

Western Victoria
transmission network project



LANDHOLDER GUIDE
**Land access,
easements and
compensation**

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Purpose

This document provides additional information on land access, easements and compensation for landholders and communities affected by the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project (WVTNP).

Landholder: the person/s (including an entity e.g. company or trust) entitled to hold title to a parcel of land.



Contents

Project overview	4
What is the EES process?	6
Having your say	7
Route selection	8
Access to your land for assessment and approvals	10
Creating a new easement	14
Compensation for easement	16
Living with an easement on your property	18
Questions about land access, easements and compensation	28
Additional Information	28

Project overview

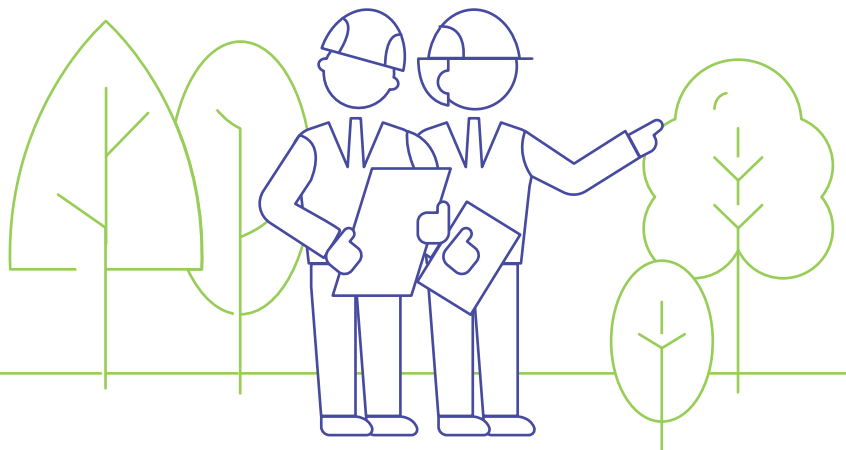
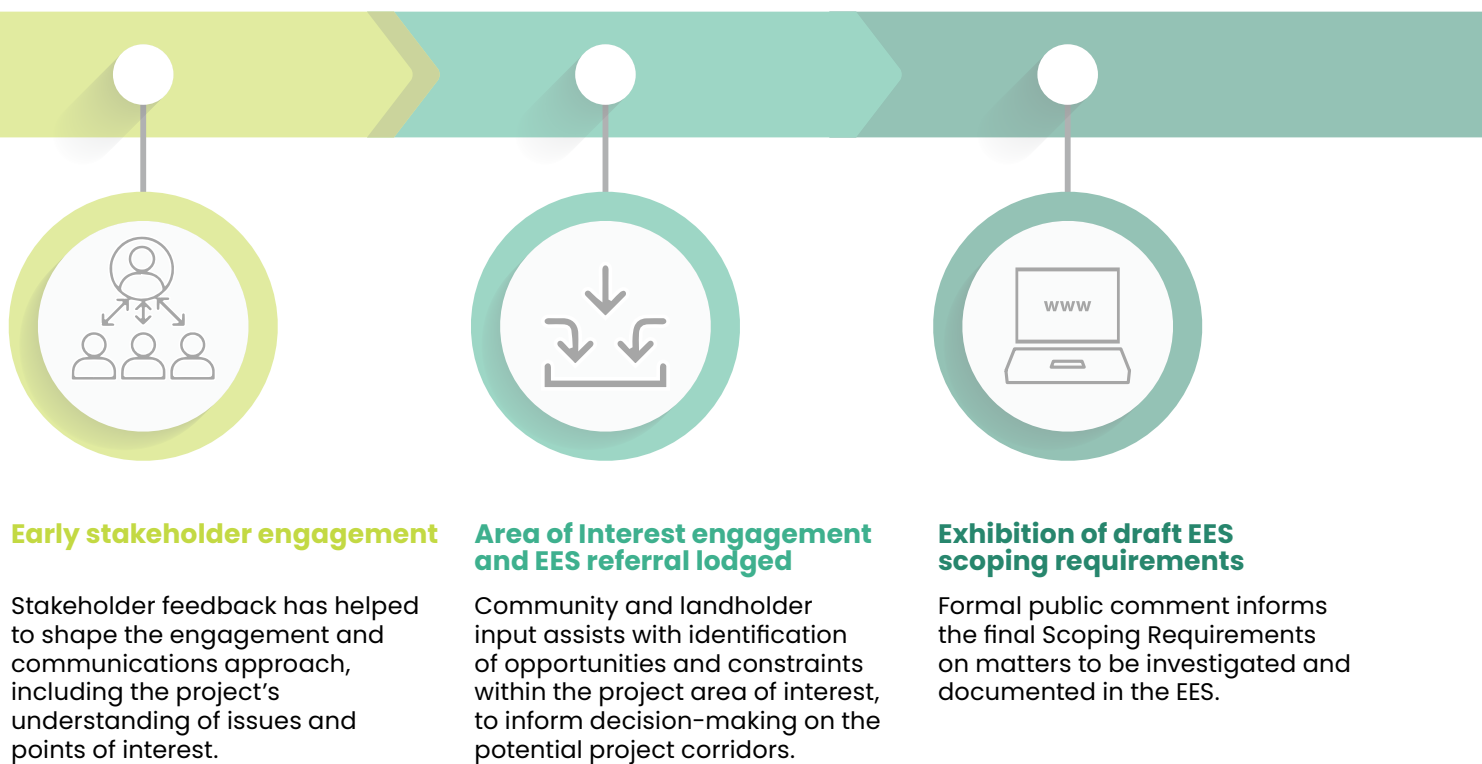
The WVTNP proposes to build a new transmission line starting at Bulgana, near Stawell in Victoria's west, and covering approximately 190km to Sydenham in Melbourne's north-west. The transmission line will connect renewable energy generated in western Victoria into the National Electricity Market.

The WVTNP is being delivered by AusNet Transmission Group Pty Ltd (AusNet Services). AusNet Services currently operates 6,500kms of transmission lines across Victoria.

In December 2019, AusNet Services was appointed by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) to develop, design, construct, operate and maintain the western Victoria transmission line after a competitive tender process.

AusNet Services is currently preparing an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the project which includes extensive studies, investigations and community consultation.

Engagement phases during the preparation of the EES





EES preparation and specialist studies

Ongoing community feedback will assist in the:

- Identification of existing values and matters to be considered in environmental, cultural and social studies.
- Development of appropriate and effective measures to avoid and minimise impact and risks.
- Identification of opportunities to maximise benefits.
- Development of a design.



EES to DELWP

Draft EES document and supporting technical reports submitted to DELWP for review.

The EES will be exhibited for at least 30 days for public comment, allowing the public to review the EES and provide written submissions on the project to Planning Panels Victoria.

The submissions will inform the panel in making its recommendations to the Minister for Planning.



