VicGrid VNI West

# Landholder Guide Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West

September 2026



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## Support for landholders

We acknowledge that the project will have a genuine impact on people and properties.

Support services are available for landholders and community members impacted by VNI West. You can make an appointment to speak to a professional counsellor for free and confidential advice.

**Converge International**

Personalised and qualified counselling services, designed to support a variety of complex wellbeing issues. Call 1300 687 327 and reference VNI West.

**Rural Financial Counselling Service (RFCS)**

Financial counselling, small business and wellbeing support for farmers and regional businesses. Call 1300 735 578 and reference VNI West.

Please visit the Community Support Services webpage to discover more services available to you.

## Accessibility services

If you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50 (within Australia). 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.

## Project contacts

**Website:** vniwproject.com.au
**Email:** enquiries@vniwproject.com.au
**Free call:** 1800 824 221
**Facebook:** @VNIWest

## Acknowledging Traditional Owners

VicGrid proudly acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which VNI West is to be delivered, including those recognised through Native Title and those recognised by the State of Victoria as Registered Aboriginal Parties. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

VicGrid also acknowledges other First Peoples who maintain cultural connections, custodial responsibilities, and ongoing relationships to the lands and waters across the project area. We recognise their deep connection to Country and the significant role they play in caring for and managing land, water, natural and built landscapes, and in maintaining profound knowledge systems.

We remain committed to building genuine and enduring partnerships with First Peoples, grounded in respect, transparency, and cultural authority, to ensure that the planning and delivery of this project reflects their rights, culture, and connections to Country.

# Landholder Guide overview

The 2026 VNI West Landholder Guide provides landholders with key information including what to expect during land access, how easements work, easement acquisition pathways, and details about the compensation and benefits available to landowners. Our goal at VicGrid is to equip you with the information you need to confidently make the best decisions for yourself and your property.

## Part 1: Project and landholder overview



Outlines VNI West and the parties involved in the project's development. This section explains how the proposed route is refined and how the preferred easement has been selected. You will also learn about our engagement approach and how we work with landholders through dedicated landholder liaisons.

- Project development and route refinement
- Route options under assessment
- Support for you from your landholder liaison

## Part 2: Land access overview



Details the processes involved to access private land for field surveys and inform project impact assessments. This section describes associated access payments and the rights and responsibilities of landholders and VicGrid.

- Field surveys and investigations
- The Environment Effects Statement
- Voluntary land access and access payments
- Land access in accordance with statutory powers under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic)

## Part 3: Easements, benefits and compensation



Easements, benefits and compensation: Explains the Land Easement and Access Package (LEAP) benefits available to eligible landholders, how compensation is determined and the process for acquiring land interests needed to construct and operate VNI West.

- Transmission easements for VNI West
- Managing your property
- Your Land Easement and Access Package
- Valuation, compensation and benefits
- Easement acquisition pathways

Where relevant, this guide has been updated to comply with the requirements of the Essential Services Commission's Land Access Code of Practice (LACoP). The LACoP is an important document that outlines when land can be accessed for purposes associated with the provision of electricity transmission infrastructure, and the steps that need to be taken before this access can occur.

More information is available on the ESC's website at esc.vic.gov.au



# Part 1: Project and landholder overview

**Purpose**

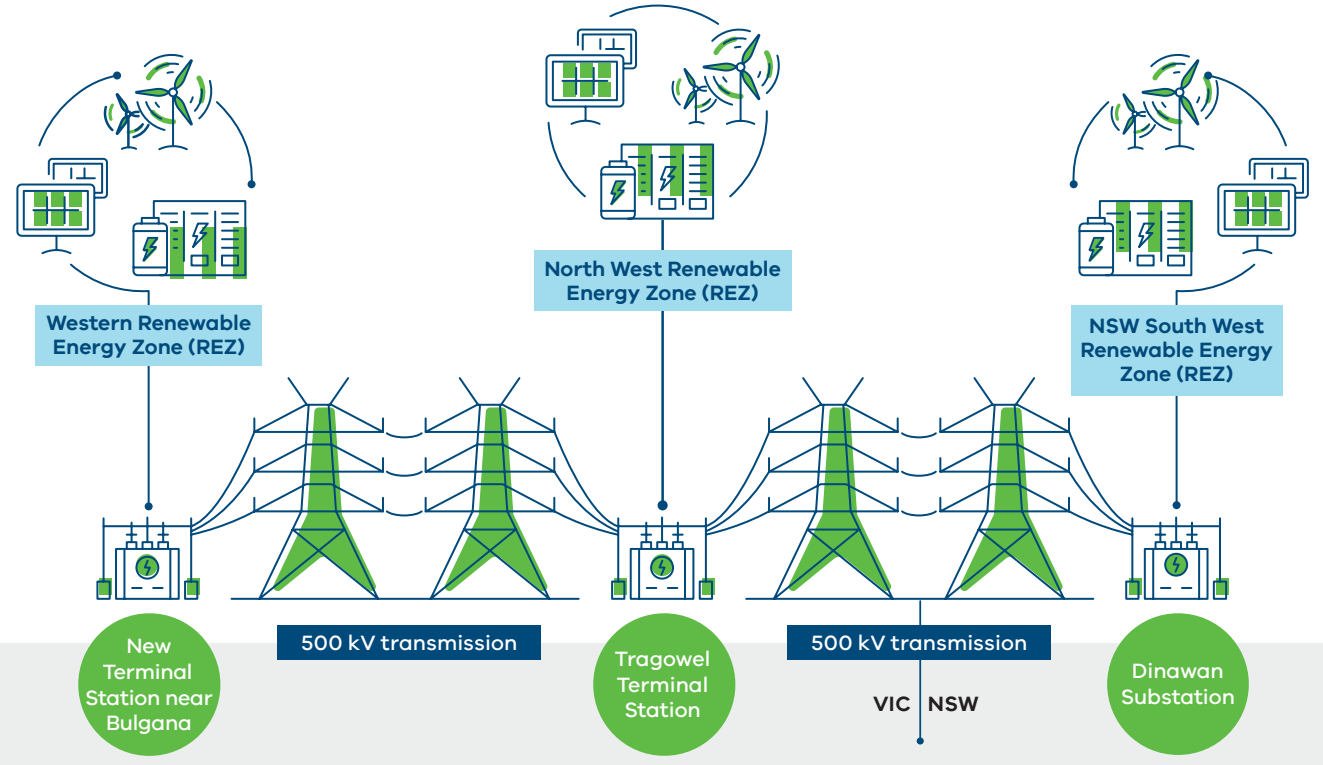
This section outlines VNI West, the route refinement process to date, and how landholders are being supported via dedicated landholder liaisons.

**Contents**

- Project development and route refinement
- Route options under assessment
- Support from your landholder liaison

The Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West (VNI West) is a major infrastructure project to build and operate a new transmission line between Victoria and New South Wales.

VNI West will harness electricity from renewable energy zones in both states, supporting the ongoing transition away from coal-fired power and helping to keep electricity supply reliable and secure as old generators are retired.




*This diagram is for illustrative purposes only.*

The most cost-effective replacement for retiring coal-fired generators is renewable energy – including solar and wind – backed by batteries, gas, and hydro to ensure consistent supply.

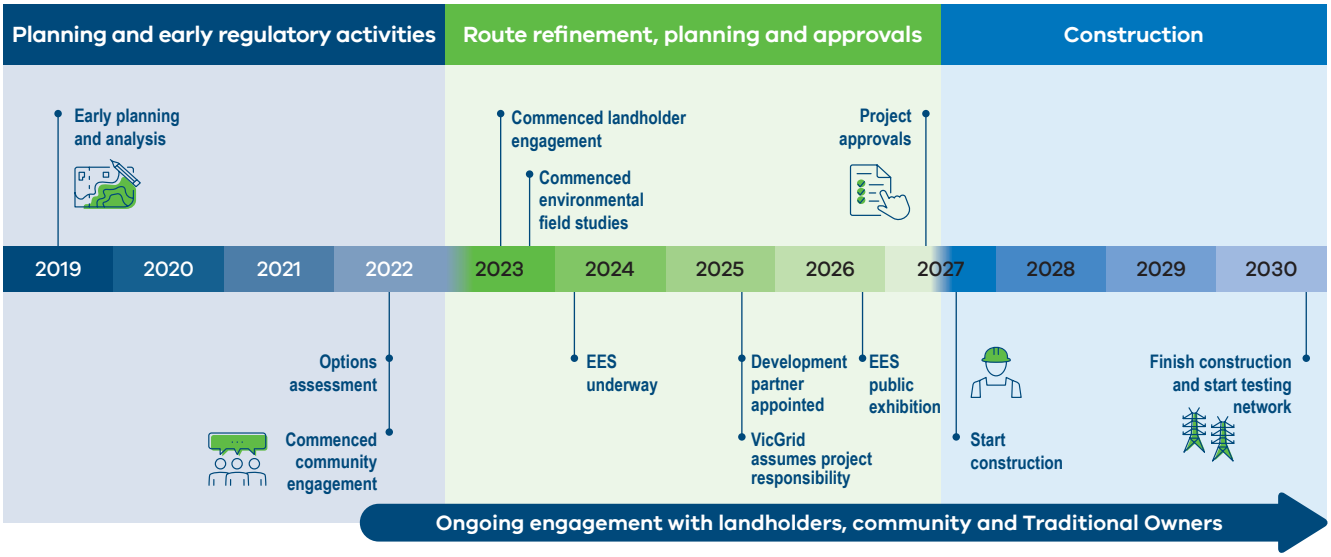
The new 500 kV (kilovolt) transmission line will run from the Dinawan terminal station in NSW to a site near Bulgana in Victoria, where it will connect to Western Renewables Link via a new terminal station to be constructed at Tragowel.

As a landholder within the preferred easement, you've been appointed a dedicated landholder liaison. Your liaison is here to discuss the specifics of your property, your business operations and any other important matters – including survey access, easement negotiations and available landholder payments.

You can find all the latest project information including timelines and key milestones on our project website, vniwproject.com.au

## Project timeline

The visual below illustrates the expected timing of planning, approvals and construction for VNI West. As with any major infrastructure project, timing may be subject to change.




