

# Flora and fauna considerations

Melbourne Airport's third runway is a major infrastructure project designed to meet the growing demand for air travel. While extensive efforts have been made to reduce environmental impacts, the project will affect several ecologically significant areas across our 2,740-hectare airport estate. As part of our commitment to sustainable development, a comprehensive offset management program is in place to protect biodiversity and support long-term conservation outcomes.

## What's being impacted?

Despite significant efforts in the design of the third runway to minimise impacts on local flora and fauna, environmental assessments indicate that some disturbance to native vegetation and habitat is unavoidable. As part of the project, and in accordance with government approvals, selective vegetation clearance will be undertaken within the airport precinct. This includes:

- 78.74 hectares of Grey Box Woodland, which includes 68.02 hectares of Swift Parrot foraging habitat (a migratory bird that visits during winter months)

- 90.49 hectares of Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain, which includes 9.75 hectares of Golden Sun Moth habitat
- 64.34 hectares of Growling Grass Frog habitat

These areas are listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and are important for Victoria's biodiversity. These amounts are the maximum allowed to be removed, and, where possible, Melbourne Airport will work to find ways to minimise the amount cleared.

To compensate for this loss, Melbourne Airport is acquiring environmental offsets.



Grey Box Woodland



Natural Temperate Grassland



Growling Grass Frog



Golden Sun Moth



Swift Parrot

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## What are environmental offsets?

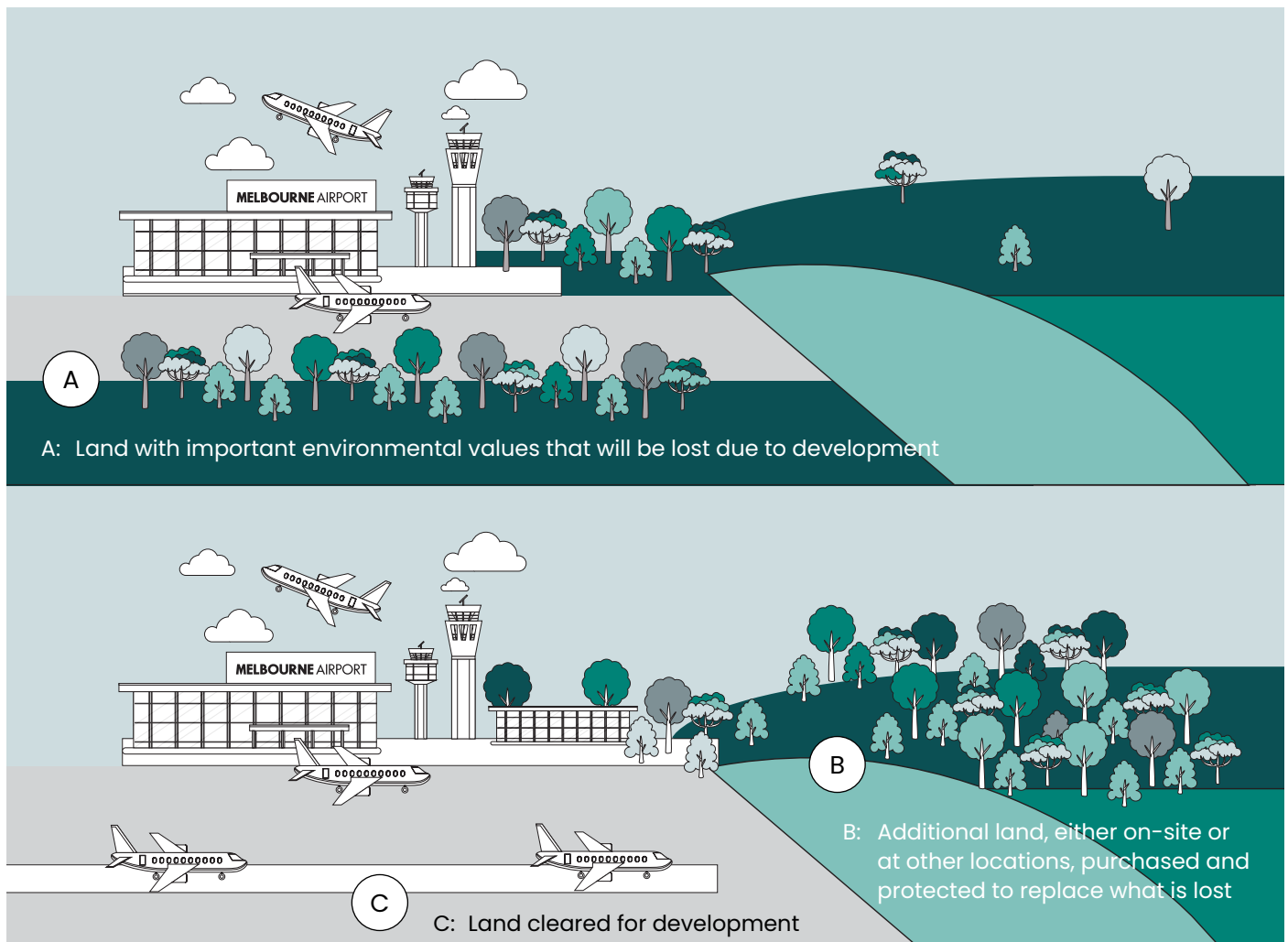
Offsets are a key requirement under federal legislation and compensate for unavoidable environmental impacts.

