VNI West

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LCVIA)

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 landscape character and visual amenity during construction and operation of the project. For more information, refer to **Chapter 9: Landscape Character** and **Visual and Technical Paper 3: Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment**.

Findings from the EIS assessment

Construction impacts

Short term visual changes

Visual impacts identified during construction activities include:

- the visual impact of temporary plant and equipment present within the existing landscape
- establishing worker accommodation facilities, construction compounds and access tracks
- vegetation removal.

Landscape character zones

For the assessment, the project footprint has been divided into seven landscape character zones (LCZs). The table below outlines the identified level of impact.

Landscape character zone	Landscape impact
Murray River Rural Valley	Moderate daytime impacts expected.
Moulamein Rural Plains Hay Open Rural Plains Delta Creek Rural Plains Gregadoo River Valleys	Moderate night-time impacts expected due to lighting required at construction compounds and temporary worker accommodation facilities.
Wagga Wagga rural fringe Gregadoo Great Dividing Range foothills	Low or negligible impacts

Temporary visual impacts

Temporary visual impacts are expected at three private dwellings located near the construction compound at Fisher Lane, Wetuppa. Combined temporary worker accommodation facilities and/or construction compounds may also be visible from Fisher Lane, Cunninyeuk Road, Balranald Road, Cobb Highway, Mabins Well Road and Kidman Way.

Operational impacts

Landscape character and visual amenity

During the project footprint refinement, careful consideration was given to minimising impacts on landscape character and visual amenity. Where practicable, the transmission line route was aligned alongside existing infrastructure and positioned away from towns to reduce visual disruption. Despite these efforts, the transmission lines and expanded Dinawan substation will be visible from certain viewpoints.

Visual impacts during operation are expected to be more noticeable in areas with open landscapes, where the transmission line changes direction, or where no existing lines are currently visible. The Murray River Rural Valley LCZ is anticipated to experience a moderate impact, while all other LCZs are expected to experience low to very low impacts. Night-time impacts across all LCZs are projected to be negligible to low.

From public viewpoints, visual impacts during operation are generally expected to range from very low to moderate. Two specific viewpoints — at Cunninyeuk Road and at Cobb Highway— may experience moderate visual impacts due to limited natural screening vegetation.

The assessment also identified 13 dwellings not directly affected by an easement with private viewpoints that may experience some visual change. Of these, nine are located over one kilometre away, and all but one are more than 500 metres from the project footprint. Further analysis suggests that, due to distance and intervening vegetation, visual impacts for these dwellings during operation are expected to be minimal to very low.

Mitigation measures

- The detailed design will aim to reduce visual impacts by locating specific transmission line structures as far away as possible from sensitive viewpoints, or where vegetation would potentially screen views experienced from affected dwellings.
- Vegetation clearance for the project will be limited to the minimum extent necessary for construction and operation to maximise existing visual screening and retention of the existing landscape character.

How the assessment was carried out

The LCVIA study area extended five kilometres around the transmission line corridor for landscape character impacts, and 1.5 kilometres for the detailed visual impact assessment which considered viewpoints from both public areas and private dwellings.

It considered landscape character, scenic quality, visual sensitivity and potential changes to visual amenity during construction and operation.

The LCVIA was undertaken in accordance with applicable guidelines, legislation and visual assessment data, including the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Transmission Guideline – *Technical Supplement for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (2024).*

The LCVIA included:

- a review of existing information and digital modelling to understand terrain;
- site inspections in select locations to verify the review
- taking photographs for a detailed technical assessment to determine a visual impact rating, and to develop photomontages from representative viewpoints along the project footprint
- identifying landscape character zones and assessing the landscape character impacts for both day and night-time
- identifying representative viewpoints from private dwellings and public locations and analysing the visual impact using the tools in the *Technical Supplement*. This includes assessing landscape features such as scenic amenity and contribution to sense of place.

The EIS outlines:

- the distinct characteristics of local landscape types and zones
- the visual sensitivity of public and private viewpoints across rural and regional settings
- daytime and night-time impacts to landscape character from construction and operation
- changes to visual amenity from transmission lines, substations and associated infrastructure
- impacts on valued views and scenic locations, including along tourist routes and rivers
- community and stakeholder views on landscape values and visual change
- cumulative visual impacts when considered alongside other energy and infrastructure projects
- design and mitigation measures to reduce visual prominence and retain local landscape character.

Photomontages

The EIS includes photomontages and 3D modelling at representative viewpoints to support the assessment of visual impact from public viewpoints and private dwellings.
This photomontage shows how the project may appear in the landscape along Cunninyeuk Road, Cunninyeuk.

Image: Photomontage view along Cunninyeuk Road.

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: https://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.

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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