Ongoing landholder, community and stakeholder engagement



What is the EES process?

An Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required to assess the potential environmental effects of the WVTNP, prior to any statutory decisions being made on the project. The EES process is accredited to assess impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance (listed threatened species and communities) under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* through the Bilateral Assessment Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria.

The WVTNP is in the preparatory stage of the EES. Extensive studies, investigations and community consultation are required to be undertaken to prepare the EES technical reports as set out in the scoping requirements. Access to some areas of land is required to undertake these studies and investigations.

The project's Technical Reference Group, including representatives from federal, state and local government and Registered Aboriginal Parties, reviews and comments on the technical adequacy of the draft technical reports and EES chapters during preparation of the EES. When the draft EES is finalised, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) will complete an adequacy review to ensure the EES addresses the scoping requirements prior to its exhibition.

The EES will be on public exhibition for at least 30 business days. Public submissions on the EES may be made during the exhibition period.

After exhibition of the EES, the Victorian Minister for Planning will appoint an independent 'Inquiry and Advisory Committee' made up of persons with expertise relevant to the project. The committee will consider the EES and planning approval sought for the project. It will also hold a public hearing to hear evidence from experts and members of the public that request to be heard.

After the hearing, the Inquiry and Advisory Committee will produce a report, providing an independent assessment of the significance and acceptability of the environmental effects of the project, and providing recommendations to the Minister for Planning. The Minister will consider the report and prepare a Minister's assessment report for the consideration of statutory decision-makers (including the Commonwealth with regard to the required approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*) for the project.

Victorian and Commonwealth Government approvals need to be in place before construction can commence. Pending the completion of the EES process and other required approvals, construction activities may commence.

You can read more about the EES and approvals processes in the *Environmental and key project approvals* fact sheet on the [WVTNP website](#). Information about the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) and EES process is also available on the DELWP website (www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria).



Having your say

AusNet Services is engaging with the community, landholders and interested parties through the project website, regular eUpdates, webinars and community engagement sessions. Our engagement activities are designed to provide opportunities for you to have a say in the development of the project and contribute to the EES.

As part of our ongoing community and stakeholder consultation, community engagement sessions are being held to share EES study findings and assessments which are of interest to the community and to get feedback. These sessions are an important opportunity for you to provide your feedback so it can be considered in the final technical reports and the EES.

Community input is central to the EES process and important information provided by landholders and the community helps to inform the development and design of the project. The EES will document how AusNet Services has consulted and responded to issues raised by the community.

When the EES is complete, the document will be exhibited for public comment for at least 30 business days. During this time, you can have your say on the EES by making a written submission on the EES. Interested stakeholders and persons may also make a submission at the public hearing. Generally you can make a submission in person at a hearing only if you have made a written submission during the exhibition period.

A list of the most frequently asked questions about planning panels and answers to those questions can be found on the DELWP website (<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/panels-and-committees/planning-panel-guides/planning-panel-faqs>).

Information relating to the project, including the community and stakeholder consultation plan for the EES, is available on the DELWP website (www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/western-victoria-transmission-network-project). The plan outlines the approach to and opportunities for community engagement during the preparation of the EES.

You can read more about the EES and approvals processes in the *Environmental and key project approvals fact sheet* available on the [WVTNP website](http://www.vvtnp.vic.gov.au). Information about the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Vic) and EES process is also available on the DELWP website (www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria).



Route selection

As part of the EES process, feasible project alternatives will be considered, together with a wider discussion of other alternatives considered but not pursued. This includes alternative corridors, routes, locations of infrastructure such as terminal stations, designs including overhead and underground, and/or other options for the planning, construction or operation of the project. Alternatives will be investigated as part of the project opportunities to avoid and minimise environmental, cultural and social impacts. Following consideration and evaluation of alternatives, the EES will describe the rationale for the preferred alternatives identified.

Following community feedback, along with early investigations, the initial area of interest for the proposed transmission line was narrowed down to multiple corridors in February 2021. Community consultation and technical investigations have continued since then.

A single corridor was identified in June 2021 based on:

- Consultation with landholders and local communities.
- Technical assessment by environmental, cultural and social specialists.
- Impacts on environmental, cultural and social values including land use, visual amenity, cultural heritage and biodiversity.
- The cost to electricity consumers.

Within this corridor, multiple alternative routes are being assessed based on landholder engagement, constructability and further technical and environmental studies. AusNet Services is working closely with landholders and communities to better understand the values and uses of land, including agriculture, within the corridor. The decision around the proposed route for the transmission line will consider not only environmental impacts; it will also consider minimising economic and social effects on land use, lifestyles and livelihoods.

Access to properties for field surveys and investigations and information on how you use your property is a vital part of this process. This information, along with the findings of the technical and environmental studies, will inform selection of the proposed route. This is the route that will have the least impact on environmental, social and cultural values, while considering constructability and technical aspects. The proposed route will be announced in late-2021.

Refer to the *Transmission corridor fact sheet – June 2021* on the [WVTNP website](#) for further detail about the corridor, including a detailed map.



What is the role of your Land Liaison Officer?

As a landholder in the project corridor, you have a dedicated Land Liaison Officer as your key point of contact for the project. The officer will work with you to address any questions and concerns.

The officer will also discuss access protocols and procedures through a voluntary land access consent process to ensure any potential impact to your property, lifestyle, operations, biosecurity and any livestock is kept to a minimum.

If your property is within the proposed route when identified, your Land Liaison Officer will work with you to understand your land use and activities, how the infrastructure will impact your property, discuss the easement requirements and towers and provide information about compensation.

Contact details for your Land Liaison Officer can be provided by the project team on 1300 360 795 or via email info@westvictnp.com.au.

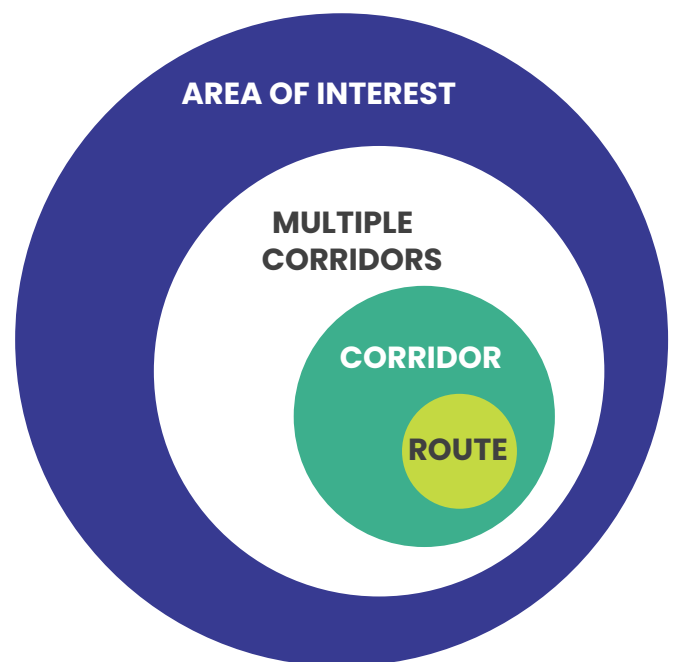
Narrowing down the area of interest

Area of interest – A broad geographical area was investigated to understand the constraints and opportunities to identify corridors for further investigation.