*The above dates are indicative only and subject to change.*

## Project development and route refinement

We're continuing to work closely with landholders to refine the proposed route of VNI West. The goal is to ensure the final alignment minimises impacts on the environment, farming, land use and day-to-day operations wherever possible.

### July 2018

The need for new transmission to increase connection between Victorian and NSW power grids was identified in the Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) Integrated System Plan. VNI West is proposed to link renewable energy generation to the National Electricity Market.

### May 2023



Based on the RIT-T, MCA and market modelling, a 5–50 km wide area of interest was established.

### October 2024



Landholder engagement, technical studies and field surveys helped define a preferred easement of around 70 m wide along most of the route, as shown in the map on the following page. A broader survey area (which includes the preferred easement), of around 270 m wide, was also mapped to extend the scope of potential impacts to be assessed as part of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the project.

### November 2025



The Victorian Government introduced reforms under the Victorian Transmission Investment Framework (VTIF) to change how major transmission projects are planned and delivered across the state. As part of these reforms, from 1 November 2025, responsibility for planning Victoria's transmission infrastructure – including accountability for VNI West – shifted from AEMO Victorian Planning (AVP) to VicGrid.

### December 2019



The Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) began. This involved an economic cost-benefit test to establish a business case for the project. Environmental and social considerations were included via a Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) of constraints and opportunities.

### October 2023



A draft corridor was selected, with an average width of 2 km. The draft corridor was refined through desktop analysis, expert workshops and engagement with local communities to reduce impacts on sensitive environments and cultural sites. Landholder engagement commenced prior to the draft corridor's release.

### March 2025



Following the release of the preferred easement, the alignment was further refined in response to landholder feedback, particularly in relation to tower placement. Where feasible, adjustments were made to reflect local input.

### February 2026

Following legislative changes to Victoria's transmission planning framework, responsibility for planning the state's transmission network, including responsibility for developing VNI West, transferred from AEMO Victorian Planning to VicGrid. Reflecting this change, the VNI West entity previously known as Transmission Company Victoria (TCV) began operating as VicGrid VNI West. The transition supports a more coordinated and consistent approach to planning and developing major transmission projects across Victoria.

### Developing VNI West with Iberdrola Australia Networks

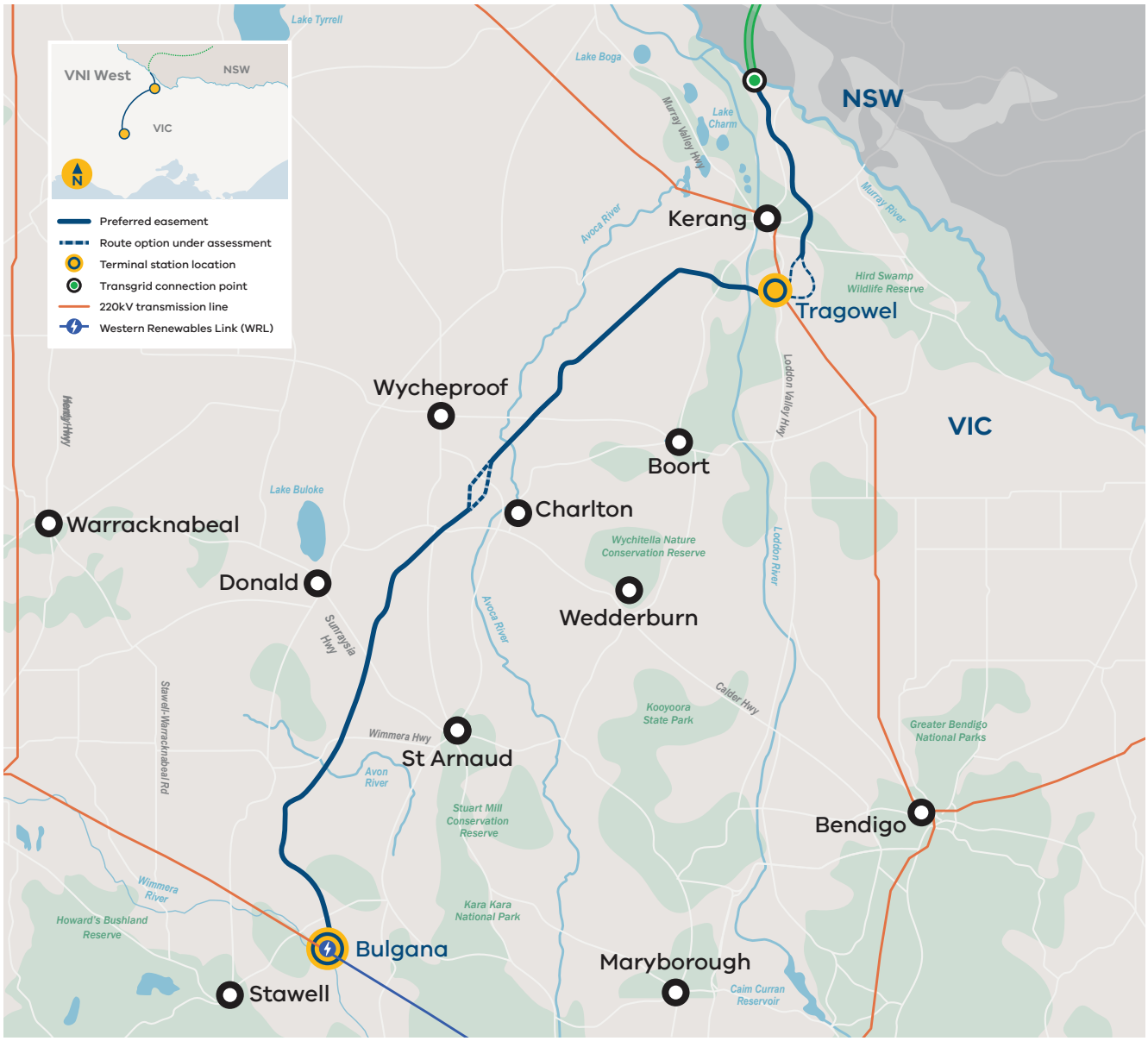
**In 2025, Iberdrola Australia Networks was selected as the development partner for the Victorian section of VNI West. VicGrid continues to lead the project, with Iberdrola Australia Networks supporting activities such as project design, procurement, planning approvals and the Environment Effects Statement (EES).**

## Delivering VNI West

AEMO Victorian Planning initiated the early development phase of VNI West, prior to responsibility for transmission network planning in Victoria transferring to VicGrid in November 2025.

VicGrid is now responsible for developing the Victorian section of VNI West, in close collaboration with Iberdrola Australia Networks – the project's development partner.

## Location of the preferred easement




*This diagram is for illustrative purposes only.*

## Route options under assessment

There are two areas of the VNI West preferred easement where route options are being assessed via the project's Environment Effects Statement (EES). These sections are represented on the project map above.

In each case, additional environmental, technical, planning and social studies are underway to help determine the most suitable alignment. This assessment will continue throughout the EES process and will examine whether any of the alternative routes may offer advantages – for example, fewer environmental constraints, reduced land-use impacts, or stronger landholder support for infrastructure siting.

The presence of environmental sensitivities, planning overlays, or logistical barriers – as well as opportunities identified through landholder engagement – are all being carefully evaluated.

You can find a more detailed summary in Section 4 of the VNI West Preferred Easement Report, available on the VNI West website.

# Engaging with you

VNI West's proposed infrastructure will largely be located on private land, and we recognise the importance of working respectfully and transparently with the people it affects most.

We acknowledge conversations have not always been easy, and we thank you for the time and consideration you've already given.

We're committed to ensuring landholders are treated fairly, recognised appropriately and compensated when infrastructure is located on their land.

You know your land best. That's why our engagement approach is designed around helping you make informed decisions, not only about access and agreements, but also about the future use of your land.

Because of the complexity of these discussions, we strongly recommend seeking independent advice. If you already work with professional advisers – including legal, agricultural, or financial experts – we will reimburse reasonably incurred costs for engaging these advisers. More detail on this support can be found in Part 3 of this Landholder Guide.

The term **landholders** includes both owners and occupiers.

We will work with all landholders during the land access process, including those with easements, leases, or other legal interests (e.g. caveats or co-ownership structures).

This Guide refers to **landowners** where agreement, payment or access information is directed specifically to the owner of a property.

## Our engagement principles



**Meaningful:** Engagement will have a clear purpose and relevance to your situation.



**Accurate:** We will provide information as it becomes available and respond to you as promptly and clearly as possible.



**Informed, accessible and inclusive:** Information will be practical, easy to understand, and inclusive of all stakeholders to encourage active participation in the project.



**Genuine and transparent:** We'll be open about what can and can't be influenced, and honest in all communication.



**Share other options:** You'll be made aware of external services, support, or next steps that may help you navigate decisions.



**Full circle engagement:** We will ask what matters to you, listen carefully, and respond – including outlining how your input has shaped our approach.

## Support from your landholder liaison

**Your landholder liaison is your dedicated point of contact throughout the project.** Every landholder within the preferred easement has been assigned a liaison to be their dedicated project contact point.

They are here to:

- Help the landholder work through any concerns, and understand priorities
- Keep landholders updated on the project as it progresses
- Support negotiations around land access
- Facilitate survey and investigation access (where access is granted)
- Guide landholders through the Option for Easement process
- Connect landholders with project specialists who can answer technical, environmental or planning questions

## Landowner payments

There are a number of ways landowners may be eligible for payments throughout the life of the project.

These may include:

- Payments for granting survey access
- The Landholder Benefit Payment
- Easement compensation
- Construction Licence Fee payments
- Option Fee
- A separate payment from the Victorian Government

More detail on compensation and payments is included in Parts 2 and 3 of this Guide.



# Part 2:
# Land access

**Purpose**

This section explains how land access works for VNI West and outlines the field surveys needed to better understand the project area. It also shows how landholders can help shape access arrangements when choosing to grant voluntary access.

**Contents**

- Field surveys and investigations
- The Environment Effects Statement
- Voluntary land access and access payments
- Land access in accordance with statutory powers

To plan VNI West properly, we need access to both private and public land to carry out surveys and investigations. These activities help us understand the current conditions across the VNI West project area.

The aim is to better understand environmental sensitivities – including flora, fauna, agricultural land use, visual impacts and technical or social considerations – to inform route planning and project design.

