VNI West

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Bushfire Impact Assessment

FACT SHEET | AUGUST 2025
Application number SSI-72887208

VNI West proposes the construction, operation and ongoing maintenance of a 500kV double circuit overhead transmission line that would connect the high voltage electricity grids in NSW and Victoria. As part of the EIS for VNI West (NSW), a detailed assessment was undertaken to understand the potential impacts of the project on bushfires during construction and operation. The assessment considers both the risks of the project initiating a bushfire and the potential impacts of a bushfire on the project infrastructure. For more information, refer to **Chapter 18: Hazards** and **Risk and Technical Paper 12: Bushfire Impact Assessment**.

Key findings from the EIS assessment

Bushfire risks during construction

During construction, there is potential for bushfires to impact construction activities as well as potential for bushfires to be started by construction activity, through accidental ignition of nearby vegetation. These risks would be highest near heavily vegetated areas, unmanaged grassland and near stockpiles of removed vegetation. Potential causes of accidental ignition include:

- construction activities involving hot works (welding or grinding activities)
- motor vehicle exhaust systems
- electrical faults in equipment
- inappropriate storage and handling of dangerous materials.

Bushfire risks during operation

Operational bushfire risks are expected to be low, however may be associated with:

- accidental ignitions caused by plant, equipment, motor vehicles or hot works during maintenance activities
- substation and transmission line operation if there is a mechanical failure, or when direct contact with vegetation occurs.

Mitigation measures

Incorporating elements into the project design to reduce bushfire risk by:

- conducting risk assessments when determining the final location of infrastructure
- identifying appropriate fuel-reduced 'buffer zones'
- reviewing new technologies for opportunities to improve bushfire risk management.

During construction, mitigating risk by:

- having a Bushfire Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan in place
- implementing appropriate bushfire risk control measures
- implementing hot work procedures during fire danger periods or total fire ban days.

During operation, actions taken to reduce bushfire risks include:

- operating the network within technical limits;
- routinely inspecting transmission assets to identify defects
- conducting regular vegetation inspections using LiDAR imaging and ground or aerial inspection
- managing 'hazard trees' outside the easement that pose a danger to our network or community safety
- managing vegetation within the easement to maintain safety clearances
- completing asset management and defect rectification works in a timely fashion.

How the assessment was carried out?

The Bushfire Impact Assessment assessed potential bushfire impacts during both construction and operation of the project, including risks to public safety, and emergency egress and evacuation. This includes:

- assessment of potential bushfire risks through analysis of fire history in the area, potential sources of ignition, vegetation mapping, satellite imagery, contour data, climactic and seasonal influence, and identified bushfire survey areas
- assessment of bushfire survey areas against the performance criteria outlined in *Planning for Bush Fire Protection: A guide for councils, planners, fire authorities and developers (NSW RFS, 2019)*
- Identifying mitigation measures, such as buffer zones between a bushfire hazard and built structures, to be implemented during construction and operation to avoid or minimise bushfire risk.

Next steps

You have the opportunity to review and comment on the EIS via submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) during August 2025. Electronic copies of the EIS are available via:

- DPHI Major Projects website: www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects
- VNI West (NSW) project website: www.transgrid.com.au/vniw

Following the EIS Exhibition period, Transgrid will produce a Submissions Report to formally respond to community and stakeholder feedback received during exhibition.

For more information on the VNI West EIS, please scan the QR code, or visit www.transgrid.com.au/vniw.

The EIS outlines:

- potential ignition sources during construction, such as hot works, and vehicle exhausts
- areas of elevated risk, including grasslands, vegetation stockpiles, and heavily vegetated locations
- bushfire risks during operation from maintenance activities and infrastructure faults
- fire management responsibilities around substations, access tracks, and transmission line easements
- measures to reduce ignition risks and ensure rapid response capability during high-risk periods
- ongoing coordination with emergency services and integration of fire risk management into project plans.

Image: Bushfire safety helicopter inspections help to identify any bushfire risks and assess the condition of towers and lines.

Connect with us

Transgrid is committed to working with landowners and communities throughout the delivery of VNI West.
Please connect with us for more information.

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