Multiple corridors – Based on constraints and opportunities across the area of interest multiple corridors were identified for further investigation.

Corridor – A single corridor was identified based on additional assessment.

Route – Further studies and engagement are being conducted to identify a proposed route within the corridor.



Access to your land for assessment and approvals

Why is access needed?

During preparation of the EES, access to some properties is required to conduct field surveys and investigations to document the existing conditions and environmental sensitivities of the land. These field surveys will be used to assess the potential environmental impacts of the project and identify ways to avoid, minimise or offset those impacts.

To minimise interruption to landholders, AusNet Services has made significant efforts to reduce the level of private land access required for physical surveys and investigations including:

- Using aerial imagery.
- Undertaking surveys on adjacent and/or representative public land.
- Sourcing survey results/data from other neighbouring projects or land.
- Prioritising land access based on EES assessment and approval requirements.

Refer to the *Land access for environmental and engineering studies fact sheet* on the [WVTNP website](#) for more information about these studies.

Cultural Heritage Management Plan investigations

AusNet Services is preparing Cultural Heritage Management Plans to identify any Aboriginal cultural heritage present within the project area and ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect it. Traditional Owners and archaeologists will conduct investigations for evidence of Aboriginal cultural heritage in areas of potential sensitivity. This may include walk overs and small-scale excavations. AusNet Services have notified identified landholders where a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is being prepared. As the project progresses, any landholders effected by potential changes to the Cultural Heritage Management Plan area will be notified.





What is a Land Access Consent Form?

If access to your land is required to conduct surveys or investigations, AusNet Services will write to you to request consent for temporary land access. This letter will provide an overview of why access is required, contact details of your dedicated Land Liaison Officer and a template voluntary land access consent form for your consideration.

AusNet Services will work with you to agree on access arrangements to be documented in the voluntary land access consent form including timing, notification requirements, access points, biosecurity arrangements and logistics.

You know your land and operational requirements best. AusNet Services values your advice on how to best undertake these surveys on your property with minimal disruption to your property and activities. You can discuss any specific concerns you may have with your dedicated Land Liaison Officer to identify how to avoid or minimise any disruption to yourself or your property.

The voluntary land access consent is not binding and may be withdrawn at any time by you advising your Land Liaison Officer. In addition, the voluntary land access consent has a fixed term and does not provide AusNet Services with ongoing access to your property after the term has expired. Providing consent for access during the EES stage does not demonstrate endorsement of the project but will help ensure a comprehensive and robust EES is delivered for consideration by decision makers.

Where you wish to obtain independent legal advice regarding the voluntary land access consent form and to assist in the review and negotiation of the land access consent and protocols, AusNet Services will reimburse the reasonable cost of this independent advice up to \$1,000 (plus GST) as discussed with your Land Liaison Officer.

What happens if voluntary land access consent is not reached?

AusNet Services would prefer to work with landholders (and occupiers where appropriate) to obtain consent for voluntary land access. Where voluntary land access consent cannot be reached, AusNet Services has powers under section 93 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) to access private land for specific purposes.

Where access is required and voluntary land access consent cannot be reached, AusNet Services will contact you and/or provide you with written notice prior to accessing your property pursuant to section 93 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic).

If any damage is caused by AusNet Services exercising its powers under section 93 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic), you will generally be entitled to compensation, provided a claim is made within two years. AusNet Services takes the exercise of its powers under section 93 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) and the responsibility to minimise any damage very seriously.

What will happen on my property?

AusNet Services and its authorised persons will conduct the specified surveys and investigations in accordance with the land access consent and protocols agreed with you, or as advised to you if access to your property is under section 93 of the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic). This includes notifying you in advance of any proposed visits to your property, explaining the purpose of the visit and implementing biosecurity arrangements.

The surveys and investigations will primarily consist of low-impact activities with limited ground disturbance and are predominantly based on walk overs and observation. These may include ground surveys, daytime and nocturnal surveys for native flora and fauna, taking photographs of relevant environmental matters, water and soil sampling and/or sub-surface excavations to understand the geology. Where sub-surface investigations are required, such as geotechnical investigations where soil samples may be taken via boreholes and test pits, any ground disturbance will be backfilled, reseeded or reinstated as per the landholder's requirement. The surveys and investigations themselves will be done by qualified specialists such as ecologists, cultural heritage specialists and soil specialists, along with support professionals.

AusNet Services commitments regarding access

AusNet Services will comply with all applicable laws in accessing your property, including compliance with any required COVIDSafe protocols.

If there is a voluntary land access consent in place, AusNet Services will abide by all access protocols set out in the land access consent form.

AusNet Services will minimise disturbance and do as little damage as possible when undertaking any surveys and investigations. AusNet Services will make good any damage caused while undertaking these surveys.

AusNet Services and its authorised persons will have appropriate public liability insurance in place that covers the surveys and investigations to be conducted on your property.

AusNet Services and its authorised persons accessing the property will carry identification which can be produced upon request by the landholder or representative of the landholder at any time when on your property.

Can I view the study findings?

A summary of the findings of surveys undertaken on your land can be provided upon request. Outcomes of the EES existing conditions or baseline assessments, based on desktop reviews and field surveys, will be published on the WVTNP website in the form of preliminary EES information sheets.

The results of technical studies will be publicly exhibited alongside the EES. Any confidential data collected during flora and fauna surveys, Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments and historic heritage studies will not be publicly linked to specific parcels of land.

What if something significant is found?

Field surveys are being used to gather information for many different technical studies for the EES. There are protections under law for some of these things including for Aboriginal cultural heritage, historical heritage and certain flora and fauna species.

If something significant is found, for example protected flora or fauna, AusNet Services will provide you with as much information as possible about what was found.

If an Aboriginal Place is discovered, following verification, AusNet Services will:

- Let you know where the place is.
- Provide you with sufficient information to ensure the place is not inadvertently impacted by ongoing activities on your property.
- Record and register the place with First Peoples – State Relations (formerly Aboriginal Victoria).
- Work with First Peoples – State Relations, local Traditional Owners or the relevant Registered Aboriginal Party to develop management strategies for the Aboriginal Place with the aim of avoiding or minimising harm during future planned works.

Generally, having Aboriginal cultural places on private land will not stop the existing land use from continuing. Aboriginal sites and places are protected by law; so if something is found on your property, management strategies will be designed to protect the site or place, in some instances this may mean relocating and protecting the cultural heritage elsewhere. This would be done at AusNet Services' cost. More information about Aboriginal cultural heritage is available on the First Peoples – State Relations website www.firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au.