The findings from these investigations will directly inform the project's impact assessments. They also help VicGrid identify a transmission route that minimises disruption to landholders, the environment and culturally significant areas while ensuring the project remains cost-effective for Victorian energy consumers.

# Why private property access is needed

## Field surveys and investigations

Before finalising the proposed transmission easement and infrastructure route, we use a range of tools to help identify areas that may be environmentally or culturally sensitive. These tools include desktop research, database information, specialist studies and aerial imagery. In some cases, this information suggests that a private property may contain certain features that need closer investigation.

To confirm and expand on this information, on-site field surveys are required. These surveys have been underway for VNI West since October 2023.



**~ 240 km proposed route**



**~ 220 directly impacted private properties**

On private land, field surveys are designed to be low-impact and carefully managed.

Typically survey activities may include:

- Site walkovers
- Photography
- Small-scale, fully remediated earthworks (such as geotechnical drilling)
- Water and soil sampling
- Use of fauna and noise monitoring equipment

A detailed list of survey activities – including how they're done and what to expect – is available in the Land Access: Technical Survey Activities fact sheet. You can find this at vniwproject.com.au

## Environment Effects Statement

Under Victoria's *Environment Effects Act 1978*, certain developments are required to go through a formal assessment of potential environmental impacts. This assessment is known as an Environment Effects Statement (EES).

In April 2024, the Victorian Minister for Planning confirmed that an EES is required for VNI West.

The EES is Victoria's most comprehensive and transparent environmental impact assessment process. It is designed to give community members, stakeholders and decision-makers a clear understanding of how the project will be delivered, and what its potential environmental impacts might be.

In February 2025, the Minister issued the final scoping requirements for the VNI West EES. These outline the specific matters to be investigated, including:

- Air quality
- Aviation
- Aboriginal cultural heritage
- Agriculture
- Bushfire
- Business and economics
- Climate change
- Ecology
- Electric and magnetic field
- Geology and soils
- Greenhouse gas
- Groundwater
- Historic heritage
- Land use and planning
- Landscape and visual
- Noise and vibration
- Social
- Surface water
- Traffic and transport

VNI West will require Commonwealth, state and other approvals prior to any construction commencing, including:

- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)
- Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA)
- Cultural Heritage Management Plans (CHMPs)

# What to expect during property access

If we need to access your property to carry out investigations for the project, we will consult with you beforehand to understand any property-specific requirements. Your landholder liaison will work closely with you to make sure access is managed respectfully, safely and with as little disruption as possible.

## Vehicle access and movements



Access will follow the terms set out in your access agreement, or Enablement and Access Deed (if one is in place). We aim to keep vehicle movement to a minimum and will use existing tracks wherever possible.

## Equipment



Your landholder liaison will let you know what equipment may be needed on your property, where it will be placed, and how long it will remain on site.

## Biosecurity



We take biosecurity seriously and want to ensure your land remains protected. You are encouraged to work with your landholder liaison to identify any biosecurity requirements specific to your property. If you have signed a Land Access Agreement or Enablement and Access Deed, we and anyone working on our behalf are required to follow your reasonable access conditions.

Please share a copy of any Biosecurity Management Plans in place for your property. Further biosecurity information, including our policy, fact sheet, and the Land Access Code of Practice (LACoP), are available on the VNI West project website vniwproject.com.au

## Fire



We assess fire risk before starting any field work.

- On **Catastrophic Fire Risk days**, no field work will take place.
- On **Extreme Fire Risk days**, only limited and approved works may proceed.

If conditions change, we will reassess and adjust activities accordingly.

## Health and safety



Before accessing your land, a safety and risk assessment is completed. This includes identifying potential health risks, like exposure to vector-borne or biological diseases. We monitor public health alerts and will work with you to record any personal safety concerns in your access agreement.

More information on VicGrid's Human Health Risk Management policy is available on the VNI West project website vniwproject.com.au

## Who will carry out the work?



Independent specialists – including experts in ecology, cultural heritage and geology – will conduct the field surveys and investigations.

Most activities are low-impact and involve little or no ground disturbance, largely relying on visual inspections. If sub-surface studies are required (such as soil samples via boreholes and test pits), we will discuss them with you in advance. Any ground disturbance will be backfilled and reinstated in line with our agreement.

Landholders are welcome to be present during field activity days. Your landholder liaison can help coordinate suitable times.

## Special considerations



We understand your land may be used for animal care, farming or other important activities. Your landholder liaison will work with you to determine the best time for access – avoiding impacts on livestock movement or farming activities.

We will also consult with you beforehand to understand and protect any areas of cultural heritage on your property.

## Commitment to project safety



We are committed to delivering VNI West safely and with as little disruption to your property as possible. If any damage does occur, we will work with you to address it.

To report damage:

- Contact your landholder liaison
- Email enquiries@vniwproject.com.au or
- Submit a report through our website. The submission should include:
  - Description of the damage
  - Photos
  - When and where it occurred (date, time and location)
  - Any other relevant details

Your landholder liaison can provide you with a copy of our Land and Property Damages Policy and guide you through the next steps.

# Landholder rights and project commitments

When we seek access to your property to undertake field surveys, landholders and VicGrid have specific rights and responsibilities.



## Landholders have the right to:

- Provide or refuse voluntary agreement for property access. If voluntary consent is not provided, VicGrid may, where required, exercise legislative powers to access your property.
- Receive specific information about proposed surveys before any access notice is issued.
- Receive clear information about your rights and VicGrid's obligations under access agreements, Section 93 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) (EI Act), and the Land Access Code of Practice (LACoP).
- Be informed of proposed access dates and details, including who will be accessing your property and when.
- Verify identification of all persons entering your property.
- Provide feedback or request changes and have these considered in good faith with a timely response from VicGrid.
- Be consulted on how risks like biosecurity, fire and health will be managed during access.
- Have reasonable requests regarding access understood and adhered to by VicGrid.
- Expect privacy and confidentiality to be maintained at all times.
- Receive compensation for any damage caused by field surveys and investigations (where that damage cannot be rectified).
- Request information on any incidents that occur during access.
- Request and receive outcomes from land access investigations (excluding any information which may be personal information, confidential or commercially sensitive).
- Make a complaint to VicGrid regarding access and, if unsatisfied with the response, escalate the matter to an external dispute regulation body such as the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV), subject to eligibility.

## Our commitments to you:

- Comply with all relevant laws when accessing private land.
- Follow the LACoP, including consulting with landholders before entering into land access agreements or using section 93 EI Act powers.
- Respond promptly to landholder enquiries about property access.
- Respect access protocols set out in access agreements (where in place).
- Ensure all personnel carry project ID, which will be presented on request.
- Minimise disturbance and avoid damage wherever possible when undertaking surveys and investigations.
- Repair or compensate for any damage caused while undertaking field surveys and investigations.
- Maintain public liability insurance that covers all field surveys and investigations to be conducted on private property.
- Handle complaints in accordance with our complaint handling process and offer dispute resolution support where required.
- Ensure that all project representatives contacting you about land access have the appropriate skills, training and qualifications.

# Land access under voluntary agreement

## Land access for field surveys and investigations

The sequence below outlines the process of land access if you choose to enter into a voluntary agreement with VicGrid.

### 1



**Identify sites and timings**

We'll first determine:

- The specific areas of land that need to be accessed
- Who will require access to your property
- When the work is scheduled to take place

Your landholder liaison will work with you to agree on access dates and times that minimise disruption to your day-to-day operations, to the best of our abilities.

### 2



**Request access**

Your landholder liaison will work through the requirements for land access with you.

They will explain the draft Access Agreement or – if after June 2025 – the Access Licence included in your Enablement and Access Deed.

You will have time to review the agreement, ask questions, and raise any concerns.

### 3



**Understand requirements**

Your landholder liaison will work with you to record any access conditions or procedures you would like us to follow.

These may include:

- Preferred access dates and times (and duration of access)
- Entry and exit point(s)
- Mode of access (e.g. 4WD, on foot, etc)
- Number of personnel and organisation(s) they represent
- Biosecurity processes

### 4



**Legal advice (strongly recommended)**

You are welcome to seek independent legal advice regarding the Enablement and Access Deed.

VicGrid will reimburse your reasonable legal costs and your landholder liaison can guide you through the process.

### 5



**Voluntary agreement reached**

Once terms are agreed, both parties sign the Land Access Agreement or Enablement and Access Deed. This confirms your conditions – which VicGrid must comply with – including:

- Access dates and duration
- Purpose of the activities (e.g. flora and fauna survey)
- Entry/exit point(s)
- Approved equipment and vehicles
- Biosecurity protocols

After the agreement is signed, your Access Payment will be issued.

### 6



**Confirmation notice**

When voluntary agreement is reached, VicGrid can provide written confirmation of:

- The upcoming access period
- Activities to be carried out
- Who will be on site

You will receive this at least seven (7) days before the agreed access period, unless an alternate timeframe is agreed.

### 7



**Property access**

A final reminder will be provided 24 hours before access, or as otherwise agreed.

VicGrid will access your property in line with all agreed terms, including:

- Biosecurity entry procedures
- Fire and health risk protocols
- Any specific property requirements

Landholders may be present at surveys if they choose.

Once fieldwork is complete, we'll restore any disturbed ground or damage in accordance with our agreement.

### 8



**Reporting**

After access is complete, VicGrid can:

- Contact you promptly to confirm that works have finished and access is concluded
- Provide a Land Access Completion Report within 15 business days, summarising what activities took place on your property

## Working together to agree on land access

VicGrid's strong preference is to work in partnership with landholders to reach voluntary agreement, in accordance with each landholder's access requirements and the LACoP. This means we'll seek your permission before carrying out field surveys on your property.

We understand that land access requests can raise important questions or concerns. We're committed to open, respectful communication – listening to your needs, understanding your preferences, and working with you to find the most suitable approach.

Some landowners may have previously entered into a Land Access Agreement to allow VicGrid to access a property. From June 2025, landowners were provided with an Enablement and Access Deed – a separate agreement that also includes land access rights.

