

VNI West

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

FACT SHEET | FEBRUARY 2025

The environmental assessment process

VNI West has been classified by the NSW Government as Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI). The project has also been declared a controlled action by the Commonwealth Government

Based on these classifications, VNI West must go through comprehensive State and Commonwealth environmental assessment and approval processes to identify and assess the potential environmental, economic and social impacts of the project. It also ensures the community can have their say on the project before any final decision is made.

As part of these planning approval processes, Transgrid is required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The purpose of the EIS is to help members of the community, interested stakeholders, government agencies, and relevant authorities understand the potential impacts or provide an informed submission on the merits of the project.

About the EIS

The EIS is being prepared to address the potential environmental impacts of the NSW components of the VNI West project. It will:

- detail the specialist studies carried out to determine the potential impacts of the project
- set out proposed management measures to avoid or minimise those impacts
- summarise engagement undertaken
- help government agencies, relevant authorities, community and stakeholders make an informed submission on the merits of the project.

Separate planning approval for the Victorian component of VNI West is being progressed by Transmission Company Victoria (TCV) under the relevant State and Commonwealth jurisdictional requirements.

Environmental planning approvals pathway

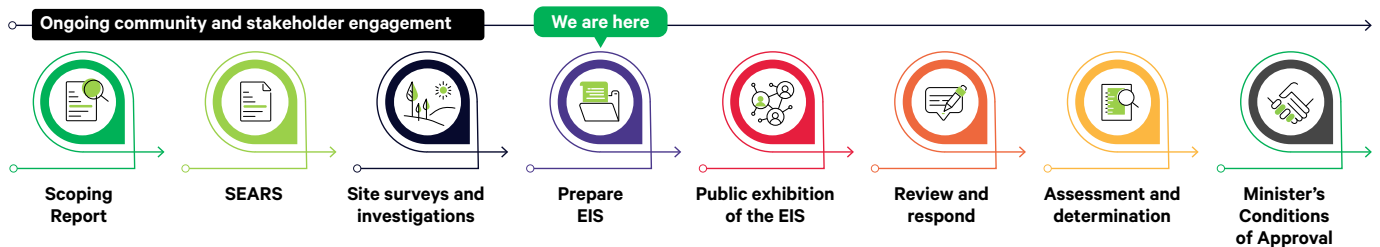


Image: Graphic of the Planning approvals pathway stages.

The approval pathway

The first step in the regulatory process required a preliminary assessment of VNI West (NSW)'s potential environmental impacts and the preparation of a Scoping Report. This report was submitted to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) in April 2024. DPHI subsequently issued the project's Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) in October 2024.

The SEARs set out the matters that must be investigated as part of the EIS, including the specialist studies that must be conducted to inform the EIS. A total of 17 specialist studies are currently being prepared to support the preparation of the EIS and identify potential impacts from the VNI West (NSW) project, and to propose measures to avoid or mitigate those impacts.

Project footprint

The assessment footprint of the EIS includes:

- an indicative 200-metre-wide transmission line corridor; and
- areas which support project construction, including access tracks, workforce accommodation camps and construction laydown areas.

While the final easement will generally be about 70 metres wide, the EIS consideration of a 200-metre-wide area enables a level of flexibility for future potential design refinements and allows for further avoidance and minimisation of impacts. The final location of all proposed infrastructure will be confirmed during detailed design.

VNI West Environmental Impact Statement specialist topics



Aboriginal heritage



Groundwater



Noise and vibration



Air quality and greenhouse gas



Hazards and risk – including bushfire and electric and magnetic fields



Social



Aviation



Historic Heritage



Soil, topography and contamination



Biodiversity



Hydrology, flooding and water quality



Sustainability



Cumulative impacts



Landscape character and visual



Traffic and access



Economic



Land use and agriculture



Waste management and resource use



What we've heard from the community

Throughout engagement to date, the community has tabled concerns that are relevant to consider in the EIS assessment:

- Impacts to **agricultural activities** during construction and operation, including lower production, job losses and commensurate impacts to the local economy and services.
- **Flooding** along the easement.
- **Visual impacts** potentially diminishing the value of rural land and affecting the overall appeal of the region.
- **Aboriginal heritage** sites, and ensuring protection.
- **Health and safety** impacts, including the presence of electric and magnetic fields and the impacts on the mental health of individuals and the collective community.
- **Socio-economic** impacts including business impacts and community benefits.
- **Environmental** impacts including vegetation clearing, bushfire risk, erosion, loss of heritage items and waste generation.
- Protecting the **biodiversity** of the area including local flora and fauna.
- **Traffic and transport** impacts including concerns about heavy vehicles passing through towns, wear and tear of roads and indirect impacts to roads not initially marked for use by the project.
- **Cumulative impacts** from other projects and the need for a coordinated approach amongst projects.
- **Construction impacts** including worker accommodation sites, access roads and quality of materials used.

Next steps in planning approvals



Public exhibition of the EIS

Once the EIS is finalised, the NSW DPHI will place the EIS including all specialist studies on public exhibition for community and stakeholders to view and have opportunity to make a submission.

We anticipate the public exhibition will be in the middle of 2025.



Review and respond

Transgrid reviews submissions and prepares a Submissions Report responding to issues raised. If significant changes to the project are required, an Amendment Report or Preferred Infrastructure Report will also be prepared.



Minister's Conditions of Approval

Following assessment of the EIS by both State and Commonwealth governments, the determination will include decisions on whether the project is approved, and any conditions attached to the approval.

Once approval is received, Transgrid will prepare and submit a Construction Environmental Management Plan to DPHI for approval before construction.

Connect with us

Transgrid is committed to working with landowners and communities through the development of VNI West.

Please connect with us for more information.



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