The offset process includes:

- Securing land at on-site and off-site locations
- Managing that land to improve its ecological condition and protecting it for the long term

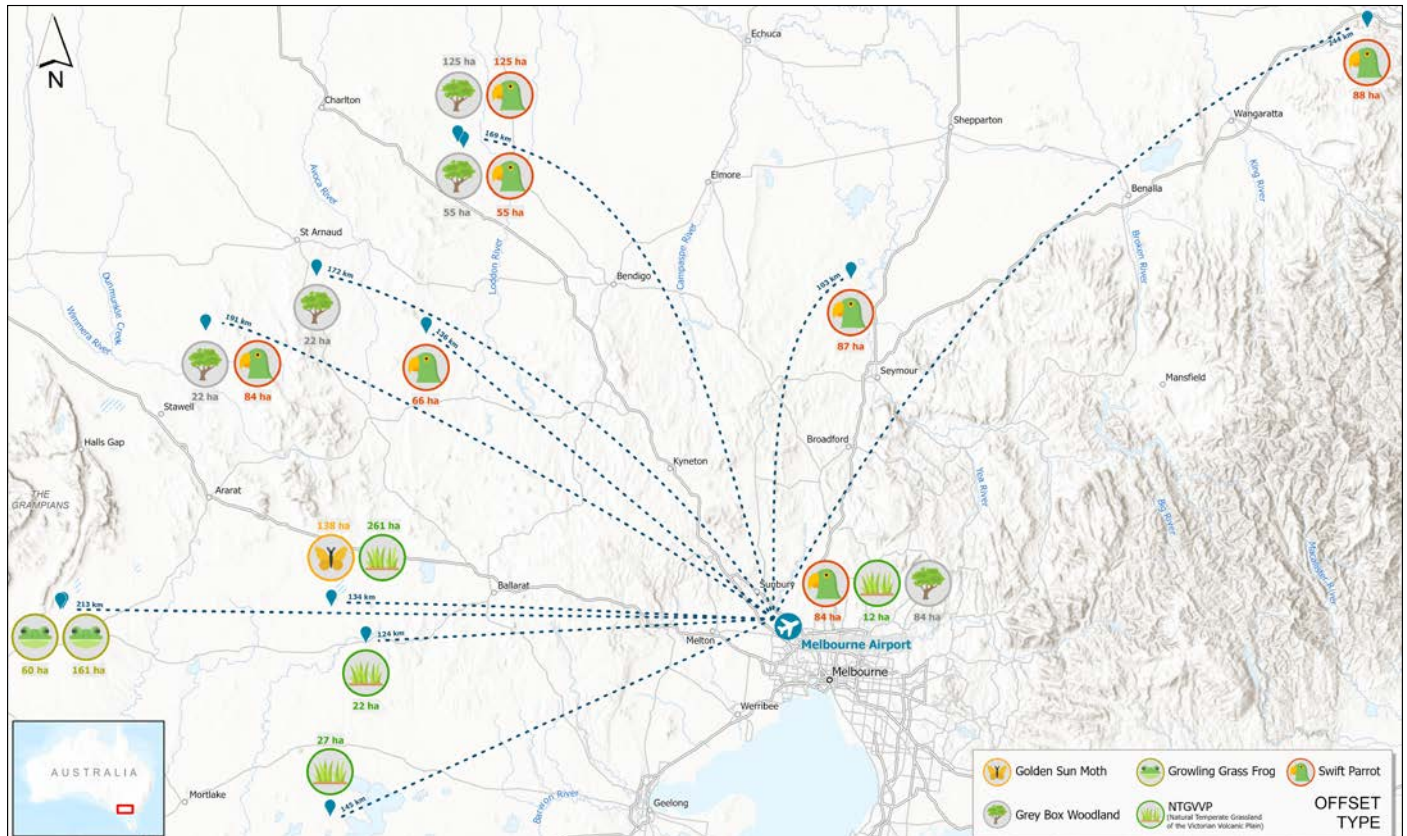
Melbourne Airport is securing land and managing it in perpetuity (or, in simpler terms, forever) to replace the significant environmental values that will be lost by the removal of these habitats for the third runway project. The offset program includes two on-site offset areas and a number of off-site locations within Victoria.

