Murrabit and Tragowel Landholder and Near Neighbour Sessions

October 2024

Conversation Capture



TRANSMISSION COMPANY VICTORIA

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Version	Release date	Changes
1.0	December 2024	Draft prepared.
2.0	February 2025	Updated to include link to further information about insurance.

1 Background

On the 29th and 30th of October 2024, from 5pm-7pm, Transmission Company Victoria (TCV) held an information session for landholders and near neighbours in Murrabit and Tragowel.

TCV shared a presentation at the session and attendees were able to ask questions or provide feedback throughout.

We would like to sincerely thank all those who made the time to attend these meetings. Your questions and input were highly valuable, and we hope that you found the information provided to be of use.

1.1 Event snapshots

Murrabit

- 29 October 2024 between 5pm-7pm
- 35-40 attendees
- Held at the Murrabit Public Hall
- Facilitated by TCV with support from Transgrid

Tragowel

- 30 October 2024 between 5pm-7pm
- 25-30 attendees
- Held at the Tragowel Hall
- Facilitated by TCV with support from VicGrid

2 Key Themes

Attendees raised several questions and concerns over the course of the meeting. The following is a summary of those questions and TCV's response.

2.1 Route refinement process, outcomes and next steps

How are the different constraints prioritised?

As part of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process, to ensure consistency of approach an evaluation framework was applied to identify potential environmental, social, cultural and technical constraints to inform development of the project, this is a widely accepted approach for assessing project options. The evaluation framework included several environmental values such as National Parks and Ramsar listed wetlands which were deemed to represent areas to be totally avoided, while other constraints were classified as 'avoid where practicable'. The full evaluation framework can be found in The Preferred Easement Report.

Why can't transmission be placed alongside a railway or road?

Many public road reserves are not wide enough to accommodate major 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.

How long will it take to finalise a preferred easement where there is currently a preferred and an alternative?

These will be assessed under the comprehensive Environment Effects Statement (EES) process. This is expected to occur over the next 12-18 months, however, if the studies and assessments support ruling out a route option earlier, landholders will be notified as soon as possible.

Are the tower locations final and will landholders have input on the final alignment?

The proposed location for transmission towers is not yet final.

Individual maps showing the proposed tower locations have been shared with landholders, and we would like to work with you to seek early feedback on infrastructure placement. Participating in conversations with your Landholder Liaison is the best way to ensure your voice is heard and considered in the final project design, including the proposed location of transmission infrastructure on your land.

2.2 Insurance

How will transmission lines impact insurance?

We understand that insurance impacts are top of mind for many landholders and neighbours. More detailed information on insurance can be found on the TCV website by accessing the 'Transmission Infrastructure and Insurance" fact sheet at: www.transmissionvictoria.com.au/fact-sheets-policies

2.3 Safety, equipment and farming practices

Has the project considered flood zones?

TCV narrowed the route for VNI West based on a 'principle of avoidance.' We aimed to avoid constraints, such as sensitive environmental areas and flood prone areas, wherever possible. This was not possible for the entire length of the transmission line, especially in the northern area. Where required, we will design and build the infrastructure to accomodate constraints such as this. During the construction phase of a project, various measures will be put in place to manage and mitigate weather risks, including preparing relevant environmental management plans.

Will safety assessments be conducted on equipment operating under power lines?

Based on a minimum 15m ground clearance and the No Go Zone guidelines published by Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), vehicles and equipment of up to 5m in height may travel and operate without permission. Vehicles and equipment between 5m to 8.6m in height may be permitted to operate subject to a safety assessment undertaken by the TNSP.

The safety assessment is specific for each property, equipment and vehicles. The assessment will determine whether a permit or spotter may be required for this work.

What is the lowest sag point of the towers?

The transmission towers are expected to be between 60 and 80 metres high in areas with the lowest sag point likely to be about 15m from the ground.

Will fences near transmission lines need to be earthed?

TCV is preparing more detailed information on fencing, requirements for which will ultimately be determined by the Transmission Network Service Provider (TNSP) that will partner with TCV. Generally, if your fence is within 50 metres of transmission infrastructure, it may require earthing, insulating, or for electric fences the installation of filter units. This is dependent on the materials your fences and gates are made from, the distance from the centre of a transmission tower or easement, the length of your fence, whether your fence is electrified, and other factors like soil resistivity.

