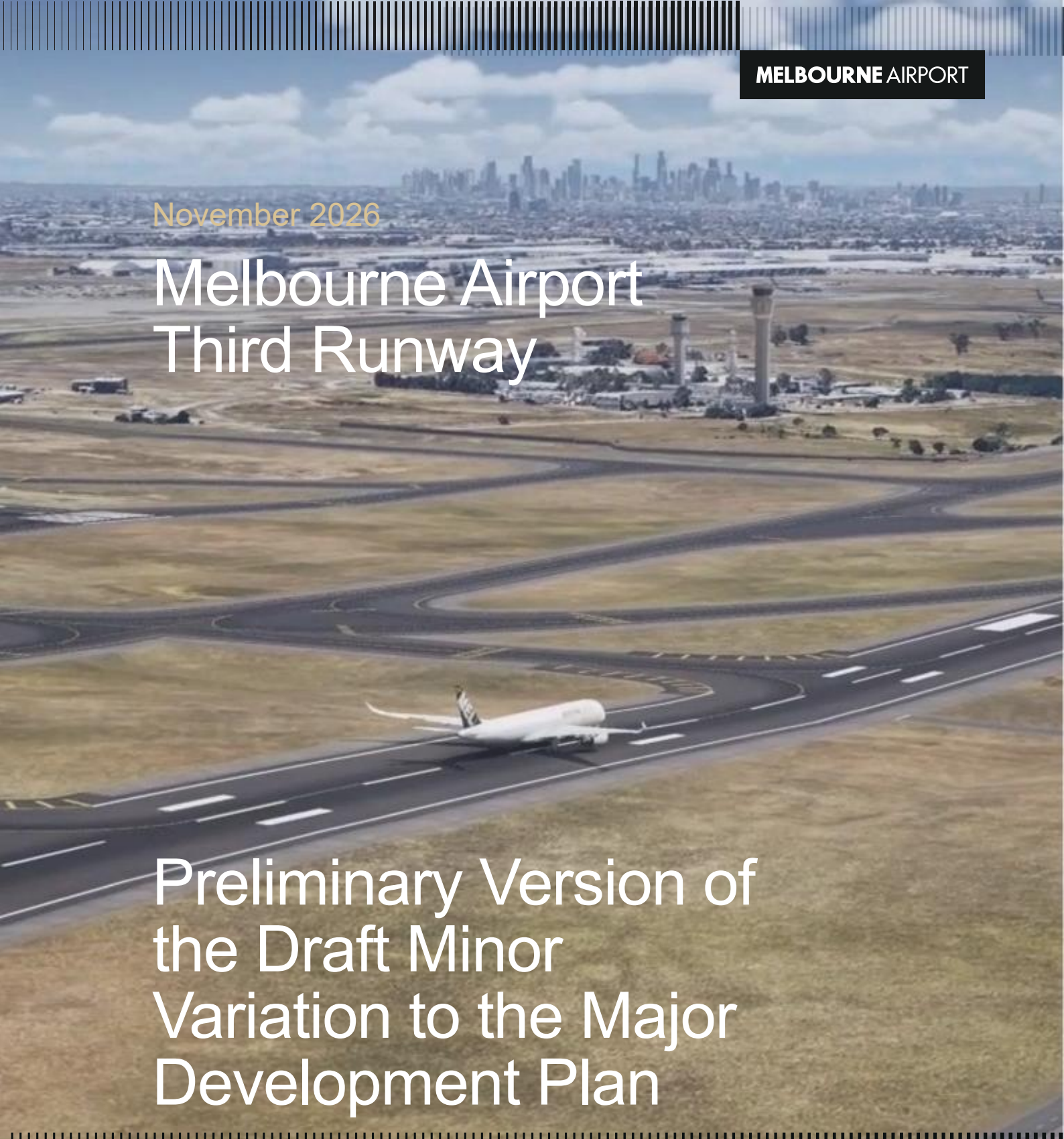
MELBOURNE AIRPORT

November 2026

Melbourne Airport Third Runway



Preliminary Version of the Draft Minor Variation to the Major Development Plan

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Executive Summary

This document is the preliminary version of the draft minor variation to the approved Major Development Plan for Melbourne Airport's Third Runway Project (approved MDP), which was approved by the Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government on 10 September 2024.

Since the MDP was approved, APAM has progressed preliminary and early works, extensive site investigations, procurement activities, Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) processes and detailed engineering design. These activities have identified opportunities to refine elements of the approved disturbance footprint associated with construction and delivery of the approved Project.

The proposed Minor Variation relates to refinements of:

- Utility infrastructure;
- Drainage infrastructure;
- Local roads and construction access arrangements;
- Temporary and permanent construction requirements; and
- Areas of the approved disturbance footprint that are no longer required for Project delivery.

The proposed Minor Variation therefore includes both additional disturbance areas required to facilitate detailed design outcomes and areas that have been removed from the existing Project disturbance footprint following further design refinement. The revised disturbance footprint has been developed through a structured process of avoidance, minimisation and identification of no-go areas, with the net effects of all additions and reductions assessed as part of this Minor Variation. The Minor Variation assesses the impact of the proposed refinement of the existing disturbance footprint, noting that there is no alteration proposed to the fundamental aviation development or its operation.

The Proposed Minor Variation

The proposal is considered by APAM to be an MDP variation of a minor nature in accordance with section 95 of the Airports Act because it facilitates delivery of the development approved by the Minister without changing the fundamental purpose, function or aviation outcomes of the approved Third Runway Project. The proposed variation does not involve a new runway, a different runway configuration, changes to the runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP, additional aviation infrastructure, or different airport-capacity outcomes. The future operation of Melbourne Airport’s runway system remains subject to the Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan required under Condition 3.1 of the MDP Conditions of Approval.

The proposed Minor Variation does not alter:

- The purpose of and strategic need for the Third Runway Project;
- The approved runway development;
- The approved taxiway system;
- Airport-capacity outcomes;
- The runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP;
- Airspace architecture;
- Aircraft noise assessment assumptions; or
- The aviation outcomes for which the Third Runway Project was approved.

Accordingly, APAM considers that the proposed variation facilitates delivery of the approved Third Runway Project and constitutes the same major airport development.

Legislative and Planning Context

The approved Third Runway Project demonstrated consistency with applicable Commonwealth legislation, the Melbourne Airport Master Plan and relevant planning and approval requirements. The proposed Minor Variation does not alter the approved purpose, function or aviation outcomes of the Project and continues to operate within the same legislative and policy framework assessed through the approved MDP.

The proposed Minor Variation remains consistent with:

- The Airports Act;
- The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act);
- The Aviation White Paper: Towards 2050, 2024;
- Melbourne Airport Master Plan 2022;

- The proposed Melbourne Airport Master Plan 2027;
- State and local planning considerations; and
- Applicable airport development and building approval requirements.

Assessment Outcomes

The approved MDP remains the primary assessment document for the Project. APAM reviewed each approved MDP specialist impact assessment to determine whether the proposed disturbance footprint refinements alter any assumptions, impacts or conclusions of the approved assessment. Supplementary assessment was undertaken where the revised disturbance footprint had the potential to alter the conclusions of the approved MDP.

Supplementary assessments were undertaken for:

- Soils, groundwater and waste;
- Ecology; and
- European heritage.

Indigenous cultural heritage is being addressed through the amendment to the Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP 16792), including additional survey and impact assessment in consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, as described in Section 4.3.3.

The supplementary assessments demonstrate that the revised disturbance footprint does not materially alter the overall environmental outcomes of the approved Project. In several instances, the revised footprint results in reduced environmental impacts compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint.

Key ecological outcomes include:

- A reduction of approximately 4.07 hectares of impact to Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain.
- A reduction of approximately 5.20 hectares of impact to Growling Grass Frog habitat.
- Reduced impacts to Golden Sun Moth habitat.
- Reduced overall impacts to Grey Box Woodland.
- An overall reduction in impacts to several Matters of National Environmental Significance when compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint.

Collectively, these outcomes demonstrate that application of the avoidance, mitigation, and offset hierarchy and implementation of the no-go area framework has resulted in a reduction in impacts to several Matters of National Environmental Significance when compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint.

Consultation

Prior to public exhibition, Melbourne Airport consulted with relevant Commonwealth, State and local government stakeholders on the proposed Minor Variation, including DITRDCSA, NEPA, the Airport Environment Officer, the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning, Hume City Council and Brimbank City Council. This engagement provided an opportunity to brief stakeholders on the proposed disturbance footprint refinements, approvals pathway and key assessment outcomes. Feedback received through this pre-exhibition engagement was considered in finalising the proposed Minor Variation for public exhibition.

The preliminary version of the draft Minor Variation will be made available for public comment for 15 business days, from 24 November 2026 to 14 December 2026.

Submissions received during public exhibition will be considered in finalising the proposed Minor Variation for submission to the Minister.

Conclusion

The proposed Minor Variation reflects the progression of the Third Runway Project from concept design to detailed design and construction planning. It refines the approved disturbance footprint to facilitate delivery of the approved Project while maintaining the purpose, function and aviation outcomes associated with the approved MDP.

The supplementary assessments demonstrate that the revised disturbance footprint can be delivered within the approved environmental and regulatory framework for the Third Runway Project, while maintaining the approved aviation outcomes and reducing impacts to several key ecological values when compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint. APAM therefore considers that the proposed variation is of a minor nature for the purposes of section 95 of the Airports Act.

1. Introduction

1.1 Melbourne Airport Third Runway

Australia Pacific Airports (Melbourne) Pty Ltd (APAM) is delivering Melbourne Airport's Third Runway Project (the Project), a nationally significant aviation infrastructure development that will increase airfield capacity, improve operational efficiency and support future aviation growth.

The Major Development Plan for the Third Runway Project (approved MDP) was approved by the Commonwealth Minister on 10 September 2024.

Since the MDP was approved, APAM has progressed preliminary and early works, further site investigations, procurement, Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) and detailed engineering design. Through this work, opportunities to refine small elements of the approved Project have been identified, and APAM is now seeking a minor variation to the approved MDP to facilitate delivery of the approved Project.

1.2 Overview of Proposed Minor Variation

The approved disturbance footprint was established based on the concept design available when the approved MDP was prepared and represented the maximum extent of potential ground disturbance anticipated for construction and operation of the approved Project. Subsequent Project development has identified locations where refinement of the approved disturbance footprint is required to support delivery of the approved development.

The proposed refinements principally relate to:

- Utility infrastructure required to service the Project;
- Drainage infrastructure required to manage runoff and overland flows;
- Local roads and construction access arrangements;
- Temporary and permanent construction requirements; and
- Areas within the existing Project disturbance footprint that are no longer required for Project delivery.

The proposed Minor Variation therefore includes:

- Additional disturbance areas required to accommodate the detailed design on-ground refinements and construction methodology for the approved Project; and
- The removal of areas within the existing Project disturbance footprint that are no longer required for Project delivery.

The proposed Minor Variation seeks approval for the resulting revised disturbance footprint. It does not seek approval for a new runway, a different runway project, or additional aviation infrastructure beyond that within the approved MDP. The proposed refinements do not alter the fundamental nature, purpose or operational outcomes of the approved Project.

Following consultation with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA) regarding the appropriate approvals pathway, APAM is seeking approval of a minor variation to the approved MDP under section 95 of the *Airports Act 1996* (Cth) (Airports Act). Section 95 applies where:

(a) a major development plan for an airport has been approved by the Minister;

(b) the airport-lessee company for the airport gives the Minister, in writing, a draft variation of the plan; and

(c) the variation is of a minor nature.

This document has been prepared in support of APAM's request for approval of the proposed Minor Variation. The purpose, location and extent of the proposed footprint refinements are described in Section 2.4 and implications for the approved MDP impact assessments, environmental and heritage values, conditions of approval and secondary approvals are addressed in Section 4. This document should be read in conjunction with the approved MDP and addresses only the changes associated with the proposed Minor Variation.

1.3 Why APAM Considers the Proposal a Minor Variation

Section 95 of the Airports Act provides for an airport-lessee company to give the Minister a draft variation of an approved Major Development Plan (MDP) where the proposed variation is of a minor nature.

APAM considers the proposed variation to be of a minor nature because it facilitates delivery of the development approved by the Minister on 10 September 2024 without changing the fundamental purpose, function or aviation outcomes of that development.

The proposed variation arises from progression of the approved Project from concept design to detailed design and construction planning. The proposed changes are confined to refinements of the approved disturbance footprint associated with utility infrastructure, drainage infrastructure, local road alignments, construction access arrangements and other supporting infrastructure that already forms part of the approved Project.

The proposed variation does not seek approval for a different aviation development. It does not involve a new runway, a different runway configuration, changes to the runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP, additional aviation infrastructure intended to accommodate increased passenger, freight or aircraft movements, or different airport capacity outcomes.

In assessing whether the variation is of a minor nature, APAM has considered the proposed changes collectively, taking into account the potential for cumulative impact, rather than as a series of unrelated individual adjustments. Accordingly, this document assesses the revised disturbance footprint as a whole, including:

- Areas proposed to be added to the approved disturbance footprint;
- Areas proposed to be removed from the approved disturbance footprint;
- The resulting net change in disturbance area;
- Environmental and heritage values affected by the revised footprint;
- Consistency with approved impact limits, approval conditions and permit requirements;
- The continued applicability of the assessments contained within the approved MDP; and
- Any changes required to permits, management plans or secondary approvals.

Updated assessments of soils, groundwater and waste, ecology and European heritage have been undertaken to evaluate the revised disturbance footprint. Indigenous cultural heritage is being addressed separately through the amendment to CHMP 16792, as described in Section 4.3.3. These assessments indicate that the proposed variation does not materially alter the overall environmental outcomes of the approved Project. In several instances, the revised disturbance footprint results in reduced impacts compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint.

The ecological assessment demonstrates that the revised disturbance footprint does not result in an overall increase in impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act, when considered across the Project as a whole. While this outcome supports APAM's position that the proposed changes are of a minor nature, APAM's assessment is not based solely on environmental impacts. APAM's position is principally based on the fact that the proposed variation refines aspects of Project delivery without changing the aviation development approved by the Minister, the purpose for which it was approved, or the outcomes it is intended to deliver.

The basis for APAM's Minor Variation assessment is described throughout this document, including the description of the proposed variation, the assessment of revised environmental and heritage impacts, the consideration of approval and permit limits, and the comparison of the proposed variation with the approved Project.

On this basis, APAM considers that the proposal is a variation of a minor nature for the purposes of section 95 of the Airports Act and does not constitute a new or different major airport development.

1.4 Structure of the Minor Variation Document

This Minor Variation document is structured to address the requirements of section 95 of the Airports Act as follows:

- **Section 1 Introduction** – Introduces the approved Project and the proposed Minor Variation, describes the nature of the proposed disturbance footprint refinements, explains why APAM considers the proposal to be a variation of a minor nature for the purposes of section 95 of the Airports Act, and identifies the Project proponent.
- **Section 2 Proposed MDP Minor Variation** – Describes the approved Project, the progression of the Project from concept design to detailed design, the development of the revised disturbance

footprint, the avoidance, mitigation, and offset hierarchy adopted by APAM, the proposed footprint refinements, and the consistency of the proposed Minor Variation with the approved Project.

- **Section 3 Consistency with Legislation and Policy** – Describes the legislative and policy framework applicable to the proposed Minor Variation and demonstrates continued consistency with relevant Commonwealth legislation, the Aviation White Paper, the Melbourne Airport Master Plan, State and local planning considerations and airport approval requirements.
- **Section 4 Assessment of Impacts** – Assesses the environmental and heritage implications of the proposed Minor Variation against the existing Project disturbance footprint, considers whether the proposed changes alter the conclusions of the approved MDP assessments, presents supplementary assessments undertaken for soils, groundwater and waste, ecology and European heritage, and describes the Indigenous cultural heritage assessment being progressed through the amendment to CHMP 16792.
- **Section 5 Minor Variation Consultation and Approval Process** – Describes the consultation and approval process undertaken in support of the proposed Minor Variation, including consultation objectives, consultation activities and submission of the Minor Variation to the Minister.
- **Section 6 Conclusion** – Summarises the outcomes of the Minor Variation assessment and APAM's conclusions regarding the proposed variation.
- **Appendix A: Airports Act Minor Variation and MDP Consistency** – Provides a completed assessment of the proposed Minor Variation against the requirements of section 95 of the Airports Act and demonstrates the basis on which APAM considers the proposal to be a variation of a minor nature.

1.5 Project Proponent

As the Airport Lessee Company under the Airports Act, APAM is the Project proponent.

Contact details for APAM are:

Australia Pacific Airports (Melbourne) Pty Ltd
International Terminal,
Locked Bag 16,
Tullamarine, VIC, 3043

The APAM contact in connection with this proposal is:

Rosie Offord
Head of Planning
Rosie.Offord@melair.com.au

2. Proposed MDP Minor Variation

2.1 Approved MDP and Project Status

The approved MDP provides for the development of a new parallel north-south runway system at Melbourne Airport.

The approved Project includes:

- A new 3,000 metre north-south runway (16R/34L);
- Associated taxiway infrastructure connecting the new runway to the existing airfield;
- Modification of the existing east-west runway (09/27);
- Airfield lighting, navigational aids and supporting aviation infrastructure;
- Drainage infrastructure, utilities and access roads; and
- Construction areas and other supporting works required to construct and operate the new runway system.

The disturbance footprint approved through the MDP represented the maximum extent of potential ground disturbance anticipated for construction and operation of the Project. The approved disturbance footprint was approximately 833 hectares and reflected the concept design available when the MDP was prepared.

Following approval of the MDP, APAM notified the Department on 25 October 2024 of disturbance footprint refinements associated with the Northern Access Road and Arundel Creek Treatment Facility early works packages. Incorporating these refinements, the existing Project disturbance footprint is approximately 836.4 hectares. Figure 1 shows this existing disturbance footprint, which forms the baseline for comparison with the proposed Minor Variation.

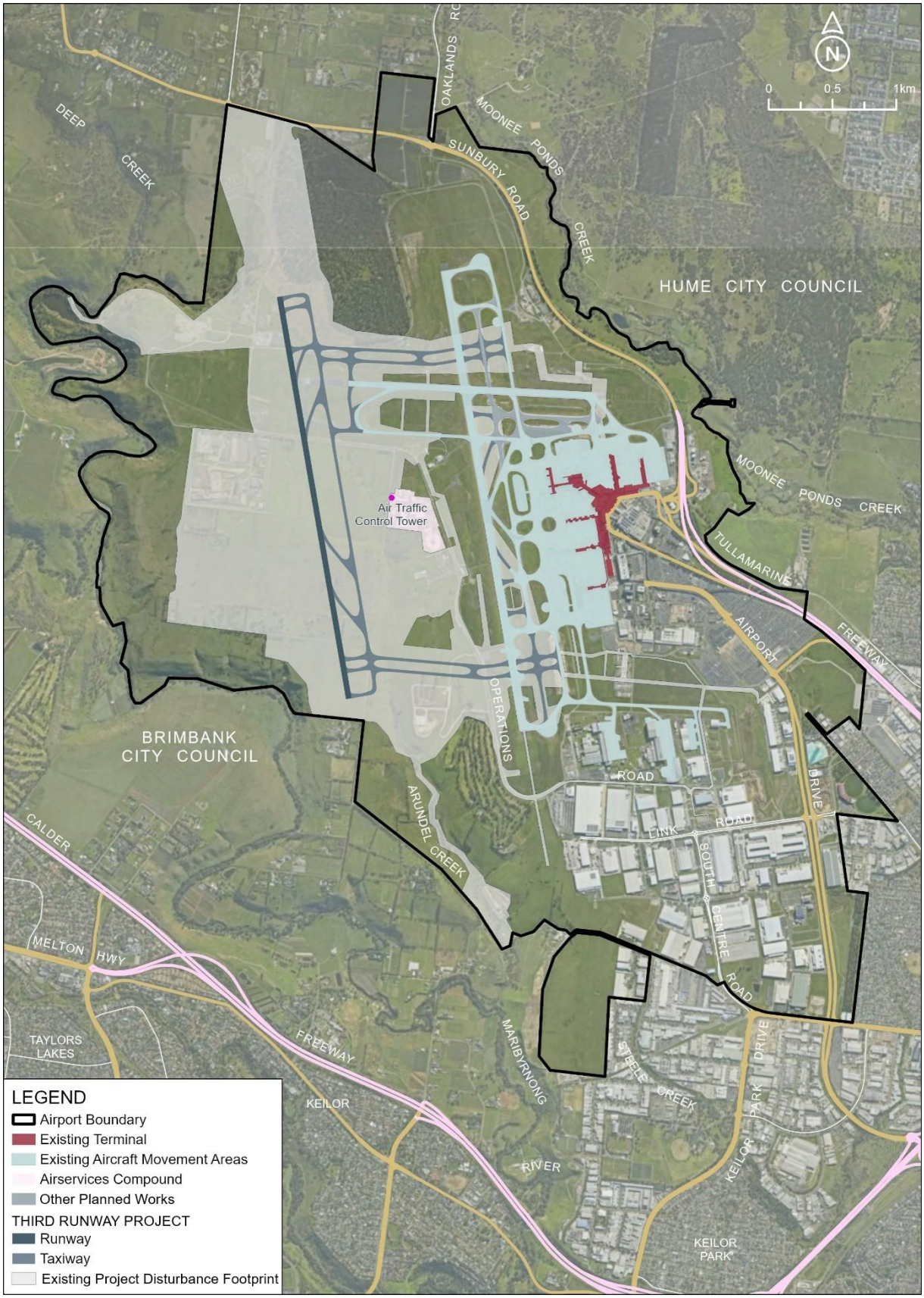

Figure 1 Third Runway Project Disturbance Footprint

2.2 Design Development Following MDP Approval

2.2.1 Preliminary and Early Works Construction and Investigations

The approved Project disturbance footprint was established using the concept design and construction assumptions available at the time the MDP was prepared.

Preliminary works, early works and additional investigations undertaken since approval have substantially increased APAM's understanding of:

- Geotechnical and ground conditions;
- Contamination and PFAS constraints;
- Existing utilities and services;
- Environmental and heritage constraints;
- Drainage and overland flow requirements;
- Construction staging requirements; and
- Operational interfaces with existing airport infrastructure.

These activities have generated additional information regarding ground conditions, existing utilities, environmental and heritage constraints, drainage requirements, construction methodologies and operational interfaces. As detailed design progressed, this information identified a number of locations where infrastructure, work areas and access arrangements could not be accommodated within the existing Project disturbance footprint shown in Figure 1 and refinement of the footprint was therefore required.

2.2.2 Main Works Procurement, Early Contractor Involvement and Detailed Design

Following an Expression of Interest process and Request for Tender, APAM commenced a competitive Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) process for the main works in October 2025.

The ECI process involved two shortlisted proponents and was undertaken to support progression of the Project from concept design towards detailed design and delivery planning. Over a six-month period, the proponents worked collaboratively with APAM and relevant stakeholders to further develop delivery methodologies, construction staging approaches, operational-interface management strategies and value-add initiatives.

The ECI process provided an opportunity to test constructability assumptions, further develop delivery methodologies and identify opportunities for design optimisation. Detailed consideration was also given to operational constraints, environmental management requirements, stakeholder interfaces and construction sequencing.

In parallel with the ECI process, APAM and its design teams continued to progress engineering design across the Project. This included further development of:

- Utility infrastructure and connections;
- Drainage infrastructure and overland flow arrangements;
- Local roads and access routes;
- Temporary works and construction staging;
- Earthworks and materials-management requirements; and
- Interfaces with existing and proposed airport infrastructure.

The ECI process concluded in March 2026 with the submission of detailed commercial, technical and delivery proposals. Following evaluation of the submissions and ECI outcomes, APAM appointed a preferred contractor for delivery of the main works in June 2026.

Detailed design has continued following the preferred contractor's appointment, supported by Safety in Design workshops, Design Readiness workshops and formal design reviews involving APAM and relevant stakeholders. Approximately 25 design packages are expected to progress to around 80 per cent completion by January 2027.

Collectively, the procurement, ECI and design processes have provided a greater level of Project definition than was available when the approved MDP was prepared. This additional detail has confirmed the infrastructure, work areas and access arrangements required to deliver the approved Project and identified locations where these requirements could not reasonably be accommodated within the existing Project disturbance footprint. This has informed the avoidance and minimisation process described in Section 2.3 and the footprint refinements described in Section 2.4.

2.3 Assessment of Overall Project Impact

APAM has sought to refine the approved Project without a net increase in its overall environmental and heritage impacts. The comparison is against the existing Project disturbance footprint.

The proposed revised footprint includes additional disturbance in some locations and avoids disturbance in others. The assessment considers these changes separately for each environmental and heritage matter, taking account of the location, nature and extent of impacts, the condition and value of affected habitat or heritage features, and the effectiveness of proposed management measures. Direct, indirect and consequential impacts are considered where relevant. A reduction in the total disturbance area does not, by itself, demonstrate a reduction in environmental impact, and reductions in one environmental or heritage matter are not assumed to compensate for increases in another.

