VNI West

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Vegetation Clearing

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 vegetation clearing required for the project, from the perspectives of biodiversity (flora and fauna), and bushfire management and protection of transmission infrastucture. For more information, refer to **Chapter 3: Project Description, Chapter 7: Biodiversity** and **Technical Paper 1: Biodiversity development assessment report**.

Why is clearing needed?

Vegetation management is needed to enable construction activities and to ensure the safe and reliable operation of transmission lines. Vegetation clearing will be undertaken to help establish the transmission line easement and structures. Ongoing vegetation management is required to ensure:

- safe access for inspection and maintenance
- protection of transmission infrastructure from damage caused by vegetation
- compliance with safety regulations around minimum vegetation clearance distances
- reduced risk of bushfire ignition or electrical faults.

Where is clearing needed?

Vegetation will be cleared in key areas to support the construction of the project including (but not limited to):

- transmission line easement and areas around each transmission structure
- new or upgraded access tracks
- the Dinawan substation expansion
- telecommunications facility sites
- construction compounds and temporary worker accommodation facilities.

How will clearing be done?

The method of clearing will depend on the local environment as well as the requirements for construction or operational maintenance. Importantly, clearing methods will consider terrain, vegetation type and environmental constraints.

Mitigation measures

Impact to sensitive areas will be avoided or minimised where possible during detailed design.

Ground-truthing of clearing requirements, including involvement by a suitably qualified arborist.

All clearing conducted in line with approved environmental management plans.

Areas of cleared vegetation will be offset in line with the project's biodiversity offset strategy. Further details are available in the Biodiversity Impact Assessment fact sheet.

Use of alternative construction methods to minimise impacts on special biodiversity protection zones, which have been identified for specific flora and fauna species.

Construction disturbance areas

The project footprint comprises three disturbance areas, which will be subject to specific clearing requirements as part of construction and ongoing maintenance. The disturbance areas for construction include:

Disturbance Area A – Full Vegetation Clearing

A 10-metre wide strip on either side of the centreline has been assumed to be removed during construction. Additional clearing includes (but is not limited to):

- clearing for each transmission line structure and associated construction area (as illustrated below)
- areas for brake and winch sites
- new or upgraded access tracks
- construction sites for telecommunication facilities, the Dinawan substation expansion and network augmentation works
- construction compounds and combined temporary worker accommodation facilities.

Disturbance Area B – Selective Clearing Within the Easement

For this disturbance area, tall growing vegetation that has the potential to exceed the clearance requirements for the transmission line now or in the future would be removed.

These clearances follow Transgrid's design manual for new transmission lines. This means that:

- vegetation within 10 – 30 metres from the centreline that exceeds heights greater than four metres (or have the potential to) will be removed
- vegetation within 30 – 35 metres from the centreline that exceeds 10 metres (or has the potential to) will be removed
- groundcover and understorey vegetation would generally not be cleared but, if impacted during clearance activity, would be allowed to recover.
- **Hazard Tree Zone – Outside the Easement**

This area is located outside the transmission line easement, and refers to an area which may contain trees of a sufficient height, which, if they were to fall, would strike the overhead conductors or the transmission line structures, or come close enough to cause an electrical flashover and infringe on the vegetation clearance requirement at the lowest point of sag in the transmission line. Trees identified by a suitably qualified arborist as posing a risk would be removed.

