



TRANSMISSION
COMPANY
VICTORIA

VNI West Environment Effects Statement Consultation Plan

July 2024



Important notice

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Version control

Version	Release date	Changes
1.0	February 2024	Draft prepared.
2.0	May 2024	Updated to reflect engagement undertaken between February 2024 and May 2024.
3.0	July 2024	Updated to reflect commentary from Department of Transport and Planning.
4.0	July 2024	Updated to reflect commentary from Department of Transport and Planning.

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1 Glossary

Term	Definition
AEIC	Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner
AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
AER	Australian Energy Regulator
AVP	AEMO Victorian Planning
CEC	Clean Energy Council
CRG	Community Reference Group
CSEP	Communication & Stakeholder Engagement Plan
DEECA	Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
DELWP	Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (now DEECA)
DTP	Victorian Department of Transport and Planning
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EWOV	Energy & Water Ombudsman of Victoria
GMID	Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
ISP	Integrated System Plan
km	Kilometres
km²	Square kilometres
kV	Kilovolt
LGA	Local Government Area
MW	Megawatt
NCR	Nature Conservation Reserve
NEM	National Electricity Market
NEVA	National Electricity (Victoria) Act 2005
PACR	Project Assessment Conclusions Report
PADR	Project Assessment Draft Report
RIT-T	Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission
TCV	Transmission Company Victoria
TRG	Technical Reference Group
VNI West	Victoria New South Wales Interconnector - West
WRL	Western Renewables Link

2 Acknowledgement of Country

TCV acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country across the area of interest for VNI West, including the Barapa Barapa, Wamba Wemba, Barengi Gadjin and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples and the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations and any other Traditional Owners who are impacted by the project.

We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay respect to Elders past and present.

3 Introduction

3.1 Purpose

This Consultation Plan (Plan) outlines the consultation program to be undertaken by TCV for the Victoria to New South Wales Interconnector West Project (VNI West) during the preparation of the Environment Effect Statement (EES) and Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA).

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* and the EES Consultation Plan Advisory Note (DELWP, 2018).

The Plan provides an overview of the approach, guiding principles and objectives of the engagement program, identifies key stakeholders and provides an overview of planned engagement activities. The Plan will apply up until public exhibition of the EES and approvals documentation, including the PSA.

Consultation during the EES process will encompass both:

- **Informal consultation:** to assist in the development of the EES and inform considerations during the route refinement process.
- **Formal consultation:** for public input into both the scoping requirements for the EES and the review of the exhibited EES and PSA.

As part of the EES process there will be ongoing opportunities for community input. The statutory consultation process as part of the EES is managed by the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).

This Plan covers the Victorian portion of VNI West. Transgrid is responsible for the New South Wales (NSW) component of VNI West and will follow relevant NSW processes.

4 About the project

4.1 Background

VNI West is a project to build a new high capacity 500 kV double-circuit overhead transmission line between Victoria and New South Wales.

It is proposed to connect electricity from renewable energy zones (REZs) in both states and improve the reliability and security of electricity supply as ageing coal-fired power stations retire.

The initial regulatory process for VNI West (the RIT-T) concluded in May of 2023. Since then, TCV has narrowed the 5-50km area of interest to a draft corridor of ~2km. Constraints and cultural values within the area of interest that must or should be avoided were identified based on detailed desktop analysis and expert workshops, along with information gathered through community and stakeholder engagement.

Through direct engagement with landholders, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders within the draft corridor, TCV will build its understanding of how the land is used today to verify location constraints and discuss how to minimise land-use and environmental impacts through planning and design.

4.2 Project description

The project proposes to develop a new 500 kV twin-circuit electricity transmission line (with associated infrastructure) within a corridor between Victoria and New South Wales. The project will connect Western Renewables Link (WRL) in Victoria with Project EnergyConnect in NSW via new terminal stations in Bulgana and Kerang (refer to Figure 1). This will facilitate better and more reliable interconnection of the transmission systems within these two National Electricity Market (NEM) regions.

The draft corridor for the project is proposed to be located in northwest Victoria, approximately 100km generally to the west and north-west of Bendigo, running between Bulgana (at the south), traversing north past St Arnaud, Charlton and Boort, and end north of Kerang at the Murray River (at the Victoria and NSW border) (Figure 2).

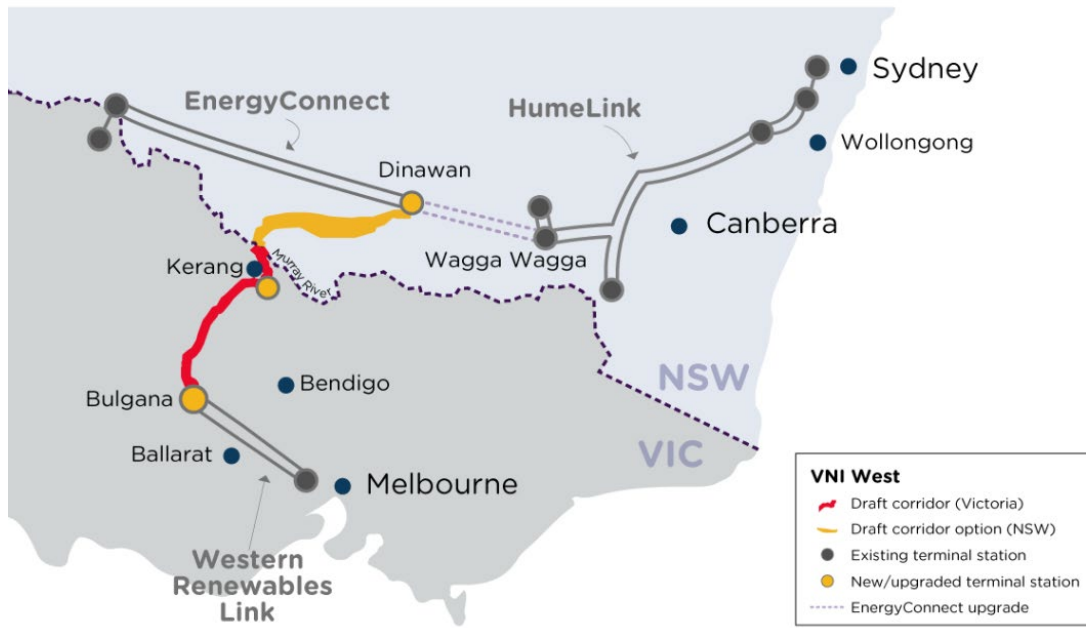


Figure 1 - Indicative draft corridor for the combined Victorian and NSW components.

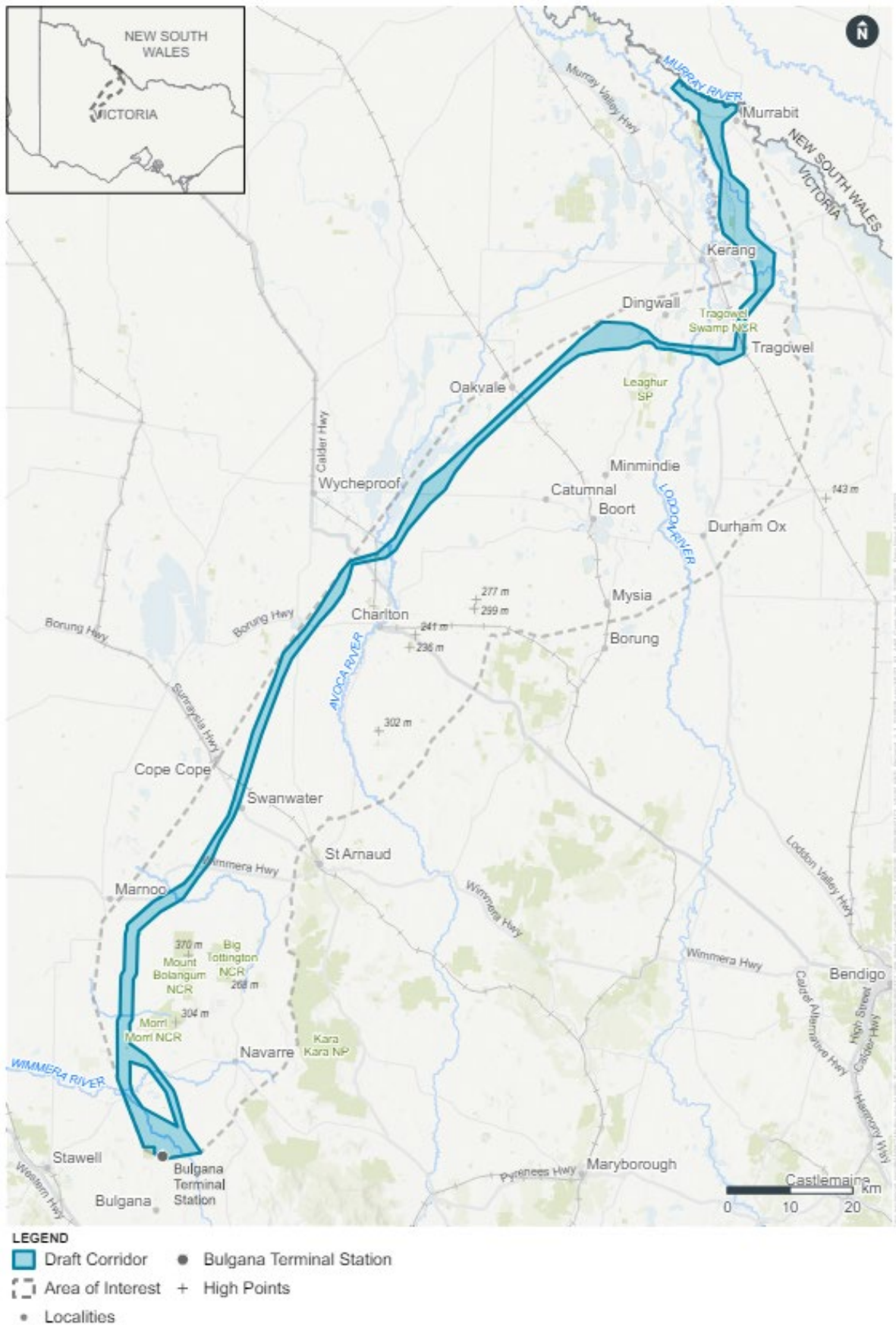


Figure 2 - VNI West draft corridor (Victoria)

4.3 Project area demographics

The information below describes key demographic indicators for the four key local government areas (LGAs) within the VNI West project footprint – Buloke, Gannawarra, Loddon and Northern Grampians. Unless noted, the indicators described are for the four LGAs combined and are compared with equivalent total figure metrics from across Victoria where appropriate.