Prompts for discussion with your dedicated Land Liaison Officer

Below are some questions you may consider asking your dedicated Land Liaison Officer while discussing your voluntary land access consent.

Communication

- Who will my regular contact be?
- What are their contact details?
- Who is an alternate contact?
- How will we stay in contact?
- How will I be advised of project updates?
- How long will it take for my questions to be addressed?

Tip: You may wish to establish a regular meeting or communication schedule and advise your Land Liaison Officer of how you prefer to be contacted.

Investigation and survey work

- What investigations and environmental survey activities do you plan to undertake on my property?
- Where and when do you plan to undertake your activities?
- Can I be present when you carry out the proposed investigation?
- How many people do you expect to be on my property for this work?
- How long do you expect to be on my property for this work?
- What impact will these activities have on the surrounding area, if any?
- Will there be sub-surface work or ground disturbance?
- Will you rehabilitate the area after the work?

Tip: Ask your Land Liaison Officer to mark out key locations on a map for clarity. This may include proposed entry and exit points and areas of interest for survey works.

Protocols and procedures

- How will you monitor entry to the site?
- How will you ensure that gates are left as they are found?
- How will you ensure that biosecurity is protected on my land?

Tip: Possible items to discuss: a sign-in book or travel log, weed management and travel protocols.

Complaints

- Who do I contact if I have a complaint?
- How do I make a complaint?

Creating a new easement

What is an easement?

An easement is a right held by one person to access, occupy and/or use part of the land owned by another person, for a particular purpose.

The easement terms outline what the easement holder and the landholder can and can't do in the easement area.

Why are transmission line easements needed?

Transmission line easements are needed to protect public safety and provide access to infrastructure to help maintain a reliable transmission network. In terms of public safety, transmission line easement terms ensure that only activities which are compatible and safe can occur within the easement area. In terms of network reliability, the easement allows AusNet Services to efficiently access its infrastructure to maintain it and ensure it is operating as it should, including in emergencies.

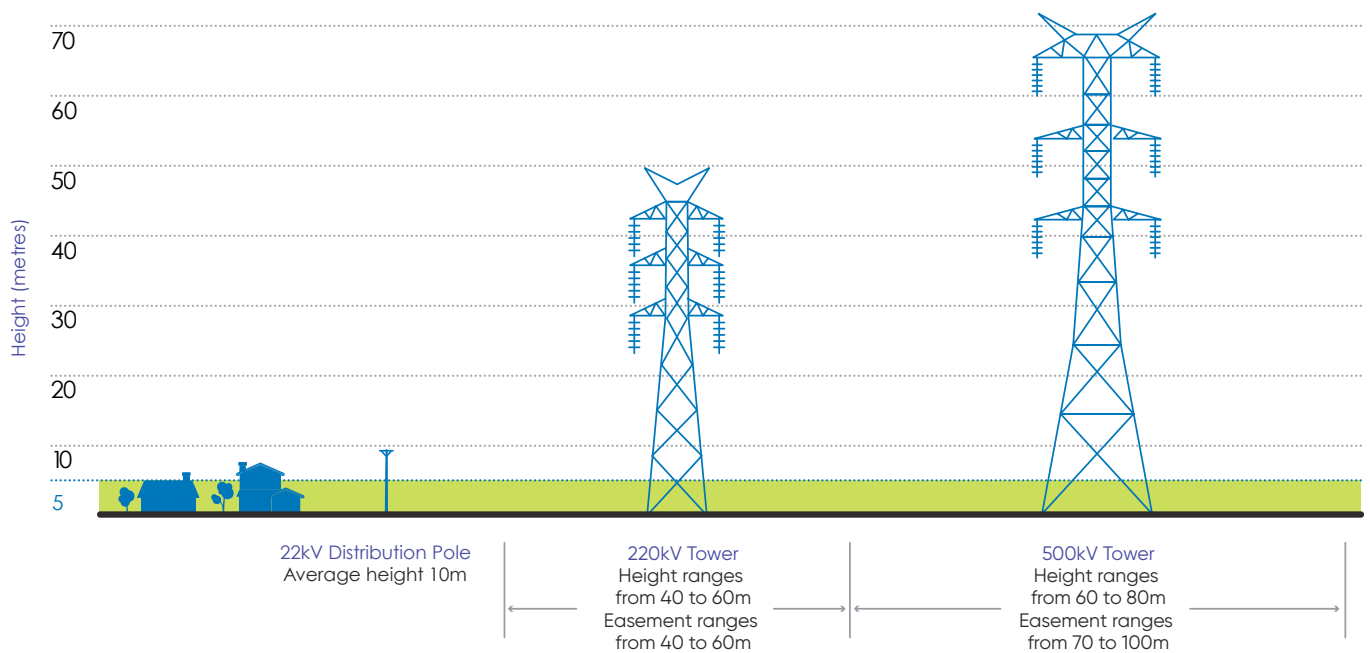


Figure 1: Typical easement widths for overhead transmission lines

How wide will the easement generally be?

Transmission line easements vary in width depending on the operating voltage, design of the towers, relevant design and safety standards, and site-specific conditions. Easements for a 220kV overhead transmission line range from 40 to 60m wide, and for a 500kV overhead transmission line, easements range from 70 to 100m wide.

Underground transmission electricity cable easements vary in width depending on the operating voltage, design and safety standards of the cable network and site-specific conditions. Underground transmission electricity cables are usually buried between 1 to 2m under the surface. Comparable 220kV underground transmission cable easements are approximately 25 to 30m wide and for 500kV transmission lines, the easements will extend to approximately 30 to 35m.

How is an easement created?

In some cases, the granting of an easement and its terms will be negotiated and agreed between a landholder and AusNet Services. In other cases, legislation allows for the creation of easements and may also set out the terms of those easements – these are called ‘statutory easements’. Under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) an electricity corporation, such as AusNet Services, may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, compulsorily acquire easements over private land to erect, lay and maintain powerlines.

An easement will usually be registered on the title to the property. The purpose of registering an easement over land is to show on the public record that an easement exists. Easements for the project will be surveyed to determine the boundaries of the easement area and then forms will be lodged with Land Victoria to register the easements on title. Unlike a lease agreement, easements registered against a title have no expiry date.

When will easements be negotiated?

Once a proposed route for the transmission line is determined in late-2021, AusNet Services' Land Liaison Officers will contact landholders to discuss the proposed route, how it may impact their property and discuss opportunities to minimise impacts through design and micro-siting. Following consideration of feedback from landholders, further discussion will be held with landholders on the timing and works that may be undertaken on properties during construction and operation.

