Scoping Requirements Western Victoria Transmission Network Project Environment Effects Statement

Environment Effects Act 1978

DECEMBER 2020

VICTORIA State Government | Environment, Land, Water and Planning

We acknowledge and respect Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136186 or customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au. This document is also available on the internet at planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects.

VICTORIA State Government | Environment, Land, Water and Planning

List of abbreviations

AEMO	Australian Energy Market Operator
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
EE Act	*Environment Effects Act 1978*
EES	Environment effects statement
EMF	Environmental management framework
EPA	Environment Protection Authority
EPBC Act	*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
FFG Act	*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
GWh	Gigawatt hours
ha	Hectares
km	Kilometres
kV	Kilovolts
m	Metres
MNES	Matters of national environmental significance
MW	Megawatts
RIT-T	Regulatory investment test for transmission
TRG	Technical reference group

Contents

1. Introduction

In light of the potential for significant environmental effects, on 4 August 2020 the Minister for Planning determined under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act) that Ausnet Transmission Group Pty. Ltd., through its commercial arm Mondo, is to prepare an environment effects statement (EES) for the proposed Western Victoria Transmission Network Project. The purpose of the EES is to provide a detailed description of the project, assess its potential effects on the environment[1] and investigate feasible alternative project designs, alignments and other aspects to avoid and mitigate effects. The EES will inform and seek feedback from the public and stakeholders and enable the Minister to issue an assessment of the project's environmental effects at the conclusion of the EES process. The Minister's assessment of the project's environmental effects will inform statutory approval decision-makers.

Scoping requirements set out specific matters to be investigated and documented in an EES. While the scoping requirements are intended to cover all relevant matters, the EES will need to address other issues that emerge during EES investigations, especially those relevant to statutory decisions that will be informed by the assessment.

1.1 The project and setting

The project comprises new high voltage transmission lines connecting an existing terminal station at Bulgana, north of Ararat, with a new terminal station to be built adjacent to an existing terminal station at Sydenham, on the north-western outskirts of Melbourne (Figure 1). The new transmission lines will operate at 220 kV between Bulgana and another new terminal station, to be built to the north of Ballarat, and at 500 kV between that new terminal station and Sydenham. Some works will also be required at existing terminal stations at Ballarat and Elaine (south of Ballarat). The total length of the project is approximately 190km.

The alignment for the project is proposed to be located within a broad area of interest of urban, peri-urban and rural land with tenures that include private land, predominantly used for farming, and public land, managed for conservation or other public purposes (Figure 1). The area of interest is narrower for the western component (Bulgana to Waubra) and, in a west to east direction, widens from the Waubra Terminal Station to provide for the new terminal station to the north of Ballarat and to a new terminal station adjacent to the existing Sydenham Terminal Station. Identification and investigation of potential corridors and alignments within the area of interest will be undertaken within the parameters of the EES.

The project was analysed by the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) through a regulatory investment test for transmission (RIT-T). AEMO then conducted a competitive tendering process before awarding the construction contract to Mondo. The RIT-T and tender award were predicated on an overhead design for the transmission lines. This matter is discussed in Section 3.4 below.

The proposed overhead transmission line will require lattice towers spaced at intervals of approximately 450-550m. Towers will be 40m to 60m high for the 220kV section of the project and 60m to 80m high for the 500kV section. The proponent will seek to acquire an easement (a limited interest in the land) in which to build and operate the project. The easement will typically be 40m to 60m wide for the 220kV section of the project and 70m to 100m wide for the 500kV section of the project.

The area of interest includes parts of six municipalities and five catchment management authorities. Five registered Aboriginal parties which represent the interests of Traditional Owner groups also have interests in the project's area of interest.

[1] Here, 'environment' encompasses physical, biological, heritage, cultural, social, health, safety and economic aspects.