The information below is based upon total figures (i.e. not averages or medians) from the Australian Bureau of Statistics data from the 2021 Census. The total resident population across the four LGAs is 36,568.

- The age profile skews towards older residents. Residents over 65 years of age represent 28.6% of the total population, which is higher than the State (16.8%). There are also fewer younger residents, with 27.3% of the population aged between 15 and 44, compared to the State (41.0%).
- Individuals who identify as of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent account for 2.1% of the population, a higher proportion than the State (1.0%). Most Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents speak English (93.9%), while 0.4% speak an Australian Indigenous Language and another 0.4% speak a Torres Strait Islander Language.
- Individuals born overseas account for 7.5% of the population, which is a lower proportion than the State (30.0%). Of the total population in the area, 0.4% of speaks English not well or not at all. The top five languages other than English are Mandarin (0.4%), Filipino (0.4%), Tagalog (0.3%), Malayalam (0.2%) and Punjabi (0.2%).
- Over half of residents aged 15 years and older hold a non-school qualification (53.4%); 10.7% hold a bachelor's degree or higher, 7.3% hold an advanced diploma or diploma, and 22.0% hold a certificate.

Analysis of the demographics of the region has guided TCV's engagement approach and demographic data will continually be assessed. TCV has designed its communications and consultation process with a combination of online and in-person engagement activities, to ensure accessibility for all stakeholders. This includes the use of both online and print media, recognising the age range represented in the area, and that regional audiences do not always have consistent and reliable internet access.

TCV also appreciates that a small percentage of the population in the area cannot speak English well or at all. Translation services are available on the TCV website and noted in all project collateral.

4.4 Consultation to date

TCV acknowledges the importance of consultation and is committed to working closely with stakeholders, Traditional Owners, community members and landholders. TCV has undertaken regional communications and engagement to learn more about the communities and land in the draft corridor. Community, landholder and Traditional Owner meetings have provided opportunities for people to ask questions and provide feedback to the project team.

Discussions with stakeholders including local Councils, community and Traditional Owners commenced during the early stages of the project. Following the release of the preferred area of interest in May 2023,

TCV has focused on building connections with communities and landholders that could be impacted by this critical infrastructure. Local feedback is essential to identifying constraints and locating the transmission infrastructure. This feedback provides local knowledge and experience in relation to environmental, cultural, social and land use considerations that are taken into account through the route refinement process and development of the EES. VNI West's development to date has been informed by the outcomes of a range of engagement activities including:

- Community events and information sessions.
- Direct engagement with landholders.
- Community Reference Group meetings.
- Council and stakeholder briefings and workshops.
- Interactive online map open to community comments.
- Constraints workshops with key stakeholders and community members.
- Discussions with Traditional Owners and On Country days.
- Feedback received through the project hotline and inbox.

TCV also uses a number of communication channels to build awareness of the project and promote engagement, including:

- Media releases.
- Project website regularly updated with latest project information.
- Project updates to a distribution list including local community members.
- Radio interviews.
- Social media.
- Newspaper advertising

An overview of TCV's engagement activity to date is provided in the table below.

More detailed information on the purpose and outcomes of the consultation undertaken can be found in the [reports section](#) of the TCV website.

The table below provides detail on engagement undertaken to date on the VNI West project.

Table 1 – VNI West consultation to date

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
Identification of project need (Project Specifications Consultation Report [PACR]) ¹ 2019-2021	Industry forum	February 2020	35 organisations	Seek feedback on the RIT-T process to date and considerations which should be assessed in the next phase.	Additional network options were recommended and investigated in subsequent reports.
	PACR open for submissions	December 2019- March 2020	24 submissions received from industry participants		
	Industry meetings		Numerous organisations		
Identification of options (Project Assessment Draft Report [PADR]) ² 2022	PADR open for submissions	July-September 2022	26 submissions received from industry participants and local government	Seek feedback on the options presented in the PADR, particularly the technical and economic assessments.	Feedback on the PADR was considered as the project's early development progressed. Of note, additional network options were considered, and additional criteria was assessed in future (including giving
	Meetings with PADR submitters	Mid-late 2022	Meetings were offered to all those who made a submission, this included representatives from local government,		

¹ https://www.aemo.com.au/-/media/files/electricity/nem/planning_and_forecasting/victorian_transmission/vni-west-rit-t/vni-west_rit-t_pscr.pdf?la=en&hash=6EB4EC0F50F12C8F380940BF10D7D791

² https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/electricity/nem/planning_and_forecasting/victorian_transmission/vni-west-rit-t/vni-west-project-assessment-draft-report.pdf?la=en

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
			industry, manufacturers, generators, developers etc.		consideration to social, environmental and cultural values).
Identification of alternative options (Additional Consultation Report [ACR])³ Early-mid 2023	ACR open for submissions	February-April 2023	533 submissions received from community members, environmental groups, councils, industry, consumer organisations etc.	Seek feedback on the outcomes of the assessment, which identified a broad 5-50km area of interest (option 5) as the preferred network option.	Feedback received on the ACR helped to finalise the network option recommended in the PACR. In particular, the preferred option selected was a variant of what was proposed in the ACR with an alternative Murray River crossing point. This was selected in response to stakeholder feedback that this crossing
	Meetings with various key stakeholders		33 stakeholder briefings held with community representatives, local members, councils etc.		
	Meetings with Traditional Owners		6 meetings held with Traditional Owner groups		

³ https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/electricity/nem/planning_and_forecasting/victorian_transmission/vni-west-rit-t/vni-west-consultation-report---options-assessment.pdf?la=en&hash=D86F047ECAD16C6BFC73DDC797ED6789

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
	Community drop-in sessions and webinars	March 2023	320 community members participated across 12 in-person drop-in sessions and 3 webinars		point is less environmentally and culturally sensitive and would enable greater levels of connection for renewable energy.
	Online 'deep dive' sessions		Over 50 industry representatives		
Selection of Area of Interest and Corridor Refinement (Project Assessment Conclusions Report [PACR])⁴ May-August 2023	Online interactive map	June-August 2023	2326 comments from 201 participants	Announce the selection of the preferred 5-50km area of interest and seek feedback on matters which should be considered to narrow the corridor.	Feedback received greatly assisted in identifying constraints within the area of interest that should be considered when narrowing the corridor. Community and stakeholder input directly influenced the selection of the draft 2km corridor. Specific examples of how feedback was considered in the
	Community information sessions and webinar	July 2023	Almost 400 community members		
	Constraints mapping workshops	July 2023	6 workshops with 51 participants including community, industry and advocacy group representatives		
	Meetings with Traditional Owners	August 2023	12 meetings with Traditional Owner		

⁴ https://aemo.com.au/-/media/files/electricity/nem/planning_and_forecasting/victorian_transmission/vni-west-rit-t/reports-and-updates/vni-west-pacr-volume-1.pdf?la=en

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
	including On Country Days		groups including 69 representatives		route refinement process can be found on pages 35-39 of the <u>Corridor Report</u> .
Draft ~2km Corridor Announcement⁵ September-December 2023	Direct engagement with landholders (meetings, emails, phone calls etc.)	September-December 2023	TCV attempted contact with 100% of landholders, of those, 65% of landholders participated in conversations with TCV	Engage directly with impacted landholders to introduce the project, identify questions or concerns and develop a better understanding of how the land is currently used.	Feedback received from landholders has been continuously communicated internally and will be considered in the route refinement process. These conversations have also informed TCV's understanding of key areas of interest for the community, which has influenced the topics we are communicating on.

⁵ <https://transmissionvictoria.com.au/-/media/16bf3d579a8944f084eb37bd800a13a0.ashx?la=en>

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
	Community information sessions and webinar	October 2023	Over 500 individuals participated in 5 in-person sessions and 1 webinar	Engage with community members to announce the draft ~2km corridor, provide information on the process undertaken to narrow the area and explain how feedback was considered in the process.	Community members were able to learn more about the process to date and receive answers to questions of interest.
	Community Reference Group (CRG) meetings	September 2023 ⁶	11 CRG members	Establish the CRG by introducing the purpose of the group and workshopping the Terms of Reference.	Feedback from CRG members was incorporated into an updated Terms of Reference.
		November 2023 ⁷	13 CRG members	Provide information to the CRG on the EES process and consultation opportunities.	Feedback from the CRG resulted in the development of additional information on key topics of

⁶ <https://transmissionvictoria.com.au/community/-/media/d047605803114e0c85cc95b7d6650a2d.ashx?la=en>

⁷ <https://transmissionvictoria.com.au/community/-/media/78875a11d0aa4360958266edd3f96e6c.ashx?la=en>

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
					interest such as bushfire risk and insurance.
EES Referral Consultation January-May 2024	Meetings with landholders	Ongoing	Ongoing communication and meetings with all impacted landholders where possible	Maintain strong working relationships, answer questions, provide information on key topics of interest, including the EES process and seek feedback which may inform route refinement, the project more broadly and the EES process.	Ongoing engagement ensures maintenance of relationships with key stakeholders. Feedback received has and will be considered in the EES and route refinement process.
	Meetings with key stakeholders	Ongoing	Briefings with local councils and engagement with other key stakeholders through a joint stakeholder roundtable		
	Meetings with Traditional Owners	Ongoing	Ongoing communication and meetings with all impacted Traditional Owner groups		

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
	Community Reference Group meeting	February 2024 ⁸	13 CRG members	Provide the CRG with information and seek feedback on the compensation process, neighbour benefits and broader community benefits in collaboration with Vic Grid.	The CRG received answers to questions on matters raised in the meeting and requested future meetings which focused on bushfire risk and insurance as key topics of interest for the community. The next CRG meeting included a representative from the CFA and TCV worked with the Insurance Council of Australia to provide information on insurance impacts ⁹ .
	Targeted community meetings	February-March 2024	Over 80 community members and landholders participated in local	Provide information on the project, including the EES process and answer	Feedback received at these sessions has provided TCV with a better understanding

⁸ <https://transmissionvictoria.com.au/community/-/media/7ea3a29b2d4f418ab5c772ebf39ca4a2.ashx?la=en>

⁹ <https://transmissionvictoria.com.au/project-resources/-/media/a72f25f6b89644998305578f19d16461.ashx?la=en>

Milestone	Engagement activity	Date	Participants	Purpose	Outcome
			in-person meetings in Glenloch, Tragowel and Murrabit	questions of community concern.	of what is important to the community and allowed us to answer questions of interest.
	In-person community information sessions	April 2024	Over 120 attendees		
	Community Reference Group meeting	May 2024	13 CRG members	Provide information on the project, including the status of the EES, seek feedback on engagement approach and provide the opportunity for Q&A with a representative of the CFA.	The CRG provided valuable insights on TCV's engagement approach which will be incorporated into our future planning.