The table below outlines the voluntary land access agreements used by VicGrid up to 30 September 2026:

| Land Access Agreement – up to June 2025 | Enablement and Access Deed – June 2025 to September 2026 |
|---|---|
| A Land Access Agreement (LAA) is offered to private property landowners and is the key document that explains who, when and how VicGrid and its project consultants – such as ecologists or geotechnical specialists – will access your property.<br><br>The LAA also includes an Access Payment to landowners for access to their property. | The Enablement and Access Deed replaced the LAA for new agreements from June 2025 and provides formal access rights where no LAA is already in place. It includes an Access Licence that sets out how any access to your property will occur, including your specific requirements.<br><br>The land access payment amount remains the same as under the LAA. However, if you've already received an LAA payment, a second land access payment under the Deed will not apply. |

The terms of your Land Access Agreement or Enablement and Access Deed can be amended during the agreement period – as long as both you and VicGrid agree to the changes.

## Enablement and Access Deed payments and reimbursement

Landholders who agree to provide voluntary access to their property may be eligible for payments that recognise the time, effort and inconvenience involved, including Access Payments and reimbursement of reasonable legal costs.

The arrangements below apply to voluntary access agreements entered into up to 30 September 2026. Information about easement agreements and Landholder Benefit Payment arrangements is provided in Part 3.

Below is an overview of each payment type:

| Payment Type | Document | Summary | Term | Amount |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Access Payment** | **Enablement and Access Deed** **(June 2025 to 30 September 2026)** | Provided for participating in the survey access process. Only one payment is made per property, even if there are multiple landowners. The Access Licence within the Enablement and Access Deed will contain a payment for participation in the survey access process, recognising the inconvenience for allowing/ facilitating voluntary access to land. | 3 years | Properties providing up to 299 acres of access receive $10,000 ($5,000 per year for two years). Properties providing 300 acres or more may qualify for additional payments, which your landholder liaison will confirm with you. No land access payment will exceed $50,000. |
| **Professional costs** | **Enablement and Access Deed** | For landowners to seek independent legal advice relating to their access agreement or the Enablement and Access Deed. | N/A | Costs for reasonable professional fees, up to an agreed threshold (detailed on page 38 of this Guide) reimbursed by VicGrid. Please contact your landholder liaison for more information. |

In addition to the Access Payment, signing the Enablement and Access Deed before 30 September 2026 confirms eligibility to receive 20% of the Landholder Benefit Payment upfront.

# Land access under legislation

VicGrid VNI West requires access to land for important field survey activities, which help inform impact assessments for VNI West.

Our preference is always to work with landowners to reach an agreement on property access that suits them, their occupiers, and their farming or business operations. However, in limited cases where access to land is critical and we have not been able to reach an agreement regarding access within the necessary timeframe, VicGrid VNI West may seek access to land in accordance with statutory access powers under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) (EI Act).

## Section 93 EI Act – Power to enter upon land and carry out works

Under section 93 of the EI Act, it is lawful for VicGrid VNI West and its officers, employees and authorised representatives to enter upon land to undertake surveys and other necessary activities.

Specifically, section 93(1) of the EI Act states:

*For the purposes of this Act, an electricity corporation, subject to this Act–*

> *(a) may enter upon any lands and sink bores and make surveys and do any other acts or things necessary for sinking bores or making surveys; and*
>
> ...
>
> *(e) may do all other things necessary or convenient for constructing, maintaining, altering, or using any works or undertakings of, or under the control of, the electricity corporation.*

VicGrid VNI West may rely on this power when:

- Repeated and genuine attempts to contact landholders and reach voluntary agreement on access are exhausted (a minimum of three attempts over a two month period)
- Access is needed to complete essential project activities, such as season-specific ecology surveys.

Landholders will receive written notice before any access is undertaken under section 93 of the EI Act.

This notice and any access under section 93 will be in compliance with the requirements set out in the Land Access Code of Practice (LACoP).

## Section 93B EI Act – Power of Authorised Officers to enter land

The EI Act has been amended to introduce enforcement powers that supprt access under section 93 of the EI Act.

Under the new section 93BC of the EI Act, Authorised Officers appointed by the Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources may enter land to carry out, or assist in carrying out, activities authorised by section 93 of the EI Act.

Section 93BC(1) of the EI Act provides that an Authorised Officer may:

> *... enter any land to do either of the following things on that land or on any other land–*
>
> *(a) exercise a power under section 93, if section 93 authorises the officer to do so; or*
>
> *(b) facilitate the exercise of a power under section 93 by another person.*

Consistent with its approach to access under section 93 of the EI Act, VicGrid VNI West may seek to exercise powers under section 93BC after all reasonable efforts to reach a voluntary access agreement with the landholder have been exhausted.

Landholders will receive a Notice of Proposed Entry under section 93BD of the EI Act before any access is undertaken under section 93BC.

As with access under section 93, access under section 93BC must comply with LACoP requirements (discussed further on the following page), except for notice requirements, which are dealt with separately under the EI Act. An Authorised Officer will carry identification confirming that they are an Authorised Officer and must produce it on request, unless they consider doing so would be a safety risk.

## Enforcement

It is an offence to hinder, obstruct or delay access under section 93BC of the EI Act. If an Authorised Officer reasonably believes the access is being hindered, obstructed or delayed, an Authorised Officer may:

- Issue a warning to the person hindering, obstructing or delaying access
- Issue a direction to the person hindering, obstructing or delaying access
- Serve an infringement notice to the person hindering, obstructing or delaying access
- Apply to the Magistrates' Court for an entry order (discussed further below)

## Entry orders

If entry onto land in accordance with section 93 or 93BC of the EI Act has been hindered, delayed or obstructed, an Authorised Officer may apply for an order from the Magistrates' Court authorising entry onto land.

An entry order will only be sought for access by Authorised Officers as a final resort.

If an application is made to the Magistrates' Court for an entry order:

- Authorised Officers will serve you with notice of the application as soon as practicable
- A hearing will be scheduled for not less than 21 days following the application being made
- You will have the opportunity to object to the application and to have your objection heard by the Magistrates' Court

If the Magistrates' Court ultimately makes an order authorising entry onto privately-owned land:

- An Authorised Officer will serve the landowner with a copy of the entry order
- It will specify the date (or dates) on which entry is to occur
- It may authorise Victoria Police to attend when entry is to occur

## The Land Access Code of Practice

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) developed the LACoP to regulate land access by licensed electricity transmission companies, like VicGrid VNI West.

The LACoP sets out the rules and processes that licensed companies must follow when accessing – or seeking to access – private land, either through voluntary agreement or using statutory powers under the EI Act. It outlines the requirements to be followed before, during and after land access, with the aim of minimising disruption and ensuring landholders and other interested parties receive clear communication and fair treatment.

As an electricity transmission company, VicGrid VNI West is legally required to comply with the LACoP, other than in respect of the notice requirements for access in accordance with section 93BC, where it must instead follow the notice requirements set out in section 93BD of the EI Act.

If landholders have concerns about whether VicGrid VNI West is complying with its obligations under the LACoP – and the concern cannot be resolved directly with VicGrid VNI West – landholders may escalate complaints to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria, an independent dispute resolution body.

More information is available at ewov.com.au

The rights and responsibilities of landholders and VicGrid when accessing land are detailed on page 20.



# Part 3: Easements, benefits and compensation

**Purpose**

This section outlines how land may be acquired for VNI West, including the process for entering into an Option for Easement and benefit and compensation payments available.

VicGrid will only seek to acquire an interest in your property if transmission infrastructure needs to be located on your property. In these cases, access and easement arrangements will be formalised through agreements with the landholder.

Because only the owner of the land can legally grant an easement, all information about the Land Easement and Access Package will be directed to the owner in the first instance. If other individuals or entities have a legal interest in the land, they may also need to provide their consent before the owner can enter into either the Enablement and Access Deed or Option for Easement.

**Contents**


- Transmission easements for VNI West
- Managing your property
- Your Land Easement and Access Package
- Valuation, compensation and benefits
- The Option for Easement process
- Statutory acquisition process
- Privacy, contacts and complaints

# Transmission easements

## What is an easement?



An easement is a legal right that allows someone to access, use or occupy part of a property owned by another person/party for a particular purpose. An easement can be registered on the property's title, so it appears in official land title searches.

Once registered, an easement remains in place unless both the landowner and the person or entity it was granted to agree to change or remove it.

An **Option for Easement** is the legal agreement between a landowner and VicGrid, allowing the project to acquire that easement at a future date.




*Indicative site preparation activities*

1. Fencing access track*
2. Tower assembly area
3. Final construction footprint
4. Construction licence area: Agreed land for project construction activities
5. Easement

*Controlled via Property Management Plan (PMP)

For VNI West to move forward, VicGrid must acquire easements over certain properties to allow for the construction and operation of power lines used to transmit electricity. Easements will only be sought on properties where transmission infrastructure is proposed to be built.

*If an easement is acquired over your land, you will remain the legal owner of the property. However, use of the affected area will be subject to the terms of the easement agreement.*

## Why is an easement needed?

If transmission infrastructure is proposed for your property, an easement of approximately 70 m in width will generally be required. This easement provides the legal rights needed to build and operate the transmission line.

Before the easement is formally registered, VicGrid will need temporary access to a wider construction licence area. This area is typically 100 m wide and includes the future 70 m easement within it. Once VicGrid VNI West exercises its option to acquire the easement by agreement, the construction licence area enables construction works to be carried out while the easement registration process is being completed.

After construction, ongoing limited access may be required to operate and maintain the transmission line. This mostly involves accessing the easement corridor, particularly in areas that can't be accessed by road.

Once construction is complete, the final 70 m wide easement will be registered on the land title. This provides the legal rights to keep the infrastructure in place, carry out inspections and maintenance, and ensure public safety around the transmission line.

## Establishing the preferred easement for VNI West

Finding the right location for VNI West is an ongoing process, which began in 2019. Early development activities under AEMO Victorian Planning focused on regulatory requirements, market analysis and financial considerations – establishing the need for VNI West.

The Project Assessment Conclusions Report (PACR) – the final report as part of the Regulated Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) – identified the preferred option for VNI West – a 50 km wide area of interest known as Option 5A – in July 2023.

Following comprehensive community consultation including public forums and online engagement tools – as well as detailed environmental and technical analysis – the Area of Interest was narrowed to a 2 km wide draft corridor in October 2023.

Further technical and environmental assessments, supported by consultation with landholders identified in the draft corridor, enabled the establishment of a 70 m wide preferred easement across most of the alignment in October 2024.