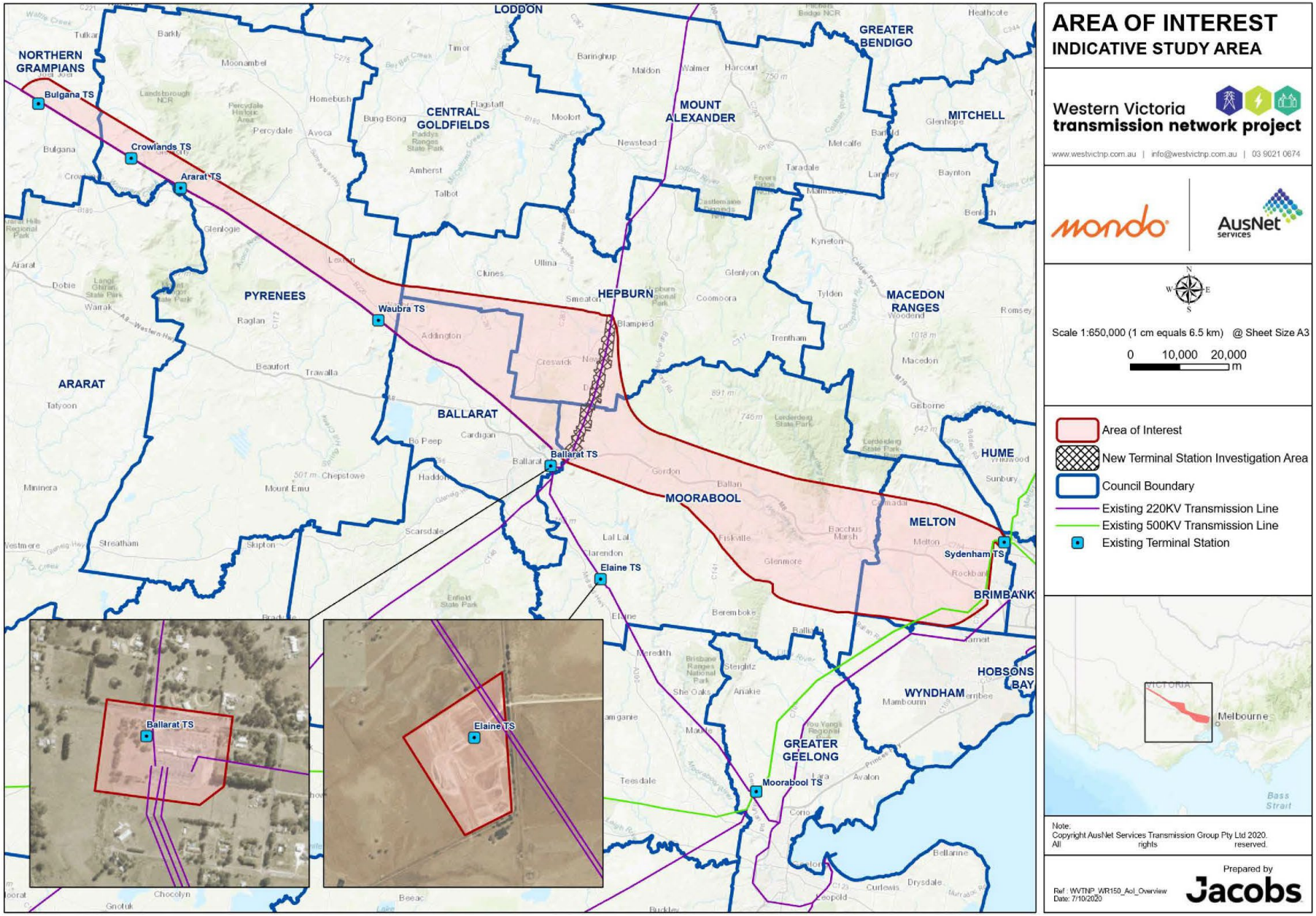

Figure 1: Location of the project (source: Ausnet Services – Mondo, Jacobs).

1.2 Minister's requirements for this EES

When the Minister decided that an EES was required to assess the project's potential environmental effects, he published procedures and requirements applicable to the preparation of the EES, in accordance with section 8B(5) of the EE Act (Appendix A). In the procedures and requirements, the Minister identified broad key matters and environmental risks that the EES should investigate and document:

- alternative corridors, alignments, site locations, designs or other options for the planning, construction or operation of the project;
- potential effects on biodiversity, including loss, degradation or fragmentation of habitat;
- effects on Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values;
- impacts on visual and landscape values; and
- other effects on land uses and the community.

The EES should address the feasibility of potential environmental mitigation and management measures associated with the matters listed above.

These scoping requirements provide further detail on the specific matters to be investigated in the EES in the context of the *Ministerial Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines).

2. Assessment process and required approvals

2.1 What is an EES?

An EES describes a project and its potential environmental effects. It should enable stakeholders and decision-makers to understand how the project is proposed to be implemented and the likely environmental effects of doing so. An EES has two main components.

1. The EES main report – an integrated, plain-English document that assesses the potential impacts of the project on the environment and examines avoidance, mitigation or other measures to reduce the environmental effects. The main report draws on technical studies, data and statutory requirements such as specific limits for surface water and groundwater quality and waste discharge to the environment and should clearly identify which components of the scope are being addressed throughout.

2. The EES technical reports – specialist studies, investigations and analyses that provide the basis for the EES main report. These reports will be exhibited in full, as appendices to the main report.

2.2 The EES process

The proponent is responsible for preparing the EES, including conducting technical studies and undertaking stakeholder consultation. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for managing the EES process. The EES process has the following steps[2]:

- preparation of a draft study program and draft schedule by the proponent[3];
- establishment of an inter-agency technical reference group (TRG) convened by DELWP;
- preparation and exhibition of draft scoping requirements by DELWP on behalf of the Minister;
- finalisation of the scoping requirements after considering public comments received during the advertised exhibition period, for issue by the Minister;
- commissioning and conducting EES studies, including peer review as appropriate, by the proponent;
- review of the proponent's EES studies and draft documentation by DELWP and the TRG[4];
- completion of the EES by the proponent;
- review of the complete EES by DELWP to establish its adequacy for public exhibition;
- exhibition of the proponent's EES and invitation for public comment by DELWP on behalf of the Minister;
- appointment of an inquiry (panel) by the Minister to review the EES and public submissions received, and provide a report to the Minister; and finally
- following receipt of the inquiry report, an assessment of the project's environmental effects by the Minister for the consideration of statutory decision-makers.

Technical reference group

DELWP has convened an agency-based TRG, comprising representatives of relevant state government agencies and departments, registered Aboriginal parties and local government authorities. The TRG will advise DELWP and the proponent on:

- applicable policies, strategies and statutory provisions;
- the scoping requirements for the EES;
- the design and adequacy of technical studies for the EES;
- the proponent's public information and stakeholder consultation program for the EES;
- responses to issues arising from the EES investigations;
- the technical adequacy of draft EES documentation; and
- coordination of statutory processes.

Consultation plan

The proponent is responsible for informing and engaging the public and stakeholders to identify and respond to their issues in conjunction with the EES studies. Stakeholders include landowners, other potentially affected parties, the local community and interested organisations and individuals, as well as government bodies. Under its EES consultation plan, the proponent will inform the public and stakeholders about the EES process, the project and associated investigations and will provide opportunities for input and

[2] See also planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria.
[3] The proponent's draft study program and schedule are part of the iterative process of planning and scoping the EES.
[4] For critical components of the EES studies, peer review will be required.

engagement during the EES investigations. The EES consultation plan is reviewed by DELWP and the TRG before it is finalised. The consultation plan will be published on the DELWP website[5]. The EES consultation plan will:

- identify stakeholders;
- characterise stakeholders in terms of their interests, concerns and consultation needs and potential to provide local knowledge;
- describe the consultation methods to be used and outline a schedule of consultation activities during the EES investigations and development of the EES; and
- outline how inputs from stakeholders will be recorded, considered and/or addressed in the EES.

Statutory approvals and the EES process

The project will require a range of approvals under Victorian legislation. DELWP coordinates the EES process as closely as practicable with the approvals procedures, consultation and public notice requirements, in particular the planning approval process.

The key approvals known to be required under Victorian legislation are:

- approved cultural heritage management plans (CHMPs) under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*; and
- planning approvals under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* for use and development of land and associated matters across six planning schemes (Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Hepburn, Ballarat, Moorabool and Melton).

Other approvals are likely to be required and will be identified throughout the course of the EES.

Statutory decisions about approvals required for the project to proceed may not be made before the decision-makers have considered the Minister's assessment, which is the final output of the EES process.

2.3 Accreditation of the EES process under the EPBC Act

The proponent referred the project to the Commonwealth . A delegate for the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment determined on 2 September 2020 that the project is a controlled action[6] and requires assessment and approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) (see Appendix B). The provisions for the Commonwealth's controlled action decision are listed threatened species and ecological communities (sections 18 and 18A of the EPBC Act).

The EES process is accredited to assess impacts on matters of national environmental significance (MNES) under the EPBC Act through the Bilateral Assessment Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria. The Commonwealth Minister or delegate will decide whether the project is approved, approved with conditions or refused under the EPBC Act, after having considered the Minister for Planning's assessment under the EE Act.

