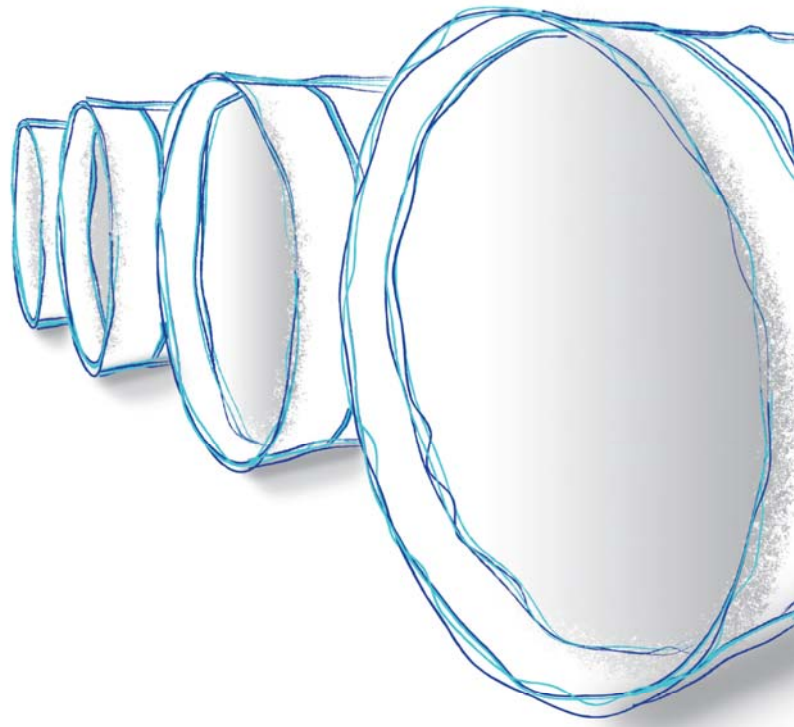




# project factsheet



August 2009

## Environmental Offsets

The Sugarloaf Pipeline Alliance is committed to offsetting vegetation and habitat losses caused by construction activities on the project. Guided by the Victorian Government's *Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for Action*, the Alliance has prepared an 'Offset Management Strategy' that details how the project will compensate for loss of native vegetation and provide a 'net gain' for the project.

This fact sheet explains the way these environmental offsets have been calculated and what they entail.

### Vegetation offsets

The Offset Management Strategy requires any native vegetation cleared is to be offset by increases in vegetation and habitat elsewhere or through providing better security arrangements for existing vegetation.

These offsets must be over and above the area cleared, of an equivalent habitat type and within the same bioregion.

### How offsets are calculated

The volume of vegetation cleared is measured in 'habitat hectares'. A habitat hectare is a measure of both the quality and quantity of native vegetation within an area based on the relevant type of native vegetation or bioregion.

Quality is assessed by comparing the characteristics of the vegetation on the site against those of an undisturbed area of the same type of vegetation.

Site assessments to determine habitat hectares of areas cleared and offset areas have been conducted by the Alliance experts and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE).

### Calculating the pipeline offset

It has been estimated that up to 83 habitat hectares of native vegetation will be cleared along the 70km of the Sugarloaf Pipeline route. The extent of clearance is based on a 30 metre construction corridor.

The construction corridor includes vegetation from three bioregions:

- Central Victorian uplands
- Highlands – Northern Fall
- Highlands – Southern Fall.

Offset areas have been selected from all three bioregions and are significantly larger than what is considered necessary to provide an overall 'net gain' for the project.

In addition to creating vegetation offset areas, the Alliance will also replace more than half of the vegetation removed within the Toolangi State Forest with native species.



## Offset vegetation areas

The Alliance has identified and purchased several areas that will be set aside and managed for conservation purposes to provide an offset for the native vegetation cleared. This includes an 826 hectare property at Mount Typo, north east of Mount Buller, and a 60 hectare property south of Yea called 'Sheoak'.

In addition to these properties, Melbourne Water also has significant existing credits through previous transfers of land to the Crown. These properties, which are now part of Kinglake National Park, will offset Highlands – Southern Fall native vegetation cleared throughout the Toolangi State Forest, Yarra Glen and Sugarloaf Reservoir areas.

Melbourne Water will also conduct a significant replanting program as part of the offset requirements in the Alliance's Offset Management Strategy.

### Mount Typo

The 826-hectare Mount Typo property has significant conservation value as it is a natural habitat extension of the Alpine National Park, which encompasses Victoria's high country.

This property is in the Highlands – Northern Fall bioregion and, therefore, provides an offset for vegetation cleared within the Toolangi State Forest and Glenburn areas.

Mount Typo is protected against future development and will be added to



The Alliance offset property at Mount Typo has significant conservation value

the register of Crown Reserve and managed by Parks Victoria.

### Sheoak

The 60-hectare Sheoak property will provide an offset for the Central Victorian Uplands grassy woodlands habitat areas cleared between Yea and Devlin Bridge, around southern Killingworth and at Sheoak itself (where the pipeline's high-lift pump station is being built).

Sheoak will also be an ongoing protected habitat for two threatened species, namely: the striped legless lizard and the golden sun moth.

Management and rehabilitation of this former livestock grazing property will involve selective conservation grazing, weed management, minor revegetation of overstorey species and ecological burns. These works will be conducted with the guidance of the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Country Fire Authority.

### Further information

Copies of the Alliance's 'Offset Management Strategy' are available on the project website.