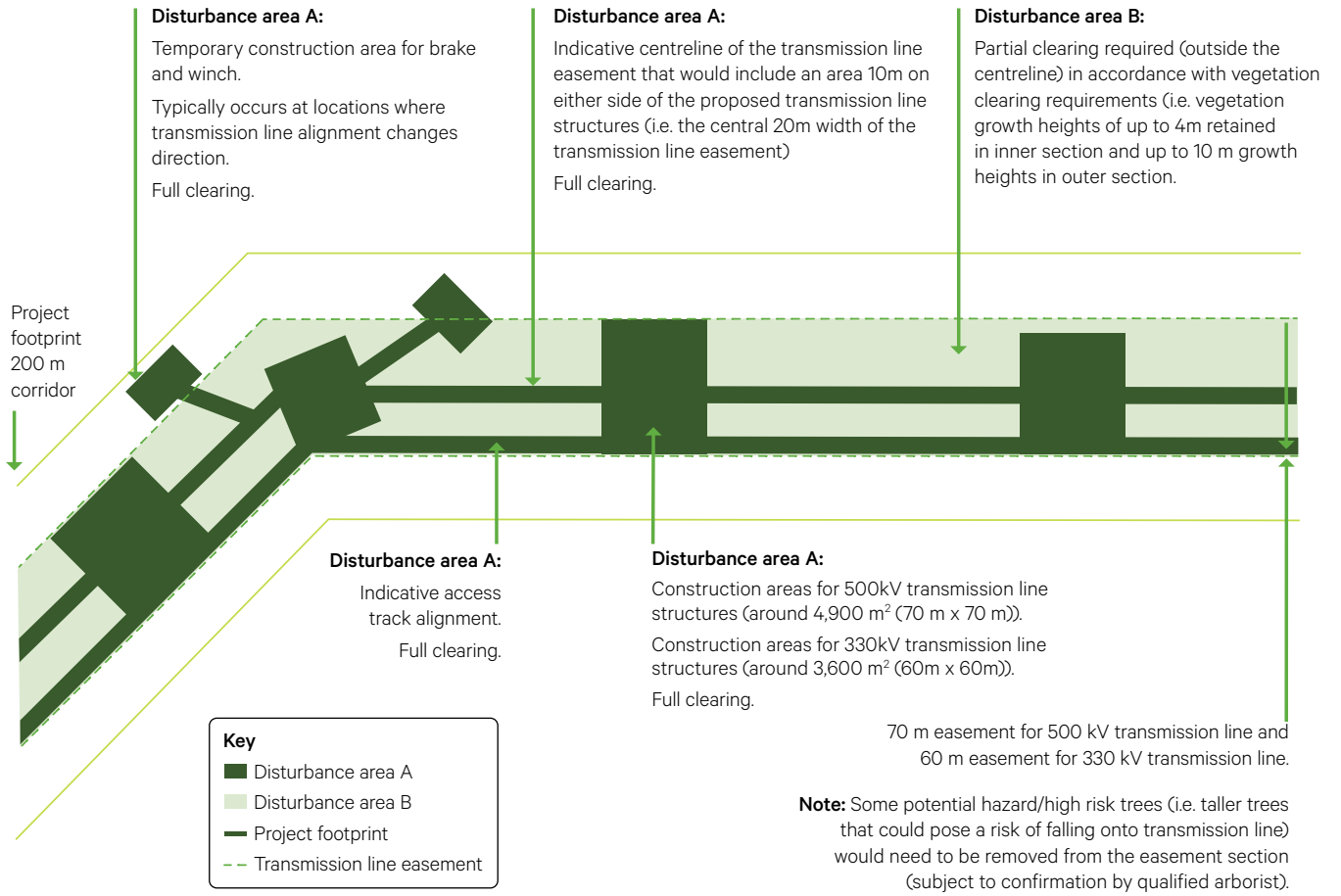

Image 1: Indicative vegetation clearing zones within the 200-metre-wide project footprint during construction.

Ongoing operational maintenance requirements

During operation, vegetation below the transmission lines would require ongoing maintenance to ensure electrical safety clearances and protection zones are maintained. Vegetation will be managed to acceptable heights of between four and 10 metres depending on where the vegetation occurs in relation to the transmission lines (as illustrated in below).

Vegetation clearing will also be required up to a 20-metre radius around each transmission line structure to provide safe access and set up for operational inspection and to prevent vegetation encroachment around the structures. Trees beyond the transmission line easement would be removed where they pose a risk to the transmission line or structure. Ad-hoc vegetation maintenance would also be required along operational access tracks.

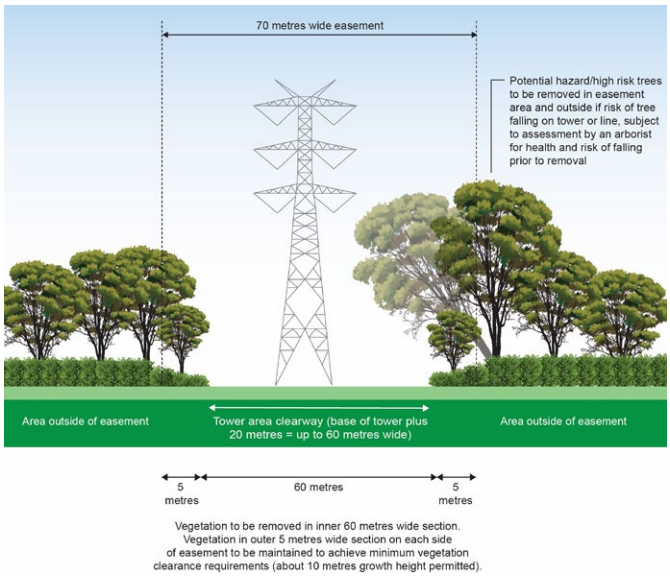

Image: Indicative clearing requirements for the 500kV transmission line at tower locations.