[5] planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/western-victoria-transmission-network-project
[6] Under the EPBC Act, projects are considered as 'actions'. For the purposes of this document the term 'project' also means 'the action'.

3. Matters to be addressed in the EES

3.1 General approach

Preparation of the EES should be consistent with the principles of a systems approach and a risk-based approach[7], so that the environmental effects of and responses to potential impacts are assessed, particularly for those that pose a relatively higher risk of adverse effects. The EES should put forward a sound rationale for the level of assessment and analysis undertaken for any environmental effect or combination of environmental effects[8] arising from construction and operational stages of the project.

In the case of potentially significant effects, analyses documented within the EES should be detailed enough to provide a good understanding of the nature of the effects including:

- the potential effects on individual environmental assets —magnitude, extent and duration of change in the values of each asset— having regard to intended avoidance and mitigation measures;
- the likelihood of adverse effects, including those caused indirectly as a result of proposed activities, and associated uncertainty of available predictions or estimates;
- potential cumulative impacts arising in conjunction with other existing or proposed projects;
- likely residual effects, assuming the proposed measures to avoid and mitigate environmental effects are implemented; and
- proposed approach to managing and monitoring environmental performance and contingency planning.

3.2 Content and style

Together with the Minister's reasons for decision, the published procedures and requirements and the Ministerial Guidelines, the content of the EES and related investigations is to be guided by these scoping requirements. It is the proponent's responsibility to ensure that adequate studies are undertaken to support the assessment of environmental effects, focusing primarily on significant effects (including those that might emerge during the investigations). The EES should demonstrate how the project will achieve a balance of economic, social and environmental outcomes that contribute to ecologically sustainable development and provide a net community benefit.

The EES should provide a clear, objective and well-integrated analysis of the potential effects of the proposed project, including proposed avoidance, mitigation and management measures, as well as feasible alternatives. The EES should also address requirements associated with statutory decisions that will be informed by the Minister's assessment. Overall, the main report should include:

- an executive summary of the potential environmental effects of the project outlined in, including potential effects on identified MNES;
- a description of the entire project, including its objectives, rationale and key elements;
- a description of the relationship of the project to public policies and plans;
- an outline of the primary approvals required for the project to proceed;
- descriptions of the existing environment and likely trends, including future climate change scenarios, where these are relevant to the assessment of potential effects;
- appropriately detailed assessments of potential effects of the project on environmental values, relative to the 'no project' scenario, together with an estimate of the uncertainty associated with predictions;
- intended measures for avoiding, minimising, managing and monitoring effects;
- any proposed offset measures where avoidance and mitigation measures will not adequately address effects on environmental values, including the identified MNES, and discussion of how any offset package proposed meets the requirements of the Victorian Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation and the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy as it relates to MNES;
- predictions of residual effects of the project, including residual significant impacts on MNES, assuming implementation of proposed management measures;
- responses to issues, including alternative options, raised through public and stakeholder consultation;
- evaluation of the implications for the project from the implementation of legislation and policy; and
- conclusions on the significance of impacts on regional, state and federal matters.

[7] Ministerial Guidelines (p. 14).
[8] Effects include direct, indirect, combined, facilitated, short and long-term, beneficial, adverse and cumulative effects.

The proponent may choose to prepare a website with interactive functionality to provide an alternative form of access to EES information, which may complement the conventional EES chapters and technical documents. Such an approach should be discussed with DELWP and should be integrated with the preparation of the EES package, including review by the TRG.

The EES should also outline a program for community consultation, stakeholder engagement and communications proposed for implementation during the construction and operation of the project, including opportunities for local stakeholders to engage with the proponent to seek responses to issues that might arise during project implementation.

The proponent must also prepare a concise, graphical-based, non-technical hard copy summary (A4, no more than 10 pages) for free distribution to interested parties. The EES summary should include details of the EES exhibition, public submission process and availability of the EES documentation.

3.3 Project description

The EES is to describe the project in sufficient detail to allow an understanding of all components, processes and development stages, and to enable assessment of their likely potential environmental effects. The project description should canvass the following:

- an overview of the proponent's environmental performance and track record, including experience in delivering similar projects, as well as organisation health, safety and environmental policies, and whether the proponent has been subject to any past or present proceedings under a Commonwealth, state or territory law for the protection of the environment or the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;
- contextual information on the project, including its objectives and rationale, its relationship to statutory policies, plans and strategies, including the justification for need for the project, selection of preferred options for alignment and design of the project (see Section 3.4 below) and implications of the project not proceeding;
- existing and planned land uses in the vicinity of the proposed project, supported by plans and maps;
- the proposed operational life of the project, and any decommissioning and rehabilitation arrangements; and
- other necessary works proposed for the project, such as road upgrades and/or connections, and infrastructure and services relocation.

Description of the project's components should detail:

- applicable standards and adopted specifications for transmission and terminal station infrastructure;
- location, footprint, layout and access arrangements during construction and operation;
- clearing or lopping of native vegetation for construction or operations;
- design and expected construction staging and scheduling;
- proposed construction methods and materials, and extent of areas to be disturbed during construction;
- solid waste, wastewater and hazardous material generation and management during construction and operation;
- rehabilitation of site works areas;
- proposed tenure arrangements to provide for access for maintenance or other operational purposes;
- lighting, safety, security, and noise requirements during construction and operation;
- hours of construction work and a description of the expected duration of project components, including which components are temporary and which are permanent; and
- operational requirements including maintenance activities and decommissioning.

3.4 Project alternatives

The EES should document the proponent's design development process leading to the proponent’s preferred form of the project as presented in the EES. The EES should explain the proponent’s criteria for evaluating the feasibility of potential alternatives and explain how specific alternatives were shortlisted or rejected for evaluation within the EES. The EES should document the likely environmental effects of feasible alternatives, particularly where these offer a potential to avoid or minimise adverse environmental effects whilst meeting the objectives of the project.

The referral of the project under the EE Act presented the project in terms of an area of interest rather than a proposed alignment. Alignment selection can be a very important way of avoiding or minimising adverse

impacts for linear infrastructure projects. Key aspects of the project, for which the EES will need to demonstrate consideration of feasible alternatives, include:

- the boundaries of the original area of interest;
- potential corridors and alignments within the area of interest, including criteria for excluding portions of the area from further consideration;
- siting of the new terminal station north of Ballarat, and the extent to which selection of that site influences the choice of preferred alignment in either direction;
- the rationale for the preferred mode of construction (overhead or underground, including potential for partial underground construction); and
- other feasible alternatives raised through feedback from the community or other stakeholders.

