

Landscape and Visual Impact



Environment Effects Statement

The [Environment Effects Statement \(EES\)](#) is Victoria's most rigorous and transparent environmental impact assessment. It describes the project, its rationale, and potential environmental and social effects.

Scoping requirements

In February 2025, the Victorian Minister for Planning issued the final scoping requirements for the VNI West EES, setting out the proposed specific matters to be investigated and documented. While the scoping requirements are intended to cover all relevant matters, the EES can also address other significant matters that emerge during EES investigations or through consultation.

Landscape and visual impact scoping requirements

The EES scoping requirements state that the investigation into potential landscape and visual impacts focuses on project infrastructure that may affect the visual amenity of residents in townships or individual dwellings along the route.

The project area of interest also includes high points in the landscape, such as the Mount Bolangum Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR), Big Tottington NCR and Morri Morri NCR in the southern area, and Mount Buckra Scenic Reserve, Charlton East Bushland Reserve and Howells Hill Scenic Reserve near Charlton.

Matters for investigation

- *Potential effects on significant landscape values (such as landscape character and features) and landforms in the vicinity of the project area of interest, especially national parks, other reserves and areas identified for their landscape values.*
- *Potential for nearby landholders, residents, and communities to experience significant visual impact from project infrastructure, in both public and private viewsheds.*
- *Potential cumulative impacts of the project – in combination with other visually conspicuous developments – on landscape values of the region.*

Assessment overview

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance and effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.

The LVIA considers how transmission infrastructure will affect visual amenity during the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the transmission infrastructure.

In 2024–25, extensive field surveys were conducted in and around the project easement informed the assessment, including surveys on public land (such as road reserves and parklands) and private properties identified near proposed project infrastructure. Details of these surveys are outlined in the study methodology.

During planning for the project easement, and in developing the Project Reference Design, it was determined that the easement would be located at least 5 kilometres from significant high points and major townships along the easement to minimise impacts. Every effort was also made to keep the easement distant from parks and reserves and other publicly utilised spaces.

Scan this QR code to view the complete list of [scoping requirements](#) for the VNI West project.





Study methodology

- The purpose of the surveys is to take photographs looking in the direction of the future transmission infrastructure from predetermined view locations.
- The location of the camera and control points within the camera's immediate surrounds are georeferenced and recorded by a licensed land surveyor with a GPS receiver.
- The photographs and georeferenced camera and control point locations collected during the surveys inform the creation of photomontages – highly accurate, photorealistic images of the transmission infrastructure within the existing landscape.
- These photomontages are then assessed to determine the level of change in the existing environment and whether the resulting impacts are positive or negative, direct or indirect. Effects are then described and mitigation measures recommended, if applicable.

The LVIA considers three variables to determine the overall effect:

- **Landscape value:** assigned as either very high, high, moderate, or low based upon the following criteria:

Low

Minor presence of preferred landscape features, and/or a prevalence of non-preferred landscape features.



Moderate

Local significance and/or some presence of preferred landscape features, with these being more prevalent than non-preferred landscape features.



High

State or Regional significance designation, and/or presence of Significant Landscape Overlays.

Prevalence of preferred landscape features, with minimal presence of non-preferred landscape features.



Very High

National significance including landscapes which are included in Australia's National Heritage List and/or Commonwealth Heritage List or designated wilderness areas.



- **Magnitude of visibility (the extent to which transmission infrastructure will occupy or change an existing view):** A grading system is used to categorise the magnitude of visibility ranging from very high, high, moderate, low, very low/negligible, and nil.
- **Sensitivity of viewers (the extent to which transmission infrastructure will occupy or change an existing view):** Private residents are assumed to have a very high sensitivity to visual impacts, as are visitors to national parks or areas with statutory protection for landscape value or significance. Visitors to recognised scenic destinations – including designated lookouts and recreational areas – are also considered to have a higher sensitivity to changes in visual amenity.

Local input

Several landholders have requested that the LVIA considers the effect on their properties due to proximity to proposed project infrastructure. Community input has also highlighted several important high points with important views found in areas throughout the region.

Next steps

The LVIA is ongoing. Potential impacts on dwellings and other sensitive land uses will be presented in photomontages and mitigation measures proposed where appropriate.

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