8	Monitor for and control impacts from rabbits and deer.	<p>No surface disturbance within the site.</p> <p>No active rabbit warrens to be present.</p> <p>No damage to Strzelecki Gum plantings from deer activity.</p> <p>No rubbish.</p> <p>Minimal artificial piles of logs and rocks.</p>	<p>Cow pat recorded on site.</p> <p>Pest Animal cameras were placed in the site in March 2026, with six red foxes and no rabbits being observed.</p> <p>Continued monitoring required to determine the number of pest animals present and if control is required.</p>

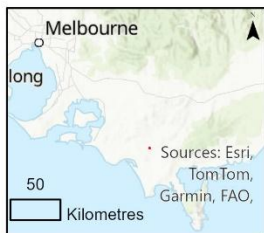
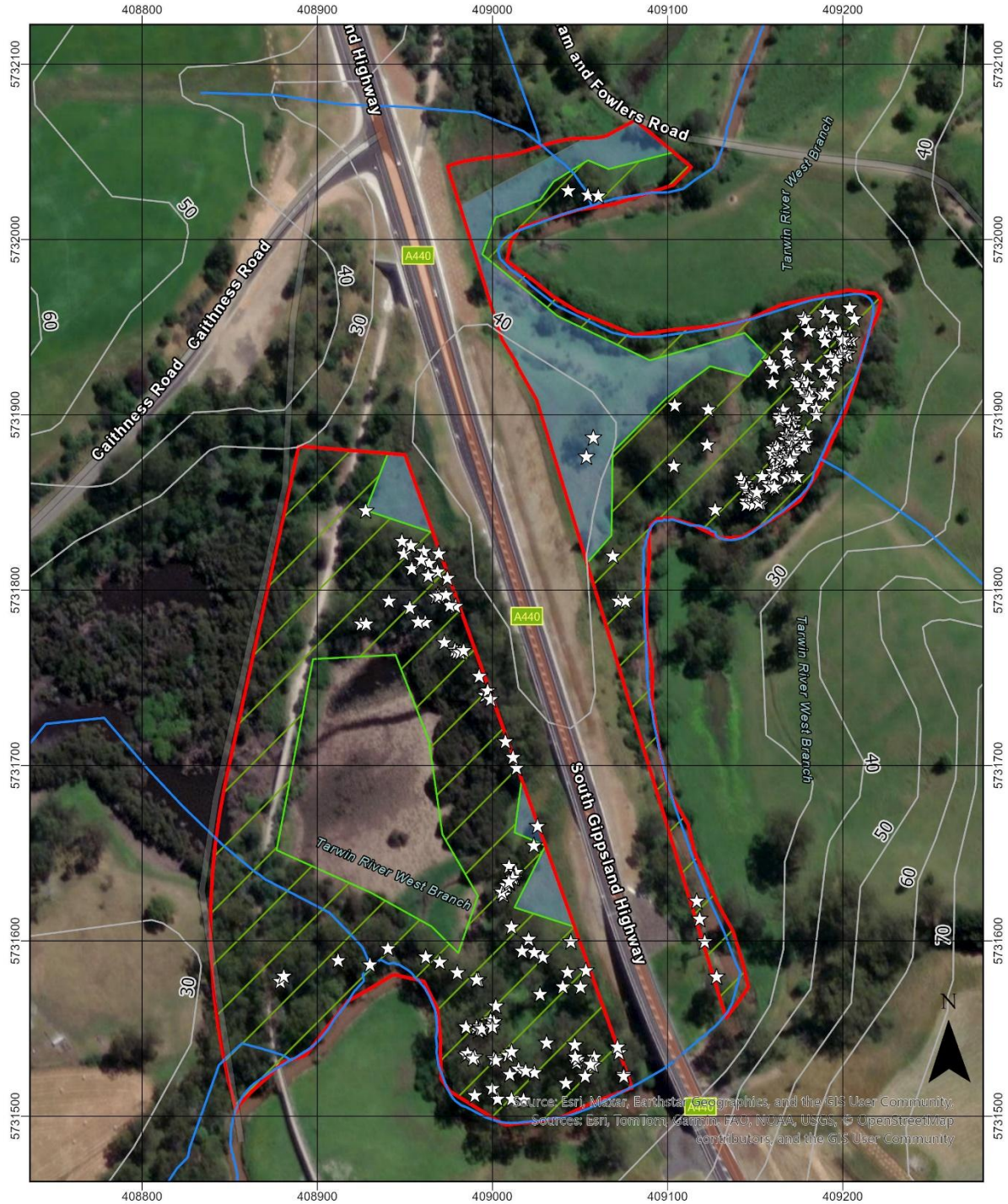
Action #	Management Action	Standard to be achieved	Year 7 Notes
9	Monitor and control all new and emerging pest animals.	Control numbers of any new and emerging pest animals.	No new and emerging pest animals were recorded during the 2025-26 period.
10	Collect indigenous seed on site and / or place order with local indigenous nursery.	Collect seed / propagate tube stock (seedlings) for species listed in Table 3 from seed sourced on site or as locally as possible and from the same soil type. Provenance principles should be followed of seed collected on or adjacent to the offset site.	50 Strzelecki gums planted in June 2025.
11	Prepare the site to ensure optimal establishment of the vegetation. For areas where planting will occur complete at least 2 cycles of weed elimination.	To ensure plants have greatest chance of survival, planting circles should be weed free with no high threat weed cover at time of planting. Undertake revegetation activities outside of the canopy drip-line of all indigenous trees and avoid disturbing any existing native vegetation.	50 planting circles sprayed in May 2025.
12	Sow seeds / plant seedlings with species specified and guard seedlings with core flute or wallaby guards.	By the end of Year 4 – all plantings have been completed within the revegetation area.	50 Strzelecki gums planted in June 2025.
13	Replace unsuccessful seedlings if losses observed.	100% survival of Strzelecki Gum plantings and 85% of all other planting numbers as specified in <i>Table 3</i> by the end of Year 10. Replace lost plantings if required to ensure numbers are maintained.	226 Strzelecki Gum individuals (a mixture of planted and naturally germinated) were recorded in April 2025 within the offset. Count to be re-done in 2027 to give time for the individuals planted in 2026 to grow.
14	Undertake plant maintenance post-planting, including weed control and guard re-establishment/removal	Control all high threat weeds to plants survival. Minimise off-target damage from control activities (avoid all native plants). Removal of guards once plantings are self-sufficient and risk reduced to survival.	To be undertaken in Year 8 to ensure revegetation plants are not out-competed.