During these discussions, landholders may also wish to outline the operational and specific requirements related to their property which might be affected by the presence of a transmission line easement so that steps can be taken to avoid, minimise or make good these impacts, wherever possible. The Land Liaison Officers will discuss options to minimise the impact on individual landholders and their property as far as possible, and information about the easement terms and compensation for easement based on the valuation.

Can I refuse to enter into an option for easement?

Entering into an option for easement is voluntary. You can refuse to enter into an option for easement. AusNet Services will negotiate in good faith to enter into an option for easement with each affected landholder. Under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic) an electricity corporation, such as AusNet Services, may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, compulsorily acquire easements over private land to erect, lay and maintain powerlines.

What is the process for an easement to be agreed?

AusNet Services will seek to enter into an option for easement with each landholder on the route.

Option for easement

An 'option' is a legally binding agreement between parties which grants one party (the grantee) the right (but does not oblige them) to acquire an interest from another party (the grantor) on agreed terms, within a certain period of time. For this project, AusNet Services expects to seek an option for easement which will grant AusNet Services a right to acquire an easement over the landholder's land on agreed terms and for an agreed price within a certain period of time.

Exercising the option

If AusNet Services wants to proceed with the easement on the land, it will 'exercise' the option for easement. This means AusNet Services will notify the landholder that it wants to proceed with the easement and take various other steps as outlined in the option for easement.

Timelines

To allow for flexibility prior to construction, AusNet Services will usually have three years from the date the option for easement starts to exercise the option for easement, with a right to extend this period by a further year. If AusNet Services does not exercise the option within the required timeframe, the option for easement will expire.

Easement terms

The option for easement will outline the terms of the easement to be entered into if the option for easement is exercised. The option for easement and associated easement terms will allow AusNet Services to investigate, construct, operate and maintain the transmission lines and associated infrastructure required for the project.

Option fee

The landholder will be compensated for entering into an option for easement. The landholder will be entitled to a one-off 'option fee' in exchange for entering into the option and an 'extension fee' if the option is extended. Reasonable legal and professional costs incurred by the landholder in negotiating the option for easement will be reimbursed by AusNet Services.

Compensation for easement

Who gets compensated?

Compensation will be paid to landholders where an easement is acquired over their property. All other parties holding an interest in the land on which the easement is located, who suffer loss due to the establishment of the easement or construction activity, will also be considered as part of the compensation process.

Who determines the amount of compensation?

If you choose to negotiate an option for easement with AusNet Services, the elements of compensation and associated value will be discussed and negotiated with you during that process.

To ensure compensation is fair and fully considers the impact of the easement on your property, a qualified valuer will undertake all compensation valuations. You will have opportunities to discuss the impact of the easement on your property with the valuer and provide information to assist in determining the compensation payable.

By working with the appointed valuer, you can provide a clear understanding of your individual property characteristics and current land use. There may be things about your property that the valuer needs to be made aware of, for example special value (see below).

You will be provided with valuation and compensation information in writing. If you obtain independent advice regarding compensation for the easement from an independent qualified valuer, the valuation obtained by you and the valuation obtained by AusNet Services will be considered and discussed with you as part of the process to calculate and negotiate compensation.

Where negotiated agreement cannot be reached, AusNet Services may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, compulsorily acquire the required easement under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic), the amount of compensation you receive is based on the valuation carried out by the Valuer General or a person who holds the qualifications or experience specified under section 13DA(2) of the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* (Vic). A landholder will be able to provide evidence of loss in this process to inform compensation payable.

When will compensation be paid?

Where a negotiated option for easement is agreed, easement compensation (80%) is generally paid at the time the option is exercised, with the balance paid at the time the easement is registered on the land title, which will be detailed in the option for easement. AusNet Services can also discuss flexible payment options for the agreed easement compensation. This may include spreading the agreed easement compensation over a longer period, including annualised payments.

Where an easement is acquired compulsorily, compensation will be paid in accordance with the provisions of the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (Vic).

Will my costs be covered?

Where you, as a landholder, obtain independent legal advice to assist in the process to negotiate an option for easement, and/or independent valuation advice from a qualified valuer to assist in the valuation, compensation and easement negotiation process, AusNet Services will reimburse the reasonable cost of this independent advice.

How is the amount of compensation determined?

The assessment of compensation will be determined in accordance with valuation principles set out in the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (Vic) and the *Valuation of Land Act 1960* (Vic) made up of the following components:

Market value

Where an easement is being acquired, the compensation for market value is the difference between the market value of the land before the easement and after the easement. Market value may include the reasonable 'highest and best use' of the land, based on what is physically, legally and financially possible. For example, the 'highest and best use' of the land might be subdivision of the land into individual lots or its value might be greatest if multiple parcels are packaged.

Severance

This is reduction in market value of land which is caused by land severed from other land because of the easement. For example, an easement on agricultural land may be located so that it effectively 'quarantines' a part of the land, limiting its use for farming activities. Compensation is payable for the depreciation in the value of the land associated with the severing of that land and will usually be wrapped up in the market value calculation.

Special value

This refers to any additional financial value only available to the specific landholder in respect of the affected land and not to the market in general. This considers 'special' economic value rather than sentimental value. For example, a house fitted out with consulting rooms may have special value to the doctor-owner but would not have value to the market in general. This will usually be wrapped up in the market value calculation.

Disturbance

This refers to any financial loss caused by disruption to the landholder, including the landholder's business, arising directly and reasonably from creating the easement. For example, if timing of the acquisition means that the landholder cannot harvest a sown crop, the landholder will be compensated for the value of crop lost.

Legal/valuation

This refers to any reasonable professional costs incurred by the landholder because of the acquisition of the easement.

Living with an easement on your property

What activities are permitted on the easement?

While there are some restrictions on the use of the land within an easement for overhead transmission lines, there are generally many permitted activities which may be included in the easement terms. AusNet Services will work with landholders to agree on the easement terms. Permitted uses may include grazing and agriculture, market gardens, orchards and horticultural nurseries (excluding buildings), water storage dams (subject to sufficient clearances) and operation of irrigation equipment (with some restrictions). Aerial crop spraying is not permitted within an overhead easement. See the tables below for more information.

There are also restrictions on the use of the land within an easement for underground transmission cables. There are also many permitted activities which may be included in the easement terms. AusNet Services would work with landholders to agree on the easement terms if an underground cable was installed. Permitted uses may include grazing, operation of irrigation equipment (with some restrictions) and aerial crop spraying. Agriculture, market gardens, orchards and dams are not permitted within an underground cable easement.

Some activities require a safety assessment. Safety assessments are provided to landholders free of charge. A written notice of permission to proceed will be issued following the assessment, which will detail any required safety precautions.

AusNet Services will work with landholders to identify opportunities to minimise impacts on existing land use throughout the detailed design phase, and to conduct safety assessments where required.



