



APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF
RESPONSE TO PUBLIC
SUBMISSIONS ON THE DRAFT EIS

MARINUS
LINK

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)

Marinus Link Project

EPBC 2021 /9053

Proponent's summary of responses to public submissions on the draft EIS: s 104(2)(b) EPBC Act

Marinus Link Pty Ltd (**proponent**) is the proponent of the Marinus Link underground and subsea electricity interconnector cable (EPBC 2021/99053) (**Project**). The proponent prepared a combined draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Project in accordance with guidelines published in October 2022 and Victorian Environment Effects Statement (**EES**) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) (**draft EIS**). Relevantly to decision making under the EPBC Act, notice of publication and invitation to make submissions under section 103(1)(c) of the EPBC Act was given and ability to make written submissions was open between 31 May and 12 July 2024 via the Engage Victoria portal. Notice was given in accordance with the EPBC Act and EPBC Regulations. Submitters were not required to identify whether their submission related to matters relevant to matters to be assessed under the EPBC Act, the EES, or both.

This table of response to comment is Appendix A to the EIS Addendum dated December 2024 which forms part of the finalised EIS under section 104 of the EPBC Act.

In response to the draft EIS, 27 submissions were received.

- 4 of these were from regulatory authorities in Victoria: Environment Protection Authority Victoria (**EPA Victoria**); the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (**DEECA**) – Regions; South Gippsland Shire Council; and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority. Both EPA Victoria and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority provided subsequent and separate comments on the Proponent's revised EPRs. No submission was received from Latrobe City Council, or from Burnie City Council or any other Tasmanian regulatory authority in respect of Tasmanian aspects of the draft EIS.
- 2 of the public submissions were originally marked confidential, however following subsequent discussion between the proponent, the relevant parties and the Victorian Inquiry and Advisory Committee (**Victorian IAC**) considering the EES, the submissions have been released with some redactions.

The Victorian IAC also invited each of the three First Peoples groups affected by the proposed project within Victoria to make further comments. The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation provided a response dated 16 July 2024 including a summary of the recommendations of the Cultural Values Assessment dated May 2024 prepared in relation to the Project.

This Appendix sets out the response of the proponent to each of the submissions made on the draft EIS for the Project, and the response of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (**BLCAC**) dated May 2024. Given the small number of submissions received on the draft EIS, a response is provided to each submission individually. The responses are informed by:

- The comments of each submitter made during the period above. Each submission will be provided to the Minister under the EPBC Act and is available via the Engage Victoria website at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/project/MarinusLink-IAC/page/Submissions>;
- The supplementary reports of each expert engaged by the proponent, addressing the proposed change to timing of Stage 2 of the Project discussed in section 2 of the EIS Addendum;
- The expert reports of each expert witness engaged by the proponent to provide evidence to the Victorian IAC;

- Further discussion with submitters, site visits and further engagement in accordance with the proponent's usual practice for continued engagement with affected landholders;
- Further exchange of correspondence with EPA Victoria, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the Victorian Country Fire Authority through the Victorian IAC process;
- Further engagement with the Tasmanian Environment Protection Authority (EPA Tasmania) in progressing the Environmental Impact Statements under the Tasmanian regulatory regime, including the preference for mitigation measures rather than EPRs as discussed in section 15.2.3 of the EIS Addendum;
- Further advice from experts on the proposed Environmental Management Framework including Environmental Performance Requirements and mitigation measures in light of all the above matters as discussed in section 15 of the EIS Addendum.

This Appendix is structured as follows:

- 1 Detailed response to the comments made by the EPA Victoria, DEECA – Regions, South Gippsland Shire Council and the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority.
- 2 Submissions Summary Table summarising the issues raised in other submissions and providing the proponent's response.
- 3 Response to the BLCAC Cultural Values Assessment recommendations.

1 Response to submissions of EPA Victoria, DEECA – Regions, South Gippsland Shire Council and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

1.1 Response to EPA Victoria – submission 18

The Proponent notes that the EPA Victoria submission acknowledges the involvement of EPA through the Technical Reference Group process during preparation of the draft EIS including EES and draft PSA, and that EPA Victoria advised in its submission that it would not be presenting at the Victorian IAC hearing. The Proponent has sought to engage further with EPA Victoria in meaningfully responding to the matters raised in EPA's submission and most of these have been resolved through proposed minor amendments to the draft Environment Performance Requirements to be included in the Project's Environmental Management Framework:

- The Proponent acknowledges EPA Victoria's comment that 'the draft EIS has identified key project risks and has referred to the proposed mitigation measures to manage and mitigate those risks'. The Proponent acknowledges and agrees that the Project will be subject to the *Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic)* including the general environmental duty (GED) set out under that Act, which, broadly put, requires the avoidance or minimisation of risk of harm to human health and the environment from pollution and waste so far as reasonably practicable. Although compliance with the proposed Environmental Management Framework and EPRs will not necessarily ensure compliance with the GED, compliance with the proposed Environmental Management Framework and EPRs is a key element in the Proponent's approach to compliance with the GED.
- The Proponent acknowledges EPA Victoria's recommendations for specific changes to the EMF and EPRs. EPA Victoria's recommendations have been considered by relevant experts. On 14 August 2024, the Proponent provided to EPA Victoria a full version of the EPRs, marked up with the amendments recommended by EPA Victoria in its submission, with comment responses of the Proponent in light of expert advice on EPA Victoria's recommendations. The proponent provided further markup proposed by the Proponent where relevant, including where comments are not adopted.
- EPA Victoria provided a response dated 30 August noting that most of the proposed changes were therefore agreed.
- Following this exchange, there are limited drafting points within the EPRs where the Proponent has proposed an alternative to EPA Victoria's submission. These matters relate to a very limited subset of the detail of the requirements for development of the land decommissioning management plan, waste management plan, construction waste management plan, spoil management, and construction noise and vibration management plan.
- The proponent considers that these matters can be addressed through finessing the drafting of the final EPRs as required pursuant to the draft Incorporated Document and do not raise any concerns regarding potential for the Project to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance.

1.2 Response to DEECA - Regions – submission 21

Key issues raised	Proponent response in finalised EIS
<p>Role of DEECA Regions Decisions under Victorian legislation</p>	<p>The Proponent acknowledges and appreciates the engagement of DEECA Regions in the draft EIS process including through the Technical Reference Group. The Proponent notes the extensive review by DEECA Regions of relevant specialist assessments and chapters, in addition to consideration of future approvals that will be required under Victorian legislation, where such approvals are to be sought at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The proponent has provided a very detailed response to DEECA’s submission relevant to Victorian matters through the Victorian IAC process.</p> <p>The below response focuses on matters raised by DEECA that may additionally be relevant to MNES under the EPBC Act.</p>
<p>Native vegetation removal - Key considerations under the <i>Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation</i> (DELWP 2017) (Guidelines) – avoid and minimise statement; offset statement</p>	<p>The Proponent agrees that the considerations raised by DEECA Regions are relevant to the assessment and approval of actions in relation to the Project under Victorian legislation.</p> <p>A key difference between the Proponent’s approach and the submission of DEECA Regions relates to the level of detail appropriately provided in the draft EIS, which is based on a concept design within a survey area, and the level of detail to be provided at a future time, governed by the conditions of the proposed Incorporated Document.</p> <p>The proposed Project controls (including particularly clause 5.4 of the Incorporated Document) would require the extent of native vegetation proposed to be removed to be identified to the satisfaction of the Secretary, DEECA, having regard to the final Project design, and prior to the removal of native vegetation. The proponent has sought advice of experts in relation to ecology, land use planning and aquatic environments, and in light of that advice that the proposed EPRs are suitable to minimise and manage impacts to an acceptable level, remains of the view that the controls proposed by the draft Incorporated Document and EPRs provide an appropriate and holistic approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant to EPBC listed vegetation in Victoria, a single patch of the EPBC Act listed Gippsland Red Gum (<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> subsp. <i>mediana</i>) Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland community and equivalent FFG Act listed Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland community was identified within the McFarlane Road, road reserve at (KP 79.7). The project description assessed in Technical Appendix V (Terrestrial ecology Vic) provided for trenched construction along the road reserve, resulting in a direct impact on the community (direct removal of 0.11 ha). Following finalisation of Technical Appendix V (Terrestrial ecology Vic), the proponent has undertaken further

design in accordance with EPR EC01 and have committed to the use of HDD at this section of the McFarlane Road. With the commitment to use HDD, the associated patch will not be impacted by the project. The terrestrial ecology expert has now assessed the significance of impacts as 'low'.

- In relation to Tasmania, no EPBC protected threatened flora species were identified as potentially occurring within the converter station site or the shore crossing. No threatened vegetation communities are impacted.
- Offsets will not be required under the EPBC Act.
- Further expert ecology advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that the approach taken to identification of impacts to native vegetation through multiple, extensive desktop assessments and on-ground habitat condition assessments and subsequent targeted survey results. The expert states that the calculation of impacts to native vegetation have without question been done in accordance with the Victorian Guidelines, and the offset (ENSYM) scenarios generated provide a high level of accuracy of the likely pre- and post- mitigation impacts to native vegetation and offset requirements. He explicitly refutes claims that Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology is not sufficient to determine impacts on the basis it is not in accordance with the Victorian Guidelines and directs to section 5.6 of that Technical Appendix for the process followed to ensure field data was collected in accordance with the Guidelines, section 5.12.2 for the process for calculating impacts in accordance with the Guidelines, and section 5.3 for the process of mapping vegetation and use of modelled condition scores.
- The Proponent notes, and agrees with, the expert's comment that it is unreasonable to expect the documentation prepared for the draft EIS to respond specifically to the application requirements under the Victorian Guidelines, including presenting data and figures in a specific manner, when this has been identified for completion and provision at a later, more appropriate stage of the process. The Proponent notes that the conditions of the draft Incorporated Document address timing for satisfaction of relevant requirements of the Guidelines, and the EPRs provide further detail.

No change is required for the finalised EIS. Further detailed response to the matters raised in the Guidelines will be provided at the appropriate time pursuant to the conditions of the draft Incorporated Document.

Potential for disturbance outside the draft EIS Area of Disturbance (AoD) above HDD and recommendation for additional on ground impact assessments for any changes to area or construction methodology

The AoD presented in the draft EIS includes the HDD drill pads (entry and exit points), but does not include the land above HDD bores, where HDD is proposed to be used specifically to avoid construction impacts.

The potential for design changes as compared with the concept design presented in the draft EIS is addressed (amongst other places) in EPR EC03, and in the process of development and approval of Alignment Plans in accordance with clause 5.2 of the draft Incorporated Document.