Accordingly, the proposed revised disturbance footprint was developed using a hierarchy that sought to:

- Avoid and minimise additional impacts wherever reasonably practicable;
- Mitigate impacts that could not reasonably be avoided;
- Identify areas within the existing Project disturbance footprint that are no longer required for Project delivery and protect those areas from disturbance associated with the Project; and
- Assess the cumulative outcome of all additions and reductions to determine the resulting Project impacts.

The proposed Minor Variation must therefore be assessed as a complete package. Consideration of the additional disturbance areas alone would not accurately represent the revised Project outcome because it would not account for areas previously approved for disturbance that are no longer required and will be protected from Project disturbance.

The approach adopted by APAM is shown in Figure 2 and described further below.

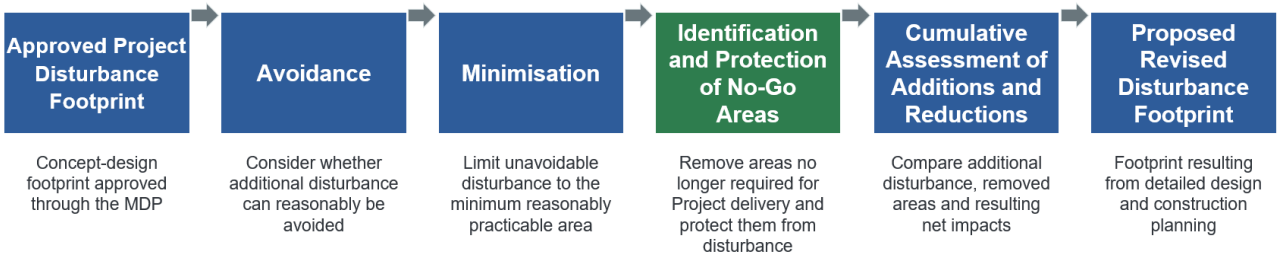

Figure 2 Framework for Assessing Changes in Project Impacts

2.3.1 Avoidance

Prior to proposing any disturbance outside the existing Project disturbance footprint, APAM considered whether the relevant infrastructure, access arrangement or construction activity could reasonably be accommodated within the existing Project disturbance footprint.

This process included consideration of:

- Alternative utility alignments;
- Alternative drainage layouts;
- Alternative access arrangements;
- Alternative construction methodologies;
- Alternative staging approaches; and
- Opportunities to utilise areas already approved for Project disturbance.

Where a reasonably practicable alternative could be implemented within the existing Project disturbance footprint while maintaining safety, constructability, operational performance and compliance requirements, that alternative was preferred.

Where additional disturbance could not reasonably be avoided, APAM further refined infrastructure layouts, work areas and construction methodologies to minimise the extent of disturbance required.

The minimisation process considered:

- The minimum area necessary to construct, operate and maintain the relevant infrastructure;
- Construction and operational safety requirements;
- Temporary and permanent disturbance requirements;
- Environmental and heritage constraints;
- Drainage, utility and earthworks requirements; and
- Opportunities for further refinement as engineering design progressed.

For each proposed footprint refinement, alternatives were considered before the final disturbance footprint was identified.

The resulting footprint refinements are considered to represent the minimum reasonably practicable disturbance required to deliver the approved Project.

2.3.2 Identification and Protection of No-Go Areas

Detailed design has identified areas within the existing Project disturbance footprint that are no longer required for Project delivery. These areas have been removed from the proposed revised disturbance footprint and designated as Project no-go areas.

Along the southern perimeter of the retained Grey Box Woodland, tree removal undertaken to date as part of the Project has stopped at the boundary of the area identified for avoidance, retaining the trees within that area. This retained area contributes to the reduction in treed Grey Box Woodland impacts reported as a result of the revised disturbance footprint in Table 7.

The no-go areas will be protected from disturbance through the Project's design controls, environmental management measures, contractor obligations and construction controls. Adjoining works will be managed in accordance with the applicable environmental management plans, including measures for drainage, erosion and sediment control, weed management and vegetation protection. Any proposed changes affecting the no-go areas will be subject to the Project's formal change-control process and applicable approval requirements.

The no-go areas are not offsets or compensatory measures. They are areas previously approved for disturbance that are no longer required for delivery of the Project and will be protected from Project disturbance.

2.3.3 Assessment of Overall Impact

The proposed revised disturbance footprint comprises:

- Additional disturbance areas identified through detailed design and construction planning;
- Areas removed from the existing Project disturbance footprint; and
- No-go areas that will be protected from disturbance associated with the Project.

Table 1 summarises the overall change in the Project disturbance footprint arising from the proposed Minor Variation.

Table 1 Changes to the Third Runway Project Disturbance Footprint

Footprint	Area (ha)
Approved Project disturbance footprint	Approximately 833 ha

Footprint	Area (ha)
Existing Project disturbance footprint following notified refinements (October 2024)	836.4
Proposed revised Project disturbance footprint	806.0
Net reduction	**30.4**

Compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint incorporating the refinements notified to the Department on 25 October 2024, the proposed Minor Variation reduces the disturbance footprint by approximately 30.4 ha, or 3.6%.

The impact of the proposed Minor Variation has therefore been assessed by comparing the impacts associated with the existing Project disturbance footprint, incorporating the refinements notified to the Department on 25 October 2024, against those associated with the proposed revised disturbance footprint.

This comparison considers:

- Gross impacts associated with additional disturbance areas;
- Impacts avoided through design refinement and minimisation;
- Impacts removed through the protection of no-go areas;
- Proposed mitigations; and
- The resulting net impacts.

Section 2.5 considers whether the proposed refinements remain consistent with the purpose, function and aviation outcomes of the approved Project. Section 4 assesses the changes in environmental and heritage impacts, including local increases, avoided impacts and the continued applicability of the approved assessment conclusions and management measures. These findings collectively inform APAM's assessment of the proposed Minor Variation. The overall conclusion takes account of the findings for each environmental and heritage matter, rather than relying solely on the net change in disturbance area.

2.4 Proposed Footprint Refinements

The proposed Minor Variation incorporates the footprint and supporting infrastructure refinements identified through the design development and avoidance and minimisation processes described in Sections 2.2 and 2.3. These comprise:

- Additional disturbance areas required for Project delivery;
- Areas within the existing Project disturbance footprint that are no longer required and are proposed to be removed;
- Refinements to infrastructure and utilities supporting the Runway 34R Instrument Landing System and the high-voltage electricity network; and
- Omission of the proposed Runway 34R approach lighting system.

The proposed footprint refinements are shown at a whole-of-project scale in Figure 3. Detailed views of the locations where changes to the disturbance footprint are proposed are provided in Figure 4 to Figure 9. The associated infrastructure changes and amendments to the approved MDP are described below.

2.4.1 Utility Infrastructure

Detailed engineering design and utility coordination identified locations where utility infrastructure alignments and associated work areas require refinement to support current and future servicing requirements for the approved Project.

These refinements are necessary to ensure utility infrastructure:

- Provides the required servicing function;

- Interfaces appropriately with existing and future airport infrastructure;
- Can be safely constructed, accessed and maintained; and
- Responds to site conditions confirmed through investigations and detailed design.

Runway 34R Instrument Landing System

The proposed Minor Variation expressly identifies infrastructure and utilities supporting an Instrument Landing System (ILS) for existing Runway 34R. Accordingly, the following text supplements the Instrument Landing System provisions in Section A4.12.1.2 of the approved MDP:

"The Project also includes infrastructure and utilities to support an Instrument Landing System (ILS) for existing Runway 34R. The associated utility alignments and work areas are included in the revised Project disturbance footprint."

High-voltage electricity network

The high-voltage (HV) electricity network supporting the Project has been refined through detailed design. Figure 10 of this Minor Variation replaces Figure A4.8 of the approved MDP and shows the revised network layout, identifying the changes from the previously assessed layout and their relationship to the proposed revised disturbance footprint.

The works associated with these network changes are contained within the proposed revised disturbance footprint described and assessed in this Minor Variation.

2.4.2 Drainage Infrastructure

Further hydraulic modelling and detailed drainage design identified locations where drainage infrastructure and associated work areas required refinement.

The proposed drainage refinements are intended to:

- Improve runoff management;
- Improve overland flow performance;
- Support constructability outcomes; and
- Facilitate operation of the approved Project.

2.4.3 Roads and Access

Detailed delivery planning and contractor engagement identified locations where local roads, temporary access arrangements and construction access requirements differ from those assumed at concept design stage.

The proposed refinements are required to:

- Maintain safe and continuous access to construction areas;
- Maintain access to operational infrastructure;
- Support construction staging requirements; and
- Facilitate efficient delivery of the approved Project.

2.4.4 Runway 34R Approach Lighting

The approved MDP identified that a new 720-metre approach lighting system for Runway 34R may be provided, subject to further assessment. This proposed system will not be constructed and is omitted from the Project scope.

Accordingly, the following provision in Section A4.9.1 of the approved MDP no longer forms part of the Project:

"A new 720 metre approach lighting system for existing runway 34R may be provided (subject to further assessment)."

The other approach lighting provisions in Section A4.9.1 of the MDP remain unchanged.

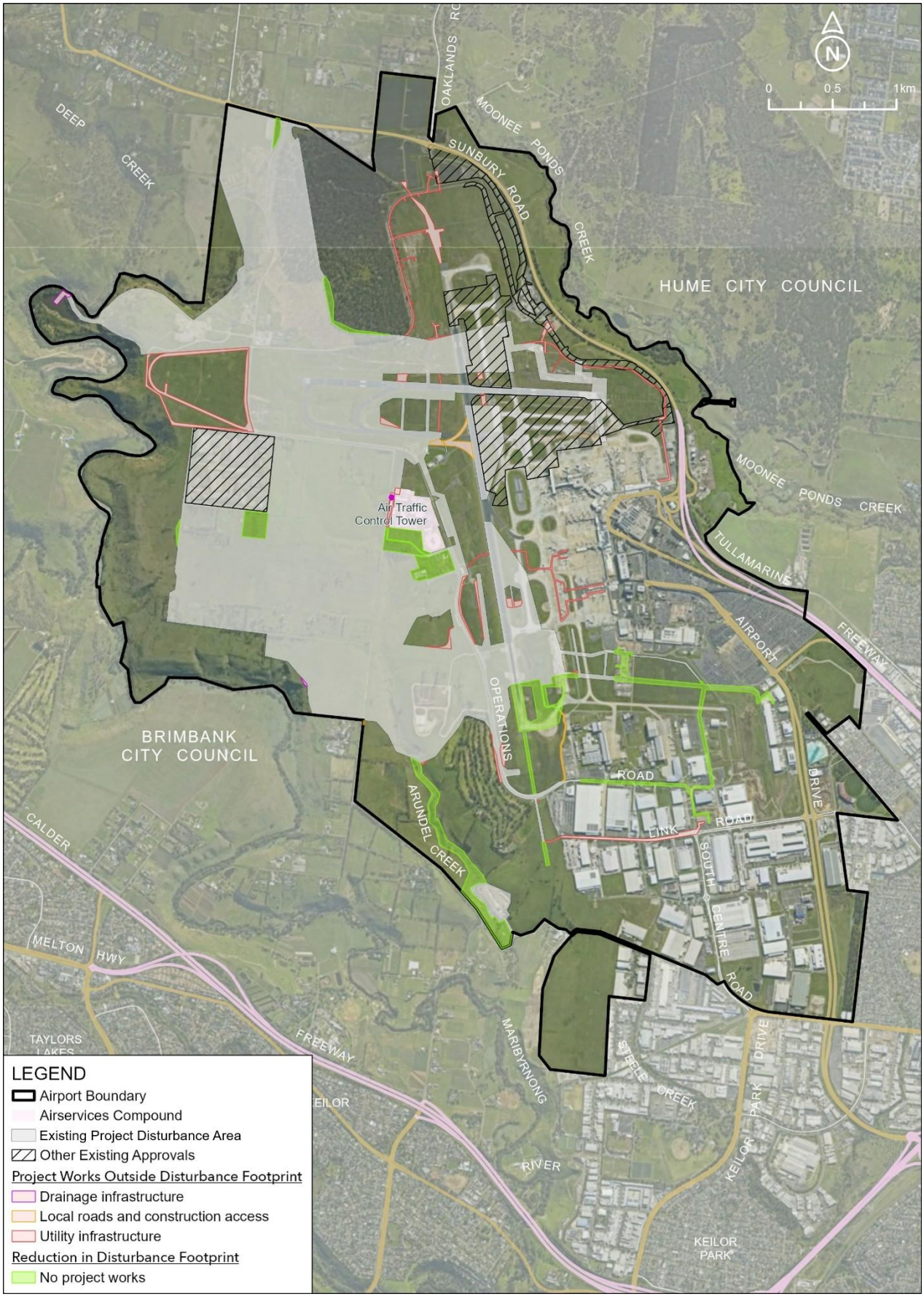

Figure 3 Proposed Minor Variation to Disturbance Footprint

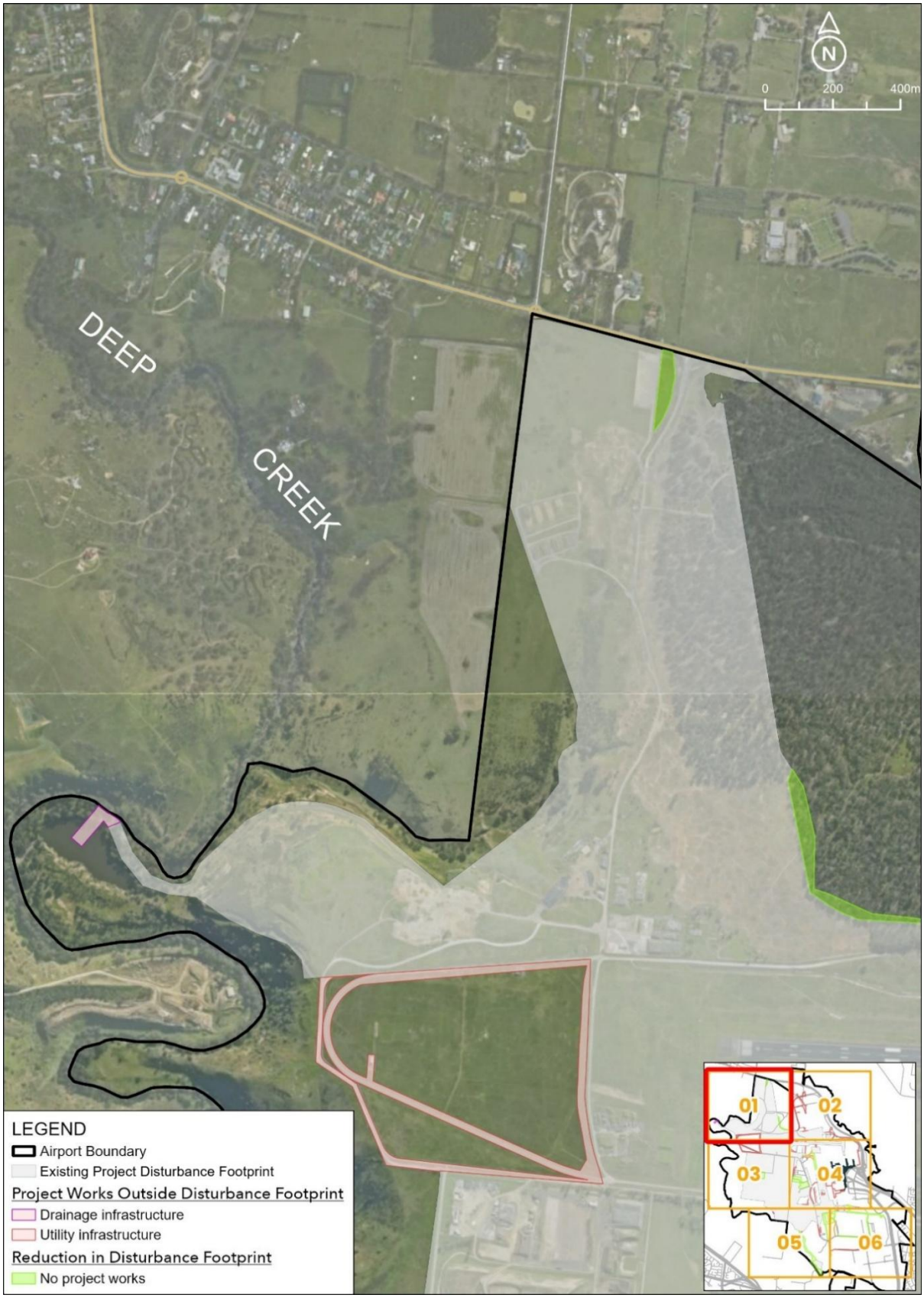

Figure 4 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint – Detail 1

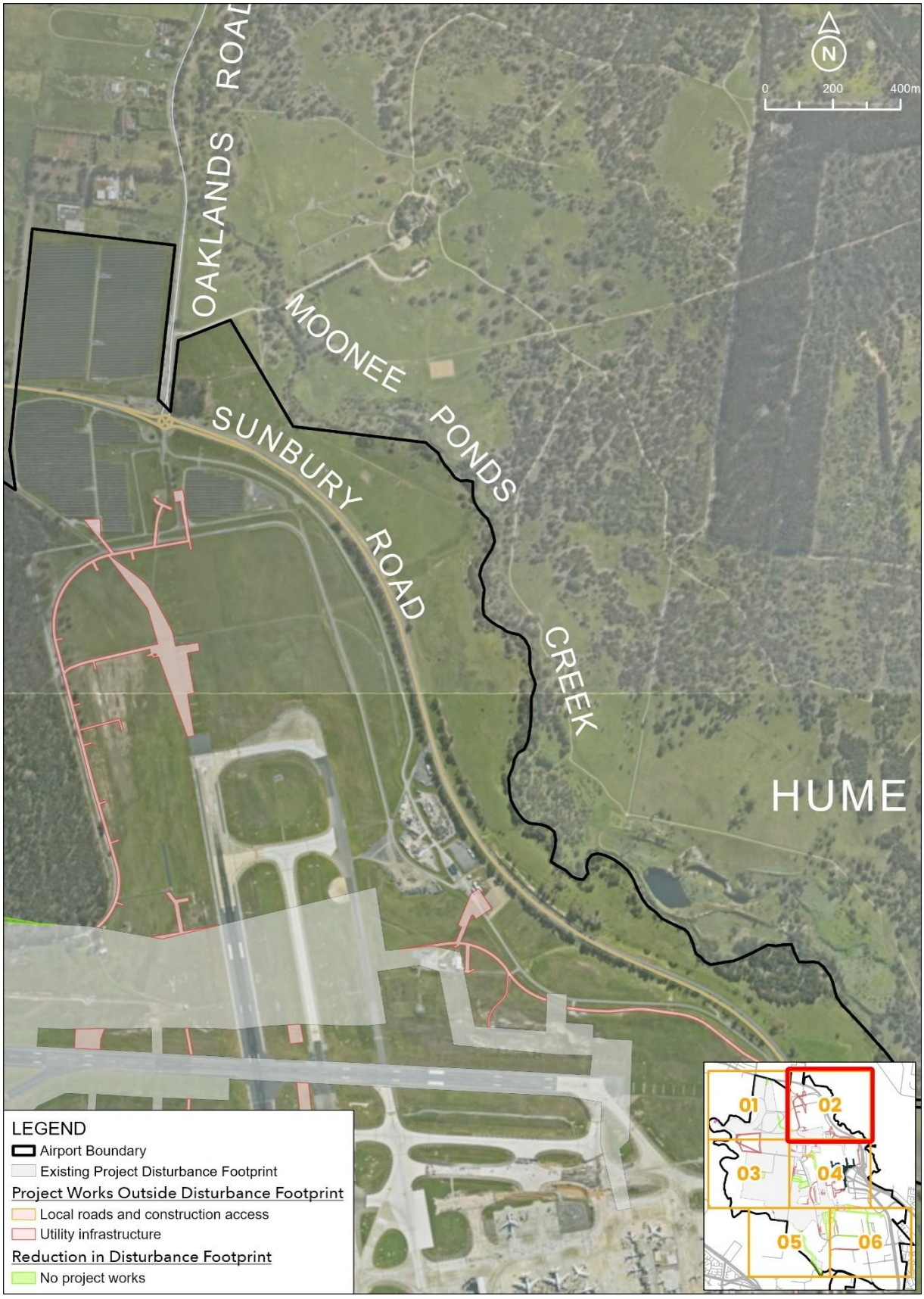

Figure 5 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint – Detail 2

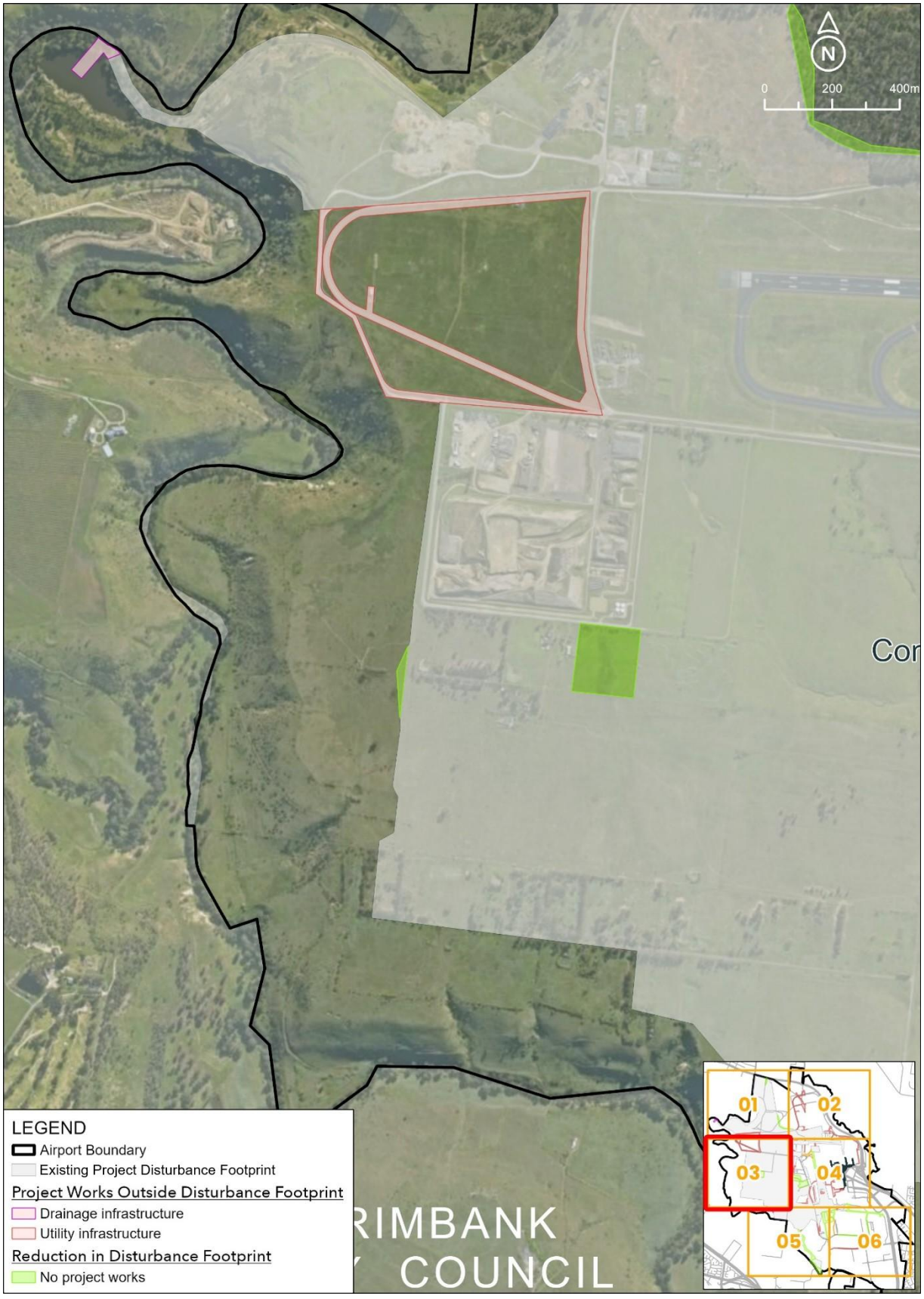

Figure 6 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint – Detail 3



Figure 7 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint – Detail 4



Figure 8 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint – Detail 5



Figure 9 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint – Detail 6



Figure 10 Revised High-voltage Electricity Network

The footprint and supporting infrastructure refinements described above collectively comprise the proposed Minor Variation. Their consistency with the approved Project is considered in Section 2.5. The environmental and heritage implications of the revised disturbance footprint are assessed in Section 4.

2.5 Consistency with the Approved Project

The proposed Minor Variation modifies the approved disturbance footprint but does not alter the approved aviation development.

The footprint refinements described in this section have been considered cumulatively to determine whether they alter the purpose, function, scale, runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP or outcomes of the approved Project. This assessment recognises that the revised disturbance footprint incorporates both additional disturbance areas identified through detailed design and construction planning and areas that have been removed from the existing Project disturbance footprint and protected as no-go areas.