The process for identification and analysis of the project alternatives will need to be documented in the EES including:

- description of alternatives considered in the project design process, including alternative transmission line alignments and terminal station locations;
- identification of methods and environmental criteria for comparison of alternatives and for selection of preferred alternatives;
- assessment and comparison of the technical feasibility and environmental implications of alternative options considered;
- the basis for selecting the preferred project layout and design, particularly where alignments are located in proximity to environmentally sensitive areas; and
- description of how information gathered during the EES process was used to refine the preferred transmission line alignments and other project alternatives.

While the assessment of environmental effects of site selection, alignment and design alternatives must address the matters set out in these scoping requirements, the depth of investigation of alternatives should be proportionate to their potential both to minimise potentially significant adverse effects and to meet project objectives. References to "the project area of interest" are to be read as applying iteratively to potential corridors or alignments for the project as they emerge within the project area of interest.

3.5 Applicable legislation, policies and strategies

In addition to the EE Act and the EPBC Act, the EES will need to identify all relevant legislation, policies, guidelines and standards, and assess their specific requirements or implications for the project, particularly in relation to required approvals. The EES should identify and characterise expected or progressing changes to relevant legislation such as the recent passage of a new Environment Protection Act which is expected come into effect on 1 July 2021.

3.6 Draft evaluation objectives

Draft evaluation objectives are provided in Section 4 for each of the topics to be addressed in the EES. The draft evaluation objectives identify desired outcomes in the context of key legislative and statutory policies, as well as the principles and objectives of ecologically sustainable development and environment protection, including net community benefit. They provide a framework to guide an integrated assessment of environmental effects, in accordance with the Ministerial Guidelines, and for evaluating the overall implications of the project.

3.7 Environmental management framework

Inadequate management of environmental effects during project design, construction and operation could result in a failure to achieve necessary environmental outcomes and statutory requirements or meet reasonable stakeholder expectations. Hence, the proposed environmental management framework (EMF) in the EES should describe a transparent framework with clear accountabilities for managing and monitoring the environmental effects and risks associated with the construction and operational phases[9]. The EMF should be clearly integrated with the statutory approvals required if the project is to proceed. The entity responsible for approval of environmental plans should be identified.

[9] Ministerial Guidelines (p. 20).

The EMF should describe the baseline environmental conditions to allow evaluation of the residual environmental effects of the project and the efficacy of applied environmental management and contingency measures. The framework should include:

- the context of required approvals and consents;
- the proposed environmental management system to be adopted;
- organisational responsibilities and accountabilities for environmental management;
- an environmental risk register that is maintained during project implementation;
- contingency measures to respond to unexpected but foreseeable environmental risks, should they eventuate; and
- the environmental management measures proposed in the EES to address specific issues, including commitments to mitigate adverse effects and enhance environmental outcomes.

An important aspect of the EMF is community consultation, stakeholder engagement and communications during the construction and operation of the project. If the project proceeds, the EMF will probably be the primary document that outlines opportunities for local stakeholders to engage with the proponent to seek responses to issues that might arise during construction or operation. To this end the EMF must set out procedures for:

- complaints recording and resolution;
- auditing and reporting of performance including compliance with relevant statutory conditions and standards; and
- review of the effectiveness of the EMF for continuous improvement.

Management measures proposed in the EES to address specific issues, including commitments to mitigate adverse effects and enhance environmental outcomes should be clearly described in the EMF. The EMF should describe proposed objectives, indicators and monitoring requirements, including for (but not limited to) managing or addressing:

- biodiversity values, including bird and bat mortality due to collisions with infrastructure and any mitigation or offsetting measures, if required;
- landscape and visual values;
- surface water, groundwater, waterway and wetland values;
- protection of human health;
- noise and vibration, including during construction and operations;
- air quality during construction;
- Aboriginal cultural heritage values;
- historic heritage values;
- soil impacts and erosion;
- aviation (including with respect to aerial firefighting);
- bushfire risk;
- electromagnetic interference;
- farming or other primary production values of land that may be affected by the project;
- socioeconomic and land use values, such as for landowners, neighbouring residents and visitors to neighbouring public land reserves; and
- transport network, particularly during construction, including managing temporary disruption and changed accessibility.

4. Assessment of specific environmental effects

Preparation of the EES and the necessary investigation of effects should be proportional to the environmental risk, as outlined in the Ministerial Guidelines (p. 14). A risk-based approach should be adopted during the design of EES studies, so that a greater level of effort is directed at investigating and managing those matters that pose relatively higher risk of adverse effects.

The following structure sets out how the EES should document its assessment of effects for each evaluation objective.

1. **Identify key issues or risks** that the project poses to the achievement of the evaluation objective.

2. **Characterise the existing environment** to underpin impact assessments having regard to the level of risk. The environmental risk assessment by the proponent could guide the necessary data acquisition.

3. **Identify the potential effects** of the project on the existing environment (pre-mitigation).

4. **Present design and mitigation measures** that could substantially reduce and/or mitigate the likelihood, extent and/or duration of potential effects. All design and mitigation measures must apply the mitigation hierarchy with justification of why higher order measures cannot be applied.
   a. Avoidance: measures taken to avoid creating adverse effects on the environment from the outset, such as careful spatial or temporal placement of infrastructure or disturbance.
   b. Minimisation: measures taken to reduce the duration, intensity and extent of impacts that cannot be avoided.
   c. Rehabilitation/restoration: measures taken to improve a degraded environment following exposure to impacts that cannot be completely avoided or minimised.
   d. Offsets: measures taken to compensate for any residual, adverse impacts after full implementation of the previous three steps of the mitigation hierarchy.

5. **Assess the likely residual effects** of the project on the existing environment and evaluate their significance assuming implementation of design and mitigation measures.

6. **Propose performance criteria and management** to evaluate whether the project's effects are maintained within permissible levels and propose contingency approaches if they are not.

The description and assessment of effects must not be confined to the immediate area of the project but must also consider the potential of the project to impact on nearby environmental values, including areas potentially impacted by offsite components of the project. In addition, the cumulative effect of the project in combination with other activities in the broader area/region needs to be assessed for all significant adverse effects.

4.1 Biodiversity and habitat

Evaluation objective

Avoid, and where avoidance is not possible, minimise potential adverse effects on protected native vegetation and animals (particularly listed threatened species and their habitat and listed ecological communities), as well as address offset requirements consistent with state and Commonwealth policies.

Key issues

- Potential for significant effects and their acceptability on listed threatened ecological communities including but not limited to:
  - Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain;
  - Grey Box (*Eucalyptus micrcarpa*) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-eastern Australia;
  - Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain;
  - Seasonal Herbaceous Wetlands (Freshwater) of the Temperate Lowland Plains; and
  - White Box-Yellow Box-Blakeley's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland.

