

VNI West is a proposed 500kV double-circuit transmission line connecting the energy grids of NSW and Victoria. As part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared, a detailed assessment will be undertaken on the potential landscape character and visual amenity impacts during construction and operation of the project.

What is a Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (LCVIA)?

The LCVIA evaluates potential changes to visual amenity resulting from the project's construction and operation. This includes impacts on surrounding residences, scenic or significant vistas, night lighting, air traffic and road corridors in the public domain. The assessment also proposes mitigation measures that may reduce potential impacts.

What have we heard from the community to date?

During development of the project to date, community members have raised concerns that:

- overhead transmission lines would impact the picturesque landscape, diminish the value of rural lands and affect the overall appeal of the region
- the visual presence of transmission lines may have a negative impact on tourism activity and the local economy.

How is the assessment carried out?

Generally, the project 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.

The LCVIA study area in NSW extends 5km around the transmission line corridor for landscape character impacts,

and 1.5km for the detailed visual impact assessment which considers viewpoints from both public areas and private homes.

The LCVIA will be undertaken in accordance with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's *Transmission Guideline - Technical Supplement for Landscape Character and Visual Impact Assessment (2024)*.

The LCVIA includes:

- a desktop review of existing information and digital modelling to understand terrain
- site inspections in select locations to verify the desktop reviews
- taking photographs 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 assessing 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.

Views will be assessed by identifying the magnitude of change created by the project, and the visual sensitivity of the expected viewer. Combined, these characteristics will be used to assign a rating of potential visual impact at each viewpoint. Ratings are categorised as very low, low, moderate or high.

Photomontages

The EIS will include photomontages and 3D modelling at representative viewpoints to support the assessment of visual impact from public viewpoints and private dwellings. A sample VNI West photomontage is shown to the right.



Image: Photomontage at Carrathool Road.

Transmission line design

The project is being designed to use two main types of transmission line structures. Typical examples showing the height of the transmission towers for the 500kV double-circuit line (between Dinawan and the NSW-VIC border) and the 330 kV double-circuit line (between Wagga and Gugaa) are provided below.

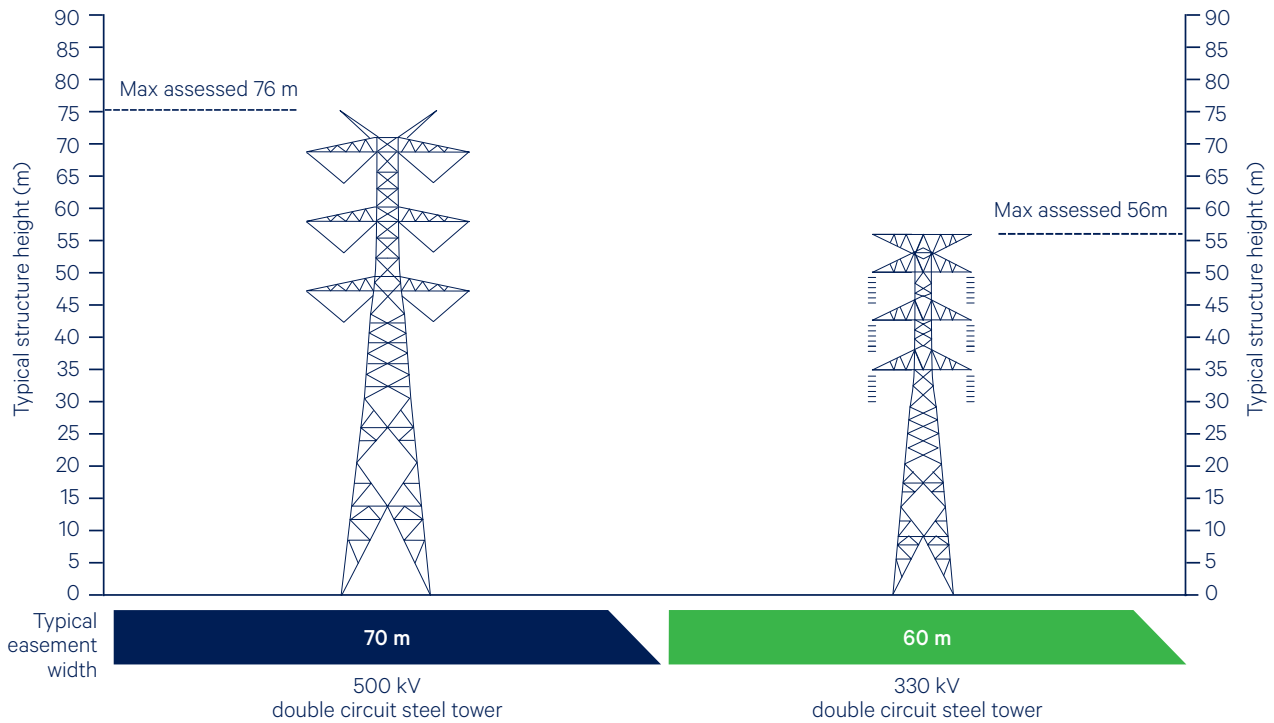


Image: Diagram of 500 kV and 330 kV towers.

Preliminary impacts identified

Preliminary visual impacts identified are associated with construction activities including:

- mobilisation of plant and equipment throughout the project footprint
- establishment of construction compounds, access roads and tracks
- vegetation removal
- the large-scale transmission line structures when viewed from the Cobb Highway and local roads.

Mitigating impacts

The detailed design phase will consider ways to mitigate visual impacts. The project team will consult with landowners of properties identified as having a moderate or high visual impact to understand where property-specific mitigation measures would be effective. Opportunities for minimising visual impact, such as planting screening vegetation, will be investigated once detailed design is complete.

Next steps

Visual amenity and landscape character will continue to be considered as the project progresses through the EIS and detailed design and more information about identified impacts and proposed management measures will become available.

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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