

Preliminary EES Information Sheet for Existing Conditions

Aviation

Introduction

This document provides a summary of the existing conditions identified for aviation within the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (WVTNP) area of interest (AOI). Identifying the existing aviation features within the AOI is an important step towards understanding the potential impacts, interactions and considerations for the project.

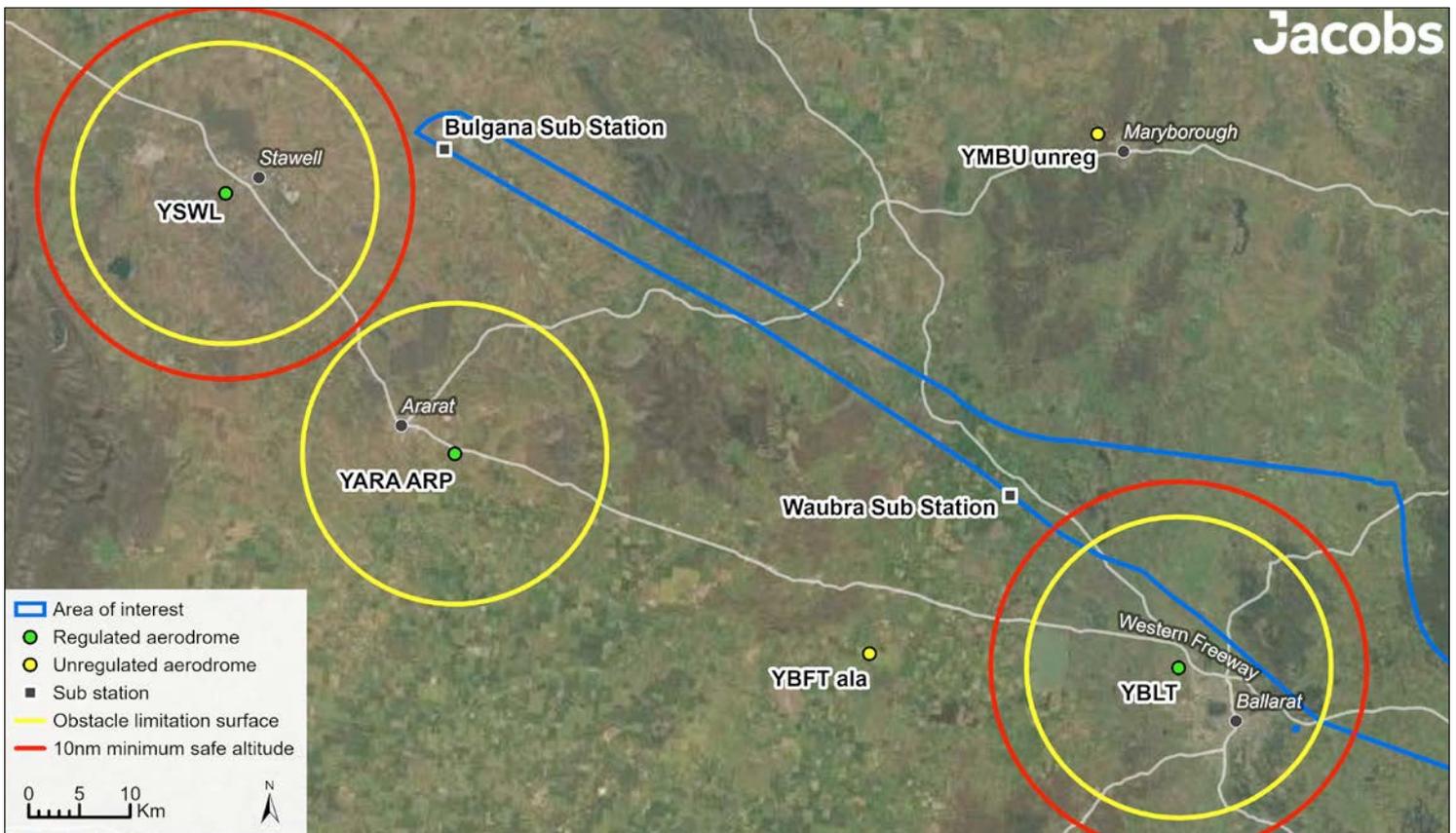


The existing aviation sites and conditions have been identified by a qualified, independent technical specialist and include aerodromes, protected airspace, and aviation activities. A review of the known regulated (controlled and managed aerodromes) and unregulated aerodromes within 30km of the WVTNP AOI boundary was undertaken. The Aeronautical Information Publication (the international publication of aviation regulations and information), aeronautical charts, Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and Airservices Australia documentation was reviewed, as well as relevant legislation, policy and guidelines. Further investigations will be undertaken to gather more information, where required, about existing conditions and potential project impacts. The findings will be updated and included in the aviation impact assessment for the Environment Effects Statement (EES).