The assessment demonstrates that progression of the Project from concept design to detailed design has refined aspects of the disturbance footprint, construction methodology and supporting infrastructure. However, those refinements do not change the aviation development approved by the Minister on 10 September 2024.

Table 2 compares the approved Project with the revised Project incorporating the proposed Minor Variation.

Table 2 Consistency with the Approved Third Runway Project

Approved MDP Element	**Effect of Minor Variation**
Project purpose and strategic need	Unchanged
Runway configuration	Unchanged
Taxiway system and operational function	Unchanged
Airport capacity outcomes	Unchanged
Operational concept	No change is proposed by the Minor Variation to the runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP. Future runway operations remain subject to the Noise Sharing and Airspace Concept Plan required under Condition 3.1 of the MDP Conditions of Approval.
Airspace architecture	Unchanged
Aircraft noise assessment assumptions	Unchanged
Aviation outcomes	Unchanged
Utilities, drainage, roads and access infrastructure	Refined through detailed design
Construction methodology and staging	Refined through detailed design and construction planning
Disturbance footprint	Revised through the additions and reductions described in this document

The proposed footprint refinements are confined to detailed design and delivery of infrastructure and activities already forming part of the approved Project. The proposed variation therefore changes aspects of how the approved Project will be delivered on the ground but does not change the development that was approved by the Minister. Accordingly, APAM considers that the proposed Minor Variation facilitates delivery of the approved Project rather than constituting a new or substantially different major airport development requiring a separate approval process.

3. Consistency with Legislation and Policy

The approved MDP demonstrated consistency with applicable Commonwealth legislation, the Melbourne Airport Master Plan and relevant planning and approval frameworks. The proposed Minor Variation does not alter the approved purpose, function or aviation outcomes of the Project and continues to operate within the same legislative and policy framework assessed through the approved MDP.

The following sections describe the legislation, policies and approvals relevant to the proposed Minor Variation and demonstrate the continued consistency of the Project with those frameworks.

3.1 Commonwealth Legislation

The approved MDP demonstrated consistency with the applicable Commonwealth legislative and approvals framework, and the proposed Minor Variation builds on that assessment, taking account of the proposed Project refinements and changes to relevant legislation since the MDP was approved.

The Third Runway Project remains subject to the airport environmental requirements established under the Airports Act, including the *Airports (Environment Protection) Regulations 2026* and their transitional arrangements, and the Airport Environment Strategy forming part of the approved Melbourne Airport Master Plan. These requirements address pollution, ground-based noise, native habitat and species, and heritage.

The environmental assessments and management commitments established through the approved MDP remain the basis for addressing these matters. Table 4 and Section 4 consider whether the proposed refinements affect the original assessment assumptions, impacts or conclusions, and identify supplementary assessment and management measures where required.

APAM is seeking approval of the proposed variation under section 95 of the Airports Act. Section 95 provides a mechanism through which an approved MDP may be varied where the variation is of a minor nature. This document has been prepared to support APAM's application under that provision and should be read in conjunction with the approved MDP.

As described in Sections 1 and 2, the proposed Minor Variation incorporates refinements to the approved disturbance footprint and supporting infrastructure arising from detailed design and construction planning.

As the Project is located on Commonwealth land, it is also subject to the EPBC Act. An EPBC Act Part 13 Permit (E2024/0235) was issued for the approved Project on 21 January 2025 which established conditions relating to the management of Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES) and other protected matters. A Variation of Conditions attached to Part 13 Permit (E2024/0235) was subsequently applied for by APAM and decided by the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) on 11 September 2026 which clarified the timing of indirect offsets.

The Part 13 Permit establishes clearance limits for specified threatened species and ecological communities. APAM proposes to retain the existing clearance limits and seek any amendments required to align the permit footprint maps and associated provisions with the revised Project disturbance footprint. Corresponding amendments will also be sought to the impact-area maps and associated provisions of the Third Runway Major Development Plan – Melbourne Airport – Conditions of Approval. The timing and sequencing of these processes will be progressed in consultation with DITRDCSA and NEPA. The existing clearance limits in Conditions 7.9(b)–(f) of the MDP Conditions of Approval are proposed to be retained.

The proposed Minor Variation has been assessed against the MDP Conditions of Approval, the Part 13 Permit and other applicable approval instruments. The assessment demonstrates that the proposed variation remains capable of being delivered within the regulatory framework established for the Project.

A detailed assessment of consistency with section 95 of the Airports Act is provided in Appendix A. Assessment of impacts to MNES and other protected matters is provided in Section 4.

3.2 Aviation White Paper

The Aviation White Paper: Towards 2050, published in August 2024, sets out the Australian Government's vision for Australia's aviation sector. It includes a range of policy initiatives relevant to airport planning, environmental management, community engagement, accessibility and aviation safeguarding. The White Paper identifies additional planning considerations for airport Master Plans and MDPs, including climate resilience, decarbonisation, disability access, community consultation, General Aviation access and aircraft noise management.

Table 3 summarises how the Project responds to the matters identified in the Aviation White Paper and relevant airport planning considerations as the MDP was approved prior to the Aviation White Paper's publication.

Table 3 Third Runway Project Alignment with Aviation White Paper: Towards 2050

Consideration	Relevance	Response
Climate resilience	Relevant	The Project incorporates extensive drainage, flood mitigation and stormwater infrastructure and has been assessed against climate change and natural hazard risks. The Project has also been designed to improve the resilience and reliability of Melbourne Airport's runway system under future operating conditions.
Decarbonisation	Relevant	The Project supports efficient airfield operations through a modern parallel runway system that reduces operational constraints and inefficiencies. Sustainability objectives and greenhouse gas assessments form part of the approved MDP.
Disability Access	Relevant	The Project represents airfield infrastructure and is not a passenger-facing development. The Project does not alter public terminal facilities or public-access areas.
Community Consultation	Relevant	The Project has been subject to extensive consultation through the MDP process, including engagement with government agencies, industry stakeholders, local councils, community groups and airport users. Consultation on the proposed Minor Variation will continue in accordance with the Airports Act requirements and APAM's established engagement framework.
First Nations Engagement and Heritage	Relevant	The Project is being delivered in accordance with approved Cultural Heritage Management Plans and Melbourne Airport's broader cultural heritage management framework. Assessment and management of Indigenous cultural heritage remain integral components of Project delivery.
General Aviation Access	Relevant	The Project is specifically intended to increase airport capacity, improve operational efficiency and support future aviation growth. The Project does not restrict General Aviation access and will provide additional runway capacity for the airport's aviation users.
Noise Mitigation and Noise Sharing	Relevant	Aircraft noise impacts and runway operating arrangements were comprehensively assessed through the approved MDP. The Project includes a Draft Runway Operating Plan and

Consideration	Relevance	Response
		detailed aircraft noise assessment, which considered future runway operations and associated noise outcomes.
Aviation Capacity and Network Resilience	Highly Relevant	The Project is intended to increase runway capacity, improve operational resilience and reduce network constraints at Melbourne Airport. The Project supports the long-term capacity and connectivity objectives identified in the Aviation White Paper.

The Project has been assessed having regard to the airport planning considerations identified in the Aviation White Paper. APAM considers that the Project appropriately addresses the matters relevant to its scale and nature, including climate resilience, decarbonisation, accessibility, consultation, First Nations engagement, General Aviation access and aircraft noise management, while supporting the long-term capacity, resilience and efficient operation of Melbourne Airport's airfield infrastructure.

3.3 Airport Master Plan

The MDP for the Third Runway Project was approved on 10 September 2024, when the Melbourne Airport Master Plan 2022 (Master Plan 2022) was in effect. The Project is entirely consistent with the Master Plan 2022, and it is explicitly listed as a fundamental element of the Airside Development Plan. The Preliminary Draft Melbourne Airport Master Plan 2027 (Master Plan 2027) reiterates the development of the Third Runway Project as a key element of the Airside Plan.

The proposed variation aligns with the Airside Development Plan contained in Master Plan 2022 and the Airside Plan contained in Master Plan 2027.

In Master Plan 2022, Section 9.2.1.5 states the main elements of the Third Runway Project to be delivered:

- A 3,000 metre north-south runway (16R/34L), with a 200 metre starter extension at the southern end;
- Modification of the existing east-west runway (09/27), including shortening the western end by approximately 346 metres; and
- Taxiway infrastructure on the new 3,000 metre north-south runway (16R/34L) and connecting to the existing north-south runway.

In Master Plan 2027, Section 13.2.1 states the main elements of the Third Runway Project to be delivered, which are as per Master Plan 2022, but with the following modifications:

- A 3,000 metre north-south runway (16R/34L), with a 180 metre starter extension at the southern end;
- Modification of the existing east-west runway (09/27), including shortening the western end by approximately 346 metres and following the inclusion of Condition 1.1 of the MDP approval, an eastern extension of 345 metres. Approval of the eastern extension is to occur through a separate Eastern Extension Project MDP; and
- Additional taxiway infrastructure for the Eastern Extension Project.

The proposed Minor Variation does not alter the airfield development identified in either Master Plan. The proposed changes relate to refinements of the approved disturbance footprint and do not affect the runway, taxiway or aviation infrastructure outcomes contemplated by Master Plan 2022 or Master Plan 2027.

The proposed Minor Variation is consistent with both Master Plan 2022 and the proposed Master Plan 2027 as the refinements to the disturbance footprint do not alter the fundamental nature, purpose or operational outcomes of the Project as previously approved.

3.4 State and Local Government Planning

The proposed Minor Variation does not alter the consistency of the approved Project with the State and local government planning frameworks considered through the approved MDP process.

The proposed Minor Variation remains consistent with the State and local planning considerations assessed as part of the approved MDP.

3.5 Airport Development and Building Approvals

The Project is subject to Airport Lessee Consent from APAM and a Building Approval from the appointed Airport Building Controller (ABC).

Building Approval cannot be issued by the ABC without written consent from APAM, confirming that the new development is consistent with:

- Master Plan 2022 or, if approved at the time of Building Approval, Master Plan 2027;
- Planning objectives for the airport; and
- An approved MDP (including any approved Minor Variation/s).

4. Assessment of Impacts

4.1 Overview

This section assesses the environmental and heritage implications of the proposed Minor Variation against the existing Project disturbance footprint and considers whether the proposed changes alter the assumptions, impact pathways, management measures or conclusions of the approved MDP assessments.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether the proposed disturbance footprint refinements alter the conclusions of the approved MDP, require supplementary assessment or result in the need for additional management measures.

For each environmental and heritage matter, the assessment considers direct impacts associated with the revised disturbance footprint and any indirect or consequential impacts that may arise from the proposed works. It also considers impacts avoided through removal of areas from the existing footprint and the protection of Project no-go areas. The assessment does not assume that the overall reduction in disturbance area, or a reduction in one environmental value, compensates for an increase in another.

The approved MDP remains the primary assessment document for the Project. Supplementary assessment has only been undertaken where the proposed disturbance footprint refinements have the potential to alter assumptions, impacts, proposed mitigations, or conclusions reached through the approved MDP assessment process.

4.2 Approved MDP Assessments

The approved MDP contains a comprehensive assessment of the environmental, social, operational and aviation impacts associated with construction and operation of the Third Runway Project. The proposed Minor Variation does not replace or supersede those assessments. Rather, it considers whether the revised disturbance footprint alters the assumptions, impact pathways, impact outcomes, required mitigations, or conclusions of the approved MDP.

APAM reviewed each assessment contained within the approved MDP to determine whether it remains applicable to the revised disturbance footprint or whether supplementary assessment was required. Where the approved assessment remained applicable, it continues to form part of the basis for assessment of the Project. Where the revised disturbance footprint had the potential to alter approved assessment conclusions, supplementary assessment has been undertaken.

Table 4 summarises the relationship between the approved MDP assessments and the proposed Minor Variation. It identifies those assessments that remain applicable and those matters addressed through supplementary assessment.

Table 4 Relationship Between Approved MDP Assessments and the Proposed Minor Variation

MDP Chapter	Minor Variation Comparison
Chapter A1: The Project - Introduction	The Third Runway Project was approved consistent with Master Plan 2022. The proposed Minor Variation remains consistent with Master Plan 2022. As described in Section 3.3, the proposed Minor Variation also remains consistent with the proposed Master Plan 2027.
Chapter A2: Need for the Project	The Minor Variation does not impact or vary the need for the Project.
Chapter A3: Options and Alternatives	The Minor Variation does not impact or vary the options and alternatives considered.
Chapter A4: Project Description	The Minor Variation updates the Project description to: • Expressly identify infrastructure and utilities supporting the Instrument Landing System (ILS) for existing Runway 34R;

MDP Chapter	Minor Variation Comparison
	• Omit the proposed High Intensity Approach Lighting System (HIAL) for Runway 34R; and • Revise the high-voltage electricity network layout, including replacement of Figure A4.8 in the approved MDP, superseding it with Figure 10 in this Minor Variation. The changes and associated amendments to the approved MDP are set out in Section 2.4.
Chapter A5: Project Construction	The Minor Variation will change the disturbance footprint outlined in the approved MDP (Figure A5.1). The Minor Variation maintains consistency with the construction methodology, phases and proposed delivery of the Project.
Chapter A6: Stakeholder Engagement	The Minor Variation maintains consistency with applicable consultation and approval requirements.
Chapter A7: Sustainability Framework	The Minor Variation maintains consistency with the applicable sustainability framework.
Chapter A8: Assessment and Approvals Process	The Minor Variation does not alter the overall assessment and approvals framework. Any required changes to relevant approval instruments are addressed in Section 3.1.
Chapter B1: Airport - Introduction	The Minor Variation does not impact or vary the 'Airport – Introduction' chapter.
Chapter B2: Land Use and Planning	The Minor Variation maintains consistency with the 'Land Use and Planning' chapter.
Chapter B3: Soils, Groundwater and Waste	The Minor Variation maintains consistency with APAM's environmental management governance and the mitigation and management measures already deployed or proposed for the Project. See section 4.3.1.
Chapter B4: Surface Water and Erosion	The Minor Variation incorporates drainage refinements informed by further hydraulic modelling and detailed design, as described in Section 2.4.2. These refinements remain consistent with the surface-water and erosion impacts assessed in the approved MDP. The assessment conclusions and associated management measures remain applicable, including implementation of the Sediment and Erosion Control Management Plan.
Chapter B5: Ecology	The Minor Variation results in an overall reduction in impacts to EPBC Act-listed threatened ecological communities and listed species habitat, although some localised impacts increase. See Section 4.3.2.
Chapter B6: Indigenous Cultural Heritage	The Minor Variation will be addressed via amendment of Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) 16792. The amendment process includes additional survey, impact assessment and identification of any additional avoidance, management and mitigation measures required in consultation and agreement with the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP).

MDP Chapter	Minor Variation Comparison
	Works within additional areas requiring inclusion in the CHMP will not proceed until the amendment process has been completed and applicable requirements are in place. Any additional avoidance, management and mitigation measures identified through the amendment process will be implemented as required.
Chapter B7: European Heritage	The Minor Variation assessment addresses proposed works adjacent to, or intersecting with, three historical places previously considered in the approved MDP. Additional impact assessment has been conducted and mitigation and management measures have been recommended and will be implemented to manage historical sites relative to the proposed works. See Section 4.3.4.
Chapter B8: Surface Transport	The Minor Variation does not materially change the external construction access points, haul routes or peak construction traffic volumes assessed in the approved MDP. The conclusions of the surface transport assessment and associated traffic management measures remain applicable.
Chapter B9: Ground-based Noise and Vibration	The Minor Variation maintains consistency with the types of construction activities, plant and working hours considered in the approved MDP assessment. The conclusions of the construction noise and vibration assessment remain applicable, together with the measures implemented through the Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan.
Chapter B10: Air Quality	The Minor Variation remains within the material-handling quantities, haul-road activity and exposed-ground assumptions adopted in the approved MDP construction air quality assessment. The assessment conclusions remain applicable, together with the dust management measures implemented through the approved Construction Environmental Management Plan.
Chapter B11: Greenhouse Gas Emissions	The Minor Variation maintains consistency with Melbourne Airport's commitments relative to greenhouse gas emissions related to construction and operation.
Chapter B12: Landscape and Visual Amenity	The Minor Variation maintains consistency with APAM's environmental management governance and the mitigation and management measures already deployed for the Project. The Minor Variation will result in a reduction in the extent of Natural Temperate Grassland and the Grey Box Woodland impacted.
Chapter B13: Climate Change and Natural Hazard Risk	The Minor Variation does not change the Climate Change and Natural Hazard risk assessment.
Chapter C1: Airspace – Introduction	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Airspace – Introduction' chapter.
Chapter C2: Airspace Architecture and Capacity	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Airspace Architecture and Capacity' chapter.

MDP Chapter	Minor Variation Comparison
Chapter C3: Aircraft Noise Modelling Methodology	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Aircraft Noise Modelling Methodology' chapter.
Chapter C4: Aircraft Noise and Vibration	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Aircraft Noise and Vibration' chapter.
Chapter C5: Airspace Hazards and Risks	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Airspace Hazards and Risks' chapter.
Chapter D1: Community – Introduction	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Community – Introduction' chapter.
Chapter D2: Economic Impact Assessment	The Minor Variation does not impact the Economic Impact Assessment chapter.
Chapter D3: Health Impact	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Health Impact' chapter.
Chapter D4: Social Impact	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Social Impact' chapter.
Chapter E1: Management Framework – Introduction	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Management Framework – Introduction' chapter.
Chapter E2: Environmental Management Framework	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Environmental Management Framework' chapter.
Chapter E3: Offset Management Framework	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Offset Management Framework' chapter.
Chapter E4: Draft Runway Operating Plan	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Draft Runway Operating Plan'.
Chapter E5: Risk Management	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Risk Management' chapter.
Chapter E6: Summary Commitments and Conclusion	The Minor Variation does not impact the 'Summary Commitments and Conclusion' chapter.

4.3 Updates to Impact Assessments

APAM identified aspects requiring additional assessment for the proposed Minor Variation through consideration of the approved MDP impact assessments, the proposed changes, and a review of available information. This section describes the outcomes of additional assessments and related approvals processes determined to be required for the following aspects as a result of the proposed Minor Variation:

- Soils, Groundwater and Waste
- Ecology
- Indigenous Cultural Heritage

- European Heritage

4.3.1 Soils, Groundwater and Waste

The inclusion of the additional areas within the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint is not expected to materially alter the existing soils and groundwater impact assessment or associated risk profile. These additional minor areas are located within the Airport Boundary and have been subject to previous contamination investigations, including per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) assessments. The existing characterisation of site conditions, including geology, hydrogeology, land use history, Areas of Environmental Concern (AECs), Contaminants of Potential Concern (CoPCs) and the Conceptual Site Model (CSM), remain applicable and consistent with those in the approved MDP. The Human Health and Environmental Risk Assessment (HHERA) was undertaken on an estate-wide basis including areas within the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint. The HHERA concluded that associated on-site and off-site human health risks were low and acceptable.

One AEC (*AEC 20 – Former Oaklands Road*) was not intersected by the original disturbance footprint but is now within the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint. AEC 20 was previously identified in Table B3.2 of the approved MDP (replicated below in Table 5). CoPCs associated with AEC 20 include metals and petroleum hydrocarbons, which is consistent with the CoPCs outlined in Table B3.4 of the approved MDP. The HHERA identifies AEC 20 as a low-risk area with the potential to cause localised soil contamination below adopted threshold limits.

The CoPCs associated with AEC 20 have therefore already been considered within the approved MDP assessment framework and do not introduce contaminants or risks outside those previously assessed for the Project. Soils encountered during construction of the Project will continue to be managed through the implementation of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and associated Contaminated Land and Groundwater Management Plan (CLGMP), which include measures to avoid or minimise potential contamination risks during construction, including implementation of contingency procedures for the management of unexpected contamination.

Both the CEMP and CLGMP have been endorsed by the Independent Environmental Assessor (IEA) for the Project pursuant to Condition 7.2 of the MDP Conditions of Approval. The Main Works CEMP has been approved by a DAR SES Officer pursuant to Conditions 7.3(c) and 7.25 of the MDP Conditions of Approval, while the CLGMP has been approved by the Airport Environment Officer (AEO) pursuant to Condition 7.3(d) and Attachment C of the MDP Conditions of Approval.

The proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint relative to AECs described in Table 5 is shown in Figure 11. The proposed excavation depths of the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint are consistent with those considered in the approved MDP. Although groundwater is unlikely to be intersected, there is the potential to intersect perched groundwater. This scenario has therefore already been considered within the existing assessment frameworks and continues to be managed through the implementation of the CEMP and associated CLGMP, which include measures to manage contaminated water from dewatering activities, including implementation of Dewatering Plans if necessary.

Areas removed from the existing Project disturbance footprint were assessed with respect to potential PFAS source areas. The proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint relative to Perfluorooctanesulfonic Acid (PFOS) and Perfluorohexanesulfonic Acid (PFHxS) concentrations in soil (near surface) is shown in Figure 12. The proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint removes proposed disturbance areas near the Airservices Learning Academy Training Ground (AEC 34) and the Airservices Smoke Hut Training Ground (AEC 35) which are identified as PFAS source areas. As a result, the proposed Minor Variation reduces the Project's interaction with known or potential PFAS source areas and PFAS contamination will continue to be managed through the implementation of the CEMP, CLGMP and PFAS Management Plan.

No change is anticipated to the potential waste streams or waste sources associated with construction activities.

Table 5 Areas of Environmental Concern

AEC	Details	AEC	Details
1	Former landfill	21	Former construction/laydown area associated with original airport development
2	Former incinerator site	22	Stockpiled materials (2018–2019)
3	Demolished and dilapidated buildings	23	Radar and diesel above-ground storage tank
4	Waste dumps	24	Above-ground storage tank and former underground storage tank
5	Disturbed ground and infilled land	25	Construction compound/laydown area
6	Vehicle maintenance	26	Residential property, historically agricultural and currently storing equipment associated with carnival/showground equipment and rides
7	Activities associated with former hobby farms, horse agistment and kennels	27	Temporary construction compounds/infrastructure (various locations)
8	Runway and fill beneath runway	28	Infilled dams
9	Settlement ponds (runway/asphalt works waste management)	29	Former Fire Training Ground infrastructure and props
10	Disused quarry	30	Burn scars visible in 1982 aerial image around former Fire Training Ground infrastructure
11	Former Fire Training Ground	31	Airservices Australia stockpiled PFAS-contaminated soil
12	Evaporation pond	32	Current Fire Training Ground infrastructure, operational (kerosene, generator and holding tanks for wastewater)
13	Current Fire Training Ground	33	Melbourne Airport Fire Station
14	Above-ground storage tank and fuel line to current Fire Training Ground (kerosene)	34	Learning academy
15	Construction laydown, stockpiling, asphalt batching and equipment storage (multiple users/uses)	35	Smoke Hut and former training areas to the south of the Smoke Hut
16	Concrete crushing and recycled materials processing	36	Satellite Fire Station
17	Former communications tower complex west of the Grey Box Woodland	37	Melbourne Airport golf course
18	Former communications tower complex within the Grey Box Woodland	38	Aviation maintenance areas (various users/tenants)
19	Former Bulla Road	39	Joint User Hydrant Installation

AEC	Details	AEC	Details
20	Former Oaklands Road	40	Temporary PFAS soil stockpile/storage area

An updated assessment for soils, groundwater and waste impacts for the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint has been undertaken and is summarised in Table 6.