Landholders with properties identified in the preferred easement provided their feedback on its location and proposed tower locations. This feedback influenced shifts to the easement and changes to more than 250 tower locations.

### 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.

**6,500 km**
**of transmission lines currently operate in Victoria, many of which coexist with farming and agriculture**



In March 2024, Energy Safe Victoria published guidelines on working and farming near transmission infrastructure, which provide details on issues like transmission line height and easement widths to ensure safe operation in all conditions.

For more information about these guidelines please visit esv.vic.gov.au

For more information, please see the Farming and Transmission fact sheet on the VNI West website vniwproject.com.au

Working closely with landholders is an important part of determining the final easement. Your feedback helped VicGrid identify the most suitable placement for transmission towers and lines, and can assist in reducing impacts on farming, business operations, and the overall use of your land.

For safety reasons, there are some restrictions on how land within a transmission easement can be used. These typically relate to maintaining safe clearance from transmission lines and other infrastructure. However, many agricultural activities can continue within the easement, depending on the specific terms of the agreement.

Landholder liaisons are working with landholders to discuss specific farming and agricultural activities and provide advice as to which activities are restricted or need further assessment or permitting.

# Your land easement and access package

The VNI West Land Easement and Access Package provides important information for landowners with properties within the project's preferred easement.

The package includes proposed easement terms, details on the Benefit Payment for landowners, indicative compensation amounts, and supporting documents to help you to make informed decisions at every stage of the process.

Your dedicated landholder liaison will guide you through each document in the package. They're here to help you understand your access obligations and can also assist you in accessing professional services for independent legal, valuation or other professional advice if required.

A summary of the documents included in the package is provided below.

| Document name | Document description |
|---|---|
| **Cover letter** | A personalised letter tailored to you, your property and your circumstances. It provides a brief overview of your Land Easement and Access Package. |
| **Landowner payment estimate** | A summary of the improved compensation available for your property, including allowances for each compensation element. These amounts are calculated in line with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (LACA). |
| **Enablement and Access Deed** | The Deed is a formal agreement that allows VicGrid VNI West to access private land. Under this agreement:<br>• VicGrid VNI West is granted access to the property for surveys and preliminary investigations<br>• Landowners who sign an Enablement and Access Deed by 30 September 2026 can receive 20% of the Landholder Benefit Payment upfront.<br>• VicGrid VNI West and the landowner will negotiate the Option for Easement (OfE), which will be granted once the form of the OfE is agreed |
| **Access to your property will be required during the development phase of the project to carry out essential surveys.** | |
| **Land access: technical survey activities** | A guide explaining the range of field survey activities taking place on public and private land, the purpose of these activities, and how VicGrid uses independent specialists to carry them out. |
| **Option for Easement (OfE)** | Gives VicGrid VNI West an option to take an easement and build transmission infrastructure on a property in return for payment. It also outlines access rights prior to and during construction. |
| **Landowners who sign their OfE by 30 September 2026 will be eligible to receive 20% of the Landholder Benefit Payment on an upfront basis.** | |
| **Term sheet** (OfE documentation) | Sets out terms of the OfE, payment amounts and indicative plans for access during construction and operation. Once agreed, this forms the basis of the OfE. |
| **Memorandum of Common Provisions** (OfE documentation) | Outlines the rights and obligations of VicGrid VNI West and the landholder once the easement is in place. It sets out terms and conditions for permitted and restricted activities within the easement. |
| **Easement diagram** (OfE documentation) | A draft map showing the proposed easement, construction licence area and any areas excluded under the OfE. After construction, a final version called the Easement Instrument Plan will confirm the easement area and be used to register it on the property title. |
| **Property Management Plan (PMP) template** (OfE documentation) | A template used to record existing infrastructure that may be impacted by construction. It outlines how that infrastructure will be managed during works, and how the property and any impacted items will be reinstated after construction.<br>The PMP helps ensure landholders are confident in how their property will be managed and remediated throughout the project. |
| **Property and asset map(s)** | An updated map of your property or properties, showing proposed tower locations. |

## Considering an offer before project approval

Some financial benefits are only available to landowners who sign agreements within the LEAP. By engaging with VicGrid early and entering into agreements, landholders can:

- **Secure additional benefits** – Signing the Enablement and Access Deed by 30 September 2026 allows eligible landowners to access additional Landholder Benefit Payments upfront.
- **Have more control** – Early agreements give you the opportunity to negotiate terms that work best for you.
- **Help shape project impacts** – Engaging early allows you to provide input that can reduce disruption to your property, even if you haven't signed an OfE.



# Compensation, valuation and benefits

## Calculating initial compensation for landowners

Each Land Easement and Access Package includes a landowner payment estimate, based on a property-specific valuation carried out by a qualified independent valuer.

To ensure compensation is fair and reflects the real impact on your property, landowners are encouraged to think about how the proposed easement may affect their operations and share this information with the valuer. Your input is essential in helping VicGrid understand the full impact of the project on your land.

The landowner payment estimate included in your LEAP is an initial estimate only. Assumptions have been made in preparing this figure, and further details – along with access for a site visit – will help refine the offer to better reflect your property's unique characteristics.

## Understanding property valuations

A qualified valuer appointed by VicGrid VNI West will assess your property using principles set out in the LACA and the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* (Vic). They will also consider how the proposed easement might affect how your land is used. Valuation professionals will work with landholders to understand the impacts of the proposed easement on their property.

Your landholder liaison can help coordinate the valuation process, including:

- **Meeting with the valuer** – You can speak with the valuer before the assessment to explain how your property is used and raise any concerns.
- **Allowing a property inspection** – With your permission, the valuer can inspect the site to better understand its features and condition.

This collaborative approach helps ensure that compensation is tailored to the specific nature of your property and its use.

### Seeking independent valuation advice

Landowners are encouraged to seek independent advice about the compensation offer they receive. VicGrid VNI West will reimburse reasonable costs for obtaining an independent valuation.

The Australian Property Institute (API) is the leading professional body for property valuers. To support landholders, the API has created a dedicated referral directory for VNI West, making it easy to find local, qualified valuers and agronomists with relevant experience.

- You can access the referral directory at: api.org.au/expressions-of-interest-independent-valuers-for-landholders-affected-by-vni/
- The API can also be phoned on 1800 111 API (1800 111 274)
- Web: vniwproject.com.au
  Email: enquiries@vniwproject.com.au
  Free call: 1800 824 221

Compensation offers are based on what's known as market value depreciation – the difference between the property's value before and after the easement is acquired. Valuers will consider other potential losses (where applicable), including:

- Loss in market value
- Loss of special value (such as unique property features)
- Loss due to disturbance
- Loss due to severance (if part of the property becomes difficult to access or use)

These elements of compensation are described in more detail below.

| Market value | Disturbance | Severance and depreciation | Special value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Compensation is based on the difference in the market value of the land before and after the easement is acquired.<br><br>This includes the reasonable "highest and best use" of the land, based on what is physically and legally possible.<br><br>For example, where permitted by planning controls, this might include subdivision into individual lots. | Covers financial losses that occur as a direct, natural and reasonable result of acquiring the easement. This could include lost income from farming operations affected by construction.<br><br>Losses need to be assessed by an appropriate expert and are typically included in the market value payment. | Covers the devaluation (reduced value) of remaining land or property improvements (like a house) outside of the identified easement.<br><br>Also covers access restrictions caused by the easement "severing" previously connected areas or disrupting land use.<br><br>For example, if the transmission infrastructure permanently impeded the ability for lateral irrigators to reach land on the other side of the easement. | Refers to financial value that is unique to the landholder, not the general market. It recognises when a property feature has specific economic value to you, even if it wouldn't increase the property's resale value.<br><br>For example, a house with consulting rooms might have added value to a doctor-owner, but not to the wider market.<br><br>This is based on practical, economic use, not sentimental value, and is usually included in the market value calculation. |

Valuers engaged by landowners must complete their assessments in line with relevant legislation and the Australian Property Institute's professional practice regulations.

If you choose to engage a valuer, they may be asked to meet with VidGrid's appointed valuer to support their valuation. Landowners will also be asked to provide VicGrid VNI West with a copy of the independent valuation.

## Shaping a valuation specific to your property

If your independent valuer disagrees with the valuation-informed landowner payment estimate provided in your Land Easement and Access Package, you are encouraged to speak to your landholder liaison. They can help arrange a meeting between your valuer and the VNI West project's valuer to discuss any differences in their assessments.

If you choose not to accept the landowner payment estimate, there are three possible next steps:

**1**



**Landowner negotiation**

If you believe the estimate should be revised, you can submit a proposal with supporting evidence. This might include a valuation from your own expert, agronomic or business impact data, or other relevant property-specific information.

Any proposal should be supported by clear, verifiable data to help inform changes to the compensation amount.

**2**



**External resolution**

If agreement still can't be reached, VicGrid is open to discussing options for resolving the matter, including mediation or arbitration. Either party can suggest appointing an independent mediator or arbitrator to help resolve the dispute.

If the parties decline to participate in mediation or arbitration, actions under an Agreement Unlikely scenario would be considered.

**3**



**Agreement unlikely**

If no agreement is reached, VicGrid VNI West may begin the compulsory acquisition process. This does not prevent further negotiation – discussion may continue with the aim of reaching an agreement before the Notice of Acquisition (NOA) is issued (see page 44) and even after that point, compensation negotiations can still proceed.

## Access to professional advice

If you own property along the VNI West route, you are strongly encouraged to seek independent professional advice during the easement negotiation process. This may include services from qualified valuers, lawyers, accountants, tax specialists, insurance advisers or agronomy services.

Having your own experts helps ensure you receive informed advice and achieve the best possible outcome. These professionals can help review agreements and documentation, explain your options and negotiate on your behalf.

VicGrid VNI West will reimburse all reasonable professional expenses, regardless of whether an agreement is reached.

### Legal advice

The Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) is the peak body for the Victorian legal profession. They have an online referral service which enables you to search for lawyers who are local, and/or specialise in property and planning law.