- Potential for significant effects and their acceptability on key threatened flora species including but not limited to:
  - Adamson's Blowngrass (*Lachnagrostis adamsonii*);
  - Bacchus Marsh Wattle (*Acacia rostriformis*);
  - Basalt Pepper-cress (*Lepidium hyssopifolium*);
  - Brittle Greenhood (*Pterostylis truncata*);
  - Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosis leptorhynchoides*);
  - Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albican subsp. tricolor*);
  - Large-fruit Groundsel (*Senecio macrocarpus*);
  - Matted Flax-lily (*Dianella amoena*);
  - Small Golden Moth Orchid (*Diuris basaltica*);
  - Spiny Rice-flower (*Pimelea spinescens*);
  - Sturdy Leek-orchid (*Prasophyllum validum*); and
  - Swamp Fireweed (*Senecio psilocarpus*).
- Potential for significant effects and their acceptability on key threatened fauna species including but not limited to:
  - Australasian Bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*);
  - Australian Painted Snipe (*Rostratula australis*);
  - Golden Sun Moth (*Synemon plana*);
  - Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*);
  - Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)
  - Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*);
  - Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*);
  - Plains Wanderer (*Pedionomus torquatus*);
  - Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera phrygia*);
  - Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus obesulus*);
  - Spot-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*);
  - Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*);
  - Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*); and
  - White-throated Needletail (*Hirundapus caudacutus*).
- Potential cumulative effects on listed threatened flora and fauna species, including but not limited to those mentioned above, from the project in combination with other projects.
- Direct or indirect loss of native vegetation or other habitat values due to project works or operational maintenance prescriptions.
- Direct or indirect loss, disturbance and/or degradation of listed or other protected species and nearby habitat that may support listed or other protected flora, fauna or ecological communities.
- Potential initiation or exacerbation of listed potentially threatening processes under the FFG Act.
- Potential impacts on habitats within the protected area estate, including national parks and other conservation reserves.
- Potential impacts on planted vegetation established through environmental programs.
- Disruption to the movement of fauna (both day and night) between areas of habitat across the broader landscape, including risk of collisions with transmission line infrastructure.
- The availability of suitable offsets for the loss of native vegetation and habitat for listed threatened species under the EPBC Act and/or FFG Act.

Existing environment

- Characterise broadly the type, distribution and condition of biodiversity values within a suitable study area, comprising the project area of interest and its environs, including native vegetation, terrestrial and aquatic habitat and habitat corridors or linkages. This should include identifying and characterising any ephemeral wetlands/habitat for threatened species and communities listed under the EPBC Act or FFG Act.
- Characterise the biodiversity values that could be affected by each feasible alternative taken forward for assessment, including impacts resulting from road widening or other consequential changes to transport infrastructure.
- Identify and characterise any areas of native vegetation and groundwater dependant ecosystems that may be affected by groundwater drawdown or surface hydrological changes.
- Identify bird and bat species susceptible to collision with transmission infrastructure and describe their presence or use of the area of interest, including key habitat features.

- Identify planted or recovered vegetation established through environmental programs.
- Describe the biodiversity values that could be directly or indirectly affected by the project, including:
  - native vegetation and any ecological communities listed under the EPBC Act or FFG Act; and
  - presence of, or suitable habitats for, protected flora and fauna species, in particular species listed under the EPBC Act, FFG Act and DELWP advisory lists.
- Describe any existing threats to biodiversity values, including but not limited to:
  - historic or ongoing disturbance or alteration of habitat conditions (e.g. habitat fragmentation, severance of wildlife corridors or habitat linkages, changes to water quantity or quality, fire hazards, etc.);
  - potentially threatening process listed under the FFG Act; and
  - the presence of any declared weeds, pathogens and pest animals within and in the vicinity of the project area.
- Characterisation of the existing environment is to be informed by relevant databases, literature (and published data), community observations (including citizen science and information from residents and landholders in or adjacent to the area of interest), appropriate targeted and/or seasonal surveys and modelling of the potential and actual presence of threatened species and communities consistent with Commonwealth and state survey guidelines, conservation advices and threatened species recovery plans or action statements. Where surveys do not identify a listed species or community, but past records and/or habitat analysis suggest that it may occur, a precautionary approach to the further investigation and assessment of its occurrence should be applied.

Mitigation measures

- Identify and describe potential alternatives, proposed design options and mitigation measures and their expected effectiveness in avoidance or reduction of significant effects on any flora, fauna and ecological communities listed on the EPBC Act, FFG Act or DELWP advisory lists or other protected species or protected area estate. Provide clear statements noting which avoidance or mitigation measure will be committed to.
- Identify staging or timing options for works that could help to avoid or minimise adverse effects on seasonal values (e.g. migratory species, breeding behaviour).
- Justify and describe the assumptions and level of uncertainty associated with the proposed measures achieving their desired outcomes.
- Develop hygiene controls for vehicle and machinery movement and other measures to minimise the spread of, or otherwise control, pathogens and weeds during construction and operation.
- Describe the application of the three-step approach to avoiding the removal of native vegetation, minimising impacts from removal of native vegetation that cannot be avoided and providing offsets to compensate for the biodiversity impact from the removal of native vegetation.

Likely effects

- Assess the direct and indirect effects of the project including feasible design, location and alignment alternatives, and including transport route upgrades and other ancillary activities, on native vegetation, listed ecological communities, and listed threatened and other protected flora species.
- Assess the direct and indirect effects of the project and feasible alternatives, on listed threatened and other protected fauna species under the EPBC Act, FFG Act and/or DELWP advisory lists or their habitats.
- Assess the direct and indirect effects on planted or recovered vegetation established through environmental programs.
- Assess the direct and indirect effects of the project during construction and operation on biodiversity values, including:
  - disturbance or alteration of habitat conditions (e.g. habitat fragmentation, severance of wildlife corridors or habitat linkages, displacement due to avoidance of project infrastructure, changes to water quantity or quality, fire hazards, etc.);
  - the potential for birds and other fauna to be disturbed or disoriented by project effects such as noise, vibration or lighting;
  - direct removal of individuals or destruction of habitat;
  - threats of mortality of listed threatened or other protected fauna (including site and species specific risk-factors); and
  - the presence and potential spread of any declared weeds, pathogens and pest animals within and in the vicinity of the project area.

- Assess the potential cumulative effects on listed threatened or other protected fauna species from the project in combination with other projects that might have similar types of impacts.

