

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Committee:	Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Inquiry:	2025/26 Budget Estimates
Hearing date:	6 June 2025
Witness:	Melissa Horne MP
Committee Member:	Nick McGowen
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Question:

Ports of Hastings: Why did the first proposal require such a large environmental footprint?

Answer:

The project footprint proposed in the 2023 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation 1999* (EPBC) Referral reflected an area in which the project would be sited. It is common practice to nominate a broad project area in EPBC referral documentation, with further narrowing down of the environmental footprint as technical investigations progress.

Following the Commonwealth Minister for the Water and Environment's decision on the previous project referral in 2023, the Port of Hastings has undertaken extensive scientific studies, technical assessments, and engineering work to address the issues raised and refine the scope of the project.

This subsequent work has led to a substantially modified design and a further refined footprint for the proposed Victorian Renewable Energy Terminal that minimises environmental impacts while meeting the technical needs for an offshore wind assembly port. The revised project now proposes a substantial reduction to the footprint, including a 70 per cent reduction in dredging and a 35 per cent reduction in reclamation.