The survey area in Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology included the areas where HDD is proposed. The further expert ecology advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process reiterates the expert's view that the assessment to date has been comprehensive and robust, other than a small number of identified areas that require further assessment in accordance with the proposed EPRs. In relation to the potential implications of changes to construction methodology, and the risk of lost bore heads requiring excavation or other impacts that may occur as a result of unplanned events, the expert notes that the risk of an event occurring, and that the impact would be significant, is low, given the location of the Project is predominantly heavily degraded or modified with limited value and the refinement of planning and design, including alignment, resulting in substantial avoidance of minimisation of impacts, and having regard to the appropriate controls for such events in the EPRs such as those relating to groundwater and surface water. The Proponent considers that the controls proposed by the draft Incorporated Document and EPRs provide an appropriate and holistic approach.

If changes to construction area or methodology are proposed these would need to be consistent with the project as approved under the EPBC Act, or the proponent would need to consider referral of a variation of the approved project.

Marine
FFG Act listed Tasman grass-wrack
Heterozostera tasmanica

The Proponent acknowledges DEECA's comment that the marine ecology surveys were adequate to describe the general physical environment and marine habitats likely to be present in the survey area.

DEECA's specific comments in relation to Tasman grass-wrack within Victorian coastal waters have been addressed through the Victorian process noting that this is not an EPBC listed species.

Potential impacts of the Project to the marine environment were the subject of extensive investigation and assessment in the draft EIS as set out in Technical Appendix H: Marine Ecology and Resource Use, and a comprehensive suite of EPRs has been proposed. Further marine surveys are underway to inform detailed design and refinement of project sub-sea alignment in accordance with the proposed EPRs. No change in the finalised EIS is proposed.

Terrestrial aquatic values including
fauna

Potential impacts to aquatic values are assessed in Technical Appendix Q: Surface Water and Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology.

Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology does not assume waterways would be avoided, but rather identifies the different types of potential impacts on waterways and on aquatic values, arising from crossing either with trenchless or trenched construction technique. The Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology provides controls which it considers to be appropriate in context, including EPR EC03.

Further expert advice in relation to waterways and potential associated impacts on ecology was obtained by the proponent through the Victorian IAC process. Relevant to potential impacts on MNES, the advice confirmed:

- The vast majority of ‘waterways’ intersected by the project are high-level drainage lines which do not support functional aquatic or terrestrial ecosystems. In many instances these are effectively gullies within farmland that have been cleared of native vegetation, are not fenced from stock access, are interrupted by access tracks, dams and other manmade structures and would only support flowing water for short periods after heavy rainfall events.
- All major waterways, which support continuous or seasonal flows and are considered to have some degree of ecological function (although in many instances still limited) were assessed. This includes the waterways that are proposed to be HDD.
- Generally, waterways supporting sensitive values will be avoided by trenchless construction techniques and in addition to the controls encapsulated in EPR EC03, numerous other EPRs detail controls related to the protection and management of waterways which will ensure that where impacts cannot be avoided (eg trenching is required), the risk to aquatic and riparian ecosystems is minimised, both within the alignment and within the broader catchment. Given the application of these measures, it is reasonable to assume that impacts to waterways can be restricted to the point of crossing and for the duration of construction, and that sites will be appropriately rehabilitated so subsequential issues do not arise post-construction.
- The proposed changes to EPRs relevant to waterway crossings (reflected in Appendix C to this EIS Addendum) will improve assessment of risk and further reduce the likelihood and consequences of incidents or events during construction.
- Although EPR SW01 is considered appropriate, changes have been made to explicitly require documentation of existing aquatic habitat. The ongoing role of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority in relation to waterway condition is also noted, including that the CMA endorsed the exhibited EPRs and did not in its own submission raise any concerns regarding the Project.

The proponent has proposed changes to the relevant EPRs reflecting the advice of its experts in response to DEECA’s submission, which have been reviewed and approved by the experts. These changes are included in the draft EPRs included in the finalised EIS.

Threatened terrestrial flora

The Proponent acknowledges DEECA’s comment that the approach taken in the EES to assume presence of threatened flora species in unsurveyed areas is suitable to inform likely risks to the overall habitat availability for these species in the survey area.

In relation to *Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland Community*, since the exhibition of Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology of the draft EIS, the Proponent has confirmed that McFarlane Road and the associated patch of Gippsland Red Gum (*Eucalyptus tereticornis subsp. Mediana*) Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland (listed under the EPBC Act as critically endangered) and equivalent FFG Act listed Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland Community and/or Central Gippsland Plains Grassland will be avoided through

use of trenchless construction techniques (e.g. HDD). As a result, it can be confirmed that this community will not be impacted by the project.

Threatened terrestrial fauna

Contrary to comments made in the DEECA submission:

- Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology acknowledges the avoidance of direct impacts on shorebird habitat through use of HDD. It assesses potential for indirect impacts on shorebirds including having regard to noise and light (see, e.g., the MNES significant impact tests in Appendix 5 at PDF p 328), and has regard to these matters in the development of EPR EC02;
- Targeted surveys were undertaken for shorebirds, as detailed in section 5.9.9 of Technical Appendix V;
- The use of beaches by Hooded Plover (listed under the EPBC Act as vulnerable) is considered in Technical Appendix V: see Table C p 14 / PDF p 15; detail of surveys at section 5.9.9 p 45 / PDF p 46; section 6.3 pp 79-80 / PDF pp 80-81; section 8.3.2 p 107 / PDF p 108; Appendix 4 (PDF pages 339-340). The further expert ecology advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that targeted surveys were undertaken for Hooded Plover but only crested tern and sanderlings were identified during the survey. The expert report also further discusses the potential impacts of the shore crossing on coastal fauna including the Hooded Plover, noting that the high and substantial dunes provide screening between the HDD drill pads and the beach habitat in this location. The expert report notes that EC02 proposes appropriate work restrictions during sensitive life-stages within 100m of priority habitats, which (due to distance and the intervening dunes) includes a very small portion of the foreshore at Waratah Bay, which amounts to approximately 350m of the 16.1km beach or approximately 0.02% of the potential breeding and nesting habitat. Expert advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process isn that the findings of Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology are accurate and the post-mitigation impact is likely to be low for shorebirds.

Impact to fauna species associated with the loss of hollow-bearing trees

Section 8.3.2 of Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology and the expert report of Mr Garden identifies the following:

- As a count of tree hollows within areas of unassessed areas was not possible during preparation of the impact assessment, a precautionary approach was adopted in the assessment of hollow-bearing trees, where the number of large trees was used as a proxy for the number of hollow-bearing trees.

EPR EC01 also requires completion of fauna utilisation surveys prior to the commencement of project works, which will identify those hollow bearing trees that are being utilised and allow for the minimisation of their removal through actions such as micro-siting.

Recommended change to CEMP requirements

EPR EC02 would require the preparation of a biodiversity management plan as a sub-plan of the CEMP, which would address (amongst other things) how impacts to fauna will be managed during construction as relevant to this comment. The Proponent does not consider changes to the CEMP requirements necessary.

Specific recommendations on amendments to EPRs:

- EC01: vegetation quality assessments to be undertaken for specified areas
- EC01: matters to address the Guidelines
- EC01: identification of FFG Act protected flora, obtain permit, incorporate conditions into plans
- EC02: microsites to avoid threatened species habitat in biodiversity management plan
- EC02: specific procedures to manage Chytrid fungus
- EC03: further aquatic surveys if specified waterways unable to be avoided through HDD or alignment changes
- EC03: requirement for FFG Act permit for fish
- MERU02: locating alignment in areas of sparse seagrass
- MERU07: pinnipeds to be specifically included in marine fauna management plan

In addition to its submission on the draft EIS, DEECA – Regions made further submissions at the Victorian Inquiry and Advisory Committee hearing. It relevantly made recommendations for amendments to EPRs. There are a number of recommendations which the Proponent has not proposed to be incorporated into the EPRs, set out below. The Proponent considers that these matters can be addressed through finessing the drafting of the final EPRs as required pursuant to the draft Incorporated Document and that they do not raise any concerns regarding potential for the Project to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance.

- EC01: The Proponent does not consider it necessary for HDD crossings to be referenced, as impact to the areas above HDD crossings in the final design is not expected. The EPRs also contain a number of controls for managing the potential for HDD crossing construction impacts. The Proponent does not consider it necessary to include specific reference to 'any other areas that were not subject to site surveys', as these areas would be captured under the existing EPR EC01.
- EC01: The Proponent does not consider these recommendations to be necessary, as they would duplicate conditions of the draft Incorporated Document and EMF.
- EC01: The Proponent does not consider this to be required as it duplicate legislative requirements and the proposed requirements are not feasible at the relevant stage of the project, acknowledging, however, that obtaining the necessary permits will occur at the appropriate time.
- EC02: The Proponent does not consider this to be required, where the appropriate timing for microsites to avoid and minimise habitat impacts is during the design stage and that this is addressed in EPR EC01.
- EC02: The Proponent does not consider these measures necessary, where they are considered standard operations already included under EPR EC03 requiring a site management plan, though has proposed to include reference to the risk of pathogens in EC03.
- EC03: The Proponent does not agree with this recommendation as it unnecessarily duplicates requirements under EPRs EC01 and SW01. If a specified waterway cannot be crossed using HDD, the physical extent of those crossings will become part of the AoD for the final design and EPR EC01 will require habitat assessments and targeted surveys and required further assessment to determine habitat suitability and/or presence/absence of threatened species. EPR EC01 also requires those assessments and targeted surveys to inform design. The Proponent has, however, proposed an amendment to SW01 to incorporate a requirement for habitat of potentially affected waterways to be documented as part of a plan to manage erosion and surface water.

- EC03: The Proponent does not accept this change, as it unnecessarily duplicates a statutory requirement. The revised EMF includes a specific reference to permit to take listed fish.
- MERU02: The Proponent does not agree to this change as (a) there are a number of factors relevant to the location of the coastal crossing HDD exit point; and (b) in light of the assessment undertaken, the impact to Tasman grass-wrack will not be significant and this further restriction is unnecessary to achieve acceptable impacts.
- MERU07: The Proponent does not consider specific reference to pinnipeds (seals) to be required. The marine fauna management plan' will encompass pinnipeds and further, MERU07 states the measures in the plan much be consistent with the objectives of relevant EPBC Act recovery plans, including the Sub-Antarctic Fur Seal and Southern Elephant Seal Recovery Plan (DEH 2004).