Performance criteria

- Describe and evaluate proposed measures to manage the residual effects of the project on biodiversity values and MNES, including an offset strategy and offset management plan that sets out and includes evidence of the offsets that can be secured or are proposed to satisfy Commonwealth and Victorian offset policy or guideline requirements.
- Describe how the offset/s will be secured, managed and monitored, including management actions, responsibility, timing, performance measures and the specific environmental outcomes to be achieved.
- Proposed EPBC Act offsets must meet the requirements of the EPBC Act Environmental Offsets Policy (October 2012)[10].
- Describe and evaluate the approach to monitoring and the proposed contingency measures to be implemented in the event of adverse residual effects on flora, fauna and ecological community values requiring further management.

4.2 Cultural heritage

Evaluation objective

Avoid, or minimise where avoidance is not possible, adverse effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage values.

Key issues

- Potential for destruction or disturbance of sites or places of Aboriginal cultural heritage or historic heritage significance.
- Potential for indirect impacts on sites or places of Aboriginal cultural heritage or historic heritage significance within or in the vicinity of the project area.
- Potential impacts on or loss of intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage values associated with the project area and surrounds.

Existing environment

- Review and assess previous studies, registers, geomorphology, landform and land use history to identify areas of known Aboriginal cultural heritage and model areas with the potential to contain Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Describe the extent, nature and significance of any Aboriginal cultural heritage sites or areas of sensitivity potentially impacted by the project (including associated infrastructure or ancillary works) through consultation and investigations, ensuring adequate field assessments are conducted to verify the findings of any desktop studies.
- Identify any known or previously unidentified intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage values associated with the project area, including values associated with biodiversity, landscape or other elements.
- Liaise with registered Aboriginal parties and other Traditional Owner groups or representatives as appropriate to complement and supplement other investigations into additional values, Aboriginal places or areas of high sensitivity.
- Review land use history, previous studies and registers and listings to identify areas of known historic heritage values and assess the potential for the Project to contain unregistered historic heritage sites.
- Identify and document any known and previously unidentified places, objects, sites and landscapes of historic heritage significance within the project area and its vicinity, including any necessary field investigations to supplement past studies. Assessments are to be undertaken in accordance with the *Heritage Act 2017*, Heritage Victoria's *Guidelines for Conducting Archaeological Surveys* (2020) or updates and other guidance documents. Maps of site extents showing their proximity to proposed works should be provided.
- In particular identify all places on the Victorian Heritage Register, Victorian Heritage Inventory and in Heritage Overlays in relevant planning schemes that could be affected by the project.

Mitigation measures

- Where previously unknown heritage values are identified through project studies, consider potential for registration/listing or nomination for registration/listing under appropriate statutory systems.

[10] http://www.environment.gov.au/epbc/publications/epbc-act-environmental-offsets-policy

- Describe and evaluate potential and proposed design and construction mitigation methods to avoid adverse effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage and historic heritage, and where avoidance is not possible, to minimise adverse effects.
- Develop management and contingency measures in accordance with the requirements for CHMPs under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
- Develop an archaeological management plan and chance finds procedure to manage historic heritage investigation/ excavation etc, consistent with the Heritage Act and relevant protocols..

Likely effects

- Assess the potential direct and indirect effects of the project on Aboriginal cultural heritage values, and whether they can be avoided.
- Assess the potential direct and indirect effects of the project on sites and places of historical cultural heritage significance, having regard to the *Guidelines for Investigating Historical Archaeological Artefacts and Sites* (Heritage Victoria, 2015) or updates and other relevant guidance documents.
- Assess the potential direct or indirect effects on any intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage values associated with the project area or its vicinity.
- In assessing potential effects, have regard to potential aggregated effects on heritage values to the extent that multiple sites of heritage significance may represent associated values and may collectively contribute to significant values at a regional or broader level.

Performance criteria

- Outline any proposed commitments to avoid, mitigate and manage residual effects on sites and places of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance (through draft CHMPs as appropriate).
- Outline any proposed commitments to avoid, mitigate and manage residual effects on sites and places of historical heritage significance, including site investigation and recording procedures (within the framework of applications for consent under the *Heritage Act 2017*).

4.3 Landscape and visual

Evaluation objective

Avoid, or minimise where avoidance is not possible, and manage potential adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity.

Key issues

- Potential effects on significant landscape values and landforms in the vicinity of the project area of interest, especially national parks, other reserves and areas identified for their landscape values, such as (but not limited to) areas covered by Significant Landscape Overlay.
- Potential for nearby landowners, residents and communities to be exposed to significant visual effects from project infrastructure.
- Potential cumulative impacts of the project in combination with other visually conspicuous developments on landscape values of the region.

Existing environment

- Characterise the landscape character, features and values of the project area of interest and its environs.
- Identify public and private viewsheds which could include elements of the project and characterise visual values of the area.
- Identify the components of the project that may result in a significant visual amenity effect including towers, transmission lines and terminal stations.
- Identify viewsheds in which project infrastructure could feature, including from representative residences (where permitted), public lookouts, tourist attractions, representative roads and key vantage points in or close to the area of interest or from which the project can be seen.
- Identify existing prominent built features within the landscape (e.g. transmission lines and wind farms) and their impact on the existing landscape and visual setting.

Mitigation measures

- Identify and evaluate any potential design, siting and alignment options that could avoid and minimise potential effects on landscape and visual amenity, having regard to viewpoints from which the project could be visually conspicuous.

- Identify additional management strategies that may further reduce potential effects.

Likely effects

- Assess the landscape and visual effects of the project, including on public and private viewpoints. Use photomontages and other visual techniques to support the assessment.
- Assess the potential for cumulative impacts associated with the development of the project in the context of existing built infrastructure and nearby proposed/approved visually significant development.

Performance criteria

- Outline measures to monitor the success of commitments to mitigate or manage effects on landscape and visual values during all phases of the project.
- Describe the approach to monitor effects and develop contingency measures to be implemented in the event of adverse residual effects on landscape and visual values requiring further management.

4.4 Land use and socioeconomic

Evaluation objective

Avoid, or minimise where avoidance is not possible, adverse effects on land use, social fabric of the community, businesses including farming and tourism, local and state infrastructure, aviation safety and to affected and neighbouring landowners during construction and operation of the project.

Key issues

- Potential significant disruption to existing and/or proposed land uses, with associated economic and social effects.
- Potential adverse impacts on agriculture or other forms of farming, including constraints on cropping or grazing, spread of weeds or pathogens and restrictions on farming practices.
- Potential adverse effects of overhead transmission infrastructure on aviation, especially with respect to use of aircraft for farming work and fire-fighting.
- Potential for impacts on reasonably foreseeable upgrades to public infrastructure.
- Potential adverse economic and social effects, both direct and indirect.
- Need to provide adequate information to inform required statutory planning approvals decisions.

