VNI West

Land use and planning

The Project would expand Victoria's electricity transmission network and support renewable energy connections, aligning with state and local planning policy that recognises its role in facilitating renewable energy development and improving system reliability.

The Project would be located across four Local Government Areas (Gannawarra Shire, Loddon Shire, Buloke Shire, and Northern Grampians Shire) over the 240 km Proposed Easement. The Proposed Easement would generally be 70 m wide, except at two locations where it would widen to 170 m. Land use within the study area is predominantly agricultural, with more intensive farming occurring in the northern sections.

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 23 and ***Technical Appendix P*** identify how the Project aligns with state and local planning policy and assess potential impacts from the Project on existing and future land uses.

READ MORE ↗

Chapter 23: Land use and planning ↗

Technical Appendix P: Land use and planning ↗

The transmission line would traverse a mix of high- and low-intensity farmland, with limited areas of conservation land associated with water crossings, roads, and waterways including the Murray River, Loddon, Avoca, Avon, Richardson and Wimmera Rivers, Morrl Morrl Creek, and associated reserves. Several arterial roads connect regional townships including Stawell, Navarre, St Arnaud, Donald, Charlton, Boort, Wycheproof, Wedderburn, Kerang, Cohuna, and Swan Hill. There are no declared freeways within the study area.

Construction impacts would be temporary and generally confined to the Proposed Easement, Tragowel Terminal Station, and associated laydown and accommodation areas. These impacts are primarily related to amenity, including dust, noise, and traffic. Localised vegetation removal would occur at river and road crossings; however, existing land uses would otherwise remain largely unaffected. Impacts would be minimised and managed via the Project's Construction Environmental Management Plan, Construction Bushfire Management Plan, Air Quality Management Plan and a Noise and Vibration Management Plan. Residual construction impacts are considered moderate but temporary due to short-term displacement of existing uses.

During operation, impacts would be permanent for the life of the Project but minor in nature. These include the removal of vegetation beneath transmission lines to maintain safety clearances and small ground disturbance areas at the base of transmission towers (typically 20 x 20 m). Agricultural use would largely continue within the Proposed Easement, although some restrictions would apply, including limitations on the use of manned aerial services. The Tragowel Terminal Station site would be removed from agricultural production during operation but may be returned to pre-existing use following decommissioning. The Project's Operational Environmental Management Plan would manage impacts such that, overall, operational impacts would be considered minor permanent impacts that do not materially affect the underlying purpose of land use within the area.

VNI West

Land use and planning (cont.)

The Project contains land subject to two Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) areas; the Dja Dja Wurrung RSA and Wotjobaluk Nations RSA. Both the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA) and Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BGLCAC) have Land Use Activity Agreements (LUAAs) in place which apply to Crown land within the respective RSA areas.

The Project includes works on Crown land, and it is recognised that Traditional Owners have rights and interests in these areas. Engagement with the DJAARA and BGLCAC would be undertaken in accordance with good faith negotiation requirements, with permitted activities and obligations to be determined through agreement.

Two Proposed Easement options at Tragowel and Teddywaddy were assessed, with minimal difference in overall land use impacts as both options traverse similar land use types and affect comparable areas.

A Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) is proposed to facilitate Project delivery under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The PSA would introduce a new Specific Controls Overlay to the Project Land and an Incorporated Document into the Gannawarra, Buloke, Loddon, and Northern Grampians Planning Schemes, allowing the Project to be permitted under all relevant planning schemes.

Overall, while construction would result in temporary moderate impacts due to short-term disruption of existing land uses, operational impacts are minor and permanent but do not materially alter underlying land use patterns. The Project would result in minimal long-term land use change.

