

Western Victoria
transmission network project



June 2020

SUMMARY

Stakeholder engagement overview

An overview of stakeholder engagement completed to date and proposed future engagement for the Western Victoria Transmission Network Project

Delivered by

mondo


AusNet
services



Ongoing engagement is critical to project success

Our engagement commitment

AusNet Services is committed to delivering extensive and meaningful engagement, in an open, inclusive, accessible and timely manner throughout the planning and delivery of the Project.

The Project's engagement and communication objectives aim to:

- Strengthen relationships with stakeholders to foster trust, awareness and understanding of the Project
- Develop and maintain a social licence to develop, construct and operate through best practice stakeholder engagement
- Increase awareness, and understanding of the Project, including the process of design, approvals, construction and operations
- Minimise impacts to stakeholders by proactively mitigating potential impacts and provide timely responses to issues via easily accessible communication channels
- Facilitate genuine stakeholder and community input to minimise impacts, maximise benefits and meet commitments made to the community.

Our engagement approach is underpinned by four key values which guide us in the planning and delivery of all our activities - Understanding, Openness, Respect and Responsiveness.

Our engagement will include multiple activities during key project phases to seek community input into the planning and decision-making process. We will promote all engagement activities and provide up-to date information about the process, so stakeholders can easily and meaningfully have their say.

We will report on the outcomes of the engagement, including what feedback we receive and how it has been considered in our Project planning, design and methodology.

Successful coordination and integration of stakeholder and community engagement, planning and design is critical to achieve successful Project outcomes.

The Project engagement approach seeks to ensure the timely and effective participation of a broad range of stakeholders including local communities, businesses, interest groups and Government representatives, to facilitate their input in the Project planning and decision-making process.



Proposed engagement approach

The engagement program seeks to ensure the timely and effective participation of all stakeholders to facilitate input in the Project planning and decision-making process. The purpose of engagement activities in this phase is to:

- Raise awareness about the Project including promoting opportunities for feedback/comment
- Provide clear and accessible avenues for providing feedback and incorporating this in Project planning and design
- Undertake engagement with key stakeholders on the area of interest and potential environmental and social impacts
- Support the delivery of positive social and economic development initiatives
- Identify opportunities to maximise local community benefit
- Facilitate stakeholder input and participation in statutory consultation periods

AusNet Services has commenced consultation with landowners and occupiers, Councils and relevant agencies. Communication and engagement activities will be tailored to suit the community and stakeholder preferences in the Project area.

Due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, in March 2020 AusNet Services temporarily postponed some early face to face community engagement activities. A revised approach has been prepared which increases online engagement activities, while ensuring extensive communication through traditional print and media channels.

Stakeholder input will be sought via a wide range of channels including:

- An online engagement platform integrated into the project website, which supports 24/7 interactive feedback mechanisms including:
 - Interactive mapping tool that allows community members to share location based local knowledge and feedback
 - Online forums
 - Interactive question and answers
 - Online surveys
- Briefing sessions and workshops (face to face and online)
- Webinars
- Drop in information sessions and forums (when safe to do so)
- One on one discussions
- "Pop up" information booths in local townships (when safe to do so)
- A Council Advisory Group with western Victorian councils located within the area of interest
- Community Reference Groups with interested, representative community stakeholders.

Key communication channels include the Project website/online engagement platforms, telephone hotline and email, postcards and mailouts, static displays and posters, print, radio and television advertisement, social media platforms, geotargeted social media posts, project videos, 'meet the team' videos, factsheets and newsletters.

The Project website <https://www.westvictnp.com.au/> will be the home of the latest Project information, including updates and reports. The website has direct feedback capabilities via in-built online engagement tools to ensure stakeholders have access to the latest project information and can provide direct feedback to the Project team.

Early engagement shapes project planning

Engagement undertaken in early 2020

Initial engagement activities have sought to build awareness of the Project with local Governments and agencies and help determine the best way to engage with their communities.