Existing environment

- Describe the project area of interest and its environs in terms of land use (existing and proposed), land classification and suitability for specific purposes, development, urban areas, townships, residences, farming and other economic activities, forestry, tourism and conservation reserves.
- Describe zoning and overlays and public infrastructure within the project area of interest that support current and strategic patterns of economic and social activity.
- Identify relevant local regional and state policies.
- Describe the community and social setting of the project area of interest.
- Identify and describe aerodromes, air navigation and air traffic management services, transiting air routes, and designated airspaces in or adjacent to the project area of interest.
- Characterise current use of aerial spraying and aerial firefighting that could be affected by the project (including any significant water resource that may be used for aerial firefighting in the vicinity of the area of interest).
- Characterise recreational usage within the project area of interest and its surroundings, including water bodies, national parks and reserves.
- Identify locations, values and prescribed management priorities for public land and council land in or adjacent to the project area of interest.

Mitigation measures

- Demonstrate whether the project is consistent with relevant planning scheme provisions and other relevant policies (including approved management plans for adjacent public land).
- Outline measures to avoid or minimise potential adverse effects of the project and enhance benefits to the community and businesses in or near the project area of interest.
- Describe measures to prevent establishment or spread of agricultural weeds or pathogens.
- Describe proposed mitigation or management measures to reduce potential effects on aviation operations and safety with regard to advice from Civil Aviation Safety Authority and emergency services.

Likely effects

- Identify potential long and short-term effects of the project on existing and foreseeable land uses, public infrastructure and fire and emergency management.
- Identify potential economic effects of the project, considering direct and indirect consequences on land use, farming and agriculture, other businesses, employment and local and regional economy.
- Identify potential social impacts arising from the project.
- Identify potential impact on tourism and tourist attractions and recreation within and around the project area of interest.
- Identify the potential effects and risks to aviation operations and safety from the project.

Performance criteria

- Outline measures to monitor the success of commitments to mitigate or manage effects on land use and socioeconomic values during all phases of the project.
- Describe and evaluate proposed measures to monitor potential residual social, land use and economic impacts and describe contingency measures for responding to unexpected impacts.

4.5 Community amenity, safety, roads and transport

Evaluation objective

Avoid, or minimise where avoidance is not possible, adverse effects for community amenity, health and safety, with regard to construction noise, vibration, dust, lighting, waste, greenhouse gas emissions, transport network, operational noise, fire risk management and electromagnetic radiation.

Key issues

- Managing traffic disruptions for residents, businesses and travellers during the construction of the project.
- Potential damage to local and regional road surfaces along transport routes and increased risk to road safety on transport routes.
- Potential for adverse effects to local air quality at sensitive receptors and on other sensitive land uses during construction of the project.
- Potential for adverse effects resulting from project-related noise or vibration at sensitive receptors during construction and operation.
- Implications of the project for fire risk management on surrounding land, including fire ignition risks arising from the project.
- Potential for adverse effects from waste generated during construction and operation.
- Risks to human health, including due to electromagnetic or other radiation emissions from project construction or operations.
- Potential electromagnetic interference with communication or infrastructure systems.
- Potential for emissions of greenhouse gases to result from the project.
- Need for appropriate control and management of project-generated waste.

Existing environment

- Describe the existing, approved and committed transport network in and around the project area of interest, including proposed construction transport route options, in terms of capacity, condition, accessibility and potentially sensitive users.
- Characterise current local conditions in relation to air quality using data collected from existing local monitoring stations.
- Identify existing land uses in the vicinity of the project which may generate air quality impacts relevant to managing project construction impacts.
- Characterise the ambient noise environment in and adjacent to the project area of interest in established residential, farming, commercial and open space areas and at other sensitive land use and high amenity locations.
- Identify sensitive receptors that could be affected by noise, dust or electromagnetic or similar radiation from project construction or operation.
- Characterise the fire risks associated with the project area of interest and its environs.

Mitigation measures

- Identify any required transport network upgrades to accommodate construction traffic and additional road maintenance regime to address adverse impacts from project construction.

- Describe and evaluate the proposed traffic management and safety principles to address changed traffic conditions during construction of the project.
- Describe and propose siting, design, mitigation and management measures to control emissions to air from construction activities.
- Describe and evaluate both potential and proposed design responses and/or other mitigation measures (e.g. staging/scheduling of works) which could minimise noise and vibration during construction and operation.
- Identify measures to minimise or contain electromagnetic radiation emissions from the project or to shield or buffer nearby sensitive receptors from such emissions.
- Describe and evaluate the proposed traffic management and safety principles to address changed traffic conditions during construction and operation of the project.
- Outline any required transport infrastructure works or upgrades required to address adverse impacts of the project construction and operation, including impacts on accessibility (e.g. access road construction and upgrades).
- Describe and evaluate options for managing wastes generated through construction and operation of the project.
- Identify project design and management measures that will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the project.
- Describe and assess potential measures for avoiding, mitigating or managing impacts of electromagnetic radiation, including on human health and on telecommunications.
- Identify measures for avoiding, managing and minimising fire risks arising from or associated with the project, having regard to planning and other policy provisions.

Likely effects

- Assess the potential effects of construction activities on the transport network, including amenity and accessibility impacts.
- Identify any works required to accommodate project traffic during construction (having regard to the type and dimensions of vehicles and loads) and potential environment effects.
- Identify and assess protential impacts on human health and safety that could result from the project.
- Assess the potential effects of construction activities on air quality and lighting.
- Assess the potential effects of the project on noise and vibration amenity at sensitive receptors, including information that addresses EPA Victoria's *Noise from Industry in Regional Victoria Publication 1411*.
- Assess the risks that the project could cause a fire affecting land and assets within or outside the project area of interest.
- Assess the implications of the project for fire risk management or bushfire suppression activities within the project area of interest or in its vicinity.
- Identify potential effects of fugitive emissions of electromagnetic or similar radiation from the project on sensitive receptors.
- Identify and assess risks to the project's ongoing sustainability including susceptibility to extreme weather events in the context of modelled climate change scenarios.
- Quantify anticipated greenhouse gas emissions from the project during its construction and operations, and assess the implications of these emissions in the context of the targets outlined in the *Climate Change Act 2017*.

Performance criteria

- Describe proposed measures to manage and monitor effects on amenity values and identify likely residual effects, including compliance with standards and proposed trigger levels for initiating contingency measures.
- Describe the intended approach to monitoring, measuring and reporting the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from project construction or operation.
- Describe contingency measures for responding to unexpected impacts to amenity values resulting from the project during construction and operation of the project.

