VNI West

Business and economics

The farming industry is the largest sector by number of businesses in the study area, followed by the construction industry. Given its significance, agricultural impacts were addressed in a separate dedicated assessment and excluded here (see section 8.1.8 of the *EES Executive summary* and *EES Chapter 20: Agriculture*).

Most non-agricultural businesses are located within regional townships situated well away from the Proposed Easement, meaning direct impacts from construction and operation are limited. The main non-agricultural businesses in proximity to the Proposed Easement are planned or approved renewable energy projects, including wind and solar developments, which would rely on the Project for connection to the electricity grid.

All EES documents, chapters, technical appendices, and attachments are available to view and download on the VNI West website at vniwproject.com.au/EES

EES Chapter 22 and *Technical Appendix O* assess potential impacts to existing business and employment profiles within the study area, key stakeholder concerns, and broader economic impacts associated with the Project.

READ MORE ↗

Chapter 22: Business and economics ↗

Technical Appendix O: Business and economics ↗

Output	Employment	Wages and salaries	Value added
$25.40 million	**107 jobs**	**$8.24 million**	**$10.68 million**

Key issues raised through engagement with businesses and councils include uncertainty around construction timing and approvals, potential impacts on accommodation availability, tourism-related concerns, and labour force availability.

Uncertainty regarding construction timing may influence investment decisions for renewable energy proponents and businesses participating in supply chains. This impact would be managed through ongoing communication and stakeholder engagement to improve certainty around Project staging, procurement opportunities, and delivery timelines.

Potential impacts on housing availability as a result of a temporary influx of construction workers was identified as a concern. However, the Project would utilise temporary worker accommodation facilities, thereby avoiding reliance on local housing and reducing pressure on regional accommodation services.

Tourism impacts were assessed as low due to the location of the Proposed Easement, which avoids major tourism destinations, including parks, reserves, and high-value scenic areas, and is situated well away from the Grampians National Park. As such, impacts to tourism-dependent businesses are expected to be minimal.

Labour market impacts are also expected to be minor. While some competition for skilled labour may occur, the use of a predominantly non-local construction workforce would limit pressure on the regional labour supply.

The Project is also expected to generate economic opportunities, including increased demand for local goods and services during construction, increased regional employment opportunities, and improved network capacity to support renewable energy development. Improved access to the electricity grid is expected to reduce curtailment impacts for energy generation projects which would allow them to dispatch more energy to the market.

The key economic outcomes from the Project are shown above.

Implementation of a communications and engagement framework, a local procurement strategy, a local employment plan, and the use of temporary worker accommodation facilities to avoid pressure on local housing and services would help minimise and manage impacts.

Overall, residual impacts to business and economic conditions are expected to be negligible to minor, with a number of positive economic effects associated with employment, procurement, and renewable energy development support.