This can be found at liv.asn.au/referral

The LIV can also be phoned on 03 9607 9550

# Benefits and compensation

The below table outlines details of the payments available to landholders under the LEAP.

| Document | Payment | Amount | Payment timings | What is it for |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Enablement and Access Deed** | **Landholder Benefit Payment** | $56,000 per hectare of transmission easement (pro rata, rounded to the nearest 100m$^2$). | 20% on all parties signing the Enablement and Access Deed by 30 September 2026 (within 20 business days). | Recognises the landholder's role in enabling critical infrastructure. |
| **Option for Easement (OfE)** | **Landholder Benefit Payment** | | 20% on all parties signing the OfE (within 20 business days), remaining payment available on exercising the OfE. | |
| | **Option Fee** | $50,000 ($30,000 of this amount to be deducted from the Easement Compensation Payment if the option is exercised). | Within 20 business days of all parties signing. | Grants VicGrid VNI West an option to acquire an easement over the nominated area on the Easement Terms. |
| | **Easement Compensation Payment** | Property specific. | 80% payable on the option being exercised by VicGrid VNI West.<br>Remaining 20% after easement registration on the property title (unless agreed otherwise in the OfE). | Based on market value, special value, severance, disturbance and depreciation (per LACA), as assessed by the project's qualified valuer, and in negotiation with any relevant experts on behalf of the landowner. |
| | **Professional costs** | Up to $5,000 (Enablement and Access Deed).<br>Up to $10,000 (OfE, whether or not an OfE is agreed).<br>Costs likely to exceed these thresholds to be discussed with your landholder liaison. | Enablement and Access Deed reimbursement is payable within 20 business days of entering into the Deed (subject to cost evidence and tax invoice, if applicable).<br>OfE negotiation reimbursement payable within 20 business days of executing the OfE (subject to cost evidence and tax invoice, if applicable). | Reimbursement for professional advice (legal, valuation, agronomy, etc) in the negotiation of the Enablement and Access Deed and the OfE. |
| ***National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005*** | **Victorian Government Landholder Payment** | $8,000 per kilometre per year of new easement, paid annually over 25 years (indexed to inflation). | Annual payments begin once eligibility has been approved by VicGrid. | This payment is separate to payments under the Package.<br>Payments are made in accordance with Part 7 of the *National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005*, to compensate landowners for hosting key infrastructure. |

| Document | Payment | Amount | Payment timings | What is it for |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Option for Easement (OfE)** | **Construction Licence Fee** | Property specific. | Within 20 business days of entering into the Option for Easement, then annually in advance for up to five years or until construction is complete. | Covers temporary use of land inside and outside the easement during construction (negotiated on a case-by-case basis). |
| | **Option Extension fee** | $15,000 | Within 20 business days of exercising the extension. | Payable if VicGrid VNI West extends the OfE option exercise period for an additional year. |
| | **Associated easement registration costs** | On a case-by-case assessment. | Reimbursement within 20 business days of easement registration (subject to cost evidence and tax invoice, if applicable). | Covers costs in event that landowners incur additional costs as part of registering the easement on the title. |
| | **Associated mortgagee consent or third-party consent costs** | | Reimbursement within 20 business days of providing a relevant third-party consent deed (subject to cost evidence and tax invoice, if applicable) | Covers costs in event that landowners incur additional costs as part of obtaining mortgagee or third-party consent to the Enablement and Access Deed, OfE, registration of easement on title, or entering into a tripartite deed required for VicGrid financing. |
| | **Associated approvals costs** | | Reimbursement within 20 business days of the landholder providing the requested cooperation to VicGrid (subject to cost evidence). | Covers costs in event that landowners incur additional costs in assisting VicGrid obtaining any approvals for the Project. |
| | **Costs to changes to the easement area or construction licence area** | | Reimbursement timeframes vary, depending on the relevant change to the easement or construction licence area. | Covers costs in negotiating a material change to the easement area or construction licence area and any consequential changes to compensation payable. |
| | **Costs of assignment** | | Reimbursement within 20 business days of the landholder complying with VicGrid's request for assistance (subject to cost evidence and tax invoice, if applicable). | Covers landowners costs for assisting in transfer, novation, or assignment of the Enablement and Access Deed, OfE or easement. |
| | **Land Rehabilitation Offset Payment** | An amount equal to the Construction Licence Fee, payable during the year in which the construction completion date occurs, recognising the time taken for the impacted land to return to full productive capacity. | | |

**All payments outlined in this table and throughout the Landholder Guide are subject to the terms and conditions of each relevant agreement.**

**Consumer Price Index**

The Benefit Payment, Easement Compensation Payment and Construction Licence Fee are subject to annual Consumer Price Index adjustments. These reviews occur each year following the anniversary of signing the Enablement and Access Deed or OfE, where relevant.

**Payment scheduling**

VicGrid is open to working with landholders to adjust the timing and method of compensation payments to better suit individual needs. For example, a landowner may choose to receive their compensation as annual payments spread over seven years. Requests like this can be discussed with your landholder liaison.

**Changes to the Option for Easement**

The OfE includes a process to agree on minor adjustments to the Indicative Easement Plan after construction. If the proposed changes are more significant, they may require a review of the property's compensation.

Similarly, if the construction laydown area identified in the OfE is changed, it may result in an increase to the Construction Licence Fee paid to the landholder.

## The voluntary easement acquisition process

Below is a general overview of the easement acquisition process where a landowner has chosen to negotiate and agree to this pathway. The exact process may vary depending on each landholder's circumstances and individual negotiations.

The table also outlines the payment milestones. It does not include conditional payments detailed in the benefits and compensation table on the previous page.

Professional costs associated with negotiating the Enablement and Access Deed and the Option for Easement may arise at different points throughout the stages outlined below.

| **Before the Land Easement and Access Package is provided** | |
|---|---|
| **Gathering property information** | **Compensation assessment for the easement** |
| Property-specific information helps inform the compensation assessment included in the Option for Easement proposal. It also helps VicGrid identify ways to protect or work around land use and existing infrastructure during construction, where possible. This may be used to inform the Property Management Plan (PMP). | An indicative compensation assessment is prepared by a qualified valuer, in line with the LACA and the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* (Vic), this is your Landowner Payment Estimate. With your input, the valuer may inspect your property to better understand potential impacts, like disturbance to existing use or farming operations. |
| **Eligible payments:**<br>• Land Access Agreement payment – for providing access<br>• Professional costs – for negotiating access | |
| **Refer to page 38-39 for more information** | **Refer to page 35 for more information** |

| Land Easement and Access Package | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Land Easement and Access Package (LEAP) presented** | **Landowner review** | **Negotiation and agreement** |
| Landholders are provided with a package containing:<br>• Cover letter<br>• Landholder payment estimate<br>• Landholder Guide<br>• Enablement and Access Deed<br>• Land access: technical survey activities<br>• Option for Easement (OfE), including:<br>– Memorandum of Common Provisions (MoCP)<br>– Easement diagram<br>– Property Management Plan template<br>– Property and asset map(s)<br>– Term sheet<br>Landholder liaisons will assist landholders with delivery and walk-through of documents.<br>VicGrid would prefer to deliver the LEAP in person. If this is not possible, and consent has been provided to discuss with your legal advisor, farm manager or other representatives, the information will be provided via a sent package. | Landowners are encouraged to seek independent professional advice (e.g. valuation or legal) and will be reimbursed for any related costs by VicGrid VNI West.<br>Feedback on the LEAP can be provided via your landholder liaison. | Once the Land Easement and Access Package has been provided, your landholder liaison will support you through the negotiation process, with input from VicGrid's legal and valuation advisers.<br>Negotiations with VicGrid are often iterative, meaning both parties – including landholders and their advisers – will work through issues to reach agreement on compensation and conditions.<br>If you disagree with the landowner payment estimate, you can provide supporting information, such as an independent valuation. This may lead to a revised offer, as outlined in the table on page 36.<br>Your landholder liaison can also help coordinate discussions with mortgagees or other third-parties that hold an interest in your property. Their consent is required before entering into agreements with VicGrid VNI West. This includes any occupier of the land or person who has lodged a caveat over the land. |
| | **Eligible payments:**<br>Professional costs – Up to $5,000 in negotiating the Enablement and Access Deed.<br>Professional costs – Up to $10,000 in negotiating the OfE (whether or not an OfE is agreed). | **Eligible payments:**<br>Access Licence fee payment – when the Enablement and Access Deed is signed.<br>20% of Landholder Benefit Payment when Enablement and Access Deed is signed by 30 September 2026.<br>Option Fee $50,000 (within 20 business days of all parties signing the Option for Easement).<br>20% of Landholder Benefit Payment when Option for Easement is signed.<br>Professional costs – in obtaining third party consent from others with interest in the land. |

## Securing early access to the Landholder Benefit Payment

Landowners who sign an Enablement and Access Deed by 30 September 2026 can access part of the Landholder Benefit Payment upfront under the current payment arrangements.

After 30 September 2026, the upfront payment available from signing the Enablement and Access Deed will no longer apply. However, landowners who sign an updated OfE after this time will remain eligible for the full Landholder Benefit Payment, with 20% paid on signing and the remaining amount paid when the option is exercised, subject to the terms of the particular agreement.

Contact your landholder liaison if you would like an executable version of the Enablement and Access Deed provided to you and your professional advisor(s).

| **Project approval, construction and completion** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Exercise Option for Easement** | **Construction** | **Completion of construction and registration of easement** |
| VicGrid VNI West will notify landholders of its intention to exercise the Option for Easement (OfE). This process will generally occur following the completion of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process.<br>Landholders will receive a formal option exercise notice, which confirms the easement has been acquired and grants the project access to the property for construction in accordance with the terms of the OfE. From this point forward, both parties are bound by the terms of the easement.<br>If the option is not exercised within the agreed period, it will either expire or terminate as outlined in the OfE. In that case, landholders will retain all payments received, including any access, benefit or option payments.<br>The option must be exercised by VicGrid VNI West within three years of the date the OfE was signed (the Option Expiry Date). | During construction, access to your property will be managed in line with the OfE and the agreed Property Management Plan (PMP).<br>All construction activities will comply with statutory approvals and the obligations set out in both the OfE and PMP.<br>VicGrid will keep landholders informed throughout the construction process and will notify you in advance when access to your property is required. | Once construction is complete, VicGrid VNI West will carry out any remediation works agreed upon in your PMP.<br>A licensed surveyor will prepare a final easement diagram. Once confirmed through the Easement Instrument Plan, the easement will be registered on your property title. |
| **Eligible payments**:<br>Remaining Landholder Benefit Payment when the option is exercised by VicGrid.<br>80% of Easement Compensation Payment. | **Eligible payments:**<br>Land rehabilitation payment.<br>Construction Licence Fee (annually during construction). | **Eligible payments:**<br>20% of Easement Compensation Payment.<br>Victorian Government Landholder payments begin. |

## Compulsory acquisition

VicGrid VNI West's strong preference is to reach voluntary agreement with landholders to acquire transmission easements through the Option for Easement (OfE) included in the Land Easement and Access Package. This approach gives landholders an opportunity to engage early and ensure their property-specific concerns are considered and Landholder Benefit Payments are made available.