4.5 Feedback received during consultation

Over the course of engagement, TCV received a wide range of valuable insights from community members, Traditional Owner groups, landholders and stakeholders for consideration. This feedback provided us with a better understanding of the key areas of concern or interest for stakeholders. Feedback received to date has influenced the route refinement process and will be considered throughout the development of the EES.

Feedback on several key area of interest has contributed to the route refinement process including:

- Important considerations relating to land use and agriculture.
- Areas of ecological, social, historical or cultural value.
- Information on existing infrastructure.

Examples of key topics of interest for the community and landholders include:

- Corridor selection process.
- Impacts on farming.
- Approvals process and future consultation.
- Landholder engagement and compensation.
- Bushfire risk.
- Health Impacts.
- Alternative options.
- Policy and regulation.
- Whole of community impacts.
- Organisational trust and transparency.

Further detail on feedback received and TCV's response is outlined in Appendix A1.

5 Goals, Objectives and Commitments

5.1 Engagement goal and objectives

TCV's engagement activities are guided by the organisation's foundation engagement goal.

TCV's goal is to ensure genuine, transparent and timely engagement with stakeholders and communities throughout the EES process, and ensure local knowledge and views inform the refinement of the VNI West corridor.

TCV consistently reviews engagement planning and implementation to ensure alignment with six key engagement objectives.

- Stakeholders understand what VNI West is, how the local area may be impacted, the underlying project need, and accept the project.
- Relevant stakeholders have participated and provided their feedback throughout the project lifecycle, and stakeholder views are meaningfully considered and reflected in decision-making.
- Stakeholder views regarding preferred methods and opportunities for engagement are known and observed wherever possible.
- Engagement and communications processes comply with all regulatory requirements and encourage opportunities for participation.
- TCV's brand is strengthened as a result of the manner in which engagement and communications are delivered.
- Project teams develop working relationships with stakeholders which can be maintained and shared.

5.1.1 Guiding principles

TCV's engagement objectives are underpinned by three key guiding principles for the organisation, its employees, contractors and representatives.

- **Timeliness:** engage as early as possible and allow sufficient time and opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in the engagement process. Relevant timeframes must be made clear to stakeholders as early as possible to set realistic expectations.
- **Transparency:** communication and engagement must be transparent, must directly address stakeholder questions, and must provide a clear direction for feedback, follow ups and complaints.
- **Trust:** communications and engagement activities must treat stakeholders as partners in the development and delivery of projects. To build trust we must be accountable for the

commitments we make, and we must incorporate reasonable suggestions into our decisions and processes.

5.2 EES Engagement Objectives

The required consultation outcomes throughout the EES process as stated by DTP¹⁰ are:

- The public is **informed** about the proposed project and program of EES studies.
- TCV **seeks** targeted input from stakeholders during preparation of the EES to:
 - Identify issues of potential concern;
 - Obtain local knowledge on existing conditions;
 - Understand perceptions of potential effects; and
 - Gain feedback on measures that might provide reasonable responses to stakeholder concerns.
- TCV **responds** to stakeholder input.

5.3 Engagement Commitments

TCV has developed a set of commitments it intends to meet while delivering engagement to support the VNI West EES process. These commitments reflect contemporary best practice and are consistent with feedback received from stakeholders about what is important to them.

- Be clear on how we intend to engage, and the level of influence stakeholders can have (e.g., mapping engagement against the International Association of Public Participation spectrum).
- Genuinely consider stakeholder feedback and demonstrate how stakeholder feedback has been considered in the EES, including in relevant technical studies.
- Be open and transparent.
- Ensure information is provided in a clear, concise, and timely manner.
- Understand and use stakeholders' preferred channels of engagement and communication.
- Respect the time and resource constraints of stakeholders when engaging.
- Be respectful in all our behaviours and stakeholder interactions.
- Seek to continually improve the stakeholder experience.

¹⁰ <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environmental-assessments/environmental-assessment-guides/preparing-an-ees-consultation-plan>

6 Key Stakeholders

The table below details the key stakeholder groups identified for VNI West and the primary known stakeholders or stakeholder organisations within each group, as well as their likely areas of interest and key channels for engagement. For the purpose of this plan, a ‘key stakeholder group’ is defined any individual, group of individuals, organisation or political entity with a stake in the outcome of the project.

Stakeholders were identified through extensive desktop research, analysis and mapping processes, and engagement with local councils and other key stakeholders.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive and will be regularly reviewed and updated throughout the engagement program.

Table 2 VNI West Key Stakeholders

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
Victorian State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action Department of Transport and Planning Minister for Climate Action, Energy and Resources Minister for Transport Minister for Planning The State Electricity Commission Agriculture Victoria Country Fire Authority VicGrid Victoria’s Rural Assistance Commissioner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and approvals process. Community concerns and engagement approach. Access required for public or crown land. Project impacts and mitigation measures. Bushfire risk and potential limitations to fire-fighting limitations post construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder briefings. Workshops and roundtable meetings. Project updates. Project collateral.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Victoria • Environment Protection Authority Victoria • First Peoples State Relations • Attorney General • Valuer-General • Minister for Economic Development • Minister for Regional Development • Minister for Local Government • Minister for Industrial Relations • Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. 		
Commonwealth Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water • Minister for Climate Change and Energy • The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts • Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government • Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and approvals process. • Community concerns and engagement approach. • Access required for public or crown land. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder briefings. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Project updates. • Project collateral.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member for Mallee • Member for Lowan • Member for Murray Plains • Member for Mildura • Member for Ripon • Members of the Legislative Council representing Western Victoria and Northern Victoria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and approvals process. • Community concerns and engagement approach. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. • Opportunities to provide community benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder briefings. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Project updates. • Project collateral.
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buloke Shire Council • Gannawarra Shire Council • Loddon Shire Council • Northern Grampians Shire Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and approvals process. • Community concerns and engagement approach. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. • Opportunities to provide community benefit. • Access to public and council managed land. • Opportunities for job creation and local economic benefit. • How feedback received has/ will influence the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder briefings. • Community events. • Pop up events. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Project website. • Project updates. • Stakeholder interviews. • Project collateral.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
Traditional Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barapa Barapa • Wamba Wemba • Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagalk Nations (via Barengi Gadjin Aboriginal Corporation) • Dja Dja Wurrung (via Djaara) • Other groups as identified throughout project development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impacts to areas of cultural significance and mitigation measures. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. • Opportunities to provide community benefit. • Access to public and council managed land. • Opportunities for job creation and local economic benefit. • How feedback received has/ will influence the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Country Days. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Project updates. • Project collateral.
Directly impacted landholders	<p>Landholders within the VNI West project corridor. Includes owners on title, occupiers, lessors and other parties with an interest in land.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impacts to land use including farming operations. • Bushfire risk and potential limitations to fire-fighting limitations post construction. • Compensation. • Community concerns and engagement approach. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with dedicated landholder liaison. • Community events. • Pop up events. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Project website. • Project updates. • Project collateral. • Social media. • Media and advertisements. • Interactive digital tools.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to provide community benefit. • Access to private land. • Planning and approvals process. • How feedback received has/ will influence the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback forms/online surveys. • Community Reference Group (CRG). • Regional office. • Direct mail outs. • Webinars.
Neighbouring landholders	<p>Landholders adjacent to the VNI West project corridor. Includes owners on title, occupiers, lessors, other parties with an interest in land, and some adjacent landholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction impacts. • Opportunities for job creation and local economic benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events. • Pop up events. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Project website. • 1800 824 221.
Local communities	<p>Communities within or near the project area or investigation corridor.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project e-mail. • Project updates. • Project collateral. • Social media. • Media and advertisements. • Interactive digital tools. • Feedback forms/online surveys. • Community Reference Group (CRG). • Regional office. • Direct mail outs. • Webinars.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
Regulatory authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Energy Regulator • Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria • Goulburn-Murray Water • North Central Catchment Management Authority • Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water • Australian Energy Market Commission • Essential Services Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and approvals process. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. • Opportunities to provide community benefit. • Future connection opportunities and impact on local renewable energy developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder briefings. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Project updates. • Project collateral.
Industry groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AusNet • Boort Tourism and Development Committee • National Farmers Federation • Regional Development Victoria • Transgrid • Victorian Farmers Federation (including local branches) • Local renewable energy project developers including BayWa r.e., RES, RWE, Squadron Energy and West Wind • Australian Energy Council • Clean Energy Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and approvals process. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. • Opportunities to provide community benefit. • Future connection opportunities and impact on local renewable energy developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder briefings. • Community events. • Pop up events. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Stakeholder interviews. • Project website. • 1800 824 221. • Project e-mail. • Project updates. • Project collateral. • Social media. • Media and advertisements. • Interactive digital tools.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Networks Australia 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback forms/online surveys. Community Reference Group (CRG). Regional office. Webinars.
Advocacy groups	<p>Local progress associations and issue-specific interest groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birchip Cropping Group Environment Victoria Farmers for Climate Action Grain Growers Grampians New Energy Taskforce NEXA Advisory RE-Alliance Energy Consumers Australia Energy Users Association of Australia Landcare Victoria Loddon Plains Landcare Network Murray Mallee Landcare Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community concerns and engagement approach. Project impacts and mitigation measures. Opportunities to provide community benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder briefings. Community events. Pop up events. Workshops and roundtable meetings. Stakeholder interviews. Project website. 1800 824 221. Project e-mail. Project updates. Project collateral. Social media. Media and advertisements. Interactive digital tools. Feedback forms/online surveys. Community Reference Group (CRG). Regional office. Webinars.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
Local community groups	<p>Local interest and/or community groups, e.g., neighbourhood house, community action groups and environmental groups.</p> <p>Buloke</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlton Forum • Charlton Neighbourhood House • Donald 2000 • Donald Community Centre • Wycheproof Community Resource Centre <p>Gannawarra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerang Lions Club • Kerang Progress Association • Kerang Neighbourhood House • Kerang and District Agricultural Society • Rotary Club of Kerang <p>Loddon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADAPT Loddon Mallee • Wedderburn Neighbourhood House • Wedderburn Lions Club <p>Northern Grampians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stawell Neighbourhood House • St Arnaud Neighbourhood House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community concerns and engagement approach. • Project impacts and mitigation measures. • Opportunities to provide community benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder briefings. • Community events. • Pop up events. • Workshops and roundtable meetings. • Stakeholder interviews. • Project website. • 1800 824 221. • Project e-mail. • Project updates. • Project collateral. • Social media. • Media and advertisements. • Interactive digital tools. • Feedback forms/online surveys. • Community Reference Group (CRG). • Regional office. • Webinars.