1.3 Response to South Gippsland Shire Council – submission 10

Key issues raised	Proponent response in finalised EIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Gippsland Shire Council is 'excited by the role renewables will play in safeguarding our environment,' and 'the new renewables industry will help us to build an innovative, skilled, and resilient economy' • Acknowledges the broad range of community views • Acknowledges the proposal for a draft Planning Scheme Amendment • Supports IAC process as an appropriate means to consider submissions and balance 	<p>The Proponent acknowledges and appreciates the support and engagement of South Gippsland Shire Council and its officers through development of the Project and draft EIS, including through participation in the Technical Reference Group for the EES. The Proponent looks forward to continuing to work with South Gippsland Shire Council through delivery and operation of the Project, including through the processes set out in the EMF and EPRs.</p> <p>Council's comments have been considered by relevant experts. No changes to the draft EIS or EPRs have been required in response to Council's comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proponent has proposed EPRs that formalise the Proponent's approach to ongoing community consultation, in particular EPR S03, which provides for the development and implementation of a community and stakeholder engagement framework. • The Proponent is developing its community benefits sharing scheme in accordance with EPR S04 and this will continue through 2024, including further consultation. EPR S04 provides that the community benefits sharing scheme should be developed having regard to <i>Community Engagement and Benefit Sharing in Renewable Energy Development: A Guide For Renewable Energy Developers (July 2021)</i>. Technical Appendix B: Economic Impact Assessment of the draft EIS identifies that EPR S04 will seek

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| <p>various viewpoints and interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly encourages continuing communication with community • Council is interested in community benefits scheme to ensure benefits are returned directly to local community impacted by project • Proposes that any required environmental offsets are invested in the local community | <p>to enhance employment and social benefits for the local population and include an industry participation plan to enhance opportunities for the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proponent proposes to provide environmental offsets in accordance with the <i>Guidelines</i>. Although the Proponent is keen to consider local offsets and other local funding opportunities where relevant, the Proponent does not consider it appropriate for this to be linked to statutory offset requirements nor for this to form part of the regulatory controls applied to the project. • With the application of EPRs A01 to A06, residual impacts on farming land are assessed as being short term and of low to moderate significance during construction and low to very low significance during operation. There will be some residual impact on the use of land within the cable easement area, though land will be reinstated and rehabilitated, and the easement will allow the landowner to continue to use the land, subject to conditions. • The potential use of land within the Project land for revegetation opportunities and offsets will be managed through preparation of Property Management Plans in accordance with EPR A02. These plans will be developed with landowners and will consider the use, characteristics, practices and plans specific to the land. |
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1.4 Response to West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority – submission 17

Key issues raised	Proponent response in finalised EIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Authority's feedback during the Technical Reference Group process for the EES was given due consideration and draft EIS documents have incorporated feedback where appropriate • The Authority is satisfied that appropriate EPRs have been identified to ensure impact on waterways and floodplains are minimised 	<p>The Proponent acknowledges and appreciates the engagement and advice of the Authority through development of the project, including through the Technical Reference Group for the EES. The Proponent looks forward to continuing engagement with the Authority through finalising the proposed EPRs and through delivery and operation of the Project as envisaged by the EPRs.</p> <p>The Proponent has sought the views of the Authority on the EPRs now proposed in the finalised EIS and the Authority has confirmed it is supportive of these.</p>

2 Response to comments raised in other submissions

Submission number	Submitter Key issues raised	Proponent response in finalised EIS
1	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threats to wildlife habitats, migration, foraging and mating from construction activities, noise and vibration, and location of infrastructure Cumulative impact will increase wildlife vulnerability to predation, reduced genetic diversity and ability to adapt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proponent considers that the draft EIS provides robust justification for its conclusion that the potential risks and impacts from the Project will be avoided, minimised and mitigated effectively through application of the proposed EPRs. The further expert advice on terrestrial ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process has confirmed that the draft EIS sets out a thorough assessment of impacts to matters raised in this submission, based on the precautionary principle, and that management measures proposed through the Biodiversity Management Plan in EPR EC02 are appropriate. Within Victoria, EPBC-listed vegetation identified through the assessment set out in the draft EIS was limited to a single patch of the EPBC Act listed Gippsland Red Gum (<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> subsp. <i>mediana</i>) Grassy Woodland and Associated Native Grassland community and equivalent FFG Act listed Forest Red Gum Grassy Woodland community was identified within the McFarlane Road, road reserve. The project description assessed in Technical Appendix V (Terrestrial ecology Vic) provided for trenched construction along the road reserve, resulting in a direct impact on the community (direct removal of 0.11 ha). Following finalisation of Technical Appendix V (Terrestrial ecology Vic), the proponent has undertaken further design in accordance with EPR EC01 and have committed to the use of HDD at this section of the McFarlane Road. With the commitment to use HDD, the associated patch will not be impacted by the project. The further expert ecological advice obtained through the Victorian IAC processes has assessed the significance of impacts as 'low'. In Tasmania, no EPBC protected threatened flora species were identified as potentially occurring within the converter station site or the shore crossing. No threatened vegetation communities impacted. The further expert advice on geomorphology and landslip obtained through the Victorian IAC process has confirmed that application of the EPRs can sufficiently mitigate concerns regarding erosion, stability and HDD operations.
2	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy development for the whole community should 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rationale for Marinus Link is set out in the draft EIS at Volume 1, Chapter 2, which notes that Marinus Link will play an important part in the nation's transition from coal and gas fired power to renewable energy generation. Marinus Link will substantially increase the capacity for energy trading between Tasmania – whose already-significant renewable energy generation capacity is set to double

	<p>override individual property owner concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues with potential negative environmental consequences should be carefully managed 	<p>by 2040 – and the rest of the National Electricity Market (which is comprised of five regions: Victoria, New South Wales, Canberra, Queensland, and South Australia). The Project will facilitate delivery of renewable energy generation and storage to support energy stability within the NEM and support Australia to achieve its renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proponent has given careful consideration to managing impacts on affected landowners as well as Traditional Owners, as reflected in Volume 4 Chapter 6: Agriculture and Forestry; Volume 4 Chapter 15: Land Use and Planning; Volume 4 Chapter 16: Social and their corresponding technical appendices, Appendix K: Agriculture and Forestry; Appendix S: Land Use and Planning; and Appendix U: Social. The Proponent has proposed a comprehensive EMF and detailed EPRs to carefully manage impacts of the project through construction and operation.
3	<p>██████████</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestion for floating cables to be used in conjunction with fisheries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Marinus Link marine cables will be buried on the seabed as set out in the project description in Volume 1 Chapter 6: Project Description of the draft EIS.
4	<p>████████████████████</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on wildlife and marine mammals from project-related environmental degradation, climate change and pollution Noise and vibration impacts to fish, birds and marine mammals Cable corrosion from seawater and introduction of pollution into the marine environment Conflicts with SDG15 (life on land) and SDG14 (life below water) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft EIS sets out a thorough assessment of impacts to matters raised in this submission, based on the precautionary principle and the proponent remains of the view that the management measures proposed through the Biodiversity Management Plan in EPR EC02 are appropriate. The further expert advice on terrestrial ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that the proposed EPRs are appropriate. Technical Appendix H: Marine Ecology and Resource Use of the draft EIS addresses the concerns raised in respect of marine ecology. Table 0-1 and 0-2 of the Technical Appendix summarise the construction and operational impacts on marine ecology. All impacts are assessed to have a residual significance rating of <i>Low</i>, except for the residual impact significance rating of <i>Moderate</i> for auditory damage assessed for cable lay ship underwater noise cumulative impacts to high-frequency hearing cetaceans. The further expert advice on marine ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process states, however, this was an anomaly of the method adopted in the assessment, which requires a receiver (i.e., an HF cetacean) to remain at a constant distance from the noise source for 24 hours, which is an unlikely scenario, and in a more plausible scenario the rating would be a low risk. The Proponent's position is that the design of the type of subsea HVDC cables are armoured, insulated and waterproof, and are designed to last for duration of the operational life of the Project. There are no oils or other fluids used in the type of subsea HVDC cables the Proponent proposes for the Project. The further expert advice on marine ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process states that, in the

- Consider alternative solutions like increased use of solar panels and wind farms on land
- context of where the Proponent adopts a decommissioning option that retains the cables in situ, noting the relatively benign chemical composition of the HVDC cables, the likelihood of direct chemical contamination to marine or sediment quality is low, and predicted impacts of potential long-term corrosion of the metallic components on surficial sediments, overlying bottom waters and benthic flora and fauna are assessed as have a low risk, as the quantities of any heavy metals that may be released are considered insufficient to have significant impacts.
- Marinus Link's Sustainability Framework, which is available on its website, has been developed in light of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2017, among other key documents. It is also informed by the Australian Government Nationally Determined Contribution Under the UNFCCC Communication 2022. Volume 1 Chapter 9: Sustainability, Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas explores this topic in greater detail. The chapters on Volume 2 Chapter 2: terrestrial Ecology, Volume 3 Chapter 2: Marine Ecology and their corresponding technical appendices (Appendix V and Appendix H) provide in-depth studies of the potential impacts of Marinus Link on marine and terrestrial environment during construction and Operation. The EPRs recommended in light of these impact assessments will also help mitigate impacts.
 - The rationale for Marinus Link is set out in the draft EIS at Volume 1 Chapter 2 (see also: the Proponent's response to submission 2). The project description is in Volume 1 Chapter 6 of the draft EIS.

5

- Concerns about traffic and noise impact on certification of an organic farm in the area
 - Concerns about pollution from trucks on people, livestock, crops or water
 - Queries regarding methodology for noise and vibration assessment including noise from traffic
 - Communication regarding traffic impacts
- A high-level assessment of noise associated with construction traffic on public roads was presented in Technical Appendix T: Noise and Vibration. The further expert traffic advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirms that the assessment undertaken in the draft EIS is sufficient to conclude that off-site construction traffic is unlikely to warrant dedicated noise mitigation measures, particularly given the temporary nature of the associated impact. Most heavy vehicle movements in the vicinity of the Project are expected to occur during normal working hours and along rural highways. EPR NV02 and the construction noise and vibration management plan it requires will ensure that reasonable and practicable measures to minimise the risk of harm as a result of noise from onsite and off-site sources during construction (including heavy vehicle movements on local roads) will be implemented.
 - Volume 4, Chapter 6: Agriculture and Forestry and Technical Appendix K: Agriculture and Forestry address related concerns. EPR A05 provides that prior to commencing project works on each certified organic farm, measures be developed to avoid impacts on organic farming and organic farming certification. The Proponent notes that Mardan-Dumbalk Road is located approximately 2 km west of the Project alignment and is not proposed to be used for construction traffic.