Ongoing management and protection of sites are outlined in site-specific offset management plans approved by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW). Melbourne Airport will also submit regular compliance reports to DCCEEW.



The locations of the offset areas for Melbourne Airport's third runway project, which includes sites on Melbourne

Airport land as well as on land in other locations around Victoria, are seen in the map below.



Melbourne Airport recognises the impact of the loss of habitats. While the offsets are an important part of compensating for this loss, we have taken additional steps to reduce environmental impacts wherever possible. This includes:

- Melbourne Airport recognises the impact of the loss of habitats. While the offsets are an important part of compensating for this loss, we have taken additional steps to reduce environmental impacts wherever possible. This includes:
- Designing the project to avoid sensitive areas
  - Avoiding clearing habitats where possible
  - Designing infrastructure, such as the Arundel Creek Treatment Facility, in a way that is compatible with Growling Grass Frog habitat
  - Developing comprehensive Construction Environmental Management Plans that detail the potential environmental impacts of construction activities relating to the third runway and how those impacts will be prevented, controlled or mitigated, and monitored
  - Relocating fauna prior to any habitat removal by a suitably qualified ecologist
  - Having an ecologist on site during works to relocate any additional fauna that may have entered the area
  - Where possible, undertaking habitat clearing outside of the Swift Parrot migratory season
  - Installing permanent predator-proof fencing around the retained Grey Box Woodland area
  - Fencing off the retained vegetation and habitat areas to ensure construction activities are limited to the approved areas (this fencing will also be inspected on a daily basis to ensure integrity)
  - Putting in place controls to prevent introducing pests and weeds during removal works
  - Including key ecological information in worker inductions to ensure awareness of project requirements to protect flora and fauna



## Spotlight on the Grey Box Woodland and Swift Parrot

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The Grey Box Woodland is in the northern part of the airport. It is an endangered ecological community under the EPBC Act and provides foraging habitat for the migratory Swift Parrot, a species listed as critically endangered.

More than half of the Grey Box Woodland – 83.53 hectares – will be retained and protected as an on-site offset location, with improvements made to it as part of the offset program. These improvements include:

- fencing to prevent predators from entering
- weed control to improve the habitat quality
- pest control to manage species such as rabbits
- strategic revegetation to improve food resources for the Swift Parrot
- reusing cleared vegetation such as hollow logs to create habitats for fauna.

## Indigenous and European heritage protection

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Prior to any clearing of the Grey Box Woodland, cultural heritage salvage works will be completed. These include:

- Salvaging artefact scatters
- Recovering five scar trees and investigating how we can reuse these (in consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation)

These works are carried out in line with the Cultural Heritage Management Plan, developed with and approved by the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

In addition, there will be work to salvage European heritage sites.

For further information contact [newrunway@melair.com.au](mailto:newrunway@melair.com.au) or call 03 9297 1597