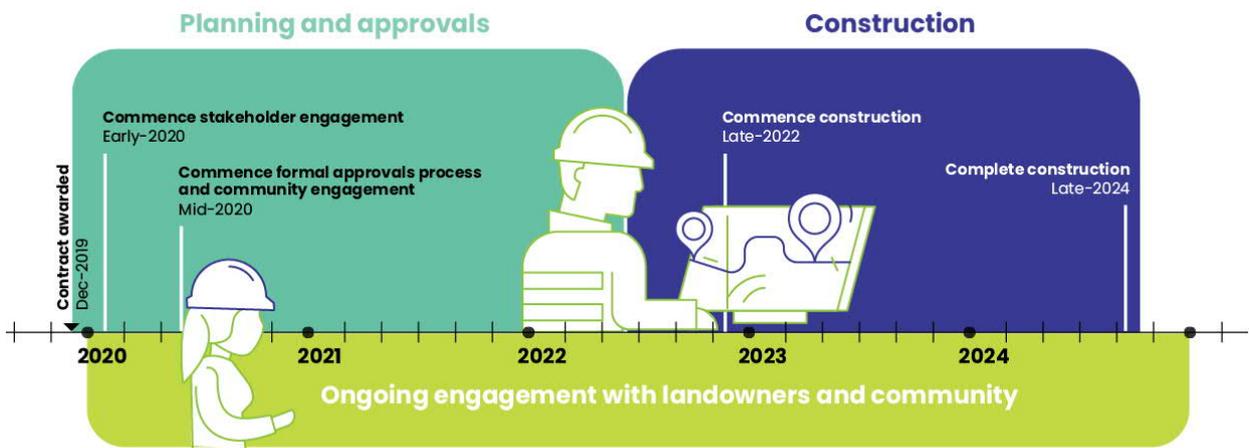


Figure 1 Key Project stages

The focus of our initial engagement activities have been to introduce AusNet Services, the Project and benefits with the aim of working closely with local Government and agencies. We are seeking input and guidance in determining the Project corridor within the area of interest. In addition, we have sought advice and insights on effectively engaging with local communities throughout our engagement approach, especially during Covid-19.

Due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, in March 2020 AusNet Services temporarily postponed a range of early face to face community engagement activities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of community members and our team. Extensive engagement with local councils within western Victoria, Government agencies, and indigenous representative groups has continued through a range of online briefings and workshops.

Broader community engagement activities have been re-designed to be delivered in predominantly online formats.

An overview of key engagement and communication actions undertaken in early 2020 is provided in Table 1.



Table 1. Summary of engagement and communication activities in early 2020

Month	Activities	Key Stakeholders
January / February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project hotline established Basic website established with invitation to register for updates Planning for Project launch and local engagement activities in March 2020 Information materials developed Briefings with key Government stakeholders (following letter invitations sent to local councils and Members of Parliament (MPs) in December 2019) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members and other interested stakeholders Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Northern Grampians Shire Council Pyrenees Shire Council Aboriginal Victoria Local state MPs and Ministers
March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project launch and local engagement activities postponed due to Covid-19 Briefings continued with key Government stakeholders Introductory correspondence to Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP) and Traditional Owner Groups (TOG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DELWP Aboriginal Victoria Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) Hepburn Shire Council Moorabool Shire Council Melton City Council Ballarat City Council Local state and federal MPs and Ministers Community members and other interested stakeholders Boon Wurrung Foundation
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email update to subscribed community members and interested stakeholders Expanded project website went live with online engagement capability including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement survey New project information Fact sheets and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) Workshops commenced with local councils and key stakeholders Letters to potentially affected landowners Emails to Government agencies to promote Project awareness and offer briefings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DELWP DAWE Heritage Victoria Victorian Planning Authority Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation Wathaurung Aboriginal Corporation Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Earth Resources Regulation) Department of Treasury and Finance Department of Premier and Cabinet VicRoads (Department of Transport and Regional Roads Victoria) Northern Grampians Shire Council
May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops continued with local councils within area of interest Follow up meeting with key council officers Councillor briefings Planning for referral submission engagement and recommencement of local community engagement with Covid-19 mitigations in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moorabool Shire Council Hepburn Shire Council Hepburn Councillors Melton City Council Pyrenees Shire Council Pyrenees Councillors City of Ballarat Invest Victoria Victorian Planning Authority

Month	Activities	Key Stakeholders
June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing offered and/or planned in June 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks Victoria Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CMA) North Central CMA Port Phillip and Westernport CMA Glenelg Hopkins CMA Wimmera CMA Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Agriculture) Southern Rural Water Central Highlands Water Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water EPA Country Fire Authority Melbourne Fire Brigade Regional Development Victoria Moorabool Councillor briefing Ballarat Councillor briefing Melton Councillor briefing

Engagement prior to the Project – 2017 to 2019

AusNet Services is building on stakeholder engagement carried out by the Australian Energy Market Operator as part of the Regulatory Investment Test for Transmission (RIT-T) process.

From 2017 to 2019, AEMO undertook stakeholder consultation with government, industry and consumers as part of the regulated market consultation process to identify the preferred transmission investment option to address network limitations in Western Victoria. AEMO's stakeholder consultation included the opportunity for public submissions and participation in deep-dive industry forums at key stages of the RIT-T process.

AEMO's consultation included:

- Industry and market participants
- Local governments across Western Victoria
- Consumer representative groups
- Indigenous groups
- Members of Parliament



- State Government and Departments
- Commonwealth Government and Departments
- Regulators and policy bodies

AusNet has considered stakeholder feedback received during the RIT-T consultation process in developing an expanded Project stakeholder engagement program designed to facilitate key stakeholder input into Project planning and decision-making processes.

For information about the RIT-T visit www.aemo.com.au/initiatives/major-programs/western-victorian-regulatory-investment-test-for-transmission/ (External link)