Action #	Management Action	Standard to be achieved	Year 7 Notes
15	Prepare and submit an annual report	Report provides enough detail in the form of written comments and supporting evidence that an assessor can easily determine the completion of / progress against the management commitments	Completed.

## Maps

Maps commence on the next page

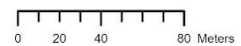
Map 1 – Offset Site and location of Strzelecki Gums



**Legend**

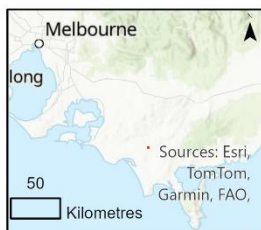
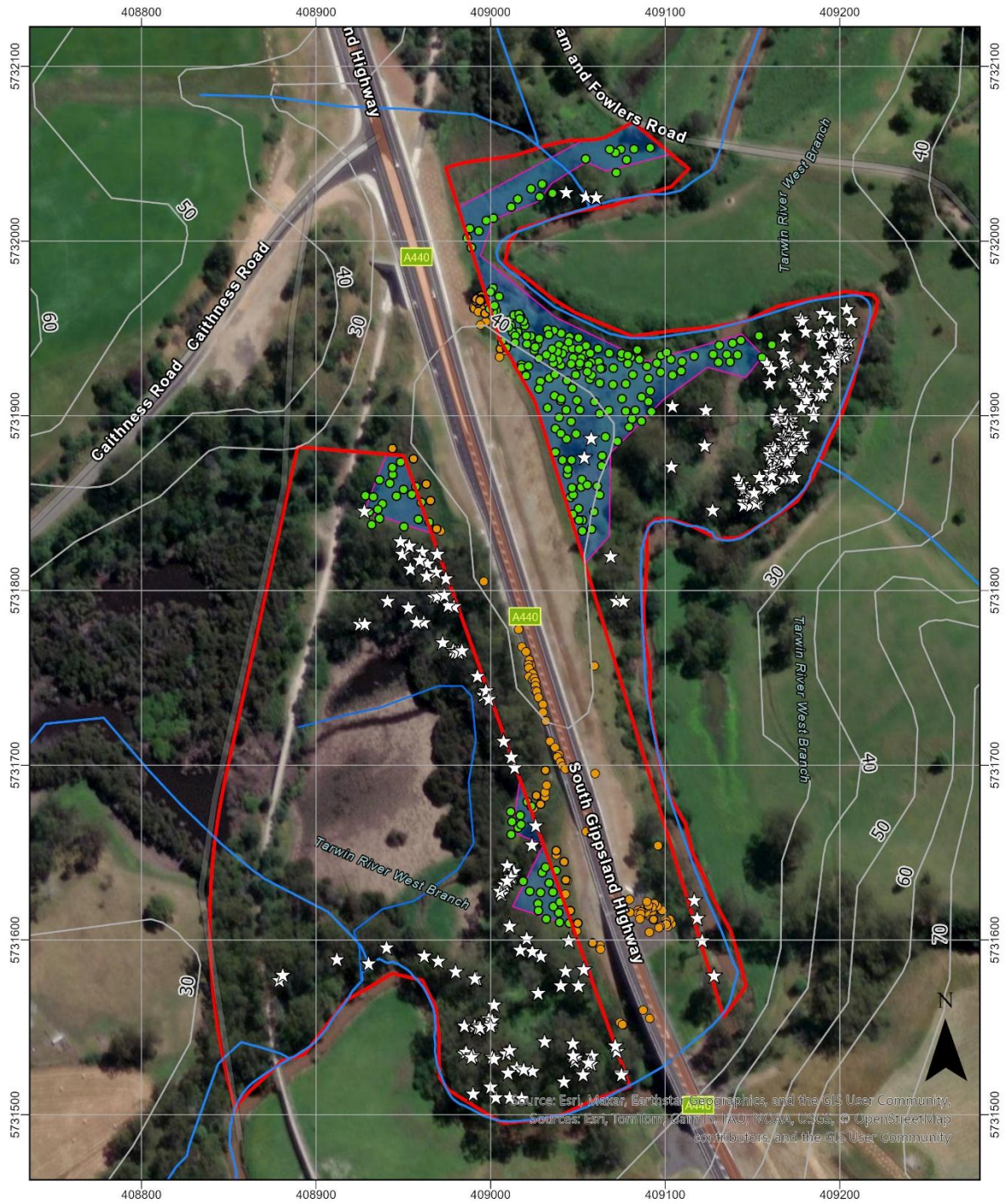
- ▭ Offset Site Boundary
- Watercourses
- Elevation (m)
- ☆ Strzelecki Gums Protected within Offset Site
- ▨ Remnant Native Vegetation
- ▭ Revegetation Site

Spatial Reference  
GCS: GCS GDA 1994



Imagery Acquisition Date: 2022  
Date Exported: 24/04/2024

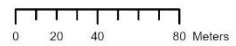
Map 2 – Juvenile Strzelecki Gum Locations



**Legend**

- ▭ Offset Site Boundary
  - Watercourses
  - Elevation (m)
  - ▭ Revegetation Site
- 
- Strzelecki Gum Recruits and Plantings**
  - Outside Offset Area
  - Within Offset Area
  - ☆ Strzelecki Gums Protected within Offset Site

Spatial Reference  
GCS: GGS GDA 1994



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IMS-QT-02-V1.1

## **Appendix C – Letter from DAWE 29 March 2021 Ref: 2017/8070**



**Australian Government**

**Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment**

Ref: 2017/8070

[REDACTED]  
Senior Manager Planning and Environment  
Major Road Projects Victoria  
L26, 180 Lonsdale St,  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

**SOUTH GIPPSLAND HIGHWAY REALIGNMENT, KOONWARRA, VICTORIA  
(EPBC 2017/8070) - Independent audit requirement**

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence dated 2 March 2021 to the department requesting clarification of the intent of condition 16 attached to the EPBC Act approval dated 18 January 2019.

Officers of this department have reviewed the request and briefed me regarding condition 16.

As a delegate of the Minister, I advise that an independent audit of EPBC Act approved action 2017/8070 need only be conducted if such an audit is specifically requested in writing by the Minister. Unless so requested, you do not need to submit an annual independent audit report.

As you are aware, the Department has an active monitoring program which includes monitoring inspections, desk top document reviews and audits. Please ensure that you maintain accurate records of all activities associated with, or relevant to, the conditions of approval so that they can be made available to the Department on request.

Should you require any further information please contact [REDACTED] Assessment Officer, Post Approvals Section, on [REDACTED] or by email:

Yours sincerely

Kim Farrant  
Assistant Secretary  
Assessments (Vic and Tas) and Post Approvals Branch  
Environment Approvals Division

29 March 2021

Att.