Will the TNSP be able to access the easement at any time?

Landholders will continue to have ownership and use of the easement land, subject to the easement terms. Access to the easement will follow the terms agreed upon by the landholder when the offer for easement is made.

A Property Management Plan (PMP) will be developed in consultation with landholders and will define features and infrastructure on your property, define how your land and these items would be managed during a construction process, how the land disturbed during construction would be remediated, as well as any ongoing access requirements post-construction.

What if a foreign TNSP operates the line and does not look after it?

AEMO will carefully evaluate each tenderer's capabilities prior to selecting a partner by the end of the year. There will be an extensive onboarding period where the successful tenderer will work alongside AEMO to continue to develop the project over the next 18 months.

Important criteria for selecting the right partner will include their demonstrated ability to build trust with the community and deliver on community benefits. We will work with the development partner under a collaborative contract model to ensure strong continuity in relationships. The onboarding process will allow the new party a full understanding of issues, concerns and commitments made in discussions with landholders and the community over the past two years. Conversations with landholders and communities will continue to be an important input as the project progresses.

2.4 Post construction

Is there potential for upgrades or decommissioning?

VNI West's transmission infrastructure will be built to the latest overhead line design standards. The transmission line, including structures and foundations, are designed for a minimum "service life" of 70 years.

Most overhead transmission lines have a long lifespan, so decommissioning of existing transmission lines is not common but may occur if the transmission line is being replaced with a higher voltage line. Remediation and associated costs would be the responsibility of the TNSP.

2.5 Compensation

Why is NSW indexing payments to CPI while Victoria is not?

The Victorian Government payment of $8000 per km, per year for 25 years, is indexed to CPI. The remaining compensation from TCV is proposed to be split into two payments (80% before construction, 20% after). These payments are not indexed to CPI as they are not ongoing.

Will TCV compensate farmers for irrigation system reconfigurations or any other type of reconfiguration of farms that has to take place due to transmission lines?

Property-specific information will inform the compensation assessment included in the Option for Easement proposal. This information will also assist us to consider what measures may be put in place to protect specific features of your property and/or to work around the existing activities on the property during construction, if possible. If reconfigurations are required due to impacts of the transmission, TCV will compensate the landholder for these works. More information about compensation can be found in the Landholder guide.

2.6 Near neighbour concerns

What compensation options are available for neighbouring landholders?

VicGrid is developing and confirming the compensation which will be available for neighbours. Under the current proposed framework, if you are a landholder with a dwelling within 400m of proposed transmission infrastructure in Victoria, you may be eligible for near-neighbour consideration. This could include a one-off payment of up to $40,000, with the amount scaled based on the distance from the dwelling or sensitive land use to the nearest new transmission infrastructure.

TCV's Neighbour Liaisons will work closely with neighbouring landholders to address concerns and answer any questions while the compensation details are being finalised.

2.7 EES process and other opportunities for input

When will the draft scoping for the EES be open for public comment, and how can landholders participate?

Transmission Company Victoria (TCV) is currently undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the proposed VNI West project, via an Environment Effects Statement (EES). The EES is a rigorous regulatory assessment of potential environmental impacts commonly required for major projects in Victoria, overseen by the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

TCV is required to carry out technical studies and assessments to assess the potential impacts of the project on a range of matters including agriculture, local business and economy, cultural heritage and the environment.

DTP has outlined the matters that TCV is required to investigate in a draft scoping requirements document, which is available for public comment. Submissions from the public will be considered before the scoping requirements are confirmed by DTP and the Minister for Planning.

This is an important opportunity for members of the community to provide input to the EES process.

More details on how to provide feedback are available at engage.vic.gov.au/vni-west-project

What will the submission window for the EES draft scoping be?

Consultation on the draft scoping requirements will open for 15 business days.

What are the differences between the various opportunities to provide public comment to the project?

Providing submissions on the EES Draft Scoping requirements is one of the two formal opportunities for communities and other stakeholders to provide feedback to the EES process. Later, the EES will be on public exhibition and open for submissions.

In addition to the formal consultation opportunities, TCV will continue to directly engage the community and seek feedback during the studies phase, including through community information sessions, webinars and meetings.

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