500kV vehicles and equipment height clearances

The 500kV double circuit transmission line will be designed with a minimum clearance for the lines of 15m above the ground. Based on a minimum 15m ground clearance and the No Go Zone guidelines published by Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), vehicles and equipment of up to 5m in height can travel and operate under the 500kV transmission lines without permission from AusNet Services. Vehicles and equipment between 5m to 8.6m in height may be permitted to operate subject to an AusNet Services' safety assessment.

These requirements should be discussed with your Land Liaison Officer so they can coordinate a safety assessment request during the detailed design phase of the transmission line.

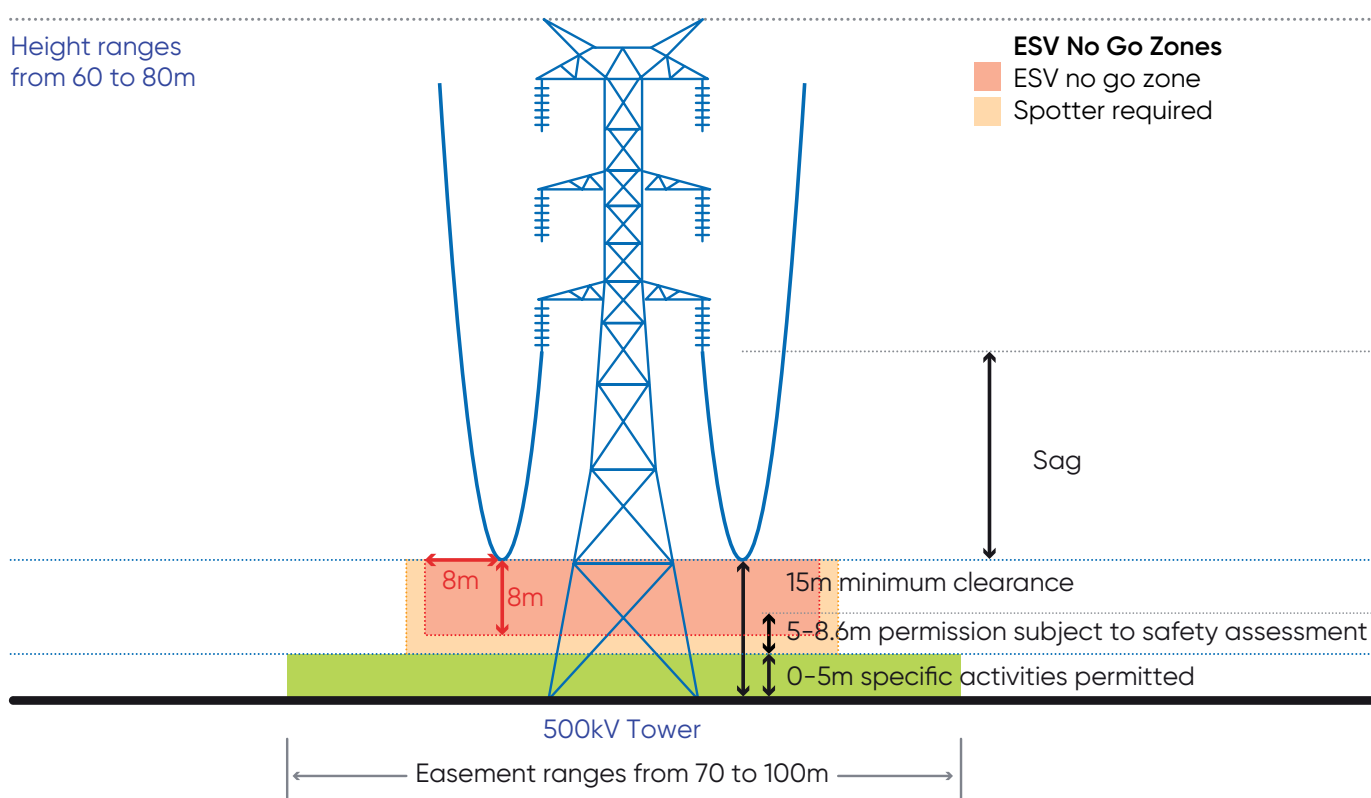


Figure 2: Safety clearance dimensions for vehicles and equipment from the 500kV transmission line conductor using a 72m tower example – to be read in conjunction with the specific activity requirements in Table 1.

All limits and clearances contained in this document only apply to the WVTNP. For all other existing electricity transmission lines within Victoria, please refer to 'A guide to living with transmission line easements' available on the AusNet Services website here – www.ausnetservices.com.au/en/Safety/Working-Near-Lines

Activities within 500kV transmission line easement

Table 1: Activities permitted and not permitted within 500kV transmission line easements.

Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted (500kV)	Conditions/Notes
Crops and vegetation	Yes	<p>Mature tree and shrub growth of up to 3m in height is permitted. For vegetation above 3m in height, an AusNet Services safety assessment is required to ensure that minimum clearances and fuel load densities are maintained. Maximum height cannot exceed 8m.*</p> <p>Planting trees and shrubs should be scattered or clumped with no more than 10% density of cover over the easement area.</p> <p>Ground-growing crop types are allowed without requiring an AusNet Services safety assessment if earth movement change is less than 300mm in depth from the original ground profile.</p> <p>Ground-growing crops are permitted to grow within 5m of the tower steelwork, subject to obtaining AusNet Services permission, and provided access for maintenance works is maintained.</p>
Grazing of livestock	Yes	No conditions
Use of centre pivot and lateral moving irrigators	Yes	<p>Are permitted to operate up to 8.6m height, subject to an AusNet Services safety assessment which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height of machinery cannot exceed 8.6m.</p>
Use of rain gun irrigators	No	Large water spray irrigators of the gun type are not permitted to operate within the easement due to safety risks and potential damage to electricity infrastructure.
Use of headers with augers extended	Yes	<p>Are permitted to operate up to 5m in height without an AusNet Services safety assessment.</p> <p>Are permitted to operate over 5m in height subject to an AusNet Services safety assessment which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height cannot exceed 8.6m.</p>
Vehicles	Yes	<p>Are permitted to travel under the lines and operate vehicles up to 5m in height without an AusNet Services safety assessment.</p> <p>Are permitted to operate between 5m and 8.6m, subject to an AusNet Services safety assessment which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height cannot exceed 8.6m.</p>

* The vegetation height information has been updated in line with the AusNet Services Vegetation Management Plan, approved by Energy Safe Victoria.

Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted (500kV)	Conditions/Notes
Aerial crop spraying – manned aircraft (e.g. light planes and helicopters) and unmanned aerial vehicles (e.g. drones)	No	Manned aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles are prohibited within the transmission line easement due to the safety risk and potential damage to electricity infrastructure.
Fencing	Yes	All fixed metallic parts must be earthed and are subject to prior approval from AusNet Services.
Construction (including digging and earth moving activities)	Yes	<p>No excavation work is to commence until AusNet Services has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry and issued a permit to work adjacent to a high voltage electrical apparatus.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p> <p>Note: A permit is not required for planting crops if earth movement change is less than 300mm in depth from the original ground profile.</p>
Lifting wet heads from sunken bores	Yes	AusNet Services prior approval required.
Dams	Yes	<p>Entire coverage of easement by dams is not permitted.</p> <p>Dams cannot be located within a 30m radius of any tower centre.</p> <p>Seek advice from AusNet Services for appropriate location.</p> <p>Where a dam is proposed to be located outside the 30m radius of any tower the high-water level and the top of earthworks/embankments must continue to maintain the minimum ground clearance of 15m.</p>
GPS	Yes	<p>The flow of electrical energy through the transmission lines does not affect GPS signals.</p> <p>There can be a small effect on GPS signals if you are under or right alongside a tower. This is known as multipathing. It is associated with being too close to a steel structure which could be a tower, windmill, shed or any other metal structure. The effect is only noticeable within about 3m of the metal object.</p>

As the project progresses AusNet Services will provide clarification on fixed structures (e.g. sheds, and cattle yards).

220kV vehicles and equipment height clearances

The 220kV double circuit transmission line will be designed with a minimum clearance for the transmission line of 9.2m above the ground. Based on a minimum 9.2m ground clearance and the No Go Zone guidelines published by Energy Safe Victoria (ESV), vehicles and equipment up to 4.6m are able to travel under the 220kV transmission lines without permission. Equipment cannot be operated under the 220kV transmission lines without permission. Vehicles and equipment up to the height of 4.6m may be permitted to operate, subject to an AusNet Services safety assessment.

These requirements should be discussed with your Land Liaison Officer so they can coordinate a safety assessment request during the detailed design phase of the transmission line.

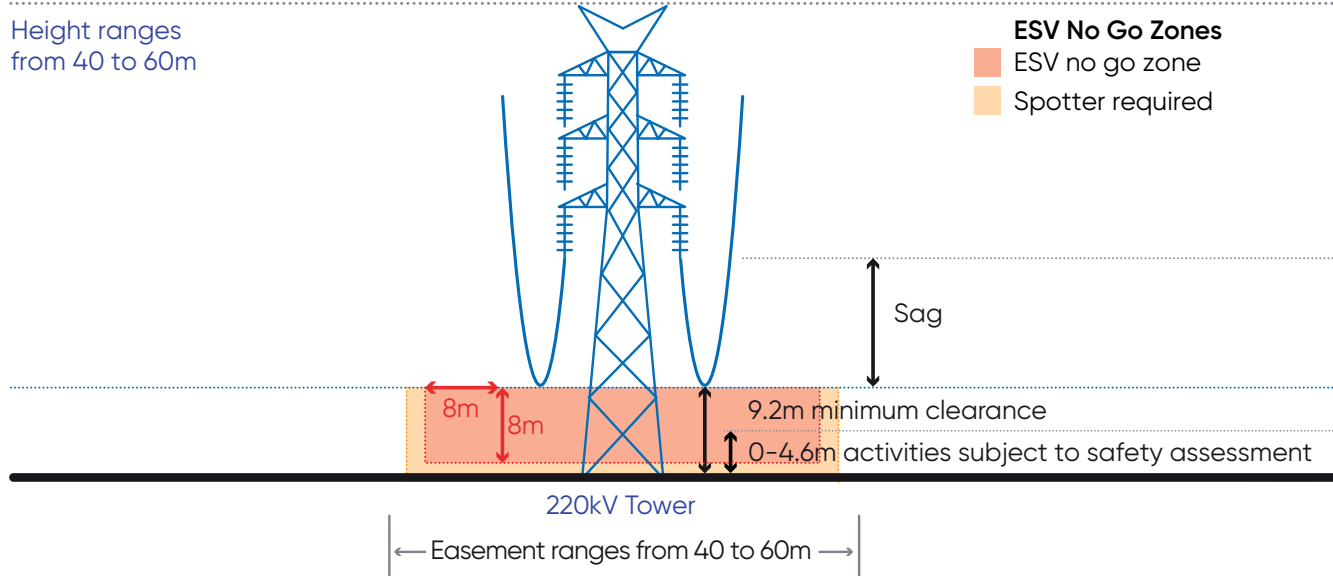


Figure 3: Safety clearance dimensions for vehicles and equipment from the 220kV transmission line conductor, using a 50m tower example - to be read in conjunction with the specific activity requirements in Table 2.

Activities within 220kV transmission line easement

Table 2: Activities permitted and not permitted inside 220kV transmission line easements.

Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted (220kV)	Conditions/Notes
Crops and vegetation	Yes	<p>Mature tree and shrub growth of up to 3m in height is permitted. For vegetation above 3m in height, an AusNet Services safety assessment is required to ensure that minimum clearances and fuel load densities are maintained. Maximum height cannot exceed 8m.*</p> <p>Planting trees and shrubs should be scattered or clumped with no more than 10% density of cover over the easement area.</p> <p>Ground-growing crop types are permitted without requiring an AusNet Services safety assessment if earth movement change is less than 300mm in depth from the original ground profile.</p> <p>Ground-growing crops are permitted to grow within 5m of the tower steelwork subject to obtaining AusNet permission, and provided access for maintenance works is maintained.</p>
Grazing of livestock	Yes	No conditions
Use of centre pivot and lateral moving irrigators	Yes	<p>Are permitted to operate up to 4.6m height, subject to an AusNet Services safety assessment which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height cannot exceed 4.6m.</p>
Use of rain gun irrigators	No	Large water spray irrigators of the gun type are not permitted to operate within the easement due to safety risks and potential damage to electricity infrastructure.
Use of headers with augers extended	Yes	<p>Are permitted to operate up to a height of 4.6m, subject to an AusNet Services safety assessment which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height cannot exceed 4.6m.</p>
Vehicles	Yes	<p>Are permitted to operate up to a height of 4.6m, subject to an AusNet Services safety assessment which must be sought prior to operating.</p> <p>Maximum height cannot exceed 4.6m.</p>
Aerial crop spraying – manned aircraft (e.g. light planes and helicopters) and unmanned aerial vehicles (e.g. drones)	No	Manned aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles are prohibited within the transmission line easement due to the safety risk and potential damage to electricity infrastructure.

* The vegetation height information has been updated in line with the AusNet Services Vegetation Management Plan, approved by Energy Safe Victoria.

Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted (220kV)	Conditions/Notes
Fencing	Yes	All fixed metallic parts must be earthed and are subject to prior approval from AusNet Services.
Construction (including digging and earth moving activities)	Yes	<p>No excavation work is to commence until AusNet Services has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry and issued a permit to work adjacent to a high voltage electrical apparatus.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p> <p>Note: A permit is not required for planting crops if earth movement change is less than 300mm in depth from the original ground profile.</p>
Lifting wet heads from sunken bores	Yes	AusNet Services prior approval required.
Dams	Yes	<p>Entire coverage of easement by dams is unsuitable. Seek advice from AusNet Services for appropriate location.</p> <p>Dams cannot be located within a 30m radius of any tower centre.</p> <p>Where a dam is proposed to be located outside the 30m radius of any tower the high-water level and the top of earthworks/embankments must continue to maintain the minimum ground clearance of 9.2m.</p>
GPS	Yes	<p>The flow of electrical energy through the transmission lines does not affect GPS signals.</p> <p>There can be a small effect on GPS signals if you are under or right alongside a tower. This is known as multipathing. It is associated with being too close to a steel structure which could be a tower, windmill, shed or any other metal structure. The effect is only noticeable within about 3m of the metal object.</p>

As the project progresses AusNet Services will provide clarification on fixed structures (e.g. sheds, and cattle yards).

Activities within an underground transmission line easement

The information provided on activities permitted, or not, in conjunction with underground transmission infrastructure has been based on the equivalent guidance for underground distribution lines as per the No Go Zone guidelines published by Energy Safe Victoria, and industry practices. As per the No Go Zone guidelines, the exclusion zone within the easement around an underground cable installation is 3m however the entire easement area will have restrictions.

Additional restrictions also apply to an underground transmission line easement to mitigate the risk of a person contacting an energised line and to protect the cables from damage. When cables are damaged by metal objects including fencing stakes or any digging tool, there is a risk of electric shock that can cause serious injury and/or death.

Table 3: Activities permitted and not permitted inside underground transmission line easement.

Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted (underground)	Conditions/Notes
Crops and vegetation	No	The transmission cable trench will have a thermal back fill which cannot be disturbed by vegetation roots and farming activities. For comparable underground transmission cables, thermal back fill would be approximately 300mm below the surface.
Grazing of livestock	Yes	Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating related equipment. Equipment can traverse across the easement.
Use of centre pivot and lateral moving irrigators	Yes	Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating. Equipment can traverse across the easement.
Use of rain gun irrigators	Yes	Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating. Equipment can traverse across the easement.
Use of headers with augers extended	Yes	Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating. Equipment can traverse across the easement.
Vehicles	Yes	Subject to the ESV No Go Zone for operating. Equipment can traverse across the easement.
Aerial crop spraying – manned aircraft (e.g. light planes and helicopters) and unmanned aerial vehicles (e.g. drones)	Yes	No conditions.

Agricultural and farming activities	Permitted (underground)	Conditions/Notes
Fencing	Yes	<p>No driving fence posts in the ground within an underground cable easement.</p> <p>Prior to construction (including digging and earth moving activities) AusNet Services to be contacted via Dial Before You Dig.</p> <p>No excavation work is to commence until AusNet Services has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p>
Excavation (including digging, earth moving activities and landscaping)	Yes	<p>This is assumed to only be likely to be required for running other utilities and services where there may be a need for coordination in relation to the transmission easement. No excavation work is to commence until AusNet Services has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p>
Dams	No	<p>No excavation work is to commence until AusNet Services has responded to your Dial Before You Dig enquiry.</p> <p>Visit www.1100.com.au to lodge an online enquiry.</p>
GPS	Yes	<p>The flow of electrical energy through the transmission lines does not affect GPS signals.</p>

All limits and clearances contained in this document only apply to the WVTNP. For all other existing electricity transmission lines within Victoria, please refer to 'A guide to living with transmission line easements' available on the AusNet Services website here - www.ausnetservices.com.au/en/Safety/Working-Near-Lines

Who is responsible for maintaining the easement?

As part of operating its transmission networks, AusNet Services conducts routine inspections to ensure that its transmission infrastructure (towers, lines and terminal stations) is safe and operating correctly. Typically, AusNet Services inspect transmission lines once a year via the air and once every five years via land vehicles. AusNet Services also undertakes annual pre-summer vegetation maintenance activities as required.

Landholders continue to have possession and use of the easement, subject to the terms and conditions of their easement agreement. They are responsible for general maintenance of the land within the easement in the same way they are responsible for maintenance of any property owned. Landholders are not responsible for maintaining any electrical or other infrastructure belonging to AusNet Services.

Ongoing access to the easement

The electricity transmission network is critical infrastructure that enables the supply of electricity throughout Victoria. Where a negotiated easement agreement is in place, any ongoing access by AusNet Services to your property for routine inspections and maintenance activities will be included in the terms of the easement agreement. Where a negotiated easement agreement is not reached, and an easement is compulsorily acquired under the *Electricity Industry Act 2000* (Vic), ongoing access will be in accordance with the terms of the easement reached through that process.

On some properties, access roads and tracks may be constructed specifically to build, maintain and enable emergency access to the transmission lines. When designing access tracks to facilitate access to the transmission infrastructure, AusNet Services will work with you to minimise the impact to your property.





Questions about land access, easements and compensation

AusNet Services recognises that the requirements of each property and landholder are unique. This guide provides general information for landholders around access to your land, easements and compensation. Your Land Liaison Officer is available to discuss with you any specific questions or concerns you have around access, easements or compensation related to your property.

Contact details for your Land Liaison Officer can be provided by the project team on 1300 360 795 or via email info@westvictnp.com.au.

Additional Information

Australian Energy Market Operator

(www.aemo.com.au) including information on the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) process for this project can be found on the AEMO website.

Environment Effects Statement Process in Victoria

(www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria) including information about the environment assessment process managed by DELWP.

Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner

(www.aeic.gov.au) including information about how to make a complaint, best industry practice and resources for landholders.

Essential Services Commission

(www.esc.vic.gov.au) including information about the regulation of transmission licenses in Victoria.

Energy Safe Victoria

(www.esv.vic.gov.au) including information about the safe design and operation of high voltage transmission networks in Victoria.

Valuer General of Victoria

(www.land.vic.gov.au/valuations/first-time-here/about-valuer-general-victoria) including general information about how land is valued in Victoria.

Western Victoria Transmission Network Project

(www.westvictnp.com.au) including information about the project and specific topics in the publications and FAQs.



Stay informed

If you need further information or clarification about these guidelines or on the project in general, please call 1300 360 795 or email info@westvictnp.com.au. To register for updates, visit westvictnp.com.au.

The information in this document is for reference only – it is not designed to be, nor should it be regarded, as professional or legal advice. You should seek appropriate independent professional and/or legal advice where appropriate and before making any decisions based on material in this document. The information is an overview (in summary form) and does not purport to be complete. This document, and the information in this document, will not form the basis of any contract or commitment. AusNet Services does not guarantee or warrant the accuracy, completeness, or currency of the information provided and AusNet Services, its directors, officers, employees, agents and advisers disclaim all liability and responsibility (including for negligence) for any direct or indirect loss or damage which may be suffered by any recipient through use or reliance on anything contained in or omitted from this document.