

Chapter 11

Matters of Environmental Significance

11.0 Matters of Environmental Significance

This chapter discusses matters of environmental significance, their presence and legislative framework, as they relate to the Project. Three levels of matters of environmental significance are considered within Queensland, these include the following:

- Matters of national environmental significance (MNES), under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).
- Matters of state environmental significance under the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*.
- Matters of local environmental significance, under the relevant Local Government Authority, Local Planning Instrument. Note, no matters of local environmental significance are identified in any of the relevant Local Planning Instruments and have not been considered further in this chapter.

11.1 Matters of National Environmental Significance

Under the EPBC Act, actions that have, or are likely to have a significant impact on a MNES require approval from the Australian Government Minister for the Environment. The Minister will decide whether assessment and approval is required under the EPBC Act. MNES protected under the EPBC Act, include:

- world heritage properties
- national heritage places
- wetlands of international importance (often called 'Ramsar' wetlands after the international treaty under which such wetlands are listed)
- nationally threatened species and ecological communities
- migratory species
- Commonwealth marine areas
- the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

MNES identified as potentially relevant to the Project include:

- nationally threatened species and ecological communities
- migratory species.

These MNES are collectively referred to as 'protected species'. All other MNES identified above, are not present within the Draft Alignment. The presence and extent of protected species has been identified within Chapter 9 Flora and Chapter 10 Fauna, and the supporting appendices Appendix E Ecology (Substation) Technical Report and Appendix F Ecology (Transmission Line) Technical Report. The protected species identified as known, or with a high or medium likelihood of being present are identified in Table 11-1.

Table 11-1 Protected species potentially present

Common Name	Scientific Name	EPBC Act Status
Greater glider	<i>Petauroides volans</i>	Vulnerable
Sharman's rock-wallaby	<i>Petrogale sharmani</i>	Vulnerable
Squatter pigeon (southern)	<i>Geophaps scripta scripta</i>	Vulnerable
Northern quoll	<i>Dasyurus maculatus</i>	Endangered
Koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	Vulnerable
Black-throated finch (southern)	<i>Poephila cincta cincta</i>	Endangered
Ghost bat	<i>Macroderma gigas</i>	Vulnerable

This EAR has presented the worst case impact scenario associated with full clearing of the proposed 60 m wide transmission line easement. Powerlink Queensland is currently incorporating mitigation measures into the design process to avoid and reduce the extent of potential impacts on MNES as a result of habitat clearing and/or fragmentation.

The DoEE provide a guideline to assist proponents proposing an action, to decide whether a project is likely to result in a significant impact of a MNES. The guideline, referred to as *Matters of National Environmental Significance: Significant Impact Guidelines 1.1* provides a significant impact criteria for each MNES.

Upon completion of the mitigation though design process, Powerlink Queensland will finalise the assessment of the Project against the significant impact criteria for listed threatened species and ecological communities. The assessment will be used to support a Referral under the EPBC Act.

The Terms of Reference (Appendix A Terms of Reference) stated an assessment of the offset liability for the Project. This has not been included in this EAR as the Significant impact assessment has not yet been finalised.

11.2 Matters of State Environmental Significance

Matters of state environmental significance (MSES) are defined under the Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014. MSES include certain environmental values that are protected under Queensland legislation including the:

- *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- *Marine Parks Act 2004*
- *Fisheries Act 1994*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Regional Interests Planning Act 2014*
- *Vegetation Management Act 1999*
- *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*.

MSES that are applicable to the Project include:

- 'Of Concern' regional ecosystems and essential habitat managed under the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*
- Habitat for endangered, vulnerable or special least concern fauna species managed under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- Watercourse in high ecological value waters under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

The Section 14 of *Environmental Offsets Act 2014* states an offset condition may be imposed if the prescribed activity will, or is likely to, have a significant residual impact on a prescribed environmental matter. Schedule 1 of the Environmental Offset Regulation 2014 identifies prescribed activities. The Infrastructure Designation process under the *Planning Act 2016* is not considered a prescribed activity for the purposes of providing an offset under this *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*.

Regardless of the above, Powerlink Queensland have employed the 'avoid, minimise, and mitigate' approach throughout the Project, including:

- the corridor selection process (refer Chapter 2 Project Justification)
- employing mitigation through design (currently being undertaken by Powerlink Queensland to reduce impacts where possible)
- mitigating environmental impacts through implementation of Environmental Management Plans (Chapter 26 Environmental Management).