4.6 Catchment values and hydrology

Evaluation objective

Maintain the functions and values of aquatic environments, surface water and groundwater quality and stream flows and prevent adverse effects on protected beneficial uses.

Key issues

- Potential for the project to have significant impact on waterways, floodplains and wetland systems.
- Potential for adverse effects on nearby and downstream water environments due to changed water quality or impacts on groundwater or waterway conditions during construction.
- Potential for adverse effects on the functions, values and beneficial uses of groundwater due to the project's activities, including water extraction, interception or diversion of flows, discharges or seepage from tower foundations or other earthworks and changes to salinity.
- Potential for disturbance of contaminated, saline, dispersive or acid sulphate soils.
- Potential for erosion resulting from construction and operation due to vegetation loss or other factors.

Existing environment

- Characterise the groundwater (including depth, quality and availability to licence/use) and surface water environments and drainage features in the project area of interest and its environs.
- Characterise the interaction between surface water and groundwater within the project and broader area.
- Characterise the wetland systems in the project area of interest and its environs including the extent, types and condition of wetlands that could be impacted by the project, having regard to terrestrial and aquatic habitat, including as habitat corridors or linkages.
- Characterise soil types and structures in the study area and identify the potential location and disturbance of dispersive, acid sulphate, saline or potentially contaminated soils, or soils of other special characteristics that could affect or be affected by the project.

Mitigation measures

- Identify and evaluate aspects of project works and operations, and proposed design refinement options or measures, that could avoid or minimise significant effects on water and catchment environments.
- Describe further potential and proposed design options and measures that could avoid or minimise significant effects on beneficial uses of surface water, groundwater and downstream water environments during the project's construction and operation, including response measures for environmental incidents.
- Describe further potential and proposed design options and measures that could avoid or minimise significant effects on soil stability.
- Describe available options for treatment or disposal of the various categories of solid and liquid wastes generated by the project.

Likely effects

- Assess the potential effects of the project on surface water and groundwater environments and beneficial uses, including on permanent and ephemeral waterways, floodplains and wetland systems in or near the project area of interest and its environs, considering appropriate climate change scenarios.
- Identify and assess potential effects of the project on soil stability, erosion and the exposure and disposal of contaminated or hazardous soils (e.g. acid sulphate soils).
- Identify potential environmental effects resulting from the generation, storage, treatment, transport and disposal of solid and liquid wastes, including soil, from project construction and operation.

Performance criteria

- Describe proposed measures to manage and monitor effects on catchment values and identify likely residual effects.
- Describe contingency measures for responding to unexpected but foreseeable impacts such as disturbance of acid sulphate, saline, dispersive or contaminated soils.

Appendix A: Procedures and requirements

The procedures and requirements applying to the EES process, in accordance with both section 8B(5) of the Act and the *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines), are as follows.

(i) The EES is to document investigations of potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including the feasibility of associated environmental mitigation and management measures, in particular for:

   a. alternative corridors, alignments, site locations, designs or other options for the planning, construction or operation of the project;

   b. potential effects on biodiversity, including loss, degradation or fragmentation of habitat;

   c. effects on Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values;

   d. impacts on visual and landscape values; and

   e. other effects on land uses and the community.

(ii) The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES will be set out more fully in scoping requirements. Draft scoping requirements will be exhibited for 15 business days for public comment, before final scoping requirements are issued by the Minister for Planning.

(iii) The proponent is to prepare and submit to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) a draft EES study program to inform the preparation of scoping requirements.

(iv) The level of detail of investigation for the EES studies should be consistent with the approach set out in the scoping requirements and be adequate to inform an assessment of the significance and acceptability of its potential environmental effects, in the context of the Ministerial Guidelines.

(v) DELWP will convene an inter-agency technical reference group (TRG) to advise DELWP and the proponent on the scoping requirements, the design and adequacy of the EES studies and coordination with statutory approval processes.

(vi) The proponent is to prepare and implement an EES consultation plan for informing the public and consulting with stakeholders during the preparation of the EES. The consultation plan will have regard to advice from DELWP and the TRG and address the continuing public health emergency and the implications of any changes in movement or other restrictions arising from the state of emergency.

(vii) The proponent is also to prepare and submit to DELWP its proposed schedule for the completion of studies, preparation and exhibition of the EES, following confirmation of the scoping requirements. This schedule is intended to facilitate the alignment of the proponent's and DELWP's timeframes, including for TRG review of technical studies for the EES and the main EES documentation.

(viii) The proponent is to apply appropriate peer review and quality management procedures to enable the completion of EES studies to a satisfactory standard.

(ix) The EES is to be exhibited for a period of 30 business days for public comment, unless the exhibition period spans the Christmas–New Year period, in which case 40 business days will apply.

(x) The required duration of the exhibition period may be revised in light of circumstances applying at the time the draft EES is submitted for adequacy review and authorisation to exhibit.

(xi) The proponent is to follow any specific directions given by the Director Impact Assessment, DELWP, regarding advertising and exhibition arrangements, including with respect to giving advance notice of the intention to exhibit, provision of soft or hard copies of the exhibited EES to interested parties and the placement or otherwise of EES copies for viewing in public places.

(xii) An inquiry will be appointed under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to consider environmental effects of the proposal. The inquiry will be conducted by formal hearing, which may include the use of video-conferencing or other technology as the inquiry Chair deems appropriate.

Appendix B: Controlled action decision

Australian Government
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Notification of
REFERRAL DECISION AND DESIGNATED PROPONENT – controlled action

Western Victorian Transmission Network Project, Victoria (2020/8741)

This decision is made under section 75 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

proposed action	To construct an overhead electricity transmission line and related infrastructure, including construction and upgrade of terminal stations, between Bulgana in western Victoria and Sydenham, in Melbourne's north-west [See EPBC Act referral 2020/8741].
decision on proposed action	The proposed action is a controlled action. The project will require assessment and approval under the EPBC Act before it can proceed.
relevant controlling provisions	• Listed threatened species and communities (sections 18 & 18A)
designated proponent	AUSNET TRANSMISSION GROUP PTY LTD ACN 079 798 173
assessment approach	The project will be assessed under the assessment bilateral agreement with the Victorian Government.
Decision-maker	
Name and position	Declan O'Connor-Cox Acting Assistant Secretary Environment Assessments (Vic, Tas) & Post Approvals Branch
Signature	
date of decision	2/9/2020

GPO Box 858 Canberra ACT 2601 • Telephone 02 6274 1111 • www.awe.gov.au