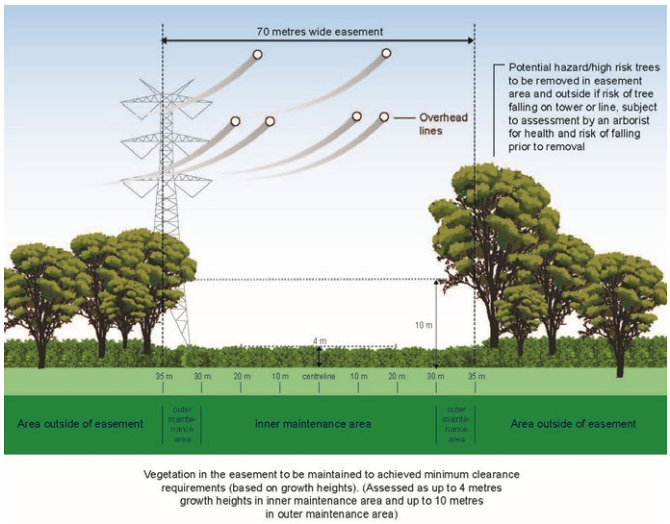

Image: Indicative clearing requirements for the 500kV transmission line mid-easement, between transmission line structures during operation.

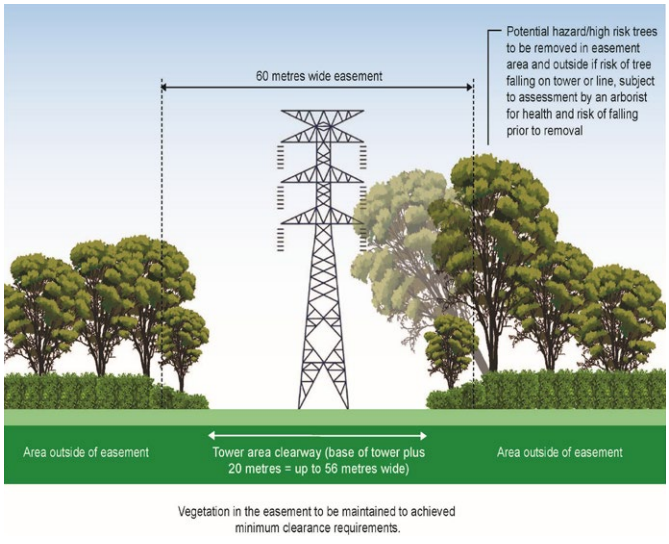

Image: Indicative clearing requirements for the network augmentation works (330kV) transmission line mid-easement, between transmission line structures during operation.

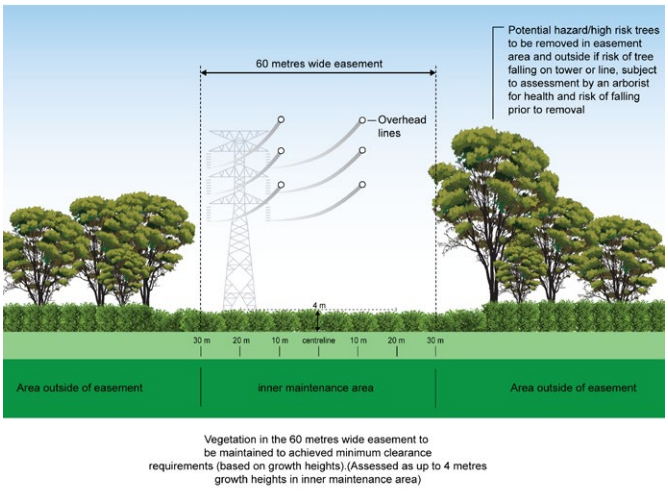

Image: Indicative clearing requirements for the network augmentation works (330kV) transmission line at tower locations.

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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