- Compensation for medical problems or need for day sleep
- Appendix L: Air Quality addresses impacts to land, soil, flora and vegetation. It identifies one organic farm in the project area and concludes that, based on advice from the agricultural expert, the risk of dust affecting the potatoes in the farm is low, particularly due to standard management practices proposed for the project. Further expert advice on air quality obtained through the Victorian IAC process has confirmed that other air pollutants associated with traffic have a lower risk of affecting agricultural activities than dust, and that the activities due to the Project have low potential to affect long-term concentrations of these pollutants. These practices are provided in EPR A06. Under this EPR, the Proponent will develop property-specific measures to avoid impacts on organic farming and certification on each farm. These measures will be informed by advice provided or guidelines published by approved organic certifying bodies registered by the Commonwealth. The further expert advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process has also noted that the National Organic Standard excludes environmental contaminants such as those that may be generated by the Project and these would not be a reason to deny or discontinue certification. The expert concluded that the EPRs relating to Air Quality will ensure that there will be a negligible to low risk associated with the Project in this regard.
- The further expert advice on air quality obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that the expert considers the assessment in the draft EIS was appropriate, conducted in accordance with IAQM guidance and has adopted relevant dust management and mitigation measures from EPA Victoria guidance documents.
- Volume 4 Chapter 8: Traffic and Transport, its related Technical Appendix W, and the further advice of a traffic expert obtained through the Victorian IAC process address concerns regarding traffic. EPR T01 requires a transport management plan to be developed to document how disruption to affected local land uses and traffic will be managed. Site inspections of the surrounding road network, including observational review of traffic behaviours, were undertaken in the course of preparing the Technical Appendix W. The Proponent does not propose to use the Mardan-Dumbalk Road identified by the submitter for construction traffic, and Mardan Road is not proposed to be used by trucks or heavy construction vehicles.
- Volume 4 Chapter 9: Air Quality, its associated Technical Appendix L and the further advice of a traffic expert obtained through the Victorian IAC process have confirmed that risk of dust and traffic emissions on sensitive receptors following implementation of EPRs is negligible to low. The levels of combustion-related air pollutants due to construction and operations will be insignificant and the relevant activities of the project will be short-term and transient and consequently have a low potential to affect long-term concentrations of these air pollutants.
- In relation to compensation and associated social impacts, the further expert advice on social impact assessment obtained through the Victorian IAC process notes that compensation is payable to directly affected landowners. The Proponent observes that nearby landowners who are not eligible for direct compensation payments may have specific concerns addressed through the ongoing consultation

framework under EPR S03, and may benefit from the broader social schemes envisaged through EPR S04 (community benefits scheme) and S05 (industry participation plan).

- The Proponent offers a community support service to members of the community regarding the Project and its impact. Further information on the support service is available on the Proponent's website at <https://www.marinuslink.com.au/landholder-engagement/>.

6

[REDACTED]

- TIA doesn't mention impact on Strzelecki Koalas
- Impact on koalas and other wildlife will be absolutely devastating

- Victorian Koalas, including Strzelecki Koalas, are not listed under the EPBC Act. The draft EIS sets out a thorough assessment of impacts to matters raised in this submission, based on the precautionary principle, and that management measures proposed through the Biodiversity Management Plan in EPR EC02 are appropriate. Further discussion is below in the response to submission 11.
- EPR A02 also requires property management plans to avoid impacts to trees and tree protection zones including isolated trees and stands, shelter belts and wind break plantings, which may be relevant.

7

[REDACTED]

- Lack of knowledge about EMF impact on earthworms, microbes and soil bacteria could heavily impact submitter's sons, who are third-generation farmers
- Impact on bees, which can't be placed within 5 metres of the 90-km alignment

- Although there is no published research on the potential impact of EMF on earthworms, Technical Appendix A: Electromagnetic Fields cites research that concluded there was no conclusive evidence of crop yield and plant health impacts from elevated EMF levels. The further expert advice on electromagnetic frequencies obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that, having regard to earthworms, microbes and soil bacteria directly impacting crop yields and plant health, impacts are concluded as being negligible, and that publicly available information indicates that there are currently no existing apiaries within the impact zone. The assessment in the draft EIS has had regard to the matters raised in this submission and EMI, EMF and thermal heat, including cumulative impacts, will be appropriately managed through the EPRs as proposed.
- The further expert advice on terrestrial ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process has confirmed that the draft EIS sets out a thorough assessment of impacts to matters raised in this submission, based on the precautionary principle, and that management measures proposed through the Biodiversity Management Plan in EPR EC02 are appropriate.
- Further information would be required to assess any potential impacts on the submitter's property.

8

[REDACTED]

- Impact of EMF on natural migration of sea life as well as

- The further expert advice on marine ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process responded to the lack of information on the species raised by this submitter, as set out in the EIS Addendum. The limited information is acknowledged, including owing to a lack of Australian and southern hemisphere laboratory and/or field studies on these six species. Given the general absence of such studies,

	<p>fishing yields in established fishing grounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of information on potential impacts of EMF from the cable on the behaviour, migration, and recruitment of species like Southern Rock Lobster, Giant Crab, Shortfin Eel, Longfin Eel, Gummy Shark, and School Shark. 	<p>Technical Appendix H draft EIS: Marine Ecology and Resource Use had to have recourse to northern hemisphere studies as surrogates, and consideration of marine animals of the same families or genera, and this approach is considered by the expert to be appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical Appendix H: Marine Ecology and Resource Use assessed impacts of EMF on marine invertebrates (including decapod crustaceans) under section 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 and concluded that magnetic fields impacts are not predicted, having regard to field studies (as cited in the Technical Appendix). EMF effects on migratory eels are assessed as being unlikely to present a barrier to migration, where all eels are expected to be able to cross cable locations. Transient exposure to magnetic fields is also assessed as being unlikely to interfere with migration or other long-distance movements of sharks, given the wide range and variability of natural electric fields encountered in Bass Strait. EPR MERU12 as exhibited is appropriate to manage the risks.
9	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to the taxpayer of the Project Extent to which the Project subsidises private wind farm developments which benefit private developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project rationale and purpose are described in Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale (see also: the Proponent's response to submission 2). The further advice of economic experts obtained through the Victorian IAC process notes that the Project's economic contribution includes the generation of local, state and federal public tax revenues, which are, in part, used to fund essential and community infrastructure.
11	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern regarding the Strzelecki Koala and Strzelecki region, including cumulative impact with VicRoads road widening and February 2024 storm impacts, and having regard to the Victorian Koala Management Strategy and Biodiversity 2037 Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian Koalas, including Strzelecki Koalas, are not listed under the EPBC Act. Through the desktop and field study methodology utilised in Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology, presence and location of Koalas were recorded whenever observed during field assessments. Koalas are not a threatened species in Victoria and a specific impact assessment for this species was not considered warranted, although they were observed in the Strzelecki Ranges and along the Great Southern Rail Trail. Impacts to native vegetation in these areas was assessed as small and temporal in nature. It was concluded that, based on the post-mitigation impacts to habitat, the Project is unlikely to lead to a long term decrease in the size of the local populations of Koala nor materially reduce the area of occupancy for the population.

- General concern regarding robustness of native vegetation offsets
- Reference to Southern Bent-wing Bat
- The further expert advice on terrestrial ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that Southern Bent-wing Bat (listed under the EPBC Act as critically endangered) does not occur in the Gippsland region.
- Technical Appendix M: Bushfire concluded that there is a low risk of fire ignition and then escape from Project activities and that the risk of fire ignition and escape can be effectively avoided or at least significantly mitigated through implementation of the recommended EPRs. The further advice of a bushfire expert obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that, in relation to the Strzelecki koala population, should a fire start and spread from the Project, the impact on the population (if any) would be temporal in nature and very unlikely to affect the entire population.

12

- Rationale for project and economic case
- Ownership of land by MLPL shareholder, Victorian Government, and commercial relationship with HVP
- Impacts to submitter's property
- Crossing of Little Morwell River – route selection, minor waterways and subterranean flows into the river, wetlands and swamp adjacent to trench through Little Morwell River and Ten Mile Creek Road not identified. Impact to swamp between the river and Pleasant Valley Rd, and freshwater spring in this swamp.
- Impact of Little Morwell River crossing on endangered species, including Narracan
- The rationale for the project is set out in the draft EIS at Volume 1 Chapter 2 (see also: the Proponent's response to submission 2). The economic impacts of the project are addressed in Volume 1 Chapter 7: Economics, Technical Appendix B: Economic Impact Assessment, and the supplementary report on economic impact responding to the updated timing for the two stages of the project, as discussion section 2.2.1 of the EIS Addendum.
- The Proponent has undertaken a comprehensive route and site selection process to assess the ultimate proposed route. This process is set out in Volume 1 Chapter 3: Route selection and project alternatives. The Proponent has also considered the tenure and uses of land along the proposed alignment route, discussed in detail in Volume 4 Chapter 15: Land Use and Planning and Technical Appendix S: Land Use and Planning.
- The Proponent does not consider that the Project will preclude the use of land through which the alignment traverses for carbon farming, noting that this does not necessarily require deep-rooted planting.
- Property Management Plans will be developed with landowners in accordance with EPR A02, informed by a property condition survey undertaken in accordance with EPR A01. The Property Management Plans will set out property-specific measures to avoid or minimise disruption to infrastructure, practices and operations, including domestic water supply.
- Where possible, land access will be attained through voluntary agreement with landholders, who will receive compensation. As a transmission company within the meaning of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic), the Proponent also has the statutory power to access land for the purposes of investigations and doing all things necessary for constructing, maintaining, altering, or using its works. If the Proponent exercises its statutory powers, it will pay compensation to the landholders for any damage as a consequence of the exercise of the power. The compensation will either be a gross sum or a yearly payment, depending on the agreement with the landholder.