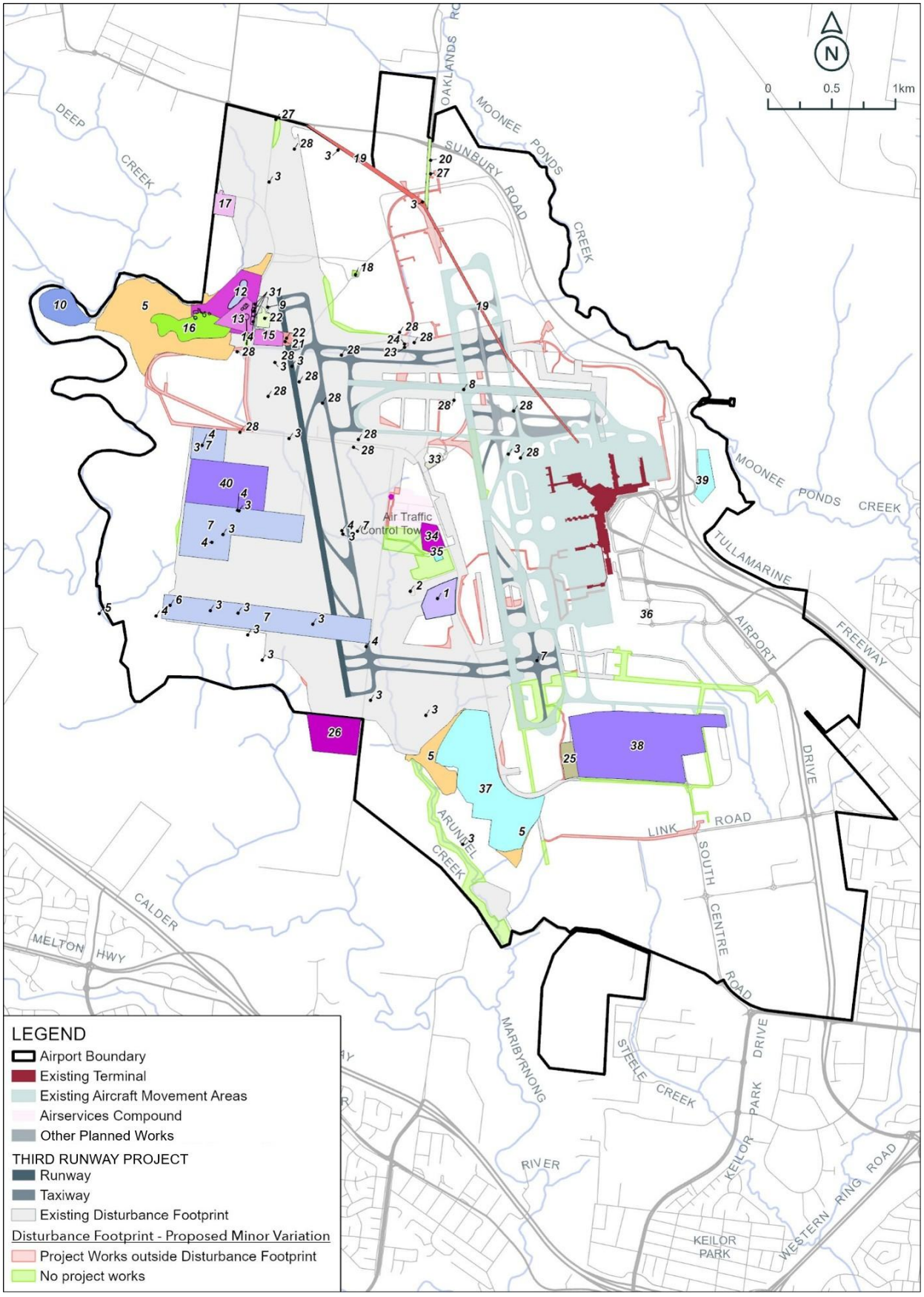

Figure 11 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint and Areas of Environmental Concern

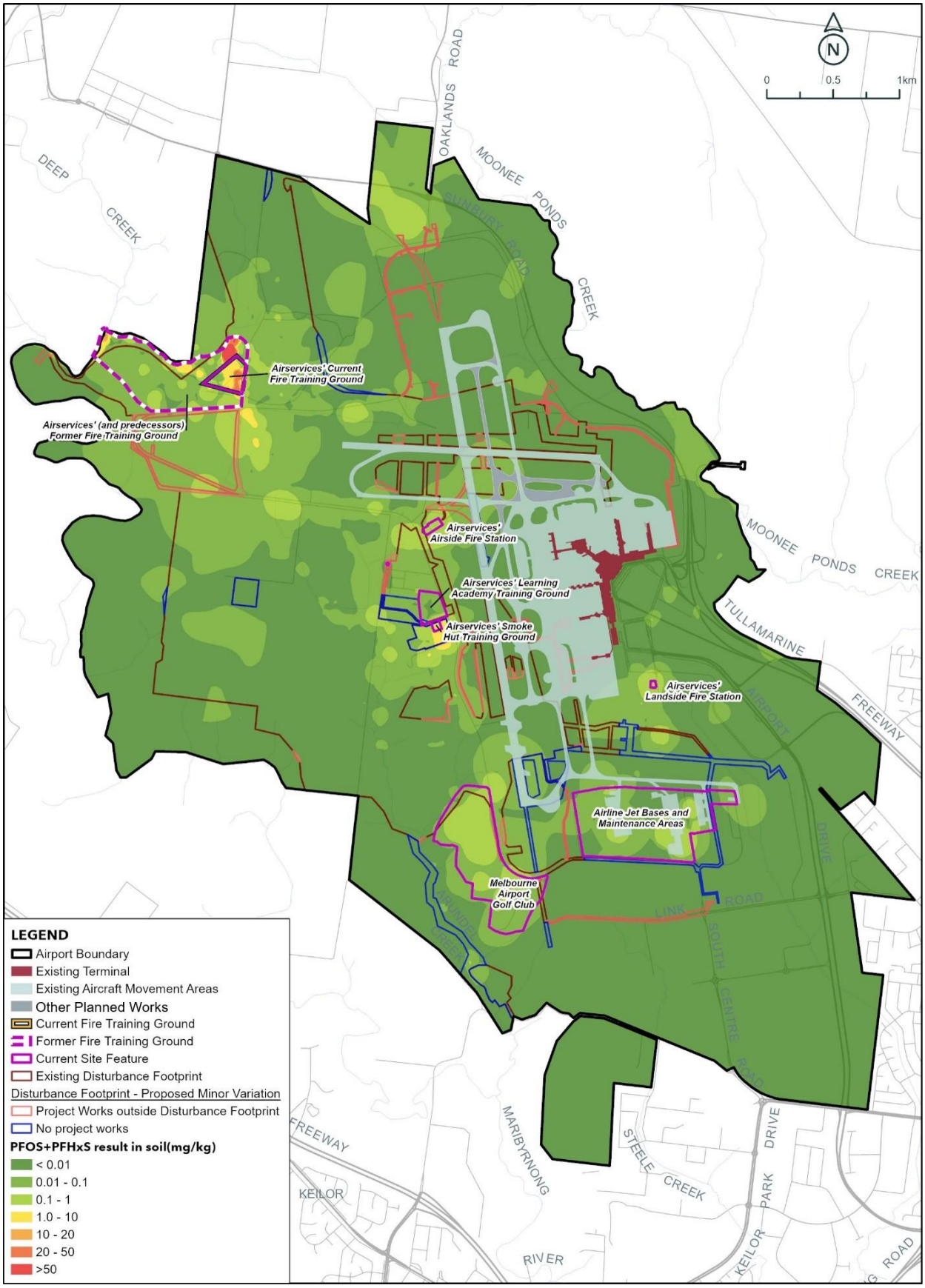

Figure 12 Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint and Concentration Map of PFOS+PFHxS Total Concentrations in Soil (Near Surface)

Table 6 Updated Impact Assessment – Soils, Groundwater and Waste

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of minor variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
Disturbance/removal of PFAS contaminated soils and sediment	The majority of the Project site contains PFAS impacted soils and sediments above ecological investigation levels. The Project works are likely to require excavation of key source areas which also contain impacts above human health investigation levels (e.g. the current and former Fire Training Grounds). Mismanagement of excavated soils and exposed surfaces may increase risks to both onsite and off-site receptors	Management of PFAS impacted materials in accordance with Project-specific PFAS management strategy which will outline re-use options for PFAS impacted soils and identify where additional controls may be required. Re-use options and controls will depend on soil contamination levels and will include options for unrestricted re-use and re-use in particular settings such as placement at depth or under constructed pavements. Engineered containment, onsite	Low	N/A	Minor Variation disturbance footprint additional areas also contain PFAS impacted soils and sediments which may be above ecological and human health investigation levels. There is also a reduction in the Minor Variation disturbance footprint interaction with some PFAS source areas compared with the existing Project	No change – consistent with and in accordance with Melbourne Airport's PFAS management strategic approach as described in the approved MDP.	Low

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of minor variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
		treatment or off-site disposal may be required for higher levels of contamination.			disturbance footprint. Excavated soils and exposed subsurface areas if not managed appropriately, may increase risks to both onsite and off-site receptors.		
Disturbance/removal of existing contaminated soils containing asbestos-containing material	Direct impact to on-site construction workers – non-cumulative.	Removal of asbestos-containing material under controlled conditions and disposed of to landfill.	Negligible	N/A	Additional areas may also have a direct impact to on-site construction workers – non-cumulative.	No change – consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Negligible
Disturbance/removal of existing non-PFAS contaminated soils uncovered as part of demolition works	There is likely to be point source impacts associated with redundant infrastructure that is required to be	Inspection and where necessary validation of any excavations beneath and surrounding former infrastructure (pits, tanks, pipelines).	Negligible	N/A	N/A – Minor Variation areas will not require demolition works.	N/A	N/A

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of minor variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
	removed. Historical areas of landfilling	Where possible avoidance of known landfill areas					
Intersecting perched groundwater	Although groundwater is unlikely to be intersected during Project works, there is the potential to intersect perched groundwater systems that may be impacted by PFAS and other contaminants	If groundwater is encountered and is required to be extracted as part of works, existing water treatment facilities are available to treat water to remove contaminants of concern	Negligible	N/A	Consistent with the original Project impact, there is the potential works in the Minor Variation areas may intersect perched groundwater.	No change – consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Negligible
Importation of fill	The Project's cut and fill balance is in deficit. Importation of fill will be required to achieve design levels. Importation of fill if not managed properly can present a risk to the	Management of importation of fill in accordance with Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure it meets EPA guidance for fill material and does not present a	Low	N/A	Minor Variation areas will also require importation of fill to achieve design levels. Importation of fill if not managed properly can present a risk to	No change – consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Low

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of minor variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
	receiving environment.	risk to the receiving environment. Early identification of fill source sites, confirming fill material categorisation and appropriate tracking and monitoring of incoming material to confirm compliance will be key elements to mitigating risks			the receiving environment.		
Green waste removal	Protected grasslands and other native vegetation exist across the Project site – improper handling of green waste during removal leads to spread of pest weeds and/or pathogens disrupting native species	Management of weeds in accordance with Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	Low	N/A	Management of weeds that may be present in the Minor Variation disturbance footprint in accordance with the CEMP will not alter the Project impact.	No change – consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Low

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of minor variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
Waste management – construction and demolition waste	Wastes generated from demolition works and construction works (e.g. concrete formwork)	Management of wastes in accordance with CEMP to maximise re-use/recycling opportunity. Onsite management and recycling and re-use of PFAS-impacted demolition wastes	Low	N/A	Works at the Minor Variation areas are likely to generate waste from construction works (only – no demolition required).	No change – consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Low
Waste management - rubber and tyre waste - pavement maintenance - lighting	Waste generated from use and maintenance of runway, wear and tear of aeroplane tyres, replacement and maintenance of navigation and other lighting requirements. Off-site impact as waste if disposed to landfill	Manage wastes in accordance with Melbourne Airport Waste Management Strategy to maximise re-use/recycling opportunities	N/A	Negligible	No change.	N/A	N/A

4.3.2 Ecology

The proposed Minor Variation will result in minor changes to the existing Project disturbance footprint, resulting in a total reduction to the proposed disturbance footprint by 30.4 ha and reducing the associated ecological impacts. The following sets out the approach and results of the updated ecological assessment comparing the existing Project disturbance footprint and the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint.

Approach

To understand the ecological impact of the proposed Minor Variation, the following approach was adopted:

- Where the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint reduced the area to be disturbed, then the ecological impacts associated with these areas were removed.
- For newly impacted areas under the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint:
    - An updated database search was completed to identify species and ecological communities likely to occur within 10 kilometres of the existing Project disturbance footprint.
    - Where available, ecological data captured as part of the approved MDP ecological assessment was used to enable comparison.
    - Additional areas that required further assessment were identified and then completed within the relevant optimal field survey window.
    - An updated impact assessment was completed using a combination of the original MDP ecological assessment dataset and new field assessments from 2025 and 2026.
    - Where newly impacted areas were inaccessible and MDP data not available, conservative assumptions were made on the potential extent and condition of MNES, consistent with the approach taken for the approved MDP ecological assessment.

The flora assessment of additions to the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint (where data was not available from the original MDP assessments) was undertaken on 11, 12, 14 and 17 November 2025; 10, 11 and 16 December 2025; and 11 and 12 February 2026. The flora assessment followed the same methodology as the approved MDP ecological assessment. No further targeted surveys were deemed required for threatened fauna species as the fauna values are well documented across the airport estate and recorded. Further, the existing fauna survey efforts were applicable to the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint.

The native vegetation in the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint is provided in Figure 13, with detailed views shown in Figure 14 to Figure 19.

The EPBC Act listed species habitat in the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint is provided in Figure 20, with detailed views shown in Figure 21 to Figure 26.

The EPBC Act listed species in the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint is provided in Figure 27, with detailed views shown in Figure 28 to Figure 33.

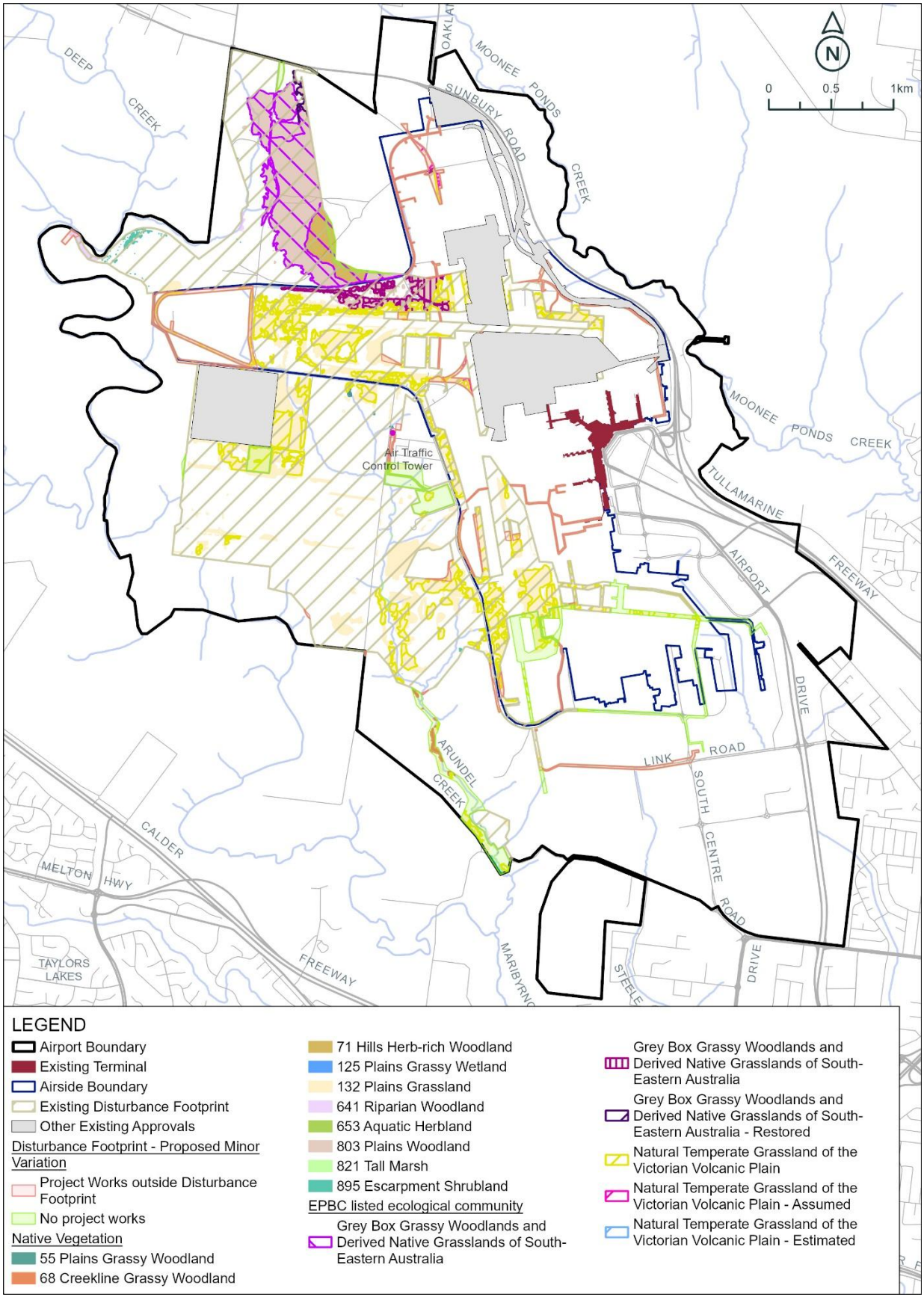

Figure 13 Native Vegetation in the Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint

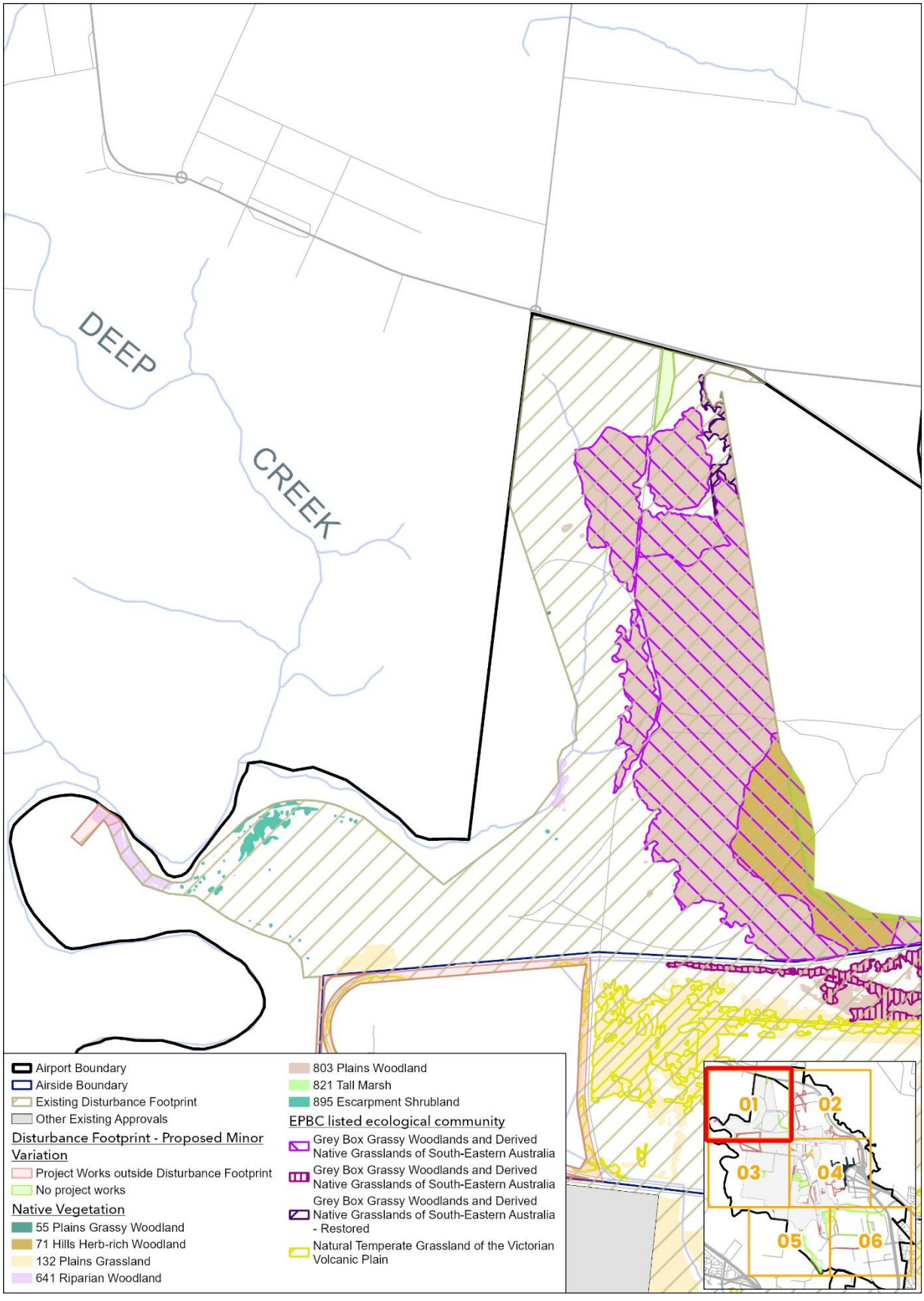

Figure 14 Native Vegetation in the Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 1

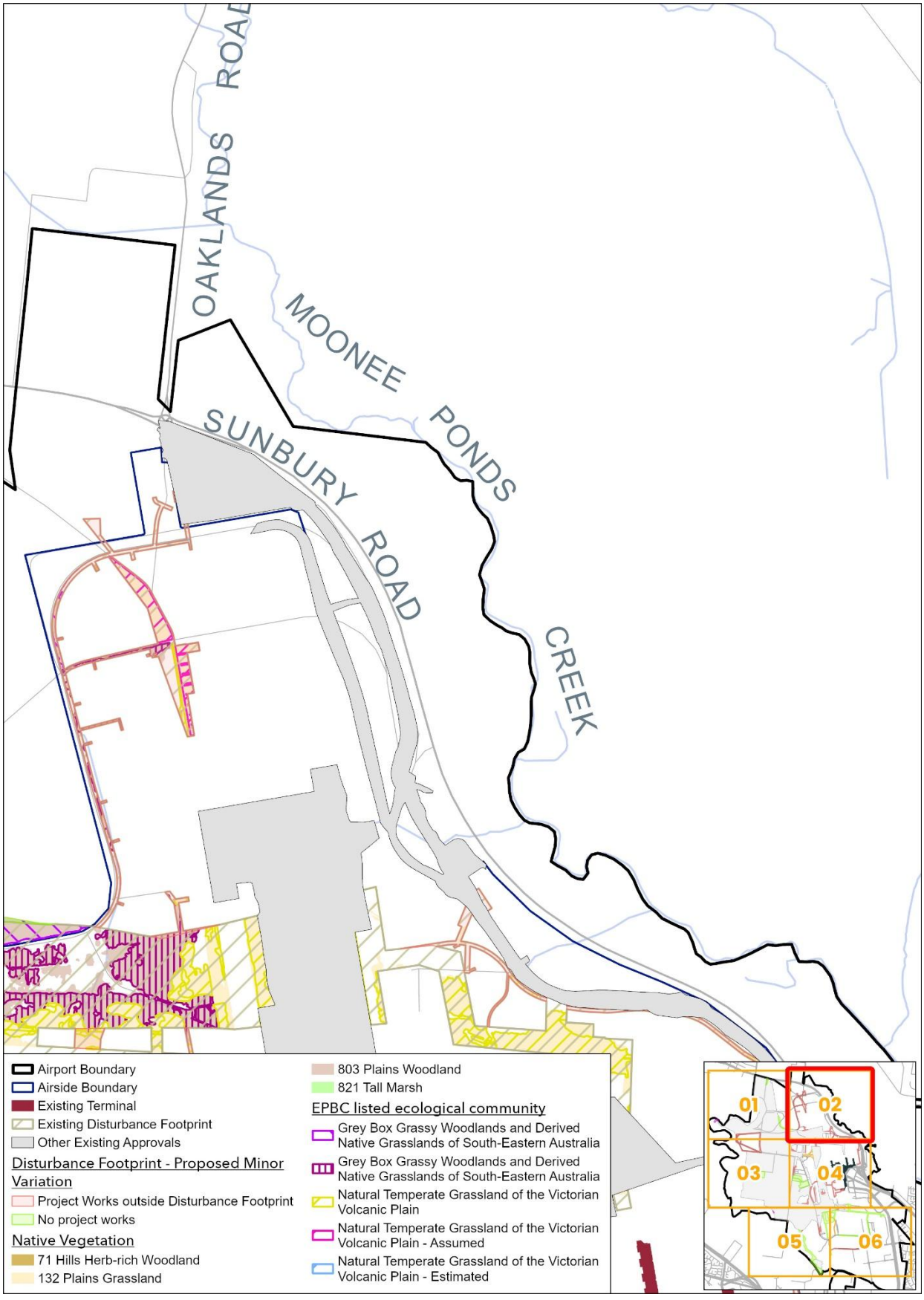

Figure 15 Native Vegetation in the Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 2

