VNI West

Victoria to NSW Interconnector West



VicGrid



Victoria to NSW Interconnector West

VNI West will deliver a new electricity transmission line between Victoria and New South Wales.

It will connect Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) in both States and support reliable, secure electricity supply as coal-fired generation retires.



Map is illustrative only and not to scale.

VNI West Project Easement (Victoria)

In Victoria, the project easement for VNI West is approximately 70-metres-wide along most of its 240-kilometre-long route.

The easement stretches from a new substation near Bulgana in Western Victoria to the New South Wales border, 30 kilometres north of Kerang.

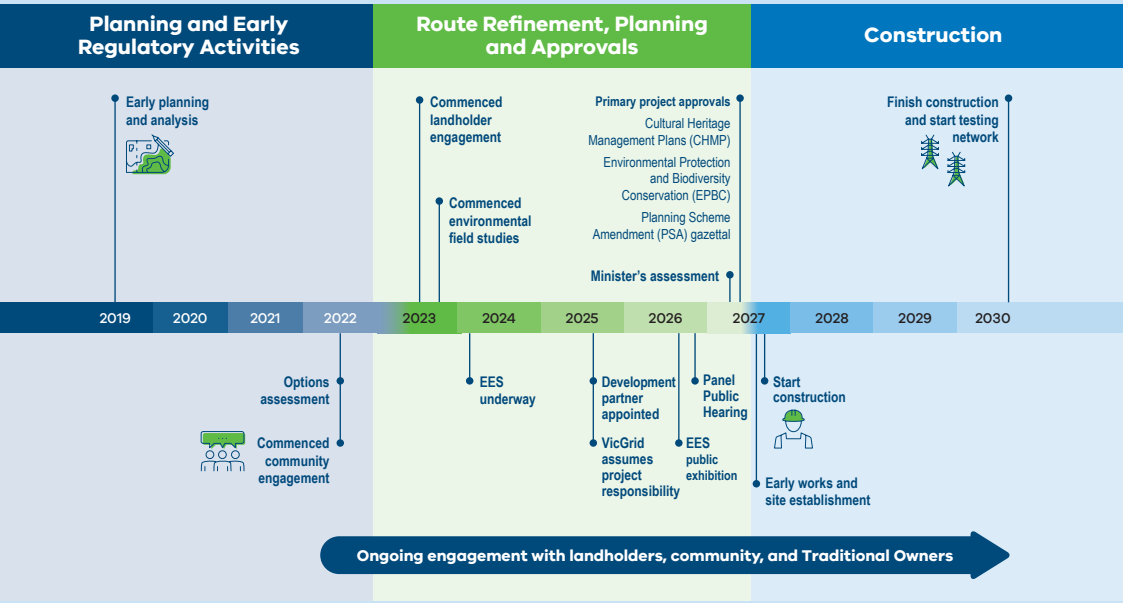
The process to identify the project easement began with determining the 50-kilometre area of interest in May 2023, which was narrowed down to a 2-kilometre draft corridor in September 2023.

An alignment update in mid-2025 reflects ongoing planning, design, construction, and consultation work in refining a route for this critical transmission infrastructure project.



This diagram is for illustrative purposes only.

VNI West Project Timeline



The above dates are indicative only and subject to change.



Project Planning and Approvals

Commonwealth Approvals

Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC)

- The project was referred to the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Water to decide if approval was required under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act).
- Public consultation on VNI West's referral under the EPBC Act was publicly advertised from 15 to 30 May 2024.
- The Minister confirmed in June 2024 that VNI West was a 'Controlled Action' requiring assessment and approval under the EPBC Act and would need to be assessed under the bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments.
- The Commonwealth has resolved to use the bilateral agreement and rely on the Victorian Government's Environment Effects Statement (EES) process to guide its approval decision under the EPBC Act.

State Approvals

Environment Effects Statement (EES)

- The VNI West project must complete an Environment Effects Statement (EES) and obtain relevant State and Commonwealth approvals before construction can commence. Planning approvals required for the VNI West project will be informed by the EES.

Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA)

- A draft Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 will be prepared to propose changes to the planning schemes within the VNI West project development area and will be exhibited with the EES for public comment.
- The project anticipates that a PSA would be the most appropriate means of providing consistent planning controls across the municipalities within the VNI West project area.
- The key approvals required under Victorian legislation include PSAs to amend the Gannawarra, Loddon, Buloke, and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes to apply a Specific Controls Overlay to areas where the project is proposed.

Project Planning and Approvals

State Approvals

Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP)

- VNI West is required to prepare Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs) in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, which will include the results of an assessment of the potential impacts of the project on Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- CHMPs for VNI West will be prepared in collaboration with Traditional Owner groups, Registered Aboriginal Parties, and First Peoples — State Relations. The CHMPs will identify potential impacts the project may pose to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, as well as ways that heritage can best be protected.

Other State Approvals

- Should the project obtain the primary approvals as previously mentioned, a range of secondary approvals may be required for the project under Victorian legislation to support construction and eventual operation of the transmission project. These would be sought prior to construction commencement, and may include:
  - Leasing provisions for commercial and non-commercial purposes on reserved Crown land under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* (Vic) (Crown Land Act).
  - Permits under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1998* (Vic) (FFG Act) for clearance of FFG Act listed species within Crown land.
  - Permit or consent for management of impacts on historic heritage under the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic) (Heritage Act) for works on sites protected under the Heritage Act.
  - Works on waterways Permit under the *Water Act 1989* (Vic) (Water Act).
  - Management Authorisation Permit under the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic) (Wildlife Act) for the removal or salvage of indigenous vertebrate species (except declared a pest) listed under the FFG Act.
  - Consent under the *Road Management Act 2004* (Vic) for any road upgrades or works planned on a road, lane, street or footpath.

