



Business and Economics

Environment Effects Statement

An [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 in the EES. While the scoping requirements are intended to cover all relevant matters, the EES can also address other significant matters that emerge during the EES investigations or through consultation.

Business impact (socioeconomic) scoping requirements

Business impact relates to the Socioeconomic EES scoping requirements.

Matters for investigation

Socioeconomic matters identified include:

- *Potential significant disruption – both long and short-term – to existing and/or proposed land uses (including agriculture), public infrastructure, and fire and emergency management, with associated economic and social effects.*
- *Potential impact on tourism and tourist attractions within and around the project area of interest.*
- *Potential adverse economic effects, including both direct and indirect effects on employment, farming and agriculture, other businesses, housing, and local and regional economy.*

Assessment overview and study methodology

The business impact assessment identifies, assesses, and characterises potential direct and indirect effects on businesses and the local economy within the study area associated with the construction and operation of the project. Broader economic impacts of the project across the State will also be considered.

The assessment includes desktop research, economic modelling, and consultation.

There is also a separate EES study specifically addressing the potential for the project to impact agriculture and agricultural businesses in the region.

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





Existing conditions

The business impact assessment is ongoing. Existing conditions understood to date indicate that the study area is rural, characterised by relatively small populations and low population densities. It includes a limited number of medium and larger towns, such as Charlton, Kerang, Stawell, St Arnaud, Wedderburn, and Wycheproof. The project easement is at least 5km from all of the main townships and would have no direct disruption effects on township businesses. There are a limited number of non-agricultural businesses in proximity to the project easement along its entire length.

The local economy is dominated by agriculture, which accounts for 53.3 per cent of businesses in the study area and is the major employer. Impacts on agricultural businesses will be assessed in the Agriculture Impact Assessment. Other key industries include community services – such as health and education – as well as construction and retail.

Each shire's economy contributes approximately 0.1 per cent to Victoria's Gross State Product (GSP).

Next steps

The business impact assessment is continuing, with a focus on economic modelling. The specialists will assess potential negative impacts which the project may have on businesses, and consider whether there will be positive effects through procurement of labour, goods, and services in the region.