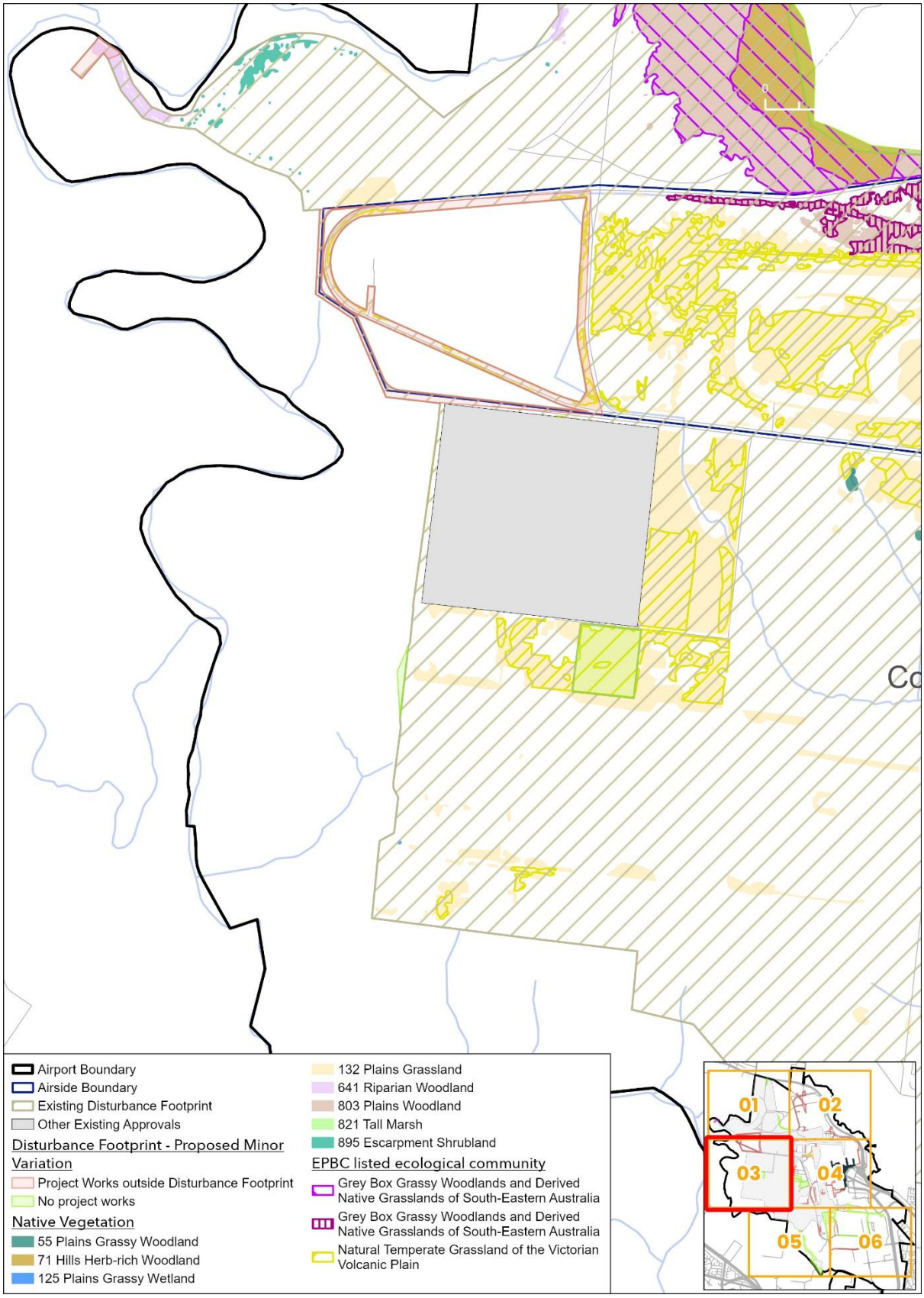

Figure 16 Native Vegetation in the Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 3

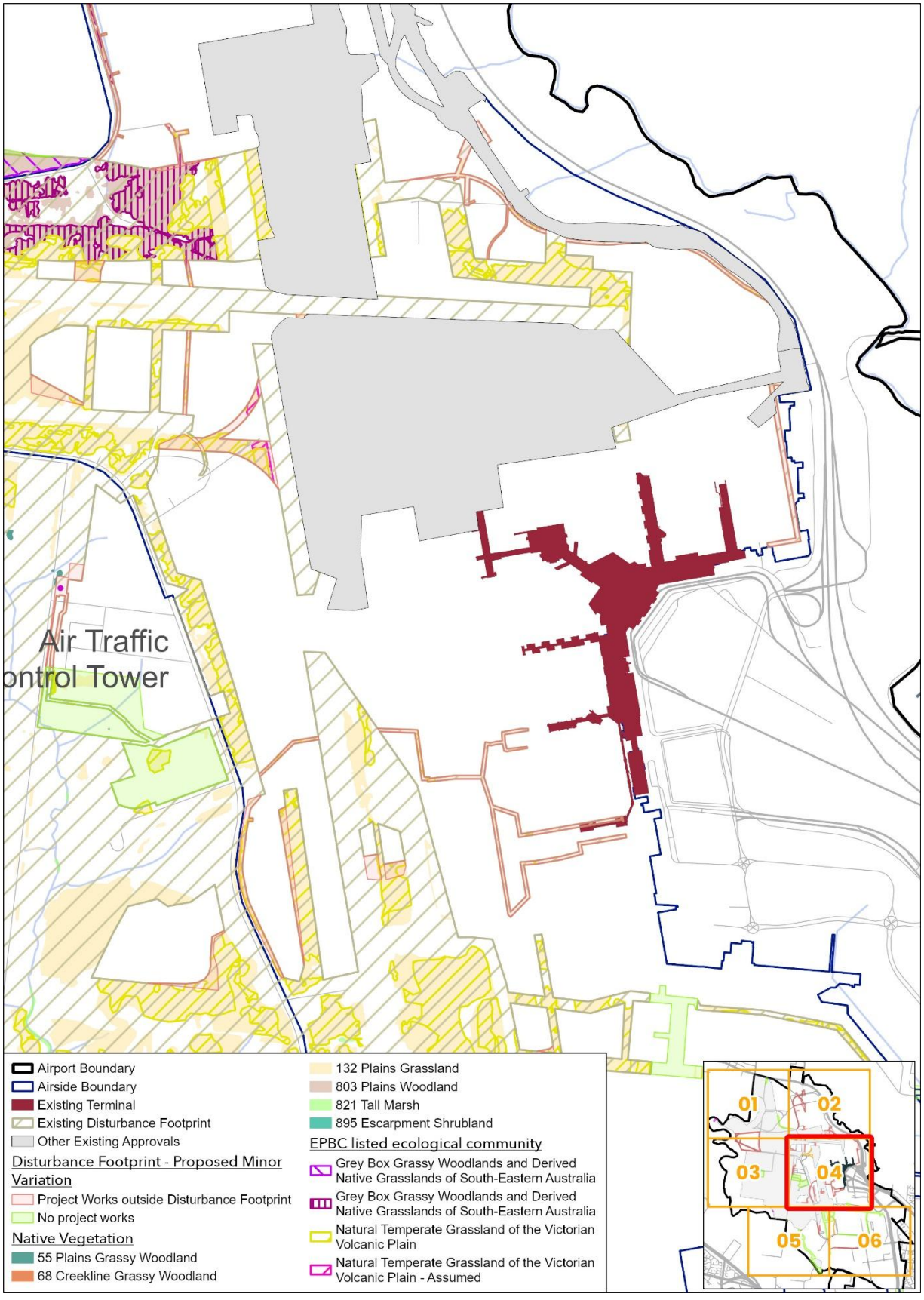

Figure 17 Native Vegetation in the Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 4

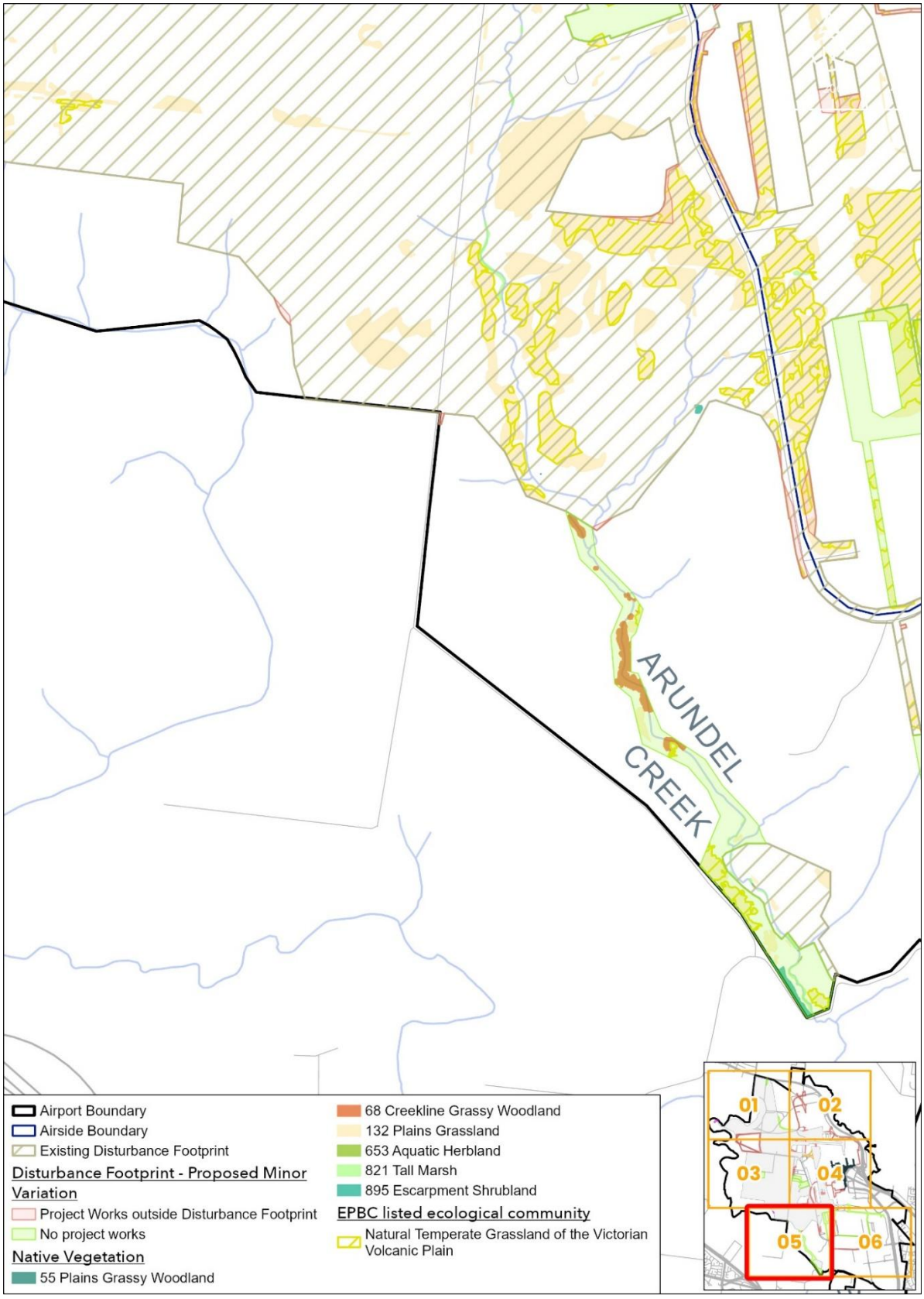

Figure 18 Native Vegetation in the Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 5

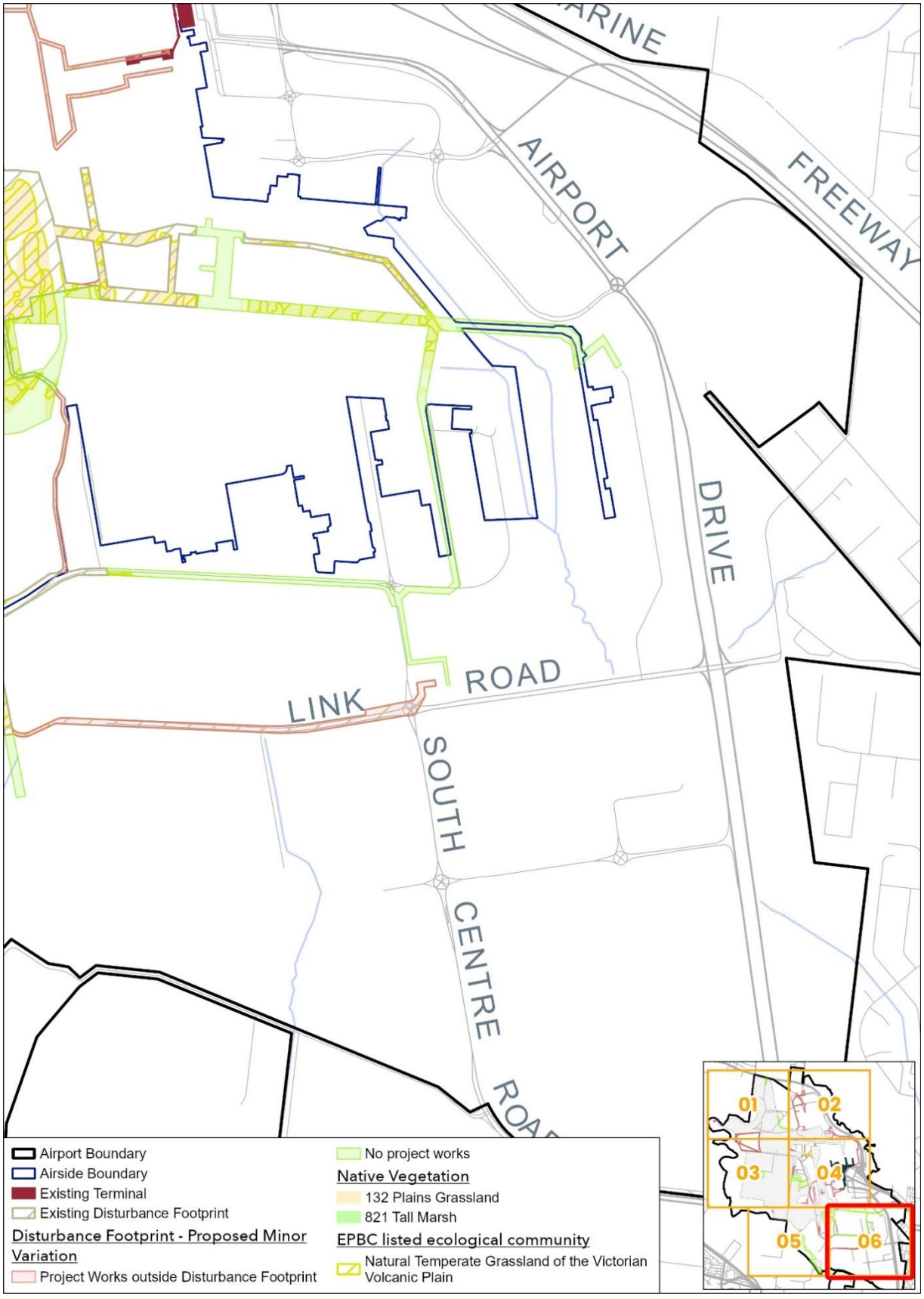

Figure 19 Native Vegetation in the Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 6

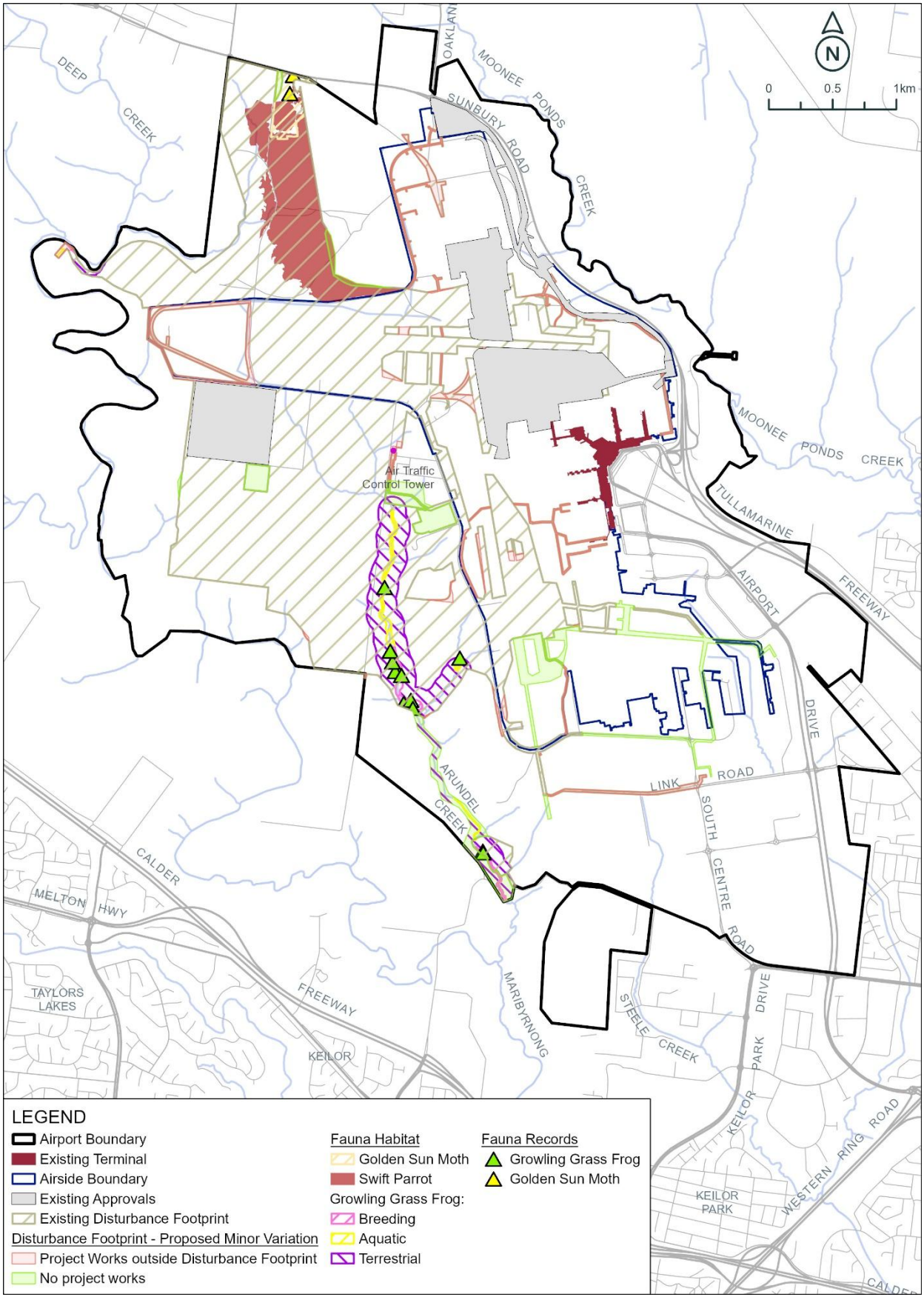

Figure 20 EPBC Act Listed Species Habitat and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint

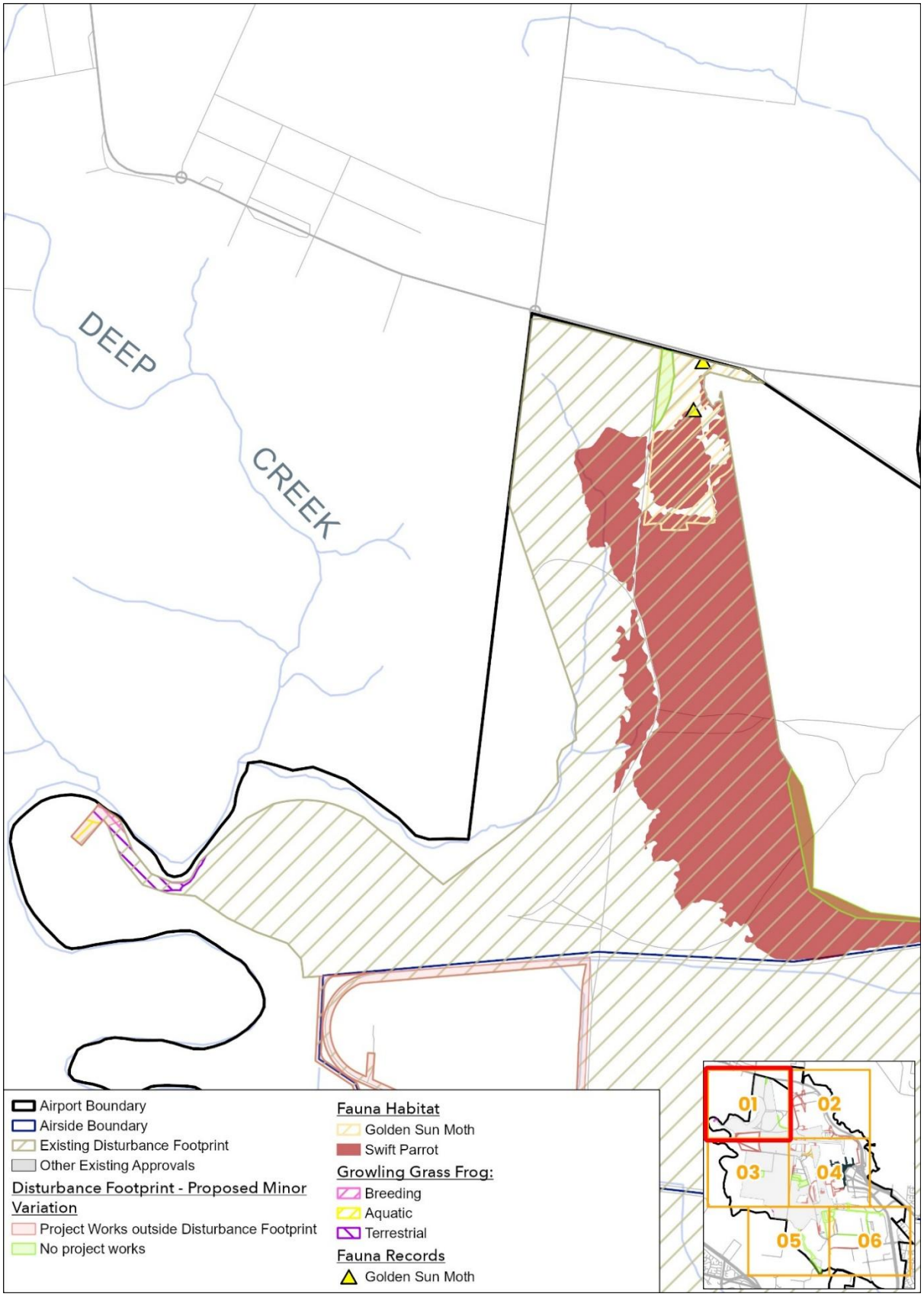

Figure 21 EPBC Act Listed Species Habitat and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 1

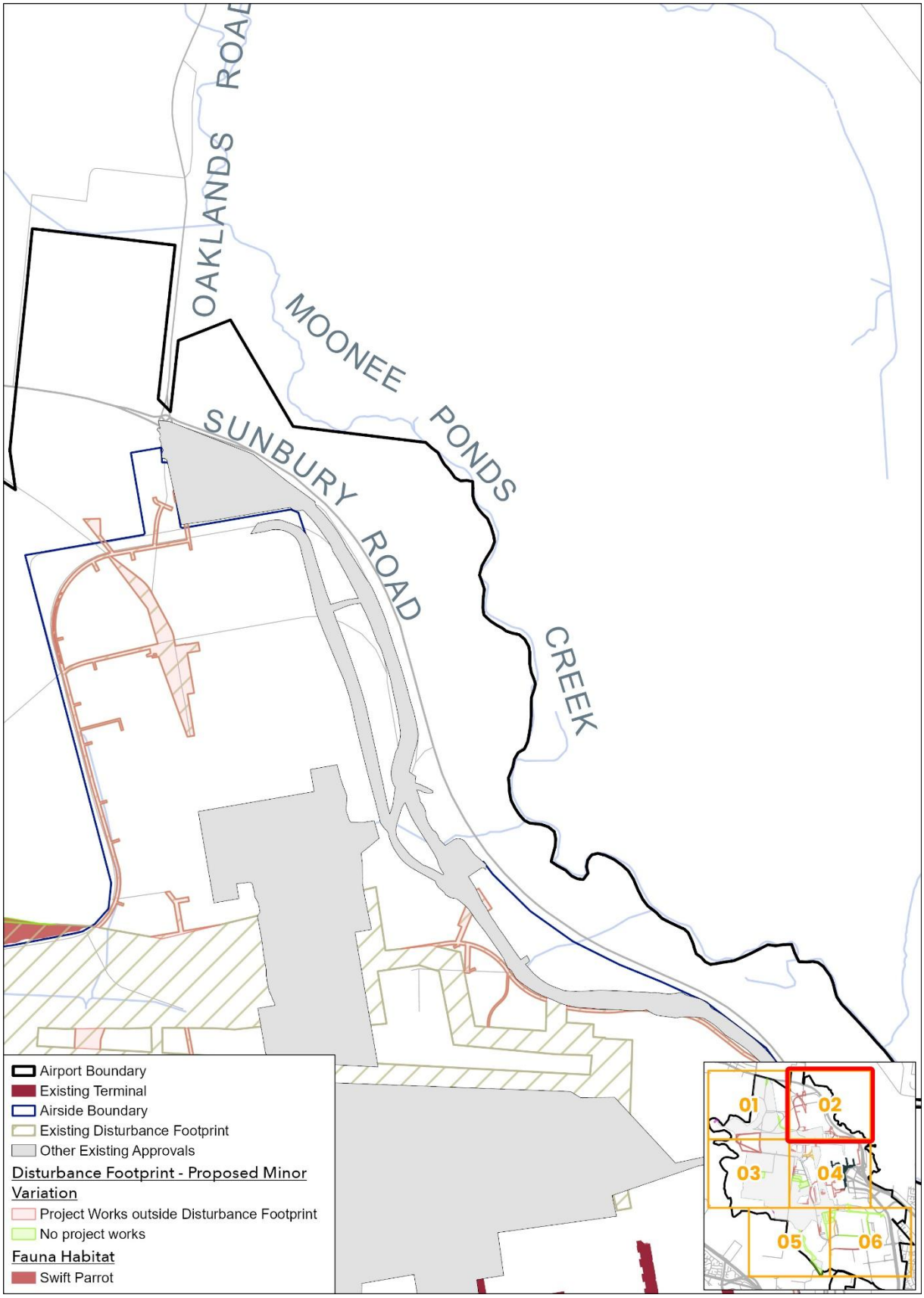

Figure 22 EPBC Act Listed Species Habitat and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 2