Project benefits at a glance



Harness renewable energy for Victorian homes



Provide local jobs and business opportunities during construction



Support training and skills development in rural communities



Boost regional economic activity



Strengthen the connection between interstate power grids



Ensure energy security as coal-fired power retires

What benefits will the project deliver to local communities?



As the project is built and operated, it will create local jobs and boost demand for nearby businesses. That means more work for local trades, suppliers, and service providers — both during construction and once the project is running.



The government will set up a fund to support towns that host renewable energy projects. Money from project developers will go into this fund, and it will be used for local infrastructure and community programs based on what each area needs.

Frequently Asked Questions

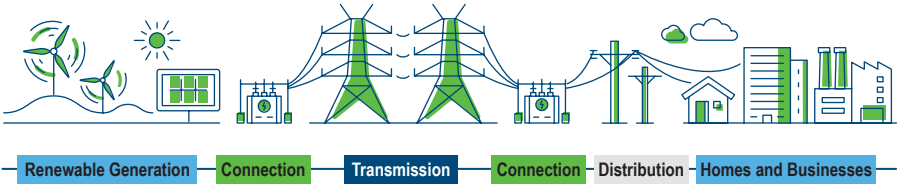
Why does Victoria need more transmission?

VNI West is needed to bring more renewable energy from Victoria and New South Wales into the grid and keep our electricity supply reliable.

Australia's coal-fired power stations are closing after decades of service, with many shutting earlier than planned as they reach the end of their operating lives and become less economical to run.

Renewable energy from the sun and wind is the lowest-cost replacement for coal, supported by batteries, gas, and hydro.

Projects like VNI West will connect these new and diverse energy sources to homes and businesses. Existing transmission can't meet this need because generation is now located in different parts of the country, and the current network wasn't built for this shift.



Is the project approved?

No, not yet. The VNI West project is undergoing a comprehensive environmental and planning approval process. The project cannot proceed without approvals from State and Commonwealth governments. This process includes ongoing engagement with landholders, local communities, Traditional Owners, and other stakeholders.

Why isn't VNI West being built underground?

Underground transmission infrastructure comes with significant land-use restrictions for buildings, dams, farming, and tree planting. Vegetation with deep roots can't be planted over the easement, and cropping opportunities are limited.

Installing underground lines would also require a deep concrete trench along the entire route, which would cause major disturbance to soil, water, flora, and fauna.

In addition, underground transmission is far more expensive than overhead lines — and projects like VNI West are ultimately paid for by electricity consumers.

How will the VNI West project consider biosecurity?

Landholder Liaisons will work with landholders to identify all biosecurity requirements for their property, and agree on appropriate management plans. These can be detailed in the Enablement and Access Deed, and the VNI West project team and its personnel must comply with their requirements at every stage of the project, in line with legal and contractual obligations.

What assessments are required?

Before the project can be approved, the VNI West project is required to undertake a range of studies and assessments to determine the potential impact of the VNI West project as part of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process. Studies and assessments are underway in relation to the following EES matters:

- Air Quality
- Aviation
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage
- Agriculture
- Bushfire
- Business Impact
- Climate Change
- Ecology
- Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)
- Geology and Contaminated Land
- Greenhouse Gas
- Groundwater
- Historic Heritage
- Land Use
- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Noise and Vibration
- Social
- Surface Water
- Traffic and Transport

Why can't transmission infrastructure be located next to roads?

Many public road reserves are not wide enough to accommodate major transmission infrastructure and can also be areas of environmental sensitivity as they often contain important remnant vegetation. There are also potential road safety, public safety, and transmission infrastructure safety risks.

Can you continue to farm under and around transmission lines?



Yes. There are many farming activities which can take place in a transmission line easement such as broadacre cropping, running livestock, and planting orchards.



6,500km

of transmission lines currently operate in Victoria many of which coexist with farming and agriculture



For information on farming with transmission, please head to the VNI West website and access our 'Farming with Transmission Fact Sheet'.

Do transmission lines increase bushfire risk and can you fight fires around transmission?

Bushfires have been safely and successfully fought around transmission across the country for decades. Transmission lines, when managed and maintained properly, pose a very low risk of starting a fire. Importantly, in a major bushfire emergency, transmission can be "turned off", so there is no power running through the lines. By law, the companies that own and maintain transmission lines must work with fire authorities to ensure that firefighting is possible around transmission.

What is an Enablement and Access Deed?

The Enablement and Access Deed outlines how the VNI West project team and field survey teams can access a property, subject to a landholder's access requirements such as biosecurity procedures. It includes an access payment — where no Land Access Agreement is in place — and confirms eligibility for the Landholder Benefit Payment. More information on the Enablement and Access Deed is available in the Landholder Guide on the VNI West website.

VNI West

Contact us

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If you need an interpreter, please call 13 12 50 and reference VNI West. If you are deaf and/or find hearing or speaking with people on the phone difficult, please contact the National Relay Service on voice relay number 1300 555 727, TTY number 133 677 or SMS relay number 0423 677 767.

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