- Cray, platypus and native black fish.
- Route impact on subterranean spring line parallel to Darlimurla Road; impact to the dam below the spring as the only stored groundwater on the property
 - Impact of trenching Little Morwell River on flooding, and consequently to landslips given existing profile of the property
 - Impact to riverbed and banks, impact to re-establishment plantings.
 - Cumulative impact with overallocation of water in the system.
 - Impact of project construction on cattle crossing in summer, and on their revegetation efforts in this area. Includes preclusion from planting deep rooted trees in future.
 - Impact on carbon farming in the area, including future ability to undertake this.
 - Impact on domestic water supply
 - Cumulative impacts in the Strzelecki ranges with other power and
- In relation to Little Morwell River, the further expert advice on ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process acknowledges that the draft EIS had omitted a small area of swamp habitat immediately upstream of the proposed crossing point (the woodland was mapped but the full extent of the associated aquatic habitat was not). Mr Garden recommends that this area be accurately mapped and appropriate controls implemented during construction to maintain the associated hydrology of this value if trenchless /HDD construction is not possible. The Proponent considers that the EPRs in the finalised EIS respond appropriately to this recommendation.
 - The Proponent's initial design for the crossing of the Little Morwell River within this property, which is not a permanent waterway, was that trenched crossing was proposed on the basis that HDD may not be viable for a range of reasons including location of HDD pads given other HDD sections to avoid native vegetation and to manage steep slopes. Impacts of trenched crossing were assessed in the draft EIS and found to be acceptable in light of the proposed EPRs. Some potential to further improve the condition of the waterway was considered given its use as a cattle crossing. Subsequently, the Proponent has received further advice from its HDD contractor and HDD is now the preferred methodology, subject to geotechnical and other investigations, and landowner consultation.
 - The further expert advice on geomorphology / landslip, surface water, groundwater obtained through the Victorian IAC process have considered the potential for the crossing of Little Morwell River within this property to be HDD rather than trenched, and the ecology expert has considered the impacts of this on sensitive aquatic values in the waterway. The experts have each confirmed that they consider the EPRs, as relevant to their expertise, appropriate to address the potential impacts of HDD crossing of Little Morwell River, should this eventuate, with some proposed changes in relation to trenched and HDD crossings of waterways that are reflected in the EPRs in the finalised EIS.
 - The further expert advice on surface water has confirmed that EPRs SW01, SW02 and SW03 are considered appropriate to manage impacts of construction on Little Morwell River, whether this is trenched or, as now proposed, through HDD, and requiring a pre-construction demonstration how the project has been designed to mitigate overall flood risk and incorporate flood protection measures where required. Noting the ongoing role of the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority under the EPRs, it is relevant that the CMA has endorsed the exhibited EPRs and did not in its own submission raise any concerns regarding the Project or its implementation.
 - The further expert advice on landslip has confirmed that application of the EPRs can sufficiently mitigate concerns regarding erosion, stability and HDD operations.
 - The further expert advice on ecology has confirmed that EPR EC03 is appropriate, and has underlined that there are a number of EPRs that work together to protect and manage waterways and aquatic and riparian ecosystems, including to address unforeseen events. It is concluded that, given the application of these measures, it is reasonable to assume that impacts to waterways can be restricted to the point

telecommunications projects and VicRoads upgrades.

of crossing and for the duration of construction, and that sites will be appropriately rehabilitated so subsequent issues do not arise post-construction.

- The further expert advice on groundwater has considered the identified dam at Darlimurla Road and considers the source of water flowing to the dam in the forested area to the south of Darlimurla Road is unlikely to be disturbed by proposed cable trenching. In respect of potential groundwater impacts on the swamp and springs mentioned, it is recommended that local hydrogeological investigations, required under EPR GW01 in this area where dewatering is expected, specifically consider potential impacts on the dam.
- Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology sets out the assessment of the Project potential impacts on wildlife generally, specific species and native vegetation, including multiple and extensive desktop assessments, detailed field surveys, and analysis undertaken, which has informed the design of the Project and development of EPRs to avoid and mitigate impacts identified. The further expert ecology advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirms that the findings of this assessment are robust and that the impact of the Project on native vegetation and on native species is not significant particularly having regard to its scale, and concludes that the EPRs are appropriate to manage the Project impacts including in light of cumulative impacts.

13

[REDACTED]

- Concern regarding Tasmania being turned over to multi-national corporations to build wind turbines
 - Environmental and economic impacts in Tasmania
 - Separate assessment process for Tasmania
 - Extent to which the project has considered the unknowns of climate change
 - Inconsistencies regarding jobs and other economic matters between the draft EIS and the
- No wind farm is proposed as part of the Project. Other projects will need to undergo their own assessment, including in Tasmania, and including as to land use and approval requirements for entities with foreign ownership.
 - Technical Appendix E: Heybridge terrestrial ecology assessment found that the impacts of the Project on threatened ecological communities, threatened flora or threatened fauna species at the converter station and the shore crossing will be reduced to manageable levels. No EPBC protected threatened flora species were identified as potentially occurring within the converter station site or the shore crossing. No threatened vegetation communities are impacted.
 - The supplementary report on economics (see EIS Addendum section 2.2.1) and the further expert advice on economics obtained through the Victorian IAC process conclude that the Project will deliver significant economic outcomes to the regional economy of North West Tasmania and economy of Tasmania more generally.
 - Environmental impacts in Tasmania will be addressed through the Environmental Impact Expert reports and Development Application under Tasmanian legislation. The draft EIS explains the approval process in the three jurisdictions and the interaction of these processes at Volume 1 Chapter 4: Legislative Framework. There was no legal requirement to align the timeframes for exhibition although the Proponent has sought to do so where possible. The Proponent was not able to align the timeframes for

EY reports relating to Marinus
Link

- Creation of 'new' jobs

exhibition of the Tasmanian EISs with the Victorian/Commonwealth draft EIS. This was also acknowledged in the public notice for the draft EIS.

- Technical Appendix F: Heybridge Social Impact Assessment explores the impacts of the Project on the populations that live in the study area (Heybridge State) and the regional study areas (Burnie City and Central Coast LGAs). The assessment determined that the potential adverse impacts of the project can be effectively managed through implementing the EPRs. Technical Appendix F: Heybridge Social Impact Assessment and Volume 2 Chapter 3: Social Impact (Tas) also detail the community consultation conducted in Tasmania (Sections 6 and 3.2, respectively), the outcomes of this consultation and engagement with landowners having informed the social impact assessment.
- More generally, the EPRs for Victoria and mitigations measures for Tasmania proposed in the Environmental Management Framework (see Appendix B to the EIS Addendum) set a range of requirements addressing social impacts and benefits across the areas affected by the Project, including ongoing consultation, community benefits sharing scheme and industry participation plan.
- Technical Appendix C: Climate Change states there is high to very high scientific confidence in the direction of climate change trends relating to increased temperatures, storm events, and bushfire weather, and sea level rise, with uncertainty around the timing or actual intensity of events.
- The further expert advice on economics obtained through the Victorian IAC process explains that the use of the term "FTE job-years" is standard practice in economic impact analysis. The number of job-years discussed in the draft EIS material considered to be inconsistent by the submitter. The submitter is comparing the total full-time equivalent (FTE) job-years for both Victoria and Tasmania (in Section 7.1 of Technical Appendix B: Economics, which are SGS's estimates) against the FTE job-years for Tasmania alone (EY's Economic contribution of Project Marinus, October 2023). The submitter does not include the FTE job-years for Victoria in EY's report. When accounting for EY's Stage 1 and Stage 2 FTE job-years estimates for Victoria, the total FTE job-years for construction of the Project is 1,755 jobs per year and similar to SGS' assessment of 1,755 jobs per year.
- Further, the expert advice on economics obtained through the Victorian IAC process acknowledges that economic impact analysis can only estimate the labour "demand" generated by a project and that it does not and cannot estimate the supply side of the labour demand. This is the nature of economic impact modelling and analysis. Technical Appendix B: Economics explains the methodology, inputs and assumptions of the economic impact assessment and that these are confirmed as, in practice, the best tools for reasonably estimating economic impacts.

14

- In relation to impacts on EPBC-listed vegetation, as set out in the response to submission #1:
-

- Impact on wildlife, including on koalas, the grey goshawk, grey-headed flying fox, and lace monitor, Strzelecki koalas including cumulative impact with clearing for highway and Delburn wind farm
- Query need for the project
- Within Victoria, Technical Appendix V (Terrestrial ecology Vic) had identified removal of 0.11ha EPBC-listed vegetation. Following further design, the proponent has committed to use of HDD at this location and there will be no direct impact to this EPBC-listed vegetation.
- Within Tasmania, No EPBC protected threatened flora species were identified as potentially occurring within the converter station site or the shore crossing. No threatened vegetation communities are impacted.
- The Grey Goshawk (*Accipiter Novaehollandiae*), the Lace Monitor (*Varanus varius*) and Victorian Koalas (including Strzelecki Koalas) are not listed under the EPBC Act.
- Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology sets out the assessment of the Project potential impacts on wildlife generally, specific species including EPBC listed Grey-headed flying fox and native vegetation, including multiple and extensive desktop assessments, detailed and targeted field surveys, and analysis undertaken, which has informed the design of the Project and development of EPRs to avoid and mitigate impacts identified. The further expert ecology advice obtained through the Victorian EIS process confirms that the findings of this assessment are robust and that, based on these assessments and surveys, very few threatened species occur within the survey area. The expert ecologist concluded that the impact of the Project on native vegetation and on native species is not significant particularly in comparison with other activities in the area, and concludes that the EPRs are appropriate to manage the Project impacts including in light of cumulative impacts.
- The project rationale and purpose are described in Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale (see also: the Proponent's response to submission 2).

15

- [REDACTED]
- Loss of endangered EVCs and restriction on replanting habitat
 - Cumulative impact on native vegetation habitat including Strzelecki Highway clearing and HVP clearing
 - Impact on Eucalyptus Kitsoniana (Bog Gum)
 - 'General' offsets should be like-for-like

- Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology sets out the assessment of the Project potential impacts on native vegetation generally, specific species. The further expert advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process states that that the impact of the Project on native vegetation and on native species is not significant particularly having regard to its scale, and concludes that the EPRs are appropriate to manage the Project impacts including in light of cumulative impacts.
- In relation to impacts on EPBC-listed vegetation, as set out in the response to submission #1:
 - Within Victoria, Technical Appendix V (Terrestrial ecology Vic) had identified removal of 0.11ha EPBC-listed vegetation. Following further design, the proponent has committed to use of HDD at this location and there will be no direct impact to this EPBC-listed vegetation.
 - Within Tasmania, No EPBC protected threatened flora species were identified as potentially occurring within the converter station site or the shore crossing. No threatened vegetation communities are impacted.

- Offsets for native vegetation removal will not be required under the EPBC Act. The regulatory controls under which offsets for native vegetation removal under Victorian legislation must be provided are outlined in the draft EIS and reflected in the Environmental Management Framework. The Proponent will comply with those requirements.
- The Proponent understands that the plantation land along and through which cable route alignment is proposed is for pine plantation rather than eucalyptus.

16

████████████████████

- Outlines services that could be provided by this organisation to Marinus Link

- The Proponent appreciates the information provided about how this organisation could provide services to Marinus Link. The Proponent has proposed EPRs, notably EPR S05 requiring the development and implementation of an industry participation plan, relevant to local procurement. The submission does not raise issues relevant to approval of the Project under the EPBC Act.