Group	Description	Interests and concerns	Key tools of engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St Arnaud Community Energy Renewal Association 		
Media	<p>Local, State and national media.</p> <p>Key local media outlets include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stawell-Times The Weekly Advertiser Loddon Herald North Central News Buloke Times Gannawarra Times Bendigo Advertiser Weekly Times Stock and Land Campaspe News The Barham Bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and approvals process. Community concerns and engagement approach. Project impacts and mitigation measures. Opportunities to provide community benefit. Opportunities for job creation and local economic benefit. How feedback received has/ will influence the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media releases. Stakeholder briefings. Media interviews. Project website.

6.1 Technical Reference Group

DTP has convened a Technical Reference Group (TRG) to provide advice throughout the EES process. Agencies invited to participate in the TRG include representatives from government, regional authorities, municipal councils and registered Aboriginal parties (RAPs) with statutory, policy or technical interests in the project.

The primary role of the TRG is to advise:

- DTP on matters that should be included in the scoping requirements and consultation planning for an EES, along with the technical adequacy of the proposed VNI West EES and the adequacy of its response to relevant matters.
- TCV on the need for and adequacy of technical EES studies in terms of their consistency with good practice standards of method and analysis.

The TRG will provide advice and assistance to TCV on:

- required statutory approvals and coordination of procedures.
- relevant policies and strategies, and related information requirements.
- the design, method and adequacy of technical studies for the EES.
- availability of relevant data sets and research.
- conformity of the proposal and EES studies with policy and statutory requirements.
- design and implementation of the proponent's public information and stakeholder consultation plan for the EES.
- responses to issues arising from the EES investigations.
- technical adequacy and completeness of draft EES documentation.

An overview of the organisations included in the TRG for VNI West is below:

- Agriculture Victoria
- Buloke Shire Council
- Country Fire Authority
- DEECA Planning & Environment Assessment (PEA)
- Environment Protection Authority
- First Peoples - State Relations
- Gannawarra Shire Council
- Goulburn Murray Water
- Heritage Victoria
- Loddon Shire Council
- North Central Catchment Management Authority
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Parks Victoria
- VicGrid
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- Barengi Gadjin Land Council

More information on the TRG and its role can be found on the [DTP website](#).

6.2 Community Reference Group

The success of any major transmission project is dependent not just on its technical design and delivery, but also on how effectively it engages with and addresses the concerns of the communities it affects.

The CRG for the VNI West project will be one engagement mechanism to provide communities with an opportunity to work collaboratively on the project.

The CRG, together with Transmission Company Victoria (TCV) will develop a shared understanding about the project, including discussing community concerns and opportunities to address potential impacts.

The CRG currently has 18 community members representing a broad range of locations across the draft corridor.

The CRG for the VNI West project will aim to:

- Increase community understanding about the VNI West project, processes, and key milestones.
- Enable two-way conversations between TCV and the affected community and stakeholders.
- Provide a transparent forum to discuss issues of community interest related to the VNI West project.
- Capture community feedback and suggestions to assist with project decision making.
- Provide a forum for community input into regional benefit sharing opportunities.
- Allow an avenue of feedback to communities, on how community suggestions around the project have been considered or actioned.

More information on the CRG, including its members, terms of reference and previous minutes, can be found on the [TCV website](#).

7 Approach

7.1 IAP2 Spectrum

The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation is a globally recognised and accepted good practice approach to engagement. We have broadly outlined our application of the IAP2 Spectrum in the table below and indicated that we intend to engage primarily at the “Involve” part of the Spectrum for this engagement.

Table 3 IAP2 Spectrum

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Engagement goal	Provide balanced and objective information to assist stakeholder understanding of the problem, alternatives, opportunities and solutions.	Obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	Work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Partner with stakeholders in each aspect of the decision, including development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	The final decision is made by stakeholders.
Engagement promise	We will keep you informed.	We will listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



7.2 Engagement and Communication Channels

The formal engagement and communication channels to be utilised for this program are summarised in the tables below.

Section 10 of this document provides a schedule of key engagement activities and consultation milestones.

Table 4 Engagement Channels

Method	Intent & Audience	Delivery method	IAP2
Stakeholder briefings	Briefings with local councils, State Government, regulators and other stakeholders to provide project updates, respond to enquiries and consult on engagement activities.	In person, online or hybrid	Consult
Stakeholder interviews	Targeted stakeholder interviews to inform specific EES technical studies.	In person, online or hybrid	Involve
Community events	Forums for discussion between the project team and local community members, landholders and other local stakeholders. Independent subject matter experts may present to provide information on specific topics.	In person	Consult
Pop-up events	TCV attendance at existing community events such as field days and markets to maintain a presence in the area and answer questions.	In person	Consult
Workshops and roundtable meetings	Workshops and roundtables with key stakeholders including the CRG, landholders, communities and Traditional Owner groups to discuss a broad range of project issues including route selection, the EES process, delivery considerations and local constraints and opportunities.	In person, online or hybrid	Involve
On Country Days	Meeting with Traditional Owners on their traditional lands to share knowledge, practices, and stories to support greater	In person	Involve

Method	Intent & Audience	Delivery method	IAP2
	understanding and respect for their culture and heritage.		
Interactive digital tools	Interactive digital tools provided via the TCV website. In previous rounds of engagement, TCV has utilised an interactive map which was open for comment (now closed for comment, viewing still available).	Online or facilitated in person	Consult
1800 824 221	This telephone line will provide a service for community members looking for further information about the project on a broad range of issues. The number is advertised on the TCV website and all collateral both digital and print.	Phone	Consult
Project e-mail	This e-mail address will provide community members with a channel to provide feedback, make an enquiry and/or lodge a complaint. Address advertised on the TCV website, and on all print and digital collateral.	Online	Inform
Feedback forms/online surveys	Tool to capture general community and/or stakeholder feedback and specific inputs on topics such as EES studies or route selection considerations.	Online or facilitated in person	Consult
Regional office	TCV maintains a project office in Kerang to provide landholders and community members with a location for face-to-face conversations with TCV team representatives including landholder liaisons. A second location is under development in Donald.	In person	Consult
Webinars	Online information sessions to present project information including EES studies, seek feedback, and answer questions.	Online	Consult

Table 5 - Communication channels

Method	Intent & Audience
Project website	Used to widely inform stakeholders including project updates and opportunities to be involved in engagement processes.
Project updates	Online project communications delivered via email to inform stakeholders more broadly about the project and opportunities for involvement in engagement processes. Stakeholders can register to receive project updates via the TCV website here .
Project collateral	Project collateral will be used consistently to provide information on various topics, for example booklets, fact sheets and FAQs.
Media and advertisements	Traditional and digital media including monthly columns in local papers, radio placements and online information sources used to increase awareness of the project, promote information sessions and/or meet the public notice requirements of any third-party approvals.
Media releases	Media releases on key project milestones or topics will be issued to a wide range of State and regional news outlets.
Media interviews	Project spokespeople participate in interviews with media outlets at key project milestones or where requested.
Social media	TCV's Facebook and Twitter accounts provide project information and advertise engagement opportunities.
Direct mailouts	Direct mailouts to potentially impacted community members to raise awareness of the project, promote community events, and provide project information.
Registered post	Used when issuing notices or other formal correspondence to landholders. Registered post will also be used when landholders cannot be reached as part of title search process.

8 Landholder Engagement

TCV will engage with landholders guided by and in line with:

- The Essential Services Commission’s Electricity Transmission Company Land Access Statement of Expectations.
- The role of the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner and the AEIC Terms of Reference 2021-25.
- Recommendations made by The Energy Charter’s Better Practice Landholder and Community Engagement Guide.

8.1 Landholder Engagement Objectives

TCV’s engagement with landholders seeks to achieve the following objectives.

- Provide a planned, consistent and professional approach to landholder engagement.
- Continue to engage with landholders on project design, environmental assessment and matters of tenure.
- Continue to minimise project risk by proactively identifying, documenting and managing landholder issues.
- Ensure that all landholders are treated openly, honestly and with respect and use consultative methods appropriate to each landholder.
- Provide and promote opportunities for landholders to meaningfully contribute to project decisions and technical studies that will impact them.
- Ensure that landholders are aware of their rights with respect to the project.
- Strengthen relationships with landholders and their communities to foster trust, awareness and understanding of the project.
- Understand landholder concerns and demonstrate that these have been addressed through project design.
- Ensure that landholders are fully aware of the engagement process, timelines and approvals gateways.