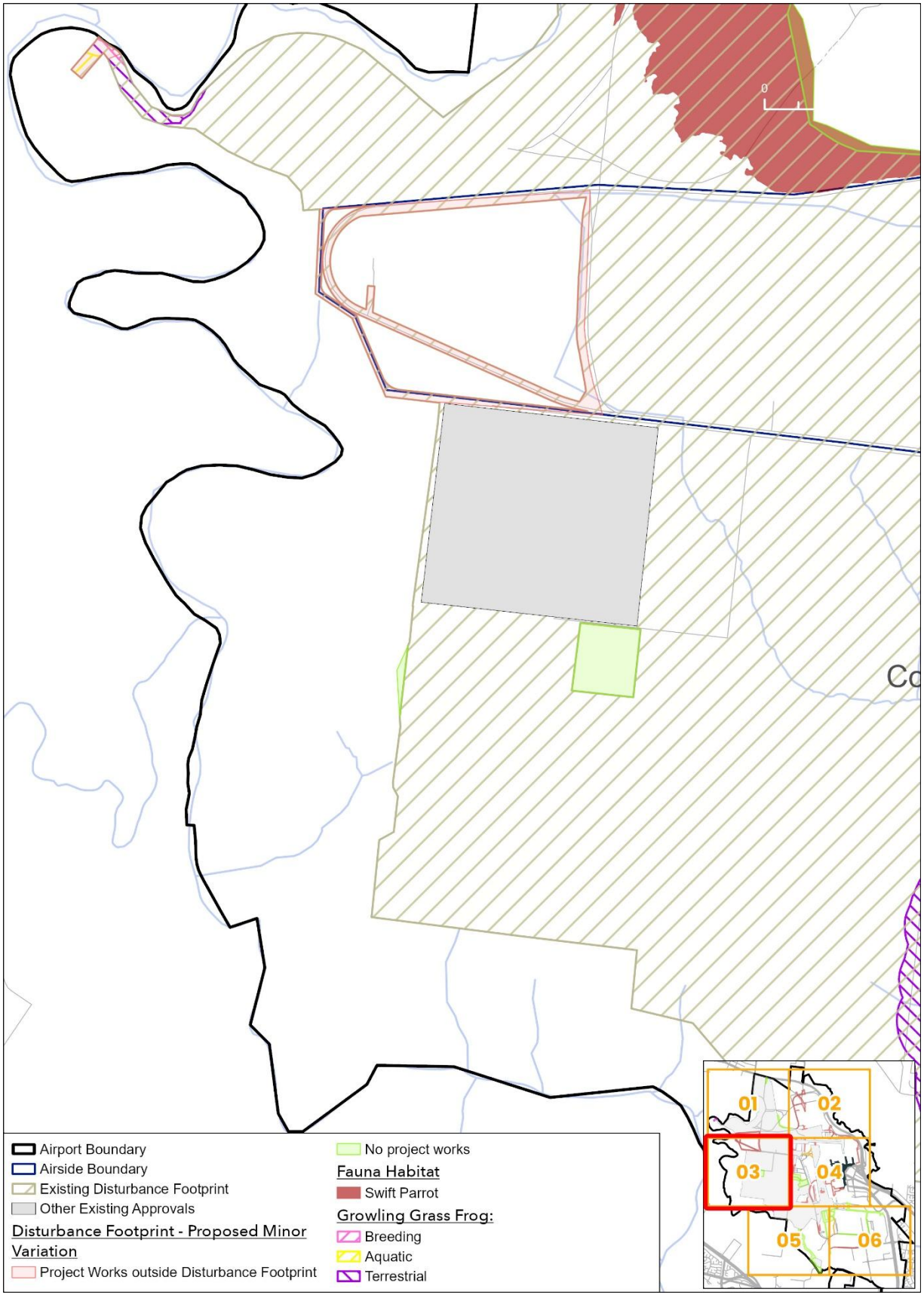

Figure 23 EPBC Act Listed Species Habitat and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 3

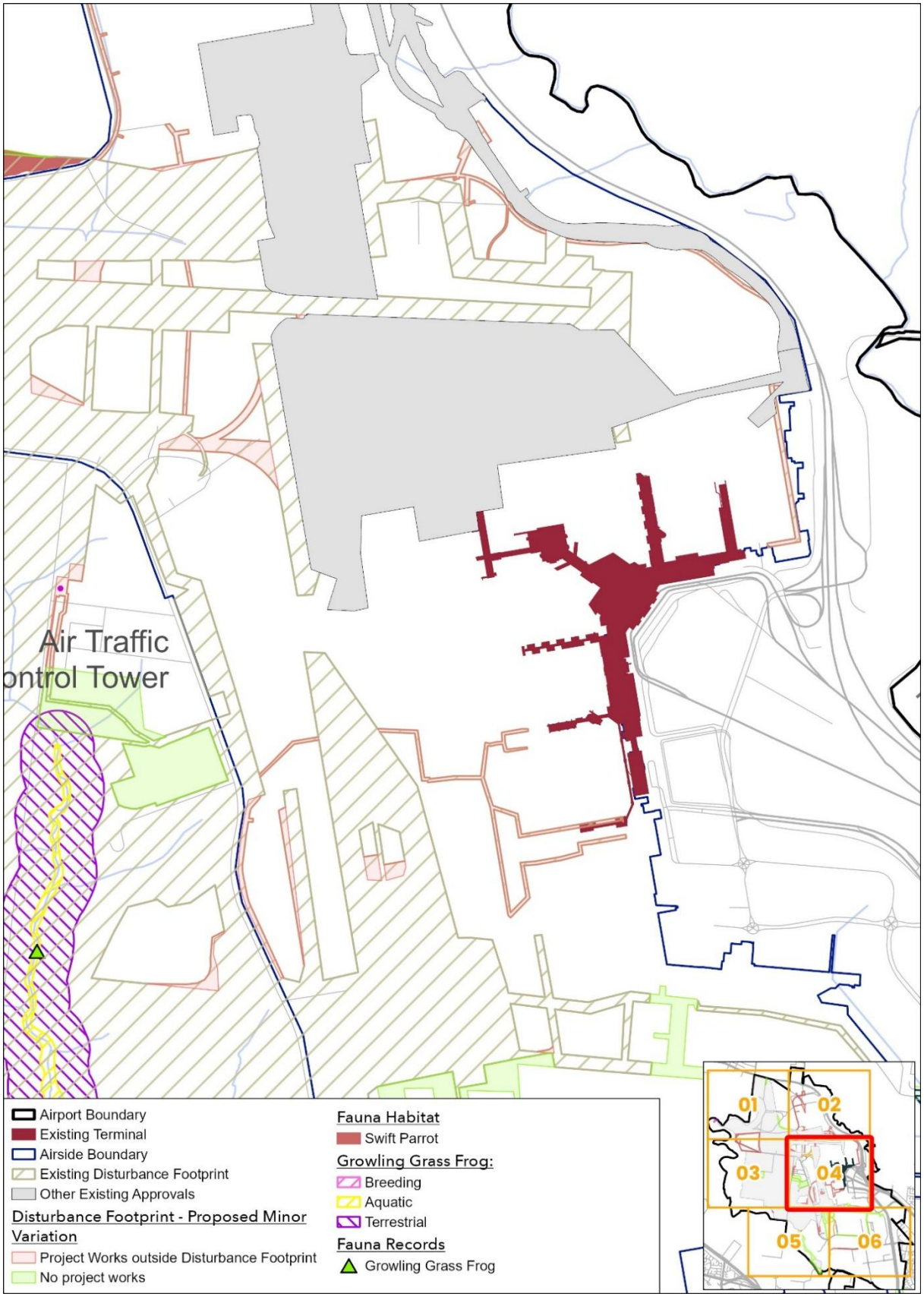

Figure 24 EPBC Act Listed Species Habitat and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 4

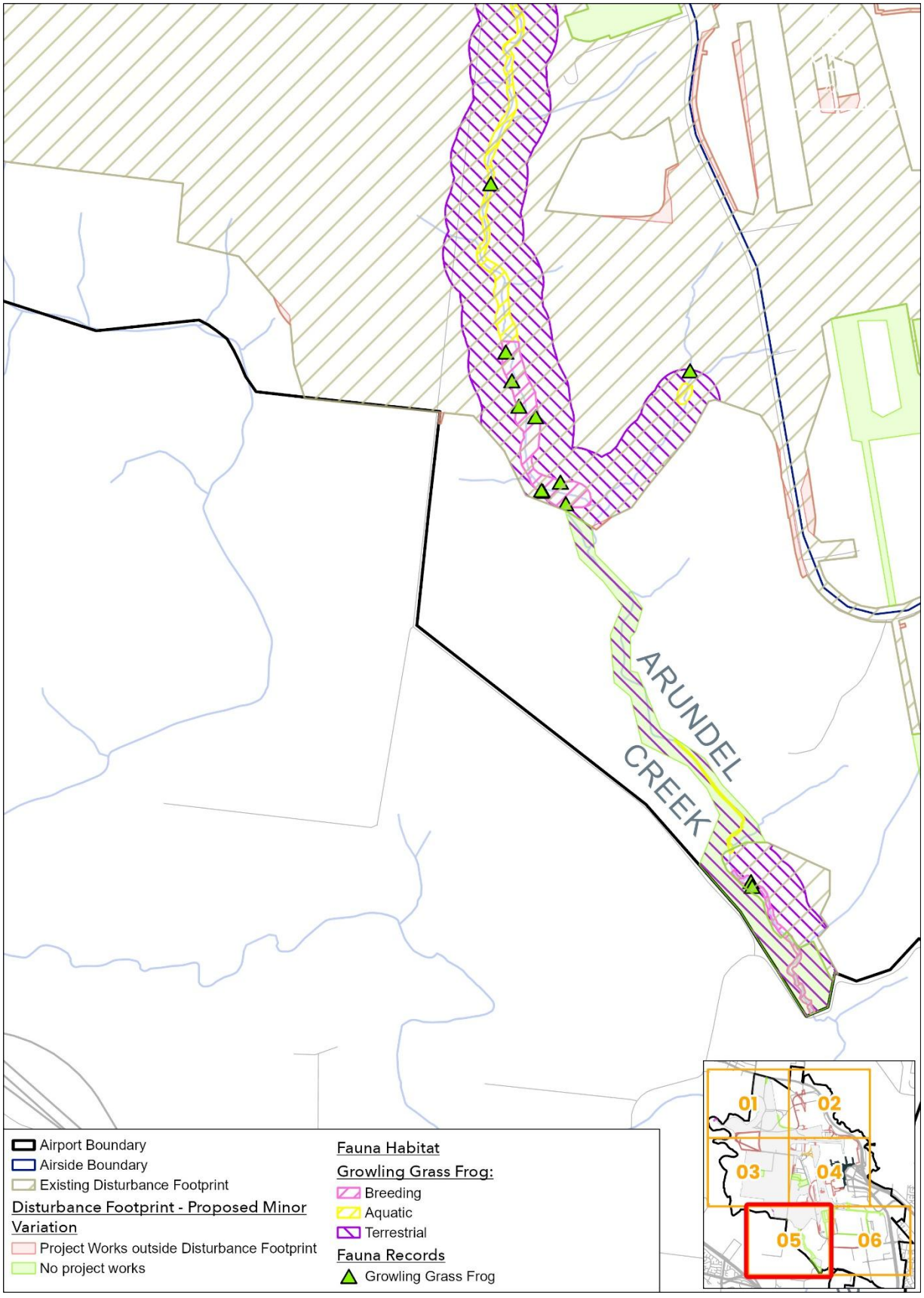

Figure 25 EPBC Act Listed Species Habitat and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 5

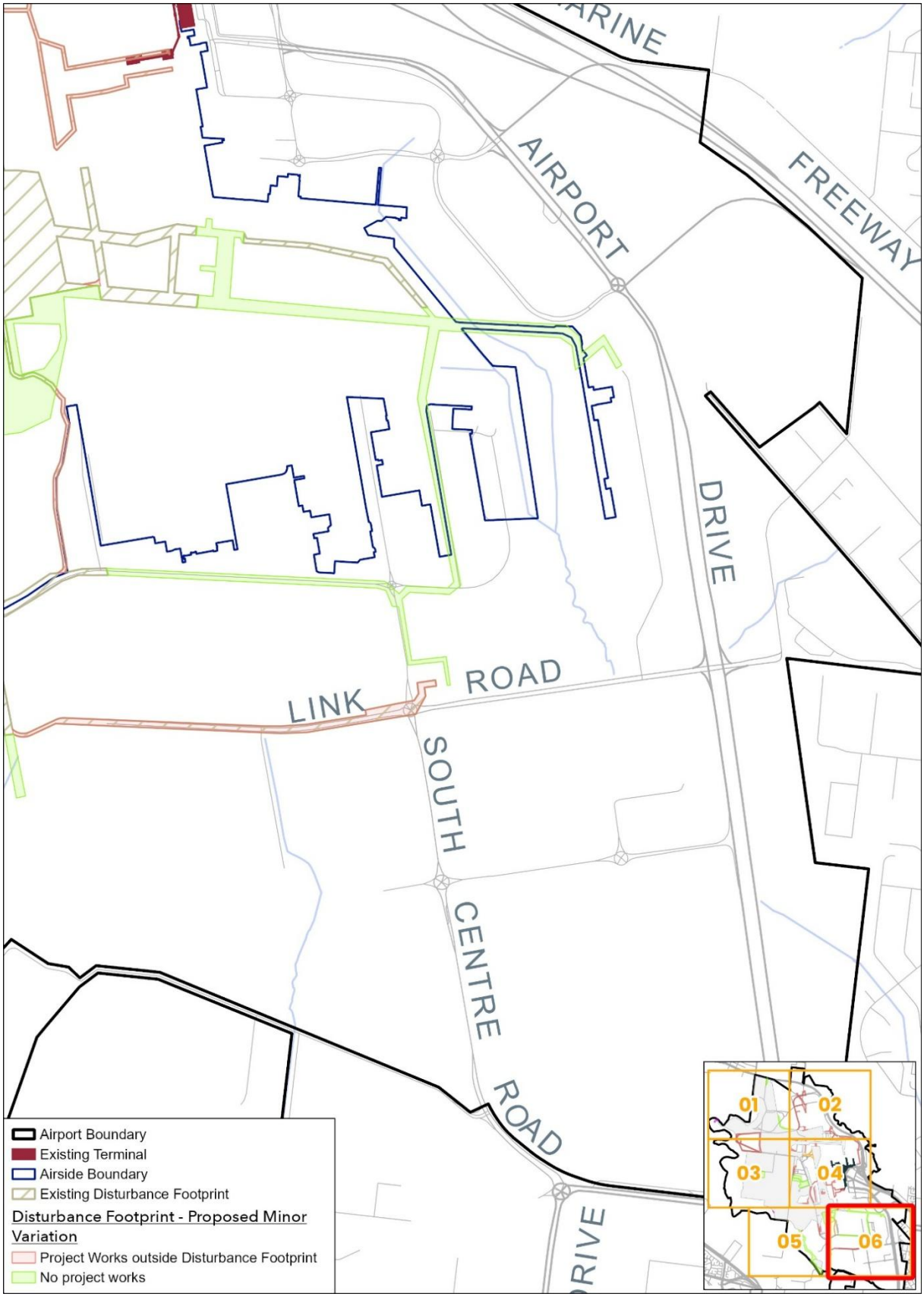

Figure 26 EPBC Act Listed Species Habitat and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 6

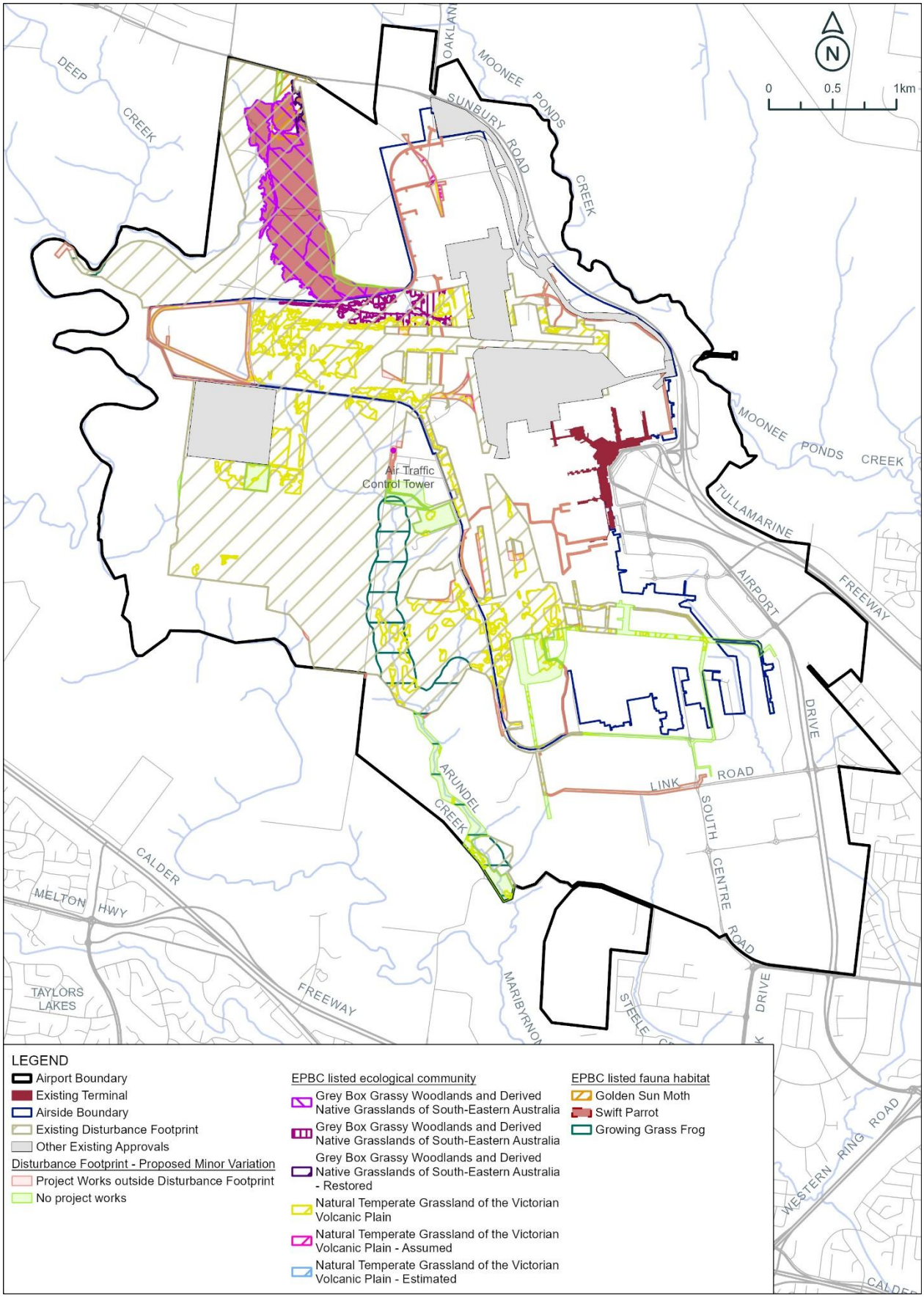

Figure 27 EPBC Act Listed Species and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint

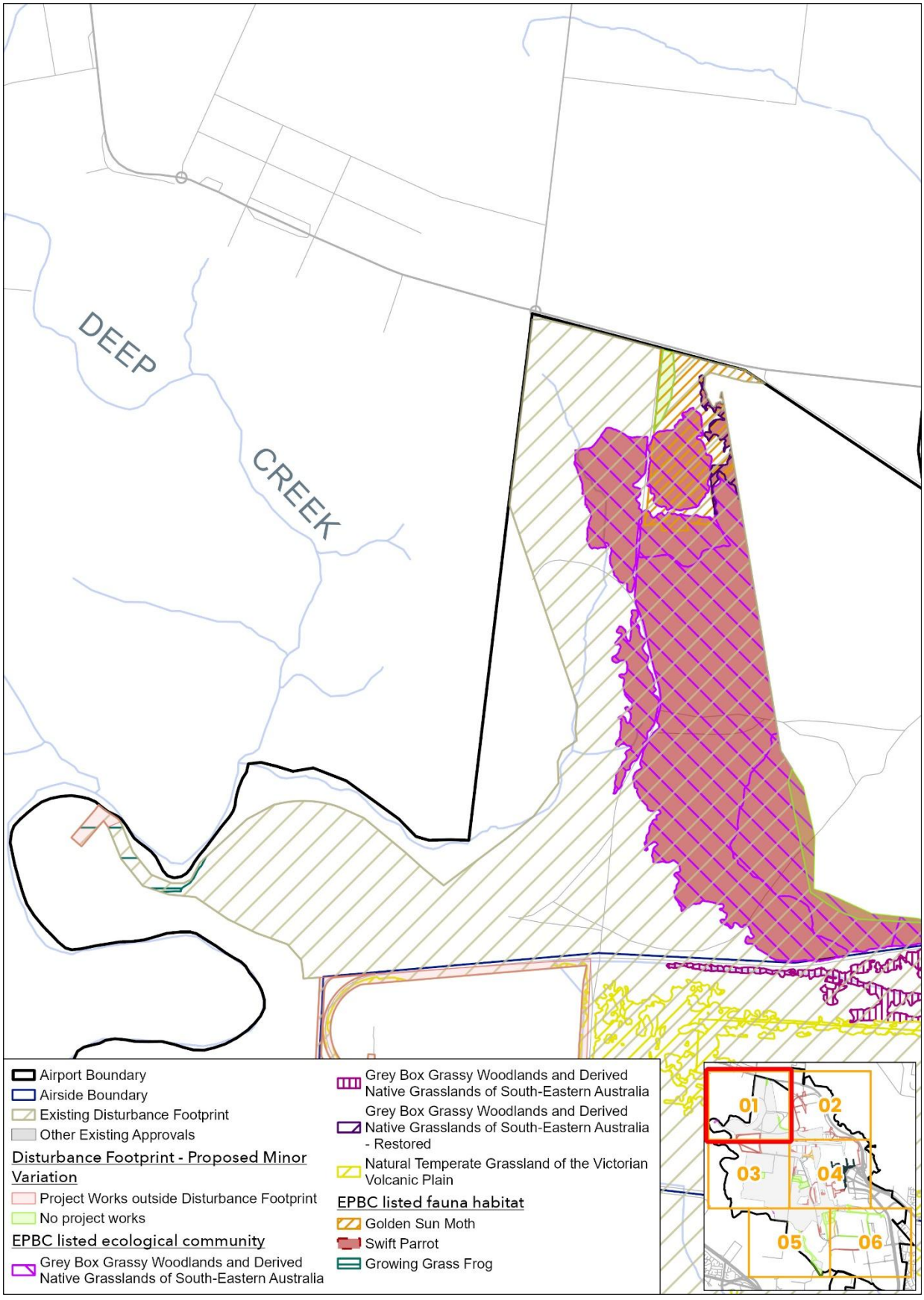

Figure 28 EPBC Act Listed Species and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 1