19

████████████████████
████████████████████

- No objection, but several interface issues:
- Shared underground cable alignment (6km); requires physical separation between the two cables to avoid cumulative thermal impacts
- Marinus cable and track alignments coincide with new or upgraded tracks to be built for ██████████
- Location of Marinus cable joint bays relative to ██████ infrastructure; and
- Possible laydown area that coincides with location of ██████ site operations centre;
- Removal of a significant tree by Marinus that has been identified in ██████ consultations as protected

- The Proponent has been engaging with ██████████ and looks forward to continuing engagement. Consultation and engagement activities undertaken to date included direct engagement with landholders, including landholders relevant to the ██████████. Consultation with stakeholders, including proponents of other projects, will be ongoing through construction, operation and decommissioning in accordance with the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Framework required by EPR S02.
- Following further design at this location the Proponent considers that there is a high probability that the 'significant tree' will be able to be avoided through finalisation of the detailed design to ensure the access point will not impact the tree, based on arborist advice as per EPR EC01. The Proponent is continuing to consider laydown requirements in this area and will progress discussion with ██████████ as outlined above.
- The further expert advice on electro-magnetic frequency obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirms that Technical Appendix A: Electromagnetic Fields identified the ██████████ and Project cables as potentially having cumulative impacts on each other and proposes EPR EMF01 to manage the cumulative EMF and EMI effects in design of the onshore HVDC cables for the Project.

20



- Port(s) in addition to Port of Melbourne to be used for the stockpiling of materials, assembling of components and landing and mooring of vessels; concerned that ports within Ramsar sites will be used
 - EMF affecting perception of Australian lobster in export markets. EMF disrupting marine creatures' lifecycle habits
 - Reassess project rationale and zoning in light of the renewed nuclear debate
 - Introduction of bird flu through overseas vessels
 - Noise emissions impact on pygmy blue whale
 - Extended periods of construction causing turbidity
 - Noise and turbidity impacting migratory species and behavioural changes of marine fauna
 - 'Induced' projects cannot be substantiated
 - Erosion impact of waves by installation and presence of cable
 - Increased turbidity at Waratah Bay
 - Cumulative impacts with Hawaiki Nui Submarine Cable
- The Project does not include, and is not expected to require, construction of any new port facilities. The Proponent expects to use the Port of Melbourne for delivery of major components in Victoria, although this will be confirmed by contractors. It is expected that local vessels, such as those supporting the cable laydown vessel, would have access to smaller ports along the coast such as Port Franklin and Port Welshpool. Section 6.4 of Technical Appendix H: Marine Ecology and Resource Use identifies several major and minor ports in Victoria and Tasmania that may be used.
 - The further expert advice on marine ecology and resource use obtained through the Victorian IAC process states that reefs on which rock lobsters are found are present more than 10km from the Project subsea cable alignment. Migrating or moving lobsters over the cable will experience transient exposure to weak DC magnetic fields, from which no 'tainting' of rock lobster flesh is expected. In respect of lifecycle habits, all magnetic and induced electric field impacts on marine fauna are assessed as having residual impact significance ratings of between Very low and Low.
 - The rationale for the project is set out in the draft EIS at Volume 1 Chapter 2 (see also: the Proponent's response to submission 2). Approval for construction or use of nuclear power plant is prohibited under section 140A of the EPBC Act.
 - In relation to noise from construction-related vessels, Technical Appendix H: Marine Ecology and Resource Use concludes that underwater noise modelling predicted no mortality of noise-sensitive marine fauna, noting also that the relevant assumptions informing marine noise modelling were conservative, and the implementation of a marine fauna management plan resulted in impact significance ratings of low to very low. The further expert advice on marine ecology and resource use obtained through the Victorian IAC process states the residual impact significance ratings for interactions with pygmy blue whales in Victorian nearshore waters and adjoining Commonwealth marine waters are anticipated to be low or very low given their likelihood of occurrence assessed as Possible. That advice recommends EPR MERU07 and EPR MERU08 as appropriate to address this concern. In respect of assessment of turbidity and erosion impact by waves, the expert report states that the cable will be installed and buried in the seabed and the cable installation and burial operation will not interfere with wave action at the sea surface. The presence of the buried cable does not affect bottom currents or seawater flows and that the very small volumes of drilling fluid released and turbidity plumes from HDD breakthrough in the subtidal nearshore environment do not require detailed numerical modelling..
 - In relation to turbidity impact from the cable lay vessel, Technical Appendix H considers turbidity in this context and notes that wet jetting by comparison to other construction methodologies keeps disturbance of seabed sediments at a minimum.
 - 'Induced projects' are considered to be those intended to generate power for the purpose of exporting to the mainland in excess of existing transmission capacity between Tasmania and the mainland. Such projects are expected on the basis of Tasmanian planning and policy in respect of renewable energy generation, and in light of strategic planning for the NEM of which the Project forms part. The further

and the Subsea Fibre Optic Data Cable System

- Proposal is contrary to at least two local management plans
 - Use of photomontages in Vol. 4, Chapter 7 (landscape and visual) invites scepticism because of the prevalence of deepfake
- expert economics advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process includes extracts of planning material prepared and published by the proponents of the Bell Bay Wind Farm and Northern Midlands Solar Farm, which reference the Project.
 - Technical Appendix H of the draft EIS and further expert advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirm that construction of cable crossings can be managed, including interaction with existing and future infrastructure in the Commonwealth marine area. Expert assessment of electro-magnetic frequency has confirmed that the Project would not give rise to any significant cumulative impacts of electromagnetic interference or electromagnetic frequency with existing cables.
 - The Proponent understands the relevant local management plans referred to in this submission to be the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park Management Plan and the Gippsland Plains and Strzelecki Ranges Conservation Action Plan. The Cape Liptrap plan is relevant to Parks Victoria's management and control of the park, though does not exist to identify particular values or regulate land use or development outside the park. The Gippsland Plains and Strzelecki Ranges plan applies to parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria in those areas; it does not apply to the landscape outside those parks and reserves and does not contribute to the understanding of ecological values outside those parks and reserves.
 - Volume 4 Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual, Technical Appendix R: Landscape and V set out the methodology of how photomontages are prepared. Sensitive landscapes are avoided, and there are no locations where the project's landscape and visual impacts are assessed as greater than low.
 - The proponent relies on expert advice that application of the EPRs can sufficiently mitigate concerns regarding erosion, stability and HDD operations.

22

██████████

- Need for Project
 - Query benefit to consumers rather than to private investors and to the governments
 - Will not lead to lower energy prices if the regulator's prices are high
 - Project will not benefit Tasmanians
 - Consultation of community
- The project rationale and purpose are described in Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale (see also: the Proponent's response to submission 2).
 - Section 6.5 of Technical Appendix B: Economics and the supplementary report on economics dated August 2024 discuss the economic contributions to the local and regional labour force, as well as to the generation of local, state and federal public tax revenues, which are, in part, used to fund essential and community infrastructure.
 - Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale identifies wholesale energy cost reduction in the NEM as one of the five key benefits of the Project, contributed to through reducing the capital cost of future generation, energy storage and transmission augmentation by using existing infrastructure to its full potential; increased development and availability of relatively low-cost renewable energy capacity; and reducing reliance on expensive gas generation to provide dispatchable energy.

- Further expert economics advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process concludes that the Project will deliver significant economic outcomes to the regional economy of North West Tasmania and economy of the whole of Tasmania, estimated to add value of \$352 million for North West Tasmania during construction and \$681 million for the whole of Tasmania during construction, \$306 million and \$679 million for those economies during operation. Further benefits include anticipated generation of significant local and state employment (2,661 FTE in Tasmania during construction and 494 FTE during operations), together with the expansion of economic and employment opportunity for youth and First Nations populations in terms of skills and training opportunities.
- Attachment 4: Consultation Report provides details of the consultation undertaken by the Proponent and governments in relation to the Project. The consultation activities are divided into five phases and include: raising awareness about the project, informing the community about the project details and possible impacts, seeking feedback on issues and concerns, informing the community about the draft EIS and the public exhibition process, informing the community of about the outcome of the planning application, and supporting community engagement with the contractor as the Project transitions to construction.
- Technical Appendix F: Heybridge Social Impact Assessment and Volume 2 Chapter 3: Social Impact (Tas) also detail the community consultation conducted in Tasmania (Sections 6 and 3.2, respectively), the outcomes of this consultation and engagement with landowners having informed the social impact assessment and understanding of the key issues for the community.

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- Query need for Project to decarbonise mainland Australia
- Impact of wind farms that Marinus Link will facilitate, in particular to the Tasmanian Wedge-tailed Eagle and critical habitat for the Tasmanian Devils and other threatened flora and fauna

- Section 2.2.1 of Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale identifies the Project as a significant enabler of the energy transition to renewable energy generation through better access to hydro resources, wind generation and future pumped storage in Tasmania.
- Planning for the NEM has regard to the entirety of the NEM. The identified optimal development path, in the context of the transition of the NEM to renewable energy, includes Marinus Link as a contributor to the “decarbonisation” of Australia as a whole.
- The further expert advice on terrestrial ecology obtained through the Victorian IAC process has confirmed that the draft EIS sets out a thorough assessment of impacts to matters raised in this submission, based on the precautionary principle, and that management measures proposed through the EPRs including Biodiversity Management Plan in EPR EC02 are appropriate.
- The proponent relies on the impact assessments of the Project on Victorian and Tasmanian coastal and inland habitat set out in the draft EIS and expert advice concluding that the proposed EPRs and mitigation measures are appropriate.