We understand this process can be complex and emotionally challenging. Our goal is to work with you transparently and respectfully, giving you the information and time you need to make the right decision for your situation.

Participation in the OfE process is entirely voluntary. If a landholder decides not to proceed with a negotiated agreement, VicGrid VNI West (as an electricity corporation) may apply for approval from the Governor in Council under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) to compulsorily acquire an easement over the property.

Before taking this step, the project will provide clear written notice to affected landholders. This notice will explain what compulsory acquisition means, including how it may affect any compensation or access payments offered under a voluntary agreement.

Landowners may continue to negotiate with VicGrid VNI West to enter into an OfE agreement at any time before a Notice of Acquisition (NOA) is issued under the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (Vic) (LACA). Negotiations may continue after this time, in limited circumstances.

While negotiations may continue after a NOA is issued, any compensation payable from that point forward must comply with LACA requirements.

Landowners may enter into voluntary negotiations for an OfE up until Step 4 in the compulsory acquisition process outlined in the table below, when the formal NOA is issued.

The statutory process for compulsory acquisition of an easement is governed by the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) and the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (Vic). The key steps are outlined in the table below:

| Step | | Description |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Agreement not reached** | Application for the compulsory acquisition statutory process may commence if a landholder declines VicGrid VNI West's offer to enter into an OfE, or agreement cannot be reached despite good faith negotiations. |
| 2 | **Seek Governor in Council approval** | VicGrid VNI West may then apply to the Governor in Council to compulsorily acquire easements under Section 86 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic). |
| 3 | **Notice of intention to acquire** | The compulsory acquisition statutory process will formally commence on issue of a Notice of Intention to Acquire (NOITA) the easement, in accordance with the process set out in the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (Vic) (LACA). The NOITA would include details of the interest to be acquired, including a diagram of the easement. |
| 4 | **Notice of Acquisition** | At least two months after a landholder receives the NOITA, VicGrid VNI West will publish a Notice of Acquisition in the Victorian Government Gazette and in a local newspaper.<br>A copy will also be served to the landholder within 14 days.<br>Once the notice is published in the Victorian Government Gazette, the easement is formally created and automatically vests in VicGrid VNI West. |
| 5 | **Compensation and entry into possession** | **Compensation**<br>Within 14 days after the Notice of Acquisition is published in the Victorian Government Gazette, VicGrid VNI West will provide the landholder with a revised compensation offer for the easement. This offer will include a certificate of valuation prepared by an appointed valuer, in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (Vic) (LACA).<br>After receiving the compensation offer, the landholder can notify VicGrid whether they:<br>• Accept the offer (by providing VicGrid with a notice of acceptance), or<br>• Dispute the offer (by submitting a notice of claim) in accordance with the LACA.<br>If a resolution cannot be reached, the matter may be referred to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal or the Supreme Court of Victoria for determination.<br>**Entry into possession**<br>VicGrid VNI West will provide landholders with required advance notice prior to the first entry onto the property to commence the use of the easement and any other land temporarily required for safe and efficient construction. |
| 6 | **Registration** | VicGrid VNI West will register the easement on the title of the land, this will typically occur following construction and cadastral survey of the easement area. |

## Managing your property with VNI West

An individual Property Management Plan (PMP) is developed to give landholders confidence in how project activities will be managed on their property. A blank PMP template is included in every Land Easement and Access Package to help landholders begin thinking about what matters most when it comes to managing the land during construction and reinstatement activities.

Throughout each stage of the project, landholder liaisons are working directly with landholders to understand how each property is used. The goal is to minimise disruption and ensure the needs of each landholder are recognised and addressed.

The PMP records any existing infrastructure on the property that may be affected by construction. Once agreed, it sets out how that infrastructure – and the broader property – will be managed during the construction phase. This includes how any damage will be remediated or how areas will be reinstated once construction is complete, as well as arrangements for the ongoing operational phase.

## Property Management Plans

The PMP remains in place throughout all key phases of VNI West – including construction, reinstatement, remediation and ongoing operations.

Either the landholder or VicGrid can request changes to the PMP at any point before or during construction, as long as both parties agree to the proposed updates.

If an easement is required on your property, and agreed, both parties will commit to following the PMP. This commitment is formalised through the Option for Easement (OfE), which outlines responsibilities during construction, and the Memorandum of Common Provisions, which applies during the operational phase of the project.

The table below outlines the steps involved in preparing a Property Management Plan.

**1 Property representative(s)**

Landholders, or their representative(s), received a blank PMP template and map in their Land Easement and Access Package.

PMP templates can prompt discussions about how the construction footprint, and existing infrastructure or property features should be managed during construction.

**2 Understanding your land**

Where agreed, your landholder liaisons are here to work with you to document property features within the easement.

Completing a draft PMP will help inform an annotated easement map describing your existing infrastructure.

**3 The Property Management Plan**

Following the property visit, a populated draft PMP will be provided for review. The PMP will include:

- Temporarily severed land and crossings
- Biosecurity requirements
- Construction area access
- Vegetation and soil management
- Temporary fencing and notice periods
- Site remediation

We will work with you to finalise a PMP based on your property specific requirements.

**4 Site remediation**

Following construction, VicGrid will ensure properties are returned to the state agreed in the PMP.

This may include things like:

- Remediating any disturbed soil or pasture
- Reinstating access tracks, drains and culverts (unless otherwise agreed to by the landholders)

**5 Reinstatement**

For safety reasons, certain features on your property – such as trees or built structures – may not be able to be reinstated within the easement after construction. These will be identified in your PMP and may be factored into your compensation offer.

If you choose to manage reinstatement yourself, compensation can also include a management fee to reflect your time and effort in completing the work or coordinating contractors.

**Things to consider in designing your Property Management Plan include:**

### Severed land and crossings

In some cases, a transmission easement or access track may temporarily cut off parts of a property, making them inaccessible during construction.

Landholders will be consulted on how to manage this, with options including temporary crossing points (outside of high-impact activity periods), fencing, or additional compensation (rent) for not using the area during construction.

### Vegetation and soil management

If vegetation clearing is required in the construction licence area, landholders can request specific approaches, including:

- Vegetation removed entirely from their property
- Vegetation retained in protection zones where possible (more feasible in construction areas than within the easement)
- Felled timber left on site for firewood
- Top and subsoil stored separately

Any replacement tree planting will be discussed and agreed upon with landholders on a case-by-case basis.

### Fencing and notice periods

Landholders can propose that construction areas and access track(s) be fenced – either temporarily or permanently – and can nominate their preferred fencing type for the project to consider.

Any fencing or gates removed for construction will be reinstated after works are complete, in consultation with VicGrid.

These agreed requirements will be recorded in the PMP.

## Risk and liability

The Option for Easement terms are shaped to be more favourable to landholders than what's typically seen in other transmission and infrastructure projects. They include stronger protections around risk and liability.

This position sets a new benchmark for how easements can be negotiated fairly and was informed by feedback from the VicGrid VNI West Community Reference Group and lessons from other major projects.

The project operator, not the landholder, is responsible for maintaining and insuring the transmission infrastructure. This includes public liability insurance for construction, operation, and maintenance activities. VNI West releases landholders from any claim except to the extent directly caused by a breach of agreement, negligent act (or omission), fraud, or deliberate misconduct of landholders.

Because insurance policies and advice can vary depending on individual circumstances, landholders are encouraged to speak directly with their insurance company or broker. This advice can also inform compensation discussions.

VicGrid, VicGrid VNI West, and its contractors will maintain public liability insurance.

A range of frequently asked questions on insurance and liability are available on the VNI West project website vniwproject.com.au

## Privacy and complaints or disputes

### Use of personal information

We collect and maintain personal information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Our information systems are designed, operated and maintained in accordance with international standards and best practice for data security. We periodically review our information security practices to ensure personal information is protected from misuse, loss or unauthorised access, modification and disclosure.

Unless required by law, we take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information when it is no longer required.

### How records are kept

Information about engagement with landholders – including meeting notes – is stored in the project's stakeholder management system. This information is only shared with VicGrid's experts when relevant to matters such as access, design or project approvals.

Field survey and investigation findings may be used in project approval documentation, but they will never include personal information.

### Our Privacy Policy

VicGrid's Privacy Policy is available on the VNI West website.

Under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), you have the right to request access to your personal information. You can make this request through the VNI West website.

If you have questions about the way we handle your personal information, please contact us by:

Phone: 1800 824 221
Email: enquiries@vniwproject.com.au

## Complaints

VicGrid complies with the Land Access Code of Practice developed by the Essential Services Commission, which sets out clear obligations and standards for how we conduct land access.

We encourage landholders to raise any concerns or complaints directly with their landholder liaison as the first point of contact.

If a complaint cannot be resolved to your reasonable satisfaction, you can escalate it to VicGrid management. Details of the internal escalation process are outlined in the Enquiry and Complaint Handling Policy available on the VNI West website.

Complaints can be made by phone, email, or letter. Please refer to the Complaints Policy on the VNI West website for further information on how to lodge a complaint and what details to include.

**Contact details to make complaints to VicGrid are outlined below:**

Free call: 1800 824 221
Email: enquiries@vniwproject.com.au
Post: Manager Project Stakeholder and Community Engagement
VicGrid
GPO Box 1756
Melbourne VIC 3001



## How will land access or acquisition disputes be resolved?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint to the project team, depending on the nature of the complaint, you may escalate your concerns to an external body:

- The Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria
- The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

If your complaint relates to an agreement between you and VicGrid VNI West (such as a Land Access Agreement or Option for Easement), you may also use the dispute resolution process outlined in that agreement.

**Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria**

Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV) (ewov.com.au) is a free, independent and fair dispute resolution service for Victorians. It can receive complaints about the way a transmission company proposes to, or has, used its rights to access private property. EWOV can help you and VicGrid reach a resolution based on the facts or determine a fair and reasonable outcome to a complaint.

Free call: 1800 500 509
Email: ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

**Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner**

The Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner (AEIC) (aeic.gov.au) provides information about how to make a complaint, best industry practice, and resources for landholders. The Commissioner may handle complaints from concerned community residents who live in proximity to proposed or operating wind farms, large-scale solar farms (5 MW or more), energy storage facilities like large-scale batteries (1 MW or more), and new major transmission projects. The AEIC can be contacted by:

Free call: 1800 656 395
Email: aeic@aeic.gov.au

# Useful contacts

### VicGrid

vicgrid.com.au – coordinates Victoria's renewable energy zones and transmission network planning and development, including VNI West.

### Energy Safe Victoria

energysafe.vic.gov.au – including information about the safe design and operation of high voltage transmission networks in Victoria.

### Environment Effects Statement Process in Victoria

planning.vic.gov.au – including information about the regulated environment assessment process in Victoria.

### Essential Services Commission

esc.vic.gov.au – including information about the regulation of transmission licenses in Victoria such as the Electricity Transmission Company Land Access Statement of Expectations and the Land Access CoP.

### Australian Energy Market Operator

aemo.com.au – including information on the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) process for this project.

## Community support services

We understand the prospect of new transmission infrastructure has caused stress for some landholders and community members. We acknowledge the genuine impact this project may have and recognise that, for some, it may affect mental health and wellbeing.

While we will do our best to mitigate impacts to mental health through respectful and transparent engagement, professional support may be more helpful in some cases. If you or someone you know is struggling, we encourage you to reach out to the free, confidential counselling service engaged by VicGrid.

### Converge International

Converge International is a 24/7 mental health and wellbeing service, offering access to over 1,800 qualified clinical professionals. The service is designed to help with a wide range of wellbeing issues and is completely confidential.

While VicGrid funds the service, it does not see or have access to your personal information. Converge will only collect the information needed to provide support.

Please call 1300 687 327 and reference VNI West.

Additional support for landholders is available through the following organisations.

| Organisation | Services | Details |
|---|---|---|
| **RFCS Victoria West** | Financial counselling, small business and wellbeing support for farmers and regional businesses | 1300 735 579<br>wswrcs.com.au |
| **Beyond Blue** | Free online and telephone helpline for people seeking mental health information or qualified support | 1300 224 636<br>beyondblue.org.au |
| **Lifeline** | Provides access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services | 13 11 14<br>lifeline.org.au |

## Translation and interpretation

If you need an interpreter, please contact the project team and we will make the appropriate arrangements.

Call 13 14 50 or email enquiries@vniwproject.com.au

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.



# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Australian Energy Market Operator** | The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) is Australia's independent system and market operator and system planner. |
| **Compulsory acquisition** | Compulsory acquisition refers to the legal process whereby an authorised entity compulsorily acquires an interest in land for public use. Landholders in Victoria are entitled to compensation if this occurs. Compulsory acquisition is often used to secure land necessary for projects like roads, solar or wind farms and other infrastructure. |
| **Conditional payments** | Conditional payments are case-by-case payments based on a landholder's unique circumstances. Examples of conditional payments include Construction Licence Fees or easement registration costs. |
| **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** | The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a statistical measure of the average price change over time for consumer goods and services. CPI is widely used as an economic indicator and is a key tool for measuring inflation. |
| **Draft corridor** | The draft corridor for VNI West refers to the 2 km wide area identified in October 2023 as the likely route for the project. |
| **Easements** | An easement is legal right to access or use part of another person's land for a specific purpose, like operating public infrastructure. The easement is registered on the land title to ensure it is accurately shown in searches of the land title. The easement can only be changed or removed with consent from both the landholder and grantee of the easement. |
| ***Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) (EI Act)** | Victorian legislation that provides the legal framework for the electricity industry, including the licensing and regulation of electricity transmission, distribution and supply activities. |
| **Enablement and Access Deed** | The Enablement and Access Deed is a formal agreement that allows VicGrid to access land for surveys and preliminary investigations. It includes details about the Benefit Payment and negotiating an easement under the OfE. |
| **Environment Effects Statement (EES)** | The Environment Effects Statement (EES) is Victoria's most comprehensive environmental assessment process for major projects. The EES identifies and evaluates potential environmental impacts to inform project design. |
| **Essential Services Commission (ESC)** | The Essential Services Commission (ESC) is an independent statutory authority responsible for regulating essential services in Victoria, including energy. The ESC helps ensure services are safe, reliable and affordable. |
| **Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV)** | EWOV is an independent and free dispute resolution service for electricity, gas and water complaints in Victoria. EWOV can consider complaints related to land access, including how a transmission company proposes to – or has – accessed private property. |
| **Insurance Council of Australia (ICA)** | The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) is the national body representing the insurance sector in Australia. It advocates for policyholders and works to highlight the importance of insurance to the economy and society. |
| **Land Access Code of Practice (LACoP)** | The LACoP is a mandatory set of rules and standards that licensed electricity transmission companies in Victoria must follow when accessing or seeking to access or acquire private land. |
| ***Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (LACA)** | The LACA sets out how interests in land may be compulsorily acquired in Victoria and how compensation must be assessed and paid. |
| **Landholder** | The term landholders includes both owners and occupiers. We will work with all landholders during the land access process, including those with easements, leases, or other legal interests (e.g. caveats or co-ownership structures). |
| **Landholder Benefit Payment** | The Landholder Benefit Payment for VNI West refers to the per-hectare payment available to landholders. The Benefit Payment recognises the contribution of landholders in supporting critical infrastructure and aims to ensure compensation is fair, transparent and respectful. |
| **Landowner** | A landowner is the registered proprietor of the land as recorded on the property title. Only the landowner can grant an easement, enter into an Option for Easement, or otherwise transfer a proprietary interest in the land. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Option for Easement (OfE)** | The OfE is a legal agreement that gives the VNI West project team permission to acquire an easement over land at a future date. It also sets out the rights and conditions that apply during construction and access. |
| **Preferred easement** | The preferred easement is identified as the least constrained location for the 500 kV transmission line infrastructure, reflecting up-to-date consultation and assessments. The preferred easement is approximately 240 km long and 70 m wide, except for two locations where the easement widens to accommodate additional infrastructure. |
| **Property Management Plan (PMP)** | The PMP outlines how your property will be managed and protected during access, construction, and remediation. It forms part of your agreement with VicGrid. |
| **Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T)** | The RIT-T is a national framework used to identify the transmission investment option that delivers the greatest net economic benefit. Where relevant, it also ensures that reliability standards set by jurisdictional or Electricity Rules are met. The RIT-T provides a consistent process for assessing all transmission investments, removing the previous distinction between projects driven by reliability needs and those delivering market benefits. |
| **Renewable energy zone (REZ)** | REZs are designated areas of the state that not only have abundant renewable energy resources – like wind and sun – but are also appropriate for development from a land use and environmental perspective.<br>REZs may contain renewable energy infrastructure including solar and wind projects, and batteries for storage, and will be connected to the transmission network in an orderly and efficient way. |
| **Terminal station** | A terminal station is a key component of the electrical grid and is crucial in ensuring a stable and safe electrical supply. Victoria is home to over 60 such facilities, designed to facilitate the transition of electricity from high-voltage transmission lines to lower-voltage distribution networks that directly serve homes and businesses. |
| **Transgrid** | Transgrid is a Transmission Network Service Provider (TNSP), which builds, owns and operates electricity transmission in NSW and the ACT. Transgrid is developing the NSW section of VNI West. |
| **Transmission Company Victoria (TCV)** | Transmission Company Victoria (TCV) is a company established by AEMO Victorian Planning (AVP) to progress early development stage works for VNI West. TCV commenced engagement with landholders, Traditional Owners, and the wider community to understand local concerns and ensure that any commitments made early in the process are upheld throughout the life of the project. In November 2025, responsibility for developing VNI West transferred to VicGrid, and VicGrid VNI West was established as the entity name of the project proponent. The entity TCV no longer exists, and has been replaced by VicGrid VNI West. |
| **Transmission licence** | A transmission licence authorises the holder to operate transmission infrastructure and transmit electricity in Victoria. VicGrid holds a transmission licence to support the development and delivery of VNI West. |
| **Transmission Network Service Provider (TNSP)** | In September 2024, a tender process was launched to identify a development partner with the capability and capacity to help complete early works, and ultimately, construct, own and operate VNI West.<br>Before construction begins, and if this partner meets VicGrid's expectations through the development phase, they will then be appointed to build, own and operate the project with strict oversight from VicGrid. |
| **VicGrid** | VicGrid coordinates the overarching planning and development of Victorian Renewable Energy Zones and oversees transmission network planning and investment decisions – including accountability for VNI West. |
| **Western Renewables Link (WRL)** | The Western Renewables Link (WRL) is a proposed new 190 km overhead high-voltage electricity transmission line that will carry renewable energy from Bulgana in western Victoria to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west.<br>The project is critical infrastructure required to unlock the renewable energy potential of western Victoria an important renewable energy zone and will help to deliver clean and affordable energy to all Victorians. |
| **VicGrid VNI West** | VicGrid VNI West (VNI West) is the new project entity name for VNI West, formerly Transmission Company Victoria (TCV). VicGrid VNI West is the proponent of the project and retains the Victorian transmission licence. |



**Important Notice**

This document or the information in it may be subsequently updated or amended.

This document does not constitute legal or business advice and should not be relied on as a substitute for obtaining detailed advice about the National Electricity Law, the National Electricity Rules or any other applicable laws, procedures or policies or investment or business decisions. VicGrid (and its related entity) has made every reasonable effort to ensure the quality of the information in this document but cannot guarantee its accuracy or completeness.

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VNI West

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## Contact us

Website: **www.vniwproject.com.au**
Email: **enquiries@vniwproject.com.au**
Free call: **1800 824 221**
Facebook: **@VNIWest**

If you need an interpreter, please call 131 450 (within Australia). 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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