8.2 Landholder Engagement Approach and Channels

Landholders in the identified study corridor will have a dedicated Landholder Liaison to discuss the unique characteristics of their properties and farms as well as other important issues, including compensation and other payments associated with the project.

TCV, its employees, contractors and representatives are committed to treating all landholders with respect and decency to ensure that all property owners and farmers are fairly recognised and compensated where transmission is required to be located on their land.

The table below outlines the channels that will be used to communicate and engage with landholders.

Table 6 Landholder Engagement Channels

Method	Intent & Audience
Email	Landholders will be provided with the email address of the dedicated Landholder Liaison. This email address will be provided on the Landholder Liaison's contact information card issued to all landholders.
Meetings with dedicated landholder liaison	Meetings with landholders will take place in person, via Zoom/Teams or via telephone depending on landholder preference and depth of engagement required. Meetings are able to be held outside of business hours if required.
Phone	Landholders will be provided with the mobile phone number of their dedicated Landholder Liaison to contact during business hours. Outside business hours by appointment. Landholder Liaisons will endeavour to respond in two business days. This mobile phone number will be provided on the Landholder Liaison's contact information card issued to all landholders.
Registered post	Registered post will be used when issuing notices or other formal correspondence to landholders. Registered post will also be used when landholders cannot be reached as part of title search process.
TCV website	A dedicated section on the TCV website relating to engagement with landholders on the VNI West project will be established and provide further information and resources for impacted and interested landholders. The webpage will be included on all printed and digital communications provided to landholders.

9 Traditional Owner Engagement

TCV recognises the importance of engagement with Traditional Owner groups and Registered Aboriginal Parties across the project area. We will continue to work with these groups to seek feedback on a range of factors relevant to project planning and development including cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), opportunities for direct involvement in project works, and other considerations which may arise throughout the project.

TCV, its employees, contractors, and representatives are committed to supporting Traditional Owner participation in the project and treating Traditional Owners with respect, decency, and by acknowledging their deep connections to Country. We will support Traditional Owner participation throughout the project and seek input from Traditional Owners on matters that impact their Country and communities. On the IAP2 spectrum, TCV's engagement with Traditional Owners will incorporate the "Involve" and "Consult" parts of the Spectrum.

9.1 Engagement Objectives

- **Provide meaningful opportunities** for Traditional Owners to inform create and advocate for outcomes for the project;
- **Provide Traditional Owners with transparent, relevant and timely information** regarding the project to enable effective decision-making and input into the project;
- **Ensure multiple channels and consultations** through which Traditional Owners can provide input into the project; and
- **Ensure Traditional Owners are made aware** of how their feedback on the transmission route will be used throughout the project.

9.2 Engagement Approach

TCV is committed to engaging with Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Parties in a culturally appropriate manner which enables free, prior and informed consent (FPIC). We are committed to working closely with these groups to understand how they would like to be engaged and implementing this feedback wherever possible. To ensure our engagement activities with Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Parties support FPIC, TCV will:

- Engage early and consistently throughout and provide necessary information on impacts, for example;
 - Meet with a range of potentially impacted Traditional Owner groups early in the planning stages, prior to the release of a draft area of interest, and ongoing meetings and On Country Days with Traditional Owners.
 - Listen and respond to Traditional Owners regarding the most appropriate methods of engagement and consultation.
 - Develop an understanding of each group's governance processes and where possible, structure engagement and desired input around these.

- In partnership with VicGrid, provide funding to ensure Traditional Owners can meaningfully engage with process.
- Raise awareness of the project and consultation program;
 - Wherever possible allow time and resources for Traditional Owners to disseminate information within community.
- Be as inclusive as possible in our approach to engagement with Traditional Owners, including being guided by them as to who needs to be in meetings and which groups or organisations need to be engaged.
- Ensure engagement is culturally appropriate;
 - Meet with Traditional Owners on Country.
 - Support Welcomes to Country and Smoking ceremonies as part of engagement activities on Country.
- Ensure the timely provision of information;
 - Continue to work with Traditional Owners to provide the information the need to make informed decisions.
 - Acknowledge the challenges of providing information that may be confidential or not publicly available and work with Traditional Owners to develop an understanding of how best to manage this.
- Collaborate and co-design ways of working for the lifetime of the project; and
- Respond to enquiries and concerns in a timely manner.

9.3 Traditional Owner Groups

Known Traditional Owner groups within the project area include:

- Barapa Barapa (represented by Barapa Country Aboriginal Corporation and Barapa Barapa Elders and representatives who are not represented by this organisation)
- Wamba Wemba (represented by Wamba Wemba Aboriginal Corporation and Wamba Wemba Elders and representatives who are not represented by this organisation)
- Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, and Jupagalk Nations (represented by the Barengi Gadjin Land Council)
- Dja Dja Wurrung (represented by the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DJAARA))

10 Engagement Schedule

10.1 High Level Engagement Schedule

The visual below provides an overview of the EES process, including how engagement will inform the different phases of the EES and steps in the process when stakeholders, landholders and other interested members of the public can provide input into the process (Figure 3). The statutory consultation process as part of the EES will be managed by DTP.

The table below provides indicative timing of proposed engagement and communication activities to support consultation during the EES process. The schedule, along with associated engagement and communication activities, will be reviewed and revised as necessary (Table 7).

TCV will provide DTP with a detailed action plan each quarter as the project progresses.

Feedback received during the EES process can influence both the EES and project outcomes, including:

- additional investigations;
- EES engagement approach and consultation activities; and
- suggestions on how to avoid, minimise or manage impacts to individual properties.

During each engagement phase TCV will collate and analyse feedback. Feedback will be communicated as technical studies are being prepared to ensure insights are incorporated in the EES. Public summaries will be prepared reporting on engagement activities, key themes received during consultation, and how feedback has been considered and/or informed project and design decisions. This will be included as a chapter in the EES.

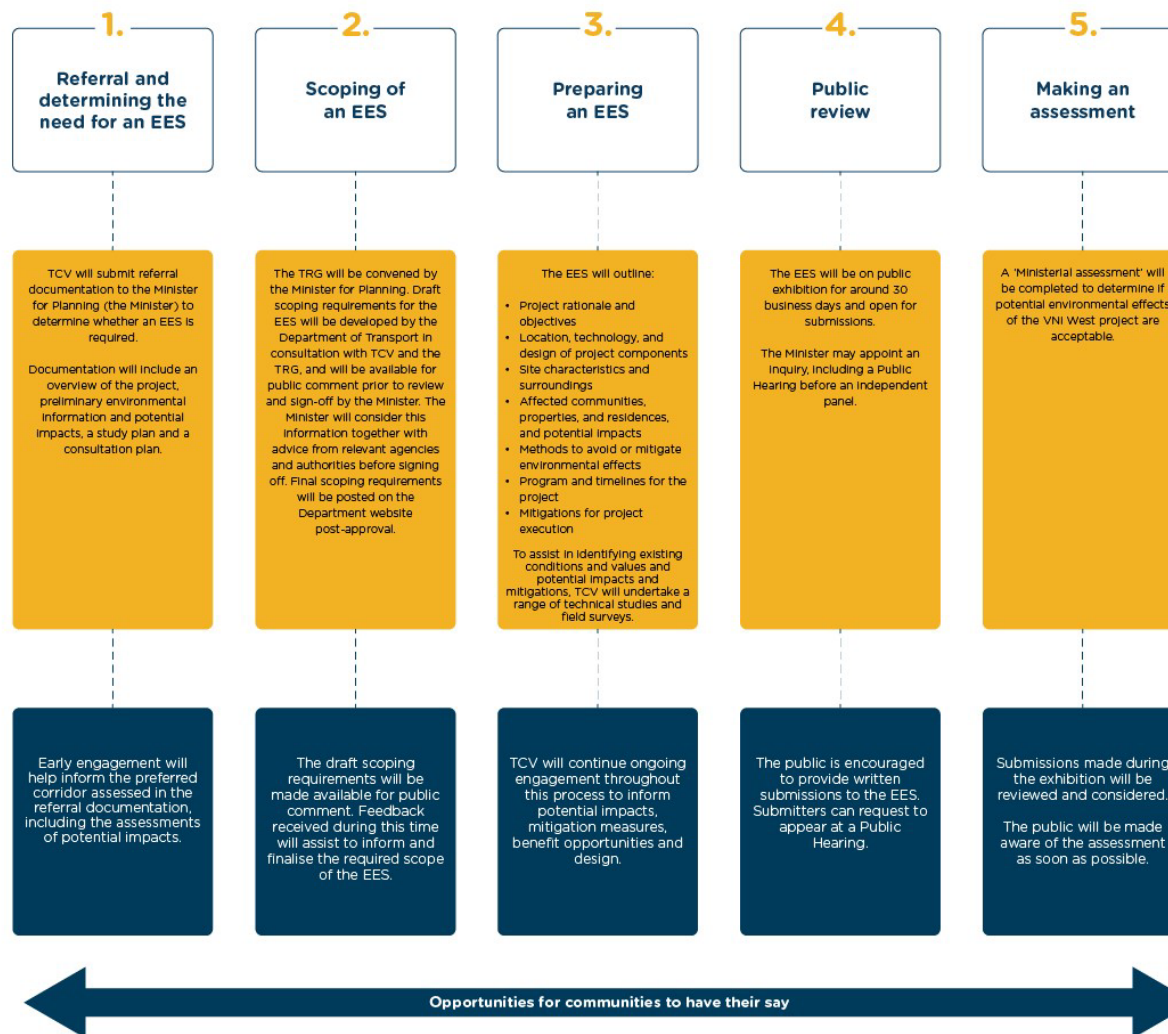


Figure 3 - Overview of EES Process and Engagement Activities

Table 7 EES Engagement Schedule

Engagement Phase	Timing	Proposed engagement activities	Proposed communication tools	Objectives
Submission of referral	Early 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings to local government, key stakeholders and Traditional Owner groups • Ongoing Landholder engagement • CRG meeting • Stakeholder roundtable • Community information sessions • Kerang Regional Office • Respond to email and phone enquiries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website information on EES referral • Fact sheets • Project update • Media and advertising as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders are aware of the referral submission and understand next steps. • Feedback received guides our engagement approach on the EES. • TCV improves understanding of stakeholder interests and concerns for consideration in developing draft scoping requirements
EES scoping requirements	Mid-late 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landholder engagement to discuss arrangements for survey activities and understand constraints and other considerations. • Briefings to local government, key stakeholders and Traditional Owners • Targeted engagement with key stakeholders • CRG meeting • Stakeholder roundtable • Community drop-in sessions/ webinar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website information outlining how feedback on scoping requirements can be provided. • Information packs to be shared by Councils and local (social) media channels. • Fact sheets • Project updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders are aware of the opportunity to provide feedback on the scoping requirements and • Feedback received informs required studies, scope of impact assessments and assessment methodology