- Degradation and depletion of coastlands, native forests, aerial habitat
- Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment sets out the assessment of potentially affected fauna listed under the EPBC Act and *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (Tas), being the Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*), spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*) and Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audaz fleayi*). Further advice provided to the Tasmanian EPA confirms that 'the terrestrial ecology assessment has confirmed that there are no residual impacts to terrestrial ecological values expected at the highly disturbed, ex-industrial site proposed for the Converter Station, nor at the Shore Crossing site.' In particular:
 - In relation to nocturnal fauna, there is existing night-time anthropogenic lighting associated with the Bass Highway and nearby residences, as such additional lighting for the Project is not likely to result in increased risk of disorientation nor collisions by nocturnal fauna. Standard recommendations in the Commonwealth *National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife* Appendix A (Best Practice Lighting Design) are recommended and can be implemented through the CEMP that is required for the Project under the proposed EPRs or, if EPA Tasmania prefers a different format for these environmental management measures in Tasmania, the requirement can be reflected in that alternative format.
 - The assessment and on-ground surveys of the Project site in Tasmania including Heybridge Converter Station and shore crossing area addressed a range of threatened species, and potential risks. The extant population of devils and quolls was assessed as relatively small based on the NVA database records, as well as the landscape context and on-ground surveys. There is an absence of suitable dense foliage and hollows for white-throated needletail and this species is unlikely to be impacted by the Project including given the minimal vegetation clearance required in Tasmania. There is an absence of suitable denning habitat in the vicinity of the Project site as observed during field surveys as well as the NVA database records and the landscape context. No little penguin burrows or individuals were recorded despite targeted surveys.
 - The assessment in the draft EIS concluded that the increased night time traffic risk on Bass Highway for the Project would not exceed the 10% threshold at which the risk to Tasmanian devils and spotted-tailed quolls is considered to be substantially increased, according to the 2023 *Survey Guidelines and Management Advice for Developments Proposals that may impact the Tasmanian Devil* (DNRE, 2023). Following the draft EIS the proponent has received further advice if additional increases in night-time traffic are assumed related to extended construction assumptions (7am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun). With these extended assumptions, the 10% threshold is still not reached. Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment sets out measures to reduce impacts to Tasmanian devils and spotted quolls on Minna Road. (section 8.1.3.1).

- In relation to white-bellied sea-eagle, it is not listed as threatened under the EPBC Act but is listed as vulnerable under the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* (Tas). It is listed as a marine species under the EPBC Act. Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment (at section 7.3) has identified the white-bellied sea-eagle as potentially occasionally overflying the area (it has been sighted within 5 km of the converter station and shore crossing). However, there are no known nests within 1 km of the survey area and the nearest nest, over 1.5km away, has not been verified as present since 2006. The assessment concludes that it is unlikely that the construction and operation of the project will disturb breeding birds.
- In relation to the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle, Mr Brereton has confirmed that eagle nest checks are not recommended for the Heybridge Converter Station site and shore crossing, given the lack of known eagle nests within 1km of each site. The nearest known nest is 1.6km away and three consecutive aerial searches have failed to find this nest despite targeted survey efforts. Aerial nest searches are required within 12 months prior to commencement of construction and annually throughout construction at the Heybridge site and shore crossing. If a new eagle nest were discovered within 500m or 1km line-of-sight of proposed works, then the eagle constraint management period would apply. Management will be in accordance with the Tasmanian EPA's *Guide to Eagle Nest Searches and Activity Checks* (EPA Tasmania 2023), the Tasmanian Forest Practice Authority's *Fauna Technical Note No1: Eagle nest searching, activity checking and nest management* (Forest Practices Authority 2023) and the Commonwealth's *Survey Guidelines for Australia's Threatened Birds* (DEWHA 2010).
- Further expert advice provided to the Tasmanian EPA has confirmed that the change in the timing of stages 1 and 2 of the project does not result in any further impacts, changes to identified impacts assessed, or changes to the conclusions set out in Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment.
- Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment addresses impacts of the Project on Tasmanian coastal waters and habitat. Native vegetation within the Heybridge Converter Station site has been mapped and verified on the ground during field surveys, and has periodically been provided to Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania to help inform TASVEG (the Tasmanian Vegetation Map). No removal is proposed of the *Eucalyptus amygdalina* coastal forest and woodland, which is not listed as threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (Tas), and no removal is proposed of the *Eucalyptus viminalis* – *Eucalyptus globulus* coastal forest and woodland, which is listed as threatened under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (Tas).

24

[REDACTED]

- Impact on ecosystems and biodiversity, particularly in Tasmania
- Impact of wind farms and transmission lines on rare and endangered species (including the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles, orange-bellied parrots, and Tasmanian devils) and ecosystems
- Marinus Link is unlikely to reduce fossil fuels consumption but will facilitate growth in energy demand

- As set out in response to submission #1, Technical Appendix V: Terrestrial Ecology assessed potential impacts to EPBC-listed vegetation in Victoria. One patch was identified in the draft EIS as to be impacted. Following further design, the proponent has committed to avoid this patch of EPBC-listed vegetation. The proponent relies on the EPRs including Biodiversity Management Plan in EPR EC02 as appropriate to address any other potential indirect impacts of the project on habitat.
- Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment considers the Project's impacts on ecosystems in Tasmania (Sections 6.5, 7) and provides mitigation measures to minimise those impacts (Section 8.7). It concludes that the impacts of the Project on threatened ecological communities, threatened flora or threatened fauna species at the converter station and the shore crossing will be reduced to manageable levels. In particular, it specifically addressed the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle and Tasmanian devil.
- In relation to EPBC-listed flora in Tasmania, Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment finds that no threatened flora species were identified as potentially occurring within the converter station site or the shore crossing. Three flora species were identified in the baseline assessment within the survey area through the PMST tool or with records on the NVA, though a review of the current range and habitat requirements found that they were either absent or unlikely to occur because of the absence of suitable habitat within the survey area.
- In relation to protected fauna and, in particular the Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle and Tasmanian devil, see also the Proponent's response to submission 20. The project rationale and purpose are described in Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale (see also: the Proponent's response to submission 2). The NEM is transitioning from fossil fuels and investment in transmission is one element of facilitating this transition.

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[REDACTED]

- Environmental impacts of Marinus Link on delicate ecosystems in Victoria, and in Tasmania
- Impacts of wind farms, solar farms and battery storage systems on the environment and on food production

- Technical Appendix E: Heybridge Terrestrial Ecology Assessment considers the Project's impacts on ecosystems in Tasmania (Sections 6.5, 7) and provides mitigation measures to minimise those impacts (Section 8.7). The assessment found that the impacts of the Project on threatened ecological communities, threatened flora or threatened fauna species at the converter station and the shore crossing will be reduced to manageable levels.
- As set out in response to submission #1, direct impacts to EPBC-listed vegetation in Victoria have been avoided, and no EPBC-listed vegetation was identified within the Tasmanian converter station site.
- The further expert ecology advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirms the expert's view that the draft EIS sets out a thorough and robust assessment of impacts to flora and fauna in Victoria, based on the precautionary principle. He notes that the impact of the Project on native vegetation and

- Impact of energy policy on consumer electricity bills; relevance of coal and nuclear alternatives
 - Social licence for Marinus Link and other energy projects in Tasmania and Victoria
 - Impact on landscape
- on native species is not significant particularly having regard to its scale, and concludes that the EPRs are appropriate to manage the Project impacts including in light of cumulative impacts.
- The proponent relies on expert advice that:
 - whilst this submission and submission 20 use various language that includes the words ‘toxic’, ‘heavy metal leachates’ and ‘bisphenyl A’, the submissions are referring to other projects including wind farms or battery storages and therefore are not relevant to the assessment of potential impacts regarding contamination and acid sulfate soils for the Project.
 - noting that the assessment in Technical Appendix P: Groundwater concluded that impacts are associated primarily with temporary construction dewatering that might reduce water supply or flow rates in baseflow-dependent streams, and cause changes to groundwater quality should groundwater acidification occur.
 - there is a low impact significance to groundwater-dependent ecosystems.
 - With the application of EPRs A01 to A06, residual impacts on farming land are assessed as being short term and of low to moderate significance during construction and low to very low significance during operation. There will be some residual impact on the use of land within the cable easement area, though land will be reinstated and rehabilitated, and the easement will allow the landowner to continue to use the land, subject to conditions.
 - Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale identifies wholesale energy cost reduction in the NEM as one of the five key benefits of the Project, contributed to through reducing the capital cost of future generation, energy storage and transmission augmentation by using existing infrastructure to its full potential; increased development and availability of relatively low-cost renewable energy capacity; and reducing reliance on expensive gas generation to provide dispatchable energy.
 - The project rationale and purpose are described in Volume 1 Chapter 2: Project Rationale (see also: the Proponent’s response to submission 2). The 2022 ISP forecasts the withdrawal of 14 GW of the then-current 23 GW coal capacity in the NEM by 2030, also suggesting that all coal capacity could close as early as 2040. Construction and operation of nuclear power plant is prohibited under the EPBC Act.
 - Technical Appendix U: Social Impact Assessment and the further expert advice on social impact assessment obtained through the Victorian EIS process address the potential social impacts of the Project in Victoria. Technical Appendix F: Heybridge Social Assessment addresses the potential social impacts of the Project in Tasmania. Technical Appendix U: Social Impact Assessment and Technical Appendix F: Heybridge Social Assessment each detail the engagement undertaken with the communities and specific consultation for the respective social impact assessments. This engagement has informed the project’s understanding of existing social conditions, local community values about their area and what places are important to them, and attitudes towards the project and areas of community concern. This has and will, in turn, inform the Project’s strategies for ongoing community

engagement, workforce and accommodation, industry participation, and community benefits sharing scheme, each strategy to be monitored, evaluated, and adaptive managed on an ongoing basis.

- Technical Appendix R: Landscape and Visual finds that the majority of the Project's visual impacts have been avoided through the undergrounding of the proposed transmission lines in Victoria. The assessment concludes that residual visual impacts during construction have been assessed as low or negligible and overall residual landscape and visual impacts in operation are low. Sensitive landscapes are avoided, and that there are no locations where the project's landscape and visual impacts will be greater than low.

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REDACTED

The Proponent has been engaging with [REDACTED] as a potential stakeholder in the vicinity of the Marinus Link project for some time. The Proponent will continue to engage with [REDACTED], consistent with its commitments including under the proposed EPRs.

The Proponent has reviewed the unredacted submission of [REDACTED] and all of the matters raised are the subject of further direct engagement between the parties.

However, in relation to the approvals sought for the Project, including under the EPBC Act, the Proponent observes that the [REDACTED] BESS project is not yet a formally proposed project. Key aspects of the project specifications, design and location have not yet been crystallised. This includes critical elements such as the BESS capacity, location of the BESS within the land parcel, whether connection would be to the 220kV network or 500kV network, proposed connection route, whether the connection would be overhead or underground, whether and how noise mitigation would be included in the BESS design, and how [REDACTED] would propose to otherwise avoid or mitigate impacts on the property owned by the Proponent. The Proponent's position is that it is not possible for the Proponent to commit in detail to mitigating potential impacts of a theoretical project at this early stage of its design and development.

The proponent has not identified any matter which appears likely to result in a significant cumulative impact on matters relevant to approval of the Project under the EPBC Act and considers that the proposed EPRs remain appropriate to manage impacts of the Project and ongoing engagement with [REDACTED] and the community more broadly.