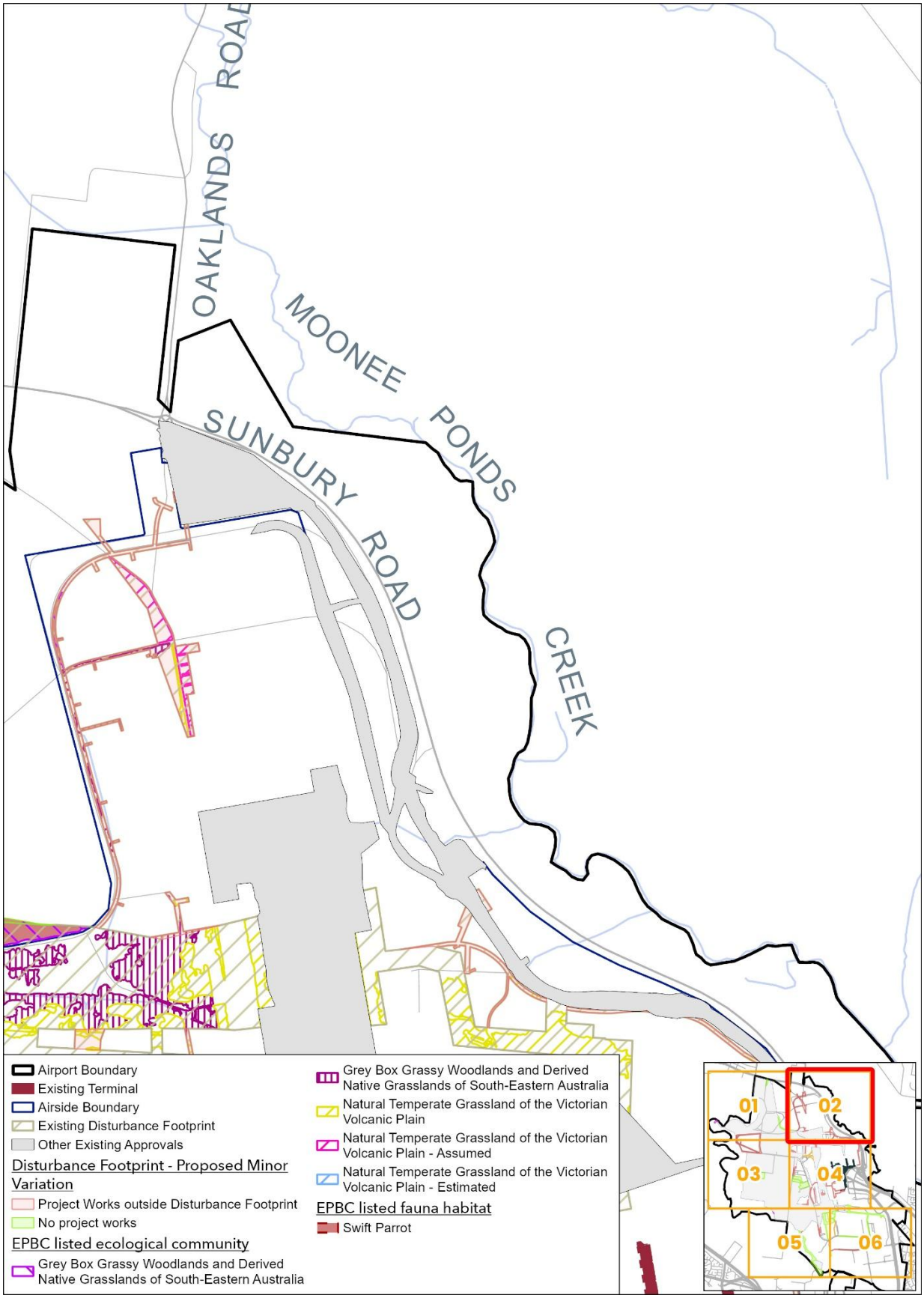

Figure 29 EPBC Act Listed Species and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 2

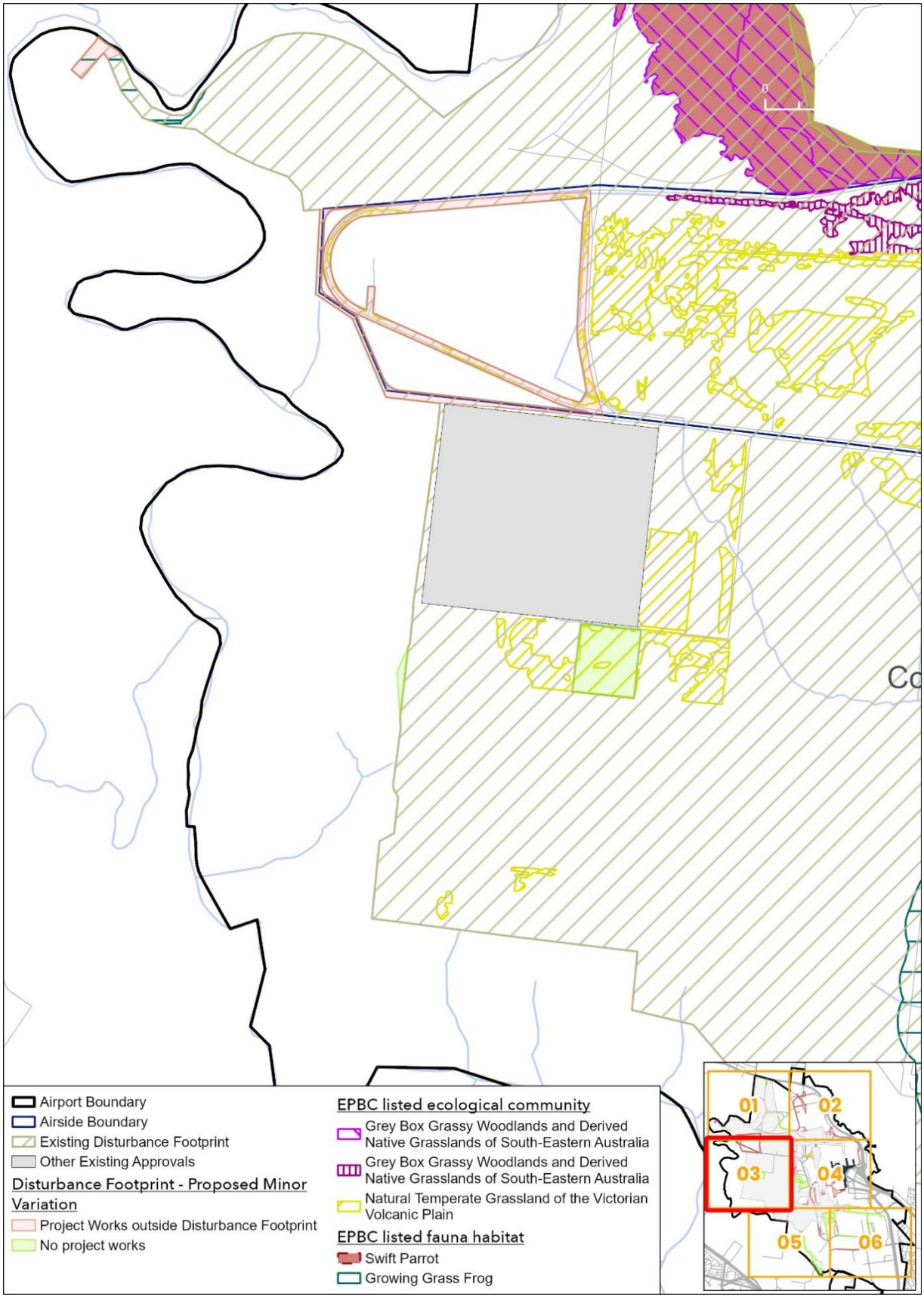

Figure 30 EPBC Act Listed Species and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 3

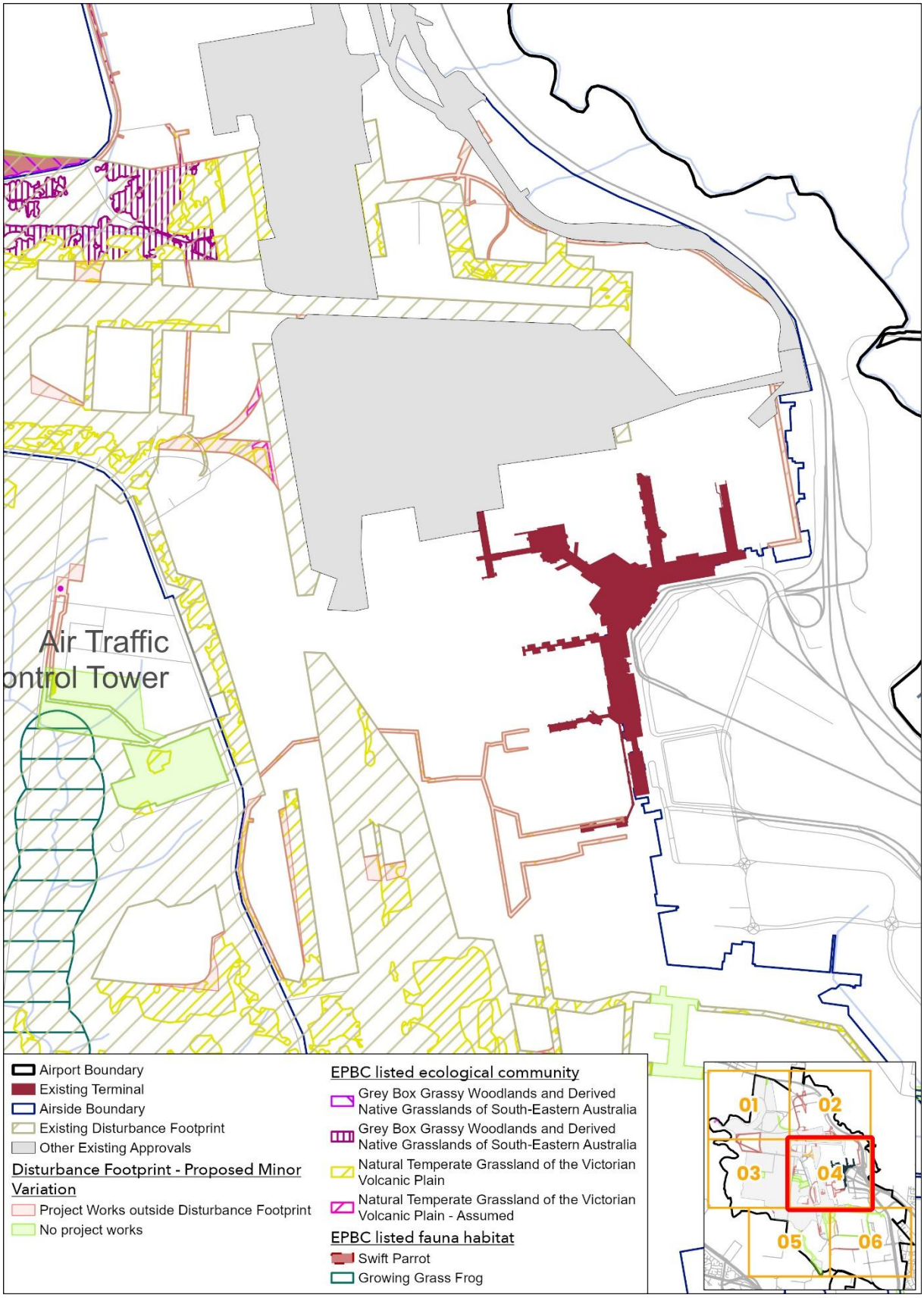

Figure 31 EPBC Act Listed Species and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 4

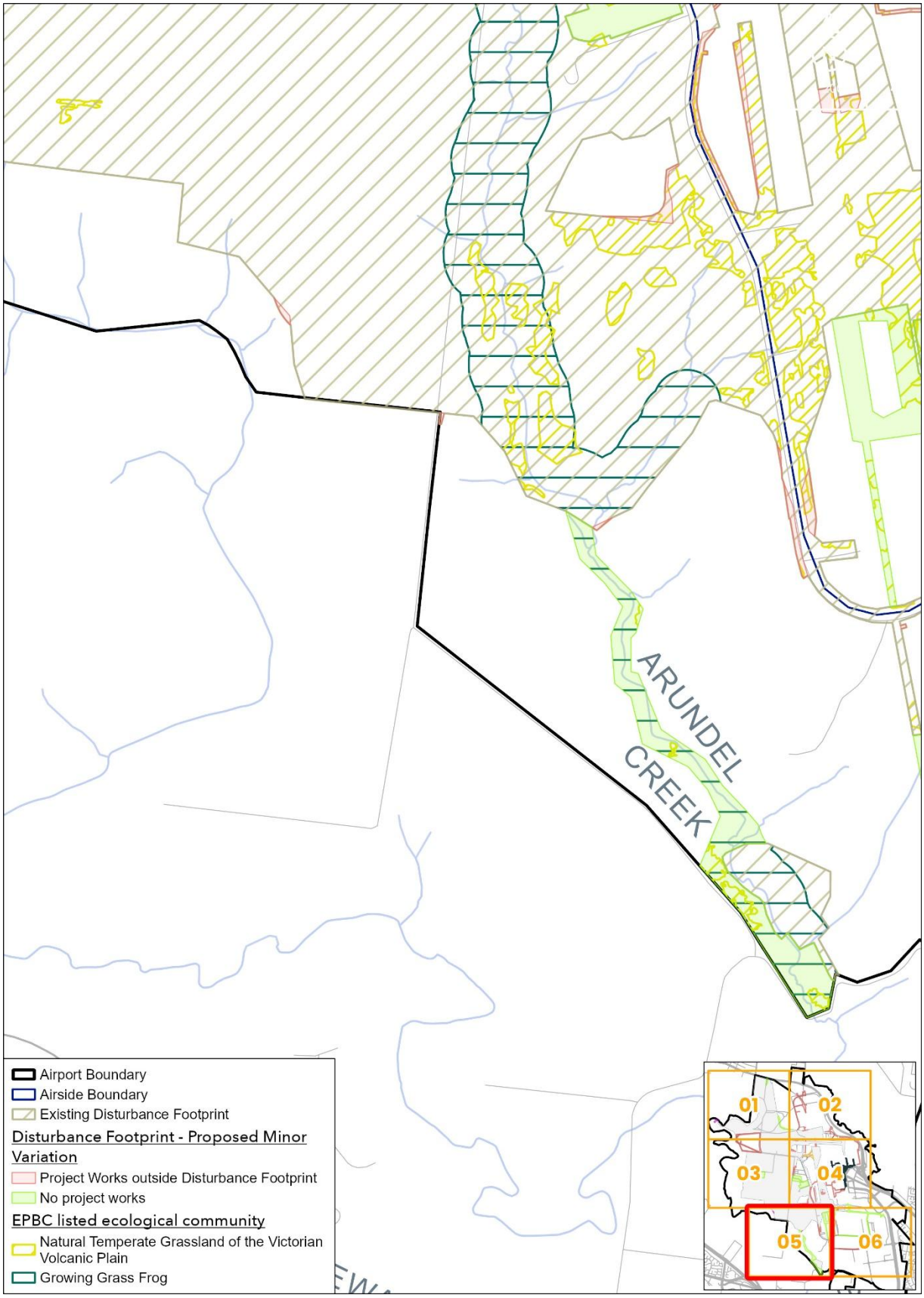

Figure 32 EPBC Act Listed Species and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 5

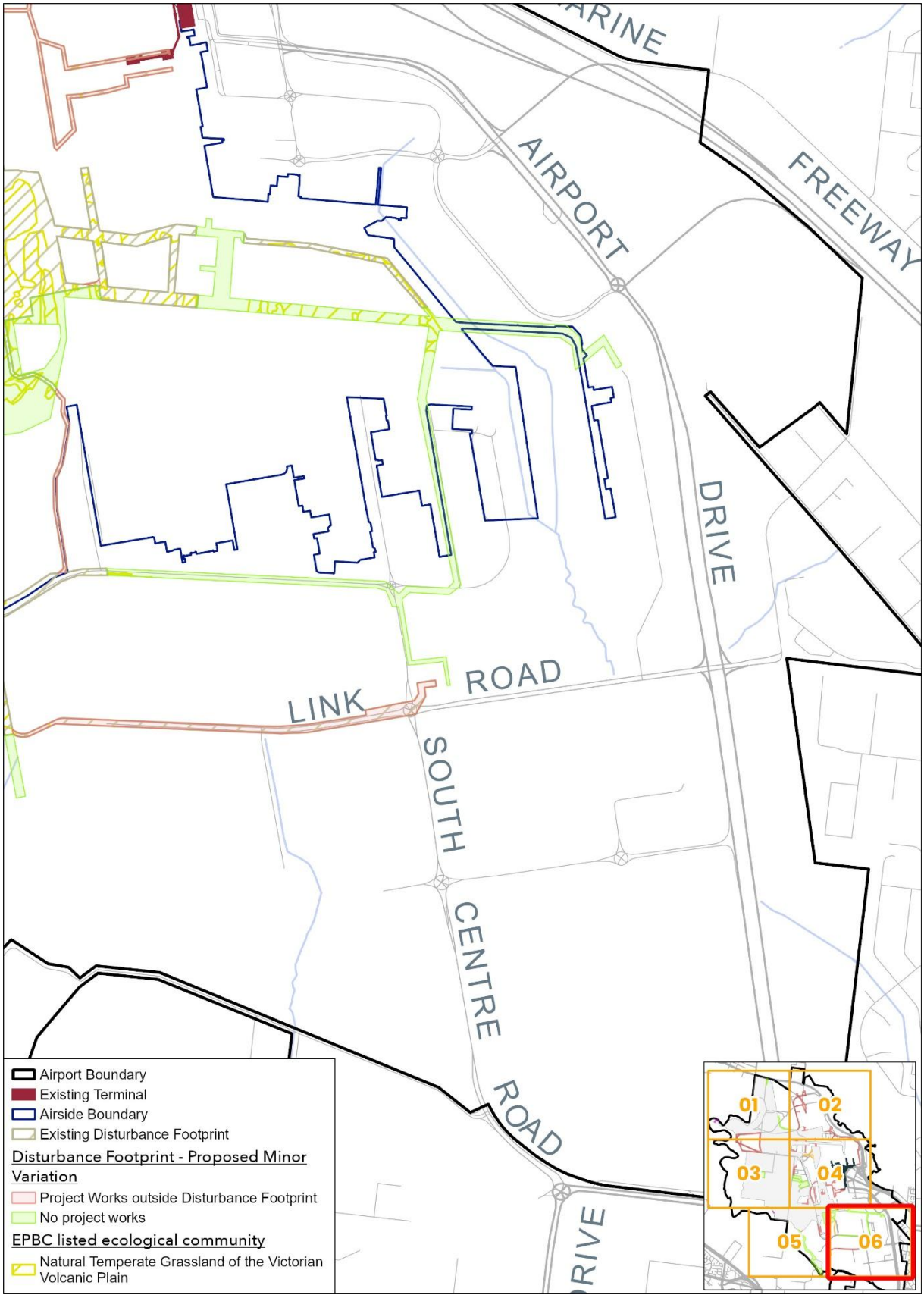

Figure 33 EPBC Act Listed Species and Proposed Minor Variation Disturbance Footprint - Detail 6

Results

Matters of National Environmental Significance

A summary of the changes to Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), including threatened ecological communities (TECs), associated with the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint is provided in Table 7.

Table 7 Summary of MNES Impact Changes: Existing Disturbance Footprint and Proposed Minor Variation

MNES	Existing Project disturbance footprint	Minor Variation footprint total	Change in total impact to MNES	Comments
Natural Temperate Grassland	90.49 ha	86.42 ha	-4.07 ha (4.5% decrease)	Numerous small changes to the footprint, including reductions in impact and some new impacted areas. Overall total impact reduced. Consequential loss, whereby retained grassland patches are no longer of sufficient size to qualify for protection under the EPBC Act account for 1.65 ha of the total Minor Variation disturbance footprint impact.
Grey Box Woodland (treed state)	68.02 ha	66.17 ha	-1.85 ha (2.7% decrease)	Reduction is largely due to minor changes to the footprint boundary along the southern perimeter of the retained woodland.
Grey Box Woodland (derived grassland state)	10.72 ha	12.37 ha	+1.65 ha (15.4% increase)	Increase in impacts due to access roads and associated infrastructure to the east of the main woodland patch. These areas were not impacted in the existing Project disturbance footprint.
Grey Box Woodland (total)	78.74 ha	78.54 ha	-0.20 ha (0.3% decrease)	Overall, a net reduction in impact to this TEC has been achieved, as described above
Golden Sun Moth habitat	9.75 ha	9.46 ha	-0.29 ha (3.0% decrease)	Reduction due to avoidance of an area of habitat in the northern most section of the existing Project disturbance footprint.
Growling Grass Frog habitat	64.34 ha (7.27 ha breeding/ aquatic and 57.05 ha	59.14 ha (6.85 ha breeding/ aquatic and 52.29 ha	-5.20 ha (8.1% decrease)	The revised footprint boundary along Arundel Creek has reduced direct impacts on Growling Grass Frog, however there are likely to be indirect impacts

MNES	Existing Project disturbance footprint	Minor Variation footprint total	Change in total impact to MNES	Comments
	terrestrial habitat)	terrestrial habitat)		between the proposed treatment facility and the existing Project disturbance footprint due to decline in water quality. Impacts on Growling Grass Frog habitat near the Deep Creek quarry in the north west of the existing Project disturbance footprint will be avoided in accordance with strict Growling Grass Frog specific construction parameters, implemented via the CEMP and Flora and Fauna Management Plan. This includes management measures such as establishment of exclusion zones and management of water extraction volumes and seasonal timing. Overall, the total impact of 59.14 ha includes 7.56 ha of indirect and consequential impacts
Swift Parrot habitat	68.02 ha	66.17 ha	-1.85 ha (2.7% decrease)	Swift Parrot habitat is consistent with Grey Box Woodland (treed state) hence this is decreased as described above.

Overall impacts on all TECs and the extent of terrestrial threatened species habitat are lower in the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint than in the existing Project disturbance footprint. The 1.65-hectare increase in impact to the Grey Box Woodland derived grassland state is more than balanced, in area terms, by the 1.85-hectare reduction in impact to the treed state of the same TEC. As discussed in Section 2.3, for each proposed footprint refinement, alternatives were considered before the final disturbance footprint was identified. Activities that relate to upgrading existing vehicle tracks and infrastructure were considered to represent the minimum reasonably practicable disturbance required to deliver the approved Project.

Habitat for three of the listed fauna species (Swift Parrot, Gang-gang Cockatoo and Grey-headed Flying-fox) is provided by the Grey Box Woodland (treed state), and as a result the impacts to habitat for these three species have reduced by an equivalent amount (2.7%).

Impacts to Growling Grass Frog habitat have also decreased; in total impacts have been reduced by 8.1%. Total impacts on Growling Grass Frog habitat are 59.14 hectares (of which 51.58 hectares are direct impacts and 7.56 hectares are indirect/consequential impacts). Changes to the footprint have occurred along Arundel Creek, however indirect impacts are still likely to occur along a section of the creek flowing south until the Arundel Creek Treatment Plant.

Impacts to Growling Grass Frog aquatic and terrestrial habitat at the Deep Creek quarry will be avoided through implementation of specific construction and water-extraction controls. Works will be limited to the temporary installation of overland pipes and upgrades to the existing track within its current width, with track works undertaken outside the Growling Grass Frog breeding period (October to March). Water extraction will

also occur outside the breeding period and will be limited to a maximum 10% reduction in total quarry water volume. The pump inlet will be submerged below the water surface and screened to exclude adult Growling Grass Frogs. These requirements will be implemented through the approved CEMP and Flora and Fauna Management Plan.

Threatened ecological communities

Area weighted average condition scores have been calculated for the Natural Temperate Grassland TEC areas proposed to be impacted by the existing Project disturbance footprint and the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint. The average condition of Natural Temperate Grassland affected by the two footprints is therefore similar. While the average condition score increases slightly under the proposed Minor Variation, from 47.24 to 47.89, the total area of Natural Temperate Grassland impacted decreases by approximately 4.07 hectares.

For the Grey Box Woodland TEC, the proposed Minor Variation results in an overall reduction in impact of approximately 0.20 hectares. This comprises a 1.85-hectare reduction in impact to the higher-quality treed state and a 1.65-hectare increase in impact to the lower-quality derived grassland state.

Flora and fauna likelihood of occurrence

An updated database search of threatened flora and fauna records has been conducted, including the existing Project disturbance footprint and the surrounding 10 kilometres. The purpose of this update is to highlight any additional species that require consideration, either due to new records within the search area, or updates to species status.

The ecological assessment considers relevant Commonwealth and Victorian-listed ecological values, including species and ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act and FFG Act, in assessing the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Minor Variation.

The updated database search and likelihood of occurrence assessment revealed that most additional species flagged within the database search area are due to the numerous changes to the EPBC Act and/or *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (Vic)* (FFG Act) threatened species listing status since the approved MDP ecological assessment. Most of the newly flagged species are unlikely to occur within the Project disturbance footprint, generally because suitable habitat is absent or because conspicuous species have not been recorded during surveys undertaken to date.

Listed species that were not specifically considered in the approved MDP are:

- Listed under the EPBC Act
    - Blue-winged Parrot
    - Southern Whiteface
    - Brown Treecreeper
- Listed under the FFG Act
    - Cut-leaf Burr-daisy
    - Australasian Shoveler
    - Fat-tailed Dunnart
    - Southern Toadlet.

The three EPBC Act listed bird species (Blue-winged Parrot, Southern Whiteface and Brown Treecreeper) have the potential to occasionally visit and utilise the treed Grey Box Woodland habitat. As there is no further impact to this habitat within the additions to the existing Project disturbance footprint, significant impact assessments were not undertaken for these MNES.

The Cut-leaf Burr-daisy and Southern Toadlet, if present, would both inhabit damp and waterlogged habitats, in which minimal impacts are proposed. There is some potential for Fat-tailed Dunnart, a small marsupial, to be present; however this species requires refuge sites, generally consisting of loose surface rock, most of which has historically been removed from grassland areas.

If present, the Australasian Shoveler, a native duck, may occasionally use the large water storage dams on Arundel Creek, but there is no change to the impact as a result of the proposed Minor Variation. All potential impacts to this species occur within the existing Project disturbance footprint. No further habitat is impacted within new sections of the revised footprint.

Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon *Tympanocryptis pinguicolla*

The Victorian Grassland Earless Dragon (VGED) had been presumed extinct in Victoria, with the last confirmed sighting in 1969, prior to the species being rediscovered west of Melbourne in early 2023.

In the approved MDP ecological assessment, the species was assigned a low likelihood of occurrence. Since the rediscovery of the VGED, numerous targeted surveys for the species have been conducted throughout its historical distribution. However, it is understood that no additional remnant populations have been discovered. This indicates that the species has had a significant decline throughout much of its historical range, rather than being overlooked and under-recorded solely due to a lack of targeted survey effort.