Engagement Phase	Timing	Proposed engagement activities	Proposed communication tools	Objectives
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerang Regional Office • Respond to email and phone enquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media • Videos • Media and advertising as required. 	
Undertaking studies and preparation of the EES	Mid 2024-Mid 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted engagement with key stakeholders and local councils • Landholder engagement • Traditional Owner engagement • CRG meetings • Stakeholder roundtable • Place-based community drop-in sessions. • Online webinar/engagement • Technical information sessions as required. • Kerang and Donald regional engagement hubs. • Respond to email and phone enquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website information • Fact sheets • Project updates • Videos • Social Media • Media and advertising as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders are provided with the opportunity to inform the EES. • Feedback received informs the preparation of existing conditions reports. • Feedback influences the preparation of impact assessments and mitigations. • Stakeholder views are considered in developing the construction planning and approach
EES public exhibition and formal submission	Mid 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted engagement with key stakeholders and local councils • Landholder engagement 	Broad communication on public exhibition including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders are aware of the opportunity to participate in the public exhibition.

Engagement Phase	Timing	Proposed engagement activities	Proposed communication tools	Objectives
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Owner engagement • Community drop-in sessions • CRG meeting • Stakeholder roundtable • Online engagement • Kerang Regional Office • Respond to email and phone enquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • Project update • Letterbox drops. • Media and advertising; and • Media release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCV is able to adequately respond to submissions and address feedback received during the Inquiry.
Minister's Assessment and informing decisions	Late 2025 – Early 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted engagement with key stakeholders and local councils • Landholder engagement. • Traditional Owner engagement • CRG meeting • Stakeholder roundtable • Respond to email and phone enquiries 	Announcement of Minister's assessment and ongoing broad communication about the project including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Social media • Project update • Media and advertising • Media release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders are aware of the Ministers Assessment and understand the reasoning. • Stakeholders understand the meaning of the assessment and next steps.

11 Recording, monitoring, and reporting

11.1 Information and records management

TCV will continue to use a dedicated stakeholder management database to record engagement and consultation activities and to manage communications throughout project.

All concerns and issues raised through consultation will be documented, along with details of their resolution (where applicable), to ensure feedback and learnings are incorporated.

11.1.1 Privacy Policy

To the extent TCV collects personal information (as defined under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)), TCV is committed to handling personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). Information about how TCV handles personal information is provided in the AEMO Privacy Policy, available at: <https://aemo.com.au/en/privacy-and-legal-notice/privacy-policy>.

11.2 Feedback and complaints management

TCV will proactively consult and engage with community and stakeholders throughout the EES process. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to contact TCV to share their views, make an enquiry and lodge a complaint.

Stakeholder feedback will be collected, recorded and considered as part of the ongoing development and refinement of the project design. Through EES reporting to the Technical Reference Group (see 9.3) TCV will document how stakeholder input or feedback has informed the EES, and how and why project changes were made in response.

11.2.1 Management process

Stakeholders can provide feedback, make an enquiry or lodge complaints with TCV through the VNI West hotline and enquiries email address provided on the project website and communications materials.

TCV recognises it is vital that there is a clear path to lodge a complaint and that there is confidence the complaint will be considered and responded to fairly, with respect and in a manner which is timely and consistent.

The time required to resolve a complaint will depend on its complexity. TCV will advise every complainant in writing of the likely timing for their complaint to be responded to, and the outcome of the complaint including the reasons for resulting decisions and any action to be taken.

TCV considers a complaint closed under a range of circumstances, including:

- the complainant confirms that they have accepted an offered resolution.
- information has been provided that addresses the questions or issues raised.

- the complainant does not provide consent for TCV to discuss the complaint or share information, preventing TCV's ability to assist in achieving a resolution.
- the complainant advises that they no longer wish to pursue the complaint.

TCV's Enquiry and Complaints Handling Policy is available on the TCV website at <https://www.transmissionvictoria.com.au/contact-us>

11.3 Monitoring and reporting

11.3.1 Engagement record keeping

TCV uses the Borealis Consultation Record Management (CRM) tool to record engagement and consultation activities and to manage communications throughout the project. All concerns and issues raised through consultation will be documented in Borealis, along with details of their resolution (where applicable) and sentiment, to ensure feedback and learnings are incorporated in the ongoing engagement approach.

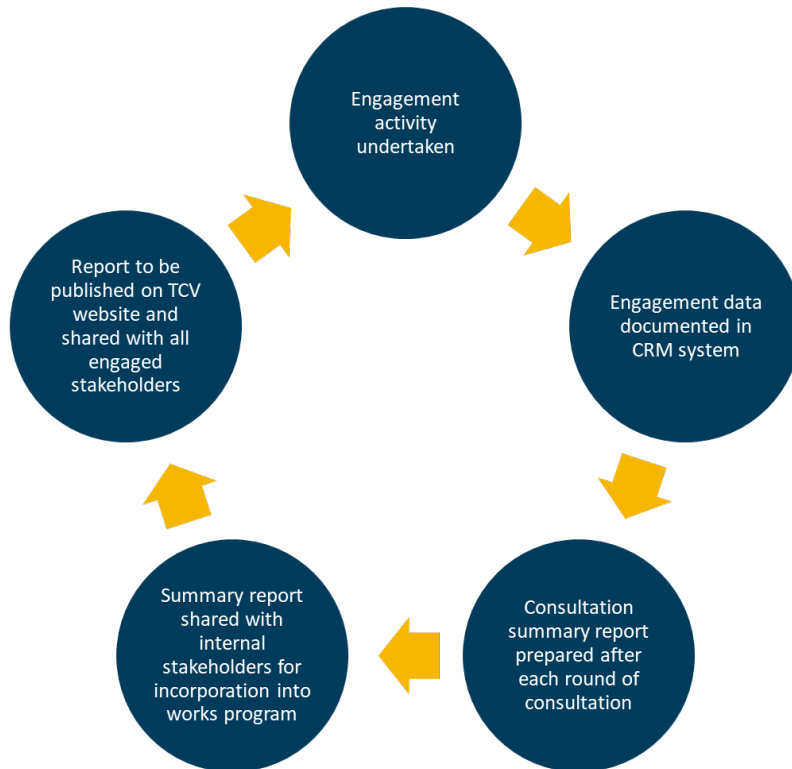
11.3.2 Reporting

TCV's approach to recording, monitoring and reporting on engagement activities ensures that feedback from consultation is taken into consideration throughout the project lifecycle and shared with community and stakeholders.

After each significant engagement milestone TCV will publish a summary report detailing engagement activities, key themes and how feedback received in the course of the engagement has been considered and may inform future engagement activities.

Outcomes from engagement activities and feedback channels will be promptly and consistently communicated to relevant internal stakeholders. Engaged stakeholders will be informed of the outcomes and impacts of their involvement. A record of all communications issued during engagement will be recorded and included in relevant reporting.

Figure 4 Engagement Feedback Loop



Consultation summary reports outlining engagement outcomes and key insights from stakeholders, community and Traditional Owners will be prepared and provided to the TRG. TCV will also generate reports and provide these to DTP on a regular basis. Reporting will be undertaken until completion of the EES process.

In addition, a formal consultation report will be developed and included as a chapter in the EES. This will detail the outputs and outcomes of consultation and engagement processes on the project and will be exhibited.

11.3.3 Evaluation

The engagement schedule, including tools and channels, will be regularly assessed and revised as necessary to ensure engagement objectives are met.

Evaluation tools and measures of success are outlined in the table below. They relate to the goals, objectives and commitments for the engagement.

Success will be measured in two ways:

- Assessment of feedback provided in stakeholder submissions.
- Direct feedback in stakeholder engagement meetings.



Table 8 Success Measures and Evaluation Tools

Success Measures	Key Indications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased community understanding and awareness of the project, the engagement process and the regulatory approval process. • Continued participation through community events, project inbox, hotline, and activities to support approval process. • Stakeholders have a clear understanding of available communication channels and where to source information. • Clear demonstration of stakeholder and community input considered as part of route refinement. • Good relationships between project team and key stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrics from consultation and engagement activities such as number of attendees of community events. • Feedback received through community surveys, including the nature, number and geographical spread of responses. • Number of subscribers to project updates, social media and visits to the website. • Number of emails and hotline calls, with regard to sentiment. • Number of community enquiries and complaints, with regard to sentiment. • Number of landholders engaging with the project, including the quality and frequency of contact. • Results from sentiment research surveys, including number of responses and nature of feedback. • Frequency and sentiment of engagement with key stakeholders.

A1. Feedback received to date

The table below outlines the key topics of interest and concern raised during initial phases of consultation, as well as TCV's response and how the feedback was considered.