Community and stakeholder feedback

The community provided important input about existing conditions including:

- Current aerial activities associated with agriculture and emergency management.
- Current aerodrome activities and plans.



Western section of the AOI and known aerodromes

Overview

Aeronautical infrastructure includes aerodromes, air traffic control communications, radio navigation and surveillance facilities, prescribed airspace protecting aerodromes and published air routes, as well as Prohibited, Restricted and Danger airspace. Civil aerodromes are either regulated by CASA or unregulated. CASA has no jurisdiction over unregulated aerodromes. Firefighting and air ambulance aircraft use any aerodrome suitable for their intended operations.

Tall structures such as transmission towers and conductors / wires can present an aviation hazard. To ensure safety during take-off or landing, the airspace surrounding aerodromes in Victoria is protected from tall structures. Aircraft operating at altitudes below 3000ft are usually single engine light aircraft used for recreational flying and pilot training. These aircraft predominantly fly by day, must remain clear of cloud and maintain visual reference to the ground. They are required to remain at least 500ft above the tallest structure on the ground within 600m of their flight path.

Authorised low flying activity such as military, emergency services, aerial firefighting and aerial spraying are flown by highly trained and appropriately licensed pilots. Through flight planning these pilots are aware of transmission lines and other obstacles that may affect their operations.

Western section of AOI – Bulgana to North Ballarat

There are five known aerodromes within 30km of this section of the AOI. The regulated aerodromes at Stawell (YSWL), Ararat (YARA) and Ballarat (YBLT) are protected by prescribed airspace. Prescribed airspace protects the safety and efficiency into or out of an airport. The unregulated aerodromes at Beaufort (YBFT) and Maryborough (YMBU) have recommended obstacle free areas (OFA) as described in Civil Aviation Advisory Publication 92-1¹. There is also a helipad on the roof of the Ballarat Base Hospital.

At Ballarat, there is potential for the project to impact the prescribed airspace which may limit the location and height of transmission lines and terminal station infrastructure. Aircraft operating at Stawell, Ararat and Beaufort aerodromes must stay high enough to avoid existing wind farms, which is also above the proposed height of the project infrastructure in the AOI.

1. <https://www.casa.gov.au/rules-and-regulations/current-rules/civil-aviation-advisory-publications>



Eastern section of the AOI and known aerodromes

Eastern section of the AOI - Ballarat to North Sydenham

There are five known aerodromes within 30km of this section of the AOI, plus Ballarat as described in the previous section. The Melbourne Airport Tullamarine (YMML) is regulated and protected by prescribed airspace. There are four unregulated aerodromes at Myrniong (RAA ALA), Rowsley/ Brooks Landing (YBSL), Bacchus Marsh (YBSS) and Melton (YMEL). There are two helipads at Rowsley (YWRS) and Djerriwarrh (Bacchus Marsh) Health. The Fiskville airstrip is closed.

The Bacchus Marsh unregulated aerodrome hosts flying training, gliding, aircraft maintenance, recreational flying and light aircraft hangarage. There is potential for project infrastructure to impact on some aircraft operations, such as forced landing practice near the aerodrome. The Moorabool Shire Council owns the aerodrome and future improvements may include expanded operational areas, lighting for night operations and the possibility of becoming a regulated aerodrome.

The Melton unregulated aerodrome hosts ultra-light and light aircraft operations, aircraft maintenance and hangarage. There is potential for project infrastructure to impact on some aircraft operations and future improvements such as additional runways or extensions.

Considerations for the project

A range of considerations have been identified for further investigation and management which will be addressed in the aviation impact assessment including:

- Potential for project infrastructure to penetrate prescribed airspace at regulated aerodromes.
- Potential for project infrastructure to infringe recommended obstacle free areas at unregulated aerodromes.
- Risk of towers and conductors (wires) to authorised low flying activities including aerial firefighting, aerial spraying, military and emergency services operations.
- Potential for project infrastructure to impact on the future expansion plans of aerodromes.

Next steps

- Engage with aerodrome owners and undertake further investigations.
- Undertake an assessment of the potential impacts of the project through analysis of tower height and location, impacts on prescribed airspace, and obstacle free areas.
- Assess plans for the Melton aerodrome and consider potential project design modifications and other mitigation such as additional operational requirements for aircraft using the aerodrome.
- Prepare an aviation impact assessment including proposed mitigation measures to manage any potential impacts. The impact assessment will inform the project design and be published as part of the EES. The EES will be an important source of information about potential project impacts for the community, landholders, decision-makers and as part of the approvals process.



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