Since the rediscovery of the species in 2023, it has been listed as Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act and the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments have been working with species experts to confirm the best approach to the ongoing conservation of the species.

The majority of the newly impacted area for the proposed Minor Variation either contains, or is immediately adjacent to, existing airport infrastructure, including runways, tracks, roads, and associated airport facilities. These highly modified and actively managed areas are unlikely to provide suitable habitat for VGED. Grassland and lawn areas adjacent to tracks, roads, and runways are subject to edge effects associated with nearby infrastructure and maintenance activities. These effects are likely to include ongoing disturbance, vegetation management, and altered habitat structure, reducing habitat quality. Additionally, field-based habitat assessments and analysis of recent and historical aerial imagery at several locations associated with the airport have determined that a population of VGED is unlikely to persist within these areas. This determination was largely made due to the evidence of historical ploughing, ongoing disturbance, lack of appropriate refugia and high cover of weeds.

Based on the assessment of habitat suitability, including consideration of historical disturbance, ongoing land management, vegetation condition and availability of suitable refugia, the additional disturbance areas are not considered to provide suitable habitat for VGED and no further targeted field assessment is necessary.

Offset Management Strategy

The Offset Management Strategy for the Third Runway Project was developed and approved as part of the MDP and is implemented as a requirement of the Conditions of Approval and EPBC Act Part 13 Permit. At the time of submitting the Minor Variation, in accordance with the Offset Management Strategy, the Conditions of Approval and EPBC Act Part 13 Permit:

- All 14 Offset Management Plans for direct offset sites have been approved by the Minister for the Environment;
- 12 direct offset sites have been secured; and
- Two remaining direct offset sites are controlled and will be secured prior to commencement of Main Works.

The direct offset package meets 100% of the offset requirements for Grey Box Woodland, Swift Parrot, Golden Sun Moth and Growling Grass Frog, and meets 96.7% of the offset requirements for Natural Temperate Grassland. APAM continues to consult with NEPA regarding a proposed indirect offset package to meet the remaining offset requirements for Natural Temperate Grassland. In accordance with the EPBC Act Part 13 Permit, this indirect offset proposal must be approved by the Minister for the Environment prior to 30 November 2031.

The approved direct offset package and proposed indirect offset proposal are sufficient to accommodate the ecological impacts associated with the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint. The offsets proposed for the Project will not be reduced as a result of the reduced impact to MNES associated with the Minor Variation disturbance footprint refinements.

Conclusion

An updated assessment of ecological impacts for the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint has been undertaken and is summarised in Table 8. It determined that:

- Overall impacts to each threatened ecological community and EPBC Act listed species habitat have decreased, although impacts to the derived grassland state of Grey Box Woodland increase by 1.65 hectares;
- For Natural Temperate Grassland, the extent of impact has reduced, with the average condition of impacted areas remaining relatively consistent between the existing Project and proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprints;
- Overall Grey Box Woodland impacts have decreased, with reductions concentrated in the higher-quality treed state, notwithstanding increased impacts to the lower-quality derived grassland state; and

- Changes to database records or species status under the EPBC Act and/or FFG Act identified one additional flora and six additional listed fauna species. No additional or only limited potential ecological impacts on these species are expected from the Minor Variation disturbance footprint.

Table 8 Updated Impact Assessment – Ecology

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
Natural Temperate Grassland	90.49 ha Natural Temperate Grassland. 90.49 ha of a critically endangered TEC within the impact area, which also corresponds with higher quality areas of the FFG Act Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland community.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones and vegetation protection areas. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Adequate offsite offsets secured in line with EPBC Act Offsets Policy.	Medium	N/A	86.42 ha of a critically endangered TEC within the impact area. Direct removal of 84.77 ha (including 1.93 ha of estimated / assumed Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (NTGVVP)) plus 1.65 ha of consequential loss, resulting in a total impact on 86.42 ha of this TEC, which also corresponds with higher quality areas of the FFG Act Western (Basalt) Plains	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
					Grassland community		
Grey Box Woodland (treed state)	68.02 ha Direct removal of 68.02 ha of this EPBC Act TEC, which also corresponds with the FFG Act Temperate Woodland Bird Community.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones and vegetation protection areas. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Adequate offsite offsets secured in line with EPBC Act Offsets Policy.	Medium	N/A	66.17 ha Direct removal of 66.17 ha of this EPBC Act TEC, which also corresponds with the FFG Act Temperate Woodland Bird Community.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
Grey Box Woodland (derived grassland state)	10.72 ha Direct removal of 10.72 ha of this endangered TEC within the impact area.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones and vegetation protection areas. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Adequate offsite offsets secured in line with EPBC Act Offsets Policy.	Medium	N/A	12.37 ha Direct removal of 11.63 ha of this endangered TEC plus 0.74 ha of consequential loss, resulting in a total impact on 12.37 ha of this TEC.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium
Golden Sun Moth habitat	9.75 ha 9.75 ha of habitat within the impact area	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented:	Medium	N/A	9.46 ha Direct removal of 9.46 ha of habitat in the impact area.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
		• Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones and vegetation protection areas. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Adequate offsite offsets secured in line with EPBC Act Offsets Policy.				mitigation and management measures.	
Growling Grass Frog	64.34 ha Direct removal of 64.34 ha of habitat within the impact area (including 7.27 ha of aquatic/ breeding habitat and 57.05 ha of	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones.	Medium	N/A	59.14 ha Direct removal of 51.578 ha of habitat within the impact area (including 6.664 ha of aquatic/ breeding habitat	Additional mitigation measures proposed in response to the Minor Variation disturbance footprint include implementation of	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
	terrestrial habitat).	• Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Adequate offsite offsets secured in line with EPBC Act Offsets Policy.			and 44.914 ha of terrestrial habitat). A further 7.56 ha of GGF habitat is lost due to indirect/ consequential impacts comprised of 0.19 ha of aquatic/breeding habitat and 7.37 ha of terrestrial habitat	exclusion areas and controlled parameters around water extraction (if extraction is required) to mitigate impacts to Deep Creek, via the approved CEMP and Flora and Fauna Management Plan.	
Swift Parrot habitat	68.02 ha Direct removal of 68.02 ha of foraging habitat within the impact area	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds.	Medium	N/A	66.17 ha Direct removal of 66.17 ha of foraging habitat within the impact area.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
		• Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Adequate offsite offsets secured in line with EPBC Act Offsets Policy.					
Grey-headed Flying-fox habitat	68.02 ha Direct removal of planted trees, scattered trees and 68.02 ha of Grey Box Woodland habitat that represents potential foraging habitat.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures**	Medium	N/A	66.17 ha Direct removal of planted trees, scattered trees and 66.17 ha of Grey Box Woodland habitat that represents potential foraging habitat.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
		Impact is not a significant impact as defined under EPBC Act and does not require offsets. However, offsets obtained for Grey Box Woodland are expected to also benefit this species.					
Gang-gang Cockatoo	68.02 ha Direct removal of planted trees, scattered trees and 68.02 ha of Grey Box Woodland habitat that represents potential foraging habitat.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures**	Medium	N/A	66.17 ha Direct removal of planted trees, scattered trees and 66.17 ha of Grey Box Woodland habitat that represents potential foraging habitat.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
		Impact is not a significant impact as defined under EPBC Act and does not require offsets. However, offsets obtained for Grey Box Woodland are expected to also benefit this species.					
Listed migratory species	Five migratory fauna species have medium to high potential to occur in the Project area. Direct removal of native vegetation and fauna habitat that is occupied or utilised on occasion by migratory species.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures**	Medium	N/A	No change	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
		Impact is not a significant impact as defined under EPBC Act and does not require offsets. However, offsets obtained for the Project are expected to also benefit this species.					
Plants (native vegetation)	247.96 ha of native vegetation Direct removal of 247.96 ha of native vegetation, of which 169.23ha belongs to one of two EPBC Act listed TECs and 229.39ha belongs to one of two FFG Act listed TECs on Commonwealth land (overlap of 158.51 ha between the EPBC Act and	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Adequate offsite offsets secured in line with EPBC Act Offsets Policy.	Medium	N/A	242.12 ha of native vegetation Direct removal of 242.12 ha of native vegetation, of which 162.57 ha belongs to one of two EPBC Act listed TECs and 223.98 ha belongs to one of two FFG Act listed TECs on Commonwealth land (overlap of 150.94 ha between the EPBC Act and FFG Act TECs).	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
	FFG Act TECs).[1]						
Plants (FFG Act listed communities)	229.39 ha of native vegetation Direct removal of 229.39 ha of native vegetation that corresponds with one of two Victorian FFG Act listed communities: Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland community and Victorian Temperate	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring.	Medium	N/A	223.98 ha of native vegetation Direct removal of 223.98 ha of native vegetation that corresponds with one of two Victorian FFG Act listed communities: Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland community and Victorian Temperate Woodland Bird Community.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

[1] APAM acknowledges that there was an error in the EPBC Act listed TEC and FFG listed TEC totals presented in Table B5.32 of the Final MDP. This is a transcription error only, and the correct totals are included in Table 8 above. The correct totals (169.23ha of EPBC listed TECs and 229.39ha of FFG listed TECs) are consistent with the total Project impacts approved via the MDP Conditions of Approval and the EPBC Act Permit (Permit E2024-0235).

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
	Woodland Bird Community.	**Management measures** Values mostly correspond to those that will be offset in accordance with EPBC Act listed communities.					
Water resources (Arundel Creek and associated tributaries)	Modification of approximately 4.5 km of streamline and alteration to hydrological and ecological features.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. Undertake biological and physiochemical monitoring of waterways to be impacted. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures**	Medium	N/A	No change	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
		Offset measures implemented as compensatory measures for Growling Grass Frog will improve ecological values of an offsite wetland for significant species.					
Animals (FFG Act listed species)	In addition to removal of habitat for five species also listed under the EPBC Act, direct removal of known or potential habitat for a further 25 fauna species listed under the FFG Act, with the most notable being the removal of 594.29 ha of occupied Tussock Skink habitat.	**Mitigation** The following mitigation will be implemented: • Conduct environmental inductions for all workers and contractors. • Install No-Go Zones. • Develop a Project-specific CEMP. • Manage surface water runoff, erosion and weeds. • Develop a fauna management plan. • Ecological monitoring. **Management measures** Compensatory offsets for MNES are expected to also benefit the broad range of fauna species that may be affected by the Project.	Medium	N/A	In addition to removal of habitat for five species also listed under the EPBC Act, direct removal of known or potential habitat for a further 25 fauna species listed under the FFG Act, with the most notable being the removal of approximately 575.47 ha of occupied Tussock Skink habitat.	No change - consistent with and in accordance with already proposed mitigation and management measures.	Medium

4.3.3 Indigenous Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) 16792 was approved in July 2022 for the Project by the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWWCHAC), the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP). In accordance with the requirements of the CHMP and obligations under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)*, the CHMP is undergoing an amendment process to include additional impact areas required to facilitate the Project, including to accommodate this proposed Minor Variation. Additional survey and impact assessments are underway in consultation with the WWWCHAC.

Project works will continue to be undertaken in accordance with approved CHMP 16792. Works within any additional areas requiring inclusion in the CHMP will not proceed until the CHMP amendment process has been completed and applicable requirements are in place. Any additional avoidance, management and mitigation measures identified through the amendment process will be established in consultation and agreement with WWWCHAC and implemented as required.

4.3.4 European Heritage

The additional impact areas proposed as part of the Minor Variation are largely located outside recorded historical sites and features. There are three areas where proposed works are located adjacent to, or intersect with, historical places previously considered in the approved MDP.

The additional impact areas have the potential to impact these historical places as a result of activities, such as vehicle movements, stockpiling or clearing operations.

Table 9 identifies the historical places located adjacent to the proposed Minor Variation disturbance areas where a variation in the extent of impact is proposed from that approved for the Project and provides details of potential impacts.

Table 9 Potential Impacts to Historical Places

Historical place	Proposed impact
Bellno Homestead (refer to Figure 34)	Works near the Bellno Homestead are confined to areas adjacent to the existing and previously disturbed Western Access Track. Salvage of the historical archaeological remains within 10 metres of the Bellno Homestead has been completed. The homestead site has been partially excavated, and no further salvage works are required, noting that the homestead is not proposed to be impacted and the results of the partial excavations are sufficient to characterise historical activities at the site.
Fawkner Land Co. settlement (refer to Figure 35)	Works proposed near the Fawkner Land Co. settlement intersect with the settlement lane in one place but are confined to areas previously disturbed by road, drain and underground service construction. Site observations indicate there is potential for scattered historical artefacts to be present that are related to the Fawkner Land Co. settlement.
Oaklands Junction (refer to Figure 36)	Works at Oaklands Junction involve construction to the north of the site, as well as to the west on the opposite side of the former Bulla Road. The bluestone culvert under the road may be impacted by the works, as well as other historical features or scattered archaeological deposits.

The following historical places are not impacted by the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint:

- Aucholzie Homestead Low local significance;
- Barbiston Farm Complex Low local significance;
- Kennedy's Hut Site Moderate regional significance;
- Coghill's Boiling-Down Works High state significance;
- Coghill's Sheepwash and Dam Low local significance;

- Grants Road Bluestone Culvert Low local significance;
- Oakbank Farm Homestead Moderate regional significance;
- Radar Hill Track Low local significance;
- Roseleigh Homestead Low local significance;
- Seafield Farm Low local significance; and
- Victoria Bank Homestead Moderate regional significance.

An updated assessment of the European Heritage impacts for the proposed Minor Variation disturbance footprint has been undertaken and is summarised in Table 10.



Figure 34 Previously Recorded Historical Sites in Relation to the Proposed Minor Variation Footprint - Bellno Homestead



Figure 35 Previously Recorded Historical Sites in Relation to the Proposed Minor Variation Footprint - Fawkner Land Co Settlement



Figure 36 Previously Recorded Historical Sites in Relation to the Proposed Minor Variation Footprint - Oaklands Junction

Table 10 Updated Impact Assessment – European Heritage

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
Bellno Farmstead and Quarry Moderate regional significance	Design avoids impact	Provision for archaeological salvage if harm cannot be avoided.	Low	Low	The Minor Variation disturbance footprint avoids works within the homestead site and the wider historical artefact scatter identified during site inspection. The additional impact areas are located outside the known site extent near the Western Access Track. This location has been previously disturbed.	• The additional impact areas avoid the known extent of the site and are located in a previously disturbed location. • Archaeological monitoring has been completed within 10 metres of the site • Manual archaeological excavation has been completed within the footprint of the homestead. • Historical site to be shown as exclusion zone on design and construction drawings.	Low

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
						• The homestead site and quarry will be avoided by the proposed additional impact areas.	
Fawkner Land Co. Settlement Moderate regional significance (potentially moderate State significance)	Direct impacts to part of place from construction	Archaeological salvage	Low	Low	Direct impacts to part of the site from construction. The Minor Variation footprint impacts appear to be confined to previously disturbed locations. However, there is potential to impact scattered historical artefacts.	• Additional impact areas are primarily confined to previously disturbed locations, which have been impacted by road and drain construction, and the installation of utilities. • Where reasonably practicable, archaeologist specified temporary fencing will be installed to demarcate the western section of the site where	Low

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
						impact can be avoided. • Monitoring of works within the site extent will be undertaken by an archaeologist during the initial stripping of topsoil.	
Oaklands Junction Low local significance	Design avoids impact	Provision for archaeological salvage if harm cannot be avoided	Low	Low	Direct impacts to part of the site from construction. The Minor Variation footprint impacts are proposed in areas that have the potential for both intact archaeological features and scattered historical artefacts. A bluestone culvert may also be impacted during construction.	• There are minimal options to further reduce impact from construction now that design and construction planning has progressed • Where reasonably practicable, archaeologist specified temporary fencing will be installed to exclude works from archaeologically	Low

Environment aspect & baseline condition	Approved MDP impact				Assessment of Minor Variation impact		
	Original Project impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Project Residual Impact Assessment		Minor Variation impact	Mitigation and/or management measures	Minor Variation Residual Impact Assessment
			Construction	Operation			
						sensitive areas outside of the Minor Variation footprint. • Monitoring of works within the site extent will be undertaken by an archaeologist during the initial stripping of topsoil.	

5. Minor Variation Consultation and Approval Process

5.1 Consultation Objectives

Melbourne Airport is committed to transparent and proportionate consultation on the proposed Minor Variation. Consultation has been structured to build on the extensive stakeholder and community engagement undertaken through the approved MDP process, while focusing on the disturbance footprint refinements and associated environmental and heritage matters that are the subject of this Minor Variation.

The consultation objectives are to:

- Provide stakeholders with clear information regarding the proposed disturbance footprint refinements;
- Explain how the proposed changes relate to the approved Project;
- Provide relevant government agencies and local authorities with an opportunity to understand and comment on the proposed changes;
- Provide the community with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed Minor Variation during public exhibition; and
- Ensure issues raised through consultation are considered prior to submission of the Minor Variation to the Minister.

The consultation approach for the proposed Minor Variation builds upon Melbourne Airport's existing stakeholder and community engagement processes established for the Third Runway Project and other major airport development projects.

5.2 Consultation Approach

Melbourne Airport maintains a comprehensive engagement framework that supports ongoing consultation with government agencies, local councils, airport users, industry stakeholders and the broader community. This framework is informed by Melbourne Airport's engagement principles and incorporates a range of communication and engagement channels including stakeholder briefings, Project updates, consultation forums, dedicated project websites, newsletters, public information materials and direct engagement activities.

Consultation on the proposed Minor Variation has been undertaken in two stages:

- **Pre-exhibition engagement** with relevant Commonwealth, State and local government stakeholders to brief them on the proposed changes, approvals pathway and key assessment outcomes; and
- **Public exhibition** of the proposed Minor Variation for 15 business days prior to submission to the Minister.

This approach reflects the nature of the proposal as a variation to the approved MDP and enables targeted engagement on the matters that have changed since approval of the MDP.

5.3 Consultation Undertaken During Preparation of the Minor Variation

During preparation of the proposed Minor Variation, Melbourne Airport consulted with relevant Commonwealth agencies regarding the proposed disturbance footprint refinements, approvals pathway and matters requiring supplementary assessment. This included engagement with:

- The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA);
- The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), formerly the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW); and
- The Airport Environment Officer (AEO).

Prior to public exhibition, Melbourne Airport also briefed:

- The Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP);
- Hume City Council; and
- Brimbank City Council.

These briefings provided an overview of the proposed Minor Variation, including the disturbance footprint refinements, the basis for the Minor Variation approval pathway, and the environmental and heritage assessment undertaken to support the proposal.

Feedback received through this pre-exhibition engagement was considered in finalising the proposed Minor Variation for public exhibition.

5.4 Public Exhibition of the Preliminary Version of the Draft Minor Variation

The preliminary version of the draft Minor Variation will be made available for public comment for a period of 15 business days, from 24 November 2026 to 14 December 2026, in accordance with section 95A of the Airports Act.

The proposed Minor Variation will be made available on the Melbourne Airport website, together with information explaining the proposed changes and how written submissions may be made.

During the exhibition period, interested stakeholders and members of the community will have the opportunity to review the proposed Minor Variation and provide written submissions to Melbourne Airport.

Melbourne Airport will continue engagement with relevant government agencies, local authorities and other interested stakeholders during the public exhibition period as required.

5.5 Public Exhibition Outcomes and Submission to Minister

Following completion of the public exhibition period, Melbourne Airport will review all submissions received and consider the matters raised in finalising the Minor Variation.

A consultation summary will be prepared documenting:

- The consultation undertaken;
- The issues raised through submissions;
- Melbourne Airport's response to relevant issues; and
- Any amendments made to the proposed Minor Variation as a result of consultation.

The final Minor Variation documentation will then be submitted to the Minister for consideration in accordance with the Airports Act.

6. Conclusion

Melbourne Airport's Third Runway Project is a nationally significant aviation infrastructure development that was approved by the Commonwealth Minister on 10 September 2024 following a comprehensive assessment under the Airports Act. Since approval of the MDP, APAM has progressed preliminary and early works, detailed investigations, procurement activities, Early Contractor Involvement processes and detailed engineering design. These activities have provided a substantially greater level of Project definition than was available when the MDP was approved and have identified opportunities to refine elements of the approved disturbance footprint associated with delivery of the approved Project.

The proposed Minor Variation relates to refinements of the approved disturbance footprint arising from detailed design, construction planning and Project delivery requirements. The proposed changes include additions to the disturbance footprint where required to facilitate construction and operation of the approved Project, together with the removal and protection of areas that are no longer required for Project delivery. The revised disturbance footprint has been developed through a process of avoidance, minimisation, mitigation and proactive management of no-go areas, with the cumulative effects of all proposed additions and reductions assessed as part of this Minor Variation.

The assessment undertaken for this Minor Variation demonstrates that the proposed changes do not alter the fundamental nature, purpose or aviation outcomes of the approved Project. The proposed variation does not involve a new runway, a different runway configuration, changes to the runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP, changes to airport-capacity outcomes, or a different aviation development. Rather, it refines how the approved Project will be delivered on the ground.

The proposed Minor Variation remains consistent with the legislative and policy framework considered through the approved MDP, including the Airports Act, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, the Aviation White Paper, Melbourne Airport Master Plan 2022 and the proposed Melbourne Airport Master Plan 2027 and State and local planning frameworks. The proposed changes do not alter the approved planning outcomes associated with the Project and remain consistent with the strategic planning framework established for Melbourne Airport.

Updated assessments of soils, groundwater and waste, ecology and European heritage have been undertaken to evaluate the revised disturbance footprint. Indigenous cultural heritage is being addressed through the amendment to CHMP 16792. The results indicate that the Minor Variation is consistent with the approved MDP which remains the primary assessment document for the Project and that the revised disturbance footprint does not materially alter the overall environmental and heritage outcomes of the approved development. In several instances, the revised disturbance footprint results in reduced impacts when compared with the existing Project disturbance footprint.

Prior to public exhibition, APAM consulted with relevant Commonwealth, State and local government stakeholders on the proposed Minor Variation. The proposed Minor Variation will be subject to a 15-business-day public exhibition period, with submissions received during exhibition to be considered before the Minor Variation is finalised and submitted to the Minister.

The ecological assessment demonstrates that the revised disturbance footprint results in a reduction in impacts to a number of Matters of National Environmental Significance and threatened ecological communities previously assessed through the approved MDP. Impacts to Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain, Growling Grass Frog habitat, Golden Sun Moth habitat and Swift Parrot habitat have decreased, as have overall impacts to Grey Box Woodland, when assessed against the existing Project disturbance footprint. The revised disturbance footprint therefore does not result in an overall increase in impacts to Matters of National Environmental Significance and remains capable of being managed through the mitigation, management and offset measures established for the approved Project.

Having regard to the approved MDP, the results of the supplementary assessments, the applicable approval conditions and permit requirements, and the overall outcomes of the revised disturbance footprint, APAM considers that the proposed variation is of a minor nature for the purposes of section 95 of the *Airports Act 1996*. The proposed variation facilitates delivery of the approved Project and does not constitute a new or substantially different major airport development.

Accordingly, following completion of public exhibition and consideration of submissions received, APAM intends to seek approval of the Minor Variation under section 95 of the Airports Act to enable delivery of the approved Project in accordance with the revised disturbance footprint described in this document.

Appendix A: Airports Act Minor Variation and MDP consistency

Section 95 of Airports Act - Requirements		Comment
95 (1)	This section applies if:	
	a) a major development plan for an airport has been approved by the Minister; and	The Major Development Plan for the Third Runway Project was approved by the Minister on 10 September 2024.
	b) the airport-lessee company for the airport gives the Minister, in writing, a draft variation of the plan; and	This document is the preliminary version of APAM's draft variation to the approved MDP for the purposes of public comment under section 95A of the Airports Act. Following public exhibition and consideration of submissions received, APAM intends to finalise and submit the draft variation to the Minister for approval under section 95 of the Airports Act.
	c) the variation is of a minor nature.	The proposal is considered by APAM to be an MDP variation of a minor nature in accordance with section 95 of the Airports Act because it facilitates delivery of the development approved by the Minister without changing the fundamental purpose, function or aviation outcomes of the approved Project. The proposed variation does not involve a new runway, a different runway configuration, changes to the runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP, additional aviation infrastructure, or different airport-capacity outcomes. Rather, it refines how the approved Project will be delivered on the ground. The proposed Minor Variation does not alter: • The purpose of or strategic need for the Third Runway Project; • The approved runway development; • The approved taxiway system and operational function; • Airport-capacity outcomes; • The runway operating arrangements assessed in the approved MDP; • Airspace architecture; • Aircraft noise assessment assumptions; or • The aviation outcomes for which the Project was approved.

MELBOURNE AIRPORT

Australia Pacific Airports
(Melbourne)
ACN 076 999 114
Level 2, T4 Melbourne Airport
Management, Victoria 3045
Australia

Locked Bag 16, Tullamarine,
Victoria 3043 Australia
+61 3 9297 1600