Table 9 Key Topics of Interest and Concern


Item of feedback	Description	TCV's response and how feedback was considered	EES Influence
 <p>Corridor selection process</p>	<p>Community members questioned the corridor selection process, particular matters of interest included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why the shortest route was not selected; • Why VNI West can't be situated along roadsides; and • How ecology and cultural heritage was considered. 	<p>The draft corridor was identified based on feedback from landholders, community members, government agencies and stakeholders, as well as data from ongoing technical, engineering and environmental assessments.</p> <p>A range of factors have been considered including ecology, agricultural activities, sites of known Aboriginal cultural heritage, flooding, landscape and proximity to residential areas and towns.</p> <p>TCV acknowledges that it will not always be possible to avoid all sensitivities, however, where particular areas can't be avoided, there are a range of technical and engineering solutions can be investigated to seek to mitigate impacts.</p> <p>The priority in determining the draft corridor was to avoid sensitives where possible and determine a route that minimises impact.</p> <p>Similarly, roadsides are often too narrow to safely locate towers near passing traffic and they frequently contain important remnant vegetation, so they are generally not appropriate for transmission infrastructure. Siting towers within existing easements (such as roadway easements), may be possible in some locations and explored as the project continues, however, it is unlikely these locations would be suitable for the majority of VNI West.</p> <p>For more information on the draft ~2km corridor and the selection process, please refer to the Corridor Report on the TCV website.</p>	<p>Feedback influenced the defining of the draft ~2km corridor included as part of the EES referral.</p>
 <p>Impacts on farming</p>	<p>Community members and landholders expressed concerns that transmission infrastructure will significantly reduce productive land and introduce restrictions which will make it difficult to continue farming the land. Particular restrictions of concern included machinery height, drone</p>	<p>TCV has heard the concerns about how transmission may impact farming and agricultural activities and is committed to working collaboratively with farmers and property owners to minimise impact on farm activity and farmers' ability to work the land.</p> <p>The corridor for VNI West will be narrowed from ~2km to an approximately 100m wide easement. That area will still be available for</p>	<p>Feedback and the initial risk assessment undertaken for the project has identified agricultural impacts as a potential key area of concern. The feedback was taken into consideration when developing the scope of this technical study.</p>



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	<p>usage, irrigation and future farming practices.</p> <p>It was also noted the draft ~2km corridor traverses some properties diagonally. Concerns were presented that this would impact several long lateral irrigators and cause significant impact to property usage.</p> <p>Other items of concern included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interference with GPS, radio and RFID tag signals; • Biosecurity concerns; and • Land access. 	<p>farming and will not be fenced off. TCV is targeting narrowing to an approximately 100m wide draft easement by mid-2024.</p> <p>A key part of this process includes engaging closely with landowners to identify a location for infrastructure that minimises impact.</p> <p>As part of these discussions, Landholder Liaisons will work with farmers to develop an understanding of existing infrastructure, such as irrigation, and attempt to identify possible solutions to avoid or minimise any impacts.</p> <p>There will be some restrictions on how the land can be used within the easement, but many farming activities can continue, including cropping, grazing and the use of machinery up to about 5m in height or up to 8.6m subject to a safety assessment.</p> <p>More information on topics such as GPS, biosecurity and land access, can be found on the Biosecurity and Farming with Transmission fact sheets on the TCV website.</p>	
 <p>Approvals process and future consultation</p>	<p>Community members raised questions about the approvals process and future opportunities for community consultation. There were concerns that community consultation could not provide any tangible or genuine influence in the process, particularly regarding whether the project receives final approval to go ahead.</p>	<p>TCV is at the beginning of a comprehensive environmental and planning approval process for VNI West, this is expected to run over the next 2 years.</p> <p>This will include ongoing engagement and consultation with landholders, local communities, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The project cannot proceed without planning approvals from State and Commonwealth governments. There will be numerous avenues for consultation to influence this process, including a formal public submissions process ahead of the Ministerial assessment.</p> <p>It has been confirmed by the Victorian Planning Minister that VNI West will be subject to an Environment Effects Statement (EES). For more information on the EES process, including the rigorous engagement process, please refer to the Department of Transport and Planning website.</p>	<p>Feedback received has demonstrated the importance of clearly communicating the approval process which has influenced the consultation plan outlined in this document.</p>
 <p>Landholder engagement and compensation</p>	<p>Concerns were raised about landholder engagement to date, including the methods of contact and allegations that Landholder Liaisons had targeted vulnerable community members and denied them the chance to have a support person at face-to-face meetings.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised about landholders who only found out they were</p>	<p>TCV's Landholder Liaisons used publicly available databases to find contact information for landholders. These details do not include the age, marital status or gender of landholders. It is the responsibility of TCV to first engage with all known landholders, which generally in the first instance is the registered owner of the property. However, we also need to speak to any other landholders that have an interest in the property that may be impacted (such as tenants), and we encourage those landholders to reach out to TCV. Landholders are welcome to</p>	<p>TCV will ensure landholders are aware of the opportunity to provide input to the EES process. Feedback received from landholders will be considered in the route refinement process as part of work on the EES and influence the consultation process.</p>

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	<p>in the corridor days before the corridor was made public. Questions were raised about the process moving forward and whether the delivery of an information package was the end of engagement. Questions and concerns were also raised regarding the adequacy of compensation, particularly that a payment for loss in market value can only compensate for financial loss at the time it is paid and will not compensate for the future growth in property value.</p> <p>There was a misunderstanding from some attendees that the only payment available is the Victorian Government payment of \$8000 per linear kilometre, per year, for 25 years.</p>	<p>bring along a support person if they have any concerns about speaking with a TCV representative one-on-one.</p> <p>In the six weeks leading up to the release of the ~2km draft corridor, the Landholder Liaisons made every attempt to contact landholders in this new, narrowed area, resulting in contact with about 40% of landholders.</p> <p>Each Landholder Liaison focused on a particular geographical part of the draft corridor and where possible, initial contact was always by phone. If there was not a publicly available phone number for a landholder, TCV Landholder visited a property to leave a contact card or an information pack. When this occurred Landholder Liaisons complied with any signposted biosecurity requirements, and only visited properties where legally able to do so.</p> <p>At the community information sessions numerous additional landholders also reached out to TCV to provide their contact details and engage in initial discussions.</p> <p>TCV greatly encouraged impacted landholders who have not yet been able to have a discussion with their Landholder Liaison to reach out. A conversation with your dedicated Landholder Liaison will not increase the likelihood of the project going ahead or being located on your land.</p> <p>It is an opportunity to share details of how farms and properties operate and how your land is being used to reduce the impact of the final location of the line.</p> <p>It is TCV's intention to ensure that all impacted landholders are fairly compensated.</p> <p>The Victorian Government's proposed annual payment of \$8,000 per linear kilometre per year for 25 years is only one avenue of payment.</p> <p>There are various payments which make up the total compensation package. Compensation will include any loss in land value and any impact the line may have on farming operations.</p> <p>More information on compensation can be found in the 'Easement Compensation – Option Agreement' fact sheet and Landholder Guide.</p>	
 <p>Bushfire risk</p>	<p>Concerns around bushfire risk and transmission infrastructure were raised by community members at all events. Specifically, people expressed fear that bushfires could not be fought around transmission, particularly due to perceived limitations of aerial firefighting and high-pressure hoses. Community members also noted that visibility becomes a significant</p>	<p>TCV appreciates the importance of ensuring transmission infrastructure does not impede the ability to manage bush fires.</p> <p>In Victoria, there are currently around 6,500 kilometres of transmission lines. Bushfires have been managed and successfully fought around transmission infrastructure for decades.</p> <p>The CFA has recently published a FAQ document on fire and transmission that states:</p>	<p>Feedback and the initial risk assessment undertaken for the project has identified bushfire impacts as a potential key area of concern. The feedback was taken into consideration when developing the scope of this technical study. Representatives from Victorian Fire Authorities such as the</p>

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	<p>issue in the event of a bushfire, and worried that towers would act as an obstacle to emergency vehicles and firefighters on the ground and that thick smoke could cause dangerous electrical arcs.</p>	<p>"In the case of a bushfire response, an assessment will be made by the Incident Controller - and if it is considered safe to do so, responding crews can operate near transmission lines.</p> <p>Firefighters receive training on the control measures for fighting fires near transmission lines. Victoria's fire authorities also have appropriate policies and operational procedures in place."</p> <p>Transmission Network Service Providers also have a commitment to provide its customers with a reliable and safe electricity supply. In the event of a bushfire, they work closely with Emergency Management Victoria (EMV), Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV), Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMV) and follow all agreed and mandatory directions. If required, this can include turning off the power across parts of the transmission network.</p> <p>Engagement with fire authorities also includes ensuring aerial firefighting can occur. Aircraft can and do operate around power lines and there is transmission mapping available for pilots.</p> <p>Bushfire risk will be considered at every stage of planning and design for VNI West. Design standards for transmission as well as the operation and maintenance of lines and towers mitigate the risk of fire and enable assets to withstand bushfire conditions.</p> <p>The project must conduct a major bushfire risk assessment as part of the regulatory process before the project can be approved by Government. This will be conducted by an independent expert and requires consultation and input from fire authorities including the CFA.</p>	<p>CFA will provide advice to TCV through this process as part of the TRG.</p>
 <p>Health Impacts</p>	<p>EMF and health concerns</p> <p>Community members raised concerns about the potential impacts of Electro Magnetic Fields (EMF) on both human health and livestock.</p> <p>Mental Health</p> <p>Concerns were also raised about the impact the project may have on the mental and emotional wellbeing of community members and landholders. Attendees questioned how the project could adequately consider social impacts during the approvals process given the significant impact it has already had on affected communities.</p>	<p>EMF and health concerns</p> <p>There are no significant health risks to those living close to high voltage transmission lines.</p> <p>After reviewing a significant number of studies on the concerns and potential health impacts on individuals, the Australian Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety Advisory (ARPANSA) has said there is no scientific evidence to establish that exposure to electromagnetic fields around the home, the office or near power lines causes adverse health effects.</p> <p>Despite this, a precautionary approach will be applied to managing electromagnetic fields, including targeting minimum setbacks from residences and monitoring power lines for electromagnetic field intensity.</p> <p>EMFs are naturally occurring and found wherever there is electricity. Natural occurrences include from lightning, solar activity and the earth itself. Wherever electricity is flowing or there is an electrical force, EMFs are produced.</p>	<p>Feedback has identified EMF impacts as a potential key area of concern. The feedback was taken into consideration when developing the scope of this technical study.</p>