Impacts of the [REDACTED] BESS project, including cumulative impacts with Marinus Link, can be addressed at the appropriate future time through the planning and environmental assessments and approvals that the BESS project will require. This can then take into account the potential impacts of the BESS project with the design, specifications and land use profile once crystallised by [REDACTED].

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████████████████████
████████████████████

- Acknowledges the significance and benefits for the communities and consumers in the NEM and generally support the project
 - ██████ land directly impacted by 18 km easement
 - Potential ██████ liabilities for damages to cables, increased safety measures, management protocols, and associated additional cost and resource demands
 - Health and human safety risks
 - Fire risk during construction and restricted access to plantations
 - Biosecurity risks
 - Proposed route intersects biodiversity offset sites on ██████ land
 - Direct drilling should be used where the Project intersects with creeks and major roads
 - Anticipated loss of wood stock and productive land along the current route, along with operational restrictions.
 - Permanent removal of trees and prohibition on planting and managing trees within easement
 - Suggests rerouting the cabling to the external boundaries of the plantations and ██████ land
- The proponent has been engaging with ██████ as a key affected landholder for years through development of the Project, including in relation to route selection and refinement, alignment to minimise impact to operations, and matters to be addressed in EPRs in particular the requirement for pre-construction property condition surveys and a Property Management Plan which will set out the detailed interaction with landholder activities during construction and operation of the Project.
 - The Proponent appreciates ██████'s engagement with the Proponent, including in a site visit on 27 August 2024 at which, among other things, the attendees discussed the potential alternative options raised by ██████ and the rationale for the current route. The Proponent acknowledges that the Project route impacts ██████ land and the Proponent and its representatives have refined the route to reflect matters discussed where appropriate, including location along existing tracks and easements, and along or near the boundary of land parcels or coupes. The Project decision to confirm the converter station location at Hazelwood partly arose from the concern raised by ██████ regarding the area of plantation land that would have been required for the alternative location considered at Driffield. ██████ has confirmed to the Victorian Inquiry and Advisory Committee that it no longer seeks to discuss an alternative route.
 - The Proponent agrees that construction and operation of the Project through ██████ land will require careful management of a number of potential risks and impacts, and considers that the robust governance framework established by the EMF, including CEMP, OEMP and EPRs, is appropriate to manage this.
 - In particular, the Property Management Plan (PMP) required by EPR A02 requires a bespoke response to the property condition survey (EPR A01) and specific circumstances of the ██████ plantation operations, and would be informed by discussion with ██████.
 - Biosecurity protocols and bushfire management protocols are specifically addressed as requirements of the PMP. The proponent relies on the draft EIS, supported by expert advice provided through the Victorian IAC process, that, for a range of reasons, fire ignition risk from the Project is not high, and that fire ignition risk can be very effectively avoided (entirely) or significantly mitigated through risk reduction measures triggered by the EPRs.
 - The requirements for the CEMP are detailed, and are considered appropriate to address construction phase including human safety.
 - Management of erosion risk will be addressed through the construction controls proposed by the EPRs relating to surface water and geomorphology, as well as the CEMP. No erosion risk specific to ██████ land or to forestry operations has been identified. Further expert advice obtained through the Victorian IAC process confirmed that application of the EPRs can sufficiently mitigate concerns regarding erosion, stability and HDD operations.

- Specific implications of erosion within the context of forestry operations not sufficiently explored
- Severance of coupes compromises efficiency and economic viability of operations
- Location of access roads
- Implications of Project on Delburn Wind Farm
- Alternative route
- The Project description clarifies that HDD is proposed for road crossings, but is not proposed for all creek crossings. The detailed impact assessment confirms that the impacts of trenched crossing of waterways will be acceptable in accordance with the controls proposed in the EPRs.
- Overall, the proponent considers that, in light of matters raised in evidence for █████ in the Victorian Inquiry and Advisory Committee hearing, some minor drafting amendments could be made to EPRs A01 – A06 as relevant to clarify the forestry-specific matters to be addressed in property condition surveys and Property Management Plans. This has been reflected in the proposed EPRs in the finalised EIS.
- The Proponent acknowledges that, despite the above, the Project will have some impact on █████ operations during the period of construction, and potentially during the period of operation due to limitations on deep-rooted tree planting directly within the 20m easement. The Proponent has sought to avoid and minimise permanent impacts as set out above. Compensation will be available to █████ in conjunction with arrangements for the Project’s interest in █████ land either by agreement or through compensation assessed in accordance with the applicable statutory processes.

3 Response to BLCAC letter and recommendations

Key issues raised	Proponent response in finalised EIS
General	<p>The Proponent acknowledges and appreciates the engagement of BLCAC and its representatives with the proponent over a long period of Project development, and notes that the recommendations set out in the BLCAC letter to the Victorian Inquiry and Advisory Committee were produced through a Cultural Values Assessment developed in the context of BLCAC engagement with the Proponent and membership of the Project’s First Peoples Advisory Group.</p> <p>The Proponent’s responses are provided as relevant to the potential social and economic impacts of the Project, in light of the assessments in the draft EIS on terrestrial cultural heritage, underwater cultural heritage and social impact assessment. The Proponent is committed to ongoing engagement with First Peoples including through BLCAC, in accordance with the strategy and framework provided for in EPR EM08 and EPR S03.</p> <p>Consistent with EPR CH03, it would be appropriate for the BLCAC recommendations arising from its cultural values assessment to be considered, as relevant and as appropriate, in the preparation of the relevant Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) under the</p>

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic). BLCAC, together with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and the Boonwurrung Land & Sea Council, are the First Peoples groups being consulted with in respect of development of the CHMP relating to Victorian coastal waters and the coastal land area. The proponent's responses are not intended to suggest the relevant CHMP will be prepared in any particular way having regard to the recommendations, or to foreclose on the proper consideration of the recommendations in preparation of the relevant CHMP.

Recommendation 1:
Preserve core geotechnical samples for future research and grant opportunities involving BLCAC

The proponent acknowledges that these samples may contain information which could contribute to understanding of the environment within which First Peoples lived toward the end of the Late Pleistocene era and that may be of wider cultural and scientific value.

The Proponent considers that further research is beyond the specific scope of the Project but the ability of the Proponent to assist BLCAC to identify future research and grant opportunities could be a matter discussed as part of ongoing engagement.

Recommendation 2:
Conduct a more detailed study of the paleoenvironments of Bass Lake to collect deeper core samples from the Pleistocene Epoch and identify submerged freshwater springs that might have attracted human activity. Also strongly recommends further assessment of the proposed underwater route of Marinus Link, especially near palaeoshorelines to avoid damaging unknown Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Further expert advice on Aboriginal cultural heritage and underwater cultural heritage obtained through the Victorian EIS process concluded that the shallow depth of the submerged sediments that will be impacted by the subsea cable is more recent and is unlikely to contain material archaeological deposits.

The Proponent considers it beyond the scope of the Project to conduct a detailed study of Bass Lake but considers that sharing of Project data for a study conducted by others could be discussed as part of ongoing engagement.

Recommendation 3:
Consult BLCAC prior to

The Proponent agrees that this is reasonable and expected for specialists working with First Peoples underwater cultural heritage and is consistent with its proposed approach to ongoing engagement.

making public any findings, data or analysis of the results of the UWCH assessment so that BLCAC can consider providing a expert report about the significance of the findings to Bunurong peoples.

Recommendation 4:
Provide employment to Bunurong peoples so that they can learn, develop skills and work on Country.

This is consistent with the requirements of the industry participation plan set out in EPR S05.
The proponent notes that EPRs S03 (community and stakeholder engagement framework) and EPR S04 (community benefits sharing scheme) also relate to support and protection of cultural heritage values in conjunction with other measures such as EPR CH01.

Recommendation 5:
Undertake cultural awareness and cultural values training.

This is considered reasonable and the proponent anticipates this would be a condition of CHMP 18244, also referenced in EPR CH02.

Recommendation 6:
Engage BLCAC's Tarbuk Biik (Strong Country) environment team to undertake work within the project area, as needed.

The Proponent cannot commit at this stage of project development to specific engagements, but notes that the industry participation plan set out in EPR S05 will address employment opportunities available to BLCAC's environment team and others.

Recommendation 7:
Consult with BLCAC to help incorporate Boon wurrung language into signage and publications.

The Proponent agrees that incorporation of First Peoples language in appropriate ways should be considered, and considers that the ongoing engagement envisaged by EPR EM08 and EPR S03 is an appropriate context for this.

<p>Recommendation 8: Consult BLCAC to develop salvage methodology if salvage is required for the non-RAP area CHMP</p>	<p>The three First Peoples groups consulted during the preparation of the Aboriginal and Historical Cultural Heritage Assessment (including BLCAC) will also be consulted regarding site-specific management conditions that will be included in CHMP 18244 currently being prepared for the Project. These management conditions will specify archaeological salvage requirements for the land area.</p> <p>Salvage is not proposed within Victorian coastal waters.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: Continue ongoing meaningful communication with BLCAC</p>	<p>The Proponent has proposed EPRs that formalise the Proponent's approach to ongoing consultation, in particular S03, which provides for the development and implementation of a community and stakeholder engagement framework, and EM08, which requires development and implementation of a strategy for ongoing engagement with First Peoples in Victoria during construction and operation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: Protect biocultural values by consulting BLCAC prior to harming any vegetation</p>	<p>The three relevant First Peoples groups (including BLCAC) have been consulted during preparation of the Aboriginal and Historical Cultural Heritage Assessment and will also be consulted regarding site-specific management conditions that will be included in CHMP 18244. Specific consultation prior to removal of vegetation is not proposed. Ongoing engagement with BLCAC generally is proposed as set out above.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: BLCAC would like to connect with GLaWAC on Country to negotiate together on the shared boundary impacts of Marinus Link</p>	<p>The Proponent proposes ongoing engagement with the three relevant First Peoples groups as set out above, but does not consider it appropriate for the Project to be involved in discussions related to boundaries.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: Recognise the 'disturbance to the Land Bridge, acknowledgement that it is there and that it holds the tracks of our Ancestors and our songlines</p>	<p>Having regard to the findings of the experts on Aboriginal cultural heritage and underwater cultural heritage that the shallow depth of the submerged sediments that will be impacted by the subsea cable is more recent than the deeper landforms, the Proponent does not agree that the Project will 'disturb' the land bridge.</p> <p>However, the Proponent recognises that the Project is located on land and in waters of significance to BLCAC. The Proponent considers that the proposed ongoing engagement under EPR EM08 and EPR S04 allows for further discussion as to any appropriate recognition in signage and written materials as suggested by BLCAC.</p>