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		<p>Mental Health</p> <p>TCV understands the prospect of new transmission has caused significant stress for some community members and landholders, particularly in these early stages of the project where there is still quite a high degree of uncertainty.</p> <p>TCV acknowledges that the project will have a genuine impact on community members and landholders and appreciate that that these impacts may affect mental health. It is our hope to alleviate these impacts by engaging thoughtfully with the community to answer questions and seek input into the project. We will also work closely with landholders to seek a location for transmission that minimises impacts.</p> <p>We acknowledge that although we will do our best to mitigate impacts to mental health through the engagement process, professional support may be more useful for some community members and landholders.</p> <p>TCV encourages anyone experiencing challenges to their own, a friend or a family member's mental health and wellbeing to utilise the professional health and wellbeing support service engaged by TCV.</p> <p>Members of the community can contact the Community Support Service to make an appointment to speak to a professional counsellor for free and confidential advice. Please call 1300 687 327 and reference "VNI West".</p>	
 <p>Alternative options</p>	<p>Feedback related to the consideration of alternative options, which would avoid the need for VNI West or minimise impacts. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinion of other industry representatives such as Bruce Mountain and Simon Bartlett (Plan B); and Undergrounding. 	<p>A range of options were considered during the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) for VNI West. Viable solutions needed to meet energy system needs and provide net economic benefits to consumers, who ultimately pay for this investment through their electricity bills.</p> <p>The pending retirement of coal fired generation in Victoria is also driving the timeframe for planning and building new transmission, which discounts the viability of nuclear or emerging technologies. The option selected for VNI West met the criteria outlined above and was forecast to deliver the greatest benefit to consumers.</p> <p>AEMO conducted an analysis of Plan B and disagreed with its findings. Specifically, AEMO's review of the Plan B Report shows it would result in lower levels of renewable generation entering the grid and would likely require the acquisition of people's homes on the outskirts of Ballarat and Bendigo. AEMO also found that it would likely result in long periods of power system disruption. Plan B also failed to provide the electricity system security benefits of a second interconnector to NSW.</p>	<p>Feedback and the initial risk assessment has identified alternative options as a key area of interest. The feedback was taken into consideration when developing the scope of this technical study.</p>

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		<p>The Victorian Government appointed engineering consultancy, Jacobs, to undertake a further review and published their findings in April of 2024. The review did not support Plan B's assessment and suggested alternative to VNI West, finding that VNI West meets Victorian energy objectives. The review also found that Plan B had underestimated the benefits of the VNI West project and would present its own risks and challenges.</p> <p>Undergrounding</p> <p>It is important to note that transmission projects are ultimately paid for by electricity consumers and the cost of building and running underground lines is significantly higher. There are several other considerations with undergrounding, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timeline for developing the infrastructure is much longer; • It does not enable as much connection with renewable generation along the route; • It causes significant disturbance to flora and fauna; • There are a lot of restrictions associated with farming activities above an underground line; and • Maintenance and repairs are more difficult. 	
 <p>Policy and regulation</p>	<p>Feedback and questions related to State and Federal Government energy policy, and in relation to renewable energy and climate change. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weighted importance of agriculture and climate change; • International coal export activities; • Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) selection; • Changes to the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T); and • Environmental Effects Statement (EES) and approvals process; <p>Impacts of renewable energy development on climate change</p>	<p>TCV are working closely with VicGrid to understand community concerns and will ensure VicGrid representatives are available during community consultation sessions wherever possible.</p> <p>TCV will work to ensure we are able to provide clear information to communities on the required approvals process and other regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>Feedback received has demonstrated the importance of clearly communicating associated policy and regulation which has influenced the consultation plan outlined in this document.</p>

Item of feedback	Description	TCV's response and how feedback was considered	EES Influence
 <p data-bbox="342 472 454 547">Whole of community impacts</p>	<p data-bbox="521 244 931 475">Feedback related to consideration of impacts to the whole community, the cumulative impacts of the transition to renewables and the appropriateness of engaging with individual landholders when the decision of one individual may impact their neighbours and community. Examples of whole of community impacts include:</p> <ul data-bbox="521 488 925 807" style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual impact and infrastructure design; • Mental health impacts; • Impact of Electric Magnetic Fields (EMF); • Vegetation removal; • Future transmission projects; • Impacts as a result of landholder decisions; • Benefits sharing; and • Project suppliers and partners. 	<p data-bbox="954 244 1630 451">In addition to individual landholder engagement, TCV will continue to engage with the broader community through a range of channels such as the Community Reference Group and community events. TCV is committed to ensuring the whole community can benefit from the VNI West project through a shared benefits scheme and flow on economic impacts. TCV welcomes VicGrid's recent announcement that the regional benefits sharing scheme proposed under the Victoria Transmission Investment Framework will apply to VNI West.</p>	<p data-bbox="1653 244 2033 347">Items of broader community concerns have been considered when developing the scope for technical studies such as, visual amenity, EMF and ecology.</p>
 <p data-bbox="342 879 488 954">Organisational trust and transparency</p>	<p data-bbox="521 823 931 951">Feedback related to a lack of trust in TCV the RIT-T process and governance, including the perceived influence of Orders made under the <i>National Electricity (Victoria) Act (2005)</i> (NEVA).</p> <p data-bbox="521 963 925 1035">Community members also noted that TCV needs to be clear on what authoritative powers it holds.</p>	<p data-bbox="954 823 1630 927">TCV will continue working to provide accurate and timely information to the community. TCV is committed to maintaining transparency throughout the project by providing regular updates and disseminating information broadly as early as possible.</p>	<p data-bbox="1653 823 2033 927">Feedback received on the consultation process to date will continually inform TCV's approach to engagement, including throughout the EES process.</p>

Route refinement feedback

Feedback received across a range of project aspects has supported the VNI West route refinement process to date. The project corridor will be further examined and refined as part of the EES process.

Land use and agriculture

The engagement process highlighted important considerations relating to land use and agriculture. Feedback primarily noted the importance of minimising impacts to prime agricultural land. Constraints identified included:

- Areas of irrigated agriculture.
- Properties with strict biosecurity requirements.
- Existing farming infrastructure such as sheds, silos, paddocks and stock yards.
- Properties utilising aerial technology (including drones and planes).
- Agricultural industries that could be negatively impacted by the project.

Feedback also noted concerns related to land devaluation, compensation, decreased productivity, easement restrictions, division of land, fire safety, land access and impacts during construction.

Examples of specific issues raised by the community which assisted with selection of the draft corridor included:

- Particular areas within the Goulburn-Murray Irrigation District (GMID) with irrigation infrastructure which may be incompatible with transmission lines.
- Intensive agricultural activities, such as a high technology feedlots near Charlton.

Environment

Areas of ecological value were identified across the area of interest using known data and with community input identifying areas of localised high value habitat and vegetation not identified on publicly available databases. These included:

- Locations that support populations of rare or threatened native plants and animals or old growth trees.
- Remnant patches of vegetation such as native grasslands in areas largely cleared for agriculture.
- Local roads and streams with important remnant vegetation.
- Potential disruption of natural water flows across the floodplain.
- Significant wetland and floodplain areas.
- Important native flora and fauna species within the area were also identified through community input.

Examples of specific issues raised by the community which assisted with selection of the draft corridor included:

- Areas where significant amounts of private and public investment have been made to improve natural values such as shelterbelts, corridor planting and large-scale revegetation and private land

protected or maintained for conservation including sites north of St Arnaud, west of Mysia and other locations throughout the corridor.

- Areas of protected vegetation particularly in areas surrounding Lakes Meran, Leaghur and Minmindie.
- Areas throughout the corridor containing Buloke trees, Box trees and endangered orchids.
- Areas of vegetation where species such as Wedge Tailed Eagles have been sighted.
- Areas prone to flooding which were not shown in flood maps including areas to the south of Charlton, along the Avon River, east of Tragowel and along the Waranga Western Channel to the west of Mysia.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

Areas of cultural significance have been identified through discussions with Traditional Owner groups and inputs into the project's interactive map. Areas of historic heritage, including local heritage sites, were also identified. These were added to data on known sites of cultural significance, other cultural sites and locations of artefacts.

During consultation the project's Traditional Owners noted the importance of intangible cultural values such as spiritual connection with the land, waterways and vegetation, in addition to sites containing artefacts.

Historic heritage

Sites of historic heritage within the area of interest include war memorials, sites of local heritage importance and European heritage sites including original settlements, school sites, old homesteads and historic hotels.

Sites of tourism were also noted, with some comments expressing concerns that transmission lines would impact visual amenity and thereby negatively affect tourism, including hilly areas south of Charlton and around Morrl Morrl Nature Conservation Reserve (NCR), Mount Bolangum NCR, Big Tottington NCR and Kara Kara National Park.

Infrastructure

Community feedback also identified existing or planned infrastructure which could act as a constraint to the location of transmission infrastructure. Examples included:

- Buildings.
- Mobile phone towers.
- Pipelines and underground cables.
- Social infrastructure.
- Train lines and roads.
- Residential areas and residences.
- Agricultural infrastructure.
- Fire breaks, water points and fire stations.
- Tourism infrastructure.

- Weather stations.
- Underground artesian wells.
- Quarries and mines.

Feedback highlighted the importance of minimising impacts to existing infrastructure, particularly townships, residences and existing agricultural infrastructure such as sheds and silos.

Examples of specific issues raised by the community which assisted with selection of the draft corridor included:

- Maximising the distance between transmission infrastructure and townships and individual rural residences.
- The absence of several private aerodromes in the Kerang area from maps which require defined clearances to transmission infrastructure to ensure safety.
- Existing and potential renewable energy developments where VNI West provides opportunities for connection points, particularly in the areas around Kerang, which could enhance local employment.

Social

Feedback highlighted numerous social considerations, including impacts to the broader community as opposed to individual landholders. Examples of feedback received included:

- Avoidance of industries that are vital to local economies, for example, key tourism hot spots such as parks and reserves, the olive industry near Boort and the large feedlot near Charlton.
- Concerns around the visual impact of the project on the landscape including localised impacts on residents.
- Other features identified across the landscape that may constrain the project route included local vantage points, lookouts, hiking trails and recreational areas such as campsites.